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PIONEER DAY

July 24, Pioneer Day, is celebrated yearly in "Mormon Country" and increasingly on an international

scale among Latter-day Saints. On this date in 1847, the first Mormon pioneers (143 men, 3 women, 2 children) led by Brigham YOUNG, entered the uninhabited Salt Lake Valley. They began the pioneer settlement of more than 400 communities in the intermountain West, Canada, and Mexico. Before the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, 80,000 Mormon refugees and converts went west in perpetual immigration. Six thousand lost their lives and were buried along the way.

"In the annals of the American Frontier," wrote historian Purnell H. Benson, there is "no more thrilling story" (p. 423). On July 24 this story is commemorated annually by a huge parade in Salt Lake City and is also celebrated frequently in drama (e.g., the *Promised Valley* musical), poetry, and song. The holiday is typically marked by sunrise services and, throughout LDS communities,



A Pioneer Day parade in Eureka, Utah. Traditionally, Latter-day Saints dress in pioneer costume and reenact the entry of the Mormon pioneers into the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. Pancake breakfasts, picnics, and pageantry mark Pioneer Day, even outside the Intermountain West. Courtesy Utah State Historical Society.

by Old West reenactments. In Church programs, commemorative addresses are given and family journals and reminiscences are revived. The close conjunction of the festivities of July 4 and 24 tends to focus on the Mormon exodus as a quest for religious freedom. But like the Puritan movement and the Jewish *aliyah*, it was at root a quest for the sacred. It grew out of the vision of a consecrated community, the KINGDOM OF GOD on earth. The festivities of July 24 attempt to regain and extend that vision.

[See also Celebrations.]

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PIONEER ECONOMY

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was the major force contributing to the economic development of the Great Basin region in the nineteenth century. This was true until the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, and to a large extent even through the remainder of the century. Though the railroad ended the isolation of the Great Basin and brought both economic benefits and new challenges to HOME INDUSTRIES, the Church's economic role did not decline significantly until the end of the pioneer period (see ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE CHURCH).

Church involvement in the economy was rooted in theology. According to LDS belief, building up the KINGDOM OF GOD on earth—developing it and beautifying it for the return of the Savior—is a prime task of God's people. LDS pioneers believed that the Church was the agent of God and his people in building the kingdom. The responsibility to promote its progress and perfection rested upon Church officials. It thus became a religious duty to produce, to build, and to prepare for the MILLENNIUM. Digging canals, tending herds, cultivating crops, and constructing telegraph lines, railroads, and factories were all viewed as acts of religious devotion similar to prayer, worship, and other strictly religious activities.

Partly because economic activity had religious significance, it was clearly understood that all such was to be conducted in harmony with gospel principles. Precious-metal mining and other economic activities that did not contribute to basic production and stable communities were not endorsed. Individualism, profiteering, and speculation were eschewed. Instead, the individual member was enjoined to be "one with his brethren." Not only were they to work together in harmony, but Latter-day Saints were also expected to maintain relative equality in the possession and enjoyment of this world's goods.

President Brigham Young recognized early on the economic importance of women in making a harsh land productive. Not only were women partners with men in agriculture and home production—the more so with many men called away on missions—but they were also specifically encouraged by President Young to be involved as telegraph operators and shopkeepers, and he enlisted them throughout the territory to work in SILK CULTURE.

Building the pioneer kingdom required the erection of a "two-decker" economy—a foundation of agricultural and handicraft production to satisfy the most pressing wants of the settlers and the steady increment of immigrants, along with a superstructure of investment to provide for future growth. In general, programs were concerned with three types of activities. First, leaders sought to increase the agents of production by a widespread missionary program and by promotion and organization of emigration (see IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION; PERPETUAL EMIGRATING FUND). Between 1847 and 1880 more than 70,000 converts immigrated to the Great Basin to work on farms, in factories, and to participate in COLONIZATION projects.

Second, Church leaders sought to aid capital formation. This they did by sending out exploration parties to discover new resources, by developing these resources under Church sponsorship, by mobilizing the savings of its members in the Great Basin and in Europe, and by diverting resources from the production of consumables to the production of reproducible wealth. Sizable groups were sent to southern Utah to mine and manufacture iron, to southern Nevada to mine silver and lead, to northern and central Utah to mine coal, to southern California to establish an entrepôt, to southern Utah to raise cotton and other semitropi-