CONTENTS

A RANGER NAMED OUTLAW ................................................................. Glenn Shirley 8

SACRAMENTO—RIVER OF DISASTER .................................................. Leo Rosenhouse 14

BILL TILGHMAN, FRONTIER LAWMAN ............................................... Bob Gaddis 18

RUNNYMEDE: LOST PARADISE OF THE KANSAS FRONTIER ............... Jean Hagen 21

THE LAST MASSACRE ......................................................................... Lee Bartley 24

UTAH'S STRANGE ALPHABET .............................................................. A.J. Simmonds 28

SECOND LIFE OF A SEVERED HEAD .................................................. William B. Secrest 31

FIRST BANKS IN THE SOUTHWEST .................................................. Xanthus Carson 34

RED CLOUD, NAPOLEON OF THE SIOUX .......................................... Vera Holding 38

VIOLENT END OF THE CASEY GANG .............................................. Leola Lehman 42

THE DEADLY GUN OF BEN THOMPSON ............................................. Robert Norman 45

E CLAMPUS VITUS ............................................................................. Doris Cerveri 46

•SPECIAL FEATURES

SMOKE SIGNALS .................................................................................. letters page 4

WESTERN BITS ...................................................................................... interesting information 6

CONSULTING EDITOR
Professor Foster-Harris, University of Oklahoma, author of "The Look Of The Old West"

PUBLISHER
Robert C. Sproul

EDITOR
Bob Dowling

ART DIRECTOR
Charles Foster

TRUE FRONTIER is published bi-monthly by MAJOR MAGAZINES, INC., Sparta, Ill. Executive, editorial offices at 198 S. Franklin Avenue, Valley Stream, N.Y. 11580. Single copy price $2.00; subscription rates, $12.00. 6 issues. No responsibility for loss or non-return of manuscripts, photographs or illustrations and all material must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Entire contents copyright 1968. Printed in U.S.A. No. 6
That the frontier was the vitally unique factor in American history is hardly a debatable question. That is was frequently unusual is also certain. Its very existence drew a population which hoped for a new and better life beyond the constricting bounds of already established societies whose conventions were rooted in the time-honored traditions and modes which were as much a legacy from past generations as were the roads and buildings and long-cultivated farms.

But the frontier also drew another class of inhabitants. It drew the social innovators—the idealists who saw the virgin land beyond the last settlements as a blank page upon which a new society could write its story.

The determined followers of Robert Owen at their communal colony of New Harmony, Indiana; the pioneers and trappers, turned founding fathers, who wrote a constitution for the Oregon Country at Champoeg in 1843; the city planners who laid out Versailles-like grids for raw cow towns; the hundreds of Thoreaus who sought private Waldens beyond the frontier; they were so divergent, but they shared something very important beyond the land they came to fill. They were experimentors with a plan who believed that mankind was perfectable and could achieve that perfection in the empty land in the American West.

That land was the scene of many strange events and many bizarre experiments. But none was quite so unusual as Brigham Young's attempt to re-make the English language.
If there was ever a time and place where more injury was done to a tongue and its grammar, it was on the western frontier of the United States. But it was also in the West that one of the first of many movements was made to reform the language—the Deseret Alphabet.

Mormon interest in language is as old as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—founded in upstate New York in 1830 by its first Prophet-President, Joseph Smith, Jr. Smith’s Book of Mormon, a second volume of scripture for believers, had allegedly been translated from a record engraved on golden plates in characters of “reformed Egyptian.” Early in church history leading elders were studying Hebrew and other tongues under the auspices of the “School of the Prophets.”

But these were experiments with foreign languages—ancient and modern. Real interest in English began in an inauspicious fashion in 1837 in Preston, Lancashire, England, when George Darley Watt was baptized by immersion in a chill river to become the first of a hundred-thousand Mormon converts in Great Britain.

The same year that Watt was baptized, Queen Victoria ascended the British Throne and Isaac Pitman published his epochal contribution to phonography, Stenographic Shorthand. Watt studied the Pitman system; and when he emigrated to the United States to join the main body of the LDS Church in Nauvoo, Illinois, his skill was utilized as a secretary.

When Brigham Young led the main body of the Church to Utah in 1847, Watt followed. In Salt Lake City he taught shorthand to the church clerks and succeeded in interesting Brigham Young in the Pitman System. For years George Darley Watt made shorthand transcriptions of the sermons of important church leaders.

By 1852 Brigham Young was convinced that shorthand was a great improvement over regularly spelled English. Not only was it phonetic (surviving examples of Brigham’s
writing show he was capable of misspelling anything) but it also took less paper—a still rare commodity on a frontier fifteen hundred miles from the nearest supply depot on the Missouri River.

There was also the value of communication with the Indians. It sounds, of whatever language, could be represented by unchangeable symbols; and if the Indians could learn the set pronunciation of these signs, it would be possible for a Mormon interpreter to write letters to distant tribes and receive written replies. In the 1850’s and 1860’s the Utah Mormons were particularly interested in converting the surrounding tribes to their faith and integrating them into settled farming communities. Making the Indian tribes literate was seen to be the key to the whole process of civilizing them; and a phonetic alphabet was exemplified by Pitman’s Shorthand appeared to be the fastest and easiest way for teaching the tribes to read and write.

In 1852 Brigham Young could speak with the utmost authority. Not only was he President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Mormons who comprised ninety-nine percent of Utah’s population; but he was also, by Presidential appointment, Governor of the Territory. In both capacities he commanded vast resources. Governor Young turned the practical development of the “new system of orthography” over to the Regents of the University of Deseret, the first state institution of higher learning founded west of the Mississippi River and ancestor of the University of Utah. In October 1853 the Board of Regents appointed a select committee of three to prepare a school book in which spelling and pronunciation of all the characters would be uniform and easily learned. The committee was further charged with the development of a new alphabet to be used in the book. Each member was to prepare his own alphabet and present it to the Board of Regents who would take the best elements of each and synthesize a single system. The select group included Parley P. Pratt of the Board of Regents, Herbert C. Kimball, President of the upper house of the Territorial Assembly, and the indispensable father of it all, George Darley Watt.

The committee started to work immediately, and on November 24, 1853, drew apparently desired plaudits from the Deseret News, Salt Lake City’s only newspaper and the official voice of the Mormon Church: “We have observed the frequent sittings of the Board of late that has the fatherly supervision of education in the Territory of Utah, and are happy to learn that their discussions are calculated to call forth a searching investigation (Continued on page 56)
into the elementary sounds of language and also into the nature and structure of such characters as are employed to express the radical and multiplied sounds of language.

That was a strange thing to consider for a group of men surrounded by hostile Indian tribes and six hundred miles of wagon road to the nearest American settlements in California and Oregon. But they did consider it; and on January 19, 1854, the News announced the result of those considerations.

The article explained that a new phonetic alphabet had been adopted which could be quickly learned and easily written. “The orthography will be so abridged that an ordinary writer can probably write one hundred words a minute with ease, and consequently report the speed of a common speaker without much difficulty... In the new alphabet every letter has a fixed and unalterable sound. By this method strangers cannot only acquire a knowledge of our language much more readily but a practiced reporter can also report a strange language when spoken.”

Like the university, the newspaper, and practically everything else in Utah Territory, the new alphabet was christened Deseret. Deseret is a word uniquely Mormon and comes from their second volume of holy scripture, the Book of Mormon. That work, a purported ecclesiastical history of the American Indians, speaks of a family fleeing Mesopotamia after the destruction of the Tower of Babel: “And they did also carry with them deseret, which, by interpretation, is a honey bee.” It is no mere coincidence that the beehee is a prominent emblem on the Utah state flag.

The Deseret Alphabet as presented in 1854 contained thirty-eight letters representing common English sounds with symbols for both the long and short forms of the vowels—A, AH, AW, E, O, OO—and the consonants and combinations I, OW, WOO, YE, HE, P, B.

Only five characters (O, C. D. S, L)—all but 0 assigned a new sound—of the Latin alphabet were included among the thirty-eight symbols. For the remainder, George D. Watt invented signs based on Pitman's shorthand or copied from classical alphabets printed in Webster's Dictionary.

As soon as the new alphabet was presented, both the officials of the University and the University made every effort to foster its introduction. Special schools were started in Salt Lake City to teach the new alphabet, and clerks in the church offices were instructed in its use. The Legislative Assembly voted an appropriation of $2,500 to purchase fonts of type in the Deseret Alphabet for the local printing of books.

While Erastus Snow was in St. Louis in 1857 making arrangements for the new type, he learned of President James Buchanan's decision to replace Brigham Young as Governor of Utah and to send 2,500 troops to the Territory as an intermountain garrison. Viewing the troops as an army of invasion, Snow abandoned the type and hurried back to Salt Lake.

In the almost comic "Utah War" which preceded the entry of the troops into the Mormon commonwealth, the Deseret Alphabet was almost forgotten. Not until 1859 was the subject again introduced. In February of that year, the Deseret News began printing articles in the new characters. From 1859 to 1860 records at church headquarters were kept in the phonetic alphabet. But the early momentum was lost. By 1860 both the Deseret News and Brigham Young's secretaries were back to spelling English in the old way with the old letters.

In 1855 Jules Remy, a French visitor to Salt Lake City, saw the strange letters on sign boards and in use in letters and diaries. He predicted, however, that the new alphabet would be abandoned by its own authors. During the strained years following the Utah War and the economic pressures and opportunities afforded by the War between the States, it seemed likely that Remy's prophecy would be realized. However, the Frenchman had not counted on Brigham Young's persistence nor on the lengths to which the churchman would go if he felt his commonwealth was threatened. In the last half of the 1860's it was threatened.

Discoveries of rich mineral deposits in the mountains around Salt Lake resulted in an influx of non-Mormon miners and merchants—people who could hardly be expected to be sympathetic to either polygamy or to the closed social and political structure which revolved around the LDS Church. Additionally, the "splendid isolation" which Utah has known since 1847 was about to end. The Union Pacific from the east and the Central Pacific from the west were straining toward a Transcontinental junction and the fat government subsidy which accompanied each mile of track laid.

At a time when the mountain fastness of Utah was about to be penetrated, she was further threatened from within by her own success. Nearly a quarter of Utah's foreign born population (thirty-five percent of the Territory's inhabitants) was Scandinavian. A considerable percentage was German, Italian, or Welsh—all non-English speaking peoples. Mormon missionaries on the European continent had been highly successful. But assimilating the immigrants was difficult.

It was church policy to incorporate the new-comers into the English speaking society of their co-religionists as quickly as possible. But it was difficult for the immigrants to transfer the knowledge gained from their phonetic native tongues to English where, as Church President Brigham Young pointed out, the letter ñ had "one sound in mute, a second sound in father, a third sound in fall, a fourth sound in man, and a fifth sound in marry."

So the alphabet which had seemed dead a decade before was resurrected—to teach English to foreigners and to effectively isolate Utah's children from the ill effects of close association with the "world" which was sure to enter the Territory in the wake of the Transcontinental Railroad. As the Deseret News editorialized: "The greatest evils which now flourish, and under which Christendom groans, are directly traceable to the licentiousness of the press.... It is our aim to check its demoralizing tendencies, and in no way can we better do this, than by making the knowledge of the Deseret Alphabet general and by training the children in its use."

But to make the Alphabet general involved the production of a literature written in it. On May 15, 1868, the University's Board of Regents hastily instructed Professor Orson Pratt to develop material for elementary school books to be printed in the Deseret Alphabet. He must have worked overtime. For by August proof sheets of the first primer had been received in Salt Lake City. By the end of October 10,000 copies had been printed and forwarded to the Regents.


As a child's writer, Professor Pratt was a failure. Except for occasional selections from the Bible or the inclusion of well-known poems, the lessons were deadly reading. But as products of a frontier society, there was a kind of naive directness about them. Lesson XV for example discusses a common pioneer item: "A gun. It is my new gun. Have you seen my new gun? A gun is good to keep off the dogs and bad men at night. We should take care of our guns and keep them clean. We must not point them at any one."

There were also some practical admonitions to "slop" the hogs, feed the chicks, study hard, learn to read, and "do right."

The lessons were kept colloquial enough for Professor Pratt to call a horse a "nag."

Once the primers were available, the Regents' attention turned to the publication of a back-up literature. In Territorial Utah this took the shape of church books and the Holy Scriptures. Professor Pratt went back to the translating table. By March 1869 he had transcribed the Book of Mormon and was hard at work on the Bible, the Doctrines and Covenants, the Catechism, and a Deseret Phonetic Speller.

In April 1869 the manuscript for the Book of Mormon was forwarded to Russell Brothers of New York City. By September 500 copies of the whole book and 5,000 of the first third of the volume had been printed. It was intended that the partial Book of Mormon would be
SECOND LIFE OF A SEVERED HEAD

(Continued from page 33)

"The head of the notorious outlaw 'Joaquin Murrieta', which was on exhibition here about a year ago or thereabouts, was seized by Deputy Corbett, and safely lodged in the office of that functionary. The owner proper (Joaquin) being dead, and the owner improper (Mr. Wothring) being in debt, the deputy has assumed the guardianship."

The head and hand reposed in the sheriff's office until September of 1855, when they again changed hands. Under the heading, "New Goods," the following articles appeared in the San Francisco Alta on September 26, 1855:

"Some may suppose that an allusion is made to the Japanese cargo; not so; a more curious and novel commodity is in the market: a brigand's head and a robber's digits. The head of 'Three Fingers Jack' and the head of the celebrated Joaquin Murrieta were sold by the Sheriff on Monday, for the sum of $26 to satisfy an execution. Judge Lyons and Mr. J.V. Plume were the largest bidders on the occasion. Poor Joaquin, a price was set upon his head while living, and a price is set upon it now that he is dead. It is a head that seems to be particularly liable to executions. Twice has its owner been forced to part with it, to satisfy that provision of the law. If a man's trunk is exempt from execution, why should not his head be so likewise? However, both head and hand are sold and thereby hangs a tale. One of the lucky purchasers may plume himself upon having made a curious bargain, but the other has certainly carried off the palm."

Evidently this particular purchase was of a speculative nature, for in February of 1856, the two hideous exhibits were again sold. A Mr. Craigmiles, of San Francisco, was the new owner, and he announced that he intended exhibiting "his ghastly property" through the interior cities of the country. He was leaving on the first steamer for New Orleans and expected to realize $50,000 from his project. A newspaper item concluded that "we shall probably next hear of the noted cabeza in Europe, exciting the wonders of cockney, Parisian, and invalids at Bath and Baden-Baden." The price paid by Craigmiles isn't known.

Details of the travels of the head and hand are lacking, but evidently they were exhibited throughout the east by the new owner. Horace Bell, an early Californian, noted in his memoirs that he had known a man who had seen them exhibited in a New York museum. After their tour of the east, the head and hand again turned up in San Francisco where they were reportedly acquired by one Andrew J. Taylor in the late 1850's.

Taylor was a forty-niner who had come out during the gold rush from Mississippi. He was known throughout the state as "Old Natchez," and he operated a weapons store and pistol gallery on Clay street, opposite the plaza. He was a skilled gunsmith and if you had anything to do with weapons in old San Francisco, sooner or later you came into contact with Natchez Taylor at his shop.

Here the great and the near-great, as well as the man on the street, came to get their weapons checked, repaired or loaded. The pistol used by gambler Charles Cora to kill U.S. Marshal Richardson was loaded by Natchez, as was the weapon used by Casey to kill editor King of the Bulletin. The result of these two shootings was the great vigilante uprising of 1856.

Old Natchez also helped supply arms for the various filibustering expeditions which were outfitted in San Francisco in the 50's. Crabb, William Walker, Charles de Pindray and others were all aided in their vain attempts at empire-building by the popular former Mississippian.

Old Natchez was also the official armorer for California's most noted duel—the encounter between U.S. Senator David Broderick and Judge David Terry. Taylor stood by as Terry deliberately shot down his opponent when the latter's weapon prematurely discharged and missed its target. There was some talk that Natchez had tampered with the trigger settings, had informed Terry of the situation but not told Broderick. The claim was not taken seriously, however, by anyone who knew the mild-mannered gunsmith.

Joaquin's head sat on a shelf in Natchez' store and gazed blankly at the many historic personages who visited the shop on Clay street. Bobbing about in its alcohol-filled glass container, the head was a disinterested observer of an event that took place just a week and a half after the tragic Broderick—Terry duel.

A teammate named Travis, accompanied by a friend, stepped into the Natchez gallery to examine a pair of derringers. While the friend was looking over the derringers, Mr. Travis picked up a pistol from the showcase and inspected it, inadvertently pointing it at Natchez. Suddenly there was a roar and a cloud of black powder smoke. The horrified Travis discovered that he had accidentally shot Natchez in the face, killing him instantly. The unfortunate gun-