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IS IT TRUE WHAT "THEY" SAY ABOUT DIXIE? Who knows? What do they say? Somewhere in that long aeon of time from the beginning to the present, there is an answer or maybe a story that holds the key to our understanding.

If the earth came swirling out of that vast universe of gases and solidified into this whirling sphere we call earth, then Utah's Dixie grabbed the prettiest of the colors, the cleanest of the air and that warmth of the sun that stirs the chemicals of life into the pleasantness of living.

The geologists tell us that Utah's Dixie was once a barren desert of blowing sand that was engulfed with oceans, seas and lakes which solidified the sand into the wonders of the Colorado plateau. As the snow and ice melted, the water and wind washed away the softer materials and volcanic upheavals coated the area with harder more enduring surfaces that challenge the elements to transfigure them again into the beautiful wonders that myriads of tourists travel the continents and oceans to see.

Somewhere in that vast transformation, living things crept onto the landscape and evolved into vast forests and such creatures as dinosaurs that still remain mummified among the colorful remains of the past.

The forests died out and petrified in the lakes that disappeared and only the stone foot prints of dinosaurs and trees remain to remind us of their presence in Dixie.

When man first stumbled into this area is not known. Various experts have estimated from 10 to 25,000 years ago. We do know that several groups of humans have occupied the area over thousands of years. They have left the artifacts of civilization and minor disturbances of the earth to remind us of their presence. Why they came or why they left, we do not know.

There were natives living here when European civilization was introduced to the area. These people had been here for sometime and their descendants still roam the landscape today. Part of them live on reservations set aside for them by the government and others mingle with the rest of us for their place in the sun. These natives became known as Paiutes and have various branches with different names.

Like all primitive peoples, these natives had adapted well to their environment but their lives were hard and short when compared to the European who nudged their way in and around them in an effort to occupy and control the territory.

If it is ever possible to see and write the truth as it pertains to a given people, the story of the Dixie native will be a grim one. If we are to believe what we hear and see as evidenced by the past, their food supply was meager and consisted of about everything that could run, walk, bloom or crawl. Their homes were largely what nature provided in and among the crevices of rocks and shrubbery; sometime a few poles were stacked together like a tepee and covered with bark or brush. Clothing was slight and when the native was covered, it was usually with rabbit skins or bark. The better dressed set might manage a deer hide or something equivalent.

Who knows what kind of world Dixie was as Dinosaurs wandered over the colored landscape? Will our era on earth leave no more

to enlighten the future than did theirs: We can't suppose the natives who frequented this area in primitive times even had a concept of Dinosaurs. Their knowledge and ours of their primitive past is about as wanting.

The natives, invaded by Europeans, have tried, as most primitive peoples did, to hang on to that part of the earth on which they depended for an existence. In a losing battle for dominance, they have called on that universal acceptance of sacredness to hang on to portions of their domain. Areas and symbols unknown to the masses a few generations ago, have become the sacred symbols of organized protest and legalized maneuvering for control in today's world.

The natives, like their European invaders, fought among themselves for control of the land and each other. Perhaps that was a major reason for the almost passive acceptance of the European occupation of Dixie. The locals needed protection and food. Their hold on the territory was mainly dependent on their ability to adapt to the extreme levels of poverty necessary for human existence. A newer and more advanced technology could, perhaps, make an improvement in their expectations. It would seem, at the time, that there wasn't a lot of support for holding on to their "sacred" past. They lived for the moment and hoped that the moment would get better.

As the year 1776 rolled around, the Dixie natives were surprised to see the Dominguez-Escalante party slowly making their way through Toquerville, across the Hurricane bench and eventually through House Rock Valley to the Colorado River. The natives seemed surprised. We can't suppose their surprise would have been greater than that of the Escalante party had they known that their path took them just a few hundred yards from the Warner Valley Dinosaur tracks. These ancient animals had crossed the same area when the land was wet and able to support the huge creatures. How times had changed. Was the Dixie native doomed to a similar fate? Would the knowledge carried by the Spanish Fathers doom the native and his way of life? Surely, Escalante hoped so. His vision of Catholic missions dotting the barren landscape must certainly have included a Spanish speaking native wearing a Christian cross. If his vision did not reach fruition, it is certain that the knowledge he carried about the native, did.

As other people of European descent found their way to Dixie, the natives were exposed to the bits of technology that held promise for a better way of living. Weapons, horses, clothing etc. were brought by the trappers and traders. To secure these new products a new slave trade developed. A viscous trade that included the children of the weak. These unfortunate people were stolen or purchased from their parents and carried to southern California or New Mexico to be bartered. As a result of this despicable business, a continuous intercourse between the Spanish and the natives of Dixie continued well into the middle of the Nineteenth Century. It was finally stopped by territorial legislation passed after the Mormons occupied the area in the 1850's.

As the trappers entered the area in the early 1800's, they

observed, and in some cases participated in, the traffic involving the local natives and their Spanish and Mexican customers. All of these contacts had a tendency to widen the knowledge of the existence of the Dixie area. The trappers searched for furs and traders used the route through Dixie to do business in California and in reverse--New Mexico.

Jedediah S. Smith led a group of trappers into Dixie in 1826 and 1827. It is believed that his group was the first of European descent to travel through the Virgin River Gorge.

William Wolfskill took a group of trappers from Utah's Dixie to California in 1830. From that time on, the Old Spanish trail was a route of trade between Southern California and New Mexico. It is known that the Spanish had been trading with the natives in Southern Utah since the Escalante expedition in 1776. The evidence indicates that most of this activity was from the Santa Fe area into Southern Utah and back. Wolfskill's party left us a rather detailed description of the Dixie native and the impressions he left on the trappers in the party. The picture was not pretty.

John C. Fremont made his way to Utah and the Great Basin in 1843 but he didn't find his way to Utah's Dixie until the following year when he returned from California by way of the Old Spanish trail and camped at the Mountain Meadows. The Mormon leadership read his reports and initiated a migration that put permanent settlements in the area. Ironically, Fremont's life was probably saved as a result. He and his starving party were rescued by the people of Parowan in February of 1854. He later was to run for President of the United States on the Republican Party ticket--advocating the abolition of polygamy and slavery.

The Mormon migration reached Utah in 1847. As the Mormon leaders explored and planned for settlements, they realized a need for seeds, plants and trade routes. They immediately sent a group to Southern California to secure their needs and establish a reliable trail. These men returned to Salt Lake City by way of the Old Spanish trail in May of 1848. They were followed a few weeks later by a portion of the Mormon Battalion. The Battalion members led by Jefferson Hunt brought a wagon, a herd of cattle and over 100 mules through Dixie on their way to Salt Lake City.

The following year, 1849, Jefferson Hunt was contracted to lead the group for which Death Valley is named to Southern California. He brought them to the mouth of Holt canyon just north of the Mountain Meadows. At this point, all but 7 wagons left him for a short cut west to Death Valley. Some returned to his leadership, others followed behind, some perished.

So it seems, the Catholics, Escalante and party, were the first white men to enter Utah's Dixie and, the Methodist trapper, Jedediah S. Smith was first to cross over Dixie and leave through the Virgin narrows; but it was to be the Mormons who realized its potential as they explored and settled it.

In the fall of 1849, Brigham Young sent a group of 50 men, under the leadership of Parley P. Pratt, to explore the south and seek out the potential sites for settlement. They reached the area of what is known today as Parowan and split into two parties. It was late fall and the evidences of winter was all

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around them. Twenty of the men rode their horses over the south rim of the Great Basin and for the first time witnessed the wonders and grandeur of Dixie. As they moved farther south, we can imagine that the climate steadily grew warmer and the trappings of fall were still in evidence. The sky was clear and blue. The warm breeze from the south stirred the remaining colored leaves as they slowly fluttered into the running streams below.

As the party made its way down the Black ridge through Toquerville and on southwest across the red sands at Grapevine spring, they must have marveled at the rugged, twisted surface of the Hurricane fault on the east and endless disarrangement of the earth's surface to the south. Shadowed by the Pine Valley mountain on the north, they made their way to the Virgin river and followed it through Washington to its juncture with the Santa Clara. Here they made camp. Little did they know what their visit would eventually bring.

Their immediate interest centered around several pieces of high grade iron ore that had been washed down the Santa Clara stream. They speculated about its origin and possible use. After noting the possibility of a city in the area, they proceeded up the Santa Clara with a view to locating the source of the iron. Jefferson Hunt had earlier noted the presence of a large iron deposit west of Cedar City. The party continued up the Santa Clara and Magotsu to the Mountain Meadows, and on their return to Parowan again noted the presence of large iron deposits west of Cedar City.

While the climate in Dixie was mild and the growing season long, it was iron that induced Brigham Young to send people south. In December 1850 the legislature created Iron county and Brigham Young called 120 men, 30 women and 18 children to journey south and establish an "Iron Mission." George A. Smith was in charge and led the group to establish Parowan in January of 1851. Parowan was to be an agricultural community to supply the Iron workers who would be living in Cedar City which would be designed as an industrial town. These communities would also serve as rest and supply stations for the traffic headed to and from California.

Brigham Young also suggested that John D. Lee establish a community at the junction of the Santa Clara and the Virgin rivers. In the meantime he alerted Erastus Snow and Franklin D. Richards, who were on missions in England, to gather capital and organize an iron company with a view to establishing an iron operation at Cedar City.

The group under George A. Smith was able to produce a small quantity of iron in September of 1852. A sample was sent to Brigham Young and the remainder was used to make andirons and horseshoe nails. The amount was not sufficient to replace the iron tires from their wagons used to carry out the experiment.

Erastus Snow arrived in Cedar City in November of 1852. He had arranged to ship several kinds of machinery for making iron from England. He was president of the Deseret Iron Company that had been organized in England. Erastus was able to buy out the group under George A. Smith for \$2,865.64.

The new company invested another \$40,000 in improvements and equipment. It was plagued with the same problems that had been experienced by the first company. The territorial legislature kicked in \$5,000, and the company pushed along with about 70 employees. It had produced about twenty-five hundred pounds of iron when it was shut down to deal with Indian troubles.

Brigham Young sent Isaac C. Haight to rebuild and run the operation. The legislature contributed another \$4,840 which the LDS Church matched. In 1855 The 150 new settlers were sent to start the operation again. The furnace and the machinery were improved. Some iron was produced, but the winter freeze, floods and the coming of Johnston's army convinced Brigham Young to shut down the operation. A new attempt was made to get the process going again in 1858, but in 1859 the operation was closed. Many of the miners left and others turned to agriculture.

Erastus Snow, who had returned from England, was in charge of the Iron business. He realized that it was a losing business and quickly went on a mission for the Church. When he returned, he was appointed to settle St. George in 1861 and much of the usable materials at the iron works followed him there. His business in St. George, in addition to creating a city, was to raise cotton and other products that would grow in the area.

Several small communities had been established in southwest Utah before 1861. Washington and Santa Clara had been established to deal with the Indians and to raise cotton. Most of the people who came to Santa Clara, after the Indian missionaries, were immigrants from the German speaking area of Switzerland. They were intended to raise grapes and other fruits and vegetables. Most of the settlers sent to Washington were from the southern states and were to raise cotton. The people who were sent to settle St. George were largely immigrants from the British Isles and Canada. The leaders were mostly from New England.

The synergy among the people sent to New Harmony on the north and the Muddy River on the south created the Dixie-ite with a distinct dialect in speech and a defined geographical area in Southern Utah.

The Dixie-ite produced the goods needed to help make the Mormon area self-sufficient and the resulting trade between the north and south made the term Dixie a logical name for the area.

The flood of new people and the construction of I-15 has diluted the population and traditional trade between north and south. The area has been Americanized to the extent that trade and outside capital have redistributed loyalties and power in Dixie. However, the Dixie brand is still popular and is widely used. It is not now nor has it ever been associated with slavery, rebellion, or the Civil War.