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The Personal Journal of George A. Smith, 1850-1852, and the Iron County Mission: A Model of Mormon Colonization in the Great Basin

In the winter of 1850, George A. Smith and a group of 166 men, women, and children began a journey southward to settle the Little Salt Lake Valley. The purpose was to found a farming community that would provide food for workers in a projected iron industry, and to provide additional communities for growth. The initial settlement was Parowan and has been called the "Mother Colony." From there, the saints spread out to every possible arable niche in the region, including Paragonah, Fillmore, Beaver, and Cedar City. A record of the trip and experiences related to the colonization is found in the journals of George A. Smith as well as those of his clerks, Henry Lunt and John D. Lee.

The George A. Smith journals have been unpublished to this date. The editing of the journals for publication allows the reader further insight into the life of a little-known leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. These are personal journals and have been preserved in the LDS Church archives. Many of the same thoughts, emotions, hopes, and struggles that we are concerned

studies, such as Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's *Midwife's Tale*, have pointed out that much may be learned from such documents. While essentially the story of one man, the lives of many others are played out in the pages of Smith's journal. We see here the process through which the Mormons evolved and applied institutions and values that were used in settling 497 communities in the American West between 1847 and 1902. One cannot help but feel the poignancy and vibrancy of life while reading language from a daring pioneering effort that took place one hundred and fifty years ago.