

Mormon Stronghold in Southwestern Iowa

MORMONISM and polygamy are not synonymous, as most persons believe. There is today a large and apparently permanent organization of Mormons, commonly known as Latter Day Saints, with almost 50,000 communicants, who not only disbelieve in plurality of wives, but actually oppose and denounce the practice.

This sect resembles the Utah organization in many respects. They claim to be the only true Mormons and the only faithful disciples of Joseph Smith. With headquarters at Lamoni, a small town of about 2,000 inhabitants, located in the choicest part of Decatur county, Iowa, and under the leadership of Joseph Smith, Jr., who is a son of Joseph Smith, the "seer," these people send out elders and missionaries to every state and territory in the union and to nearly every nation of the earth, including the islands of the seas. Under the direction of their president they founded this colony or settlement in 1831, when a committee, consisting of David Dancier and Elijah Banta, came from Plano, Ill., then their headquarters, to the prairies of southern Iowa, where a company was formed, which purchased all the land it could secure. This same land was afterward sold to their brethren who followed within a few years. Forty-seven families

either elder, priest or teacher. Mormons are aggressive and they want members. They are all well stocked with a knowledge of their church and its doctrines and every possible means is used to convert to their faith those who happen to live among or near them.

Some Mormon Institutions.

Lamoni has a Mormon college, a large tabernacle, an extensive publishing house, where the Saints' Herald, a weekly paper, and many other periodicals and books are published. It has three public school build-



BISHOP E. L. KELLEY OF THE MORMON CHURCH AT LAMONI.

ings, a "Saint's Home" and no saloons, although intoxicating drinks often find their way through the borders of Zion.

All aged saints who have not the means or ability to support themselves may go to the home, where they are clothed and fed. If they desire, they are allowed to do light work in the various departments. David Dancier, who died some years ago, was the originator of the idea of building a home for the aged poor and gave liberally toward its establishment. His plan was to make it as nearly as possible a self-supporting institution.

Story of Joe Smith.

Many persons have heard the story of a young man born in Vermont in 1805, who, when but 14 years of age, became intensely interested in his soul's welfare and failed to find comfort in any of the churches of his day, having joined several of them. It is said that this young man was one night out in the woods praying for guidance in the matter, when an angel from God appeared to him and in a wonderful and powerful voice informed him that he had found favor in the sight of God, and that he was chosen to give to the world again the



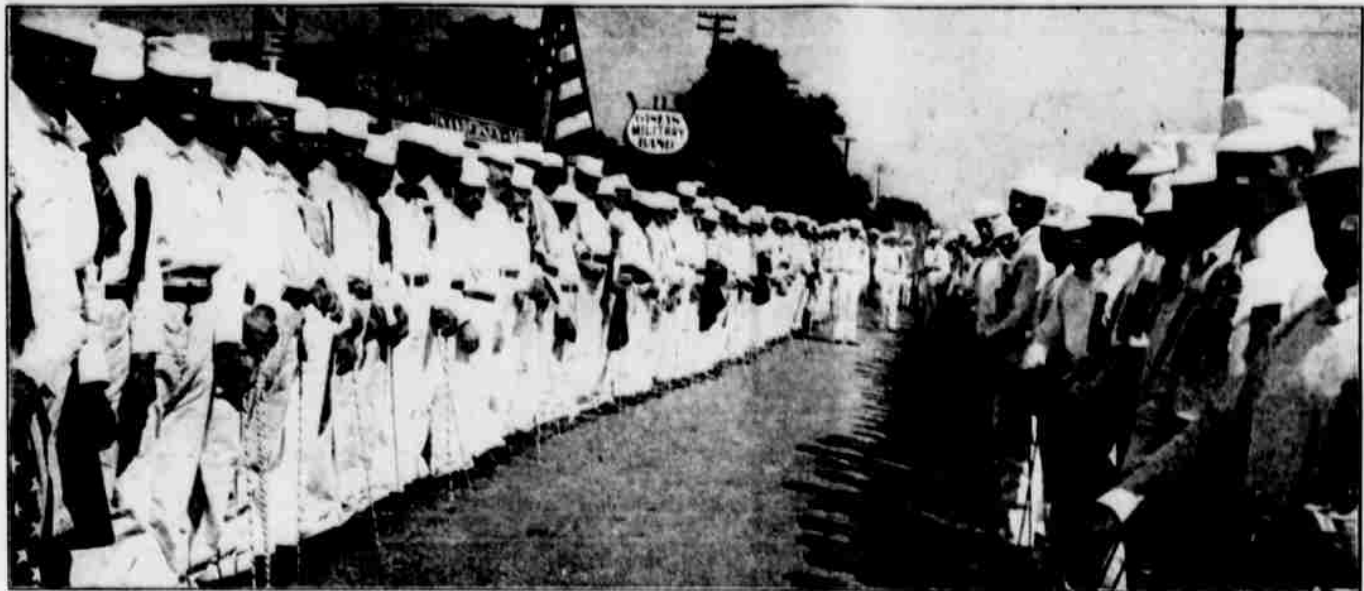
MATCHEORA, A SOUTH SEA ISLAND MORMON ELDER.

only true religion of the latter days, which had been taken from it many years before. He was told where there were buried near Palmyra, N. Y., a set of golden plates, which he must dig up and with them he would find the "Urim and Thummim," two transparent stones set as a pair of spectacles and by the aid of them only would he be enabled to translate the message from God. This is said to have transpired in 1829 and it was not until April 6, 1830, at Manchester, N. Y., that this man chosen of God was enabled to found the Mormon church.

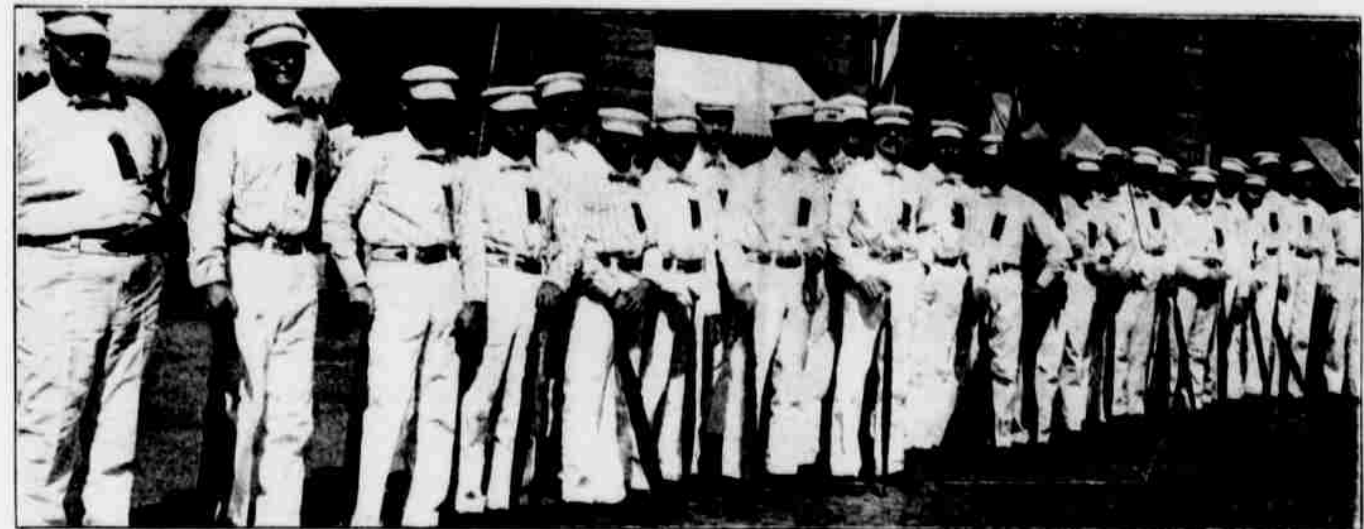
The Book of Mormon purports to be a sacred history of the aborigines of the American continent and the Mormons believe that Christ preached to these mound builders during His forty days' absence from the Old World, and that after His ascension these people fought with the Indians, who were a wicked and cursed race, until 384 A. D., when a decisive battle was fought on the hill of Cumorah, in western New York, in which the Christians were defeated and annihilated. A man by the name of Mormon is said to have written a history of this people and was directed of God to bury it until He should see fit to bring it forth. This history they believe is the Book of Mormon.

Smith found followers and in 1831 settled

Views of Labor Day Parade in Omaha



HOD CARRIERS' UNION, GIVING AN IDEA OF THE STRENGTH OF THE BUILDING TRADES UNIONS—Photographed by a Staff Artist.



LOCAL UNION OF STAGE HANDS—MADE A FINE APPEARANCE IN THE PARADE—Photographed by a Staff Artist.



BROTHERHOOD OF STATIONARY FIREMEN IN HABITMENTS OF CRAFT—Photographed by a Staff Artist.

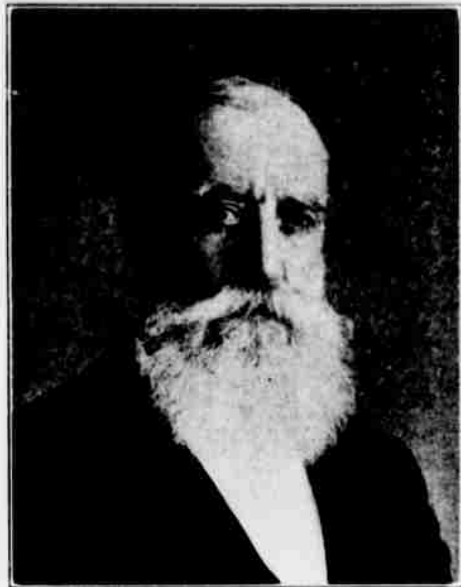


BREWERY WORKERS' UNION, THE MEMBERS WEARING WREATHS OF HOPS—Photographed by a Staff Artist.

in Kirtland, O., where a temple was erected. In 1838 they pushed west to Missouri, but were driven out in 1839 and went back to Nauvoo, Ill., where another temple was built. January 27, 1844, Joseph Smith and his brother, Hiram, were killed by a mob at the jail where they were confined in Carthage, Ill. The Mormons then had differences and troubles among themselves in that community. Brigham Young, with about 10,000 followers, went to Salt Lake City in 1847. There were no less than eighteen men ambitious to succeed the dead leader and as many divisions were made, each with its president, everyone claiming to be chosen of God by revelation to succeed Smith. The Josephites, as they are sometimes called, and which is the Lamoni branch, was not permanently organized until June, 1852, when they held their first conference at Zarahemla, Wis. Their annual conference is now held in April of every year. Last spring they met at Inde-



COUNTERMARCHING AT SEVENTEENTH AND DOUGLAS STREETS—Photographed by a Staff Artist.



JOSEPH SMITH, JR., PRESIDENT OF THE REFORMED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS.

came at once. Lamoni was founded and named from a familiar character in the Book of Mormon. Mormons then came within a short time by the carload and even by the trainload from every part of the United States and at present there are several thousands of them living in Decatur and surrounding counties.

Lamoni a Sacred Town.

Lamoni is a wonderful and even a sacred town in the eyes of the average Mormon. They speak of it as "Zion." In this little cut-of-the-way village lives Joseph Smith, Jr., president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, as they believe, one favored of God, whose father blessed and transmitted to him all the powers of prophecy, healing, of receiving revelations and performing miracles, which the elder Smith claimed to possess. Bishop E. L. Kelley also resides here and is next in order of the great and powerful men chosen of God to lead his people in these latter days. He is first counselor to the president. Then comes Alexander Smith, patriarch, son of Joseph Smith, sr.,



KORAH, A COMANCHE INDIAN, WHO IS A MORMON ELDER.

and also counselor to the president. These three are known as the first presidency. To these men all true members of the church sincerely believe that God, through His angels, appears and reveals His will and pleasure concerning His chosen people. There is also a quorum of twelve who ordain elders, baptize and claim to have the gift of administering the blessings of the Holy Ghost. The seven quorums of seventy are the elders and missionaries who preach the "truth" to the world. There is also a quorum of high priests and many other minor officers. The organization is patterned after the early church. Nearly every man who belongs to this church is

(Continued on Seventh Page.)