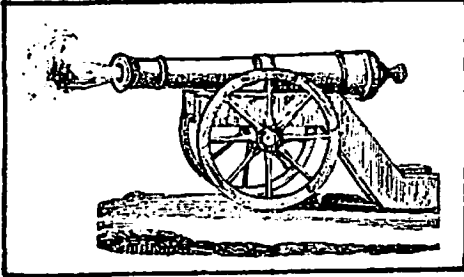


FOURTH OF JULY

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The next year the holiday was observed by the Mormons in a more usual manner. John Brown, Jr., wrote that his father went to Ft. Tejon and returned with a large American flag given to him for the occasion by Samuel A. Bishop. This was raised on a tall pole brought from the mountains. Orations were delivered from a platform, and a 12-pounder brought from Los Angeles was fired in salute. Amasa Lyman's diary noted that a large balloon was released from inside the stockade. Historians Mr. and Mrs. Beattie wondered in Heritage of the Valley where these isolated settlers might have acquired that balloon.

According to Brown, the 1854 observance consisted of the reading at the church service of an address that had been delivered by an un-naturalized Englishman at Salt City the year before, and which had been published in the

Deseret News. It was not too well received by some of the settlers. Furthermore, as Elder Amasa Lyman reported, "there were some men from Jurupa (Riverside) who were drunk, and drunkenness were disturbing the quiet of our streets and insulting our citizens."

Really the best 4th of July celebration occurred in 1856, and a description of it was recorded by Horace C. Rolfe in his Political History. Early in 1856 a rift was developing between two factions of settlers in San Bernardino Valley. On one side were the faithful Mormons who accepted the rigid control by the colony's leaders as necessary for the welfare of the group. On the other side were those called Independents, composed of former Mormons dissatisfied with this control, and non-Mormon settlers. Consequently two celebrations were planned that year, one arranged by the Mormons at the town plaza (now Pioneer Park), and the other organized by the Independents on 3rd Street in front of McDonald's furniture store. Both were open to all, and there was much friendly rivalry and visiting back and forth. The Independents erected a 60-foot liberty pole for their new flag on the south side of 3rd Street between C and D. The Mormons obtained a taller pole 100-foot high and a larger flag. A brush bowery was built on 3rd Street with seats for the visitors. At the plaza the Mormons built a larger structure with more seating capacity. The Independents organized a choir to sing patriotic songs. The plaza faction had a brass band and a troop of uniformed young men to parade and escort the dignitaries. So far the Mormons were ahead. But the Independents were not to be outdone. The speeches at the plaza were quite adequate, but 3rd Street had Quartus S. Sparks, a brilliant orator of wide reknown. The Mormons had the little brass cannon from 1854 with which to fire salutes. But McDonald remembered the discarded cannon from Ft. Moore in Los Angeles, and hauled it in a carreta to San Bernardino. With this, of course, the little brass 12-pounder couldn't compete. There was dancing, and a bountiful meal was served at both locations. The whole occasion was a double success. Indian and Mexican neighbors also shared in the fun and feast.

By 1857, however, feeling was running high between the two factions. Political rivalry and the much-delayed decision by the Mormons to choose land in the valley which had already been settled by Independents, as illustrated in the Jerome Benson affair, brought much bitterness. The 4th of July was celebrated by the Church party again at the town plaza. The Independents met at Benson's ranch on Hunt's Lane, just east of the present freeway interchange, where an adobe barn had been barricaded and the McDonald cannon mounted. It featured another stirring oration by Sparks and an abundance of good country food. Surprisingly there was no confrontation.

In 1858, after the Mormon exodus, the community observed the 4th of July by setting up the former Independents' flag pole at the town plaza and again using the cannon for salutes. (This is the cannon that was mounted in front of Pioneer Hall on F Street until a few days ago, when it was moved to Native Sons Hall on Del Rosa Avenue.) Festivities were also held at Garner's Grove, a popular picnic place on the south side of 3rd street and west of the present Union Station.

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