

REMARKS BY FRANKLIN A. RICHARDS AT A REUNION OF THE RICHARDS FAMILY ASSOCIATION

HELD ON THE 10TH DAY OF OCTOBER 1929

My dear relatives and friends:

I esteem it an honor to be invited to speak to you a few minutes about the three Richards Brothers, who came to the Great Salt Lake Valley in pioneer days, and were outstanding figures in the founding of this great commonwealth. Any sketch of them would be incomplete without a brief reference to our heroic common ancestor Joseph Richards, the father of Phineas, Levi and Willard whose marriage to Rhoda Howe, the sister of Mabbie Howe, who was the mother of the Pres. Brigham Young, created the relationship between the Richards and Young families, about which I have often been questioned by members of our family who did not know that the Richards Brothers and the Young Brothers were first cousins.

JOSEPH RICHARDS

At the age of fourteen' years Joseph entered the American Army; was at the siege of Boston, and served at Crown Point, Bennington, Toiga, West Point and Cow Pens, and was in several engagements without being seriously wounded. Yet his constitution was so impaired by forced marches and fasts, sometimes for three days continuance, that it never fully recovered. He resided in Farmingham and Hopkinton, and finally in Richmond, Massachusetts, He was a highly respected citizen and had a numerous family, whose descendants have been leading members of the communities in which they have lived.

It was through tracing their genealogy back to this revolutionary patriot that so many of his descendants have been able to show themselves entitled to be compatriots in the great organization: "The Sons of the American Revolution,"

PHINEAS RICHARDS

Grandfather Phineas Richards, who was born November 15th, 1788, in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, was a carpenter and joiner by trade. He left his parents in 1811 for Berkshire County, where he enlisted in the Massachusetts militia in 1813, and was soon promoted to the colonel's staff, with the rank of Sergeant-Major. Once receiving his discharge he returned with his father and family to Richmond, in 1825 and was appointed coroner for Berkshire County which office he held until 1843, when he removed to Nauvoo, Illinois, having previously embraced the faith of the Latter-day Saints.

On settling at Nauvoo, Phineas was elected a member of the City Council one of the regents of the university, and one of the body guards of Lieutenant General Joseph Smith of the Nauvoo Legion. He worked on the Temple and was a great admirer of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

In 1836 he left Nauvoo and went to Winter Quarters, and in 1848 came to the Great Salt Lake Valley. When the Provisional Government of the State of Deseret was organized he was chosen a senator; and when the Territory of Utah was created by act of Congress, he was elected a representative for three years, and on the fourth year, became Chaplain of the House, He took an active part in the colonization and development of this inter-mountain region both in public and private capacities, and was prominent in church activities as well as in service of the State.

He was modest and unassuming, but strong in his convictions. When he reached a conclusion regarding any proposition he was prepared to defend his opinion, and unless convincing reasons were presented he did not change. He was ever ready to serve his church, his state and his country. His contribution of his son George, who when but fifteen years of age, left the family home in Mass. and travelled more than one thousand miles to cast his lot with the Saints in Missouri, where he was murdered at Haun's Mill and buried in the well with other Saints who were martyred at the same time; and later the enlistment in the Mormon Battalion of his son Joseph who was but seventeen years of age and who laid down his life at Pueblo; and his approval and encouragement of his sons Franklin and Samuel, in dedicating their lives to the service of the Church, the State and humanity, all show the character, the loyalty and the unselfishness of Grandfather Phineas and his beloved wife Wealthy the mother of these boys. Had occasion ever required there is no doubt that he would have laid down his life for his church, his state or the nation.

LEVI RICHARDS

Uncle Levi Richards, who was born December 7th, 1790, was brought up a farmer by his father until the age of eighteen years when, having a natural genius for mechanical arts, he devoted several years of his life to various mechanical pursuits. Later he became a very successful botanical physician.

In 1836 he visited his friends in Ohio and practiced medicine there having among his patients Joseph Smith the Prophet, and his brother Hyrum. While there he became a convert to the Mormon Faith and went to Western Missouri, where he nursed the sick and rendered surgical aid to the wounded and defenseless men, women and children who had been driven from their homes and banished by the infamous order of Governor Boggs of Missouri.

In 1841 he went to England on a Mission and spent two years successfully preaching the Gospel in that land. In 1843 he returned by way of New Orleans and settled in Nauvoo, Illinois, where he filled various offices in the Nauvoo Legion, the last of which was that of General Surgeon. He was also a member of the City Council of Nauvoo.

From there he went to Council Bluff where he joined his people and remained there till 1847, when he went on another mission to England, where he remained five years, traveled extensively preaching and baptizing converts.

In 1853 he returned to America, crossed the plains with his family and settled in this Valley, where he remained engaged chiefly in mechanical and professional employments during the remainder of his life.

Uncle Levi was a man of culture and refinement. I well remember his classic feature and fine personality. He was a popular physician in his school of medicine and an ardent worker in the activities of the Church.

The sterling worth, ability and talents of this great man are abundantly manifested in the culture and qualifications transmitted to his worthy posterity.

WILLARD RICHARDS

Uncle Willard Richards was the youngest son of Joseph and Rhoda Howe Richards. He had an active and penetrating mind and was given to the investigation of questions of art, science, medicine and religion,

Colonel Thomas L. Kane, who knew him intimately said he was a genial gentlemen, a pleasant scholar of the most varied attainments, and that his integrity was above question.

He was born in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, June 24th, 1804. At the age of ten years he removed with his father's family to Richmond. In the summer of 1835, while in the practice of medicine, near Boston, he came across the Book of Mormon and read it through twice in about ten days, he was so firmly convinced of its truth that he immediately sold his business and went to Kirtland, Ohio, in company with his brother Levi, where he was cordially received by his cousin, President Brigham Young and soon thereafter was baptized into the Church.

Willard became an intimate friend and close companion of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and was side by side with him at Carthage jail when Joseph and Hyrum were martyred, He escaped without injury, although his companion Elder John Taylor was wounded. His presence of mind, quickness of perception and boldness of execution at the time were marvelous. He felt the burden of giving direction to the affairs of the Church, in consequence of the absence of the Twelve Apostles, and his ability was commensurate to the occasion.

In 1847 having previously been ordained an Apostle, he become second counsellor to President Brigham Young. He was one of the memorable and one of the pioneers who endured the hardships and privations attendant upon their journey from the Missouri River to the Grand Salt Lake Valley in 1847.

He served as Secretary of the State of Deseret and afterward of the Territory of Utah and presided over the legislative Council. He was also Postmaster of Salt Lake City and held other official positions.

He established the Deseret News in 1850 and was the editor and proprietor of that paper. He was also General Historian of the Church. He was eminently gifted for all of the offices which he held. His demise was a great loss and source of sorrow and regret to the entire Church,

In closing I desire to pay my humble tribute to the memory of this great man. In 1846 my father left Nauvoo on a Mission to Europe and at the same time my mother and her infant daughter started for Winter Quarters with the Saints, who were driven from the City of Nauvoo. During the journey she gave birth to a son who lived only a few hours, and upon her arrival in Winter Quarters my little sister was taken sick and died. I have often heard my mother say that during this trying period, and until my father returned from Europe in 1848 to bring her to the Valley, as well as after their arrival here, while my father was away upon foreign missions Uncle Willard was like a father unto her, giving such comfort and encouragement as enabled her to endure the terrible trails and hardships of her sad and lonely life.

When I was eight days old my mother and I were very sick and our lives seemed to be hanging in the balance, Uncle Willard came to our bedsides, and, after administrating to mother gave me a blessing which was written down by Brother Thomas Bullock. His promises of life and health were fulfilled.

Uncle Willard was also very kind to and considerate of my father and always exhibited a marked interest in his welfare and success. He could not have been kinder if father had been his son. Because of these things our branch of the Richards family has always regarded Uncle Willard as a benefactor, as well as a truly great and good man, and if we have felt great privilege to be loved, reverence and respect for him. We feel it is a distinct honor to be related to such a worthy and brilliant leader in our Church and State.