

The Historians Corner

Edited by James B. Allen

This issue of the Historians Corner contains three miscellaneous, but most interesting documents. The first is an important commentary on one of the most far-reaching modern programs of the Church: the Welfare program. Paul C. Child was a counselor to President Harold B. Lee in the Pioneer Stake when the famous early experiments in welfare work were instituted in the 1930s. On 12 June 1971 he wrote a letter to President Spencer W. Kimball outlining some of their experiences as they used the Church organization to help the members of their stake achieve economic security. One result of these activities was Harold B. Lee's call to help establish a Church-wide welfare program. In light of the impressive growth of welfare work, and its importance in the Church today, this letter becomes a significant document. With the permission of Brother Child, the major portion of his letter is published here as a reminiscence.

The next two items relate to the Nauvoo period in Church history. The first is an interesting note by Kenneth W. Godfrey relating to the literary interests of Joseph Smith and other citizens of Nauvoo and raises some interesting questions for further historical study. The second is an unpublished letter by a non-Mormon who was a contemporary observer of the troubled times leading to the death of Joseph Smith. He was not particularly friendly toward the Mormons, but his letter provides some important insight into the spirit and feelings of the times. Jan Shipps has done Mormon historiography a distinct service by discovering and editing the letter.