

A light gray map of North America, including the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The state of Utah is highlighted in a solid green color. The text is positioned on the left side of the image, overlaid on the map.

HISTORY OF BEEKEEPING UTAH 1846-1900

Utah Beekeeping Association Conference
Albert Chubak
February 24-25, 2017

17th Century British Merchant Ship



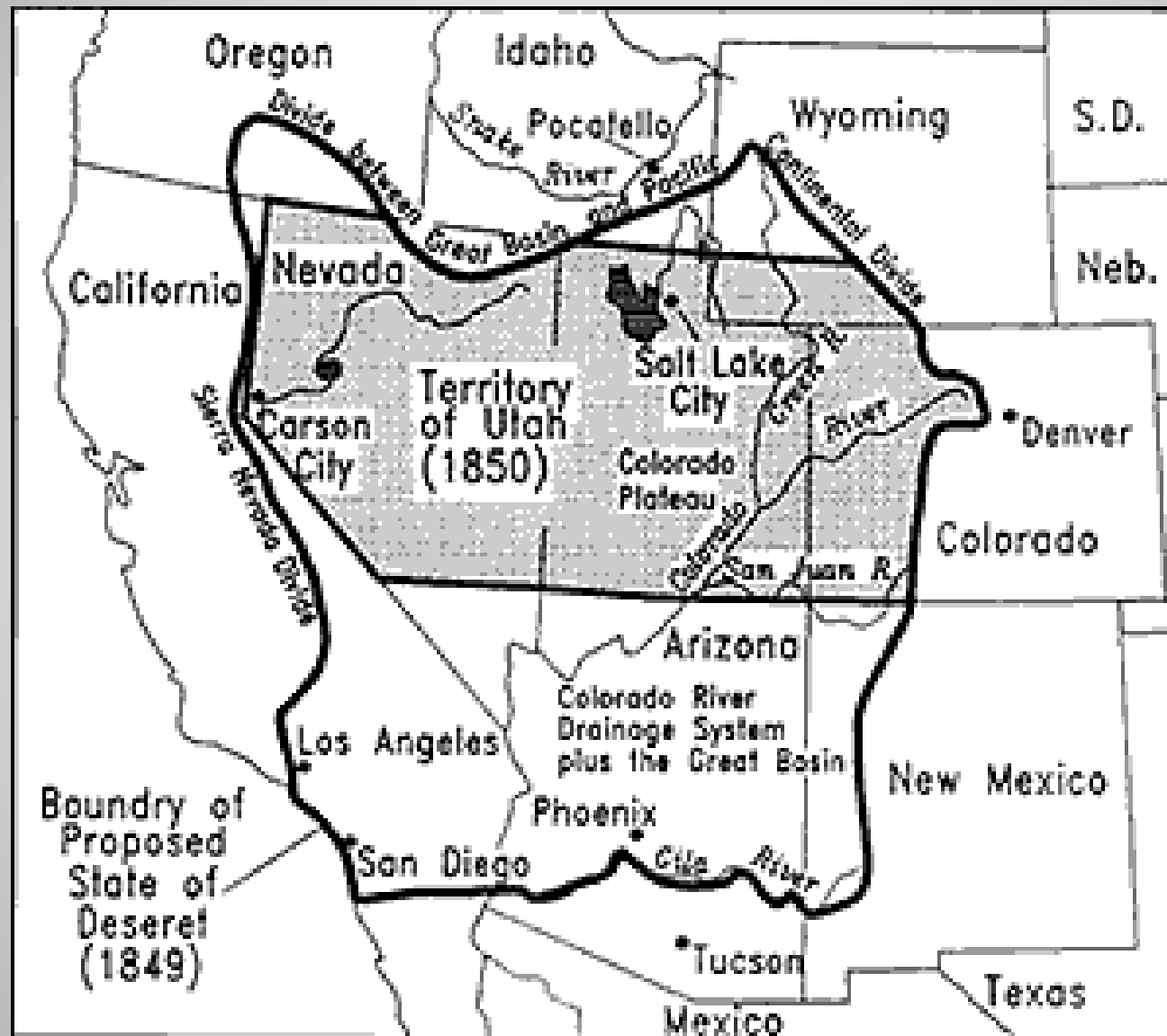


From Ms. Gorner's American History webpage



The exploration of the West by Jedediah Smith. The branch of the [Sacramento River](#) that is labeled as pointing northeast is now known as the [Pit River](#). Taken from "Jedediah Smith" on Wikipedia

- **1622** - The first recorded cargo of European honeybees was imported to the American colonies in 1622 on the ship "Discovery"
- **1730** - 343,900lbs of beeswax was exported to England. Average hive produced 20lbs of honey, and 2lbs of beeswax. 1739 5 tons, 1743 4 tons. Just Beeswax!!! Wonder if it was melted wax, or wax still with honey in it?
- **1792** - First book on Beekeeping printed in **1792** by Isaiah Thomas, "A complete Guide for the Management of Bees"
- **1793** - Second book on beekeeping printed **1793** by Benjamin Smith Barton "An Inquiry the Question, whether the Apis Mellifica, or True Honey-bee is Native of America"
- **1811 – 1860** - 400,000 took the overland trail west across the continent
- **1836** – Prior only on foot or horseback, 1836 was the first wagon train west.
- **1846** the Mormons numbered 70,000
- No log existed of those that headed west, what they carried, or if it was abandoned or lost along the trail



Daughters of the Utah Pioneers - Map prepared by BYU Geography Department

Frontier Legend vs Verified Fact

In Tammy Horn's book "Bees In America" page 80, the claim that "contemporary commercial beekeepers Russell and Norman Mitchell can claim a great-grand father "who brought bees to Utah, strapped to the back of a covered wagon, with Brigham Young". The reference was from Joseph Moffett's book "Mitchell Brothers of Missoula, Montana" page 508.

Verify fact. Family history of the Mitchell family, consists of Russell T Mitchell and Norman Don Mitchell or the 'Contemporary Commercial Beekeepers' in a family with 4 sisters. Their father was William Wesley Mitchell born in 1896, who married to Olive Myrtle. William's father line continued to William David Mitchell born in 1871. William David's father was James Mitchell born in 1841, his father was James Mitchell born in 1817 in Newton, Clackmannan, Scotland. and died in Riverdale Utah March 8 1890. James Mitchell came to America with his wife, and 4 children born in Scotland. They arrived in America by ship in New Orleans November 1850 (ship manifest), then traveled to Utah 1851 and 1853. The first documentation in Utah is a church record in Journal History 20 November 1853 which states they had left for California.

Brigham Young's company arrived in the Salt Lake valley 1847. Clearly the Mitchell family could not have been with Brigham Young as they had not arrived in New Orleans until late in the year 1850. Once Brigham Young arrived in Utah in 1847, he never left.

This account appears to be more frontier legend than verifiable fact.



- **1850's** Brigham Young sought after the secrets of refining sugar beets into sugar. John Taylor spent considerable time in Europe seeking equipment, seeds, and methods. Sugar House factory was formed, but the venture failed. Molasses and dried fruit were common sweeteners. Tallow was what they used for candles. Honey and beeswax were scarce and valuable.
- Early beekeepers - William Bringham, W. D. (William DeWitt) Roberts, Benjamin F Johnson, Wilford Woodruff, but many many names are showing up.
- **1851** - Fifth General Epistle included "honey" as something suggested to be brought to Utah **1851**
- Brigham Young is the 1st documented settler to own colonies of honeybees (however not a beekeeper)
- **1857** - King Bee has spoken. The Hive of Bees by Charles Derry **1857**
- **1859** San Francisco paper March 16th notes 85 hives of bees were received by steamer
- **1860** the common honeybee in US not as good as bees from Europe
- **1860** - Mountainous regions of California **1860**, imported bees from the East. Were carelessly handled, but one pint of bees survived. Divided the bees into two hives with what they had of larvae. Were put into a patent hive. By august 2 swarms were captured from one, and one from the other. By fall 5 colonies in good condition. 1860



Utah State Collections - Beekeeper with his hives, holding a Cornwall bee smoker abt 1880



Brigham Young University Lee Library L. Tom Perry Special Collections; MSS P 1

BYU Collection Amos Warren with beekeeping veil, Springville 1880



Utah State Collections - Two beekeepers with their hives



Brigham Young University Lee Library I, Tim Perry Special Collections; MSS P 128

BYU Collection Bro Ed Stung by bee 1899

Springville Sept 1st / 65
President Brigham Young
Dear Bro
Now we have
not swarmed & I think
it is too late now to allow
them to the north have
destroyed one stand for
me & one for you in spite
of all I could do I have
ruled mine & if you wish
me to rob yours please send
me a tin can that will
hold one hundred lb
or over they will fill the
stands full again I winter
I consider on the hole they
are coming splended
Yours Bro in the Gospel
Wm Brighurst

William Brighurst letter to Brigham Young 1865
from Springville, Utah From the LDS Church Archives

- **1863** Honey from Springville from William Bringham's yard (these bees were Brigham Young's) Whitbeck (beekeeper), Bringham (beekeeper), W. E. Dodge (and others) Washington County. "Why has not the Deseret Agricultural Society taken the matter into consideration and encouraged the introduction of bees into the valleys of Deseret?" Importing bees from California documented, both southern and northern routes.
- **1866** "questioned on if bees could be kept in this Territory"
- **1869** 2 colonies are sold from a store in Ogden for \$12 each. Honey sold for 50 cents, size of the container unknown
- **1870** Dr Crockwell Last spring bought a swarm of Italian bees, home in the cars. Badly handled. Late spring before they worked. Well supplied now for winter and I took off 2nd box of honey, which gives me 60lbs this summer.
- **1870** Stock Meeting "The Parent Society for the introduction and culture of stock, bees, fish, etc"
- **1870** wrote Brigham Young offering to come teach women how to beekeep. Later patented a beehive of her own.
- **1870** Wm D Roberts of Provo at National convention, chosen vice president Bee Cultural Journal. Roberts also invented a bee hive this year and filed for a patent. His obituary in 1909 in Salt Lake City states he was the first commercial importer of bees to the Utah Territory. He and William Bringham were close friends and brought bees together.
- **1870** Bee Convention in Utah. First Beekeeping organization called the "Deseret Parent Society" included all livestock, then called "The Deseret Stock and Bee Association". Later the "Deseret Bee Association".

On February 6, 1862, Mr. Roberts was married to Maria Lisk, at Lancaster, Mo., and they took their wedding trip across the plains to Utah. Mr. Roberts made several trips across the plains before the advent of the railroad, and was intimate with most of the Indian tribes between the Missouri river and California. He did much in building up this western territory. He imported the first bees to Utah, the first California quail, the first steam threshing machine and steam brick machine. He was Provo's first postmaster after Utah became a state.

Salt Lake Tribune March 9th 1912

1871 Utah Central railway carries 18,000lbs of bees on manifest arriving in Utah Territory

1871 A box-car load of bees arrived yesterday from the West by the Utah Central railroad. Not long will Utah have to import honey, with bees arriving from the east and west. Plant clover, buckwheat.

1871 A National article on artificial and reconstructed comb appears

1872 Mill Creek branch of the Stock society meets.

1872 Fair included a “Class H – Poultry, Fish, and Bees” included award for “best hive of bees with reference to size of swarm, form of hive and condition of bees and honey”. “best sample of honey comb” and “best sample of extracted honey not less than 5lbs”

1872 Introduction of Italian Bee in place of the well known “old species, or black bee”

1872 Moses Thursion contracted for 200 swarms of Italian bees being imported. Advertised Italian bee swarms at \$13 each, until 20th, after that \$15 each.

1872 Bees (35-36 stands) being exported by W.D. Roberts to Montana and Idaho

1872 Utah Territorial Convention to discuss the name to be given to the new state. Deseret preferred to the “ugly word Utah”. Deseret signifies honeybee and busy bee, and in Mormon scriptures. Utah refers to a nasty insect infested, grasshopper eating tribe of Indians.

1874 W.D Roberts claims Territory has had a year or two of bad luck with bees

1874 First reference to “Utah Beekeepers” semi-annual meeting in city hall Oct 8th 1874, included 6 counties: Salt Lake, Davis, Utah, Juab, Iron, and Tooele. Mr. Chas. Monk from Utah county stated he and his son had 135 stands. Average honey per hive was 40lbs, valued at 35cents per pound. Had bees 5 years.

Oct 9th 1874 Report of the Committee on Foul Brood Salt Lake City I. Bullock, J. Morgan, C. Monk, G. Bailey the committee. Includes how to inspect, what to do with the colony and equipment. They don't know where it is coming from.

1875 How to feed bees both syrup and protein as rye and wheat flour! Included what forage plants were ideal: cottonwood, sweet clover, mignonette, mustard, catnip, pumpkins, squashes, and melons, gooseberries, currants, great American bee plant, white clover, mezquit, Lucerne, rabbit bush, and others. First reference to a style of hive used, as the “Kidder” hive.

1875 How to make \$350 a year by cultivation of bees. Talked about Hives, Swarms, Side hiving, nature of under-hiving, Feeding bees, Dividing Stock Hives, To render bees harmless, removing bees, to weigh hives, bees' enemies, joining swarms, profits of beekeeping

1875 Continuous issues with Foul brood



UofU Collections – Bluff Utah Wagon behind apiary 1890

1877 Canning Honey – S. J. Despain of Granite Utah created an invention. He places tin cans upside down in the upper boxes, bees fill the cans with comb and honey. They are then removed from the hive, a lid put on and sold.

1879 Bee Keeper Convention at the Council House Territorial Bee-Keeper Association President A. M. Musser Edward Stevenson Secretary. John Morgan Correspondence Secretary. John Ellis of Kaysville reported 200 colonies. Each beekeeper gives a reporting. Total honey produced and values earned.

1880 April 11th Bee Inspector – During the last session of the Legislative Assembly petitions came in praying for a law against foul brood in bees. First Bee Inspector from Mill Creek George B Bailey, a well known Bee Man.

1881 Petrified honeybee found in the bluffs of Missouri River near Rulo, Nebraska

1881 Geo. Hibeard from Logan is listed as an Apiarist and the “bee man”

1882 Feb 28th Bill Providing for Inspections of Bees passed. Full text included.



E. S. Lovesy
UofU Collections
SaltLakeTribune 1900-12-30



UofU Collections – Andrew Vernon abt 1910 Uintah County



UofU Collections – Jenson Utah

1882 F. H. Reeder candy maker on 5th Street made a candy beehive with a top that removes and candy frames inside!

1883 First mention of a Beekeepers Association of Payson by B. Worthington

1885 Issues with Rattlesnakes and Honeybees

1887 Article first appears about Bee-keeping for Women. Eliza Donavan of Indiana wrote Brigham Young in 1870 offering to teach women.

1887 Discussion on Cellars for Bees

1898 Nephi Ephraim Miller 1873 – 1940 born Provenance Cache Valley. Started into beekeeping when he was 35. Considered the father of Migratory Beekeeping.