

BELNAP FAMILY REUNION
Sugar City, Idaho
August 8, 1998

THEME: Belnap Country Fair, featuring the Belnaps who settled in Idaho.

The reunion was held at the Sugar City Park where nearly 300 Belnap family members convened at 12:00 noon. A table was set up for registration and receiving dues manned by Secretary/Treasurer Joy M. Belnap. Each person received a ticket for the door prize drawings to be held throughout the day.

President Les Hill gathered everyone together to begin the day's festivities. The opening prayer and blessing on the food was given by Roy Hill. The pavilion was filled to capacity with members enjoying their lunch. The overflow crowd set up their lunch on blankets under the shade of the many trees bordering the park. The Belnap Family Organization furnished a refreshing punch.

A highlight of the day was the original quilt made by Martha McBride Knight Smith Kimball on display. This quilt is featured in the paperback book by University of Utah Press, *Gathered in Time*—a compilation of pioneer quilts with brief histories of their makers. This book was featured on the Public Broadcasting System in December 1997. This quilt is in the possession of Roma Thomson Freeman, Martha's great, great granddaughter, and is still in remarkable condition.

Another highlight was the tool chest that crossed the plains with the Ox Bow Company last year. This chest was a replica of the one that John McBride Belnap was buried in and left on the trail in Nebraska. This gave the members of the Belnap Family who did not attend the dedication of the grave a chance to see the famous box. The chest is now in the possession of Wes Belnap in Idaho.

A special get-acquainted game was on-going throughout the afternoon which featured certificates of each of Gilbert, his two wives and 17 children. The game was to collect all 20 certificates to win a pewter medallion the size of a fifty-cent piece featuring a covered wagon and the words "Belnap Family Reunion 1998." These medallions were donated by a generous family member.

Other activities around the park included display tables featuring two of Gilbert's children who settled in Idaho. Benon Palmer Whyte displayed items of her grandmother Mary Belnap Lowe, and the Cox and Hill families items of their great grandfather Reuben (Ruben) Belnap.

Marilyn Thomson Lee furnished supplies and prepared two quilts to be tied by anyone who wanted the experience. One was a baby quilt, the other a twin-size quilt.

An area for face painting for the children was under the direction of Benon P. Whyte and

others. The children loved this.

There was a cake walk (rice krispy squares) for the younger ones, as well as a fish pond under the direction of Pat Lusk Baldwin.

Another donation of 250 multi-colored frisbees were given freely to all. For those interested, there was a game where the frisbees could be thrown through a hoola hoop as a target.

Throughout the afternoon there were drawings for door prizes of books, coat-of-arms, Belnap pins, etc.

An auction of many items was held under the direction of Gordon L. Belnap and W. Dean Belnap. The two quilts mentioned above were put on the auction block. They were finished except for the binding. The highest bidder on the baby quilt was Jean Hammon Brooks. The twin quilt went to Verda Stoker Nelson. Pat L. Baldwin had donated a tray of silver and turquoise rings which were used as prizes and for the auction. Marlena and Wes Belnap donated hand-made wooden M & M dispensers which were also auctioned off.

Later in the day line dancing was taught on the lawn. The children especially loved dancing to the music. The day was sunny and quite warm, but a large group participated.

Glenda Hammon Guinn served as a roving photographer and captured many pictures of the activities.

The reunion was officially over by 4:00 p.m. Many family members drove the short distance to the Wilford, Idaho Cemetery to visit the graves of Gilbert's son, Augustus Weber Belnap, and various other members of his family buried nearby. They also visited the graves of numerous Hammon relatives who tie into the Belnap family two ways: Reuben Belnap married Lucien Vilate Hammon, whose brother Levi Byram Hammon married Reuben's sister, Martha Jane Belnap.