

MORMON PIONEER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (MPNHA)

For more information:

Robert Stevens

Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area

435-835-6877

Email: rstevens@sanpetemessenger.com

RELEASE: August 15, 2019



in partnership with

Discovery Road - Hello Neighbor

The latest episode of the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area (MPNHA) documentary series "Discovery Road" tells a story of how people are connected through history, culture and the landscape itself.

The documentary, "Hello Neighbor," tells the story of a group of Sanpete Valley settlers who were assigned to help establish "Zion" in the San Luis Valley in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico in the 1800s.

Thomas Crowther and Hans Jensen, both from the Sanpete Valley, led groups of "Mormon Danes" to lay out new towns and build churches in the San Luis Valley.

Descendants of Hans Jensen who are interviewed in the program recount the hardships early pioneers faced in building communities across the region.

The intent of "Hello Neighbor" is to reach across state boundaries to explore how people are connected through history, culture and the landscape itself, says Monte Bona, MPNHA executive director.

Bona says more than 350 people placed DVD orders for "Hello Neighbor" after



The latest episode of "Discovery Road" includes interviews with descendants of Hans Jensen, pictured here, a pioneer from the Sanpete Valley who was sent to Colorado. The descendants recount the hardships early pioneers faced in building a new community in the San Luis Valley.



Katie Dokson with the Sangre De Cristo National Heritage Area is interviewed during the production of "Hello Neighbor" for the ongoing series Discovery Road. The story of art, water and early pioneer settlement across three national heritage areas is chronicled in the program.

a screening over the Pioneer Day holiday.

"The episode is very relevant to the people here," Bona says. Some residents may have ancestors who helped settle the San Luis Valley.

The show explores many racial, religious and language conflicts that cropped up between the Mormons and the Hispanics who were already living in the big San Luis Valley.

David Mackey, an historian from Manti, discusses a series of remarkable events over a 30-year period that connects Utah and Colorado. It begins with a soldier from the Mormon Battalion who shared his copy of the Book of Mormon with a leader named Francisco Salazar. Many sick and starving soldiers from the battalion were nursed back to health by the Hispanics of the San Luis Valley.

It is also noteworthy that a descendant of Francisco Salazar became the U.S. secretary of the interior. His name is Ken Salazar, and in 2010, he approved the management plan that has funded restoration and revitalization projects in the MPNHA area, Bona says.

Because the San Luis Valley has overlapping trails and migration corridors, different cultures ended up spending time there, the film explains.

The documentary chronicles several stories, including the longstanding battle over water. The Jack Dempsey story comes alive with a visit to a Colorado museum honoring the boxer. The program concludes with a visit of some Amish people who have recently started to enter the valley.