

MORMON PIONEER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (MPNHA)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHAT: "Discovery Road" local television series, Episode 4
WHEN: 7 p.m., Sunday, Dec 9, 2012
WHERE: KJZZ Television, Channel 14
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Unsung but historic Utah war explored in "Discovery Road," Episode 4



The Mt. Pleasant Relic House (with accompanying blacksmith's shop and monuments), built in 1869 and designed by Brigham Young, was also the site of the 1872 peace treaty between Mormon settlers and Native Americans that ended the Black Hawk War. The home and the war are both topics in the next episode of "Discovery Road."

co-host Gena Persinger stopping at the Relic House in Mt. Pleasant, the preserved home of Mt. Pleasant's first mayor, William Seely, and which served for a time as the Mt. Pleasant City Hall and remains as one of the architectural jewels of the city. It is said to have been designed — and partially built — by Utah colonizer and Mormon prophet Brigham Young himself.

The home, built in 1869, is now used as a museum and is one of the most historic sites in Sanpete County. Indeed, it plays an incredibly significant — yet rather unsung — place in Utah's history: It is the place where the treaty was signed which ended a seven-year war between pioneer settlers and Native Americans.

The Black Hawk War, 1865-1872, started and centered in Sanpete County, but involved skirmishes between Indians and white settlers throughout Utah. It resulted in the abandonment of many early

(Continued . . .)

MT. PLEASANT, Utah—A visit to one of Mt. Pleasant's most iconic historical buildings leads to the discovery of a clash of civilizations 150 years ago between Mormons who came to the Utah Territory to find a land to call their own, and the Native Americans who already did.

It's a finding important enough for a double-length episode of "Discovery Road," a television documentary series that explores life, history and culture along U.S. Highway 89.

Episode Four of the series will air in a one-hour broadcast on Sunday, Dec. 9 on KJZZ TV Channel 14 beginning at 7 p.m.

The episode begins with host/producer James Nelson and

Mormon settlements, and only ended when federal government forces from Fort Douglas were finally called upon to intervene.

As “Discovery Road” hosts James Nelson and Gena Persinger go to the Relic House to find out more about the Black Hawk War, they are greeted by Roxey Washburn, the curator, who takes them through the home and explains the circumstances of the treaty’s signing on Sept. 17, 1872.

Apropos to the show, they “discover” a 1998 documentary, hosted by Merrill Osmond, about the war: “Utah’s Blackhawk War: Cultures in Conflict.” The documentary won a Telly Award for excellence in local and regional television programming, and is in the archives of the Mormon Pioneer Heritage Institute at Snow College, which produces “Discovery Road” in coordination with the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area.

Our hosts then turn the time over to a showing of the film.

Osmond explains that as the Civil War began winding down with one of its last battles on April 9, 1865 in Appomattox, Va., another war was just beginning—on that very day but a continent away in the Utah pioneer town of Manti, when a scuffle between a Mormon settler and an Indian brave was the flashpoint that set off a war that would last several years.

“Compared to the conflict now ending at Appomattox Court House, this war would be minor. But to the men, women and children living in Utah, it would be a relentless tragedy leading to enormous loss in property and human life,” Osmond narrates.

The film explains the background, context and events of the Blackhawk War—and not always from the Mormon pioneer settlers’ point of view.

“In many ways, these cultures were set up for conflict. They were so different,” says Forrest S. Cuch, former director of the Utah Division of Indian Affairs.

Cuch, in the film, gives just one example: The Indians saw the Mormons as overtaking their hunting grounds, so the occasional taking of settlers’ cattle was presumably acceptable according to the Indians’ way of life; Mormons saw such a thing as thievery. Trouble was certain to follow.

Through the knowledge of historians and tradition, and through the recollections of descendants of the war from both sides, “Viewers will better understand how it all happened, and why, after seeing the broadcast,” host Nelson says.

The documentary is available from the MPNHA, and the video could make an excellent Christmas gift for the right person, says MPNHA Executive Director Monte Bona. It can be ordered by calling Bona at 801-699-5065, or sending an email to montebona@hotmail.com.



A video produced by the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area tells the history — from both sides — of Utah’s Black Hawk War. The video is available from the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area, and will be shown in its entirety during the next episode of “Discovery Road” on KJZZ TV on Sunday, Dec. 9 at 7 p.m.

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***The Mormon Pioneer Heritage Area (MPNHA) is a federally designated area of central and southern Utah running along the beautiful and historic U.S. Highway 89 — including the All-American Road Utah State Route 12, and Capitol Reef Scenic Byway Utah State Route 24, which both intersect with U.S. 89 and together form the MPNHA's Boulder Loop. The area includes the counties of Sanpete, Sevier, Piute, Wayne, Garfield and Kane.**

The Utah Heritage Highway 89 Alliance is the local coordinating entity of the MPNHA and receives annual funding from the National Park Service. Its purpose is to preserve, tell and interpret the stories, history and heritage of the area, and to promote its culture and value.