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PROFILES FROM THE PAST

His varied talents

At the May 5, 1901 quarterly conference of the Jordan, Utah, Stake, a 76-year-old gray-haired gentleman rose to speak of the old days. He earnestly testified of the divine calling of Joseph Smith and that Brigham Young was his true successor. "I know it because I was there."

So spoke Patriarch Joshua Terry, a man who had seen and experienced much in his lifetime. Born in eastern Canada in 1825 as the 11th of 14 children, he quickly learned the importance of independence and at the same time the need for cooperation.

With his parents, he passed through the events of Missouri and Illinois. Even though a teenager, he assisted in the construction of the Nauvoo Temple. The fall of 1847 found him in the valley of the Great Salt Lake where he assisted in the erection of the "old Fort." Few could claim such a varied career in frontier America.

Joshua Terry was one of but few men living in 1901 who knew Indians as they were in the pioneer days, who could speak of life at Ft. Hall, Idaho, and Ft. Bridger, Wyo., as it really was. In fact, during his lifetime, he was an Indian trader and interpreter, mountain man, guide, pioneer of three states, missionary and patriarch.

A typical episode of his varied career occurred in October of 1855. In the course of settlement, most Mormon dealings with Indians were positive, equitable and friendly. However, misunderstandings did arise with Chief Tababooindowtsy over potatoes and wheat at Ft. Supply, Wyo. Words were exchanged, tempers lost, and emotions set on edge. The United States Indian agent did his best to calm the situation, but had to leave before completely settling the matter. As a final resort, the experienced and diplomatic Joshua Terry was asked to insure that the offended Indians were pacified. After several anxious discussions the problem was peacefully resolved as the chief announced that he was now a "very big friend to the Mormons and all white people."

In the years to come, Joshua Terry would be commissioned by Brigham Young to "negotiate for him with the Shoshones," and to be a missionary to these people.

Joshua Terry was a man of unusual talents whose life was devoted to the gospel. — **William W. Slaughter**

(Part of a series produced by the Church Historical Department.
Drawing by Deseret News artist Reed McGregor.)