

Gilbert Belnap Family Memorial Service and Monument Rededication
Dedicatory Prayer
Saturday, 22 July 2017, Ogden City Cemetery, Ogden, Utah
Brent J. Belnap

Our dear Father in Heaven, as relatives from many locations, we have assembled this summer day in the community that served as the first home of the Belnap family in the Great Basin, in the Ogden City Cemetery around the family burial plot of our shared progenitor, Gilbert Belnap,

We gather in honor of our common ancestors and all our Mormon Pioneer forebears. We are grateful for their courageous lives and pioneering accomplishments, evidenced through their devotion and sacrifice to their families, their nation, and the cause of Zion. We thank Thee that, through them, a portion of the noblest and most stalwart blood of the House of Israel flows in our veins. We are grateful to have been reminded in this memorial service of their deep and abiding faith in Thee and Thy Son and His Restored Gospel.

Now, on this hot July afternoon at the time of year when we honor and celebrate the arrival of the early settlers of this great State, by the authority of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood, we rededicate and reconsecrate this burial plot as the resting place of 11 elect sons and daughters of Thee, including six who died as infants, representing five family generations interred over a period of 67 years, from 1852 until 1919:

Annetta McBride
Abigail Mead McBride
Volney Belnap
Gilbert Levi Belnap
Byram Rosel Belnap
John Francis Stoddard
Gilbert Roy Belnap
Gilbert Belnap
Henrietta McBride Belnap
Martha McBride Knight (Smith Kimball), and
Adaline Knight Belnap

On this occasion we also rededicate and reconsecrate the burial plots located elsewhere here in the Ogden City Cemetery of five other children of Gilbert Belnap and many other of his direct descendants and their spouses.

We dedicate and consecrate the restored Gilbert Belnap Family Monument. Like the surrounding mountains, may it stand tall as a tribute to our family heritage. May the monument and each headstone weather the elements well. Protect them from desecration. May they continue to be lovingly cared for by future generations as tangible reminders of our grand legacy.

We pray that this ground may be hallowed and protected until the Resurrection. May those who visit here, if it be Thy will, be privileged to feel, according to their faith and righteous desires, the very presence of their forebears as tangibly as we sense today's scorching heat. May we be

privileged to have them think of us and, where possible, assist and encourage us from beyond the veil in our own earthly sojourns.

We humbly acknowledge the presence of John McBride Belnap, infant son of Gilbert and Adaline, who was buried in an unmarked grave in his father's tool chest a thousand miles away and who was so wonderfully honored 20 years ago during the Mormon Trail Sesquicentennial Celebration. We rejoice in the symbolic earthly reuniting, represented by the presence of the re-created historic John McBride Belnap Tool Chest, of all of Gilbert Belnap's family. May this symbolic rejoining of members of Gilbert's family whose remains lie at opposite ends of the Mormon Trail—a linear temple—remind us, the living, of the importance of families and of eternal family ties. We thank Thee for the knowledge that families are eternal and that the sealing ties among Gilbert Belnap's posterity, including us here today, are real and strong. May our kinship with the living and our shared dead be renewed this day.

May we, as Elder Jeffrey R. Holland recently admonished, keep “the stories, traditions, values, and contributions of [our] valiant ancestors fresh in our memories.” May we also heed Elder Holland's caution, in that we remember “that the honor and glory of [our ancestors'] courageous lives belong to *them*. [We are] in no way exalted in [our] character simply because they were exalted in theirs. When [*we*] stand before God to account for [*our* lives], it won't help [us] much to pull out [our] family history . . . and then ask for admittance to those grand, celestial realms on the basis of a pedigree chart.” May each of us “live a life as exemplary in its own way as [our] pioneer ancestors' lives were in theirs. [May we] live so [our] children or grandchildren or great-grandchildren will want to remember [*us*] and tell stories of [*our*] faith, just as we tell [the] stories of our earlier generations.” (Lloyd, R. Scott, “Elder Holland shares his own family pioneer heritage in speech to Sons and Daughters of Utah Pioneers,” *Deseret News*, 18 Jul 2017; emphasis added.)

May each of us, as President Gordon B. Hinckley, counseled, “never permit [ourselves] to become a weak link in the chain of [our] generations.” (Hinckley, Gordon B., “Keep the Chain Unbroken,” *Brigham Young University 1999–2000 Speeches* (2000), 108–9.)

We love Thee, Father. We love Thy Beloved Son. Smile with favor upon us. Strengthen our resolve to walk acceptably before Thee continually. Increase our dedication to Thy will. Keep in our memories the solemn covenants we and our Pioneer ancestors have made. May Thy blessings attend us now as we return to our homes and celebrate our Pioneer heritage, we fervently and humbly pray, in the sacred name of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, Amen.

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