

BELNAP FAMILY REUNION

Sept. 7, 1925

Taken from the Ogden Standard-Examiner Sept. 13, 1925

Relatives gathered from Connecticut, West Virginia, Illinois, Wyoming, Nevada, Idaho and Utah at Liberty Park in Ogden, Labor day, to attend the Belnap reunion.

Members of the family started to gather at the park at 2 p. m. and by 3:30 p. m., all was in readiness for the interesting program that followed, which was as follows;

Song, Our Mountain Home so Dear.

Invocation, William Cool bear.

Quartet, Silver Threads among the Gold, by Eugene and Ellis Belnap, and Lee and West Stoddard.

Address of welcome, Joseph H. Belnap

Reply, Leverett Belnap of Hartford, Conn.

Solo, Maude Belnap Kimball

Historical sketch of Belnap family, by Hyrum Belnap

Duet, John and Joseph Lowe

Piano selection, Jewel Belnap

Piano selection, Mrs Hyrum A. Belnap

Song, God Be With You 'Till We Meet Again.

At the close of the program the different family groups at their lunch together, during which a number of toasts were given by Scott Belknap of Carthage, Ill., Henry Belnap of Idaho, Eugene Belnap of Idaho, Joseph H. Belnap of Ogden, Utah, and Mary Belnap Lowe of Franklin, Idaho. John and Joseph Lowe rendered instrumental selections.

HONOR PIONEER

When lunch had been served the different family groups assembled in their cars and drove to the Ogden City Cemetery, where they placed flowers on the graves of Gilbert Belnap the Utah pioneer, and his immediate family.

One of the most interesting parts of the program was the historical sketch of the Belnap family given by Hyrum Belnap, son of Gilbert Belnap, which was as follows;

HISTORY OF FAMILY

"Mr. Chairman, and fellow kinsmen; The purpose of this gathering of all those who bear the name of Belnap or Belknap from many of the states of the Union is to promote fellowship and renew acquaintance among each other and to instill into the hearts of the coming generations, who bear our name, the ideals and principles of honor, integrity, and good will toward men that we have so long cherished and practiced.

"When the Puritan fathers were making their struggle for religious tolerance in England, they were compelled to cross the channel to Holland to obtain peace. The whole European country practically, was under the control of royalty, satisfaction was not obtained in Holland. In 1620 these Pilgrim fathers boarded ship and came to America. This little band of people who had put personal welfare second and community interest first, soon posted high on the hill tops. "This is the land of the free and the home of the brave, and we hold it self-evident that all men are created equal."

DIFFERENT SPELLING

"Among these people who first planted their feet upon American soil were Abraham Belknappe, his wife, Mary, four sons and one daughter. I have learned through research and travel that we who are gathered here are the descendants of this good family. Some of the Belknap families that I have met spell the name as Belknap, others spell it Belnap and still others spell it Bealknap. Each and every one of them who have kept records, claim to have come from some one of these four brothers above mentioned.

"History pertaining to different spelling of the name Belnap is this. Shortly after the death of Abraham Belknappe in September, 1643, his children discarded one P and the E, leaving it spelled Belknap. Gilbert Belnap, my father, went east in 1873-74 and visited his relatives in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and Canada. Upon his return he told this story; that there were two brothers living in the New England states that desired a distinction between their families. One lived up in the northern part of the New England States. The other one who left the K out of the spelling, making it Belnap, was Jesse Belnap who was born in Hebron, Conn., Aug. 31, 1760. He joined the Revolutionary army at Hebron, Conn., in 1777, and in 1779 while the army was camped in Redin, Conn., he married a resident girl there by the name of Eunice Hall. He was released from the army in 1780. Later he moved to western New York and then to North east Erie, Penn. This information is on file at Washington D. C., in affidavits made by himself and others, and was filed in 1832. He died at Northeast Erie, Penn., when 94 years old.

DESTROYED IN FIRE

"Gilbert Belnap also stated that when about 18 years old that he visited his grandfather, Jesse Belnap, at Northeast Erie, Penn., where he saw their large Bible containing a record of the marriage of his grandfather and grandmother as well as a record showing that three brothers that came from England where their ancestors. His uncle, David Belnap, became heir to these records which were later destroyed by fire.

"In 1908 I visited Hebron, Conn., looking up records and found that the court house had burned down 50 years before. Then I went to Washington, D.C. in order to find Great-grandfather Jesse Belnap's parents' names from his enlistment papers in the Revolutionary Army in 1777. They, too, advised me that the capitol was burned in 1812 by the enemy and they could do nothing for me. I returned to Hartford, Conn., and found in the will of one Samuel Belnap who married Mary Dickson, July 9th, 1723, the following children's names; Mary Belnap, born March 3, 1724. Simson Belnap, born June 7, 1726. Job Belnap, born Oct. 29, 1728. Ebenezer Belnap, born June 13, 1731. Samuel Belnap, born May 15, 1734. Abel Belnap, born Sept. 15, 1736. Jesse Belnap, born April 9, 1739 at Somers, Conn. The records show that this Jesse only received some personal property, as his share of the estate.

"I traced this Jesse into Castleton, Vt., where he was chosen town clerk, whose duty it was to record all births, deaths and marriages. Here I found his own records in the hands of Judge Clark. Jesse Belnap records that he came there from Connecticut in 1771. In his own hand writing he records the following; My wife Eunice, died July 25, 1774. My eldest daughter Bette by my wife Eunice died Sept. 17, 1777. My third daughter Olive by my wife Eunice died Sept. 25, 1777. Judge Clark said, "There must have been some contagious disease here taking so many away at the same time." Jesse Belnap then married one Deborah Hathway, and he records; Ruth from my wife Deborah was born Nov. 21, 1782. My second son, Jesse, was born May 21, 1784. My third son, Augustus, was born June 29, 1787, etc. I employed a historian in Hartford, Conn., and he later informed me that Somers and Hebron are a few miles apart, and from the research that he made, that Jesse Belnap born in Somers in 1739 was the father of Jesse Belnap, born Aug. 31, 1760. That the son of Jesse Belnap from his second wife, Deborah Hathway, born in 1782 and the son from the first wife, Eunice born in Hebron, Conn., Aug. 31, 1760 are the two brothers that made a distinction in their names by the Hebron Jesse, leaving the K from the spelling of the Belnap name.

"The Newburgh record written in 1875 informs us that our American Belknaps can be satisfactorily traced back to Sir Robert Belknappe who was chief justice in England in 1375. When I was in London in 1913 looking over the records they disclose that the Belknappe's came down to England with the Normans in 1066 when William the Conqueror overpowered that land. There are several Belknaps who have held very prominent places in England.

"Some of the Belnap's who deserve honorable mention are; Abraham Belnappe, his wife Mary, who came from England, and their children, Abraham, Jr. Jeremy, Joseph, Samuel and Hannah, who married Christopher Osgood. These people cut down the timber, cleared the brush and made it possible for those who followed to enjoy this good land. Jeremy Belnap wrote the New England history. Dr. Belnap was referred to frequently by Webster when compiling the Webster dictionary. Isaac Belnap, an army officer fought side by side with Washington in the Revolutionary war. Washington chose his daughter, a school teacher, to march with him at the head of that march in the great ratification dance at the close of the war. W. W. Belnap was secretary of war in the cabinet under Pres. Grant. A Mr. Belnap of Grand Rapids, Mich., an officer in the Civil war, was chairman of the commission which placed the battle ground markers at Chattanooga, Tenn., and the surrounding country. Judge Belnap was an associate justice in the Nevada supreme court. In this western part of the United States, California, Oregon, Washinton, Nevada and Utah, Belknaps were among the early pioneers. In Ogden Gilbert Belnap was the first marshal in 1850; later attorney and county commissioner. For 20 years he was bishop on Hooper Ward. His wife was at the head of the Relief society organizations. His children are leaders in every district where they live. There are many others deserving of mention.

EXTOLS VIRTUES

"Follow kinsmen, in closing permit me to talk to the young folks. Honor the name you bear; do not be one that will bring reproach upon the name, Belnap. Respect your parents; honor the aged, for true it is that one cannot live in happiness without the aid and association of his fellow men. To illustrate let me tell a story.

"One time when we were traveling in Henderson county, Tenn., we stopped with Judge Read. Passing the time looking over his large Bible we saw on the front leaf a picture. In the center was a circle enclosing a clean white surface. This represented a plain where a new babe was born. On the one side was a stair leading up to another plain on which was an altar. A man was kneeling at the altar receiving a crown from the hands of an angel. The stairway leading to the altar had seven steps on each of which was written a word.

Beginning at the bottom they read; Virtue, Knowledge, Temperance, Patience, Godliness, Kindness and Charity. On the other side of the plain where the babe was born and reared to manhood, was another stairway leading down to a pit. This, too, had seven steps. Beginning at the top and going down were the following words; Unvirtue, lack of knowledge, intemperance, impatience, ungodliness, without brotherly kindness, without charity. Under this picture was written, 2nd Peter chapter 1, verses 1 to 11. Live the principles named on those steps leading upwards and we one and all will go step by step higher and higher until we reach that beautiful altar where God dwells.

"I am thankful that my name is Belnap and that I had the privilege of coming through such a noble race of people. Yes, I am doubly thankful that I was raised by such parents as my father and mother. They taught me all my life to climb the ladder going up to the higher plain. They advised me to avoid the ladder leading down into the pit, as I would an adder. Again, be thankful for the name and your parentage. And though obstacles be purposely placed in your path, follow the Saviour's pattern, "Forgive them for they know not what they do."