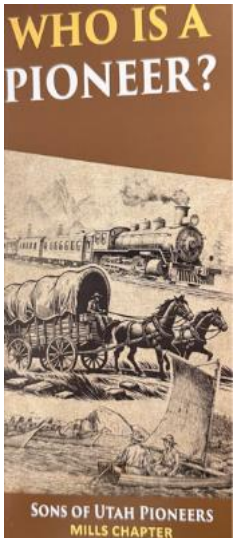
OCTOBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

Next Meeting, Monday, October 12, 6:30 p.m.
at the ***National Headquarters, 3301 East 2920 South, Salt Lake City, Utah***

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Randy Baker, Mills Chapter President

I hope you got a chance to look at the new chapter membership pamphlets during August and September and have given one to a friend. Please invite a friend to join us. We need to keep our chapter alive and all of us need to invite friends to continue to enjoy the things about pioneers that we so like.



My wife Ronalee and I along with Ann and Greg Robison from our chapter attended the National Encampment in Pocatello in September. We enjoyed learning about how the growth of early Pocatello was tied to the Oregon trail and the crossings of the Snake and Blackfoot Rivers just north of Pocatello (roughly 1842 to 1865). One resident noted that there were about 20% of the community that were members of the Church in early Pocatello days and is about 50% today.

The biggest reminder I got out of Encampment was that being part of Sons of Utah Pioneers organization means being involved with friends in all chapters and the national organization leaders, not just knowing our own chapter members.

I hope you will have fun at the October Mills Chapter Meeting learning from a vexillologist as there is not too many of them.

I am having much joy connecting with some of my ancestors. I hope you are too. Perhaps it is my age or my sentimentality, but I am thinking a lot about how some of my some of the people responsible for me coming to this earth felt about the challenges in their life and what helped them move forward. Please enjoy your personal journey to connect with a person that inspired you.

Thank you for making the Mills Chapter so wonderful.

We are sad to announce the passing of Terry Clemmer, one of our longstanding Mills Chapter Members. Terry served as Chapter President and a member of the Board for many years. He had a remarkable career in medicine and a great family. Our condolences to his wonderful wife Jan. https://www.larkinmortuary.com/obituary/view/terry-clemmer/?utm_source=legacy&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=legacytraffic

Upcoming Meeting

October 12, 2026

Symbols of a People: What Flags Reveal

DeVaughn Simper dresses in colonial garb between historic flags at an event in July of 2025

DeVaughn Simper, a nationally recognized vexillologist and historical educator, will address the Sons of Utah Pioneers Mills Chapter on October 12 as our featured speaker. With extensive experience in civic symbolism, museum interpretation, and the study of American heraldic and vexillological traditions, Simper brings a depth of expertise that illuminates how flags function as meaningful historical sources. Mr. Simper describes himself as a **vexillologist,** an expert who studies the history, symbolism, design, and cultural significance of flags. The United States has used over 200 official flags. Everything you could ever want to learn about our nation's history can be seen in our national flags.

Unofficially known as 'Professor Flag', his lecture will explore how banners and emblemsrecord the values, aspirations, and identity of the communities that created them. Far more than decorative objects, flags serve as primary evidence that helps historians verify events, trace cultural development, and understand the lived experience of earlier generations.

Through his remarks, attendees will see how vexillology strengthens historical interpretation and enriches our understanding of pioneer-era society. He has a large collection of historical flags and will bring some of them to the meeting. He is also ready for questions. "I haven't been stumped yet so bring them on!"

The Life Guards Mormon Battalion flag on display at National SUP HQ

Mr. Simper first crossed paths with the Sons of Utah Pioneers when he was asked to help restore a genuine Mormon Battalion Flag that was donated to the National SUP collection in 2021 by Gary Smith, a descendant of Church Patriarch Eldred G. Smith. It is known as the "Life Guards" Flag and is now prominently displayed in front entrance lobby of the National SUP Headquarters building. He will also speak about that flag and its experiences.

This presentation promises to offer a clear, engaging perspective on the role of symbols in shaping and preserving our shared heritage.

2026 SUP National Encampment

September 17 - 19, 2026

Hosted by the Portneuf Pioneer and the Grand City SUP Chapters

This year's national encampment event was held in southeastern Idaho, in the communities in the Pocatello area, including Mink Creek, Portneuf, Malad, Soda Springs and Rexburg.

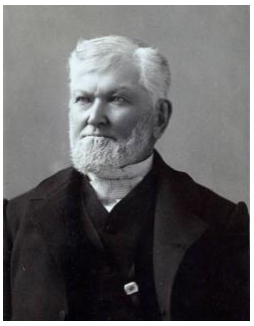
There is a deep history of pioneering in this region that was tied to two major national events:

- the opening of the fur trade by the Moutain Men from about 1820 – 1832, after the Lewis & Clark voyage in 1805 did the earliest exploration of the region.
- The westward migration following the California, Oregon and Mormon Trails from 1840 until the opening of the railroad in 1869.

The geography is dominated by the Snake River. The Oregon Trail headed through this area and the first ferry was established in 1840 by former Mountain Men Joe and John Meek. Safe reliable ferries were indispensable to the Westward Migration.

Most travelers were headed elsewhere to Oregon and California but a few lingered and helped establish the towns. The farmland was exceptional for growing potatoes and the plentiful water from the rivers made it a prosperous place.

The first organized settlement attempt was Fort Lemhi near the Salmon River in 1855, though conflicts forced it to close by 1858. Mormon pioneers established Franklin, Idaho's oldest permanent community, just across the Utah border in April 1860 under the direction of church leaders like apostle Charles C. Rich. Other settlers moved over the mountains into the Bear Lake region, founding Bloomington and Montpelier in 1863 and built a stunningly beautiful tabernacle in Paris in 1884 using masons from the Logan Temple.



In the 1870's, Church members helped build rail lines through the region, which eased travel and transport into the Pacific territories. Pocatello was founded as a railroad hub, unlike nearby agricultural communities. Pushed by land scarcity in Utah in the 1880's, homesteaders moved en masse into the Snake River Valley, founding Rexburg, Idaho Falls (Eagle Rock), and surrounding communities.

Ronalee & Randy Baker, Mills Chapter President with Board Member Greg Robison & Ann Robison

In 1884, Church leader Wilford Woodruff stood in a wagon box in the Snake River Valley to encourage struggling settlers, prophesying that the sagebrush would give way to thriving communities and farms. Historians note that rapid, organized LDS colonization in southeastern Idaho provided the population and infrastructure necessary for Idaho to achieve statehood in 1890.

JOIN US AT THE TYHEE STAKE CENTER
12146 W. Tyhee Rd., Pocatello, Idaho
September 17-19, 2026

Schedule of Events

Thursday, September 17th

- Temple Sessions at 9:30 am, 10:30 am, and 11:00 am
  (arrive 30 minutes before each session)
- 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm Registration & activities at the Tyhee Stake Center, (DUP) - pioneer games, crafts, family history, local history, western night.
- 6:00 pm Welcome and Dinner
- 7:00 pm Speaker: Bryan Murray, retired judge speaking on Pocatello history, followed by entertainment - Boyd Murdock, Roy McKee (music), and Todd Andrus (cowboy poet)

Friday, September 18th

- 8:00 am Registration
- Full-Day and Half-Day Tours
- 6:00 pm Dinner and Guest Speaker
  Timothy J. Dyches, Emeritus 70 – more info
- Entertainment by Angel Tones

Saturday, September 19th

- 8:00 am National Board Members Meeting.
- 9:15 am Business Meeting for all SUP Members.
- 9:15 am Spouse's meeting: Jynnea Smedely, Speaker
- 10:15 am General Meeting, Catered Luncheon & Farewell

Lodging Options

Dump Station for campers 850 Barton Rd., Pocatello, ID – open May 15th through November 15th

Hotels and places to stay
Trip Advisor for Hotels & Places to Stay in Pocatello

Best Western
1415 Bench Rd.
Pocatello, ID
(208) 471-5212

- Theme –
"Gateway to the Northwest"

Full-Day Tours **(Box Lunch provided for each attendee)**

Friday, September 18th

1 - ATV Trail head at 9:30 am.
1st meet at 8200 West Portneuf Rd. at 9:00 am (Mink Creek Ward building Map). Then proceed as a group to the trailhead.

Scout Mtn. Rd. is located on the West side of Scout Mountain in the Bannock Range, just south of Pocatello, Idaho, within the Caribou-Targhee National Forest. It is accessed via the Mink Creek Recreation Area (South Fork of the Mink Creek Rd. off of the main Mink Creek Rd. via Bannock Hwy). The area features steep, forested terrain (Douglas fir, aspen) and is accessible by hiking and motorized trails, including high-clearance 4x4 trails. Important Note: Out of State attendees – get Idaho ATV permit from the Idaho Dept. of Parks and Recreation.

2 - Visit Malad-Samaria Area
- bus Leaves at 8:30 am
from the Tyhee Stake Center.

Home of the largest concentration of Welsh people outside of Wales. Visit the Oneida Museum in Malad and the Heritage Square in Samaria. Visit the original Olive Davis Osmond Cabin, mother of the famous Osmond family of performers.