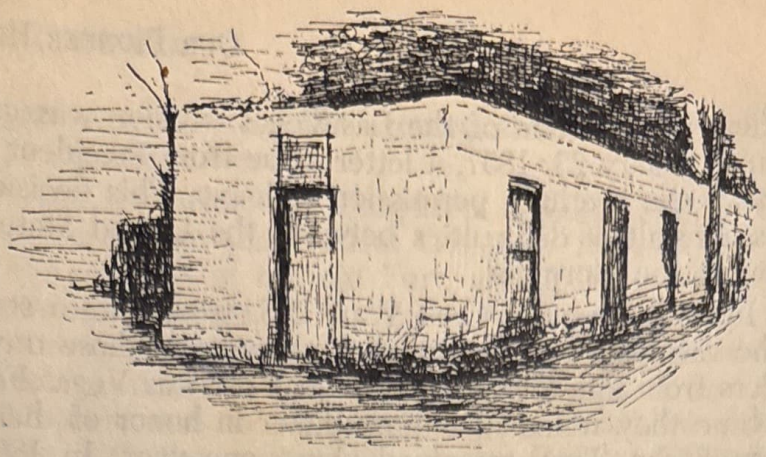

DAUGHTERS OF UTAH PIONEERS

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER, 1974 *Compiled by* KATE B. CARTER

The Las Vegas Fort

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 1 Samuel 15:22

THE OLD SPANISH TRAIL was a route known to the authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In December of 1847, they had sent Porter Rockwell to California for the purpose of obtaining seeds, livestock and other provisions. Accompanying him were Jefferson Hunt and others, in all a party of fifteen. They followed the Old Spanish Trail through what is now Clark County, Nevada, and returned the same route the following spring. April 12, 1848, a party of the Mormon Battalion, 25 in number, under the leadership of Henry D. Boyle, followed this trail from Southern California to Salt Lake. Other than their provisions, they had 135 mules and one wagon. This wagon is believed to have been the first ever taken over the route. In 1849-50 Howard Egan, a Mormon Scout, made the trip over the trail and returned giving a good account of the country. A year later, the Lyman and Rich Company made their way to settle in San Bernardino and under date of May 13, made note of camping at *a large spring, usually called Las Vegas.* Information thus obtained was the forerunner of the call by Brigham Young to settle Las Vegas.

It was in April 1855 at a session of General Conference that approximately 30 men were called as missionaries to go to Las Vegas. The purpose of the mission was to establish a halfway station for travelers between the Pacific Coast and Utah, maintain good rapport with the Indians and attempt to instruct them in the ways of farming and cleanliness. A second call was made in 1856 and more missionaries were sent, some taking their families.