

Deseret News

Within three years after Mormon pioneers settled the valley of the Great Salt Lake, Brigham Young established the *Deseret News*. Taking its name from the old term for the Utah Territory - a "deseret" is a honeybee, according to the *Book of Mormon* - the newspaper first appeared on June 15, 1850, on a \$60 press that had traveled 1,100 miles by ox-cart across the country to Salt Lake City. The *News* began as a weekly, its first edition masthead proclaiming "Truth and Liberty." As the official organ of the Church of the Latter-day Saints, the newspaper published gospel-related items and espoused Mormon theology. Yet it also covered national events, for Brigham Young did not want readers to find themselves isolated from the "outside world."

In 1865, the paper became a semiweekly, appearing on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and two years later it added a daily edition called the *Deseret Evening News*. The newspaper printed its first "action" photographs on May 12, 1900, when it printed five images of a mine explosion at Scofield, Utah, which killed over 200 men in the nation's worst mine disaster up to that time. Appearing eleven days after the blast, the grim photos depicted wagons loaded with coffins and stretcher-bearers bringing out the dead.

After the turn of the century, the paper began to attract readers with innovative large-type, banner headlines that extended across the entire front page. One of these appeared on September 7, 1901, the day after President William McKinley was shot, proclaiming, "GOD BLESS OUR PRESIDENT." A week later, another banner announced McKinley's death in inch-high letters. At that time, *News* employed more than 100 reporters, editors, copyboys - even a society-page maven - under the direction of general manager Horace "Bud" Whitney, who had taken over the newspaper three years earlier. Hired to raise circulation numbers, Whitney expanded the coverage of sports, introduced a regular mining, business, and stocks section, and placed a larger emphasis on society and fashion.

By the 1920s, the *Deseret News* had moved its operation to downtown Salt Lake, installing a 50-horsepower printing press capable of producing 32,000 copies per hour. In 1922, the newspaper discontinued the semiweekly, but branched out into new territory with a radio station. Known today as the *Deseret Morning News*, the paper boasts the second highest readership of any daily in Utah. It remains the longest running American newspaper west of the Missouri River and continues to operate both as a widely read news source and as an official organ of the Mormon Church.