

MORMON PIONEER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (MPNHA)

For more information:

Linda Petersen

Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area

801-554-7513

Email: linda@bpmedia.com

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in partnership with

Mormon gold miners take center stage in new Discovery Road episode

In its newest episode, “Saints of Gold,” Discovery Road, the TV series sponsored by the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area (MPNHA), examines the little-known story of Mormon gold miners and their central role in the California Gold Rush.

Discovery Road host James Nelson takes viewers on a tour of Marshall Gold Historic State Park with its replica sawmill, original buildings and museum, located along the American River where gold was discovered more than 150 years ago.

While prospectors of the day were largely intent on building their fortunes, the Mormons in California focused on the future of their faith and the struggling Mormon communities back in Utah. Most brought the gold dust and nuggets they found back to Brigham Young, their religious and territorial leader.

That gold was melted into coins which helped the struggling territorial economy find firm footing. In this episode viewers get to see some of the rare and valuable Mormon coins and hear stories from coin experts about the unique markings and inscriptions on the coins.

Nelson then takes the story to Marysvale, Utah, where some local people became millionaires overnight from the gold and other precious metals discovered there.

Along the way, Discovery Road takes a side trip off the main highway in the middle of the desert to



Youngsters at the Mound Valley School in Jiggs, Nev. gather for a history lesson from a real cowboy and find themselves in a Discovery Road cameo role.

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Rare and valuable gold coins bear testament to the early Mormon prospectors who contributed the gold dust and nuggets to produce them.

visit a one-room school house in Jiggs, Nev. and meet a unique cowboy, John Collette, or “Cowboy John” as he is known. The modern-day cowboy shares the history of the area with local students and tourists today. As a tour guide, he also helps visitors appreciate the beauty and wide open spaces of the West while realizing how challenging the crossing to California was long ago.



Host James Nelson introduces viewers to the story of early pioneer miners in “Saints of Gold,” the newest Discovery Road episode.

The episode concludes by introducing viewers to Samuel Brannan, the man who first shouted “Gold! Gold!” up and down the streets of San Francisco. He was excommunicated from the Mormon church after he was accused of diverting church funds into his own business and went on to become California’s first millionaire before dying penniless.

Discovery Road’s “Saints of Gold” airs on the Utah Education Network on Saturday, Jan. 6 at 6 p.m. and on Wednesday, Jan. 10 at 12 a.m. The show will air on local Channels 10 and 3 this month. Check local listings for dates and times.

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About the MPNHA:

The Mormon Pioneer Heritage Area is a federally designated area of central and southern Utah running along the beautiful and historic U.S. Highway 89 — including the All-American Road Utah State Route 12, and Capitol Reef Scenic Byway Utah State Route 24, which both intersect with U.S. 89 and together form the MPNHA’s Boulder Loop. The area includes the counties of Sanpete, Sevier, Piute, Wayne, Garfield and Kane.