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MORMON INDIAN MISSIONS - 1855

A Thesis

Submitted to the

Department of History

Brigham Young University

Provo, Utah

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

by

Wesley R. Law

July 1959

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had been organized less than six months when Joseph Smith called four of its members to fill a mission among the "Lamanites."¹ The missionaries met with the Catteraugus Tribe near Buffalo, New York, moved on to the Wyandots near Sandusky, Ohio, and thence to the Missouri frontier where they visited and preached to the Delawares.²

The interest Joseph Smith had in the Indians was taken up by Brigham Young when he became the leader of the Church. The leaders of the Church felt a definite responsibility to the Indians due to some of the doctrine contained in the Book of Mormon which states that the Lamanites were descendants of the House of Israel and that their forefathers were directed from Jerusalem to this continent about 600 B.C. It further mentions that after living upon this hemisphere for

¹Among members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the term "Lamanite" is used frequently in exchange for the term "Indian." This word originated with the Book of Mormon and is used quite extensively therein. The term will also be used occasionally throughout this work in referring to Indians.

The men sent on this first mission were: Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, Jun., Parley P. Pratt, and Ziba Peterson.

²Brigham H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), I, 225, 251-52.

some time a faction of this group rebelled against the commandments of God and were cursed with a dark skin. However, a promise was given to this fallen group that some day

. . . the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them; wherefore, they shall be restored unto the knowledge of their fathers, and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which was had among their fathers.

And then shall they rejoice; for they [the Indians] shall know that it is a blessing unto them from the hand of God; and their scales of darkness shall begin to fall from their eyes; and many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a white and delightsome people.³

The leaders of the Church felt the Indians had a very significant part to play in the overall plan of this earth. However, for the Indians to achieve this role they must first be converted and baptized into Christ's Church, or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Then through obedience to the commandments of God and through education the Indians may rise to a state of prominence and thus be able to carry out their role. With this background one may more easily understand why the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has this unique philosophy in regard to the Indians and why some of the Church leaders have made certain statements which will be mentioned later.

Missionary work among the Indians in the Rocky Mountains was almost simultaneous with the settlement of the various valleys. Whenever the Church came in contact with the Lamanites they felt a responsibility to try to help them. There was actually a reciprocal purpose involved in order that the Mormons might be more secure from the Indian depredations.

Under private initiative, the settlement of Carson Valley, at

³II Nephi 30:5-6.

the base of the Sierra Nevada Mountains took place in 1849-50-51. Orson Hyde, under the direction of Brigham Young, led a stabilizing group of missionaries to this location in 1854.⁴

In 1853 the L.D.S. Church purchased Fort Bridger and that same year called approximately one hundred men to establish Fort Supply on Smith's Fork.⁵

The following year, at the April conference of the Church, several men were called to establish a mission among the Indians in Southern Utah. During the year the mission was visited by President Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and party.⁶

The next spring, 1855, the Church made a prodigious endeavor at establishing Indian missions. The writer has been unable to find any single reason why this year rather than any other year was selected. It seems the time was selected because of a natural development of internal affairs in the Church and communities as well as one or two possible external situations.

During the less than eight years the Mormons had been in the Great Basin their growth had been quite rapid. It was estimated that the population in 1850 was about fifteen thousand, and this was tripled by 1854 and reached 76,355 by 1856.⁷ With a growth of this nature it seems only natural that the authorities of the Church would be

⁴Andrew Love Neff, History of Utah, 1847-1869 (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1940), pp. 223-25.

⁵Neff, p. 233.

⁶Preston Nibley (comp.), Three Mormon Classics (Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallis, Inc., 1944), p. 218.

⁷Carter E. Grant, The Kingdom of God Restored (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1955), p. 465.

interested in extending its cordon in order that they might prepare for the growth of the Church.

During the first few years in the Basin the full manpower of the Church was needed in establishing farms and bringing them into production, as well as building homes and communities. By 1855 communities and farms were quite well established throughout the length of the territory. Thus the Church could afford a large number of men being called on missions.

It may even be possible that Utah's first Indian War, the Walker War of 1853-54, in which some nineteen white men were killed, had some effect in sending out the missionaries to let the Indians know the Mormons wished to live in peace and be friends. The Mormons did not want to witness a recurrence of a similar nature.

Another possible purpose for establishing these missions, with the exception of the one in the Indian Territory, was to complete the cordon of settlements around the Mormon empire with hopes of occupying all areas suitable for settlement and thus keep the "Gentiles" far removed from the Mormons.

The main purpose of these missions, however, seems to be the one mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, viz., the obligation the Church authorities felt in seeing that the natives were converted to Mormonism and properly educated. Wilford Woodruff said, "It is actually our duty to do all we possibly can to benefit, enlighten, and save this dark and ignorant people."⁸ President Young remarked,

⁸Wilford Woodruff, "Preaching the Gospel to and Helping the Lamanites. Obedience to Counsel," Journal of Discourses, IX (Liverpool: Horace S. Eldredge, 1862), 227.

". . . the . . . time has come when they [the Indians] should be favored. We do know of a surety that the Lord is working among them and preparing their minds to receive the Gospel."⁹ Orson Pratt said:

the Latter-day Saints in these mountains never can have the privilege of going back to Jackson County and building that city which is to be called the New Jerusalem . . . until quite a large portion of the remnants of Joseph [the Indians] go back with us.¹⁰

Will the brethren reach forth the helping hand and try to redeem the sons of the forest with whom we are surrounded? I believe they will; for the purposes of God must be fulfilled; and we are the people who have to do the work; . . . you may say in your hearts that 'it would be so much labor and trouble--it would cost us so much of our time and means to convert those around us, that we have not courage to perform the great undertaking.' But what were we sent here for? The Lord has caused us to come here for this very purpose--that we might accomplish the redemption of these suffering, degraded Israelites, as predicted in the sacred records of their forefathers [the Book of Mormon] . . . therefore we can have no excuse, for our duty has been plainly told us.¹¹

An external situation which may have caused some inducement on the Church authorities to want closer unity and cooperation between them and the Indians was the growing opposition in the East against polygamy. The "runaway justices" of 1851 ignited the fuse which was later to explode as "Buchanan's Blunder." The people of Utah knew the opposition in the East had led to Lieutenant-Colonel E. J. Steptoe being appointed governor in 1854, although he refused to occupy the position and Young continued to function in Steptoe's place. The question of polygamy arose before Congress quite frequently during

⁹Andrew Jenson, "History of the Las Vegas Mission," Nevada State Historical Papers, V (1925-1926), 159.

¹⁰Orson Pratt, "Redemption of Zion," Journal of Discourses, XVII (Liverpool: Horace S. Eldredge, 1875), 301.

¹¹Orson Pratt, "Salvation of the House of Israel to Come Through the Gentiles," Journal of Discourses, IX (Liverpool: Horace S. Eldredge, 1862), 177-78.

this time and was later to appear in the newly-formed Republican Party as a major plank in its platform for the repeal of the so-called "twin relics of barbarism," polygamy and slavery.¹² Under these conditions it seems the Church leaders felt it would be a great asset to be able to call in the Indians for assistance if the need ever arose. The fact that the Church leaders were expecting an eruption with the government and had planned to utilize the strength and fighting power of the Indians is shown by a portion of a letter written by John Steele, a missionary at Las Vegas. He says, "If the Lord blesses us, as he has done, we can have 1,000 brave warriors on hand in a short time to help quell the eruption that might take place in the principalities."¹³ As President Brigham Young met with the missionaries shortly before they departed for their missions he said, concerning the Indians, ". . . by and by they will be the Lord's battle ax in good earnest."¹⁴

Wilford Woodruff said:

I tell you the Lamanites of these mountains will yet be a shield to this people if we do right and if we will not do our duty, our necks are ready for the halter or the knife; yes, you will find that our necks will be ready for the knives of our enemies if we do not look to these poor degraded natives.¹⁵

Thus when the Church met at general conference in April, 1855, the names of nearly one hundred and fifty men were read from the pulpit

¹²Richard D. Poll, "The Mormon Question Enters National Politics, 1850-1856," Utah Historical Quarterly, XXV (1957), 117.

¹³Jenson, p. 171.

¹⁴"Minutes of Missionary Meeting Held in the Seventies Hall, April 8, 1855" (Ms. in LDS Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City), single page.

¹⁵Woodruff, p. 227.

to represent the Church as missionaries. A few of these men, however, were assigned to missions which had been established earlier by the Church. The remainder of the missionaries were to establish missions at various places which had been selected by the general authorities of the Church. A total of five new missions were started, an account of which is the problem of this thesis. These missions were: Elk Mountain, Las Vegas, White Mountain, Indian Territory, and Salmon River.¹⁶

Several of the men whose names were read at conference did not live in the Salt Lake vicinity; however, those who did were asked to be at a special missionary meeting on the evening of April 8, 1855. At the meeting there were one hundred and two missionaries who answered to their names as they were read. During the meeting President Young said:

Do any of you want to be excused? We don't want any man to go and leave his family to suffer. . . . Do you feel to go and labor just as faithfully as if you were going to the Islands of the sea, and with an eye single to the glory of God?, if not I want them to step out of the way. . . .¹⁷

Heber C. Kimball spoke to the group, saying,

. . . there will be a power manifested in this mission, that never is on a mission to the Gentiles. . . . you will run every missionary that is now among them out of their midst. . . .¹⁸

The missionaries were instructed to prepare themselves and to leave as soon as possible in order that this important duty might be amplified.

¹⁶Since a thesis has been written on the Salmon River Mission, only a brief summary will be given in the Appendix of this study. See Samuel Merrill Beal, "The Salmon River Mission" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of California, 1934).

¹⁷"Minutes of Missionary Meeting Held in the Seventies Hall, April 8, 1855."

¹⁸Ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE ELK MOUNTAIN MISSION

During the April, 1855, conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the names of some forty men¹ were called as missionaries to the Elk Mountain Mission. The mission was to be located at the present site of Moab, Utah, on the Colorado River. The river at that time, however, was known as the Grand River. While at the mission the missionaries erected a fort and planted crops, which they hoped would provide the food needed for the first year. However, some of the Indians became dissatisfied and staged an uprising which resulted in three of the elders being killed. This and other reasons caused the men to abandon the mission and return to their homes after being at the mission only three months.

As one considers the strategic positions at which the Church established some of its missions in 1855, there is reason to share Neff's viewpoint in regard to one of the purposes for the establishment

¹Those men called as missionaries were: Alfred N. Billings, Robert Brown, John Clark, Oliver B. Huntington, Joseph S. Rawlins, Moses Draper, Alma Fairchilds, William Freeman, William E. Holden, James W. Hunt, Lot E. Huntington, Clark A. Huntington, James Ivie, John L. Ivie, Levi G. Metcalf, John McEwan, Stephen R. Moore, Byron Pace, Christopher Columbus Perkins, Ethan Pettet, William W. Sterrett, William P. Jones, Ephraim Wight, Clinton Williams, Thomas Wilson, Andrew Jackson Allred, Edward Edwards, Archibald Buchanon, William P. Tarrell, John Crawford, John Lowry, Jr., William G. Petty, Peter Stubbs, John Shelby, Sheldon B. Cutler, Martin Behunin, William Behunin, D. Johnson, John Lewis, Richard James and William Hamblin.

of this mission. He says it was "an attempt to control the only other accessible entrance to the Great Basin country, that via Denver and New Mexico, along the route of the Old Spanish Trail. . . ." ²

It may have come as a surprise to several of the men at conference to hear their names read from the pulpit and learn they had been called to open an Indian mission in the eastern part of the territory. Oliver B. Huntington, who was teaching school at the time of his call, says, "I did not open my school another day but set directly about getting ready." ³ It was no easy accomplishment to equip oneself with the necessary provisions for that type of a mission in those days. The missionary was not able to reach his destination via train and there purchase the needed items. Huntington later states:

I continued working and praying to get ready with means for an outfit to complete my mission, for I felt it to be one of the greatest missions ever given in this dispensation.

The more I tried the more impossible it seemed to go for everything worked against me and I could bring nothing to pass. I believed it right for me to go and therefore was sure as God had called me, He had not called me to do what I could not.

Only till within a day or two of the time of starting my way began to open. Cows and cattle were almost impossible to get even with money and of that I had not a dime but first a cow and calf and so worked on trading until I was prepared with a poor though better than no outfit. ⁴

After acquiring the cow and calf, Huntington traded them for a wagon to which Alma Fairchild and William P. Jones agreed to hitch their cattle. Thus the three were soon ready to embark upon their mission.

²Neff, p. 236.

³"Oliver B. Huntington Diary" (Ms. copy in LDS Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City), p. 96. Hereafter referred to under the author's name.

⁴Ibid.

The difficulties experienced by Huntington were not peculiar to himself but were evidently shared by others. William Byron Pace, who was living in Provo, was to travel in a party of four, having one wagon, three yoke of cattle and one cow. Leaving for his mission on May 14, 1855, Pace says, "I bid farewell to my wife and children (leaving them without ten days provisions and nothing to get with) and started to the Elk Mountains. . . ." ⁵ Owing some land in Payson, he tried to sell or trade part of it in order to better the situation of his family and himself. He records:

I finally succeeded in getting a cow and forty dollars in lumber from Pardon Webb for ten acres. . . . there did not seem to be many that felt interested in trading unless they could get two prices for stock. . . . I could find no one that felt disposed to give me more than half price for my land and that to sic in some thing that was of no use to me nor no sic one else.

After hunting without success for a Buyer, a being by the name of George Patten did condescend to give me a 19 dollar Rifle and a pound of powder with a horn, for $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres of good garden land worth according to fair valuation sic \$10.00 per acre. . . . ⁶

Instructions had been given for the missionaries to assemble at Manti. Most of them from the Provo-Salt Lake area left during the first half of May: O. B. Huntington, Alma Fairchild, and W. P. Jones leaving the 8th; ⁷ W. B. Pace on the 14th; ⁸ John McEwan and Thomas Wilson on the 15th. ⁹ The trip from Provo to Manti usually required

⁵"William B. Pace Diary" (Ms. copy in Brigham Young University Library, Provo), p. 2. Hereafter referred to under the author's name.

⁶Pace, pp. 2-3.

⁷Huntington, p. 96.

⁸Pace, p. 2.

⁹"John McEwan Diary" (Ms. copy in Brigham Young University Library, Provo), p. 4. Hereafter referred to under the author's name.

about four days.¹⁰

Upon reaching Manti, the missionaries continued to trade in order to be better prepared for the trip. W. B. Pace and the three men sharing his wagon obtained a steer to work with their extra cow, thus giving them four yoke with which to pull their wagon.¹¹ O. B.

Huntington says:

We found the people very kind, more so than in the city [Salt Lake]. I swapped my light wagon for a heavier one and everything I wanted nearly I got by asking for as I had no money to buy with and everybody was willing to do all they could to help on the mission.¹²

The missionaries, having arrived in Manti, decided to continue their trek on May 21st and left that afternoon.¹³ On the evening of the 22nd the company camped on the Sevier River,¹⁴ where they took an inventory¹⁵ and held a meeting. At the meeting, Alfred N. Billings, who had been appointed mission president by Brigham Young, was sustained

¹⁰McEwan, p. 5.

¹¹Pace, p. 4.

¹²Huntington, p. 97.

¹³"Alfred N. Billings Diary" (Ms. copy in Brigham Young University Library, Provo), p. 1. Hereafter referred to under the author's name.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵The inventory of the company consisted of forty-one men, fifteen wagons, sixty-five oxen, sixteen cows, thirteen horses, two bulls, one calf, two pigs, four dogs, and twelve chickens. They also had 14,656 pounds of flour, thirty-two bushels of wheat, two and one-half bushels of corn, thirty-three bushels of potatoes, twenty-two bushels of peas, four bushels of oats, one whip saw, twenty-two axes, six scythes, two ironbars, six trowels, seven hoes, eleven shovels, five plows, ninety-nine pounds of gun powder, two hundred pounds of lead and 37,800 gun caps. (See Andrew Jenson, "The Elk Mountain Mission," The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, IV [1913], 189. Hereafter referred to as "The Elk Mountain Mission." See also Huntington, p. 97.)

as such by the missionaries of the company,¹⁶ after which President Billings appointed Oliver B. Huntington as mission clerk¹⁷ and asked Joseph Rawlins to be wagon master.¹⁸

When about thirty-three miles south of Manti the missionaries went east up Salt Creek, where they obtained their supply of salt from a saleratus cave in the mountain.¹⁹ They then continued east up the canyon following "where the road had been cut by Gunnison's [sic] party."²⁰ Approximately twenty-seven miles from the salt cave the company reached the rim of the Great Basin, where the water drains east into the Green and Colorado Rivers.²¹ Some three or four miles east of the Basin's rim they found some curious Indian paintings, which identify the route followed by the elders.²²

On May 30th the party reached the junction of Gunnison's route

¹⁶"The Elk Mountain Mission," p. 189.

¹⁷Pace, p. 4.

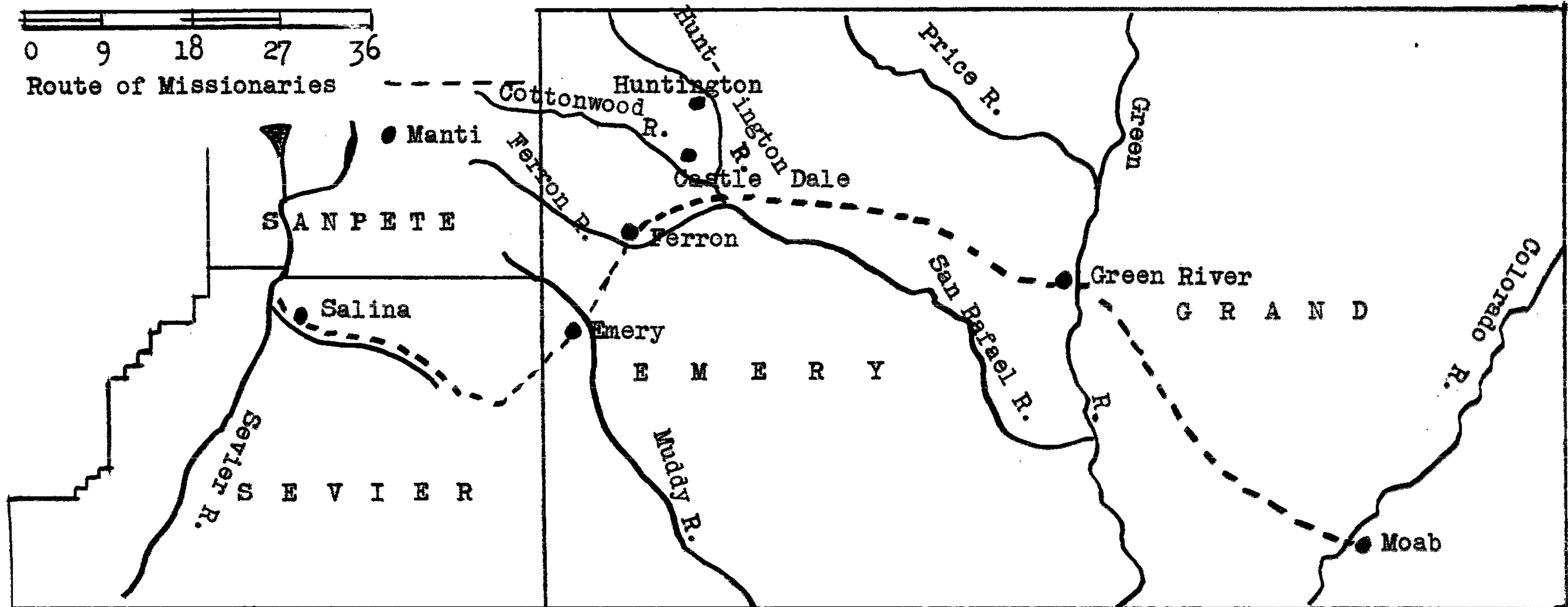
¹⁸McEwan, p. 6.

¹⁹"The Elk Mountain Mission," p. 190. (The saleratus cave would likely be in present-day Salina Canyon as this seems to be the canyon through which they traveled.)

²⁰Billings, p. 1.

²¹"The Elk Mountain Mission," p. 190.

²²These paintings consisted of a large open circle, the tail of a serpent figure, and some human legs. Two of the legs, which were beneath the circle, were a bright red; the others, however, were quite dim. A little farther to the east they found two hands painted with red paint. ("The Elk Mountain Mission," pp. 190-91.) Some of these paintings can be seen from the highway today as one travels Utah Highway 10 between Emery and Salina, which seems to be the route followed by the missionaries.



After the missionaries crossed the Wasatch Mountains, between present Sevier and Emery Counties, their route was in a northeasterly direction. The present route through this area is Utah Highway 10, which crosses four major streams: the Muddy at Emery, the Ferron at Ferron, the Cottonwood at Castle Dale, and the Huntington at Huntington. However, the diaries kept by the missionaries only record the crossing of three streams. The rivers at this time would have been high from spring runoff, as it was the last of May, so it seems doubtful the elders would have failed to observe one of the streams.

The explanation reached by the writer is that the missionaries turned more to the east after crossing present Ferron Creek (called Sweet Cottonwood by the missionaries) and crossed Huntington Creek below its junction with the Cottonwood. Thus they would have crossed only three major streams. A Mr. Jim Behunin from Ferron, Utah, who has done extensive Indian exploration and excavation in this region, says the Spanish Trail crossed Huntington Creek below its junction with the Cottonwood and above its junction with the Ferron.

and Huntington Creek.²³ There they met some friendly Green River Indians who volunteered to show the missionaries a route to the Green River which would save two or three days' travel.²⁴ President Billings and five other horsemen surveyed the newly proposed route some five or six miles that night and decided to follow it the next morning.²⁵ Being piloted by the Indians, the missionaries left Gunnison's route²⁶ and followed the Old Spanish Trail, the former being to their north.²⁷ The first day after leaving Huntington Creek no water was found until shortly before dark, and this was:

. . . in a perpendicular rocky canyon in holes and puddles at the bottom.

Some brought up water in buckets for their stock by traveling over one-fourth of a mile or rather climbing while others clambered down to an overhanging rock and drew up water with lassos and then passed it from hand to hand until it reached the top. This was very dangerous work [and] occupied ten men. A little after dark all the stock [ninety-six head of cattle and horses, plus dogs, pigs, and chickens] had got a taste of water . . . [but] very few [had] all they wanted.²⁸

Billings says the above water was drawn one hundred and fifty feet by

²³Pace, p. 7. (This crossing of Huntington Creek would likely be below the junction of Huntington and Cottonwood Creeks and above the site where the Ferron and Huntington Creeks join to form the San Rafael River.)

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵"The Elk Mountain Mission," p. 191.

²⁶If the missionaries were following Gunnison's route at Salt Creek, west of the Great Basin rim, and were on it at Huntington Creek, it seems to the writer that they likely followed it between the two points mentioned. Gunnison had wagons with him and surely the missionaries could follow the route this surveyor made some twenty months earlier.

²⁷Pace, p. 7.

²⁸Huntington, pp. 97-98.

means of the ropes.²⁹ On June 2, 1855, they reached the Green River.³⁰ The teams and men were all weak from a lack of sufficient and proper drinking water,³¹ as only one running spring had been found in the forty odd miles between Huntington Creek and Green River.³²

The day following their arrival at Green River being Sunday, the missionaries spent the day in resting, enjoying the abundance of water and the pleasant shade of the cottonwoods which lined the river. That afternoon a meeting was held at which several Indians were present. Billings says:

. . . we had a talk with them told them our business was to learn sic them the principles of the Gospel and to raise grain. They seemed to have the Spirit of the Lord upon them and to be well pleased with wat sic we had told them. . . .³³

Those same Indians were later described as being so honest and friendly that the missionaries did not keep guards on their livestock at night.³⁴

Moving down the river about a mile on the day following, the group located a good site for ferrying. They had a small boat which President Billings had brought along as his "wagon box." Some of the men started boiling tar and making pitch so that the boat could be calked, while others made oars, unloaded wagons or herded the cattle.

²⁹Billings, p. 2.

³⁰"The Elk Mountain Mission," June 5, 1855. (This would be near the site where present Green River, Utah, is located.)

³¹McEwan, p. 11.

³²Pace, p. 7.

³³Billings, p. 3.

³⁴"The Elk Mountain Mission," June 5, 1855.

With the boat in working order they started ferrying some of the running gears across the river. However, in doing so, William P. Carroll's wagon wheel fell over the side of the boat. Grapple hooks were used in an attempt to find it but proved unsuccessful.³⁵ Each wagon, including its full load, required two trips with the boat to get it across the river.³⁶ Getting the cattle across proved to be the most difficult task. Relative to this problem, President Billings wrote: ". . . we worked nearly two days in trying to swim our cattle and only got twenty-five over. We then took two at a time and towed them over with the boat, many of them would not swim a stroke, and some swam back."³⁷ In trying to force the cattle into the river they broke the leg of a large, fat ox. O. B. Huntington felt it was a good thing "for we needed beef."³⁸

The afternoon of June 8th, the missionaries left the Green River and started for Grand River.³⁹ O. B. Huntington says there were two watering places between the two rivers. This made it extremely difficult when one considers that a large portion of their route was through sand, and in other places large dugways had to be cut to let them into rocky canyons.⁴⁰

³⁵McEwan, p. 11.

³⁶Deseret News, August 1, 1855, p. 167.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Huntington, p. 98.

³⁹McEwan, p. 12.

⁴⁰Huntington, p. 98. (An example of the water shortage is shown in an experience encountered by John McEwan and John Clark. One day, while laboriously driving the loose stock through this terrain, they became so thirsty that they roped a cow, took off one of their

On June 10, 1855, the tired, thirsty party reached the Grand River, in the little valley by the same name.⁴¹ For many years prior to the arrival of the missionaries, this valley had been a favorite spot for Indians to gather, mainly because the terrain for miles around is rough and almost waterless. The climate is temperate and the snowfall light; the soil is rich and productive, as much so as any other valley in the Rocky Mountains.⁴² After the missionaries had been in the valley a short time, John McEwan further described it in a letter as:

. . . about three miles wide, the mountains high and almost perpendicular where we are, and of a reddish caste, a few cotton wood trees scattered on the mountain side, and a small range for stock; at the north end of the valley where we are, the land is sandy with a little dark shade in it, beyond it looks as though it were all sand.

. . . there is not much land for farming purposes . . . it is thick with sage brush and greasewood, and nearly all sand, no firewood except going from forty to forty-five miles they say, no fencing material . . . so our stock will be herded to keep them off the grain, as the farm will be exposed and open.⁴³

O. B. Huntington adds further to the valley's description by saying it is:

. . . some ten miles long by two and one-half wide, with the Elk Mountains the La Sal Mountains thirty miles distant in an east south east direction--Elk Mountain and Pack-saddle creeks unite near the center of the valley and empty into Grand River where it

shoes, milked it full, and drank it. It took five shoes full before they agreed to release the cow.)

⁴¹McEwan, p. 12.

⁴²"History of San Juan Stake, Moab Ward" (Ms. copy in LDS Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City), Introduction.

⁴³Deseret News, August 22, 1855, p. 191.

enters a Kanyon [sic] in the mountains. . . . the river runs through the north west end of the valley, and is ruggedly kanyoned [sic] at its entrance and exit.⁴⁴

On June 12th, Billings and five others crossed the river to select a site for the fort. While these men were selecting the site, others were busy ferrying the wagons and supplies across the river, clearing land for plowing, or engaged in building the dam or the ditch by which the new land might be watered.⁴⁵

As the valley was explored, the missionaries found that the Indians were raising corn and melons by means of irrigation.⁴⁶ The seeds for these two crops had been taken from a Mormon cache made in the valley the previous year.⁴⁷ The crops were watered by building a dyke or dam of loose soil and rubbish around the crops and running water into the enclosure.⁴⁸

After being in the valley a few days, the missionaries held a meeting in which it was agreed by unanimous vote that Joseph S. Rawlins be first counselor and William R. Holden second counselor to President Billings, with Oliver B. Huntington as clerk. After a few remarks by the aforementioned men, all the missionaries retired to the river and were rebaptized.⁴⁹

⁴⁴Deseret News, August 1, 1855, p. 165.

⁴⁵McEwan, pp. 12-14.

⁴⁶Pace, p. 13.

⁴⁷"The Elk Mountain Mission," June, 1855. (In 1854 Governor Young called twelve men to make a trading trip among the Navajos and to explore the country in southeastern Utah. They left Manti on October 17, 1854, with five wagons loaded with supplies. Some of those things they cached in Grand Valley.)

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹"The Elk Mountain Mission," June 16, 1855.

On the day the missionaries were rebaptized the president said they would all work and live together as a family, "having one common interest." This plan, however, was not satisfactory to some for they wanted to work by themselves "and would not agree to work on a common interest until a trial experiment could be made."⁵⁰ The day following this announcement, June 17th, the president, realizing the opposition to the family plan, said the men

. . . could go into messes, form small companies and farm together or each man could work by himself, they could in fact suit themselves and work as they pleased, and if any one wanted to raise nothing, he could have the privilege.⁵¹

The company was then divided into four messes, Billings being captain over twelve, O. B. Huntington captain over eleven, John Lowry, Jr., over nine, and James Ivie, captain of nine.⁵² The work of the mission was frequently divided on the basis of the mess, such as one being responsible for plowing another for the dam and ditches, while the others might be working on the fort.

The day after the company divided into messes, Clark A. Huntington, Levi G. Metcalf, and Moses Draper were sent to recover the cache made in the valley the year before.⁵³ They found the wagons, ten spades, some tobacco and some lead; everything else had been taken by the Indians, an estimated loss of three hundred dollars.⁵⁴

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹"The Elk Mountain Mission," June 17, 1855.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Huntington, p. 96.

⁵⁴"The Elk Mountain Mission," June 18, 1855.

On June 23rd the missionaries met the first Indians in the valley. They were a group of excited Utes, who were fleeing from the Snake Indians and came into the elders' camp calling for assistance in getting their families across the river. Clark A. Huntington hurried off to the river and by means of the boat, which they had hauled from Manti, ferried the remainder of the Utes across the Grand River to safety.⁵⁵ A week later, Suit-Sub-Soc-Its, nicknamed St. John, the chief of the Elk Mountain Utes, came into the valley with four of his men. He had seen the "great smoke" (caused from the burning brush as the land was cleared) and had come to see who was sending this unintelligible smoke signal. He said the group was welcome to stay, this being the first group of whites or reds to which he had ever extended such an invitation. He further said:

. . . I had a dream the other night and I saw the Mormons coming here to live on my land and I went and got my men and was . . . going to drive them off, but the Great Spirit told me to let the Mormons alone that we must be good friends, and not fight any more. . . . he wanted us to learn [sic] his wild Boys how to plow, raise grain and work like [the Mormons].⁵⁶

By the time St. John made his appearance, the missionaries had their crops and gardens planted; they had moved the site of the fort, fearing the original site would be inundated by the river during flood stages,⁵⁷ and were progressing well on their corral. The corral, one hundred and thirty feet by sixty feet, was made from logs nine feet

⁵⁵Ibid., June 23, 1855.

⁵⁶Face, p. 12. (Billings says St. John was infuriated at seeing the whites settling on the land but felt satisfied after receiving two shirts and a blanket. [Billings, p. 6.])

⁵⁷McEwan, p. 15.

long, being set in the ground three feet. The west end of the fort was to serve as the east end of the corral.⁵⁸

The 4th of July saw many Indians gathered to the Grand Valley. The activities of the missionaries, however, during the day did not impress the Indians for they said the whites acted like fools instead of men. The mission journal records: "That the natives to whom we were sent should reprove us of our laughter and folly filled all with a sense of shame and reminded us of our instructions from the prophet and caused sudden reform."⁵⁹

The elders decided to observe the following day as their Fast day, it being the first Thursday of the month. This same procedure was followed throughout the remainder of the mission.⁶⁰

The morning after the first Fast day, some messes started hauling stone for constructing the fort,⁶¹ which they planned to be sixty feet square.⁶² There were several Indians in the valley by this time and some of them objected to their "white friends" building a fort. It was all right to build a corral in which to keep their stock, but if the missionaries were to be their friends then why should they have a big, rock fort for protection. Two or three prominent Indians even forbade the missionaries to build any more on the fort.⁶³ Old

⁵⁸"The Elk Mountain Mission," June 29, 1855.

⁵⁹Ibid., July 4, 1855.

⁶⁰Billings, p. 6.

⁶¹McEwan, p. 17.

⁶²"The Elk Mountain Mission," June 29, 1855.

⁶³Ibid., July 10, 1855.

Nicholas, a relative of Chief St. John, was opposed to the missionaries "staying on this land halling [sic] the stones and piling them up as . . . [they] pleased."⁶⁴ Another Indian came to some of the elders who were cutting wild hay and told them to cease cutting the hay and leave the country.⁶⁵ The number of Indians, however, who had this negative feeling toward the missionaries was small but would later prove their devastating strength. The large majority of the Indians were friendly and happy to have the missionaries in the valley. The Indians came "in bands and droves . . . all keen for trade,"⁶⁶ some staying for fairly long periods of time and others moving on quite quickly.

Chief St. John returned to the valley on July 11th and found the Indians in a state of excitement, caused either from trade, missionary work, irritated Indians, or a combination of all three. The Chief's presence had a quietening effect on the Indians. He told his people the Mormons had come to help them, that he wanted the Indians to treat the Mormons right and not steal from them, and that they should all live together.⁶⁷ Billings said he told the elders:

. . . to live here and learn them [the Indians] to work he did not . . . expect us to give his men something to eat every time they came amongst us . . . he did not want us to bring any more men out here that . . . we had . . . plenty to live amongst them to . . . trade [and] learn them to work. . . .⁶⁸

⁶⁴Pace, p. 14.

⁶⁵McEwan, p. 18.

⁶⁶"The Elk Mountain Mission," July 11, 1855.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Billings, p. 7.

The afternoon of July 14th, two Indians came into camp saying Chief Arapeen⁶⁹ was coming from the settlements with letters and would soon be at the fort. His arrival with the mail was heralded with joy and appreciation by the missionaries as some of them had not heard from their families since leaving for their missions.

At daylight the following morning, according to Indian custom, Arapeen was out preaching to the Indians at the top of his voice, speaking first in the Ute language and then in Navajo. That evening a meeting was held in which Chief Arapeen, Chief St. John, and Ammon, St. John's brother, all preached and the meeting ". . . was given up to the natives. The spirit of God ruled in power visable. The work was beginning to take root in their hearts."⁷⁰ A week later several of the Indians, including one of the chiefs, requested baptism. A meeting was held at which the sacrament was administered and instructions given to the candidates by Clark A. Huntington and Andrew Jackson Allred. After the meeting they retired to the river, some two miles away, where Comahrowats was the first to be baptized--his name, however, was first changed to Nephi; Teshucktooick followed, his name being changed to Lehi; Sahpatsopanahban was next, his new name being Samuel; Joseph was the new name given to Sahuh Werewuruh before he was baptized.⁷¹ There were fourteen males and one female baptized, all of

⁶⁹Arapeen had been baptized earlier and was a good friend to the members of the Church.

⁷⁰"The Elk Mountain Mission," July 15, 1855. See also McEwan, p. 19.

⁷¹"The Elk Mountain Mission," June 22, 1855.

them receiving a new name.⁷² After the baptisms, each person was confirmed at the water's edge under the hands of President Billings, Joseph Rawlins and John McEwan,⁷³ after which the party returned to the fort where Nephi, Lehi, Samuel, and Joseph were ordained elders.⁷⁴

A few days before these baptisms took place, the last stone on the fort walls had been laid, it being only two weeks since they were started. With the completion of the fort walls, William P. Carroll, Stephen R. Moore, Christopher Columbus Perkins, John Lowry, Jr., James Ivie, John Crawford and William Holden were sent home to help with Indian affairs at Salt Creek.⁷⁵ Letters from the remaining missionaries were sent to their families in the settlements.⁷⁶

The same day the last stone of the fort was laid, Chief Arapeen and his men left the valley on their trip to the Navajos.⁷⁷ Some three weeks later he returned, accompanied by four Navajo chiefs, one of them being his brother, Chief Spoods. They came to make peace with the Utes in order that they, the Navajos, might learn the ways and customs of the missionaries. An invitation was extended to the elders to visit and teach the Navajos.⁷⁸

⁷²McEwan, pp. 20-21.

⁷³"The Elk Mountain Mission," July 22, 1855.

⁷⁴McEwan, pp. 20-21.

⁷⁵"The Elk Mountain Mission," July 19, 1855.

⁷⁶McEwan, p. 20.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Pace, p. 17.

The elders continued to hold their meetings, at which the Indians were usually in strong attendance. At one of these meetings, held the last of July, Chief Nephi was called on to speak and in part said:

That . . . [the missionaries] were the only friends they had, that he told his boys to steal nothing from us, but to live in peace, and in the spring he wanted all his men to put in grain, ect., so as to live as . . . [the elders] do and have plenty to eat.⁷⁹

The sacrament was explained and administered to all who had been baptized. At the close of the meeting the Indians "both young and old promised not to steal the least thing from . . . [the missionaries]."⁸⁰

The elders record many Indians visiting the mission during the early part of August. Several of them had never seen bread before and did not know what it was. "They were hunting friends and having heard of the Mormons they came to see them and wanted to be friends."⁸¹

On the 19th of August, three of the brethren who had gone to the settlements earlier returned to the mission with the mail. Among the many letters received was one from President Brigham Young to President Billings. A meeting was called, to which the natives were invited, and the letter was read.⁸² It instructed all missionaries to travel and live with the Indians, except enough to defend the fort. This news was received with much rejoicing by the Indians.⁸³

⁷⁹McEwan, p. 23.

⁸⁰"The Elk Mountain Mission," July 29, 1855.

⁸¹Ibid., August 6, 1855.

⁸²McEwan, pp. 26-27.

⁸³"The Elk Mountain Mission," August 19, 1855.

With the return of the three elders on the 19th and a fourth one the following day, fifteen others prepared to make a visit to the settlements and left on the 21st.⁸⁴ This left twenty-two elders to care for the mission.

The last of August saw the fort completed, with the gates hung, cabins inside the fort completed, the corral completed, water ditched into the fort, and the elders living in relative security.

At this same time President Billings, Ethan Pettet, John Lowry, Jr., William G. Petty, Clinton Williams and Clark A. Huntington, in answer to an earlier invitation by the Navajo chiefs, left the mission to visit that tribe. They planned to investigate the possibilities of trade and to learn the attitude of the Navajos concerning missionary work.⁸⁵ The elders returned from the trip on September 12th. They had traded for horses and several blankets,⁸⁶ but had made no attempt at missionary work, not even describing the mission which they had started at Grand Valley. Clark A. Huntington, the interpreter, however, had a short, private conversation with one of the chiefs, who instructed Huntington that the missionaries would be allowed and welcome to settle among the Navajos if they could find a suitable place. The stipulation given by the chief was due to the shortage of space in the very narrow canyon in which the tribe had their settlement.⁸⁷

⁸⁴McEwan, p. 27.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 28.

⁸⁶"The Elk Mountain Mission," September 12, 1855.

⁸⁷McEwan, pp. 33-34.

With the coming of September, the elders were not the only ones to notice the maturing of the crops. Chief St. John visited the missionaries "and said he had lied when he told the brethren the Indians would not steal because he had found that they had been stealing corn."⁸⁸

At the Fast Meeting in September, John McEwan was called to speak. There were several natives in the congregation and during the meeting one of them beckoned to Andrew J. Allred to leave the meeting. While going to his lodge the Indian asked Allred what McEwan was speaking about. At the lodge several Indians were gambling and after each game Allred would explain some of the things upon which McEwan had been speaking. Then followed another game and further explanation; this procedure was repeated several times when Allred was informed that two or three Indians would likely be baptized the following morning.⁸⁹ The following day, however, there were eighteen baptized instead of the anticipated two or three. They were each given a new name and three of the men were ordained elders and two ordained priests.⁹⁰ From that time on baptisms were performed almost daily.⁹¹

During the middle of September, St. John became quite sick and sent his son requesting someone to administer to him. John Crawford, James W. Hunt, Peter Stubbs, William H. Hamblin, John McEwan, and Clark A. Huntington responded to the invitation.⁹² John McEwan

⁸⁸"The Elk Mountain Mission," September 2, 1855.

⁸⁹McEwan, pp. 31-32.

⁹⁰"The Elk Mountain Mission," September 7, 1855.

⁹¹"Missionary Work Among the Indians," (Ms. copy in LDS Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City).

⁹²"The Elk Mountain Mission," September 15-16, 1855.

records the following:

A short time after [the administration] . . . one squaw commenced doctoring him and two others joined in singing, thence one young Indian got up and danced with a gun in his arms, flint lock [and] a little powder in the pan--after a while he fired it off, this was to kill the devil or drive him away, then he had a great many curious manouvers [sic] and actions. Before retiring to rest we repaired to the banks of Pack Saddle Creek, and brother John Crawford offered up prayer, thence returned to wick-i-up, found the chief sitting up and eating a little boiled watermellon and juice, he inquired if any of us wanted to eat some, it was the best he had but none of us felt hungry.⁹³

Prior to the middle of September the elders had placed guards on their crops in hopes of keeping the Indians from stealing them. Matters became worse, however, and on September 15th the missionaries started cutting the corn and hauling it to the fort in order that it might be saved.⁹⁴

In the midst of the heavy stealing, on September 19th six elders (Ethan Pettet, John Crawford, Andrew J. Allred, William P. Jones, William G. Petty, and John Lowry, Jr.) started for home. Three of them had completed their missions; the others, however, were returning for a short visit.⁹⁵ With the departure of these six men, there were sixteen left to care for the fort, crops, and livestock.

The day following the departure of these men, President Billings, returning from the crops, reported the Indians had taken all the beets, part of the turnips, part of the potatoes, all the squash and all the melons. The missionaries were then sent to harvest the remainder of the potatoes in order to have seed for the next year. This,

⁹³McEwan, pp. 34-35.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 34.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 36.

however, amounted to only three pecks.⁹⁶

The day of the coup de grace, September 23rd, the missionaries felt apprehensive and moved their herd ground. This provoked some of the Indians, who came to the fort for an explanation. While the Indians were milling around the fort, the suspicion of James A. Hunt was aroused when, about noon, he saw three Indians start in the direction of the herd. His horse being some distance from the fort, Hunt took his lariat and left immediately to catch the animal so that he might more quickly check on the herd and herders and, if necessary, assist in bringing the stock to the corral. As he left the fort on foot, Charles, the son of St. John, followed him on horseback. Hunt felt uneasy with Charles at his heels and frequently turned to look at him, at which Charles would laugh and ask why Hunt was so nervous. About a mile from the fort Charles asked Hunt to look at the stock, which he did by raising himself on tiptoe. At that time Hunt was shot with the gun Charles had recently traded from C. A. Huntington.⁹⁷ The ball entered Hunt's back about an inch and one-half to the left of the back bone and four inches above the small of his back and went downward⁹⁸ in a diagonal direction and lodged in his thigh.⁹⁹ Immediately after the shot, Charles shouted to another Indian to run and take the horses. The Indians then left, crossed

⁹⁶Billings, p. 19.

⁹⁷"The Elk Mountain Mission," September 23, 1855.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Deseret News, October 10, 1855, p. 245.

the river, and assembled on the other side.¹⁰⁰

Ephraim Wight and Sheldon B. Cutler were herding the stock at the time of the shot and apparently saw what happened. Wight drove the stock toward the fort while Cutler rode at breakneck speed to sound the alarm. As he rode into the fort shouting the alarm, President Billings jumped on the horse behind Wight and they started for Hunt. Several others followed with blankets, water, and rifles. Clinton Williams started on horseback to assist with the stock.¹⁰¹ The men placed Hunt in a blanket and started for the fort, but with a quarter of a mile to go, the Indians recrossed the river and started toward them, shooting as they approached. William M. Sterrett, Sheldon B. Cutler, and Clark A. Huntington dropped behind to act as a rear guard so that the others might carry Hunt to the fort. During the shower of bullets President Billings was hit in the right forefinger. This, however, was the only casualty among the missionaries, other than Hunt. Most of the cattle and horses were brought into the corral except a few driven off by the Indians.¹⁰²

The men in the fort were next surprised by the burning of their winter supply of hay and corn. These two items had been stacked adjacent to the corral wall. Five or six men were soon engaged at carrying water in an attempt to save the logs and thus keep the stock from escaping. They managed to save the corral but the hay and corn

¹⁰⁰Peter Gottfredson, History of Indian Depredations in Utah (Salt Lake City: Skelton Publishing Co., 1919), p. 86.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²"The Elk Mountain Mission," September 23, 1855.

were completely consumed.¹⁰³

During the afternoon, Charles was seen leading six Indians toward the mountains. Rifle shots were later heard in that direction and it was feared that Charles and his men had met and killed Edward Edwards and William Behunin who had gone into the mountains the day before to obtain fresh game for their mess.¹⁰⁴

Some of the Indians near the fort continued shooting until after dark while others came to the fort and talked to C. A. Huntington, denying they had killed the two elders on the mountain. The Indians also asked for bread and received all the missionaries had. After this the natives turned the water out of the ditch leading to the fort and later that night acknowledged killing the two hunters.¹⁰⁵

Hunt continued to live and suffer. During the night he was administered to by his companions but he soon told them he was dying. Again the elders laid their hands upon him, "blessed him and dedicated him to the Lord, asking the Lord to take him if it were His will. No sooner had they removed their hands than Brother Hunt died."¹⁰⁶ He had lived about thirteen hours after being shot.¹⁰⁷

This was not a general uprising, for there were many Indians who were sorry to see it happen. Those who participated were under no single chief. Some were Green River Utes, others were of White

¹⁰³Gottfredson, p. 87.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶"The Elk Mountain Mission," September 23, 1855.

¹⁰⁷Deseret News, October 10, 1855, p. 245.

Eye's Utes, but the main body is described as "a strolling band of thieves and murderers." However, on this occasion the cutthroats were under the leadership of Charles, son of St. John.¹⁰⁸

With three of their men dead, their winter supply of hay and corn burned, the water turned from the fort, and receiving word that the renegades had sent runners for additional help, the thirteen remaining missionaries decided it was best to abandon the mission and flee for their safety. "Without eating breakfast they left about 11 a.m.,"¹⁰⁹ taking what provisions they could carry. Being fired upon by the Indians as the missionaries left, the latter returned the fire and killed four of the belligerents. To further handicap the missionaries, Stephen Moore was sick and had to be helped all the way.¹¹⁰ However, the group made good their escape, being assisted by some of the friendly Indians.¹¹¹

After crossing the Grand River, they met an old chief and two of his sons. The chief, a brother of St. John, told the missionaries he would recover as much of their stock as possible and would see that the three dead men were buried. He later returned with eight cows,

¹⁰⁸"The Elk Mountain Mission," September 23, 1855.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰"Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (Ms. history in LDS Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City), October 2, 1855, p. 2. Hereafter referred to as "Journal History." (This account further states that the missionaries did not take any horses with them as they escaped. This, however, is an error as there were several horses taken. Richard W. James, William W. Sterrett, and Clark A. Huntington all rode horses, one of which was later killed for meat.)

¹¹¹Deseret News, October 10, 1855, p. 245.

stating the remainder had been killed or wounded.¹¹²

As the missionaries reached Green River, it was decided to send William W. Sterrett, Clark A. Huntington, and Richard W. James through the Spanish Fork trail to intercept any elders who might be returning to the mission.¹¹³ Both groups, the one following the old Spanish Trail and the one going by way of the Spanish Fork route, left on September 25th, the latter group taking only four days' rations as they expected to be home in five days.¹¹⁴

The missionaries under Billings reached Huntington Creek on September 27th. There they left two notices for any missionaries who might be returning to the mission from their visit home, informing them of the abandonment. With the exception of John McEwan, this group reached Manti on September 30th. McEwan became lost while crossing the range of mountains west of present Emery County and did not arrive in Manti until October 4th.

Meanwhile the trio traveling by the Spanish Fork route became lost, which resulted in their missing Oliver B. Huntington and some elders who had been reassigned from the White Mountain Mission. As Huntington and his companions were about half way to the abandoned mission, Chief Spoods, a brother to Arapeen, came into the missionaries' camp about midnight and told them of the late uprising at the mission. The elders then turned about and started for Manti, arriving

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³"The Elk Mountain Mission," September 25, 1855.

¹¹⁴Deseret News, November 17, 1855, p. 280.

there a few days after Billings and his party.¹¹⁵

The three elders who had become lost along the Spanish Fork route encountered some trying experiences. The fifth day, the one on which they should have reached home, they were still lost in the mountains, following one dead-end trail and retracing their steps only to follow another. October 5th saw them eating rawhide moccasin soles in an attempt to get some nourishment. That afternoon they discovered a fresh Indian trail and followed it until dark. Their supper that night consisted of a portion of the small dog which had been accompanying them. The following day they were much surprised when the Indian trail led them to the Green River.¹¹⁶ That night they hung the remainder of their dog meat out to freeze and then roasted it the following morning, saying that it tasted much better that way.¹¹⁷

The trail, on the afternoon of October 7th, led them to the Indian camp. Sterrett says:

Some might think it strange that we should want once more to get among a portion of the same tribe which a few days before had sought our lives and drove us from our property and from our homes. But we trusted in the God of Israel; we had prayed that he would direct us to some lamanite [sic] camp, and now he was about to do it we felt to praise his holy name. We found them to be a very friendly band. The chief took us to his lodge and set before us a large tin pan full of the choicest pieces of fat deer meat, to which we did ample justice.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵Huntington, p. 100.

¹¹⁶It would likely have been near Price, Utah, that the missionaries took the wrong trail and entered the canyons north of Price rather than going to the west and northwest. The location at which they reached the Green River is not known, but it would likely be some place below present-day Ouray, Utah.

¹¹⁷Deseret News, November 17, 1855, p. 280.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

After resting a day or so, the elders continued on their journey. The twenty-pound supply of meat which they had received from the Indians was soon exhausted, and the night of the 12th saw them cooking rawhide straps from their saddles. Sterrett says they all felt quite "unwell" the following morning. Their clothes had been badly torn from their bodies by this time and their shoes were nearly worn out, leaving their feet exposed to the rocks, prickly pears, and briars.

On the 15th they approached a large stream in which the water was running west. After discussing their route they decided to go up stream, and after traveling about eight miles they camped for the night.¹¹⁹ Sterrett says, "[I] . . . had nothing to eat . . . [and] was very hungry . . . [so] killed a worn out horse, and roasted a part for supper. I was here directed in a dream which way to go to get out of the mountains."¹²⁰

The following day was spent in camp jerking some of the horse meat and resting. Sterrett told his dream to his companions, and they agreed to follow the directions he suggested.

On the 17th they reversed their route and went down the stream. They camped about nine or ten o'clock that night, still not knowing where they were. Of the morning of October 18th Sterrett later records:

So strong was our belief that we were near the valleys of the mountains, that we did not eat any of our meat, but pushed on for five miles, and to our unspeakable joy we discovered Utah Lake; then did our hearts melt before our Father in heaven, and we felt

¹¹⁹This was the Provo River. After reaching the river they went upstream to the approximate vicinity of present Heber, Utah.

¹²⁰Deseret News, November 17, 1855, p. 280.

to praise his name for delivering us from the difficulty we have been placed in, and from the danger to which we have been exposed.¹²¹

Thus, twenty-four days after the trio left their companions at Green River, they joyously entered the city of Provo, where they learned that President Billings, upon reaching Manti, had officially closed the mission by releasing all the missionaries.¹²² Though the mission was never re-opened, the short, dramatic experiences of these missionaries have become a saga of missionary work among the Utes.

There are undoubtedly many reasons for the failure of the mission. One of the major reasons was the failure on the part of the missionaries to leave the fort and live with the Indians, as instructed by President Young. This would have resulted in a more friendly relationship between the two groups. However, as it was, the missionaries kept themselves somewhat aloof by using the fort as a means of protection. The fort was a sign to the Indians that they were not trusted by the missionaries.

The friction that resulted from some of the Indians helping themselves to the elders' crops may have had some effect upon the uprising. There were feelings of animosity exhibited from the time the missionaries started the fort. Having a knowledge of these conditions, Billings was not too cautious in permitting so many elders to return home for a visit at one time. Thus, with only a few missionaries present, the belligerent Indians may have felt they could stage a successful uprising.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Huntington, p. 100.

Had the uprising not occurred and had the missionaries remained in the Grand Valley, they undoubtedly would have been able to give great assistance to the Indians. This assistance, however, would likely have been more in their temporal rather than their spiritual needs. Even though there were probably more than fifty Indians baptized, it is doubtful that their lives were changed much. Their background, customs, and living conditions were not conducive for strict adherence to this new way of worshipping and living.

The disaster at the mission was one of the major reasons for permanent settlers not wanting to enter the valley. Thus, Neff says, the permanent settlement of the valley was deferred for a full decade.¹²³

¹²³Neff, p. 237.

CHAPTER III

THE LAS VEGAS MISSION

The inception of the project took place in the spring of 1855, when several elders were called to open an Indian mission at the Las Vegas Springs. It was an extreme sacrifice for most of the men to equip themselves for such an undertaking. They left their homes with what they hoped were enough provisions to last them until more could be raised. The desert proved a major obstacle in reaching their destination. The extremely hot summer days at the mission made farming quite difficult. After the laborious task of planting and sowing was completed the results were discouraging, due to the soil being heavily impregnated with saleratus as well as being contaminated with worms. What crops the missionaries did raise were constantly threatened by the local Indians who felt little restraint in helping themselves. Several of the Indians were baptized into the Church, but this seemed to have little effect on changing their customs and mode of living. A year after the mission was started Nathaniel V. Jones came to the fort with instructions to take what men and supplies he needed to assist him in mining lead. Because of the authoritative position of Jones in requesting foodstuffs and missionaries and inferring that William Bringham, president of the mission, was subservient to Jones, a breach was started between the two. This breach, which was nourished by a compost of jealousy and mistrust,

was later to result in Bringham being dropped from the mission and disfellowshipped from the Church. Conditions under which these two groups, the miners and the missionaries, were living should have called for close and diligent cooperation, but because of the estranged relationship between the two leaders there were dissensions and ill feelings between the two groups. These ill feelings, unsuccessful attempts to adequately smelt the galena lead ore, and the frequent raids by the Indians caused the miners to abandon their project and start for home in February, 1857, and the bulk of the missionaries soon followed.

Las Vegas is a Spanish term meaning "The Meadows." This meadow was located in the southeast corner of present-day Nevada, where the city of Las Vegas is situated. The men in the Writers' Program state that "By 1830 . . . the big springs and meadows . . . were a welcome camping place . . ."¹ to the caravans of traders traveling to or from California. John C. Fremont was at the springs in 1844 and Jefferson Hunt, sent to obtain seeds and foodstuffs for the Mormon Church, traveled this shortened route in 1847.

There were various objectives or reasons the Church had for wanting to establish a mission at the Springs. One of these is found in the Fifth General Epistle of the Church given in April, 1851. It reads in part:

Elder Amasa Lyman and Charles C. Rich left this place early in March . . . for the purpose of establishing a settlement in the southern part of California . . . near [the] Williams Ranch and Cajon

¹Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Nevada, Nevada, A Guide to the Silver State (Portland, Oregon: Binfords and Mort, 1940), p. 184.

Pass, between which and Iron County we design to establish settlements as speedily as possible . . . so as to have a continued line of stations and places of refreshment between this point and the Pacific. . . .²

A second reason may have stemmed from the hopes of finding and smelting ore into needed metals. Two other reasons, the same as those involved in the establishment of other Rocky Mountain missions, were: to act as guards or barriers along one of the strategic routes into the Great Basin and as George W. Bean says, to "teach those wild Piede Indians the blessings of peace and industry, and honesty and kindred principles"³ in order that their living conditions might be improved. A fifth reason is given by Neff as to "protect immigrants and the United States' mail from the Indians."⁴

With hopes of achieving the objectives or reasons just stated, the Church called thirty men⁵ at the April conference of 1855 to found a mission at the Las Vegas Springs.⁶

Most of the missionaries had families to support and some of them

²Deseret News, April 8, 1851, p. 235.

³Flora D. B. Horne (comp.), Autobiography of George Washington Bean and His Family Records (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Co., 1945), p. 115.

⁴Neff, p. 234.

⁵The missionaries were: James T. S. Allred, George W. Bean, James A. Bean, William Bringham, William Burston, Sidney Carter, Benjamin Cluff, Joseph C. Clowes, William S. Covert, Edward Cuthbert, William Foster, Ariot L. Hale, William Hamblin, Benjamin R. Hulse, Richard James, William P. Jones, Jr., Albert Knapp, William Maxwell, Joseph Milliam, Ira S. Miles, Amasa E. Miriam, William C. Mitchell, Jr., William Nixon, Stephen C. Perry, Thomas E. Ricks, William C. A. Smoot, George G. Snyder, John Steele, and William Vance.

⁶Neff says that thirty men were called in 1854 to establish a mission at Las Vegas but for some reason did not attempt to do so. (Neff, p. 234.)

had good opportunities for financial advancement, but because of their devotion to the Church and respect for those in authority they left their families and employment to meet the request of the Church. George W. Bean is a good example. He was employed by Col. Steptoe in exploring a wagon road on the south side of Great Salt Lake. As the exploration was completed the men returned to Salt Lake where Col. Steptoe, needing Bean for his ability as an Indian interpreter, offered him five dollars per day plus all provisions furnished if he would take a new assignment. Under such elaborate financial prospects one is able to see why Bean would record, "I was stunned to learn my name had been listed and voted upon to go on a mission."⁷ He went to Brigham Young and had his call verified. President Young knew of Bean's offer from Col. Steptoe but still felt Bean was needed as an interpreter for the mission. Bean said his religion came first and he would be glad to serve wherever he was called. Showing the spirit of Bean's wife, and this would likely be typical of most other families left behind, he says, "She assured me she would take good care of things in my absence and had faith all would be well with us."⁸

At a meeting on April 22nd, the elders were set apart for their mission and decided to depart on May 7th. Brigham instructed them as to their obligations and Orson Hyde advised them to raise a crop that season. Missionaries living south of Salt Lake were notified of the plans of departure so that they might be prepared to join the caravan as it moved south. However, the party was delayed and did not leave until May 10th.

⁷Horne, p. 114.

⁸Horne, p. 117.

Prior to their departure a Mrs. Spruce from Grantsville gave Ariot L. Hale "about a dozen cotton seeds and requested . . . [him] to plant them when . . . [he] got to Las Vegas."⁹

Upon reaching Juab Valley the missionaries were called together by President Bringham and organized into a company. William S. Covert was chosen first counselor, Ira S. Miles second counselor, Ariot L. Hale captain of the guard, and Ira S. Miles appointed clerk pro tem of the company.¹⁰ Moving on to Nephi they were overtaken by some elders from Provo, some of whom were going to the Elk Mountain Mission and some to Las Vegas. It was there the decision was reached to allow Richard James and William Hamblin, who had been assigned to the Las Vegas Mission, to go to the Elk Mountain Mission in exchange for William A. Follett and John W. Turner.¹¹

President Young and other Church officials preceded the missionaries into southern Utah and there called additional elders to serve at Las Vegas. As the caravan reached the Sevier River, they were joined by Amasa Miriam, Sylvester Hulet, and Artemas Millett, the last two being called while Brigham Young was in Manti.¹² While the company passed near

⁹"Ariot L. Hale Diary," No. 3 (original Ms. in LDS Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City), p. 3. Hereafter referred to under the author's name. One of Hale's diaries covering the early history of the mission is lost. When he returned home for a visit in 1856, Brigham Young told him he did not have to return to the mission. He remained home and thus his diary ends as far as the mission is concerned.

¹⁰Jenson, p. 125. (This history by Jenson is almost a direct copy of the mission journal with the exception of a few letters being added to his article. The writer has compared them and for convenience is using the published account by Jenson.)

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Jenson, p. 126.

Cedar City, Bringham and others went to the iron works to see how the ore was smelted and moulded. Isaac C. Haight, who was living at Cedar City, wrote to Erastus Snow, after the missionaries had been there:

From the knowledge that I have of most of the men who compose that mission, I feel sanguine that much good will be done to better the condition of these poor and degraded sons of the desert, not only their temporary condition, by teaching them how to plow, plant, sow, ect., and raise their own living without depending upon the precarious means of subsisting on the little game that exists in the sterile regions, and of killing the cattle and horses of travelers, but also in their spiritual condition, by delivering them from the gross superstition of their fathers and bringing them to a knowledge of the covenants that the Lord made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with Lehi, Nephi, and Moroni. . . .¹³

Pushing on, the elders reached the bend of the Santa Clara, where the road leaves for the Rio Virgin, on June 3rd. There they complied with the instructions given by Orson Hyde, while in Salt Lake, by all being re-baptized and re-confirmed.¹⁴ Upon reaching the Muddy River they met Captain Rufus Allen and his four men who had been sent to explore the Colorado River. Allen and his party were waiting for the missionaries so that they might cross the desert together. George W. Bean says, "Brother Allen and his company [were] baptizing Indians by scores and hundreds. . . . The Chiefs were all baptized and received English names such as Thomas, Rufus, Isaac, ect. . . ." ¹⁵ The mission journal confirms this wherein it is recorded: "They [Allen and his men] had baptized about 230 Indians since they . . . arrived [at the Muddy]." ¹⁶

¹³"Journal History," June 9, 1855, p. 2.

¹⁴Jenson, pp. 129-30.

¹⁵Horne, p. 118.

¹⁶Jenson, p. 131.

From the Muddy River to the springs at Las Vegas the men were faced with a fifty-two mile waterless route. The complete company rested on June 12th, and the following day Bringham and about half the men took the strongest teams and started across the desert. Their kegs and barrels were all filled with water in order that the cattle might be refreshed and even revived while crossing the desert. The remaining men and teams were to wait at the Muddy for twenty-four hours and then start. The advance party arrived at the Las Vegas meadows about three p.m. on June 14th. Several of the animals could not make it and water had to be taken back to them. Water and teams from the advance party were also sent back to refresh and help the second group. The day after the advance company reached the Springs they were joined by the second group.¹⁷ G. W. Bean was in the second group and says: "We reached the water at last, also fine meadow grass. This was . . . the hottest weather I ever saw. A few Moacoats, Muddy Indians, came with us but we found no natives at the Las Vegas Springs."¹⁸

The day after the second party reached the meadows, Bringham and a few others went to examine the springs and explore the meadows. Some interesting accounts have been left of the springs. John Charles Fremont and his exploration party visited the springs on May 3, 1844. Fremont says:

Two narrow streams of clear water, four or five feet deep, gush suddenly, with a quick current, from two singularly large springs. These and other water in the basin pass out in a gap to the eastward. The taste of the water is good, but rather too warm to be agreeable, the temperature being 71° in the one and 73° in the other. They,

¹⁷Jenson, pp. 131-32.

¹⁸Horne, p. 119.

however, offered a delightful bathing place.¹⁹

G. W. Bean writes:

. . . a pretty clear stream of water, about the size of a common millrace, comes from two springs about four miles west of our location.

The . . . springs . . . are from 20 to 30 feet in diameter and at the depth of two feet the white sand bubbles all over as tho it was [sic] the bottom, but upon wading in there is no foundation there, and it has been sounded to the depth of 60 feet without finding bottom; and a person cannot sink to the armpits, on account of the strong upward rush of the water.²⁰

Other accounts say the stream is "about three feet wide and fifteen inches deep, having a tolerable swift current, . . ." ²¹ being confined to a deep, narrow channel.²²

Bean describes the meadows as "a nice patch of grass about half a mile wide and two or three miles long, situated at the foot of a bench 40 or 50 feet high. The valley faces east. . . ." ²³

With the exploration of the meadows completed, it was decided to build the fort near the "center of the valley or basin" ²⁴ on a rise of ground close by the creek.²⁵

The day following the exploration of the meadows was Sunday. The men built a bowery in the forenoon and then held a meeting in the

¹⁹John Charles Fremont, Narratives of Exploration and Adventure (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1956), p. 408.

²⁰Deseret News, July 25, 1855, p. 158.

²¹Ibid., September 26, 1855, p. 232.

²²Ibid., August 29, 1855, p. 198.

²³Ibid., July 25, 1855, p. 158.

²⁴Ibid., September 26, 1855, p. 232.

²⁵Ibid., July 25, 1855, p. 158.

afternoon. President Bringhurst gave the opening prayer of the meeting in which he "consecrated the place unto the Lord."²⁶ He then spoke to the missionaries, and after expressing gratitude for their safe arrival said he hoped the elders,

felt the responsibility of their mission and that they would do justice to the same; that they would all remember that they were to set an example before the Lamanites of sobriety and industry, and, in short, everything requisite to civilize and enlighten the degraded 'sons of the promise.'²⁷

A few days after arriving at the Springs some of the men began laying out the fort site, while others were farming or establishing an irrigation system. The garden lots were laid off along the bottom land, just below the fort site, each man receiving a quarter acre lot.²⁸ Besides the garden areas there were fifteen, five-acre lots laid off for wheat, corn, etc., the men feeling this was all they would be able to care for the first year as the ground was quite heavily covered with mesquite brush.²⁹ Bean writes, the "farming land is not plentiful . . . as most of the soil is either too sandy or has too much saleratus. . . ."³⁰ The crops were planted and most of them did very well at first. Bringhurst wrote on July 10, 1855, saying the corn was growing one and one-half inches in twenty-four hours.³¹ Ariot L. Hale planted the few cotton seeds which Mrs. Sprouce had given him. He records:

²⁶Jenson, p. 132.

²⁷Ibid., p. 133.

²⁸Ibid., p. 134.

²⁹Deseret News, September 26, 1855, p. 232.

³⁰Ibid., July 25, 1855, p. 158.

³¹"Journal History," July 25, 1855, p. 1.

They came up and grew butiful. When about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet high they begun to but and form the balls for the cotton. Every mishennary and passer by went to see my hills of cotton. The largest cotton ball was as big as a small hen egg when it burst open it was butiful. as big as a mans fist.³²

A sample was sent to Brigham Young the following winter.

Present at the elders' meetings on the second Sunday at the mission were "about thirty Indians . . . who had come in the day before. They behaved very well, listening to the preaching with great attention, although not understanding it."³³ Elder Ira S. Miles had not been enjoying good health since before reaching the mission, and it was decided to let him return home.³⁴ He had been second counselor as well as secretary for the mission. Rufus Allen and his men also returned, having made an unsuccessful attempt to explore the Colorado River for navigation.³⁵

At the meeting the following Sunday, President Bringham said he did not feel right about keeping Ira S. Miles as his second counselor and as clerk, "as he [Miles] had, at different times, manifested a contentious, wicked spirit."³⁶ Other missionaries expressed the same feeling so he was released from both positions. George G. Snyder was then chosen second counselor and George W. Bean as clerk.³⁷

On July 3rd the missionaries decided to organize themselves into

³²Hale, pp. 3-4. (Hale has left a very interesting diary but his grammar and spelling are not always correct. These errors are so numerous that the writer feels it would greatly distract from the entry to add [sic] after each error and so has refrained from such usage.)

³³Jenson, p. 137.

³⁴Deseret News, July 25, 1855, p. 158.

³⁵Jenson, p. 140.

³⁶Ibid., p. 142.

³⁷Ibid.

a military company called the Las Vegas Guards. John Steele was selected as captain. Part of the guard awakened the rest of the missionaries at daybreak the next morning by a salute of firearms. The afternoon was spent in singing and listening to speeches and toasts. They even made a liberty pole and hoisted their own stars and stripes. Concerning the "Stars and Stripes," John Steele wrote:

I went to work, took a piece of cloth, tore it in strips, got some red flannel, tore it in strips; took some blue and made stars; and by the assistance of Brothers Foster and Hulet, I had a very nice little flag ready for flying . . . others were preparing a mast; as we had no good timber, we got a mesquite stump, a false wagon tongue, and a tall willow, and made a pole 30 feet high, shook out our flag and at the sound of the guns, gave three cheers, led by President Bringhurst, and retired to the bowery. . . .³⁸

A few days after the July 4th celebration, President Bringhurst wrote the following:

Shortly after we arrived here, we assembled all the chiefs, and made an agreement (treaty) with them for permission to make a settlement on their lands. We agreed to treat them well, and they were to observe the same conduct towards us and with all white men. Peace was to be preserved with all immigrants traveling through this country, as well as with the settlers.

If the travelers through this country will use the Indians well, there will be no trouble with them, but if they are mistreated, they are ready and able to take revenge on the first opportunity. They recount many instances of unprovoked murder committed by white men, who have traveled this road, but they are now willing to bury all animosities, and to once more try the conduct of white men.³⁹

On one occasion, after the elders had held their evening prayers, Bringhurst,

Exhorted the brethren to set a good example in all things before the Lamanites that were in their midst. He hoped they would be more careful in the future in regard to some practices that were prevalent to some degree in camp, which were bordering on indecency.⁴⁰

³⁸Jenson, pp. 154-55.

³⁹Deseret News, August 8, 1855, p. 174.

⁴⁰Jenson, p. 147.

Bean says:

The Indians were very shy at first, but good kind treatment won them over in time. . . . We sent out runners to gather in the Lords of the Soil. . . . After they learned our intentions, they made good promises and we made some. . . .

The Indians were soon partially converted to habits of industry, and helped us to grub the land, make adobes, attend the mason and especially to herd the stock. . . . They irrigated our land and assisted in . . . [the] construction of . . . our mission fort. . . .

. . . we taught them to be honest, truthful, industrious and peaceful, and to keep good feelings among the Indians and with our people.⁴¹

The next major activity of the missionaries was to locate timber to use in the construction of fort gates, door frames, tables, etc. Bean says, "Our prospects for timber are not very flattering."⁴² Bringham, accompanied by eight of the missionaries and an Indian boy for a guide, took a week's rations and left in search of the timber. Steele has this to say:

At length [we] came to a canyon some 10 miles north of the California road, and found 80 or 90 trees, varying from six inches to two and a half feet through; some of them were good trees, but most of them were not first rate. Our guide informed us that was all the timber in the country; we told him that we wanted to go further and see some more timber, but he said it was a great way off, and there was no water near at hand.

After arriving at the Las Vegas we found the distance to the timber to be over 20 miles, 15 miles hard road--gravel and rocks--and the rest sand.⁴³

The crops were doing well by this time but were constantly threatened by the livestock. Thus the elders decided to use the mesquite brush to fence in their crops. The brush was well covered with sharp thorns but Lorenzo Brown said it was handled quite easily,

⁴¹Horne, pp. 119-20.

⁴²Deseret News, July 25, 1855, p. 158.

⁴³Ibid., September 26, 1855, p. 232.

. . . by having a thick shirt and buckskin pants and mittens. . . . Our manner of making fence is to dig a trench about a foot deep and set the brush in it [with the tops sticking out] and after fill the ditch.⁴⁴

John Steele describes it as making a very good fence and says by the last of July they had about half of their fields fenced.⁴⁵

While some of the men were working on the fence, others were building a dam across the stream, building bridges across the channel, or working on the corral. The corral was to lie adjacent to the fort, being as long as the fort and eight rods wide.⁴⁶ The corral was completed on July 28, 1855, which made it possible to lock up the livestock at night.⁴⁷

It was during this period, the latter part of July, that John Steele wrote of the condition of the missionaries and Indians. He said:

As to the health of the camp it is tolerable good, with the exception of a general weakness, the brethren not being able to work half as hard as they used to.

The reason of this is, in the first place, the brethren have worked very hard to raise corn, etc., hearing the news that all the wheat crop is destroyed at home, and, in the next place, the weather is very hot; [the men are also hindered by] not having light suitable clothing fit for the season. The last and principal reason is, they have nothing (with a very few exceptions) to eat but dry bread, and water for drink, and for a change they have water and bread as the cows are mostly dry.

But still we are not discouraged, for we hope for better times ahead; and if we don't live to see it maybe our children will. There is a first-rate spirit manifested among the Lamanites; they have not stolen anything from us yet; some of them have come into camp rather suspiciously, as they have been shot at and drove [sic] away from the camps of passing emigrants who have been on the road for years; they will show us the bullet holes and marks they have received from white

⁴⁴"Lorenzo Brown Diary" (original Ms. in LDS Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah), June 23, 1856.

⁴⁵Deseret News, September 26, 1855, p. 232.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Jenson, p. 155.

men and they will tell us they will try and forget it, although their brothers have been killed, etc.⁴⁸

It seems there was not the spirit of cooperation and love among the missionaries as there should have been. This is borne out by a proposal for a second exploration for timber. President Bringham asked for volunteers for the new undertaking. Some of the men who volunteered did not have teams and wagons so after the evening prayer meeting Bringham asked the remainder of the men to volunteer the necessary items to outfit the expedition. Of those who had horses or mules the only person to offer his to the expedition was James Bean. The following evening Bringham,

. . . gave the brethren a severe lecture for their selfishness in withholding their animals from those that were going out for the benefit of the whole company; also that he hoped that the blacksmith would be more accommodating in shoeing the horses for the brethren; if not, he would buy the tools and get the work done otherwise.⁴⁹

During the month of August there was considerable time spent in making adobes with which they planned to build the fort. At their evening meeting on September 3rd they discussed the hauling of stone for its foundation. George W. Bean wrote from the mission on September 11th and said: "Our fort . . . is now progressing rapidly; the walls . . . are to be 14 feet high [on the side where the two-story homes were], two feet thick at the bottom, and one at top."⁵⁰

By December 10th the fort walls were completed to a height of nearly eight feet.⁵¹ A week before Bean wrote this letter a drawing

⁴⁸Deseret News, September 26, 1855, p. 232.

⁴⁹Jenson, p. 156.

⁵⁰Deseret News, October 10, 1855, p. 246.

⁵¹Ibid., January 9, 1856, p. 349.

was held which determined where each man would build within the fort.⁵² Ariot L. Hale said the "mess" of which he was a member had completed laying the adobes for their house inside the fort and October 12th they obtained some sawed lumber and commenced putting on the roof. The following day the roof was completed and the men of the mess moved from their wagons into the house.⁵³ John Steele said the fort was located "on a beautiful spot on the California road, on an eminence that overlooks the valley to the south, east, and north, but cannot be seen until you get within 300 yards of it coming from the west."⁵⁴

It seems, from the mission journal and the diaries, that the missionaries began to have more contact with the Indians during the months of September, October, and November. The entry in the mission journal for September 2nd reads: "A good many Indians were at meeting this day. They were well behaved and appeared interested and anxious to understand the nature of the proceedings of the meeting."⁵⁵ Bean says they were "fairly honest and soon joined the Church. During the summer most of the adults were baptized and in many ways showed improvement."⁵⁶ Ariot L. Hale records that several Indians presented themselves for baptism but President Bringham said he "wished them to thurrally [*sic*] understand the prinsiples of our religion before they went into the watters of baptism."⁵⁷ However, President Brigham Young had advised

⁵²Jenson, p. 162.

⁵³Hale, p. 2.

⁵⁴Deseret News, September 26, 1855, p. 232.

⁵⁵Jenson, p. 162.

⁵⁶Horne, p. 120.

⁵⁷Hale, p. 2.

the missionaries to baptize the Indians,

. . . whenever they desire it. Tis true they are ignorant and necessarily have a very poor and imperfect understanding of our principles. Still they will have a better chance to obtain a knowledge of them if they are baptized and confirmed, as ignorant, low and degraded as they are, still they actually possess a more consistent intelligent view of God, angels and holy beings than the Gentile Christian nations. They are as susceptible of receiving the Holy Ghost as a great portion of our people were when they first embraced the gospel.⁵⁸

During the early part of November, Hale makes the entry that several of the Indians were attending the meetings. At one of these meetings,

. . . the Indian chief arose to his feet and talked most powerful he said that they wanted to be baptized that they mint might be good men and women. . . . President Bringham concluded to baptize some of the Indians. After meeting we made a dam in the Vegas and our president went down into the watter and baptized over 50 Indians their chief took the lead.⁵⁹

John Steele wrote on October 1, 1855, that,

the Indians here desire very much to be baptized and the head chief, Antunip, came to our prayer meeting and said he wanted all the 'Mormons' to lay their hands on him, on his head, arms, and all over his body, for he was sick all over, and pray to the Lord for him that he might get better.⁶⁰

The maturing crops revealed two discouraging things that first year. One, the Indians were not as honest as the elders had supposed. They would go into the gardens at night and help themselves to what items they wanted. This necessitated putting night guards on their gardens. The elders felt sorry for the Indians in their state of hunger and need, yet the missionaries could also see that they likely did not have enough to last them for the next year. Concerning their condition John

⁵⁸Jenson, pp. 165-66.

⁵⁹Hale, p. 4.

⁶⁰Jenson, p. 170.

Steele wrote: "I do not blame them for stealing anything to eat, for there is not anything in all this country for them to eat except mesquite and lizards."⁶¹ The second major discouragement was the yield received from their grain crops. The gardens did quite well as they were next to the stream, but the five-acre lots, wherein they had the grain planted, had too much saleratus in the soil. Steele said:

I planted three acres of corn, oats, peas, beans, etc., and my oats came up most beautiful; [sic] so did everything else, but, in spite of all my exertions to save it, the saleratus killed it, and I will not have three bushels of corn on it. . . . there is not one particle of ground within 20 miles of us, with the exception of our garden, that is rich enough to bring bunch grass.⁶²

During the latter part of August it was decided to take what cattle could be spared, thirty head in all, to California and trade for horses and mules. President Bringham and five others were to make the trip. William S. Covert was to be in charge at the mission during Bringham's absence. Being gone almost six weeks, Bringham and the others returned on November 2nd. They brought forty-nine head of mules and mares, most of them being wild. These animals were divided the following day among the several owners, all concerned being well satisfied.⁶³

When Bringham and his five companions returned from California, they found some of the elders "preparing to leave for a visit with their families."⁶⁴ Brigham Young had written earlier and said: "If any of you wish to come in this fall on a visit, I have no objections, but by no means leave the mission spare of men."⁶⁵ A few days later Bringham

⁶¹Jenson, p. 170.

⁶²Ibid., p. 169.

⁶³Ibid., p. 175.

⁶⁴Hale, p. 122.

⁶⁵Jenson, p. 167.

granted permission to William S. Covert, George G. Snyder, Joseph S. Milam, John Steele, Stephen C. Perry, Benjamin R. Hulse, William Burston, James T. S. Allred, John W. Turner, Edward Cuthbert, and James A. Bean to return home for a visit.⁶⁶ John Steele had written to George A. Smith earlier, saying:

I should like very much to go home this fall as my family are completely destitute of the comforts or even the necessaries of life. . . . not that I wish to neglect my public duty for the sake of a private one, but when I hear that there is no meal in the barrel, and the bishop has none, and no money to buy any with in the treasury, it makes me feel as if my little babies are hungry.⁶⁷

Thus Steele welcomed the opportunity to return to his family for a visit. The elders left with the understanding and agreement that they would return to the mission by March 10, 1856.⁶⁸ President Young said if any of the elders returning home wanted to bring their families back to the mission with them they were most welcome to do so.⁶⁹

With the uprising at Elk Mountain and a threatened disturbance at Green River, because of the missionaries beating an Indian, President Brigham Young wrote a warning letter to the missionaries at Las Vegas, which read in part:

It is often the case that Indians get saucy and act very provoking, steal, etc. . . . This requires great forbearance and judgment and wisdom on the part of our brethren to manage and control them right, and not take such a course as to provoke hostilities with them.

For my part I would rather that you or any of the rest of the missionaries would leave and come home than to pursue such a course as will lead on to angry and hostile feelings at every little annoyance caused by their folly, theft, etc. They do not know any better,

⁶⁶Jenson, p. 176.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 172.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 176.

⁶⁹Hale, p. 5.

and we should know better than to blame and seek to chastise them for their ignorance, for it in reality amounts to nothing more. . . . if they do take some of your grain and vegetables, why understand it is no less than you might expect from them in their present low estate, and that it is our hope and desire, through the help of the Lord, to make them better.⁷⁰

The late fall of their first year at the mission saw the missionaries with their fort well completed⁷¹ and most of the men living in their houses. Two mills were soon to be in operation for the benefit of the mission: a sawmill to produce lumber for doors, tables, etc., and a grist mill to produce their flour, the latter being ordered from California. For their personal advancement and entertainment the Las Vegas Lyceum Club was organized,⁷² and Bean opened a school to teach the Paiute language to the missionaries.⁷³

George W. Bean gave a fair summary of the accomplishments of the mission during its first summer and fall and a current picture of the Indian situation when he wrote:

Our fort is now enclosed with the exception of hanging the gates. The crops turned out tolerable well and we are now enjoying the fruits of our labors in the shape of potatoes, turnips, hulled corn, and squashes. The last named article is considered a lawful tender by our red brethren for anything they have to dispose of. They will work all day tending mason or other work for two squashes sic not much larger than a person's head. Corn they are not so fond of as many of them have not teeth enough in their heads to grind it after it gets ripe.

⁷⁰Jenson, pp. 179-80.

⁷¹Contrary to several opinions, the fort wall was fourteen feet high only on the side where the homes were. This wall was two feet thick to a height of seven feet and a foot thick for an additional seven feet. The other three walls were something like seven or eight feet high.

⁷²Jenson, p. 183

⁷³Hale, pp. 6-7.

We have thus far been enabled to gain favor in the sight of the Lamanites in this region of the country, and notwithstanding the bad reputation these have heretofore had, they have respected ourselves and property as religiously as though it was no hardship for them. . . . We have not been able to give them much of an insight of our principles but what little they do understand, they as strictly adhere to as their more refined neighbors. We have baptized 57 of them already, and many more will be on hand when the weather gets warmer. . . . their convictions of religion are rather shallow at present; still they have perfect confidence in all that we are able to tell them. . . . If we only had plenty to feed them for their labor, we could govern and control them to the very letter. Many of them intend to farm near us the coming season. The Utahs have been down to the Muddy buying up squaws and children, and those about here are in great consternation, fearing they will visit here and force them to sell their squaws, and they say they have not enough for themselves, or they would have provided some of us with wives before this.⁷⁴

The last of December, 1855, the missionaries staked out pre-emption claims, covering about eight miles in length and a mile or more in width, the creek running through it lengthwise. This precaution was taken just in case the area turned out to be in New Mexico.⁷⁵ Also during this time, Bringham presented Sylvester Hulet before the remainder of the elders and made a complaint against him that he had,

manifested a spirit of opposition from time to time to the counsels and regulations given by the authorities at Las Vegas and he [Bringham] considered that Hulet had used his influence to prevent others in camp from fulfilling the requirements made of them. Hulet acknowledged in part and said that he was sorry and would try to live more strictly to the duties of his calling.⁷⁶

The Christmas and New Year holidays were spent in an unusual manner. For Christmas the men mounted their horses and went on an unsuccessful fox hunt.⁷⁷ For the New Year celebration part of them tried

⁷⁴Jenson, pp. 187-88.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 191.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 192-93.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 192.

taming and breaking the mules and mares recently brought from California,⁷⁸ while others went to the warm springs and enjoyed a bath.⁷⁹

On January 10, 1856, the mail carrier brought "documents appointing a post office at Las Vegas, to be called Bringham's P. O., Las Vegas, ----- County, Territory of New Mexico, William Bringham, Postmaster."⁸⁰ The same day President Bringham made arrangements to have the mail carrier deliver one thousand grape cuttings, fruit trees, and seeds from California.⁸¹

Shortly after the middle of January, two Paiute Indians came to the fort stating that their people would like to see the missionaries. Bringham told them that they would be visited around the last of the month. Accordingly, on January 30, 1856, Bringham, G. W. Bean, Ariot L. Hale, William C. A. Smoot, Albert Miles, Sylvester Hulet, William C. Mitchell, William Foster and Chief Joshua, acting as guide, took leave of the fort to visit the Indians along the Colorado, the Rio Virgin and the Muddy Rivers. The main purpose of the trip was to get acquainted with as many tribes as possible.⁸² The plans had originally been to visit the tribes east of the Colorado, but because of their hostile nature the missionaries changed their mind. Near the Rio Virgin, Bean says they discovered tall, transparent ledges of crystal salt as clear

⁷⁸Hale, p. 7.

⁷⁹Horne, p. 123.

⁸⁰Jenson, p. 108.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Horne, p. 120.

as window glass and seemingly inexhaustable.⁸³ While in the Muddy River region the missionaries noticed the Indians using salt in their cooking, which was something new for the general run of Indians. The elders persuaded Chief Joshua, their guide, to take them to the salt mine by giving him a shirt. They were then taken up the mountain and through the portal, being told they were the first white men ever to be taken inside the mine.⁸⁴ After leaving the salt mountain, the missionaries visited a few villages while traveling up the Muddy River. Hale says:

Jest before night we found a band of Indians that was painted and on the war path. They were sulky and would not talk and acted verry strange. They had their bows and poyson arrows⁸⁵ reddy for use if their chief had gave the word. Our Indian guide became frightened and tried to get away from us but was prevented after a while we found out that their chief had a verry sick child. . . . they said the grate spiret was mad becaus they alowed white men to com among them they said if the childe dide that we was all to be kild his hole band was ready to carry the excrution into affect. President Bringham requested to see the cheief and the child and talk with him but for a long time we was deprived of the prevelige but finally they consented and we was paylited [piloted] through the grape vines and brush into a cave in the side of the mountain. Their set the Indian Cheief like a marbel stature. he would not speak nor move for a long time. his squaw sat on the side of the cave by a little fire with the sick childe in her arms. After a long talk by our interpreter, Gorge Been he [the chief] begun to move his hend a little finely he spoke a few words nothing could be don untile the pipe of peace was smoked by him and our interpreter. After that we was premeted to see the child. The squaw unroled the little pappoos from an old bundle of rags. their lay before us the most horrid speciman of humanity that I ever beheld. I thought if our lives depend on the life of that poor little skeleton that we wure in a bad row for stumps. the child apeared to be about four monts old.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Hale, p. 12.

⁸⁵These are made by having an angry rattlesnake bite a deer's liver. The liver is then buried until it becomes putrid. They then take it out and dry it. When they want to use it the liver is steeped in water and the arrows then rubbed into the liver. Arrows thusly treated will kill any victim if the skin is broken. (Jenson, p. 173.)

It was a meur skeleton it little hands looked like bird claws. President Bringham took the childe warmed some water and bathed it from hed to foot. took some bread and shugar from our grip sack made it some food. after it was washed clean we formed a circle around the child and adminesterded to it. in two minutes after our hands was taken of the chile head it opened its eyes and looked around and commenced eting the food that our preseident had prepared. The childe was healed by the power of God. . . . his band [of Indians] about 60 in number was told to go to their wickeups the chief and his squaw was made a few presents of a little flower bread and shugar and we was alowed to depart and go on our way rejoysing.⁸⁶

Bean says, "If elders were ever united in faith and administration to the sick, it was at that time, for we saw the natives were well prepared to carry out their threat."⁸⁷ The party of elders then continued up the Muddy until they struck the immigration road and followed it to Las Vegas, arriving there on February 6, 1856.⁸⁸

Early in 1856 President Bringham and some of the missionaries, accompanied by several Indians, laid out some lots about one and one-half miles north of Las Vegas for the beginning of an Indian farm. This seemed to please the Indians very much.⁸⁹ The last of March the missionaries spent considerable time plowing for the Indians as their new farm. Then in April the elders showed the natives how to plant corn and other garden seeds.⁹⁰ During the time the men were working on the Indian farm three Iats Indians came to the mission. One of them was the head chief. They were friendly and wanted to be baptized. With the

⁸⁶Hale, pp. 12-14.

⁸⁷Horne, p. 123.

⁸⁸Hale, p. 14.

⁸⁹Jenson, p. 199.

⁹⁰Hale, pp. 17-18.

ordinance completed a few days later, they were given a few presents and sent back to their own country as missionaries.⁹¹

The last of March it was decided to let President Bringham, George W. Bean, and Thomas E. Ricks return home for a visit. When they reached Salt Lake, Bringham wrote a letter to the Deseret News which read in part: "We have enough corn and vegetables [at the mission] to supply those who are there until harvest, but those who go there this spring will have to take enough food to last them until more can be raised."⁹² The missionaries referred to by Bringham, who were going to the mission that spring, numbered twenty-nine and were called at a special conference on February 24, 1856.⁹³ The way in which these and other missionaries were selected at that time is most interestingly told by Heber C. Kimball in a letter to his son, William. He says in part:

There has [sic] been courts in session here for weeks and weeks, and I suppose that one hundred and fifty or two hundred of the brethren have been hanging around; with the council house filled to the brim. This scenery continuing for a long time, one day brother Brigham sent Thomas Bullock to take their names, for the purpose of giving them missions, if they had not anything to do of any more importance. So brother Brigham counseled me to make a selection--for Los [sic] Vegas some thirty. . . . another company of forty eight to go to Green River . . . thirty five or so to Salmon River. . . . These are all good men but they need to learn a lesson.⁹⁴

⁹¹Hale, p. 17.

⁹²Jenson, p. 207.

⁹³"Journal History," February 24, 1856, p. 3. The following men were called from Salt Lake County: William Camp, John S. Fullmer, Lewis Rolins, Lorenzo Brown, Andrew Cahoon, Almon L. Fullmer, Thomas Hall, Hyrum Kimball, George Mayer, Samuel Thompson, Aaron Farr, Alexander A. Lemon, Justin Merrill, Samuel Turnbow, Ute Perkins, Daniel Sherrer, Allen Stout, John Solder, William Moss, Francis Boggs, Jacob L. Workman, and Elijah K. Fuller; E. Barney and Philander Colton from Provo, and Miles Anderson and John Lowder from Parowan. Beeson Lewis was called from Beaver County, and William W. Riley and John H. Redd from Palmyra.

⁹⁴The Latter-day Saints Millennial Star, June 21, 1856, p. 397.

Some of the newly called missionaries arrived at Las Vegas in early April. A day or so later Albert Miles, William W. A. Smoot, and Ariot L. Hale received a unanimous vote of approval to return home for a visit.⁹⁵ This, however, was contrary to instructions left by President Bringham.⁹⁶

Conditions at the mission must not have been as satisfactory as the mission journal indicates, for after Ariot L. Hale completed his visit home he went to Brigham Young to see if there were any instructions or communications he would like delivered to the mission. Hale was informed that things were not running too smoothly at the mission and as a result he and his two companions would not have to return.⁹⁷

John Steele, being in charge at the mission while Bringham and his two counselors were in Utah, suggested on April 20, 1856, that a company of missionaries investigate the lead ore which was known to exist in the region.⁹⁸ A few men, under the direction of Steele, left the following morning to make an exploration. Two days later they returned with a one hundred and eighty pound sample, reporting "they had found the lead in large quantities."⁹⁹

On May 6th, Nathaniel V. Jones arrived at Las Vegas, being accompanied by Philip K. Smith and Ira Hatch. Jones had a letter from Brigham Young, dated April 14, 1856, which read:

⁹⁵Jenson, p. 211.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 212.

⁹⁷Hale, p. 23.

⁹⁸Jenson, p. 213.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 214.

To the Bishops and Presidents of the Church . . . who are beyond Cedar City. Beloved Brethren: You are hereby authorized and required to use all reasonable exertions to furnish the bearer, Bishop Nathaniel V. Jones, with such men, animals, tools, etc., as he may call upon you for, to enable him to safety [sic] diligently and successfully accomplish the purposes of the mission upon which he is now sent, viz; to search for and examine into the location, quality and quantity of different ores and metals, as specimans of rich lead ore have already been brought to me from that region, and it is highly desirable that we be able to make our lead, copper, etc., at the earliest practicable date. Your Brother in the gospel, Brigham Young.¹⁰⁰

Jones requested three men and five animals from the mission. These were to be under his direction for the next thirty days. Albert Knapp, Beason Lewis, and William C. Mitchell were the missionaries who volunteered to go. Jones and his men soon left the mission to explore the ore prospects. Jones says:

. . . we visited the place where the specimans had been obtained that were sent to the president's office. After examining the strata, I came to the conclusion that it would not pay for the working.

In our explorations through the country we learned from the Indians that there was quantity of the same kind of ore about fifty miles south from this place. I hired a guide and set out immediately in search of it. The mineral to all appearances was inexhaustible; in quantity, it was several rods wide and varying from one to four feet in thickness. . . .

This mineral lays from the Vegas south by west, distance 27 miles, and about four miles east from the military road leading to California, and about 25 miles west from the Colorado and is situated high in the tops of the mountains.

The nearest running water is 12 miles, though there is a small mound spring within $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the mineral that will do for camp purposes. There is plenty of timber for fuel in the mountains, but no grass for animals.

After our explorations, we returned to the Vegas. After a day or two of rest, we started to explore the country north-west from the Vegas. We penetrated the country about 400 miles in this direction and found it to be one continuous stretch of dry, burnt-up mountains and arid sand plains entirely destitute of vegetation or timber. Not feeling disposed to risk too much in an unexplored region, thereby jeopardizing the lives of men and animals, we thought it advisable to retrace our steps.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰Jenson, p. 270.

¹⁰¹Ibid., pp. 271-72.

They returned on May 20th, stating that they could not locate the silver mountain. The following day Jones, Smith, and Hatch left the mission to return to Utah.¹⁰² Upon reaching Salt Lake, Jones made his report to President Young.¹⁰³ Some nine days later Nathaniel V. Jones and sixteen others¹⁰⁴ were called on a special mission to open up and develop the lead mines in the Las Vegas region.¹⁰⁵

The majority of the missionaries who left Las Vegas to visit their families and those who were newly called to the mission reached the Vegas during June of 1856. Some of the new missionaries met Nathaniel V. Jones as he was returning to Salt Lake. Jones reported the elders at the mission to have about seventy acres planted to grain.¹⁰⁶ Lorenzo Brown, one of the new missionaries, reports about 150 acres of land were fenced by the middle of June. He further records that,

The prospect for land is very poor and for grain slim. Most of the wheat is more or less blasted and a great proportion smut, while the potatoes and corn are badly eaten by worms. . . . To all appearance now there will not be more than enough raised to support the mission. Things look rather disheartening.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 218.

¹⁰³"Journal History," April 16, 1857, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴The lead mine missionaries consisted of Peter Maughn, Jacob Peart, Meto Andrus, Harrison Burges, George Brown, Philander Colton, James Davis, James Hall, Oliver B. Huntington, Wilson Lund, Darwin Richardsen, Thomas Sanders, Charley Woodard, William T. Van Noy, Benjamin Roberts, and George Woodard. Some of these men were a part of those selected by Heber C. Kimball for hanging around the courts in Salt Lake City.

¹⁰⁵"Journal History," June 22, 1856, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶Brown, May 26, 1856.

¹⁰⁷Brown, June 17, 1856.

Brown further said that if the number of people at the mission were compared to the wheat prospect, figuring ten bushel per acre, the mission would lack 1,000 bushels in having enough for the people. One can more easily understand Brown's comment concerning the scarcity of food by realizing that some of the elders now had their families at the mission, resulting in a total membership of 103 individuals as of July 1st.¹⁰⁸

President Bringhurst, having arrived back at the mission, remarked that because of the "scarcity of provisions in camp . . . some measure must be entered into for the sustenance of all connected with the mission."¹⁰⁹

Another problem presented by the increased number of people at the mission was the lack of room in the fort for new homes. Thus on July 17, 1856, the erection of a new fort was discussed and a committee of three appointed to superintend the construction of the same.¹¹⁰

The Indians proved a much greater problem during 1856 than they had been the year previous. In April of 1856 they took Miles Anderson's horses and killed them for meat.¹¹¹ In May, a calf belonging to John Steele, was taken from the corral. Four of the elders went in search of it and found where it had been killed. The elders tracked the Indians to their camp and after talking with the chief for some time convinced him that the thieves must be brought to the mission and punished. The Indians, upon reaching the fort, "seemed to feel very bad and promised to do better, so the brethren thought it best not to whip them."¹¹² The

¹⁰⁸Brown, July 2, 1856.

¹⁰⁹Jenson, p.224.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 226.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 214.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 118.

last of June there was considerable excitement among some of the Indians when a few of their number were pushed or pulled by the hair of their head from one of the farms. The Indians left in an irritated mood and threatened to return and kill the livestock belonging to the missionaries. One of the chiefs came to the fort the next day and apologized for the Indians. He said he hoped to be able to stop the stealing but it would be difficult because the squaws and children were very hungry.¹¹³ The missionaries frequently discovered where the Indians had gone into their farms and gardens during the night and had taken things. One night in August several Indians were seen stealing corn and one of the boys was caught. Bringhurst ordered the boy chained up all night in the fort. This he hoped would teach the others a lesson. The next morning some of the Indians came into camp, accompanied by their chief. Some of them felt it was perfectly all right to punish the boy in this manner while others wanted to retaliate by killing some of the cows and horses.¹¹⁴

The last of September a large ox belonging to Bringhurst was driven off by two Indian boys. Bringhurst, being informed of this act by some other Indians, secured help, overtook the two Indians and returned the ox to the fort. That night the Indians took a calf belonging to Bringhurst and killed it. A few days later a fine heifer calf belonging to William S. Covert was killed. Three days after Covert's calf was taken a large, black ox belonging to President Bringhurst was killed. The last of October the Indians made a general break into fields, taking items which had not been gathered by the elders. Two of the elders made

¹¹³Brown, June 28-29, 1856.

¹¹⁴Jenson, p. 234.

an unsuccessful attempt to force them out. Lorenzo Brown records on October 10th that the Indians were driving off so many cows and horses for meat from the miners that a stockade was needed in which to put their stock and then guard it night and day.¹¹⁵ On November 1st, "President Bringham kicked a Muddy Indian out of the fort for stealing bread and other things."¹¹⁶ To help keep the elders in check during this time and remind them of their responsibilities to the Indians President Covert reread the letter they had received earlier from Brigham Young wherein he counseled them not to abuse the Indians for stealing.¹¹⁷

Bringham had talked with Brigham Young concerning the lead mines while the former was in Salt Lake. Upon his return to Las Vegas he set about almost immediately to organize a mining company. On July 17th the matter was discussed and a decision reached to have Almon L. Fullmer be superintendent in charge of the road to the ore and in building a fort nearby.¹¹⁸ A few days later Bringham and ten others left the fort to explore the lead possibilities. Soon after, a special meeting was called "to deliberate upon the propriety of commencing to operate in the lead mines immediately."¹¹⁹ A discussion took place on how they should proceed and what tools and provisions were needed. It was decided to have Bringham select twelve or thirteen men to participate

¹¹⁵Brown, October 10, 1856.

¹¹⁶Jenson, p. 251.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 222.

¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 225-26.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 229.

in the lead business. The enterprise could be referred to as a business because they hoped to sell the lead and purchase badly needed provisions. The day after the special meeting, President Bringham selected sixteen men to comprise the mining association, with Almon L. Fullmer as president. They agreed to leave the fort and start upon the new enterprise in a few days.¹²⁰ Shortly after they had departed, Nathaniel V. Jones and four others arrived at Las Vegas to commence operations of the lead mines. The following Sunday evening, August 10th, Jones stated he was "to take those brethren who were called on their missions at the last April conference, and proceed immediately . . . [in] working out the lead. . . ."¹²¹ He further stated that the mining mission was to be,

. . . a separate and distinct concern from the Las Vegas settlement, and those brethren who had come the present season and were engaged with him, would be discharged by him and allowed to return home as soon as the required amount of lead was obtained.¹²²

To let the people at the mission know the authority upon which he was acting Jones read the following letter from Brigham Young:

To all whom it may concern. This is to certify that the bearer, Bishop Nathaniel V. Jones, is counseled to forthwith proceed with a company to the neighborhood of the Las Vegas and to engage in manufacturing lead, and the said Bishop Jones is hereby empowered to call to his aid in the said manufacture and transportation of lead, building of furnaces, mining the ore, etc., such persons as his judgment and necessities may dictate, not only southern missionaries, but others of the brethren in the southern settlements if need be.¹²³

Jones said his instructions "were not very cordially received. . . .

[that Bringham] came out in public against the plan of operation and

¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 229-30.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 231.

¹²²Ibid., pp. 231-32.

¹²³Ibid., p. 232.

refused to render . . . any assistance whatever."¹²⁴ Bringhamurst said he did not feel it was proper to allow the "brethren to leave and go with Brother Jones until the proper documents were produced by him or until further written instructions were received from President Young."¹²⁵

Why Bringhamurst would not accept the above letter from Brigham Young is not known to the writer. At any rate, Jones and Bringhamurst agreed that the cause of difference should be presented to President Young in a single letter from Bringhamurst.¹²⁶ In the meantime Jones called to his wagon the missionaries who had arrived at the fort that season, told them he was determined to carry out the instructions he had received, and asked the missionaries whether or not they would support him. At the conclusion of the meeting the missionaries who were present "handed in their names to Bishop Jones, in order to be controlled and dictated by him. . . ."¹²⁷

A letter from Brigham Young, apparently written before he had received Bringhamurst's correspondence regarding the latter's relationship with Jones, cleared up the matter of jurisdiction. The letter which Young was answering apparently told of Bringhamurst's plans to develop the lead mines. Brigham's reply read in part:

I am glad to hear this and hope that you and the brethren of the mission will take hold of this business energetically and produce a large amount of lead. We have appointed Brother Nathaniel V. Jones of this city to take charge of this business and superintend the whole matter, so that whatever is done we wish to have it done under

¹²⁴"Journal History," April 16, 1857, p. 3.

¹²⁵Jenson, p. 233.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 234.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 233.

his direction. At the same time we wish to have you render him all the assistance in team work and manual labor that you can and he can employ to advantage.¹²⁸

An earlier letter from President Young mentioned that teams and wagons were being sent to Las Vegas to pick up some lead. The teamsters were to have brought flour from Cedar City for Bishop Jones and the miners. Anticipating the delivery of the flour, Jones had borrowed heavily from Bringhurst expecting to repay it when the teams and wagons arrived for the lead. The day before these wagons arrived, Jones had sent word to Bringhurst stating that he, Jones, needed more flour and a beef, plus the blacksmith. However, when the wagons arrived with no flour this put the miners and missionaries in a serious situation. Bringhurst wrote to Jones, stating "that it would be impossible to provide his company with any more provisions of any kind, as they had but a scanty supply at the fort,"¹²⁹ nor could they have the blacksmith.¹³⁰ A few days later, August 29th, Jones personally went to the fort to see if his needs could not be satisfied. He traded for two yoke of cattle from John H. Bleazard who was returning home. This would provide Jones and his men with meat for the near future but the flour situation was still precarious. While at the mission, Jones told the teamsters who had come for lead that none had been smelted but he would have their loads ready by September 8th.¹³¹ Jones returned to the mines the following day, taking with him Edward Cuthbert, the blacksmith,¹³² and the newly

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 235.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 238.

¹³⁰Brown, August 31, 1856.

¹³¹Jenson, p. 240.

¹³²Ibid.

acquired oxen. By September 10th the miners had their red sandstone furnace completed. A fire was started in the furnace the same day, which drew very well, but the heat caused the walls to crack badly. With this failure they decided to build a new furnace of adobe and persuaded the teamsters, who were waiting for lead, to remain and see if it could not be produced.¹³³ The adobe furnace was also a failure. Thus the teamsters started for Utah on September 17th.

Not being able to obtain material around Las Vegas which would withstand the extreme heat required for blasting, Bishop Jones returned to Salt Lake to procure it. He left on September 16th, expecting to be gone for six weeks.¹³⁴

Prior to Jones' departure for Salt Lake the relationship between himself and Bringham became more estranged. George W. Bean says this was partly due to the strict role of Bringham and the liberal ideas of Jones. So strong became their estrangement that both parties agreed to appeal to the First Presidency of the Church and let them decide what action should be taken. George W. Bean and Thomas E. Ricks were chosen to represent the missionaries and Elijah K. Fuller and John Turner were to represent the miners.¹³⁵ The mission journal says Bean and Ricks left on September 1st,¹³⁶ each of them taking a ton of lead ore with which

¹³³Brown, September 13-14, 1856.

¹³⁴Ibid., September 16-17, 1856.

¹³⁵Horne, p. 124.

¹³⁶Bean says that they left on September 22nd.

they planned to purchase provisions.¹³⁷ As they met with Brigham Young there were many questions asked. Bean says President Young,

realized the spirit of the mission was broken and he thought best to abandon it, but to get all the lead possible before this mission went out. [He] then suggested that the families could return to the settlements, and the boys with teams haul as fast as possible until the lead was worked out.¹³⁸

Bean and Ricks were released unless they desired to return and help haul the ore, of which President Young wrongfully assumed there was plenty.¹³⁹

The First Presidency did not solve the problem, at least not at this time, and the enmity that existed between the two leaders carried over to the miners, missionaries and even the Indians, to the point that Bean says it, ". . . seriously impeded our success as missionaries."¹⁴⁰ Some of the missionaries working under Bringhamurst were not united with him and showed a spirit of opposition. On September 19th President Bringhamurst called a meeting, "to decide who were willing to carry out his counsel and be men whom he could depend upon to operate with him in the camp."¹⁴¹ He invited all the men to speak and make known their feelings.

Bringhamurst then called for a vote from all those who did not consider themselves missionaries to Las Vegas and were not willing to carry out all the counsels of the presidency in that place. Jacob L. Workman, Edson Barney, and Samuel Thompson gave in their names as being against President Bringhamurst.¹⁴²

¹³⁷Bean was a one-armed man, having lost his arm at Fort Washington while firing a cannon to scare the Indians away. When one considers the problems involved in driving the draft animals and setting and releasing the brakes for a distance of approximately 450 miles, this was no minor accomplishment.

¹³⁸Horne, p. 126.

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Horne, p. 124.

¹⁴¹Jenson, p. 245.

¹⁴²Ibid.

Lorenzo Brown says that Thompson was later ordered to leave the mission but refused to do so.¹⁴³ Even though these three men were opposed to Bringhurst, the remainder seemed quite solidly behind him and willing to sustain him in his undertakings.

On November 6, 1856, a meeting was called to discuss plans for a house of worship. ". . . the upper part . . . was designed to be used as a prayer circle room for spiritual instruction and to give the natives their endowments, etc."¹⁴⁴ The ground floor was for a school house¹⁴⁵ and a place of worship. They thought they could build an 18 by 26 house for \$1,000. To raise this money a proposal was made to levy a twenty dollar poll tax on each man and a six dollar tax to be placed upon each garden and city lot. This proposal met some opposition. It was later decided and agreed to place a thirty-eight dollar tax on each man at the mission. The first rock for the foundation of the new school and chapel was drawn on November 10th. Robert and George Read dug the foundation for the new building and a week later the foundation was started, being finished the following day. As soon as the foundation was completed the men started laying adobes. However, the walls were only about three feet high when the project was abandoned.¹⁴⁶ During this time some of the missionaries were working at the Indian farm where they plowed some sixteen acres of land and planted it to wheat.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³Brown, October 7, 1856.

¹⁴⁴Jenson, p. 260.

¹⁴⁵Brown, November 20, 1856.

¹⁴⁶Jenson, p. 260.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 252-56.

Nathaniel V. Jones had arrived in Salt Lake to secure material for a furnace and on different occasions met with Brigham Young. The difficulties between Jones and Bringham were discussed and a decision reached. Jones certainly had the advantage over Bringham by being able to present his criticisms in person. Also there were letters sent to President Young from elders at the mission who apparently did not approve of some of the things Bringham was doing.¹⁴⁸ At any rate Jones returned to the mission on December 4, 1856, with a letter from Brigham Young containing the decision of the First Presidency. The letter notified Bringham that he had been "dropped from the mission and disfellowshipped from the Church"¹⁴⁹ until satisfaction should be made.¹⁵⁰ Samuel F. Atwood, who came to Las Vegas with Jones, records the following:

. . . I learned that there were divisions, contentions, and dissatisfactions among the brethren and nearly everyone was on the point of leaving, some to the north and some to California, but when Brother Jones showed them the letters from Pres. Young which dropped Brother Bringham from the Presidency . . . and placing Brother Samuel Thompson in his place, there was quite a change, which I hope will be for the better.¹⁵¹

It is regretful that the personality clash of these two individuals could not have been solved and a harmonious relationship developed between them. There is no question of Bringham's devotion to the task assigned him. He felt a responsibility to the Indians and to try to achieve it he wanted the use of all missionaries who had been assigned to the mission.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., p. 257.

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

¹⁵⁰"Journal History," April 16, 1857, p. 4.

¹⁵¹Jenson, p. 265.

He wanted a free hand in carrying out his assignment and did not feel it was right to be subservient to Bishop Jones. There seems to be no doubt that Bringham was too strict and domineering in his assignment, thus divorcing some of the missionaries from himself. It seems that two of the reasons for keeping Jones in preference to Bringham was, first, the urgent need of lead, and second, Jones was at Salt Lake presenting his case in person.

Bishop Jones also brought a letter to Samuel Thompson, one of the three elders who had earlier voted not to sustain Bringham in his position, appointing him as the new mission president.¹⁵² A meeting was called to have Thompson sustained as president. Four of the men, William Bringham, William S. Covert, William W. Riley, and William P. Jones, would not sustain Thompson in the new appointment.¹⁵³ Also at the meeting a survey was taken to determine the amount of provisions possessed by the group. They felt they had only enough to sustain them until more could be brought in from California. From a survey taken earlier it was estimated the missionaries would need between 4,000 and 5,000 pounds of flour to meet their needs until the next harvest.¹⁵⁴ To alleviate this problem some of the men took four wagons and set out for California on December 11, 1856.

On Christmas day President Thompson and Sylvester Hulet left for the lead mines to pay a visit to Jones and his men. They found the men doing a small amount of smelting. While Jones had been in Salt Lake the

¹⁵²Jenson, p. 257.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 258.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 250.

miners had been somewhat successful in their attempts at smelting but the results had been discouraging. From about 8,500 pounds of ore they had smelted only twenty pigs, each weighing about fifty pounds.¹⁵⁵ Jones' return kindled a new spark in the miners. He had planned to be gone six weeks but was actually gone twelve. Some time before his return Brown recorded, "All hands expect to leave for home as all are pretty much discouraged."¹⁵⁶ In fact, Grundy, the smelter, and Summe, the blacksmith, left for their homes in California the day before Jones arrived. However, Jones immediately sent someone to bring them back.

Jones now made a diligent effort to produce the lead. He hired the Indians, male and female, to carry the ore down the mountain from the mine to the furnace, paying them ten shirts for each 10,000 pounds delivered.¹⁵⁷ This type of conveyance took place until a trail was completed and then the ore was hauled by mules. Samuel F. Atwood wrote:

The mineral yields from 20 to 30 per cent, proving to be a much poorer quality than was expected to be when seen in the lead on the mountain. There is found in it after the outside is taken off, much dry bone, black jack, and sulphur, which burns up much of the lead in smelting, which makes the mineral yield much less than was estimated. . . .¹⁵⁸

Some writers¹⁵⁹ have said the miners did not understand why the lead was so hard and that it was not until years later that they actually learned the hardness was caused from the presence of silver in the lead.

¹⁵⁵Brown, October 17-20, 1856.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., October 3, 1856.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., August 24, 1856.

¹⁵⁸Jenson, pp. 265-66.

¹⁵⁹Writers' Program of the Works Project Administration, p. 185.

This is true only to the extent that they had to wait to have their opinions verified. Brown says: "Grundy [an experienced smelter] is quite confident there exists a large amount of silver in the lead as it is very hard and has a clear ring unknown to lead."¹⁶⁰

The unity between Jones and his men was strained at times, especially when it was rumored that Jones was being paid four cents per pound on all lead produced. He also brought his wife with him as he returned with the furnace material, which made some of the men jealous. The double standard of diet between Jones and his men caused antagonism. Brown says Jones' menu included butter and pork whereas the men had only beans and bread. What made it worse, some of the men were sick and attributed it to their poor diet.

Not only were there major problems and discouragements involved in smelting and a few minor ones in personal relationships, but the Indians presented a problem and a threat to the miners. Jones records that,

. . . they had collected at a spring, about three hours travel from us, and were making their calculations to drive off all our stock and drive us out of the country or kill us. This they had been talking of doing for some time past, and I had every reason to believe they would put their threats into execution.¹⁶¹

Brown says, "Our animals are not safe. Two armed men are with them by day and [they are] corraled at night."¹⁶² Under these conditions many of the men hoped they would soon be going home and looked for signs to indicate the same. On January 17, 1857, Lorenzo Brown wrote that Jones had,

¹⁶⁰Brown, October 17-20, 1856.]

¹⁶¹"Journal History," April 16, 1857, p. 5.

¹⁶²Brown, January 17, 1857.

. . . sent Vance's saw and Thompson's tools down from the mine. . . which hails as another omen of deliverance from this call. . . . The miners have suspended operations and are trying to clean up what they have got out. . . .¹⁶³

On January 24, 1857, the men smelted the last ore at that location. Two days later they tore down the horse-power bellows, which Jones had hauled from Salt Lake, and anything else that could be re-used, packed it, and started for the mission.¹⁶⁴ On January 30th Bishop Jones and most of his men left to see if they could not find some better prospects for mining. They had an unsuccessful trip, traveling twenty-five or thirty miles northwest of the mission. Upon their return Jones decided to abandon any further attempts at mining in the Las Vegas region. After spending the next few days preparing for the trip, the miners started for home on February 18, 1857,¹⁶⁵ having smelted only about 9,000 pounds of metal during the time in which they were operating.¹⁶⁶

The missionaries at this time were wondering if they would not soon be following the miners. They had felt that the mission would soon be closed and they would all return home. However, a letter from President Young was received at the mission and read on January 26, 1857, which told them to carry out the objectives of the mission. This "revived the spirits of the brethren very much, as most all were foolishly beginning to contemplate a speedy breaking up of the mission and

¹⁶³Ibid., January 17, 1857.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., January 24, 26, 1857.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., February 18, 1857.

¹⁶⁶Glenn S. Dumke, "Mission Station to Mining Town: Early Las Vegas," Pacific Hist. Review, XXII (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953), 258.

removal therefrom."¹⁶⁷ With their minds thus made up to stay but with an increased threat from the Indians the missionaries started working on the three shorter walls of the fort to increase their height to about ten feet. This was completed on February 4th and that evening, for the first time, they felt it wise to start corralling the stock inside the fort. On February 23rd, President Thompson received a letter from President Young informing the missionaries that they were at liberty to close down the mission and return home any time they desired.¹⁶⁸ They could not leave, however, until some of their number, who had gone to California for provisions, returned with the oxen and wagons. These men started to arrive at the mission around the middle of March. On the evening of the 19th the men met and most of them decided to leave for home on the 23rd. Some of them, however, refused to leave until they had a more formal release,¹⁶⁹ and stayed until the late summer of 1858. Benjamin R. Hulse was president of the mission during most of the time after Thompson returned home. Jacob Hamblin wrote on September 10, 1858, that "the brethren and Indians on Las Vegas had raised forty acres of corn and wheat, but that the mountain Indians had come down and stole the whole of it."¹⁷⁰ A conference was held on September 26, 1858, where it was decided the "mission should be dropped . . . on account of the thieving disposition of the Indians. . . ."¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷Jenson, p. 267.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., p. 276.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., p. 277.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., p. 281.

¹⁷¹Ibid.

Even though there were a few Indians baptized during the early history of the mission it seemed to have had little effect upon them. Some of them, such as Chief Patsearump, named Nicholas by the elders, was very friendly and hated to see the missionaries leave. The main body of the Indians, however, was glad to be rid of the Mormons. The main contribution of the mission would be that it, possibly, "paved the way for the later Mormon settlements in southern Nevada."¹⁷²

During the Civil War federal troops established Fort Baker at the Las Vegas site to protect travelers between Salt Lake and California.¹⁷³ O. D. Grass, a prominent citizen of Arizona, acquired the ranch and water rights and in 1868 offered it for sale, stating:

There is excellent sawing timber in the Charleston Mountains about 25 miles distant. The soil is black, rich loam and will produce any kind of vegetables; there is water to irrigate 400 acres of small grain and range for 3000 head of cattle.¹⁷⁴

In 1882, Archibald Stewart purchased the ranch, which he kept for several years. In 1903 a railroad was organized by Senator William A. Clark, which was to run through the Las Vegas region. This resulted in the establishment of a townsite which is known today as the city of Las Vegas.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷²Effie Mona Mack, Nevada, A History of the State from Earliest Times Through the Civil War (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1936), p. 164.

¹⁷³Dunke, p. 359.

¹⁷⁴Jenson, p. 284.

¹⁷⁵Dunke, pp. 259-60.

CHAPTER IV

THE WHITE MOUNTAIN MISSION

This is the only one of the five Indian missions proposed by the Church in 1855 that was never established. Some thirty or forty elders were called to work under David Evans, mission president. They were asked to establish a mission about 180 miles due west of Fillmore, Utah,¹ in the White Mountain region of present-day Preston, Nevada. President Young and a party of men met the missionaries on May 24th near present-day Scipio, Utah, as they were bound for their mission.²

Near Fillmore, Evans divided the elders into two groups. Those with the stronger horses were to accompany him³ in selecting a site for the mission while the remainder were instructed to go to Beaver Valley, and under the direction of ---- Runnel and John W. Norton, plant a crop.⁴

The men under President Evans left Fillmore the last of May, expecting to be gone two weeks. After crossing barren deserts, where both

¹"Journal History," May 29, 1855, p. 6.

²"Journal History," May 24, 1855, p. 1.

³Those accompanying Evans were: E. G. Williams, Peter Nebuckar, George Nebuckar, Orson Miles, Nelson Empy, Brigham Lamb, James Lamb, Silvanus Collett, John Snedacka, ---- Ray, and Henry Evans, as interpreter.

⁴"Journal History," July 17, 1855, p. 2.

man and beast experienced severe thirst, the party reached the vicinity to which they had been sent. After exploring some of the area the men found one of the valleys to contain good, ". . . rich soil, plenty grass, rushes and red clover, . . . [and] several good springs. This [says Williams] is the place picked for our station."⁵ A large creek, which the men called Meadow Creek, ran near by and from this they planned to irrigate their crops. They also found a large meadow some ten miles long and two miles wide ". . . with several species of grass just fit for cutting. . . ." ⁶

The exploration party arrived back at Fillmore on June 11th where they found the men waiting who had been sent to plant crops at Beaver Valley. Those sent to plant the crops said Beaver Valley was ". . . the poorest they had seen" and as a result had made no effort toward planting.⁷ Evans was not convinced of their findings and went to examine the valley himself. However, he too could find no suitable spot for farming and so decided

. . . to cross the desert with . . . [the] wagons and go to building a fort until time to put in a crop for the fall. I commenced [wrote Evans] to inquire for spades and shovels and found there was [sic] but three or four in the whole company. Another thing I discovered was only one plough belonging to the company. . . . I therefore seen [sic] at once that I could neither build fort or farm. I thought that under considerations of this kind it was better for us to go home and get up the kind of a [sic] outfit that we wanted both to fort and to farm and go back in the fall prepared to put in fall crops and build a fort. . . . ⁸

⁵"Journal History," June 4, 1855, pp. 4-8.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., July 17, 1855, p. 6.

⁸Ibid.

President Young was likely aware of the lackadaisical attitude of the missionaries in not wanting to complete this mission. He wrote to the elders at Las Vegas on July 31st and in part said:

We will probably abandon the White Mountain Mission, as the elders have returned from that place, and send them to strengthen the Elk Mountain Mission on Grand River.⁹

Apparently all the missionaries were not sent to strengthen other missions for an attempt was made the last of August to revive the interest in the White Mountain Mission. This is shown in a letter written by Heber C. Kimball to Franklin D. Richards. He says in part:

David Evans, that headed the mission to the White Mountain south, had returned, rather giving up their mission. We called upon them last Sabbath to make preparations and return back again in two weeks, and build a fort, etc., as there are many Lamanites in that region.¹⁰

There is no indication that a further attempt was ever made on the part of the elders to establish the mission.

The main thing that was possibly accomplished by the starting of this mission was the new area the men explored and with which they became familiar. Because of the difficult accessibility to this region the Church officials sent a one-hundred-man exploration company there in 1858 to see if a large portion of the Church members could not conceal themselves from Johnston's army.¹¹

⁹Jenson, p. 159.

¹⁰"Journal History," August 31, 1855, p. 5.

¹¹Ibid., April 25, 1858, pp. 6-17.

CHAPTER V

THE INDIAN TERRITORY MISSION

Five missionaries from Utah opened this mission in 1855 by laboring among the Delawares and Cherokees. They were soon joined by four elders from St. Louis and the project was expanded into the Creek nation. The mission functioned for five years before the elders were asked to leave. During this time, the major accomplishment of the missionaries was reconverting some sixty-five followers of Lyman Wight and seeing them migrate to Utah. The mission was reopened in 1877 for seven months, because of a phony report by Robert Lake who claimed to be a Kiowa Indian. During 1883 and 1884 the mission functioned only in short bursts of proselyting. Andrew Kimball and James G. West reached the Indian Territory in 1885, and established it as a permanent mission. The elders spent their time primarily working among the five civilized tribes but did some work among the others. In 1892 the elders and members of the Church erected their first meeting house at Manard, Cherokee nation. Two years later they dedicated a second one at the Massy Settlement in the Choctaw nation. The following year the states of Kansas and Arkansas were added to the mission and a chapel was built at St. Johns, Kansas. The year 1897 saw Texas added to the mission, and the following year President Kimball was released, being replaced by William T. Jack. In

the spring of 1898 the name of the mission was changed to the Southwestern States Mission.

The Indian Territory comprised comparatively few full-blooded Indians; half-breeds, whites, and Negroes made up an extremely high percentage of the inhabitants. Twenty different Indian nations were situated within its 37,142,240 acres.¹

The five civilized tribes--Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole--occupy the eastern and southern portions of the territory, while the semi-civilized tribes--Osages, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Comanches, Apaches, Pawnees, Kiowas and other smaller tribes occupy the west and north.²

It was to some of these civilized nations that Orson Spencer, supervisor of the Church in the Mississippi Valley, and his companion, James McGraw, apparently made a visit early in 1855. It seems that these missionaries possibly made recommendations to the General Authorities of the Church that a mission be opened among this people.³ Consequently, about a month following the spring conference of 1855, five elders⁴ left Salt Lake to labor among the Indians of this region. Henry W. Miller had been called as mission president. Upon reaching the area of their mission ". . . Washington N. Cook and John A. Richards were left at Kaw River . . . to ascertain the feelings of the Delawares and other tribes . . . who dwelt

¹"Journal History," April 30, 1887, p. 5.

²Deseret News, December 9, 1893, p. 769.

³Deseret News, October 20, 1894, p. 561

⁴The elders were: Henry W. Miller, Robert Petty, Washington N. Cook, John A. Richards, and William A. Richey.

in . . . [that] part of the country."⁵ Miller, Richey, and Petty traveled on until they reached the settlement of Spavinaw, located on a creek by the same name.⁶ There they met Captain Jacob Croft and several others who were followers of Lyman Wight.⁷ Some of these men had become dissatisfied with Wight and left him. Others were there to take employment in the construction of sawmills and work of this nature. The missionaries soon began holding meetings with these people who had once held membership in the Mormon Church. The entry in the mission journal for July 10, 1855, reads: "Bro. Moody⁸ baptized Jacob Croft and family (eight in number). They were confirmed by Elder Miller and others."⁹ President Miller and the two elders with him used the Croft home as their headquarters until the following summer.

The first year in the territory showed prospects of a successful mission. Several of the followers of Lyman Wight were re-baptized and a branch of the Church, known as the Cherokee Branch, was organized, William Slade being called as the first branch president in the new mission.¹⁰ The Indians seemed to show an interest in Mormonism and the

⁵"The Indian Territory Mission" (Ms. in LDS Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah), April 8- July 4, 1855.

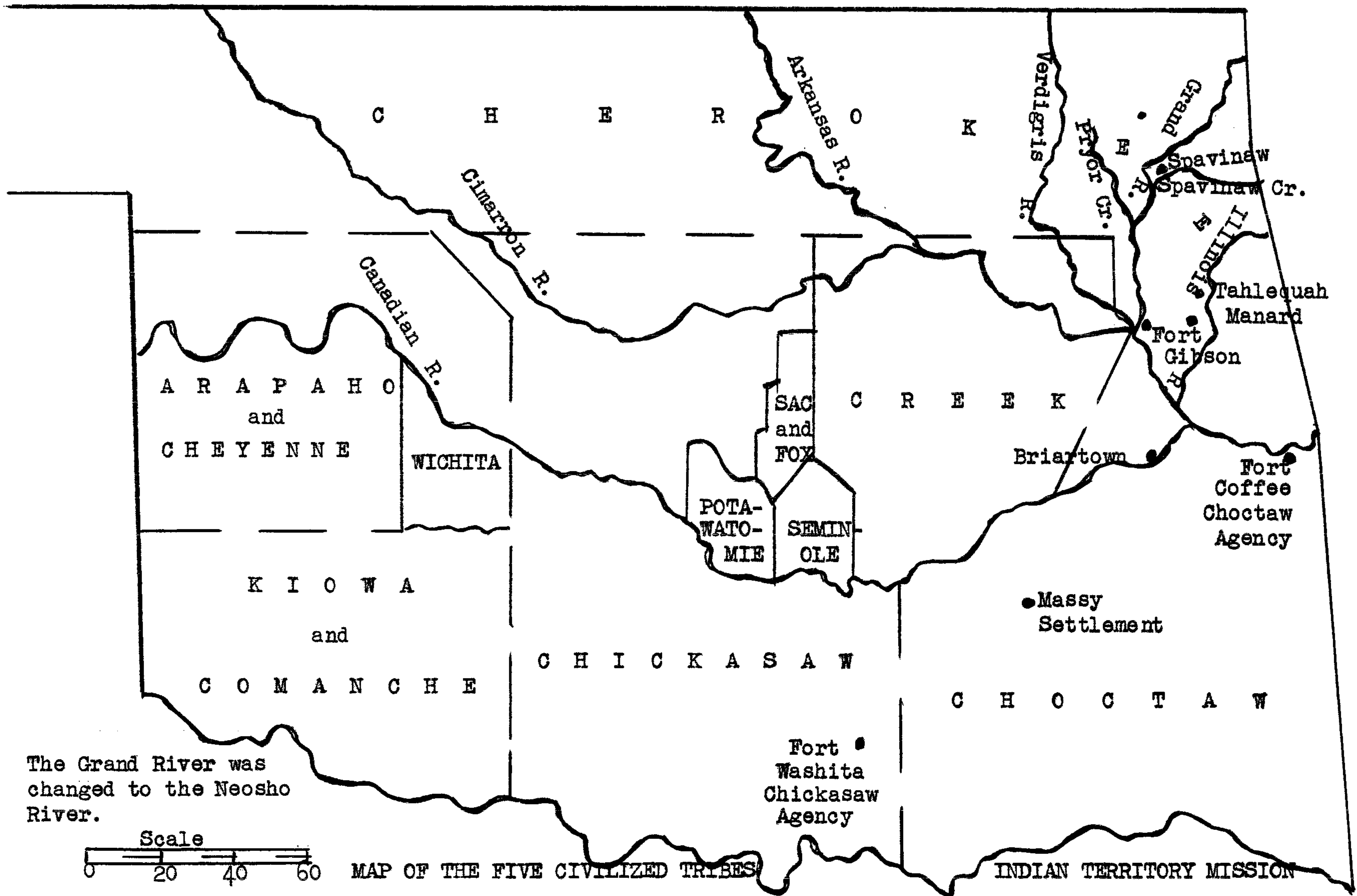
⁶Roberts, V, 103.

⁷Wight had been a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but following the death of Joseph Smith he rebelled against the Church leaders and convinced a group to follow him to the territory of Wisconsin. He later led his associates to Texas, where he died in 1858.

⁸The author has been unable to find any information as to who this Brother Moody was.

⁹"Indian Territory Mission," July 10, 1855.

¹⁰Ibid., July 17, 1855.



elders, on different occasions, were called to speak to them. During the month of July, Elder Miller was asked to address a congregation of about four hundred Cherokees. President Miller and Mr. Slade then went to Tahlequah, the Cherokee capital, and visited Chief John Ross. During the conversation Chief Ross said he had a Book of Mormon and promised to read it.

Elders Cook and Richards, who had been assigned to labor among the Delawares, arrived at the home of Jacob Croft during the middle of August, stating that they could not gain permission to preach to that tribe.¹¹

During the last of August Elders Spencer and McGraw came from Missouri to visit with President Miller and the other missionaries.¹² President Miller, thinking there was a need for additional elders, requested that Spencer send some from St. Louis. Thus at a conference in St. Louis, held October 6, 1855, Elders James Case, William Bricker, George Higginson, and Henry Eyring were called to labor in the Indian Territory. The elders reached the Croft residence on Spavinaw River the first part of November.¹³ Shortly after their arrival a meeting of the missionaries was held. James Case was called to preside over the Creek nation and Henry Eyring was to be his companion. John A. Richards and William Bricker were also to proselyte among the Creeks. Washington N. Cook and George Higginson were assigned to the Choctaw nation¹⁴ and the remaining three were to continue working among the

¹¹"Journal History," August 15, 1855.

¹²"Indian Territory," August 31, 1855.

¹³Ibid., November 12, 1855.

¹⁴Ibid., November 12, 1855.

Cherokees. During this time Elder Petty was not enjoying good health. He was afflicted with a touch of malaria and suffered chills and fever. His condition continued to grow worse and in February, 1856, he passed away.¹⁵ President Miller was also sick at this time and spent February and March at the Croft home trying to recuperate. Richards and Bricker, while traveling to the Creek nation, stopped at the home of some Cherokees, William and Mary Burgess. Mary had been sick for some time and the doctors had given up her recovery. The elders state that they administered to her and she soon regained her health. She and most of her family later joined the Church.¹⁶

The spring and summer of 1856 saw encouraging growth for the missionaries in the Creek and Cherokee nations. Eyring had been able to baptize Jack Randall, a Creek town chief, whose influence resulted in several others being baptized. Elder Miller had the privilege of baptizing Chief Randall's wife, Rhoda, just prior to the completion of his mission.¹⁷ For the benefit of these new members, James Case, supervising the Creek nation, organized the Princess Creek Branch. This branch, however, did not meet with much success, at least as far as the presidents of the branch were concerned. Henry Eyring, writing to Wilford Woodruff in 1860, says concerning the branch,

. . . they are not fully organized [at the present] . . . the first president resigned, the second died, the third apostatized and the fourth resigned. They now have a teacher and meet occasionally for worship.¹⁸

¹⁵"Journal History," August 31, 1860, p. 2.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷"Indian Territory Mission," November 9, 1856.

¹⁸Ibid.

Because of the opposition of a Presbyterian minister, Reverend Loughridge, the United States agent ordered the missionaries out of the Creek nation. In April of 1856 Eyring started to labor among the Cherokees, near Fourteen-Mile Creek, where he baptized six persons and ordained one of them, Archibald MacDonald, an elder.¹⁹ Another branch at Pryors Creek was also organized among the Cherokees. This was later dissolved, however, when all the people connected with it moved away.

Cook and Higginson, who had been assigned to the Choctaws, left that nation in October of 1856, without baptizing anyone.²⁰ There was no further attempt to do missionary work among this nation until Andrew Kimball's administration.

During the early summer of 1856 a company consisting of some sixty-five saints was organized in preparation for migrating to Utah. Captain Jacob Croft was to be in charge. This group had previously been followers of Lyman Wight.²¹

During the fall of 1856 the chief of the Cherokees ordered all Mormon missionaries out of that nation. They all complied with his instructions except Elder Richey, who remained but did no public proselyting.²²

The same month the elders were ordered out of the Cherokee nation a mission conference was held at Pryors Creek. None of the

¹⁹Andrew Kimball, "Excerpt from History of Indian Territory Mission" (now in the possession of Spencer W. Kimball, Salt Lake City), p. 1.

²⁰"Journal History," August 31, 1860, p. 3.

²¹"Indian Territory Mission," June 22, 1856.

²²"Journal History," August 31, 1860, p. 3.

missionaries were in good health, most of them having been afflicted all summer with fever and ague. President Miller had received his release and was soon to leave for home. It was recommended and approved that Washington N. Cook replace Miller as mission president. A report of the conference was carried in the Deseret News and read in part:

The prospect in the Creek nation is very promising, while there is but little interest manifested in the Cherokee and Choctaw nations. We calculate to employ all traveling Elders in the Creek nation and hope to see the work in a flourishing condition in a short time.²³

A summary of the mission at that time is given in Table 1:²⁴

TABLE 1
CHURCH MEMBERSHIP OF INDIAN TERRITORY MISSION
1856

Branches	Missionaries from Utah and St. Louis	Elders	Teachers	Baptized	Cut Off	Total
Pryors Creek Cherokee nation	2	5	1	36	1	44
Princess Creek Creek nation ..	3	5	.	42	1	50
Choctaw nation.	2	.	.	..	.	2
Total.....	7	10	1	78	2	96

Shortly before the conference William Bricker had received permission to leave the mission for a short visit with his wife in St. Louis.

²³Deseret News, April 8, 1857, pp. 35-36.

²⁴Ibid.

Losing interest while at home he never returned to complete his mission and later apostatized from the Church.²⁵

At the close of the October, 1856, mission conference all the elders started working in the Creek nation. This resulted from the orders issued by the Cherokee Council. During the following summer the Creek officials forbade the missionaries to do any further preaching among their people. Even though the elders had been ejected from the Cherokees the previous year they now returned and once again started to proselyte. Elder Eyring, however, remained among the Creeks and sought employment from them.²⁶

During the first years of the mission John A. Richards married a Cherokee Indian. President Brigham Young suggested that some of the missionaries do this so that they might be more closely identified with the Indians and that the missionaries might have a more permanent place in which to stay. In 1857, Richards and his family settled on a ranch and he later became quite wealthy. The Civil War, however, caused him to lose most of this wealth.²⁷ After Richards took up farming he lost interest in missionary work and withdrew from activity in the Church until Elder Andrew Kimball met him some twenty years later and the two worked together for a short time as companions.

The missionaries were saddened during the fall of 1858 by the death of President Cook. He died of consumption after being sick only a short time.²⁸ His successor, Elder Henry Eyring, was nominated and

²⁵"Indian Territory Mission," fall, 1856.

²⁶"Journal History," August 31, 1860, p. 3.

²⁷Ibid., April 30, 1887, p. 5.

²⁸"Indian Territory Mission," September 4, 1858.

sustained at a conference held shortly after Cook's death.²⁹

The missionaries were able to baptize a few more natives into the Church during 1858 and early 1859. In fact, the increased number of baptisms resulted in the organization of two new branches. The elders apparently had been allowed to resume their labors among the Creeks, as the Nephi Branch was organized in that nation by President Eyring and the Lehi Branch was organized among the Cherokees. The Lehi Branch functioned only a short time when it was disorganized due to its president and teacher moving to Utah. A letter written by President Eyring in 1860 stated that the Nephi Branch was still functioning. It also mentioned that there were forty-three members of the Church in the Cherokee nation and forty-eight among the Creeks. Speaking of this total membership, however, Eyring said that ". . . only a very few are alive in the cause, the majority are careless and indifferent. . . ." ³⁰

At the close of 1859 the Cherokee authorities again ordered the missionaries to leave the reservation. They all complied except Richards who was allowed to remain because he was married to one of the tribe. Richards, however, made no attempt to do any missionary work. The Creeks issued a similar order during the early part of 1860. President Eyring and William Richey were the last missionaries, excluding Richards, to leave the mission. They started for Utah on May 23, 1860. As far as the records indicate the mission was closed on May 23, 1860, and remained as such for the next seventeen years.³¹ Upon returning home,

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰"Journal History," August 31, 1860, p. 4.

³¹"Samuel O. Bennion Letter" (LDS Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah), 1937, single page.

President Eyring said concerning the mission:

. . . the result of those toils, privations and hardships, and the sickness of all, and the death of two Elders, connected with it, is but very small apparently. But it is hoped that in after years spontaneous fruits may spring up from the exertions of the servants of God, among the seed of Jacob.³²

Robert Lake, purporting to be a Kiowa Indian, called upon President Brigham Young in . . . [1877], [he] said. . . he had been sent by his tribe to the Mormon chief to ask that missionaries be sent to teach them regarding the Book of Mormon.³³

This so impressed President Young that he called Matthew William Dalton and John Hubbard to accompany Robert Lake and reopen the Indian Territory Mission. They reached Vinita, the largest city in the Cherokee nation, during the month of March and there held their first meeting.

The parties wishing to put the elders to the test, took up a collection and offering it to them, to their astonishment found they would not take it, but recommended that they give the amount to the Sunday School. Elder Lake³⁴ took exception to this and because . . . [they] would not take the money and divide with him he deserted them. As the express purpose of their visit to the Indian Territory was to investigate the claims made by Mr. Lake they were now at a loss for this pretended Indian was to aid them as a guide.³⁵

Elder Dalton later had an interview with a Kiowa agent who told him that no such man as Robert Lake had lived among the Kiowas. He did say that a ". . . suspicious man, not a member of the tribe, had been sent away from the reservation."³⁶

While Dalton and Hubbard were visiting the various tribes, they

³²"Indian Territory Mission," May 23, 1860.

³³"Missionary Work Among the Indians."

³⁴Robert Lake was baptized while in Utah by Dirrick Huntington and apparently ordained an elder.

³⁵Andrew Kimball, "Indian Territory History" (Ms. in possession of Spencer W. Kimball, Salt Lake City, Utah), p. 1.

³⁶Ibid.

met Anthony Navarre among the Potawatomies. Navarre belonged to that tribe but had gone to Utah several years earlier, where he had been baptized.³⁷ In 1857, he was sent on a mission to his own people.³⁸ Even though he spent his time teaching school rather than doing missionary work he had accomplished much good.³⁹ Upon meeting Dalton and Hubbard, Navarre decided to accompany them and assist in an attempt to do missionary work.

For some reason Elder Hubbard wanted to labor in a different part of the Territory than his two companions and separated himself from them. This resulted in his receiving a letter from Brigham Young which read in part:

Indirectly we have learned . . . that after arriving in the Indian Territory yourself, Brother Dalton and Brother Lake all separated and commenced your ministrations in different districts.

The cause for this separation we have not learned, doubtless you had good reasons for taking these steps, or you would not have done so, and we should be pleased to learn them.⁴⁰

Hubbard soon returned to work with his two companions.

The letter from President Young to Elder Hubbard further stated:

We have not received any communications from . . . [you] since you left to fill your mission to the people of the Kiowa nation. The great interest we take in the success of your labors prompts us to inquire with regard thereto.

. . . when you left here we understood that you would proceed directly to the tribe of the Kiowa Indians, and find out from them whether or not they had sent a messenger as Brother Lake asserted,

³⁷Deseret News, October 20, 1894, p. 561.

³⁸"Indian Territory Mission," June, 1877.

³⁹Kimball, "Indian Territory History," p. 1.

⁴⁰Fred J. Holton (comp.), "Unpublished Biography of Matthew William Dalton" (copy in the possession of Matthew J. Compton, Brigham City, Utah), pp. 93-94.

to learn from us, the principles of the gospel, if they had done so, you would instruct them therein. This appears to have been lost sight of, as you have tarried by the way. . . . We should like the truth of Brother Lake's story ascertained . . . for if the hearts of this people are prepared for the gospel we want to have it carried to them. . . .⁴¹

Prior to receiving this letter from Brigham Young, Hubbard had received word from Chief Charles Thompson, head chief of the Cherokees, inferring that Hubbard was disturbing the peace, etc. President Young learned of this information from a letter Hubbard had written to Utah. This resulted in Young writing the following letter to Chief Thompson:

Salt Lake City, U. T.
June 9th, 1877

Hon. Charles Thompson
Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation
Indian Territory

Dear Sir:

I have incidentally learned that one of our missionaries--Elder John Hubbard--now sojourning in the Indian Territory has addressed a note to you to which you have courteously replied. I am also told that you consider Mr. Hubbard's presence an intrusion and a disturbing element to the public welfare of the Indian Territory that ought to be removed. If this be so, I sincerely regret that you should entertain such views, as the entire history of our Church when truthfully told shows us to have been the influencing friends of the people of which you are a representative man, and their welfare and civilization has ever been, and is now, one of the leading features of our faith and practice. Today we are doing our utmost by precept and material aid to teach the tribes by which we are surrounded the arts of a higher and more useful life. Kindness and truthfulness have always been our policy in dealing with them, and those who know us have confidence in our word and faith in our promise.

If you are acquainted with the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints you will be aware that there are no people, no political party--no religious sect--that places the Aborigines of this continent so high in the scale of humanity as we do. We regard them as direct descendents of the chosen people of God and the inheritors of many of the most glorious promises ever given by the Almighty to the human family, and in this they are far more highly blessed than are their white brethren. The history of this branch of the House of Israel is contained in the Book of Mormon, a copy of which I have requested Mr. Hubbard to hand you with my respects. I earnestly entreat you to read it with a prayerful

⁴¹Ibid.

heart, and I am satisfied that if you do so the spirit of the Lord will burn within your bosom, testifying to you that it is the record of your fathers' history, and of God's dealings with them, and contains the fulness of the gospel of eternal life.

So far as Mr. Hubbard's being a disturbing element in your midst, we have sent him rather as a messenger of peace to declare the acceptable year of the Lord, to preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins and to declare to the out-casts of the House of Israel that God's set time to favor them has come, that he has remembered his promises to their fathers, and the day of fulfillment is nigh at hand; with these motives Mr. Hubbard comes into your midst, not to disturb or destroy, but to build up and bless.

Should you ever visit Utah I hope you will not omit to pay me a visit as I shall be extremely pleased to meet you,

I remain,

yours very respectfully,
Brigham Young⁴²

Chief Thompson was apparently not pleased with President Young's letter and wrote the following reply:

Office of Executive Department
Cherokee Nation
Tahlequah, July 16, 1877

Hon. Brigham Young
President Church of Latter Day Saints
Salt Lake City, Utah
Sir

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your very interesting letter and take this occasion to thank you sincerely for the favor. I regret my absence has caused the very great delay in acknowledging the same. With due deference permit me to say that I can not allow myself to be drawn into a polemic controversy with such a veteran in that particular field as you are acknowledged to be, and regret very much, for your sake, that I cannot endorse your particular doctrines or submit that your able letter has done more than to command my admiration for its ingenuity. As to the action taken in the case of your missionaries--Mr. Hubbard and others, I acted agreeable to my sense of duty, and my honest convictions, aided by my recollections of former Mormon missionaries in this country, which was the reverse of what you are pleased to advocate in your letter. If you desire to establish a mission in the Cherokee nation it must be done through our national council, which meets in November.

I am with great

⁴²Brigham Young, "Indian Territory Letter" (filed under "Indian Territory," LDS Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City), June 9, 1877.

respect your most
obedt. servt.
Charles Thompson
Principal Chief, etc.⁴³

Confronted with such obstacles as Chief Thompson, the missionaries met with little success. They spent sometime among the various tribes, but were able to baptize only one person. This man, however, was an intelligent chief who later represented his people in Washington, D.C.⁴⁴

Elder Dalton experienced the most difficult hardship of his mission during the fore part of September. On this occasion Elder Hubbard was endeavoring to catch some horses which they planned to use for traveling. In trying to "head them off," he ". . . had hardly taken sixteen steps, when suddenly, without a moment's warning, he, fell down, and instantly expired."⁴⁵ All efforts to try to revive him failed. Kimball later records that he died from an epileptic seizure.⁴⁶ Elder Dalton wanted to do everything possible for his departed companion. He purchased the best casket available and had all preparations completed for shipping the body to Utah when he received word to bury Hubbard in the Indian Territory.

Dalton and Navarre continued their missionary efforts in the Territory for some six weeks after the death of Hubbard. Then Navarre returned to his own tribe and Dalton returned to Utah.

⁴³Charles Thompson, "Indian Territory Letter" (filed under "Indian Territory," LDS Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City), July 16, 1877.

⁴⁴"Missionary Work Among the Indians."

⁴⁵Holton, pp. 92-93.

⁴⁶Kimball, "Indian Territory History," p. 1.

Thus, after being closed for some seventeen years, the mission was reopened for seven months because of a false report given by Robert Lake. With the return of Elder Dalton it was to be almost six years before it was again reopened.

In the spring of 1883, President John Taylor, a true friend of the Lamanites, decided to reopen the mission. This task was assigned to Apostle George Teasdale and he was to be assisted by Matthew Dalton. These two men left Ogden on April 16, 1883. Upon reaching the Indian Territory they went to Fort Gibson, where they had an interview with Dennis Wolf Bushyhead, head chief of the Cherokees. The elders made their headquarters at Fort Gibson in the home of Mrs. Anne E. Brown. She treated the missionaries very kindly for a short while, but her feelings soon changed and she asked the elders to move. They then went to Tahlequah, the Cherokee capital, to meet with the assembly and explain why the elders were there. The assembly was not impressed and the missionaries departed feeling quite low in spirits.⁴⁷

Shortly after this the elders met strong opposition from the various ministers. At a joint meeting with a Methodist minister, the missionaries were not only abused by the minister but he suggested that the Mormon missionaries be driven from the territory. The elders told him they were citizens, had broken no law, and did not intend to leave. This pleased the Indians to see the missionaries make a firm stand and from then on the opposition seemed to decrease.⁴⁸

Teasdale and Dalton had not been in the Indian Territory long

⁴⁷"Indian Territory Mission," April 20-August 31, 1883.

⁴⁸Ibid.

when they met Mr. William Hendricks and his wife, Ann. Mr. Hendricks was a half-breed Cherokee and owned a store at Manard. He and his wife showed some interest in Mormonism and offered great assistance in helping with the temporal needs of the missionaries. The missionaries frequently stayed with the Hendricks and were able to teach them the gospel. Both of them were later baptized, she, however, being baptized some five years prior to him.⁴⁹

During the month of September Elder Teasdale wrote a few tracts for the Cherokees. "The Restoration of the Gospel" and "What is the Gospel?" were two of them. These and other tracts were translated into the Cherokee language with the help of Mr. Eubanks, an Indian interpreter.⁵⁰

In the latter part of 1883 the General Authorities of the Church called Elder Teasdale home and sent Joseph Felt to replace him.⁵¹ The mission journal records the following concerning Dalton and his new companion:

Upon one occasion, after laboring long, but apparently without results in a certain district, Brother Dalton in the night season, received the following dream: "He saw over the Arkansas River, the figure of a large fine looking Indian, who waved his hands to him repeatedly, and called out loudly to him 'Come over here; come over the river and help us.'" The vision was plain and vivid; he told it to his companion, with the result, that they decided to cross the river and labor.⁵²

In the spring of 1884, Dalton and Felt, after crossing the Arkansas

⁴⁹Andrew Kimball, "Our Missions and Missionary Work," Contributor, XV (1893-94), 253.

⁵⁰"Indian Territory Mission," September 16, 1883.

⁵¹Holton, pp. 104-05.

⁵²"Indian Territory Mission," 1883.

River, went to Briartown where they met Seborn Marby, a white, and his wife, Mary, a Cherokee. These people became great friends to the missionaries and later joined the Church. Seborn Marby was also ordained an elder.⁵³ Dalton and Felt met with considerable success during the seven months they were together and were able to baptize several Indians into the Church. They worked together until April, 1884, when they both returned to Utah, once again leaving the Territory without any missionaries.

Two weeks after Dalton and Felt arrived in Utah, the Church called Israel Bale and Frank C. Teasdale as missionaries to the Indian Territory. These two elders were asked to try to establish the mission as a permanent field. However, because of ill health they were not able to meet the request and had to return home early. Although they were gone only six months, they had the privilege of baptizing seven persons and blessing two children.⁵⁴

Bale and Teasdale had failed in establishing a permanent mission of the Territory; however, another attempt was made in the beginning of 1885, when Andrew Kimball and James G. West were assigned to the mission.⁵⁵ From then until the present the mission has never been without missionaries. Due to the meager amount of missionary work that had taken place in the mission since 1859, the disorganization caused by the Civil War, and the moving of several Church members, the branches were completely disorganized. Kimball was called as mission president and

⁵³Deseret News, February 6, 1892, p. 235.

⁵⁴Kimball, "Indian Territory History," p. 5.

⁵⁵Deseret News, October 20, 1894, p. 561.

had the responsibility of trying to build up the mission. After being in the field some seven months, Elder West returned home on account of sickness, leaving Elder Dalton to labor alone. During the interim between West's leaving and the arrival of another elder, President Kimball became acquainted with John A. Richards and the two spent a little time together doing some missionary work.⁵⁶ Three months after the release of Elder West the mission was strengthened by the arrival of Ammon Green and Ammon Allen and later by David Shoud.⁵⁷ During this time President Kimball had established his headquarters at the home of W. H. Hendricks, at Manard. After the arrival of these three elders, Shoud and Allen went east of Manard while Kimball and Green went south and west to proselyte.⁵⁸ Concerning their missionary work President Kimball said:

We hold our meetings in school and court houses and private residences, principally the latter. Our best work is done by distributing tracts and in fireside conversations, not 'campfires,' for the people all live in houses, having abandoned their old wandering habits.⁵⁹

During the last of the 1880's the mission tried to expand into new fields of labor but the elders were disappointed in their attempts. Elders D. B. Broadhead and F. M. Anderson went to the Indian agent in the northwestern part of the Territory in hopes of gaining permission to preach to the Senecas, Wyandottes, Chippewas, Delawares, etc. The agent, however, was a Methodist minister and would not grant them permission.⁶⁰

⁵⁶Deseret News, May 2, 1891, pp. 585-86.

⁵⁷Deseret News, October 20, 1894, p. 561.

⁵⁸"Journal History," April 30, 1887, p. 5.

⁵⁹Deseret Evening News, August 16, 1886.

⁶⁰Deseret News, January 25, 1890.

John J. Hill and Jed. W. Ashton were kindly received at the Osage agency. The agent granted permission to proselyte among the tribe but suggested that the elders wait until the chiefs assembled in council and then meet them. However, while waiting for the council to convene, Elder Ashton became sick, making it impossible for the elders to meet with them. Shortly after this a new Indian agent was appointed who would not grant proselyting privileges to the Mormons.⁶¹

In the spring of 1891, President Kimball sent the following report to the General Authorities of the Church, covering the first thirty-six years of the mission:⁶²

TABLE 2

PROGRESS REPORT OF INDIAN TERRITORY MISSION
1891

<u>Item</u>	<u>Number</u>
Baptisms	55
Children blessed	26
Apostatized	8
Emigrated to Colorado	5
Emigrated to Utah	19
Tracts distributed	4,000
Books of Mormon	50
Elders now in field	6
Condition of mission, good	

Accompanying the report was the following:

. . . the number of baptisms can hardly be taken into consideration as a proof of development in that mission, because of the peculiar mixture of blood and conditions generally, yet we feel greatly encouraged and with warranted faith, look forward to the day in the

⁶¹Deseret News, January 28, 1893, p. 161.

⁶²Andrew Kimball, "The Indian Mission" (now in the possession of Spencer W. Kimball, Salt Lake City), p. 3. There is an error apparently in Kimball's report on the number of baptisms as he lists twenty-seven less than the report for 1857.

near future when the leaven which is now being sowed broadcast will rise with mighty results.⁶³

It was just prior to submitting this report, the spring of 1891, that the mission was granted permission to expand into the Chickasaw tribe.⁶⁴ The elders were quite elated over the prospects of success. Mr. Harris, a tribe member and ex-governor, opened his doors to the missionaries and gave them great assistance.⁶⁵ The first Chickasaw branch of the Church, known as the Leader Branch, was organized in 1894. E. L. Causey was to preside over it and J. H. Miller, an Indian, was ordained a priest and called to assist Elder Causey. There were ten members who belonged to the newly formed branch.

The elders felt if they had a meeting house of their own it would greatly strengthen their possibilities in doing missionary work. President Kimball wrote:

From our earliest experience among them [the Indians] we have felt dissatisfaction from the fact that we were not permanently situated. Other denominations have mission schools . . . , church houses and parsonages. What others have done they think we ought to imitate. Many have avowed their interest in our affairs and the doctrines we teach saying that if we would build a meeting house they would contribute towards its erection and help to make our congregation.⁶⁶

With this objective in mind, a petition was made to the 1891 Cherokee Legislature requesting a tract of ground upon which the missionaries and members of the Church might erect a chapel. However, before the petition was presented the chief died, as did also the assistant chief. The third person in command took sick and the Legislature adjourned. William H.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Deseret News, May 2, 1891, pp. 585-86.

⁶⁵Ibid., February 6, 1892, p. 235.

⁶⁶Ibid., April 9, 1892, pp. 497-98.

Hendricks then offered a site upon which the edifice might be built.⁶⁷ The men started working on it during the early part of 1892 and it was completed the following summer at a cost of slightly over \$400.00. At a mission conference held the following October, the chapel was dedicated by Elder H. M. Rawlins,⁶⁸ presiding elder.

The semi-annual mission report, covering from April 6 to October 6, 1892, noted that missionary work had been started among the Seminoles, the last of the five civilized tribes to receive the missionaries. It also showed nineteen baptisms since the report of April, 1891. They planned to have twelve additional missionaries arrive that fall and two more during the winter.⁶⁹

Shortly after the missionaries had their meeting house completed they started holding school for the children. Elder Nichols was the teacher. Inasmuch as the Indian children did not have to pay tuition at reservation schools, the same procedure was followed by Elder Nichols; however, the white children were asked to pay.⁷⁰

President Kimball, making his report in October, 1893, said:

Since our last report the Elders in the Indian Territory have been greatly blessed in their ministerial labors. . . . There has [sic] been twenty-seven baptisms, only a small percentage of which are Indian. The white people who have been baptized, are principally from New Hampshire, Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, and Missouri. We cannot see much development among the Indians of our old fields, as far as baptisms are concerned. A peculiarity of the Lamanites mixed as they are, to such an extent with the gentile nation, are a combination hard to comprehend; while they are hospitable, warm-

⁶⁷Kimball, "The Indian Mission," p. 5.

⁶⁸Deseret News, October 20, 1894, p. 561.

⁶⁹Kimball, "The Indian Mission," pp. 11-12.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 11.

hearted and kind in their treatment toward the Elders, they do not seem to take that interest in religion that is characteristic of the Indian proper. . . . we may count our friends by the score and name a great many who have avowed their interest in and determination of obeying the gospel, and proven their fondness for us by kind treatment towards the elders, yet not withstanding their firmness as friends to the cause of truth, they either lack the necessary inward courage in yielding obedience to the requirements of the gospel and subject themselves to the reproof of their people, or the time has not come in the providence of the Almighty for the Lamanites of that country to enter the fold of Christ. . . . do not gather the idea that we feel in any way discouraged, on the contrary, we are convinced that a great amount of good has been and is being done.⁷¹

He added further information as shown in the following table:⁷²

TABLE 3

PROGRESS REPORT FOR INDIAN TERRITORY MISSION
1893

<u>Item</u>	<u>Number</u>
Baptisms at last report	86
Baptisms since last report	27
Total.	113
Children blessed	17
Emigrated (Saints to Utah)	15
Members	74
Elders from Utah during 6 months	11
Elders local	1
Elders now in the field	9
Priests local	4

The mission was expanding and called for more elders. President Kimball's report for the year 1894 showed as many as twenty-seven missionaries in the field at one time. When he wrote this, the last day of December, 1894, there were twenty-one missionaries in the field. They had seven local elders who gave strong assistance in holding meetings and helping with the branches. They had thirty-nine baptisms during

⁷¹Ibid., p. 16.

⁷²Ibid., p. 18.

the year, making a total membership of 158. There were nine who went to Utah and two that apostatized. After moving, excommunications, etc., they figured their membership to be about 109.⁷³

Sometime during 1892 the missionaries started proselyting among the Osage Indians. Elder John J. Hill wrote that they would have to learn the Osage language in order to teach the people, as the Indians did not speak English and there were very few interpreters available.⁷⁴

The missionaries were making fine progress among the Choctaws. They had earlier organized a branch there and now saw the need for a chapel. A site was selected at the Massy settlement. Construction was started early in 1894 and completed in September. The chapel was the scene of the first conference held in the Choctaw nation. During the conference the chapel was dedicated by Elder Ephraim Jeppson.⁷⁵

The year 1895 was a big year in the growth of the mission. The states of both Kansas and Arkansas were added to the mission. With the acquisition of Kansas, President Kimball sent Elders Coolbear and Davis to that state as missionaries. They made their headquarters at St. John where they found a branch of the Church already functioning. The branch had no place to hold meetings and so began investigating the possibilities of building a chapel. A. C. Glasscock, a prominent citizen of the city, offered a fine location if the Mormons would build a chapel on it. There was a nice chapel in the city which was in the hands of a loan company. This chapel was offered to the Mormons, which they purchased

⁷³Ibid., p. 22.

⁷⁴"Journal History," April 19, 1889, p. 2.

⁷⁵Deseret News, October 13, 1894, p. 524.

and moved to their new location. The chapel measured twenty-eight by forty-five feet and was the largest one in St. John.⁷⁶ In attendance at the dedication were President Kimball and a group from Utah. President Kimball dedicated the edifice.⁷⁷

Shortly after the chapel at St. John was dedicated there were twenty-eight elders in the mission. They were quite evenly divided between the Indian Territory, Oklahoma Territory, Kansas and Arkansas. To have six elders laboring in Arkansas was quite encouraging because the year previous they had not been able to have any missionaries in the state.⁷⁸

In October, 1896, a reunion of Indian Territory missionaries was held in Salt Lake City. The "Roll of Honor" was read, which included the names of 107 elders who had served or were serving in this mission.⁷⁹

During the early part of 1897, Texas was added to the mission, and during the latter part of the year the state was divided into the southern conference and the northern conference.⁸⁰ The following year the state of Arkansas was divided into the east and west conferences.⁸¹

After serving some twelve years as an efficient, energetic mission president, Andrew Kimball was released in the forepart of 1897 and

⁷⁶Deseret News, September 28, 1895, p. 452.

⁷⁷"Journal History," September 17, 1895, p. 9.

⁷⁸Deseret News, April 11, 1896, p. 538.

⁷⁹Ibid., October 10, 1896, p. 542.

⁸⁰"Indian Territory Mission," September 4, 1897.

⁸¹"Journal History," February 5, 1898, p. 5.

returned to his home in Idaho.⁸² It was under his administration that the mission took on a state of permanency. He labored long and hard and received a partial payment in seeing the mission achieve a degree of success and from the devotion and appreciation paid him by the missionaries who labored under him.

Elder William T. Jack was called by the General Authorities of the Church to replace Kimball as mission president. After arriving in the mission, President Jack moved the headquarters from Manard, Cherokee nation, to St. John, Kansas.⁸³ When he took over the mission there were five conferences and sixty-nine elders laboring therein.⁸⁴

Since the mission now included the states of Kansas, Arkansas, and Texas, the name "Indian Territory" was not an appropriate title for the mission. Thus in March, 1898, the General Authorities of the Church changed the name of the mission to the Southwestern States Mission. The boundaries of the mission were the same, and William T. Jack continued as mission president.⁸⁵ Table 4, which follows, gives the statistical condition of the mission at the time its name was changed.

Of the five Indian missions started in 1855, this is the only one that continued to function beyond 1858. Unlike most of the other missions established that year, it had a very slow start. The missionaries worked long and hard, making only a little showing at a time, but it paid great dividends in the end. The greatest obstacle the missionaries likely faced was being able to retain their health in order to

⁸²"Indian Territory Mission," April 15, 1897.

⁸³"Journal History," April 29, 1897, p. 3.

⁸⁴"Indian Territory Mission," April 15, 1879.

⁸⁵"Indian Territory Mission," March, 1898.

TABLE 4

STATISTICAL CONDITION OF THE MISSION IN 1898 AT THE TIME
ITS NAME WAS CHANGED

Conferences	Presidents	High Priests	Seventies	Elders	Priests	Teachers	Deacons	Members	Total Officers and Members	Children under Eight Years	Total Souls	Baptized-New Members	Baptized-Children	Received Members	Received Children	Children Blessed	Removed Members	Removed Children	Died - Members
Kansas	James L. Nielson	.	19	7	.	1	3	47	58	139	197	29	4	6	2	133	3	1	.
Oklahoma	William T. Harper	1	11	4	3	.	2	48	57	61	118	13	2	.	.	41	16	2	.
Cherokee	Joseph J. Richardson	1	8	3	2	.	3	123	131	69	200	44	15	10	7	23	26	11	1
East Arkansas	John H. Peterson	.	12	.	.	1	.	29	30	22	52	26	..	2	.	21	..	.	.
West Arkansas	Frank L. Copening	.	14	.	.	.	.	9	9	37	46	6	..	3	.	37	..	.	.
Lone Star	Hyrum Andrus	.	16	.	3	.	.	61	64	87	151	24	5	.	.	67	..	.	.
North Texas	Joseph Coulam	.	16	1	.	1	.	31	33	156	189	11	2	.	.	150	2	.	.
		*	*	15	8	3	8	348	382	571	953	153	28	21	9	472	47	14	1

*Have not included High Priests and Seventies from Zion, in total of Members

John M. Knight - Clerk

William T. Jack - President

perform adequate missionary work. This is the only one of the five missions that can be credited with achieving a high degree of success. Probably the main reason for this is due to the Indians of this area being permanently located on farms and not having to roam about in search of something to eat.

CONCLUSION

There were various reasons the Church had for starting the missions at Elk Mountain, Las Vegas, White Mountain, Fort Lemhi, and the Indian Territory. The major one was their philosophy in regards to the ancestry of the American Indians and the part they were to play in the overall plan of the earth. A second reason was to occupy the favorable outlying farming area in hopes of keeping the gentiles from settling there. A third was to gain the friendship of the Indians so as not to have another recurrence similar to the Walker War, and a fourth motive was to establish the natives as a bulwark against any gentile invasion.

The program the Church followed in the western Indian missions was to select an area some distance from the closest Utah settlements and there start a mission. A suitable site called for enough farm land and irrigation water to provide for the needs of the missionaries as well as having a surplus in order that some of the natives might be fed when the need arose. The elders were next to erect a fort for the protection of themselves and their livestock. The Church officials felt that when the Indians learned there was food at these missions they would come to them from the surrounding regions. When the natives visited the forts the elders hoped to interest them in farming and convert them to Mormonism and thus change their nomadic culture to one of agriculture.

It seems that if the Church had followed the system that George Hill and others used their chances for success would have been much greater. Under this system there would have been no forts built and the choice areas would not have been claimed by the missionaries. Instead the missionaries would have gone out singularly or in pairs, selected a small group of natives and lived among them. In this way the Indians could have been instructed how to farm and the elders could have learned the Indian language and become better acquainted with their customs. Under this procedure the elders could also have complied with Brigham Young's suggestion of marrying the Indian women and it would have been more effective than taking the Indian wives into the forts. The elders would have been more a part of the tribe and would likely have increased their effectiveness as missionaries.

There are various reasons why the western missions did not achieve success. One was the occupancy by the elders of the choice areas of land. The site at Elk Mountain was the summer rendezvous for the Indians in that locality whereas Fort Lemhi was where the Indians of that region gathered to catch their annual supply of fish. A second reason was the aloofness of the elders. By secluding themselves within the forts it was a sign to the Indians that they were not trusted by the whites. A third reason why some of them failed was due to poor organization and a lack of cooperation among the missionaries. A fourth reason would involve outside influences, as at Lemhi, when Powell stirred the natives into an uprising.

In analyzing the great number of hours donated by the missionaries and the permanent effect it had on the recipients one must classify the western missions as an almost complete failure, in spite of there being some five or six hundred natives who accepted the gospel. Of this number

it seems ninety-five per cent did so for one of two reasons, or both. First, it was the popular thing to do, as at the Muddy River, and second, it bettered the natives' possibility of obtaining badly needed provisions.

The Indian Territory Mission, on the other hand, met with a high degree of success which seems to have stemmed from the fact that the Indians of this mission were stably situated in an agricultural society and were living in separate homes, and the elders were able to meet with them on an individual basis and not as a group.

APPENDIX

SALMON RIVER MISSION¹

This was the fifth of the five missions undertaken in 1855. The twenty-seven elders on this project were under the supervision of Thomas A. Smith, mission president. The site for their settlement was selected on June 15th in the upper Salmon River Valley. The Indians among whom they were to work were the Flatheads and the Bannocks or Shoshones. The objectives for sending the men to this region were about the same as those of the other missions. Samuel M. Beal says: the elders were to ". . . teach the Indians the principles of civilization: induce them to give up their savage mode of living, . . . convert . . . [them] to Mormonism and promote peace among the several tribes--and toward . . . the white race."

While the men were waiting near Fort Hall for a ferry to be repaired they performed their first baptisms when three Bannocks asked to have the rite performed.

From the vicinity of Fort Hall the party followed the Snake River to a point near present Idaho Falls and then went in a northwesterly direction. While crossing a desert region, after leaving the Snake River, the missionaries were joined by a Bannock Indian named Mattigan and his family. These Indians later rode ahead to tell their tribe of the coming of the Mormons. Show-Woo-koo, the Bannock chief and his escort, then rode about seventy-five miles to meet the elders and invited them to settle in the Salmon River country. The elders selected their site on the east bank of the Lemhi River. Due to the shallowness of this river the Indians of the area gathered here to trap Salmon during their spawning season. Thus the region was cherished by the various tribes.

The elders soon had eight acres cleared and planted to garden crops. The seeds came up nicely and showed prospects of a good crop, but they were destroyed by a grasshopper invasion. The only thing that was harvested the first year was about forty-five tons of wild hay.

The men soon started a stockade and eventually some twenty-five houses were to be built therein. The stockade was completed near the

¹Samuel Merrill Beal, "The Salmon River Mission" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of California, 1934).

middle of August. Also at this time the first mail left the new settlement for Utah as well as a company of eleven men to acquire supplies for the winter. By the time the men arrived back at the fort with their goods the Indians were in such dire need of assistance that the missionaries gave them most of their recently received provisions. The elders were once again almost destitute of food and apparel and in December a second group started for Utah to obtain sufficient supplies to see them through the remainder of the winter and the following spring.

During the winter months the elders tried to improve themselves by spending three sessions a week studying the Shoshone language.

The following May the mission was strengthened by the arrival of twenty-seven new missionaries. The crops had been planted by this time and looked very promising. However, the elders witnessed a destruction similar to the one experienced the year previous, except that some of the wheat shoots came up again and produced about one hundred bushels of wheat. With the major part of their crops destroyed again in 1856 the leaders at the fort sent two wagon trains to Utah for additional supplies.

The following winter P. G. Taylor, E. Robinson, and B. F. Cummings went to the Bitterroot Valley, in western Montana, to see if Mr. McArthur, part owner of Fort Hall, would sell the fort and surrounding area to the Church. Nothing apparently came of their inquiry as the Church did not make the purchase and nothing further is recorded about it by the missionaries.

The mission was visited during the summer of 1857 by President Brigham Young and a party of 114 men, 22 women, and 5 boys. President Young said the elders had gone too far north to make their settlement. Heber C. Kimball and Daniel H. Wells, who were in the visiting company, urged the missionaries to marry the local Indian girls. A few of the elders followed the counsel and were married to the natives.

After Young and his party had gone it was decided to abolish the community style of living and let each person farm as much land as he could care for. However, in order to do this it was necessary that a new fort be built and part of the men move there so that adequate farming land might be available.

It was not until August 22, 1857, that the missionaries learned of the approach of Johnston's army. The local Indians also learned of it and began to have a negative attitude toward the men at the fort. They not only began to demand food but would steal everything possible. John W. Powell was a mountaineer and seemed to be highly responsible for exciting the Lamanites and turning them against the missionaries. So marked was the changed attitude of the natives that the elders from the second fort moved to the first fort so that both groups of whites might have better protection. In spite of the negative change in the Indians the missionaries did not believe Powell when he told them the Indians planned to burn their supply of hay and steal their stock.

On the morning of February 25, 1858, the men of the mission divided into various types of work; some left for a load of timber, some went to the lower fort for hay, others were repairing the mill, and some were herding the stock. About 10 a.m. an estimated two hundred Indians rode into the area of the fort and started driving off all the stock, estimated to be three hundred head. George McBride, one of the herders, dashed among the Indians trying to turn back the stock but was shot in the attempt. President Smith and others tried to retrieve the stock but in so doing Smith was shot in the right arm.

James Miller was one of the men who had gone to the lower fort for hay. As he and his companions were returning to the upper fort they were attacked by the Indians. Miller was killed and two of those with him were wounded. Andrew Quigley, one of the two wounded, was shot in the shoulder and had his head badly beaten. He lived for a few weeks but died en route to Utah. The missionaries blamed J. W. Powell as the instigator of the uprising.

The missionaries were in a precarious situation as the nearest settlement and help was some 350 miles to the south. Two men were selected to leave for Utah and report the conditions at the fort to President Young. An inventory, taken prior to the departure of the two messengers, showed the Indians had taken nine horses and 250 cattle. The messengers reached Salt Lake on March 8th but were told that men could not be spared to strengthen the mission due to the approach of Johnston's army. However, Young did send 150 men to rescue the missionaries. The rescue party reached the fort on March 23rd and 25th.

Prior to the departure of the elders from Fort Lemhi they excommunicated twelve of their Lamanite converts for participating in the attack. They had 1,000 bushels of wheat they could not take with them so gave it to Snagg, a faithful, friendly chief. Of the several Indians who married elders there was only one who accompanied her husband to Utah, the remainder stayed with their own race in the upper Salmon River country.

A vanguard company, consisting of eleven men, started for Utah on March 26th. While traveling up Bannock Creek this group was attacked by the Indians. W. B. Lake was shot in the head and instantly killed. The main company of missionaries and rescue troops left the mission the day after the vanguard company. Both groups were much surprised to find the northern Utah settlements abandoned because of the entrance of Johnston's army into the valley. The elders and rescue troops disbanded at Brigham City and each went his separate way.

Thus, after living among the Indians of the upper Salmon River for almost three years, the elders succeeded in baptizing approximately one hundred of the natives. The missionaries not only gave of their time in trying to improve the conditions of this group of people but shared with them much of their precious food. As a token of appreciation for these kindnesses the Indians stole nearly 250 head of stock and killed four of the whites.

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MORMON INDIAN MISSIONS - 1855

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An Abstract of the Thesis of

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ABSTRACT

Due to the L.D.S. philosophy concerning the origin and destiny of the American Indians, Brigham Young felt the gospel should be taught to the various Indian tribes. Thus, at the spring semi-annual conference of the Church in 1855, a number of men were called as missionaries and assigned to establish five Indian missions. Four of these, Elk Mountain, Las Vegas, White Mountain, and Salmon River, were in or near the Utah-Idaho region and the fifth was in the Indian Territory.

Alfred N. Billings was called to lead some forty missionaries to Elk Mountain and there establish a mission. The Indian chief welcomed the Mormons by expressing his desire to have them show his people how to raise and care for crops. Several of the natives were baptized and seemed to enjoy having the missionaries among them. Some, however, were disgruntled and started an uprising by shooting James A. Hunt. Two other missionaries were killed before the remaining elders voted to close the mission and returned home.

The mission at Las Vegas was supervised by William Bringham. A number of natives were baptized and a farm was started for them. During this time Nathaniel V. Jones was sent to mine lead ore in the area and instructed to use what missionaries he needed from Las Vegas. This developed into a conflict between Jones and Bringham and resulted in Bringham being disfellowshipped from the Church. The miners returned

to Utah in February, 1857, and were soon followed by the missionaries.

David Evans was to be in charge of the mission at White Mountain, to be located near present-day Preston, Nevada. The area was explored by a few of the elders, but upon returning, an organizational problem caused the party to postpone departing until fall. However, by then they had completely lost interest and nothing further was ever accomplished.

The Indian Territory mission was opened by five missionaries from Utah who were soon joined by four from St. Louis. During the first year of the mission some sixty-five followers of Lyman Wight were re-baptized and later migrated to Utah. Some of the natives were also baptized and a few branches of the Church organized. The elders left the mission in 1859-60, at the request of the Indian Councils and did not return until 1877, and this was the result of Robert Lake, who reported the Kiowas to be extremely interested in Mormonism. In 1885 the mission took on a permanent nature and missionaries have since been in the area continuously. Under Andrew Kimball's administration new branches were organized, three chapels erected, and the states of Arkansas, Kansas, and Texas added to the mission. In 1898, a more appropriate name was given to the mission--the Southwestern States Mission.

The Salmon River project functioned the longest of those in the inter-mountain region. Grasshoppers destroyed the entire crop the first year and the majority of it the second year. Things seemed to be going quite well when a general uprising in February, 1858, took the lives of four missionaries and forced the elders to abandon the mission.

Considering the donation of better than a million and a half working man hours by the missionaries involved in these missions, the dividends were not very colossal, especially among the four inter-

mountain missions, where some six hundred natives were baptized. The Indian Territory mission, though slow in establishing its permanency, is the only one that can claim any degree of success.

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