



1963

# A History of the Latter-Day Saint Settlement of Oakley, Idaho

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A HISTORY OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINT SETTLEMENT  
OF OAKLEY, IDAHO

A Thesis

Presented to the  
College of Religious Instruction  
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science

by

Wayne R. Boothe

July 1963

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the many people who have contributed information, loaned documents or pictures, and given encouragement in the writing of this thesis. Most of them will, of necessity, go unmentioned; but the help of all is sincerely appreciated.

Of invaluable assistance has been the collection of newspapers published in Oakley from 1893 to 1961, on file in Oakley's village office, and also the Cassia Stake records in the Latter-Day Saint Church Historian's office.

Special thanks go to Dr. James R. Clark, major chairman, and Dr. Chauncey C. Riddle, minor chairman, who have given freely of their time and counsel; to Newell Dayley, Wilford Sagers, Wallace Hale, Claude Wells of Oakley, and Mrs. Herman Johnson of Rupert, Idaho, who loaned me much material and displayed great interest in this project; to my wife, Velma, and to our family for their sacrifice, suggestions and encouragement.

W. R. B.

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## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Saints:** Faithful members of the Church and Kingdom of God on earth.

**Church:** The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons).

**Zion:** 1. The Church of Jesus Christ is Zion. 2. The place where the members of the Church live.

**Gentiles:** People who are not members of the Church, unbelievers.

**General Authorities:** The presiding authority of the Church is the First Presidency, consisting of three High Priests, a president and his counselors. Associated with them are Twelve Apostles and other men who are called Assistants to the Twelve Apostles; a Patriarch to the Church; The First Council of Seventies, consisting of seven men; next in order is the presiding Bishopric, consisting of three High Priests.

**Stake:** A geographic unit of the L.D.S. Church similar to a diocese.

Each stake is composed of several smaller units called wards.

**Ward:** A ward is the Mormon equivalent of a parish. The basic ecclesiastical Church Unit in and through which the programs of the Church are administered. Several wards form a stake.

**Branch:** Congregations of Saints which are not large and stable enough to form wards are organized into branches, presided over by a branch president. All the congregations located within the districts of missions are called branches.

M.I.A. (Mutual Improvement Association): An auxiliary of the Church that aids the priesthood in leading the youth of Zion in spiritual and social development. Y.L.M.I.A. (Young Ladies Organization), Y.M.M.I.A. (Young Mens Organization). This organization is sometimes called "Mutual."

Relief Society: An organization of adult women whose purpose is to work for the temporal and spiritual salvation of all the women in the Church.

Primary: An organization for the instructing of the L.D.S. children up to the age of 12 years.

Mormon Battalion: A battalion of 500 men recruited by the U.S. Government in 1846 to go to California to help fight Mexico.

Word of Wisdom: A revelation given to Joseph Smith in 1833 as a law of health dealing particularly with dietary matters. (D. & C. 89)

Conferences: Latter-day Saints assemble periodically in various conferences to worship and to receive religious instructions.

High Council: Each Stake has a group of 12 men called to serve as a judicial and administrative body. Their work is to aid and assist the stake presidency in regulating the various Church affairs and programs in the Stake.

Church Security Program: This has reference to the Church Welfare Program which provides for the temporal needs of the poor. Whenever possible those receiving welfare assistance work for what they receive.



CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to give a general account of the Latter-day Saint settlement of Oakley, Idaho. This study is to relate many of the difficulties that faced these early pioneers and to show their courage and resourcefulness in meeting these problems.

Justification of the problem is that the history of this Latter-day Saint settlement has never been written. The writer feels it is important to preserve and record for future generations some of those stories and events in Oakley's history that might otherwise be untold and forgotten.

Method of procedure

The writer sought out and interviewed residents of Oakley that were known to have knowledge concerning the study. These interviews with many of the oldest people in the community opened many avenues of information on the history of the valley. They referred the writer to many other people, both present and former residents of the community, who had witnessed many of the events in the proposed study, and these also were contacted.

The writer had access to 2,000 issues of newspapers published in Oakley from 1893 to 1961, at which time the newspaper office closed. These issues yielded many additional items of interest. Call-back interviews had to be made to question people on some of these additional newspaper items that were incomplete.

Libraries were checked for books on this area of Idaho, early county

records were searched, letters were written to many people not possible to be contacted because of distance, and agencies such as the weather bureau and soil conservation offices were consulted. All of these contacts yielded much helpful information.

The writer has striven to accumulate as much information as he could find, and he has expended time and effort to clarify questionable areas and points and to document the information thus presented.



Figure 1. Oakley, Idaho

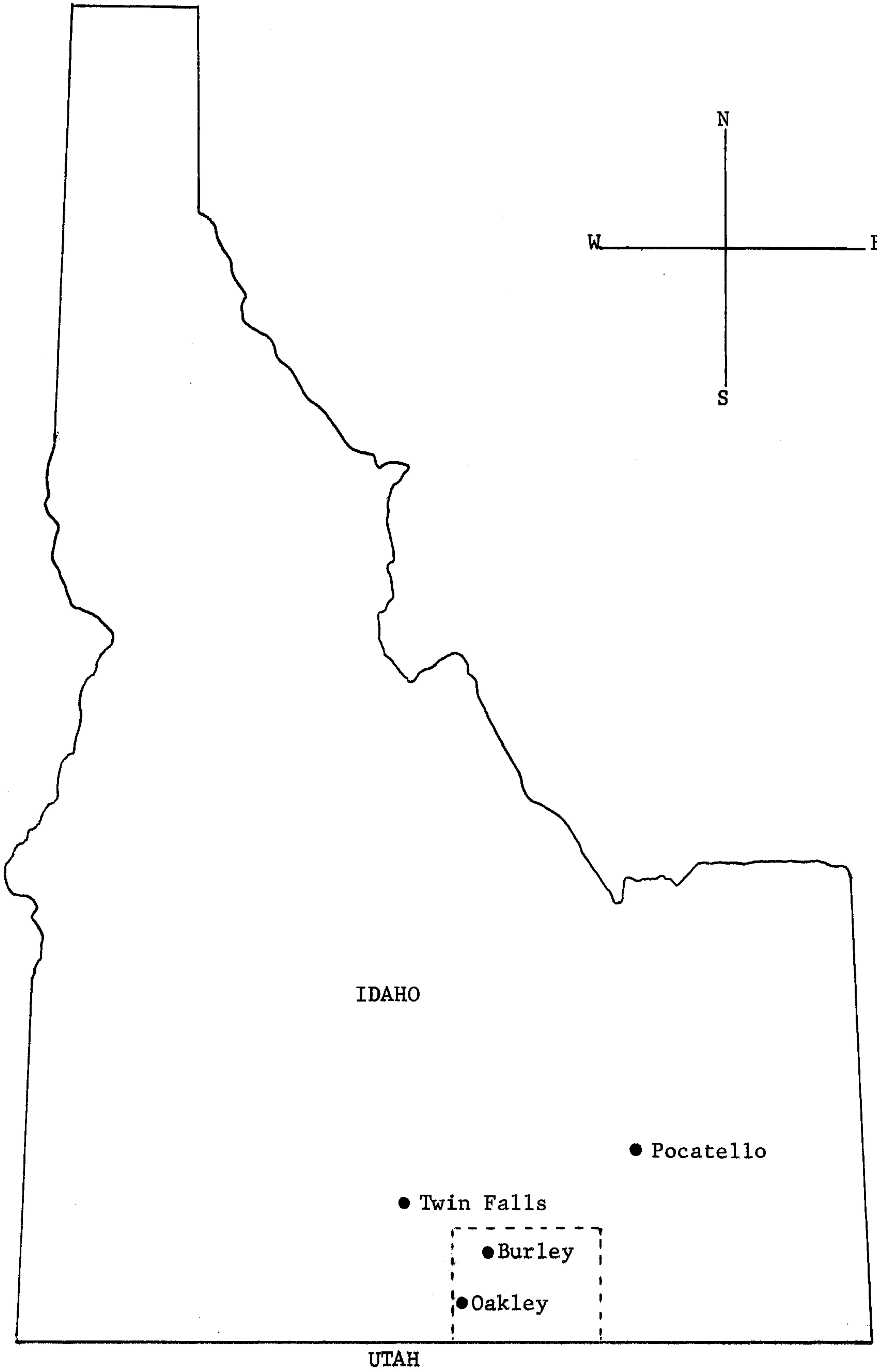


Figure 2. Location of Oakley, Idaho

CASSIA COUNTY

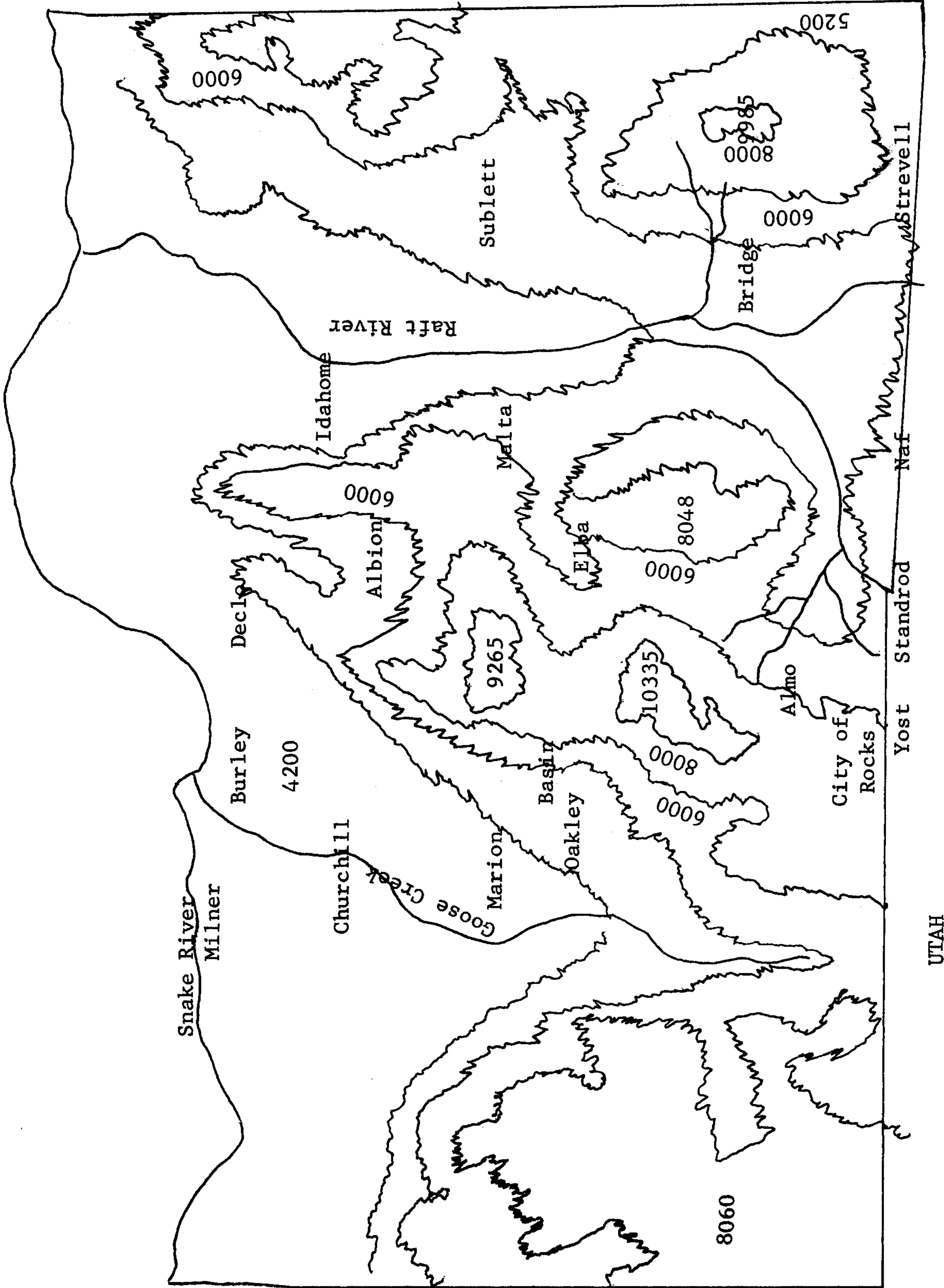


Figure 3. Map of area surrounding Oakley

CHAPTER II  
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Geographical description

Oakley is a small agricultural community of south-central Idaho, numbering approximately 800 people. It is a part of Cassia County and is located 20 miles southwest of Burley, the county seat. Oakley is situated in the Goose Creek Valley, named from the Goose Creek flowing from the mountains south of Oakley.

Oakley is bordered by mountains on the east, west, and south. Mount Harrison to the east and Mount Independence to the south range in altitudes of 9,265 feet above sea level and 10,335 feet above sea level, respectively. The state line dividing Utah and Idaho is 20 miles to the south of Oakley.

Situated some 16 miles southeast of Oakley is a 20 square-mile area of rock formations carved by erosion into many interesting shapes and sizes. This was a noted scenic area enjoyed by early emigrants on their way to Oregon and California and is also enjoyed by people today. It has been given the name of "City of Rocks."

The "Basin" is located 5 miles east of Oakley and is separated from Oakley by a low ridge of mountains. The population of this area is considered a part of Oakley.

The length of the growing season varies considerably. A frost-free period of 110-130 days is recognized in the Goose Creek Valley. The Basin and the area above Oakley fall within the 80-110 day period.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>United States Department of Agriculture, Climatic Summary of the United States--Southern Idaho Section 6. p. 30.

The average annual temperature recorded for Oakley from 1893 to 1952 is 48.3 degrees F. The highest temperature recorded was 108 degrees F., and the lowest temperature recorded was 26 degrees below zero.<sup>1</sup>

The average total precipitation from 1893 to 1952 was 10.20 inches. An average of the last twenty-two years, compared with the preceding thirty-seven years, shows a decrease in precipitation.<sup>2</sup>

The total acreage of land in the Goose Creek Valley is 696,424 acres. Of this acreage, 110,437 acres are irrigated lands, with 29,152 acres being classed as dry-farming land. The principal crops grown today are sugar beets, potatoes, beans, cereal crops, alfalfa hay and pastures. Corn silage and red clover seed are produced on a smaller scale in this area.<sup>3</sup>

#### Trappers-explorers

The general area of Oakley Valley or the Goose Creek Valley was traversed by trappers and explorers many years before its settlement. As they journeyed up and down the Snake River, they searched its creeks and tributaries, looking for fur-bearing animals. The following account tells of one of these expeditions along the Snake River in Cassia County:

On the sixteenth day of October of 1811, the Hunt party sent out by the foremost citizen of his day, John Jacob Astor, camped on what was then known as Caldron Linn, now the present site of the town of Milner. This expedition known as the Hunt Party, was sent out from St. Louis by John Jacob Astor, and it camped for some time at the spot where Milner now stands. Judge Hays says a record of their troubles will be found in Washington Irving's-Astoria. The party spent most of October and November in the Snake River Valley. They called

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Glen H. Logan, Soil Scientist, A Descriptive Legend of the Soil Survey on the East and West Cassia Soil Conservation Districts, Idaho. Feb. 1962.

the whirling waters below the rocky island at Milner which now supports the immense dam, "The Caldron Linn," and the canyon below, "The Devils Scuttle Hole." The party camped longer at Milner than anywhere else.<sup>1</sup>

One Idaho historian stated that it was the Hudson Bay Trappers who found some cassia plants along a stream in this area and named it "Cassia Creek."

Goose Creek, also, was named by fur trappers.

Goose Creek, Cassia County--This stream was named by members of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company under Milton Sublette in 1832, because of the vast number of geese which congregated upon and fed along its course.<sup>2</sup>

### Indians

The Goose Creek Mountains and others surrounding the Oakley Valley were a favorite hunting area for Indians. Deer and antelope were plentiful, and the Indians came here to get their meat and dry it for winter. This area was a favorite place for pine nuts, as illustrated by the following:

During the late fall after the heavy frost had struck the mountains, many Indians of different tribes visited the City of Rocks region to gather pine nuts, which were plentiful in this neighborhood. It was my delight when these Indians came to the station to beg a biscuit or some pine nuts to get "Glove Maker Jim" to converse with them.<sup>3</sup>

The City of Rocks has long been known for the number of pine nuts it produces each year. Some of our early settlers stated that they traded grain for meat with the Indians.

### Emigrant trails

When gold was discovered in California, many emigrants travelled on the Oregon Trail, which followed the Snake River, until they came to the Raft River. Here they left the Oregon Trail and followed the Raft River in a

<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, April 28, 1911.

<sup>2</sup>Charles S. Walgamott, Six Decades Back, (Caldwell: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1936), p. 354.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 43.



southerly direction to the City of Rocks, near the Utah-Idaho border. From there they went west to the Goose Creek and, following west still further and south, came to the Humboldt River and then continued on to California.

There were many variations of the trails to California, as some followed the Snake River down to Raft River and then followed the border of the mountains until they came to the Goose Creek Valley and then followed the Goose Creek south to meet the California Trail south of Oakley.

The City of Rocks, located some 16 miles southeast of Oakley, was once a terminal of the old Oregon and California trails. Wagon trains coming from the East camped here, and those going to California turned west; while those going to Oregon traveled down Birch Creek to Oakley Meadows and on to the Snake River to Oregon. One large rock in the City of Rocks was called Camp Rock and was used as a directory for the trains yet to come. The travelers would write on the granite face with wagon grease the dates of their arrival and departure and the direction they were going.

The following are accounts of various emigrant trains camping in the area:

Near nightfall on August 15th (1849) we encamped on Goose Creek, a small tributary to the Lewis Fork of the Columbia River, in the southern part of what is now the State of Idaho, and about two hundred miles north of the Great Salt Lake. At the point where we struck the creek, there had been a regular camping place, and the grass in that vicinity had all been consumed; but, by moving up the creek a mile or two, excellent grass and ice cold spring water were found and we tarried there all of the next day.<sup>1</sup>

The following account took place in 1844:

Proceeding down Bear River, they arrived without adventure at Fort Hall, which was the point at which the Oregon party was to separate from those going to California. Here they were compelled to purchase flour, for which they paid a dollar a pound. . . . The parting

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<sup>1</sup>Reuben Cole Shaw, Across the Plains in Forty Nine, (Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1948), p. 109.

with the Oregon party was a sad one. During the long journey across the plains, many strong friendships had been formed and the separation was deeply regretted by all. Our emigrant train now consisted of eleven wagons and twenty-six persons, all as determined to push on to California as on the day they left Council Bluffs. The country they had traversed was more or less known to trappers and hunters, and there had been little danger of losing their way; neither were the obstacles very formidable. But the remainder of the route lay for most of the distance through an unknown country, through which we must find our way without map, chart, or guide, and with diminished numbers.<sup>1</sup>

Another phase of history can be told of the Northern California Trail which branched off at the Raft River where highway 30 north is now and how the trail ran in a southwesterly direction up through the Raft River Valley coming into the City of Rocks, continued on over Granite Pass and on to the Goose Creek area. Here it followed Goose Creek for some time and left this part of the country for California through Wells, Nevada.

The Overland Trail originated first at Corinne, Utah. This was the shipping point on the Southern Pacific Railroad for Montana, points north and for the Pacific Northwest. When the Southern Pacific reached Kelton, Utah, it became the shipping point. The Trail went to Cedar Creek, south of Strevell and passed by the present town of Strevell going in a northwest direction. It passed around the mountain crossing Clear Creek and on to Raft River directly west of the Twin Sister Rocks and on to the stage station in the heart of the City of Rocks.

The two trails crossed there and the Overland Trail turned northwest and went over Junction Summit and ran along the foot of the mountains to Summit Station and down Cedar Hill where it crossed Birch Creek about three miles southeast of Oakley. Running a northwestern direction it turned due west at the present Eldon Whittle place and crossed Goose Creek. Oakley Meadows, which was another stage station about three miles from Oakley, connected the rest of the Overland Trail with the Oregon Trail at Rock Creek and to the Northwest.<sup>2</sup>

Emigrants coming through this area were subject to attack by unfriendly, irate Indians, who didn't want the white men moving into their hunting areas. The following is an account of Indian depredations in this area:

The Loveland History gives an account of the battle with the Indians. Captain Smith and a company of forty five people were on their way to California during the late summer of 1862. This company was set upon by the Indians--four being killed, nine wounded. Three escaped, going to Brigham City for help. Here they were directed to the home of Colonel D. C. Loveland where they received of his

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<sup>1</sup>Stewart-Schallenberger, The Opening of the California Trail, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953), p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>Times News, (Twin Falls, Idaho) May 23, 1961.

hospitality. The colonel started with them at once for the scene of the trouble. He found the survivors in a starving condition, having had nothing to eat but wild berries for nine days.<sup>1</sup>

In the early 1860's, the City of Rocks was the scene of one of the largest, most complete and calamitous Indian onslaughts in emigration history. This particular siege lasted four days and nights, leaving 300 Missouri emigrants dead and their caravan of more than sixty wagons a burning mass. The guide and a young woman sharpshooter, who escaped on the fourth night, reached the Mormon Settlement of Brigham City, 100 miles to the southeast, through barren country. The following is an account of this massacre:

Out of some three hundred persons, men, women, and children, only five, three men and two women were known to have escaped the cruel death administered to them by the overwhelming band of Indians that had congregated for days in such great numbers that they were enabled to hold in siege a train of emigrants who were well organized, well armed and provisioned, and well equipped with fine stock, drawing more than sixty wagons. Despite the magnitude of this onslaught, very little, if anything has been written. The only records rest in the memory of old people who lived at that time, or in the account as handed down from parent to child.

The writer visited this battle ground in 1875. Evidence of the conflict was marked plainly by trenches thrown up under each wagon as they were arranged in circles. Accompanying our party was an old trapper who gave us a detailed account of the tragedy. In the interval of fifty years that have elapsed their memory can cut some funny capers, and in putting this story together the writer has taken considerable pains to verify what he believes he saw and heard on the subject more than fifty years ago.

The best informer was Mr. W. M. E. Johnston, who with his wife at present lives a mile south of Twin Falls. They were fourteen and twelve years of age respectively at the time of the massacre, and were living in the settlement of Brigham City, Utah, where a rescue party was dispatched to the scene. On their way they found, on Raft River, two women, one man and a baby, who had escaped and had for several days existed on rosebuds as their only food. They remembered that the Indians returned and passed through the settlement displaying the scalps of their victims attached to the manes and bridles of their ponies. They recall seeing a North Ogden blacksmith and a party going to salvage the irons from the burned wagons.

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, August 21, 1936.

In 1872, eleven years later, Mr. Johnston visited the battlefield, and in 1887 the Johnston family moved to Almo Creek, securing land that partially covered the battlefield, which still bore evidence of the hard fought battle. In leveling and plowing the ground for alfalfa, Mr. Johnston uncovered numerous old guns and pistols.

Mr. Johnston speaks the Shoshone language well enough to be understood and from an old Indian he was able to get the Indian version which is in part incorporated in the following story.

In the Spring of 1861 an emigrant train left the Missouri River bound for California. It was equipped as nearly as possible, with everything necessary to make safe the trip in unsettled country infested with Indians. The train consisted of more than sixty wagons and some three hundred souls. Nothing is known of the early part of their trip until they reached the western plains where they were harassed by Indians whom they were able to keep at bay through their well organized camping, their driving management, and their equipment of arms.

This gave them added courage, and they looked on the Indians, who at first were small in numbers, with indifference, and sometimes they took shots at them at long range to keep them away, which angered the Indians. This together with the natural antipathy which they held for the white man, coupled with the desire to destroy the train and possess its belongings caused a general uprising of the numerous Indians whose habitats were adjacent to the Oregon Trail.

Indian runners were sent out and signal smokes were sent up. The place of concentration was to be Indian Grove, some four or five miles south of Almo creek. According to the Indians account there was assembled here the largest number of hostile Indians ever known in these parts. Here they provisioned their camp with game meat, which was plentiful, and waited for the condemned train.

The emigrants traveled in confidence over the Oregon Trail until they crossed the Raft River, where their guide headed them south over the Sublette Cut-Off to the California Road. They traveled peacefully for three short days without sighting Indians, and then encamped for the night on Almo Creek, so named by the Indians signifying "Plenty Water," where now nestles the peaceful village of Almo. Here they took their usual precautions, made a corral of their wagons, placed strong guards over their stock, and slept peacefully, not knowing that an overwhelming band of blood thirsty Indians were looking down on them from Indian Grove, a large elevated mountain bench, finely timbered which even to this day retains its name.

The outpost of the Indians watched with impatience the emigrants light their morning fire inside their wagon enclosure: watched the herdsmen drive their stock to camp to be harnessed for the days journey; and saw the line of defense being broken, each wagon falling into its allotted position in almost military precision. The Indians were in readiness. They were about to attack a foe much their superior in arms and ammunition. The Indians had a few guns and small quantities of ammunition, but they depended on the greater number, their bows and arrows and their well planned mode of attack.

They allowed the train, as it moved slowly southward from Almo creek, to proceed until its rear wagon was some distance from the creek. Suddenly the pre-arranged signal was given by the Indian lookout, and the Indians in great numbers emerged from their places of concealment where they had lurked in silence and secrecy. They

completely surrounded the surprised emigrants who immediately gave orders for all wagons to be corralled with all stock inside the enclosure. This was accomplished in spite of the hair raising yells of the blood thirsty Indians who knew they had committed the first act of their contemplated tragedy. They had the emigrant train cut off from water, and the siege began. It was not to be a fight where man was given for man, but was fought in Indian fashion, each Indian protecting himself, reserving his ammunition, keeping the train in siege until the emigrants had exhausted their ammunition and were famished for water. A large portion of the Indians had secretly returned to their camps at Indian Grove leaving only enough of their tribesmen to hold the siege, and from protected points of vantage picked off with arrows or guns any emigrant that attempted to escape or get water.

In relays, the Indians, day and night harassed the whites with arrows, guns, and fire brands shot into the wagons, and otherwise terrorized them by yells, which were joined in by the entire Indian war parties. This was intended to impress on the minds of the confused emigrants the overwhelming majority of the Indians.

The emigrants realized their condition, and under each wagon a trench was dug with the dirt thrown to the outside. The digging of a well was started in the hopes of getting water. This work was carried on feverishly until it proved disappointing. Men undertook to bring water from the creek and were shot down. Occasional shots from the Indians killed or badly wounded some white man, woman or child, which threw the members of the besieged party into greater confusion and grief.

The excitement grew intense as panic stricken horses in their struggles broke their fastenings and ran frantically around the enclosure while others in their attempts to break loose were snorting, rearing and trampling the earth, from which rose great columns of dust through which frantic women and children darted hither and thither in their aimless attempt for relief. This with the constant yelling of the Indians and howling of their dogs made a scene too wild and awful to contemplate.

On the third day the stock was ordered turned from the enclosure. As they hastened for water they were taken into possession of the Indians. Little by little the fighting force of the train was reduced, and the remainder contemplated the inevitable. It was on the fourth night that the guide accompanied by a young woman who had displayed great courage and marksmanship planned to make their escape. Under the protection of darkness they crawled through the sage brush, making their way to the mountains. After hours and hours of travel they found their way to the settlement at Brigham City, Utah. In the after part of the same night one man and two women, one with a nursing baby, secretly stole from the doomed camp, crawling for miles on their hands and knees. The mother of the child, in her anguish and endeavor to keep in company with the others as they crawled through the brush, was compelled to take the garments of the child in her teeth and carry it in that manner.

They were successful in making their escape, reaching a point on Raft River which was afterwards known as E. Y. Ranch, where they lived on rose buds and roots until found by a rescue party from Brigham, who sent them to the settlement and proceeded to the battle grounds of Almo Creek to find the entire party slain and the wagons burned. The

bodies of the unfortunate people were buried in the wells which they had dug.<sup>1</sup>

### Cattlemen

In the early 1860's, many people followed the Oregon Trail, intent on going to the gold fields in Oregon and California. There were others who were looking for good farm and pasture land. Some of these people stopped in this valley and settled on the banks of the various streams that emptied into the Snake River and, by the American doctrine of appropriation, established ownership of the water. This valley looked like fine grazing land, and some could see it as potentially rich cattle country. The hills and valleys were covered with tall grass and innumerable streams of cool, sparkling water. Wild game was in abundance.

In 1871 some three or four hundred head of Texas cattle were driven in by A. D. Norton and M. G. Robinson. Norton and Robinson had been merchants at Dry Town on the Snake River, and had brought in a small bunch of beef cattle in 1871, which responded so quickly to the fattening qualities of the bunchgrass that grew among the sagebrush that they decided to run stock cattle in the valley. The idea of using the mountains for summer range had not been taken into consideration.

These cattle were turned loose on Rock Creek, and a home ranch established on the Cottonwood a few miles south of the present city of Twin Falls.

A year later in 1872, A. J. Harrell, a wealthy California man, conceived the idea of bringing a band of cattle into Goose Creek Mountains for summer and driving them south to the lowlands of Nevada for the winter, with a base supply at Humboldt Wells, Nevada, on the Central Pacific Railway.

The condition of the range in the mountains was ideal. There was an over-abundance of pure sparkling water flowing from many springs and creeks with virgin grass and vegetation in the mountain parks and coulees that would yield two to three tons to the acre if cut. Sagebrush was unknown in the mountains except on the low dry ridges, and there only a small shaggy growth.

As Mr. Harrell was augmenting his band, which became known as the Shoe Sole, other companies came in, viz.: the "Winecup" and the "HD," both having headquarters on the tributaries of Goose Creek and on the Nevada side of the mountain. At this time cattle were cheap.

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<sup>1</sup>Walgamott, op. cit., pp. 120-126.

Old steers were worth fifteen dollars, stock cows with calves at their sides, eleven dollars. All beef cattle were shipped from Wells, Nevada, to San Francisco. The market was low but the cost of production was small. Nothing was fed and the loss was computed to be one per cent, but in a few years the range began to show signs of over-crowding; there were thousands of five and six year old steers on the range, and too many breeding animals.

In 1882 two wealthy cattle men, John Sparks and John Tinnin, who previously had bought out the "Winecup" and "HD" brands, bought the "Shoe Sole," paying a lump sum of \$950,000, which was thought a considerable sum in those days. This made the Sparks and Tinnin holdings probably better than 175,000 head of cattle, ranging from Goose Creek or Junction Valley on the east to Bruneau or Devil Creek on the west, Snake River on the north, and the Great American Desert on the south.

Sparks and Tinnin immediately began improving their herds by producing herefords and shorthorn bulls, and undertook to decrease their holdings by extensive gathering and shipping of steers and sterilization of the young breeding animals, which in turn would become shippers.

In 1885 this concern branded 38,000 head of calves. During the years from 1886 to 1891 the entire country suffered from the effects of drought. Springs and creeks dried up, grass and vegetation wilted to the ground. The snow that fell in the mountains fell on frozen ground and was taken off by chinook winds, leaving no moisture in the earth. This drought made it possible for the sagebrush to move to the hills where it still remains.

In 1891, on the same range where six years before 38,000 head of calves were branded, 60 head represented the entire year's crop. From 1891 rainy seasons were again enjoyed, by this time this immense herd had almost been depleted.

A. J. Harrell with his son Andrew came to the rescue, taking over the Tinnin interest and stocking the range with 3,000 cows, thinking that the former condition of the range would return; but, alas, the sagebrush had moved to the mountains to stay: another cycle in the evolution of nature had lapsed.

Later the Shoe Sole brand and holdings were sold to the Utah Construction Company, and the cattle industry of Southern Idaho, while still extensive, is now in the hands of many.<sup>1</sup>

The Oakley Meadows was the home ranch of the Bradley-Russell cow outfit, a concern which counted its cattle by the thousands. Its winter grazing range encompassed the entire valley from the mountains on either side to the Snake River. Its summer pastures were the mountains around the valley.

Both cattle and sheepmen were attracted to the grazing lands of this area, and there resulted one of the traditional range wars of the state.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 197-198.

This was the reason for the statute known as the "Two Mile Limit Law."

Since 1875 there has been in Idaho a statute known as the "Two Mile Limit Law." This law states that it is unlawful for any person owning or having charge of sheep to herd them or permit them to be herded on the lands or possession claims of others. Under this act it is unlawful to herd sheep or permit them to graze within two miles of a dwelling house. The owner of the house may sue the owner of the sheep for any damages he has sustained. Of course, this law does not prevent the owner of sheep from simply driving them from one place to another, although they happen to pass within two miles of a settler. Even if the sheep should occasionally eat grass as they travelled along or while they stopped for a needed rest, they would not be considered to be grazing, within the meaning of the law. This law was passed to protect the ranchers from the injury that might result to them if sheep were permitted to graze too near their homes and the surrounding pasture lands.<sup>1</sup>

#### Stage station, freighting, mail route

Oakley Meadows was one of the stage stations of a company operating from Kelton, Utah, to Boise, Idaho, from the years 1869 to 1878.

When the Southern Pacific reached Kelton, Utah, in 1869, it became the shipping point for all of Southern Idaho. Freight teams and an express line conveyed people and supplies to the Boise area and all places in between. At various times the mail was sent by way of the stage; and, earlier, the Pony Express used the stage stations for its purposes.

The following accounts point out the organization of these stage stations and the influence that Kelton had on the welfare of the people in this area.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Rosevear owned and operated a hotel and also a feed yard in Kelton, Utah. Kelton at this time, was the main southern station for stages and freighters, Boise being the largest northern station. Kelton was situated on the Central Pacific Railroad ninety one miles west of Ogden, which placed it about three miles north of Salt Lake.

Nothing grew within two miles of the town for the ground was covered with a salt dirt called alkaline ground, which makes the

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<sup>1</sup>Cornelius J. Brosnan, History of the State of Idaho, (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons Press, 1948), pp. 239-240.



foreground of the place look white.

The stages going from Kelton to Boise and cities south had to travel so fast for safety that fast horses were needed about every twelve miles. This necessitated stage stations or depots at these twelve mile points. Parts of these stations still stand.

Freight was also hauled over this road. It was hauled by mules and oxen, eight and ten span hooked together pulled as many as three wagons at one time.

The early columns of the "Statesman" (Idaho Statesman, Boise, Idaho) have constant reference to Kelton. "Freight is enroute from Kelton;" "A dearth of food supplies is because the road to Kelton is impassable." It was in fact the connecting link between Boise and the outside world.<sup>1</sup>

The City of Rocks Stage Station was the main point coming into Idaho. This building was erected to accommodate stage travel and was situated on the Sublette Cut-Off of the road to California among the scattering pines on the headwaters of Raft River and about three miles east from the nature sculptured city known as the City of Rocks.

Between these main stage stations, such as the City of Rocks Station and the Oakley Meadows Station, were other stations approximately ten to twelve miles apart, where fresh horses were attached to the stage.

The writer as a youth remembers some of the stations on this line placed approximately ten miles apart; where a stable, and other buildings suitable for the use of horses and mules, were erected; also, as the times demanded, a fortification of ample size to care for the stable hostlery and passengers. That stage drivers, hostlers and passengers were thrilled aplenty is still told by a living few; this, however, will not be for long unless some assistance is given to perpetuate this story for the rising generation.

The old stage road is still visible in a few places, the line of travel being north of Kelton to the Strevell Summit, thence into the Raft River Valley, where it seems, there was a division in roads, the one going north down the Raft River; the stage coach line we are considering, turning west up the source of the same stream, then crossing the river where it makes a bend to the southwest, east and a little south of what is now the town of Almo, thence through the City of Rocks or skirting the same, after which the road crossed the Oakley Summit, following a north westerly direction through what is now the town of Oakley, continuing past Warm Creek, Buckhorn Dry Creek and Rock Creek. The course being in as near direct line for Boise as water and feed would allow. (sic).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, May 8, 1931.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., March 15, 1935.

Indians were concerned with the movement of the white men and on many occasions tried to discourage them from going through this area by giving warnings and by going to greater extremes, as illustrated by the following account:

The coach from the west brought the news that Indians had burned the station at Birch Creek Divide and the soldiers stationed at City of Rocks were helping to build one on Summit Creek, about a mile from the other; one hostler had been killed. We left Curlew Station at six in the morning and were to travel only in daylight on account of Indians. We had a team that seemed to want to be different and our driver sure knew how to swing them in line. Soon we had a cloud of alkali dust trailing behind us.

A little after sunup, our stage pulled out of the stockade and we were escorted by ten cavalry men to the next station, which was the new station then being built on Summit Creek, just northwest of City of Rocks, on the northwest slope of the Birch Creek Divide. After changing teams we were off at a wild break-neck speed for the Oakley Meadows station in Goose Creek Valley, then on to the Mountain Meadows, Rock Creek, Desert, Mud Spring, Lewis Ferry Stations.<sup>1</sup>

The following is an experience of a pony express rider with Indians in the Goose Creek:

One day early in March as I rode up Goose Creek, five old Indians came out of the brush some distance ahead of me and stood there until I came up. I thought that there was something up.

When I came up to them, one old fellow stepped out, put his hand on my horse's mane, and said "You will have to go back." I asked him what for. He said "We are going to stop this paper talk, burn the cabin at the ferry, cut the boat loose, and let it go down the river." I asked them if I couldn't go on through this trip. They wanted to know what difference it would make to go back now or after I made the trip. I told them that I had lots of paper talk to the big chief in Washington. That the papers said the Indians were good to the white people, and that they wanted the big chief to send a big ox train loaded with guns, ammunition, blankets, beads and jewelry for the Indians. One old Indian turned to the other and said that I was telling a lie. I never let on that I heard what he had said but kept on talking to them. I told him the reason I wanted to go-one was that I wanted to get my share of the guns, blankets, and ammunition. They then had a talk among themselves. Pretty soon the old Indian that was talking to me, untied a big flowered handkerchief from around his neck, stepped up to me, tied it around my neck, drew the knot tight, and told me not to untie it until after I got back.

He said, "If any Indians wanted to look at it, let them do it,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., August 13, 1926.

then they will not harm you until you get back to the ferry."

I said, "I want to send word to my wife to tell the two old Indian families to take all my horses except one and start for Fort Hall; but to leave the one horse for me with the companies' horses, and I will come up as soon as I get back."

He said that he was not going but that he would send his boy to tell her.

I said, "Be sure to do it, for I want her to get out of the way before anything happens."

He said he would send him the next morning. I then went on through to Brigham City, and I told the agent what happened. I told him that I would take this mail back with me, but I wouldn't come any more. I asked him what I should do with the mail that Cummins would bring out.

He said, "Tell him to leave it there at the ferry or else take it back with him the next morning." I bid him goodby and started for the ferry. Once or twice on the road I met Indians, and they looked at the handkerchief and said I was all right.<sup>1</sup>

The route of the Pony Express entered Idaho at the head of Raft River, crossed the Sublette Cut-Off to California at the City of Rocks, then passed over the mountain to Goose Creek Valley, crossing the Goose Creek at Oakley.

Later, the Pony Express Mail Carrier was done away with, and the contracts for sending the mail were taken over by stage lines.

If I remember rightly, in 1870 Mr. Hailey was running the stage line from Kelton, Utah, to Umatilla, Oregon, on the Columbia River, a distance of about seven hundred miles. That same year the entire stage lines, or mail routes of Idaho, went under the general control and management of the Northwestern Stage Company by reason of security, by bidding, the mail contracts from the post office department at Washington.

Concerning DeLacy's bid for the mail contracts, there was some speculation in Idaho. The bidder was under suspicion. The Owyhee Avalanche of February 28, 1874, made an interesting comment, which I here insert because it also gives the amount of the bids for carrying the mails:

A Washington dispatch announces that Wm. DeLacy is awarded contracts for carrying mails, as follows: Dalles to Boise City, at \$9,500; Boise City to Winnemucca, \$13,500; Kelton to Dalles, (Dalles, Oregon) \$67,000.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Abraham C. Anderson, Trails of Early Idaho (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1940), pp. 312-313.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Donaldson, Idaho of Yesterday (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1941), pp. 74-75, 77.

The following article explain the difficulties encountered by the stage companies in providing the means of travel for its customers:

Our first day's experience was about a duplicate of every other day. During the Winter I took my seat on the outrigger, and at certain places indicated by the driver I would poke a willow down into the snow, just leaving the brush or part of the willow sticking up. When we encountered a drift and the leaders could plunge through we would always make it. If it was too deep the horses would always lie down, and then I would take off my fur coat and get among their legs and tramp the snow solid around them, then put on my coat and get back on the seat; and then the driver would speak to the horses and we would move on. There was one place at a dugaway where we struck the Birch Creek, where we were compelled to tramp out each way on every trip that winter. We would travel east toward Oakley's station until we would meet the eastbound stage, which would be a coach. Here the passengers, mail and express from the sled would be transferred to the coach, which would be turned back; and the driver who came with me would go on and I would return with the eastern driver, the eastbound passengers and the mail.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Walgamott, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

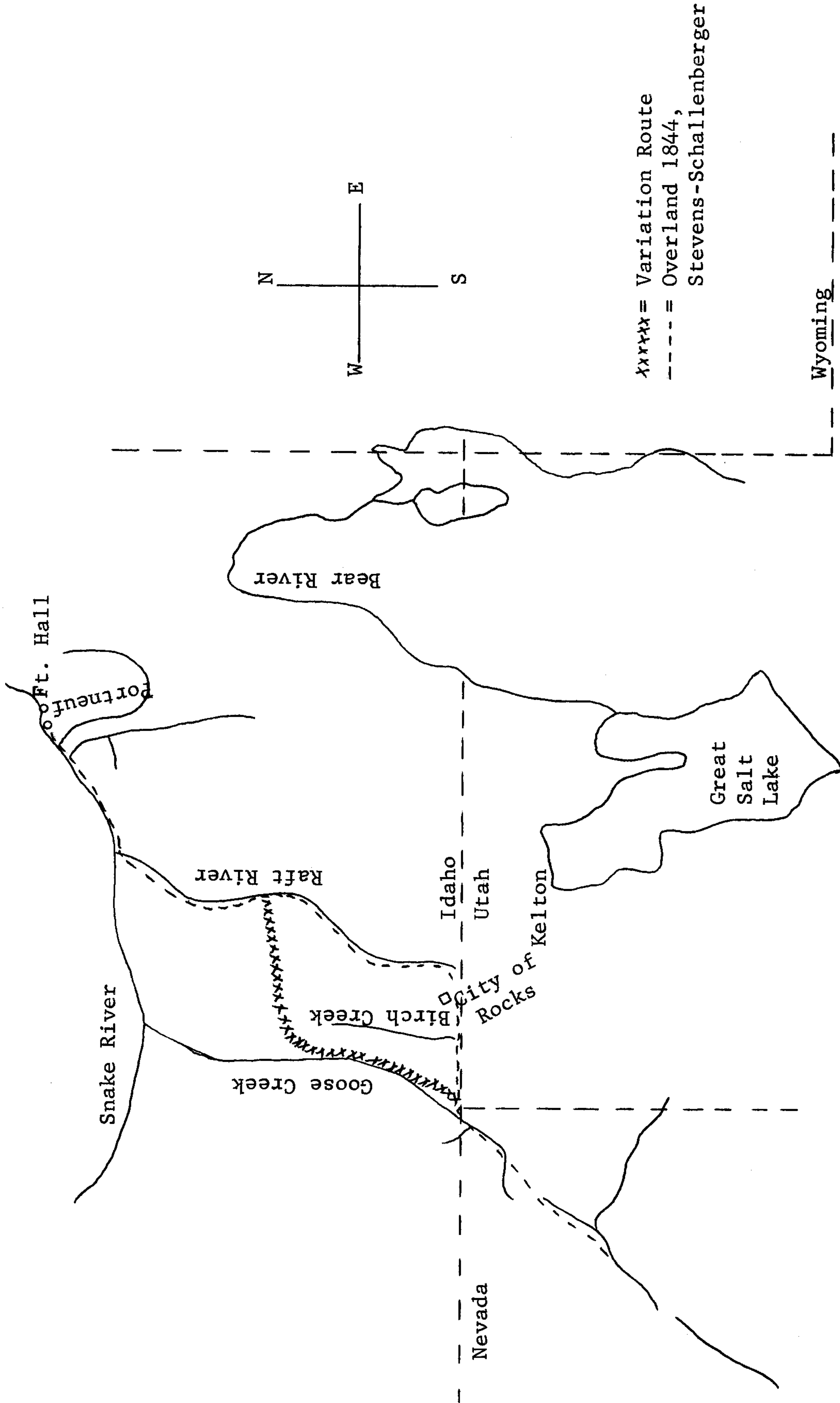


Figure 4. Map of emigration trails near Oakley

### CHAPTER III

#### SETTLEMENT AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

In 1870, William Oakley settled at the pony express and stage station in Goose Creek Valley. This station was located two miles west of the present town of Oakley and became known as Oakley Meadows. The town of Oakley was also named after this man.

The Chaplows were others who came to the valley early and cared for the station at the Meadows. Their personal dwelling also housed the first school, post office, store and stage station. It was the central point of activity in the whole Goose Creek Valley.

There were a few scattered settlers on the streams in the Oakley area at this time with a few head of cattle. They cultivated small patches of grain and made trips in the fall to the nearest grist mills, where they could get their wheat ground into flour. One of the first threshers was a post in the ground, having attached to it a pair of horses hitched to a sweep. The horses went around and around, tramping out the grist. The following is a list of some of the early settlers in this valley and tells where they were located:

In the very early days on Goose Creek there were Mr. Hart, David Walker, the Ribletts, the Emersons, J. B. Rice, Hopkins, and Rivers. In the Basin there were the Daleys, George M. Scott and Mr. Welch, who came to Goose Creek in 1879. The Chaplows were over at the Meadows; James Iverson, John Iverson, and Peter Anderson were at Cottonwood; the Fosters at Warm Creek; Jeff Butler at Buckhorn; Mr. Dill and family at Mountain Meadows.

There were J. E. Miller and George Chapin, Lewis, John Birch and the Dunns at lower Goose Creek. There were also Ed Griffith and James Dick at Oakley, and Rilley and Brannons at the Island.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Walgamott, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

The life of these early settlers was difficult. The following article describes their condition:

The settlers suffered much hardship and deprivation, but still lived in a rude comfort. They enjoyed the free-hearted companionship of their neighbors, who might live some miles away, and were happy in the knowledge that nature's cupboard was always open, fish in the streams and deer in the hills and for diversion there was an occasional dance in the little school house or frontiersman's cabins. There were log cabins, dirt floors, or maybe puncheon floors, cooking over the fireplace, dutch ovens and rude boxes or benches cut out with an axe for seats, and many windows or openings covered with flour sacks to let in the light, or the primitive light made by lighting a strip of cloth lying in a lid or dish partially filled with grease. Still there was much enjoyment. Occasionally some settler had brought some comforts with him and the house or cabin would be a little better equipped.

Roads were deep in mud in the wet season and deeper in dust in the dry season, especially on the stage and freight roads, a condition not entirely remedied in the outlying districts.<sup>1</sup>

#### Early investigation by church members

On June 1, 1878, Heber Dayley, Thomas Dayley, Elisha Dayley, and Charles McMurray first visited Goose Creek Valley. When they first came into the Basin, they found three log buildings that were owned by Nevada cattlemen. After this visit, they described the Basin by saying that they could hardly cross the creeks there because of the thickness of the willows and the many soft marshes. They described the creeks and streams as being full of clams.<sup>2</sup>

They spent four days in the valley and staked out 160 acres of land apiece. As they were preparing to go back to Utah, a report came that the Indians in the area were on the warpath.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 311.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Mrs. Herman Johnson, Rupert, Idaho, December 21, 1962.

<sup>3</sup>The Oakley Herald, Pioneer Day Issue, July 18, 1957 (Reprint of Eighth Annual Pioneer Celebration, July 23-24, 1936, by William A. Martindale).

The stage was stopped by six Indians three quarters of a mile south of the Oakley Meadows Stage Station, and those on the stage were told that if everyone in the valley didn't leave immediately, they would all be killed. After burying what farm implements they had, the settlers in the whole valley moved to points of safety, driving their stock with them.

The following accounts describe this experience in different areas of the valley:

Early in 1878 there was an Indian scare further west between Mountain Home and Glenssferry. The Indians killed John Bascom and a man that was with him. They had been down on the Bruno and were coming back on the south side of the river. Some people saw them fighting the Indians from the north side. John Bascom's wife was then at Rock Creek.

At Goose Creek they heard of the killing so all the women and children were loaded up and moved to the ten mile house near Kelton, Utah. The day before they started I was put on one of the best horses in the country and was told to go. I went to every place as far as Sam Land's and reported that the Indians were coming. The next morning there were about 20 wagons started out with families. We stayed at the ten mile house about ten days.<sup>1</sup>

In July of 1878, the people of Grouse Creek had a terrible Indian scare. A fellow coming from a town called Terrace reported that the Indians were on the war path. Immediately, the people of the town began to gather together at a place called the Fletcher Ranch. They stayed there for several days, but no Indians came. . . . When the scare had subsided, my sister and myself went back and forth to the ranch every day to take care of things there. The neighbors were angry to think they would consent to it but we were not the least bit afraid. In fact, there were no more Indian scares all the rest of the summer.<sup>2</sup>

The Dayleys went with a group of non-Mormon settlers who were leaving the Goose Creek Valley by way of Birch Creek Road towards Kelton, Utah:

It was the intention of the party to make the trip secretly and quietly--an aim which was not realized; for most of the 150 head of stock accompanying the party had bells and some of the people insisted on singing as they journed. It was stated that the group was heard

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, November 24, 1938.

<sup>2</sup>Annie Louisa Mecham (Taken from personal life story).



at the City of Rocks Stage Station while they were a mile and a half distant from that place.<sup>1</sup>

When this group was ten miles northwest of Kelton, the party was met by three hundred and fifty soldiers under the command of Colonel Howard, whose purpose was to quell the uprising.

This Indian scare was over within a few weeks, and the men moved back onto their farms with their families.

On November 11, 1878, Heber C. Dayley brought his family into the Basin and spent the winter of 1878-1879 there in a log cabin.

Early in the following spring, a number of people from Tooele County, Utah, came into the Basin to settle. The following describes their entrance into the valley:

In March of 1879, Thomas J. Dayley brought his family into the valley from Grantsville. Enoch R. Dayley, Sr., Heber Dayley, James Dayley, Moroni Fairchild, Hyrum W. Egan and Solomon P. McIntosh followed, and these seven purchased the right to all the water of Basin Creek with all its tributaries from Frank Riblett who owned a large ranch, called the Harp Ranch, located on the present site of Oakley, and who claimed all right to the water of Basin Creek.<sup>2</sup>

Mrs. Thomas Dayley wrote a letter to her father, William C. Martindale, in the early spring of 1879, telling him of the beautiful valley and how they felt that it would be an ideal place to live. The following account describes his visiting this area in the late spring of 1879:

William C. Martindale visited his daughter Mrs. Thomas Dayley in the late spring of 1879. He found some of the settlers willing to sell or relinquish their claims and that there would be hundreds of acres of land lying waste. He talked to one man who said, "Do you want to bring in more people to starve? We can't thrash what grain we've raised." When W. C. Martindale returned to Grantsville he reported all he had seen and heard to Francis M. Lyman, then president of Tooele Stake. He was so pleased with what he saw that he and two

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, January 15, 1932.

<sup>2</sup>Andrew Jenson, Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Co., 1941.)

of his friends, George Whittle and Emerson Green, returned in September of that same year and brought the first threshing machine. In November of the same year Francis M. Lyman who was the president of Tooele Stake came with W. C. Martindale to look over the valley. He was greatly impressed and made a favorable report to the headquarters of the church.<sup>1</sup>

Crops planted during the spring of 1879 were nearly eaten up by the crickets. These were very troublesome for several years after the valley was settled.

On April 26, 1880, for the sum of six hundred dollars the transfer was made for the ownership of the water rights in the Basin. In 1881, a few other families moved into the Basin, and the Basin Creek was divided into 16 shares.

#### Settlement of Oakley and related problems

William C. Martindale was plowing in his field in Grantsville, Utah, when a boy came to him and told him he was wanted at the bishop's office. Brother Lyman and other authorities were there. President Lyman said, "Brother Martindale, we want you to prepare to go to Goose Creek Valley." President Lyman accompanied Brother Martindale and others back to the valley for the purpose of purchasing water rights, which were held by certain stockmen, and to prepare for a general colonization.<sup>2</sup>

Farming in the Oakley Valley has been a challenging experience from the very beginning. When any land is classified as being in an arid district, unceasing efforts must be made then to provide the moisture needed to mature the crops. The settlers of Oakley Valley have realized this struggle from the very beginning and have worked hard to make provisions

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, Cassia Stake Number, November 12, 1946.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Mrs. Herman Johnson, Rupert, Idaho, December 21, 1962.

for themselves and for their posterity, so that they would be able to have some permanency in the valley.

Creek irrigation. The water rights to the various creeks in Oakley Valley were claimed by the first settlers, who were non-members of the Church. They laid claim to them by right of the American doctrine of "Appropriation." When investigation revealed that the water rights could be bought from these settlers, leaders of the Church came, negotiated, and purchased these rights for the Church members. Some of these water rights were purchased by individuals, but the larger ones were negotiated by Church leaders.

Goose Creek and its tributaries, Trapper Creek and Pole Creek, form the largest of the streams flowing out of the mountains at Oakley and provided water for many claims. The following are some of the earliest water claims: Laura L. Thatcher, 160 inches on April 1, 1875; George Chapin, 200 inches on April 1, 1876; George Chapin and Harriet Stout, heirs-at-law of Marie and Elizabeth Chapin, 120 inches on April 1, 1876; J. F. Tatro, 170 inches on July 1, 1877. From 1875 to 1887, there was a total of 10,555 inches of water claimed for usage by 30 different individuals or groups. These claims were subject to the amount of water for use.<sup>1</sup>

According to the procedure of appropriation, those who filed first were the first to get their claims filled. The claimant next in line got his claim filled if there was any water left over.

Canals were dug for those farms not bordering the Goose Creek; and their construction and upkeep were a community affair, involving all those who drew water from the various canals. The following article describes

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<sup>1</sup>Decreed Water Rights, Goose Creek and Tributaries, Cassia County. Second Division. Frank Riblett, Commissioner. Albion, Idaho, 1903. pp. 2, 3.

the building of these canals:

After people had put in their grain on the east side of Goose Creek and in the Marion district, it was necessary to build a canal on the east side called the Emerson canal or an extension of that ditch, and the one on the west was called the west canal. The work was sectioned off to each owner of water. Bishop Haight's section was from a point beginning at the place designated now as the northeast corner of President W. T. Jack's lot and extended to where the First Ward chapel now stands. The reservoir canal followed nearly all the way right in the east canal and similarly quite a distance of the west canal also. We did about a week's work on the side hill with pick and shovel. The ground was very dry; as Ether Durfee, who had charge of the work on the west canal made the statement, it was reported, that the earth had not been wet for 1800 years to his certain knowledge.

The first time I ever saw C. G. Eliason was while I was working on the side hill ditch; he was horseback and he wanted to know how long it was going to be before water could be turned in the canal, as his grain was burning up. There was quite an acreage of grain raised in 1882.<sup>1</sup>

In 1885, a communication was sent to Salt Lake concerning the construction of canals:

There are two canals being built, several miles in length and of respectable size, for irrigation, the water being taken out of Goose Creek.<sup>2</sup>

Birch Creek and its tributary, Cold Springs, flow into Oakley from the mountains south-east of Oakley town. The earliest claimants on this creek were E. R. Dayley, 80 inches on March 1, 1875; Jacob Dayley, 30 inches on April 1, 1881; E. R. Dayley, 30 inches on April 1, 1881; and L. A. Nelson, 48 inches on April 1, 1881.<sup>3</sup>

The above men were members of the Church, and since they didn't arrive in Goose Creek until 1878, the date of 1875 would suggest that perhaps this is when the original people on this creek had claimed water and that the

<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, November 12, 1946, J. J. Milliard Sr.

<sup>2</sup>Deseret Evening News, (Salt Lake City), March 26, 1885.

<sup>3</sup>Decreed Water Rights, Birch Creek, Cassia County. Second Division. James McMillian, Commissioner, Twin Falls, Idaho, 1910.

above settlers purchased these claims from earlier settlers.

Cottonwood Creek, located north-east of Oakley, had the following early claimants: J. H. Caldwell and J. F. Caldwell, 160 inches on June 10, 1871; John Iverson, 20 inches, and William Poulton, 12 inches on March 31, 1872.<sup>1</sup>

After the settlers had purchased the water rights, they began clearing the land in anticipation of soon bringing their families.

A few settlers came into the area before the general migration of 1881, the following being accounts of some of these:

Hyrum Severe of Grantsville, Utah, was the first permanent Latter-day Saint settler at Oakley, he having bought a claim in the vicinity of an older non-Mormon rancher before President Martindale and other settlers from Tooele County located there.<sup>2</sup>

Eugene Emery, Sr., first arrived in Goose Creek Valley in 1877. The first two years he was there he lived in a dugout. In 1879, he settled on his ranch up in the hills along Goose Creek, south of Oakley. There were others who lived in dugouts, too. In the fall of 1880, William Moultrie arrived in the Basin. It was too late in the year to get logs out for a cabin; so Mr. Moultrie got busy and fashioned a large dugout in which he and his family lived comfortably for a number of years.<sup>3</sup>

H. L. Hunter journeyed from Salt Lake, taking seven days for the trip. He first visited Oakley in 1879 and brought his family in 1880. When he built his home that year, he used old harness tugs, which had been cast aside by the stage line, for door hinges.<sup>4</sup>

One of Oakley's early settlers from Tooele, Utah, Joseph Smith (not the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Cottonwood Creek, Cassia County. Second Division, Albion, Idaho, 1903.

<sup>2</sup>Jensen, op. cit., p. 600.

<sup>3</sup>The Oakley Herald, July 31, 1936, March 12, 1937.

<sup>4</sup>The Oakley Herald, July 31, 1936.

Mormon Prophet), arrived in company with Fred Craner on June 11, 1880. They found only a few settlers. In the immediate vicinity of the town were perhaps half a dozen ranches.

A man named Thatcher had a store some miles down Goose Creek. Mr. Smith remembers paying \$28.00 for two pieces of bacon. J. F. Tatro also had a store between Oakley and the present site of Burley. Bacon, as well as other merchandise, was brought in by freight team from Kelton, Utah.<sup>1</sup>

The houses were built of logs, roofed with poles, shingles, straw, and dirt. Smith said that often rats would cut through the roof, and straw and dirt would fall into the food on the dinner table. There was no question as to whether the floors should be painted or oiled, because they were dirt.<sup>2</sup>

On some of the homes the doors would be nothing more than canvas, covering the opening. Later, as time permitted, doors were made of poles split in two and nailed together with wooden pegs. Of necessity, the settlers first built very simple shelters, because there were so many other things to be done. They had to cut the timber and haul, not only logs for homes and sheds, but also poles and posts for fences. They built the roads, cleared the sagebrush off the land, and fenced the farms.<sup>3</sup>

The Basin filled up first, but it wasn't long until many settlers decided that there wasn't enough room for them and certainly not enough water to raise sufficient crops to sustain all who had settled there; so many of them moved down to where Oakley is now situated.

The early church membership of the Goose Creek Valley was originally from the Tooele Stake area. An article entitled "The Spirit of Grantsville

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, January 12, 1926.

<sup>2</sup>The Oakley Herald, January 12, 1926.

<sup>3</sup>Interview with Newell Dayley, December 20, 1962.

and Tooele Moves North" lists the following pioneers who made the move:

Pioneer families found in the Goose Creek Valley as early as 1880 or thereabout. David Walker, Heber Dayley, Thomas Dayley, Enoch Dayley, Sr., Enoch R. Dayley, Jr., James Dayley, Jacob Dayley, Hyrum H. Severe, F. M. Cummins, John Anderson, Alfred Elison, Andrew Elison, Wm. C. Martindale, Swanty Nelson, Ether Durfee, Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, George Bunn, Hyrum L. Hunter, Wm. A. Critchfield, Oliver Weatherby, Claus Karlson, George Whittle, Charles Bailey, John Weighall, Fred Craner, John Craner, Robert Wilson, Moroni F. Fairchild, Hyrum W. Egan, Emanuel Sanford, Solomon P. McIntosh, Sam'l R. Worthington, Orson P. Bates, Samuel Lee, George S. Grant, William Moultry, Moroni Pickett, Robert G. Martin, John C. DeLaMare, George Craner, Adam G. Smith, Joseph R. Price, John N. Price, Rosel H. Hunter, Lorin J. Robinson, Sr., Cyrus Tolman, J. Alvin Tolman, Charles Jenkins, John Adams, Elam W. McBride, Aaron McBride, Orson McBride, Arlin Bates, Ormus Bates, Martin Okelberry, William Rowere (sic), James Whitby, Henery (sic) Worthington, James Clark, Charles G. Elison, Daniel L. Gorringer, Charles Eklund.<sup>1</sup>

President Martindale was instructed to have all the land surveyed for water. Frank Riblett, a nephew of Jerry Riblett, the first postmaster at Oakley, was interested in engineering and was asked to help with this survey.

Frank Riblett wrote a letter to the county surveyor of Minidoka County and mentioned that between the years 1879 to 1881, some citizens had come to him and told him that there was a possibility of irrigating by gravity some lands near the mouth of Goose Creek from a point in the Snake River. He mentioned that he had only a surveyor's compass, but he inquired around and found two men who were willing to loan him \$200 with which to buy a Gurley Surveyor's transit outfit. This had a level suspended to the telescope, enabling a more accurate job to be done. He stated that he then reported to President William C. Martindale and started to work.<sup>2</sup>

The following is a copy of the note which George Whittle and William C. Martindale signed to get the \$200 for Riblett's surveying equipment:

<sup>1</sup>Earl Whitely, Honoring Cassia Stake Presidency, (booklet) 1926.

<sup>2</sup>The Oakley Herald, (Special Cassia Stake Number), November 12, 1946.

Salt Lake City, September 22, 1880. February 1st 1882 after date for value received, We or either of us promise to pay to George A. Lowe, Two Hundred Dollars, payable at his office in Salt Lake with interest at the rate of ten per cent per annum from Feb. 1, 1881 until due, and if not paid when due, interest to be at the rate of one and one-half per cent per month from maturity until paid. The Drawers and Endorsers severally waive presentment for payment, protest and notice of protest and nonpayment of this Note, and all defenses on the ground of any extension of the time of its payment that may be given by the holder or holders to them or either of them.<sup>1</sup>

Francis M. Lyman, former president of Tooele Stake, wrote a letter to William C. Martindale on July 16, 1881, and informed him that he, with a traveling party, would leave Tooele about August 8th for the Goose Creek Valley by way of Brigham City, Raft River, and Marsh Basin (Albion) and would arrive at Oakley on Saturday the thirteenth of August.

On this visit they expressed a desire to visit the Shoshone Falls and as much of the country in the general area as possible, within the time of their stay in Goose Creek Valley. They also expressed a desire to visit the American Falls, where they thought water could be taken from the Snake River for irrigation. They also asked Brother Martindale to arrange for a large meeting on Sunday the 14th of August.<sup>2</sup>

When they arrived, they held a three-day conference in a large bowery hastily erected, as there were no buildings that would hold the large crowd.

Apostles Francis M. Lyman, Merriner W. Merrill, John Henry Smith, and President Heber J. Grant of Tooele Stake were in attendance, having arrived from Salt Lake City by team.

Apostle Lyman said that he could foresee the time in the future when the waters of the Snake River would be harnessed by the power of man and a large part of the country would have water and become a greater producing

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



valley than the Salt Lake Valley.

Apostle Lyman sent a letter to President Martindale on September 20, 1881, mentioning that he had thought much about the arrangement of the townsite since his visit in August. He said he would have no objections if the brethren desired to cluster together in different places up and down the valley where they could build on their lands and be near each other and where it would be suitable to build district schools.

He mentioned that due care should be taken when settling to look to the safety of the people from floods and from malaria that rises from pools of water and decaying vegetation upon the lower lands. He stated that they should give attention to the comfort, convenience, and happiness of the Saints there. He added that he would like to spend some time with them on this subject at the next general conference.<sup>1</sup>

The pioneer spirit of brotherhood and cooperation was among the members in this valley when they saw their church-member neighbors in need. The following experience portrays this spirit of brotherhood:

The price of things was very high when we first came to Oakley; for example, flour was \$5 per hundred pounds and potatoes were \$3 per hundred pounds. My husband groubbed (sic.) sage brush to buy a few groceries and flour. We surely had very little and felt many times that it would have been impossible to succeed if the Lord hadn't been with us to give us courage and strength.

In the spring we were very desirous of planting some crop, but could see no way out only to put our trust in the One who rules over us. At morning and evening in our prayers, we petitioned our Father in Heaven to help us, and my testimony is that God answers prayers if we do our part. While my husband was in Oakley, a Brother William Whittle came to him and said, "Brother Tolman, do you need a little money to help you put your crop in? If so, I have \$10 I can loan you till fall." A brother C. H. Carlson came to him and said, "I understand you have no team. You can take my team to put your crop in." My husband came home rejoicing. We felt that God had been good to us. The spring before his brothers had planted two acres of wheat, and the spring of which I speak, it came up voluntary. We raised a good crop

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

so we had flour for the following winter. We had no farming implements or stock of any kind. We only had an ax and a gun. At that time we were permitted to get wild meat, so the gun surely helped to provide meat for our family.<sup>1</sup>

Various groups of settlers would get together to hunt deer for their winter meat. As they would approach a likely place for deer, they would disband and sneak up from all sides of the gulch in order to get close. This was because they were hunting with muzzle-loading guns, and lead and powder were scarce. Some of them would hammer their lead out flat then cut it into slugs, thereby making it more probable that one of the slugs would make a lucky hit. Whenever one of the group happened to make a kill, all the parties shared alike, with the exception that he who made the kill got the hide.<sup>2</sup>

To pay their taxes and get money to buy those things they couldn't produce, some of the pioneers had to freight grain to Hailey and Ketchum and sell it to the miners for what they could get. Newell Dayley said his father tamped grain in sacks until they were extremely hard, so that they could carry more poundage in the same wagon space. They filled the wagon and took off for the mining area. They ferried the Snake River at a settlement called "Starsferry" and then went north towards Hailey and Ketchum.<sup>3</sup>

In 1881, a large migration of people came into the Oakley area. As people visited the area and went back to their homes in Utah, they talked about this area, and many were encouraged to move to Oakley.

The following account gives a description of the construction of their early homes and also the extent of the raising of grain in 1883:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., (Cassia Stake Centennial Edition), November 20, 1947. Mary Jane Gorringer Tolman.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., John Fairchild.

<sup>3</sup>Interview with Newell Dayley, December 21, 1962.

After returning with our families on August the first 1882, we had to get places for doors and windows sawed out of the log cabins and doors and windows placed in, which was not a little job. Then we had to chink up between the logs and then mix mud and plaster up the spaces on the outside. Lumber was very scarce; we had to haul the lumber from Albion as there was a small sawmill there. Most of the roofs were straw and dirt. We had no flour mill in the country then. There was a small burr mill about 2 miles northeast of Albion, owned by Andrew Burnstrum, and we had to go there for flour for several years until Tuttle and Haight built the mill on Goose Creek near the reservoir.

The school lasted from December 1st until February 15th, 1883.

Grain was the medium of exchange in those days and everything was done on a promise to "pay after I thrash." The threshing machine talleys gave a 75,000 bushel of grain raised in 1883 in Goose Creek Valley. Hay was the scarce article in those times--only wild hay, no alfalfa then. The Oakley Coop shipped to Bellevue on Wood River, over 200,000 pounds of grain and they made a good profit on it--the route from Oakley crossed the Snake River at Starr's Ferry and then followed the old freight road to Wood River.<sup>1</sup>

Planting, raising, and selling crops were no easy matter when one understands the means of communication and transportation and the pests that bothered the crops. The following article illustrates the difficulties these early pioneers encountered in making a living:

I well remember all plowing was done with hand plows. We would plow the land and sow the grain, broadcasting it by hand, then we would harrow over it. When grain was ready to harvest, Dan had a buck-eye machine that cut it and left it in bunches which we would tie up by hand. A few years later came the binder. I believe Dan and the Tolman brothers brought the first header into the country.

I hauled barley in a wagon up to the mill site (where Oakley dam now is) to have it chopped. Then I took it over to Wood river country and sold it for \$1.25 per hundred pounds. John Alexander was the first farmer here to raise alfalfa hay. Mother had been helping in their home when their first child was born. I remember mother saying when she returned, "You boys ought to try some alfalfa. Brother Alexander's horses look so good eating that hay."

As years went by Dan once a year planted two acres of potatoes. They were planted by hand, dug with a hand plow, and kicked or scratched out by hand. When he put in five acres, people thought he was crazy for sure.

Jake Dayley was the leading man in the valley, getting the first steam thrasher. Horse power thrashers had thrashed the grain before that. . . .

There were no fences when I came. Everything was open. The first fences we did make were pine poles set up with cedar posts. Timber was

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, April 2, 1926. J. J. Milliard, Sr.

real handy. At the head of Bostetter, patches of poles were so thick Vic and I would back our wagons up, cut the poles so they would fall on the wagon. Along about 1885 or 1886 a fire swept through this forest. The fire burnt the branches and left the dead poles standing. This was a blessing to the people. Besides their fences, the houses were all made of logs. And the only fuel people had for years was wood hauled from the hills. . . .

We saw hard times in this valley and I've felt like if it hadn't been for jack rabbits, deer and antelope, people would have starved.

Rabbits got so thick they would destroy our crops. I've seen them tip hay stacks over by eating underneath. We fenced against them. We got balsam logs, sawed these in three-foot lengths, split them into about two-inch pickets, and by weaving wire around the pickets it made a pretty good fence but it was slow and hard work, took several years to fence 220 rods around Dan's place.

We had rabbit drives that were great sport. However we had two sad accidents. A boy was drug to death by a horse, and George S. Grant, President Heber J. Grant's brother, was accidentally shot.<sup>1</sup>

Jacob Dayley found some profit during these early years in bringing 75-100 head of oxen from the Wood River area to this area to feed during the winter, and in then returning them in the spring, prepared for a summer's work of freighting.<sup>2</sup>

As the Latter-day Saint settlers came into the area in large numbers and cleared the sagebrush for planting crops, the cattlemen soon realized that it would be best to sell out to them, for they could see that in the near future the whole area would be settled. The following article describes the purchase of some of these ranches:

In 1889, the Thatcher ranch, owned by Henry M. Thatcher was purchased. The payments in the purchase price were \$4,000 cash which President Haight borrowed from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and also \$4,000 in horses at \$40 a head.

The other ranches that were purchased in the valley were the Chapin Ranch and the Tatro, Adamson and Botzet properties. These were all bought

<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, Alfred Garringe.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Newell Dayley, December 21, 1962.

at a total expense of around \$75,000.<sup>1</sup>

Beginning in the summer of 1885 and for years following, it was dry and hot. Snow did not pile up in the mountains. The grass turned brown and the cattle and horses cropped it to the ground. The range had been overstocked and was in poor condition. This condition caused concern for the sheep and cattle owners. As cattle were here first, the cattlemen claimed the range; and the sheepmen claimed their rights. Range wars flared up between the cattle and sheep men.

After a few hot and dry years, winter struck with a vengeance. Snow piled up many feet deep. The temperature dropped and dropped again. The livestock could hardly find feed to sustain life. Late spring snows hung on later than usual; and the cattle, game, and sheep died by the hundreds. The following is an account of this winter and of the great loss of sheep to one individual:

I decided I wanted to go into the sheep business. Mr. H. L. Hunter of Oakley Meadows gave me that chance when he asked me to take over 4,000 head of sheep for a few years. I decided a ranch and 4,000 sheep was too much for one man, so I picked on the late William Dahlquist for a partner. It didn't require an attorney to draw up a lease or partnership in those days as all that was needed was an oral agreement.

Well, we started. I found my troubles had just commenced. The winter of 1889 and 1890 was the hardest we ever saw on stock. A deep snow crusted over for six weeks, and no feed to be bought. I lost a third of the sheep.<sup>2</sup>

The following information concerns the extent of sheep raising in this area and also other pertinent facts relative to sheep raising and marketing:

Do you remember when these men were running sheep in this part of Cassia County, starting in 1882? Ave Critchfield, father to Fred Critchfield; Fred Walters; Lude Hunter; Bill Hunter; Walt Matthews; Tim Matthews; Bish Matthews; Fred Critchfield; L. A. Critchfield;

<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, April 2, 1926. J. J. Milliard.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., March 12, 1937. James Port.

Johnny Craner; Bill, Disk, Ted and Sam Poulton of Warm Creek; John and Lars Larson, John Carson and sons John, Vince, Owen, Clarence; John Fairchild; P. H. Bell; Tom Dayley; J. K. Dayley and Chatman, all of Basin; Sol Hale; Rosel Hunter; Hyrum (Hy) Severe; Swanty Nelson and brother Amel; C. G. Elison; James Port; William Dahlquist; Bill and Ira Poulton, Willow Creek; Bill Tolman; Jud and Ammon Tolman; Hy and Oliver Pickett; Ed Hunter; E. W. McBride; Alvin Tolman and sons; Charles and LeVern Bailey; Charles Eklund; Harrington and Marshall Day Creek; W. C. Martindale and sons John, Jim Bill and Lon; Arthur Critchfield; Alvin and Frank Erickson; Jack Dayley and son; A. C. (Cut) Worthington; Ink Dayley; Johnny Gray; John Cummins; Adam Smith and sons Bob, Jack and Jode; Tom Clark and son; Frank Elquist and Bill Elquist and Clark Sander Elquist; George Bronson; Edward Samuelson; Dave Walker and sons Bill, Jim and Dave; August and Fred Larson; Frank Durch; Sam Judson; H. D. Haight Jr.; Gen Curtis; Herman and Davis Hunter.

Do you remember the size of bands run? Not ten or eleven hundred head but twenty-five to thirty-five hundred and we herded on foot.

In the early days all wool was freighted to Kelton, Utah, and return load was made up of stock salt.

Do you remember when 50 to 75 teams were on their way to Kamima with wool, and the races run to the railroad so they could unload in cars?

Do you remember when Bonny-mount from Grouse Creek crossed the state line and run 25,000 to 30,000 sheep in Utah and Idaho? He and Charles Morris built the dipping vat on Trout creek which they used for many years.

Do you remember that they used Chinamen for herders?

Do you remember when a herder received \$30 per month and board? The eats those days consisted of sour-dough bread, mutton, coffee, a little sugar and dried fruit, either peaches or prunes. No milk or canned goods furnished.

Do you remember they received around 8 to 10 cents for wool and held their wethers until they were 3 and 4 years old before selling for \$2 to \$3.50 per head? Do you remember when wool raised to 40 cents one time? Most of the fellows sold delivered at Kelton. The story goes Charles Eklund was offered the same price but he wanted 50 cents, but wool dropped to 10 cents and Lude Hunter asked him why he didn't sell and he said, "That is one time I fooled the wool buyer."<sup>1</sup>

The above article gives us some idea of the number of sheepmen in dispute or concerned over this sheep-cattle problem.

Through the years an unofficial dividing line, separating the sheep and the cattle, had been established. This was the ridge between Big Creek and Goose Creek and became known to some as Dead Line Ridge. The cattle concerns hired men to patrol the area; and when they would see a band of sheep

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, February 6, 1946. Newell Dayley.

getting too close, they would warn the herder to get his sheep back.<sup>1</sup>

The following account relates the events preceding the killing of two young sheep herders:

In the spring of 1894, Jack Davis, a young man of pleasant looks and manners, rode into the Snake River Valley. He secured employment with several different cattle companies and finally with a large company that controlled the Shoe Sole Brand, with ranches throughout the mountains. He soon became known as a story teller because of the stories he told of his many great experiences. He was always talking about finding a diamond mine, and soon he was given the name of Diamond-Field Jack.

In the vicinity of Rock Creek, now in Twin Falls County, lay the seat of rich cattle industries, while around Oakley and east of it were the headquarters of the sheepmen. The cattlemen felt that it would be impossible to keep the sheep off the range, and they tried to establish certain allotted ground for each. Diamond Field-Jack rode this line to keep the sheep from intruding on cattle country. He took occasion to notify sheepmen who came into the vicinity that it would be well to keep off.

In company with one Jack Gleason, a cowboy, he shot up the Dunn Brothers' sheep camp, although no one was hurt. A few days later, Diamond-Field called at the Dunn camp and found Oliver Dunn alone. He found that Oliver had a bandaged finger from a cut on a barbed wire. Diamond-Field examined it and found that it was infected. For several days he made regular visits and, on leaving each time, warned Dunn not to come any nearer with his sheep. On each of these visits he redressed the wound.

About this time a William Tolman from Oakley thought he would scare Jack out of the country. Tolman, a large fellow, rode into Jack's camp

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with John S. Smith, December 22, 1962.

one day, catching him unawares; but in their argument Jack got the drop and shot Tolman. The wound was not fatal, and when Tolman saw that Diamond-Field could not be bluffed, he pleaded for his life. He gained Jack's sympathy by referring to his dependent family. Diamond-Field gave him first aid and helped him into the hands of his friends.

Some sheepmen, who were headed with their sheep into the restricted district, met the parties coming out with Tolman on a stretcher. This so changed their minds that they headed their sheep north and left the area.<sup>1</sup>

Before this fight with Tolman, Jack is said to have made the statement that he would kill the next sheepman who crossed the ridge into the cattle country.

On February 4, 1896, two sheepherders had been seen traveling along a road, well into the cattle range. They had set up their camp, prepared their wagons, tied their sheepdogs to the wagon wheels, quieted the flock and were preparing breakfast. They were John Wilson and Daniel Cummings.

Twelve days later the two were found dead in camp. They had been killed by gunfire. The bullets were .44 caliber. The only gun in camp was clean and had not been fired.

The talker--Diamond-Field Jack became the number one suspect at once.<sup>2</sup>

Davis dropped from sight, but he was known to have made some inquiries about leaving before this time. A year later he was traced to Yuma, Arizona, where he was held by the authorities. Two deputy sheriffs of Cassia County, E. R. Dayley and John Gray, went to Arizona after Diamond-Field Jack, who willingly returned to Idaho with them. He was formally charged with the murder of John Wilson and confined in the Cassia County jail in Albion, Idaho.

John C. Rogers was prosecuting attorney for Cassia County, assisted by the able William E. Borah, now of international fame, and O. W. Powers,

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<sup>1</sup>Walgamott, op. cit., pp. 169-171.

<sup>2</sup>Times News, (Twin Falls, Idaho) May 5, 1963.



a powerful attorney from Salt Lake.

The defense was represented by James H. Hawley, Esq., assisted by K. I. Perky, Esq., which is considered to this day a great array of legal counsel. The trial began on April 25, 1897, and lasted for thirteen days with continuous night sessions before Judge C. O. Stockslager and a jury that had no connection with either the sheepmen or the cattle industry.<sup>1</sup>

Davis pleaded not guilty and voluntarily related his past gun exploits, expressing no regrets. This increased the admiration of his friends and the astonishment of his enemies.

Feelings ran high in the area, predominantly in support of the sheepmen. The state's case was circumstantial: It showed all the threats made by Davis against sheepmen, and his presence in the area on February 4, 1896, the last date on which the victim was seen alive.

The state tried to fix the murder on this date by the condition of the bodies, the emaciated state of the sheep-dogs which were found alive still tied to the wagon, and by some unbaked bread found in the camp oven--bread which the men had been preparing when last seen on the 4th.

To suggest criminal intent the prosecution showed that Davis, just before the crime, had traded a light hunting jacket for a dark one, remarking that he could be seen too easily at night.

The strongest defense alibi was the impossibility of the travel required for the defendant to have carried out the crime. On the day of the murder Davis had started out from the Brown ranch on the Idaho side after sunrise, and was next seen at the Boar's Nest ranch on the Nevada side shortly after 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

The defense argued that it was impossible to ride from the Brown ranch to the murder site, commit the crime, and ride back to the Boar's Nest ranch--a distance later measured at 55 miles--within a period of about five and a half hours.

The prosecution countered that it was both possible and highly probable. Both sides introduced expert witnesses who disagreed on the speed at which horses could be ridden under the conditions of February 4, 1896, the estimates varying from 3 to 12 miles per hour.<sup>2</sup>

Although evidence was circumstantial, Davis was convicted. True to form, Davis talked for a solid hour when the court asked him if he had anything to say.

Preparations were made for the execution. The scaffold was erected. Diamond-Field was interested in the work and said, after examining the

<sup>1</sup>Walgamott, op. cit., p. 174.

<sup>2</sup>Times News, May 5, 1963.

scaffold, that it would do the work intended. The death watch was established. The condemned man amused himself in making hair ropes and trinkets for children, and in playing cards with the members of his death watch. He ate regularly and slept soundly.

The time of his execution was almost at hand and Asahail P. Murray was on guard. It was three o'clock in the morning, and Diamond-Field Jack was to be hanged at daybreak. The death watch was restless; he tried to be careful as he paced the floor; but his movements aroused the condemned man, who arose, greeted him, and, seemingly unconcerned, neatly dressed himself.

In the little town of Albion, excited people came from their beds and peered through their windows at the single light in the death chamber at the county jail. The Methodist minister, who was to offer consolation arose and prepared for the ordeal; the physician who was to pronounce death was awaiting the time. Lights sprang up in every house; the town was awake; the great lock in the jail clicked as the sheriff, with the death warrant, entered. Diamond-Field Jack had two hours to live.

How would the time be spent? The prisoner suggested cards and, as the chairs shuffled to their positions, attention was called to the sound of horses' hoofs on the hard road. They grew nearer and nearer and abruptly halted at the jail door. The sheriff was summoned and the breathless rider, who proved to be Attorney Puckett, handed him a legal document. The officer fumbled as he opened the envelope that winter morning. It was a stay of execution.

There were no telephone or telegraph communications at that time, and Attorney Puckett had made a swift ride from the main line at Minidoka with the stay of execution which saved for a time the condemned man's life. An appeal had been perfected in the Supreme Court of Idaho.

In due time the higher court tried the case on its merits, affirmed the judgment of the lower court, and ordered the judgment carried out. Judge Stockslager for the second time sentenced the prisoner to be hanged. When within a few hours of the time set for the execution, another appeal to the circuit court was taken and another stay of action was granted.<sup>1</sup>

For five years his fate wavered back and forth in the courts. One account tells of a third stay of execution from the state pardon board, and this time--in 1901--the sentence was changed to life imprisonment.

As early as 1898 two other men admitted publicly that they were the guilty ones.

Jeff Gray, a young cowboy, and J. E. Bower, a Sparks-Harrell superintendent, swore that they were riding together that day in 1896 when they came across the sheep wagon. An argument developed, and Wilson attacked Bower. Gray then shot both herders to save Bower's life. Gray was actually tried for the murder in Albion in 1899, and acquitted on the grounds of self-defense.

Soon, most residents of Cassia County were convinced that Davis

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<sup>1</sup>Walgamott, op. cit., pp. 176-177.

was innocent and letters urging a pardon poured into the pardon board. But the pardon board, the Idaho State Supreme Court, and the federal courts all stubbornly refused to accept the Bower-Gray story.

In 1902 the board of pardons was still meeting every few months to consider Davis' case which had now become a big issue within the state. John Sparks, then governor-elect of Nevada, told the board that Bower had told him the same version of the self-defense story a few days after the shooting in 1896.

The pressure of the evidence and not the Sparks-Harrell money finally did the trick. In December of 1902 Diamond-Field Jack Davis was pardoned, and became a free man for the first time in five and a half years.

It is interesting to note that Jack Davis finally found his diamond field. A few years later he actually made a fortune in beryllium emeralds and lived the rest of his life in comfort and respectability. He died in Las Vegas in 1949 after being hit by a taxicab, an unlikely end for a legendary western gunman.<sup>1</sup>

Today, the memory of the cattle-sheep wars is growing dim, and the Diamond-Field Jack story stands as a reminder that the sheepmen, as well as the cattlemen, have ample reason to want to forget the unpleasantness of the past.

Before any other trouble arose between the sheepmen and the cattlemen, the government established forest reserves and divided the ranges.

The number of settlers increased yearly in Oakley and its surrounding areas, and land to farm and water to mature the crops were a desired blessing of these settlers.

Dry farming had been carried out successfully in various parts of Utah, and some of the farmers secured some dry-farm wheat from Cache Valley and experimented successfully with dry farming. The following is an article published in the local paper in 1905, giving suggestions for successful dry farming techniques. This is an example of scientific farming that was conveyed to the settlers in the various settlements of the Church and was written by the then leading scientist and apostle, John A. Widtsoe:

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<sup>1</sup>Idaho Farmer, March 7, 1963. Dr. David H. Grover. Speech Instructor Oregon State University.

Get the water into the soil. Keep it there until needed by the plants. Plow deep; this lets the water down beyond the reach of the sunshine. Plow in the fall; this enables the rains and melting snows of all winter and spring to soak into the soil. Crop the land only every other year; this makes it possible to store the water of two seasons in the soil: the sod is then a water reservoir. Keep the top soil well stirred during the fallow year; that prevents the water from being drawn to the surface to be evaporated. Grow fall sown oats as far as possible; that enables the plants to make use of the valuable early spring moisture. Use varieties that get along with little water. Use only top soils for arid farming. Do all this and be glad; the crop is sure.<sup>1</sup>

Within the next few years, hundreds of acres of land were cleared and planted into dry-farm wheat. This land was not located where it could be irrigated by canal irrigation, and thus many additional acres became productive and have yielded through the years some outstanding quantity and quality crops. The following article describes dry farming in this area in 1912.

All doubt as to the permanency of dry farming has been removed the last two years in the success that has attended the efforts of dry farmers. Crops have been exceptionally heavy under ordinary conditions and where scientific cultivation has been employed yields have been nearly up to that of irrigated lands.

Probably no sections have developed in the dry farming business as Basin and Moulton. Along the foothills east and north of Basin thriving and productive dry farms line the mountain base for miles, all of which are yielding heavy returns. At Moulton, a new section recently opened in what was known as the Junction Valley, scores of dry farms have been entered and a new road leading up the Birch Creek from Oakley furnishes an outlet that promises to make of it a successful dry-farming district and similar to the lands surrounding Basin.<sup>2</sup>

Some experimenting in the raising of sugar beets was conducted in Oakley in 1911. Eugene Picket conducted one of these experiments and in the Fall of 1911 received a check for \$130 for his crop of 1½ acres. In 1911, the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company informed the public that their experiments for the last several years proved beyond any question that this valley was

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Eagle, September 21, 1905.

<sup>2</sup>The Oakley Herald, December, 1912.

exceptionally well adapted for beet culture. They encouraged the farmers to plant beets in sufficient acreage to justify installing a plant at or near Oakley.

In February of 1912, it was rumored around that no water was going to be stored in the reservoir. This was investigated by William T. Jack, and the following article informs us of the results of that investigation:

In consequence of a report having gone out that there would be no water stored in the reservoir this spring, which if true would affect materially the growing of beets in this section this year, President William T. Jack called upon General Manager D. C. MacWatters in the interest of the sugar company to ascertain whether it was a true report. He found that it was the intention of the company to store all water possible or about forty five feet, bringing it within about ten feet of the top of the dam at its present height.

Those who have signed up for beets may rest assured that they will not be disappointed in getting the water necessary to mature their beet crops.

People generally ought to calculate on planting heavily this year as there are splendid indications that there is going to be an abundance of water, and the prospects of a good market before them, seems to be the opinion of nearly everybody.<sup>1</sup>

The following statistics for beets are for the year of 1913: Island, 2,174 tons; Marion, 3,384.50 tons; Oakley, 6,186.75 tons.<sup>2</sup>

There were hundreds of acres lying waste in the Oakley Valley; and many more settlers would have come to Oakley, had there been sufficient water to irrigate the land.

For many years the people in the valley had been wondering how they could conserve the waters flowing from the largest creek, Goose Creek, and it was proposed that a dam be constructed to conserve the water. This became more of a need after they had witnessed some dry years and had felt the pinch of insufficient water.

In 1894, Joseph M. Carey, a senator from Wyoming, gave his name to a

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, February 23, 1912.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., December 1913.

piece of federal legislation which vitally influenced the development of southern and eastern Idaho. This act directed that each state in the arid region be given some 1,000,000 acres of federal land, provided the state would construct the necessary dams, reservoirs, and canals to irrigate the lands. This law, at first, needed added amendments to make it a successful project.

Under this Carey Act, the development of irrigation after 1902 was very extensive in Idaho; and in that year Idaho had a greater number of Carey Act projects than any other state. The following explains the functioning and organization of the Carey Act:

In 1894, Senator Joseph M. Carey, of Wyoming, gave his name to a piece of federal legislation known as the Carey Act. In accordance with the provisions of this act, Congress agreed to donate a million acres of land to Idaho and other arid western states, on condition that these states would, in turn, cause the land to be irrigated and reclaimed. Each state was authorized to make contracts with corporations or persons for the reclamation of these lands by the construction of irrigation works. As fast as the state could show the United States Government that the works had been built, the government would issue patents to the state, and the state, in turn, would convey the land to the settlers. The original law provided that the land must be reclaimed within ten years after the act was passed. This limitation prevented the undertaking of large irrigation works. Investors also feared that they would not have sufficient security for the money which they would have to spend.

Carey Act Amendments. To protect the persons advancing money for the construction work, Congress, in 1896, passed an additional act, providing that the state would permit a lien or claim to be created against the land for the expenses incurred in reclaiming it and also for reasonable interest. In this way the companies which advanced the money were protected and encouraged to increase their investments.

In 1901, the law was again amended so as to provide that there should be a ten-year period allowed in which to reclaim the land, from the time the works of each project were started, instead of from the time the Carey Act was passed. This change proved beneficial and for the first time the Carey Act became an effective law under which irrigation projects might be carried out. The building of important works under this law commenced in 1903, that being the year in which work was started in what is generally known as the Twin Falls country. Since that time, the development under the Carey Act has been extensive in the southern and eastern portions of the state.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>C. J. Brosnan, History of the State of Idaho (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), pp. 354-355.

The Oakley Dam, one of the Carey Act projects was started in 1909 and completed in 1913. The cost of its construction was \$1,577,126.24. It was built at the mouth of Goose Creek, which provided the largest portion of water for the valley. The construction of the Dam was a gigantic undertaking. Hundreds of horses, mules, and men worked for three years to complete this project. *here*

The water was sold by shares to the land owners. This Oakley project extended *east* to the Marion farms, *west* to just below the Basin walls, and *North* south to the Island. The following crop yields are reported for a few of the farmers receiving water from the dam:

Although water for irrigation was not available until the middle of May (1913) and the settlers were late in getting on their land, the following yields speak for themselves. C. H. Poston located one mile north of Churchill raised over 300 bushel of potatoes per acre off sage brush land. A. G. Shades, four miles west of Churchill harvested over 35 bushels of wheat per acre from 145 acres; the average yield of oats per acre on the new land was about 75 bushels. Hill Bros., one mile west of Churchill raised about 150 sacks of potatoes per acre on 40 acres.<sup>1</sup>

A number of prominent people in Idaho purchased land under this Oakley project. The following are a few names of prominent land owners:

George A. Day, State Land Commissioner; George A. Smith, County Auditor; D. C. McCougall, former Attorney General; L. H. Sweetser, former Lieutenant Governor; Hector C. Haight, State Senator; S. D. Parke, Editor of the Burley Bulletin and many other prominent men in the state and outside. None of the new settlers live in their todays, but all in their tomorrows. And with full confidence in the glorious future, which is not far off (sic).<sup>2</sup>

In December, 1915, the Idaho Code Commission submitted a report to the Governor concerning the Twin Falls-Oakley project. They reported that 38,506 acres had been sold. The commission recommended that the acreage of the project in Oakley be cut down to 26,730 acres, which is all that

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, December 26, 1913.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



Figure 5. Oakley reservoir



the commission felt could be adequately irrigated in normal precipitation years. They suggested that the settlers should not attempt to irrigate too much outlying land. Rather, they should concentrate the available water on more centralized areas. The commission expressed sympathy for the settlers and regretted that the company had not made a more thorough investigation of the potential water supply.

The reduction of acreage on the project was made necessary by the inadequacy of the water supply. It was proposed later (a) that the number of acres be cut to 21,000 and that those who had made improvements on lands from which the commission proposed to withdraw water be reimbursed acre for acre and (b) that the Twin Falls-Oakley Land and Water Company pay for such improvements, so that there might be no loss to the individual.

In 1915, very little water was available because of so little precipitation, and it was proposed that the settlers be given a fair and reasonable adjustment:

It is the sense of this board that the settlers of the Twin Falls-Oakley Project who did not receive water for the year 1915 according to contract and who suffered crop failure as a result shall not be required to pay to the Twin Falls Oakley Land and Water Company any installment of principle and interest due prior to the year 1916, until after they have been furnished water according to contract for the irrigation season of 1916.<sup>1</sup>

By 1926, problems still faced the settlers, because there was not enough water; and it was proposed to further reduce the project to 16,500 acres.

In 1934, the following meeting was held for the purpose of proposing a further reduction in acreage:

A more compact Oakley Project protected against drouth is the probability which is bringing cheer to scores of Oakley farmers since the mass meeting of Monday night which agreed to buy the project

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., March 17, 1916.

bondholders rights for \$200,000 plus the cost of liquidating taxes. Bondholders now own 10,330 shares of stock, and some of the water is delivered to farms fifteen miles from the dam and even farther. If the plans are carried out according to schedule, all the farms in Golden Valley and Churchill will be eliminated, and all the water will be delivered to land in a compact area below the reservoir. Record for the past ten years indicate that an average of two feet of water per share may be expected under the reduced acreage.

In addition to the Churchill and Golden Valley farms, the bondholders own certain areas north of Oakley, and the settlement as contemplated would also eliminate these areas from cultivation.<sup>1</sup>

The proposed cut in acreage became a reality, but this did not seem to answer the problems of irrigation in the Oakley Valley, as more dry years found the settlers still short of water.

The year of 1934 was the driest year on record in the Oakley Canal Office. The water then was taken from Churchill and Golden Valley and used only on the Oakley Project, which by now consisted of about 10,000 acres.

The following chart illustrates the amount of water conserved by the

Oakley Dam:

| Year | Years<br>run-off<br><u>ac. feet</u> | Ac. feet<br>delivered<br><u>to headgates</u> | Hold-over<br>at end of<br>year. <u>ac. ft.</u> | Ac. feet<br>delivered<br><u>per share</u> |
|------|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 1913 | 49,975                              | 21,823                                       | 9,327  | 1.50                                      |
| 1914 | 65,831                              | 23,422                                       | 16,000   | 1.50                                      |
| 1915 | 29,010                              | 22,668                                       | 00   | 1.06                                      |
| 1916 | 53,000                              | 29,402                                       | 1,000  | 1.42                                      |
| 1917 | 80,189                              | 33,725                                       | 21,660   | 1.50                                      |
| 1918 | 27,206                              | 20,012                                       | 1,888  | 1.26                                      |
| 1919 | 30,700                              | 18,666                                       | 00   | .803                                      |
| 1920 | 35,340                              | 16,604                                       | 00   | .723                                      |
| 1921 | 118,707                             | 51,476                                       | 30,839   | 2.33                                      |
| 1922 | 67,856                              | 40,806                                       | 23,744   | 1.84                                      |
| 1923 | 51,835                              | 32,347                                       | 12,435   | 1.50                                      |
| 1924 | 39,381                              | 25,363                                       | 2,242  | 1.20                                      |
| 1925 | 50,259                              | 25,883                                       | 4,107  | 1.156                                     |
| 1926 | 29,162                              | 17,204                                       | 00   | .763                                      |
| 1927 | 43,600                              | 24,152                                       | 1,743  | 1.112                                     |
| 1928 | 41,498                              | 26,342                                       | 300  | 1.21                                      |
| 1929 | 42,465                              | 26,928                                       | 1,310  | 1.26                                      |
| 1930 | 24,940                              | 14,846                                       | 500  | .705                                      |
| 1931 | 20,470                              | 11,031                                       | 485  | .51                                       |
| 1932 | 41,200                              | 23,253                                       | 850  | 1.087                                     |

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., February 23, 1934.

| Year | Years<br>run-off<br><u>ac. feet</u> | Ac. feet<br>delivered<br><u>to headgates</u> | Hold-over<br>at end of<br>year. <u>ac. ft.</u> | Ac. feet<br>delivered<br><u>per share</u> |
|------|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 1933 | 30,600                              | 18,843                                       | 00   | .874                                      |
| 1934 | 17,491                              | 8,189  | 800  | .4  |
| 1935 | 11,837                              | --?  | 638  | .666                                      |
| 1936 | 36,739                              | 23,130                                       | 2,097  | 1.08                                      |
| 1937 | 31,330                              | 19,572                                       | 730  | .92                                       |
| 1938 | 40,411                              | 23,508                                       | 2,104  | 1.10                                      |
| 1939 | 35,176                              | 21,562                                       | 1,796  | 1.01                                      |
| 1940 | 21,897                              | 13,073                                       | 365  | .61                                       |
| 1941 | 26,118                              | 14,644                                       | 676  | .70                                       |
| 1942 | 57,585                              | 30,516                                       | 8,325  | 1.50                                      |
| 1943 | 60,400                              | 30,471                                       | 17,492   | 1.50                                      |
| 1944 | 39,361                              | 30,566                                       | 8,212  | 1.50                                      |
| 1945 | 44,141                              | 30,471                                       | 6,450  | 1.50                                      |
| 1946 | 52,928                              | 30,741                                       | 9,939  | 1.50                                      |
| 1947 | 30,266                              | 23,060                                       | 1,814  | 1.125                                     |
| 1948 | 33,336                              | 19,490                                       | 1,370  | .958                                      |
| 1949 | 48,657                              | 30,712                                       | 3,753  | 1.50                                      |
| 1950 | 42,486                              | 30,650                                       | 00   | 1.50                                      |
| 1951 | 61,300                              | 30,738                                       | 14,552   | 1.50                                      |
| 1952 | 60,932                              | 30,772                                       | 23,116   | 1.50                                      |
| 1953 | 44,965                              | 30,653                                       | 17,020   | 1.50                                      |
| 1954 | 24,272                              | 25,045                                       | 1,334  | 1.25                                      |
| 1955 | 25,265                              | 15,494                                       | 765  | .75                                       |
| 1956 | 43,821                              | 27,697                                       | 1,430  | 1.354                                     |
| 1957 | 46,514                              | 28,172                                       | 1,675  | 1.375                                     |
| 1958 | 52,371                              | 30,719                                       | 5,419  | 1.50                                      |
| 1959 | 26,120                              | 18,090                                       | 00   | .883                                      |
| 1960 | 27,119                              | 14,693                                       | 794  | .719                                      |
| 1961 | 23,135                              | 11,375                                       | 00   | .56½                                      |
| 1962 | 57,618                              | 30,553                                       | 8,286  | 1.50                                      |

Since there is water flowing into the reservoir from Goose Creek and Trapper Creek the year around, the records show the yearly inflow to the reservoir in acre feet as measured at gage stations on each creek above the reservoir. The records also show the amount delivered to the settlers' headgates.

We figure on a delivery of 60% of the inflow, but in years when there is ample water the delivery runs as high as 68%; in short years as low as 52%. This loss naturally included reservoir loss through seepage, evaporation, as well as delivery loss.

Since 1913, the reservoir has only been filled to its capacity of approximately 75,000 acre feet twice and that was in 1921 and 1922.<sup>1</sup>

The Oakley Dam has been a great blessing to the people residing in Oakley, for it has conserved the precipitation from season to season. This

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Rita S. Layton, Ass't Secretary, Oakley Canal Company, Oakley, Idaho. February 8, 1963.

has made it possible to use the water only when it was needed for irrigation; and as a result, the Oakley area has been able to support more people than otherwise would have been the case.

During the time the reservoir was being constructed, the communities of Marion, Churchill, and Island were being established. These communities received their big impetus of growth because of the Oakley Dam that was to provide this whole area with water for irrigation. /

Marion was named after Francis Marion Lyman in 1881, when a few settlers came from Tooele County, Utah. Water ditches were dug and a number of log cabins were erected that year. Community growth throughout the years was due to the fact that Goose Creek bordered the community, and the farmers irrigated from it. The land needed little leveling, and when the Oakley Dam project was announced, some thought that this would be a good place for a town to be built. The Oregon Short Line Railroad had come from Milner to Oakley a short time before, and this fact supported the building of a town in Marion. The following is an announcement of this new townsite sale in 1912:

On Thursday the 11th of July the Marion Townsite Company will place on the market 225 lots lying next to the Oregon Short Line Depot at prices ranging from \$75 to \$300 for residence lots and from \$100 to \$500 for business lots.

The new depot is being rapidly completed, the varnishing now being done and all will be in readiness on that date.

In addition a new hotel, one implement house, lumber yard, barber shop, meat shop will be erected on the townsite at once and negotiations are under way for a new bank to be erected at that place.

All of these business houses who contemplate erecting these structures in the near future are amongst the number who took advantage of the offer to secure a lot free provided they would build upon them within one year after their acquiring title thereto.

The Howard Land Company also contemplate erecting an office for their use shortly so that the business of the sale can be transacted there on the date named.

The tract that has been surveyed and thrown into lots is situated in the center of a splendid tract of land and after next spring when the water is on the new land it will be surrounded with a great many farms in all directions and bids fair to become a thriving town in the future.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, June 21, 1912.

Marion prospered as a small town for a few years. A general store and other houses of business functioned for a while, but when means of travel improved, the town proved to be inefficient, and the business houses closed. Marion is still a distinct community near Oakley, with several hundred people.

Churchill was a scattered settlement, the center of which was a school house, located 11 miles north of Marion and 15 miles northwest of Oakley. This settlement came into being when members took up land under the new Oakley Dam Irrigation Project. The following article was printed concerning this community in 1913:

Churchill is a new townsite situated on the Idaho Southern Railroad just half way between Milner and Oakley, being twelve miles each way, and promises to be one of the best towns in the Goose Creek Valley. The location is ideal and the soil in this vicinity is among the best and most productive in the State of Idaho. There are perhaps more settlers in this immediate vicinity of Churchill than in any other section of the project, a great many of whom have invested in lots in this new and promising town. Although the greater part of the town is covered with big healthy sagebrush, Churchill has a branch yard of the Gem State Lumber Company, Churchill Mercantile Company. The townsite company is drilling a well for city water, and the town has telephones and electricity for lighting, heating and cooking. Many cars of grain and potatoes were shipped from Churchill this Fall.<sup>1</sup>

Churchill became a large farming community, and it looked as though it would become one of the larger towns in the area. The reason for its growth was the Oakley Dam, as it received all its water for irrigation by canals from Oakley. Because of the water shortage during 1924, a number of the people left. As the years went by, the area received less and less precipitation, and it was decided to cut down the area receiving water from the Oakley Dam. As a result, this community completely became a ghost town.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., December 20, 1913.

Oakley received some recognition in 1915, when two Oakley men entered some grain in the International Exposition in San Francisco, California.

The following articles mention this recognition:

Jacob Dayley of Oakley, a well known grower of Turkey Red Wheat has just captured a gold medal prize at the Panama Pacific International Exposition for his exhibit of Turkey Red Wheat.<sup>1</sup>

Swanty Nelson, another of our well known farmers has won two prizes at the Panama Pacific International Exposition at San Francisco. One prize of a silver medal for California Feed Barley and a bronze medal for wheat.<sup>2</sup>

Artesian wells had first been discovered in 1911, when some drilling was being done in the mountains south of Oakley. Also, in 1920 there was much speculation concerning the possibility of this area being a potentially rich oil field. As they began to drill for oil, many artesian wells were encountered. The following article describes these discoveries of water and how the people saw a potentially added boon to the dry-years' problem:

The well on the J. D. Ranch, 12 miles south of Oakley has reached a depth of over 800 feet. Drilling goes right ahead, in spite of the fact that the immense quantities of artesian water have been encountered.

It is estimated that the stream of artesian water measures over a hundred inches. Thus it is seen that C. G. Elison, the owner of the ranch has already profited by reason of the well. According to the agreement between the land owners and the Pearl Oil and Gas Company, the former is to have possession of any water that may be struck.

It now looks as if the coming of D. P. Carpenter to Oakley with his oil rigs would not only bring the prosperity that accompanies the discovery of oil, but would also help solve the problems of water shortage. If an abundance of artesian water can be secured at moderate depths, Oakley Valley can be made the best agricultural section in the world.<sup>3</sup>

Later in 1920, when it was time to put in crops, the following article was published. It illustrates how some people were anxious to do all they could to secure water for help in dry years:

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., September 10, 1915.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., September 24, 1915.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., February 20, 1920.

Practically everybody is confident that a good irrigation season is assured for 1920. The water fall for the first half of April this year is about equal to the total rainfall for April of last year.

A season of prosperity awaits Oakley. We should see to it that there is never another dry season. Before another year passes, wells should be drilled for artesian water. The Herald feels confident that wells will supply Adam's ale in quantities suitable for redeeming all the land between Oakley and the Burley project.<sup>1</sup>

From 1920 to 1932, there was sufficient precipitation to assure somewhat normal delivery by the water company.

By the early Spring of 1934, it was apparent that crops could not be grown that year in Oakley because of so little moisture. The Oakley Canal Company applied to the federal government for aid in drilling artesian wells above Trapper Creek and other places in the hopes that water could be drawn from artesian wells to flow into the dam and hence to the farms. The following article describes the funds requested by the Oakley Project and how it was to be appropriated:

C. J. Griffith, John McMurray and W. J. Spackman were in Boise last week representing the Oakley project in the matter of drouth relief. It is reported that they requested the sum of fifteen thousand dollars for Oakley.

It is reported that the requests were granted provisionally. If every thing works out right, the principal sum will be used for drilling for artesian water, with a smaller sum devoted to repair of canals and emergency pumping. The sum of five hundred dollars is available immediately for cleaning the artesian wells now flowing above the dam; and work is already under way or will be under way within a few days.

It is believed locally that well drilling will relieve the semi-perennial drouth as well as the special drouth of 1934.<sup>2</sup>

The following article describes the effect of some of the federal-aid money used on Goose Creek:

Progress was made this week in federal aid projects in the Oakley locality. The pumping at the Goose Creek well, resulted in tremendous gains in flow of water. The pumping at this well this week and at the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., April 16, 1920.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., June 15, 1934.

Trapper Creek well last week was undertaken as a test of what might be expected if additional wells were drilled.<sup>1</sup>

Artesian wells assisted the settlers in providing over the years a more constant and even supply of water for their crops.

By the latter 1940's, many acres of land in Oakley Valley were still lying waste because of a lack of adequate water to bring them under cultivation. Some observed that artesian wells were supplying small tracts of land, and it seemed apparent that there was a large underground supply of water, which, lacking internal pressure to force it to flow as the artesian wells did, could be pumped by electricity-powered pumps on to thousands of acres of land. Today, this added means of bringing water from the underground has brought upwards of forty-five thousand acres of previously wasted, sagebrush land to rich productivity. The following article describes some of these pumped wells and the influence they wield for the benefit of the people in the Oakley Valley:

Twentieth century pioneers went out on desolate flats and barren hills and dug for water. One can safely say that the first ones were dug sometime during the latter 1940's and early 1950's. Now there are approximately four hundred wells using about 30,000 horsepower to bring the water up many hundreds of feet onto the thirsty soil. There has been an increase of about 5,000 horsepower in the past year alone. Six wells have 400 horsepower pumps, and the range goes down to three horsepower pumps. One recent well has a 200 horsepower pump pumping 450 inches of water. Another well completed within the last two months has a 125 horsepower pump putting out 425 inches of water.<sup>2</sup>

The dry, dirty flat, as the area between Oakley and Burley is called, is green again. Where dust once blew and tumbleweeds rolled, potatoes, grain, alfalfa, beets, peas and beans are now growing.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., June 29, 1934.

<sup>2</sup>Oakley Pioneer Day Celebration (booklet) 1961.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



## CHAPTER IV

### DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

#### Branch and ward organization

On May 9, 1880, a branch of the Box Elder Stake was organized in Goose Creek Valley, with William C. Martindale as the presiding elder. He was sent to the valley by President Francis M. Lyman of the Tooele Stake in Utah.

William C. Martindale presented his letter of appointment to be the presiding elder with the authority to pick his own counselors. He chose Enoch R. Dayley, Sr., and George Whittle to serve as his counselors.

These men continued presiding over the Saints in Goose Creek Valley until it was no longer feasible to have a branch. Many additional settlers had arrived, and in order to provide for their needs more efficiently and to give them opportunities to serve, a ward was organized. On Sunday, September 24, 1882, Apostles Francis M. Lyman and John Henry Smith visited the branch and organized it as the Cassia Ward of the Box Elder Stake.

Horton D. Haight was called by the leaders of the Church to come to Oakley to preside over the Saints as their bishop. He picked William C. Martindale and George C. Whittle as his counselors. These brethren served as a bishopric until 1887. Due to the rapid growth in membership, area of the stake, and modes of transportation, it became increasingly difficult for the stake leaders of Box Elder Stake to give proper supervision and guidance. So in 1887 a stake was established in the Goose Creek Valley.

Stake organization

On November 19, 1887, the saints residing in the Cassia Ward and vicinity were separated from the Box Elder Stake and organized as the Cassia Stake of Zion with Horton D. Haight as president. He chose Moroni Pickett and William T. Brim as his counselors. This presidency remained intact until the death of President Haight, January 19, 1900.<sup>1</sup>

The following is the account of the organization of the Cassia Stake by the first stake clerk, Joseph Y. Haight:

The following is an account and list of the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who were residing in what was known as the Goose Creek Valley, now known as Oakley, and the adjacent towns located in Cassia County, Idaho, viz: Marion, Basin, Albion, Elba and Almo. The Saints residing in these towns met at Oakley on the 19th of November, 1887, and at 10 a.m. of said day assembled in the Oakley ward meeting house and were called to order by Bishop Horton D. Haight Sr. who was then bishop of the Oakley ward. There were present upon the stand with Bishop Haight, his counselors, William C. Martindale and George Whittle and Apostle John W. Taylor, member of the Council of Twelve Apostles, and Seymour B. Young, one of the council of Seventies of the church. Bishop Haight stated that the Saints in these various settlements had come together, and that Apostle John W. Taylor and President Seymour B. Young were here for the purpose of organizing a stake of Zion in this part of Idaho. They hoped all present would be interested in what would follow, and gave the meeting into the hands of Apostle Taylor and Young, when the following business was transacted.

Horton D. Haight Sr. was appointed stake president; Moroni Pickett, first counselor; William F. Brim second counselor; Joseph Y. Haight, stake clerk.

Robert Wilson, stake patriarch;

Dor P. Curtis Sr., president of the High Priest Quorum; Cyrus Tolman, first counselor; William C. Martindale, second counselor;

As members of the High Council--Dor P. Curtis Sr., Cyrus Tolman, William C. Martindale, Norton R. Tuttle, James S. Lewis, Charles Moir, George Whittle, Claus H. Karlson, Ether Durfee, George Bunn, Thomas Dunn, Edmund Homer;

As alternates to the High Council--Solomon P. McIntosh, Jonathan T. Griffith, Myron B. Durfee, Hyrum H. Severe;

Presidency of the Stake Elders Quorum--Asa M. Beecher, President, Arthur Peck, first counselor, Lorenzo Martin, second;

Presidency of Stake Relief Society--Louisa Haight, president, Helen E. Tuttle, first counselor, Ann Wilson, second counselor, Louisa Pickett secretary;

Y.L.M.I.A. Presidency--Rosabell A. Brim, president, Sarah E. Bates, first counselor, Urilda McBride, second counselor;

Stake Primary Presidency--Priscilla Worthington, president, Ann

<sup>1</sup>Jenson, op. cit., p. 71.

Bird, first counselor, Mary A. Rawson, second counselor, Sarah E. Robinson, secretary.

Stake Sunday School Officers--Orson P. Bates, superintendent, L. J. Robinson Sr., first assistant, Heber K. McBride, second assistant, James B. Stoddart, secretary;

Stake M.I.A. presidency--Edward T. Hoagland, president, John N. Price first counselor, Thomas E. Harper, clerk.<sup>1</sup>

Immediately following the organization of Cassia Stake, with Oakley being the stake headquarters, the following six wards were organized:

Oakley Ward. The Oakley Ward was organized on November 19, 1887. John L. Smith was chosen and sustained as bishop, with Rosel H. Hunter, first counselor, and Hyrum D. Clark as second counselor.

Marion Ward. The Marion Ward was organized on November 21, 1887. Previous to the Ward organization, a Sunday School had been organized; and in the spring of 1884, the Saints of Marion were organized as a branch of the Cassia Ward, with Cyrus Tolman as presiding elder. The following describes the choosing and the organizing of the Bishopric:

At a special meeting held at Marion, November 21, 1887, Apostles John W. Taylor and Seymour B. Young being present, Adam G. Smith was ordained a Bishop and set apart to preside over the Marion Ward by Apostle Taylor, who also ordained Wm. A. Tolman a High Priest and set him apart to act as first counselor to Bishop Smith. Arlin H. Bates was ordained a High Priest by Horton D. Haight and set apart to act as second counselor to Bishop Smith. Joseph H. Gold was set apart as clerk of the Ward.<sup>2</sup>

Basin Ward. The Basin Ward was organized on November 22, 1887. Enoch R. Dayley, Sr., bishop; William M. Moultrie, first counselor; William R. Hardy, Jr., second counselor; Charles W. Dayley, clerk.

Bishop Enoch R. Dayley died in December of 1892, and the ward reverted to its former status as a branch of the Oakley Ward until September 23, 1900,

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, May 14, 1926.

<sup>2</sup>"Cassia Stake Record" (M.S., 1887-- , on file at the Church Historian's office, Salt Lake City, Utah: History is arranged chronologically by year).

when it was organized again as a ward, with Adam S. Sagers as bishop.

Albion Ward. The Albion Ward was organized on November 23, 1887.

William T. Harper was chosen as bishop, with George V. Brim as first counselor, Don C. Loveland as second counselor, and Thomas E. Harper, ward clerk.

The following illustrates the religious organization functioning in Albion before the ward organization:

In September, 1882, when Apostle Francis M. Lyman and others visited Albion, there were about half a dozen families of Saints residing in and about the settlement. On this occasion James S. Lewis, was appointed presiding Priest to take charge of the Saints in Marsh Basin. No counselors were chosen at that time, but a couple of teachers were appointed to assist Elder Lewis who presided over the Saints in the Basin until the Ward was organized in 1887.<sup>1</sup>

Elba Ward. The Elba Ward was organized on November 24, 1887. Thomas Taylor was sustained as bishop with David Ward as first counselor and Osmer F. Beecher, as second counselor and Edmund Homer as the ward clerk.<sup>2</sup>

The following relates the early influence of the Church in the Elba area before the members were organized as a ward:

John Osterhout settled on Cassia Creek in 1880 and soon afterwards applied to the proper authorities at Oakley for a branch organization on Cassia Creek. In response to this request Elder Wm. C. Martindale, who presided at that time over all the Saints in the Goose Creek country and surrounding regions, came over on a visit to Cassia Creek and held a meeting with the Saints there October 2, 1881. James Cole was chosen president of the branch with John Osterhout and Reuben A. Beecher as teachers. From the time of this organization meetings were held regularly through the influence of these men. Previous to this organization Brother Osterhout held meetings occasionally in private residences and also in the school house, a log building 20 feet by 30 feet, which had been erected in the neighborhood of the present Elba.<sup>3</sup>

Almo Ward. Almo Ward was organized on November 25, 1887. Thomas O. King was sustained as bishop, with Charles R. Ward as first counselor and

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 1887.

<sup>2</sup>The Oakley Herald (Special Cassia Stake Number), November 12, 1946.

<sup>3</sup>"Cassia Stake Record," op. cit., 1880.

Harry E. Wynler as second counselor. Robert Wake became ward clerk.

The following describes the activity of the Church in Almo previous to its organization as a ward:

On Thursday, September 28, 1882 a special meeting was held in Almo at which Apostles Francis M. Lyman and John Henry Smith were present. President Heber J. Grant of Tooele Stake and Bishop Horton D. Haight of Oakley and others were in attendance. On this occasion the Saints at Almo were organized as a branch of the Church, with Myron D. Durfee as president and Thomas O. King, Charles R. Ward, John Lowe, Robert Wake, William Jones and Henry D. Durfey as teachers. At that time there were 15 families belonging to the Church in the Upper Raft River Valley.<sup>1</sup>

Grouse Creek Ward. The Grouse Creek Ward was organized on September 9, 1877, when the Box Elder Stake was formed. When the Cassia Stake was organized, the Grouse Creek Ward was transferred to the Cassia Stake. On November 27, 1887, this ward was officially transferred by the visiting brethren.

#### Further stake expansion

As the years went by, Oakley Valley became filled with settlers. It was a well-defined base for supplies, and from this point other areas to the north, east, and west began to be settled. As these new settlements grew, branches of the Church and then wards were organized to unite the people in fellowship. Other wards were formed from the North-Western States Mission territory, when and where it was more convenient and efficient for the church leaders to visit and supervise.

Blaine Ward. The Blaine Ward was organized on March 22, 1896. The following describes the areas consolidated to form this new ward:

The Branch called the Little Wood River Branch was organized on June 5, 1892, with George S. Harris as presiding Elder. On March 22, 1896, the Little Wood River Branch was organized as the Blaine Ward,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 1882.

it being located in the newly organized Blaine County, Idaho and belonged to Cassia Stake of Zion.

In 1903, three branches of the Church, which had hitherto belonged to the Northwestern States Mission, were transferred to the Blaine Ward namely, Soldier, Bellevue and Fir Grove, all in Blaine County, Idaho and vicinity.<sup>1</sup>

Basin Ward. On September 23, 1900, the Basin Ward was once again formed, with Adam S. Sagers as bishop, Samuel McIntosh as first counselor, and Porteous Dayley as second counselor. Fred H. Critchfield was ward clerk.

Oakley First Ward division. On May 26, 1901, Oakley Ward was divided into three wards, known, respectively, as the Oakley First, the Oakley Second, and the Oakley Third.

Oakley First Ward. The Oakley First Ward was organized on May 26, 1901, with Hector C. Haight, bishop; David P. Thomas, first counselor; George Craner, second counselor; and John J. Millard, Sr., ward clerk. The following describes the boundaries of this ward:

When first organized the ward contained all that part of the town lying south of Jenkins-Adams Street, and extending east and west into the country.<sup>2</sup>

Oakley Second Ward. This ward was organized on May 26, 1901. Rosel H. Hunter was made bishop. He selected Swanty Nelson and Moultrie M. Worthington to be his counselors and W. Casper Whittle to be ward clerk. The following describes the boundaries of this ward:

The Oakley Second Ward comprises the Latter-day Saints residing in the southwestern part of the town of Oakley. Northward the ward extends to Main Street, east to Center Street, and south and west to the mountains.<sup>3</sup>

Oakley Third Ward. This ward was organized on May 26, 1901, with Elam W. McBride as bishop and John H. Craner as first counselor and Daniel B.

<sup>1</sup>Jenson, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 600.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 601.

Wilson as second counselor, with Robert L. Wilson as ward clerk.

This ward consisted of those residing in the northern part of the town of Oakley, or all that part of the town lying north of Jenkins-Adams Street. Westward, the ward extended to the Marion Ward.

Yost Ward. This ward was organized on July 26, 1903, with Thomas H. Blackburn, Jr., as Bishop. The following describes the Church activity in this area before it was organized as a ward of the Cassia Stake:

The first "Mormon" settler on George Creek was Joseph F. Tracy, who came from Park Valley, Utah in 1880 and took up land about two miles southeast of the present Yost meetinghouse. Other settlers gradually moved in and the distance from Almo being too far to attend meetings there, the families on George Creek who belonged to the Almo Ward concluded to build a schoolhouse of their own, which was done in 1886.

Ebenezer Richardson was the first presiding Elder on George Creek, he having been appointed to that position by President Oliver G. Snow of the Box Elder Stake.

Under the date of February 8, 1894, Franklin W. Young wrote as follows from Yost, Box Elder County, Utah:

This place is at the south end of Raft River Valley. . . . We belong to the Cassia Stake of Zion, and though not organized into a ward, we hope that that event is not far distant. . . .

We have a good Sunday school, not very strong as regards numbers, but though few, yet full of determination to go ahead, which is so characteristic of the Latter-day Saints. . . . The Relief Society is doing a good work of charity. They hold their meetings every two weeks. The Primary Association is doing good among our children, and a great amount of credit must be given President Margaret B. Yates for the able manner in which she conducts the meetings.

I cannot help but go back a few years in my mind to the time when we did not have a house to meet in. It was a day of thanksgiving to us when we could meet once more in a house of prayer, built by our own hands, to be able once more to eat of the bread and drink of the water in remembrance of the death and suffering of our Savior. The Spirit flowed from heart to heart, and glad were the songs that were sung. It was a day of rejoicing to one and all. Since that day we have struggled onward to build up our small branch and roll on the Kingdom of God.

Our Sunday school was organized on the third of August, 1890. Within the last three years we have doubled in numbers, so that we now have a total of 86 souls enrolled upon our record. There are a few families here who are not of us, and to these we have been preaching the Gospel with good results. I can assure you it was a happy day when the writer took three of them into the waters of baptism and baptized them for the remission of sins. There have also been a few rebaptisms. A spirit of reformation is taking hold of the people here.

They want to do and be better. My prayer is that God will help us to gather in the honest souls of this place.<sup>1</sup>

Oakley Fourth Ward. This ward was organized on January 21, 1906, with David P. Thomas as bishop, with Marcus O. Funk as first counselor and Thomas H. Clark as second counselor, with John N. Price as ward clerk.

The Oakley Fourth Ward was organized from the west part of the Oakley First Ward.

Kimberly Ward. The Kimberly Ward was organized on May 10, 1909, with Etson B. Wilkins as Bishop. The following article describes some historical background of the Kimberly Ward:

The first Latter Day Saint meetings were held in the private residence of Albert Franklin McEwan, but soon afterwards a meeting house was built.

On May 28, 1905, the Saints in the Kimberly district were organized as a branch of the Marion Ward by the Cassia Stake presidency, with Magnus P. Swann as presiding Elder. He was succeeded in 1908 by Etson B. Wilkins, who presided until May 10, 1909, when the Kimberly Branch was organized as a regular bishop's ward with Etson B. Wilkins as Bishop.<sup>2</sup>

Burley Ward. The Burley Ward was organized on June 3, 1906, with Lorenzo W. Robins as Bishop. A branch of the Oakley Third Ward was organized here, previous to its being organized as a ward.

Manard Ward. The Manard Ward was organized as a ward on July 21, 1907. The following describes the church affiliation of the Saints before they were organized as a ward:

A few Latter Day Saints residing at Soldier were discovered by missionaries laboring in the Northwestern States Mission, and these Saints were organized as a branch of the Church in 1901. They were transferred in 1903 to the Blaine Ward of the Cassia Stake. On July 21, 1907, this branch was organized as a ward with Isaac E. Thurber as Bishop.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 401.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 467.



View Ward. The Mountain View Ward was organized on April 17, 1910, with Jesse C. Reeder sustained as Bishop. The following article describes the association of this group with the Church, previous to the ward organization:

In December, 1908, in a house that was on the farm where Laurel H. Richardson now lives, the first meeting on record was held. There were enough people living around in the community that they wanted to have a branch of the Church here.

So in January 1909, a Sunday School was organized under the direction of Bishop Lorenzo Robbins of the Burley Ward and his counselor David Taylor, sustaining Jesse C. Reeder as superintendent and Benjamin H. Burgess as assistant.

Bishop Lorenzo Robbins wanted to know what the people would like to name the branch; some wanted to call it Burgessville and some wanted other names. The people couldn't agree on a name so Bishop Lorenzo Robbins was asked to suggest a name. He suggested "Mountain View" so it was known by this name. Later "Mountain" was dropped and the ward was called the "View."

The View Ward was organized on April 17, 1910.<sup>1</sup>

Twin Falls Ward. The Twin Falls Ward was organized on June 19, 1910.

The following article describes religious association with the Cassia Stake before ward organization:

The first branch organized in that part of Idaho was the Kimberly Branch, organized by the Cassia Stake Presidency May 28, 1905, with Magnus B. Swan as presiding Elder. As the Saints increased in numbers in the vicinity of Twin Falls, the Kimberly Branch was divided August 23, 1908 and the west part of the same organization as a separate branch, called the Twin Falls Branch, with Peter Swenson as presiding Elder. Brother Swenson presided until June 19, 1910, when the Twin Falls Branch was organized as the Twin Falls Ward, with Lawrence G. Kirkman as Bishop.<sup>2</sup>

Heyburn Ward. The Heyburn Ward was organized on June 26, 1910, with George Hellewell as bishop. Prior to this, it had functioned as a branch of the Burley Ward since September 10, 1905. The following describes the organization of this first organization there as a branch:

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<sup>1</sup>The Burley Herald (Burley, Idaho), Golden Anniversary Edition, August 1955.

<sup>2</sup>Jenson, op. cit., p. 892.

On Sunday last President William T. Jack and President John L. Smith went to Heyburn and effected a church organization there.

George E. Hellewell was made presiding elder and Superintendent of Sunday Schools; Joel E. Serrine Assistant Superintendent. Miss Clara Jones, secretary and treasurer; Miss Delia Ferrins, Assistant Secretary; Miss Luella Ferrins, chorister; fourteen families belonging to the Church, resided at Heyburn. Elder Serrine kindly tendered the use of a very large room of his comfortable home as a meeting place for the Saints for the ensuing year.<sup>1</sup>

Malta Ward. The Malta Ward was organized on November 13, 1910, with Thomas Taylor, Jr., as bishop. The following describes the Church activity in this area before ward organization:

Among the first Latter-Day Saints who settled at Malta were Frank Hall and family and Thomas R. Smith and family. The Neddos came about 1900. The first settlers were all farmers and attended meetings at Elba. Gradually the settlers increased in number and finally a temporary Sunday School was organized in 1903 and sessions held in the home of Thomas Taylor jun. . . . At a meeting held November 13, 1910, attended by Stake President Counselor, William T. Harper and Bishop David Hubbard of the Elba Ward, it was decided to organize the Saints in the Malta District as a ward to be known as the Malta Ward. Such an organization was effected with the following officers: Thomas Taylor jun., Bishop; Jesse L. Hubbard, first counselor and Robert Hutchison, second counselor; Alfred C. Hubbard, ward clerk.<sup>2</sup>

Naf Ward. The Naf Ward was organized on August 17, 1913, with Walter M. Johns as Bishop, and Joseph N. Sorenson and Levi Dunn as his counselors.

The following describes earlier church activity in the Naf area:

Walter M. Jones arrived with his family in July, 1912, and settled on the Utah end of the valley. On his arrival he found a mixed population of Mormons and Gentiles, some of them on the Utah and some of them on the Idaho side--perhaps fifteen families altogether. Fred T. Bradshaw was then the presiding Elder at Naf, and there were two Sunday schools running, one on Clear Creek, Utah, and another one in Idaho. Brother Bradshaw held meetings in the Naf schoolhouse in Idaho.

Before the Ward was organized, there was a Relief Society, a Sunday School and a Y.M.M.I.A. on the Utah side of the Branch, with Walter M. Johns as president of meetings. After the Ward was organized, the other usual auxiliary organizations were effected. At one time there were seven Sunday schools in the ward, viz. the Naf, Clear Creek, Standrod, Strevell, Gunnell, Bridge and Rafton (the latter on Rafton near the narrows). Regular sessions of the Sunday Schools were held in that

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Eagle, September 14, 1905.

<sup>2</sup>Raft River Stake Record, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1910.

many school houses.<sup>1</sup>

Pella Ward. The Pella Ward was organized on November 16, 1913, with Charles H. Smith as Bishop. James O. Peterson was chosen as first counselor and James W. Bodily as second counselor, with Harvey E. Coltrin as ward clerk.

The first settlers in the Pella area were a number of Latter-day Saints, who moved in to make homes under the Minidoka Irrigation Project. The locality was originally called Beulah, but when the Beulah district was organized as a branch of the Burley Ward, the name was changed to Palisade. This meeting was held at the home of Homer A. Randall, May 22, 1910, with Charles Smith as the presiding elder. When a ward organization was effected, the name of the small community was changed to Pella.<sup>2</sup>

Unity Ward. The Unity Ward was organized May 23, 1914, with Lawrence E. Harris sustained as Bishop. A branch organization was effected on May 31, 1914, with Samuel Banner as the presiding elder.

This ward consisted of Latter-day Saints residing in a farming district. The inhabitants of Unity, most of whom were Latter-day Saints irrigated their gardens and farms under the Minidoka Canal Project. The name Unity was suggested for the locality because the early settlers showed more than usual unity and cooperation in their pioneer labors.<sup>3</sup>

Burley First and Second Wards. On May 23, 1915, the Burley Ward was divided into two wards: the Burley First Ward, with David R. Langlois, bishop; and the Burley Second Ward, with Isaac Gudmundson, bishop.

Springdale Ward. The Springdale Ward was organized on October 17, 1915, with Charles C. Livingston as bishop. The following describes its development

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 1913.

<sup>2</sup>Cassia Stake Record, op. cit., 1910.

<sup>3</sup>Jenson, op. cit., p. 900.

towards being a ward:

Prior to the organization of a branch at Springdale, the people belonged to the View Ward. A Branch, known as the Pratt Branch (thus named in honor of some of the family of Parley P. Pratt who lived there) was organized November 24, 1912, with Charles C. Livingston as presiding Elder. He acted in that capacity until the Springdale Ward was organized on October 17, 1915 when he was ordained a Bishop and set apart to preside over the ward.<sup>1</sup>

Hazel Ward. The Hazel Ward was organized on April 16, 1916, with Jesse W. Richins as bishop and Henery J. Cotterell and Christopher Boyton as counselors, with Harvey E. Coltrin as ward clerk.

Declo Ward. The Declo Ward was organized on July 30, 1916, with Lorenzo E. Olson as bishop. The following describes its development towards a ward:

Declo was formerly called Marshfield, and the Saints there were organized as the Marshfield Branch in December 1909, with Hyrum S. Lewis as presiding Elder. He was succeeded in 1913 by George C. Darrington, who presided over the branch until it was organized as the Declo Ward July 30, 1916.<sup>2</sup>

Murtaugh Ward. The Murtaugh Ward was organized on May 26, 1918 with Adrian A. Merrill as bishop. The following describes the earlier organization of a branch in the area:

Among the first L.D.S. settlers in the district were Judson Tolman and family, Hyrum Pickett and family, and George Decker and family, who located in the Murtaugh district in 1906. These families of Saints were organized as a branch of the Marion Ward, Cassia Stake, May 9, 1916.<sup>3</sup>

Buhl Ward. The Buhl Ward was organized on July 20, 1919, with Asael H. Dixon as bishop. The following describes the branch organization existing before its organization as a ward:

The Buhl Ward is an outgrowth of the Twin Falls Ward, to which ward the first Latter-day Saint settlers in the Buhl district belonged. As early as 1916 the Saints at Buhl constituted a Branch of the Twin Falls Ward, with Horation Cox as presiding elder. He was succeeded in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 915.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 557.

1917 by Arthur A. Jarman, when the Buhl Branch was organized as a ward.<sup>1</sup>

Star Ward. The Star Ward was organized in 1920, with Alma C. Tilley as bishop. The following article describes the branch organization previous to its organization as a ward:

A Latter-day Saint branch existed as early as 1916 with William D. Harris as presiding elder. He was succeeded in 1918 by George Durfee, who was succeeded in 1919 by Alma C. Tilley, who acted in that capacity until 1920, when the branch was organized as a ward.<sup>2</sup>

Organized branches of the church. A number of branches of the Church were organized within the Cassia Stake boundaries, branches that never developed into wards before being transferred to other stakes when Cassia Stake was reduced in size. The following places were organized into such branches:

Hagerman: December, 1894.

Boise: February 8, 1903, with E. J. Merrill as the presiding elder.

Acequia: 1906, with David R. Langlois as the presiding elder.

Jackson: 1909, with Charles Albert Brewerton as presiding elder.

Rupert: 1910, with Henry Catmull as the presiding elder.

Moulton: 1914, with James Parley Howell as the presiding elder.

Sublett: 1914, with Ole Madsen as the presiding elder.

Churchill: May 23, 1915, with Wallace Warner as the presiding elder.

Butte: March 2, 1919. (Organized as an independent branch in 1920.)

#### Contact with church membership

Local leadership contact. In the beginning of stake organization the stake presidency visited the various wards as often as time and circumstances would permit. As more settlers came into the area and moved father into the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 834.

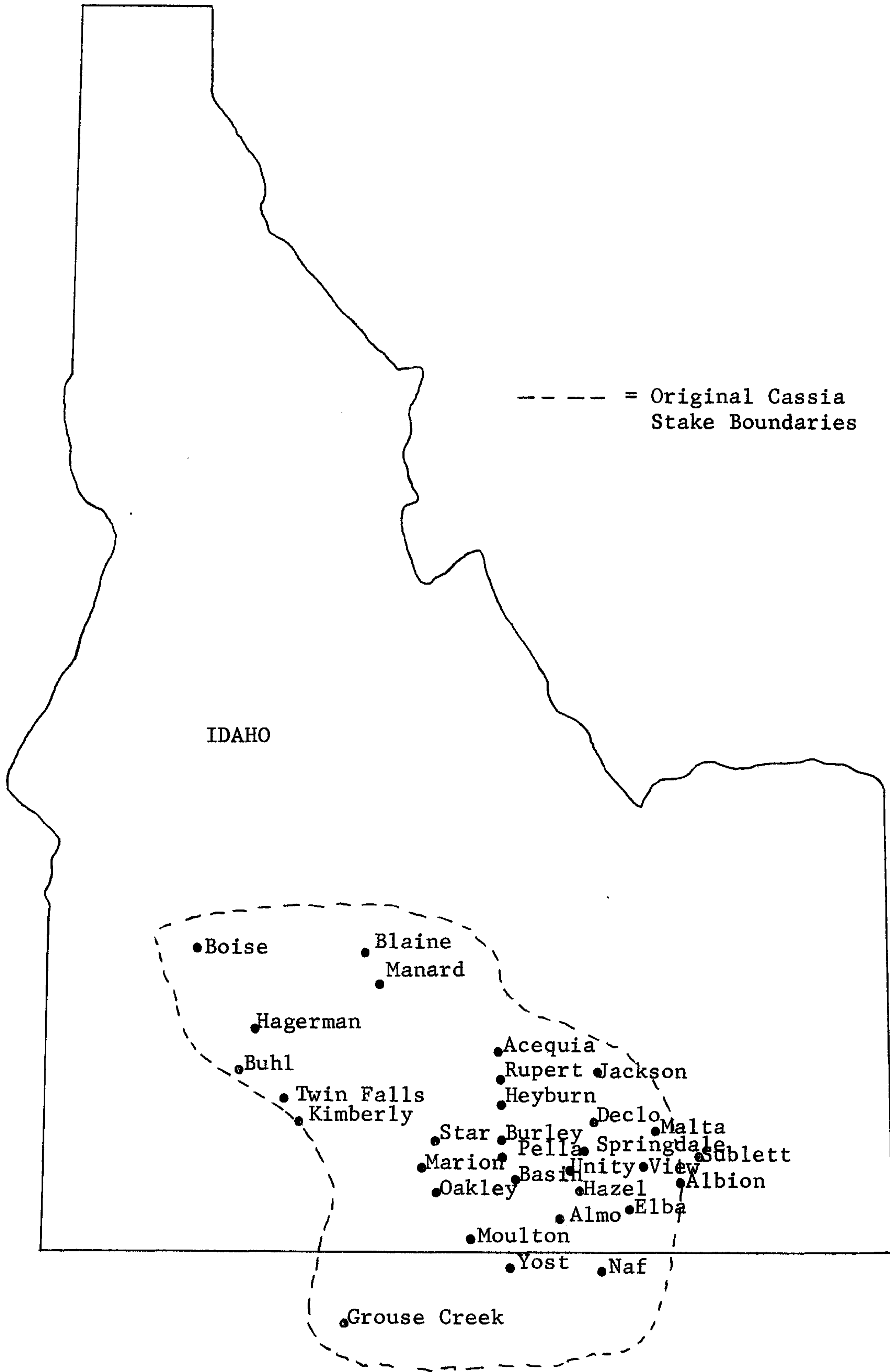


Figure 6. Wards and branches in Cassia Stake

State of Idaho, they required more branch and ward organizations.

The stake membership in 1888 was 1,575 people. By 1900, it had increased to 2,446 people. This added growth multiplied visiting assignments to these various settlements, and so the stake presidency called members of the stake to go on a mission for one or two weeks every three months to the distant places to represent them. The presidency also carried on their own visits at great expense in time and means. The following is a description of one of these missionary assignments:

A visit to Carey would take five days. The stake president and his counselors left on a Friday morning around 4 A.M. with a span of horses and a light buggy and traveled until 8 in the evening. Saturday morning they arose and prepared their food and started on their journey again by 6:30. They usually arrived at their destination around 3 or 4 in the afternoon. This was dependent also on the weather. Meetings were held Saturday evening and all day Sunday. Some of these missions included visiting more than one place, and so their journey sometimes was extended to periods of two weeks before they returned to their homes.<sup>1</sup>

When one considers the distances, the means of transportation, and the condition of the roads, their sacrifice can be seen clearly. On the following page is a sample missionary-appointment schedule of 1906 for the surrounding area, showing the close contact they maintained with the wards despite the distance to be traveled. The distances they traveled to visit the wards listed in this schedule ranged from  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to 30 miles. There were some wards at the outer limits of the stake not listed on this schedule that required traveling such distances as 70 to 200 miles.

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with Newell Dayley, December 22, 1962.

|                   | <u>Feb. 18</u> | <u>Mar. 11</u> | <u>Mar. 18</u> | <u>Mar. 25</u> | <u>Apr. 8</u> | <u>Apr. 15</u> |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| S. E. Hale        | Oakley         | Oakley         | Oakley         |                | Basin         | Oakley         |
| George H. Severe  | First          | Second         | Third          |                |               | Fourth         |
| H. L. Hunter      | Oakley         | Oakley         | Oakley         | Basin          |               | Oakley         |
| Zera Whittle      | Second         | Third          | Fourth         |                |               | First          |
| L. W. Robbins     | Burley         | Oakley         |                | Marion         | Oakley        | Heyburn        |
| Newell Dayley     |                | Fourth         |                |                | First         |                |
| H. J. Wells       | Oakley         | Oakley         |                | Oakley         | Marion        | Oakley         |
| R. I. Mills       | Fourth         | First          |                | Third          |               | Second         |
| J. H. Worthington | Basin          | Marion         | Burley         |                | Oakley        | Oakley         |
| Elmer Mecham      |                |                |                |                | Second        | Third          |
| Moses Smith       | Marion         |                | Oakley         | Oakley         | Oakley        |                |
| Daniel McLaws Jr. |                |                | Second         | First          | Third         |                |
| Don C. Loveland   | Albion         | Elba           |                | Almo           |               |                |
| Robert Parish     |                |                |                |                |               |                |
| David O. Allen    | Oakley         | Basin          |                | Oakley         | Oakley        | Marion         |
| Robert Smith      | Third          |                |                | Second         | Fourth        |                |
| Ira Brim          | Elba           | Albion         |                |                |               | Almo           |
| J. W. Gransbury   |                |                |                |                |               | 1              |

### Stake conferences

Stake conferences were important events in the lives of the people, especially in the earlier years, as they afforded an opportunity for the people, who had been separated for several months, to get together and to receive instructions pertaining to the Kingdom of God. These conferences were inspirational and instructional meetings and were a means of unifying the people. Suggestions relative to temporal matters were often relayed to the people for the purpose of helping them with whatever problems they were currently facing.

The following is a news report relative to a quarterly conference of 1888:

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Eagle, March 1, 1906.



The Quarterly Conference of the Cassia Stake, convened at Elba, July 21-22. The meeting house not being large enough to accommodate all who would wish to attend, the people of Elba erected a large and commodious bowery which gave ample room for all. It proved much more comfortable than a house would have done as the weather was very warm.

On the stand were Pres. H. D. Haight and Counselors, Patriarch Robert Wilson, members of the High Council, and Bishops of all the wards in the Stake.

Sunday afternoon the General and Stake authorities were presented and sustained, as were also a Board of Education to take into consideration the best means of starting schools wherein the principles of our religion may be taught.<sup>1</sup>

The following article illustrates the teaching of the word of wisdom and the law of tithing to the Priesthood on a Sunday evening in 1894:

Sunday evening a meeting of the Priesthood, and as many as wished to remain, was held, where Elder Lyman catechized each person separately upon the Word of Wisdom and paying of tithing. He said the time had come when those holding the Priesthood and prominent positions in the Church must strictly observe the Word of Wisdom or step aside for those who would.<sup>2</sup>

Newell Dayley, a long-time resident of Oakley, recalled that in the year 1906 or 1907, members of the stake worked on the road between Burley and Oakley to make it smooth for the General Authorities to travel on. John Adams was given the responsibility to organize the workers and get the work done. This was a cooperative assignment between the two places and shows the love and respect they had for the comfort of the General Authorities.<sup>3</sup>

The following describes the Church's interest in and concern for the temporal welfare of its people:

Apostles F. M. Lyman and Heber J. Grant presided at conference. Both of the visiting brethren expressed their pleasure in coming out and were greatly impressed with the splendid opportunities before the people who inhabit this valley.

They dwelt considerably on the importance of the people encouraging the establishment of the beet factory in the vicinity by signing up for

<sup>1</sup>Deseret Evening News, August 3, 1888.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., December 27, 1894.

<sup>3</sup>Interview with Newell Dayley, December 22, 1962.

the cultivation of beets. They both bore testimony to the good to be derived in the production of beets as they had almost become bankrupt in years past in establishing the industry in Utah and were therefore in a position to be discouraged if one should be. Still they were the more enthusiastic in the raising of beets notwithstanding their earlier misfortunes in getting it started and maintained.

Elder Francis M. Lyman predicted that this country would yet teem with people in the not far distant future. He was one of the first men to visit this section about 31 years ago and at that early date reported upon his return to his friends in Utah that this was one of the best valleys he had ever seen. On this visit he even went farther than at that time and said that it was the best he knew of anywhere in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

One of the main purposes of a conference of the Church is to renew man's hope and thus help him to go forward with faith and energy to accomplish those things of most value. The following account tells us of the influence of a quarterly-conference speaker on one of the members of the Church:

The conference of Cassia Stake, held January 14, probably will always be remembered for the refreshing change that was manifest there. Many people coming away with expressions that would seem to verify this statement. (Sic)

The visiting speaker was Dr. Levi Edgar Young of the University of Utah and also one of the Presiding Seven Presidents of the Seventies. His viewpoint on religion was indeed broad and refreshing. . . . He held out hope and opportunity for the struggling race. To the man who was downcast, he held out a future that was at least full of light and hope. Doctor Young did not feel that the end of the earth was at hand. In his afternoon sermon he told that there were many generations yet ahead and that the gospel had not as yet been preached to the thousands waiting to hear it.

Optimism, happiness and refreshing vigor took the place of old time sermonizing with its hopelessness and blue colored future. . . . There was happiness, cheer and a burning optimism that went far to lifting the load from the shoulders of the overburdened man struggling under his load of economic want and family cares. It was an invitation for him to take up the white man's burden and bear it on to success.

Many a man who had entered the building smileless came out with a broad grin of pleasure, not to say joy on his weather beaten features. It is not to be doubted that on the morrow he took up his weary burden with a sprightliness and vigor that took him on his road much easier than had been his want for some time.

Even the children came in for their share of recognition. The little folks will long remember what Elder Young had to say to them and the humor and fun manifest in his playful regard for them. . . .

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, February 16, 1912.

Elder Young recognized the freshness of the spirit of youth and that it had a share in the world. Instead of drooling away a lot of formulas accepted generally but now well understood or lived, he turned to the playing children and soon their hands were responding eagerly, anxiously to his questions and responded equally with his humor. The little boy who told him that he had caught no fish on his--Doctor Young's--fishing trip to Snake River, caught the professor just right. "You caught none," the boy said. "You are right," the speaker said, "I caught none."

There were no little children sleeping or restless then. Every eye was fixed upon the visitor. Every eye watched his every move and wondered what was coming next. He had entered their world and was a playmate of theirs. Do you think they will remain away from the meeting when next he comes? I think not. The memory of what he said to the little folks will remain long with them. . . .<sup>1</sup>

During quarterly conferences, stake boundary changes are effected, as are also the resultant changes in leadership. The following shows the divisions of the Cassia Stake at various times in its history:

History has shown that there were 10 stakes formed from the once extended Cassia Stake, They were the following: Raft River Stake, April 27, 1915; Boise Stake, November 3, 1913; Twin Falls Stake, July 26, 1919; Burley Stake, July 27, 1919; Blaine Stake, August 19, 1919; Minidoka Stake, May 11, 1924; Cassia Stake, November 19, 1887. Also Weiser Stake, Gooding Stake, and another Stake in Boise were created from former Cassia Stake Territory.<sup>2</sup>

Cassia Stake is the mother of nine other organized stakes of the Church, and before the divisions the stake presidency had difficulty in properly directing the stake activities. The following is a list of the early stake presidencies and their terms of office:

Organization of the Cassia Stake November 19, 1887. Stake Presidency: Horton D. Haight, Moroni Pickett, William F. Brim. Stake Patriarch, Robert Wilson. Stake Clerk, Joseph Y. Haight.

Re-organization of Cassia Stake May 14, 1900. Stake Presidency: William T. Jack, John L. Smith and William T. Harper. Stake Clerk, John J. Millard Sr.

Re-organization of Cassia Stake October 20, 1928. Stake Presidency: Charles S. Clark, Moses S. Martin, William G. Hardy.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., February 9, 1934. J. Lyman Smith.

<sup>2</sup>Pioneer Day Booklet, 1959.

Re-organization of Cassia Stake February 17, 1946. Stake Presidency: Lewis R. Critchfield, David R. Martindale, C. Verl Clark.<sup>1</sup>

### Church buildings

In 1881, a log building was constructed at the present site of Oakley. This building could accommodate 50 people and served three years for all public purposes.

A new meeting house was commenced in 1883; this was also a log building which served for all public purposes. This building was 65 feet long and 30 feet wide, with a stage and a basement.

The tabernacle was built in Oakley by local stone masons who shaped each rock with hammer and chisel. The stone was hauled by team and wagon from mountains about four miles away. The following article describes the construction of the tabernacle:

Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Worthington donated what was known as the "Hill" for church purposes and the basement and foundation were dug out. The plan was received from Salt Lake City in 1896 and the material was gathered for its construction, all the people contributed, hauling sand, rock and lumber. Norton R. Tuttle was the superintendent of construction; Joseph Beck, F. O. Peterson, Aaron McBride and others were the stone cutters and masons. I remember that Bishop John L. Smith, H. D. Haight, Jr., and the writer (J. J. Millard, Sr.) hauled the large flat rock that is in the bottom of the foundation. President Haight devoted a large portion of his time, aiding in the work.<sup>2</sup>

President Haight died in January of 1900, leaving the responsibility of directing the work of the tabernacle on the shoulders of his counselors until later in that same year when a new stake presidency was called. The work was then carried on to its conclusion. The building was completed in 1902.

A Relief Society Hall was built for the functions of the organization. Pricella Worthington donated the ground and was the first one active in

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald (Cassia Stake Number), November 12, 1946.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., May 12, 1926.

building the hall. This building was built with local brick, and after all these years the brick lime-mortar sets firm and smooth.<sup>1</sup>

In 1916, a fine Cassia Stake Office Building was erected in Oakley, at a cost of \$4,148.75. The building was erected with white brick and stucco material and provided room for stake presidency, high council, and other small meetings.

In 1929, the Church bought the old Howell's Opera House that had been constructed in 1904. This building was used for drama presentations by the Church and also for a picture-show house that provided regulated, wholesome presentations. This building was called the Cassia Playhouse.

In 1929, also, the Church purchased an implement building, which was remodeled for a dance hall and dining room. This building became known as the Rainbow Hall.

The Church completed a \$6,000 L.D.S. seminary building in 1926, which took the place of the Cassia Academy in providing for religious instruction.

The Cassia Stake Tabernacle, built in 1902, served as the stake house for 54 years. In 1954, construction began for a new stake tabernacle:

By 1954, a new need had arisen in the Peaceful Valley. The people felt a need to make their place of worship show its importance to them. They felt a desire to build a structure which would not only be more convenient as they carried out their religious obligations, but also one which would be more modern in its appearance and more beautiful, thus showing the love and thankfulness they felt in their hearts toward a God who had been so kind and generous to them as they lived in the valley.

So the people were called upon to build a stake center where all could come together under a new program. Again the people rallied to the tradition of those who had built before them.

The stake then consisted of six wards--Oakley 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, Basin, Marion and Grouse Creek. These were the Saints who planned to erect a new building on State Highway 27 at a cost of \$230,000.

When the building was completed, the valley of Oakley was divided (sic) into two wards. The state highway and Main Street from town going west were the dividing lines. In 1956, Pella and View Wards of

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<sup>1</sup>Letter received from Earl Whitely.



Figure 7. Meeting House, built 1883

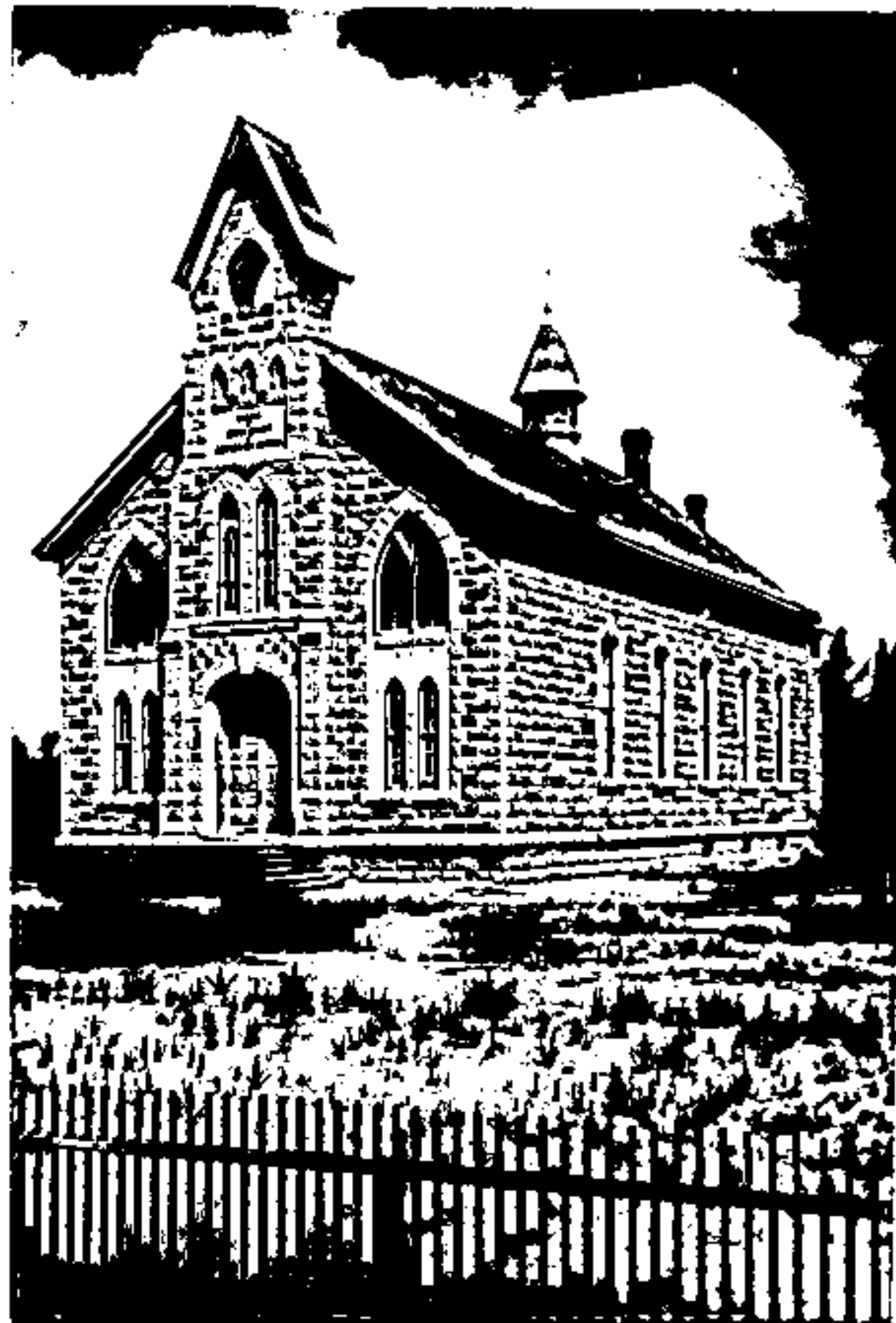


Figure 8. Stake Tabernacle, 1902

the Burley Stake were given back to the mother stake; in 1959, the Unity Ward joined the group, and again there were six wards.<sup>1</sup>

President David O. McKay visited Oakley on June 24, 1956, and dedicated the new Cassia Stake House.

### Church-sponsored activities

Twenty-fourth of July celebrations. The first twenty-fourth of July celebration in Oakley was held in the year 1882. In preparation for this event, the men built a large bowery consisting of posts set in the ground, with poles attached from post to post and covered with willows. Slabs of wood were used for benches. A friendly feeling of peace and joy prevailed among these people. Even the Indians in the area joined with them in their celebration.<sup>2</sup>

Because Oakley was the center of Latter-day Saint activity, the people from all over the area came to Oakley to celebrate the "Pioneer Day." The following article is a twenty-fourth day program in 1906.

Salute 24 guns daylight and raising flag at sunrise, Capt. Artillery Louis Critchfield.

Brass band serenading the town.

Parade to assemble People's Hall at 9 o'clock under direction Marshall of the day, W. R. Lee.

Line of march, Blaine avenue to tabernacle, Order of procession, Pioneers, James Port, Lavern Barrus, Ray Craner. Black Hawk Chief, Fred Taylor band of savages, M.I.A. workers, 12 ladies on grey steeds, 12 young men on black steeds. Stake Presidency. Oakley Bishops, High Priests, Seventies. Elders. Relief Societies, Sunday Schools. Primaries. Bicycle Riders. Citizens. (sic)

Program at Tabernacle 10 a.m.: Singing by choir under the direction of Viola Dayley. Prayer, President W. T. Harper. Music, Brass Band. Sketch of Mormon Battalion, Lyman Bates. Oration, Pres. W. T. Jack. Quartette, "Hard Time Come Again No More," James Millard and company. Recitation, Miss Maud Thomas. Toasts and Sentiments--Reader--John J. Millard. Quartette, Mrs. Oliver Pickett and Co. (sic)

<sup>1</sup>Oakley Pioneer Day Booklet, 1959.

<sup>2</sup>The Oakley Herald (Cassia Stake Number, L.D.S. Centennial Memories), November 20, 1947.

The toast for forty-seveners, Sisters Haight and Grant were very appropriate. May they help us celebrate many a pioneer day hereafter.

The Tug of War pullers voted their prize of \$6 into the Brass Band fund. The Band was recipient also of five dollars from C. G. Parkinson yesterday. It is likely also that the general committee will have a generous contribution for this splendid organization, and thus the good work goes on.

The Tug of War was perhaps the most exciting sport that was witnessed on the 24th. Twelve of the strongest men that could be found were lined up six on each side, and the way they pulled beat anything we ever saw. Bp. Haight's side was pulled over but he says they would not have been, if some one had not called "Rest." From the way things looked during the pull we think the Bp. was right.

In the three day baseball contest, Twin Falls team took first prize, Oakley second.<sup>1</sup>

It has been customary at all pioneer celebrations from 1882 to the present to hold a meeting at ten o'clock on the first day of the celebration for the purpose of reviewing the experiences of the pioneers of the Church. This has been the focal point of the celebration. Other activities which have been carried out at various July twenty-fourth celebrations are games and races for the children, carnivals, harness races, movies, dances, rodeos, and parades with floats decorated by church auxiliaries and groups. An interesting event featured for the past several years is a marathon horse endurance race, run in relays for a distance of twenty-two miles.

The pioneer program at ten a.m. always includes an inspirational talk and several musical numbers, featuring local talent. On several occasions outstanding pioneer pageants or tableaux have been presented, with the participants all in colorful costumes.

Boy Scout program instigated. The Church responded quickly to the idea of incorporating the Boy Scout program into the Y.M.M.I.A. program. The following is an account of the introduction of this movement into Cassia Stake by a general board member:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.



Dr. Taylor gave a short sketch of the boy scout movement which he hopes will be taken up in all of the wards in connection with the M.I.A. and asks the cooperation of all the officers and members to make it a success.

On Monday evening at 8 o'clock, Dr. Taylor, who had been asked to prolong his visit until Tuesday, instructed a number of officers and members in scout craft. He first taught them how to tie a number of knots that will be found useful in numerous ways. He next lined them up on the gymnasium floor, and proceeded to instruct them in scout drill explaining that it was given the boys to improve their carriage, and to learn obedience, combined with promptness. He next instructed them in the treatment of persons who had almost met death by drowning.<sup>1</sup>

Cassia Stake cannery. The Church sponsored a canning center in Oakley on August 14, 1936. This was a part of the Church Security Program of preparing food for storage in the event of personal or general disasters. In addition to taking care of their own needs, an effort was made to take care of surplus products that one might have. This surplus food was canned by volunteer labor and used in the welfare program of the Church.

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, March 28, 1913.

CHAPTER V  
SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

Early education in Oakley Valley

The first school in the Oakley area was located about two miles west of the present site of the Oakley business district. This school was held in one end of the Oakley Meadows Stage Station during the 1870's and provided education for the few scattered settlers' children before the Latter-day Saint settlers came and established schools for their children. The following article describes this early school:

The first school in the area was located in the Oakley Meadows Stage Station. The teacher was John F. Hansen. There were eleven pupils in that school some of them walking or riding horseback six or seven miles each day to and from school. One room of the Oakley Meadows station was designated as the school house and the grain and hay, stored for the horses in one end of the room, was covered over with pieces of burlap. The teacher's desk was a goods box, on which reposed one or two books, his lead pencil and the urgent voiced cow bell. The pupils sat in two rows on backless benches, in front of the teacher, boys on one side and girls on the other, the short legs of the tiny ones dangling in space, the long legs of the tall boys sprawled over the dirt floor.

There was no blackboard in that school room, but some of the pupils had slates and there were a few pencils and a very few sheets of brown paper.

The spare harness was hung from pegs in the log walls and the one window let in the light and kept out the rain with a pane of oiled paper, in lieu of glass.

The few books used in that school were brought up from the homes.<sup>1</sup>

In 1881, a log building was constructed on the present site of Oakley that accommodated 50 people and served for all public purposes for three years. It was used for the first school on Oakley's present site.

As the settlement of Oakley grew, small communities came into existence,

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<sup>1</sup>The Burley Herald Bulletin, (Golden Anniversary Edition), August 1955.

and because of the lack of efficient transportation, schools were established in 1883 at Locust, one mile north of Oakley town; at Marion, one mile west and one north; and at Basin, five miles east. Two schools functioned in the Basin. One school was located at the upper end of the Basin, and the other at the lower end. The Oakley Elementary School was also begun in 1883.

These schools, in the beginning, were only four-month schools and were financed by contributions from the parents of the school children. One family might pay their assessment in food, while another family might offer board and room for the teacher for a specified length of time.

In 1885, a school was started at Island, located one mile west and five miles north of Oakley. The Warm Springs school, located six miles south of Oakley, was started in the early 1890's. These two schools, for reasons of economy, rotated their school sessions with several months' attendance at each school. These schools were for all grades, and so the teacher would teach children of all ages.

The above schools functioned until 1939, when they were consolidated.<sup>1</sup>

The following is an announced closing exercise for the district school in Oakley in the spring of 1902:

The following is for the last day of school: Song "Happy Greeting," by the school; prayer, C. K. McMurray; song "Twilight is Stealing," by the school; 10 minute address, O. P. Bates; instrumental music, Mae Martindale; 10 minute address, W. C. Martindale; recitation, Howard Price; address, Supt. H. H. Thornton; song, members of primary department; recitation, Hattie Snow; duet Matilda Latty, Bertha Bates; dialogue, members of 2nd primary; instrumental solo, Clara Bates; 10 minute address Bishop Haight; song, "Vacation is Coming,"; presentation of certificate, Principal; dismissal, C. K. McMurray.

Picnic sociable at the school house 2 o'clock p.m. All children having attended school during the past year are invited.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with Wilford Sagers, April 10, 1963.

<sup>2</sup>The Oakley Eagle, April 11, 1902.

Education was compulsory in the Oakley Valley, and the local community had prepared itself to enforce this law. The following notice encouraged parents to see that their children were in school:

Notice to all parents and guardians of children residing in Independent School District No. 2 (Oakley). We the undersigned notify all parents and guardians of children residing in Independent School District No. 2, that it is the duty to have and to keep in regular attendnace all their children from the age of six years to eighteen years in district school (sic). Delinquency and irregularity of attendance is not excuseable and will be handled.<sup>1</sup>

By the year 1912, the enrollment in the district school in Oakley increased to four hundred and seventy-five students. This growth necessitated the building of a larger school. The following describes the school situation at this time:

By no means the least among the thriving institutions of our town is the Public School. The present home is a very substantial rock structure containing eight class rooms. It is entirely too small to accommodate the present enrollment of four hundred ten pupils, and as a consequence two other buildings in town are occupied, awaiting the completion of the new edifice now nearing completion, which it is expected will be ready for occupancy about Feb. 1st.

The faculty consists of eleven members including the principal, B. F. Wilson and because of the heavy enrollment all the teachers are taxed to their full capacity.

The census of this district is four hundred seventy-five and the excellent percentage is due to the efficient service of the probation officer.

Never before in the history of the school has it been in such a flourishing condition. The faculty is strong and doing exceptionally good work.

An invitation is extended to the patrons of the school to visit it any time while the former is in session, and become acquainted with the existing conditions, and the work being done.

At present the pupils are somewhat handicapped through not having a larger play ground since the new building has taken up much of the former space, but the Board is doing what they can to remedy this condition in the way of arranging for additional ground, if possible, now adjoining the present site.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, February 11, 1910.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., December 20, 1912.

### Cassia Stake Academy

The Mormon people were particularly anxious that education should be of such a character as to foster the religious life. Such was the advice of Apostle Franklin D. Richards of Ogden, Utah, who was associated in the northern migration of his people and for whom Idaho's pioneer settlement was named. He once said, "Education is as dangerous as whiskey, if it is the wrong kind of education." (Fremont Stake Record, No. B, May 15, 1893, Rexburg, Idaho, p. 89.)

This philosophy resulted in the organization of a number of Idaho church schools, known as academies.

On November 18, 1889, the Cassia Stake Academy opened at Oakley. This school developed into far-reaching institutions in the service of the people in their surrounding communities.<sup>1</sup>

Because public schools were not providing for the training of the older child, these academies filled an important need and formed the main educational center of the entire surrounding area.

In 1889, the Cassia country was but sparsely settled; yet, in addition to the numerous small schools in the settlement, the Cassia Stake Academy, opened at Oakley in a log cabin on November 18, 1889, offered instruction in higher-grade work. The academy was soon able to offer a three-year high-school course, supplemented by theology. Later, training in animal husbandry and dairying was added to the curriculum.<sup>2</sup>

The board of education was called on July 22, 1888, and sustained in quarterly conference on the same date. It was constituted as follows: Orson P. Bates, James Stoddart, John J. Millard, James McGavin, Thomas E. Harper, Moroni Beecher, Thomas O. King, and John Lowe. The academy was organized with George H. Day as principal and with an enrollment of thirty-two pupils. The enrollment increased to fifty-seven during the term. Two terms were held that year.

The second academic year commenced September 22, 1890, with Brother

<sup>1</sup>C. J. Brosnan, op. cit., pp. 239-240.

<sup>2</sup>Jensen, op. cit., p. 120.

Axel F. O. Nielson as principal. He was assisted by several of the students in teaching the many classes.

General superintendent of the academies of the Church, Dr. Karl G. Maeser, sent a letter to the effect that it was a necessity to obtain the services of a lady teacher to instruct the girls in the art of homemaking. The board of education immediately started searching for a lady to fill this position. They hired Sister Annie Bird, and she commenced her work November 24, 1890. On this date the academy was favored with a visit from Dr. Maeser. He expressed himself as being pleased with the manner in which the school was being conducted. He was pleased with both the students and the teachers. He gave some very valuable instructions to the teachers regarding their behavior toward their students. He also gave wise instructions to the school children, exhorting them to pray for their teachers and to be punctual in all their undertakings.

During the year 1890, the enrollment grew to 125 pupils, and an academy building was erected at a cost of about six thousand dollars. Of white sandstone, the building was 28 by 50 feet and 25 feet in height. It had a seating capacity for 160 pupils, 80 on each floor. School began in the new building in January, 1891.

The third academic year commenced August 31, 1891, with Brother A. F. O. Nielson as principal and Sister Ettie Hunter of Grantsville as assistant. In January, 1891, the president of the stake and counselors were sustained as members of the board of education. President Horton D. Haight was the president of the board; and James Stoddart, the secretary and treasurer. The greatest enrollment that year was 134 pupils. A library, containing fifty-seven works, was started in 1891-1892.

The fourth academic year commenced September 5, 1892, with Brother

A. F. O. Nielson as principal and Sister Geneva Worthington as assistant. There was an enrollment of 102 pupils. The school was giving good satisfaction, and its benefits were greatly appreciated. There was still some indebtedness on the building, but the residents were very zealous in working to liquidate all its obligations. Great praise was given to the teachers and pupils for the zeal they showed in their labors.

In its earliest years the Academy employed two teachers and also used three of the advanced students to assist in some of the classes.<sup>1</sup>

Students were encouraged to attend from the far-outlying settlements, but the facilities for living and boarding in Oakley were not adequate. We see this fact conveyed to the people in the area by the local newspaper in 1905:

Oakley is the headquarters of the Cassia Stake. The stake presidency lives here. The Stake Tabernacle is here. The Stake Academy is here. It is the central place for all ecclesiastical organizations. As such it becomes the common meeting place of hundreds of people who come in on church business from one to ten times a year. It is supposed to be able to furnish accommodations for the visitors. As a matter of fact it is not able to do it.

Just now the deplorable lack of accommodations is very much in evidence. Three or four teachers and a few score of pupils have recently come to town with the intention of doing work at the academy. It has been no small matter to get these few honest souls located. It has in fact, been a very difficult matter. It has looked at times as if it would be an utter impossibility. There seem to be very few in Oakley that are disposed to the boarders. There are a great many people here that cannot take boarders, either on account of lack of room, or on account of not being able to obtain help in the home. Domestic service is a most difficult thing to obtain in Oakley.

The few who will take boarders, require it seems to us a rather stiff price. To be sure there is not very much money in student boarders at any figure that is asked in Oakley, but we are confident that there is enough to help an ordinary family out considerably, and that the yield is equal to that of many other kinds of labor in which other people are engaged. We have before us a dozen catalogues of prominent institutions of learning in Southern Idaho and Utah, and the average price for board is not over \$3.00 taking their own figures for it. The usual statement is "board can be had from \$2.50 to \$3.50 per week. Students often club together and reduce the cost to about \$2.00

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<sup>1</sup>Oakley Pioneer Days Booklet, July 24-25, 1961.

per week."

We cannot expect people to set good table board at \$2.50 per week. We think we can expect them to set board that is plenty good enough for pupils for \$3.00 or \$3.50 per week. Pupils should not be large eaters. They should not eat more than about one half as much as a man working in the fields. They should eat little meat. They should drink no stimulants. They should not eat pastry rich food. A plain simple diet is required. What we want now is good people that will take in our boys and girls from distant parts and give them healthful nourishing food at a reasonable price. Most of our pupils do not come from homes representing a great amount of capital; a large number come from comparatively poor homes. They are young men and women of good character who will form an adornment for our homes and will be an honor and a credit to our city. We want two hundred just such young people here this winter and we want accommodations for them. We want Oakley to be a school town; and an educational town; a clean town, with an atmosphere of purity and of refinement. To become such, some of our good people will have to open up their hearts and their homes. Will you do it? That's the question that confronts you.<sup>1</sup>

Cassia Academy functioned until after the spring of 1909, when it was decided to wait for a year until more suitable quarters could be arranged. Work was started, and by the fall of 1910 a new building was completed. The new building was constructed of brick, with steam heat and running water. It was also scientifically lighted and ventilated. The heating plant, bathrooms, and the gymnasium were located in the basement. The well-arranged and large gymnasium was appropriate for the physical training of the boys and girls who attended the school. It had a good track and was large enough to play basketball and all other indoor sports.

An auditorium capable of seating over three hundred people was located above the gymnasium. This was used for work in elocution and public speaking, and afforded a place for the students to give plays and other public entertainments, adding greatly to the social advantages of the school.

This new school had ten class rooms, a library, and a principal's room.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Eagle, September 14, 1905.

<sup>2</sup>The Burley Herald Bulletin (Golden Anniversary Edition), August 1955, p. 102.



The following is the announcement of the opening of the academy in 1911 and mentions the courses taught:

The Cassia Stake Academy will open its school year September 18, 1911. A strong faculty has been secured for the school year and prospects are more favorable for the coming winter than ever before. The faculty is made up of the following; Jos. Mills A. B. Principal, Theology and History, Zina Taylor, Matron, Domestic Arts. George C. Laney, B.S. Mathamatics and Manual Training; Marion A. Gudmunsen, M.A. English and German. Amos Epperson, Music and Preparatory. On account of some change in the selection of a teacher in the athletics department, the name will be given out later. The new members of the faculty come highly recommended as being proficient in their line of work. (sic)

Prof. Mills has visited every ward in the stake during the summer and has received many assurances from young people and parents that a good quota will be furnished from all parts of the country tributary to the school this year.

The school will offer the regular high school courses and in addition a missionary class will be opened in December to which young men and women may enter and get special instruction and training in religious topics, which of themselves furnish the only true foundation for permanent and continuous growth. The Church School offers all the advantages that State Schools supply, and besides a course in Theology which acquaints people with a knowledge of the past and future estate of the soul, a gift of itself worth more than all else that man can obtain.

Young people who are not members of the Church will not be required to take Theology unless they desire, but the need of such training is seen by professors in practically all lines of research because of the hope of life it holds out and stability it establishes in those so trained.

All students who enter the school are expected to work and will be made welcome by the faculty. Board and lodging can be had as reasonable as anywhere and students will find it advantageous to make arrangements for such before school opens, and as many as can should start at the commencement of the first semester.<sup>1</sup>

By the spring of 1920, it was reported in the community that the academy would close at the end of that school term, because of a lack of sufficient enrollment and maintenance funds.

A committee was organized in the community for the purpose of raising funds and to encourage the people of the community to support the committee in their plans to secure the continued operation of the academy.

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, August 18, 1911.



Figure 9. Second Cassia Academy Building, 1891



Figure 10. Third Cassia Academy Building, 1910

President Jack, of the stake presidency, was sent to Salt Lake to confer with the commissioner of education. President Jack carried with him a document signed by businessmen and individuals pledging \$5,000 for the maintenance of the academy during the school year of 1920-1921. The commissioner of education assured President Jack that the Church would be pleased to appropriate the rest of the funds needed.

By the spring of 1921, high-school facilities were offered by the state schools, which would have caused a duplication of secular studies; so Cassia Academy was closed. The building and grounds costing \$43,000 were deeded to the Oakley Independent High-School District for the nominal sum of \$15,000.

#### Oakley L.D.S. seminary

The Oakley seminary building was constructed at the cost of \$6,000 and was completed by the fall of 1926. This building provided for the religious instruction of the ninth through twelfth-grade students.

In 1932 and 1933, the Church offered a Junior Seminary Program for the seventh and eighth grade students. These classes were held in the church buildings adjacent to the Basin, Locust, and Oakley schools. Wilford Sagers taught these six classes once each week.<sup>1</sup>

The following article describes the enrollment at the seminary and mentions the names of some of its instructors:

The opening of the Oakley Seminary this year marks the tenth anniversary of the institution. It first opened in the autumn of 1926 under the directorship of George A. Smith, with an enrollment of 46, which increased to 100 the following year. In 1928, R. Golden May was appointed principal and the registration reached 102, from which came the first graduating class, in the Spring of 1929, consisting of five members. In 1931 Wesley P. Lloyd became principal and the enrollment was 105, increasing to 139 during the three years of his directorship. Under J. Wayne Moss, who came to the institution in 1934, the

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with Wilford Sagers, April 10, 1963.

registration increased to 155 last year.<sup>1</sup>

Boyd H. Ririe was the seminary teacher from 1936 to 1940; Clawson Richardson, from 1940 to 1942; Harold Larsen, from 1942 to 1943; and Wilford Sagers, from 1943 to 1962. Gail Ockey is presently the principal.

During the nineteen years Wilford Sagers was the principal and teacher, he achieved the highest average percentage of enrollment in the history of the entire seminary program, with a 99.2 percent of the L.D.S. students and a 98.1 percent of the non-member students enrolled.

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, August 28, 1936.

## CHAPTER VI

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PROBLEMS

Before Cassia County was formed, the Goose Creek country was part of Owyhee County, with the county seat at Silver City. This was two hundred and fifty miles distant by the nearest-traveled road, creating problems for Goose Creek settlers. For example, the Owyhee County assessors came over to Goose Creek Valley and assessed even the possessory land claims. This assessment was illegal, because only a very little filing for land and water had been done, and the settlers did not have legal title to the land. Yet they were assessed fully for the land they were on, while large herds of cattle in the area received little assessment. However, because of the inconvenience due to distance and means of transportation, litigation was not entered into and carried on.

Cassia County, Idaho, was created by an act of the territorial legislation in February of 1879. This new county included all the territory south of the Snake River from Devil Creek on the west to Raft River on the east.

Albion was designated as the temporary county seat by a special election in April of 1879, with Goose Creek district contending. J. Q. Shirley, J. E. Harrington, and R. A. Beecher, Sr., were members of this first temporary board of county commissioners. A special election, for a permanent organization and selection of a permanent county seat, was held on June 2, 1879.

At the organization of this new county were about a dozen settlers on Rock Creek and about the same number on Goose Creek and Trapper Creek. There were twelve votes cast at Rock Creek, and Oakley cast fourteen. Oakley's

votes came from Goose Creek, Basin, Trapper Creek, and Land Creek and vicinity.

There was little personal property in the first few years of the county's history. The first assessment roll was \$197,000, and from seven to nine hundred dollars was the total tax in those days. These taxes on the assessed evaluation were not collected very quickly, because the settlers had a struggle for existence in establishing themselves in the valley; and inasmuch as produce was the means of exchange, very little money was available for taxes.

The territory was under the jurisdiction of United States district judges, acting separately in defined districts. John T. Morgan of Oneida County was chief justice, and as district judge he held the first Cassia County court in the year 1880. James B. Hays succeeded Judge Morgan in 1885. Under these judges litigation started, and tax assessments were more equitably defined, enforced, and processed.<sup>1</sup>

William C. Martindale, the first presiding elder in Goose Creek Valley, was elected on the democratic ticket to go to the territorial legislature in 1882. While in this capacity, he worked to get territorial legislative support to promote the legality of taking water from the Snake River for purposes of irrigation. He presented this in a bill entitled "House Memorial Bill No. 9," on January 30, 1883. The bill was given the third reading necessary before a vote could be made, and it passed by a 13 to 9 vote. It then was referred to the territorial committee on mines and mining affairs and was sent to Congress, where it died. Mr. Martindale introduced another bill that would have provided women with the right to vote. This bill was defeated by a 7 to 15 count and then laid aside and not passed until 1896.

The campaign against polygamy affected the Oakley people and was started

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<sup>1</sup>Walgamott, op. cit., p. 308.

with the Edmunds Act of 1882. By the provisions of this act, polygamists were punished by disfranchisement and a fine of not more than \$500 and a maximum imprisonment of three years. Children of such unions were also considered illegitimate.

In the fall election of 1884 for the territorial legislative body, the balance of power was in the hands of the anti-Mormons and they decided they were going to disfranchise all Mormons because they supported polygamy. William C. Martindale was re-elected for the 1884 term and fought against this bill.

Fred T. Dubois, Idaho's famous anti-Mormon crusader led a crusade against the L.D.S. Church and was successful in getting the courts to back him to prosecute the members of the Church practising polygamy. Deputies were employed and given good pay to search out these families and bring them to the courts for punishment.

H. W. Smith a young lawyer from Blackfoot, Idaho drafted Idaho's Election Test Oath, and it passed the legislature. The courts upheld the measure and it became a part of Idaho's constitution. The following is the oath held legal by the courts:

No person is permitted to vote, serve as a juror, or hold any civil office who is a bigamist, or polygamist, or who, in any manner, teaches, advises, counsels, aids or encourages any person to enter into polygamy or who is a member of, or contributes to the support, aid, or encouragement of any order which teaches polygamy or which teaches or advises that the laws of this State, prescribing the rules of civil conduct are not the supreme law of the state.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of the above test oath, the members of the Church in Cassia County holding county offices were released from their offices as related in the following quotation:

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<sup>1</sup>M. D. Beal, A History of Southeastern Idaho, (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1942), p. 305.

A short time ago our county commissioners were ousted from their office, two of them at least, because they wouldn't swear to a disgraceful kind of an oath, and for the same cause our precinct officers have been removed from office. The governor appointed the officers to fill the vacant places in the county board and they have appointed the successors to our precinct officers. A nice mess, that, for a free community to get into. The question is to figure in the courts now in session at Albion, and possibly may receive a judicial acquiescence or the reverse.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the members of the Church went to the voting places on election days and presented their ballots for voting. When this was done, the election judges were taken by surprise and decided to test the law. They passed some of the applicants who subscribed to the elector's oath and stated that they had withdrawn from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Some of the members stated that they would withdraw from the Church, vote, and then the next day claim membership. Because of this loophole, the election judges added to the oath the statement that they had withdrawn from the Church and would not at any time in the future reunite with the Mormon Church. This caused such denunciations that it was modified to the following:

I do solemnly swear that I am not a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and swear to forever uphold the constitution and laws of the United States the teaching of any sect to the contrary notwithstanding, so help me God.<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. Marshals hired by the government to search out polygamous families made a number of raids on Oakley. On several occasions the marshals were led by a man who had been in Oakley a few years before, selling fruit trees, and he had stayed long enough to find out about the family relationships. These visits caused a lot of concern and worry to those living in polygamous relationships. The following is an account of a visit

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<sup>1</sup>Stake Historical Record, op. cit., 1888.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



of the marshals to Oakley:

The people of this place were favored with a call from the "deputies" yesterday morning at break of day. Searching houses in which were only women and children, and avoiding those in which they saw men, examining the contents of cellars, granaries, etc. and plying children on the street with the questions regarding family relations, were the chief features of their visit. One lady, under whose bed they were peering, asked to see the papers authorizing them to search private houses, and disturb the inmates at that untimely hour. The answer was: "We have them but do not show them."

As they wended their crest fallen way in the direction from which they came, they stopped at one house and apologized for their rudeness on their former visit. Their chagrined appearance is accounted for by the fact that they were as alone on their return, as when they came.

What these fellows wanted of the men they inquired for, the people did not learn, neither did they learn what was the office or calling of these strange individuals, but from their nervousness, lack of courtesy, piratical methods and general imbecility of manner, they were at once set down as U.S. Deputy Marshals. This is the beginning here in this county, but the end knoweth no man. Reports say there are three of these prowlers encamped in the suburbs where they intend to sally forth from time to time and seize their victims as opportunity offers.<sup>1</sup>

At times these deputies would come into the Latter-day settlements disguised both in dress and in the type of transportation, because the people were on the look-out for strange men on horses. Some of the polygamous family heads were barely able to escape, even though they had horses close by in case of an emergency. The following is an example of this:

We have had a visit lately from an alleged U.S. Deputy Marshal, who rode in a buggy, and was after alleged polygamists, and thought he had found one, who, however, didn't want to be found; so he ran for his horse that stood staked in the field at the back of the house, and while running was shot at by the alleged deputy three times, but didn't get hit, nor did he stop, for he rode for fences and washouts or anything that might impede the progress of his pursuer in the buggy.

The family the man shot at was thoroughly alarmed, as may be judged, but I hear of no serious results following. In another case, however a lady very nearly lost her life through alarm at the intelligence conveyed to her that her husband would be arrested if found. Her condition was very delicate and the shock nearly proved fatal though help happened along at the right time, and she is now doing as well as can be expected.

The alleged deputy is an old residenter, (sic) who had many kindnesses shown to him in the past by the people he appears to have

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<sup>1</sup>Deseret Evening News, August 31, 1885.

elected to persecute.<sup>1</sup>

After the Mormons were disfranchised, the county suffered financially. The appointee positions of the county, formerly held by members of the Mormon Church, were given to individuals appointed by the governor. The Mormons contested the appointments, and the appointees hired lawyers to defend their case, which they did successfully. These newly appointed county officers paid the attorneys from funds in the county treasury. The indebtedness of the county was increased about \$50,000.<sup>2</sup>

In 1890, Wilford Woodruff issued the official statement of the Church, called the Manifesto, which released the membership of the Church from the practice of polygamy.

Previous to 1896, the people elected a constable to maintain the peace, and this constituted the organized political village government during the first few years of Oakley's history.

As settlers by the hundreds had moved into Oakley and the legislature had granted the Saints once again their rights as free citizens, a village-governing body was organized in 1896. John L. Smith was the mayor and A. F. O. Nielson, the clerk, with George Craner, Don P. Albie, O. P. Bates and John J. Millard members of the village board. The term of office was set at three years.

In the beginning years of this village government an ordinance was passed establishing a wage for some of the village offices. These wages were to be paid quarterly and were as follows: Village Clerk \$40; Village Treasurer \$1; Village Attorney \$200; Village Marshall (in addition to fees) \$60. However, the majority of the village boards, including the present

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., October 13, 1885.

<sup>2</sup>The Times (Albion, Idaho), June, 1888.

one, have received no compensation for their services, not even expense money for meetings they are required to attend.<sup>1</sup>

The following men have served as mayors of Oakley:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| John L. Smith  | 1898 to 1904                                     |
| S. P. Worthington                                      | 1904 to 1909                                     |
| John O. Lowe   | 1909 to 1913                                     |
| (The minutes did not give the names from 1913 to 1927) |  |
| William R. Gray  | Jan. 4, 1927 to May 11, 1929                     |
| S. P. Worthington                                      | May 11, 1929 to October 13, 1931                 |
| C. B. Payton   | Oct. 13, 1931 to May 3, 1932                     |
| C. H. McMurray   | May 3, 1932 to January 3, 1933                   |
| William C. Hardy                                       | January 3, 1933 to December, 1933                |
| Jared A. Mercer  | Dec. 1933 to Sept. 1939                          |
| C. B. Payton   | Sept. 1939 to July 1940                          |
| W. J. Southworth                                       | July 1940 to May 1, 1945                         |
| W. B. Whiteley   | May 1, 1945 to April 1949                        |
| Clarence Matthews                                      | April 1949 to Feb. 5, 1957                       |
| J. N. Dayley   | Feb. 5, 1957 to March 3, 1959                    |
| Glen Elison  | March 3, 1959 to the present (1963) <sup>2</sup> |

The present board consists of Glen Elison (Chairman), Don Clark, Lawrence Elliott, Vern Peterson, and Raddon Layton.

The following are other ordinances passed in the Oakley Village in the early 1900's:

- Ordinance 8. Drunkedness, \$50 fine.  
Reckless driving, \$100 fine.  
Fighting, \$50 fine.  
Offensive language, \$100 fine.
- Ordinance 12. Prohibit cigarettes, liquor to be sold to those under 21 years of age. \$50 fine plus costs.
- Ordinance 17. Prohibit minors admission in public billiard and pool halls. \$100 fine.
- Ordinance 25. No baseball in limits of village on Sunday. \$5 to \$100 fine, plus costs and if default, imprisoned in village jail at hard labor at \$1.50 for every day so confined until paid.
- Ordinance 28. Road Poll Tax. All able bodies 21 to 50 in age are to work two days or pay \$4 to street, alleys and parks.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Oakley Village and Town Minutes, 1896-1963, on file at the Village Office.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Oakley Village Ordinance Book, on file at the Oakley Village Office.

Business development

Before the Latter-day Saints settled in the Goose Creek Valley, there were two stores in the area. One was owned by a Mr. Thatcher and the other by J. F. Tatro. Their supplies were brought by teams from Kelton, Utah.

Hyrum Wells started a store in his home in the Basin in the beginning of the Latter-day Saint settlement at that place, and soon George Ward also opened a store there. That was soon taken over by John Fairchilds.

In 1880, George S. Grant established a store in Oakley on the present site of the Oakley High School. This store was operated by him for several years until he was accidentally killed in a rabbit drive. The business was then sold to several individuals and became the Oakley Cooperative Mercantile Association, a branch of the Z.C.M.I. in Salt Lake. This cooperative store began its business in 1883. Even after the addition of an additional building to the side of the former Grant Store, it proved inadequate; so they built a two-story building which still stands and presently houses the Oakley Mercantile.

During some of the years in Oakley's history, the newspapers gave no indication of noteworthy events that could be included in this history; so those years, of necessity, will be omitted.

As the number of settlers increased in the area, the demand for various places of business increased; and by 1885, Oakley had two general merchandise stores, two blacksmith shops, two saloons, a post office, and three public schools. By the year of 1893, there were added another store, one hotel, one millinery shop, one dressmaker shop, two photographers, one paint shop, two shoemakers, one book and music store, and one grist mill with a capacity of fifty barrels a day.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Newell Dayley, March 12, 1963.

By 1905, Oakley had added a dancing hall, another general merchandise store, two drug stores, a furniture store, four implement houses, a state bank, a harness shop, two more blacksmith shops, a hotel, a barber shop, a tin shop, a meat market, two livery stables, a jewelry store, a photograph gallery, an opera house, three physicians, two music teachers, two attorneys, and a dentist. By this year, Oakley's population had grown to 2,000 people.<sup>1</sup>

In the year 1910, local option prohibiting the sale of liquor except by a doctor's prescription at a drug store, was voted in by a large majority. This lasted until national prohibition in 1918.

There was an amusing reference to this local option law in connection with an article on a flood in the newspaper of March 4, 1910:

A tremendous flood struck Oakley on the last day of February. Never before in the history of Oakley was the town so flooded as on that day. The streets in the town and those in the country around were guttered out with some of them left impassable after the high water had run down. It will take many thousands of dollars to put the roads in as good shape as they were before. Many bridges were swept away which will have to be replaced with new ones or the old ones put back.

Many cellars were filled up and much damage done in that way. The Oakley Coop. store had a great quantity of goods in the cellar, amounting to several thousand dollars worth. Over one thousand dollars worth of tea and coffee was stacked away in the cellar when it filled up with water. A good many of the people in the country especially along Goose Creek had to move out of their houses until the flood was over. Oakley was a wet town on the last day of February notwithstanding there was local option law in force.<sup>2</sup>

By 1911, the Oakley Dam was under construction, and many additional people moved into Oakley to help with its construction. Others moved in to purchase land that would soon be under irrigation.

Accompanying this rapid expansion in population and businesses were the additions of the utilities to Oakley's community. The following is an

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., December 28, 1905.

<sup>2</sup>The Oakley Herald, March 4, 1910.

announcement of the telephone company coming to Oakley:

Construction work on the Oakley plant of the Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone Company is nearing completion, and more than 100 phones are already in use in the city. Much credit is due Mr. Morris J. LeeHy for the vigorous manner in which he has prosecuted the work.<sup>1</sup>

A group of men decided to pipe the warm water from Warm Spring, located a few miles south of Oakley, to a park north of the village and have a swimming pool in connection with the Light Air Park that had been built. These promoters felt that a swimming pool, skating rink-dance hall, ball park, and a horse-racing rink would, together, be a successful enterprise. By the time the water arrived in Oakley it was cold. Some thought that the water could be used for household purposes, and a few experiments were made which justified this idea. This group of men formed the Oakley Water Company and, having a demand for the water, laid an 8-inch pipe where formerly 2-inch pipes carried the stream from Warm Creek. The following is an article describing the first homes to have bathroom facilities with warm and cold-running water:

That people in Oakley are alive to the value of improved modern methods, is evidenced by the large number of homes that have in them complete hot and cold water systems, bath rooms, closet, kitchen sinks and heating plants. Most of these have been installed during the past summer.

Bathrooms complete have been installed by the Oakley Hdw. Co. in the homes of Wm. R. Gray, Thos. H. Clark, K. McMurray, James Port, H. C. Haight, E. B. Mecham, C. G. Elison and S. P. Worthington. Dr. Nielson has a complete system of underground water pressure. Jos. Y. Haight, hot and cold water system and heating plant and W. T. Jack is having 2 bath rooms installed, which is being completed.

Last year Chas. L. Haight, Dr. E. P. Oldham, and Mrs. A. C. Worthington had similar additions to their homes which totals a good number of up to date residences in this place.<sup>2</sup>

The Commercial Club, a service unit of organized businessmen, promoted the growth and development of this community. This organization has come

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., February 10, 1911.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., December 15, 1911.

and gone several times, and its functions now are taken care of by the Chamber of Commerce. The following is a sample of the way the organization pushed for community improvements:

Another improvement that decidedly improves, and that should have the support of every citizen is installing of an electric lighting system. Oakley is the only town of its size in the entire state that has not an electric light plant, and the town of its size that needs one most. Therefore, let every good citizen put his shoulder to the wheel and push! That Oakley, in addition to her dandy railway and telephone systems, may have another brother system, in a reliable and up to date lighting system that shall be practically a home institution and will be consonant with her growing importance. Such a plant is now the one thing needed to place Oakley on its proper footing, and our solid and substantial citizens should call a meeting, get together and subscribe for enough of the stock to guarantee that Oakley's needs shall be the care of Oakley's people.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of 1911, another bank had been added, as had another furniture store, two lumber yards, one rooming house, two restaurants, one museum, two moving-picture houses, a real estate firm, four coal dealers, a roller mill, a cold-storage butcher shop, a tailor shop, a dry goods store, an electric supply house, a hardware store, a U.S. Forest Office, a Bell Telephone Exchange, and two railroads.<sup>2</sup>

During the year 1911, there was a fire at the Light Air Park. This fire destroyed the skating rink and dance hall.

During the summer of 1912, the Great Shoshone and Twin Falls Water Power Company extended their electric light lines into Oakley and were furnishing power to numerous places. The arrival of electricity meant much to this community and provided opportunity to develop other industries in an efficient manner.

By the summer of 1912, every public building in Oakley was served with cement sidewalks, and the whole community totaled seven miles of cement walks.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., February 10, 1911.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., December 22, 1911.

The first newspaper in Oakley, called The Oakley Star, was published for the first time on May 11, 1893, and was edited by A. L. Davidson. A weekly paper, it was published under this name until 1896, when W. A. Davidson, who had recently sold his newspaper in Rexburg, came to Oakley and took over this one, changing it to The Oakley Sun. This publication started on January 30, 1896, with W. A. Davidson and D. P. Albee being the owners. They published the following article in announcing their paper:

The proprietors of the Sun have established it without asking aid of any kind from any person. Therefore we can be independent. We can advocate any and all measures that we think are for the public good or denounce those that we think are not, without having to ask some one else whether it would be policy for us to do so. We trust that we shall publish a clean bright newsy paper, that the residents of Oakley and of Cassia County will feel a just pride in sustaining, both by their subscriptions and by their advertising patronage.

Being an independent paper our columns will at all times be open to the discussion of political and other topics of general interest. We solicit short articles from those who wish to contribute, only demanding that they avoid personalities; we however not holding ourselves responsible for any ideas advanced, except those appearing in our editorial columns.<sup>1</sup>

The Oakley Sun was changed to The Oakley Eagle in 1901, and was known by this name until the fall of 1908, when it was changed to The Oakley Herald. The paper was published under this name under the ownership of several different men during the ensuing years between 1908 and 1920. In 1920, it was purchased by Charles Brown, an ex-minister, who had come to Oakley in about 1915. Oakley had always been predominantly Latter-day Saint, but with the construction of the Oakley Dam, many non-members had come to work; and by 1915, Union Church services were being held in a local building. It was the hope of those in charge to unify all the religious denominations into a Union Church. Charles Brown served as its minister for a while. The organization functioned for a short time and then stopped

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, July 23, 1953, (Reprints of articles from Oakley Sun).



holding services in Oakley. It was then that Mr. Brown became owner and editor of The Oakley Herald. He edited it for the next forty years. Publication stopped when he died in 1961 and has not been resumed since that time. Mr. Brown was a very efficient promoter of the Oakley area, and the townspeople have missed both him and his newspaper.

During 1918 when the flu plague was rampant throughout the world, the following article was published in the local newspaper:

No one is permitted to leave the precincts of Oakley, Basin, Boulder, Locust, Marion, Churchill, Hazel, Kenyon, and Moulton without permits from the Board of Health. Anybody who enters these districts from the outside, will be quarantined five days at their own expense. Violations of this order are to be punished by fine or imprisonment or both.<sup>1</sup>

During World War I, the people of Oakley supported the war effort enthusiastically with bond drives and contributions. W. E. Eller<sup>b</sup>ly and Wilford Sagers headed the bond drives. People contributed various items, and auction sales were held. One rooster sold for \$63.<sup>2</sup>

In 1923, fire invaded the business block of Oakley, and the following businesses were burned out: Speckman's Hardware; Kick's Central Market; L.D. Cowan building, rooming house, bakery; Nielson and Lowe building; Clark Lee's restaurant, rooming house, pressing shop.<sup>3</sup>

Very few of these business houses were rebuilt, because of the decline in population after the completion of the dam project. After the reservoir was completed, the project or the land area to be irrigated with reservoir water was cut down to one-half of its original size, and many people moved away. The population increased slightly during the operation of the Vipont

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., December 29, 1918.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from Wilford Sagers, May 6, 1963.

<sup>3</sup>The Oakley Herald, January 26, 1923.

Mine, but it declined again after the closing of the mines. The population had dropped from well over 2000 in the booming years to 1000 by 1927.

### Local industries

Saw and flour mill. James Bostetter built a sawmill in the Basin and ran it for about three years, then sold it to Cooper and McGavin. He then moved up the south fork of Land Canyon and put in a shingle mill. He sold lumber for sluice boxes and cabins to miners located along the Snake River. As soon as the available lumber was cut out of this area, the steam sawmill was hauled by ox teams to Hailey.<sup>1</sup> The present Bostetter Ranger Station and picnic area were named after Mr. Bostetter.

In 1884, the Tuttle family moved to Oakley, where they built the first flour and planing mill in the Goose Creek Valley. The following article tells us of this mill:

In 1884 he moved to Oakley, this state, where he built a sawmill, to which he added a small chopping mill. Two years were then consued in erecting and equipping a flour mill of the buhrstone type, which was afterword changed to the roller system.

The machinery for the above Tuttle enterprise was freighted by wagon trains from Kelton, Utah. The granite rock for the grinders was first obtained in Utah and Vermont; but under the constant revolving of the grinding wheel they failed to hold up, and consequently the granite had to be imported from France.

A problem developed when the Goose Creek could not furnish enough water to run the three mills; so the planning and saw mills were abandoned, leaving only the flour mill in operation in 1895. At this time the mill was changed from the burr-type mill to the roller type.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., February 15, 1929.

<sup>2</sup>Progressive Men of Idaho, (Chicago: Bowen and Company, 1904), p. 892.

People came from as far away as Grouse Creek, Utah, and Rock Creek, Idaho, with wagon loads of grain to be ground into their winter supply of flour. The Wood River country also received a supply of flour through wagon train loads shipped to that area. This mill was operated by the Tuttle family until 1903, when John Southworth purchased the property. In 1910, it was sold to the Ferris-Kessel Construction Company, which was building the reservoir. This company changed it to an electric-power system.<sup>1</sup>

After Mr. Southworth sold his holdings on the Goose Creek, he purchased land in Oakley adjoining the Oregon Short Line Railroad and built a flour mill and elevator. This firm was called the Oakley Milling and Elevator Company and did general milling work, also putting up cereals and other lines connected with that business. This mill was put into operation September 1, 1912, and cost approximately \$12,000.<sup>2</sup> It is still in operation.

Marble quarry. In 1885, a marble quarry was opened in the Basin by a Mr. Roberts, about nine miles east of Oakley. At first it was thought that the marble was the best-known in America. The stone was a clear white and was capable of the finest polish. The supply was not very extensive and has proved through the years to be a soft marble.<sup>3</sup> There are approximately 100 tombstones in the Oakley Cemetary today made from this marble quarried by Mr. Roberts; the tombstones are eroding rapidly and the writing is barely visible.<sup>4</sup>

In 1931, another marble claim was worked by a Mr. Vey of Wisconsin. He prepared a carload for shipment, but this has never developed into a

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with Newell Dayley.

<sup>2</sup>The Oakley Herald, December 8, 1911.

<sup>3</sup>Deseret Evening News, October 13, 1885.

<sup>4</sup>Interview with Newell Dayley, Sexton of Oakley Cemetary.

profitable enterprise.

Coal mining. In the 1890's, Jim Mabey and Edward Barrett, prospected for coal up Goose Creek and Trapper Creek and located several beds of coal some 20 miles south of Oakley. The beds they located were all of a poor quality. They averaged about 15 percent moisture and about 30 percent ash but were high in gas content. When this was reported, others went prospecting and found other veins of about the same content. A fair vein of coal was located a few miles above the Phil Shaw Ranch on Trapper Creek, and this mine furnished the Normal School at Albion, the Oakley Coop., Cassia Academy, and the People's Union in Oakley with coal until the railroads came into Oakley and brought better coal. People came from Twin Falls and other areas for coal, and it was sold for \$1 a load. One of these beds was worked by eight men in two shifts. They ran a tunnel about 100 feet and then decided to go nearer the foot of the mountain and sink a shaft. They sank a shaft a hundred feet and went through several beds of very clean lignite. The veins were very thin but almost free from ash.<sup>1</sup>

By 1906, there were two well-established veins of coal, each being five feet thick at the outcropping; and the coal was said to be superior to that of the Rock Springs and Kemmerer mines. This coal was selling readily for \$2 a ton at the mines and \$8 at Oakley. Some were planning on making this coal available to Burley, Minidoka, and other regions; but the plans never materialized, for the railroads, in 1910, made better coal available. The coal fields of Oakley were never used after the railroads came to Oakley.<sup>2</sup>

In 1913, a bulletin was sent to Oakley from the Geological Survey, dealing with the coal and lignite deposits of Cassia County. It reported

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, March 3, 1933.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., March 1, 1906.

that there were 156 square miles of lignite fields in the county and classified them as very dirty, impure, and with a high percentage of water and earthy matter.<sup>1</sup>

In 1933, T. F. Shaw reported that he saw smoke coming from the mouth of one of the mines up Trapper Creek and, upon investigation, found the mine on fire.

Cheese factory. A cheese factory was started in Oakley in 1918. At this factory an excellent grade of cheese was produced, and a ready market was found for the product. In 1918, the factory was paying \$1200 per month for milk and \$375 for labor. This company was called the Diamond R. Factory.

The outstanding quality of the Oakley Cheese made at this factory is evidenced by a letter received by the manager, R. M. Reed. This letter was received from the Purity Chain Stores, LTd., San Francisco, California. The general manager stated that he could use 150 cases of their triplet cheese per week.

Mr. Reed couldn't fill the orders from near-by towns. The demand for cheese from the Oakley factory exceeded the supply many times.<sup>2</sup>

When a better market for milk in neighboring towns became available, this factory was forced to close down.

Precious metal mining. The Vipont Mine was located about 20 miles south of Oakley and was actually in the state of Utah, but due to the existing roads, minerals were transported down the Birch Creek road to the railroad. This mine affected Oakley's population and business growth, as there were no Utah settlements close and accessible.

The Vipont Mine had been worked in the 1880's and periodically since

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., October 3, 1913.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., September 25, 1931.

then. It has yielded some profits to the miners from time to time. In 1918, the property was purchased by Mr. C. A. Phillips of Spokane, Washington, a prominent mining man.

The mine consisted at this time of over six thousand feet of underground workings. There was sufficient ore blocked out according to the engineers to run a "one hundred-ton-a-day" mill from six to ten years. The report from the mine was that the silver was running from 500 to 1000 ounces of silver to the ton. Stocks in this company were offered for sale at 30 cents a share for the purpose of completing the midway tunnel.<sup>1</sup>

The following article mentions the progress at the mine by the winter of 1918:

One car load of gold and silver ore has been shipped from the Vipont to smelters at Salt Lake. This makes the third car this autumn.

A boarding house and an office building have been erected. All necessary supplies have been brought in for the winter. The company plans to keep sixteen men employed through the cold weather, and to add to the force next spring.

Preparations are being made to build a concentrating mill of 150 tons capacity next spring. A power line will be taken up from Oakley and a good wagon road built on the west slope of the mountain.

The Vipont promises to be one of the leading mines of Idaho.<sup>2</sup>

By 1920, three shifts a day were working at the Vipont Mine. Another 100-horsepower Fairbanks Morse Engine was being installed that would help eliminate some of the shortage of power.<sup>3</sup>

By the summer of 1920, the Vipont Mill was treating an average of 130 tons of ore a day, with three thousand dollars worth of concentrates per day being shipped. This mine was producing over a million dollars a year.

In the early spring of 1921, some 50 men worked for about two months

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., July 15, 1918.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., December 13, 1918.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., January 2, 1920.

to place power poles from Oakley to the Vipont mine, some 21 miles.<sup>1</sup>

The greatest number of people living at the site of the Vipont mine was approximately 500 people.

During the intensive operation of the Vipont Mine, millions of dollars of ore were hauled over the Birch Creek Road. This road had been used many years earlier for the stage-line road, and through the years not much improvement had been made. During the operation of the mines the road was in poor shape; and the company, on many occasions, had to stack shipments at the mine until rainy seasons were over, so that the ore could be shipped without getting the rigs bogged down on the road.

When the price of silver dropped from \$1.00 to 75¢ an ounce, no profit could be made and the mine closed. The last load of silver was hauled out in 1922. Oakley's population declined again. Since that time the mine has been worked by different people, and even today there is some mining activity near there in the Skoro mine.

The following are precious metal mines that were operated at one time or another in the Oakley area: the Little Jewell Mine, 9 miles east of Oakley, which contained 14 mining claims; the Young America Mine, 5 miles north of the Little Jewell, with 4 mining claims; Skoro Mine adjacent to the Vipont mine; and Boulder mine, 12 miles to the north of Oakley.

The following is a brief history of the Idaho Silver Mine:

The Idaho Silver is a good example of what inducements the mining industry has to offer in the vicinity of Oakley. This mine was first opened between 1900 and 1903 by a group of Oakley men. The tunnel was driven in about 300 feet, and a shaft, sunk from the tunnel level at a point from 50-100 feet from the face of the tunnel, reached a depth of about 100 feet. High values of silver were found in the shaft all the way down. The claims were reached near the bottom, where, it is asserted by some who were connected with the enterprise, the ore showed the almost incredible figure of 2000 ounces of silver to the ton.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., January 21, 1921.

Those back of the project were good men, but due to lack of proper organization, work was discontinued in 1903. Years later Bill Garvin took up the claims. To clear out the old tunnel was more difficult than to make a new one, but he set out to find the old shaft. On August 1, 1920, the Idaho Silver Mining Company was incorporated, with Bill Garvin, President, John Garvin, Vice President, Walter Southworth secretary and treasurer.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the lack of capital this mining company dissolved their partnership.

Oil drilling. The West Pearl Oil and Gas Company designated Oakley as a potentially rich oil field, and by January of 1920 this company had their rig some twelve miles south of Oakley drilling for oil. They drilled thirty feet the first day. D. P. Carpenter, who was in charge of the operation, stated his belief that they would strike oil within one to four months. This well, if successful, was to be the first one in the state of Idaho. Mr. Carpenter was planning to sink a second well in the near future and stated that they would see a big herd of wells in the Oakley district. This machinery on the JD Ranch was of the highest grade.<sup>2</sup>

By the last of February, the depth of the well was 800 feet; and by the last of May, the following article was published:

Oakley already has an oil well, not a geyser, but one probable capacity of producing the precious liquor in paying quantities. The well is down 1400 feet, and the drillers are still at work, determined to secure a larger flow of oil.

Excitement reigned in Oakley Monday when the report spread that a large flow of oil had been struck on the JD Ranch, 12 miles south of Oakley. The rumor spread to Burley, Twin Falls, Gooding, and other places. Scores of autos, filled with men eager to look at the first oil well in Idaho went up the Goose Creek Road. But most of the would be spectators had to take their look from a safe distance, as they were confronted with "No Trespassing" signs.

The well has reached a depth of 1400 feet. The present equipment is sufficient for going 4000. However it is not expected that it will be necessary to go so far.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., November 12, 1920.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., January 23, 1920.



Twelve additional inches of water were struck at a depth of 1200 feet. There seems to be no limit to the supply of water underground.

Reliable parties report that when the last flow of oil was encountered, oil could be seen floating 2000 feet down Goose Creek.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as a sign of oil had been found, oil men were busy leasing lands both south-east and south-west of Oakley, and by the middle of July of 1920, another test well was started by the same company.

The drilling for oil by this company extended over the period of a number of years, but only small traces of oil were found. This was a very disappointing venture, because the mountain formation and strata suggested a producing oil field; but after all the work and anticipation, the drilling stopped. Many thousands of dollars were lost in this venture.

#### Transportation

The transportation during the early settlement of Oakley was team and wagon. This means of transportation was very time-consuming and tiresome and required much preparation. Mary Jane Gorringer Tolman, an early pioneer of Oakley, wrote in her biography of the journeys her family had taken from Oakley to Logan and other parts of Utah. She described a journey to Logan to do temple work at the request of her father-in-law. They left on May 1, 1887, with their five children, her mother, her husband's mother, and some of his brothers and their families. They traveled one week to get there, worked in the temple two weeks, and took one week to come home, arriving on June 1, 1887.

In the fall of 1891, Mrs. Tolman's mother wrote and wanted to come out to Oakley for the winter. Mrs. Tolman talked it over with her husband, and he said he thought it would be all right for her to go for her mother. A covered wagon was made ready, and her son William, who was only eleven years

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., May 28, 1920.

old, a baby one year old, and she herself left on October 28. Her brother was supposed to be in Utah and was to come back with them. She started on her journey, and her brother, who had found a way to come to Oakley, met them on the way and drove the team into Utah. Mrs. Tolman stated that she had made several journeys like this, which usually took about one month for travel and visiting.<sup>1</sup>

Oakley had transportation lines connecting with Minidoka, when the Union Pacific ran a line through there to the West Coast. Minidoka was 45 miles northeast of Oakley, and an 1898 newspaper advertised the stage line that left Minidoka at 7 A.M. and arrived in Albion at 2 P.M. There was also a daily stage from Oakley to Albion, leaving Oakley at 8 A.M. and leaving Albion back for Oakley at 1 P.M. The fare from Oakley to Albion was \$1.50 or \$2.50 round trip.<sup>2</sup>

In 1905, after Burley had received a railroad line, a stage left Burley at 2 P.M. and arrived in Oakley around 6 P.M.

The following is the announcement of the first motor car to take over the old stage line from Oakley to Burley:

At a meeting of the promoters of the Oakley and Burley Auto Car Company held February 16, in the parlor of the Burley Hotel satisfactory arrangements were made to stock an auto line of first class machines between Oakley and Burley, and if business will justify a complete Auto Livery Barn will be stocked by the company. The stock necessary to inaugurate this new enterprise was taken up at the first meeting. Among the promoters at the meeting were Ben. Critchlow, of Ogden, B. E. Barr of Burley, J. J. Millard, H. F. Wells of Oakley. The first machine will be an 18 horse power surrey type and will be on the Burley and Oakley Road on March the 15, 1905. A. J. Henrod has the contract to put the road in condition for auto travel.<sup>3</sup>

The Idaho Southern Railroad had a line between Burley and Twin Falls

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., (1947 Cassia Stake Number).

<sup>2</sup>The Oakley Sun, November 3, 1898.

<sup>3</sup>The Oakley Eagle, February 22, 1906.

and decided to run a line from Milner straight south to Oakley. This line was completed on February 10, 1910. This linked Oakley by rail with the rest of the world and proved a real asset to the building of the dam and the transporting of sheep, cattle and produce. This line ran tracks to Oakley east of the canal that is west of the present Oakley High School. This railroad went out of business after a few years, because of the convenience of the newer and more complete Oregon Short Line facilities. This railroad company completed a line from Burley to Oakley on May 26, 1911. The new company provided a very convenient depot, stockyards, side tracks, and other conveniences given to larger towns. This railroad is still in use today (1963) and makes runs when necessary to transport beets and other items for the benefit of the people of Oakley.

#### Mail routes

The first mail into the Goose Creek Valley came by way of the pony and stage express that entered the valley on the Birch Creek road from Kelton, Utah, beginning in 1869.

In 1878, this route was changed to the Marsh Basin Cut-off (Albion), and Frank Riblett was the postmaster until 1880.

In the spring of 1880, Enoch R. Dayley became the postmaster in Cassia County, with the main office in Oakley. A man was sent to Albion for the mail each day; and so it was possible to dispatch mail to Albion and get an answer back the same day. Enoch Dayley was succeeded by his daughter, Miss Genettee I. Dayley; after her, by P. E. Dayley; and still later, by John H. Fairchild.

The mail came to Oakley by way of Albion until 1906, when Burley was connected with the railroad. Thereafter, Oakley received its mail by way of Burley.<sup>1</sup>

### Culture and recreation

Pioneers enjoyed getting together in a spirit of good fellowship. They needed something to take their minds off their difficult labors, and a dance or a dramatic presentation took away the loneliness and added variety to their daily routine.

In the early days of the settlement, candles served as lights for the dances; and during the summers they had many dances and parties in their log cabins. The following article describes the types of music used and dances held in the early settlement:

Our first violinist was Martin Keplinger. He was good and when he wanted a rest he would get someone to play a hornpipe. He would give us a step dance and he was pretty hard to beat. If it was cold weather, he would dance in his felt boots. Sometimes Uncle Will Marcus would play the Arkansas Traveler for him. Then we had Heber K. McBride and others that played with him--James Port, William Dahlquist. Orin Bates was another violinist. Then came Eli M. Lee; M. M. Fairchild and his orchestra.

The dances of the days were quadrilles, waltzes, lancers, American, national. The prompter gave the calls for the different kinds of music. The fancy dances of those days were the minuet, French 4 and other very beautiful dances. There were no fox trots or two-steps, or the Charleston (and lo and behold! they still come!) We had 30 minutes intermission at 12 o'clock and danced until 3 or 4, but we learned better and found out we could get all the recreation we wanted by 12 or 12:30 o'clock.

Some fine concerts were given by the Mutuals--consisting of choruses, readings, quartets, step dances and other things that made enjoyment for the people in those early days. We were compelled to make our own amusements in the early settlement of the valley; every person that could came out, old and young. David Walker and H. H. Severe were two of the other musicians who played for various occasions.<sup>2</sup>

In the winter of 1883, a dramatic organization was formed, consisting

<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, October 18, 1929, March 12, 1937, June 25, 1959.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., (1946 Cassia Stake Number).

of those who enjoyed drama. This organization, enthusiastically welcomed by the people, who were starving for a variety of entertainment, was under the supervision of William C. Martindale; and its members were C. W. Bailey, John J. Millard, Sr., Joseph R. Rice, John Burnette, Horton D. Haight, Jr., H. D. Clark, Orson P. Bates, Urilda McBride, Mary Haight, and others who were added later as necessity required.<sup>1</sup>

At Christmas time in December of 1883, the first play ever presented in Oakley was given. This was a comedy entitled "Rough Diamond," with the following cast of characters: the Rich Uncle, Hyrum D. Clark; Cousin Joe, C. W. Bailey; Margery, Urilda McBride; Lady and Lord Plato, Lenorah Severe and John J. Millard. The old log church was packed to its capacity with members and non-members of the Church. The stage curtain was a wagon cover, and the furniture, a table and a few chairs. The evening closed with a dance.

In the fall of 1884, they started to get out logs to build a large hall for a place to be used as a church and for all recreations. This building had a large stage and a hall for dancing and other amusements and was completed in 1885. The following is a list of some of their drama presentations: "Gun Maker of Moscow," "The Charcoal Burner," "The Rose of Elric Val," and "The Husband of an Hour."

The plays put on by this organization were one of the big attractions for Oakley in those early days, and from the proceeds of the plays presented, a large payment on an organ for church purposes was made. A six-piece orchestra accompanied this dramatic group and added variety and entertainment that contributed to their success.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., July 26, 1935.

In 1885, the Oakley Brass Band was organized with twenty members. It was under the leadership of Henry Parkinson and James Port, two prominent members of a similar organization in Grantsville, Utah, who had come to Oakley. This organization became very successful in giving top entertainment, and towns in the surrounding area asked for their services. On the fourth and twenty-fourth of July, the residents of Oakley could expect to be awakened by the strains of "The Star Spangled Banner," "Red, White and Blue," "America," or other patriotic songs. On these special occasions when the people met together at the bowery, they were always given a reception with the true spirit of the occasion by this spirited band. This organization lasted for some fifteen years.<sup>1</sup>

After the Oakley Brass Band had dissolved its organization, there were others who insisted on a brass band; and another one was organized--the Wanship Brass Band. The following is an article concerning this organization:

The Wanship Brass Band passed through Oakley on the 13th and played some very good music, which filled the hearts of the citizens with so much glee that many followed them to Kamas. The band boys have improved very much the past year.<sup>2</sup>

In 1908, a new organization was effected, called the "Oakley Silver Band." This organization carried on the function of entertainment for special occasions in Oakley and in other communities for a number of years as the former bands had done. There have been several dance orchestras organized that have served well at Oakley's numerous dances and other festive occasions throughout the years.

Oakley has been favored by having many musically talented citizens. One group that has sung for the last several years is a men's chorus under

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Deseret Evening News, Jan. 30, 1899.

the direction of Blaine Martindale.

Because of the size and location of the community, few commercial recreational facilities have been established. A swimming pool is presently under construction; but for such facilities as bowling alleys, skating rinks, and golfing, the people go to Burley or other nearby towns. In addition to movies, dances, dramas, music, and church recreational activities, the people enjoy Oakley's numerous picnicking and fishing areas. Many jaunts to the hills are made by church, school, and private groups. The community's recreation has been and still is of a simple nature, much of it being carried out in conjunction with the recreational program of the Latter-day Saint Church.

## CHAPTER VII

### FOLKLORE

The Oakley area has had its own legends and tall tales that have added excitement and fears to the people in the community.

#### Oakley's Great Gold Mine

In the late 1800's, a prospector returning from the hills was killed by lightning in front of the J. F. Back home in Oakley. When his body was picked up and his clothes examined, gold nuggets were found in the pockets.

The only person who ever knew the exact location of the Great Gold Mine of Oakley was the prospector who was struck by lightning. The following article describes this prospector:

. . . for he was cursed with an insane suspicion that somebody was trying to steal the claim. To William Whittle and other friends he gave tentative information about the finds, but not the exact location. Always he carried a gun and lots of ammunition--ready for the enemy whom he expected.

The enemy destined to steal the secret was death or time, and neither death nor time was afraid of the bullets. The prospector's secret has been kept well.

He died after a life of poverty. And the acquaintances whom he suspected of treachery and who suspected him of insanity, many of them too have died in poverty. How curiously like life in general, if indeed it be true that an abundance of gold awaits the prospectors near Oakley. Early timers relate that an opportunity came to interest capitalists in developing the mine. The prospector invited a group of men to visit his holdings. The party arrived in Oakley only to be turned back by the prospector, whose suspicions had become an obsession.

It is said that the gold nuggets found in the prospector's pockets were obtained from the Cold Creek district, south of Oakley.<sup>1</sup>

Various individuals have claimed knowledge of the location of the claim, but nothing has ever been produced. It would be an interesting story to

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<sup>1</sup>The Oakley Herald, June 5, 1931.



know how many people have searched either in imagination or actually for this and other reported fabulous mines.

#### The wild hairy man of Birch Creek

The stories of a wild, hairy man who chased boys and girls started in the early summer of 1932. A young man was riding horseback at night in the lonely Birch Creek Canyon and felt that something was after him. As he looked around, he saw a form which he concluded was that of a gorilla. The creature was unclothed and extremely hairy and gave swift pursuit. It was with difficulty that the boy on the horse could make a getaway.

A boy going from Moulton to Almo saw what he thought was a man behind a tree and said hello. The figure snarled and came from behind the tree. The trembling horse, bolted and made a record time to Almo.

Many accounts of contact with this hairy man came into the local paper office, and many of the stories did not agree on various points. For example, he was not apt to be seen in broad daylight. He was more apt to be seen when one was expecting to see him. He was more likely to scare boys who had work to do or a duty to perform than boys who were bent on pleasure. While he was apparently able to prevent boys from bringing home the cows, the coast always seemed clear when a boy wanted to attend a dance somewhere.

The rumors of this hairy man always came from someone who had talked with someone who had talked with someone else who had known a boy that had seen the wild man of Birch Creek.

There has been a lot of speculation as to who this hairy man could have been. Some have said he must have been a hermit who had lost his power of speech, or perhaps a moonshiner who was trying to frighten inquisitive prowlers from his workshop.

Many of the boys and girls believed it sacrilegious to doubt his existence and were fearful of him, especially at night.<sup>1</sup>

The following article describes the hairy man of Birch Creek, as published in the local paper:

Some of the youngsters of Cassia County are wondering what they should do if they were to meet the Wild Hairy Man of Birch Creek--the old fellow who was supposed to frighten children last summer when they went out after the cows. It is reported that one boy, who lives at Basin, is thinking of applying for a permit to carry firearms for protection against this menace.

Such incidents give a lopsided impression of the Hairy One. Like other human beings, he has many shortcomings and peculiarities, but at heart he is not a bad being. Despite his gruffness and clumsiness, he is not unkind to those who know how to approach him properly. His yearnings toward service have been reported in this paper and had not the banking situation of southern Idaho improved, he probably would have opened a bank in his cave just to help his fellow men.

If you happen to meet the Wild Hairy Man, don't shoot him, and don't run from him; approach him in a friendly way and he may invite you to his cave for lunch. Wood haulers say that among the delicacies featured on his lunches are jerked gopher meat and dried grasshoppers. His fondness for these two items is intense and he is said to fly into a rage if anybody turns up a nose at them.<sup>2</sup>

#### City of Rocks loot

The City of Rocks was the supposed hiding place of stolen loot taken from a stage holdup in the early 1860's. Many people from Oakley and surrounding communities have searched for this hidden treasure but have found nothing. No doubt, anyone who has known the story and who has gone to the City of Rocks picnicking, pine-nutting, or sight-seeing has each taken a turn searching for the gold, captivated by the thought that he might be the lucky one to find it.

In the early 1860's, a stage was held up, with a reported loss of from fifty to one hundred thousand dollars. Ed Long, a stage driver on the Butte,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., July 8, 1932.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., February 3, 1933.

Montana to Salt Lake City run, and his partner waylaid the stage at "Robber's Roost," which was two massive rocks that flanked the stage trail between McCammon and Pocatello. No one knew who had done it. In a short time a posse was raised from the Utah area and went in pursuit of the two unknown men. Ed Long and his partner were spotted camped in some brush in Birch Creek, Cassia County. When Long's companion saw the horsemen coming, he was afraid that questioning would reveal that they were the stage robbers. He pulled his gun, and a gunfight broke out.

Long offered no resistance and told his partner not to fight, because many of the men in the posse were friends of his. Long threw down his gun just as a posseman's gun fired, found its mark, and killed him. His partner fought until he was badly wounded. Then they captured him and took him to the stage station where his wounds were dressed. He refused to tell them where the loot was hidden. Because he was wanted in Texas on other charges, he was turned over to the Texas law authorities.

A few years later, a stranger who had met Long's partner in Texas came to Newton, Utah. The stranger said that the partner had told him the loot was hidden near the City of Rocks. He asked Leander Whittaker, who knew the country well, to be his guide; and he consented. Whittaker had known Ed Long, because he had been the horse tender for the Woodland stage station when Long was a stage driver.

They left Newton and were gone for several days, returning empty handed. They had failed to find the loot. Then Whittaker learned from the stranger that he had a bloody past. He'd killed eleven people and was wanted in Texas. The Whittakers were relieved when he left!

Four years later, he came back and said he had been wrong about the money being hidden near the City of Rocks. This time he stated that the

loot was hidden about five miles from the spot where Long was killed.

No one knows for sure whether or not the stranger ever found the loot, nor does anyone know what became of him.<sup>1</sup>

The following is another account of some of the details concerning this robbery:

One of the robbers was badly wounded, and report had it that he made his way into the mountains, and at a point near the City of Rocks made a cache estimated all the way from \$50,000 to \$100,000 dollars. Then he wandered into a trapper's camp where he died from the effects of his wound; but before passing he told the trapper that he had hidden the treasure among some of the cedar trees south of and in sight of the Twin Sister Boulders.

The trapper made several unsuccessful attempts to find the cache and finally he told Glove-Maker Jim\* about it, and during the summer of 1873 Jim camped near the Twin Sister Boulders for several months; but although he searched diligently, he failed to find the cache.<sup>2</sup>

There are many accounts of this robbery, and the amount of money stolen also varies from story to story; but the story persists that the money was hidden near the City of Rocks. Whatever the truth might be, the possibility of finding the treasure has brought a touch of adventure to the hearts of many who have traveled in the area.

#### The Legend of Peaceful Valley

A long time resident of Oakley Valley wrote the following legend about his beloved valley for a July twenty-fourth Pioneer Day publication:

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<sup>1</sup>The Burley Herald-Bulletin, (The Golden Anniversary Edition), 1955. The information for this story was given to the newspaper writers by P. H. Whittaker of Declo, a son of Leander Whittaker.

<sup>2</sup>Walgamott, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

\*Glove-Maker Jim, was an old trapper who had for years been in the employ of various fur companies of southern Idaho and had trapped the streams tributary to the Snake River as an independent trapper.

He was plying his trade as buckskin worker at the City of Rocks stage station on the Kelton, Utah, and the Dalles, Oregon, stage road.

Glove-Maker Jim was a quiet-spoken man, ripe in experience of the West dating back to the early 1830's. He held many audiences on the stagecoach travel route spellbound with his interesting stories and experiences.

It happened many many moons ago when our land was inhabited only by the Red man. It was a time when the Indian tribes and even the Indian nations were at war with each other. There was much bloodshed in the land, and many were suffering from hunger and sickness because the warriors hadn't time to hunt for food nor to care for the ill. While all of this was taking place, there lived in the northern part of the country a young warrior, a son of the chief of the tribe. This young warrior grew tired of the continual wars his people took part in. Deep down in his heart he had a love for all of his brothers, not just those of his own tribe, and because of this love many of his young brothers looked up to him.

One day he went to his father and tried to persuade him to stop the wars, the killing of his brothers, and instead to have peace in the land. The great chief, who had been in many battles and had felt the glory of victory, thought that his son was a coward and became very angry. For punishment he sent his son and the sympathetic braves on a mission of destruction.

The young warriors journeyed southward. The son did not intend to carry out his father's wishes; and he knew that if he did not do as his father had commanded, neither he nor his followers could ever return to their homes and families. So the young braves wandered about the land seeking a place to build new homes where they would always have peace.

One day they came to a large, winding river. They swam their horses across and found themselves in a large valley surrounded by hills. It was a beautiful, green place. It's plains were waving with grass--feed for the horses. Wild game was everywhere--food for them. The deer, the elk, the antelope, and the wild chickens had made this their home. It was a land of many streams, and fish swam in their waters. And above all, it had a look of peace about it.

"We will make our homes here," said the young chief. "Here we will live in peace with no enmity toward our brother."

The valley was well located for their protection. There were high mountain lookout peaks on the east, the river flowed along the north, and mountain ranges met the sky on the south and west. For many years they found peace in the peaceful valley. Other Red men heard of the chief and his people and came to live with them. When brothers of other tribes rode through their valley, with the swiftest of horses they would ride to meet them, not to kill, but to tell them of the happiness they enjoyed.

One day the good chief died and was buried somewhere in his peaceful valley. Years went by. The White man came, and as he rode through the valley, he looked back to the south and saw on the middle mountain what seemed to be an Indian chief carved out of the distant landscape. On his head he wore the headdress of a chief. In winter the feathers were made white by the drifts of snow. In spring and summer they were the darkest of green. While in the autumn they changed to red and yellow. His forehead was long and receding; his nose appeared large. His hands were folded upon his heart. To the south and east a small round knoll seemed to have been put there just to form his feet. The white man called it "Indian Mountain," and as travelers came, those headed for California turned south at its base, while those who pressed on to Oregon looked back at the image as they crossed "Peaceful Valley."

Many white people stayed to make their homes at the foot of "Indian Mountain."

Many years passed, and the valley acquired a different landscape. A town was built, the land was made productive, and many people called the valley "home." The white men who made their homes here found their valley a land of peace and plenty, a haven tucked away from the hustle and drive of the outside world.

Not many years after the settlers had come into the valley in covered wagons, men flew across the valley in airplanes, and as they streaked over the valley, not knowing the history of its past, they named it "Peaceful Valley" because of the absence of air currents and air pockets.

As the years come and go, all who have been touched by the influence of "Peaceful Valley" have come to realize that the great Indian chief who lived here many moons ago was right when he taught that, "It is better to live in peace, to love all your brothers."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Oakley Pioneer Day Celebration (booklet) 1959. John A. Clark.

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Ella Boothe

Reta S. Layton

John Clark

Jack Martindale

Newell Dayley

Chauncey Platts

Tommy Dayley

Wilford Sagers

Bert Hale

John S. Smith

Wallace Hale

Frank Speckman

Alice Hobdey

Claude Wells

Mrs. Herman Johnson



## ABSTRACT

Oakley is located in southern Idaho in the Goose Creek Valley, an area traversed by trappers and explorers who named the streams and left accounts of their experiences and travels. It was a rendezvous for Indians who went there to gather pine nuts and get wild game for their winter's meat.

An emigration trail was located south of Oakley, where thousands wended their way to California. Emigrants going to Oregon from the East branched off this trail at the City of Rocks and came down Birch Creek to the Rock Creek Stage Station, southeast of the present town of Twin Falls, Idaho, and there met the established Oregon Trail.

In 1860, one of the most calamitous Indian attacks in emigration history took place on a branch of the emigration trail near the present site of Almo, Idaho, where 300 men, women, and children from Missouri were massacred by renegade Indians. The federal forces stationed in Utah patrolled the area and finally secured it for settlement.

The Goose Creek Valley was a lush productive range land for cattle from the 1870's to the 1880's, when overgrazing, settlement, and drouth made it unprofitable for the cattle companies to continue.

The Oakley Meadows Stage Station was established in Oakley in 1869. It was one of the connecting points between Kelton,

Utah, and Boise, Idaho, for freighting supplies and transporting people. A few settlers moved into the area in the 1860's and 1870's and settled on the streams, where they raised grain for the stage station animals and eked out a living.

Oakley was investigated by members of the Latter-day Saint Church and opened for settlement in 1880 after creek water rights were purchased. Most of the pioneers who settled in Oakley came from Tooele Stake in Utah.

The land was surveyed and developed by the L.D.S. settlers. To sustain the hundreds of Mormons moving in, it was necessary to divert water from the various creeks for irrigation. There was much land available, and the people saw the need for a dam that would hold the precipitation until it was needed. The Oakley dam was constructed between 1909 and 1913. By 1934, the irrigation project was cut down to one-half its original size because of decreasing precipitation through the years.

Oakley was a part of Box Elder Stake from 1880 to 1887; then it was organized as the Cassia Stake. This made it more convenient for the leaders to keep in contact with stake members. Through the years as other settlements were established within the Cassia Stake boundaries, Oakley remained the central headquarters of the stake. Responsibilities of the stake presidency increased and by 1913, the year of the next stake division, the presidency were responsible for twenty-eight wards and nine branches in an area of 22,000 square miles. Since that time, ten stakes have been organized

within the original Cassia Stake boundaries.

Because secondary schools were not provided by the state in the earlier years of Oakley's history, the L.D.S. Church sponsored the Cassia Stake Academy from 1889 to 1921. Then the state assumed the responsibility and purchased the academy building from the Church.

Economic activities affecting Oakley's development were farming, freighting, grain milling, sheep and cattle raising, mining, marble quarrying, reservoir construction, and oil drilling. During the boom mining era and construction of the reservoir, Oakley's population climbed to over 2,000. After the mines closed, the population decreased, but the little community has maintained a fairly constant population of about eight hundred. Dominantly, Oakley has been a farming area, and today (1963) 139,589 acres are under cultivation.

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