1994

"A Little Oasis in the Desert": Community Building in Hurricane, Utah, 1860-1930

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"A Little Oasis in the Desert": Community Building in Hurricane, Utah, 1860-1930

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of History

Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

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December 1994

This thesis by Walter Paul Reeve is accepted in its present form by the Department of History at Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To suggest that this study is a product of my own efforts would be a lie. I owe a debt of gratitude and appreciation to many. To Dr. Fred R. Gowans for giving me the freedom to create something that is uniquely mine while still guiding my steps and encouraging my efforts, I am grateful. I owe similar thanks to Dr. Brian Q. Cannon for his helpful insight and assistance. I am also very grateful to Dr. Martha S. Bradley for her contagious enthusiasm for history and her willingness to see my thesis completed.

To those in southern Utah—Woodrow Jepson, Fern and Robert Reeve, Mayor Gene Van Wagoner and Alice Stratton—who so willingly gave their time, wisdom, and little parts of their lives to me, I will always be thankful. Colette Wadsworth and Rene Thompson at the Hurricane Canal Company generously allowed unlimited access to company records and Louise Stein at the Heritage Museum cheerfully lent pictures. To them too, I express my thanks.

I must also acknowledge a wonderful support group of graduate students whose combination of encouragement and biting sarcasm made life

bearable—and even fun. Even more deserving of recognition are Ron, Cheri, Eric, and HAL (Amy). They endured my stressful and often grumpy moods and still remained my closest friends. I survived at times on their teasing confidence. I am truly grateful for their support.

Finally, to my mom and dad I owe a debt I cannot repay. For their faith and confidence, for always believing in me, for letting me chase my dreams, and for being my two person cheering section, I express deep gratitude and love. This thesis is for them.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nature and Scope

On the 6 August 1904 "five or six wagon loads of people" gathered on the Hurricane Bench to witness a dirty little stream of water pour life onto the desert soil of southwestern Utah.[1] The event marked the culmination of eleven years of tedious manual labor by some of the remnants of Brigham Young's Cotton Mission colonizers (as detailed in Chapter II, these were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or Mormons, whom church president, Young, sent to southern Utah to grow cotton).[2] Beginning in the early

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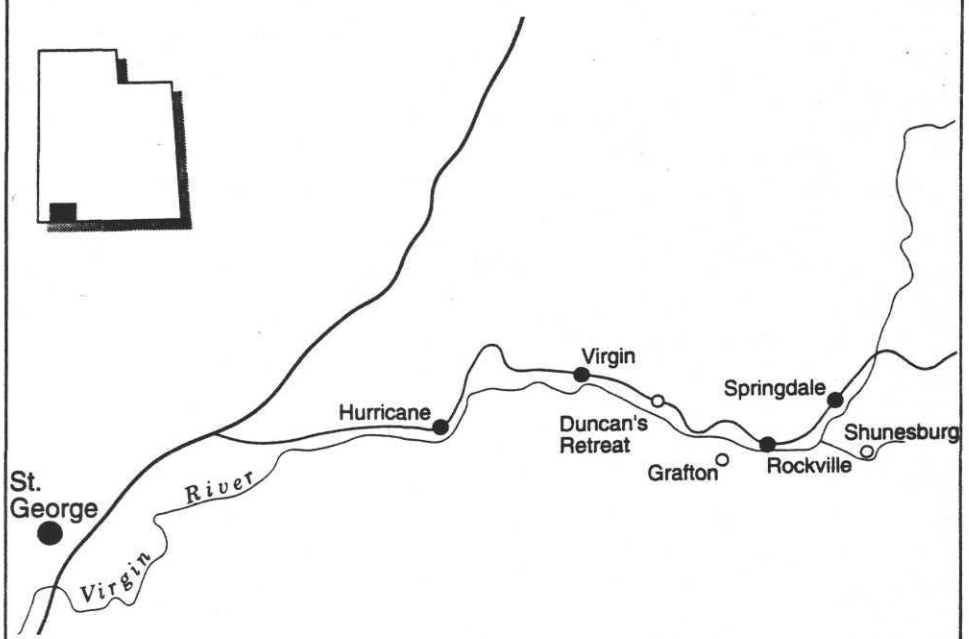
[1]Charles Workman, diary, in Alice Gubler Stratton, *The Story of the Hurricane Canal* (La Verkin, Utah: Rio Virgin Press, n.d.), 15.

[2]The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is more commonly known as the Mormon Church due to its followers' belief in the *Book of Mormon* as ancient scripture. Members of this religion are commonly called Mormons, Latter-day Saints, LDS, or sometimes "saints." In this thesis these terms are generally used interchangeably. In addition, because there were no competing religions amongst the colonizers discussed herein the Mormon Church will frequently be referred to simply as "the church."

An understanding of the church's basic hierarchy is also helpful in comprehending the narrative of this study. In the Mormon Church each congregation is called a ward and is headed by a lay minister or bishop. The bishop also chooses two counselors to assist in his responsibilities and collectively they form a bishopric. Under the direction of the bishopric a ward is composed of several different "auxiliary" organizations each headed by presidents and counselors. There is: Sunday School for parents and adolescents, Young Men and Young Women for teenagers, Primary for children, Relief Society for

1860s these religious settlers inhabited tiny plots of land along the upper Virgin River

Figure 1. Upper Virgin River Basin



Source: W. Paul Reeve, "'A Little Oasis in the Desert': Community Building in Hurricane, Utah, 1860-1920," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 62 (Summer 1994): 227.

Basin (see Figure 1).[3] The Virgin River however, often defied its name with unpredictable and devastating floods, leading many colonizers to relocate in search of better conditions. Those who remained were also desirous for improvement and in 1893 nearly a hundred men from the basin communities and Toquerville met to incorporate the Hurricane Canal Company in the hope of bringing water to the desirable lands of the Hurricane Bench.

The upper river's narrow valleys and flood plains form the stage upon which these settlers battled to survive. Their experience along the basin taught

women, and Priesthood for men. "Stake presidents" oversee six to ten bishops and these stake leaders in turn are supervised by additional levels of authority all of which are ultimately answerable to the church's twelve apostles and president.

[3]Empty circles on the map represent present-day ghost towns.

them that the Virgin was generally untameable. They relied upon its waters for daily sustenance, yet it often betrayed them with angry tantrums leaving their dams, ditches and crops in chaos. The river that was both a bane and a blessing to these colonizers occupied a center position in their lives and understanding its characteristics is essential to understanding their struggle.

A United States geological survey described the river as "a flashy stream, subject to sudden floods."[4] A similar government report called it "a stream of uncertain flow and shifting bed."[5] This unpredictable "stream" stretches nearly two hundred miles through small sections of southwestern Utah, northwestern Arizona, and southeastern Nevada before emptying into the Colorado River, or more properly, Lake Mead (see Figure 2). Springs at its source are the river's chief water supply in winter and early spring, but in summer most of the flow is from melting snow and heavy rains in the higher watershed. The earliest records (from 1909-1914) show the river's highest maximum discharge for a single day at 10,600 second-feet and the lowest at only 24 second-feet.[6]

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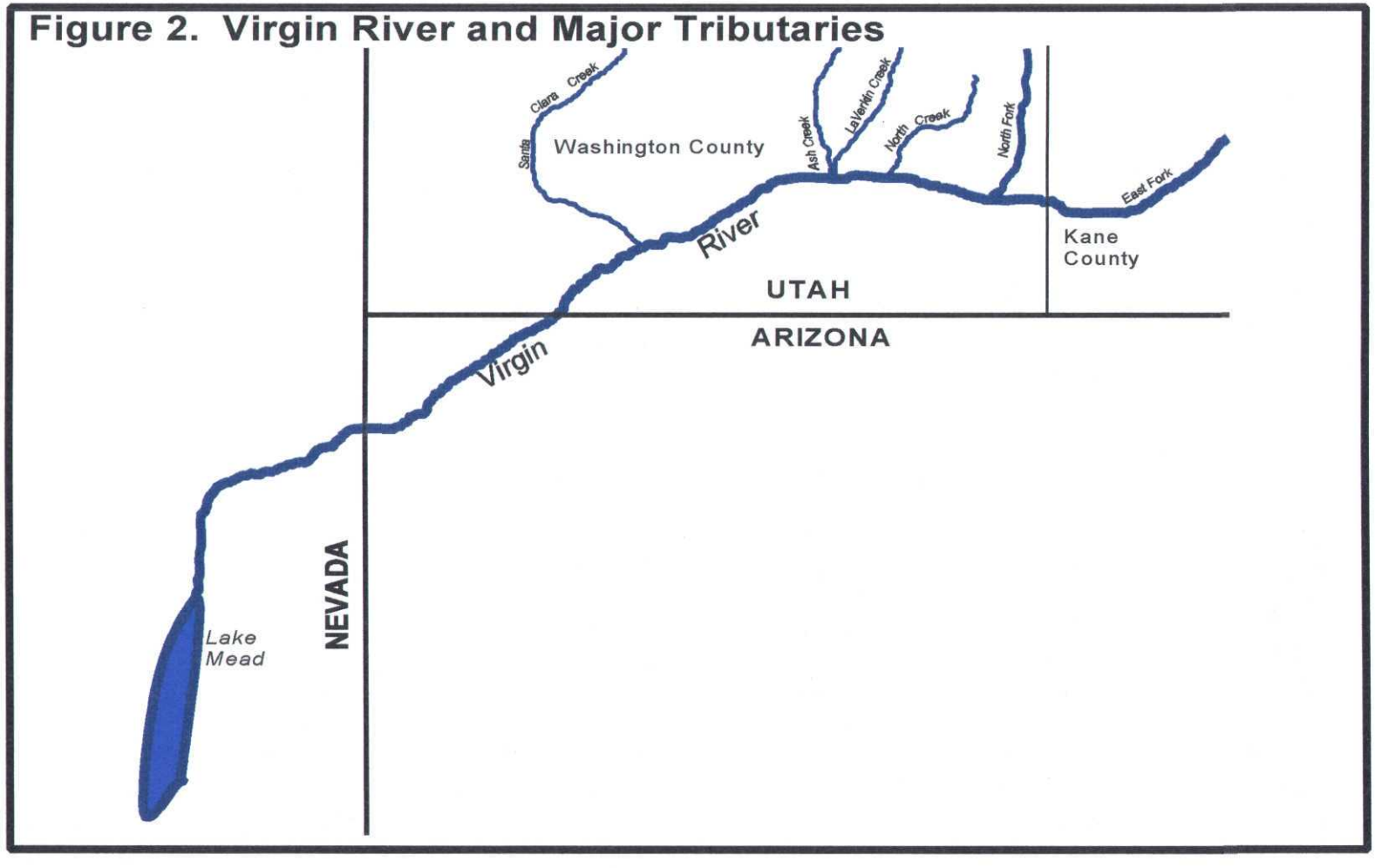
[4]E. C. LaRue, *Colorado River and its Utilization* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1916), 94.

[5]Department of Agriculture, Office of Experiment Stations, Bulletin No. 124, *Report of Irrigation Investigations in Utah* (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1903), 209.

[6]LaRue, 109-10. There are no records of measurements prior to the Virgin's waters being diverted for irrigation. The government survey cited here is the earliest know measurement. The maximum discharge was recorded in September 1911 and the minimum in July 1909. The measurements were taken just east of Virgin City.

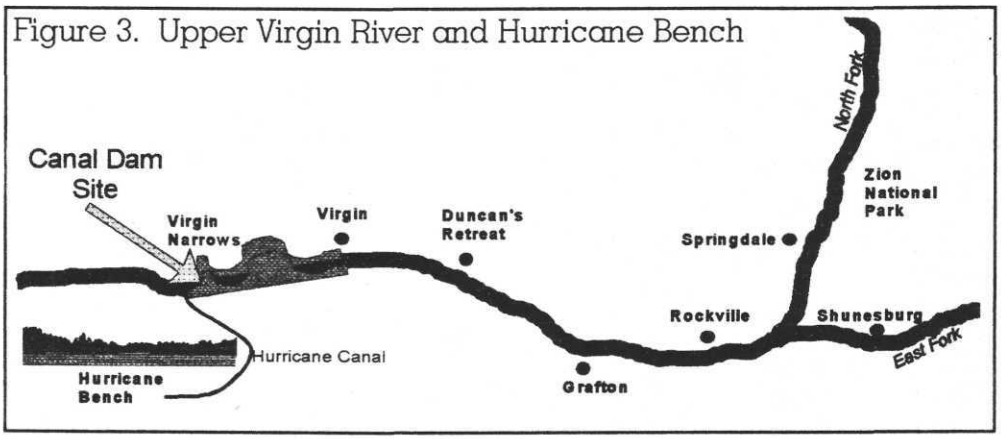
Figure 2. Virgin River and Major Tributaries



The Virgin drains a rough and mountainous area of about 11,000 square miles. This region varies in elevation from less than 1,000 feet at the river's mouth, to about 9,000 feet at its headwaters. Its upper waters rise in two main branches, the north and east forks, whose confluence becomes the Virgin River just above the town of Rockville. The north fork originates in the Kolob Plateau and cuts through the magnificent scenery of Zion National Park. The east fork has its headwaters in the mountains of Kane County, Utah. These streams form the main body of the southwesterly flowing river that picks up various tributaries along its path.

For this study however only the river's upper basin is of concern (from Hurricane on the west to Shunesburg on the east, see Figure 3). Once the two forks meet, the river passes through com-

Figure 3. Upper Virgin River and Hurricane Bench



paratively open country where many Cotton Mission colonizers established small communities. After passing Virgin City, the last of the farm villages along the upper basin, the waters of the river funnel into a section of high, cramped,

canyon-walls called the" Virgin Narrows" (see Figure 3).[7] It was in this confined gorge that the Hurricane Canal builders fashioned their dam and channeled water out of the destructive grasp of their nemesis onto the inviting Hurricane Bench. In essence they banished the antagonistic Virgin to backdrop scenery while shoving the canal onto center stage. The men and women who acted out this drama are the focus of this thesis, as are the various methods they employed to make their lives in Utah's "Dixie"[8] comfortable.

One early resident declared: "We all worked together to build the town of Hurricane."[9] If such cooperation truly existed, a detailed study of Hurricane's genesis will beneficially illuminate the mechanisms used by the town founders to pioneer the community and create its permanence. Hurricane's pioneering period did not end until 1930. At that time, the town's initial boom growth subsided and town residents settled into a comfortable lifestyle that included most of the available modern conveniences and public utilities. This thesis begins with the early 1860s and explores the origins of Hurricane's founders amongst the Cotton Mission colonizers, tracing their

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[7]Andrew Karl Larson, "Agricultural Pioneering in the Virgin River Basin" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1946), 1-4.

[8]Name given to the southwest corner of Utah Territory for its warm climate.

[9]Harriet Elizabeth Stratton Lee, "Harriet Elizabeth Stratton Lee," Historical Records Survey, WPA, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, microfilm, 920, #91.

struggles through the building of the Hurricane Canal and the eventual founding of Hurricane. It further explores, up to 1930, the community building tools used to establish Hurricane and provide a comfortable life to its residents.

It is evident that the canal company was the force behind the town's genesis, and more importantly it was the governing body and stabilizing element providing for the smooth establishment of a social order. Thus, the first intent of this study is to determine the extent of the company's influence in the community's formation process. Who were the people that rose to lead the community and help it develop a sense of permanence? Were they canal company leaders who simply became the new town's government? If so, then the canal was not only important in providing new agricultural opportunities, but through its leadership, it was a vehicle for social stability and instant order.

There are other unexplored areas, which, if studied, could remove the Hurricane experience from the ambiguous vacuum where it now lies. What characterized the town's original settlers? Exactly how many moved from the upper Virgin River Basin to take advantage of the economic opportunities Hurricane provided? How many were newcomers looking for construction work and other employment that is generally abundant in a new town? Were Hurricane's pioneers, as the local histories suggest, the devout colonizers who persisted in the face of the harsh conditions that the Cotton Mission dictated? If so how long had they persisted before building the canal?

Additionally, this thesis will explore the emergence of the town board in an attempt to ascertain its position of power in the early community; was there a swapping of prominence between the canal board and the town board over time and did this coincide with a shift away from the town's agricultural foundation? If this transformation did occur what rifts (if any) did it produce between farmers and those desiring new business growth?

It is further evident that religion played a key role in establishing a social order in Hurricane and that the line between religious and community leaders was often very blurry. The church provided the means for many social events such as dances, plays, and sports. What was the church's impact upon the community building experience and was its leadership closely tied with the canal board and town board? Were there other organizations that emerged and proved significant to the town's success? These questions, properly answered, should not only explain Hurricane's beginnings, but also generate new ideas concerning Mormon colonization habits.

Review of Literature

The continuing emergence of scholarly community studies has produced a viable historical field for the examination of the settlement practices and social order mechanisms utilized in community building. In fact as Larry Logue asserts, local studies provide a manageable testing ground for accepted

theory, and increasingly even generate new theory. In short, community studies support ideas "about the past with evidence that is convincing in its scope because the subject is limited in its scale."[10] Therefore an essential criteria for judging local histories must be their ability to test the community experience against widely accepted theories dealing with religion, family life, social structure, settlement building and when appropriate to formulate new ideas in areas yet unexplored. However, as Don Harrison Doyle discovered in his study of Jacksonville, Illinois, Hurricane's local histories tend to focus on unity and cooperation while exonerating the town founders.[11] Perhaps they deserve exoneration, yet, in distributing accolades it is important to remember the tremendous power and influence that environment, religion, theology, kinship, social ties, and economic factors all have in shaping individuals and communities. These are essential considerations when exploring the genesis of a town and its social order.

Hence, before appraising the community building historiography for

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[10]Larry M. Logue, *A Sermon in the Desert: Belief and Behavior in Early St. George, Utah* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988). See in particular Logue's preface for a good explanation of this idea, xi-xii.

[11]See Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-70* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978). In his chapter "Localism as Nationalism" Doyle notes how the local histories of Jacksonville tended to create a tradition that "justified small-town failure as chosen success." Because the people of Hurricane were not striving for the same type of success as those in Jacksonville, the parallel I have drawn is not perfect, however in a general sense the comparison is valid. Hurricane's local histories, as Jacksonville's, tend to make heros out of its founders without noting the role that additional circumstances often played in shaping the town.

southern Utah, it is vital to establish the role that the region's desert climate played in shaping the nature of the towns in that region. For this purpose William E. Smythe's *The Conquest of Arid America* is an excellent study. As Smythe contends, the Mormon saints, in their attempt to cultivate the parched lands of the West, were among the first to encounter the problem of aridity and were quick to discover that the problem's "successful solution was the price of existence." That price was paid by "the free and unlimited coinage of labor" which became the "cardinal doctrine" in Utah's economy.[12] The saints believed that "all should work for what they were to have, and that all should have what they had worked for." "In order to realize this result," Smythe further explains, "it was necessary that each family should own as much land as it could use to advantage, and no more."[13]

The church guarded against land monopoly and did not permit any to hold land for speculation. The same was true for public utilities such as water. In fact, Smythe considers it fortunate that no one built private canals and then controlled the water for personal gain. He suggests the most probable reason that such an endeavor was not attempted was the lack of capital. The saints "started upon a basis of equality, for they were equally poor. They could buy

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[12]William E. Smythe, *The Conquest of Arid America* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1907), 54.

[13]Ibid., 57.

water rights only with their labor."[14] Thus, aridity became a "compelling" force in "the adoption of the principle of associative enterprise."[15] Smythe concludes that there were four basic economic principles that created the success of Utah's agricultural system. These are: general land ownership, self-sufficiency in agriculture, public ownership of public utilities, and the associative ownership of many businesses, factories and banks.

While Smythe's study covers Utah as a whole, his conclusions are significantly applicable to Hurricane's community building experience. An essential element in examining the history of Hurricane is determining the influence that the arid climate and the Mormon's unique economic system had on its pioneers. Indeed, what Smythe concluded for all of Utah is true of Hurricane's community building experience, it was "the product of its environment."[16]

Andrew Karl Larson, in his 1946 Master's thesis on "Agricultural Pioneering in the Virgin River Basin" is certainly not ignorant of Southern Utah's environment. Larson enumerates five specific problems the region's colonizers faced as they answered the "call" from Brigham Young to establish

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[14]Ibid., 60.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid., 52.

the Cotton Mission in Utah's Dixie. There were problems in exploring the difficult region, in pacifying the Indians, in building roads to transport goods to and from market, in developing the necessary industry to produce goods otherwise unobtainable, and finally, in bringing the arid soil under cultivation. This last challenge, Larson contends, was the region's biggest; it involved the task of constructing extensive irrigation systems, including dams, canals and ditches, which the Virgin River's violent floods recurrently washed away. In addition, through the process of trial and error the settlers had to determine the types of crops best suited for the region's soil and climate. Thus, Utah in general, but southern Utah specifically, was "a country which on its face offered little inducement agriculturally"—a country which required a certain strength and determination of its inhabitants if they were to persist amidst its unyielding environment.[17]

Southern Utah's agricultural development was a key factor in Hurricane's colonization. Other forces also shaped the town's social structure; to explore these, it is now necessary to turn to community building historiography. In Latter-day Saint town studies Lowry Nelson's research provides the high water mark. Nelson, through in-depth examinations of several Mormon settlements, notes the key role that religion played in

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[17]Larson, "Agricultural Pioneering in the Virgin River Basin," vii.

establishing a social order in the Mormon West. Brigham Young, the Mormon prophet and colonizer, customarily issued "calls" to devout followers to establish new towns in selected areas of the religious kingdom he was establishing. Due to their reverence for church authority and belief that Young was a prophet and divinely inspired, most Latter-day Saints would make personal sacrifices in order to accept the call to colonize. Thus a common conviction that their commission came from one who spoke with God provided the first bond of unity for the settlers. Even in cases where the pioneers had established a town on their own initiative, their church membership was still a powerful unifying force.

Nelson further notes that the Mormon hierarchy provided instant community leadership as a bishop or another ecclesiastical superior would often be called to head the colonizing efforts. Thus respected authority was not only inherent in the Mormon system but also provided for the easy establishment of a social order.[18] Almost immediately after arriving the settlers would hold their first worship services. Additionally Nelson explains that the church provided organized recreational activities and often owned the local

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[18]To those familiar only with Mormon settlements this might not seem significant; however, when compared with Robert R. Dykstra's *The Cattle Towns*, the importance of respected authority is apparent. Dykstra concludes that incessant conflict, due in part to the lack of a well defined structure of leadership, was a large hinderance to the community building process in the frontier towns he studied. See Robert R. Dykstra, *The Cattle Towns* (New York: Athenaeum, 1976).

amusement hall where dances, plays and picture shows were conducted. Hence the church, with its strong centralized control, actively promoted the organization of social and religious activities even in the most remote areas. Church membership provided an identity and a sense of belonging that extended beyond the often dismal conditions of the frontier. It was the settlers' common faith which cut across ethnic and culturally diverse lines to provide cohesion through the trials of colonizing the arid west.

Another unique aspect of the Mormon village which aided in social unity is its town plat system. Borrowing from New England farm villages, Mormon Church founder Joseph Smith, used the village pattern for his "inspired" city of Zion that was to have been built in Jackson County Missouri. From these origins, the plat system persisted as the unique pattern of settlement that characterizes most contemporary Mormon towns. Contrary to the traditional isolated farmstead which people of similar background in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and other areas were using, the Mormons adopted the village pattern of rural settlement. The village provided protection, facilitated social interaction and mitigated the loneliness of the frontier.[19]

In this pattern the homes were established in villages or towns which were separate from the farms. The towns were characterized by very wide

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[19]Lowry Nelson, *The Mormon Village: A Pattern and Technique of Land Settlement* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1952). See Chapter 2.

streets that intersected at right angles and ran due north-south and east-west. Barns, chicken coops, pig pens, and stack yards as well as the homes were built on the village lots while the farm land itself was outside the town boundaries.

Nelson's detailed and exhaustive analysis of six Mormon villages allows him to soundly conclude that the village form of settlement was a very effective pioneering device especially when used by a homogeneous religious group responsive to ecclesiastical authority. In essence, it was well suited to the needs of the Mormon settlers simply because of the unifying and dominant feature the church played in it. Nelson's findings are interestingly applicable to Hurricane when considering that it was established independently from church directive in 1906 after Mormon colonizing efforts had largely ended and it was organized by a canal company, not ecclesiastical leadership. In addition, Hurricane was founded at a period when Charles Peterson contends most farmers were moving "away from the farm villages."[20] Even still, Hurricane's founders were Mormon settlers who naturally chose the plat system they were most familiar with—that of the Mormon village.

Turning now to studies specifically dealing with Hurricane, the best is Andrew Karl Larson's *I Was Called to Dixie*. Larson's easy-to-read style

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[20]Charles S. Peterson, *Utah: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977), 127.

creates an informative and enjoyable narrative which places Hurricane within the framework of the Southern Utah experience. Early in the book he establishes the struggles that the Mormon pioneers faced in combating the destructive Virgin River in order to irrigate their crops and provide for their families. Canals, dams, and ditches were an integral part of these settlers' lives and in their efforts to make the most of their circumstances the desert farmers often innovated and developed new techniques to suit their conditions. In the case of Hurricane, the techniques were not necessarily new, but primitive, and certainly Larson demonstrates how Smythe's principle of the "free and unlimited coinage of labor" typified this community's genesis. Larson's chapter on Hurricane focuses on the construction of the canal which served as the lifeline to this community. This well-documented account is based upon primary sources including Canal Company records and oral interviews with many of the original stockholders. His research involving the town founders is original and largely unobtainable through any other source. Larson's study, especially on the canal, is essential.

Regrettably the remaining works lack substance. *Under Dixie Sun*, a history of Washington County by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, is a compilation of essays by various authors who describe life and settlement in Southwestern Utah communities. This work does contain valuable information and portions written by well-known historians such as Juanita Brooks and

Andrew Karl Larson. In fact Larson's chapter on "Irrigation and Agriculture" once again details the Hurricane experience but this time places it within the context of the struggle for water that all the Washington County communities experienced. Despite these redeeming qualities this work does not measure up to the studies previously discussed here. Specifically, the chapter on Hurricane lacks cohesion. For example, it is divided into sections such as: "Religious Organizations," "Hurricane Air Port," "History of Schools in Hurricane," and "Hurricane's Role in the Development of Washington County," each by a different author. While the information in these sections is vital to the story of the community, there is no binding link which ties the data together, and often the narrative lapses into informal reminiscences. Had the authors intended to prove or disprove a theory, or even make interpretations based upon their studies, this history would be much improved. As it stands *Under Dixie Sun* is nice for area bookshelves but fails to qualify as scholarly community history.

The next three works, *Portraits of the Hurricane Pioneers* by Janice Force DeMille, *Honoring Our Ancestors* compiled by the Hurricane Utah Stake, and *Selected Short Stories Reflecting the Founding of the Hurricane Valley* compiled by Dell C. Stout, can easily be lumped together for review. These studies are simply collections of family stories and other articles that highlight Hurricane's original settlers.

DeMille's book is the most professional of the three in terms of research and documentation, yet this is where the superiority ends. DeMille has gleaned extensive data based upon interviews and unpublished family histories to organize information on thirty-six of Hurricane's original families. The book is arranged alphabetically according to family name and in essence serves as a who's who among Hurricane pioneers. Most likely DeMille's central intent was to preserve family history. Certainly, to the delight of local residents, she has accomplished her purpose. For the scholar, however, her work lacks an interpretive framework. DeMille makes no effort to analyze the pioneers' experiences, neither does she comment on the forces that bound the pioneers together, or discuss possible disagreements that drove them apart. In fact, she does not even form them into a group of community builders with a common goal. Instead DeMille presents each family story as if it occurred in a vacuum, devoid of any external influences. The Hurricane experience demands a critical eye.[21]

Sources

A major portion of the sources for this study, most of which have never before been utilized in historical research, are located in Hurricane, Utah. The

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[21] Because these works are almost identical in format and style to DeMille's study it would belabor the point to go into further detail on them.

Hurricane Canal Company office is most valuable for its early records such as the stock ledgers and board meeting minutes as well as the early town board minute books up to 1930. The U. S. federal census provides a valuable resource for determining the demographic makeup of the community up to 1920 and for tracing its residents over time. The *Washington County News*, beginning in 1908 with weekly articles from its Hurricane correspondent, will add insight into the general happenings of the town. Taped oral interviews of a few early residents completed in the 1960s by Fielding H. Harris are in the author's possession. In addition, there is a smattering of journals, diaries and memoirs available to bring added perspectives to the narrative.

Certainly Hurricane provides a remarkable community building case study. While it originated in the twentieth century after official Mormon colonizing efforts had ended, it still had all the elements of Mormon social cohesion and strong religious leadership, yet, the canal board seemed to be the principle orchestrator of its early social order. These elements certainly combine to create a unique research opportunity that will further Mormon community studies and bring additional insights into western settlers' continuing struggle with aridity and the methods they use to adapt to such an environment.

CHAPTER II

"THOSE WHO STAYED"

George H. Brimhall, then president of Brigham Young University, while on a trip to southern Utah, met with James Jepson, Jr. (see Figure 12, Appendix I) who was a founding father of Hurricane and a driving force behind the completion of the Hurricane Canal. As Brimhall marvelled over the nearly seven-mile-long canal that served as the lifeline to this tiny desert community, he questioned Jepson on how the town founders could have persevered for eleven years in building such a difficult ditch. Jepson responded by asking: "Do you remember how Brigham Young called a group of people to Dixie and only about half of them responded? . . . Do you remember that of the half who came, only half remained? . . . Well, the men and women who built this canal are the children of those who stayed!"[1]

Certainly such stories of pioneering determination are not uncommon—especially in Mormon culture. Yet, perhaps Jepson's statement is self-promoting or at the very least based upon personal speculation.

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[1]Andrew Karl Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie" The Virgin River Basin: Unique Experiences in Mormon Pioneering* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News Press, 1961), 401.

Regardless, subsequent historical studies tend to support Jepson's assertion. In fact, as historians Dean L. May, Lee L. Bean, and Mark H. Skolnick, found in their study concerning stability in nineteenth-century Mormon towns, the southern-Utah region was the most fluid of the four they examined—"fewer than half" stayed.[2] Their research however, encompasses a broad base and is not directly applicable to Hurricane's founders.[3] Unfortunately, other sources offer only vague generalities concerning the number of settlers who left prior to the colonizing of Hurricane. For example, Larson states "*Many* [settlers] were forced by the circumstances to leave for other localities . . ."[4] Another writer asserts: "Because of the hardships, all the families did not stay with their farms. . . . *Many* of them went back to their former homes or to other more promising locations."[5] The journal of Robert Warne Reeve, Jr. notes that "from time to time heavy floods have come down the river taking our lands, orchards, and

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[2]Dean L. May, Lee L. Bean, and Mark H. Skolnick, "The Stability Ratio: An Index of Community Cohesiveness in Nineteenth-Century Mormon Towns," in *Generations and Change: Genealogical Perspectives in Social History*, ed. Robert M. Taylor, Jr. and Ralph J. Crandall (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1986), 155. Interestingly, while the southern region experienced a low persistence rate when compared to other Utah areas, it was remarkably high in comparison to the near seventy-five percent turnover rate Don Harrison Doyle found among Jacksonville, Illinois' "non-dependent population." Doyle's "non-dependents" included all household heads and family heads, all gainfully employed persons, and all males 20 or older. See Doyle, 261-62.

[3]May, Bean, and Skolnick used four southern towns—Toquerville, Glendale, Rockville, and Kanab—taken as a unit, for their research. Of these four only Rockville contributed to Hurricane's early population.

[4]Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 384. Italics added.

[5]Hazel Bradshaw, ed., *Under Dixie Sun* (Panguitch, Utah: Garfield County News, 1950), 283. Italics added.

gardens, and causing *many* to leave."[6]

Yet, how many is "many," and were Hurricane's founders the resolute pioneers that Jepson made them out to be, or is this another example of a glorified pioneering past that does not hold up against historical inspection? Using the U.S. Manuscript Census these questions will be answered quantitatively and speculations tested against the available data. It will become evident that Hurricane's early prosperity and growth emerged from the rugged determination of its pioneers; most endured decades of adversity in southern Utah's harsh environment before investing their labor and money in the Hurricane Canal Company. They hoped to improve their economic status and escape the turbulent flood waters of the Virgin River.

The Cotton Mission

For Thomas Burgess the October 1861 Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints held far reaching implications. Active membership in the Mormon church for nineteenth-century saints often dictated much of their daily lives, including at times, prescribing where they would live, and thus, the trials they might face. Such was the case with Burgess in 1861 as the "call" came from church president and prophet Brigham Young to relocate

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[6]Robert Warne Reeve, Journal, in "Thomas Robert Reeve" ed. Fern S. Reeve, 3, typescript copy in possession of the author. Italics added.

his family to Southern Utah and there help strengthen the struggling Cotton Mission.

The great colonizing efforts of Brigham Young form an extraordinary chapter in the story of America's western frontier. The Mormons, who arrived in the barren desert of the Great Basin in 1847, were largely fleeing the religious persecution which had driven them from their homes and lands in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. In their desperation to live in peace these Latter-Day Saints willingly committed to settling undesirable lands. They believed that by doing so they could isolate themselves from outside detractors, and hence, freely practice their religion and build the kingdom of God.[7]

The Mormons' tragic experience in the midwest further created a desire among church leaders to establish their Godly society based upon the principles of independence and economic self-sufficiency. Thus, as Larson perceives it, the primary motives behind Brigham Young sending a band of "intrepid settlers" to the rough hard country of the Virgin River Basin was to "build up the out posts of Zion and to aid the church in achieving the goal of economic self-sufficiency."[8] Their mission was to produce enough cotton to

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[7]See Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Utah, 1540-1886* (San Francisco: History Company, 1889, repr. 1964).

[8]Andrew Karl Larson, "Agricultural Pioneering: Virgin River Basin," *Utah Magazine* 9 (June 1947): 28. Larson in a subsequent article, "The Cotton Mission: Settlement of the Virgin River Basin," Ibid. 9 (August 1947): 6; and in "Agricultural Pioneering in the Virgin River Basin," notes other factors motivating Brigham Young's efforts to settle southern Utah. These include: controlling the approaches to the Great Basin, serving as a way

supply the church members' needs; with this goal (and other geo-political objectives) in mind, the Mormon prophet directed Burgess and a large group of colonists to relocate in Utah's warm southern climate and there establish new settlements as well as reinforce those already existing.[9]

Yet, in the southern region's cruel environment the Cotton Mission never really flourished and as the century wore on the settlers turned more towards eking out an existence for their individual families than to communal cotton production.[10] For the residents of the eastern half of the Cotton Mission who were located along the banks of the Virgin River—in particular the communities of Virgin City, Duncan's Retreat, Grafton, Rockville, Springdale, and Shunsberg—even providing for their families proved difficult. For them, accepting the prophet's call included contending with the unpredictable and often brutal waters of the Virgin River which periodically overflowed its banks to claim increasing portions of farmland.

These uninviting conditions were all that welcomed the Thomas Burgess

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station for a new immigrant route over the old Spanish Trail, providing a link with a proposed Colorado River trade route, converting Indians to Mormonism, and protecting travelers from Indian depredations.

[9]Larson, "Cotton Mission," 25.

[10]According to historian Leonard J. Arrington the "most telling achievement of the Cotton Mission was in serving as a springboard for the planting of other Mormon colonies in southern Nevada, southern Colorado, eastern Utah, northern Arizona, northern New Mexico, and northern Sonora and Chihuahua in Mexico." In essence, Arrington suggests, St. George, the capital of the Cotton Mission, became a "second hub" of the Mormon Kingdom. See Leonard J. Arrington, "The Mormon Cotton Mission in Southern Utah," *Pacific Historical Review*, 25(August, 1956): 221-238.

family to the area in 1861. Burgess' daughter Emma and son-in-law Robert Warne Reeve accompanied his immediate family as they arrived along the Virgin River around the first of December. The small group camped between the new towns of Duncan and Grafton "until the land was surveyed and drawn."[11] Burgess drew "a blank" and Reeve "two fractions" and so on 20 December they started towards St. George in the hopes of bettering their land allotment. However, when they arrived at Virgin City Reeve's wife delivered her first baby forcing the group to stop for a few days while the new mother rested. During this time they were offered another draw of land; they received "only 3 1/2 acres of farm land and a[n] acre city lot."[12]

Five days later a tremendous rain began to drench the area. The Virgin River and its tributaries all ran high floods which obliterated the first colonizing attempt at Grafton and swept away much of the land at Virgin City and Rockville. For the first settlers of Duncan's Retreat the floods proved too great a challenge; they sold their claims and moved away. Reeve, Burgess and eight others, looking to improve upon their poor draw of lots in Virgin City, bought the claims in Duncan's Retreat and settled there. The ensuing years did not prove untroubled for the two families; the Virgin continued to take its toll. Reeve

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[11]In settling a new town it was common practice among Mormons to use an egalitarian lottery system to assign colonizers their land. To ensure that all received equal chance at the best land, each settler, regardless of authority position, drew numbers, generally from a hat, which corresponded to the surveyed town lots.

[12]Reeve, 1.

described their difficulties: "At the present time, 1866, there is not more than one half the bottom land left that was here when we came, but we have been told . . . to hold our positions as long as possible."[13]

Staying Power

As previously indicated, Reeve stated that "many" could not endure the hardships of the region and after thirty years along the river bottom, owing to the complete abandonment of his community, even Reeve moved away. Despite the continual flow of settlers leaving the basin, there are examples of remarkable staying power among some of the villages. In Duncan's Retreat, according to the federal census records, over eighty percent of the families living there in 1870 remained in 1880. However, the same was not true for twenty years later. While the community itself was completely abandoned by 1893 due to continued flooding, less than one-fifth of the town's families found new homes along the upper river basin (see Table 1).[14] The rest, like Reeve, found land more suitable to farming, no doubt far removed from the destructive forces of the Virgin River. Reeve, in May, 1892 moved his family to Hinckley, Utah where he described things as "quite different" from the "crowded"

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[13]Ibid., 3. Although Reeve's account does not specify who "told" the settlers "to hold [their] positions" it was most certainly the church hierarchy.

[14]U.S. Manuscript Census, Washington County, Utah, 1860-1900; Kane County, Utah, 1870. All census references are from Washington County, Utah except 1870 when boundary changes included the up-river communities in Kane County.

Table 1. Families* Along the Upper Virgin River with at least One Member Persisting, 1860-1900.

Year	Total Families	Persisted Through 1870	Persisted Through 1880	Persisted Through 1900
Virgin City				
1860	16	5 (31%)	2 (13%)	2 (13%)
1870	36		19 (53%)	9 (25%)
1880	36			17 (47%)
Grafton				
1870	7		5 (71%)	4 (57%)
1880	9			6 (67%)
Rockville				
1870	37		14 (38%)	5 (14%)
1880	42			14 (33%)
Shunsberg				
1870	7		4 (57%)	3 (43%)
1880	15			4 (27%)
Duncan's Ret.				
1870	11		9 (82%)	2 (18%)
1880	13			2 (15%)
Springdale				
1880	9			5 (55%)

Source: U.S. Manuscript Census, 1860-1900. *Includes any male member of the family who was traceable through the census records. See footnote 17 for a further explanation of methodology.

situation in Dixie.[15] Interestingly, according to church membership records those leaving the river basin prior to 1900 were generally moving outside of Washington County; towns within Arizona and Millard County, Utah were the top destinations of these migrants.[16]

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[15]Reeve, 4. Hinckley is in Millard County.

[16]Virgin City and Rockville Ward Membership Records, Hurricane Family History Library, Hurricane, Utah. In the Virgin City records, dated "Early-1902" 87% of those leaving the ward moved outside of Washington County; Millard County and Arizona were the top destinations. For the Rockville ward the results were similar with Millard County and

Yet, while Robert Reeve joined those moving into Millard County, his son, Thomas remained along the river basin and took up residence with his new wife in Virgin City. Certainly one cannot help but wonder what motivated those who remained in the face of such hostile surroundings, and one must even further question what separated those who stayed from those who left.[17] Apart from Duncan's Retreat, the other communities along the Virgin River Basin experienced a comparatively high turnover rate especially in the first ten years of settlement. For example, in Virgin City, only one-third of the town's original settlers remained by 1870 and by 1880 only two of the original sixteen families persisted. The numbers vary from community to community, but, the general pattern seems to indicate that those who arrived after the initial settlement period were more likely to persevere. It is plausible that because many of the difficult tasks of colonization, such as building roads, irrigation

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Arizona attracting most of the movers; surprisingly, none of those leaving Rockville during this time period relocated within Washington County.

[17]If at least one family member was traceable through the census records, then that family was counted as persisting. Hence, in the case of the Reeves, even though Robert Warne Reeve moved away in 1891 and thus did not appear on the 1900 census, his son, Thomas Robert Reeve, was listed as a resident of Virgin City in 1900, and therefore, the family was included among the persisters. The problem inherent with this methodology is the difficulty of tracing female daughters who might have married during the decade between census counts; however, among the families studied there were only a few whose children were all girls. This, of course, excludes young couples with only one child who would not have been of marriageable age by the next census. Overall, there is a minimal likelihood of these numbers being skewed by families with daughters who may have married and remained in the area but were untraceable. The other difficulty in this type of study is compensating for those who may have died between census records; yet, by calculating persistence based upon traceable family members this problem should also be minimal.

ditches, and community structures, had already been accomplished, new settlers could integrate more easily into an established social order. Even with these advantages, the turnover rate was still around fifty percent among the later arrivals, the low being thirty-three percent persistence in Rockville, and the high, sixty-seven percent in Grafton (see Table 1). In the end, the results for the four communities still existing in 1900 are remarkably similar and prove Jepson extraordinarily accurate; close to half of the total families in the region had at least one family member who had persisted for twenty years or more (See Table 2).[18]

Table 2. Families in 1900 that Persisted for Twenty Years or More Along the Upper Virgin River Gorge.

Community	Total Families in 1900	Number of Persisters	Percent of Persisters
Virgin City	34	19	56%
Grafton	11	6	54%
Rockville	23	14	61%
Springdale	17	7	41%
Shunsberg	0		
Duncan's Retreat	0		

Source: U.S. Manuscript Census, 1860-1900.

In interpreting the distinction between those who stayed and those who left, a natural assumption is that the persisters enjoyed a financial security that perhaps mitigated the otherwise stark conditions. As a whole, however,

[18]U.S. Manuscript Census, 1860-1900.

neither group commanded great wealth and therefore, an economic interpretation fails to provide a completely satisfactory explanation.[19] Perhaps the answer resides in the individual character traits of those who were called upon to bear the trials of the Virgin River Basin. Robert Reeve gave one indication as to his staying power when he wrote: ". . . we have been told from time to time to hold our positions as long as possible."[20] His statement implies

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[19]U.S. Manuscript Census, 1860-1870. In comparing the persisters' real estate and personal estate values listed in the 1860 and 1870 census against the non-persisters the difference in economic conditions between the two groups only partially explains why some stayed and others moved. For example, the 1860 median real estate value for the persisters was 67 percent higher than the non-persisters; however, the median personal estate values were identical at $300. The results varied in 1870. In that year the difference in real estate value fell to a 33 percent margin in favor of those who stayed. The same groups' personal estate value jumped to 75 percent higher than those who left. In general then, the persisters' economic condition appeared better than the non-persisters and may partially account for the latter groups movement. Yet, it is also interesting to note that the largest landholder in 1870, Ansom Winsor at $3,000, was among those who had moved by 1880. For the persisters in 1860 the median real estate value was $250 compared to $150 for the non-persisters. The average real estate value was $250, with a low of $100 and a high of $440, for the non-persisters the real estate average was $309 with a low of $75 and a high of $1200. In 1870 the median real estate value for the persisters was $300 versus $225 for the non-persisters. In personal estate the median was $350 for those who stayed and $200 for those who left. In the same year the average real estate for the persisters was $483 with a low of $0 and a high of $1500; for the non-persisters the low was also $0, the high was $3,000 and the average was $387.

In addition, neither age nor occupation were significant in explaining the difference between the two groups. In general, the male heads of household in both groups were around 42 years old and the majority were farmers. In 1860 the actual statistics for the persisters were: average age, 35; median age, 36; youngest, 26; oldest, 45; occupation: farmer, 60%; farm laborer, 20%; and other, 20%. For the same year among the non-persisters: average age, 42; median age, 40; youngest, 23; and oldest, 64; occupation: farmer, 100%. In 1870 the persisters statistics are: average age, 45; median age, 47; youngest, 22; oldest, 79; occupation: farmer, 64%; farm laborer, 13%; and other, 23%. The non-persisters in 1870 follow: average age, 43; median age, 42; youngest, 21; oldest, 85; occupation: farmer, 61%; farm laborer, 19%; and other, 19%.

[20]Reeve, 3.

a devotion and submission to church authority as a reason for remaining.[21]

In addition to this religious zeal it is important to understand the mind-set of the saints concerning marginal lands; generally they were willing to accept the tribulations of the arid west as a trade off for isolation and religious freedom. Thus, the saints were often officially instructed, even from the pulpit, to colonize unattractive areas. A notable example was a discourse delivered by church apostle George Q. Cannon on 10 August 1873 at the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. Cannon told the saints that "good countries are not for us," but "the worst places in the land we can probably get and we must develop them." He then explained that if the saints did take the "good country" it would not be long "before the wicked would want it." The saints should instead "thank God" for what they have even if it is "a little oasis in the desert where a few can settle."[22] In essence, the saints were consigned to their trying circumstances by their devotion to a church hierarchy they believed to be divinely inspired.

In southern Utah similar messages were also promulgated by local authorities. In a conference held in St. George from 4-6 May 1866, Elder H. W. Miller compared his farming experiences in the East with that of northern and

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[21]For specific examples of this devotion among those called to the Cotton Mission see Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* Chapter 8.

[22]*Journal of Discourses* (26 vols., Liverpool, 1854-1886), vol. 16, pp. 143-44. In this discourse Cannon was specifically addressing a failed Arizona colonizing attempt; however, his words reflect church teachings for all regions.

southern Utah and he concluded "to his entire satisfaction that a small piece of land well cultivated was more lucrative in yielding comfort and wealth than a very large piece with common cultivation"[23] In addition, the saints were often encouraged and directed concerning their utilization of these "small piece[s] of land." On one occasion the presiding authority for the area, Erastus Snow, toured the up-river settlements and delivered his counsel to the saints. The report of his visit states, "the brethren were encouraged to plant cotton more extensively, and although the season is far advanced were advised to plant all they can within the next few days, as the crop of cotton will otherwise be light this season, and the mills will be idle."[24] Snow also down-played the recent floods the settlers had experienced, when he commented, "We found the saints in . . . cheerful spirits. The high waters of the Rio Virgin have done less damage than was at first reported. The prospect for fruit this season is very flattering: orchards are laden with every variety of the climate."[25]

If the reports in the *Desert News* are any indication Snow was correct about the saints' cheerful attitudes, at least until the next floods hit. A. J. Workman, an original settler of Virgin City, wrote to the church newspaper perfectly content with his conditions: "I have quite a family, about a dozen in all,

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[23]*Deseret News*, Salt Lake City, 15:197.

[24]Ibid., 16:201.

[25]Ibid.

and by the help of the Lord I live and have plenty, and raise it from four or five acres; and I believe I could live well and support my family on three acres. We do not know what we can do until we try."[26] With such a positive outlook and religious devotion, it is no wonder Workman was one of only two Virgin City original settlers to persist along the basin for over forty years.

Winnowing Agent

Thus, the religious devotion of these faithful Mormons coupled with a mind-set programmed to accept less than desirable lands and further enhanced by particularly positive dispositions largely accounts for the persistence of these rugged individuals in the face of devastating circumstances. However, generally speaking, this devotion and determination appear in at least three distinguishable levels which led to different responses from the settlers. The first level is adequately demonstrated by Workman's optimistic attitude and religious piety which likely characterized those who persisted.

The next group, while still demonstrating their reverence for church authority perhaps lacked Workman's sanguine outlook or his sturdy fortitude to remain in the region despite its unfavorable environment. For example, many

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[26]Ibid., 16:246. Workman submitted equally glowing reports on other occasions. See *Desert News*, volumes 15: 29, 189; and 16:49.

colonizers revealed their continued devotion to the Mormon hierarchy by seeking releases from church authorities prior to leaving. Charles Burke, like so many others, had been called to the Cotton Mission and had settled in Virgin City. Yet, as the floods continued to decimate his means of existence he opted for brighter prospects elsewhere. His daughter wrote, "When father decided to move to Hinckley he went to St. George and asked the Stake President for a release from his Dixie Cotton Mission call. They gave it to him with their blessings."[27] Joseph Black, a Rockville resident, was also discouraged by the burdens of the Cotton Mission. After determining he could not make a proper living for his family, Black wrote to Brigham Young describing his valiance in settling the region but regretted that due to the growing size of his household and the difficulties of the river basin he felt he could not adequately subsist in Rockville. Permission was granted by the prophet for Black to move to Millard County and buy a wheat farm.[28]

The final group of colonizers lacked both devotion to authority and dogged determination. Among these saints, releases were not obtained prior to leaving; in particular, following yet another devastating rampage by the Virgin River in 1868 a number of families deserted. Certainly they were not

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[27]Carrie Burke Wright, "Memories," in "Mary Jane Burke Reeve," ed., Fern Reeve, 3, typescript copy in possession of the author.

[28]Bradshaw, 283.

highly regarded for abandoning their posts. When the local hierarchy went into the area to boost morale and reinforce the saints' religious conviction the report described the residents of Virgin City, Duncan's Retreat and Rockville, as "a little cast down over the loss of their farms" and then noted that many of them "stampeded last winter" without first obtaining a release. Those who remained were admonished to follow "the Savior's parable: that the wise man built his house on a rock, and when the winds blew and the floods came, that house stood!"[29]

Thus, it seems apparent that the Virgin, in effect, served as a winnowing agent. It separated those with fortitude, religious zeal and a mind-set acceptable to demanding circumstances from those lacking one or more of these characteristics. Indeed, by 1900 the Mormon community building experience along the upper Virgin River Basin had produced a determined group of individuals with extraordinary staying power. Therefore, when a proposal was made in 1893 to construct a nearly seven mile canal to bring water to the thirsty land known as the Hurricane Bench, these families scraped together what little money they had to incorporate and take stock in the Hurricane Canal Company. They were investing in their hopes for an improved future, and even though two previous surveys had deemed the canal

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[29]*Deseret News*, 17:135.

impossible, the hardships these colonizers had already endured created in them a perfect group to accept the challenge.

CHAPTER III

"AN IMPROBABLE DREAM"

In the 1990s the story of the canal's construction is almost legendary, especially among Hurricane natives. The pioneers who built it are heros—"men of integrity who had a dream, an improbable dream."[1] These heros have received national attention for their exploits. A U. S. Government report describes their ditch building as "one of the most enterprising [efforts] connected with the history of Virgin Valley."[2] And an article in the *Saturday Evening Post* calls their canal "an engineering feat . . . a demonstration of human persistency, of courage in the face of ruinous odds."[3] Locally their story is dramatized each year in *Men of Steel,* and histories, remembrances, and memoirs abound with additional accolades for Hurricane's founders.

The story, though familiar, bears repeating; it is indeed replete with heros, "men of integrity," and with stories of courage against "ruinous odds."

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[1]Hurricane Canal Plaque, inscription, Hurricane, Utah.

[2]Department of Agriculture, 220.

[3]Charles Morrow Wilson, "Pioneers, 1937," *The Saturday Evening Post,* 4 September 1937, 57. The canal was also featured in a brief article in another national magazine. See Christian Jensen, "The Canal on the Canyon Wall," *Ford Times,* December 1958, 44-6.

Nonetheless, the "men of steel" were human—or at least alloy. Despite years of perseverance along the upper river basin a majority of original stockholders gave up and abandoned the project years before its completion. Their labors were unrewarded and their families unattended; most sold or forfeited their stock and did what was natural and expected of them: provided for their families. It was only after the LDS church lent its support that the deserters came running back and eagerly pushed the project to completion. The story that follows is of determined men and women who faced extraordinary challenges and responded remarkably well; yet even the remarkable reach limits. The canal's completion despite these limits is reason for praise.

It was some time following the establishment of St. George in 1861 that Erastus Snow and pioneer surveyor, John M. Macfarlane, first explored the possibilities of bringing water to the land soon called the Hurricane Bench. Macfarlane felt such a project unfeasible and it was turned down.[4] The following decade Brigham Young initiated a church wide cooperative enterprise campaign and journeyed to Southern Utah to promote it. On this excursion he was accompanied by his son John W. Young, whom the prophet intended to place in a position of authority within the Cotton Mission. However, John Young had his own agenda. After exploring available lands in the Cotton

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[4]James Jepson, Jr., *Memories and Experiences of James Jepson, Jr.*, ed. Eta Holdaway Spendlove, n.p., 1944, 20.

Mission, John decided if the Virgin River could not be diverted to the Hurricane and La Verkin benches there was nothing in Utah's Dixie he would have. John was conducted to a low spot on the Virgin where he sighted his leveling instrument up river. He was not impressed: "'We'll have to take it out clear above Rockville; it's impracticable; I'm going home."'[5] And he did. The Hurricane Bench remained inviting, yet thirsty, for two more decades before the "impracticable" began.

"It Can Be Done"

As the up-river settlers occasionally traveled to St. George their journey led past the attractive Hurricane Flat stretching seductively before them (see Figure 13, Appendix I). Its expanse far surpassed the "tiny plots of soil" and small garden spots called "dinner-baskets" the pioneers then struggled to farm.[6] They looked longingly at the virgin land; some dreamed of a canal funneling life to its barren soil. Levi N. Harmon of Toquerville ran cattle on the bench and believed a canal was possible.[7] John Steele, also from Toquerville, had some horses grazing there and "in looking over the situation" believed he

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[5]Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 383-4.

[6]Jepson, *Memories,* 19.

[7]Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 385.

had "figured out just how the water could be put on the Hurricane Bench."[8] One spring when James Jepson of Virgin City was returning from a trip to Beaver County he stopped at Steele's for dinner. In their conversation Steele announced his contemplations to Jepson who enthusiastically responded "I have been thinking about the same thing for years. What's more I have a place already picked out for a dam."[9]

The two planned to meet the following week and inspect Jepson's chosen site. On the appointed day Jepson and Steele rode to the top of a "solid white limestone," box canyon in the Virgin Narrows. They left their horses and climbed into the steep gorge. Steel had his spirit leveler and felt satisfied with what he learned; the project should begin. Jepson agreed to "arouse enthusiasm" for the canal in Virgin, Grafton, Rockville, and Springdale; Steele would do the same in Toquerville.[10] Soon a committee met in Virgin City and Jepson conducted them to his proposed dam site.[11] As Martin Slack remembers: "Surely the prospects were anything but encouraging. After viewing the situation a few decided that the project was impracticable and

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[8]Jepson, *Memories*, 20.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid., 21. The committee consisting of Martin Slack, Sr., J. T. Willis and Levi N. Harmon of Toquerville, Hosia Stout of Rockville, Thomas Flanigan of Springdale and Jepson of Virgin City met Monday 27 June 1893.

utterly impossible to accomplish, but the majority said it can be done, and we will do it."[12] For Jepson it was a "thrilling, happy decision"—happy at the time, maybe, but it was a decision that required over a decade of sacrifice before the builder's struggles garnered a reward.[13]

Yet, optimistically these cotton mission survivors gathered at the Toquerville Hall, on 11 July 1893, to "effect a temporary organization" for "ascertaining the feasibility" of building a canal.[14] Four days later delegates from the various communities met and elected transitory leaders with a president, Levi N. Harmon; a secretary, Martin Slack; and three directors, James Jepson, John A. Wood and Charles A. Workman. This executive committee was empowered to levy a tax of three cents per acre, in advance, and an additional two cents per acre, if necessary, to complete a survey of the ditch site.[15]

On 25 August, stockholders met in Toquerville to hear the Executive Committee's report. They described the county surveyor's preliminary findings: the length of the proposed canal would be "about seven 1/2 miles"

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[12]Martin Slack to The Presidency of the St. George Stake of Zion, photocopy of holograph in possession of the author.

[13]Jepson, *Memories*, 21.

[14]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 11 July 1893, Hurricane Canal Company Office, Hurricane, Utah.

[15]Ibid., 15 July 1893

with a fifteen foot dam at the head. The completion of the canal would make "about two thousand acres . . . of the best quality" land available for cultivation. Isaac Macfarlane, the surveyor, would not estimate the construction cost until he finished a final survey. However, his preliminary report was enough to motivate action. It was motioned and carried that the nearly one hundred members enrolled "prosecute [their] labors in building the canal." A motion to incorporate as the Hurricane Canal Company also carried and a committee of Martin Slack and William A. Bringhurst was appointed to meet with a like committee from the up-river settlements to draft Articles of Incorporation.[16]

Shortly, the committee completed the articles, and after complying with the necessary legal formalities, the probate judge of Washington County issued a certificate of incorporation for the Hurricane Canal Company. The amount of capital stock was set at 2,000 shares of primary water rights with one share equaling an acre of water rights at a par value of forty dollars. Fifty-three people, most from Toquerville, took stock in the new company, buying 1,035 shares (see Figure 4).

Interestingly, Toquerville was listed as the principle place of business for the canal company even though its location on high ground along Ash Creek

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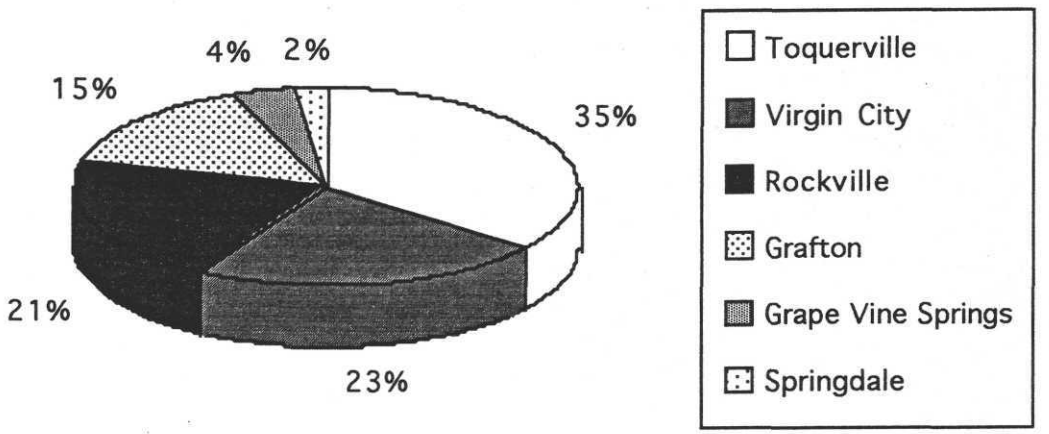
[16]Ibid., 25 August 1893.

Figure 4. Originating Towns of Hurricane Canal Company's 1893 Stockholders



Source: Records of the Hurricane Canal Company

secured it from the erosion that continuously plagued the river basin communities. One must therefore wonder what motivated such heavy initial interest from Toquerville. Martin Slack's experience offers one explanation. Slack remained company secretary for nearly twelve years, but upon the canal's completion he did not move to Hurricane. Rather, he gave his draw of lots to his sons Vernon and Lorenzo.[17] Thus, land for Toquerville's youth likely motivated involvement in the company, although, once the slow, difficult construction actually began interest from Toquerville waned. Another of Slack's sons, Walter, states, "I worked my assessments and finally got

[17]Walter Slack, "Walter Slack," Historical Records Survey, WPA, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, microfilm 920, #91.

discouraged and traded my share to someone else."[18]

In just over two years the Articles of Incorporation were amended, replacing Toquerville with Virgin City as the company's base town.[19] This shift coincided with the increasing involvement of Virgin City residents in the project and the converse among Toquerville inhabitants. In fact, by 1910, four years following the arrival of Hurricane's first resident, there were no former Toquerville denizens living as household heads in Hurricane. As further demonstrated in the next chapter it seems apparent that the varying degrees of hardships experienced among the different communities led to different levels of commitment to the canal project, especially as construction crept endlessly onward. Those who felt relatively secure with their means of existence could afford to abandon the canal, but to the more desperate investors, the canal symbolized a brighter future—one for which they were willing to sacrifice.

Constructing the canal did require sacrifice. No road, "not even a mule trail" led to the dam site and prior to the carving of a "rough trail" down the canyon in 1895 workers laboriously hefted food, tools, bedding, and even an anvil into the narrow gorge. Before construction began the company levied another tax of eight cents per share, three cents in cash and "the balance in

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[18]Ibid.

[19]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 28 December 1895.

available means."[20] With this income Isaac Macfarlane was again hired at two dollars per day to make a permanent survey. He estimated construction costs at $53,000.00 to cover all expenses except the dam and flumes.[21] As Walter Slack recalls, MacFarlane "did a fine piece of work but he hadn't much faith in [the canal]. He could see the immense amount of work and the money it would take and he knew how poor the people were so he did not think that the people would ever be able to finish it."[22]

Despite MacFarlane's pessimism construction soon began. The company levied the stockholders their first of many labor assessments on 30 December 1893: $2.50 per share "to be worked up" by 1 May 1894.[23] According to the company by-laws a member had the opportunity of either working "his labor assessment or hiring it done provided said labor [was] accomplished within the time specified."[24] Using the contract method the canal route was laid out in four-rod stations; each station was examined to determine the type of construction it entailed. The company then allowed fifteen cents per cubic yard for the easier earth excavation, seventy-five cents for loose rock and

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[20]Ibid., 24 October 1893.

[21]Jepson, *Memories*, 21.

[22]Walter Slack.

[23]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 30 December 1893.

[24]Ibid., 4 December 1893.

gravel, and a dollar twenty-five per cubic yard for the stubborn, solid rock.[25] Frequently if a station proved more difficult than estimated the board granted compensation.[26]

The more demanding sections requiring tunnels were often named for the unlucky workers who contracted them. The McMurtrie and Rockville tunnels are two examples.[27] This latter cavity, so labeled for the Rockville men who labored on it, proved troublesome (see Figure 14, Appendix I). The original workers abandoned it and Ira E. Bradshaw submitted the only bid to complete the contract. The board awarded the difficult section to Bradshaw at $20 per linear foot and required that he post a guarantee of $300 against the completion of the tunnel.[28] In all, workers blasted nine tunnels with a combined length of sixty-one rods through various mountainous sections. They also built a number of flumes to carry the water "around the most precipitous cliffs" (see Figures 15-17, Appendix I).[29]

In addition to these flumes and tunnels, a sturdy diversion dam was

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[25]Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 389.

[26]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company. The records contain several examples of such compensations.

[27]See Records of the Hurricane Canal Company and Larson *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 394.

[28]Larson, "Agricultural Pioneering in the Virgin River Basin," 306.

[29]Department of Agriculture, 221.

essential to the canal's success. In January 1895, the canal board met near the head of the canal at a point where the river bed was approximately forty feet wide and the bottom and sides were solid rock (see Figures 18-19, Appendix I). On the north side of this spot a perpendicular, solid-limestone cliff towered a hundred feet skyward. On the south, a rock rose nine feet to a shelf above the river bed. Canal directors felt it was an ideal place for their blockade and decided the dam should be seventy-five feet thick and five feet higher than the bottom of the canal.[30] The Isom company consisting of William Isom, John W. Isom, James Jepson and Richard Parker contracted for the dam with a $1,000 bid. Their agreement also specified if floods damaged the work during construction they would be compensated.[31]

The four men shortly set about their task. They planned to raise the water to the rock shelf on the river's south side and use it as a natural spillway. These innovative dam builders shot an overhanging cliff on the canyon's north side into the river to form a base. They then added huge boulders weighing several tons and filled in the gaps with smaller rocks. The men felt their structure was formidable and in April 1895 the canal board accepted the work and paid the builders $1,150 (the additional $150 was given as "reimbursement

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[30]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 29 January 1895; Larson, "Agricultural Pioneering in the Virgin River Basin," 303.

[31]Larson, "Agricultural Pioneering in the Virgin River Basin," 302.

for flood damage done during construction.")[32]

The temperamental Virgin did not take kindly to any disruptions in its flow. It was only a year later that the river, in a fit of anger, threw the boulders downstream. Not to be discouraged the canal company tried again. This time they hauled a large pine log from nearby Kolob Mountain to the dam site. Workers then drilled a hole in the north side's rock wall and cut a slot in the shelf on the south. They finagled the pine log across the water into these cuts. Still not satisfied, the workers anchored big cedar posts to the pinewood dam with their tops angled into the river. This whole mass they then weighted down with rocks. Still the Virgin proved stronger. In another burst of fury the river lifted the bulky log from its slots and flicked it like a toothpick down the canyon. Undaunted, the stockholders returned the pine blockade to the dam site. This time they added a second layer of cedars and rocks and bound the entire stack together with galvanized wire. The river's hateful floods were no match for this third dam; it held until 1911-12, when canal employees blasted a solid rock column across the river and cemented the barrier into place.[33]

The eventual success with the dam aside, it seems that from the outset

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[32]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 22 April 1895.

[33]Woodrow Jepson, interview by author, Tape recording, Hurricane, Utah, 8 October 1994. According to Jepson this rock column lasted until the flood of 1966 washed a twelve feet "hunk" away. Jepson himself repaired the dam in 1966 which held until the canal was replaced by a pipeline in the mid 1980s. See also Larson, "Agricultural Pioneering in the Virgin River Basin," 303-4.

meeting company tax and labor assessments proved difficult for the already economically depressed settlers. They began their vast undertaking the same year that the United States plunged into one of the most severe depressions in its history. Over one-sixth of the nation's railroads went into bankruptcy in 1893, and farm prices and income in the 1890s reached their lowest level in three decades. Utah was hit particularly hard by this economic downturn. The state's silver production dropped thirty-three percent, copper forty-eight percent, and salt output suffered an incredible ninety-two percent decline. Needless to say unemployment levels ran high and it was a challenging time for household heads to provide for their families.[34]

In this context beginning the Hurricane Canal project seems even more absurd. But the river-basin denizens were accustomed to economic struggles. The nationwide depression notwithstanding, they began digging their ditch. Less than a month after issuing the survey levy, however, the board resolved that those delinquent "shall forfeit their claims if said amounts remain unpaid after November 30th 1893."[35] The board issued a similar warning on 26 May 1894 to all members delinquent on labor, produce, or cash assessments. The same day the board declared its new assessment for the coming year: "$7.50

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[34]Leonard J. Arrington, "Utah and the Depression of the 1890's," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 29(January 1961): 3-18.

[35]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 11 November 1893.

per share in labor to be worked out by 1 May 1895."[36] Company membership required much and gave little.

The first winter of construction the workers camped in the open at the bottom of the shaded, chilly canyon (see Figures 20-21, Appendix I). Morris Wilson, Jr. described the conditions: "Our first shelter was a wagon cover anchored to some rocks and pegged down into the ground. This made a sort of lean-to in which we had our beds." One worker facetiously named this early camp "Robber's Roost," and another campsite made of dugouts in a wash's earthen bank earned the lasting label of "Chinatown." These sleeping arrangements were not the only inconveniences; Wilson also notes the "lack of good tools" and the difficulty of getting supplies. He does remember things becoming "much more comfortable" when workers completed the road into the canyon. Then it was possible to use "wagon boxes with the covers stretched over the bows to sleep in and live in. There [they] could keep warm and dry."[37]

Yet, even the supply road did not make the actual construction easier. The canal clung to the steep hillsides and ledges of the Hurricane Hill making horses and plows impossible tools. Instead, the shovel, pick, crowbar, wheelbarrow and hand-driven drill carved the ditch out of the canyon wall. "At

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[36]Ibid., 26 May 1894.

[37]Morris Wilson, Jr., oral interview by Andrew Karl Larson in *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 390.

times they had to hang men down from ledges" to reach the ditch, but, rock blasting was most challenging, especially for the workers who were ignorant of explosives.[38] Thomas Isom remembered picking dynamite out of "many a hole which had misfired." He explains, "We had to do this, dangerous as it was; we could not afford to lose a single stick."[39] For a season, the workers did receive much needed explosives training from displaced Nevada and Silver Reef miners. The miners were victims of the depression of 1893 which was aggravated by the Congressional repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act late that year. The repeal brought silver mining to a virtual standstill. Some migrating miners heard of the canal project and hired on—not for cash, but for board during the winter and a horse and saddle to leave with once spring came. James Jepson's son Woodrow recalls, "Pa and John Sanders hired a couple of [miners] to work all winter. In the spring Pa gave them a little mare [horse] and John put a pack saddle and grub steak on her and that was their pay for the winter's work."[40]

Remarkably, the only fatality suffered during construction was not dynamite related. Rather, on a windy March afternoon in 1902, John Isom and

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[38]Walter Slack; Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 390.

[39]Thomas Isom, oral interview by Andrew Karl Larson in *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 390-1.

[40]Woodrow Jepson, interview.

Ira R. Bradshaw decided to quit work for the day and return to camp. The two sixteen-year-old boys tiredly walked below the canal where other workers rolled rocks to make a fill. Suddenly a rock whizzed past Bradshaw and struck Isom on the head killing him instantly.[41]

"Delinquent Assessments"

Work continued slowly, only progressing significantly during the winter when men and older boys could leave their farms in care of their families.[42] Annie Isom recorded: "My older brothers worked on the Hurricane Canal during the winter months then on the farm or any other job in the summer that offered a little cash to buy blasting materials for the coming winter."[43] Yet as labor on the canal continued unrewarded "many became discouraged and dropped out."[44] They had families to provide for and soon their dreams of a brighter future became eclipsed by current realities. Some did like Charles Workman, who wrote: "Sold ten shares in Hurricane Canal Company to

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[41]See Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 393; Stratton, *The Story of the Hurricane Canal,* 13.

[42]Not all the women stayed home, some spent the winter with their husbands as cooks for the workers. See Stratton, *The Story of the Hurricane Canal,* 13 and Lee.

[43]Annie Isom, diary, in Stratton, *The Story of the Hurricane Canal,* 12.

[44]Martin Slack.

McMurtrie. Have ten shares left."[45] Others failed to complete their labor assessments and forfeited, or gradually lost shares. This "dropping out" began the first year of construction and steadily grew throughout the next nine years. Ironically, John Steele, one of the canal's instigators, was among the first to have his claim reduced for failure to complete the assessed labor.[46]

Early the canal board attempted to head off the growing stampede of deserters; at the 3 November 1894, meeting, board members planned a promotional tour of the various communities to address "the citizens upon the vital interests depending upon the completion of the Hurricane Canal."[47] In addition, a month later "several members spoke upon the great importance of completing the canal."[48] Regardless, speeches did not feed families; members continued to falter and the canal board continued to levy labor assessments and issue forfeiture warnings.[49]

These ceaseless warnings aside, the board preferred keeping members

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[45]Charles Workman, diary, in Stratton, *Story of the Hurricane Canal*, 11.

[46]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company lists on 22 September 1894 the first evidence of drop outs. David Spilsbury, F. B. Jackson, Wm D. Jackson, E. R. Lamb, J. S. Harris, Elisha Lee, Wm B. Forsyth, and D. W. Matthews forfeited their claims "because of not performing the labor assessments." The same day George T. Batty's and John Steele's claims were reduced for not completing their assessments.

[47]Ibid., 3 November 1894.

[48]Ibid., 15 December 1894.

[49]Ibid, warnings almost became a regular part of board meetings. For example, in 1896 threats of forfeiture were issued 21 March, 23 May, and 11 July.

working over stopping construction. On 8 May 1897, company directors issued the coming year's labor assessment and then leniently allowed all members having worked two thirds of their assessment for the past year the "privilege" of working the balance during the coming year.[50] Also, following an outbreak of La grippe[51] the board graciously left the accounts open for another year due to "much sickness during the past winter."[52] Possibly motivated by a combination of compassion, desperation, and necessity, the board continued to push the work forward; it tolerantly kept memberships open despite failures to meet the assessed labor. It seems the principles of unity and cooperation learned by many of the canal members during their involvement with various LDS church cooperative enterprises in the 1870s became the same governing principles adopted by the canal board.[53] Rather than applying harsh individualistic business practices the board generally ruled using communitarian ideals shaped by their aspirations for an improved future. This cooperative attitude, no doubt, largely resulted from necessity; no individual held sufficient capital to

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[50]Ibid., 8 May 1897.

[51]La Grippe is the name used by Martin Slack to describe the sickness. It is synonymous with influenza, a viral disease causing mild respiratory symptoms, fever, muscle pains and headache, and often occurring in rapidly spreading epidemics.

[52]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 20 May 1899.

[53]Jepson, who was president of the canal company for most of its first decade, records: "On the 4th of March, 1874, the United Order was organized in Virgin. Our family and most everyone in the ward joined." See Jepson, *Memories*, 12. Certainly the other canal board members became similarly involved in their respective communities.

finance the canal alone. Workers could buy stock only with their labor. Yet, later, when the opportunity for speculation and personal gain presented itself the canal board maintained its cooperative standards.

These virtues aside difficulties continued to mount: twice the dam washed away; a La grippe epidemic swept through the work camp in 1898; another year, frost ravaged much of the worker's cash fruit crops, adding to their financial worries; and finally, the company lost its $200 filling fee for failure to bring water to the land within the specified three years allowed under the Desert Land Act.[54] This act required a twenty-five cents per acre deposit upon filing ($500 was paid for the 2,000 acre Hurricane Bench) and an additional dollar per acre to be paid upon water reaching the land. Interestingly, the Desert Land Act was a loosely drafted bill passed by Congress in 1877, complete with loopholes big enough for the canal company to climb through had it been so inclined. For example, one abuse reported under the act described a man who simply carried a can of water to his claim, poured it into a furrow and then vowed he had met the requirements to conduct water to his land.[55] Instead, the Hurricane Canal Company forfeited its claim and the government refunded its $500, but the $200 in filing fees were permanently lost.

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[54]Martin Slack. The La grippe epidemic described here is the same mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

[55]Paul W. Gates, *History of Public Land Law Development* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1968), 638-9.

Fortunately, upon Utah's admission to the Union in 1896 the federal government, as was customary, granted the new state public lands. Most of the acreage came under the designation of school lands, but Utah also received land grants for other public facilities such as insane asylums and deaf and dumb institutions. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of these lands was to be used to finance the specified institution.[56] The Hurricane Canal Board eagerly took advantage of the newly available land by having four different stockholders apply to the state land board for a total of 1,689 acres.[57] The four stockholders purchased the acreage in trust, paying twenty-five cents per acre at the time of selection and an additional dollar per acre "to be paid in ten annual installments."[58] In May of 1903 the company agreed to file on an additional acreage "sufficient to make [the] total quantity 2,000 acres."[59]

The filing difficulties aside, obstacles continued to multiply for the company, and by the end of 1898 the canal board sought sanctuary in the LDS

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[56]See Gates, Chapter 12, and Benjamin Horace Hibbard, *A History of the Public Land Policies* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1924), Chapter 16.

[57]*Eighth Annual Report of the State Board of Land Commissioners of the State of Utah, for the Year Ending December 31, 1903* (Salt Lake City: Star Printing Company, 1904), 58, 70, 76, 103. According to this report, Ira E. Bradshaw filed for 329.20 acres of deaf and dumb asylum lands, Thomas R. Reeve for 559.74 acres of institution for the blind lands, Arthur Hall for 160 acres of normal school lands, and Amos J. Workman for 640 acres of school lands.

[58]Department of Agriculture, 222.

[59]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 28 May 1898; 27 April 1901; 4 May 1903.

church. The church, after all, was responsible for these Cotton Mission descendants being in the uninviting southern Utah desert; it could perhaps reward their perseverance by subscribing to capital stock in their company.[60] Unfortunately, the church was still licking its financial wounds left from the tough anti-polygamy legislation of the previous decade. It had no money to invest—or so its leadership said. Turning to the church for assistance was a common strategy among saints struggling to tame rivers and cultivate deserts. In fact, as historian Leonard Arrington asserts, it was futile to undertake land projects in arid regions within the Mormon kingdom without the promise of church aid.[61]

Interestingly reclamation efforts in the Sevier Desert in west-central Utah received substantial financial backing from the Mormon church throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1897, a year before the Hurricane company requested help, Zion's Savings Bank and Trust Company, a church-controlled enterprise, granted $12,000 credit to the Deseret and Salt Lake Company to construct a dam on the Sevier River.[62] Certainly money was tight for the church, but it made cash available to the Sevier project while rejecting the Virgin basin settlers. The difference seems to be that the Sevier River effort

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[60]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 31 December 1898.

[61]Leonard J. Arrington, "Taming the Turbulent Sevier: A Story of Mormon Desert Conquest," *The Western Humanities Review* 5(Autumn 1951): 393-406.

[62]Ibid.

was under the close supervision of church president Wilford Woodruff. The Hurricane Canal, on the other hand, had no official church sanction and its stockholders were left begging.

Still hoping to hold things together despite the church's unfavorable response, the canal board conducted another promotional stomp among the various settlements. Optimistically Samuel Isom reported that "there was much interest manifested for the completing of the canal." After Isom's report a motion unanimously carried "that the work on the canal be prosecuted vigorously until its final completion."[63]

This professed "interest"notwithstanding the rough terrain near the canal head brought the labor to a virtual standstill. By the winter of 1901 fewer than ten men worked on the canal.[64] A notice was published in the *Dixie Falcon* to all delinquent shareholders that as much of their capital stock as necessary would be sold "to pay delinquent assessments thereon."[65] Harriet Elizabeth Stratton Lee remembers that her "father worked on the Hurricane ditch from the start to the finish," but she states, "I have known many a time when we sold our ditch credit for twenty-five cents on the dollar and times so

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[63]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 30 December 1899.

[64]Larson, in *"I was Called to Dixie,"* 394-5, states seven or eight continued to work, while Stratton, in *The Story of the Hurricane Canal*, 3, claims only three remained. It is difficult to verify which is most accurate. The canal board still believed in the project and several members still clung to their shares, but the work itself was virtually dead.

[65]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 5 January 1901.

bad we were glad to be able to get that much for it."[66]

Such struggles were not unique to the Hurricane Canal Company, or even to southern-Utah colonizers. All across the arid west turn-of-the-century reclamation efforts failed miserably. In fact, ninety percent of the West's private irrigation company's were in or near bankruptcy by 1902.[67] Such widespread failings add an additional element of distinctiveness to the Hurricane company's survival. By 1901, it had expended nearly $50,000 in labor; those still involved were not willing to let such efforts be wasted.[68] Once again the canal board turned to the church for rescue.

"I Wish They Would Send Me"

In the 1901 canal board election, for the first time since the company's incorporation, James Jepson was not elected president. Rather, it was as an anxious stockholder he paced outside the board meeting in Virgin City on 18 January 1902. Samuel Isom had previously been asked to journey to Salt Lake City and petition the LDS church for help, but "circumstances" prevented him from going.[69] Jepson commented to Alfred Hall, "I wish they would send me."

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[66]Lee.

[67]Gates, 651.

[68]Department of Agriculture, 221.

[69]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 18 January 1902.

Hall marched into the meeting announcing to the board Jepson's "wish." Without hesitation the board granted it and Jepson left two days later. He carried with him an appeal to the church's first presidency signed by each of the river basin bishops interested in the project.[70]

Once in Salt Lake City Jepson gained an audience with the LDS church's two highest governing bodies, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Jepson was addressed by President Joseph F. Smith, "Are you prepared for a refusal?" Jepson remembers, "I wanted so much to make the right answer. 'No,' I replied, I came here because I had faith that it was right and proper for me to do so. When you send missionaries out into the field to preach the gospel, you want men with faith."[71] According to Jepson his response drew a pleasant laugh from the president and set a good tone for the meeting. President Smith then drilled Jepson concerning all aspects of the project and finally queried him on how much tithing members of the five wards interested in the canal had paid. Jepson was not informed on this question, but John R. Winder, a counselor to the president, quickly retrieved the information. Jepson recalled, "the amount came to about $5,000, just the amount we had

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[70]Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 395.

[71]James Jepson, oral interview by Andrew Karl Larson, in *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 396-7.

asked for."[72] The president then asked if the church put up the $5,000 where the additional $15,000 required to complete the canal would come from? Jepson responded: "If you will take stock in the amount of $5,000 we will pay the men who do the work twenty-five percent in cash and seventy-five percent in stock. . . Then when the money is spent, the job will be done . . ." Jepson reaffirmed that the company was not seeking a donation, but wanted the church to take stock in the company. He predicted: "I think I can promise you that you will get your money back in a few years. . . . You are just helping us to help ourselves. The psychological effect of your help will be equal to the money itself, for the people will not be afraid to invest in the project."[73]

It seems Jepson had all the right words; a motion was quickly carried to have the church take $5,000 stock in the company. Jepson remembered, "It was the happiest moment of my life."[74] The First Presidency sent with Jepson a letter to the canal board outlining the agreement; in the letter they apologized that the previous First Presidency "was not in a position to extend . . . a helping hand" when formerly asked. The letter stated, "We may say that even now we can ill afford to spare this amount of money . . . but in making you an exception to the rule, we feel that we are doing the right thing at the right time; and we feel

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[72]Ibid.

[73]Ibid.

[74]Ibid.

to invoke the blessings of the Lord upon your labors on the canal, and upon your labors in making for yourselves new homes."[75]

Jepson accurately predicted the psychological affect church funding would have. The $5,000 was essential, but the fact that President Smith provided it added an identification with the church that brought members scurrying back to the project. With the church's support success seemed guaranteed and those who had clung to their stock despite the challenges were in an advantageous position to capitalize on their perseverance. They controlled a very valuable commodity—water—and could have sold it and collected annual rents, thereby laying every field, orchard, and garden under their dominion. Yet, there is no evidence of such an effort. Rather the canal board declared "all assessments heretofore levied be ignored, and a new assessment . . . be levied."[76] The slate was wiped clean and none received preferential treatment. The work rushed forward over the following two years. In fact, in August of 1902 the board was forced to consider an amount for a new labor assessment because "the two former assessments had been paid up."[77] For the first time, rather than being delinquent, members completed their labor

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[75]Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund, Salt Lake City, to Elder Ira E. Bradshaw, Virgin City, Utah, 23 January 1902, in Records of the Hurricane Canal Company. Jepson returned to southern Utah a hero. He was given a vote of thanks by the board and then on 31 May 1902 was voted $20 "for services, going to Salt Lake, last winter."

[76]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 12 April 1902.

[77]Ibid., 9 August 1902.

taxes early.

Soon, members gathered in Virgin City to draw town lots. Using the Mormon Village pattern the townsite was surveyed into five acre blocks with four lots in each block containing one and a quarter acres each. The "fields" were surveyed into forty acre blocks with streets two rods wide. Main Street was to be six rods wide and all other streets five. To prevent a "few big men" from controlling the town for speculation, shares were limited to twenty acres each—again evidence of cooperative principles.[78] These principles aside, there were some who petitioned for "a preference right in drawing for lots and farms." The motion was hotly debated and granted, but "was subsequently abandoned." [79] As Walter Slack recalls, "When [the canal] was finished the originators and those who had been with the project since the beginning were not given any preference, but all drew lots according to what they had invested."[80]

The Church also drew on its investment, and in fact, took an active

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[78]See Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 388.

[79]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 22 January 1904. There was an earlier draw of lots held 28 December 1896, but it seems the ensuing high membership turnover necessitated the second drawing. The record is not clear whether those who drew in 1896 kept their original land or if all lots were drawn anew in 1904. The later seems most probable. Likewise, with the "preference right" the record does not specify who was to be given special preference. Likely, those who stuck with the project wanted first draw over those who abandoned and later returned.

[80]Walter Slack.

interest in the company. After buying stock, the church sent Hyrum M. Smith and Abraham O. Woodruff to Southern Utah to inspect the project. Walter Slack remembers, "We took them through the tunnels and around the curves where we had built flumes and when they finished they said, 'Well gentlemen, we applaud your courage but we condemn your judgment.'"[81] Poor judgement notwithstanding, after water reached the Hurricane Bench the church sold its stock for $6,600 dollars, a $1,600 return.[82]

Workers finally finished the canal in 1904 (see Figures 22-24, Appendix I). It was eight feet wide at the bottom, ten feet at the top, and had a depth of four feet. For the first four miles the canal had a grade of one-fourth inch to the rod, and after that, one-eighth inch.[83] This hard won ditch, as Slack states, "was a God send to those people up the river who had been battling with floods and disasters since the early days. . . . Many of them were able to sell their holdings on the river and build pretty nice homes in Hurricane."[84] For resident Sarah Elizabeth Isom, Hurricane provided "a new life. It was [like] emerging from a

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[81]Ibid.

[82]Jepson, interview in Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 398.

[83]Department of Agriculture, 221-22.

[84]Walter Slack.

nutshell into a world where the vision was not cramped by canyon walls."[85] This new life began only after eleven years of trials and hardships through which even many of the determined Cotton-Mission survivors faltered. Yet, utilizing ingrained principles of unity and cooperative labor they banded together—especially following the church's financial boost—and completed the improbable canal. These same principles of communitarianism helped establish a strong social order in the new town and led it into two decades of rapid growth and economic prosperity.

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[85]Sarah Elizabeth Isom and Morris Wilson, "Brief Biography of Sarah Elizabeth Isom and Morris Wilson," Historical Records Survey, WPA, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, microfilm 920, #90.

CHAPTER IV

"NO ONE IS IDLE IN HURRICANE"

It was a clear, typically hot August day in 1904,when the long anticipated event occurred—the "impracticable" ditch channeled life to the Hurricane Bench. Many canal workers and their families gathered to witness "the water run out on the land" and celebrate the end of their decade old struggle.[1] They sang and prayed, drank lemonade and hop beer, and "deliberated on the name of the town" to be. Someone suggested Chaparral after the density of such bushes on the hillside and bench, another offered Lake City, "but the majority maintained the logical name was Hurricane."[2] After all, the canal company, the hill, and the flat all bore that name, and it was agreed the new town would too. The name originated, according to tradition, with Erastus Snow. He was on an exploratory trip within the Cotton Mission and as he passed over the yet unnamed Hurricane Hill a sudden whirlwind blew by and tore the top off his buggy. He exclaimed "'Well, that was a hurricane! We'll call

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[1]Charles Workman, diary in Stratton, *The Story of the Hurricane Canal*, 15.

[2]Sarah Elizabeth Isom, 5.

this place Hurricane Hill.'"[3] The name stuck, although when uttered by a long time resident one would never know the town was called after a windstorm. The lackadaisical southern-Utah drawl has truncated and smoothed pronunciation to "Hur-ra-cun," or, for a real old timer, "Hare-a-cun." Thus a tourist or newcomer is quickly identified simply by pronouncing "Hurricane" correctly.

"This Town is Unique"

It was not until 1906, two years after water reached the bench, that Thomas M. Hinton, the first resident of Hurricane arrived. Thomas' daughter Vera first remembered Hurricane "as a place where Slippery Elm, Rabbit Brush, Shapporel [sic] and a lot of other brush and wild flowers grew."[4] Eventually the native wildlife gave way to a thriving new town, but not without

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[3]Jepson, *Memories*, 27 and Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 383. This story is commonly told among Hurricane natives and is generally accepted as fact. Larson bases his rendering on an interview with James Jepson and then notes: "several others among the older settlers of Hurricane told me essentially the same story." There is, however, another version of native American origins: LeVan Martineau in *The Southern Paiutes: Legends, Lore, Language, and Lineage* (Las Vegas: KC Publications, 1992), 186-7, suggests "the name . . . doesn't come from the English word 'hurricane' as commonly thought." Rather it is derived from the Paiute word "Awduhng' Kawn" meaning "hot house." It is the name the Paiutes used for the hot springs cave on the Virgin River between Hurricane and La Verkin. Finally, a much less factual account is told by a few Hurricane old timers. It suggests that in Biblical times the area that Hurricane now occupies was at the center of the Garden of Eden. One day Eve needed some things brought to her and asked Cain to do it. Cain had other activities occupying his time and was slow to respond. Eve, growing impatient, yelled across the garden, "Hurry-Cain." And thus Hurricane received its name.

[4]Vera Hinton Eagar, "The Life of Vera Hinton Eagar," January 1960, 1, photocopy of holograph in possession of the author.

incident. The bench's high mouse population proved troublesome to the several stockholders who camped in the new town during the week to work their lands. Many brought cats to keep the rodents out of their supplies, but when the farmers returned home for the weekend, the cats stayed behind and became pests themselves at the Hinton residence. Due to their cramped living conditions the Hintons ate their meals outdoors under a willow shed where their table became an irresistible target for the hungry cats. "Aunt Mina" Hinton recalled: "They swarmed over everything. One night we had twenty-one at what they must have thought was a house party!"[5] Thomas soon ran short on patience, caught one of the uninvited table guests and beat it to death with his fist.[6]

The cats soon had other dinner tables to menace as anxious families began moving from the up-river communities to Hurricane. Harriet Lee recalls that her family felt "pretty glad to move down [to Hurricane] where we were in no danger of having our farms washed away by the river."[7] The Lees' sentiments represent the overriding motivation drawing Hurricane's first residents to the town—they were escaping the Virgin River's destructive flood

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[5]Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hinton, oral interview by Andrew Karl Larson, in *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 401.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Lee, 1.

waters. Yet, Hurricane's early population also consisted of newcomers moving from outside Washington County to settle the new village. Thomas Hinton is one example. He was not a builder of the canal nor a river-basin dweller. Rather he was born in Virgin, but had moved away prior to the canal's construction. His experience demonstrates the canal board's open land policy towards newcomers. The board, at a 1904 meeting, acted favorably upon Hinton's request for land, selling him fifteen acres.[8]

For those already holding land in Hurricane, however, the board felt differently. Nine months following Hinton's request J. L. Workman, already a stockholder, made application for two additional town lots. The board rejected the application and further ruled that it would sell town lots "only to applicants who do not possess any."[9] They were enforcing egalitarian principles and preventing speculators from using the land for gain. As Amos Workman put it: "'We wanted the young men to all get homes and farms rather than have a few big men owning most of it.'"[10] Thus Hurricane not only provided a haven for the up-river settlers but attracted new residents as well.

Unlike Hinton, over two-thirds of the 58 households found in Hurricane by 1910 moved from farms along the upper Virgin River (see Figures 5 and 6).

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[8]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 23 May 1904.

[9]Ibid., 21 February 1905.

[10]Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 388.

Figure 5. Originating Towns of 1910 Hurricane Householders
Source: U.S. Manuscript Census, 1900-1910

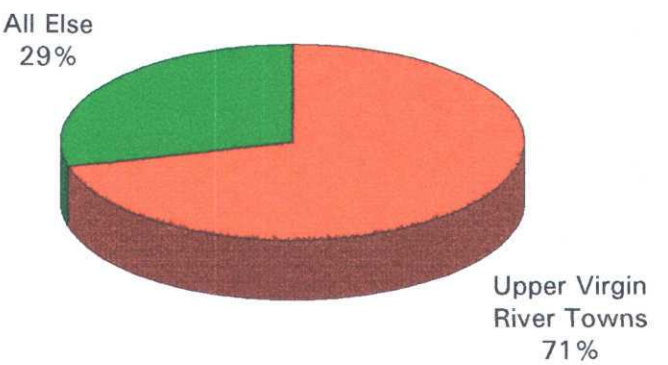
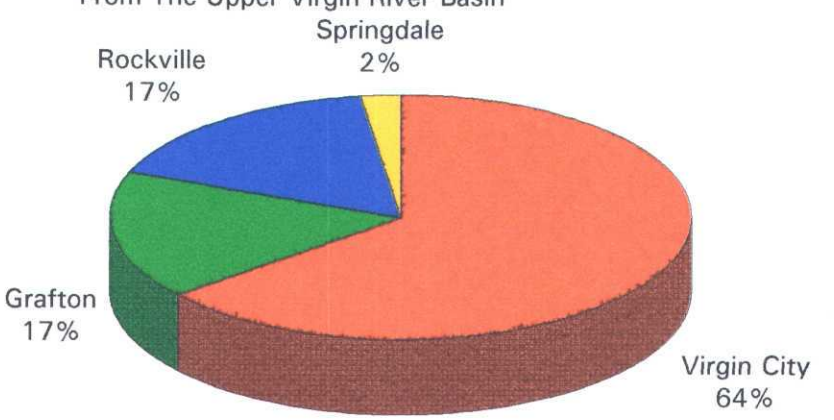


Figure 6. Originating Towns of 1910 Hurricane Householders that Moved From The Upper Virgin River Basin



Source: U.S. Manuscript Census, 1900-1910

Of those two-thirds, over sixty percent originated in Virgin City. The remaining forty percent migrated from the other river communities of Rockville, Grafton, and Springdale (see Figure 6).[11] The significance of these figures, lies in the fact that of those families moving from the basin to settle Hurricane, over nine-tenths had persisted along the river bottom for at least twenty years.[12] These findings, coupled with the fact that nearly three-quarters of the canal company stock-holders by 1907 were persisters of over thirty years demonstrates the durability of those who were among Hurricane's original settlers (See Table 3).[13] Such a legacy of perseverance greatly enhanced the chances of the new community's success.

Table 3. Years of Persistence along The Upper Virgin River Basin.

Years of Persistence	1910 Hurricane Householders who Moved from the River Basin*	1910 Hurricane Households Holding Canal Company Stock by 1907†
40 +	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
30-39	24 (59%)	24 (71%)
20-29	13 (32%)	7 (21%)
10 or less	3 (7%)	3 (9%)
Total	41 (100%)	34 (101%)

Source: *U.S. Manuscript Census, 1860-1910. †Records of the Hurricane Canal Company.

[11]U.S. Census, 1900-1910.

[12]Almost two-thirds persisted for thirty years or more.

[13]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company. These numbers were obtained by comparing the stockholders listed in the canal company records against the federal census records. Most of Hurricane's original settlers held stock at least from 1902, the latest year one of them purchased their first stock was 1907.

For Thomas Hinton, it seems that Hurricane provided the economic opportunity he needed to raise his family. According to Vera, his oldest daughter, their family had been extremely mobile prior to their arrival in Hurricane. She recalls that from 1900 to 1906 they had moved five times before making Hurricane their home.[14] Using his skills as a carpenter Hinton built a wooden granary for Thomas Isom which he was then allowed to use as a place of residence until he could erect a more suitable dwelling (see Figure 25, Appendix I).[15] By 1910 Hinton owned his own home free of mortgage and undoubtedly kept busy constructing houses and barns for the newly-arriving residents. Hinton was fairly typical of the town's sixteen new arrivals who originated from outside Washington County and accounted for one-fourth of Hurricane's families in 1910.[16] It seems certain that all but one, Edward Cuffs, relocated to Hurricane from within Utah. Even his migration was not far. His three youngest children were born in Nevada, and he likely moved to Hurricane from that state.[17]

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[14]Eagar, 1.

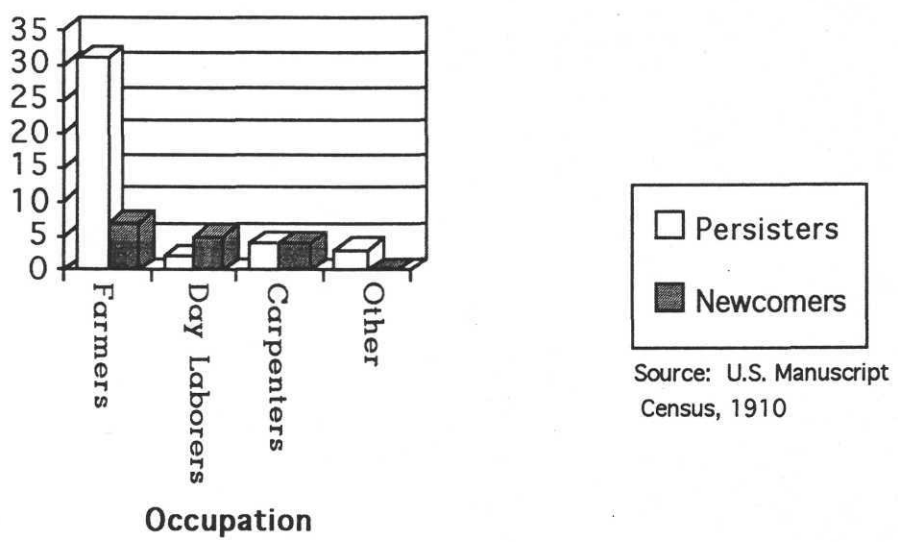
[15]Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 400.

[16]The 1910 U.S. Manuscript Census indicates that Hinton was 33 years old, had been married for eleven years and had three daughters. He listed zero months unemployed.

[17]In fact, if Cuffs likely moved from a location in southern Nevada such as Mesquite, or Panaca he would have been closer than someone leaving central or northern Utah.

So far as occupation, exactly half of the town's carpenters and almost three-fourths of its day laborers were newcomers. In contrast, the vast majority of the town's farmers moved, no doubt, to escape the violent floods of the destructive Virgin River.[18] Judging from this comparison it is not difficult to conclude that the majority of newcomers were either carpenters or day laborers who took advantage of the construction and employment opportunities inherent in a newly-founded community (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Hurricane 1910 Male Household Heads



[18]U.S. Manuscript Census, 1910.

Joseph and Ella Wittwer came to Hurricane looking for work and a place to raise a family. They were not involved in the canal's construction but were natives of nearby Santa Clara. They both taught school at Bunkerville, Nevada, in the 1907-08 school year. During the Christmas holiday Joseph rode his horse to La Verkin and Hurricane and "looked the two towns over . . . for a place to make a permanent home. [He] thought Hurricane the proper place."[19] Joseph then bought a town lot from Erastus Lee for $285.00 ("the highest price paid for a lot up to that time"). He built a two room lumber house with a small cellar on his new land. He also purchased ten acres of farm land with water rights at $65.00 per acre, a big increase over the $1.25 per acre the canal company paid for it. In the fall of 1908 Wittwer became principal of the school in Hurricane and continued there off and on for the next seven years. He also quickly became involved in town leadership. He easily gained a seat on the canal board which he held for twenty-six years while simultaneously serving his fellow Mormon saints as church clerk for twenty-seven years.[20]

If the articles printed in the *Washington County News* are any indication, others should have had similar good fortune finding employment in Hurricane. On 23 January 1908 the newspaper revealed, "There are now 29 families here,

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[19]Joseph Wittwer, "History Written by Joseph Wittwer, January 2, 1951," 19, photocopy of typescript in possession of the author.

[20]Ibid.

mostly young people. . . . Now is the time for some enterprising shoemaker to locate here. We need one very much, and our population is increasing rapidly. Also a good blacksmith would find plenty of work." The article further described the various stages of construction several new houses were under, as well as the continuing improvements, mending, and cleaning the canal needed. It then concluded by declaring that "No one is idle in Hurricane. There is plenty of work for a great many more men than available."[21] The canal certainly kept its share employed as it was often in need of repair. For example, on 27 April 1908, the county news reported, "The canal broke Monday morning . . . causing what is know as the 'big slide.'. . . It will take a large force of men several days to repair the damage."[22]

There were also plenty of public works projects to construct as the community began establishing a social order. Given the religious background of these settlers, the first public structure in the new town was built to house church services. As Vera Hinton remembers, "it wasn't long until the men built a 'Bowery,' which was made by putting posts into the ground and across the tops . . . putting limbs from cotton wood trees, . . . with the green leaves on for shade. . . . In the Bowery we held church." She further recalls that after Ira

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[21]*St. George (Utah) Washington County News*, 23 January 1908.

[22]Ibid., 27 April 1908.

Bradshaw finished his home, the first permanent dwelling in Hurricane, "church services, school and other gatherings were held there."[23]

Unlike Ira Bradshaw, most of the town's original settlers followed the pattern set by Thomas Hinton and first constructed small granaries which their families lived in until building permanent homes. Even before the completion of these granaries, however, many stockholders who had sacrificed considerably to see the canal completed anxiously took advantage of the nearly 2,000 acres of new farm land. Many camped in Hurricane during the week while they irrigated and tended their crops and then for the weekend returned home to their families along the Virgin. James Jepson was no exception and, in fact, he had decided with his wife to remain in Virgin "until such a time as [they] could have a good home to move into at Hurricane."[24] Yet, the Virgin River did not cooperate. On a February night in 1910 the torrential river came thundering down in a tremendous flood laying waste to everything in its path. Jepson lost his farm to the surging waters. He lamented, "The next morning there wasn't enough land in my main farm to turn a wagon around on. But I had another choice bit of land further back, four acres, where I had lucerne and orchard. [The river] didn't even leave me that!"[25] After Jepson's Virgin City farm was

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[23]Eagar, 1-2.

[24]Jepson, *Memories*, 27-8.

[25]Ibid., 28.

destroyed, he moved his family into their sixteen by sixteen foot granary and cellar in Hurricane.[26]

Those persisters, like Jepson, who moved their families from along the Virgin River Basin were generally suffering from poor economic conditions. The 1900 tax assessment records for Washington County reveal nearly five-sixths of them owned less than $500 in real estate, and less than $360 in personal estate.[27] James Jepson was above average as he paid taxes in 1900 on real estate valued at $625 and personal estate valued at $340.[28] Yet, according to his own account, following the flood in 1910 his real estate sold for only $50; quite a considerable loss.[29] Certainly these settlers' destitute condition was a strong motivating factor for moving to Hurricane.

Besides providing new farmlands Hurricane also made it possible for more heads of households to own rather than rent their homes. While the number who owned their homes only rose by three percent, it still

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[26]Ibid.

[27]Assessment Roll of Washington County, 1900. In fact, almost half only owned between $100 and $249 of real estate.

[28]Ibid., Marcellus Wright who also lived in Virgin was much worse off than Jepson in 1900. His real estate consisted of a cabin valued at $200 and his personal estate included some machinery, two horses, and one cow which totaled $95.

[29]Jepson, *Memories*, 28.

demonstrates the opportunities the new community provided.[30] In addition, one-third of those who persisted had not been married nor heads of households in 1900, but were so in 1910. Certainly this change is largely attributable to the ten year age progression. However, it is still evident that Hurricane provided new economic opportunities for these young couples which, more than likely, would not have been available in the county had the canal not been built.

An article in the 30 March 1908 *Washington County News* confirms that it was mostly young settlers who first inhabited the community: "This town is unique, being composed of almost entirely young people. There are only about 3 persons over 60 years of age and the majority are under 40."[31] The average age of Hurricane's total population in 1910, was 21 years old, and the average household included six members.[32] Hurricane residents were clearly

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[30]U.S. Manuscript Census, 1900 and 1910. In 1900 89.7% had owned their homes before coming to Hurricane while in 1910 92.9% of the same group owned their homes in Hurricane.

[31]*Washington County News*, 30 March 1908. While the two years following this article saw the arrival of older household heads such as 56 year old James Jepson, Morris Wilson, 66, and Marcellus Wright, 52, the town's population was still young. The average age for household heads was 43 years old, the oldest being 77 and the youngest, 23.

[32]U.S. Manuscript Census, 1910. The calculation for the average age was based on the ages of 312 residents because 54 ages in the census were unreadable. The average head of household age for the newcomers—36 years old—was a full eight years younger than the average for the persisters. The median age for the newcomers was also 36. The average age for the persisters was 44 years old, just one year older than the average for all heads of household combined. The oldest among the newcomers was Joseph Retty, a 61 year old widowed farmer, and the youngest was Joseph Spendlove, a 25 year old farmer and father of six month old twins.

middle age couples with large families who came to partake of the new town's opportunities.

To broadly generalize then, the early settlers of Hurricane, Utah were a fairly homogeneous group. Nearly all were native born Americans of whom half descended from at least one foreign born parent. No doubt these parents emigrated to Utah after converting to the Mormon faith and then were called by Brigham Young to endure the hardships of the failed Cotton Mission. Their religious devotion, sheer determination, and a mind-set for settling undesirable lands, helped them to persist. It was their children's hard work and continued determination that completed the Hurricane Canal and provided a chance for economic betterment. Nearly three-quarters of those hoping for upward mobility in Hurricane had moved from within Washington County. Of those, all but one came from the difficult and challenging Virgin River Basin. Even the newcomers did not migrate long distances; in every case except one they originated from within Utah. As a whole, these were generally young to middle age farmers with large families. Among the newcomers, over half were either carpenters or day laborers seeking employment readily available in the growing community. Hurricane thus provided an economic haven for those left impoverished by the Virgin River floods. At the same time it attracted newcomers who were hoping to take advantage of the plentiful work inherent in a new town.

"Counteracting the Evil Effects of the Flood"

Hurricane's economic opportunities seemed obvious to many as its population almost tripled over the next ten years. In addition, the new community proved remarkably stable during its first decade-and-a-half of existence. Seventy-six percent of the town's 1910 household heads remained in 1920. For the same period the closest persistence rate of the up-river communities was Springdale at 61 percent and the least stable for the region was Grafton—followed closely by Virgin City—both with only around a third of their 1910 residents remaining through 1920 (see Table 4). [33]

Table 4. Persistence Among Upper Virgin River Towns and Hurricane, 1900-1920.

Town	Persistence 1900-1910	Non-Persisters in Hurricane 1910	Persistence 1910-1920	Non-Persisters in Hurricane 1920
Springdale	83%	1 (25%)	61%	1 (08%)
Rockville	47%	7 (35%)	60%	3 (30%)
Grafton	55%	7 (78%)	33%	6 (50%)
Virgin City	26%	26 (74%)	36%	7 (44%)
Hurricane			76%	

Source: U.S. Manuscript Census, 1900-1920.

Virgin City's low stability rate can largely be attributed to its residents heavy involvement in the Hurricane Canal Company. Virgin City became the company's base town not long after incorporation and many of its inhabitants

[33]Ibid., 1910-1920.

not only held stock in the company but also served on its governing board.[34] Thus, it is not surprising that of the 35 households that left Virgin City during the twentieth century's first decade nearly three-fourths moved to Hurricane.[35] Similar correlations are true for the other up-river communities. The towns with the lowest persistence rates had the highest number of their former residents living in Hurricane by 1920 (see Table 4). Interestingly, despite their heavy initial involvement in the canal, no former Toquerville residents migrated to Hurricane prior to 1920. In fact, Toquerville enjoyed an unusually high—eighty percent—stability rate during the same decade Hurricane was seducing so many former Virgin River inhabitants.[36] In essence the people in the upper basin communities, especially Virgin City, invested sweat capital in the Hurricane Canal in the expectation of a better life in Hurricane. Particularly following a devastating flood, many, like Jepson, likely sold their land for less than the assessed valuation in the hopes of improving their economic condition in Hurricane.

While Virgin City's population became extremely fluid due to its heavy involvement in the canal, Springdale residents remained unusually stable from

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[34]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company.

[35]U.S. Manuscript Census, 1900-1910.

[36]Ibid., 1910-1920. Although no former Toquerville inhabitants were living in Hurricane by 1920, it seems those who clung to their stock until the canal was completed did farm their lands in Hurricane while maintaining Toquerville as their place of residence.

1900 to 1910. However, during the following decade Springdale's stability rate dropped to 61 percent and was remarkably close to that of Rockville. On the other end of the scale, almost identically low rates characterize Virgin and Grafton. In order to explain these differences and similarities it is necessary to take a closer look at each community. In general these towns' farmlands were in very narrow strips along either side of the Virgin River and its tributaries and as previously explained were subject to erosion from flooding. In addition to the unpredictable river, the limited availability of land was an obvious problem in these communities. In an 1861 meeting held at Grafton, resident John Nebeker described a recently completed land survey that showed not more than a thousand acres of tillable land available from Virgin City to Rockville.[37]

The Cotton Mission's agricultural reports seem to substantiate this claim. In 1864 Grafton reported 150 acres under cultivation, Virgin City 205, Springdale 110, and Rockville 105. Two years later the report shows even less farm acreage in each community except Rockville.[38] This is in part explained by the temporary abandonment of Grafton and Springdale due to "Indian depredations" during the Black Hawk War, yet even based upon the 1864 report the acreage appears small.

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[37]James G. Bleak, "Annals of the Southern Utah Mission," Book A, 79, typescripts in Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

[38]Ibid., Book A, 249. The 1866 report shows Grafton with 91.5 acres under cultivation, Virgin City with 106, Springdale with 96.5, and Rockville with 113.75.

Thus, the problems of limited lands certainly prevented these communities from experiencing the same type of rapid growth Hurricane demonstrated in its early years. It made it equally difficult for second generation settlers to remain in the region and support their young families. Yet, Rockville and Springdale demonstrated surprisingly high stability rates from 1900-1920 especially when compared against Virgin City and Grafton. Perhaps the individual characteristics of these towns provide the best possible answer. For example, at the communities of Rockville and Springdale the Virgin River gorge widens making portions of higher ground available for farming. According to Larson's study of the region, the original settlement of Rockville was located on "some low ground" but following the floods of 1862, the settlers moved to higher ground and established the town anew, this time with relative success.[39] Springdale, like Rockville, also benefitted from the availability of higher ground. In addition, this community profited from its location along the Virgin River's rocky north fork which, unlike the quicksand typical of the river bottom in other locations, provided a solid base for the Springdale settlers' dams.[40]

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[39]Larson, "Agricultural Pioneering in the Virgin River Basin," 140. Rockville's farmlands were still susceptible to flooding, but the city lots remained comparatively safe from destruction.

[40]Ibid., 145.

Grafton and Virgin City were not as fortunate with their dams nor with available high ground to farm. In fact, as previously mentioned, the first attempt to settle Grafton was obliterated by floods in 1862. Even the lands at the new townsite were "gradually reduced" by subsequent high waters. Virgin City, while never completely destroyed was often the victim of the river that shares its name. The town's location, at a low spot on the banks of the river, earned it the Indian nickname of Pocketville and largely explains its susceptibility to flooding.[41]

In essence, Rockville and Springdale were able to maintain some degree of stability due to their more favorable locations, yet, even in these communities land was scarce and the opportunity for growth limited. Thus, with the completion of the Hurricane canal, a relative abundance of land became available for cultivation, and the fact that it was far removed from the violent waters of the Virgin River only added to its attraction. *The Washington County News* gives a good indication of the different effects the floods of 1909 had on the various communities. An article dated 3 September 1909 from Virgin City described the record high water that came down the gorge and "carried away much valuable land," including "the lower city lots," and "all bottomlands."[42] The article from Rockville three days later concerning the same flood

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[41]Bradshaw, 268.

[42]*Washington County News*, 3 September 1909.

described similar damage in that community and even "land that was thought to be safe was swept away in the surging waters." The land was not the only victim as fencing, farming implements, milk cows, "two big stacks of hay," 14 hives of bees, chickens, melons, squashes and other valuables were carried downstream. The article concludes that some of the residents of Rockville are "feeling very discouraged" over their losses.[43]

In contrast, Hurricane's report of the same flood described how "remarkably well" the people had done in "counteracting the evil effects of the flood." The only damage was to the dam on the river and following a canal company meeting "men and teams set to work at once getting timber and doing such other work as necessary." By the end of the month "water was again running through [the] town ditches."[44] Thus, it seems in Hurricane the battle with the Virgin River had largely diminished to an occasional skirmish while the up-river communities were still suffering from heavy losses.

Thus, Hurricane's early prosperity and rapid growth, as well as its founders' persistence can be attributed to a number of factors. First, the fierce determination of the cotton mission survivors created an unusually rugged group of individuals who were willing to devote eleven years of labor and what little money they had to a canal project previously deemed impossible. Next,

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[43]Ibid., 6 September 1909.

[44]Ibid., 4 October 1909.

once water reached the Hurricane bench nearly 2,000 acres of land became available for cultivation which far surpassed the minimal acreage being tilled along the upper-river basin. In addition, the new land was far removed from the wild flood waters of the Virgin River providing a comparatively secure environment for farming and generating a remarkably high stability rate in a region generally plagued by low persistence. Finally, Hurricane's economic opportunities, enhanced by the canal board's friendly policy to outsiders, attracted newcomers seeking employment in the young town. In the end, the success of the canal proved the overall key in Hurricane's community building efforts. Hence, it is not surprising that those men who gained recognition as members of the canal board were easily elected as Hurricane's early community leaders. They formed a core of individuals largely responsible for the town's initial prosperity and boom growth. The story of these pacesetters and their exploits follows.

CHAPTER V

"GREAT GROWTH"

In 1917 a former business partner of Benjamin Franklin LeBaron traveled through Hurricane and described it as "the best place, where splendid resources were being developed."[1] At the time LeBaron and his family lived in Provo, Utah, but were dissatisfied with that city and its job opportunities. LeBaron decided to see Hurricane for himself. He later commented: "The country looked good to me and at once I began to look for a spot to make a home."[2] Hurricane was eleven years old at the time and "growing rapidly." According to LeBaron "prices of property were high as it was a choice place."[3] He inquired at Petty's mercantile store about any lots for sale. Charles Petty responded that his father had several and immediately showed LeBaron three. "Only one was within my reach," LeBaron remarked and he agreed to pay $350 for it of which Petty would take $50 in work. LeBaron also secured a smaller,

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[1]Benjamin Franklin LeBaron, "Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin LeBaron" 31, photocopy of typescript in possession of the author.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., 32.

previously undesirable lot from the canal company for $25.

Of his first property LeBaron said: "It was not at all pretty." And his second he described as full of "brush and rocks."[4] In fact, the $25 piece had originally been drawn by Charles Petty, but he later told LeBaron that he "could not see much good in it, so [he] threw it right back."[5] Nonetheless, Lebaron set up his tent on the smaller lot and "commenced clearing the ground and planting grape, fig and pomegranate cuttings."[6] The LeBarons worked diligently on their yard. They terraced the hillside and planted fruits (including the first jujubes in southern Utah) and nuts—"not only pecans, but almonds, black walnuts, and English walnuts"—as well as "several varieties of the fine large persimmons."[7]

Contrary to the difficulties he experienced in Provo, LeBaron felt his family was "prospering pretty well" in Hurricane.[8] He was a house painter by trade, and fortunately "many new homes were going up and [he] had painting jobs all the time."[9] Within eight years LeBaron's home was "practically

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[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., 37.

[6]Ibid., 33.

[7]Ibid., 35.

[8]Ibid., 34.

[9]Ibid., 33.

finished" and he was out of debt.[10] His family's industrious work turned their once poor, rocky place into a show-yard that commanded attention. On one occasion a passerby stopped to complement LeBaron for making his lot "the prettiest place in town." Another day a different traveller stopped long enough to suggest that LeBaron's yard was a good "place to get [an] idea of the Garden of Eden.'"[11]

Just as LeBaron, through hard work and determination, converted his property into "the Garden of Eden," so too the town turned its sage brush and chaparral beginnings into a thriving community. This transformation came under the cooperative guidance of Hurricane's several governing bodies which, though slow at times, worked to provide the townsfolk with a plentiful life that included all modern public necessities.

Undoubtedly, "brother LeBaron" was not the only new arrival in this budding town to find prosperity and satisfaction. Rather, Hurricane's abundance of land sustained a remarkable growth rate during its first fourteen years of settlement, placing its population second only to St. George in Washington County (see Figures 8 and 9). In 1913 William Spry, Utah's Governor, visited Hurricane and remarked that there was not "a town in the

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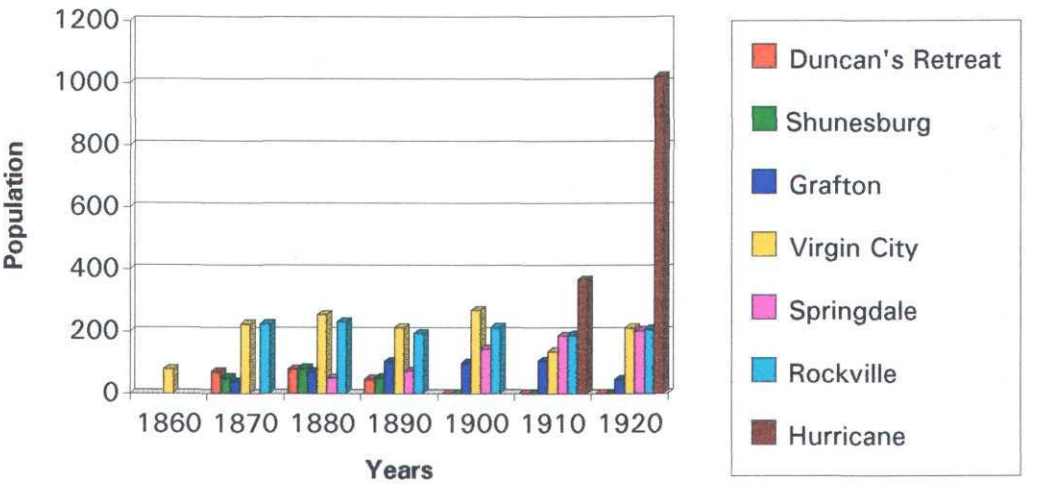
[10]Ibid., 37.

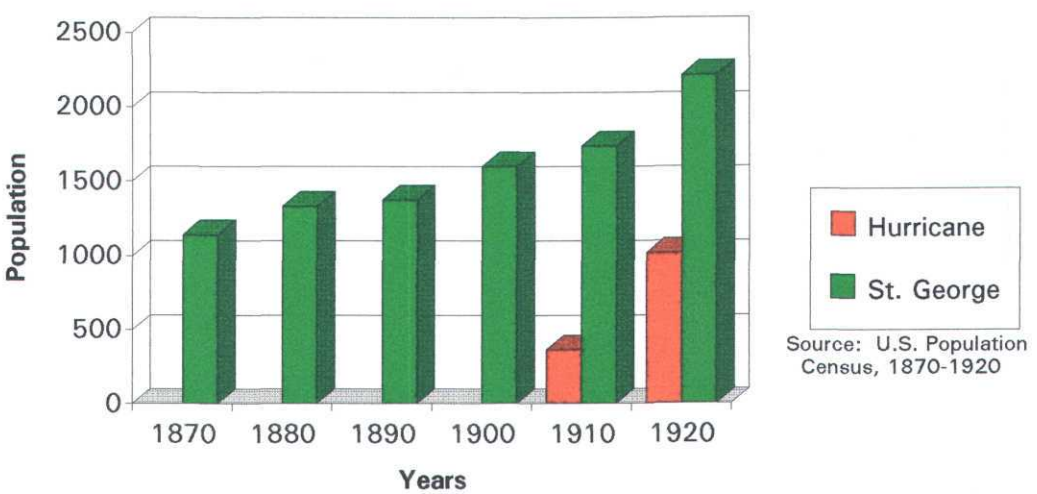
[11]Ibid.

Figure 8. Population of Upper Virgin River Towns and Hurricane, 1860-1920



Source: U.S. Population Census, 1860-1920

Figure 9. Population of Hurricane and St. George, 1870-1920



Source: U.S. Population Census, 1870-1920

state that had built up so fast or accomplished so much as has Hurricane."[12] Three months earlier Mr. D. Wooley, a visitor to Hurricane, similarly commented: "For fifty years I have watched the growth of many towns in the west and I have never seen a town which has made such a great growth, which seems permanent, as has Hurricane."[13] Such brisk expansion often leads to equally swift busts, yet Mr. Wooley further stated that Hurricane's surge was not "a mushroom boom" but was "natural and will continue."[14]

The young town's stability amid this explosive development can largely be attributed to its instant leadership. Not only did Hurricane benefit from the respected authority inherent in the Mormon hierarchy generally called to lead each community, but the eleven years of canal board management provided another, perhaps more significant, administrative mechanism. The board's esteemed command became a stabilizing element in providing for the smooth establishment of a social order in Hurricane. The board efficiently expanded its role as the driving force behind the town's genesis as it acted on such matters as requests for stock in the company and therefore land in the town, disputes over land boundaries, reparation demands, public streets and improvements, fencing and animal regulation, and cisterns for drinking water.

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[12]*Washington County News*, 6 November 1913.

[13]Ibid., 14 August 1913.

[14]Ibid.

Fortunately, though the canal board soon received help in its administrative efforts. First, in 1907 Hurricane was organized into its own religious unit or ward.[15] The church provided important amusement and social outlets as its various auxiliaries almost constantly held dances, drama productions, parties, and a sundry of other entertainments for the townsfolk. Hurricane's next leadership organization, the commercial club, formed in 1908 when a few "influential men" united to foster Hurricane's resources.[16] The commercial club quickly became an important booster group in arranging markets for Hurricane's fruit crops. It was also the impetus behind the town's early fruit festival called "Elberta" or "Peach Days" which yearly drew big crowds to Hurricane. Finally, in 1912 the Washington County Commissioner's granted Hurricane's petition for incorporation and a fourth governing body, the town council, began to share in Hurricane's management responsibilities.[17]

Ironically, rather than decentralizing Hurricane's leadership these additional organizations were largely headed by the same men who first gained prominence as canal company leaders. Using the canal board as a catalyst these men filled other influential positions and formed the core of

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[15]Hurricane, Utah Ward Manuscript History, Library-Archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

[16]*Washington County News*, 16 April 1908; 10 September 1908.

[17]Stratton, *The Story of the Hurricane Canal*, 24-29.

Hurricane's early boosters. They worked closely in establishing the community and exhibited a high degree of harmony amongst the four organizations they headed. This unity is likely attributable to overlaps in leadership, but also demonstrates the same cooperative principles that built the canal at work in the young town.

The unanimity that existed among Hurricane's authority figures is even more significant when juxtaposed against non-Mormon settlements. In Jacksonville, Illinois, for example, schisms often hindered the establishment of a viable social order. Instead of a homogenous body of community builders, Jacksonville was made up of cultural, social, and ethnic diverse groups who tended to promote disagreements. Jacksonville did enjoy a base of residents who remained in the frontier town to form a stable core , but even this group was small and was frequently challenged by a divided citizenry.[18] Jacksonville often failed to achieve the material growth and economic prosperity envisioned by its first settlers. In contrast, Hurricane's large stationary population and the oneness of its founders led to over two decades of abundance.

"Communion of Interests"

Not surprisingly, James Jepson who had served ten terms as canal board

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[18]Doyle.

president was elected to the first town board's highest office where he served two terms followed by an additional term as a board member. Similarly, of Hurricane's first three town presidents, each had previously served at least seven terms on the canal board as either president or vice president.[19] This overlap further encompassed the town's religious and commercial leadership as well (see Table 5).

Samuel Isom, the Mormon bishop in Virgin City prior to his move to Hurricane, was called to fill the same position in the new town. From 1893 -1920 Isom served eleven terms on the canal board, many of them as president. After arriving in Hurricane, he simultaneously served the community in a religious capacity as well as filling six terms as a canal board member.[20] In his positions on the board prior to 1907 Isom often worked along side fellow board members Charles Workman and E. N. Stanworth.[21] It is natural to assume they enjoyed a friendly relationship and, not surprisingly, Isom chose them as his counselors

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[19]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company; Minutes of the Hurricane Town Board, Hurricane Canal Company Office, Hurricane, Utah, hereafter referred to as Minutes. One man, Thomas Reeve, was elected to the first town board while simultaneously serving as a canal board member. A term on the canal board was originally for two years but was latter changed to one year. The town board was re-elected every two years. "Town president" is the term used in early Hurricane to refer to the town's highest office. It is synonymous with mayor.

[20]In 1912 Isom was elected again to the canal board where he served as president until 1914 and then vice president until 1915.

[21]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company.

Table 5. Hurricane Canal Company Board Members Elected Four Terms or More and Their Leadership Overlaps in Hurricane, 1893-1920.

Name*	Terms on Canal Board*	Terms on Town Board†	Terms in Commercial Club Leadership‡	Religious Position§
Joseph Wittwer	12			Ward Clerk
J. Langston•	12			
Samuel Isom•	11		1	Bishop
James Jepson•	10	3		
J. W. Imlay•	10	3	2	
Martin Slack	10			
Alfred Hall	7		1	
E.N. Stanworth	7			2nd Counselor
C. Workman	7	2	2	1st Counselor
R. Woodbury•	6	3	3	
I.E. Bradshaw•	6			
Thomas Reeve	6	2		
William Isom	4			
A. Workman	4		1	
Thomas Isom	4	1		
Arthur Hall	4			

Sources: *Records of The Hurricane Canal Company; †Minutes of Hurricane Town Board; ‡*Washington County News*; §Hurricane, Utah, Ward Manuscript History. •Served at least one term as president.

to complete Hurricane's ecclesiastical leadership.[22]

In 1913 Isom further busied himself serving a brief stint in Hurricane's commercial club.[23] J. Wilson Imlay, a ten term veteran of the canal board who later headed the town board for five years, led the club and was joined by Charles Petty, and a newcomer to Hurricane, Frank Barber. Petty managed his father's large mercantile shop in Hurricane and soon served simultaneously in

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[22]Hurricane, Utah Ward Manuscript History.

[23]*Washington County News*, 19 June 1913.

the commercial club and on the town board. Later he also become involved in the county's "good roads" movement. Barber established Hurricane's first nursery and gained prominence by actively promoting Hurricane fruit on the Salt Lake market.

Such interconnectedness among Hurricane's authority figures produced a vital "communion of interests" which resulted in a thriving young town "peopled by progressive, thrifty and industrious inhabitants."[24] One resident said it this way: "Some people have ridiculed us for undertaking to get the water onto this land, . . . some have tried to hinder us in various ways, but we are still pushing and expect to continue to push. You will find it is hard to discourage a Hurricanite, so don't waste your energy."[25]

The Canal Company's Diminishing Role

Initially the canal board maintained its prominence and assumed an almost parental responsibility for the infant community; it kept a high profile and often assisted the town board, financially or otherwise, in providing public utilities for Hurricane's citizenry. During the town's formation the canal board was the authority in Hurricane and its nurturing role was vital to the

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[24]These descriptive accolades are taken from two different outsiders' perspectives of Hurricane. See respectively, *Washington County News*, 15 September 1910, and 12 September 1918.

[25]*Washington County News*, 20 February 1908.

community's well being. The board's foremost responsibility was keeping water flowing to the land. During the canal's construction the company employed a superintendent to ensure that stockholders completed their work.[26] Once the ditch was finished the superintendent's responsibility transferred to maintaining the canal and organizing the systematic distribution of water.[27] Each stockholder had to be notified concerning his or her "water turn," the duration of which was based upon the number of shares he or she owned. Generally a turn came every two weeks. The superintendent also oversaw ditch repairs and daily monitored the physical condition of the canal. When it needed to be cleaned or repaired stockholders generally did the work and received credit towards their yearly assessments.[28] As a teenager, Robert Reeve's father frequently sent him to work on the canal or to clean distribution ditches. Robert never received cash for his labors, rather the canal company deducted the monetary equivalent of the work from his father's assessment.[29]

The company also eventually employed others to ensure the canal system ran smoothly. The board hired a "ditch rider" to keep constant watch

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[26]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company. J. T. Willis was hired as the first superintendent and others who served during construction were William Isom, Samuel Isom, and James A. Stratton.

[27]Ibid., 15 May 1906.

[28]Woodrow Jepson, interview.

[29]Robert Reeve, interview by author, Telephone interview, 8 October 1994.

for leaks, breaks, or flood damage and to regulate the amount of water delivered to farmers. Each day the rider, sitting atop his horse, followed the canal bank looking for leaks or obstructions in the water's flow. Whenever a flood came down the river or storm clouds brewed in the distance, the rider journeyed to the canal head prepared to turn the water out if the situation merited it. Woodrow Jepson, a ditch rider for five years, described traveling the narrow canal bank in a rain storm as "pretty spooky." He recalled: "You had to depend on your horse. It would often be so dark you could not see anything yourself and you could not use a flashlight with a horse, it would foul him up. . . . I never went up there when I wasn't scared."[30] Riding the ditch, as Frank Lee tragically discovered, was treacherous work. One occasion Lee spotted a log floating down the canal which he promptly lassoed. As he pulled it from the ditch the log struck his horse's leg. The frightened animal bucked Lee from the saddle and dragged him down the canal bank. Lee eventually managed to gain control of his horse, but a broken rib had punctured his lung and Lee died before receiving proper medical attention.[31]

In addition to keeping the ditch in good repair the canal board faced other demands. For example, almost immediately following the drawing for town lots and farmlands "some discrepancies" arose. The board appointed a

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[30]Woodrow Jepson, interview.

[31]Stratton, *The Story of the Hurricane Canal*, 18.

committee to adjust "any and all complaints" made by members in regard to their draw of land.[32] Thomas Isom and Ira Bradshaw had an early "misunderstanding" over ownership of a town lot. Bradshaw appeared before the board in August, 1904, and presented his case. The board ruled that "Bradshaw drew the lot in question" and shortly "dismissed the subject."[33] There is no further mention of the case nor of any objections by Isom.

Another incident occurred in 1906 when "Mr. Workman" submitted the following complaint: "I hereby protest against the company making a ditch through my field, northeast of the townsite. I further demand that the ditch be filled up and all damage that has been done be repaired."[34] David Hirschi, a board member, was appointed to negotiate with Workman, and at the next meeting, Hirschi reported that Workman "agreed to reconsider the matter."[35] The same month Thomas Reeve complained that his land was "considerably damaged by flood through neglect of the [canal] superintendent," and requested reparations. After a committee investigated, the board ruled not to allow damage compensation, but did recommend narrowing the four rod street on the west side of Reeve's land to two rods and giving Reeve the extra "in

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[32]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 30 January 1904.

[33]Ibid., 22 August 1904.

[34]Ibid., 21 February 1906.

[35]Ibid., 24 February 1906.

consideration of his land being poor."[36] Neither situation is mentioned again and it can only be assumed that Reeve and Workman at least endured these rulings. It seems the board commanded respect from Hurricane's inhabitants and thus wielded considerable power in the new town.

In addition to arbitrating land and reparation disputes, the board took part in measures to provide some necessities, and even some niceties, for its stockholders. For example, to facilitate Hurricane's settlement and cultivation the board agreed to pay for "the necessary ditches to convey the water to and from every man's land."[37] Later, company directors appointed a "field marshall" to keep animals from running at large within the fields during spring and summer and to regulate pasturing the animals during fall and winter.[38] At the same meeting canal officials made plans to beautify the new town and appointed a committee "for the planting of trees on the public block."[39] The board also took up the "cemetery question" on several occasions but never resolved a place for its location; the question was finally settled much later by the town board.

Finally, the canal board promoted and protected the interests of its

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[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid., 6 May 1905.

[38]Ibid., 28 December 1907.

[39]Ibid.

stockholders. In March 1895 canal officers presented a petition to the Water Commissioners' Court of Washington County asking for a primary right to 4,000 inches of water from the Virgin. The La Verkin Fruit and Nursery Company and the Washington Field Canal Company protested this filing. The two groups felt that the Hurricane company's petition infringed upon their previously acquired rights. The water court sided with the opposition and only granted the Hurricane organization a secondary right to 4,000 miner's inches.[40]

Stockholders in the Hurricane company believed the ruling unjust. They owned primary water rights to land that had been washed away along the upper river basin and felt entitled to transfer those rights to the Hurricane Bench. Regardless, the water court's decision did not deter the Hurricane company and with the completion of its canal the controversy continued. The St. George and Washington Canal Company began protesting that the Hurricane company was drawing too much water from the Virgin River.[41] Hurricane's canal officials agreed to enter into "a friendly lawsuit" with the other company in order to have "the water rights of each member . . . clearly defined."[42] Two months later the St. George and Washington company wrote

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[40]Larson, "Agricultural Pioneering in the Virgin River Basin," 313.

[41]The Washington Field Canal Company changed its name to the St. George and Washington Canal Company.

[42]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 2 May 1905.

to the Hurricane canal board and "respectfully" asked "that the Rio Virgin waters be turned down out of the Hurricane Canal." The directors conducted "mature deliberation" and agreed to deny the request in a letter.[43]

The Hurricane company never filed its suit but the St. George and Washington company did. A 1925 Washington County district court ruling finally resolved the matter by clearly delineating each company's water rights. St. George and Washington received thirty second feet, the La Verkin Canal Company six, and the Hurricane group received nine-and-three-quarters-second-feet of primary water rights.[44]

Despite the canal company's active role in the young town, as Hurricane matured it gradually relinquished many of its early obligations such as street maintenance, beautification, and animal regulations to other groups. In some areas the canal company even met with disappointments and defeat. It twice failed to bring electrical power to Hurricane, it moved at snail's speed in providing public culinary water, and it blundered financially with its grist mill venture. By the early 1920s, the board turned its focus towards maintaining the canal, repairing breaks, cementing trouble areas and generally ensuring the town's lifeline stayed operable. The canal remained the town's pulsating heart,

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[43]Ibid., 15 July 1905.

[44]St. George and Washington Canal Company v. Hurricane Canal Company (5th District Court, 1925).

but its rhythmic beating gradually became background noise only being noticed when it stopped pumping, became clogged, or broke. Such was the case in 1918 when the county news reported that "a great many" residents were "very discouraged" over the condition of the canal: "It is broken again, the third break in the same place this spring, the water only being in town about three days at a time all spring."[45]

"Silver Painted Radiators"

In addition to the canal company, the church played an essential role in Hurricane's beginnings. It not only contributed to the community's civic pride, but, more importantly, created social unity among town residents. Besides interacting each Sunday at church meetings, Hurricane saints, almost constantly, gathered throughout the week in less formal settings such as dances, plays, sports activities, and parties. The Hurricane correspondent to the county news reported in January 1912: "Dancing seems to be the main pleasure of the people here during the holidays; there was a dance every night last week and we are starting in the same way again the new year."[46] Another article described the recent ward party in which members were treated to "a great big feast" that included "plenty of the good things of the earth." Following

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[45]*Washington County News*, 9 May 1918.

[46]Ibid., 4 January 1912.

the dinner "a good program was rendered, consisting of songs, speeches, recitations, and music by the Silver Band."[47]

Reports of similar church organized entertainments abound in the news as does evidence of the church's active role in civic affairs. When the town built a jail the Relief Society "sisters" (the church's women's organization) provided bedding and a quilt; during the first world war various church auxiliaries spearheaded projects in support of the war effort, and when the town finally installed its sewer system the town board relied upon the church to cover half the cost. Clearly there was an intermingling of church and local government in the small town which seemed to work for the good of all.

Perhaps the church's most notable role in the infant community came in providing adequate facilities for the community's various functions. As settlers continued to flow to the Hurricane Bench it was not long before the church and social crowds outgrew the primitive bower and private homes where they gathered. During the winter of 1907-08 a group of fifteen to twenty-five men erected a "social" or "ward hall" on the public block. The church contributed $1,000 cash towards the building and the remaining expenses were donated by private citizens.[48] The structure was intended to be used for "all public

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[47]Ibid., 8 February 1912. The Silver Band was a community organized band under the direction of Christian Larson. They played for many of Hurricane's entertainments. See *Washington County News*, 12 January 1911; 1 June 1911.

[48]Hurricane, Utah Ward Manuscript History.

gatherings until other buildings shall be erected for school and church purposes, when it will be used as an amusement hall exclusively."[49] The new hall filled "uncomfortably full" at its inaugural dance as "young people" from Virgin, La Verkin, Grafton, Rockville and Toquerville traveled to the celebration.[50]

The building quickly became the center of many such activities and continued to serve as the site for religious, social, civic, and school functions. Nonetheless, its thirty-two-by-seventy-feet frame soon began to bulge against Hurricane's ever increasing population. This time the Relief Society responded. In February of 1911 young people from Leeds, Toquerville, and La Verkin attended a dance at the ward hall sponsored by the Relief Society sisters. The announced purpose was "to raise funds to build . . . a hall."[51] The following month the sisters "gave a theater" which was "well attended by outside visitors."[52] The motivated women continued activities over the following year until they could pay for a stately two room brick building. In September 1912 workers laid the foundation for "the new Relief Society Hall."[53]

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[49]*Washington County News*, 23 January 1908.

[50]Ibid., 19 March 1908.

[51]Ibid., 16 February 1911.

[52]Ibid., 2 March 1911.

[53]Ibid., 12 September 1912.

With the ward hall curtained into three divisions, plus the stage, the new Relief Society Hall made a total of six rooms for the 1912-13 school year. Even these arrangements, however, did not last long as Hurricane's perpetually multiplying youth again demanded expansion. In 1914 Rob Stratton rented a portion of his store to the school board and the two lower grades were housed there. Alice Isom Gubler Stratton recalls, "I went to the beginners in the same room with the first grade. My sisters went to school in the church house and in the Relief Society building, but we were in Robb Stratton's building that was supposed to be a store."[54] She further remembers that in the winter such accommodations were not exactly comfortable, the children "were either too hot or too cold," depending on their distance from the pot belly stove.[55]

Just when it seemed the school children would burst the seams of their haphazard housing the school board agreed to provide $16,000 toward the construction of a permanent school. The citizens, largely through church organizations, responded by matching the school board's funds.[56] The grateful

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[54]Alice Isom Gubler Stratton, "Look to the Stars," 15, typescript in possession of Alice Isom Gubler Stratton, La Verkin, Utah.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Hurricane, Utah Ward Manuscript History. The manuscript history notes that after the school was completed church meetings were held in the gymnasium. The writer explains "when the school was erected in 1917 the ward donated one half of the cost so have the right to its use." When the Hurricane ward was divided in 1928 it seems that one ward met in the school and the other in the Relief Society Hall and Social Hall. These arrangements lasted until Hurricane received its first church house in 1943.

children moved into their ten fresh rooms in January 1918. Stratton recalls, "The new building was steam heated with silver painted radiators that knocked and banged and sometimes steamed at the valves."[57] The school also had a bell that "rang exactly thirty minutes before marching time and could be heard clear across town."[58] After lining up outside in double rows the children waited for the piano to play *The Stars and Stripes Forever* and then began marching—"the littlest grade . . . first." The principal clapped his hands calling "'left, right, left, right'" as the children marched up the steps and into their classrooms, never breaking rank until seated. "The names of those who got out of step were jotted down and they marched in the awkward squad after school."[59]

In addition to its new school building Hurricane enjoyed a rapid succession of public improvements, giving it all the conveniences available to an early twentieth-century town. In the summer of 1908 with the stretch of a wire the outside world invaded the tiny community as the local telephone company extended its line to Hurricane.[60] It took an additional five years before the new convenience became available to private homes. In 1913

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[57]Stratton, "Stars," 25.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid.

[60]*Washington County News*, 23 July 1908.

Hurricane received its own exchange, and soon telephone poles proudly towered over the town streets. The poles, set eight feet from street center, were heralded by Hurricane's news writer for adding "greatly to the appearance of the town."[61] The reporter also deemed the telephone itself "not a luxury, but a necessity" which "very few families can afford to be without."[62] Apparently Hurricane residents agreed. They rushed to install their own private link to friends, family, business, and gossip. Within three months of its availability magical telephones rang in twenty-five Hurricane homes and businesses.[63]

Another magic, electrical power, was an often talked of necessity that took longer to become a reality. The canal company first dreamed of installing an electric plant in 1908 and suggested using the canal as a "right of way for a pipe line" to the plant.[64] Apparently transferring its dream into electricity proved too costly for the company and it never acted on its proposal. Four years later the town board voted to investigate "establishing an electric light and power plant for the town," but got no further than the canal board.[65]

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[61]Ibid., 29 May 1913.

[62]Ibid., 18 September 1913.

[63]Ibid., 5 March 1914.

[64]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 26 December 1908.

[65]Minutes, 16 November 1912.

Undoubtedly, following the growth Hurricane experienced in 1913, electricity could not be far off—or so Hurricane's news reporter argued. The year 1913 witnessed the erection of "ten fine dwelling houses costing from $2,500 to $4,000 each, and two store buildings costing about the same, . . ." as well as "about a dozen other houses . . . fifteen new hay-sheds, eight cisterns and several new fences." The town also added its telephone exchange and a state highway leading from the Virgin River. Certainly 1914 would "give electric light and power."[66] Unfortunately such optimism did not generate support for a $5,000 bond election to install an electrical plant. The news correspondent incorrectly believed Hurricane's people were "progressive enough to vote in favor of this project." Rather, voters defeated the bond fifty-nine to sixteen.[67] Apparently "the citizens looked upon the proposition as being burdensome instead of being self sustaining."[68]

After the town board's efforts to electrify Hurricane fizzled the canal company again grabbed the torch and determined to construct a power plant. It voted to do so in October 1915 and expected "to have the town lit up by Christmas, so that Santa won't miss anyone."[69] If Santa Claus depended upon

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[66]*Washington County News*, 1914.

[67]Ibid., 22 January 1914.

[68]Ibid., 29 January 1914.

[69]Ibid., 14 October 1915.

electrical lights to find his way in 1915, Christmas morning was terribly disappointing for Hurricane's children. The canal company's plans never materialized and the kerosene lantern continued to light Hurricane's nights. Finally, in 1917, an outside source, the Dixie Power Company, succeeded where the town and canal boards failed. It was already supplying power to other towns in southern Utah and had funds available for expansion into Hurricane. The town board granted the company a franchise in January 1917 and by October "almost every one in town . . . had their house wired for electricity."[70]

Alice Stratton recalls the wonder and excitement the mystic lights created: "To push a button on the wall to turn on the lights was nothing short of magic. But, Papa said a light was no play thing, and to keep it from wearing out, it should be turned on only once each night." For young Alice, "it seemed that night would never come." It eventually did and the next day she bragged to her playmates about the brightness of the lights at her house. "But my cousin, Iantha Campbell, out did me," Alice recalls. "She said their lights were so bright they had to open the door to let some dark in."[71] Bright lights aside, kerosene lamps were not completely abandoned as it seemed "every gusty

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[70]Ibid., 11 January 1917; 11 October 1917.

[71]Alice Isom Gubler Stratton, "Hurricane Utah's Magnificent, Wonderful Year of 1917," 1, photocopy of typescript in possession of the author.

wind or rain squall" brought darkness. Nonetheless, the convenience of electrical power mitigated such occasional reversions back to the old-fashioned lamps.[72]

At the same time that kerosene light began dimming in usefulness Hurricane's primitive water cisterns met with a much swifter extinction. In 1917 citizens overwhelmingly voted to install a water system. The $20,000 bond election passed eighty-four to three and residents, hired by the town board, soon began digging trenches along the streets to accommodate Hurricane's new waterworks.[73] Prior to the installation of this system inhabitants used the same brown ditch water that irrigated their crops, to wash their clothes,, cook their food, and quench their thirst. Buckets, barrels and cisterns were the extent of the town's water system, most of which were operated on a private basis. Frank Barber recalled: "We used to haul water from the river in a barrel. We would bring the barrel home and . . . pour a glass of milk in it . . . [to] settle it. Then we would dip the water out and then dip the mud out—about two-thirds of mud."[74]

A public cistern system was originally discussed by the canal company

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[72]Stratton, "Stars," 22.

[73]*Washington County News*, 1 February 1917; Minutes, 26 December 1916; 29 January 1917.

[74]Frank Barber, interview by Fielding H. Harris, 26 August 1969, tape recording, copy of tape in possession of the author.

in 1905, but the estimated cost ($668.90) was deemed too high and the matter was "laid over."[75] Eventually the company resurrected its plans in 1908, but remained almost endlessly as just "plans" until excavation on a 40,000 gallon cistern finally began in 1913. It was located "on the hillside just below the canal" and its elevation, seventy-five feet above the town, also served as an available water source for "protection against fire."[76] In March 1914 cistern water finally reached the public square where a "thirsty passerby [could] enjoy a cool drink."[77] Residents, however, could not wait for the tortoise paced bureaucracy and many constructed private cisterns; others hauled it or dipped it out of the ditch to fill their barrels.[78] The cisterns and water barrels supplied the town's needs for culinary water, yet they required frequent cleaning "to get rid of polliwogs, snakes, snails, and moss" and boards had to be placed over the top "to keep kids and critters from falling in" and polluting the already murky water.[79]

In light of such a primitive system it is no wonder the "progressive" citizens of Hurricane voted strongly in favor of the costly new proposal to pipe a

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[75]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 18 November 1905; 22 January 1906.

[76]*Washington County News*, 29 May 1913.

[77]Ibid., 19 March 1914.

[78]Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie,"* 401; Stratton, "Stars," 25; Stratton, "Wonderful Year," 1.

[79]Stratton, "Stars," 25.

second foot of spring water from Toquerville to Hurricane. Installation of the system also proved an economic boon to many townsfolk who earned cash hauling and laying the wooden pipe and digging the trenches.[80] While the citizenry generally benefitted from such opportunities the town government became "indebted to the amount of $9,000 or more for pipe and other material used in constructing the water system."[81] The town board borrowed $4,500 from the State Bank of Hurricane and $4,500 from the canal company to pay off the amount past due.[82]

Such matters as employment and indebtedness, however, were purely worries of the adult world. They could not appreciate, like a seven year old, the true significance of the pipe installation process. A system of trenches crisscrossing the town streets created a "Paradise" to the youthful mind and quickly became "the funnest places on earth."[83] Once the diggers retired for the evening the trenches swarmed with kids "racing, laughing, whooping and hollering" and otherwise utilizing the dirt mazes to their fullest potential.

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[80]In Minutes, 9 July 1917, 36 bills were submitted for pipe hauling and unloading ranging from $12.00 to $104.50. A larger list of eighty-two bills was recorded 31 August 1917, and similar lists appear in the record on 4, and 29 September 1917; 6, 13, 20, and 28 October 1917; 10, and 24 November 1917; 1, 8, 24, and 28 December 1917; 23 March 1918; and 6 April 1918.

[81]Minutes, 18 June 1918.

[82]Ibid.

[83]Stratton, "Wonderful Year," 1.

Unfortunately, grown-ups soon noticed the "mazes" filling back up with dirt and sternly ended the trench-racing.[84]

In addition to the town board's reliance upon the canal board for a loan to complete Hurricane's water system, the two boards often worked closely and cooperatively in providing other public services. For example, the town board, shortly after incorporation, felt it necessary to provide a "watering place for animals" as well as a corral for the marshal to use as a holding pen for strays.[85] The canal company, however, controlled Hurricane's land and its collaboration was essential. Fortunately, Thomas Reeve held seats on both the canal and town boards and became the natural go-between for the two groups. After town president, James Jepson secured a lot from the canal company the town board decided to build a corral, sixty-feet-square. Reeve was "appointed to confer with the canal board and ask for assistance to build the public corral and watering place."[86] The canal company provided the land and "assistance" and the town board saw the project to completion.

The two groups soon began delineating each other's responsibilities to avoid overlap. The canal company agreed to "keep up all ditches on each side of the streets" and in return the town government promised to "keep all road

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[84]Ibid.

[85]Minutes, 18 January 1913; 1 February 1913.

[86]Ibid., 8 February 1913.

crossings in good repair."[87] The two governing bodies also split duties in connection with Hurricane's cemetery. Canal officials, after conferring with a delegation from the town board, arranged to buy six acres of land from James Jepson and deed it over to the town. In return, town authorities consented to "fence and improve and maintain said grounds."[88] In keeping with their agreement town leaders hired E. A. Cripps to provide posts for fencing and then announced that a free "dancing party" would be given to all those who assisted in clearing the cemetery. The board also scheduled the "young ladies" to furnish lunch for the workers and Hurricane shortly obtained its cemetery.[89]

Given the young community's rapid adoption of most modern conveniences its final public utility, a sewer system, was relatively late in coming, and not even initiated by town residents. It was not until 1927 that the school board spurred Hurricane into action. School officials sent a letter to the town government offering to provide a six inch pipe, or the cash equivalent, to reach 3,000 feet from the school building "to a sink hole in James Jepson's field." Upon this impetus the town board decided to accept the offer and make a

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[87]Ibid., 1 March 1913.

[88]Ibid., 4 October 1913.

[89]Ibid., 22 February 1915.

sewer system for the business district in the process.[90]

During the next several months city officers haggled over funding and other details of the proposed system. Eventually they appointed a committee to "wait on the bishopric to see if the church would help install the sewer."[91] Hurricane's second bishop, Ira H. Bradshaw and his counselor J.Harvey Hall appeared at the next board meeting in which the cost of the proposed sewer was estimated at $4,000.[92] "The church men" tentatively agreed to "secure $1,600 towards installation."[93] At the next meeting the church and civic leaders reached a final agreement: the school board would furnish the pipe, and the town and church would cover the costs of installation on a "50-50 basis." Higher ecclesiastical authorities approved the agreement and Bishop Bradshaw promised the town council it could "look for the money immediately after October Conference."[94] Installation began shortly thereafter, and a year later the board voted to extend the system further throughout the business

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[90]Ibid., 30 April 1927; 26 June 1927.

[91]Ibid., 9 August 1927.

[92]Bishop Isom died 2 February 1923, after which Bradshaw became bishop.

[93]Minutes, 10 September 1927.

[94]Ibid., 16 September 1927. According to the record Bradshaw received permission to give the money to the town from his immediate supervisor the "Stake President." The "October Conference" referred to is likely the semi-annual meeting of the church hierarchy held at the tabernacle in Salt Lake City. It is not clear if Bradshaw would receive the needed money at the conference or why the town would have to wait until it was over to get the money.

district.[95] Slowly the convenience of indoor "privies" reached other areas of town, the biggest expansion coming in 1946 when fourteen residential blocks were added.[96]

In general, by 1930 Hurricane's population enjoyed most of the available modern conveniences. Though occasionally slow, the town authorities furnished Hurricane with a telephone exchange, electrical power, a culinary water system, a fine school building, a cemetery and finally a sewer system. Hurricane's dynamic leadership created stability and enabled the town to experience rapid expansion in an orderly fashion. The canal board provided instant respected leadership in the infant community and became a springboard for its officers into other prominent town positions. The leaders who filled these posts formed the core of Hurricane's boosters. Eventually the canal company's prominence became eclipsed by other governing bodies, but a large degree of interaction still prevailed amongst the various organizations. Church auxiliaries were influential in providing school and social facilities, the town board and canal board often worked closely in supplying public utilities, and the commercial club, as better demonstrated in the next chapter, stimulated growth and brought significant attention to the town.

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[95]Ibid., 6 September 1928.

[96]Bradshaw, 408.

CHAPTER VI

"PROGRESSIVE LITTLE TOWN"

During the first week of September 1912, the American Bankers' Convention met in Salt Lake City. Among other activities the bank delegates visited the Utah Copper Mine in Bingham Canyon. While there these business authorities from across the country were given a juicy, carefully wrapped Elberta peach as a snack. Upon removal of the paper napkin covering the fruit, delegates noticed a message: "'Utah's Famous Elberta peaches, grown at Hurricane, Washington County, Utah. You have seen the greatest copper mine in the world; you will now eat the finest peaches ever grown. . . . Tell your mother, wife or sweetheart to watch for UTAH PEACHES. You can vouch for the quality.'"[1]

Hurricane's commercial club engineered this and other promotional feats that helped create a ready market and a state wide reputation for the community's superior quality fruit. Not only did the club put Hurricane fruit on the Salt Lake market, but also took the lead in promoting "good roads" for

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[1]*Washington County News*, 5 September 1912.

Washington County. Road improvements brought tourist travel and economic growth to Hurricane as did the club's prime fruit festival. This annual event quickly gained a widespread reputation for its fine fruit, sports competitions, and other entertainments.

As the town board, church and canal board collaborated to provide public utilities, the rise of the commercial club became essential in promoting Hurricane's image as well as maintaining its steady business growth. Behind the thrust of the enthusiastic club Hurricane merchants kept pace with the town's expanding population. By 1930 local businesses provided most of the necessary goods and services to meet the townsfolk's daily needs. Not everything the club touched turned to gold, however. Town boosters campaigned to bring a railroad line to Hurricane so that farmers could easily reach northern markets with their cash crops. In this effort they failed and their dreams of running California fruit out of the Utah market diminished. Regardless, their victories in the good roads movement, the fruit festival, and at the fruit market compensated. The commercial club settled with its successes and pre-depression era Hurricane enjoyed a large measure of prosperity.

"A Great Day For Hurricane"

Shortly after organizing in 1908 the club purchased "several thousand" Elberta peach trees but soon discovered a damaging threat to its infant

crops—a numberless army of nibbling rabbits.[2] The new club responded in appropriate business fashion. It offered a bounty "of one cent each for rabbits."[3] The young men in town eagerly chose up sides and made a contest of the rabbit hunt, the loosing side gave a free dance to the winning side. The young ladies prepared and served lunch at the event and the net result for the club was "almost five hundred" dead rabbits.[4]

An important driving force behind the business club's successful ventures was an experienced nursery man from Centerville, Utah, Frank Barber. Barber and Hurricanite Jacob Workman served together as Mormon missionaries in the Central States Mission. After water reached the Hurricane Bench, Workman wrote to his friend inviting him to come to southern Utah and begin a nursery. Barber accepted and shortly moved to Hurricane. Upon his arrival in January 1907 the newborn town consisted of "a bunch of chaparral, sages, granaries, and tents."[5] It was too early in the year to plant, so Barber sat in his tent "for six straight weeks, cracking peach pits one at a time." In the spring he began planting, not only the peach pits, but all varieties of "nursery

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[2]Ibid., 15 October 1908.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., 10 December 1908.

[5]Barber, interview.

stock" which the townsfolk bought to beautify their new properties.[6]

Barber soon organized the Hurricane Nursery Company (later changed to the Dixie Fruit and Produce Company) which enjoyed tremendous success. In 1908 his company "sold over 1,700 trees . . . and quite a large number of gooseberry, blackberry, raspberry, and current bushes. The trees were of various kinds of peach, apple, pear, plum, and cherry."[7] Barber later claimed responsibility for ninety percent of Hurricane's shade and greenery which he boasted "came from pits, seeds, buds and grass that I put in here in 1909 and 1910."[8] Given the good fortune of his business, Barber soon became involved in Hurricane's commercial club and, as vice president, organized Hurricane's first "Fruit Festival" held at the Social Hall in 1909. The townsfolk displayed their finest fruits—Elberta peaches; malaga, muscatel, flaming tokay and seedless grapes; and a variety of melons—which were judged and then hungrily devoured by festival goers.[9]

Following this small beginning the commercial club expanded its vision for the following year and invited outsiders to share Hurricane's wealth. Over fifty people from St. George alone journeyed to the event as well as many

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[6]Ibid.

[7]*Washington County News*, 9 April 1908.

[8]Barber, interview.

[9]*Washington County News*, 2 September 1909.

visitors from Cedar City, Kanara, La Verkin, Leeds, Toquerville, Virgin, Washington, New Harmony and "other places." Among the St. George crowd was the editor of the county news who made a detailed and glowing report. He declared the day a "gala one for the progressive little town."[10] The editor enthusiastically described the "hearty" Hurricane welcome he received as well as being "treated to the best the people had." Hurricane residents first shared a meal with their guests and then conducted them to the Social Hall where meticulous fruit displays awaited inspection (see Figures 26-27, Appendix I). According to the editor, "visitors expected to see some choice fruit," but did not envision so much of it at "such an extra superior quality." The "boxes and pyramids" of Elberta peaches grabbed the crowd's attention causing some to suggest that "finer peaches were never seen anywhere." The newspaperman detailed the condition of the peaches: "[they] average[d] about eight ounces each and not a quarter of an ounce difference between any of them; their color was perfect, could not be better, and their flavor delicious; such peaches would command attention anywhere and bring the highest prices on any market." He had equal praise for the grapes, melons, and other fruit with the exception of the apples "which upon close inspection proved to be wormy." After judges awarded prizes "the large juicy melons were carved and soon the entire crowd

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[10]Ibid., 18 August 1910.

was eating the delicious fruits of all kinds." A baseball game and then a dance completed the day's festivities. The editor and those he spoke with agreed: "It was a great day for Hurricane."[11]

From these beginnings the fruit festival grew into an annual two day extravaganza complete with roping contests, foot races, horse races, bronco riding, steer wrestling, baseball, dancing parties, and cantatas.[12] The fruit however still commanded center stage. Alice Stratton recalls attending her first "Peach Days" in 1916 where the "melons, peaches, apples, plums, and grapes were heaped high. . . . On the afternoon of the second day, the melons were cut and everyone ate the fruit display. How Jolly it was!"[13]

In 1929 Hurricane's Peach Days adopted a county fair status complete with livestock and poultry exhibits, agricultural and horticultural displays, and various other entertainments. The announced plan was to "hold these fairs and festivals annually in Washington [C]ounty, alternating among the towns of the county." It was suggested that "next year's event be held in St. George."[14] Despite these intentions the 1930 festival was again held at Hurricane. The newspaper called it "the second annual Dixie Fruit Festival," and declared the

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[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid., 28 August 1913.

[13]Stratton, "Stars," 14.

[14]*Washington County News*, 22 August 1929.

event "one of the most successful fairs and festivals ever held in Washington [C]ounty."[15] Over sixty years later and against the protest of many St. George residents, the Washington County Fair, as it is now called, is still held in Hurricane.

With the festival drawing big crowds each year Hurricane's reputation for fine fruit continued to grow and the commercial club eagerly sought to exploit it to the town's advantage. Barber in particular was interested in attracting a railroad to Hurricane in order to easily ship the town's fruit to a wider market than peddlers could reach. To accomplish this he first had to create a demand for Dixie fruit on the Salt Lake market. At a meeting of the Commercial Club in April 1912 Barber announced the club's intention to "ship 1,000 cases of the Elberta peach" to Salt Lake City.[16] The biggest obstacle to the venture was the sixty mile wagon trip to the nearest railroad at Lund, Utah. Some were skeptical whether the fruit could arrive at market in good enough condition to sell, but Barber was ready to try.

His first shipment consisted of twenty-three cases of peaches and seven cases of apples. He wrapped each fruit individually and placed them in crates. He then arranged the precious cargo in a dead x wagon filled with straw about

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[15]Ibid., 28 August 1930.

[16]Ibid.,18 April 1912.

eighteen inches deep—the wagons "had no springs at that time."[17] Barber recalled his feelings when he finally made it to the Salt Lake market place with his shipment: "It would just fill your heart with joy when I took the lids off from those boxes; those great big red peaches just shone there and they started to grab them and grab them and grab them."[18] "My peaches arrived in better condition than most of the California fruit shipped . . . in refrigerator cars," Barber added.[19]

News of the Hurricane fruit even made the Salt Lake City papers. The *Tribune* announced: "For the first time in its history, Utah's Dixie country . . . invaded the local produce market with a consignment of peaches and apples that created a sensation among local produce handlers and bids fair to mark a precedent of far-reaching importance."[20] The article notes that despite being forced to haul the fruit by wagon to Lund "the assignment arrived in splendid condition." The entire shipment was sold before noon at $2.00 and $2.50 per box ($1 to $1.25 higher than boxes from California). The newspaper interviewed Barber who took the opportunity to campaign for the extension of steel rails to Hurricane. He stated, "All we want in the Dixie country is a

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[17]Barber, interview. A dead-x wagon was a wagon without springs.

[18]Ibid.

[19]*Washington County News*, 18 July 1912.

[20]*Salt Lake Tribune* in *Washington County News*, 18 July 1912.

railroad to eliminate the sixty-mile haul by wagon and we will beat the world at every fruit shipping. Give us an even break with the fruit growers of California and we will run them out of the Salt Lake market in one season."[21]

In 1913 Hurricane's news reporter echoed Barber's sentiments by encouraging the townsfolk to "get busy and plant fruits that will bring a railroad to your door."[22] On another occasion Hurricane's news column declared: "Lots of fruit is being hauled away from Hurricane every day. Why [doesn't] the railroad come?"[23] Barber and the commercial club continued to campaign for a railroad, while simultaneously expanding their wagon shipments. Steel rails never did stretch to Hurricane and Dixie fruit failed to run its California competition out of the Salt Lake market. Nonetheless, Barber did create a significant reputation for Dixie fruit throughout the state and by the 1915 coming of the "auto truck" was able to more efficiently ship larger quantities of fruit.[24] In 1918 the commercial club signed an agreement with William Rust who ran a wholesale fruit house in Cedar City. That year Rust reported handling

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[21]Ibid.

[22]*Washington County News*, 24 April 1913.

[23]Ibid., 31 August 1911.

[24]Ibid., 5 August 1915 announces the first shipment of peaches via the "new auto truck."

"upwards of 80 tons of Dixie fruit."[25] The following year the club signed a similar agreement with the Hancock Fruit Company, wholesalers in Salt Lake City.[26] With such a well established market for Hurricane's fruit, and the railroad a forgotten dream, the Commercial Club seemed to quietly settle into its rocking chair and contently smile over its accomplishments.

In fact, by the late 1920s mention of Hurricane's fruit in connection with the commercial club had all but disappeared. In 1929, community leaders, spurred by late frosts that year, began to encourage farmers to diversify their crops. Two inches of snow blanketed Hurricane in late March 1929 and although it melted "as soon as the sun struck it" the clear sky that followed brought early morning temperatures to twenty-two degrees Fahrenheit. Loss estimates ranged from one-half to two-thirds of the fruit crop. Hurricane resident and state senator, David Hirschi, had just returned from a legislative session in Salt Lake City when the rare winter storm hit. Hirschi suggested that the town leadership "should encourage our people to invest their money in safer industries, and mentioned especially the livestock industry."[27] When a second devastating frost hit over a week later Hurricane's reporter echoed

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[25]Ibid., 12 September 1918. Hurricane was not the only supplier of this fruit. Other Dixie towns also distributed through Rust.

[26]Ibid., 22 May 1919.

[27]Ibid., 28 March 1929.

Hirschi's sentiments: "Dixie must diversify her farming. We must not have all our eggs in one basket."[28] A good number of Hurricane residents did initiate or deepen their involvement in livestock, but crop killing frosts notwithstanding, Hurricane continued to produce fine quality fruit.

"Three Cars a Day Pass Through Hurricane"

Agricultural worries aside, the commercial club, for obvious reasons, took an active interest in the county's "good roads" movement. Despite the canal board's initial effort to improve access to early Hurricane the commercial club proved the major impetus behind the lengthy campaign. Canal officers considered the roads leading into the new town as important trade routes for the cash crops Hurricane farmers were already producing. Even though in 1906 they concluded one proposed road "too great a task at the moment," by 1907 they began looking to the state for aid. The canal board sent a delegate to the state legislature in the hopes of "securing an appropriation" to build "a bridge across the Virgin River between Hurricane and La Verkin" (see Figure 28, Appendix I).[29]

The appeal to the state proved successful although the actual coming of the bridge was slow. It was over a year later when Hurricane's news reporter

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[28]Ibid., 11 April 1929.

[29]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 22 January 1906; 19 January 1907.

announced the anticipated arrival of the "engineer who is to construct our bridge."[30] A Mr. C. H. Coleman representing the Midland Bridge Company of Kansas spearheaded the project. His "force of men" completed the bridge within a month.[31] One resident described the new steel structure as "very substantial" and all seemed pleased with the convenience it provided—and none too soon. While the metal crossing was still under construction a "Mr. Westover from Leeds" plunged his horses, wagon, and family into the river "below the good spot" and quickly became caught by a "heavy current." The swift water pushed his wagon downstream until it lodged on a few life-saving boulders. Fortunately, J. A. Stratton "happened along" and first rescued the women and children and then Mr. Westover and his horses and wagon.[32]

While the new bridge ended such difficulties with the river, it did not, in itself, solve the need for good roads. Hurricane's fruit, hay, molasses and grain crops were dependent upon access to northern markets and the poor roadways hindered the possibilities of reaching them. Hurricane's canal board was not alone in recognizing this, as a "good roads" movement prevailed throughout the county. Hurricane's news reporter joined the fray by

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[30]*Washington County News*, 2 April 1908.

[31]Ibid., 9 April 1908; 7 May 1908.

[32]Ibid., 30 April 1908.

encouraging: "All boost for better roads in Dixie."[33]

Besides greater accessibility to markets many recognized the financial profits Hurricane's proximity to Zion Park and the Grand Canyon could garner if tourist travel passed through town. In 1913 Dave Rust, a Kanab man came to Hurricane with the idea of securing convict labor to build and improve Dixie roads. Rust recruited Charles Petty to go to Salt Lake City with him where they met with Governor Spry. The governor agreed to furnish men, horse teams, guards, engineers, and road equipment if the southern Utah men provided hay and grain for the horse teams while in Dixie.[34]

In response, Rust and Petty returned south and called a meeting of commercial clubs from Hurricane, St. George, Toquerville, Cedar City, and La Verkin. These groups collectively raised $8,000 to provide hay and grain for the state's twenty horse teams. Convict labor was soon constructing new roads as well as grading and improving old ones in southern Utah.[35] The venture proved so successful that the following year the Hurricane Commercial Club took the lead in collecting the necessary hay and grain to secure the prisoners' return. Given that the state of Arizona was busy constructing an "auto route" from Fredonia to the state line, Hurricane boosters saw the opportunities that

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[33]Ibid., 22 February 1908.

[34]Bradshaw, 415.

[35]Ibid.

connecting with that road could provide—a link to the Grand Canyon that would funnel tourists through Hurricane.[36] Seizing this opportunity the commercial club organized a "good roads convention" to promote the construction of a highway from Cedar City, through Hurricane, to Kanab and then on to the Grand Canyon.[37] Bishop Isom, serving as a county commissioner at the time, expressed his pleasure with the proposed "auto highway." He believed it manifested "an earnest desire . . . to help get the tourist travel this way" and further reported that "Hurricane has already guaranteed, through its commercial club, $2,000 of the amount necessary to make a good road."[38]

The announced convention took place in Hurricane on the 22 July 1914 and was attended by delegates from several counties as well as from the State Road Commission. The various representatives established a Grand Canyon Road Committee to spearhead the proposed highway.[39] The following year J. Wilson Imlay, president of the committee presided at a similar convention again held in Hurricane, this time to ensure the route's completion. The convicts had already been toiling on the road for four months, but during this time "the

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[36]*Washington County News*, 7 May 1914.

[37]Ibid., 16 July 1914.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid., 30 July 1914.

expense of feeding the thirty teams had been borne entirely by Iron Co., Hurricane, Toquerville and La Verkin."[40] These communities were "about exhausted" and the convention's main resolution was a plea to the "other towns in this county to assist in furnishing hay and oats during the next sixty days or as long as the road camp remains in the county."[41] The horse teams required 1,000 pounds of oats and a ton of hay per day and the crews were an estimated sixty days from the state line. In cash this translated into $2,100, of which Kanab "subscribed about half." Fortunately the other communities in Washington County responded to the plea allowing for the completion of the highway.

In June, 1919, Hurricane's news correspondent reported: "An auto-load of tourists" traveled "through Hurricane . . . enroute to the Grand Canyon." Even though it was "early in the season" there were already "many cars" passing through the town and the "hotel and garage men along the route [were] preparing for a steadily growing stream of tourists to Zion and the Grand Canyon."[42] By July of that year one resident proudly boasted: "An average of three cars a day pass through Hurricane on their way to the Grand

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[40]Ibid., 11 February 1915.

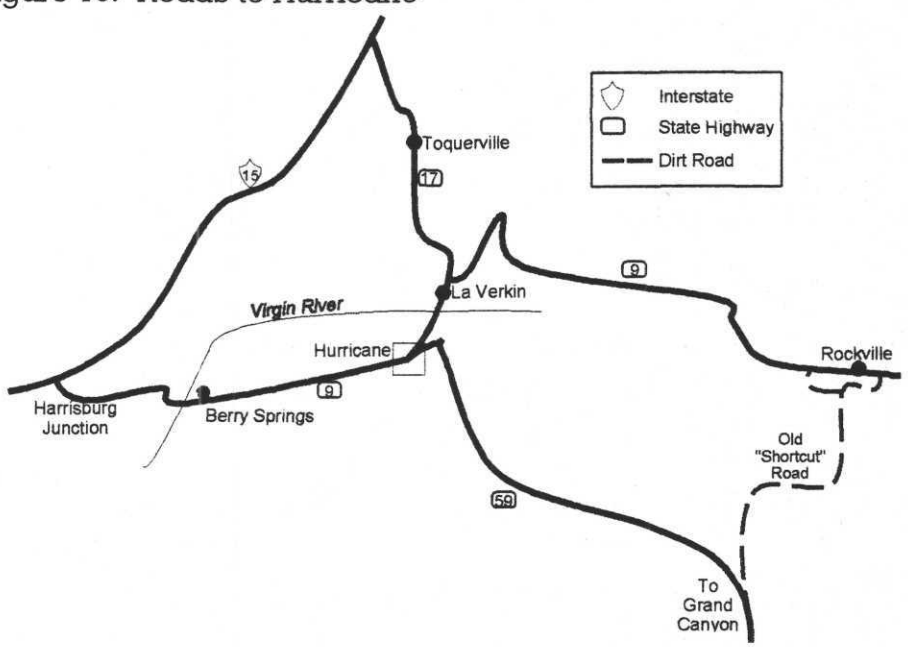
[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid., 5 June 1919.

Canyon."[43]

Despite this "steady stream" of traffic Hurricane essentially remained a dead-end town. Even much of the Grand Canyon movement began bypassing Hurricane when a "short cut" intersected the Zion Park Road at Rockville making it possible to avoid the steep Hurricane Hill (see Figure 10). Primarily the road entering town was also the road exiting town. As early as 1910 one Hurricane resident pleaded: "We want a road built between here and St. George."[44] The Commercial Club's letterhead echoed this sentiment, it read: "'Let's make Hurricane the Junction of Zion National Park, Grand

Figure 10. Roads to Hurricane



[43]Ibid., 17 July 1919.

[44]Ibid., 15 September 1910.

Canyon, and Arrowhead Trails."[45]

It took more than pleading and letterheads to accomplish this goal however. It was not until the 1920s when three influential Hurricane men served in the state legislature that Hurricane's hopes for tourist travel received some attention. J. Wilson Imlay began the campaign as a state representative, but Charles Petty, also a representative, and David Hirschi, a state senator, applied the most pressure. They courted their respective legislative bodies and eventually, in 1927, succeeded in passing a road bill. This legislation provided for construction of a road from the highway (I-15) through Toquerville and La Verkin, and across the Virgin River gorge on an expensive high-line bridge (see Figure 29, Appendix I). The proposed road would then pass through Hurricane and cross the river again by Berry Springs and reconnect with the highway near Harrisburg (see Figure 10). Thus tourist traffic, whether going to Zion Park or the Grand Canyon would likely travel through the heart of Hurricane. The last link in the route (the new bridge) was completed in 1937. The tourist travel and a new convenient route to St. George were both warmly welcomed by Hurricane residents.[46]

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[45]Bradshaw, 418. The Arrowhead Trail was later renamed Interstate 15.

[46]Ibid.

"Good Lively Trade"

Even though fruit received most of the attention, it was not the only cash crop to benefit from road improvements in the county. Hurricane farmers also grew hay, grain, corn and sugar cane. In 1911 a news article declared: "The fifth cutting of alfalfa is ready to be harvested; this has been a very successful year for hay."[47] Another Hurricane column stated: "The grain and second crop of alfalfa are being harvested. The grain crop is considerably better looking than last year's crop, and both first and second crops of alfalfa are unusually heavy, several of our farmers putting up from twelve to twenty-five tons the last cutting."[48] A later report told of Thomas Reeve's and Frank Stratton's trip to Kanab with "about seven tons of baled hay to sell."[49]

Several farmers also tried their hand at dry farming, "some in the Hurricane valley, and others [southeast of town] near Canaan."[50] Apparently they met with "phenomenal success."[51] In 1915 Bishop Isom described that year's crops as "very good" and said that the "dry land corn matured nicely; dry land wheat went about 17 bushels to the acre and some as high as 21

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[47]*Washington County News*, 12 October 1911.

[48]Ibid., 8 July 1909.

[49]Ibid., 23 March 1911.

[50]Ibid., 18 September 1913.

[51]Ibid., 16 July 1914.

bushels."[52] This early fortune aside, the crops were, at times, plagued by insects. Chinch bugs, "ten bugs for every stalk" in most fields, devastated the winter wheat in 1919.[53] Barring insects, however, both dry farm and irrigated grains enjoyed relative prosperity and soon prompted a desire for a gristmill in Hurricane to process the farmers' wheat into flour.

Thus, in 1915 when Mr. Bird, a flour-mill agent passed through town promoting "The Midget Marvel Mill" and guaranteeing it against "all wear and tear for one year" the townsfolk eagerly voted, "almost unanimously," for the proposal.[54] There were 640 shares of canal company stock represented at the meeting. These stockholders favored the canal company establishing the mill. The following week canal officers met and explored the mill's potential profits. The eager leaders envisioned a $2,000 net profit for every 8,000 bushels of grain processed. This sufficiently excited the board and it voted unanimously to build the $6,800 mill.[55]

Shortly after its installation, Bishop Isom described the new mill's virtues: "The machinery, which is of the best, runs smoothly and everything connected with the mill works like a charm." In general, he deemed the mill "a big success

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[52]Ibid., 30 September 1915.

[53]Ibid., 5 June 1919.

[54]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 8 February 1915.

[55]Ibid., 15 February 1915.

from every point of view and the people are proud of it."[56] This initial enthusiasm aside, the mill never met the canal director's financial expectations. Canal water generated the energy to run the mill's rollers which meant that every time the canal broke or water was turned out for repairs, the mill shut down. In 1916 the county news reported: "Our mill has not been running for some time on account of the water being out of the ditch."[57] From a business perspective such unreliability proved financially devastating.

Just two years after its opening, the canal board voted to close the mill and settle with the miller "for one half of the loss." The board notified those who paid cash advances for flour that their money would be refunded or flour furnished them "when available."[58] Over the next several months the company vacillated on what to do with the mill. In June it voted to sell it "at a minimum price of $11,000," but three days later decided instead to "retain the mill and continue to operate it by lease or otherwise."[59] By the end of the year they again returned to their original plan and offered the mill for sale.[60] Buyers did not exactly jump at the prospect of owning a profitless business and the canal

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[56]*Washington County News*, 30 September 1915.

[57]Ibid., 21 December 1916.

[58]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 14 May 1917.

[59]Ibid., 8 June 1917; 11 June 1917.

[60]Ibid., 29 December 1917.

company was forced to hang onto its liability. In an effort to combat its losses it installed an electric motor in the mill "so that it may continue to grind while water is out of the canal."[61] Finally, in 1923 James W. Imlay bought the mill for $8,250 relieving the canal company of its loosing venture for good.[62]

Fortunately for Hurricane's sugarcane farmers the town's molasses industry had better luck. In 1910 there were five molasses mills in Hurricane "doing a thriving business."[63] N. J. Workman, upon his return from Sanpete County with a load of the sweet, dark product reported "a ready sale and good prices."[64] That year "twenty thousand gallons of molasses of superior quality" left Hurricane "for which 50 cents per gallon was paid."[65]

The livestock industry also found fortune among Hurricane farmers as some residents began raising beef cattle to sell. In the town's early days however, a large sheep shearing pen provided a much bigger economic boom. "All loose men" were able to find employment at the Gould's shearing correl five miles east of Hurricane.[66] According to one report the main tide of

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[61]*Washington County News*, 19 December 1918.

[62]Records of the Hurricane Canal Company, 27 February 1923.

[63]*Washington County News*, 17 November 1910.

[64]Ibid., 1 December 1910.

[65]Ibid., 5 January 1911.

[66]Ibid., 14 April 1910.

sheep came in the spring when money was scarce and Hurricane's young men needed jobs.[67] In 1914 there were 131,000 sheep sheared at the pen which produced 1,048,000 pounds of wool. This put into the hands of the freighters, most of whom were Hurricane farmers, $10,480 "besides giving employment to many, creating a market for hay and other products and giving the merchants and hotels good lively trade."[68] This spirited business continued over the next decade, and at one point, the corrals were reported to have sheared more sheep than any other in the world.[69]

Hurricane's agricultural based industries by far supported the majority of the town's wage earners, but these enterprises soon gave rise to other businesses that benefitted from Hurricane's booming growth and economy. In fact, by 1920, while farmers, farm laborers, and livestock farmers comprised seventy-three percent of Hurricane's work force, a fair amount of diversity had burst into the young town. The opening of the century's third decade saw a significant increase in skilled and unskilled laborers over 1910s population, but

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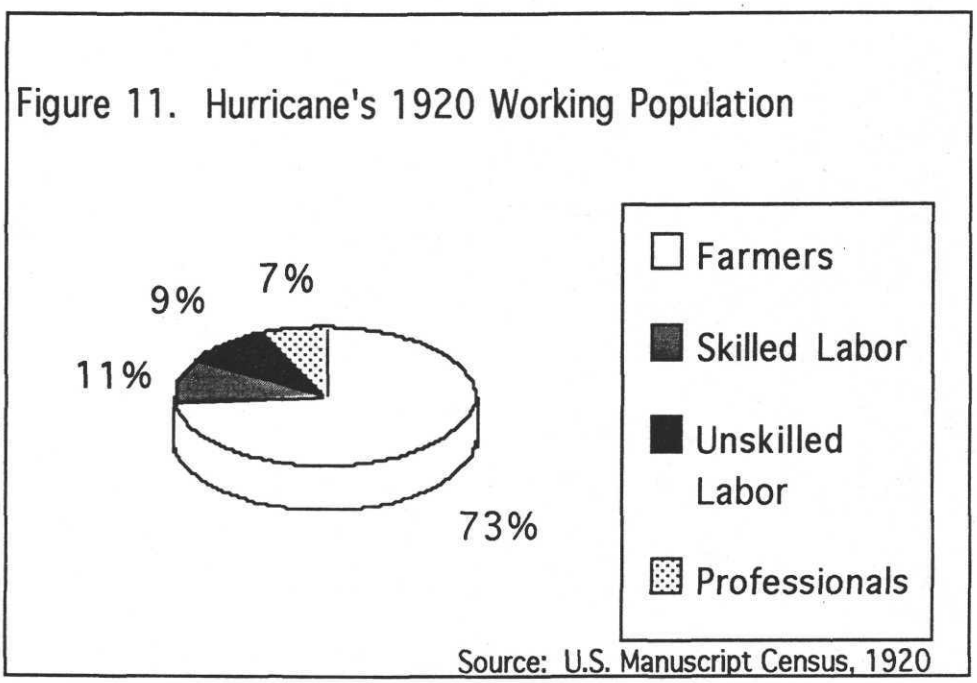
[67]Ibid., 22 May 1913.

[68]Ibid., 28 May 1914.

[69]Alice Stratton, "Gleanings About the Gould Shearing Corral" in *Hurricane Valley: Selected Short Stories Reflecting the Founding of the Hurricane Valley*, ed Dell Stout (Hurricane, Utah: Hurricane Publishing, 1989), 50.

the more dramatic rise was in Hurricane's new professional class.[70] This last group included: four business managers (for the pool hall, drug store, retail store, and one of the hotels) three school teachers, two doctors, a nurse, chiropractor, bank cashier and town marshall (see Figure 11).



The first store in town was operated by Charles Workman. It soon had competition from Petty, DeMille and Company which in 1913 completed a "fine new building . . . stated to be the largest mercantile establishment in the county."[71] Charles Petty managed the mercantile and shortly branched out to bring the latest

[70]U. S. Manuscript Census, 1920. The skilled labor included: four carpenters, three garage men, two house painters, two barbers, two seamstresses, and one each: cement plasterer, brick mason, wheelwright, miller, artist, shoemaker, and lumber mill manager. Unskilled laborers were comprised of nine teamsters/freight truck drivers, four miners, one laundress, a road laborer and a janitor.

[71]*Washington County News*, 10 April 1913.

entertainment craze to Hurricane—"a moving picture show hall."[72] The movie projector ran from a gasoline motor that created a loud "'putt, putt'" sound "heard all over town." Alice Stratton remembers going to her first moving picture with her older sisters: "They had to pay a nickel but I was only four, so I got in free. The picture trembled and flickered a lot." The show featured Charlie Chaplin, waddling about beneath men in white overalls who were painting a house. Soon "a bucket of paint fell upside down over [Chaplin's] head." All of this proved too much for young Alice, she cried and ran home. When her sisters returned they laughed and mockingly explained that "no one really got hurt, it was only a picture."[73]

A couple of years later Stratton was not so timid when she met another man made marvel—the automobile. It came roaring, popping, and chugging into town "laying a trail of dust [and] puffing clouds of smoke from its rear."[74] The auto "made a terrible noise, and smelled awful, but it ran without horses. . . The wheels had wooden spokes, were smaller than wagon wheels and had rubber tires." It was driven by Mr. Fox who "had a mole on his right cheek with three hairs sticking out;" he offered rides for ten cents a mile. Alice's grandma gave her a dime and she hopped in the front seat by Mr. Fox. When the short

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[72]Stratton, "Stars," 10.

[73]Ibid.

[74]Ibid., 14.

lived adventure was over Stratton remembers her biggest thought was: "My how I wished I had another dime!"[75]

The coming of the automobile meant more than ten-cent rides to Hurricane's businesses. Charles Petty responded by installing "a new gasoline tank in front of his store to be used for the refilling of automobiles."[76] It was not long before "quite a number " of Hurricane residents owned their own horseless carriages. Eighteen such vehicles chugged along the city streets by 1918.[77] With the tourist travel "streaming" through town, as well as the growing quantities of local cars, Walter Stout and Stanley Bradshaw felt it time to provide Hurricane with repair services. They opened a garage which quickly became "a credit to the town."[78] In 1919 Stout expanded the garage to offer new cars for sale. Of his initial shipment of Chevrolet cars all but one sold within the first week and Stout promptly ordered more "to meet the growing demand for the snappy car."[79]

It seems Hurricane was keeping pace with the national craze for cars which Henry Ford's assembly line helped create. Mass production of the

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[75]Ibid.

[76]*Washington County News*, 3 June 1915.

[77]Ibid., 3 August 1916; 10 January 1918.

[78]Ibid., 3 January 1918.

[79]Ibid., 10 July 1919.

Model T began in 1913, and by 1930 factory workers had churned out 20 million such vehicles. So popular were these automobiles that in the late 1920s Americans owned more cars than indoor bathrooms.[80] In Hurricane the story was no different. While car ownership continued to climb in the small town outhouses prevailed even into the 1940s.

In general though, by 1930 Hurricane's citizenry enjoyed comfortable surroundings enhanced by local businesses that supplied most daily needs. Hurricane's commercial club was instrumental in promoting much of this growth. Even though the club failed in its efforts to attract a railroad, it managed to create a favorable reputation for Hurricane fruit and gain a state wide market. The club also established Hurricane's fruit festival which quickly won fame and became the precursor to the Washington County Fair. Finally, the club took the lead in the region's good roads movement which eventually brought tourist travel and economic growth to Hurricane.

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[80]Thomas A. Bailey and David M. Kennedy, *The American Pageant*, 9th ed. (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1991), 2: 745-6.

CHAPTER VII

"LOYAL CITIZENS"

Despite the array of employment opportunities that Hurricane's flowering provided there were apparently still some who could not (or did not want to) find work. For them Hurricane's new pool hall was a welcome diversion. The week it opened one resident commented: "It seems lonesome now because all the loafers are at the pool hall instead of on the streets."[1] For some, however, a pool hall was not exactly the type of business growth Hurricane should encourage, and if it had to be tolerated then it should at least be regulated. The town board filled this essential role, not just in regulating the pool hall, but in establishing ordinances to maintain order and an enjoyable existence for Hurricane's citizens.

For the pool hall the town board set the age of admittance at twenty-one and the hall's closing hour at eleven p. m. The board also stipulated there was to be "no drinking, profanity, rowdyism nor gambling allowed" and granted a

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[1]Washington County News, 8 March 1917.

six month business license for the hall's two billiard tables at $50 each.[2] Apparently, the managers of the hall, Mr. Cheny and Mr. Pratt, felt it unjust that they be given licenses for only six months when those issued to Hurricane's other businesses covered an entire year. By 1919 the two men ran their hall without license rather than accept one for "a shorter period than a year." The town board filed a court complaint against the hall hoping to shut it down, but it seems the controversy was short lived. The town board agreed to extend the license to a year and the hall remained open.[3]

"Guilty of a Misdemeanor"

While the pool hall presented the main undesirable operation in town and thus received the most stringent regulations, other ordinances similarly reflected the mores of the town board enacting them. Interestingly, the ordinances also tended to mirror prevailing national attitudes of moral reform that characterized the era of Hurricane's founding. The board adopted one ordinance prohibiting the showing of "indecent pictures in motion picture shows," another against "sabbath breaking" and still another against

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[2]Minutes, 3 March 1917.

[3]*Washington County News*, 10 July 1919; 31 July 1919. Based on the fact that the 1920 U. S. Manuscript Census listed David Cheny's occupation as "manage pool hall" it is assumed the hall at least lasted until 1920, but it is not clear how much longer it survived.

"profanity."[4] The latter stipulated that "every person profaning the name of Deity within the limits of this town is guilty of a misdemeanor." All misdemeanors—sabbath breaking included—were punishable "by a fine in any sum not exceeding 99 dollars, or imprisonment not exceeding 89 days, or by both fine and imprisonment."[5]

Other crimes so punishable included "abuse," "fighting," drunkenness" and "riot." Abuse involved "using menacing, insulting, slanderous or profane language;" fighting was simply "any two or more persons who . . . engage in a fight;" drunkenness equaled "every person found drunk or intoxicated in or upon any . . . public place;" and a riot was defined as "three or more persons assembled together and in a violent or tumultuous manner commit an unlawful act."[6] Insulting females in a public place also qualified as a misdemeanor, as did "gambling," "indecent exposure," "obscene pictures and writing," "service[ing] of stallions in public view," "fast driving," and "selling unwholesome food."[7] "Nudely bathing" in streams or ponds was also unacceptable, at least "between the hours of four o'clock a. m. and nine o'clock

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[4]Minutes, 25 October 1913; Ordinance 6, Sections 47 and 48.

[5]Ibid., Ordinance 6 Section 2.

[6]Ibid., Ordinance 6 Sections 6, 8-10.

[7]Ibid., Ordinance 6 Sections 21, 25, 30, 31, 32, 37, 45.

p. m." otherwise it was permissible.[8]

Even Hurricane's youth did not escape the town board's regulatory barrage. Minors were not allowed to use "any flipper or sling, for amusement or for destroying birds, or for any other purposes . . . within the limits" of Hurricane.[9] Children who obstructed town sidewalks or streets "by playing at ball, quoits, marbles, jumping, rolling of hoops, flying of kites, or other games" were also "guilty of a misdemeanor."[10] The town authorities further felt that those children under the age of sixteen "unless returning from a public meeting or social party or in company with . . . his or her parents" should not be out past 9:00 p.m. during the summer and 8:00 p.m. while school was in session.[11] In addition, "dances, theaters and amusements of any nature" were to be closed "by not later than 12:30 a.m." each night except Saturday when the curfew was midnight.[12] The marshall was instructed to enforce these curfews by ringing the town bell at the proper hour each evening.[13]

In comparison to this list of misdemeanors the other ordinances seem no

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[8]Ibid., Ordinance 6 Section 29.

[9]Ibid., Ordinance 6 Section 22.

[10]Ibid., Ordinance 6 Section 34.

[11]Ibid., Ordinance 6 Section 38.

[12]Ibid., 4 October 1913.

[13]Ibid., 29 April 1913.

less trivial, but do give insight into what concerned the town leaders. Hurricane's first ordinance concerned "the running at large of animals" and provided for the establishment of a pound to "detain . . . and sell such estray animals."[14] The second dealt with the licensing and regulating of businesses, and the third with "the construction, use and keeping in repair of ditches, water gates and culverts." Ordinance four defined public nuisances as "all putrefying and decaying carcasses, flesh, fish or vegetable . . . all deposits of manure, entrails . . . or other unwholesome substances . . . [and] all slaughter houses or privies that have become offensive from use." The ordinance then stipulated that people found guilty of possessing such nuisances be required to remove them.[15]

The several car owners in town also came under the board's regulatory scrutiny. It set the speed limit through town at fifteen miles per hour in 1917, but in 1919 lowered it to eight miles per hour when school was in session and fifteen during the balance of the year.[16] A decade later the council raised the limit to twenty-five except in the twenty-miles-per-hour school zones.[17] The cars were not the only vehicles being reigned in; horse racing in the residential

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[14]Ibid., Ordinance 1.

[15]Ibid., Ordinance 2-4.

[16]Ibid., 1 May 1917; 22 September 1919.

[17]Ibid., 20 September 1927.

part of town was also outlawed.[18] Town officials also drafted laws declaring proper procedure when the old and new modes of transportation met on Hurricane streets. Car owners were required to allow ample space when approaching any person riding or driving a horse in the opposite direction, and when going the same direction, to signal their intent to pass by sounding the car horn.[19]

While the automobile's prominence across America made such regulations necessary, there were other national trends that Hurricane also reflected. In 1893, the same year Cotton-Mission colonizers were forming the Hurricane Canal Company, a very different group of people, generally termed "moral reformers," were organizing the Anti-Saloon League. This league joined forces with the older Woman's Christian Temperance Union to intensify the long-standing campaign against drunkenness and its harmful effects on society. Such groups became remarkably successful in shifting national focus away from the individual's responsibility for temperance towards society's. They even advocated state intervention in the regulating of drinking habits. In response to such lobbying many state, county, town, and city officials began restricting the sale and consumption of liquor. In fact, by the turn of the century nearly one-fourth of America's population lived in "dry" communities (places

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[18]Ibid., 13 December 1915.

[19]Ibid., 22 September 1919.

that prohibited the sale of liquor). Of course by 1919 this temperance crusade culminated in the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment outlawing liquor altogether.[20]

Hurricane's founding came in the middle of this movement and not surprisingly the town board mimicked what was happening across the nation. It drafted an ordinance "prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors" as well as outlawing any person from drinking "any intoxicating liquors of any kind."[21] Apparently however, when the drug store began selling "tonic beverages" a question arose over the definition of "intoxicating liquors." While the town clerk wrote to the state attorney general for clarification, town leaders instructed the marshall to request that the drug store "promise to stop selling alcoholic tonic." If the store manager refused, the marshal was to threaten non-renewal of his business license.[22] The scare tactics proved unnecessary as the drug store agreed to remove the offensive liquid from its shelves.

At the same time reformers triumphed in legislating liquor, a similar, but less well known, campaign against tobacco succeeded in banning the sale and public consumption of the "evil weed." From 1896 to 1921 fourteen states

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[20]Mary Beth Norton, et al., *A People and A Nation: A History of the United States*, 4th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994), 2: 633.

[21]Minutes, 9 August 1913; 29 November 1919; 16 December 1921.

[22]Ibid., 25 February 1929.

entirely prohibited the sale of cigarettes. Utah joined this group in 1921 when its state legislature passed the Southwick anti-cigarette bill.[23] Hurricane officials quickly followed the state's lead. Its 1921 ordinance not only prohibited the offending habit in "certain enclosed public places" but also outlawed selling cigarettes and cigarette papers and even advertising them in town.[24] Most amusing about the ordinance is the list of "public places" from which smoking was banned. It included: "dining rooms, . . . restaurants, cafes and cafeterias, theaters, passenger elevators, street cars, interurban and railway passenger coaches, motor and other passenger vehicles, . . . railway station waiting rooms, barber shops, [and] state, county and city buildings"—nevermind that Hurricane did not have most of these public facilities. Evidently the board wanted to cover all future possibilities as well! The state ban rapidly became unpopular and was replaced by a much more liberal law in 1923. Hurricane's ban lasted an additional two years before the town board unanimously approved licensing the sale of cigarettes. Thomas Stanworth received the first license.[25]

With these regulations meticulously drafted, enforcement became the

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[23]John S. H. Smith, "Cigarette Prohibition in Utah, 1921-23," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 41(Autumn 1973): 358-72. The bill was named after Edward Southwick, the state senator from Lehi who sponsored it.

[24]Minutes, 8 September 1921.

[25]Ibid., 18 July 1925.

next priority. It seems, however, the town marshall did not lose much sleep keeping up with Hurricane's criminals. Apparently smoking by minors became a problem and the marshall was instructed to "vigorously enforce against it."[26] He was also told to "arrest any person found under the influence of liquor." During prohibition he did catch "two young men" who were convicted of "having wine in their possession."[27] Stray dogs also seemed an annoyance, and town officials instructed the marshal to demand payment of fines from the owners or "kill the dogs in less than a week."[28] When Alice Stratton's father became "the stray pen keeper" family meals were "constantly interrupted" by people who were mad "because someone had put their animals in the stray pen."[29]

In other affairs, the marshall himself reported complaints concerning the "sanitary conditions of Nephi Workman's butchering" and the health board was instructed to investigate. On another occasion the marshal fined Bertie Bradshaw five dollars "for breaking quarantine regulations." But more serious were the town's three burglaries.[30] In 1913 the marshall arrested Joseph Griffin

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[26]Ibid., 18 June 1918; 18 March 1926; 6 May 1926; 13 September 1926.

[27]Minutes, 23 April 1915; *Washington County News*, 7 October 1920.

[28]Minutes, 19 February 1913.

[29]Stratton, "Stars," 35.

[30]Minutes, 15 August 1917.

"on charge of burglary in the second degree." Griffin allegedly broke into Petty Mercantile and robbed the cash register of "about $50."[31] Four years later Rob Stratton's store was also burglarized. This time the thief stole the "punch board prizes" and tried to open the cash register but "only succeeded in breaking the front part all to pieces." The marshal never caught the thief, but "the stolen articles were found later in a barn."[32] Finally, Delon Bradshaw and Charles Stratton were found guilty of taking a bale of hay from John Stout's premises. They were fined $25 each but appealed the case to district court.[33] These violations aside generally the townsfolk enjoyed a peaceful, low-crime existence. In fact, when the town marshall M. E. Hartley resigned his post for a job elsewhere, one resident, on being left without any police protection, jokingly commented: "The riots of Boston have not yet been repeated here."[34]

"Improving the Conditions of the Town"

In general, a good spirit, a cooperative attitude, and a large degree of civic pride seemed to prevail amongst Hurricane's citizens. Thus, when news of a statewide clean-town-contest reached southern Utah, residents

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[31]*Washington County News*, 13 November 1913.

[32]Ibid., 25 January 1917.

[33]Ibid., 1 January 1920.

[34]Ibid., 2 October 1919.

enthusiastically responded. Amos Workman, then president of the commercial club, joined by representatives of the Sunday School Parent's Class, went before the town board requesting that Hurricane enter the contest. The town leaders consented.[35] The commercial club "became inspired with the good that would result from this movement and immediately began pushing it forward."[36] This club of boosters worked closely with the town board to improve streets, bridge ditches, and place "a beautiful new drinking fountain" in the public square. The work of these two groups aside it was the Parents' Class of the Sunday School that "did more than either of [the] other two in improving the conditions of the town."

These church goers "sensed their responsibilities as members of the community and did everything that loyal citizens could do." A general committee from the various organizations supervised the work and effectively divided the different tasks into weekly projects. The committee set apart the first week for "cleaning and beautifying of streets and sidewalks." Week two involved "the cleaning and beautifying of lawns, flower-gardens, and yards" and the following week "the improving of corrals, outbuildings, etc." The

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[35]Minutes, 11 March 1914. Joseph T. Wilkenson, E. N. Stanworth, Mary R. Hall, Martha Hastings, and Ella S. Wittwer represented the parent's class.

[36]*Washington County News*, 21 January 1915. After Hurricane won the contest the town board offered five dollars to the person who wrote the best essay on "How Hurricane Won the Clean Town Contest." Hazel Bentley Bradshaw's essay received the prize and was subsequently printed in the county news. Most of this account is constructed from here essay. (See also Minutes 27 November 1914; 6 January 1915).

committee spearheaded each phase of work in this manner until "about three months later the inspector arrived at Hurricane." Upon scrutiny he found "a surprising number of beautiful modern homes, . . . corrals in exceptionally good condition" including "roomy" and clean stables, and "numerous modern conveniences being used." He did not find, however, "filthy pigpens" or "unsanitary out-buildings," nor any "collections of filth or decaying matter." Overall Hurricane received high marks in nearly every category and when the results were announced the sanitized little town took first place in its class and second place, behind Manti, for the entire state.[37] The townsfolk were justifiably proud of their accomplishment and when their prize, "a beautiful white drinking fountain," arrived it was given a prominent spot on the town square.[38]

In addition to consolidating efforts for the clean town contest the people of Hurricane united on other occasions for the common good. When Frank Stratton's house burned to the ground leaving only "some bedding . . . a few chairs . . . a few sacks of flour and some bottled fruit," townsfolk banded

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[37]Ibid. Hurricane received 78 of the possible 100 points in the contest. The categories and Hurricane's points were as follows: Sewage, disposal of cesspools, etc., 10 of 15. Stable and corrals, disposal of refuse, etc., 12 of 15. Garbage collection and disposal, 8 of 10. Water supply, 8 of 10. Sanitation of school houses and other public buildings, 4 of 5. Sanitary marketing of foods, 4 of 5. Presence of flies, 4 of 5. Sanitation of homes, cleanliness of homes, ventilation, etc., 4 of 5. Condition of streets, parks, and alleys, 9 of 10. General appearance of homes, barns, and barnyards, 4 of 5. Lawns and flower gardens, 3 of 5. Vacant lots, 4 of 5. Fences, 4 of 5.

[38]Ibid., 15 April 1915.

together and took up "a liberal subscription" for the homeless family. The concerned citizens quickly promised that "a new adobe house will be seen on the site of the one destroyed within a very short time."[39] Similarly, when Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Griffin's rheumatism worsened "the town people turned out enmasse . . . and built a small house" and moved the family into it.[40]

In addition to Hurricane's civic pride, townsfolk kept an eye on national events as well. In the summer of 1914 the flaming pistol of a Serb patriot triggered a series of events that held far reaching implications—even for tiny Hurricane, Utah. The well aimed bullet killed the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne and almost overnight catapulted most of Europe into war. Back in Hurricane, Alice Stratton's grandma "digested the *Deseret News* each evening" and reported her findings the following day at meal time.[41] Stratton recalls hearing about "Old Kaiser Bill" and the Germans—they were "the bad guys,"—as well as England and its team of "good guys." For young Alice "grandma's reports were awful." They told of trenches, machine guns, poison gas, liquid fires, and death. These images notwithstanding, Stratton's youthful mind managed to translate the war into something enjoyable. The two mounds of dried manure that had been pitched out the east windows of the family stable

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[39]Ibid., 14 May 1908.

[40]Ibid., 30 January 1913.

[41]Stratton, "Stars," 19.

became France and Germany. Stratton, with her friends, ran back and forth between them chanting, "'Kaiser Bill went up the hill to kill the king of France. Kaiser Bill came down the hill with bullets in his pants."[42]

Unfortunately, despite President Woodrow Wilson's pledge otherwise, the war did not remain strictly a European affair. German U-boats sank the British passenger liner *Lusitania* in 1915 with 128 American passengers on board. Similar sinkings and other threatening events eventually culminated in a Congressional declaration of war on 6 April 1917. Two months later Hurricane "fittingly celebrated" registration day. At sunrise cannons announced the event with loud booms and a flag ceremony followed. "At 4 o'clock the men who registered paraded through the streets then marched into the hall where a badge was pinned on them" and they were served "delicious cake and ice cream."[43]

The county news turned most of its attention to the war as did Hurricane's correspondent who always reported the coming and going of soldiers and the frequent festivities given in their honor. Such was the case when Calvin Dalton and George Spendlove left for training camp. The town threw a party and served "light refreshments." Church services that week also

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[42]Ibid.

[43]*Washington County News*, 14 June 1917.

focused on the "soldier boys" who were bid a fond farewell.[44] Throughout the war different church auxiliaries gave dances and bazaars for the Red Cross and the town actively promoted buying liberty bonds. Alice Stratton also remembers that "women knitted socks, mittens and sweaters, and all . . . wool scraps were made up into quilts to send overseas."[45]

As the trenches that scarred Europe became open graves for thousands of soldiers, news reports continued to detail the ugliness of the war. President Wilson soon requested a national fast for peace in which Hurricane citizens patriotically joined. Eventually, on 11 November 1918 Germany surrendered and the whole world celebrated. In Hurricane after "word came over the wire" the church bell rang for hours, car owners honked their horns and fireworks sent forth "the good news": "'Kaiser Bill' had had enough."[46]

Shortly a "good live committee" organized festivities to commemorate the return of Hurricane's soldiers. When the eighteen veterans arrived the town "royally celebrated."[47] The soldiers gave "some demonstrations" on the street followed by a "fine program." Next, the townsfolk, "some 350 in number" gathered around long tables "loaded down with good things to eat." The

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[44]Ibid., 4 October 1917.

[45]Stratton, "Stars," 31.

[46]*Washington County News*, 21 November 1918; Stratton, "Stars," 33.

[47]*Washington County News*, 27 February 1919.

evening ended with "a grand ball" in honor of "the boys who helped make the world safe for democracy."[48]

While Hurricane cheered the defeat of the Kaiser, another enemy, an extremely contagious flu virus, unleashed a world wide epidemic. Its effects proved deadlier than World War I. Globally the fatal disease killed as many as 40 million people.[49] In Hurricane, school, church, and show halls all closed and "everyone wore gauze masks."[50] In fact, Stratton recalls "anyone caught on the streets without one was subject to arrest." Stratton's mother "kept a pan of Lysol water on the back of the kitchen stove, where [the] masks simmered" and nearby a stack of the fresh clean shields waited for anyone who ventured "down town." According to Stratton "the quarantine was long and lonely" and despite all the precautions her family still caught the flu. They lay strewn over the living room floor where they could be near the fire and their mother could constantly administer "water, soup, mustard plasters and a cool hand on hot foreheads." During this time of death most people kept to themselves for fear of being infected, and even Santa Claus that year did not dare venture into homes. Instead he "stopped at every gate in town in a Model T Ford, distributing red and green mosquito netting stockings filled with candied

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[48]Ibid., 27 February 1919; 9 October 1919.

[49]Norton, 705.

[50]Stratton, "Stars," 33.

popcorn." Nonetheless, there were some men in Hurricane and La Verkin who chopped wood, fed and milked cows, and tended to other outside chores for their sick neighbors. Some women even went into contaminated homes to bathe, clean, feed and otherwise administer to the ailing.[51]

The flu epidemic eventually subsided and life without gauze masks returned to Hurricane. Even then, the persistent virus made occasional unwelcome visits to the community. In March 1922 the town board again quarantined the residents "as the 'flu' had made its appearance."[52] For the most part, however, the feared disease never returned in the same lethal proportions as 1918-19.

In general, the town board kept a watchful eye over its constituents. It wielded a heavy hand at times in regulating new businesses but was usually less than stifling. The town officers enacted a barrage of ordinances shortly after Hurricane's incorporation, many of which seem trivial, but give insight into the leader's concerns. Interestingly, Hurricane's political heads mirrored national trends in their liquor ordinances and other morally based regulations. In addition, Hurricane's citizens demonstrated a strong degree of civic pride which manifested itself not only in the clean town contest but in neighborly concern as well. During World War I the town pride turned national as

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[51]Ibid.

[52]*Washington County News*, 2 March 1922.

residents patriotically supported the war effort. In the end, it appears certain that life on the Hurricane Bench provided the prosperity and improvement that the town's pioneers dreamed of when they began construction on the Hurricane Canal.

CHAPTER VIII

"THE WORLD IS COMING"

Over one hundred years after the southern Utah settlers began the Hurricane Canal much has changed—and much has stayed the same. The canal conveyed water to Hurricane; it did not, however, solve Hurricane's water problems. The 1990s have thrust the tiny desert community into a new era of challenges brought on by the town's central position in one of the fastest-growing regions in Utah. While this distinction carries positive economic connotations it also bears a difficult downside: water. Where will it come from? One proposal calls for a massive pipeline to pump water from Lake Powell to Quail Creek Reservoir in Washington County at an estimated construction cost of $141 million (not to mention the $4 million annual output to run the electrical pumps).[1] Unlike Hurricane's original canal, the pipeline would not be used to irrigate new farm lands, but to support the region's new tourist and recreational based growth.

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[1]*Daily Spectrum*, "Water Planners Consider Pipeline," 17 March 1994, St. George, Utah.

Many within Hurricane are enthusiastic about the town's new life. The 1993 opening of a million square foot Wal-Mart distribution center is being trumpeted by developers as a life giving boon. Likewise, the town council's cravings for expansion have been evidenced by tremendous annexation efforts, construction of a municipal golf course, and the attraction of planned community investors. This new direction has met opposition by those desirous to hold onto the rural-agricultural principles of Hurricane's founders. The resulting schism has drawn national attention.

In spring 1994 Tony Horwitz, a staff reporter of the *Wall Street Journal* visited Hurricane and other southern-Utah towns. His article titled "Cultural Mismatch" ran on the front page of the 29 April 1994 issue of the *Journal*.[2] The picture Horwitz painted of 1990s southern Utah, is very different from the one detailed in this study. Instead of unity and cooperation Horwitz found a divisive rift tearing through Washington County. Its crime rate is rising, weapons have been confiscated in its public schools, and gang graffiti occasionally decorates St. George. Horwitz notes, "In 1861 Mormon pioneers settled this semiarid area to grow cotton and get away from the world; now, the world is coming to them. The county's population grew 86% in the 1980s and is still soaring."[3]

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[2]Tony Horwitz, "Cultural Mismatch: Californians Flood In and Tension Is Rising In Small Towns in Utah," *The Wall Street Journal*, 29 April 1994, A1, A6.

[3]Ibid.

Most of the "move-ins" are from California and do not always share the conservative views of Hurricane's majority Mormon population. The newcomers "tend to be more urban, affluent, and attuned to social and political trends than longtime residents." These urbanites, as one Hurricane resident noted, "leave stock gates open, gripe about barnyard smells and sounds, and threaten lawsuits over irrigation runoff." The rift even further widens as natives choose sides. Some (store owners and developers) favor the new growth and the profits it has created for struggling family businesses. Others wish the growth and the newcomers would go away; they prefer Hurricane the way it was.[4]

Ironically, those harkening to the past found a friend in a newcomer, Gene Van Wagoner, who was elected as Hurricane's mayor in 1993. Mayor Van Wagoner's wife is a native of Hurricane and in 1985 the couple decided to return to her hometown. Van Wagoner, contrary to the cold shoulder many move-ins claim to receive, "never felt any animosity because [he] wasn't born [in Hurricane]." [5] Perhaps his conservative Mormon values account for the "friendly atmosphere" he found. He stated, "If the [new] people blend in and have the qualities that the people here [in Hurricane] have I don't see any

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[4]Ibid.

[5]Gene Van Wagoner, interview by author, tape recording, Hurricane, Utah, 25 August 1994.

resentment to them coming."[6]

In his role as mayor, Van Wagoner favors a regulated and controlled growth for Hurricane. He is committed to the agrarian ideals of Thomas Jefferson and believes in the quality of life rural communities provide. Van Wagner believes that "government can only serve a certain number of people before losing contact with them." He favors a "capping process" with the population of an "ideal city" limited to 20,000-25,000 residents. His conservative stance is not unchallenged however. Since becoming mayor Van Wagner has faced a pro-development planning commission which envisions a very different future for Hurricane. Over half of the commission is comprised of people who "rely on the building trade for their livelihood and . . . are reluctant to put any road blocks on any kind of growth."[7]

Van Wagoner acknowledges the existence of "two factions" in Hurricane—those favoring development and those opposed. Regardless, the mayor sincerely believes if the differing sides "would just use a little common sense . . . there is a place for both." He notes that from 1991-1993 Hurricane had a 15% growth rate, which he feels the town will exceeded in 1994. "If [the business people] can't make a living on that kind of growth," Van Wagner

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[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

reasons, "they better go find another job because they are not businessmen."[8]

Hurricane is certainly not unfamiliar with such growth; its population nearly tripled from 1910 to 1920. Contrary to the new influx, however, residents openly welcomed this initial expansion. Hurricane's early colonizers were a homogeneous group closely knit by religious, kinship, social, and business ties and what benefitted one generally benefitted all. Growth and improvement did not favor the business person any more than it did the farmer. All profited from the fame Hurricane's peach festival gained as well as the town's hard won reputation for fine fruit. The same was true for Hurricane's new roads and its public utilities and services. In essence, Hurricane's early settlers cooperated to attract development because they all stood to gain from it. In 1994 the story is different. New housing developments eat up farm land and often border corrals and pastures that smell of manure and breed flies. The farmers and the developers are struggling to coexist.

The issues facing 1990s Hurricane are intriguing and invite attention. However, the town's transformation from the unity and cooperation of its pioneering period to the divisive issues of 1994 is beyond the scope of this thesis. Certainly it demands further study. When did the shift away from Hurricane's agricultural roots begin and was it gradual or sudden? Following

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[8]Ibid.

the town's pioneering period who rose to lead the community? Does Hurricane still have a core leadership group or has a leveling among authority figures occurred? How did Hurricane weather the great depression of the 1930s and the war years of the 1940s? What characterized Hurricane in the 50s, 60s, and 70s, and what led to the growth of the 80s and 90s? Answering these and other questions will enhance the image of Hurricane detailed here and provide a different snap shot in time with which to compare Hurricane's beginnings against.

For this study however, Hurricane's genesis offers a unique example in Mormon community building. Although the town's founding came long after Brigham Young's colonizing efforts ended, Hurricane's roots are traceable to southern Utah's failed Cotton Mission. The religious settlers who responded to Young's call faced devastating challenges. As many as eighty percent in some communities abandoned the Cotton Mission and sought improved conditions elsewhere. In the eastern half of the mission those who remained banded together and formed the Hurricane Canal Company. Company stockholders hoped the Hurricane Canal would bring upward economic mobility and a secure life for their children. Construction was based upon cooperative principals and even though many of the company's original subscribers abandoned the difficult and slow paced project, once the Mormon Church invested in it the canal board welcomed the deserters back. Amazingly canal

officers adhered to ingrained egalitarian values and forgave all debts and past obligations. Water eventually surged through the hard won ditch and settlers flocked to the Hurricane Bench.

In establishing the new town Hurricane's community builders used the settlement pattern they were most familiar with, that of the Mormon village. While most Mormon community efforts were headed by ecclesiastical leadership, Hurricane's founding largely came under the direction of the canal board. The board proved to be a vehicle for social stability and instant order. It was *the* governing authority in early Hurricane and commanded esteem and power. In addition, the men who headed this board during the ditch's construction earned a respected reputation and were easily elected to fill other leadership roles in the early town. This centralization of power caused administrative overlaps among Hurricane's key governing bodies—the town board, the canal board, the commercial club, and church leaders. As the town matured the canal board's prominence diminished and the other management groups began assuming responsibilities once held by canal officers. By 1930 these various groups provided most of the public facilities and services needed to make life comfortable for Hurricane's residents. Even though town leaders were not always efficient nor successful they commonly worked for the good of the community. In return, Hurricane's citizens were generally civic minded and patriotic; they banded together for community improvement as well as to offer

neighborly generosity.

As a whole, then, the struggle that began in the 1860s along the upper Virgin River basin ended successfully on the Hurricane Bench by 1930. For its founders Hurricane provided an escape from the destructive Virgin River as well as offered economic opportunity and room for expansion. Certainly, Hurricane met the needs of its pioneers and perhaps even fulfilled their dreams. The town's challenge in 1994 is doing the same for the more diverse group of inhabitants that call Hurricane "home".

APPENDIX I

Figure 12. James Jepson, Jr.
(courtesy Fern Reeve).

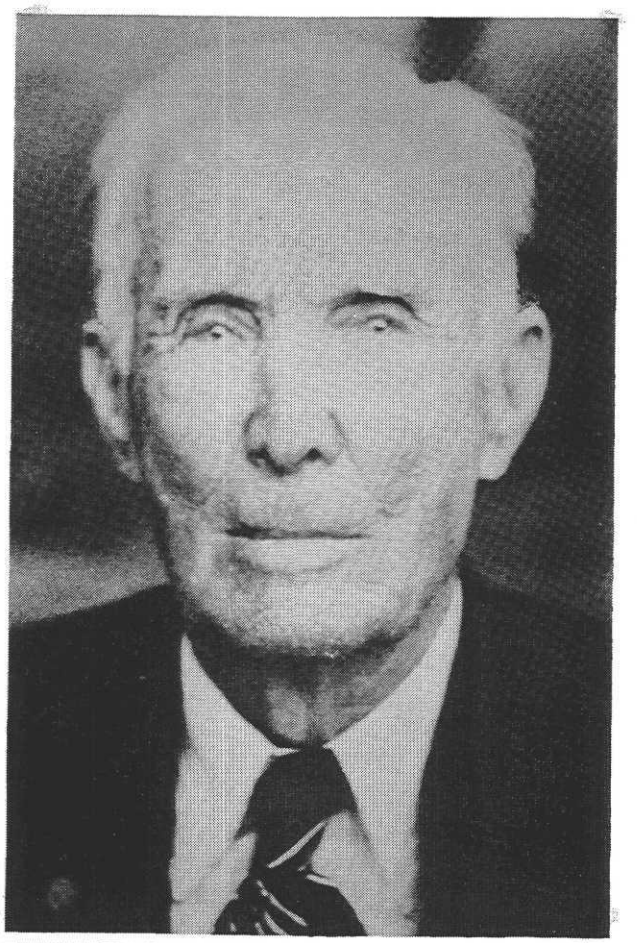


Figure 13. Hurricane Bench in 1910 (courtesy Hurricane Valley Heritage Museum).

Figure 14. The Rockville Tunnel. William Hinton pictured (courtesy Fern Reeve).

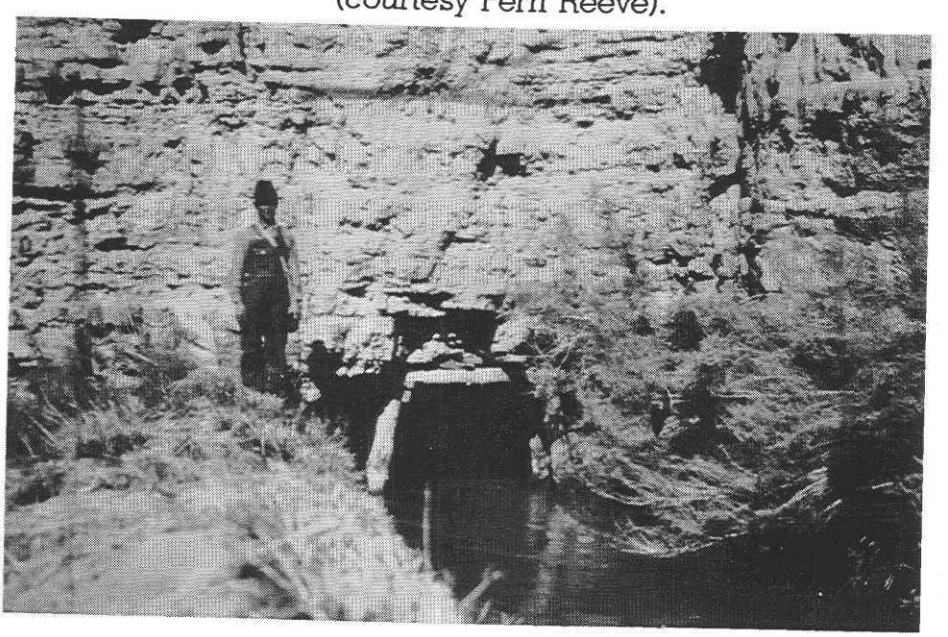


Figure 15. Hurricane Canal Flume (courtesy Hurricane Valley Heritage Museum).

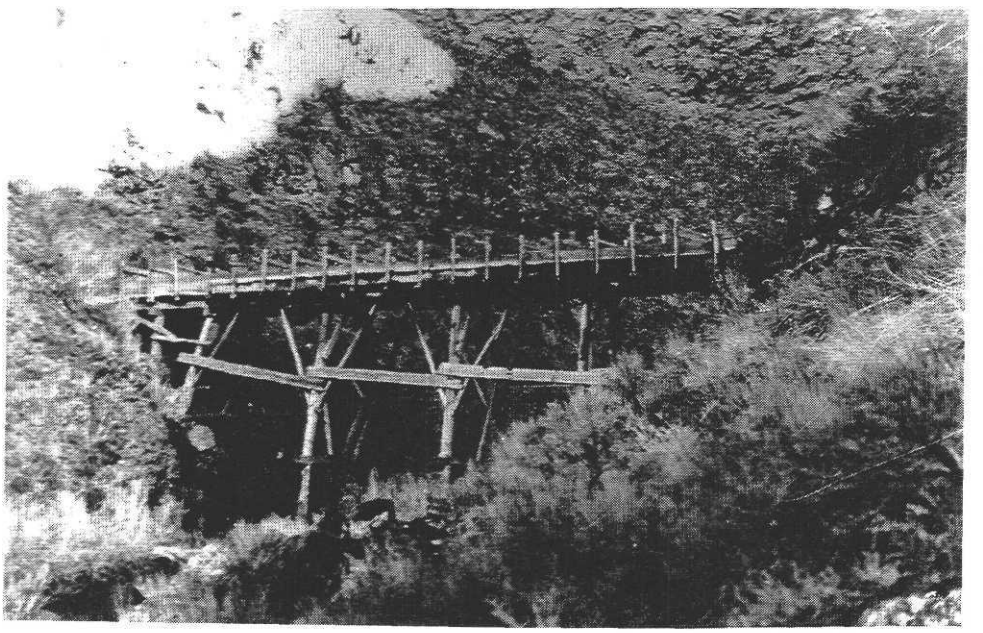


Figure 16. Hurricane Canal flume and tunnel (Lynn Clark Southern Utah Historical Collection, donated by Thelma Stirling).

Figure 17. Hurricane Canal and flume (courtesy Fern Reeve).

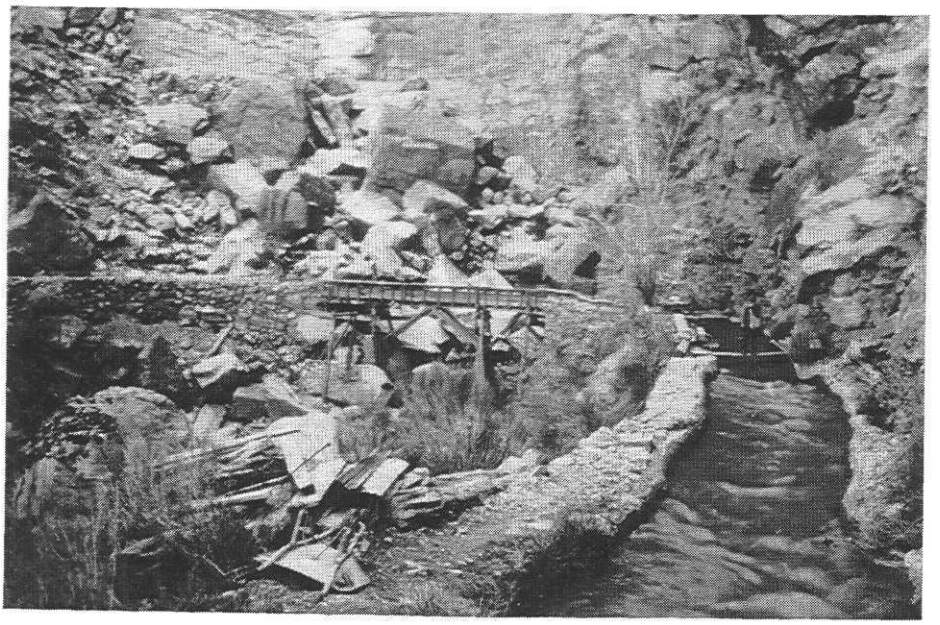


Figure 18. Hurricane Canal dam (Lynn Clark Southern Utah Historical Collection donated by Thelma Sterling).

Figure 19. Dam and control gate. William Hinton pictured (courtesy Fern Reeve).

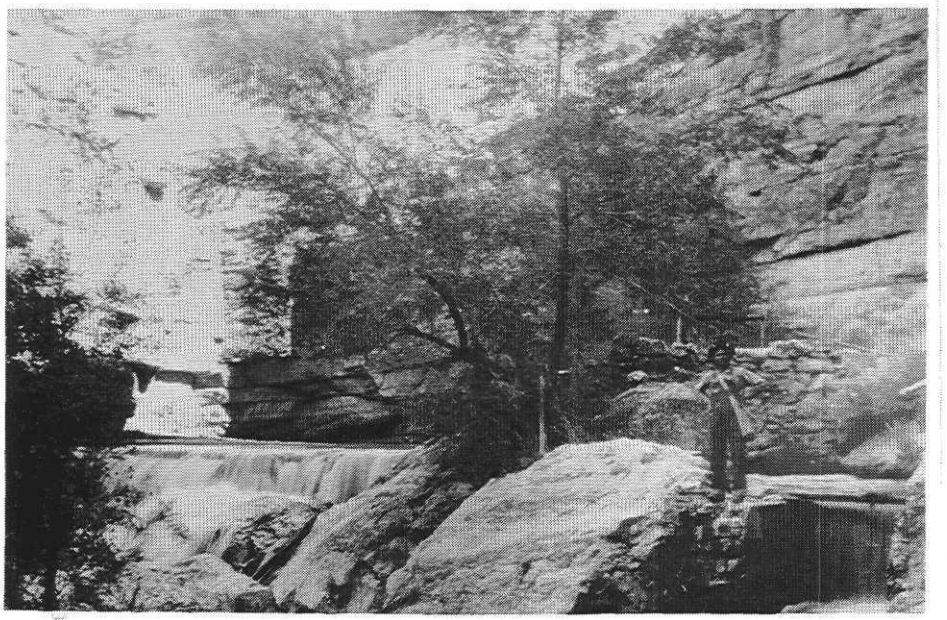


Figure 20. Canal workers' campsite (courtesy Hurricane Valley Heritage Museum).

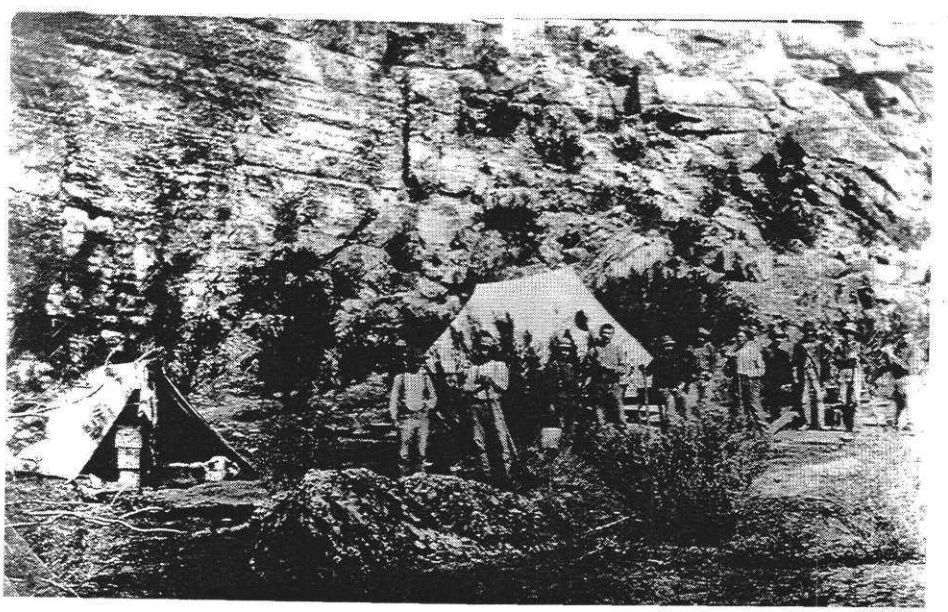


Figure 21. 1902 canal workers at hot springs on the Virgin. *Left to right:* Samuel Crawford, Bishop Hunter, Jess Lemmon, Joe Farnes, Alfred Jones, Joe Hirschi (courtesy Hurricane Valley Heritage Museum).

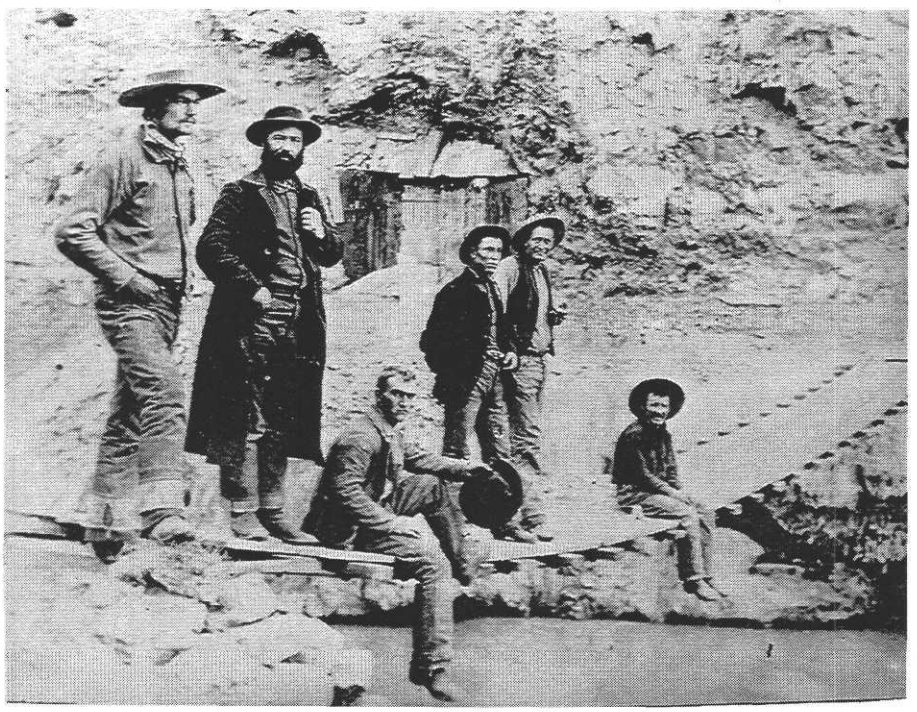


Figure 22. Horse riders in the Hurricane Canal (Lynn Clark Southern Utah Historical Collection donated by Wazel and Keith Hall).

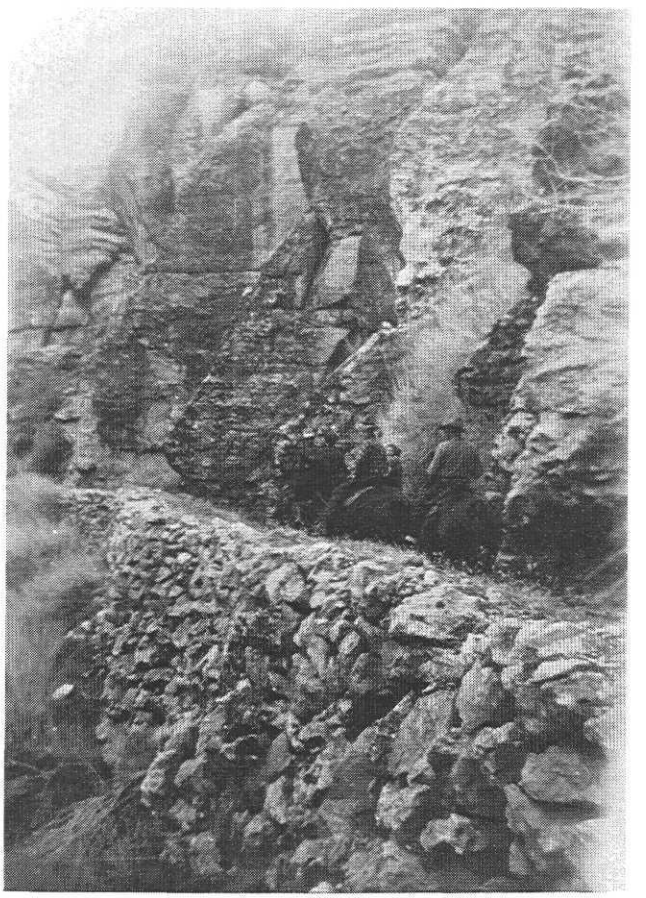


Figure 23. Concrete portion of canal (Lynn Clark Southern Utah Historical Collection donated by Wazel and Keith Hall).

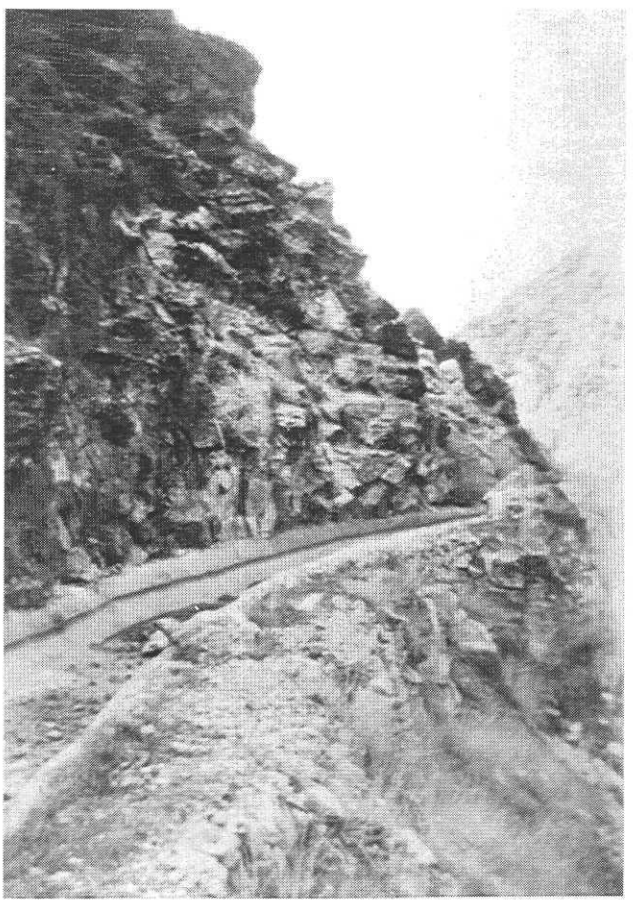


Figure 24. Canal sluice (courtesy Fern Reeve).

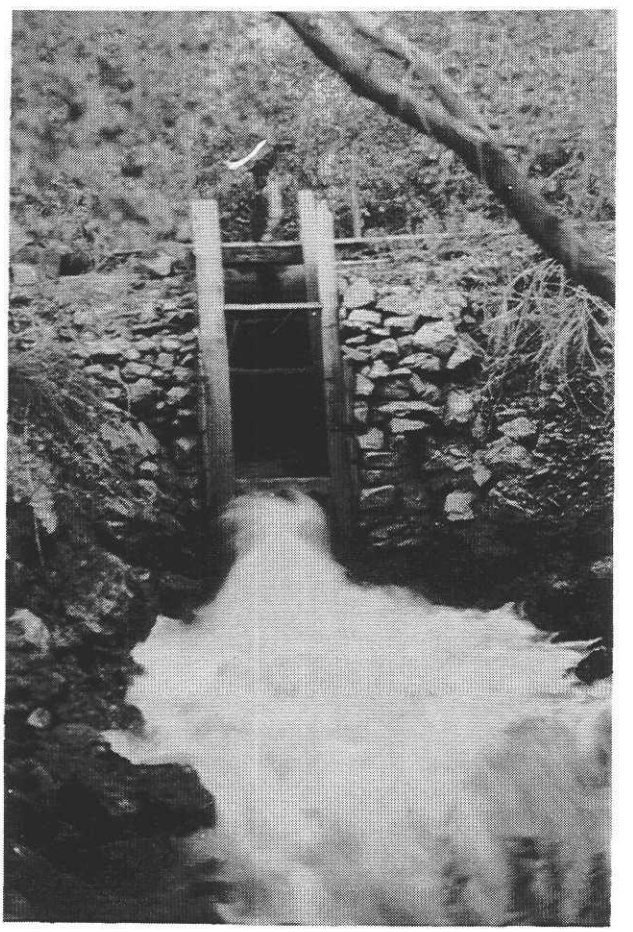


Figure 25. First Hurricane "home." *Left to Right:* Vera Hinton Eager, Wilhelmina "Aunt Mina" Hinton (courtesy Hurricane Valley Heritage Museum).

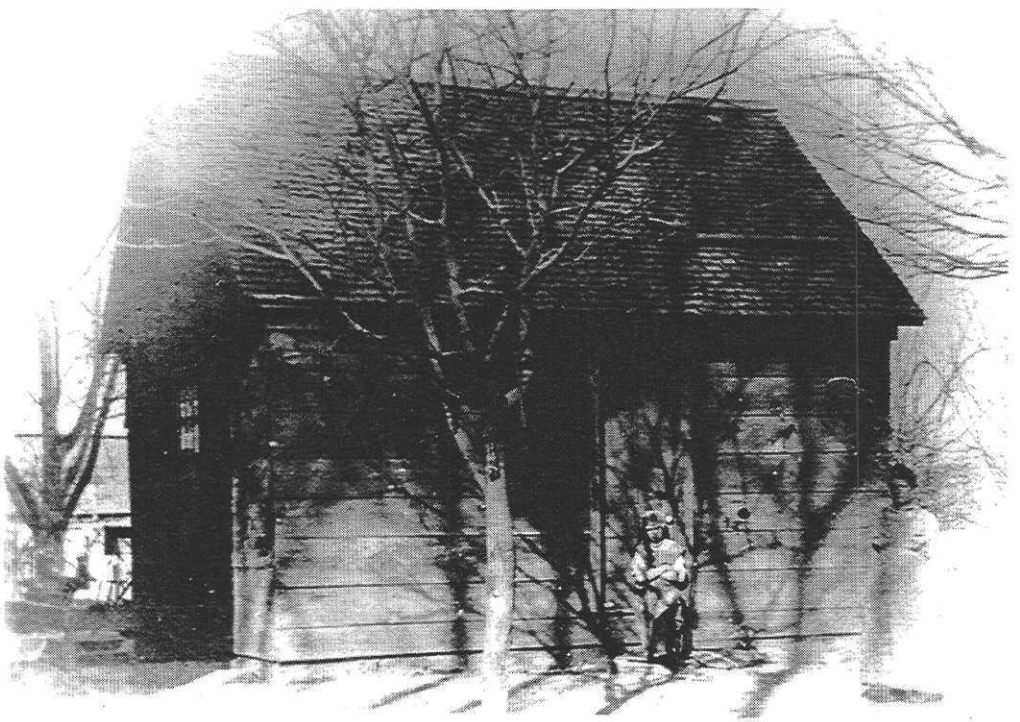


Figure 26. Fruit display, Hurricane Peach Days, 1911 (courtesy Hurricane Valley Heritage Museum).

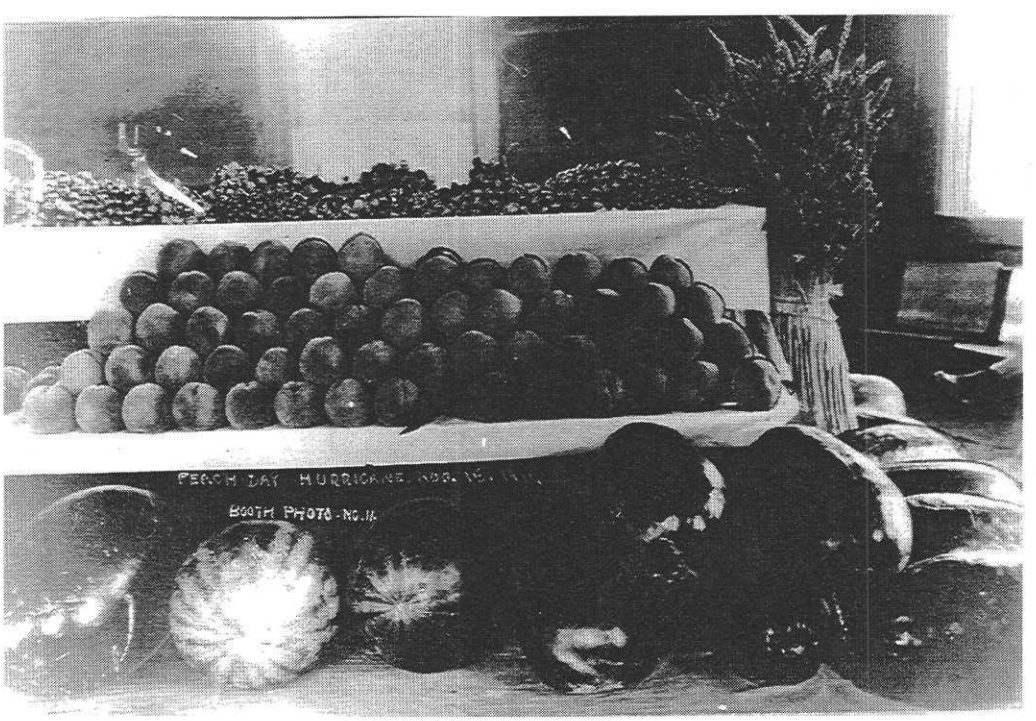
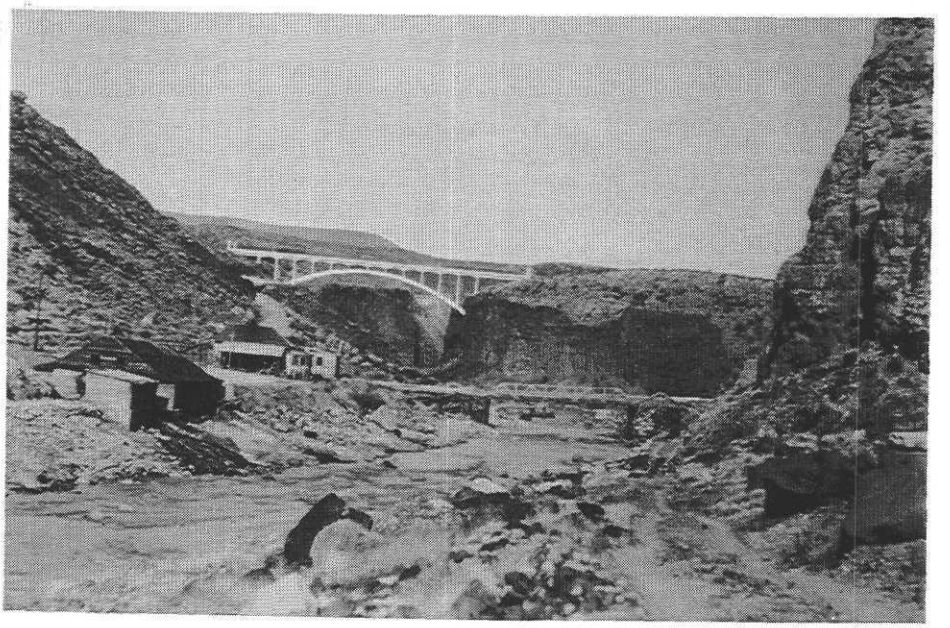


Figure 27. Fruit display, Hurricane Peach Days, 1914. (courtesy Hurricane Valley Heritage Museum).

Figure 28. Steel bridge across Virgin River between Hurricane and La Verkin (Lynn Clark Southern Utah Historical Collection donated by Fern Reeve).

Figure 29. New "high line" bridge across Virgin River gorge between Hurricane and La Verkin (courtesy Fern Reeve).



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"A Little Oasis in the Desert": Community

Building in Hurricane, Utah, 1860-1930

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M. A. Degree, December 1994

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the mechanisms employed in the community building process of Hurricane, Utah. It traces the roots of the town's early settlers beginning with their arrival in southern Utah in the early 1860s through the founding of Hurricane and the establishment of its social order. This pioneering period largely ended by 1930.

Hurricane's founders were the remnants of the Mormon Church's failed Cotton Mission. Original U.S. census research shows that by 1900 close to half of the mission's colonizers abandoned the challenging desert of southern Utah. The stalwarts who remained fashioned the Hurricane Canal with the expectation of economic betterment and a new life on the Hurricane Bench.

Using ingrained Mormon egalitarian principles the Hurricane Canal Company proved the driving force behind Hurricane's genesis. Company leaders became the new town's leaders and cooperated extensively in the various organizations they headed. They formed a core authority group that created stability and provided public utilities and services for Hurricane denizens. In the end Hurricane produced the chance for economic improvement its pioneers hoped it would.

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