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AN EXAMINATION OF MT. PLEASANT, UTAH,
1859-1939

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
Brigham Young University

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

by
Joseph G. Richardson
December 1991

This thesis, by Joseph G. Richardson is accepted in its present form by the Department of History of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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PREFACE

I moved to Mt. Pleasant in 1986 to work as a teacher at North Sanpete High School. As I became acquainted with the students and other teachers, I enjoyed listening to the stories they told about their forefathers, and I became interested in finding more information about the settlement of Mt. Pleasant. This is an unusual community in central Utah, with a strong Mormon heritage and a relatively large representation of non-Mormons. I became curious about these and other aspects of the community and started to conduct research, learning about the background of this town.

In 1987, I was accepted into the Family and Community History Master's Program at Brigham Young University. I was able to use what I learned in this program in my study of the events, personalities, and experiences of Mt. Pleasant. When it came time to choose my topic for a thesis, I naturally chose Mt. Pleasant.

I acknowledge with great thanks the patience and long-distance help of Mariel P. Budd, and guidance from Dr. G. Wesley Johnson and Dr. Mary Stovall Richards. I also wish to express my appreciation for the understanding and support my wife and children have given me during this project.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Mt. Pleasant, Utah, known as "Hub City," is the commercial center of Sanpete County. This town is located approximately 100 miles southeast of Salt Lake City and has almost 2,000 inhabitants. It sits on the banks of Pleasant Creek, from which its name is derived. Mt. Pleasant is positioned in a large valley, with branches of the Wasatch Mountains on the east and west. The land is gently sloped, allowing for excellent drainage, and has an average elevation of 5,900 feet.

Introduction

Like most of the 300 other small Mormon towns settled in the mid-nineteenth century, Mt. Pleasant followed patterns of development that set Mormon communities apart from other Western towns. In his article, "The Making of Saints: The Mormon Town as a Setting for the Study of Cultural Change," Dean L. May looks at some of the characteristics of the early years of those towns, including their stress on unity and solidarity within the community, cooperation through economic enterprises, placing a higher value on group achievement than

on individual achievement, and the uniquely coterminous relationship between the Church and the community.¹ These elements were present in Mt. Pleasant.

This thesis examines the first eighty years of Mt. Pleasant's history. Religion permeated the community affecting all areas of life, from education to the economy. This analysis will demonstrate how the characteristics described by May influenced the development of this community.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had strict, almost authoritarian control of the early development of Mt. Pleasant. This influence was weakened when the Presbyterian minister Reverend James McMillan and other Protestants joined the community. At first, tensions were great between the LDS and other churches, but later, understanding and acceptance of each others' right to believe as they wanted strengthened ties between the various churches and the different segments of society. As the railroads brought more non-Mormons and non-religious persons into the community, the churches became more supportive of each others' efforts to make this a community of high standards and Christian values.

Education was important to the people of Mt. Pleasant. The LDS and Presbyterian Churches both preached the necessity of learning and seeking knowledge. When the Presbyterian

¹Dean L. May, "The Making of Saints: The Mormon Town as a Setting for the Study of Cultural Change," Utah Historical Quarterly 45 (Winter 1977): 81.

Wasatch Academy was formed in 1875, the public schools, which had been dominated by the Mormons, were compelled to improve their curriculum and teaching staff. The Presbyterian teachers had been well-trained and provided excellent schooling at Wasatch Academy. The competition made for better schools, particularly in the rugged frontier of the American West.

The economy of Mt. Pleasant will be analyzed. Originally, the LDS Church leaders made most decisions concerning financial questions. They attempted to build cooperative businesses and a United Order, an economy where the participants gave ownership of their possessions to the Church while they continued to use only those possessions that they needed at the time. Both of these programs failed. Their influence gradually waned as the non-Mormon element increased. The economy of Mt. Pleasant has always been agrarian-based, but became more diverse with changes in local and national economic trends.

In my beginning research, I found little published material about Mt. Pleasant. The best source was a book about the town written in 1939 by Hilda Madsen Longsdorf.² She should be commended for the well-written book, even though she was an untrained historian who concentrated mainly on historical vignettes. Several other articles and books have

²Hilda Madsen Longsdorf, Mount Pleasant 1859-1939 (Salt Lake City: Stevens & Wallis, Inc., 1939).

included information about Mt. Pleasant, but no other work has analyzed the specific effects of religion, education, and economy in this community.

Nor has any other work been based upon extensive primary research. I have obtained many valuable sources from various archives, including the Special Collections in the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University, the Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the Utah State Historical Society Library. I have drawn from many diaries, oral histories, and various other primary and secondary sources, including the United States Manuscript Census. I have information from over 200 sources for this thesis.

I believe my findings will clarify and add to Longsdorf's Mount Pleasant 1859-1939. My findings show that Mt. Pleasant has been a complex community, distinctly affected by religion, which has, in turn, influenced the lifestyles of the people, education, and the economy.

Sanpitch Valley

In June, 1849, two years after the Mormons (members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) settled in the Utah Territory, Chief Wakara and Chief Sowiette of the Ute Indian tribe traveled to Salt Lake City to meet with Brigham Young, the religious and governmental leader of the Latter-day

Saints. Their purpose was to invite the Mormon settlers to colonize the Sanpitch Valley, a rich and fertile land that was the major hunting ground of the Ute Indians. Chief Wakara and Chief Sowiette requested that the settlers going to the Sanpitch Valley teach their tribe how to till the soil and build homes.³

Brigham Young was quick to take advantage of the offer. Since the late 1830s, the Church had sent missionaries to the British Isles, Scandinavia, and other parts of the world, teaching their religious principles and baptizing converts. Many of those converts were asked to leave their homelands and come to Utah to build up the Church. Brigham Young organized communities in which to locate these new members. These towns also met his purpose of building a "Zion Society," or a place where the Mormons would be able to live their religious precepts without interference from outside influences.⁴ At this point, there was no municipal or territorial control in the Sanpitch area.

A community in the Sanpitch Valley would also give Church members the opportunity to proselytize the Indians in the area. This was an important point, because the Mormons possessed a strong belief that Indians were the descendents of people who came to the Americas some 600 years before Christ,

³Ibid., 15.

⁴Leonard J. Arrington, The Great Basin Kingdom (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 96.

as recorded in the Book of Mormon. In the settlers' view, these native Americans might also be taught the principles of the Church and be converted to its doctrines.

Within two months after the initial meeting between Brigham Young and the Ute Indian chiefs, an exploring party under the guidance of Chief Wakara was sent to explore the Sanpitch Valley. The members of the group were kindly received and entertained by the Indians. On their return to Salt Lake City, they reported that the conditions were favorable for settlement.

In November, 1849, the first settlers arrived in what is now the town of Manti. Over the next few years, more families were sent to settle in Manti, and most found it satisfied their needs and wants. In 1850, the United States Congress passed an act allowing Utah to become a territory. Two years later, the Territorial Legislature gave the name of Sanpete County to the Sanpitch Valley and made Manti the county seat.⁵

Hambleton

During the winter of 1851-52, Madison D. Hambleton and Gardner Potter, two of Manti's residents, explored the area around Pleasant Creek and found that it could provide them with the lumber needed for construction in the Manti community. Because Manti was becoming overcrowded, Hambleton and Gardner decided to live next to Pleasant Creek,

⁵Longsdorf, 18.

approximately twenty miles north of Manti.

In the spring of 1852, twelve families departed Manti and established a new colony at Pleasant Creek, calling it Hambleton. A sawmill was erected, and lumber was cut to build homes for the twelve families. Land was cultivated and a fair wheat crop was raised. In the spring of the next year, more settlers joined the community.

In the early summer of 1853, the Indians of the Sanpitch Valley grew increasingly dissatisfied with the white settlers. Not only were their precious hunting grounds being disturbed, but increasing numbers of settlers were arriving to build homes and cultivate land. The Indian policy of friendship turned into a climate of hatred. The Mormon settlers then theorized that the Indians had not invited them to the Sanpitch Valley just to develop the land and teach them the ways of the white-man--they supposedly had ulterior motives connected with obtaining a new source of food. In the years before the Mormons settled in central Utah, the Ute Indians had changed from a farming and insect-eating people to weapon-carrying, horse-riding raiders with a liking for meat. Besides attacking other Indian villages to steal their babies and small children for slave trading, the Utes now stole cattle from the white settlers. By inviting them into the Sanpitch Valley, the Mormons felt that the Indians had concluded they would not have to journey so far to obtain

livestock from the white settlements.⁶ Some Mormons believed that the Indians were incited to battle against the settlers because of Colonel Jim Bridger and his mountainmen friends, who had had several disagreements with Brigham Young and the Mormons concerning ownership of Ft. Bridger and other properties.⁷ Finally, the Indians (who were a communal society) could not understand the white-man's concept of "owning" particular parcels of land.

With the growing bad feelings between the settlers and Indians, Chief Sowiette tried to keep the peace while the fiery Chief Wakara prepared the Indian warriors for battle so that he could rid himself of the white men. In July, 1853, the Indians initiated hostilities by using hit and run tactics against small communities in Sanpete, Utah, San Juan, Millard, and Iron Counties. These armed confrontations, known as the Walker (Wakara) War, lasted until May, 1854.

On July 19th, 1853, the Indians attacked Hambleton and tried to steal some cattle from the settlers, but guards had been posted, and two of the raiding Indians were killed. Four days later, the Indians attacked the Hambleton and Potter Mill, located above the settlement on Pleasant Creek. The people of Hambleton were better prepared for this skirmish, having been reinforced with fifty men who had come from the

⁶Albert C. T. Antrei, ed., The Other Forty-Niners (Salt Lake City: Western Epics, 1982), 131.

⁷Peter Gottfredson, Indian Depredations of Utah, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Private Printing, 1969), 25.

Provo area to help fight the Indians. Six Indians were killed in this battle.⁸

After reviewing their situation, the settlers of Hambleton decided they were not strong enough to defend themselves from increasing attacks. Moreover, a proclamation issued by Brigham Young on July 25 closed small settlements due to the Indian problems. The people of Hambleton packed a few of their personal belongings and moved to Allred's Settlement, six miles to the south. During the next weeks, the men returned to Hambleton under heavy guard to harvest the crops and move possessions not already destroyed by the raiding Indians. By the end of summer, all the buildings had been burned by the Indians. Hambleton no longer existed.⁹

The Walker War ended the next year with twelve Mormons and many Indians losing their lives. Over \$200,000 worth of damaged and stolen property was recorded, and several small settlements were broken up.¹⁰ Chief Wakara negotiated with Brigham Young and made a formal agreement to end hostilities. Chief Wakara was eventually converted to the LDS religion and settled down to a peaceable farmer's life. With the war over,

⁸Andrew Madsen, "History of Andrew Madsen, Mount Pleasant and the Early Settling of Sanpete Co., Utah" (photocopy), 6, 7, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo (hereafter abbreviated as Special Collections, HBLL).

⁹Longsdorf, 21.

¹⁰Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of Utah, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964), 474.

there were fewer problems between the Indians and Mormon settlers in Sanpete County.

Early Settlement

Immigrants continued to move into the area. Manti was becoming overcrowded, had a finite supply of water, and there were long-standing ethnic differences between the Danish and Swedish settlers. In 1858, exploring parties were sent from Manti to seek locations for possible settlements. James R. Ivie, Sr., Joseph R. Clement, and Isaac Allred, Sr., led an exploring party north of Manti and visited the site where Hambleton once stood. After looking at the Pleasant Creek area, they decided that this location would be a desirable place on which to build a new settlement. They returned to Manti and discussed with other recent immigrants their views about settling on Pleasant Creek. A petition was drafted and signed by sixty men, mostly of Danish descent, who wanted to relocate on the ruins of Hambleton. Ivie, Clement, and Allred were chosen to take this petition to Brigham Young, the ultimate arbiter of which new settlements should be colonized.

They met with Brigham Young in Salt Lake City on September 6, 1858. President Young considered the petition and gave his permission, but with the stipulations that the people should continue to be on guard against the Indians, and

that they build a twelve-foot high wall for protection.¹¹

About 1300 acres of land were surveyed and another meeting was called for those who planned to move to Pleasant Creek. At that meeting, numbers were drawn for the newly surveyed lots, further organizational preparations were made, and James R. Ivie, Sr., was chosen as the president of the colony. This was a temporary calling which made him the religious and temporal leader of the community.

In the middle of February, 1859, twenty of the men moved to the new location and started to make a camp. They cut wooden posts and began to fence the land that would be cultivated in the spring. These men followed a city plan originally created by Joseph Smith, the founding prophet of the LDS Church. This community was to be one mile square, with square street corners.¹² Two feet of snow lay on the ground when the first men arrived. During April and May, these men returned to Manti and Ephraim to bring their families and possessions to the new settlement. Additional immigrants, passing by the settlement on their way south, found this a desirable location and decided to join the growing community. An additional 1200 acres were quickly platted for the new arrivals. It was hard work, but much of

¹¹Daughters of the Utah Pioneers of Sanpete County, Utah, These...Our Fathers (Springville: Art City Publishing Company, 1947), 83.

¹²Gary B. Peterson and Lowell C. Bennion, Sanpete Scenes (Eureka: Basin Plateau Press, 1987), 68.

the sagebrush was cleared and fields planted, wheat being the main crop. The people of the community decided to name the town Mt. Pleasant because of the beautiful fields and surroundings.¹³

Every member of the community, of necessity, had to be busy and industrious. This rugged environment was not a place for a lazy person. The difficult pioneer lifestyle also required that people use their ingenuity and imagination to obtain the things they needed. Food came from crops, animals, and plants native to the surrounding area (sego lily, wild onions, and various roots). Clothing was made from wool processed in the homes of the people. Nearly every home had a spinning wheel. Soap was made from animal fat. Producing these items required that every member be involved--even children were employed in picking roots, etc.

After 1860, homes were built outside the fort and the town expanded quickly. Excellent crops were harvested and there were two tanneries, a flour mill, and three sawmills by the summer of 1861.¹⁴ The town's economic base was growing.

Civil War

By this time the Civil War had broken out in the Eastern part of the United States. The people of Mt. Pleasant were concerned and curious about what was happening, but did not

¹³Madsen, "History of Andrew Madsen," 19.

¹⁴Longsdorf, 70.

want to be involved in the war. Even though many felt it was a just punishment to the nation for having "persecuted" the Mormons and pushing them west, the people of Utah generally gave limited support to the Union because of their belief in the correctness of the Constitution. Utah was a territory and did not need to send soldiers to fight, but it supported President Abraham Lincoln's wish that the Mormon Militia protect the Union telegraph and mail routes that crossed the territory.¹⁵ An understanding was worked out between President Lincoln and Brigham Young by which the government would not bother the Mormons on the matter of polygamy if they would not rebel against the Union.¹⁶ Many in Mt. Pleasant were pleased when Lincoln was reelected, and saddened with his assassination. A large segment of the Mormons in Mt. Pleasant displayed little interest in the Civil War because they were born in foreign countries. Because of their patriotic background and appreciation for the Constitution, the citizens of Utah still wanted to be a part of the United States, but they also sought isolation from their earlier persecution.

Black Hawk War

In 1863 and 1864, there were again armed conflicts between the Indians and the settlers. The Walker War had

¹⁵Gustive O. Larson, "Utah and the Civil War," Utah Historical Quarterly 33 (Winter 1965): 59.

¹⁶Ibid., 66,67.

ended in 1854 and the Indians of the Sanpitch Valley had become relatively peaceful since then; they often wandered around, begging for food, and frequently visited the white settlers in Mt. Pleasant. Because of the ever-increasing numbers of white settlers and diminishing availability of the wild game on the hunting grounds, the phasing out of the lucrative inter-Indian slave trade, a smallpox epidemic brought by the white settlers, and a law passed by the United States Congress requiring Indians to move to a reservation in northern Utah, the Indians again took up the weapons of war in April, 1865.¹⁷ This time the conflict was known as the Black Hawk War. Ironically, the Civil War was just ending in the East.

Mt. Pleasant became deeply involved in this war which spread throughout central and southern Utah. Black Hawk, the chief of the Indians, used hit and run tactics, making it difficult for the white soldiers to locate or capture him. The settlers never knew when or where he would attack. Mt. Pleasant was in a safer location than most other communities, because it was in a relatively open area. The Indians would have to ride too far in the open to make a large-scale assault.¹⁸ Even though it was never involved in a major attack, the town was under constant vigilance by townspeople

¹⁷Antrei, 140.

¹⁸Grant Borg, "Biography of William Olson" (photocopy), 9 March 1937, 4, Utah State Historical Society.

who filled the roles of citizen soldiers. When some livestock was stolen in Mt. Pleasant, the old fort of 1859 was rebuilt for protection.

Mt. Pleasant sent some of its citizens to help the surrounding communities when they were attacked by the Indians. It was on one of these outings that the only person from Mt. Pleasant to die in this war, Robert Gillespie, was killed.¹⁹ Counties from northern Utah also sent soldiers to central Utah to help defeat the Indians.

During one especially difficult time, the town of North Bend (now Fairview), six miles north of Mt. Pleasant, was evacuated; its settlers were billeted in the homes of the people of Mt. Pleasant until they were able to construct a fort that provided them sufficient protection from Indian raids.

A temporary peace was signed between military officers and some of the Indian chiefs. This signing took place at William Seely's (first LDS bishop in Mt. Pleasant) home in Mt. Pleasant, with Will Frandsen, a nine-year-old boy fluent in the Indian language, serving as interpreter. One thousand pounds of flour were given to the Indians as a peace offering. Not long after the flour was used, the Indian raids began again.²⁰ Fortunately, fewer Indian problems occurred after

¹⁹Gottfredson, 157.

²⁰Montell Seely and Kathryn Seely, Seely History (Provo: Community Press, 1988), 141.

the initial Indian treaty was made.

The Black Hawk War lasted until 1872. Some seventy-five white persons and 122 Indians were killed, with damages from the war in central Utah costing well over \$1,500,000.²¹ The people of Mt. Pleasant were always alert to their own needs and willing to help other communities during this conflict. After the war, the Indians were resettled on the Uintah Reservation in Northern Utah. The Mormon Militia had to return weapons to the United States Army because government leaders were afraid the Mormons might use them to defend the Mormons' stand on polygamy.

Community Development

The Indian wars did not stop all aspects of life. Farming continued as the main method of obtaining food and earning a livelihood. Mt. Pleasant enjoyed prosperous crops until 1867. In that year, a grasshopper invasion destroyed most of the fields. It was only because of adequate preparations for such an emergency that the people of the community survived.

The town developed businesses, starting with the cooperative stores directed by the LDS Church. Newer markets opened to farmers and businessmen when better means of transportation became available.

²¹Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, An Enduring Legacy, vol. 7 (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Company, 1984), 303.

In 1875, Reverend James McMillan, a Presbyterian preacher, arrived in Mt. Pleasant to do missionary work among the Mormons. His presence changed many segments of the community. He improved the education system by providing competition between Wasatch Academy and the public schools, and he helped to bring better understanding of different religious beliefs to the people of Mt. Pleasant.

In the 1890s, the sheep industry and the business sector combined with the agricultural base to make Mt. Pleasant the most important commercial area in Sanpete County. Unfortunately, these same factors brought a climate of lawlessness to the community. Sheriff James Burns was murdered while trying to arrest two sheep thieves. There were hoodlums and desperadoes in every part of town. Many of the citizens were afraid to go out on the street for fear of violence and bloodshed. The recent economic successes attracted dishonest people and saloons brought an undesirable element.²²

The law-abiding people of Mt. Pleasant tried to counteract this behavior, as well as the label of being the most lawless town in Utah. The LDS and Protestant Churches preached higher values and the people pressured the city council to close some of the saloons. An opera house and a respectable dance hall were built.²³ These methods seem to

²²Peterson and Bennion, 112.

²³Longsdorf, 175.

have worked because the lawless elements were not mentioned after the turn of the century.

In 1914, World War I broke out in Europe. The people of Mt. Pleasant patriotically supported the federal government's war efforts. After the war, the people of Mt. Pleasant experienced weak sheep and agricultural markets. The economic problems led into the Great Depression and increased financial difficulties.

In 1939, the town leaders recognized that markets were improving and that the Great Depression was coming to an end. They decided to celebrate the eightieth anniversary of the settlement of Mt. Pleasant. Cold, sleety weather hampered the jubilee, which was successful since more than 1200 persons attended the program and dance.

To mark the eightieth anniversary celebrations, a history of the community was written and published, entitled Mount Pleasant 1859-1939, by Hilda Madsen Longsdorf of the Mt. Pleasant Historical Association.

Population

By the end of the first year of its settlement, Mt. Pleasant had 800 inhabitants. This quick growth required substantial change in short period of time. Through 1900, there was a continuous increase in population, with 2,825 persons living in Mt. Pleasant. During the Great Depression, the population dropped to 2,650. People found it difficult to

keep jobs and several moved out of the area. In 1940, just prior to World War II, the population increased to 2,750. From the 1870s through the 1940s, Mt. Pleasant had the largest population in Sanpete County.²⁴

The people of Mt. Pleasant continued to look ahead, grateful for their past and hoping for a brighter future. The first eighty years, though difficult, were fulfilling for the people of this developing community. Their faith was strong and their educational systems were effective. The economy was improving and they had survived the Great Depression. The stress on unity by the leaders and the cooperation of the citizens of Mt. Pleasant made this a progressive, influential community in central Utah.

²⁴Peterson and Bennion, 24.

resources could have been well used in their own community, but because of their dedication to the Church, the people met the request. The Church leaders also asked on several occasions for additional men, livestock, and supplies to be sent East in support of immigrants coming to the Utah Territory. Again, the people in Mt. Pleasant were quick to respond. Incidentally, many of the immigrants assisted by the men from Mt. Pleasant eventually came to this town to settle permanently.⁷ Neighbors and volunteers helped do the farming and other work around the homes of the men called to build temples and to assist the immigrants.

Mt. Pleasant often provided help to other communities, sometimes by sending its members to assist in the settlement of other areas and make them habitable. Many were asked by the leaders of the LDS Church to leave their established homes and growing community and start over by pioneering in Emery, Sevier, and San Juan Counties in Utah, in Arizona and Colorado, or even as far away as Mexico.⁸

Another sacrifice asked of Church members was tithing--the payment of 10 percent of one's earnings to the Church. Little paper money was in circulation during the early years, so offerings in kind were accepted. Often these donations

⁷Longsdorf, 81.

⁸Nell Madsen and Pearle M. Olsen, The Madsens of Mt. Pleasant, Utah (Provo: The Lars Madsen Family Organization, 1967), 153.

were from the best produce or animals that people possessed.⁹ Mt. Pleasant had a tithing office where livestock and cattle were retained.

Meeting houses were built with funds and supplies donated by the members. In 1937, the South Ward of the LDS Church was destroyed by fire and rebuilt two years later. This was quite an achievement, considering the financial difficulties encountered by the members of the Church during the Great Depression.¹⁰

Another major sacrifice was for a man to be called as a missionary. He would leave his wife and children behind and preach the gospel for two or three years. Not only was it hard on the men, but on the women and children who were left behind, because they had to run the farm and the household while the men were teaching others about their church. Christian Lund spent three years away from his wife and children while serving as a missionary in Sweden.¹¹

Church Programs

While the town was going through a period of change, the Church also experienced a developmental phase. Valuable leadership and management skills were gained through these

⁹Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, 133.

¹⁰Longsdorf, 205.

¹¹Christian N. Lund, "Diary" (photocopy), 129, Special Collections, HBL.

modifications. Programs were stabilized and doctrines became more solidified in this "new" religion, established in 1830. Mt. Pleasant was affected by these changes. For example, in 1859, a High Priests Quorum was organized and in 1862, a Quorum of Seventy, both men's priesthood groups, were formed in Mt. Pleasant. In 1868, a School of the Prophets was also initiated in the community.¹² This was a forum where theology, Church government, and problems of Church and community were discussed and acted upon.¹³

The Relief Society, the LDS women's organization, which was organized locally in Mt. Pleasant in 1868, also asked members of the Church to donate eggs, butter, fruit, flour, and quilts for the poor or less fortunate.¹⁴ Some female members donated all the eggs their chickens would lay on Sundays. The Relief Society gave compassionate service and looked after the members in need, and also provided the women with spiritual and intellectual instruction which improved their lives.¹⁵

A Sunday School was organized in 1865 with about 150

¹²Andrew Jensen, compiler, Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, DN 17:274, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereinafter abbreviated as LDS Historical Department).

¹³Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, 245.

¹⁴Marjorie Madsen Riley, "My Most Unforgettable Character," The Saga of the Sanpitch 14 (1982):137.

¹⁵Daughters, Fathers, 85.

adult students. Anthon H. Lund, one of the teachers in the local Sunday School, later became an apostle and a counselor in the First Presidency in the Church.

In 1873, a Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association was formed in Mt. Pleasant.¹⁶ This program looked after the needs of the teenage girls, making certain that they were being taught Mormon principles and preparing themselves to be good mothers and wives. Three years later, a Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association was also organized to give the young men of the Church wholesome activities during the week and to keep their loyalties to the church.¹⁷ In later years, the Boy Scout program was popular and important to the development of additional skills in the young men's lives.

In 1880, the Primary Association was organized in Mt. Pleasant. Before this time, small children were not given much opportunity to go to church services. With the Primary in place, they could now receive Mormon religious instruction on their level of understanding. During the summer months, Sunday School jubilees were held in town to provide children with an enjoyable time--parades and singing.¹⁸

In 1891, the Mormon Church initiated a seminary program

¹⁶Ellice McClenahan Carter, "The McClenahan's Mount Pleasant, Utah 1859-1959" (photocopy), 32, LDS Historical Department.

¹⁷Jensen, Journal History, DN 22:687.

¹⁸"Documents of David Candland" (photocopy), 73, Utah State Historical Society.

in the public schools. This program was taught during the school day, helping many youth become stronger in their understanding of the LDS doctrines. It also counteracted the missionary efforts of those associated with the Wasatch Academy.¹⁹

When the Great Depression struck in 1929, many persons turned to the spiritual side of life because of the difficulties brought on by the economic problems. The LDS Church tried to alleviate some of the financial problems of the members during this difficult period. Teaching principles of self-reliance and reemphasizing the work ethic helped to motivate the members and to make it through this economic disaster.²⁰

LDS Problems

All was not perfect in the Church. In 1862, a small group of Swedish members became dissatisfied with the lack of use of the Danish language in church meetings. Angered about what seemed to them to be the authoritarian stance of the Church, this handful of people was excommunicated from the Mormon Church, but allowed to stay in the community.²¹ In 1867, another small group became disturbed with the demands of

¹⁹W. H. Lever, History of Sanpete and Emery Counties, Utah (Salt Lake City: Tribune Job Printing Co., 1898), 215.

²⁰Daughters, Fathers, 93.

²¹Antrei, 79.

the Church and also left it to get away from its control.

Perhaps the biggest complaint against the Church was that it exercised too much control over the lives of the members. The Church controlled much of the land and water rights and gave authority to settle disputes to Apostle Orson Hyde. It often told members when and where to place their businesses. It controlled much of the local economy, through cooperative stores, like Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institute. It had the Relief Society start the silk industry so that products made from this material could be locally made, and not bought from the "gentiles."²² The Church influenced public school teachers to teach doctrinal subjects during school hours. It lobbied the city council to make tough laws against alcoholic beverages and participation in sporting events on Sundays.²³ Church leaders chastized members in the community for not planting orchards and gardens. Home missionaries were called to visit various towns to preach Mormon doctrines and to make certain the people followed the counsel and advice of the leaders. In reality, most of these things were probably for the benefit of the people, but some members still felt that the Church should take a softer stand and exert less of a controlling influence on the members.

²²Longsdorf, 78.

²³Ibid., 136.

United Order

In the mid-1830s, Joseph Smith taught and put into effect a communal-type system of living which he called the United Order. The people who volunteered to follow this lifestyle essentially deeded all they possessed to the Church and received back only the things they needed. In the years immediately prior to 1874, the United States was going through some difficult financial times.²⁴ These monetary problems affected Utah's economy. Some leaders of the LDS Church suggested to Brigham Young that the members again commit themselves to Joseph Smith's plan of consecration.²⁵ Apostle John Taylor came to Mt. Pleasant in 1874 and introduced the community to this economic system.²⁶ Many joined, but others were skeptical and did not. Those who did choose to participate in this economic organization were looking for the good of the group.

The United Order started off well, with each person doing what he or she could to further the program. For example, Eli Day worked at the Order Mill,²⁷ and John Hasler gave music

²⁴Leonard J. Arrington, Feramoz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, Building the City of God (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976), 137.

²⁵Antrei, 64.

²⁶Mary Louise Seamons, "Mt. Pleasant Relic Hall," The Saga of the Sanpitch 20 (1988):15.

²⁷Day, "Eli A. Day," 50.

lessons for his donation.²⁸ Every segment of the community was involved with activities in the United Order--cattle, hay, farming, threshing, saw mills, tanneries, stores, etc.

The United Order was short-lived in Mt. Pleasant, as was the case in other parts of Utah Territory. After six months, it was making progress, but by the end of the third year, it collapsed. One reason the system failed was that the national economy had picked up, and many of the members wanted to leave the Order to earn more money on their own. Also, there were not enough funding and resources in the United Order to give all members anything they needed or wanted. The United Order was dissolved by the mutual consent of its members. Most of those who were involved with the Order lost money and left this economic experiment with bad feelings, believing they had received less from the Order than they had invested. This is one example of how the people put the interests of the individual before those of the group. With the end of the United Order in 1877, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints began to lose its strict authoritarian control of the social and economic lives of its members. Mt. Pleasant would now become more like the rest of rural America.²⁹

²⁸Marilyn M. Smolka, "Mount Pleasant's Very Own Music Man," Beehive History 6 (1980):14.

²⁹Antrei, 71.

Polygamy

One of the most difficult problems for the faithful members of the Mormon Church was polygamy.³⁰ Before his death in 1844, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught the leaders of the Church the principle of plural marriage, or polygamy. Members of the Church began to practice polygamy openly a few years (1852) after their arrival in the Utah Territory.

Anti-polygamy legislation which prohibited plural marriage was passed by the Federal Government in the early 1860s but was largely ignored so that Utah Territory would remain tied to the Union during the Civil War. President Lincoln struck a deal with Brigham Young and the Church: if the Mormons would not leave the Union during the Civil War, the anti-polygamy laws would not be enforced.

In 1860, fourteen men in the community practiced polygamy--most with two wives.³¹ By 1880, twenty-six men, or about 15 percent of the married men in Mt. Pleasant, had more than one wife.³² This compares to 33 percent of the married men who practiced plural marriage in St. George³³ and 21.8

³⁰Jessie L. Embry, Mormon Polygamous Families (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 4.

³¹Mary Louise Seamons, "Polygamy in Mt. Pleasant," (photocopy), Fall 1988, term paper for Brigham Young University, in author's possession, 12.

³²Peterson and Bennion, 26.

³³Larry Logue, "A Time of Marriage: Monogamy and Polygamy in a Utah Town," Journal of Mormon History 11 (1984): 10.

percent in Davis County.³⁴

There were mixed feelings about polygamy and about those who were asked to follow this principle, but most had positive things to say about it. Many did not really want to participate in this doctrine, but did because they were taught that it was a godly principle that would bring great blessings.³⁵ This subject was constantly taught and discussed in church meetings. The young women did not feel they had much choice but to accept this law. They could either marry an older polygamist man or be an "old maid," because at this time young men who actively participated in the Church were few in number.³⁶

Several families had positive experiences with polygamy. Mads Madsen had two wives. He provided both wives with identical homes and furniture. His wives became as close as sisters and welcomed each other's children into their homes and treated them as if they were their own. The Hansen home had a wing built for each of the two wives and their children. Both wives and children met in the middle of the home for meals. They enjoyed each other's company.³⁷ Others had similar memories of polygamy.

³⁴Lowell "Ben" Bennion, "The Incidence of Mormon Polygamy in 1880: 'Dixie' Versus Davis Stake," Journal of Mormon History 11 (1984): 37.

³⁵Antrei, 151.

³⁶Ibid., 155.

³⁷Seamons, "Polygamy in Mt. Pleasant," 20.

For those who had unfavorable experiences, the biggest problems stemmed from jealousy and loneliness. Sometimes these feelings were caused by misunderstandings, but they nonetheless affected the marriage relationships. Some had problems getting along with their "auntie"--the other wife. Some wives had difficult relationships with each other; still others felt the husband was unfair and partial in treatment of the other wife.³⁸

Some polygamous husbands had to be separated from one or both wives for great lengths of time in order to avoid being discovered or caught by lawmen. This absence caused problems for the wives and children, who needed the father but were unable to be in contact with him. There were times when wives had to run from the lawmen, too.³⁹ Finally, having more than one wife and family created financial burdens for the polygamists. These difficulties could only hurt relationships. Many of the bad experiences could probably have been avoided had there not been so many hasty, ill-advised marriages.⁴⁰ According to one historian, up to 80 percent of the polygamist marriages were caused by pressure from Church leaders upon eligible persons to enter into plural

³⁸Anne Mina Madsen Remund and Ephraim Madsen, "History of Whilmina Krause Madsen" (photocopy), 1948, 10, Utah State Historical Society.

³⁹Embry, 20.

⁴⁰Antrei, 154.

marriage.⁴¹

With the growing number of anti-polygamists in the national government, more pressure was put on the members of the Church, making it difficult to lead an unmolested lifestyle. In the 1880s, marshalls searched throughout the Utah Territory, trying to catch polygamists. Hundreds of men were arrested, forced to pay large cash fines and to spend up to six months in the territorial prison. Understandably, this had a great effect on the wives and children of those convicted.⁴²

The polygamists tried to counter the raids by the marshalls looking for "cohabs." One method was to organize the young men into a group called the "Kolob Guard." These boys constantly looked for lawmen and quickly alerted the polygamists when marshalls or suspicious men were sighted. The Sanpete Railroad became known as the "Polygamist Central" among those who practiced plural marriage. The engineer on the train signaled if a lawman were on board, giving the polygamists time to hide or ride away before they were arrested.⁴³ Pits were dug in which to hide when marshalls visited the area.

There was great relief when in 1890, Wilford Woodruff, then President of the Mormon Church, announced the

⁴¹Embry, 62.

⁴²Madsen and Olsen, 155.

⁴³Longsdorf, 166.

"Manifesto": polygamy was no longer a requirement of members in good standing. Much of the confusion and many of the problems caused by searching lawmen went away. Most of the men in Mt. Pleasant then decided to live with one wife for the rest of their lives. This arrangement also caused many hurt feelings.⁴⁴

Polygamy was a difficult thing for most of the people living in Mt. Pleasant, and had a far-reaching effect on its settlers. It formulated a strong heritage for the posterity of those who practiced plural marriage, because these members tried to follow the principles of the Church.⁴⁵

Meetings

The high point of each week in the community was attending Sunday church services. This was a time to rest from physical cares and receive spiritual nourishment. Church leaders tried to obtain good speakers for worship, or sacrament meeting so that the faith of the members was strengthened. In the early days of Mt. Pleasant, the men sat on one side of the church house and the women on the other.

When the apostles or the prophet visited the community, the people made special preparations for them. For example, in September, 1865, Brigham Young and five apostles visited Mt. Pleasant. The community prepared arches, banners, a

⁴⁴Ibid., 167.

⁴⁵Seamons, "Polygamy in Mt. Pleasant," 21.

choir, and a brass band.⁴⁶ The people looked forward with anticipation to these events and to hearing their leaders speak. Some residents traveled three days to Salt Lake City for the General Conference of the Mormon Church so that they could be close to the leaders.

Presbyterian Church

Until 1875, the only organized church in Mt. Pleasant was the Mormon Church. That changed when Dr. James McMillan, an ordained Presbyterian minister from Illinois, decided to open his ministry in Mt. Pleasant. He had come to Utah to overcome a respiratory problem and to convince as many Mormons as he could that they were being taught incorrectly about God and religion.⁴⁷ Hearing from one acquaintance that the Mt. Pleasant area would provide the climate he needed, he chose to live in this community. McMillan's friends tried to persuade him to go somewhere else, but he decided he must go to Mt. Pleasant. When he arrived in 1875, there was no hotel in the community, so he found lodging with the postmaster, a disaffected Mormon. McMillan gave a sermon in the Mormon church house, but was not invited to come back. He then began to work with several of the people in town who were out of harmony with the Mormon Church. McMillan rented a hall and

⁴⁶Jensen, Journal History, DN 14:333.

⁴⁷The Reverend Duncan James McMillan, 1846-1933 (New York: McAuliffe-Booth Co., 1939), 13.

began holding Sunday services there. The "apostates" who owned the building, called Liberal Hall, leased the building to McMillan on a five-year contract.⁴⁸

McMillan, seeing a need for better education in the little town, immediately began planning a school in Liberal Hall. This enabled him to reach people and do missionary work. He knew it would take years of patient teaching to break down some of the Mormon prejudice.

At first, McMillan was cautiously welcomed into the community. Later, the Mormons tried to intimidate him so that he would move away from Mt. Pleasant. At one point, McMillan tried to obtain a share of the public funds the community spent on education in order to further his own school. Mormon leaders told him they would not support his school, after which he became angry. Perhaps this is why he started to tell stories of how badly he was treated by the Mormons.⁴⁹ Some of those accounts were published in Harper's Weekly, then one of the nation's best known magazines. One story told of how McMillan preached from a pulpit with a Bible in one hand and a revolver in another, because he feared he would be killed by the Mormons while giving a sermon.⁵⁰ In another story he told, he was threatened at night by pistol-carrying men who

⁴⁸S. H. Goodwin, Freemasonry in Utah (Published by the Grand Lodge of Utah, 1935), 5.

⁴⁹Maasen, "History of Andrew Madsen," 82.

⁵⁰Harper's Weekly, 15 April 1876, 22.

tried to break through the window in the house where he was sleeping.⁵¹ He alleged that Brigham Young preached that he (McMillan) was a wolf in sheep's clothing, and that the Mormon people should get rid of him, just as they would a real wolf.⁵²

McMillan was good at raising money for his school, and these sensational stories brought substantial financing for his cause. The Presbyterian Board of Missions was one of the major supporters of the Reverend McMillan and his work. It supported Wasatch Academy for many years.

Things were made even more difficult for Wasatch Academy when Mormon carpenters and laborers were persuaded not to help with the building of the Presbyterian school. McMillan ended up doing much of the construction on the building himself. One month after the school was opened, 109 students were enrolled in Wasatch Academy.⁵³

The emphasis at Wasatch Academy was on spiritual themes. This was to be a school where impeccable standards and high values were taught, along with the normal school curriculum. McMillan returned East, married a music teacher, and brought his bride and her organ to Mt. Pleasant. The other teachers who came to help McMillan with the school also saw an

⁵¹J. Arthur Lazell, Alaskan Apostle (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers), 37.

⁵²Hans P. Freece, "Are You That Damned Presbyterian Devil?" Presbyterian Magazine, October 1931, 2.

⁵³Longsdorf, 148.

opportunity to teach the Mormons about their Presbyterian beliefs and considered themselves missionaries.

The school continued to grow and by 1880, enough people had joined the Presbyterian Church, or had come from the East, to warrant the organization of a church. Reverend McMillan then left Mt. Pleasant to take over the responsibility as superintendent of home missionaries in Idaho and Utah, leaving others to continue his work in Mt. Pleasant.⁵⁴

In 1920, the Presbyterian church house was damaged by fire and a new one was built. Reverend McMillan was invited back to Mt. Pleasant in 1925 to participate in the dedicatory service of the new church building, twenty-five years after he had originally arrived in this town.

Protestant Missionary Work

Mt. Pleasant became the center of Protestant missionary work in central Utah. Missionaries and students from the Presbyterian Church lived in Mt. Pleasant and visited the surrounding towns and taught about their church. The Methodist Church established a small congregation in Mt. Pleasant in 1883. They built a chapel in 1886 and gave the residents of Mt. Pleasant three churches from which to choose. The Methodist missionaries talked with many who had become disaffected with the Mormon Church and converted them. They spoke the Swedish language in church services, but this was

⁵⁴Reverend McMillan, 16.

later exchanged for the English language, due to the Americanization of these foreign-born people. The Methodist Church remained small and was finally dissolved in the early 1900s.⁵⁵

Mormon Church leaders were initially protective of their members, not wanting them to associate too closely with Presbyterians and the Wasatch Academy, or the Methodists. Leaders in the LDS Church urged its members not to allow their children to attend Wasatch Academy. Many members went against the counsel of their leaders and sent their children anyway, because they felt that this was the only way their children would receive a decent education in this rough pioneer environment. There were some unfriendly feelings between the Mormons and the Protestants, but these calmed down over the years.

Between 1900 and 1930, other Protestant churches came to Mt. Pleasant, but they did not last long. In fact, attendance in the LDS Church increased in some cases when other churches and their strong preaching techniques caused bitter feelings.⁵⁶

Lodges

The late 1880s brought an increase in the number of fraternal lodges in Mt. Pleasant. In these lodges,

⁵⁵Lever, 66.

⁵⁶Antrei, 116.

organizations associated with workers, religious discussions were often held. In some cases, the lodges became the people's religion. With the coming of the railroads to Utah, people from a variety of religious backgrounds came to Mt. Pleasant. Feeling a need for social acceptance and a desire to study religion, some of these newcomers formed lodges to meet their needs.⁵⁷

The largest lodge in Mt. Pleasant was the Damascus Lodge, affiliated with the Freemasons. It was established in 1895 with thirteen members and grew quickly. People joined from the surrounding area as well. In 1898, the downtown fire destroyed the Damascus Lodge meeting house. Money was sent from the other lodges in Utah to help rebuild it.

The early 1900s brought new growth to the Damascus Lodge. Men and women were involved socially through this organization. A new Masonic Temple was dedicated in 1931.

Other lodges that met in town were The Ancient Order of Foresters, The Odd Fellows, and The Master Workman Lodges.⁵⁸ Some of these lodges were short-lived because they did not have the organizational background or national support the Masons enjoyed. With the growing Protestant congregations and increased number of lodges in Mt. Pleasant, the town became known throughout Utah as the "headquarters of the

⁵⁷Goodwin, 6.

⁵⁸Lever, 218.

apostates."⁵⁹

As the different religious organizations came to know each other better, bad feelings and defensiveness dissolved, and citizens were able to work more closely with each other in building the town of Mt. Pleasant. Religion was a driving force throughout the history of this community. Faith in God helped the people to endure the hardships associated with building a new town on the frontier.

Mt. Pleasant, like most other small Mormon settlements, was formed by the leaders in the LDS Church, creating a strong coterminous Church/community structure. There was also a great unity among the people of the town until Dr. James McMillan arrived. He brought with him the Presbyterian doctrines which caused a split in the community--something not experienced by other small Mormon settlements for some years to come. Eventually, the different religions worked together to continue the development of the community, allowing for some diversity of beliefs. This was something that other towns in central Utah did not encounter.

⁵⁹Peterson and Bennion, 112.

CHAPTER THREE

DAILY LIFE

The people of Mt. Pleasant followed lifestyles that were sometimes similar and at other times unique in comparison to those of other developing communities in the Western United States. This chapter examines specific examples of events, characteristics, and personalities that affected life in this town.

Planning and Housing

Mt. Pleasant had been surveyed and planned in 1859 using a "Mormon city plan"--large square blocks, similar to most other LDS settlements. From the early days Mt. Pleasant was quite spacious: one hundred square blocks.

One of the first concerns of the colonists in Mt. Pleasant in 1859 was to move into permanent shelters. The first settlers lived in wagons, tents and dugouts, while they worked on their crops. Brigham Young said that a fort must be built first as one of the conditions before they could settle Mt. Pleasant, in spite of the fact that the Indians were peaceful at the time. The walls of the fort were twelve feet high and four feet wide at the bottom, tapering to two feet in

width at the top. Made of mud and stone, they enclosed an area of five and one-half acres.¹

The settlers built small, 16 foot by 16 foot dwellings inside the fort for protection from the elements during the coming winter. These first houses were made of log, adobe, and stone. These humble quarters had dirt floors, slanted roofs, and small windows. With over 800 persons living inside the walls of the fort, two families often shared a single house because of the overcrowded conditions.²

Brigham Young gave permission to build outside the fort in the spring of 1860. Those homes were made of logs but were soon replaced with adobe homes. As soon as the people moved out of the fort, new immigrants took their places in the shelters inside the fort.

Mads Madsen³ and William S. Seely⁴ built solid homes of adobe in 1861. They originally had dirt floors and dirt roofs. Over the years, both of those homes went through many changes (floor, roof, plumbing, electricity), and are still in use today.

More than one family also lived in most homes built outside the fort. This was not unusual because most of the settlers were of European descent. Their customs called for

¹Madsen, "History of Andrew Madsen," 17.

²Longsdorf, 64.

³Madsen and Olsen, 7.

⁴Daughters, An Enduring Legacy, 303.

close families and multi-family dwellings. The Day family moved in with the Stakers.⁵ Eli day noted that there were beds everywhere, with as many as four persons sleeping on the same one.

As more homes were built, more materials were needed. With few conflicts between the settlers and the Indians in the early 1860s, the settlers dismantled the walls of the fort and used those stones to build their homes. When the Black Hawk War began, the fort was again needed for protection. The walls were worked on, but the fort was never completely rebuilt. After the war, Eli Day bought most of the houses remaining inside the fort and rented them to new immigrants or used them as animal stables and grain storage areas.⁶

Mt. Pleasant had many of the same architectural styles as other communities in Utah. The earliest homes were mostly of European and Scandinavian design. During the 1870s, Vernacular and Greek Revival homes were built. At the turn of the century, Victorian Gothic and Victorian Eclectic styles became popular in Mt. Pleasant.⁷

Ethnic Groups

Another important influence on early Mt. Pleasant was the

⁵Day, "Eli A. Day," 2.

⁶Ibid., 14.

⁷Peterson and Bennion, 76-78.

ethnicity of its settlers. The LDS Church had sent missionaries to Scandinavia and found many people who joined the Church. Most of these Scandinavians came to Utah to get away from some of the problems of their homelands: poor farming, little available land, high taxes, and a strong Lutheran Church influence. Many of those Scandinavians settled in Mt. Pleasant.

During the early years, there was little class distinction among the different ethnic groups and equality seemed to exist. As many as five languages were heard at any given gathering: English, Danish, Swedish, and German. People were proud of their heritages and traditions.⁸

Disunity based on old nationalistic feelings developed between the Danish and Swedish settlers in Manti; this was one of the reasons James R. Ivie, Sr., petitioned Brigham Young to settle Mt. Pleasant. For this reason, more Danish settled in Mt. Pleasant than Swedish.⁹

Scandinavians came to Mt. Pleasant and Sanpete County in an effort to maintain a continuity of ethnic identity. For a time, Sanpete County was known as "Little Scandinavia," because of the large number of people arriving from Denmark and Sweden.¹⁰ Through the 1880s, approximately 80 percent of the people living in Sanpete County were of Scandinavian

⁸Daughters, Fathers, 85.

⁹Antrei, 85.

¹⁰Peterson and Bennion, 32.

descent.¹¹ The organizations, and later businesses, attempted to meet the multi-lingual needs of the people in Mt. Pleasant.

In the 1870s, the Mormon Church counselled its members to speak English and adopt American customs and traditions, because ethnic segregation was a potential obstacle for the development of the Church. The people of Mt. Pleasant looked closely at this new policy and weighed its impact, because the community had originally been divided into four sectors, along strict ethnic lines, so that national origin groups could remain closer to each other.¹²

The first sign of ethnic differences in Mt. Pleasant surfaced in 1862 when two Swedish members were excommunicated because they were strongly against the Church, which had allowed Danish to be spoken at church meetings, but not Swedish. Several other Swedish members sympathized with them and followed their example by leaving the Church. The LDS Church tried to move quickly to dispel ethnic problems by using an even-handed approach and allowing either language to be spoken at Church services. There were other incidents of minor fighting among people of different ethnic backgrounds, but it is amazing that so few of these disturbances took place, given the long-standing prejudices, owing to Swedish,

¹¹Antrei, 75.

¹²Longsdorf, 39.

Danish, and Norwegian wars over the previous centuries.¹³

The decline of Scandinavian influence was slow, but American language and mores were taught in school, and English was spoken in church and social gatherings. Another aspect which furthered the Americanization of the various ethnic groups was plural marriage between American men and Scandinavian wives.

In the early 1900s, Scandinavian reunions began to be held throughout Sanpete County. This was a return to older customs and use of the Danish, Swedish and Norwegian languages.¹⁴ Many came from around the state to chat, sing, remember past times, and renew friendships and customs. The people were becoming Americanized so fast that the positive aspects and traditions of the various ethnic groups were being lost. Here was an opportunity for the people to stay in touch with their "roots."

Families

One enduring aspect of the European cultures in Mt. Pleasant was demonstrated by closeknit family ties. The LDS Church placed emphasis on the importance of a strong family unit and staying close to relatives. Not only was the nuclear family important to the people living in Mt. Pleasant, but during the pioneer period having the extended family

¹³Day, "Eli A. Day," 35.

¹⁴Lund, 193.

(grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins) living under one roof was often the norm.

Several of the early settlers in this community were closely related to each other. The Seelys, Madsens, and Lunds came as family groups to Mt. Pleasant and left a lasting legacy. Many citizens of the town today still claim relationship to them.

An example of close family ties was demonstrated by the Merz family, a family converted to the Mormon Church in Switzerland. Since she was a widow, the mother could not afford to bring all of the family to Utah at one time, so she left the two oldest children in an orphanage. After arriving in Utah, the mother worked long hours ironing clothes and doing other household work; then, after seven years, she had accumulated enough money to send for her son and daughter in Switzerland.¹⁵

When an accident or death occurred, broken families were invited into the homes of relatives, unselfishly putting the needs of the group first. When Eli Day's mother died, he moved into his aunt's home and was treated as a member of the family. When Miranda Peel's sister-in-law died, she took the newborn daughter, breast-fed her, and treated her as if she were really a daughter.¹⁶ Children were also taught to care

¹⁵Louise B. Johansen, "The Red Stone Fountain," The Saga of the Sanpitch 5 (1980):48.

¹⁶Seely and Seely, Seely History, 332.

for extended family members by taking food to them, watching their fires, and often carrying out other chores. This family spirit carried over into helping neighbors throughout the community.

Time spent together as a family was looked forward to with anticipation. At the end of a long, hard day, families spent time together completing indoor chores, talking, reading, eating popcorn, or playing games.¹⁷ Larger family gatherings and reunions were also enjoyed. Good food and games often accompanied the conversation at these gatherings.

Roles

Most family members were given specific roles and responsibilities in the home. As soon as children were old enough, parents gave them tasks to do. Older children cared for younger children, worked in the garden, milked cows, and hauled wood. Boys were given the more physical outdoor work, while girls were normally assigned the indoor jobs. Fathers wanted their daughters to be ladies and receive proper training in the home. While men normally did most of the money-earning work, women were probably the busiest. Not only did they prepare the meals, watch children, sew and manufacture clothing, teach the children, and keep the home clean, they often took care of the livestock, planted gardens,

¹⁷Ruth Jorgensen Cox, interview by Jessie Embry, 15 October 1982, 2, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University, Provo.

and helped their husbands in the field at harvest time. Women could not afford to be weak and timid in this rugged pioneer lifestyle. When a mother or father was ill or died, older children filled the missing parent's roles, no matter what the age. This would mean that the daughter or son was obliged to leave school in order to devote his or her life to nurturing the family.¹⁸ Also, pay earned by children often went to help with the family expenses. This is another example of how the people of Mt. Pleasant gave priority to the needs of the group.

Under such strenuous conditions, work in the home took on added significance. From the early days on, the people of Mt. Pleasant proved to be industrious and hard-working. Because of necessity, the settlers were self-sufficient in providing food and shelter. Being so far from any "civilized" city, the people consumed only what they could raise or find. Otherwise, they would go without. The same work ethic was carried on down through the generations in Mt. Pleasant.

Home Improvements

Providing heating and lighting in early Mt. Pleasant was often difficult. Flint and steel were used to light fires for the early colonists. Not all families possessed these instruments. At night, fires were built so that the coals

¹⁸Mary Louise Seamons, It Takes a Heap o' Livin' (Provo: Community Press, 1989), 59.

would last until morning, when another fire would be built. Wood was collected through the year and stored for winter use. During the first winters, little firewood was collected because of the many things to do in settling the community; large amounts of readily available sagebrush were burned.

Candles were the main lighting instrument during the early years. Families made their candles with heavy cotton string dipped in warm tallow. Candles were in such demand that sometimes in order to gain entrance into the theater or dancehall in the 1860s, a candle was given in lieu of money.¹⁹ Also, a "bitch" was sometimes used for lighting in place of candles. This was made by filling a saucer with mutton tallow or grease, putting a rag in it, and lighting the rag. When kerosene and coal oil became more accessible, candles were replaced by lamps. These petroleum products were hard on the eyes and expensive. For example, when one family received \$50 from a relative, they were only able to buy one lamp, two gallons of coal oil, and some lace.²⁰ By 1889, the downtown section had five street lamps, filled with coal oil, giving the town a somewhat look.

By the early 1890s, Mt. Pleasant purchased a hydro-electric plant that was placed on Pleasant Creek about three miles up the canyon. The first electric light was installed in 1893. By the next year, electric lights replaced the coal

¹⁹Longsdorf, 309.

²⁰Ibid., 277.

lamps in the downtown area. The Mt. Pleasant Electric Corporation, formed in 1896, provided electricity throughout the town. Limited service was available in some homes by 1897. Power was turned on by 5:00 a.m. and off again by 1:00 a.m.²¹ A siren was sounded fifteen minutes before the electricity was turned off. Other than the obvious reasons of convenience, many were pleased to have electricity, because now there was less danger of fires in the home caused by oil lamps and open fires. To the relief of many, there was no longer the need for children to clean oil lamps on Saturdays. A huge sum of money was invested in a new hydro-electric plant in 1912. Approximately \$27,000 was paid for this more advanced and reliable system.²²

The waterworks improved a great deal during Mt. Pleasant's first fifty years. Initially, culinary water was carried from Pleasant Creek. Ditches were made to bring water closer to the homes and farms. Several wells and windmills were built in the 1870s and 1880s. Mayor Carter and the city council had installed a new waterworks system throughout the downtown in 1891 at a cost of \$20,000. In 1905, the city council replaced much of the earlier waterworks with an updated system.²³ With the new water system in place, wells

²¹Soren Peter Sorensen, Biographical information, (photocopy), 9 March 1937, 2, Utah State Historical Society.

²²Daughters, Fathers, 90.

²³Ibid.

were covered and the windmills taken down. This meant that the older water purification method, using settling barrels filled with prickly pears, was discontinued. The luxury of tap water was appreciated in Mt. Pleasant, a town far ahead of most rural communities with its new water system. The last major waterworks change took place in 1938, when almost 25,000 feet of the wooden pipes were replaced by the present system.

Along with the waterworks system of 1905 came indoor plumbing and indoor toilets. Before, "outhouses," or outdoor toilets were utilized. These toilets had been placed near the dwellings, but far enough away to keep the bad odors from the homes. Some were placed up to one-fourth mile away. Sears and Roebuck catalog pages were used in the outdoor toilets as toilet tissue. The cold, long walks made these toilets undesirable. J. Golden Kimball, a colorful leader in the Mormon Church, referred to these outdoor toilets when speaking to a congregation, saying, "You Danes build these little houses so far away you have to take a lunch with you."²⁴ The "slop jar," or waste container used at night in the home, was replaced by the new indoor toilets.

Communications between Mt. Pleasant and the outside world were originally as fast as a person on horseback could travel. In 1865, a telegraph line was constructed through Mt. Pleasant and made communications almost instantaneous. The telegraph

²⁴Seamons, Heap o' Livin', 81.

proved especially helpful during the Black Hawk Indian War.²⁵ In the late 1890s, a single telephone line was placed between Fairview and Mt. Pleasant, making communications between these two towns more effective. Finally in 1900, Mt. Pleasant was the first town in Sanpete County to enjoy full telephone service.²⁶ It was not far behind major cities in the West.

By 1910, Mt. Pleasant had become a clean, modern town with a good water system, electricity, telephone service, and enterprising businesses. Another improvement was the newly paved sidewalks in the downtown district. Later in 1925, Main Street was paved.

Transportation

Road work improved over the years. Only small roads were built originally. In 1871, the town council passed a measure allowing a tax of one-half of one percent to repair streets and bridges. Up through the early 1900s, streets were muddy when wet, and dusty when dry. The coming of the automobile was a catalyst which brought many changes. The first car was brought to Mt. Pleasant in 1908 by Dr. August Lundberg. Not only were the roads terrible, full of potholes and rocks, but there were no service stations for air, water or tire repair. There were many disagreements between car drivers and horse teamsters over right-of-way and scared animals. Soon after

²⁵Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, 229.

²⁶Antrei, 182.

automobiles came to town, new laws were passed by the city council to protect citizens from reckless drivers.

The passenger train first came to Mt. Pleasant in 1890, replacing the stage line to Thistle. The train remained very important for local transportation and business interests until the 1980s. The train provided a quicker means to get crops and animals to market, and brought new enterprises to town. The train was not without problems, however, even though many people enjoyed traveling in the comfort of velvet-seated coaches, they felt the price was too expensive, up to one cent per pound from Nephi to Ephraim.²⁷ Some joked about this saying the ride was so bumpy, that a person would lose a couple of pounds on the trip and not have to pay as much. Also, the train was almost always late, because of livestock getting in the way or mechanical problems. It was said that Mt. Pleasant had three plagues: the Indian war, the grasshopper war, and the Sanpete Valley railroad.

Many of the people of Mt. Pleasant saw their first airplane when it passed overhead and landed in a field north of town in 1920. Some excitement was created in 1927 when Charles A. Lindbergh flew over Mt. Pleasant and landed his plane in a nearby field. This American hero, the first to fly solo across the Atlantic, was warmly received by the community.²⁸ An airport was built south of town during the

²⁷Longsdorf, 336.

²⁸Ibid., 203.

Depression, because of the frequent visit of airplanes during the 1930s. Ground transportation was improved when a commercial busline passed through town in 1930; the new highway, Route 89, was completed in 1936.

Rural Dangers

The rugged pioneer lifestyle was not without danger. Many of the settlers coming to the community experienced terrible conditions while crossing the Atlantic Ocean and the Great Plains. The earliest settlers lived in fear of Indians, adverse weather conditions, hunger, and wild animals.

During the first four years after Mt. Pleasant was permanently founded, the settlers felt that Indians were not a major problem, only a nuisance, because of begging and stealing. They were not a life-threatening concern until the Black Hawk War. After the war, the Indians were placed on a reservation in Northern Utah and the concerns caused by the collision of two different cultures ended.

Wild animals presented a constant threat, especially in the early years. People travelled during the day to avoid encounters with coyotes, wolves, and mountain lions at night. During sparse hunting seasons, coyotes roamed into town and went so far as to scratch on doors in search of food. Some settlers built fences around their homes as protection from coyotes and wolves. Another danger came from horses. Even though horses were tame, a train whistle, loud noises, or a

dog barking could startle them, causing them to run away wildly. There were increased dangers when cars and horses shared the roads.

Another danger existed in fires. There was always a possibility that an unwanted fire would start because so many buildings were made of wood, and because firewood and kindling were often kept close to buildings for convenience sake. Fire protection was on the city council agenda on several occasions, but it was not until 1912 that Mt. Pleasant organized its first fire department.²⁹ With the coming of electricity, there were fewer fire hazards.

Earthquakes were felt, but none strong enough to do major damage. Floods passed through town on several occasions, the worst two in 1889 and 1918. The latter was the worst. At this time, Pleasant Creek overflowed its banks and carried mud and rocks through the town. Streets, gardens, and fields were covered with silt and debris. One older man lost his life when he slipped and fell into the roaring stream. Volunteers from the surrounding communities came to help clean. Even a group of convicts from the state prison was sent to help. The city council considered new ways to prevent floods of such devastation. A large steam shovel was obtained to widen and deepen the Pleasant Creek channel. Later, a reservoir was

²⁹Ibid., 167.

built above town to safeguard against flooding waters.³⁰

The townspeople tried to do what they could to protect their children from the harsh physical conditions and the dangers of society. One way to do this was to place a 9:00 p.m. curfew on all children. When a bell rang, children would hurry home. This ordinance lasted until 1895, when the city council then ruled it "useless." The bell was also used to signal dangers, such as when Indians were in the area, when a child was lost, or in case of a flood or fire.³¹ A big drum was used for the same purpose in the earliest days.

As in other towns, death came unexpectedly in a variety of ways in this rural community. Some mothers and infants died from complications at childbirth for lack of better medical facilities. There were many accidental deaths because of the nearness of Pleasant Creek. In the first eighty years, eleven individuals drowned.³² Others died while performing their occupations. When Bishop Madsen died from being thrown from his wagon, there was quite a stir in the community. Mr. Rowe lost his arm at the planing mill and died three weeks later from lockjaw. A Johansen girl was crushed when her dress was caught in her father's threshing machine, pulling her to her death.

³⁰Leo C. Larsen, "The Flood--Or When All Hell Was Turned Loose," The Saga of the Sanpitch 11 (1979):80-82.

³¹May C. Goodman, The Heart of Home (New York: Vantage Press, 1976), 38.

³²Longsdorf, 205.

Some of the epidemics afflicting Mt. Pleasant were diphtheria, in 1886³³ and 1892; typhoid fever, in 1908;³⁴ and influenza, in 1918, in which nine persons died. These were terrible periods in Mt. Pleasant's history.

Ice was used to preserve the bodies of those who passed away, because the embalming process was not available in Mt. Pleasant during the early years. A Mrs. McIntosh was kept under ice for three weeks while her family and friends were notified of the funeral.³⁵

Medicine

During the pioneer years, Mt. Pleasant was not known for its medical care. The lack of proper medical care was similar to other small settlements throughout the American West. There were no medical doctors in this community for almost forty years. This forced the early settlers to take care of themselves. Many lives could have been saved had proper medical care been available.

During these early years, several women became prominent "healers." Sarah Seely Tidwell, known for her gift of healing, would go great distances, even in the cold and dark,

³³Seely and Seely, Seely History, 332.

³⁴Lund, 206.

³⁵William McIntosh, "Diary" (photocopy), 150, Special Collections, HBL.

to help others.³⁶ Aunt Candace was another woman known to be able to help others feel better.³⁷ One woman, known as the "Herb Lady," tried to heal the sick and afflicted with her various herbs and treatments.³⁸

Midwives learned a special art and were called upon often to help during the delivery of babies. The Mrs. Miller, Larsen, Scoville, and Peel were commonly called "angels of mercy" because of the assistance they rendered. They charged only \$3.00 to help with the delivery and watch the mother and child for ten days.³⁹ Mary Wilcox delivered more than 300 babies.⁴⁰ Until the early 1900s, all babies were born at home. It was a common practice to call a neighbor woman and a midwife to deliver the child. This was a painful process because no anesthetics were available. After the birth, the mothers were usually confined to their beds for ten days, while friends and relatives brought food and took care of the family.

Without physicians, the early settlers trusted home cures, remedies, and superstitions. Some of the more commonly used medicines were a black soot poultice applied to cuts and

³⁶Seely and Seely, Seely History, 208.

³⁷Mary Louise Seamons, "Healers and Healing," The Saga of the Sanpitch 17 (1985):58.

³⁸Seamons, Heap o' Livin', 24.

³⁹Daughters, Fathers, 87.

⁴⁰Seely and Seely, Seely History, 147.

bruises, a burnt adobe brick poultice put on sprained ankles, onion syrup for colds, angleworm oil for broken arms, salve of balsam sap for bad cuts, whiskey with sugar and hot water for colds, a bag of asafoetida worn around the neck to ward off diseases, Jad salts for bladder problems, cloves for toothaches, and a rosin-beeswax-mutton tallow poultice for cracked feet.⁴¹

Physicians came to Mt. Pleasant to practice around the turn of the century, but encountered problems in this small community. One difficulty was payment. Whilmina K. Madsen could not pay cash to the doctor who spent a week trying to cure her of an illness. Instead, she gave him a Christmas goose. Another problem came from inadequate medical care facilities in the area. People had to go to Salt Lake City for specialized treatment. Many of the best doctors remained in larger cities, leaving lesser-trained doctors for the smaller communities.

Arts and Culture

Even as a small, rural town, Mt. Pleasant had a large share of talent. Some of the areas in which that talent was expressed were music, drama, painting, and oratory. The LDS Church promoted the development of the talents of its members by holding many artistic and cultural activities. Not only were talents improved in these activities, but they also

⁴¹Day, "Eli A. Day," 6.

served to unify the people and build social aspects in the community. The social advantages found in Mt. Pleasant and in similar Mormon towns were not usually within the reach of other farming communities in the Western United States.

David Candland, an English immigrant in charge of social activities for Brigham Young in Salt Lake City, was, like Orson Hyde, sent to live in Mt. Pleasant when he had a disagreement with the Prophet. He ended up having a major effect on the social and artistic events of this town.

No one had a greater influence on music in Mt. Pleasant, or Central Utah, than John Hasler, who arrived in Mt. Pleasant in 1869, an immigrant from Switzerland, who had been a cavalry band leader. He brought written music and instruments with him. Within the first week of his arrival in Mt. Pleasant, he prepared a brass band for a visit by Brigham Young. He led brass bands for twenty-five years. Hasler also conducted choirs for seventeen years, many times bringing his own coal to heat the chapel for choir practices. He spent countless hours writing and copying music until a church hymnbook was written. He did the same for the surrounding communities. John Hasler had three organs in his home and taught music lessons to six students at a time, who would stay in his home for six weeks. They began practices at 6:00 a.m. and worked at their music skills all day.⁴² The price he asked was \$15 to \$20, but honey, meat, and clothing were the pay he usually

⁴²Smolka, 14.

received. This practice of teaching students in his home continued until his wife had a nervous breakdown.⁴³ He also rented and sold pianos and organs throughout central Utah. His sales technique was to leave a piano in a home for several weeks. When he came by to pick it up, the people often felt they needed to buy it; he would then set up purchase terms.

John Hasler was partially repaid for his many years of service in promoting music when he and each member of his brass band were given ten acres of land from the town council. This land on the outskirts of town, later became known as "Brass Band Field." Brass band contests were held between the communities of Sanpete County, with bets of up to \$1,000 as to who had the better bands. Also, Mt. Pleasant had English, Danish, and Swedish choirs thanks to John Hasler.

Drama and theater were arts practiced in Mt. Pleasant, even under primitive conditions. Readings were performed by early settlers by the light of campfires. "Oh, My Father" and "Come, Come Ye Saints" were two of the more popular presentations.⁴⁴

The year Mt. Pleasant was settled, the first theatrical company was formed. This group tried to make life more bearable and entertaining during the winter months. Just one year after settlement, a log house in the center of the fort

⁴³Harry A. Dean, "John Hasler, Pioneer Musician of Central Utah," The Saga of the Sanpitch 17 (1969):17.

⁴⁴Antrei, 414.

was designated as the theater. Good for Nothing Nan and Merchant of Venice were two of the productions performed that year, rather difficult scripts for settlers in a community far away from civilization.⁴⁵

In 1862, a social hall was built for larger musical events, dances and church gatherings. Seven years later, another social hall was built and a new dramatic company formed. This company sometimes performed three nights a week in Mt. Pleasant, then traveled to neighboring communities to put on their dramas. Some of the plays they put on were Rose of Elrich Hill and Night and Morning.⁴⁶ One of the positive aspects was that the Social Hall used scenery painted by C. C. A. Christensen, later a famous Mormon artist.

Because cash was always in short supply, tickets in these early years were obtained in exchange for a cedar post, wheat, oats, squash, or candles. The cast members would received three complimentary passes (worth \$.25 each) and up to two and a half bushels of wheat each season.⁴⁷ The patrons often brought peanuts to eat during the performance.

Through the years, drama remained popular in the community. Traveling theatrical troops also came to Mt. Pleasant and stayed in tents, sometimes providing a new show every night. Andrew C. Young was a Mt. Pleasant man

⁴⁵Longsdorf, 300,301.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

interested in promoting social and cultural activities in the community. He supervised the opera house in the early 1900s, and arranged for theatrical performances in Mt. Pleasant. Besides the opera house, the town later had the Elite and Star Theaters.

Another outlet for artistic expression was painting. One local artist, a Mr. Beaumann, painted homes, adding scenes to some of the rooms. John H. Stansfield, a sheepman, became a famous landscape artist. Although he had only an eighth grade education, he later taught commercial art at Snow College. Most of his 3,000 paintings were of Sanpete landscapes.⁴⁸

Near the turn of the century, oratorical contests took place on Sunday evenings. C. N. Lund, Jr., was one of the favorites in this arena. He won several speech contests.

The rugged pioneer lifestyle of the people of Mt. Pleasant was demanding and difficult. There was always a need for diversion and entertainment to break the strain and monotony of this kind of living. People knew how to work hard, and they knew how to enjoy recreation.

Amusements

With a little music, which was easy to find in Mt. Pleasant, dances were held. This was one of the favorite forms of entertainment. Unlike some denominations in the nineteenth century, Mormons encouraged wholesome dancing.

⁴⁸Antrei, 442.

These dances were held in the open or in the small houses of the fort when the town was first settled. Anytime people found a reason to celebrate, a dance was organized. One of the first popular places to hold a dance was the Simpson home because it had a wooden floor. Later, dancing became a major attraction at the Social Hall, above the ZCMI store, and at the Opera House. These were big dances that normally required Sunday dress and admission costs. With the \$.10 or \$.15 for entrance hard to find, wood, wheat, or a sack of potatoes was traded instead.

Dances were frequent. In the dance halls, they were held every weekend. During Christmas and other vacations, dances were sometimes held every night. Dances were a favorite kind of date for the young people of the community. Sometimes couples rode horses to a dance, changed into their dancing clothes for the evening, then changed back into riding clothes when the dance was over. Dances were a part of nearly every celebration, including wedding receptions. Some of the favorite dance steps in the early years included the Tucker Quadrille, the French Four, and polkas. In the early days, dances could be held only with the permission of the Mormon bishop.

Entertainment at home was popular. Families often spent time together at the end of a hard day of work, roasting corn or nuts, and singing or playing games. Some families spent most nights together in this fashion. Others invited friends

to enjoy their company while they danced, ate, and sang.

Another form of entertainment was provided by riding horses, buggies, and sleighs. Riding in a surrey with fringe on top was one of the McClenahan family's favorite pastimes. The Jorgensen family did the same, using a sleigh during the winter months. Heated bricks kept feet warm on those cold rides. Some of the youth would try to race against the train, called the "creeper," in their wagons and sleighs.⁴⁹ The day of the horse and buggy came to an abrupt end when automobiles became available. With the car, long trips to Salt Lake City, Provo, and other cities became quicker and more comfortable. Soon families were finding entertainment away from Mt. Pleasant and Sanpete County, at places like the Geneva Resort near Provo, the theater in Salt Lake City, or at Bryce Canyon, Zions Canyon, and the Grand Canyon to the south.

Water activities were always welcomed. Pleasant Creek and the surrounding waters provided good fishing and swimming. In the early days, boys made fishing hooks from wire and needles, or they could be purchased for \$.25 each at the store. Many good fishing stories were told, but none so dramatic as the one about Julia, a little girl who asked the boys to let her hold the fishing line. She soon caught a four-pound trout. She became the heroine of the community.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Eleanor P. Madsen, "The Creeper," The Saga of the Sanpitch 6 (1974):12.

⁵⁰Day, "Eli Day," 10.

Like others, the Jorgensen family liked to go fishing. Sometimes fishing was so good that they caught a wagon load of fish in a single day.

As for swimming, children often dammed up the creek with sand bags or rocks so that they could swim in three or four feet of water. Many stories were told of youngsters who left their clothes on the bank and enjoyed a hot summer day in the cool water.

During the winter, snow provided additional activities. Snowball fighting was a favorite. Andrew Jensen built the first reservoir in town which served as an ice skating playground during the winter. The Jorgensen family and others followed and built their own ponds for skating. On one occasion, a small boy broke through the surface of the frozen pond, but was saved from a tragic end.

In the 1890s, Mt. Pleasant gained the reputation of being the amusement center in Central and Southern Utah.⁵¹ There always seemed to be something going on--games, sports, celebrations, circus shows, and so forth.

One of the most awaited events was the coming of the circus. In the early 1900s, the Frandsens rented part of their farm property to the Ringling Brothers Circus. People came from all over Sanpete and the surrounding counties to experience the multifaceted excitement of this event. Elephants paraded through town, big tents were set up, and

⁵¹Lever, 214.

people enjoyed the amazing things the people and animals did in the big shows.⁵²

Around 1910, the first movie was shown in Mt. Pleasant, "The Perils of Pauline." Before the show, children went to Pete Poker's General Store and traded an egg for a piece of candy to eat during the movie. Sometimes the egg was taken without mother's permission. Like other towns, stealing from orchards and gardens also provided a certain thrill in Mt. Pleasant.

In the 1920s, children and adults began to listen to a new invention, the radio. Stations could be picked up from Los Angeles, Phoenix and Denver. Radio changed some of the lifestyles in this rural community, drawing it closer to the ways of the big cities.

Games and Sports

Thousands of games and activities were played by the children of the town. Some were well organized, but most were influenced by the imaginations of those who played them. Some of the favorites were steal the stick, stink base, pomp pomp pull away, stilts, bows and arrows, marbles, jacks, jump rope, hop scotch, old cat, pig, throw ball, old sow, button games (where buttons were removed from one's clothing), mumbly peg, click clock, hide the thimble, hide the clock, hide and seek, kick the can, run my sheep run, danish ball, post office,

⁵²Seamons, Heap o' Livin', 38,39.

cowboys and indians, and many wrestling and running games.⁵³

Because of some mischievous and dangerous activities, laws were passed by the city council to limit part of the youths' fun. Some of the laws included no obstructing roads with games and balls, no discharging flippers and slings. Any person sporting, hunting, or fishing on Sunday was fined \$10.⁵⁴

Baseball was one of the favorite team sports in town. As early as 1875, there were two teams in Mt. Pleasant, the Red Stockings and the Resolutes.⁵⁵ Baseball was played in the streets by the children, in the public square, and later in a city park. In 1913, a two-day baseball tournament was played in Mt. Pleasant, in which professional players were hired to play.

Celebrations

The people of Mt. Pleasant have been shown to be a happy, fun-loving people. Part of this was due to their being hard workers. When it was time to play, they worked hard at that, too. Celebrations were held for almost any reason, partly to have fun and partly to get minds off of the tedious, monotonous work that a rural community required. Along with

⁵³Madsen and Olsen, 7.

⁵⁴Longsdorf, 136.

⁵⁵Pearle M. Olsen, Nickels From a Sheep's Back, (1977), 71.

amusements, games, and sports, these jubilations helped to cement the relationships of the people and develop the social aspects of the town.

The New Year was always brought in with parties at church and in friends' homes, and with bell ringing. May Day was celebrated in Mt. Pleasant during the early years because it was a European custom brought by the immigrants. The Eli Day farm was the center of rodeo and dancing activity. This celebration died out as the Scandinavians became more Americanized.

A holiday peculiar to Utah, which normally took place in May or June, was Old Folks' Day, a day to honor the elderly members of the community with a dinner and dance.⁵⁶ The earliest party took place in 1884, with over 300 present for the dinner. People seventy-five years and older were given a special invitation. That year, there were two persons older than ninety years. This celebration continued on a yearly basis. C. N. Lund notes that over 300 were present at the celebration in 1904. The last Old Folks' Day he attended was in 1921.⁵⁷

A large celebration each year was the Fourth of July, American Independence Day. It included picnics, speeches, choirs, bands, dramas, concerts, games and dances. These

⁵⁶Joseph Heinerman, "The Old Folks Day: A Unique Utah Tradition," Utah Historical Quarterly 53 (Spring 1958):157.

⁵⁷Lund, 264.

celebrations were so large in 1861 that the Deseret News carried an article about it. Cannon salutes and parades were added to the merriment along with a liberty pole and other events in later years. This was a day that Jew and Gentile, Mormon and non-Mormon could celebrate together. As the years progressed, the parade took on greater significance, with the most popular girl in town crowned as "Miss Liberty."

The most popular celebration in Mt. Pleasant, however, was the 24th of July, a day set aside to commemorate the arrival of the Mormons in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. This celebration started in 1859, five months after the settlers first arrived in Mt. Pleasant. The 24th of July holiday followed much the same pattern as the Fourth of July, with a cannon wake-up, drums, choirs, speeches, dancing, games, etc. In the parade, the people dressed as pioneers and rode in wagons or pulled handcarts, in honor of their pioneer heritage. Sometimes this celebration was held in the mountains east of town, where celebrants were transported by wagon.⁵⁸ This religious holiday would continue to be the largest celebration each year in Mt. Pleasant, even during the Indian wars and grasshopper invasions.

Halloween was celebrated from the 1920's on. This was a time when the youth turned over outhouses, released livestock from their corrals, and performed other mischievous deeds.

⁵⁸Talula Nelson, "Twenty Fourth of July," The Saga of the Sanpitch 6 (1976):73-75.

Thanksgiving and Christmas were primarily family holidays celebrated with big feasts and gatherings of relatives. In the late 1800s, children received Christmastime lumps of sugar and an orange, if they had been well behaved. Most families decorated trees. After the 1900s, the custom of Santa Claus coming and leaving presents to the boys and girls caught on.

Another celebration of importance in Mt. Pleasant was Utah Statehood Day in 1896. After waiting almost fifty years to become a state, the people of Utah put on a big party. The people of Mt. Pleasant celebrated for two days with speeches, dances, and parades.⁵⁹

Another big holiday took place when Mt. Pleasant celebrated its fiftieth year of existence. This was a three day celebration with thousands of present and past citizens of the community in attendance. On the first day, July 5, 1909, a cannon salute awoke everyone, military bands, fireworks, singers, sports, parades and dancing. On the second day, a monument to the original settlers of Mt. Pleasant was dedicated by Joseph F. Smith, then prophet of the Mormon Church. The monument, which cost \$2,500, bore the names of all families who founded the town. President Smith then spoke to the people of how the pioneers suffered hardships and dangers so that the present generation might enjoy the comforts and luxuries of life in Mt. Pleasant. Andrew Madsen, one of the original settlers, also spoke. He related several

⁵⁹Lund, 45.

experiences and compared the difficulties to the present comforts of 1909.⁶⁰ More talks, choirs, and poem presentations followed on the third day. This celebration was planned for months and turned out to be very successful.

One aspect of social life came in the membership of many of the town's citizens in lodges and clubs. In the late 1800s, and as mentioned in the previous chapter, several lodges became popular in Mt. Pleasant. Membership was not only a sign of social acceptance, but educational and religious instruction were also made available to the members. Some of the more prominent lodges were the Freemasons, the International Order of Foresters, and the Organization of Union Workers. After the turn of the century, women's clubs and organizations were created to meet these same needs for women. They were designed to increase the intellectual, spiritual, moral and social growth of the members, and promote civic affairs. Two of the more prominent ladies clubs were the Twentieth Century Literary Club and the Home Culture Club. These provided a traveling library free to the public and later helped bring the Carnegie Library to town in 1917. Other clubs were the Our Night Out Club, Our Social Afternoon Club, Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, the Junior Literacy Club, the Acme Literary Club, the Fine Arts Club, and the Artopic Club.⁶¹ Other mainstream organizations that became

⁶⁰Madsen, "History of Andrew Madsen," 12.

⁶¹Daughters, Fathers, 97.

part of Mt. Pleasant society were the Lion's Club, organized in 1925, and the Junior Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1937.

Government

The people of Mt. Pleasant have been active in government affairs, at local and state levels. In the earliest years, the LDS Church was the authority in administering the laws of the territory. The bishop was chief magistrate in civil, military, and spiritual affairs.⁶² The stake president worked out inter-community problems. During the first twenty-five years, most political and governmental decisions were made, or strongly influenced, by the LDS leaders. This process changed with the increased number of Presbyterians coming to Wasatch Academy and the non-LDS people arriving with the railroad.

In 1861, a town committee that functioned like a town council was organized and made decisions about repairing fences and building a canal. In 1868, Mt. Pleasant was officially incorporated, and William S. Seely became the first mayor. A town council was elected at that time.⁶³ This council was active and passed laws, such as fining a person \$50 who rode horses too fast in town, or laws which allowed aged widows to avoid the payment of taxes. The town council received abuse from the public for granting a liquor license

⁶²Goodwin, 2.

⁶³Seely and Seely, Seely History, 141.

in 1872, and then would not issue another for several years.⁶⁴

In 1873, most people in Utah belonged to the People's Party. David Candland and William S. Seely were leaders of this party in Mt. Pleasant, and were selected as representatives to several political conferences and territorial meetings. The leadership of the Liberal Party was organized locally in that year and became particularly active in central Utah, at times closely challenging the People's Party in elections. Christian Lund, the leader of this movement, recruited people throughout central Utah to build the Liberal Party.⁶⁵

In 1876, the mayor and council members began to receive payment for their service. If the council members attended a meeting, they would each be paid \$1.50. If they missed the meeting, they were fined \$2.50.⁶⁶

In 1876, about 160 women attended the town council meeting to protest the granting of liquor licenses. Their political influence was keenly felt and their wishes granted, at least for the present term. The women of Mt. Pleasant were involved politically. The women of Utah were given the right to vote in 1877, only the third state or territory in the United State with women's suffrage.

⁶⁴Longsdorf, 136.

⁶⁵Madsen, "History of Andrew Madsen," 81.

⁶⁶Longsdorf, 134.

The county elections were particularly lively in 1877. The People's and Liberal Parties enthusiastically supported candidates. At that time, Mt. Pleasant seemed especially spirited politically. During these years, Mt. Pleasant sent delegates to county and territorial conventions. Some of the men often sent as representatives from Mt. Pleasant were C. N. Lund and William S. Seely.

In 1890, Mt. Pleasant made a bid to replace Manti as the county seat. The city campaigned hard and gave good reasons for making the change, but failed in the election of that year. Many residents then wanted to split the county, but this proposal was rejected. There continued to be in-fighting between the various towns in the county as to where to place public and church buildings.

In 1892, the Republican and Democratic Parties were organized locally, replacing the People's and Liberal Parties. This change took place so that Utah would be brought in line with national politics and become a state.⁶⁷

J. Page was elected to represent Mt. Pleasant in the "State" constitutional convention in 1894. The delegates wrote a constitution that clearly separated church and state, and prohibited the future practice of polygamy.⁶⁸ W. D. Candland was elected as the first senator from Sanpete County

⁶⁷Levey, 213.

⁶⁸Lund, 45.

when Utah became a state in 1896.⁶⁹

During the early years, the town council met in homes, at the telegraph office, in schools, and at the Social Hall. In 1898, an old schoolhouse was remodelled and turned into city hall. This was the first permanent residence for the city council in forty years. In 1936, a new city hall was built.

The city council and mayor continued to play an active role in the shaping of the progressive town of Mt. Pleasant. They were especially influential in bringing electricity, water, and lighting to the community, years before the surrounding towns could provide their residents the same services. The town continued to be involved in future political conventions and law-making bodies.

Attitudes

The people of Mt. Pleasant tended to demonstrate positive attitudes. When first arriving in Sanpete County, instead of seeing only a hot desert with flat, lifeless land covered with sagebrush, they saw land that would become their future home. For many, it was difficult to leave their previous homes. For example, David Candland, a distinguished gentleman, and his three wives left "civilized" Salt Lake City to come to a dug-out home surrounded by Indians and coyotes. Survival was the main thing on everyone's mind during those first years. Isolation from big cities created a community spirit of

⁶⁹Longsdorf, 175.

independence and a self-reliant attitude. The work hard ethic brought by the Scandinavians was influential in stopping complaints and going to work. These were brave people, determined to succeed.⁷⁰

These pioneers were unusually united, too. When they saw someone in need, they rendered assistance. Not only did they serve others, but they appreciated the help that others gave them, especially during the Black Hawk War.

Humor was an important element to the people of Mt. Pleasant, helping them survive the trials and hardships by laughing at them. One story was told of several boys who were swimming naked in the creek some distance from town. They heard drum beats signalling that Indians were close by. The boys ran naked to the edge of town and quickly put their clothes on before running into town for safety.⁷¹

Another story which brought humor to the Indian situation was told of a young man who was herding sheep when some Indians appeared. The boy quickly hid among the sheep and went unnoticed by the Indians. In so doing, he could not stop the sheep from eating the straw hat he had been wearing for protection from the sun.⁷²

Many ethnic jokes were told to keep the proper

⁷⁰Lever, 205.

⁷¹Day, "Eli A. Day'" 11.

⁷²Leo C. Larsen, "The Straw Hat," The Saga of the Sanpitch 14 (1982):92..

perspective. One that was often heard was about how the Danes married all the good-looking girls for their first wives, and not-so-good-looking girls for their second wives. This left no one for the Swedes to marry, so they apostatized and went back to Sweden.⁷³

The Danes were said to have pretty wives and the Swedes homely. The reason given for this was while the Swedes were working, the Danes were out looking for pretty wives.⁷⁴

J. Leo Seely was one of the town pranksters. On one occasion he sneaked a cow into the town jail. When the jailor heard the bellowing, he found the excited cow and the walls of the jail decorated with cowpies. Leo paid a \$30 fine.⁷⁵

The railroad was always behind schedule and was the brunt of many jokes. The story is told of how Brother Bradley, the train's engineer, held up the train for some time while Sister Hansen's chickens laid one more egg. He wanted her to have an even dozen eggs when she went shopping in Ephraim.⁷⁶

These humorous stories helped the citizens of Mt. Pleasant keep their perspective and continue with positive attitudes through difficult times.

This chapter has shown that there were many complex segments in the daily lives of the people of Mt. Pleasant. In

⁷³Longsdorf, 337.

⁷⁴Antrei, 80.

⁷⁵Seely and Seely, Seely History, 317.

⁷⁶Longsdorf, 336.

the early years, almost every aspect of life was influenced by the leaders in the LDS Church. The society founded in those early years in turn affected the later history of the community. The people have always shown the sense of unity and purpose found in few other settlements of the same time period in Western America. Along with the stress placed on solidarity, emphasis was also given to doing things for the good of the group instead of for the individual. The people of Mt. Pleasant were successful in building a harmonious, progressive community through the experiences and activities of their daily lifestyles.

CHAPTER FOUR

EDUCATION

For being a small, rural town located some distance from a major city, Mt. Pleasant was able to provide an excellent education for its students. The Mormon Church teaches that the glory of God is intelligence.¹ Therefore, emphasis was given to education from the beginning of this community. One of the first buildings constructed in Mt. Pleasant was a log schoolhouse. Many other buildings needed to be built that first year, but education was considered more important so the school was built. The leaders of the LDS Church had control over what was being taught in the schools during the first years. Religious principles were taught along with reading, writing, and arithmetic.

In spite of the adverse conditions faced by a growing colony, the parents recognized that children needed to be taught. During the first years, the school system improved with better regulations and a more complete organization. While many who lived in the newly settled Western United States were illiterate, this was not the case with Mt.

¹The Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982), 93:36.

Pleasant.

The first teacher in Mt. Pleasant was A. B. Strickland, who taught school during the winter of 1859-60. A. J. Forsythe, the second teacher, taught some summer classes.² These teachers volunteered their time and talents and were public servants, genuinely interested in helping the students learn. By 1862, forty students regularly attended each of the three schools in Mt. Pleasant. Because it was growing so quickly, the town was divided into three sections, later four; each section had its own school, making them more accessible to the students. Of the three teachers at that time, David Candland was the best known. He continued to support the advancement of education in this community, even though he did not always teach.

Teachers

During the early years, the only qualifications for a teacher were that he or she could read and write. There were no special schools which specifically trained teachers in the Utah Territory. There were many citizens who felt, as stated by Eli Day, that a man should teach if he could not do physical or manual labor due to health problems or injuries. Some also thought that in order for a woman to teach, she should be unmarried. As the Utah Legislature began to make requirements for teachers, Mt. Pleasant supported those

²Madsen, "History of Andrew Madsen," 28.

regulations and tried to make certain the teachers met the qualifications.³

In the history of Mt. Pleasant two teachers stand out as the most memorable. The first was Charlette Stanton Hyde, one of Apostle Orson Hyde's polygamous wives. She evidently did not get along very well with her husband and chose to live in Mt. Pleasant and teach. Instead of ringing a bell to begin school each morning, Auntie Hyde, as she was affectionately called by her students, would say, "To books, to books, to books." She was a well educated woman, but deaf. She also had the habit of smoking a pipe, and she was known to wear out willows on disobedient students. When she died, her students of many years erected a marker to her memory.⁴

Another teacher known to every student in early Mt. Pleasant was Eli Day, who grew up in Mt. Pleasant and attended its schools, having Auntie Hyde and David Candland for teachers. Eli Day would rather study and read than fish and play with the other boys. He was so quick to grasp ideas that Candland would have Eli help teach math to the other students, even though Eli was but a student himself. As an adult, he was injured while sawing wood. While recovering, he was asked by some of the people in the community to attend a new program initiated for educators. The community at first supported Eli

³A. C. Nelson, "The Utah Public School System," Improvement Era 16 (July 1913):912.

⁴Madsen and Olsen, 322.

Day and Hilda Dehlin at the Deseret University, because it wanted a better public school, and because Wasatch Academy was now boasting that it could provide a better education. The territorial government wanted to help educators earn teaching degrees by passing a tax that would help with the costs of educating teachers. Eli Day, though one of the best students in the program, still had a hard time financially. When he finally returned to Mt. Pleasant, Day added new vigor to the school system and turned things around. One of his objectives was to get rid of the switch and corporal punishment, a practice that students quite disliked.⁵ His approach to teaching reawakened interest in the public schools. Education gained higher priority, and several of the younger generation wanted to become teachers because of the influence of Day.

It was several years before a tax base and public revenues developed to support a better school system. By the early 1870s, the teachers were able to split \$3.00 for each student during the quarter.⁶ Most teachers were paid in kind (wheat, oats, hay), because cash was in short supply. By 1875, the territorial legislature appropriated a small fund for education and for teachers. Still, most of the funding for schools came out of the parents' pockets.

⁵Everette L. Cooley, "Eli Azarriah Day: Pioneer School Teacher and Prisoner for Conscience Sake," Utah Historical Quarterly 35 (Fall 1967):321.

⁶Andrew Oman, interview by DeLos Myers, (photocopy) August 1938, 3, Utah State Historical Society.

By 1886, teachers were receiving between \$110 and \$120 for each ten-week period they taught. There was an average of forty students in each of the four schools.⁷ In the 1890s, the community leaders pushed for a "free school" concept, but this was not achieved until later.

In 1911, the school board decided to build a new high school in Mt. Pleasant. This created financial strains and the school board was obliged to borrow money to pay the teachers. By 1913, the average pay for male teachers was \$85 and for female teachers \$65 per month. The pay for female teachers was approximately \$585 for a nine-month school year in 1918.⁸ By the time the Great Depression arrived, many of the teachers could no longer survive on the low pay, so they began taking second jobs, many doing farm work.

Administration

In 1863, the school system in Mt. Pleasant had a board of trustees to ensure that the educational program worked correctly. Three members were elected from each of the four sections of town. Above the trustees at the local level was the county superintendent of public instruction. Almost all decisions concerning the running of Mt. Pleasant's schools were made at the local board's level. C. N. Lund was on the school board longer than anyone else, serving for thirty-five

⁷Longsdorf, 164.

⁸Goodman, 109.

years.⁹ By 1915, the pay for board members was \$300 per year. In 1920, the State Board of Education received power to extend uniform educational practices throughout Utah, taking away some control of the local school board.

Many changes in the educational system took place around 1875. Reverend McMillan came to Mt. Pleasant during this year as a Presbyterian minister. He decided the best way to develop his ministry in the Mt. Pleasant area was to improve the school system. Even though the rural schools were adequate, they needed reforms. This was particularly noticeable to McMillan, who stated there were no organized schools in Mt. Pleasant when he first arrived. This was not correct, because the schools had been operating from the first year in Mt. Pleasant. McMillan's erroneous remarks were published by a national magazine, leading many in the Eastern United States to believe that there were no schools throughout the Utah Territory.¹⁰ One of the reasons McMillan made such statements was that he needed funding for Wasatch Academy, which he was able to raise by showing that the town needed schools. The town council had rejected McMillan's request for tax money to be used in Wasatch Academy, and soon after the stories were published about the school system.¹¹

⁹Eleanor P. Madsen, "Tithing Clerk," The Saga of the Sanpitch 18 (1986):92.

¹⁰Antrei, 314.

¹¹Madsen, "History of Andrew Madsen," 82.

Wasatch Academy began with thirty-five students on 20 April 1875. McMillan rented the Liberal Hall in which to hold classes. Four months later, 109 students were in attendance.¹² Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders, not pleased with the Presbyterian school being built in Mormon country, tried to dissuade Mormon members from sending their children there. Many members went against the counsel of their prophet, because they felt Wasatch Academy offered a better education.

The Presbyterian Mission Board helped support Wasatch Academy and on several occasions the rent on the school was miraculously paid. Wasatch Academy's emphasis was on "spiritual, high values in gaining knowledge,"¹³ and there was no doubt that the Presbyterian school raised the quality of education in Mt. Pleasant. Not only were its teachers there better trained, but the public schools were influenced to increase their efforts to reform the school system. McMillan later moved to Salt Lake City, but Wasatch Academy continued to improve and grow over the years, becoming perhaps the most popular educational institution in Southern Utah.¹⁴ By 1887, the first high school class was graduated from Wasatch Academy. Not long after, the Academy accepted

¹²Antrei, 391.

¹³Katy Hansen, The Spirit of Wasatch Academy, (photocopy), 10, Utah State Historical Society.

¹⁴Lever, 216.

boarding students from around the United States. By 1896, twenty-four nonlocal students attended Wasatch Academy.¹⁵

Through the early 1900s, more buildings were purchased for the Academy campus; this allowed for a new commercial department and home economics department, and for manual training courses. Wasatch Academy continued to have innovative programs and high quality teachers, most coming from Presbyterian colleges in the East. Students attended from foreign countries as well. By 1939, 250 students attended this school.¹⁶

Improvements

Volunteers built the schoolhouses because of their desire to improve their children's education. The first school building, made of logs, was located in the center of the fort. The fireplace was on the east end, and if students sat too close, they would be too hot. If they sat on the other end of the building, they would be too cold. When it was decided to divide the town into four sections and put four separate schoolhouses closer to the students, three of these buildings were built of white adobe, which was better than the old log schoolhouse. Throughout the early years, the trustees continually tried to upgrade the buildings and conditions. In 1868, one of the schoolhouses was rebuilt to make it larger

¹⁵Antrei, 109.

¹⁶Longsdorf, 266.

and more modern. They changed the furniture, too, removing log benches and individual slates, replacing them with desks and blackboards.¹⁷ By 1875, the last schoolhouse was replaced with a large adobe building, 50 feet by 28 feet. This school had three blackboards, two stoves, and eighty two-seat desks for the 131 pupils. There were almost 500 students attending the public schools.

In 1875, Wasatch Academy grew quickly in number of students and needed to expand. The Wasatch Academy was partially funded by local businessmen and began to buy houses and property between First West and Second West streets, as well as between First South and Second South streets. Construction was started on a new administration hall and completed by 1891.¹⁸

With the railroads coming to Mt. Pleasant in 1890, new people arrived in town. A movement to improve the public schools in the community again brought about changes. A three-story central school was built of brick and was filled with modern apparatus. This building, completed in 1896, was called "Hamilton School," after the original founders of Mt. Pleasant. One of the best schools south of Salt Lake City, it housed 600 students and ten teachers.

By 1915, all the public schools were consolidated into one central school building. Now, there were no more one-room

¹⁷Carter, 33.

¹⁸Lever, 70.

school houses. At the same time, Wasatch Academy now owned most of the buildings on "Wasatch Block." While the public schools continued to make improvements on their buildings, Wasatch Academy built a gymnasium and several halls during the 1920s and 1930s. Unfortunately, the Administration Hall was destroyed by fire and had to be replaced in 1933.

Curriculum

The early grades focused on the most basic skills. The first grade started with the learning of the ABC's; by the third grade, the children were reading. Students like Eli Day devoured books, reading anything they could acquire. Novels were particularly popular. Penmanship and drawing were also stressed in the early years with lots of copy work assigned from the blackboards. There was little paper, so slates and blackboards were used for writing. Spelling and recitation were an important part of the learning process, but math was rarely stressed because of the inadequate training of the teachers; neither was it seen as a critical skill, so long as one could add, subtract, multiply, and divide correctly.¹⁹

In 1864, a Mr. Dandsen erected an astrometer, a type of telescope. Not only did he give talks on this subject to adults, but he also shared his knowledge with students. This added a new perspective for children in the area.

In the 1890s, Wasatch Academy created a more diverse

¹⁹Longsdorf, 268.

curriculum for students. This pushed the public schools to match their crosstown rivals and include geography, algebra, Latin, and nature study in their curriculum.

In Mt. Pleasant's early days, few books were available for use. Most families owned one book, the Bible. Any other books were used in the schools. Also, books were lent from person to person in order to give all an opportunity to learn. With the building of the Carnegie Library in 1917, many more books became available to the educational system. The people of Mt. Pleasant donated \$10,000 to build the library and the rest of the \$225,470 was paid by the Carnegie Corporation as a gift.²⁰

The early years had one-room schoolhouses. The way to distinguish which grade the students were in was by finding out which book they used. There were five levels of readers. Later years brought separate classrooms and different grade requirements.

Extra-Curricular Activities

In 1891, the Mormon Church added a seminary class as part of the daily schedule. Also, in 1907, the trustees bought pictures to decorate the walls of the school to stimulate the desire for artistic work among the students.²¹ From 1909 on,

²⁰Carter, 37.

²¹Andrew Madsen, "Public Schools and Educational Review of Mt. Pleasant" (photocopy), 3, Special Collections, HBL.

greater emphasis was placed on business classes in the public schools. Not only did this help prepare the students for life in the growing economy, but satisfied the patrons' demands for these courses.

High school bands were given a push in the 1920s and 1930s. The high school at Mt. Pleasant had a colorful band with blue and white uniforms, which performed regularly at celebrations. In 1938, Mt. Pleasant hosted a marching band competition. Over 6,000 persons came to see this music festival.

Sports became an important part of the school system after the turn of the century. The biggest rivalry in the area was between North Sanpete High School (Mt. Pleasant) and Wasatch Academy. If one school could beat the other in a game, that team felt it could beat anyone. In 1912, North Sanpete beat Wasatch 18-0 in a football game.²² A party was held after for the victors. In 1925, the North Sanpete basketball team went all the way to the state tournament, the first team from Mt. Pleasant to advance so far.²³ It was also that same year that large rocks were blasted with dynamite and hauled away by wagon, in order to create a new football field at the high school. No longer would they have to practice at the city park.

In 1939, Wasatch Academy and North Sanpete played an

²²Antrei, 353.

²³Madsen and Olsen, 82.

exceptionally tough football game. The game ended in a 0-0 tie.²⁴ Athletics were very important to the youth of Mt. Pleasant and taught discipline and endurance to these future citizens.²⁵

For many years, school started at 8:55 a.m. When the principal rang a bell, students would line up outside the building. Few were late. The students then marched in an orderly fashion into the building. This practice was later stopped because the building would sway with the marching students.²⁶

There were many rules in the early school system. With the regulations came discipline and punishment. Corporal punishment was the approved method of discipline. Whips were used. In 1860, a teacher punished one student at school, after which the punished boy's brother assaulted the teacher. With the teacher injured, the school had to close for a month.

Eli Day disapproved of the use of corporal punishment. Fellow teachers laughed at his methods, but he proved to be a successful teacher who won the hearts of his students. Another method of discipline required the students to write something 1,000 times or to memorize a poem. One thing was

²⁴Robert Peel, "Diary" (photocopy), 2, LDS Historical Department.

²⁵Edith Allred, "Whatever Happened to the Class of 1924?" The Saga of the Sanpitch 11 (1979):77.

²⁶Talula Nelson, "A Day at School," The Saga of the Sanpitch 14 (1982):119.

clear, if a student were disciplined at school, he would almost certainly be punished again at home.

Problems

Even though the education process moved along quite well in this rural location, it was not without its problems. The early school buildings were small and uncomfortable. Poor lighting did little to enhance education. The buildings were almost always too cold, causing one student to remark that the "cold storage keeps us fresh."²⁷ Even in 1939, a storm broke electric wires going into the school and caused classes to be cancelled until the heating was repaired.

In the early days, school was limited to sessions only during the winter months so that young men and women could work at home during the warmer weather. Three months of school were planned for education and nine months for work--no vacation. School was experimented with during other months until the nine month schedule finally went into effect. Even with a more stable school system, some students were so busy with chores and other activities they would attend only one or two days each week.

Indian uprisings created havoc on the educational process. Parents felt more secure having the children at home during times of danger. On one occasion during the Black Hawk War, the drum sounded, indicating that an Indian attack was

²⁷Antrei, 353.

under way. The children at the schoolhouse hid under benches and tables as part of a plan to make the building look uninhabited. The Indians pounded on the door and tried to enter but eventually gave up and went away.²⁸

One problem that persisted throughout the years was the cost of education. Many poor families had a difficult time paying for books and supplies. Also, illnesses and epidemics negatively affected attendance in the schools. In 1904, a smallpox epidemic hit Mt. Pleasant, closing schools and cancelling meetings. Fortunately, there were no serious cases. The influenza epidemic of 1918 had several casualties. All schools closed from October, 1918, until February, 1919 because of the rapid transmission of this illness.²⁹ Correspondence courses were attempted, but most were unsuccessful, because of the large number of teachers who also contracted the flu. Few received credit for the school year, because they did not want to make up the work, moved away, or found it easier to drop out. Some tried to wear gauze masks over their faces and attend some classes, but this eventually failed, too.³⁰

During World War I, some of the schools nearly closed because of the number of teachers who joined the war effort.

²⁸Louise F. Seely, "A Child Remembers," The Saga of the Sanpitch 9 (1977):110,111.

²⁹Lund, 261.

³⁰Cox, 12.

The only thing that kept the classes open in Mt. Pleasant was a special twelve-week course that prepared seniors to become teachers while the others were away.

Deaths always had an effect on the schools, but none were felt so keenly as when the principal and janitor at the high school were electrocuted in 1922. E. Johanssen and K. Therkelson were trying to repair some defective wiring when they were killed.³¹

The Great Depression took its toll on the schools. Poor funding and expensive books caused some to be unable to afford education. Others moved in and out of the area in search of jobs. Only through close cooperation between teachers and citizens were the schools able to stay open.

In the first years, all children walked to school. As the town limits expanded and the people moved further away from the fort and the center of town, it was necessary to have a wagon take children to school. Some families took their children in carriages or other vehicles. Blankets were necessary for warmth in the cold winter months. In the early 1900s, a horse-drawn wagon was hired to bring children to school. When Mt. Pleasant's high school brought students in from the surrounding communities, the children came in overcrowded wagons. Of necessity, some children stayed with friends and relatives who lived closer to the school. The distance was too far for some outlying students to travel on

³¹Daughters, Fathers, 93.

a daily basis. One wagon which transported students to school had a pot-belly stove placed in the middle to keep students warm. When someone would get too close, everyone could smell burned overalls. On one occasion, the horse was spooked and the wagon overturned. Luckily, no one was injured or burned.³² By 1939, the schools of Mt. Pleasant purchased a bus in which to transport students.

For those students who walked to school, an adventure could always be found. Annie Madsen walked one and a half miles to and from school every day. She had to crawl under wire fences, jump ditches, cross fields where large, ferocious-looking cattle were grazing, follow brothers who would make a trail through the snow, and learn spelling and times-tables along the way.³³

High School

In 1888, the people of Sanpete County decided that high school and college education were needed. The Mormon bishops from the around the area met and made plans for a new school of higher education. It was originally called Sanpete Stake Academy, later Snow Academy, and finally, Snow College. Snow College acted as a normal (high) school until 1908, when high

³²Cox, 3.

³³Madsen and Olsen, 275.

schools were built in Mt. Pleasant and Manti.³⁴ A college located so close to Mt. Pleasant was a great asset. Many graduates of North Sanpete High School have been able to go on to higher degrees because of the proximity of the college.

By 1908, the trustees recognized that a high school was needed in the northern part of the county, that it was too large for one high school (two with Wasatch Academy). In 1911, the county was divided into two high school districts, with boundaries paralleling those of the two Mormon stakes. North Sanpete High School was built at the cost of \$40,000.³⁵ A few years later, the county school district was divided to match the high school areas, with Mt. Pleasant the center of the North Sanpete School District.³⁶ In 1912, Moroni High School was founded; it pulled some students from North Sanpete High School and lasted until 1957, when students from Moroni again attended the high school in Mt. Pleasant.

An additional boon to education in Mt. Pleasant was the Chautauqua, programs that traveled across the county to bring culture to the people of the United States. Millions of people were affected. Lectures, music, and drama productions were offered in large circus-like tents. Political, religious and educational topics were also covered. Mt. Pleasant was

³⁴Afton C. Greaves, "Beginnings of Snow College: Finances and Personnel," The Saga of the Sanpitch 13 (1981):74.

³⁵Lund, 224.

³⁶Peterson and Bennion, 45.

the scene of several of these events, which lasted until the end of World War I, when the Chautauqua died because of the advent of radios, movies, and automobiles.³⁷

Mt. Pleasant has always been an education-minded community. Great sacrifices were made to provide a good learning atmosphere for the youth and adults of this town. Particularly during its early years, educational opportunities were made available to the people of this town which could not be found in many other communities in the Western United States. The addition of Wasatch Academy served to improve the educational process for the students of Mt. Pleasant.

³⁷Dorothy Buchanan, "I Could Never Forget the Chautauqua," The Saga of the Sanpitch 12 (1980):19.

CHAPTER FIVE

ECONOMY

The economy of Mt. Pleasant, although always based primarily on agriculture, had other aspects. No matter which profession or type of job, the people of this community have felt that hard work was honorable; there was no room for the idler.

Leonard J. Arrington states that the economic history of Utah may be divided into four phases. The economy of Mt. Pleasant closely followed the first three of those phases up to 1939. First, a self-sufficient ecclesiastical commonwealth took place where the LDS Church controlled the local economy; second, a polarization of Mormon and non-Mormon economies occurred when many persons came to Utah with the railroads; and third, a phase of merging Mormon and non-Mormon economies happened, especially during the time surrounding World War I.¹

The first occupation to bring people to Mt. Pleasant was the lumber industry. In late 1851, after receiving permission from LDS Church leaders, Madison D. Hambleton and Gardner Potter came to the area to obtain wood for shingles and other

¹Dean L. May, ed., A Dependent Commonwealth: Utah's Economy from Statehood to the Great Depression (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1974), 3.

building materials. The town of Hambleton was built around a sawmill. After the Indians destroyed the town in 1853, the new settlers of Mt. Pleasant again placed emphasis on lumber products in 1859. The first business this time was a sawmill, which produced lumber for homes, roofs, and fences.² Through the early 1900s, Mt. Pleasant provided large amounts of lumber, with several mills operating on Pleasant Creek. After the turn of the century, the size of the forests around Mt. Pleasant diminished to a point that lumber production needed to be curtailed.³

Farming

Farming was necessary to support those who worked with the lumber industry and the new immigrants arriving in Mt. Pleasant. Because of the richness of the soil and the generally good climate, Sanpete County became known as the "Granary of Utah."⁴ Lumber was important to the founding economy of this town, but agriculture became the key to making this a successful community. Within the county, Mt. Pleasant became the leading producer of grain, lumber products and wool.⁵

Sagebrush and greasewood covered most of the Sanpitch

²Lever, 203.

³Longsdorf, 141.

⁴Lever, 203.

⁵Peterson and Bennion, 111.

Valley when the settlers arrived. These, along with rabbit brush and bunchgrass, were difficult to remove, but it was necessary in order to establish profitable farms. Clearing this vegetation from the land was hard work. Farmers had to cut it, dig it, and burn it out. Rocks and boulders were next removed, then irrigation ditches were dug. After the furrows were in place, seeds could be planted.

The earliest crops were wheat, barley, potatoes, and squash. It was not long before Mt. Pleasant, along with the rest of Sanpete County, produced large amounts of grain. Oats and rye were added to the field crops and orchards were planted with peach, apple, plum and apricot trees.

A chopping mill was brought to Mt. Pleasant in the late months of 1859. The wheat ground with this equipment was of good enough quality to make flour and bread. Even though the quality was good, people continued to travel to Payson and Spanish Fork to seek higher quality flour. By 1864, Mt. Pleasant flour had improved in quality and was sold to different mining communities in Utah, Nevada, and California.⁶ With the greater demand, a larger, more efficient mill was brought to Mt. Pleasant, providing excellent quality flour. Others mills were set up in 1869, 1875, and 1882. The Mt. Pleasant Mill and the Queen City Roller Mills gained the reputation as being the best in the state, creating extensive

⁶Carter, 22.

business for the farmers and stores of Mt. Pleasant.⁷ Originally, the people had their grain milled and paid the fee in grain, or deferred payment until they received money from sales of their finished products.⁸

Another profitable crop for the early farmers was sugar cane. Because sugar and sweets were costly to obtain the desire for sweet products motivated some to plant sugar cane. The Day Family built a small cane mill and converted the cane juice to molasses. Different kinds of candies and pastries were made from the molasses. After the mill was completed, other farmers planted cane, a great deal of which was raised around Mt. Pleasant. Sugar cane was raised extensively for several years. Early frosts and changing seasons adversely affected the cane crops, and the molasses production was eventually shut down.

In the early 1900s, sugar beets were experimented with in Mt. Pleasant. The demand for this crop grew and a sugar beet refinery was built in nearby Moroni in 1917. In that year, 6,000 acres of beets were harvested in the Mt. Pleasant area.⁹ In 1919, a failure of the beet crop led some farmers to experiment with raising turkeys commercially, which later became an important business venture. The sugar beet

⁷Longsdorf, 291.

⁸Vernon F. Larsen, "The Mount Pleasant Roller Mill," The Saga of the Sanpitch 14 (1982):131.

⁹Daughters, Fathers, 221.

production continued to develop in spite of some bad crops. In 1928, the South Sanpete and North Sanpete regions had a "beet war" because too much sugar was being produced in Sanpete County. The Southern part of the county won the competition because of a more effective system. The sugar plant was closed in Moroni, and most of the beet production in Mt. Pleasant ceased.¹⁰

The first crops were primarily for the use of the people living in Mt. Pleasant. It was known at that time that large crops produced in Mt. Pleasant could be sold in other areas to return proceeds to Mt. Pleasant's economy--but the problem was transporting the produce. Only one road led from Mt. Pleasant to Salt Lake City, and that went through Nephi, by way of Salt Creek Canyon. This inadequate road was an obstacle to progress. As was the case in most economic decisions during the first twenty-five years, the LDS Church leaders were involved. In 1861, Bishop Seely pushed to have a new road built through Spanish Fork Canyon. Orson Hyde supported the idea and \$4,000 was appropriated from Church funds. The new road was built, making travel time shorter and easier.

Mt. Pleasant products were marketed throughout the area. Brigham Young contracted to provide oats, most of which came from Mt. Pleasant, for the overland stage. Wheat and flour were also transported to miners in Montana, Nevada and

¹⁰Antrei, 241.

California and to stores in Salt Lake City.¹¹ With the arrival of the railroads in 1890, new markets opened to Mt. Pleasant products and livestock. Large amounts of wheat were shipped by rail out of Mt. Pleasant.¹²

In 1863, the Farmer's Institute of Sanpete County Agriculture and Manufactory Society was organized. This organization helped farmers to learn how to improve their techniques and farm production, and provided them an opportunity to exhibit their grain and other crops. It encouraged farmers to raise better products.¹³

After World War I, farmers experimented with new crops such as carrots, cabbage and peas for commercial production. Of those crops, large amounts of peas were planted and harvested for several years and became an important part of the economy.

The occupations in Mt. Pleasant became more diverse as greater development occurred. Farming remained the primary source of income, with wheat, barley, and oats as the main crops. In 1860, nearly all men were associated with farmwork. Twenty years later, only 48 percent, 111 out of 227, did farmwork. At the turn of the century, the number of farmers

¹¹Longsdorf, 91.

¹²Lever, 214.

¹³Madsen, "History of Andrew Madsen," 47.

remained at 45 percent.¹⁴

Water

The availability of water has been the most important factor in agricultural plans and decisions in Mt. Pleasant. There have been innumerable controversies over the years, as in other western communities, in obtaining and appropriating water for the community.

Pleasant Creek and the other four creeks in the area have provided a somewhat even flow of water over the years. The average rainfall was 12.99 inches, giving Mt. Pleasant an arid/semi-arid rating.¹⁵ Irrigation was first used in Mt. Pleasant in 1860; and as in other parts of the western United States, it made the community prosper.

The LDS Church controlled the water system for the first two decades of Mt. Pleasant's history. The farmers recognized in the first two years that their water resources could become overextended. Orson Hyde, the apostle living in Sanpete County, was responsible for controlling the waters and refereeing controversies. He settled many disputes, including a major division of water rights between the communities of Spring City, Fairview, and Mt. Pleasant. Hyde said that Cedar Creek would be divided equally between Spring City and Mt.

¹⁴United States Manuscript Census, 1860 (microfilm #805314), 1880 (microfilm #1255337), 1900 (microfilm #1241686).

¹⁵Antrei, 17.

Pleasant, and that Birch Creek would be equally divided between Fairview and Mt. Pleasant.¹⁶

In 1862, a canal was started from Fairview to Mt. Pleasant to reduce some of the water problems, but it was later discontinued. The town of Mt. Pleasant overextended itself in cultivation within just a few years. Orson Hyde preached to the people throughout Sanpete County to cut back on the number of fields planted so that the limited water would reach the most important crops, as determined by Church leaders. At this time, water rights became increasingly important to the land owners. Land without water became useless to the farmers, and latecomers to the community had little chance to obtain the necessary water rights for their crops. This became a sore point for new settlers. It was understood then, as well as now, that in order to progress, the town would need to find new ways to resolve the water problem.

Irrigation was the key to utilizing the water resources in the 1860s and 1870s. Ditches were dug from the creeks to the individual farms and fields. Digging in the hard, sun-baked ground was difficult work. Ox teams were used, and after trial and error, a good irrigation system was established. The Pleasant Creek Irrigation Company incorporated in 1885 to make the water system more effective. Not long after, the Birch Creek and Twin Creek Irrigation

¹⁶Madsen, "History of Andrew Madsen," 31.

Companies were also incorporated.¹⁷ These irrigation companies did much to improve the water shortages.

It was also recognized by the farmers that use of underground water resources would increase the amount of water. Many wells were dug in Mt. Pleasant. A new waterworks system, proposed in 1894, also improved the use of available water. Taxpayers assisted with the costs; this system was completed in 1905, making water hauling and ditches less necessary.¹⁸

Rainfall has not always been constant. In the late 1880s, below-average rains brought about drought and dust storms. Other years of drought were 1900, 1902-03, 1916, 1934, and 1939.¹⁹

On the other hand, there were also times of too much water. In fact, friendly Indians warned early settlers that it would be foolish to build a town on Pleasant Creek because of the risk of flooding. There were major floods in 1893 and 1918.²⁰ One of the main reasons for flooding was the overgrazing of cattle and sheep in the mountains above Mt. Pleasant. To help resolve the problem, the National Forest Service was given the job to protect the public domain and to

¹⁷Lever, 70.

¹⁸Daughters, Fathers, 82.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Larsen, "The Flood," 80.

manage water control.²¹ The town council of Mt. Pleasant purchased a flood dam in 1894 in hopes of avoiding further flood disasters. The dam was ineffective, and the town had to pay \$868 for damages caused by that dam during a small flood.²² The Civilian Conservation Corps built more effective water control projects (canals, ditches, terraces), put into effect during the Great Depression years. One of their projects was to combine the Sanpitch River and Pleasant Creek into one channel.

Equipment

The types of equipment used by the farmers influenced their effectiveness and output. The people of this community shared their equipment with each other to improve the harvests, another sign that the needs of the group were placed over those of the individual. In the first years, the only implements used were handmade. Cradles to cut hay and rakes to stack it were all made by hand. Homemade plows were built from old wagon wheels. Blacksmith P. M. Peel helped to manufacture many of those early tools. Crops took a longer time to harvest because of the handmade implements.

In 1860, a threshing machine, brought to Mt. Pleasant by Bishop W. Seely, was used to separate wheat. The output of

²¹Antrei, 193.

²²Longsdorf, 241.

grain was increased dramatically. In 1861, a new threshing machine was brought to town by Peel, Holiday and Averett. The first horse-drawn threshing machine was owned by Mr. McArthur.²³ This equipment travelled in circles when it was operated. Updated models were brought to Mt. Pleasant over the years, each time making harvesting quicker and more efficient. The newer, mobile threshers were taken around to the different farmers, who paid a fee to have their grain harvested. Threshing day became a major event at every farm. Everything was prepared in advance for this day: mother cooked special meals, children helped to mend old grain bags, and everyone worked quickly so that all of the grain could be threshed on the designated day. Andrew Madsen imported a threshing machine in 1869, from Buffalo, New York, having it shipped around South America to San Francisco, and across to Mt. Pleasant.²⁴

Eli Day brought the first mower/rake to Mt. Pleasant in 1867. Other pieces of equipment followed, such as a hay baler in 1886.²⁵ The railroad was the key to bringing newer implements to Utah and Mt. Pleasant. The farmers of this community saw many changes, from ox teams to tractors in the early 1900s. Larger crops could be planted and greater yields were harvested with the continually improved farm equipment

²³Ibid., 287.

²⁴Madsen, "History of Andrew Madsen," 56.

²⁵Seamons, Heap O' Livin', 28.

brought into the community.

Farm Problems

Many problems badly affected the farming in Mt. Pleasant. Water shortages, droughts, and floods have already been mentioned. Weather was also an influence, such as the destructive storms of 1935, or the killing frost of 1939, which destroyed nearly all fruits and gardens that year.²⁶ Even careless farming techniques caused some farmers to leave the area. Perhaps the worst problems for farmers were insects and animals.

In 1867, not only did farmers have to protect their crops from warring Indians, but also from another enemy, the grasshopper, which destroyed nearly all crops that year. Only those farmers who had saved portions of previous crops for such emergencies did not suffer hunger.²⁷ Bread was hard to get, but because of railroad contracts, the people of Mt. Pleasant were able to survive until the next year's crops were harvested.²⁸

Farmers were active in fighting this enemy but because of the sheer numbers of insects the task was sometimes impossible. Everyone was involved in the fight, demonstrating that cooperation was an important principle in this community.

²⁶Daughters, Fathers, 97.

²⁷Madsen, "History of Andrew Madsen," 71.

²⁸Longsdorf, 128.

As an incentive, the county paid \$1.00 for each bushel of grasshoppers brought in. Some of the methods used to fight the grasshoppers included digging trenches in which grasshoppers were buried; laying straw out, and when the grasshoppers covered the straw, setting it on fire. Some farmers set loose chickens and turkeys to prey on the invading insects. Others flooded their ditches and pushed the grasshoppers into the water to drown them. Arsenic and other chemicals were used, but they had little effect because of limited supplies.²⁹ Also, grasshopper eggs were plowed up so the sunlight would destroy the eggs.

The next year was a favorable year for crops, although many feared another grasshopper invasion.³⁰ Several farmers planted peas because the grasshoppers did not seem to like this crop as much as grain. The following year, 1869, large numbers of grasshoppers again appeared as the heavy grain crops were ready to harvest, but for some reason, the grasshoppers disappeared and little harm was done. It was later reported that this was the largest wheat crop ever harvested in Mt. Pleasant. Other bad years for grasshoppers were 1879 and 1902.³¹

Other insects affected crops but nothing to compare to the destruction caused by the grasshoppers. In 1926, for

²⁹Madsen, "History of Andrew Madsen," 70,71.

³⁰Antrei, 161,162.

³¹Lund, 147.

example, a white fly infestation created an almost total crop failure for the farmers of Mt. Pleasant.³²

Rabbits, squirrels, gophers, and sparrows also created problems for farmers. Various methods to combat these animals were constantly being implemented. For example, Aileen Carter Wilcox spent Sunday afternoons shooting squirrels. In 1896, the county put a bounty of \$.02 on each squirrel and \$.01 on each sparrow brought into the office. Rabbit drives proved to be fairly effective and even became a competition. Teams from the surrounding communities were formed and would bet against each other to see who could kill more rabbits on these drives. On one drive, 5,000 rabbits were killed.³³ On another occasion, rabbits were driven into a V-shaped fence, when 4,500 were clubbed to death. The team killing the most rabbits was hosted to dinner by the losing team.

The demand for farm laborers was always a problem for Mt. Pleasant farmers. Even with the improved equipment, there was always a need for more workers, especially at harvest time.³⁴ For those with larger farms and some capital, hired laborers lived with the farmer and his family. The farmer's wife had to cook and care for the additional helpers. Children worked on the farms, assuming responsibilities according to their

³²Daughters, Fathers, 221.

³³James L. Jacobs, "Sanpete Rabbit Drives," The Saga of the Sanpitch 16 (1984):51.

³⁴Seamons, Heap O' Livin', 27.

age.

Livestock

Nearly every settler in Mt. Pleasant kept a cow and pig to help support the needs of the family. The number of livestock continued to grow and became an important part of the economy of Mt. Pleasant. These animals were originally kept in fenced stockyards outside the fort. Keeping the animals fenced in was a constant struggle. During the Indian wars, fencing and herding cattle were especially difficult. Boys had to help do this man's job to replace citizen-soldiers who were fighting Indians. Another important part of herding the cattle was to drive the large herds to Sevier County for foraging. A yearly drive was held to round up cattle and separate them for the various owners.

Livestock played a more important economic role in the northern half of Sanpete County, and larger herds were raised there. The pioneer stock was hardy and the territorial legislature tried to improve the herds by opening the Wasatch Mountain range to foraging. Later, overgrazing of the range led to the downfall of the livestock industry in Mt. Pleasant. The Forest Service had to put limits on grazing to protect the terrain from floods.³⁵ The vegetation increased and livestock numbers were again allowed to grow.

By the early 1890s, there were 15,000 head of cattle in

³⁵Antrei, 267.

Sanpete County, mostly located near Mt. Pleasant.³⁶ The cattle business slowed considerably at the turn of the century, with cattle being sold for as little as \$8.00 per head.³⁷ World War I stimulated the cattle market, but afterwards, a surplus caused prices to drop. The Great Depression of the 1930s did not strengthen the livestock industry.

Predators also adversely affected the livestock. Around Mt. Pleasant, bears, wolves, foxes, coyotes and mountain lions could be found. In the 1860s, up to 100 coyotes were killed each month, bringing a bounty of up to \$.50 each. Sam Pearce killed forty bears in one year.³⁸

Sheep

Sheep were another important resource in the economic history of Mt. Pleasant. Almost every family kept a few sheep for wool and for a change of meat. There were many sheep owners, but three in particular, John H. Seely, William D. Candland, and John K. Madsen, changed Mt. Pleasant into the sheep center of the Western United States. Sheep cooperatives, like that headed by Andrew Madsen, added to the original growth of the sheep industry. By 1894, there were

³⁶Ibid., 233.

³⁷Anne Mina Madsen Remund and Ephraim Madsen, "History of Whilmina Krause Madsen," (photocopy) 1948, 15, Utah State Historical Society.

³⁸Antrei, 202.

over 500,000 sheep in the county, with the Mt. Pleasant Wool and Livestock Company and the Union Wool and Livestock Company the two prominent sheep organizations.³⁹ By the 1890s, thousands of sheep and millions of pounds of wool were shipped from Mt. Pleasant. These sheep could easily reach the eastern and overseas markets by rail.

In the mid-1890s, some of the sheepmen in Mt. Pleasant started to leave the business. Some, like Pete Poker, lost their whole herd to wild dogs.⁴⁰ The government discouraged many, imposing strict regulations and higher grazing fees. A financial panic in 1893 forced others out due to high prices for supplies and low wool selling prices.⁴¹

Boys were used to tend sheep. School did not always enjoy priority and some of these young shepherds never received adequate schooling. Taking care of the sheep was generally considered men's work, except for shearing time, when women were also kept busy. Whilmina K. Madsen, a widow, went against this system and joined the sheep business along with her son, John K. Madsen, who became a leader of the sheep industry throughout the United States.

John H. Seely tried not only to make a business of the sheep industry, but to improve it as well, and became one of

³⁹Madsen, "History of Andrew Madsen," 101.

⁴⁰Yulene A. Rushton, "The Legend of Pete Poker," The Saga of the Sanpitch 19 (1987):90.

⁴¹Seamons, Heap O' Livin', 15.

the most important figures in Mt. Pleasant. He worked to improve shorthorn and Rambouillet breeds. He recognized that the best sheep were found in Europe.⁴² He became the best known Rambouillet herder in the United States and Europe, exporting sheep to Russia, Japan, Argentina, and Mexico.

The man who took Seely's place in the sheep business was John K. Madsen, who had worked with sheep from fourteen years of age. He realized that the Forest Service would reduce the number of sheep in the mountains because of overgrazing and flooding, so he bought land around Mt. Pleasant, and eventually became the largest land owner in the area. John K. Madsen's sheep breeding program made his sheep the foundation for the entire sheep industry in the Western United States.⁴³ Madsen lived the sheep business and was later honored for his accomplishments in this industry. His sheep were exhibited in various shows nationally and internationally. One of his many improvements was to drive his sheep to the western Utah and Nevada deserts during the winter months for lambing, wool cutting, and warmer weather.

Sheep and cattle went through a decline around the turn of the century. Fewer crops were needed to support the declining numbers of animals, which also contributed to a slump in the farming markets. An upswing in sheep production

⁴²Grace C. Jacobsen, "The Story of John H. Seely" (photocopy), 14 January 1941, 3, Utah State Historical Society.

⁴³Olsen, Nickel, 88.

occurred during World War I. In fact, sheep and wool were the most important industries at that time in Sanpete County.⁴⁴ After World War I, the sheep markets were again flooded and prices dropped.⁴⁵ For the next few years, the need for sheep fluctuated, becoming important again in 1925. This is when the sheep market peaked in importance. John K. Madsen enjoyed good fortune during these years because of his knowledge of the sheep business. He once sold one ram, Outlaw, for \$1050 in 1928.

When the Great Depression hit, the sheep industry of Mt. Pleasant declined. Prices for wool and meat dropped. One family listened intently to the radio each night to learn when to sell if the price went up one-fourth of a cent.⁴⁶ John K. Madsen demonstrated his courage and stuck out the Depression, while most of the other sheepmen quit. By going from farm to farm to sell his sheep, he continued to be the top salesman of sheep in the area, even though prices had plummeted. By 1935, things looked better for the sheep industry, even though sheep breeding sank to a lower level than before the Depression.

The life of a sheepman was difficult. It required great strength and stamina to watch sheep and withstand the elements. It was lonely work, with the only entertainment one's own guitar or harmonica. Some improvements came when

⁴⁴Antrei, 234.

⁴⁵Olsen, Nickel, 106.

⁴⁶Cox, 7.

better sheep camps (wagons) were developed.

Sheepmen were always on the lookout for predators. Coyotes were the main problem--these predators would disable the sheep by mutilating them, then return later to kill and eat them. On one occasion, a shepherd saw a rabid coyote come after his sheep. He took several shots at the coyote with his rifle, but was tired and missed each time. Finally, out of bullets, he picked up a rock and threw it at the coyote, luckily killing it.⁴⁷

Other Animals

Attempts were made to raise chickens in large numbers in Mt. Pleasant, but raising the grain for such an undertaking did not prove cost-effective. John K. Madsen tried to establish a chinchilla farm, but after a few years this endeavor failed also.⁴⁸ One experiment that did pay off was turkey production. Even though turkeys were raised in Mt. Pleasant as early as 1867, it was not until the 1920s that turkeys were raised commercially. Because of the overproduction problems after World War I, the people of Mt. Pleasant and surrounding areas worked at marketing turkeys, wanting to make them a permanent table fixture, not just a seasonal meal. The Moroni Feed Company, formed in 1937, cut

⁴⁷Marjorie Madsen Riley, "A Deadly Aim," The Saga of the Sanpitch 14 (1982):93.

⁴⁸Longsdorf, 206.

turkey feed costs, making turkey production more profitable. That year, 35,000 turkeys were produced. This industry eventually became Sanpete County's leading money-maker.⁴⁹

Businesses

In the early years, Mt. Pleasant had no stores. People could obtain store-bought goods only by traveling to Salt Lake City, by purchasing products from people who came to settle in Mt. Pleasant, or buying from itinerant peddlers. Early peddlers caused a cash drain, because they were not required to pay local taxes and took with them the little currency that existed in the community. Besides, their prices were very expensive (i.e., denim at \$1.25/yard, calico at \$.50/yard.)⁵⁰

In the early years of Mt. Pleasant little money circulated because of the shortage of currency. People used the barter system, trading goods and services to obtain the things they needed. Workers received their wages in food, building materials, and other basics. For example, in 1874, a day laborer who worked for a high wage received two to four bushels of wheat. It was not until the late 1800s that currency was sufficient to obviate this trading system.

The first store in Mt. Pleasant was called the Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institute (ZCMI). It was a Mormon Church organization formed to further Brigham Young's economic

⁴⁹Peterson and Bennion, 58.

⁵⁰Madsen, "History of Andrew Madsen," 35.

policies and to push the goods made in the Utah Territory.⁵¹ This concept demonstrated how the community worked together to meet the needs of the group through minimizing competition and building on the base of cooperation. It attempted also to minimize the influences of the non-Mormon products coming into Utah by train. Under the direction of Brigham Young, ZCMI opened in Mt. Pleasant in 1869, with \$700 in stock.⁵² Little cash was used in this "trading" store because of its scarcity. Brigham Young had Deseret Currency printed for a short time, but this did little to relieve the cash flow problem. Through these kinds of ventures, the LDS Church was able to control the local economies of the early Mormon settlements, according to Arrington's divisions of economic history.⁵³

Several positive things occurred because of ZCMI. First, it helped people in town to receive goods without having to travel great distances for them. Second, cash was brought into the community, because many of ZCMI products were also sold to miners working in the surrounding area. Third, it became a basis for other cooperative organizations to follow, such as a cooperative shoe store (including tannery and cattle herd), the Equitable Cooperative store (managed by non-Mormons and commonly called the "gentile store"), and the Sanpete

⁵¹Arrington, Fox, and May, Building the City of God, 82.

⁵²Ibid., 75.

⁵³May, Dependent Commonwealth, 3.

Cooperative store.⁵⁴ ZCMI closed in 1892 because some of the owners wanted to build a new store, mismanagement of funds, and the people of Mt. Pleasant, who liked the Protestant ethic of competition and did not want a single store to dominate the market.⁵⁵

Some of the negative effects of the cooperative businesses were owners who became rich; the lack of cash; and the often high prices of the cooperatives.

Other stores were led into business by the cooperatives.⁵⁶ Through the 1870s and 1880s, some of the new businesses included a butcher's shop, drug store, furniture store, grocery store, creamery, hardware store, confectionary store, and a merchandise store. There were even saloons.⁵⁷

Because many members of the Mormon Church were a part of the United Order in the mid-1870s, some of the other businesses suffered. After the United Order failed, the other businesses surged in activity and became more stable. The growing economy was evident when August Lundberg purchased a city block for commercial purposes. He called his business district the "Lundberg Block."

Mt. Pleasant became known as "the Queen City, or "Hub City" because it was the commercial and financial center of

⁵⁴Longsdorf, 134,135.

⁵⁵Antrei, 472.

⁵⁶Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, 314.

⁵⁷Longsdorf, 327-330.

Sanpete County at the turn of the century. According to Arrington's four divisions of economic history, this is the third phase when Mormon and non-Mormon businesses merged to create a stronger economy in Utah.⁵⁸ Previous businesses had been split along lines of religious affiliations. In 1912, the J. C. Penney Company opened a major chain-store in Mt. Pleasant⁵⁹, and by 1917, a car dealership was started in town. Despite all the changes, peddlers could still be found selling their wares at one of the three hotels in town.

With all of these businesses, banking institutions were needed. In 1891, the Mt. Pleasant Commercial Savings Bank was incorporated with a capital stock of over \$50,000.⁶⁰ In 1906, the North Sanpete Bank was incorporated, evidence of a prosperous, busy town. These two institutions continued in good form until the Great Depression closed both banks in 1931. Two years later, the Fairview Bank opened in Mt. Pleasant and the worst financial times in Mt. Pleasant were past. Times were improving.

The railroads were an economic boost to the people of Mt. Pleasant. Several residents from the community worked on the railroads. In 1890, the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad planned to pass within a mile of town, but the people of Mt. Pleasant successfully convinced the railroad with incentives

⁵⁸May, Dependent Commonwealth, 3.

⁵⁹Longsdorf, 197.

⁶⁰Ibid., 171.

and concessions to pass through the community. The outside connections created by the railroad provided new markets and opportunities for new enterprises in the community. This stimulated farming and the production of goods in Mt. Pleasant. With the railroad came an increase in prosperity.⁶¹

Mt. Pleasant went through a productive period when the United States was involved in World War I. Money was plentiful and prices were high for farm products. After the war, there was a flooded market with a surplus of dollars but fewer products. Inflation set in and business went into a downturn.

Great Depression

The mid-1920s were difficult years in Mt. Pleasant but 1929 was worse--it brought disaster. With the stock market crash came falling prices, unpaid loans, stores closings, and farms turned back to the bank. There was no protection afforded by high tariffs in the wool and sugar industries. A general gloom and sadness in Mt. Pleasant prevailed during these lean years. Over the next two years, several established businesses and the two banks of Mt. Pleasant were closed. With over a third of the labor force out of work in Utah, Mt. Pleasant survived a little better than some other

⁶¹Peterson and Bennion, 36.

areas in Utah and the United States.⁶² This community had access to food and water and had fairly strong family support. With the closing of Mt. Pleasant's two banks, money was extremely hard to acquire.

The New Deal programs proposed by the Federal Government made a major impact on Mt. Pleasant. Of the many organizations formed, the Works Project Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) helped the town most. These organizations provided work and money that helped develop the area and protect it from natural disasters. Hundreds of men and women had to labor hard for their meager pay, but received enough money from these organizations to survive the Great Depression.

Some of the projects completed by the WPA were improved streets, bridges, a new airport, a wall around the cemetery, and work on the high school. The CCC worked on several flood-control projects, such as building canals and ditches, a reservoir, terraces in the mountains above Mt. Pleasant, and the planting of vegetation on hills to control heavy rains. The jobs provided by these programs consisted of hard, manual labor, paying up to \$30 per month.⁶³ These programs were a great help to the people overcoming the effects of the

⁶²John S. H. Smith, "Sanpete County Between the Wars: An Overview of a Rural Economy in Transition," Utah Historical Society, 46 (Fall 1978): 2.

⁶³Wil Grey, "CCC Legacy," Deseret News, 16 July 1989, sec. B, 2.

Depression and in creating a sense of pride in the workers, who felt that they did not have to go on "relief" in the public welfare organizations.

Sanpete County put some people to work during the Depression by laying gravel on streets and creating other similar jobs. The LDS Church helped to alleviate the problems of the Depression by initiating self-help concepts and programs.⁶⁴

The farmer-teacher occupation increased in numbers in Mt. Pleasant because of the Depression. The person who filled this position would work as a school teacher during the day and as a farmer in the evenings and weekends so as to earn enough money to survive these trying times. With the coming of World War II, Mt. Pleasant and the rest of the United States emerged from the depths of the Great Depression.

Besides the lumber, farming, livestock, and other businesses, some other occupations played an important role in Mt. Pleasant: freighters, miners, surveyors, brick makers, telegraph and telephone operators, honey handlers, dentists, physicians, and newspaper publishers. Some of these occupations were filled by men and women.

Thrift was an important value to the people of Mt. Pleasant. Almost everyone tried to be responsible for his own welfare by raising livestock and gardens. The non-Mormon population pressured the community to be less self-sufficient

⁶⁴Arrington, Fox, and May, Building the City of God, 343.

and more dependent on a store-run economy, but enough of the people kept the pioneer attitude that most of the residents of Mt. Pleasant were able to survive the Great Depression and other difficulties by using their own stockpiles of food and clothing.⁶⁵

The people of Mt. Pleasant have been a hard-working, industrious people. They became a self-sufficient people who tried to teach honesty and the importance and value of work to their children. With the stress the people placed on cooperation, and the value of group achievement over that of individuals, Mt. Pleasant developed into the successful town that it is today.

⁶⁵Peterson and Bennion, 87.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

In a study of this size, it is impossible to examine every aspect of life in Mt. Pleasant, but an attempt has been made to concentrate on certain factors which have affected this community and the lifestyles of the people living here.

Influential Factors

The people of Mt. Pleasant followed settlement patterns established in many other communities in the Utah Territory and the surrounding areas. The Mormon people were willing to follow the counsel and instructions provided by a great colonizer, Brigham Young. The Church and its leaders had a profound effect on how Mt. Pleasant developed, particularly in the early years. The people of this town placed emphasis on unity and harmony within the community and on cooperation in economic enterprises. Also, there was a uniquely coterminous relationship between the Church and the community.¹

The strong, moral foundation of this settlement was mainly due to the principles and teachings of the Church of

¹May, "The Making of Saints," 81.

Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. During the early years, every citizen of Mt. Pleasant belonged to the LDS Church. They tried to live the precepts of this Church--having faith in God, living righteously, working hard, and building a community where they could follow the principles of their Church without interference from the outside world. The influence of the Mormon Church became less evident in Mt. Pleasant as time passed.

With the arrival of the Presbyterian Church, and other Protestant organizations, the town changed. The people were no longer "required" to live one lifestyle or set of standards to be accepted by the community. Although there was friction between the Mormons and members of other churches, the various religious denominations gave variety and other perspectives to the people living in Mt. Pleasant. Having more than one religion made this community different from other Mormon settlements.

Education was given emphasis since the early settlement of Mt. Pleasant. Only basic learning skills were taught in the beginning. The education and abilities of the teachers affected how much the students learned. Many of the changes in this segment of the community took place when Reverend McMillan opened the Wasatch Academy. This school had better trained teachers and a more effective educational process. The public schools were forced to accept the challenge to make greater improvements in their system and to provide a better

curriculum. The public schools and Wasatch Academy constructed new buildings to create a better learning environment. While education was not given the same importance in many Western communities, it was always a priority to the citizens of Mt. Pleasant.

This community has always had an agrarian-based economy. The town developed around the farm. With good or bad harvests, the local economy increased or decreased. Cooperatives gave a strong foundation for other businesses and stores to follow. The sheep industry gave additional growth to the economy at the turn of the century. The railroads also opened new markets to the people of Mt. Pleasant. The leaders planned for the economic increase of this community and the people took advantage of financial opportunities. It became a key commercial location in Central Utah, known as "Hub City."

The lifestyles of people in this community changed immensely over eighty years. The rugged frontier provided little or no comforts in the first dwellings. The way the people lived changed yearly as comforts increased. The development of water, electricity, and transportation made a great difference in the way people lived. Mt. Pleasant was ahead of other communities in the area in providing these community services.

Unity

There was an amazing unity of purpose among the settlers in the early days of Mt. Pleasant, due to the emphasis placed on solidarity by the LDS Church leaders. This is especially true when the diverse cultural backgrounds of the people are considered. There are several recognizable factors which affected the unity, or disunity, of the people during the first eighty years of history in Mt. Pleasant.

Religion gave direction to the people on how they could work together in the cause of building this town. The teachings of the Mormon Church gave purpose to the lives of its members and motivated them to work together for the good of each other and the community. Brigham Young, a demanding, visible leader, could foresee how Mt. Pleasant and other settlements should develop using the basic principles of the Church (i.e., charity, service, love, work). On a smaller level, the religious policy of polygamy united families and helped them stay closer to each other in their relationships, also affecting the community.

The dangers and problems of rural life helped the people stay united in their goal of building this community. The Indian wars brought the people closer together for protection and in defending their community and other related settlements. Everyone would work together to rebuild after a fire, flood, or other natural disaster passed through the town. Illnesses and epidemics also gave opportunities for the

people to help each other.

Social activities and entertainment built friendships and gave the people a break from the physical exertions of daily life in this community. Nearly all attended dances, musical performances, and celebrations. These were times to enjoy each other's company and build stronger, more unified relationships.

There were economic experiments which brought at least an initial unifying effect. Cooperative businesses created a team spirit and many enjoyed working together with common financial objectives. The United Order was founded on similar promises. The Great Depression also brought people together to work to survive the monetary crisis of the time.

Finally, the basic attitudes the people possessed helped unify the community. Most of the people worked hard and valued the things they built and earned. This rugged, frontier environment gave them countless opportunities to test their will to survive. They would not give up, even under the pressures associated with settling a town.

Disunity

There were also factors which created a disunity among the people of Mt. Pleasant. While religion could be a strong motivation in building a community, at other times it split the community and caused negative feelings. Some objected to the perceived authoritarian control of the Mormon leaders

during the early years in Mt. Pleasant. When members of the community apostatized and left the Church, a division was felt throughout the community. Many decided they had to choose sides between the Church and their friends, which widened that gap. When other churches came into the town, the disunity continued to grow. Instead of building on common Christian beliefs, the people defended their side and pulled further away from each other. This had a negative impact on the development of this community. Polygamy was one of the most controversial points of doctrine.

Ethnicity contributed to disunity in the community. Within the first two years, Mt. Pleasant was divided into four sections. These neighborhoods were created so that people of the same ethnic origin could share common customs and traditions. This segregation increased tensions between the ethnic groups. These problems were not new. Denmark and Sweden had been rivals and foes for hundreds of years. Assimilating the foreign-born citizens was slow, but successful. The people of Mt. Pleasant began to think of themselves as Americans, not as Swedes and Danes.

The economic decisions of the community sometimes caused dissension among the people. The cooperatives and the United Order were initial successes, but after a while the people lost sight of their common goals and wanted to be separate from these ventures. A key factor in these decisions was competition. These kinds of economic programs left negative

feelings about the Church and community leaders and created divisions among the people. After the arrival of the railroad, many non-Mormons moved into the community. A divided community was created by the economic decisions of Mormons and non-Mormons: the latter group favored saloons and Sunday businesses whereas the former preferred to keep the Sabbath at home.

Comparing Communities

Though there has not always been harmony, the members of this community have grown together to make it a solid, successful town. By much work, sacrifice, and planning, the people of Mt. Pleasant made this a pivotal community in Central Utah.

By the mid-1870s, Mt. Pleasant was the fastest growing community in Sanpete County. It had close to 2,000 inhabitants, while Manti, the county seat, had 1800, and Ephraim had 1775.² The populations grew in these communities through 1910, then started decreasing by 1920. Some people were leaving the area because of the economic difficulties encountered after World War I. By 1930, there were 2,650 in Mt. Pleasant, 2,375 in Manti, and 2,100 in Ephraim.³ The population was on the increase again by 1940.

The city of Manti was founded in 1849, the first Mormon

²Peterson and Bennion, 24.

³Ibid.

settlement in Sanpete County. It was the county seat and center of the Mormon stake. In 1888, the Mormon temple was completed in Manti. This community was the original stopping point for hundreds of immigrants sent from Salt Lake City. Manti's population grew more slowly than that of Mt. Pleasant. In 1890, because Mt. Pleasant was the center of business and commercial activities for the county, a bid was made to change the county seat to Mt. Pleasant. The vote failed.

Ephraim, another important city in Sanpete County, was settled in 1854. This was mainly a farming community until 1888, when Sanpete Stake Academy, later called Snow College, was built here. This town had fewer commercial activities than Mt. Pleasant, and based the town's economy on the growing student population of the college. Ephraim had fewer people than Mt. Pleasant until the 1960s, when the college increased in size.

Perspective

The people of Mt. Pleasant had the vision to develop this rough, frontier settlement into a progressive, influential community. They worked hard and overcame the most difficult of situations to make that dream come true.

The perspective of these citizens of Mt. Pleasant can be best summed up by these words from Andrew Madsen, one of the founding fathers, "It is surprising to reflect upon how well and satisfied we felt under these trying circumstances. One

reason was that we looked to the future and had faith that better times were coming. We were united in performing all public work and improvements."⁴

⁴"History of Andrew Madsen," 35.

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AN EXAMINATION OF MT. PLEASANT, UTAH,

1859-1939

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ABSTRACT

Settled in 1859 by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Mt. Pleasant is a small community that has been important to the development of central Utah. This thesis examines events, organizations, and personalities in the first eighty years of Mt. Pleasant's history.

Similar to most of the 300 other small Mormon villages settled in the mid-nineteenth century, Mt. Pleasant followed patterns of development that set Mormon communities apart from other Western towns. Religion permeated the community, affecting all areas of life, from education to the economy. Emphasis in the community was placed on unity and cooperation and on group rather than on individual achievement.

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