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A HISTORY OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS
CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN THE TANNING
INDUSTRY IN UTAH FROM 1847 TO 1973

A Thesis
Presented to the L2
Department of Church History and Doctrine
of the
College of Religious Instruction
Brigham Young University

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

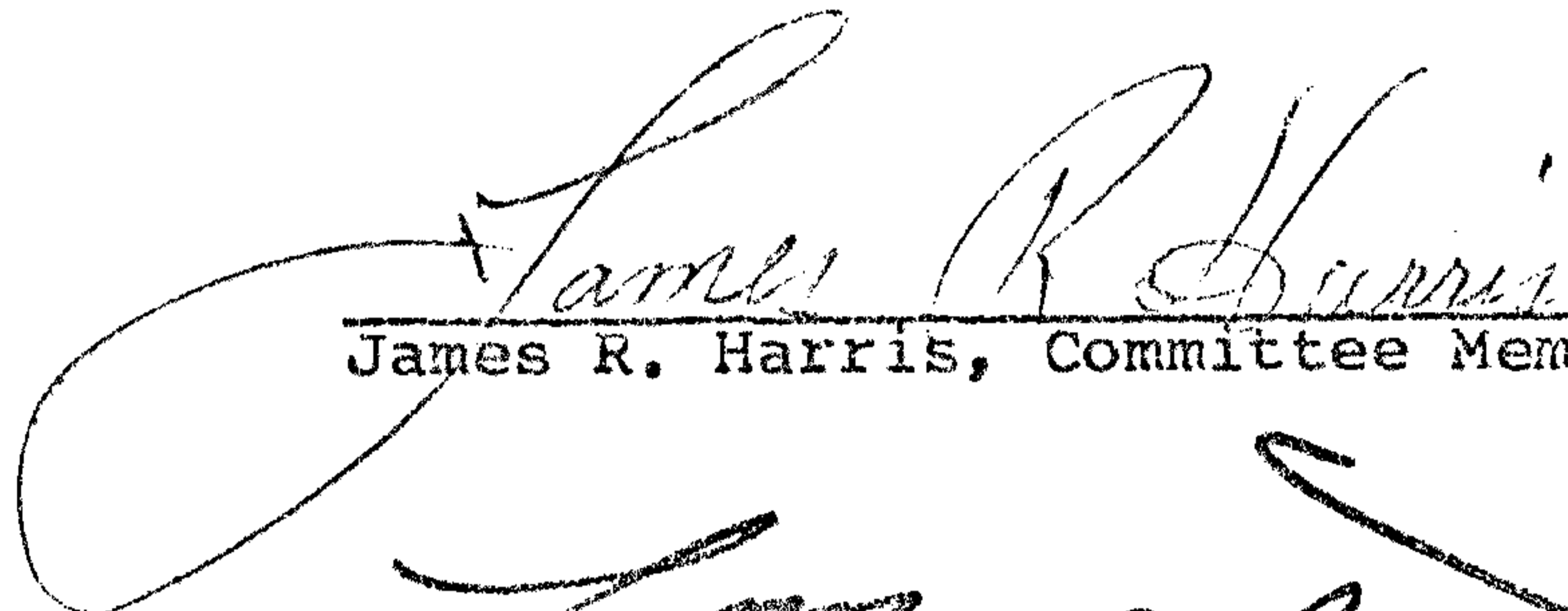
by
Paul Edwards Damron

August 1973

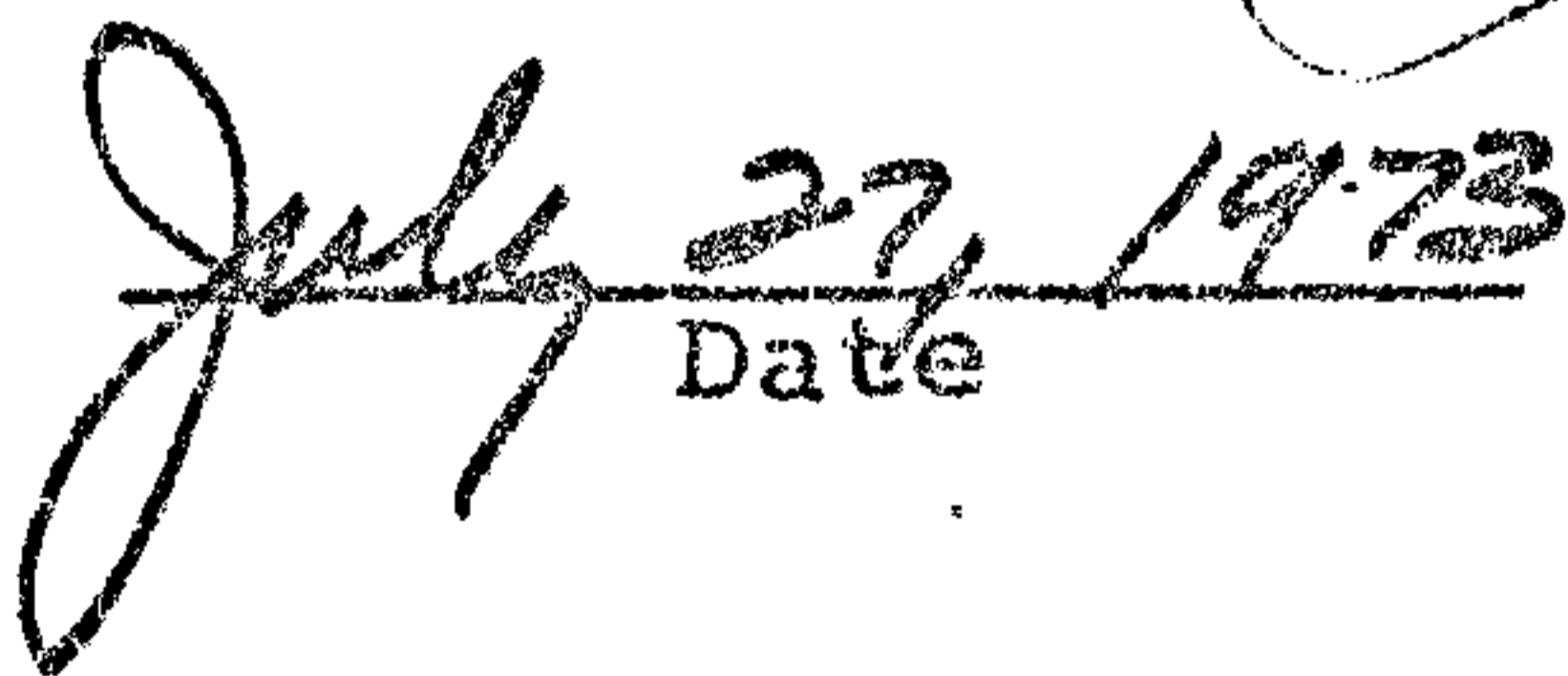
This thesis, by Paul Edwards Damron, is accepted in its present form by the Department of Church History and Doctrine in the College of Religious Instruction of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.



Russell R. Rich, Committee Chairman



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Date



Lamar C. Berrett, Department Chairman

Typed by Sharon Bird

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Paul Edwards Damron

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Because of basic needs of human life and because of the tools required to provide for those basic needs, industry is essential for the survival of any community. The community of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Great Basin was involved in almost all basic industries because of the unique migration of the majority of its members to the mountain west where new settlements were made.

Basic industries had to be established for the simple reason that when the people arrived here there were no industries at all. There were many basic industries that had to be established, such as gristmills for grinding grain, sawmills for preparing lumber for building, founderies for making tools and leather tanneries for clothing and equipment needs.

The Church in the early days in Utah gave some priority of importance to the tanning industry. Numerous instances are evident in which the Church was directly responsible for its growth. In many other instances the Church's encouragement of this industry are also evident.

Most books concerning the history of Utah contain a short summary of the tanning industry but nowhere can be

found a combined collection of the related facts of this industry.

THE PROBLEM

How involved was the Church in this industry and how essential did the Church consider it to be for the survival of the Great Basin Kingdom?

Questions considered were as follows:

1. What factors influenced the growth and expansion of the tanning industry?
2. Of what economic value was the leather industry to the survival of the early Great Basin community?
3. What brought about the eventual decline in the importance of this industry?
4. When did the tanning industry cease to be a vital factor affecting survival and progress in the area of the Great Basin?
5. What are the present day factors affecting the industry?

DEFINITION OF TERMS

When the term "Great Basin Kingdom" is used it will refer to the social, political, and economic settlements of the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints. People outside the present boundaries of Utah will be included if their activities involve the Great Basin Kingdom. Some settlers came to Salt Lake City, the center of the Great Basin Kingdom, only to be assigned to places away from the present land area of Utah.

Economic analysis of the shoe and harness industries, which receive their raw material from the tanneries, will not be emphasized, but, because of their close relationship to the tanning industry, some involvement with the shoe and harness businesses is necessary.

Biographies of people involved in tanning will be limited to their relationship to the industry.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

The previous research done on this subject has been sparse. There are a number of scholarly histories in which a brief summary of the tanning industry is contained, but no extensive coverage can be found in them. For instance, Leland H. Creer has a summary in his Founding of an Empire. Richard F. Burton in his The City of the Saints and Across the Rocky Mountains to California gives some information. Leonard Arrington interweaves the effects of the tanning industry on the Great Basin in his book Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900.

Many other histories have information of the tanning industry but only to the extent of two or three pages.

Unpublished research is a little more extensive. Joel E. Ricks in his "Forms and Methods of Early Settlement in Utah and Surrounding Areas--1847-1877" mentions the tanning industry. Myrtle M. Burnett back in 1945 wrote about the Industries of the Mormons, 1847-1900, and spent about two pages on the tanning industry. John G. Crook spent one third of his thesis on the tanning industry and had perhaps the best collection of details on the tanning industry up to this 1973 date. Almost every book of Utah history mentions the fact that the tanning industry was a vital industry. Completion of this thesis is justified in that it will give the broadest coverage of the tanning industry to date. Answers to the questions of how it was vital and why will add to the reservoir of organized historical knowledge of Utah and thus add insight into the present trends and developments of industry.

DESIGN OF THIS INVESTIGATION

The design of this investigation is to find all available details of the tanning industry and relate them in as close a chronological order as possible. The effects of other economic phases and trends will be considered as they

affect the tanning industry. The relationship of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to the tanning industry will be particularly investigated and related

PURPOSE

The purpose of this approach of investigation is to attempt to solve the problem of how involved the Church was in this industry and how essential the tanning industry was to the survival of the Great Basin Kingdom.

Chapter 2

THE BEGINNING OF THE TANNING INDUSTRY IN UTAH

The tanning industry in Utah had its beginnings in the activities of the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the eastern part of the United States and in Europe. In Missouri the Saints began a program of community development that spread to Kirtland, Ohio. In this plan there was a "general store, tannery, printing shop, and steam gristmill." The operation of these enterprises was coordinated by Church and business leaders in what they called the "United Firm" and the "Central Board of the United Order."¹ As early as 1833 the Church was involved with tanning leather. Ezra Thayre was instructed by the Church leaders to purchase the tannery of Arnold Mason in Kirtland, Ohio.² Joseph Smith, the first prophet leader, emphasized the importance of manufactures, and the necessity of local production of raw materials for a manufacturing industry.³

¹Leonard J. Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900 (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1958), p. 12.

²The Times and Seasons, January 1, 1844, p. 752.

³Joseph Smith, History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts (2d ed. rev.; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1959-60), Vol. VI, pp. 58-59.

When the Saints moved to Nauvoo, Illinois, the prophet continued to emphasize local industries. The idea of "Home Manufacture" was prevalent--perhaps because most of the people had ancestry who had practiced home manufacturing.⁴ Alvin C. Graves advertised his local tanning industry near Nauvoo on April 10, 1841, with these words:

The subscriber wishes to inform the citizens of Nauvoo and Zarahemla, that he will pay flour for hides and skins delivered at Bates Nobles in Zarahemla. He also will tan on shares.⁵

John Taylor, a prominent Church leader and later president of the Church, called attention to the skills and occupations of citizens in Nauvoo by an editorial on May 31, 1843, which emphasized the tanning of leather as a useful home industry.⁶

Edward Hunter, who later became involved in the industrial pursuits of the Saints when they moved to the Great Basin, received his early training in the tanning industry. His own words from a personal journal are instructive on this point:

I was kept to industry, what I was able to do when not in school. My father intended to make a scholar of me but, for some cause, I cannot tell, I got a great dislike for going to school. I said I would rather work

⁴Wilford Woodruff, History of His Life and Labors, ed. Matthias Cowley (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964), p. 39.

⁵The Times and Seasons, April 19, 1841, p. 421.

⁶The Nauvoo Neighbor, May 31, 1843, p. 2.

on the farm. My father said I must learn a trade. I agreed and was put to the trade of tanning and currying. I made great proficiency in currying which encouraged me much, and I took the lead of the older apprentices, and was kept in the shop at currying most of the time. My boss said, in the presence of some, that Ned (Edward) had made the greatest proficiency in currying he ever saw. That created jealousy with the others and I exerted myself more on account of his saying this. At twenty, I bossed the shop. The liquor of the bark closed the pores of my hands and occasioned an ailment in my hands and I had to quit the trade.⁷

Although only bits of information can be obtained about the leather uses of the Saints in the Exodus from Nauvoo in 1844, enough is known of the needs for clothing, harnesses, and other leather products, that one is able to conclude that leather was a vital need for crossing the plains. One account tells of leggings being made in Iowa, the temporary stopping place of the Saints.⁸

When the Saints arrived in the Great Basin they felt a revived need for leather goods of their own make. There was land to till with harnessed horses, shoes to wear on working feet, and clothes to make to replace worn out cotton and woolen goods. The distance from established communities made the task of making more leather than what they brought with them a pressing need. Mrs. Kate Carter, editor of numerous compilations on pioneer life in the Great Basin, said that the isolated position of the pioneers and

⁷ Kate B. Carter, Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Lessons for February, 1963, pamphlet.

⁸ B. H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), III, 151.

the remoteness of sources of supplies, together with the wear and tear of pioneer life caused the need for many home industries not for material gain or for competition with outside sources but for basic need in the community itself.⁹ As has been pointed out, there were men of skill who had been involved in the tanning business before and who were willing to help supply that basic community need.

Since the settlers had come to stay and since they were not willing or able to rely on their former neighbors in the settled parts of the nation for goods to carry on the business of existence, they began to face in earnest the bare realities of survival in an unsettled land. They had to learn self-sufficiency and self-reliance. Perhaps in no other industry can this struggle for learning self-sufficiency be more aptly illustrated than in the tanning industry.

One of the activities of the pioneers when they first arrived in the valleys of the Great Basin was to establish tanneries for the production of leather. In 1847 and 1848, several mills were constructed and among them was a "tannery and leather manufacturing establishment."¹⁰ Persecution had forced the Church to unite and move and then "start planning once more for the purchase of land and for the initiation of industries." Because of these circumstances the leaders did not hesitate to take steps to develop self sufficiency. The

⁹Kate B. Carter, Memories That Live (Salt Lake City), p. 122.

¹⁰Arrington, op. cit., p. 54.

Council of Fifty, a Church-related governing body in the Kingdom, was directly involved in encouragement of the tanning industry. "On January 6, 1849," they resolved that "Alanson and Ira Eldredge engage in the business of tanning and manufacturing leather, and that the Council exert its influence to sustain them therein."¹¹ In April 1849 the First Presidency stated in a letter, "The location of a tannery and foundry are contemplated as soon as the snow leaves the mountains."¹²

The first leather, although fulfilling the bare essentials, was not fine enough in quality. Too many tanners and shoe makers were available who desired better leather. The people could remember the better quality of manufactured leather goods and would not remain content with the first crude attempts at leather tanning and shoe and boot manufacturing. One example of the early days after 1850 helps illustrate: Edward Tullidge, an early Mormon historian, told of a young man in Cache County who wanted a pair of shoes but was unable to find even one pair in Logan. He determined that he would have a pair. He obtained the skin of a Newfoundland dog and took it to one "Father Wier," with an urgent request for a speedy tan. It took three months to get the skin tanned. When he took the skin

¹¹Deseret News, January 6, 1849, as reported in the Deseret News, November 8, 1934.

¹²James R. Clark, ed., Messages of the First Presidency, 1833-1964 (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc.), p. 353.

to the shoemaker, "Father Davidson," another problem exerted itself: no "sole leather, pegs, nor thread" were available. The boy searched around and finally found the needed articles. After a delay of another four months he was able to put on his shoes. He

. . . encased his cracked and sunburnt feet in shoes as soft as silk, elastic as rubber and, when wet, as expansive as buckskin. No Cache Valley Youth has since felt prouder in the possession of an article of apparel than did he in the possession of that first pair of home made shoes.¹³

Two living pioneers who were interviewed in 1939 mentioned that most people went barefoot until leather became more plentiful.¹⁴ The dances were attended by barefooted participants and all were able to get along. When cold weather came, leather needs became more acute. Susan Cole Davis is reported to have made the first shoes in Provo, Utah. Her attempts were typical of others in small communities of the early days in that the soles and the uppers were fastened together with wooden pegs. During dry weather they would separate, making an occasional walk in the irrigation ditch necessary.¹⁵

An unusual occurrence illustrates how the leather

¹³Edward W. Tullidge, Juvenile Instructor, Salt Lake City, 1889, p. 378.

¹⁴Utah Works Progress Administration, History of Minersville (n.d.), p. 1.

¹⁵Scott Odell, "Economic History of Provo, Utah" (unpublished Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1951), p. 13.

needs were faced during more difficult times. In 1859 some men looking for leather to tan were walking along the Jordan River when they came upon a dead cow. They skinned one side and were preparing to skin the other side when the slippery frozen carcass slid away into the river.¹⁶

Clothing of leather became more and more common as the cotton began to wear out. Mr. Tullidge states that in those days a full suit of gent's clothing was quite homely and that a suit of buckskin with moccasins for footwear was regarded as quite a "nobby" outfit.¹⁷

Although the pioneers were supplied with a good number of tanners and leather workers who had immigrated from various parts of the world, the problem that asserted itself was the need for materials and tools. Many of the materials obtained from the native surroundings were not the same as had been used in the leather industries in the countries from which the workers had immigrated. The hides available were basic--cattle, sheep, fox, bear, dog, rabbit, etc.--but the tanning materials were unfamiliar to the pioneers as well as very difficult to obtain. Lye was obtained from wood ash, which had to be saved, cleaned, and stored. Tannin was obtained from pine bark, oak bark, and sumac, which had to be stored and prepared. Salt was accessible from the

¹⁶Kate Carter, Treasures of Pioneer History (Salt Lake City, 1953), Vol. II, pp. 320-321.

¹⁷Tullidge, Quarterly Magazine, p. 205.

surrounding area and water was not a problem, although in cold weather it became difficult to keep it warm in order for the working of the tanning agents to be effective.

Vats for the tanning process were made and storage places were created by erecting buildings to house them. It was reported that one man left his vats outside in the open. A Deseret News reporter described the tanning process thus:

The process generally in use is to remove the hair from the hides, then cleaning them in either pure water or a solution of salt and water. A batch of fifty hides is then placed in a liquid made by steeping 150 pounds of unground native sumac in 260 gallons of water and adding 25 pounds of salt. The hides are kept in the liquid from twenty to twenty-four hours, the length of time depending upon the temperature of the liquid and the condition of the hides. Blood heat is considered the most favorable. After the hides have remained in the salted infusion of sumac the liquid is strengthened by adding about 200 gallons of strong oak or hemlock liquid and 15 pounds of salt. Hides are allowed to remain in the strengthened liquid for the space of from twelve to twenty-four hours. Sides are then withdrawn and placed in about the same quantity of strong cold oak or hemlock liquid containing 20 pounds of salt solution. After five or six days the hides are withdrawn and placed in the same quantity and quality of liquid but instead of being cold it should be blood warm.

The latter operation is generally repeated six or seven times or until the sides are completely tanned. While the sides are passing through each stage of the tanning process, repeated handling is necessary.

The salt sumac liquid is employed for the preparatory operation, while the common tan liquids are used for the finishing process.¹⁸

Margaret Marie Miles Casper, an early pioneer in the Great Basin, describes the tanning process for an individual or family enterprise thus:

¹⁸Kate Carter, Memories That Live, p. 122.

A suitable lye solution was obtained from wood ashes, and the raw hides placed therein to soak until the hair could be removed from the outside. The lye solution would not be strong enough to remove the fat from the inside of the skins without impairment of the skin tissue. The task of removing the animal fat required strong muscles and lots of energy, with the children lending their help. Some fat could be removed by scraping if the person was careful not to damage the valuable skin. They found that a metal rasp, a tool used in filing horse's hoofs or a file with raised points was a real help. Next the hides were pulled, stretched and nailed to the outside of a building where the sun and weather played their part in curing the hides. Again it was strenuous work to manipulate the hides with hands so the hides were made soft and pliable.¹⁹

After the leather preparation was completed, the articles were shaped into various useful items such as gloves, moccasins, jackets, shoe laces, etc. An awl was used to make small holes in the buckskin through which beeswaxed thread was pulled to stitch the item together. Muskrat skins also were tanned and used in trimming larger articles and for lining mittens.²⁰

John Hill, who worked in West Jordan with Bishop Gardner, left a description of the tanning process they employed. First they used lime to remove hair from the hides. They used a tool shaped like a rolling pin with blades like a safety razor to thin off the thick places in the hide. Another tool used to smooth and completely finish the leather was made of heavy pieces of round-edged glass. They pulled bark from red pine trees in a canyon to tan the leather.²¹

¹⁹Kate B. Carter, Treasures of Pioneer History (Salt Lake City, 1953), p. 320.

²⁰Ibid., p. 321.

²¹Ibid.

In an article under the title of "Nothing Like Leather," Samuel Mulliner announced the need for more tanning material by describing how to obtain it:

As the season for peeling bark is at hand, no doubt there are many who are anxious to peel bark enough to get their boots and shoes without paying cash for them. To all such, we would say that when you cut down a pine tree measure off four feet, notch it round, then peel your bark off and set it up along side of the tree; when it gets dry enough to cord lay down some poles to keep it from the damp, cord it up close, one side inclining so that rain may not get in; remember always to keep the outside of the bark to the weather. The article sumac could be cultivated to great profit by transplanting the roots or sowing the seed, then mowing it as you would your meadow; let it dry one or two days, then thresh it with your flails on a barn floor or a sheet, gathering the leaves into sacks for the tanner. Be sure you keep it from wet or damp. The article oil can be extracted from butter; if you have no salt handy, it will do fully as well without it; if it tests too strong for family use, carry it to the tanner.²²

The treatment of skins described by Mulliner entailed the care necessary to insure no cutting or exposure to rain or sun. Wolf skins were much in demand for leather, and the oil from the wolf could also be used in the tanning process.²³

Without some form of backing, the disadvantages of the local tanning industry would have continued to cause it to languish in sporadic attempts to supply the needs of the pioneers until further commercial relations could be opened up from the East. However, a more organized power did bring the needed backing into play and the tanning industry achieved some measure of success even when the Eastern competition finally came. The backing came because of the

²²Deseret News, May 15, 1852.

²³Ibid.

unique unity of the Church led by Brigham Young, who taught that:

The Lord has done his share of the work, he has surrounded us with the elements containing wheat, meat, flax, wool, silk, fruit, and everything with which to build up, beautify and glorify the Zion of the last days. It is our business to mold these elements to our wants and necessities, according to the knowledge we now have and the wisdom we can obtain from the Heavens . . .²⁴

Cooperation continued to be a keynote emphasized by all of the leaders in Utah after the Saints' arrival here. "Cooperation meant that everyman's labor was subject to call by church authority to work under supervised direction in a cause deemed essential to the prosperity of the Kingdom."²⁵ As will be seen in the following chapter, the Mormon passion for unity and solidarity was the motivating factor that made the tanning industry grow so quickly in spite of the difficulties. Because the tanning industry could create work and leather for other trades, the Church greatly encouraged it. The survival of the Great Basin Kingdom may not have been determined by the tanning industry, but the tanning industry certainly was essential to the beginning of this community. Leather was necessary if the Great Basin Kingdom were to continue to grow and remain in the area of the Great Salt Lake.

²⁴Brigham Young, sermon of February 23, 1862, Journal of Discourses, IX, pp. 283-284.

²⁵Arrington, op. cit., p. 27.

Chapter 3

SUCCESS, EXPANSION AND GROWTH OF LEATHER MANUFACTURERS, 1850-1857

Recognition of the need for leather in all forms from the tanned hide to the finished product became a strong factor in the establishment of more permanent industries from 1850 to 1857. There was an overall push by the Church leaders in the Great Basin to encourage industrial development during the years of 1851 and 1852. Governor Brigham Young in his address to the Legislative Assembly in January of 1852 said:

I have no hesitation in saying that our true interest is, and will be most wisely consulted in domestic manufacturing, to the exclusion of almost every article of imported goods. Our . . . leather, etc. . . . might be manufactured just as well at home. . . . Produce what you consume; draw from the native element the necessaries of life; permit no vitiated taste to lead you into the indulgence of expensive luxuries, which can only be obtained by involving yourself in debt; let home industry produce every article of home consumption.¹

The tanning industry was at first a community project or "semi-public works activity."² The colonization of the Great Basin followed a pattern that reveals the process by which tanneries, as well as other industries, were

¹Leonard J. Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958), p. 93.

²Ibid., p. 97.

established.

After the colony had been firmly established . . . and the first joint undertakings were completed, settlers chosen in advance for the purpose were encouraged to establish shops and mills. The community often was asked to help these enterprizers when additional labor and materials were required. In return, the owners of saw-mills, gristmills and tanneries, and such specialists as blacksmiths and carpenters, were expected to hold themselves ready to serve the entire community at reasonable rates, much as public utilities are expected to do today.³

It is reported that the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, a Church fund for the immigration of the converts to Mormonism, first from their scattered condition after Nauvoo and then from foreign lands, was regulated on the basis of the people's occupation, which was rated second only to their integrity and moral worth.⁴

The overall plan of establishing permanent communities that were self sufficient gives meaning to the fact that with nearly every group of settlers provision was made for tanners in each settlement. The model for the future settlements was Salt Lake City, and a careful review of the tanning industry and its development there will give a general picture of the process of establishing tanneries elsewhere in the territory. The enterprise of Ira and Alan-son Eldredge has already been mentioned, whether it became successful in producing the finished product is subject to question, but from the evidence provided it is clear that tanneries were as essential as any industry for the

³Ibid., p. 99.

⁴Ibid.

establishment of the Saints in the Great Basin,

Samuel Mulliner is reported to have been the first person to produce finished leather in the territory, when he exhibited a tanned calfskin in a Church conference in 1850. He began the activity of tanning in earnest in the summer of 1850. His advertisement for help appeared in the June 14, 1850, edition of the Deseret News:

Samuel Mulliner hereby notifies the citizens of Deseret that he has entered the tanning business and solicits the co-operation of all who feel interested in home manufacture. He wishes to state that it will be just as necessary for the citizens to bring bark and sumac as it is for tanners to make necessary preparations for making leather. Owners of saw mills will please save all the bark they can by stripping pine trees which come to their mills. Wanted immediately fifty cords of pine or oak bark for which the highest prices will be paid. Wanted ten hundred weight of sumac threshed and cleaned . . . And as the season for peeling bark is nearly past, the bark must be produced immediately. For further particulars, apply to the subscriber at his shop on East Temple Street, opposite Reese's Store.⁵

Under the leadership of Brigham Young, the colonizer, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints gave the most encouragement to this industry. The Saints were encouraged to be resourceful:

If you cannot tan a fox or wolf skin, shoot or trap the fox or wolf, and come to us we will tell you how to tan it, and one or two will make your babe a warm frock, and three or four will make your woman a warm petticoat, a much better one than you can buy for gold at any store in Deseret. Save all your hides and deliver them to your tanner, and if he cannot pay you for them, give them to him, and then peel or shave some bark to tan them

⁵Milton R. Hunter, Brigham Young the Colonizer (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1940), pp. 174-175.

with, and in a few days he will exchange some leather with you for some more hides and bark, which will cost you nothing but the improvement of your few leisure moments in some useful industry; then you will be in town for shoes, and not obliged to run to St. Louis for the next change of feet protectors.⁶

Prior to this encouragement, Samuel Mulliner and his partner Allen were having difficulty, for they "had in their vats 220 sides of leather that could not be completely tanned without more bark."⁷ The Church leaders felt that through the proper development of the leather industry \$100,000 could be saved from going to a foreign market.⁸ Brigham Young wrote a letter explaining the status of the tanning industry on September 22, 1851, in which he gave church "call" status to anyone skilled in the tanning business to migrate to the territory from Europe.

Experiments at tanning hides, and making leather, have as yet, been very limited in the valley. Much leather is needed in this country. . . . If some of the brethren who are tanners, would come home and attend to their calling here, they could receive the blessing of many souls. Some attempts are now making at this business, but more help is wanted. Brethren, the harvest here is great, but the laborers few.⁹

This Church encouragement produced results as a number of new tanneries were established during the following years in Salt Lake City and in a few of the territorial settlements as is shown in Table 1.

⁶Brigham Young, "Latter-day Saint Journal History," January 24, 1852. Ms.

⁷Hunter, op. cit., p. 175.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

Table 1
Tanneries Started from 1850 to 1856

Tannery	Year	Place
Sam Mulliner	1850	Salt Lake City
Mull & Allen (Deseret Tannery)	1851	Salt Lake City
Sam Clark (Semi-public works)	1852	Provo
Paragoona	1852	Paragoona
Brim & Ames	1853	Salt Lake City
Jennings & Winder	1855	Salt Lake City
Golding & Raleigh	1855	Salt Lake City
18th Ward	1856	Salt Lake City

Mr. Arrington, the present Church Historian, stated that in regard to placing the settlers in particular areas, "careful record was made of their occupations and an attempt was made to utilize their skill to advantage in the economic life of the region."¹⁰

In April, 1852, the leaders of the Church stated in their seventh general epistle that:

Tanneries have been commenced at most of the principal settlements; and at some, two or three, and after another season for peeling bark, the prospects will be good for a supply of domestic leather.¹¹

¹⁰Arrington, op. cit., p. 108.

¹¹Deseret News [Salt Lake City], Vol. II, No. 12.

Ira Ames and Alexander Brim opened a tannery in Salt Lake City in 1853. Ira Ames had been doing tanning on his own for a year or more prior to this partnership. In his personal journal he gives his feelings as well as the interesting details of his early beginnings. Here are excerpts from 1854 to 1856:

1854. In the fall of 1854 I built a tan house 25 ft. by 30. I will here state that in 1852 when I first started the tanning business, I expended everything I had, almost, to get started. I parted with 4 yoke of oxen, 2 cows, 2 wagons, 2 cooking stoves, groceries, etc. etc. Everything in the tanning process worked awkward. I had to experiment in many ways, in fact I met so many obstacles that it was like learning the trade over again. I had to pay \$20 a cord for Pine bark. Tallow from 30-40 cents a pound. Oil could not be had, but I sent to the States this year by Livingston and Kinhead and obtained about 40 gallons of fish oil at a cost of six dollars per gallon. Frequently I was obliged to use butter, lard, wood oil, tar and [white lime tar]. The dryness of the climate also affected the hides, made it more difficult to break them.

1855. This spring I was fortunate in purchasing a good sized cast Iron Bark Mill of one Fields, for which I paid \$100 and continued prospering in my business. This fall I conversed with President Heber C. Kimball in relation to using the waste water from the warm spring for water power. My first idea was to put up a water tower to grind bark, roll the leather, and a pulling machine to break the hides to soften them. There were several springs a short distance east of my house that I spoke with Brother Kimball about. All was agreeable to him. Bro. Kimball told me, "Br. Ames, go ahead sure, use the water, put up what machinery you please." I commenced digging the race this fall. The whole race is about one hundred rods long.

1856. This winter was a very severe one and immense numbers of cattle died of starvation and many drowned by collecting on the ice in Weber River and breaking in. Thus hides were very plenty and my stock of goods aided me much in the purchase of those hides. I obtained about 700 hides.¹²

¹²"Ira Ames' Journal, 1804-1869," located in the Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Alexander Brim, located in the first ward, had also been tanning before his merger with Ames.¹³

Of the fourteen Utah industries reported in the United States census of 1850, one was a tannery.¹⁴ Thirteen plants were reported in 1860, all of which had to do with the leather industry.¹⁵ Most of the plants reported were located in Salt Lake City. Although the correctness of the figures represented by the census of 1850 has been questioned by some writers, there is evidence of economic growth showing progress during the first three years of the history of Utah. Others have felt that, as population increased during the years immediately following the 1850 census, the number of tanneries would also increase. Another view on these statistics is that almost every town of the Great Basin had small manufacturing concerns which included manufacture of leather goods as well as others. Because of their small size, their industries would not reach industrial commission reports. However, when taken together, they may have had great volume and been a formidable factor in the well-being of the economic life of the area.

In 1855 William Jennings and John R. Winder entered

¹³John G. Crook, "The Development of Early Industry and Trade in Utah" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Utah, 1926), p. 20.

¹⁴Warren Noble, ed., Utah Since Statehood: Historical and Biographical (Chicago: J. J. Clark Publishing Co., 1915), Vol. I, p. 281.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 294.

the tanning industry. They combined with a harness, shoe, boot, and butcher shop. In 1855 Golding and Raleigh established the Bath House Tannery.

One of the tanneries of that time advertised with this note:

The subscribers wish to say to the public that they design keeping constantly on hand a supply of sole and upper leather of the best quality, also ready-made boots and shoes; and are prepared to make boots and shoes, etc., at the shortest notice from home manufactured or imported leather. We will receive in exchange most kinds of produce, bark, hides, cattle, and cash. An assortment of clogs on hand, also a few first quality horse collars. The highest price paid for hides and bark.¹⁵

There was a tannery called the 15th Ward Tannery which was founded by the merchant Hockaday and sold to Nathaniel Jones and James W. Cummings in 1856. Their advertisement gives the appeal of their business along with the qualifications of one of those they employed:

We take this method of informing the citizens of this place and surrounding country the Fifteenth Ward Tannery is now in operation and designs keeping on hand a large and well assorted stock of leather of every description which shall not only surpass anything heretofore manufactured in this territory, but shall be equal, if not surpass, anything brought to this market for sale. The mechanical branch will be carried on under the direction of A. L. Toussig, who has been engaged for years in the manufacture of leather in Austria, Russia, France, England and the U.S. He has thoroughly satisfied himself by this trial that the very best article of leather can be furnished from the material with which this country abounds.¹⁶

¹⁵ Andrew Love Neff, The History of Utah, 1847-1869, edited and annotated by L. H. Creer (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Press, 1940), p. 284.

¹⁶ Deseret News, February 10, 1856.

There was considered intermingling of business ventures in Salt Lake City and this was no less true in the tanning industry. The establishment of public works by the Church and the assigning of immigrants to the various wards prior for permanent settlement and work to sustain them, brought about a high degree of interdependence and cooperativeness. As skilled tanners and workers in leather arrived and began to get work, they would look around for places to establish themselves in their trade. This caused a growth of the leather industry in the outlying settlements. Shoemakers and boot and harness makers were interested in getting leather at the least cost, and the tanners were able to begin to supply their need.

Another phase of the intermingling of those involved in the tanning industry had to do with those who remained in Salt Lake City, and were able to expand to more establishments of their own because of their skill and volume of business. There was much growth going on as well as a few failures. Ira Ames combined with Alexander Brim in 1853 and they hired Philip Pugsley who eventually became well known in the tanning industry. Samuel Mulliner united with Allen in 1851 and the Deseret Tannery was started. John R. Winder and William Jennings began a tannery in 1855 and later in 1858 another merger took place that resulted in the Deseret Tanning and Manufacturing Association, the history of which will be covered in Chapter 5.

There were other factors involved to give the tanning

industry help. The public works program of the Church began a cutlery factory in which currier's knives were manufactured. This brought the needed tools to the tanneries making it unnecessary for the tanneries to import their tools from other places.¹⁷

Areas outside of Salt Lake City were growing in the leather manufacturing industry also. There was a tannery in Paragoona, established in 1852.¹⁸ This tannery functioned for a number of years until bark became scarce. Apparently, a tannery was established there because of the warm springs. The name "Paragoona" means warm water or springs. Colonel William H. Dame commenced the tannery in the new settlement. In 1853 Benjamin Watts tanned the first leather at Paragoonah, which was also the first leather made in Iron County.¹⁹

Leather manufacturing in Provo began earlier than in Paragoona. Leather tanning started in 1849 in Provo. Like other semi-public enterprises, the community was of necessity involved in getting this enterprise going. Trees were cut in Provo canyon and floated down the river. The bark was peeled and taken to the tannery. Shoes were in such demand that the leather was only half-tanned when it was used to make shoes. This caused the shoes

¹⁷"Journal History," August 29, 1858.

¹⁸Milton R. Hunter, Brigham Young the Colonizer (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1940), p. 175.

¹⁹LDS History of Parowan Stake (Paragoonah Ward, 1853).

to be stiff when dry, and big and sloppy when wet.

Jens M. Jensen, an early historian, claims that the Provo tannery was the first to produce leather in the territory.²⁰

In the year 1852 Samuel Clark set out to build a tannery. Evidently he had been involved in the earlier ventures in Provo and saw the possibilities of making a living at it. The Deseret News gave some encouragement to Samuel Clark and the community of Provo.

Good for Provo . . . Brethren at Provo, arise in your might . . . and carry your hides and skins to Mr. Sam'l Clark, tanner, and with them carry 25 or 50 cords of bark. Lumberman, hand him over 5,000 feet of plank. Carpenters and joiners, set your tools in motion and make vats; laborers, put in the spades and sink those vats, and draw a few loads of clay to pack around them; tinnerns and coppersmith, make a heater; and tell Mr. Clark he is welcome. Best, best, best in two weeks from the first blow, if all will do as counseled, the tanner may have 100 hides in the vats, and Provo City will have leather in 100 days of their own mfr., at 100% less cost than they now give the merchant.²¹

The Deseret News continued to give encouragement and gradually the tannery was put into operation. The difficulty of getting bark from the Provo canyon during the winter and the need for keeping the vats warm made the business a difficult one. It took Clark approximately forty-five days to tan one hide. As eastern competition was able to sell leather at a cheaper price, the tannery went out of business. Bark became more and more difficult to obtain. As Mr. Tullidge, a prominent historian of that time, said, "The

²⁰James M. Jensen, History of Provo, Utah (Provo, Utah: New Century Printing Co., 1924), p. 40.

²¹Deseret News, January 24, 1852, p. 21.

tanneries of the territory consistently did poor work, mostly because they did not soak their hides long enough and they made shoes too soon."²² Other places claimed tanneries in their community but records are not complete as to dates. Manti and Fillmore are known to have had tanneries in 1856. An editorial in the Deseret News of November 19, 1856, summarized conditions in the industry at that date:

We are not aware that there are any tanneries in Utah, except in this city [Salt Lake], Provo, Manti and Fillmore. This may appear to many, as it sometimes does to us, rather singular, for the few tanneries now in operation cannot supply the demand for leather.²³

Of the 235 individuals involved in the leather industry in 1850, eighty-six were in the Utah Territory and 149 were in New Mexico. The percentage of people involved in the leather industry was 2.7 percent in Utah while in New Mexico it was only .9 percent. The mountain state's percentage comparison was 1.1 percent in 1850.²⁴

Although hard times were evident in the leather industry during the years of 1850 to 1856, there were many who gained a livelihood and some few who became quite wealthy because of their involvement in this business

²²E. W. Tullidge, "A History of Provo," Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine, III (Provo, Utah: January, 1881), p. 271; E. N. Huff, Memories That Live (Springville, Utah, DUP, 1947), p. 122.

²³Deseret News, November 19, 1856.

²⁴Leonard Arrington, The Changing Economic Structure of the Mountain West (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1963), Vol. X, No. 3. Also see the table in the Appendix.

activity. When people were asked to contribute means for an express-carrying company that Brigham Young was trying to organize, the names of contributors included Jennings and Winder, Golden and Raleigh, and Philip Pugsley, who were all engaged to furnish boots and shoes, harness leather and saddles and cushions for it. These men were classed as the "leather makers in the territory."²⁵

An example of the other side--the scarcity--is evident in the seventeen-year-old boy having to work three months for a pair of buckskin pants which he describes during various seasons. In dry weather they "came half way between my ankles and knees," and "in wet weather would flippity flop on the side walk every step I took."²⁶

The tithing office in Salt Lake City, a Church collection house of contributions of members, had a large quantity of leather which indicates the making of this product in the towns of the territory at this early date.²⁷

One is left to decide about this early period as to whether the leather industry was large or small. In percentage employed for the western states at that time it was large; in the supply being able to meet the demand, it was small. The need for leather cannot be disputed. The people made provisions for that need the best they could.

²⁵Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, p. 167.

²⁶"Autobiography of Samuel Roskelley," Emma R. Hansen, ed., The Roskelley Organ (Smithfield, Utah, 1951), p. 14.

²⁷Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, p. 141.

Chapter 4

THE LEATHER INDUSTRY FROM THE UTAH WAR TO THE COMING OF THE RAILROAD

There was an exodus from Salt Lake City when Johnson's army threatened to invade Utah. Only one man is reported to have kept his tannery in operation, Philip Pugsley. He had learned his trade of "japanning"¹ leather in Bristol, England, in 1846. Pugsley had been helped by working for Ira Ames in 1853 at his tannery. When Ames' son Clark went on a mission, Pugsley took his place. He had run Golding and Raleigh's tannery on shares. He claims to have made his first "two-hits" from selling a piece of leather. When the threat of the "war" came he had had much practical experience and it fell his lot to keep the tannery open. When Ira Ames decided not to keep his tannery after the return from the mass exodus, Pugsley purchased it from him. Pugsley had the only bark for tanning in the city. He sold some to the other tanners to get them started again. William Jennings and Golding and Raleigh were helped in this way and thus two tanneries were restarted after the stoppage because of

¹This is a process of working with leather to give it a hard glossy coating.

the war.²

The next year, 1858, a number of tanneries were established. New tanneries were begun in 1859 which were financed by Brigham Young, Feramorz Little, and John R. Winder. The story of Joseph Orton attests to the reopening of the Winder and Jennings tannery. Joseph Orton was an immigrant from Farnsworth, England, who arrived in Salt Lake City on July 10, 1858. He had 75¢ left when he began looking for work. The day after he arrived he began work at the Winder and Jennings tanning establishment on Main Street. From there he moved out into the settlement of St. George and continued to ply his trade with success. John Hill, a tanner by trade, was another case in point. When he arrived in Salt Lake City in 1859 he obtained work in his field. A year later he moved to West Jordan where he was enlisted as a tanner in the new tannery there run by Bishop Archibald Gardner.³

The threat of civil war and the realization of economic isolation once again gave further encouragement to self-sufficiency. One writer has said that this determination was strong in Utah even at the expense of efficiency and progress.⁴ The attitude of the Church leaders which applied strongly to the tanning industry was, "Produce your own."

²E. W. Tullidge, "Our Industries and Industrial Men," Utah Magazine, II (Salt Lake City, 1868), 766.

³Kate B. Carter, Treasures of Pioneer History (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1953), p. 323.

⁴Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, p. 195.

Settlements were continually being started and economic self-sufficiency was emphasized for them. Between 1857 and 1867 there were 150 new settlements started. If the 1852 idea of one or even two tanneries in each settlement were even partially carried out, this would mean at least seventy-five new tanneries during this period.

Payson, which was a previously settled town (1850), received many of the poor from the Salt Lake exodus. In order to keep them in food, projects were started to help them earn provisions. One of these projects was to erect a tannery.⁵ Three tanning establishments were operated in Payson for many years--one owned by Tousick and Simons, another by J. S. Page, and the third by John Diem. Most of the leather was manufactured into boots and shoes within the city.⁶

Logan in Cache Valley got encouragement in the area of tanneries in the form of some equipment which was brought in by Ira Ames, a tanner of note in Salt Lake City, who moved there and began business. The earliest tannery there was built by Thomas Weir and Joel Ricks in the spring of 1860.⁷ Later, near 1869, Moses Thatcher, manager of the Logan Coop, Mercantile and Manufacturing Organization, which controlled

⁵Tullidge, Quarterly Magazine (Salt Lake City, 1868), p. 395.

⁶Carter, Memories That Live (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1953), p. 450.

⁷Joel R. Ricks, History of a Valley (Cache Valley Centennial Commission, 1959), p. 162.

commercial affairs of that city, said, "Besides wholesaling and retailing general merchandise we manufacture leather, harnesses, boots and shoes quite extensively."⁸

Early in 1862, David Evans and Canute Peterson built a tannery near the northeast corner of Third North and Second West in Lehi in which Jonas Holdsworth was the first workman. He had learned the tanning trade while living in England. He had brought a few of his tools with him across the ocean, and he made others here. By using tan bark from the mountains, Holdsworth was successful in making quality upper, sole, and harness leather which was exceedingly useful to the people of that town. The tannery closed in 1870.⁹

Saint George was settled during this period prior to the coming of the railroad. The Church was instrumental in the revival of that settlement by making ample provision for the trades. Leather needs were taken care of, as a few of the first settlers were tanners. Lorenzo Clark and Jesse Wentworth Crosby built a tannery near a spring north of Diagonal Street.¹⁰ There was also a tannery on First North Street, which was run by Adam Seegmiller.¹¹ Tanbark

⁸E. W. Tullidge, History of Salt Lake City, "Founders of Utah Settlements" (Salt Lake City, 1888), p. 380.

⁹Hamilton Gardner, History of Lehi (Salt Lake City, 1913), p. 85.

¹⁰Andrew Karl Larson, I Was Called to Dixie (Deseret News Press, 1961), p. 277.

¹¹Ibid.

was obtained from the Pine Valley Mountains. William Pritchard and Thomas Cottam operated a tannery some time later which might have been the one started by Clark.¹² Because the demand exceeded the supply, pioneers in the area, as was surely the case in other outlying areas, tanned their own leather. John D. Lee wrote in his diary on August 8, 1859, "I concluded to get up some teams and go South for Dock root to tan my leather with." Brigham Young, who visited this settlement, gave two recommendations that involved the need for leather. He said that the people ought to wear wooden-bottomed shoes in summer to conserve on leather and he also suggested that the people get rid of poor cattle, horses and sheep--"Kill them, their hides should be tanned."¹³ This second recommendation had two effects; it provided leather which was much in demand and it raised the standard of quality of the livestock in the settlement.

Many other smaller settlements boasted of having a tannery or possibilities of a tannery. However, while colonization was going on and tanning industries were being developed along with many other industries, competition was becoming greater. The Church leaders became actively aware of the position the people of Utah were in, and they wanted to preserve their self sufficiency. The leaders began to

¹²Ibid.

¹³James G. Bleak, "Manuscript History of St. George" (typewritten copy at the Brigham Young University library), p. 352.

discuss the problems of competition. Leather was recognized as a needed product and one that would need support in home industry or it would lose out to outside competition. This very subject was talked about in the School of the Prophets, a Church group organized for the betterment of active male members of the LDS Church.¹⁴ An indication of the competition comes from a report concerning freight received in Morgan City (Weber). Forty-six thousand five hundred ninety pounds of hides and tallow were received, while only 7,510 pounds of comparable leather products were shipped.¹⁵ Comments concerning Heber City in Wasatch County reveal the feelings of the leaders during this time of competition:

They have excellent facilities for the establishment of various branches of industries--notably a tannery, boot, shoe and harness manufactory. This community expended annually \$25,000 cash for the importation of boots and shoes, which sum might be saved to the people by utilizing their resources to that end.¹⁶

The coming of the railroad was another factor that was to affect the tanning industry. This will be discussed in another chapter, but the preparation for its coming helped soften the blow of competition when it did come. The Deseret Agriculture and Manufacturing Society was one means used to encourage the tanning industry and other industries, instrumental in bringing information and encouraging the manufacture

¹⁴Leonard Arrington, "Religion and Planning in the Far West," Economic History Review, Second Series, Vol. XI, No. 1 (1958), p. 86.

¹⁵Tulledge, History of Salt Lake City, p. 109.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 158.

of high quality leather goods at home. The first fair, October 4, 1869, gave the following listing of leather exhibits:

Class II Leather and Findings.
 Awarding Committee: P. Pugsley,
 Francis Platt and Edward Snelgrove.
 Best Sole Leather W. Jennings, Diploma
 Best Calf Skin W. Jennings, Diploma
 Best Cow Hyde W. Jennings, Diploma
 Best Harness Leather W. Jennings, Diploma
 Best Bridle Richard Margetts
 Best Skirting Richard Margetts
 Best Heavy Kip Richard Margetts
 Best Grain Leather Richard Margetts
 Best Calf Leather Richard Margetts
 Best Leather Belting Richard Margetts
 Best Military Bridle and Martingale F. Platt
 Best Heavy Harness F. Platt¹⁷

Mr. Gustive O. Larson, a contemporary historian, believes that the encouragement of the establishment of woolen factories and tanneries was to stimulate the sheep and cattle industry.¹⁸ This could very well be a factor, as the cooperative movement brought about a rise in the number of sheep from 60,000 in 1870 to 1,000,000 in 1890.¹⁹

In 1864 a unique cooperative program had begun in Brigham City, which was particularly successful in leather manufacturing starting in 1866. Lorenzo Snow explained the tanning enterprise as follows:

¹⁷Minutes of the Deseret Agriculture and Manufacturing Society, October 4, 1869.

¹⁸Gustive O. Larson, Prelude to the Kingdom (Francestown, New Hampshire: Marshall Jones Co., 1947), p. 251.

¹⁹Measures of Economic Changes in Utah, 1847-1857 (Salt Lake City, 1947), p. 51.

We erected a tannery building two stories high, forty-five by eighty feet, with modern improvements and conveniences, at a cost of \$10,000. Most of the materials and mason and carpenter work were furnished as capital stock by such persons as were able and who desired an interest in our institution. The larger portion of the work was done during the winter season when no other employment could be had. One-fourth was paid in merchandise to such as needed it. We gained by this method additional capital, as well as twenty or thirty new stockholders without encroaching much on anyone's property or business. This tannery has been operated during the past nine years with success, and reasonable profits, producing an excellent quality of leather worth \$8,000 to \$10,000 annually. We have in connection with our business a boot and shoe shop, also a saddle and harness shop. We draw our dividends in the articles manufactured at these two departments.²⁰

The period after the Utah War and prior to the railroad saw leather clothing as part of the everyday life. Even handmade shoes and Indian moccasins were used. This was coming to an end as the loom was gradually replacing skin clothing. Valley Tan was a term coined during these days. One traveler noted that the leather made in the Salt Lake Valley compared favorably with the product of English tanneries. The term 'valley tan' was used to distinguish valley-made leather from the imported stocks. For a time this expression was applied to all home products. The label fell into disrepute after its application to 'home grown' whiskey, which Mark Twain said was "made of imported fire and brimstone."²¹

²⁰Milton R. Hunter, Brigham Young the Colonizer (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News Press, 1940), p. 176.

²¹Gail Martin, ed., Utah (Utah Writer's Project, 1940), p. 113.

A good illustration of the possibilities in the field of leather manufacturing during this period is given in the experiences of Richard B. Margetts. He tells how in 1863 he went to a tanner to get some work done for a man who was working for him. He offered to pay the tanner for his work by doing some work for him in his blacksmith shop, but the tanner flatly refused. Margetts said, "This rather nettled me, and that same day I made up my mind to start a tannery, myself." Within two months he had a tanning business. He became so busy and the business became so lucrative that he closed his blacksmith shop and went to tanning full time. However, eight years later, in 1871, he had to work out of the tanning business because of the scarcity of tanning material.²²

Brigham Young summarized this time in an address given in April, 1869;

We will get some more of them [people who were going out of business because of the then Church-sponsored cooperative movement] to gathering up hides and making them into leather, and manufacturing that leather into boots and shoes; this will be far more profitable than letting hundreds and thousands of hides go to waste as they have done.²³

²²E. W. Tullidge, Quarterly Magazine, I (Salt Lake City, 1868), p. 211.

²³Feramorz Y. Fox, "Cooperation among the Mormons" (unpublished manuscript found in the Church Historian's Library in Salt Lake City, Utah), p. 23.

Chapter 5

FROM THE COMING OF THE RAILROAD TO 1884

The coming of the railroad brought change to the tanning industry. However, the change in Utah was a little less drastic than in the other western states because the action program of the Church met the challenge of eastern competitive capitalism.¹

The school of the prophets, before mentioned, established locally owned cooperatives. George Q. Cannon, counselor to Brigham Young, felt that the Church needed to take this necessary step to create new industries. "Home manufactures must be extensively and persistently pursued."² The Church felt that cultivating land, tending flocks, and developing local industries produced contented societies.³ One significant factor emphasized by these leaders was that the measures they were adopting were intended for the welfare of the people in the Great Basin rather than for profit.⁴

¹Edward W. Tullidge, "Capital and Labor" and "To Our Home Manufacturers," Utah Magazine, II (1868), pp. 78, 90.

²Ibid., p. 90.

³Journal History, May 29, 1870.

⁴Brigham Young sermon in Journal History, October 6, 1850, and October 8, 1855.

The Brigham City cooperative, begun in 1864, and the Lehi Cooperative became the models for the other cooperatives throughout the Territory. In Brigham City the tannery supervised by Mr. Hillam had been a great success and at times it was able to export leather to Salt Lake City for imported merchandise.⁵ Lorenzo Snow, the leader of the whole community, reported that:

Last year, and year before, we disposed of considerable leather to Zion's Co-operative at Salt Lake City; this year [1874] we manufactured but little more than we required for our own consumption, owing in part to the extravagant prices paid for hides by exporters, and in part to the difficulties we experienced in commanding sufficient cash to carry on our different branches of home manufactures, several of them new in their infancy, and not fully developed. For the reason as above stated, our tannery at present is working scarcely half its capacity, hence our profits in this department are small, and we continue it for the accommodation of the people rather than for its profits, limiting its operations till times and circumstances become more favorable. We produce annually over eight thousand dollars' worth of boots and shoes which are used by the people of this city and vicinity.⁶

There were approximately 150 cooperatives begun after 1869.⁷ The tanning industry was given great impetus because it was one of the activities participated in by each cooperative. Each cooperative was to take its surpluses and use them in founding tanneries.⁸ As for the financial

⁵"Successful Cooperation," Salt Lake Herald, October 25, 1876.

⁶Kate B. Carter, Our Pioneer Heritage (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Co., 1969), XII, 159.

⁷Arden Beal Olsen, "The History of Mormon Merchantile Cooperation in Utah" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1935), pp. 130-133.

⁸Journal of Discourses, XIII, 36.

results, there were some losses, but they were justified by such explanations as the following report of Bishop A. Nicholas to Edward Hunter, the Presiding Bishop of the Church in April 20, 1874.

When any particular department is found not to pay, it is not therefore abandoned but turned to good account . . . Our wool, hides and other raw materials have been turned into manufactured goods such as families chiefly require, and a market was opened at our doors among ourselves, which has greatly lessened importations from foreign markets. It has opened steady employment for the masses of people, some who are delicate in health or crippled, who under other circumstances would be utterly unable to earn their living. Here they can be useful and become as independent as anybody else. Public improvements have been promoted while the people have been enabled to obtain clothing, boots and shoes, and dress in quite good style, in some other way than by paying money or valuable farm produce for the same and chances are equalized for all. Cooperation has produced satisfaction and good feeling generally, and good results have arisen from it. Its progress has required much labor, care and watchfulness. We have had new unexpected ground to tread on from the beginning and Eastern Manufacturers to compete with.⁹

The backing given to the outlying cooperatives came from the parent organization in Salt Lake City, called Zions Cooperative and Mercantile Institution or ZCMI. The directors of ZCMI wanted to enhance industrial cooperation and so began to use these profits to help develop home manufacturing. The tanning industry was brought out of a slump and given financial backing by this move from ZCMI. Many of the directors of the ZCMI were also directors of the Deseret Tanning and Manufacturing Company which was organized

⁹A. Nicholas to Edward Hunter, letter in the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City, Utah, April 20, 1874.

February 18, 1870.¹⁰ This organization began with a capital stock of \$20,000. The main participants were: Feramorz Little, R. P. Burton, William Jennings, John Sharp, J. R. Winder, W. W. Hooper, L. W. Hardy, Frank Armstrong, Isaac Brockbank, Lewis G. Hills, William C. Staines, John Clark, Thomas Griggs, and Elijah F. Sheets.¹¹

ZCMI handled the leather manufactured by the Deseret Tanning and Manufacturing Company.¹² Consequently, on February 10, 1879, directors of ZCMI discussed the feasibility of consolidating with the Deseret Tanning and Manufacturing Company.¹³ The Deseret Tanning Company was willing to sell their stock amount for \$61,700. Their liabilities amounted to \$49,724. Seven months later W. H. Rowe, who took over the superintendency of the leather manufacturing and shoe and boot manufacturing department of ZCMI, reported that some gains had been made and that the quality of the leather was markedly improved. The tannery was kept going by ZCMI. A report by E. S. Eldredge, superintendent at that time, stated why ZCMI kept the tannery: "Our tannery although prudently managed has not been so lucrative as we could have desired, but it has held its own, furnishing

¹⁰Original incorporation papers located in the Utah State Capitol archives.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Original minute book of ZCMI in the vault at ZCMI in Salt Lake City, Utah, Book C, p. 11.

¹³Ibid., Book C, pp. 26-27.

employment to a number of hands, and has been of great benefit to the community."¹⁴ The year 1882 brought a profit of \$1,400 to the tannery. A profit of \$2,910 was reported in July, 1883. John Taylor, then President of the Church, said that "the quality of the leather now produced is in every respect first class--superior in fact to much of the imported article."¹⁵

In 1887, however, the tannery sustained a loss. This was not the whole picture because the department that depended upon the tannery was making money and employing many people.

A \$110,000 factory was constructed in 1887-1888, permitting increase in output to 500 pairs of boots and shoes daily, or more than 160,000 pairs annually, with an average employed of 180 hands. All of the sole leather and half of the uppers used in this manufacture were made at the ZCMI tannery. The tannery and boot and shoe factory were still being operated at capacity at the turn of the century.¹⁶

From the beginning of cooperatives, the whole state was having a variety of success and failure in the tanning industry. An overall state survey of statistics gives an indication of the condition of the leather industry:

1872:	Hides--lbs.	6,258	@ \$4.25	=	26,596
	Pelts--lbs.	8,000	@ .50	=	4,000
1873:	Hides--lbs.	7,500	@ 4.25	=	31,875
	Pelts--lbs.	9,600	@ .50	=	4,800
1872:	Leather--	\$3,500			
1873:	Leather--	\$5,000			

¹⁴Ibid., Book C, p. 56.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁶Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, pp. 308-309.

1872: Boots and Shoes--\$50,000
 1873: Boots and Shoes--\$42,500¹⁷

Boots and shoes show a decrease by 17 percent but leather shows an increase of 43 percent. In 1873 both hides and pelts were increased 20 percent over 1872.¹⁸ In the year 1875 the Logan and Provo areas reported eighteen tanneries valued at \$42,190.¹⁹ Table 2 is a breakdown of the value of the production and capital on hand.

Table 2
 Value of Manufacturers and Products*

	Boots and Shoes	Leather Curried	Leather Tanned
Number of Establishments	20	2	2
Capital	\$70,000	\$13,000	\$24,500
Workers			
Male	185	6	15
Female	38	--	--
Child	75	--	--
Wages	\$63,822	\$ 2,600	\$ 5,478
Value of Materials	132,456	28,412	17,424
Value of Product	199,479	41,514	28,776

*Robert W. Sloan, ed., Utah Gazeteer and Directory of Logan, Provo, Ogden and Salt Lake City (Salt Lake City: Herald Printing and Publishing Co., 1884), pp. 111-114.

¹⁷Bentham Fabian, "Resources of Utah, with Statistics of Progress for 1872" (Salt Lake City: Stevens and Company, 1874), p. 1.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

Saint George, an outlying community, was suffering from financial difficulties because its competition in the tanning industry was greater. Scrub horses were suggested as a source for hides to be tanned, the oil to be preserved from them, and their bones used for buttons. Small bushes of oak were to be pounded up for tanning purposes, and after the bark had been stripped, the poles were to be hauled away for use and not left to waste. "The shortage of leather was so acute that the people were urged for health purposes, to say nothing of economy, to use wooden-bottomed shoes."²⁰ Brigham Young told the people that they could save \$10,000 to \$15,000 per annum by doing this.²¹

It has been said that the advent of the railroad resulted in the suspension of all the tanneries in Utah and played havoc with the leather industries generally.²² This is only partly true. All of the tanneries in Utah were not suspended, although they all did suffer great set-backs and many of them languished.

²⁰Edward J. Allen, The Second United Order among the Mormons (New York College University Press, 1936), p. 53.

²¹Ibid., p. 54.

²²Feramorz Y. Fox, "Cooperation among the Mormons" (unpublished manuscript in the Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah).

The evidence of ZCMI and the cooperative movement as it affected the leather industry revealed how that industry was given some new life. There were other isolated instances in which the tanning industry did not languish completely at this time. Some of the small co-ops made significant strides in leather, even exporting some of their product. Paris, Idaho, a town associated with the Great Basin, saw the problem coming and in 1877 effected an amalgamation with the tannery and the co-op. They realized that leather could not be produced on a small scale to compete with the outside market and so they saw to it that they manufactured their own leather into boots and shoes, which became a lucrative enterprise. It was claimed that their leather was "as good as any in Utah."²³ In 1879 Paris still had the tannery going and they did a business of \$6,500 in boots and shoes and \$3,900 in manufactured leather.²⁴ Competition from the railroad caused the tannery to be the first to go out of business.²⁵

²³Deseret News, August 1, 1877.

²⁴Fox, p. 29.

²⁵Russell R. Rich, Land of the Sky Blue Water: A History of the LDS Settlement of the Bear Lake Valley (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1963), p. 123.

Orderville, Utah, took up the challenge of producing leather in 1876 and later. In 1874 the people of Orderville took stock in a tannery at Kanab. In 1876 they set up their own tan-bark mill and they also established a tannery which was run by Samuel Mulliner who had had much experience in the tanning business in Salt Lake City. In spite of setbacks, a new building was finally finished in 1877 and used for several years. This department of the United Order of Orderville was able to produce good quality leather and to make that industry profitable. The shoe factory and harness shop depended upon the leather tanned there. In 1879 the tannery produced enough leather for 702 pairs of shoes and fifteen pairs of boots.²⁶ The excess of leather goods and other products were sold by the Orderville community in Southern Utah communities to help build a capital fund with which the community could buy additional land and equipment.²⁷

In Salt Lake City various wards took up tanneries as an enterprise in cooperation with the cooperative and United Order movement.²⁸ The Fifteenth Ward had a going concern

²⁶Leonard Arrington, "Orderville, Utah: Experiment in Economic Organization" (Logan, Utah: Utah State Agriculture College, 1954), Vol. II, No. 2, p. 12.

²⁷Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, p. 334.

²⁸Ibid., p. 329.

and the Nineteenth Ward gave tanning special emphasis. Bishop Edward Hunter, Presiding Bishop of the Church, did not forget the tanning trade that he had learned so well in his youth. On March 9, 1877, it was recorded in the Journal History that Bishop Hunter had established a skin dressing establishment for the manipulation of sheep and calf skins in the Nineteenth Ward. Robert and Charles Morris, who were brothers, were put in charge of the tannery. By September 10th of that year the workers were able to exhibit some ladies' shoes made of calf skin that were "beautiful to the eye, soft and pliable and will likely outwear any imported leather of the same kind."²⁹ The advertisements of the uses and intents of the tannery were recorded in the Deseret News Weekly:

The Tannery--The new tannery in the 19th Ward, is one of the most trim and neat manufacturing establishments in the west. The peculiar aptitude of the President, Mayer Little, for giving attention to details is well known. The effects of his directing mind are seen everywhere in and about the tannery. The engine bark grinder, and other machinery are all up and ready to be put in operation. A large quantity of hides are [sic] in an advanced stage of preparation for putting into the tanning liquid, and a car load of bark, ordered from California, which has been delayed, is expected daily. This is probably the only lot of bark it will be necessary to order from abroad. It has been discovered that sufficient can be obtained locally to meet the demand. Besides supplying a large proportion of the leather in the Territory, it will also render unnecessary the importation of hair for plating purposes. The president of the establishment sees no reason for supposing otherwise than that the tannery will be a paying concern. It will labor under some advantages in competing with importations, but these are more than balanced by advantages on the side of the home article. The hides are here in abundance, whereas they are

²⁹ Edward W. Hunter, Faithful Steward (Salt Lake City, Utah: Publishers Press, 1970), p. 188.

shipped from this Territory at a profit, to manufacturers abroad, and returned here in manufactured condition, involving a large expense for freight both ways to the distant tanner. This should be sufficient in favor of the home producer to offset advantages in other directions on the opposite side.

The new tannery establishment has on hand and ready a large quantity of hides, which have mostly been procured through Mr. H. B. Clawson, who is authorized to purchase for the company.³⁰

The dedicatory services of this tannery were also recorded in the Deseret News Weekly:

Dedication Services--On Saturday afternoon the board of directors of the Deseret Tanning and Manufacturing Company met at the new tannery building in the 19th Ward. President John Taylor, presiding, Bishop Edward Hunter, his Counselor, L. W. Hardy, and Hon. William Jennings were also present.

The object of the meeting was to dedicate the building and company in accordance with the custom among the Latter-day Saints, on such occasions. The dedicatory prayer was offered by President John Taylor. The tannery is now running, the machinery being all in excellent trim and some of the product of the establishment will be upon the market at the earliest practical date.³¹

With these encouragements the leather industry continued to be a factor in the economic life of the territory of Utah. Finally, however, pressures of persecution inflicted by the government on the Church during the early 1880's caused most of the smaller co-ops to collapse or be transferred to individually-owned enterprises.³² The of J. W. Summerhays and Company is clear as to the benefits of business he had and offered to the public:

³⁰Deseret News Weekly, March 13, 1878.

³¹Deseret News Weekly, March 27, 1878, p. 124.

³²John Taylor, letter of First Presidency, April 11, 1882.

An enterprise of special interest to the people of Utah, and one that will be of value to learn something about, is the hide and wool industry of the territory; and the most prominent house engaged in this line is that of J. W. Summerhays & Co. The partners are J. W. Summerhays, R. Morris, and W. H. Rowe, who established the business in 1883. Their office and warehouse is situated at 45 and 47 South Third, West street, and is 70 x 90 feet in size. Here is stored an immense number of hides, furs, skins and wool, which are shipped to all parts of the United States. The skins and hides are brought in from Utah, Idaho, Oregon, Montana and Nevada, and are turned into the tannery operated here by this company, which is the largest in Utah. This was first established by Bishop Hunter, and has since come into the possession of the present company. The tannery is very complete in all its details and equipments. The process of tanning is very interesting, and we regret that want of space forbids going into detailed description of the methods of making leather. Some idea of the extent of this establishment may be gained from the fact that during 1889 there were 110,000 sheep skins alone tanned by this company, whose business is steadily on the increase, and whose resources are ample to meet all demands made upon it. Its policy entitles it to the consideration of the trade, who will find assured advantages in dealing here.³³

Some statistics of this time show that although changing organizational structure affected the tanning industry it did not cause it to be completely abandoned. Also the fact that tanning materials were quite extensively imported still did not nullify the need for a number of tanneries in Utah. Bancroft, a well-known historian, saw the great drawback of the leather industry as lack of native tanning material.³⁴ But in 1883 there were twenty-five tanneries still in operation which

³³Trade Commission Publishing Co., "Descriptive Review of Industries in Salt Lake City, Utah," p. 65.

³⁴H. Howe Bancroft, History of Utah (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1964), p. 733.

produced \$250,000 worth of leather products. In comparison with this, there were 200 carloads of hides and pelts shipped to eastern states, sufficient to supply almost the entire demand of Utah for leather products.³⁵ The leather used for harness and saddlery, trunks and valises, of which the manufacture amounts to not less than \$150,000, was almost entirely imported.³⁶

The Church made a last effort to save the home tanning industry in part of a conference held May 20, 1881, by the Zion's Board of Trade, in which leather was considered as one of the home industries needing encouragement.³⁷ This Church-sponsored program subsidized scores of home industries which included the manufacturing of leather in tanning and making boots, shoes and other leather products.³⁸ But the Zions Board of Trade was discontinued and little effort on the part of the Church was expended for the tanning industry after that.

In conclusion, Nels Anderson reviewed the circumstances that kept the tanning, as well as other small industries alive, by saying that it was because the Church had this extensive mercantile system that small industries dared to begin. Except for a few woolen mills

³⁵Ibid., p. 733.

³⁶Ibid., p. 734.

³⁷Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, p. 345.

³⁸Ibid., p. 355.

which later turned to special products, most of these small industries were abandoned.³⁹

³⁹Nels Anderson, Deseret Saints (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 366.

Chapter 6

THE TANNING INDUSTRY FROM 1884 TO 1973

The tanning industry was no longer a part of the 'temporal' kingdom in the Great Basin after the demise of the Zion's Board of Trade. A few individuals continued their tanneries, however. The Church concerns were sold or went out of business.¹ The boot and shoe part of the tanning industry got most of its leather from imports. The feeling of one writer was that had it not been for the co-operative movement the "leather manufacturing industries would have succumbed to outside competition" long before 1884.²

The frontier had ended and the task of living with eastern competition took on a new immediacy. There was still establishment of new settlements, but no longer were Church-encouraged tanning enterprises emphasized. In 1884 there were eighteen tanneries in existence having cash value of \$42,190.³ In 1886 an explanation of the needs of new

¹Arthur Stayner in the Salt Lake Herald, December 25, 1887; Deseret Evening News, February 4, 1889.

²Fox, "Cooperation among the Mormons," p. 28.

³Robert W. Sloan, ed., Utah Gazetteer, 1884 (Salt Lake City: Herald Printing and Publishing Company, 1884), p. 51.

settlers included a shoe and boot maker and repairer.⁴

In 1887, however, statistics of the leather industry revealed that 500,000 pounds of sheep pelts worth \$60,000 were exported from Utah, along with 500,000 pounds of hides, valued at \$50,000.⁵ Fewer hides were processed in Utah. The few concerns here consumed 50,000 pounds of sheep skin per year in manufacture, and the tanneries used about 300,000 pounds of hides per year.

However, there was another tannery started in Provo, by Mr. N. C. Rasmussen who had served his apprenticeship in Denmark. It was located "two blocks west of Bp. Tanner's Grist Mill." The vats were in place in the month of October 1887 and hides had been placed in the lime vats for hair removal. It was reported that twenty-four hides and ten calves' skins went through the tanning process in one vat of liquor. Mr. Rasmussen started out on a small scale and hoped to grow if he could procure the needed capital. His comment was that he found it difficult to have to import bark for tanning, but that the cheapness of the hides in Utah compensated for the cost of importation.⁶

⁴Feramorz Y. Fox, "The Mormon System of Colonization," reprint from the Deseret News of Saturday, July 28, 1928. This is now located in the Church Historian's office in Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁵Messages and Documents of the Interior Department, Vol. I, 1887-88, p. 902.

⁶The Utah Industrialist (Provo, Utah: The Utah Industrialist Company, 1887), p. 129.

Also in 1877 a Mr. W. H. Young, originally of Ephraim, Sanpete County but now who lived in Provo, was traveling around Utah in the interest of establishing tanneries through the Territory. There was even an attempt made to start a Tanner's Union of some sort. His comments were reported in the Utah Industrialist, a business magazine of the time:

Now is the time to start up the business, as hides, pelts, etc., are cheap, and bark is handy, and if tanners and carriers would make a determined push in this direction there would be no trouble in furnishing all the leather needed for home use; but it is work not wind which must be used.⁷

He went on to report that there were established branch tanneries at Provo, Ogden, and Spring City (Sanpete), as well as one starting at Salina. He felt that Richfield and Glenwood would be good places to establish tanneries. Some of the prices of leather would be of interest to the historian and they are:

Calf skins, eighty-five cents per pound, sole leather, twenty-five cents per pound; kip, fifty cents; horse hide, twenty-two cents per square feet; upper, twenty cents, and hair four and a half cents.⁸

Tanning materials were available and not extremely expensive. The Salina tanner reported that he would give \$7 to \$8 a cord for good red pine bark.⁹ There seems to have been a push to establish this "Tanner's Union" in Utah. Every town in the Territory was once again encouraged to establish a tanning business. Hemlock bark extract was the chief import at this

⁷Ibid., p. 249.

⁸Ibid., p. 249.

⁹Ibid.

time and was available in such quantities as to encourage the tanners in the territory.¹⁰

Most of the tanned sheep-skin is exported. Some 30,000 pounds of excellent flint deer-hide and 15,000 pounds of buckskin are also exported. Furs, such as muskrat, wolf, beaver, mink, fox, bear, badger, lynx, wildcat, and otter are shipped in quantities, whose aggregate value is \$25,000.¹¹

A year later the Interior Department reported that of the few tanneries in Utah the largest were in Salt Lake City, and that they employed fifteen hands and produced nearly \$75,000 worth of leather annually, chiefly sole leather for use in the shoe factories of the territory. They reported the tanneries at having turned out 180 sides per week, which required the importation of 500 cords of California oak bark. It was reported that "Only the want of native bark prevents tanning being a large industry in our midst."¹²

The boot and shoe part of the leather industry reported:

This industry gives employment to 350 persons in various parts of the Territory, by far the largest concerns being in Salt Lake City, where 2 factories alone employ 200 hands and turn out excellent goods to the amount of \$250,000.

One of these factories is the largest west of Chicago. The goods are sold in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado, as well as in Utah. The number of pairs annually produced in the Territory is estimated at 200,000 valued at \$350,000.¹³

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 902.

¹²Ibid., p. 892.

¹³Ibid., p. 893.

It seems that the tanning part of the leather industry was being pushed out of business by imports to the boot and shoe part of the leather industry, which continued to flourish after 1888.

The statement, "Only the want of native bark prevents tanning being a large industry in our midst," opens this study to a small effort on the part of one Arthur Stayner to enlist the help of the Church to introduce into Utah a plant called "canaigne" that contained a high percentage of tannic acid.¹⁴ In 1893 Mr. Stayner wrote to the First Presidency seeking their financial help for the production of canaigne in Utah. He had heard that ZCMI had closed down their tannery and he wanted to revive the leather industry once again. He claimed that it would save the territory a million dollars and employ 1,000 workers. The Board of Directors of ZCMI had declined to offer him any financial assistance but had encouraged him to do all he could to see if it would work. The Church replied to Stayner that they were unable to help in view of the financially cramped condition of the Church.¹⁵ It seems that the Church was no longer able to try to finance industrial ventures or agricultural concerns. The letter stated that the Church was involved in other "matters of interest to the people."¹⁶ They encouraged Stayner, but not with money.

¹⁴Letter of Arthur Stayner to the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, September 21, 1893.

¹⁵Letter of First Presidency, May 21, 1895. ¹⁶Ibid.

During this time there were some new tanning concerns beginning. The St. George Tanning and Manufacturing Company was incorporated on December 26, 1895. One of the articles in their incorporation papers stated that:

THIRD: The object, business and pursuit of the corporation shall be to establish and carry on in St. George, Washington County, Utah Territory, and at such other places as may be determined by the Board of Directors the business of tanning, Manufacturing of leather, and leather goods; oils, soap, dealing in livestock and slaughtering and disposing of the same.¹⁷

They planned to be in business for a period of fifty years. This would bring this business if continued, up to 1940. One factor in favor of its survival was its nearness to California, where tanning materials could be imported cheaply. No record of their survival or demise has been found to date.

As has been mentioned in Chapter 4, the Summerhays tannery in Salt Lake was a paying concern, which continued to produce for a number of years. This enterprise has since gone out of business.

Frank Roux Company from California incorporated and began business in 1903 under the direction of Virgil Shaw of Salt Lake City. The second purpose of the company deals with much in the tanning industry as well as other related products.

That the purpose for which it is formed are to conduct and carry on a general hide and leather business; to buy and sell all kinds of leather, hides, tallow, sheep skins, skins and furs of all kinds, at either retail or wholesale; also, to pull wool, to tan or 'taw' hides,

¹⁷Incorporation papers located in the Utah State Archives in Salt Lake City, Utah.

and skins, for sale, or otherwise; to manufacture leather, and leather articles of all kinds and character, and to sell the same; to buy, sell, lease, trade, mortgage or hypothecate, manufacture and deal in, all kinds of machinery, tools, bark, tanning materials, and all other articles and things proper or useful in a general hide, leather or tanning business . . .¹⁸

In 1904 this name was changed to Union Hide and Wool Company. Their place of establishment may be seen north of Salt Lake City today (1973); however they are no longer in business.

In the 1900 census of the Interior Department there were four leather tanning establishments reported. Three of these industries were incorporated.¹⁹

Manufacturing of leather definitely declined from 1887 on. Like some other manufacturing concerns it started to stagnate. The Church began to turn its investments to education and industry was left to seek its own level.²⁰

In 1934 there was some interest shown in the revival of the leather industry. In a summary report made by D. C. Houston on July 26, 1934, the following findings are instructive in regard to the history of the leather industry in Utah. It was reported that there were eighteen users of leather in the state; one tanner, and one experimental

¹⁸Articles of Incorporation of the "Frank Roux Company" located in the Utah State Archives in Salt Lake City, Utah, p. 1.

¹⁹Interior Department 12th Census of Industries, 1900, p. 548.

²⁰Arrington, "The Industrial Structure of the Mountain West," p. 22.

organization that tanned leather. This report dealt directly with the tanner and the experimental organization.²¹ It was found that very little tanning was being done within the state except for a few deer hides and hides with fur on for wearing apparel and floor mats. The states exporting into Utah were reported as: Pennsylvania, Virginia, Illinois, and California (San Francisco area).²² It was found, however, that an abundant supply of good hides was still available in Utah. The following table for 1933 which excluded smaller packing plants gives some indication of the quantity of hides available:²³

	per year	per month
Cattle hides	39,966	3,330½
Calf skins	6,042	503½
Sheep skins	60,542	5,045

The analysis further revealed that as only 241 hides and seventy-five sheep skins per month were in demand, the tanners could concentrate on the highest possible grade leather.²⁴ Good hides taken off the animals by "packers" or professional men using the best tools are those that are free from brands and barb wire cuts.

The report added that local tanneries would work to the advantage of the state, making it unnecessary to ship out "green" hides and ship back finished hides, thus

²¹D. C. Houston Investigator, "A Preliminary Survey of the Economic Possibility of Tanning Hides and Skins in Utah," July 26, 1934. Report located in the Utah State Historical Society in Salt Lake City, Utah.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

saving freight costs both ways. This would result in a savings of \$1.00 per hide in favor of a local tannery.

The local source of tanning material that had been a sore spot for the leather industry from the early days was approached by suggesting the possibility of local tanning material--the author gives no evidence what this material might be but "canaigne root" could have been one possibility. Lime and mineral oil were available from local manufacturers at that time.

The report's conclusion was that there was sufficient evidence to favor establishment of the tanning industry again in Utah.²⁵

In an interview with J. O. Read of Ogden, Mr. Houston found that there was a tanner running a tannery there that had made good leather and furs.²⁶ His opinion was not favorable because of the poor quality of the hides of western cattle. He pointed out that at that time the shoe repair industry in Utah did not want Western leather. At that time leather obtained from South America was used for fine saddle work, and leather from San Francisco was used for regular leather work.²⁷

The Natural Development Association did some tanning

²⁵Ibid., p. 2.

²⁶Interview with J. O. Read, Manager, J. C. Read and Brothers, saddle and harness makers and distributors at Ogden, by D. O. Houston, July 12, 1934. Report located in the Utah State Historical Society files.

²⁷Ibid.

on an experimental basis from November 1, 1933, to March 15, 1934, until they ran out of funds. They found that finished leather cost them about 70¢ per pound and that Eastern tanneries could sell equivalent leather to people in Utah for 50¢ to 60¢ per pound. They were unsuccessful, but still positive that tanneries could be a paying concern if a local tannery could get locally prepared tanning materials.²⁸

In July, 1934, a Mr. Morris Marks of the Salt Lake Leather Findings Company said that there were no tanneries in Utah. He claimed that the problem was "lack of water."²⁹

For approximately fourteen years there seems to have been little done in the leather industry as far as tanning leather was concerned. The shoe and boot manufacturers continued to increase but imports from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and other places seem to have been their sources for leather.

In 1948 Harold B. Lee, then director of the General Church Welfare Committee of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, called Lowell Fox into his office and appointed him to establish a tannery for the Church. This was part of the welfare program then getting encouragement in part because of the experiences of the depression. Mr. Arrington, the present Church historian, has said that "only since the depression of the Thirties has the cooperative approach reasserted itself in the promotion by the

²⁸D. C. Houston, p. 7.

²⁹Interview by D. C. Houston of Morris Marks of Salt Lake Leather and Finding Company, July 11, 1934. Report located in the Utah State Historical Society files.

Church of community hospitals, welfare farms, and Welfare Industries." ³⁰ Mr. Fox was instructed to learn the art of tanning which had been lost in the Church, according to Mr. Lee. ³¹ On February 24, 1948, a tannery was begun by the Church under the direction of Mr. Fox. When Mr. Fox got this management job in the then-beginning tannery, he was told by Harold B. Lee that the tanning art was almost lost and that he, Lowell Fox, was to learn it. Starting such a business without experience presented a challenge to Mr. Fox, but he stayed with it and was successful in keeping the business going. Mr. Fox mentioned that the tanning industry is a difficult industry to retain profit in, as it is very competitive. Other states have the advantage, just as in the 1869's and later. The building was located at 464 South 4th West in Salt Lake City, Utah, and was run by Lowell Fox until 1965. Mr. Fox then purchased this Church-owned business and moved it to 1873 West Cudahy Lane in North Salt Lake where the business is presently in operation.

This tannery processes from "200 to 1,000" cow hides per day and ships to locations "all over the United States and Canada." The main buyers are Latigo chap dealers for saddle

³⁰The "business empire" of the Mormon Church in 1957 is described in "Change Comes to Zion's Empire," Business Week, November 23, 1957, pp. 108-116; and "Mormon Merchants," The Wall Street Journal, December 20, 1956.

³¹Personal interview of Lowell Fox by the writer.

makers and chap garment people.³² When Mr. Fox was asked what the future of tanning in Utah would be, he replied that there was "no end to the tanning industry if they could keep up with the hide price." He also claimed that the tanning part of the leather industry was the oldest in the world as "God made coats of skins for Adam and Eve."³³ Another interesting sidelight on this Church sponsored industry is Mr. J. Lowell Fox's claim that a miracle took place in this tannery every weekend while it was owned by the Church:

We have experienced many blessings at our welfare tannery. Let me tell you of a miracle which happens every weekend. It was brought to our attention the day following our first holiday. (At this time it was not recognized as a miracle.) Upon returning to the tannery after the holiday the hides being processed were spoiled, and we wondered what caused it. A careful check was made to see if these hides had been handled in a different way. They had been washed, cleaned, cut, and placed into large vats filled with lime water where they were to stay for four days. On regular work days the hides were removed from the vats every twelve hours, the solution strengthened with fresh lime, stirred thoroughly, and the hides returned to the lime solution. This had not been done over the holiday. However, the change was never made on Sundays, and we had never found spoiled hides on Monday morning. That could not be the trouble! There seemed to be no reason for the spoiled hides.³⁴

He went on to explain that they wrote to the Technical Institute in New York for advice but received nothing new.

³² See index for step by step process of leather tanning in this tannery.

³³ Personal interview of Lowell Fox by the writer, April 13, 1973.

³⁴ Home Builders Lessons for Bluebirds (Salt Lake City: General Board of the Primary Association of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1957), pp. 137-39.

His final analysis was this statement:

This brought a strange fact to our minds--holidays are man-made and on these days just as on every week day, the hides need to have special care every twelve hours. Sunday is the day set aside by the Lord as a day of rest, and he makes it possible for us to rest from our labors as he has commanded. The hides at the tannery never spoil on Sundays. This is a modern-day miracle-- a miracle which happens every weekend!³⁵

Another tannery in Utah is owned by Val Liljenquist and his father, Ray Liljenquist, 5241 South 2nd West in Salt Lake City. The Liljenquists are natives of Utah, having ancestors who came to the Great Basin with the original pioneering party of Brigham Young. The original Liljenquist was not a tanner, however. This tannery was started only three years ago on the suggestion of R. T. Warner of England to Val Liljenquist. When Mr. Liljenquist was asked whether he would do it over again he said that he probably would not. It is a very difficult business to get into. The two main needs are capital and knowledge. He felt that a person could get started if he had the capital, but that he could not keep going without the knowledge of the intricate processes of leather tanning. The cost of getting a tannery going in this day is roughly one-half million dollars. The machinery is very expensive, the ironing machine alone costing approximately \$10,000.³⁶

When the former general manager, Mr. Ralph Colby, was

³⁵Ibid., p. 139.

³⁶Personal interview with Val Liljenquist, May 31, 1973, by the writer.

interviewed, he said that the leather industry had a history of two years, which was when this tannery began, he said.³⁷ Mr. Colby has since been relieved of his position and a Mr. Bernard Nelson is working with Mr. Liljenquist as a technical assistant at the tannery. Mr. Nelson mentioned that this tannery does about 100 hides per day and could get up to 300 per day at top capacity.³⁸ This tannery employs from twelve to twenty-five people depending on the volume of business they attain which fluctuates, thus making the number of those employed also fluctuate. Mr. Liljenquist deals in sheep hides with the wool still on after tanning. This tannery ships mainly to California for sale of his product.

The third tanner in Utah has a factory located in Springville, Utah. It is run by Frank Holley, the son of Ben Holley, the owner. This tannery is located at 1150 South Main in Springville. It has been in the possession of the present owners for three and one-half years. Prior to that it was dormant because its previous owners, Theodor Kavari and Steve Roskus, had gone broke and it had to be sold for costs by the Government. Prior to Kavari and Roskus, the building where the tannery is now located had been a cannery and a dairy.³⁹

³⁷ Personal interview of Ralph Colby by the writer, April 13, 1973.

³⁸ Personal interview of Bernard Nelson by the writer, May 31, 1973.

³⁹ Personal interview of the writer with Clarence Smith, an employee at the Springville tannery, May 31, 1973.

This tannery produces about 100 hides a week. Their top capacity could be 300 sides or about 150 hides per week.⁴⁰ They employ six people in their business. They deal in tooling leather, latigo, chap material, upholstery, garment, and suede leather. Their prices are from \$1.60 per square foot for tooling leather to \$1.00 per pound for scraps of leather or pieces too small to be used separately for any kind of leather job.⁴¹

A very informative article on this tannery by Onieta Sumsion of Springville gives a good picture of the industry there. For the year 1972 there were approximately 1,800 deer hides and 200 elk hides tanned there. The process starts with a washing of the hide; this cleans the hide, restores needed moisture, and disinfects it. The slushing machine is used next to remove the fatty tissues. This is not completely effective and a process called sanding must be used to get the suede feel to the leather.

Another factor having to do with the tanning industry in Utah is the new development of a home tanning kit called "U-tan-it" invented in Utah by Craig Larson. This has been on the market for about two years.⁴²

⁴⁰Hides include the whole animal, and sides include only one half of the animal.

⁴¹Advertising pamphlet printed by Springville Tanning, Inc.

⁴²Personal interview with Mrs. Craig Larsen, April 13, 1973, by the author.

CONCLUSION

The modern process of tanning has advanced beyond the old method of bark tanning. A process called "chrome" tan is used which cuts down the process to approximately thirty days. If leather tanned by the chrome process gets wet, it will dry soft if it is kept from drying in heat or wind.⁴³

The tanning industry is still a factor in the economic structure of the state of Utah. It has very little effect, but it offers possibility for expansion. From the evidence of the early days, however, there seems to be a basis for the claim that it was a strong factor in the economic well-being of the Great Basin Kingdom up to about 1884. This industry offered employment for many immigrants, and offered a much needed product for all concerned in the Great Basin. In fact, there was no competitive product for some time. Leather was needed and the people of the territory rose to the demand as best they could. When economic factors were not favorable other factors still compensated for its continuance. These other factors were: employment, self-sustenance, and pride in caring for one's needs rather than paying exorbitant prices for goods from other areas.

⁴³Interview of Lowell Fox by the writer, April 13, 1973.

Chapter 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY

Beginnings

The leather industry of Utah had its beginnings with people from Europe and the Eastern United States, who brought both experience and tools to the pioneers, who brought them to Utah.

The desire for self-sufficiency was a trait of the Mormon people. When needs for leather arose they tried to supply their own. The tanning industry resulted in some of the first business buildings being built after the pioneers came to the Great Basin. As early as 1849 the First Presidency of the LDS Church in a general letter to the pioneers gave encouragement for building a tannery.

Although many pioneers had experience in tanning, the tanning needs of the Great Basin were unfamiliar to them. The environmental conditions for tanning were different from those in the East and in Europe. This difference in environment presented the pioneers with unusual leather tanning problems. Barks for obtaining tannin, the liquid chemical used in tanning, were not the same kind of barks as back East. Experiments and failures plagued the settlers working to find a suitable tanning chemical from native barks.

Machinery was also scarce. The people built what they could from what they had when they came. More machinery was shipped across the plains by later pioneers. Gradually, needed materials became available in the Mountain West. Iron, knives, and other currier tools, had to be shipped in by wagon.

Oils for softening and replacing natural oils lost during the tanning process were hard to obtain. Most of the oil was shipped in to the tanneries. One man tried various oils including butter in his attempt to find a substitute for the expensive imported oils.

Some of the men engaged in the tanning industry surmounted the problems encountered and succeeded in establishing it as a sound business. These people who did succeed were usually helped by the Church financially. The Church also helped these people by enlisting the newly arriving pioneers to sustain tanneries by cutting bark and gathering hides for the tanneries. The Church also enlisted existing communities in work projects to help their local tannery.

Success and Growth

Although there were many difficulties to surmount during the 1850's the leather industry continued to expand because of the great demand for leather in this isolated outpost of civilization. Eastern competition from wagon trains was not too great and the need for leather was great. Also, immigrants who needed employment were coming into the

Great Basin. The Church saw the tanning industry as one of many sources of providing employment. The tanning industry was also recognized as a major need for settlers in new communities because leather was basic to survival. Leather to make harnesses for the horses and oxen to plow the ground and shoes for the people were only two of the vital needs for leather.

Resourcefulness was Brigham Young's word to the pioneers. Letting hides of all kinds of animals lie and rot was not considered resourceful. The way to save these hides and also to provide employment for the people was to tan the hides. The leather industry during this period was able to employ approximately 2.7 percent of the people in the Great Basin. Some few businessmen became wealthy through their leather involvement. Throughout this period, however, the tanning industry was never able to supply the complete needs of the people.

The Utah War to the Coming of the Railroad

The Utah war had a detrimental effect on the local tanning industry because Salt Lake Valley was the center of it and the people were uprooted through the migration south. Eventually, however, new tanneries were opened during this period. The Church tried to stimulate the economy by encouraging tanneries to be built. The co-operative system was started in an attempt to avert extreme changes that could be caused by the coming of the railroad. Because of

this pre-planning, when the railroad did come, the tanning industry survived.

From the Railroad to 1884

Church encouragement of the co-operative movement helped keep the tanning industry alive. Most of the tanning material at this time had to be imported, however. This caused a strain on the finances of the tanneries and some smaller enterprises were discontinued. Because of co-operative and Church support through ZCMI, some units of the leather industry did continue to progress, however. Pressures of finances eventually caused these to slow down production. The last stand effort of the Church to save "home" industries came with the Zion's Board of Trade. Subsidizing the tanning industry was one of its objectives, but this was one objective that never materialized.

The Tanning Industry from 1884 to 1973

Because of various pressures, the Church became less and less able to involve itself in industrial activity and consequently the tanning industry, like others, was left to struggle for itself. Those tanneries that did survive were usually those that received the most encouragement from the people in the communities where they were located, such as Orderville and Sant George. But by 1895-1900 there were only a few tanneries making a profit. Many others had gone out of business completely, in spite of the fact that the volume of hides available

for tanning continued to increase. Exportation of hides and importation of leather became the mode of business for the leather industry in Utah.

In 1934 interest in the revival of the tanning industry in Utah was manifest although it did not materialize. The year 1948 brought the revival of tanneries in the leather industry because of the Church welfare program. The Church operated a successful tannery for seventeen years until 1965 when it sold out to an individual. Three other tanneries started after 1960 and two are in business today (1973).

CONCLUSIONS

The leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints provided the influence which established and continued the tanning industry in the Great Basin.

The tanning industry in Utah is thriving today (1973) with prospects of future growth. Even with competition from a number of synthetics, it appears that the industry will successfully survive in Utah without further Church aid. Transportation of chemicals into Utah and financial encouragement are no longer a problem, and the raw product of cattle and sheep hides is now readily available just as it was in the past. There is an even greater volume of the raw product today.

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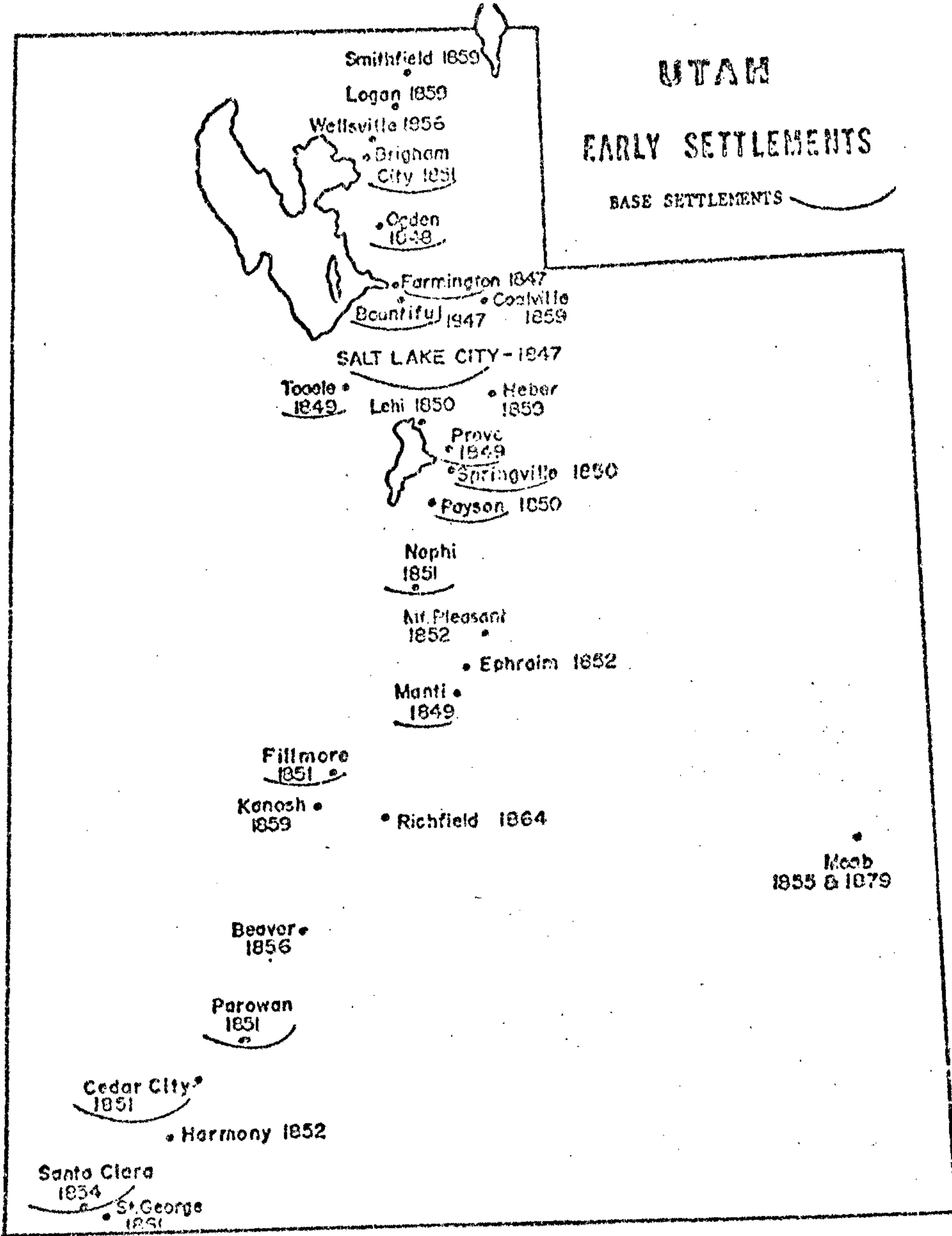
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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B

REVIEW OF TANNING INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT

1847

Alanson and Ira Eldredge in Salt Lake City.

1849

Samuel Clark in Provo, Utah, after the community worked with it and got it started.

1850

Samuel Mulliner in Salt Lake City opened the Deseret Tannery.

1851

Mulliner and Allen partnership in Deseret Tannery in Salt Lake City.

1852

Paragoona community had a tannery directed by Colonel William H. Dame.

1853

Alexander Brim in the 1st Ward in Salt Lake City, Utah.
Ira Ames in Salt Lake.
Phil Pugsley in Salt Lake.

1854

A number could have been established but no definite names have been associated with this year.

1855

Davis County tannery in Farmington under the direction of Thomas Wier, William Jennings, and John R. Winder in Salt Lake City.
Golding and Raleigh opened the "Bath House Tannery" in Salt Lake.

1856

Manti community opened a tannery.
Fillmore opened a tannery.
15th Ward tannery in Salt Lake City.
18th Ward tannery in Salt Lake City.

1857

Chester Southworth Jr. worked with a tannery in Brigham City, Utah.

1858

Brigham Young, Feramorz Little and John Winder opened the Eagle Gate Tannery in Salt Lake City, Utah.

1859

No specific names.

1860

Thomas Lee in Tooele, Utah.
Bishop Gardner in West Jordan.
Thomas Wier and Joel Ricks in Cache opened a tannery.

1861

No specific names.

1862

David Evans and Canute Peterson in Lehi.
Jonas Holdsworth of Lehi and American Fork.

1863-1865

No specific names.

1866

Lorenzo Snow in Brigham City, Utah.

1867-1869

No names.

1870

Dixie Community in St. George had a tannery opened.

1871-1873

No names.

1874

William Budge of Salt Lake City.
Kanab community tannery.

1875

American Fork Cooperative.

1876

Orderville community. Samuel Mulliner was associated with this enterprise.

1877

Edward Hunter established a tannery in Salt Lake City. Deseret Tanning and Manufacturing Company--a combination of several ward tanneries.

1878

Brother Heyner established a tannery in Glenwood.

1879

ZCMI shoe factory and Deseret Tanning and Manufacturing Co. combine.

1879-1886

No names.

1887

N. C. Rasmussen, Provo, Utah

1888-1889

No names

1890

19th Ward tannery in Salt Lake City.

1890-1894

No names

1895

St. George Tanning and Manufacturing Company

1896-1902

No names

1903

Union Hide and Wool of Salt Lake City

1904-1948

No names

1948

Tannery in Salt Lake City established by the Church with Lowell Fox as manager.

1949-1964

No names

1965

Wells Tannery in North Salt Lake run by Lowell Fox. He purchased the Church tannery and moved to North Salt Lake. The Deer Trading Post that tanned deer hides came along some time in here.

1969

Springville tannery now under management of Frank Holley.

1971

Val Liljenquist began the Leather Industries in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Names Associated with Establishment of Tanneries Where No Dates Have Been Found. The Approximate Dates are between 1855 and 1870

Tousic and Simmons in Payson, Utah.)

J. S. Page in Payson.)

probably in 1857

John Diem in Payson.)

J. W. Summerhays in Salt Lake City.

N. P. Hansen and J. R. Hansen in Cache Valley.

Simeon Carter in Brigham City, Utah.

William Marshall in Emery Co., Utah.

Daniel Allen in Escalante, Utah.

Lorenzo Clark and Jesse Wentworth in St. George.

Many others were established, as the policy of having a tannery in each settlement was worked at quite completely.

APPENDIX C

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF PEOPLE OCCUPIED IN SHOE
AND LEATHER PRODUCTS IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST
IN 1850

The following two charts will give the reader some indication of the involvement of those in the leather industry throughout the time of the thesis coverage. However, it does not differentiate between those involved in shoe making alone and those involved in the leather production of the leather industry. If general indications can be approximated, one tannery would probably be able to keep several shoe makers busy. Yet the problem was such that the shoe makers were still importing leather because the tanneries were not making leather fast enough.

INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURE OF THE MOUNTAIN WEST, 1850
NUMBER OF THOSE OCCUPIED IN EACH INDUSTRY
SHOE AND LEATHER PRODUCTS

Mountain States	Arizona	Idaho	Nevada	N.M.	Utah	Wyo	U.S.	Year
235				146	86		173,172	1850
498			26	162	231		213,157	1860
1,298	47	52	280	107	493	77	267,645	1870
2,353	119	88	224	171	731	85	269,906	1880
3,226	146	186	142	231	783	176	316,819	1890
2,777	167	195	90	177	643	173	298,726	1900
2,905	180	297	108	174	538	147	363,045	1910
3,513	300	381	93	243	519	165	437,383	1920
3,058	259	282	60	223	427	155	417,733	1930
663	56	28	2	28	66	14	364,443	1940
1,437	132	32	15	54	57	17	387,760	1950

INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURE OF THE MOUNTAIN WEST, PERCENT OF
THOSE OCCUPIED IN EACH INDUSTRY
SHOE AND LEATHER PRODUCTS

Mountain States	Arizona	Idaho	Nevada	N.M.	Utah	Wyo	U.S.	Year
1.1				.9	2.7		3.2	1850
.7			.5	.6	2.7		2.6	1860
1.0	.8	.5	1.0	.4	2.3	1.2	2.1	1870
.8	.5	.6	.7	.4	1.8	1.0	1.6	1880
.6	.6	.5	.6	.4	1.2	.6	1.4	1890
.4	.3	.3	.5	.3	.8	.4	1.0	1900
.3	.2	.2	.2	.1	.4	.2	1.0	1910
.3	.2	.2	.2	.2	.3	.2	1.1	1920
.2	.2	.2	.1	.2	.2	.2	.9	1930
.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.8	1940
.1	.1	0	0	0	0	0	.7	1950

Source: Leonard Arrington, The Changing Economic Structure of the Mountain West. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, June, 1963.

APPENDIX D

THE TANNING PROCESS IN THE WELLS TANNERY (1973)

1. Removal of the hair
 - a. Soaking in water
 - b. Flushing
 - c. Chemical wash to dissolve the hair. Sodium sulfide is used.

2. Tanning
 - a. Lime wash
 - b. Washing out lime
 - c. Lessening glue in hide. This is done by Oropon, a bacterial substance made from the pancreas of animals leeches in sawdust
 - d. Washing
 - e. Sulfuric acid and salt wash
 - f. Chrome tanning--the hide will be cut on the edge to see that the chrome has penetrated completely into the hide
 - g. Air oxidize
 - h. Wring the hide--to get the excess chrome out of it
 - i. Split hide--this is a process where the hide is made uniform in thickness
 - j. Neutralize bath or wash

3. Further care of the hide before sale
 - a. Dyeing of the hide. Almost any color is available
 - b. Oiling the hide to replace natural oils removed during tanning
 - c. Draining
 - d. Drying
 - e. Glazing--to polish the hide
 - f. Staking--this a machine that works the hide to soften it
 - g. Drying
 - h. Pigment finish if desired by customers
 - i. Pressing--to remove any wrinkles acquired in handling
 - j. Measuring and cutting for commercial sale

A HISTORY OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS
CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN THE TANNING
INDUSTRY IN UTAH FROM 1847 TO 1973

Paul Edwards Damron

Department of Church History and Doctrine

M.A. Degree, August 1973

ABSTRACT

This thesis reports the extent of the tanning industry in Utah from 1847 to 1973 and explains the relationship of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with this industry.

The tanning industry was essential to the survival of the pioneer communities in Utah until the coming of the railroad in 1869. Two important factors affecting this industry were external competition and Church support. In fact, the industry survived eastern competition because it was Church-supported. However, all Church support ended in the early 1900's, and except for a few businesses which soon ceased operation, the tanning industry in Utah came to an end. After 1904 all known Utah ventures in the tanning industry ended for a period of time.

Some efforts were made to revive this industry in 1934, but they met with negligible success. In 1948 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints commenced a tanning industry which operated successfully and was eventually turned over to private ownership in 1965. Four other privately owned tanneries have since begun in Utah.

COMMITTEE APPROVAL:



Russell R. Rich, Committee Chairman



James R. Harris, Committee Member



Lamar C. Berrett, Department Chairman