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MORMON COLONIZATION

OF THE

SAN LUIS VALLEY, COLORADO, 1878-1900

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A Thesis
Presented to the Department of History
Brigham Young University

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

by

Judson Harold Flower Jr.

May, 1966

PREFACE

Early Mormon settlements have a particular attraction for the Mormon historian. In them we can observe the trial and error process of molding societies to the pattern of a religious belief (which was the preferred procedure) and of adapting a religious program to the needs and circumstances of a particular situation (which, though sometimes unavoidable was, from the viewpoint of Church leaders, often the reverse of what was intended). We see also the difficulties of maintaining a uniform and consistent system of colonial development and expansion, and the methods and administrative machinery used in governing such a system. In these settlements many of us see our own forefathers, who faced the rigors of frontier life in an era that, to most Mormons, takes on an aura of towering strength, indomitable fortitude, and moral excellence. The historian who undertakes a study of these early settlements must be prepared to suffer a certain disillusionment, as epic figures turn out to be more nearly life-sized. He will no doubt encounter a few skeletons in the Church family closet. But this need not diminish his respect for the sturdy folk who undertook the establishment of such settlements. Rather, it serves to make them seem more real - more genuinely human. And seeing them in this light makes their accomplishments stand out all the more brightly, knowing that their deeds were the deeds not of mythical giants, but of mere - and fallible - mortals.

The history of the Mormon colonization of the San Luis Valley holds a particular interest for the writer, who was born in the valley

and spent the early years of his youth among those who helped to make the history which is the subject of this thesis. The study undertaken here has satisfied a lingering curiosity about the events and circumstances associated with the establishment and development of the small Mormon community in which he was reared.

A special debt of gratitude is owed many people whose helpfulness and co-operation made the completion of this study possible. First, to Dr. LeRoy R. Hafen, who as thesis chairman patiently read and corrected the first drafts of the work, and whose unmatched knowledge of early Colorado history helped greatly in laying the background for this study. Second, to Brother A. William Lund and his staff of assistants at the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City, who made possible the researching of early Church records and manuscripts relating to the San Luis Valley. Third, to the officials and employees at the county court house in Conejos, Colorado, who gave me access to official documents and records in their possession and allowed me to work over, under, and around them in the pursuit of resource materials. Also, to generous and thoughtful relatives who welcomed this long-departed native of the valley into their homes and provided him with bed and board during the time spent in their midst doing research. And last, but by no means least, to my wife and children, who understandingly tolerated my hermit-like tendencies during the final stages of the work.

J. H. F.

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CHAPTER I

THE SAN LUIS VALLEY BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE MORMONS

Geographic Setting

The San Luis Valley is located high in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado and New Mexico. The general lay of the valley is north-south, with the 106th meridian running through the western portion. The valley is approximately one hundred and fifty miles in length, all but about forty miles of which lies inside the Colorado border. Its width averages between forty and fifty miles, being greatest at the middle of its north-south course and narrowing almost to a point at either end. The valley floor slopes gradually from an elevation of 8,000 feet at the northernmost point to 7,000 feet at the southern end.[1] In view of its great elevation, the vast expanse of the valley is remarkable,

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[1] Rand McNally Illustrated Atlas of Today's World, (New York: Rand McNally & Company, 1962), VII, 572-73; VIII, 660-61.

and vice versa. Indeed, the combination of these two factors make the San Luis Valley a rather unique geographic phenomenon.

The exact nature of the geologic structure of the valley is still a matter of some dispute. In 1875, an extensive geological and geographical survey was conducted under the direction of F. V. Hayden, United States Geologist, at which time the opinion was formed by those making the survey that the San Luis Valley was once covered by two large lakes, northern and southern, which were divided by a slight rise of the valley floor in the vicinity of present-day Garland.[2] Most modern authorities disagree with this opinion, claiming instead that the valley floor, which is composed largely of tremendous amounts of sand and gravel, was formed by the melting waters of great glaciers which filled the canyons of the surrounding mountains during the last Ice Age.[3]

The San Luis Valley is completely enclosed by mountains. On the west it is bounded by the San Juan Range, with those portions of the range immediately bordering the valley being assigned individual names: La Garita, Sawatch, and Conejos. Viewed from the valley, the peaks of the San Juan Range do not appear as imposing as their altitude would

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[2]Ninth Annual Report of the United States Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories, Embracing Colorado and Parts of Adjacent Territories: Being a Report of Progress of the Exploration for the Year 1875, by F. V. Hayden, U. S. Department of Interior (Washington: 1877), p. 147.

[3]"Created - a Few Million Years Ago - Nature's Gift - Man's Delight," Folks and Fortunes: Saga of the San Luis Valley in Colorado, I (November, 1949), p. 38. This periodical was published in Monte Vista in connection with the Colorado State Fair, and no subsequent editions seem to have been forthcoming.

normally warrant, owing to the high elevation of the valley floor. However, on the eastern side of the valley the rugged Sangre de Cristo Range stands guard, with her peaks frequently rising above 14,000 feet elevation, averaging 3,000 to 4,000 feet higher than those of the San Juan.[4] There is a gentle westward curve at the northern and southern tips of the Sangre de Cristo Range, which results in the valley being enclosed in a slight crescent.

In contrast to what would normally be expected in an area surrounded by high, snow-covered mountains, the San Luis Valley is not well watered. While the annual precipitation in the adjacent mountains averages as much as fifty inches, that of the valley ranges from eight inches near the mountains to less than seven inches in the center of the valley.[5] Numerous mountain streams rise in the Sangre de Cristo Range, but flow only a short distance beyond the base of the mountains and are quickly lost in the sand and gravel of the valley floor. The two major streams at the northern end of the valley, the San Luis and Saguache Creeks, flow into the San Luis Lakes. These two lakes cover considerable expanse but have little depth. Here the water remains, to evaporate or sink into the sand, as the northern one-third of the valley is a closed basin and has no outlet to the sea.[6] The remaining portion of the valley

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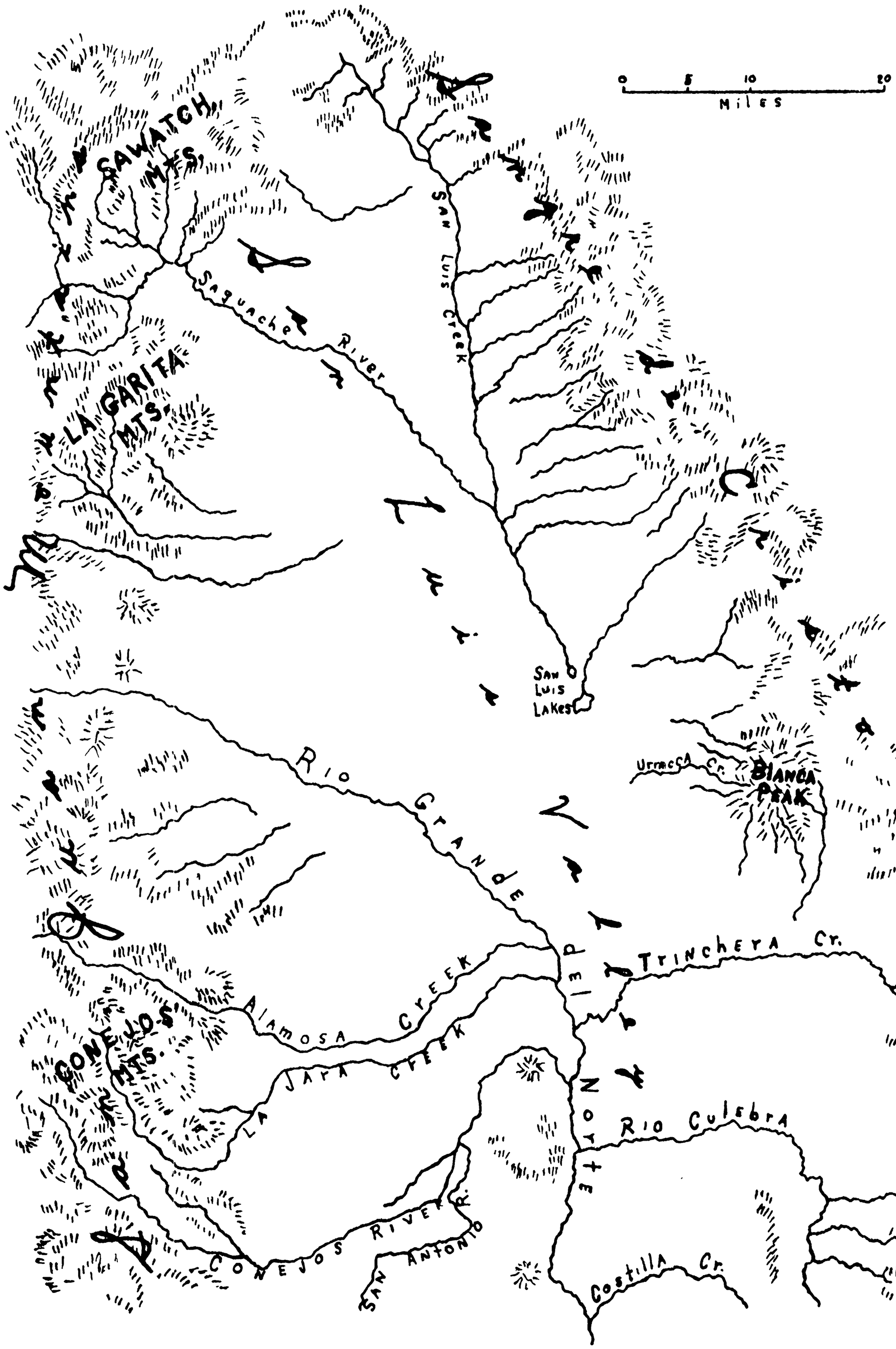
[4]Ninth Annual Report..., op. cit., p. 142.

[5]Thad G. McLaughlin, "San Luis Valley," Geological Road Logs of Colorado, ed. by John R. Donnell (Denver: Rocky Mountain Association of Geologists, 1960), p. 89.

[6]Ninth Annual Report..., op. cit., pp. 141-42.

Figure 1: Topographical Map of the San Luis Valley



is drained by the Rio Grande, which flows out of the San Juan Mountains in a southeasterly direction near Del Norte. A few miles southeast of Alamosa, the Rio Grande turns almost directly south, dividing the valley into nearly equal halves as it continues its course into New Mexico.

The San Juan Mountains, in contrast to the narrow Sangre de Cristo, are a broad, circular mass. Streams flowing out of the San Juan are less numerous than their Sangre de Cristo counterparts, but carry more substantial amounts of water. The larger of the San Juan streams, in north-south sequence, are the Saguache, Rio Grande, Alamosa, La Jara, and Conejos Rivers. These rivers together provide most of the water used for irrigation. As a consequence, the vast majority of the land under cultivation is located in the western half of the valley.[7]

A factor of particular significance in the water supply of the San Luis Valley is the great number of flowing artesian wells that are to be found there. It is estimated that there are more than seven thousand of these wells, with flows ranging from a few gallons to several thousand gallons per minute.[8]

In general, the San Luis Valley is a large, unbroken plain, slightly depressed in the center. Excepting its edges, which rise more steeply on the east than on the west, the valley floor is extremely flat. An indication of its flatness can be seen in the wide use of irrigation canals, some of which today stretch for more than twenty-five miles in

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[7]"Created - a Few Million Years Ago...," op. cit., p. 39.

[8]McLaughlin, op. cit., p. 90.

straight lines, having branches and laterals which extend from them at right angles.[9]

There are, however, a few interruptions in the flat topography of the valley floor. San Antonio Mountain and Ute Mountain, two major peaks of volcanic origin and both of unusually symetrical proportion, stand separate and aloof just south of the New Mexico border. A few miles north of the border, situated between the Conejos River and the Rio Grande, are a number of table-shaped bluffs. These bluffs are designated as the San Luis Hills, and rise as much as 1,400 feet above the floor of the valley. Along the Conejos River, almost at the geographic center of the area encompassing the Mormon settlements which are the subject of this study, are a number of smaller knolls. An interesting geographic feature brought about by the existence of these hills is that the rivers of the southwest quarter of the valley are turned northeast, in contrast to the valley's general slope, and flow for a considerable distance in this direction before joining the Rio Grande.[10]

The climate of the San Luis Valley varies somewhat from the norm expected in mountain valleys. Especially is this true as regards amount of annual precipitation which, as previously indicated, is unusually light. The most pronounced characteristic of the climate is the year-round prevalence of sunshine, though it is closely rivaled in constancy

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[9]McLaughlin, op. cit., p. 89.

[10]Ninth Annual Report..., op. cit., pp. 141-45.

by the winds which blow with gale force, often for days at a time. Temperatures in the valley are moderate, ranging from a twenty-four hour average of 63-64° in the summer, to 18-20° during the winter months.[11]

The valley and surrounding mountains abound in a variety of natural vegetation. Pine, aspen, and spruce are found in abundance on the higher mountain slopes, with piñon and cedar being common on the lower levels. Cottonwood trees and willows mark the meanderings of the streams of the valley floor, while away from the water courses nearly the whole of the valley is covered by chico and greasewood which must be laboriously cleared away before crops can be planted. Much native hay grows in the meadows of the bottomlands nearest the valley streams.[12]

Soil fertility is limited, owing chiefly to its coarse structure, sandy composition, and the presence of alkali. The alkaline condition of the soil has been a continuing problem to the farmer. However, soil authorities have indicated that the amount of alkali is not so great as to prevent successful reclamation by proper methods. Limitations of the soil and the shortness of the growing season combine to preclude the raising of slow-maturing grains and most fruits. Thus, agricultural production centers around small grains, hay, and vegetables. Wheat ranks as the major product, with oats, alfalfa, potatoes, peas, and barley being the other principal crops raised in the valley.[13]

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[11] Geology and Water Resources of the San Luis Valley, Colorado, by C. E. Siebenthal, U. S. Department of Interior, Geological Survey (Washington: 1910), pp. 22-23.

[12] Ibid., p. 26.

[13] Ibid., pp. 26-29.

Early Exploration and Settlement

When the first American explorers and traders reached the area of present Colorado, it was occupied by several Indian tribes, of which the principal ones were the Comanches, Kiowas, Arapahoes, Cheyennes, and Utes. The latter tribe had been in the area longest and claimed the entire mountain vicinity and western slope of the Rockies, and were the inhabitants of the San Luis Valley. Gradually, pressure from the gold seekers and settlers brought about the cession of most of the Indian lands in Colorado to the United States government. Beginning with the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1851, when the boundaries and territories of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and other tribes were fixed, and the Treaty of Conejos in 1863, when the Utes were moved from the San Luis Valley, the Indian gradually faded from Colorado history. The last major group of Colorado Indians, the mountain Utes, were enroute to Utah by 1881, leaving only a small reservation in southwestern Colorado where the southern Utes were settled.[14]

Long before the first Americans arrived, Spanish explorers had traversed the area of southern Colorado. There is evidence that some Spanish settlement occurred in the southern portions of Colorado during the early seventeenth century, following the conquest and colonization of New Mexico by Oñate in 1598.[15] De Vargas was in the San Luis Valley in 1694, two years after beginning his reconquest of New Mexico, which

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[14]LeRoy R. Hafen and Francis Marion Young, Fort Laramie and the Pageant of the West, 1834-1890 (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1938), pp. 191-94.

[15]LeRoy R. Hafen, Colorado: The Story of a Western Commonwealth (Denver: The Peerless Publishing Company, 1933), p. 61.

had been necessitated by the Pueblo Indian uprising under Popé in 1680.[16] Father Escalante's famous journey in 1776 in search of mission sites and a route to California brought him into southwestern Colorado. Yet, despite the activity of the early Spanish explorers, their efforts left no permanent settlements within the boundaries of present Colorado.

The first official American explorer in the San Luis Valley was Captain Zebulon M. Pike, who in early 1807 crossed the Sangre de Cristo Mountains into the valley, where he built a fort of cottonwood logs on the north bank of the Conejos River, five miles above its juncture with the Rio Grande. Pike's advance was brought to an abrupt halt by Spanish soldiers who informed him that he was on Spanish soil, at a considerable distance from the Red River which Pike professed to believe he was on. Pike apparently failed to convince the Spaniards as to the innocence of his geographical error, for they placed him under arrest and escorted him to Mexico.[17]

Each of John C. Fremont's expeditions into the West, beginning in 1842, took him through the area of Colorado. Although each of these trips was concerned to some extent with finding a route through Colorado for the Pacific Railroad, he never actually surveyed such a route. In 1848 Fremont lost one-third of his men in attempting to cross the La

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[16] J. Manuel Espinosa, "Journal of the Vargas Expedition Into Colorado, 1694," Colorado Magazine, XVI (May, 1939), pp. 81-90.

[17] Zebulon Montgomery Pike, Exploratory Travels Through the Western Territories of North America: Comprising a Voyage from St. Louis, on the Mississippi, to the Source of That River, and a Journey Through the Interior of Louisiana, and the North-Eastern Provinces of New Spain (Denver: W. H. Lawrence & Co., 1889), pp. 227-38.

Garita Mountains at the western edge of the San Luis Valley.[18] However, in 1853 he succeeded in crossing the San Juan Mountains via Cochetopa Pass, which leads from the northern end of the San Luis Valley westward across the Continental Divide to a point immediately east of present Gunnison, Colorado.[19] This route over Cochetopa Pass was followed the same year by Captain John W. Gunnison, who completed the railroad survey and for whom the river and city are named.[20]

Though the accomplishment of the official expeditions were considerable, real credit for the exploration of Colorado should go to the early hunters and fur trappers. This romantic era in Colorado history, which was drawing to a close by the 1850's and 1860's, is filled with such names as Kit Carson, Joe Meek, Jim Bridger, and Antoine Robidoux. Some of these hunters and free trappers later served as scouts for the official expeditions led by Fremont, Gunnison, and others. One of the earliest trappers of whom we have record of having trapped in the San Luis Valley was Jacob Fowler, who led a trapping expedition in the valley from February to April, 1822.[21]

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[18] Allan Nevins, Frémont: Pathmaker of the West (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc., 1939), pp. 356-66.

[19] Ibid., p. 413.

[20] Nolie Mumey, John Williams Gunnison (1812-1853), The Last of the Western Explorers: A History of the Survey Through Colorado and Utah, With a Biography and Details of his Massacre (Denver: Artcraft Press, 1955), pp. 46-47.

[21] Elliott Coues (ed.), Journal of Jacob Fowler, Narrating an Adventure from Arkansas Through the Indian Territory, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico, to the Sources of Rio Grande Del Norte, 1821-22 (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1898), pp. 100-36.

During the early 1840's the governor of New Mexico granted several extensive tracts of land to Mexican settlers in an effort to stimulate colonization in Colorado and New Mexico. These grants were intended primarily to bolster the Mexican claims east of the Rio Grande, which was an area of dispute between Mexico and the newly-born Republic of Texas. The largest of these grants, the Sangre de Cristo, comprised almost the entire southern half of the San Luis Valley east of the Rio Grande. Another, the Tierra Amarilla Grant, extended north into Colorado on the western edge of the valley. The Conejos Grant, which included much of the southwestern portion of the valley that is the area of immediate concern in this study, was eventually declared void because of non-compliance with its terms.[22]

In 1848 the San Luis Valley, along with the rest of the Mexican cession, was obtained by the United States through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. When this land cession was divided and given territorial status as part of the "Compromise of 1850" a dispute developed between the Utah and New Mexico Territories over control of the valley. The cause of the dispute was confusion as to which mountain range, the San Juan or the Sangre de Cristo, formed part of the Continental Divide which had been designated as the boundary between the two Territories. The issue was not resolved until 1861, when the San Luis Valley was largely included within the boundaries of the newly-formed Colorado Territory.[23]

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[22]Hafen, Colorado..., op. cit., pp. 94-95.

[23]LeRoy R. Hafen, "Status of the San Luis Valley, 1850-1861," Colorado Magazine, III (March, 1926), pp. 46-49.

The first known white settlers in the area later to become Conejos County arrived in 1842. They were holders of a Mexican land grant entitling them to settle in the vicinity of the Conejos River, which flows out of the San Juan Mountains into the valley a few miles north of the New Mexico border. This first attempt at settlement was short-lived, as the settlers were soon driven out by Indians who were resentful of the ill treatment which they felt they had received at the hands of Mexican authorities.[24]

The earliest permanent settlements in Colorado were established between 1851 and 1853, and were located in the San Luis Valley, east of the Rio Grande. San Luis, founded in 1851 along the banks of the Culebra River, is the oldest town in Colorado. San Pedro and San Acacio soon followed, being established in 1852 and 1853, respectively.[25]

A second and more successful attempt at settlement on the Conejos River was made in 1854. Major Lafayette Head, a former United States Marshall for the Northern District of New Mexico, brought a group of approximately fifty Mexican families into the area of the Conejos River and settled the community of Guadalupe. This group also suffered from Indian attacks, but nonetheless gradually managed to grow and prosper. A few years later, when Major Head built a new home on the south side of the Conejos River across from Guadalupe, a majority of the settlers quickly followed. This resulted in the development of a new community

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[24] Frank Hall, History of the State of Colorado... (Chicago: Blakely Printing Company, 1889-1895), IV, 91-92.

[25] Hafen, Colorado..., op. cit., p. 96.

which was named Conejos. In 1861 the newly-organized territorial legislature established, along with others, the County of Guadalupe. This name was later changed to Conejos County upon the request of territorial officials, who desired to avoid confusion with other "Guadalupe" place-names in the Territory.[26]

In its political divisions, the San Luis Valley was, until more recently, comprised of four counties: (1) Saguache County, comprising the northern one-third of the valley; (2) Rio Grande County, located on the eastern slopes of the San Juan Mountains where the Rio Grande enters the valley; (3) Costilla County, located in the southern portion of the valley east of the Rio Grande; and (4) Conejos County, also located in the southern portion of the valley, but lying west of the Rio Grande.[27] It was in the latter of these four counties that Mormon colonizers were to make their initial settlements in the valley during the late 1870's.

Colorado in the 1870's

In the decade which preceded the arrival of Mormon settlers into Colorado, the area had undergone a period of marked transition and development. Much of this development was the result of mining activity which had its beginnings with the first discovery of gold in 1858.[28] More recent were the discoveries of gold and silver in the San Juan

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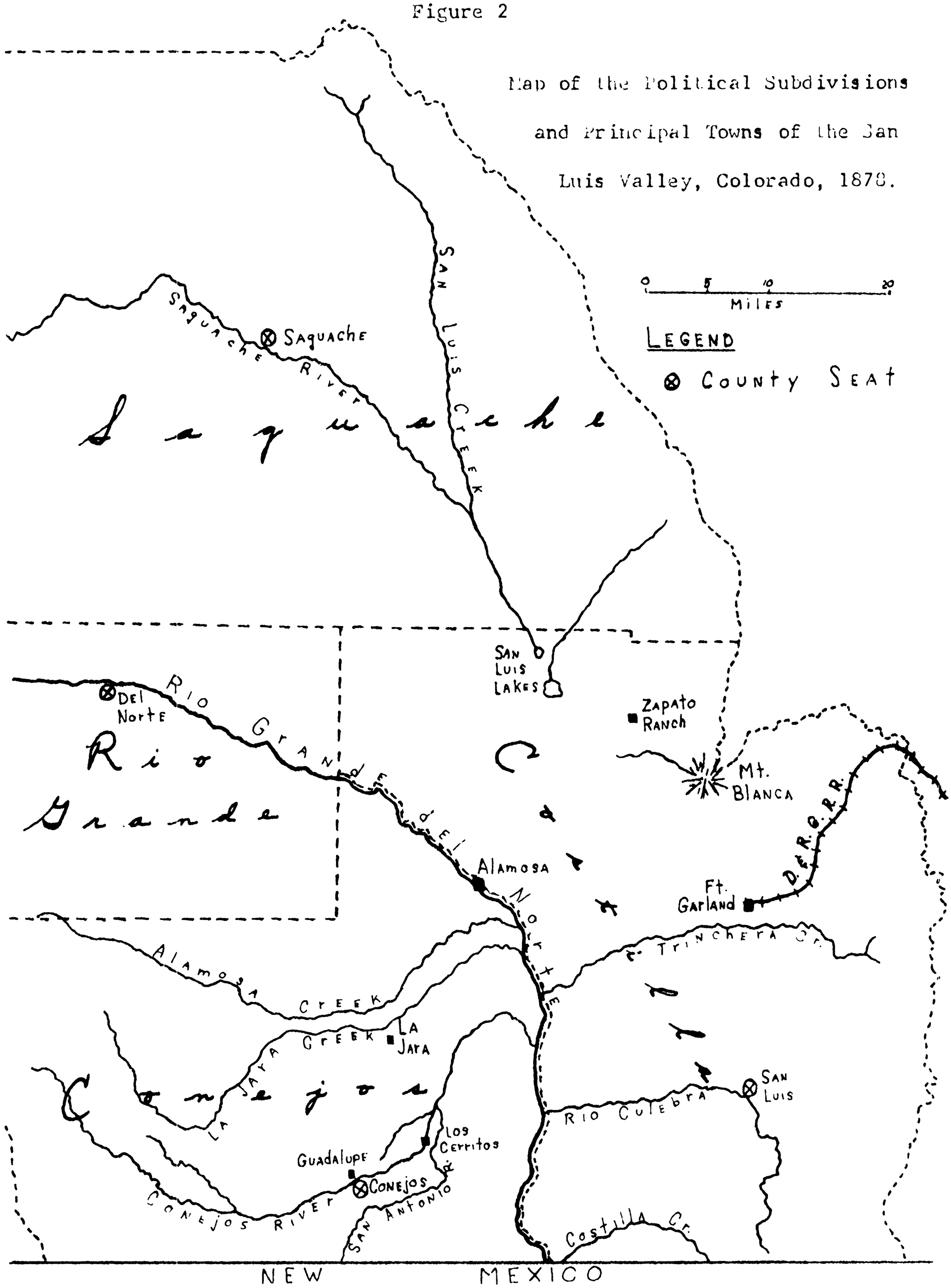
[26] Hall, op. cit., pp. 92-93.

[27] Ibid., p. 94.

[28] LeRoy R. Hafen (ed.), Colorado Gold Rush: Contemporary Letters and Reports, 1858-1859, Vol. X of Southwest Historical Series, ed. by LeRoy R. Hafen (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1941), pp. 19-21.

Figure 2

Map of the Political Subdivisions and Principal Towns of the San Luis Valley, Colorado, 1878.



Mountains in 1870-71 and the uncovering of silver-bearing lead ores at the headwaters of the Arkansas River in 1874-75. This latter discovery brought on the single biggest mining "boom" in Colorado history and resulted in the establishment of Leadville, which was to be the center of economic activity in Colorado for more than a decade. Except for the San Juan mining area, which was centered in the southwest and thus had a more direct effect upon the San Luis Valley, mining had its greatest impact in the northern portions of Colorado, where new towns rapidly developed near the mining sites.[29]

Perhaps second only to the influence of mining upon the transition of Colorado during the 1870's was that of the railroads. Fears of being isolated when the transcontinental railroad was built through Wyoming were soon dispelled by the rapid construction of railroad lines within the state. Especially important in its effect upon the development of the San Luis Valley was the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, with its main line running southward through the center of the state and projected to extend as far south as El Paso, Texas. In addition to the industrial significance of the railroads, they also played an important role in the agricultural development of Colorado, through the establishment of agricultural colonies which they promoted by the sale of their extensive land grants.[30]

Other elements also contributed to the transition which was characteristic of the 1870's. A number of towns were successfully promoted

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[29]Hafen, Colorado..., op. cit., pp. 105-24, 199-205.

[30]Ibid., pp. 182-89.

by town development companies, some of them operating on the co-operative principle, and an agency of the territorial legislature conducted a successful publicity campaign to attract permanent settlers to Colorado.[31] The chief political result of this rapid growth and change was admission into the Union, which was achieved in 1876 when Colorado was admitted as the "Centennial State."

Thus, at the time that the Mormons were preparing their colonizing venture into the San Luis Valley, much had already been accomplished by others who had preceded them. Mining was a major economic development in the nearby San Juan Mountains and would prove a valuable source of employment to many of the Saints. The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad was rapidly being extended southward and would reach the vicinity of the Conejos River at almost the same time as the first group of Mormon colonists. Agricultural development, too, was already under way, although it was to be in this latter area that the Mormons would make their most significant contribution to the further development of the San Luis Valley.

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[31] Hafen, Colorado..., op. cit., pp. 190-91.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND AND PREPARATION FOR SETTLEMENT

Mormon Colonization Practices

The establishment of a Mormon colony in an area hitherto largely undeveloped was, by the 1870's, no longer an unusual occurrence. The Mormon settlement of the Salt Lake Valley in Utah had begun in 1847 and was quickly followed by a rapid spread of Mormon colonies throughout the Utah area. With knowledge gained of experience, there emerged a fixed pattern of settlement and a standardization of methods and practices that was followed as closely as circumstances would permit. Brigham Young, President of the Church, viewed the establishment of colonies as a religious project and exercised a paternal supervision over the entire process. Church authorities were appointed, in hierarchical fashion, to roles of leadership at both the central and local levels of the colonizing program. Final authority in all matters associated with the establishment of new colonies rested with President

Young. In practice, President Young usually made the final decision regarding the selection of a suitable location for a new settlement, afterwards placing the responsibility of general supervision in the hands of one or more of his immediate assistants, the Apostles of the Church. At the local level, in the frontier colonies, local Church official directed the building of the new communities.[1]

Customarily, when a new colony was to be founded, families or groups of families from one or more established communities were called to leave their homes to help in the building up of the new settlements. In the selection of these families, care was taken to provide a balanced proportion of agricultural and industrial workers, thus insuring that each colony was supplied with the variety of individual talents and abilities necessary to the success of the venture. To this nucleus was added a group of immigrants only recently arrived among the Saints in "Zion." In this manner, a combination of experienced and inexperienced frontiersmen comprised the population of each new colony. This system proved very effective, not only in helping to assure the success of the settlement, but in caring for the absorption of the steady stream of immigrants flowing into Utah.[2]

New settlements were built under a specific plan, which called for the establishment of a community on the most promising site in a given vicinity. From this "hub-colony" other settlements would gradually

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[1]Milton R. Hunter, Brigham Young The Colonizer (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1940), pp. 55-59.

[2]Ibid., pp. 61-62.

expand throughout the surrounding area. Towns were placed at intervals of from seven to ten miles. Each town was surveyed into large square blocks of several acres each, with the blocks subdivided into lots for individual families. Farms covered as much of the land as was feasible between towns, the land being divided into small plots proportionate to the size of the families which would work them. As a rule, no homes were built on the farm lands, and all of the settlers resided in the towns. This practice of having the people reside only in the towns can be attributed to several factors, of which the most obvious - defense against the Indian menace - was only one. Town life made possible the establishment of local governments which were entrusted with the conduct of civil affairs. In addition, it provided opportunity for recreation and formal education. Above all, it afforded a greater chance for religious and spiritual guidance and development than could be possible while living in separate and remote farm units.[3]

Local government in the colonies was relatively simple, and was accomplished with a minimum of formal governmental apparatus. The religious leaders of the community, who had been appointed by higher officials of the Church, were likewise given the function of supervision over secular affairs at a level corresponding to their religious position. Both religious and secular appointments required the sustaining approval of the popular membership of the area concerned, which was somewhat automatically given. Little, if any distinction was made

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[3] Milton R. Hunter, Utah: The Story of Her People (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1946), pp. 229-33.

between religious and secular roles of leadership, and the possession of authority in both spheres was rarely questioned. Local tribunals were established, which performed their function without regard to the fine line which separates the affairs of church and state.[4]

In economic matters each settlement was to be as completely self-sustaining as possible. This same philosophy applied to the individual families, with home industries being developed to produce the essential articles of home consumption. This emphasis on economic self-sufficiency helped not only to stimulate a more rapid development of local enterprise and industry, but to lessen the degree of dependence upon already established Mormon communities. More importantly, it provided for material independence from non-Mormon businesses and merchants.[5]

The general characteristics of Mormon colonial enterprises outlined above are observable in the settlement of the San Luis Valley. However, some modification should be expected, owing to factors peculiar to the immediate situation and the fact that three decades had passed since the colonization of the Salt Lake Valley. Nonetheless, the fundamental structure of the Mormon colonial system remains intact.

Factors Leading to the Settlement of the San Luis Valley

The establishment of a Mormon community as far distant from Salt Lake City as the San Luis Valley was not a new or unique development.

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[4] Hunter, Brigham Young The Colonizer, op. cit., pp. 114-18.

[5] Leonard J. Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 112-13.

Carson Valley, Nevada; San Bernardino, California; and Fort Lemhi, Idaho; plus several sites in Arizona are representative of Mormon outposts being settled prior to or contemporary with that of the San Luis Valley, each at a considerable distance from the parent colony in Utah.[6]

Numerous factors contributed to the establishment of settlements outside of Utah. The most significant was an ever-increasing population. To the natural growth in population and church membership was added a constant flow of converts from many parts of the world immigrating to Utah to be with the general body of the Saints. In an economy that was essentially agricultural, this required a constant extension of settlements until they passed beyond the borders of the Territory. In addition to the pressures of population, it is reasonable to assume that the ever-increasing tempo of governmental prosecution of polygamists played a role in the development of remote settlements where plural families might take refuge. The most immediately compelling factor which led to the establishment of a colony in the San Luis Valley was that missionary successes in the southern states had resulted in a large number of converts, many of whom desired to migrate West, and for whom a suitable location had to be found.

The most prominent figure in the success of the missionary work in the southern states was Elder John Morgan, who in 1875 had been called to missionary labors by Church President Brigham Young.

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[6]Hunter, Brigham Young The Colonizer, op. cit., pp. 352-57.

John Morgan was born in Indiana in 1842 and lived in that state until early manhood, when he moved to Illinois. He remained in Illinois until the outbreak of the Civil War, whereupon he enlisted in the 123d Regiment of Illinois Infantry, serving with that organization in the western theater of the war. Toward the end of the conflict he served as an officer under General William T. Sherman during the famous "March to the Sea." After being honorably discharged in 1865 he went to Poughkeepsie, New York, where he attended Eastman's Commercial College, from which he was graduated in 1866. Within a short time after graduating from Eastman's, Morgan contracted a job to drive cattle from Kansas City to the Salt Lake Valley, arriving at the latter in December, 1866. Determining to reside permanently in Salt Lake City, he established Morgan College, a business school which developed into one of the most respected schools of higher learning in the Territory. In 1867 he was baptized a member of the Mormon Church, and the following year he was married to the daughter of a prominent Salt Lake City resident, Nicholas Groesbeck.[7]

Following his mission call by President Young, Elder Morgan left Salt Lake City on October 25, 1875. His labors took him initially to Illinois and Indiana, among the peoples he had known as a youth. His health soon failed him in the cold climate and he proceeded to the southern states, where he experienced considerable success in preaching the gospel. Within a short time he had organized three groups of church

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[7]Nicholas G. Morgan, "Mormon Colonization in the San Luis Valley," Colorado Magazine, XXVII (October, 1950), pp. 270-71. The author of this article is the son of John Morgan.

members totaling about sixty persons. Opposition to the Mormons soon developed throughout the vicinity which, combining with the desire of many of the new converts to be among the Saints in Zion, prompted the beginning of a search for a suitable location in the West where a settlement could be established for the southern Saints.[8]

Elder Morgan wrote to President Brigham Young, informing him that many of the converts in the southern states desired to migrate westward, and asking advice regarding a possible location site. In reply, President Young advised Elder Morgan that the growth of Zion required an extension of the settlements already existing in Utah, and recommended western Texas or New Mexico as possible locations. He further advised Elder Morgan that the site to be selected should be healthy, with abundant water so as to make irrigation feasible at little cost, and that he preferred that it be among the Indians in order that the Saints might teach and exercise a good influence over them. President Young concluded his letter with a request for information regarding the probable number of emigrants and the proposed starting date of the migration.[9]

A somewhat more definite determination of a location for the converts from the southern states was made through information supplied by Lawrence M. Peterson, of Cebolla, New Mexico, who in 1854 had migrated from Denmark to the United States with his family, all recently converted to the Church. His father died just prior to their departure from Denmark,

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[8] Deseret Evening News, December 10, 1877.

[9] Letter from President Brigham Young to Elder John Morgan, June 28, 1877, as quoted in Nicholas G. Morgan, op. cit., p. 271.

and his mother succumbed to cholera shortly after their arrival in the United States. Thus, Lawrence, along with an older brother, was left without parental guidance and was entrusted to the care of a company of immigrant Saints who were journeying to Utah. At Kansas City, Missouri, while the company was waiting to obtain teams and wagons for the remainder of the journey, young Lawrence strayed from the group and joined a caravan of Spanish traders, with whom he traveled to New Mexico. There he lived for approximately twenty years, becoming fluent in the Spanish language and marrying a Mexican woman. In 1875 he traveled to Utah to visit his brother, Hans Jensen,[10] whom he had not seen since their separation at Kansas City, and who was at that time living in Manti. While visiting with his brother in Manti, Lawrence was again brought into activity in the Church and was ordained to the office of Elder. Following his stay of two months duration, he returned to his home in New Mexico, where he preached among his Mexican neighbors, converting a group of about forty to the Church.[11]

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[10]The difference in names is accounted for by the fact that Lawrence adhered to the Scandinavian custom of taking his father's given name, Peter, as his own surname. His brother, Hans, adopted the American practice and retained his father's surname, Jensen.

[11]Andrew Jenson, "The Founding of Mormon Settlements in the San Luis Valley, Colorado," Colorado Magazine, XVII (September, 1940), pp. 174-76. Available resources differ as regards the area in which Lawrence M. Peterson's proselyting activities among the Mexicans occurred. In an interview published in the Deseret Evening News, October 2, 1877, Lorenzo H. Hatch, a Mormon missionary laboring among the Mexicans of Colorado and New Mexico, indicated that the converts brought into the Church by Brother Peterson were residents of Trinidad, Colorado, rather than of New Mexico.

Lawrence Peterson was well acquainted with that portion of the San Luis Valley which lay in the vicinity of the Conejos River, having resided for some time at the Mexican village of Los Cerritos, which was located on the bank of the Conejos River seven and one-half miles northeast of the town of Conejos. Much valuable information was obtained from him concerning the area of New Mexico and southern Colorado, and it was he who first recommended the San Luis Valley as a suitable place of settlement for the southern Saints.[12] The information supplied by Brother Peterson was sent to Elder John Morgan, who was busily engaged in preparations for the migration of the recently converted Saints from the South.

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[12]Jenson, "The Founding of Mormon Settlements...," op. cit., p. 177.

CHAPTER III

INITIAL COLONIZATION OF THE SAN LUIS VALLEY BY SOUTHERN SAINTS

Winter (1877-78) in the Barracks at Pueblo

President Brigham Young died on August 29, 1877, a fact unknown to Elder Morgan when, on August 30th, he addressed a letter to President Young with information that he was planning to take his group of emigrants by train from Scottsboro, in northeastern Alabama, to Pueblo, Colorado. From Pueblo, he proposed to move the company over the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad to end of track at Garland, Colorado, where they would disembark and travel overland toward the New Mexico border. An alternate plan was also outlined in the event that circumstances made it advisable to spend the winter at Pueblo. Should this occur, Elder Morgan anticipated sending a small group from among the strongest of the party to establish a foothold and prepare the way for the remainder to follow in the spring of 1878. He further indicated that he had been successful in obtaining very reasonable rates

for the railroad portion of the journey, the total adult fare from Scottsboro to Pueblo being $29.80, with children under twelve traveling for half that amount.[1]

Arrangements were made to leave Scottsboro on November 19, 1877. However, owing to a delay in the arrival of some of their number, they were unable to depart until two days later. On November 21st, the Saints started their journey to the West. The company consisted of seventy-two converts, mostly from Georgia and Alabama, and was accompanied by Elder Morgan and two other missionaries from Utah, James T. Lisonbee and Thomas Murphy.[2]

From Scottsboro, the Saints traveled west to Corinth, Mississippi on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. At Corinth they changed to the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad for the trip north to Columbus, Kentucky, where they crossed the Mississippi River on barges which carried the railroad cars with the passengers inside. From the western bank of the river they traveled on the Iron Mountain Railroad to St. Louis, Missouri,

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[1]Letter from Elder John Morgan to President John Taylor, as quoted in Arthur M. Richardson and Nicholas G. Morgan Sr., Life and Ministry of John Morgan (Salt Lake City: Nicholas G. Morgan Sr., Publisher, 1965), pp. 138-39.

[2]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1877," account by Daniel R. Sellers (unpublished material). The "Manuscript Histories" of the various Branches, Wards, and Stakes of the Church are located in the Latter-day Saints Church Library in Salt Lake City. In more recent years they consist of formal records kept by persons specifically designated to that task. Previously, they included handwritten or typed accounts, usually by persons directly associated with the particular period of the account, though the author is not always indicated. Dating includes only the year and no pagination is given, but as the "Histories" are arranged in chronological order, little difficulty is encountered in locating desired materials.

there changing to the Missouri Pacific Railroad which carried them westward to Kansas City, Missouri. They arrived at Kansas City late in the evening of November 22nd and remained aboard the train overnight. Shortly before noon on November 23rd, the company boarded the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad for Pueblo, Colorado. Traveling in cold and windy weather, the Saints finally arrived at Pueblo on November 24th. As it was early evening, and no provisions had yet been made for lodging, the Saints were again permitted to remain overnight in the cars of the train.[3]

On the morning of November 25th, Elder Morgan was able to make arrangements for the Saints to reside temporarily in the "Thespian Theatre," an old showhouse built in 1869.[4] On Monday, November 26th, he began arrangements for making permanent winter quarters in Pueblo, as it had been decided that continuance of the migration through the winter months would be very difficult and further, that as employment possibilities were better in Pueblo than in more remote areas, means might be found to better provision themselves for a renewal of their journey the following spring. A location upon which to erect barracks for winter quarters was sought and selected. The site chosen was a secluded island in the Arkansas River, well sheltered by trees which would help to break the cold winter wind. The location also had the

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[3]John Morgan, "Private Journal," (unpublished material). This source is located in the collection of Dairies and Journals in the Latter-day Saints Church Library, Salt Lake City, Utah. Elder Morgan's "Journal" is a multi-volume work and references are best found by chronological date.

[4]Nicholas G. Morgan, "Mormon Colonization in the San Luis Valley," op. cit., p. 273.

advantage of offering the Saints comparative isolation from the other residents of Pueblo while at the same time being at the convenient distance of about one mile from the center of the city.[5]

On the evening of November 26th, a meeting was held in the theatre, during which Elder Morgan advised that the Saints pool all of their means and join together in a communal organization known within the Church as the "United Order."[6] This advice was approved by a majority of the Saints and Daniel R. Sellers was nominated and elected to be President of the Order. At a subsequent meeting, held November 28th, the organization of the Order was completed and Brother Sellers was set apart as President and Treasurer by Elder Morgan.[7]

An amount totaling slightly over $400 was voluntarily paid into the common treasury by those who elected to participate in the Order.[8] However, this did not include all of the Saints at Pueblo, as a few families

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[5]Nicholas G. Morgan, op. cit., p. 273.

[6]The "United Order" is the most commonly used of several names by which is designated the Mormon practice of the "law of consecration and stewardship." This "law" was first given through a revelation to Joseph Smith, prophet and founder of the Mormon Church, in 1831. It involved the voluntary "consecrating" or deeding of the individual properties of church members to the Church. In return, the individual would receive a "stewardship" over an amount of the properties consecrated sufficient for the needs of his family. Any surplus property thus created would be given as a "stewardship" to the poorer members of the Church. While temporarily successful in a few instances, the project as a whole did not work out satisfactorily. It was modified in 1838 and, as an official program of the Church, abandoned in 1841, though it continued to be practiced for some time by individual groups in isolated areas and circumstances.

[7]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1877," Sellers, op. cit.

[8]John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

chose instead to rent homes a short distance from the island location.[9] Those participating in the Order continued to reside in the old theatre until December 1st, when work on the barracks was completed sufficiently to permit them to move in.[10]

The barracks consisted of a single structure, divided into ten rooms, each measuring ten by fifteen feet, with a larger room on each end to serve as kitchen and dining room. During the winter of 1877-78, these limited accomodations served as "home" for nine families, four of which included six or more children. In addition to these families there were several unmarried men, some of whom slept on improvised beds in the kitchens for lack of sufficient space elsewhere.[11]

Among the group of Saints at Pueblo were several skilled laborers, including a number of carpenters, a blacksmith, a brick-mason, a stone-mason, and a shoemaker. The remainder were farmers. Most of these men were able to obtain some kind of employment in or near Pueblo. Several were employed by a Pennsylvania company engaged in the erection of a large rolling mill, and additional jobs were made available as rapidly as the expansion of the business permitted. Employment was also found by a number of the men is securing timber to be made into ties for the railroad being built southward to New Mexico. Wages, for those who

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[9]The exact number of families which elected to remain outside the Order cannot be determined from available sources. Differing accounts vary the number from two to five.

[10]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1877," Sellers, op. cit.

[11]Nicholas G. Morgan, op. cit., pp. 274-76.

found employment, averaged from $1.50 to $2.00 per day, and the money earned was turned over to Brother Sellers who did all of the purchasing for the Saints residing in the barracks.[12]

After seeing that the Saints were suitably located and provided for, Elder Morgan left Pueblo for his home in Salt Lake City. While there, he had several meetings with President John Taylor, who had succeeded Brigham Young as President of the Church, concerning the future location of the Saints at Pueblo. The decision was also made that Elder Morgan should continue his work in helping the southern Saints to move West.[13] Accordingly, on January 21, 1878, Elder Morgan was set apart as President of the Southern States' Mission.[14] Elder James Z. Stewart, of Draper, Utah, was appointed to assist Elder Morgan in the selection of a suitable permanent location for the Saints at Pueblo, and to transfer them to the place selected.[15]

Elder Morgan left Salt Lake City on March 4, 1878, preceding Elder Stewart by about two weeks. Arriving in Pueblo on March 6th, he found the Saints at the barracks in a generally good condition, having survived the winter with a minimum of severe hardship. Two births had taken place during the winter months and death had claimed but an equal number.[16]

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[12]Nicholas G. Morgan, op. cit., p. 276.

[13]John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

[14]Brigham H. Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), V, 559.

[15]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1878," Sellers, op. cit.

[16]Nicholas G. Morgan, op. cit., p. 277.

Elder Morgan reported the situation of the Saints at Pueblo as follows:

> The Saints here have had many things to contend with during the winter that have tried some of them sorely, but we find a good spirit among them, and a determination to hold on to the faith. They were entirely unacquainted with the country, its manner or customs, which was an obstacle of no small magnitude to overcome. They had no Elder to advise them and were left to their own resources to obtain food and raiment, but they tell me they have had plenty to eat and wear; no one has suffered. Another difficulty was they were thrown into very intimate relation with each other in their winter quarters and the natural weaknesses and frailties of human nature would, of course, prominently develop themselves; differences would naturally arise, and inexperience would make blunders; in short it was the old story that Saints recognize as the experience of the sifting process that all sooner or later have to go through. In the midst of this, there came into the camp a man who had turned from the truth and endeavored to cause dissension. The result was that a close scrutiny only showed more clearly the counterfeit sought to be palmed off on them, and I have yet to find the first person who was in least affected from this cause. The Saints were poor and could not see their way clearly out of the difficulties surrounding them, but they trusted in the God of Israel and he has brought them through so far safely.[17]

Before the arrival of Elder Stewart, Elder Morgan and Daniel R. Sellers went southward by train to Garland, Colorado, then the end of track of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. While in Garland, they were able to meet with Colorado Governor A. Cameron Hunt, who recommended that the Saints settle in the southern portion of the San Luis Valley, giving them considerable information about the area. Following the meeting with Governor Hunt, Elder Morgan and Brother Sellers returned by train to Pueblo where they met Elder Stewart, only recently arrived from Utah.[18]

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[17]Letter to editors, March 18, 1878, Deseret Evening News, March 28, 1878.

[18]Nicholas G. Morgan, op. cit., pp. 277-78.

First Mormon Settlers in the Valley: Spring, 1878

Elder Stewart was much concerned about the prospect of success for the proposed settlement. He knew that it was the practice of the Church, in these matters, to send settlers well equipped with teams, wagons, machinery, seed, etc., and that the Saints in Pueblo had almost none of these necessary materials. Notwithstanding his concern, and acting upon instructions from Elder Morgan, Elder Stewart selected three of the men from the barracks to undertake an exploratory journey into the San Luis Valley. The three men chosen to accompany him were George Wilson, Milton Evans, and A. B. "Tob" Bagwell. Taking only a few provisions and bedding, plus axes, spades, and firearms, the four left Pueblo on March 25th. They traveled by train to the terminus at Garland, thence on foot to the Rio Grande, where they made arrangements with a Mexican freighter to haul them across the river, and on to a point near the village of Los Cerritos.[19]

At Los Cerritos they found Brother Lawrence M. Peterson who, having been called to assist in the settlement of the Saints in the San Luis Valley, had recently arrived with his family and that of Brother Juan de Diós Trujillo from Cebolla, New Mexico. Brother Peterson's acquaintance with the area and facility in the Spanish language enabled him to render valuable assistance in arranging for food and temporary lodging for the families who would shortly arrive from Pueblo.[20]

Shortly after arriving in the valley, Elder Stewart was successful in negotiating the purchase of two farms, totaling one hundred and sixty

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[19]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1878," account of James Z. Stewart (unpublished material).

[20]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1878," (unpublished material).

acres. The Mexican owners were desirous of moving, as they believed the grazing-land of the farms to be exhausted. Thus, Elder Stewart was enabled to purchase the farms, each with a house already constructed, for a combined price of eighty-five dollars. He signed notes for the purchases, afterwards turning them over to the Church, which assumed responsibility for payment. He then purchased a yoke of oxen and a plow, and arranged with some Mexican families to borrow wagons and other materials necessary to put in crops. Then, leaving his three companions and the newly-arrived families from New Mexico to the task of planting wheat, potatoes, and vegetables, Elder Stewart returned to Pueblo to bring the remaining Saints to the valley.[21]

Some difficulty was encountered by Elder Stewart in obtaining, from the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, the reduced rates which Elder Morgan had previously negotiated for the Saints. Though the matter was later straightened out and the Saints again granted greatly reduced fares, it was financially impossible, at this time, to take more than a small part of the Saints at Pueblo to the San Luis Valley. Giving consideration to the desirability of having those with good employment remain in Pueblo, it was mutually agreed as to which families would go to the settlement near Los Cerritos. Those selected were Daniel R. Sellers and family, Mary A. Kirtland (widow) and family, Patrick C. Haynie and wife, and Mrs. Carlyn M. Bagwell. This group left Pueblo on May 16th, the Sellers and Kirtland families being the first to arrive at Los Cerritos on May 19th.

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[21]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1878," Stewart, op. cit.

The Haynies and Sister Bagwell arrived on May 22nd, following a short stopover in Alamosa.[22] A few days later Brother Alonzo S. Blair, another who had received a call to assist in setting up the new colony, arrived with his family from Bear Lake County, Utah.[23] These families, together with those of Brothers Peterson and Trujillo, were the first Latter-day Saint families to establish their homes in the San Luis Valley.

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[22]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1878," op. cit.

[23]Nicholas G. Morgan, op. cit., p. 281.

CHAPTER IV

ADDITIONAL ARRIVALS: THE BEGINNING OF FORMAL CHURCH ORGANIZATION AND TOWNSITE DEVELOPMENT

Utah Saints Arrive in the San Luis Valley

To the southern Saints in the valley it seemed that they were faced with the task of building their new homes in a remote and virtually unsettled section of the country. Not only was the area largely undeveloped, but its geographic and climatic characteristics were almost the exact opposite of those with which they had been familiar in the South. In such a situation it was natural that they should hope for assistance from the Saints in Utah who were more experienced in the ways of the frontier. The desire that a number of families be sent from Utah to join them was frequently expressed at the barracks in Pueblo. In this way they would be provided with the aid of men and women whose experience in the process of colonization would be of great value in meeting those problems common to most frontier settlements, especially so in

the practice of irrigation. In addition, it would give them the added benefit of close association with long-time members of the Church whose knowledge of Church doctrine and practices would be a source of guidance and instruction to the recent converts.

Elder Stewart agreed that such a move would be of great assistance to the Saints at the new settlement in Los Cerritos. Knowing that it had been the usual practice of the Church to send experienced families to assist in the establishment of new colonies, he addressed a request to this effect in a letter to President John Taylor.[1] A few weeks later, having seen to the completion of the plowing and planting for the summer, Elder Stewart was released from his assignment in the San Luis Valley. He departed for his home in Utah on June 17, 1878.[2]

The first definite indication that action was being taken in regards to the sending of families of Saints from Utah to assist in the settlement of the San Luis Valley came in August, 1878. At the Quarterly Conference of the Sanpete Stake, held August 17th and 18th at Manti, Utah, Apostle Erastus Snow, addressing the conference, told the members present that the presiding brethren of the Church were attempting to carry out the program inaugurated by President Brigham Young in establishing settlements outside of Utah. In so doing, it had been decided to call several families of Saints from Utah to assist in the building up of these settlements. Bishop Hans Jensen, of Manti, was therefore

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[1]Letter from Elder James Z. Stewart to President John Taylor, May 15, 1878, as quoted in Nicholas G. Morgan, "Mormon Colonization in the San Luis Valley," op. cit., p. 280.

[2]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1878," op. cit.

appointed to lead a group of Saints from Sanpete Stake to assist in the establishment of the settlement now beginning in the San Luis Valley, Colorado. Also appointed, and unanimously sustained to assist Bishop Jensen in this project, were John H. Hougaard, of Manti, Christen Berthelsen of Fountain Green, and John Allen and his two sons of Richfield.[3]

Optimism for the venture was high. Prior to their departure for Colorado a meeting was held in Manti at which the "gift of tounges" was manifested,

> ...through which the prediction was made that the brethren called to Conejos County, Colorado, should succeed in establishing settlements in that part of the country and afterwards return to labor in the Manti temple. Then they should go back to San Luis Valley where a temple would be erected at some future day.[4]

On September 3, 1878, Bishop Jensen, along with his daughter Marie and son Marinus, a Mexican (name unknown), William A. Cox, Soren C. Berthelsen and family, and John Allen and family - a total of eighteen persons - left Manti for the journey to the San Luis Valley.[5]

Leaving Manti, they proceeded south along the Sanpitch and Sevier Rivers to Salina, Utah. At Salina they joined the route of the Old Spanish Trail, which took them eastward over the Wasatch Plateau, then northeast through Castle Valley until they crossed the San Rafael River

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[3]"Report of Sanpete Stake Quarterly Conference," Deseret Evening News, August 23, 1878.

[4]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1878," op. cit.

[5]Hans Jensen, "Journal," translated by Lauritz G. Petersen (unpublished material), in the Latter-day Saints Church Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, p. 98.

near present Castle Dale, Utah. Continuing along the Old Spanish Trail they turned eastward towards Gunnison Valley and the Green River, which they crossed near the present town of Green River, Utah. A few miles southeast of their crossing point on the Green River they left the Old Spanish Trail to continue eastward into the Grand River Valley, which they followed to present Grand Junction, Colorado. At Grand Junction they crossed the Grand (Colorado) River and followed the Gunnison River to the confluence with the Uncompahgre River where the city of Delta now stands. Traveling up the Uncompahgre River, they arrived at a point near present Montrose, Colorado.[6] To this point their journey had been over the same route as that taken in the opposite direction by Gunnison in 1853.[7] However, instead of continuing along Gunnison's route over

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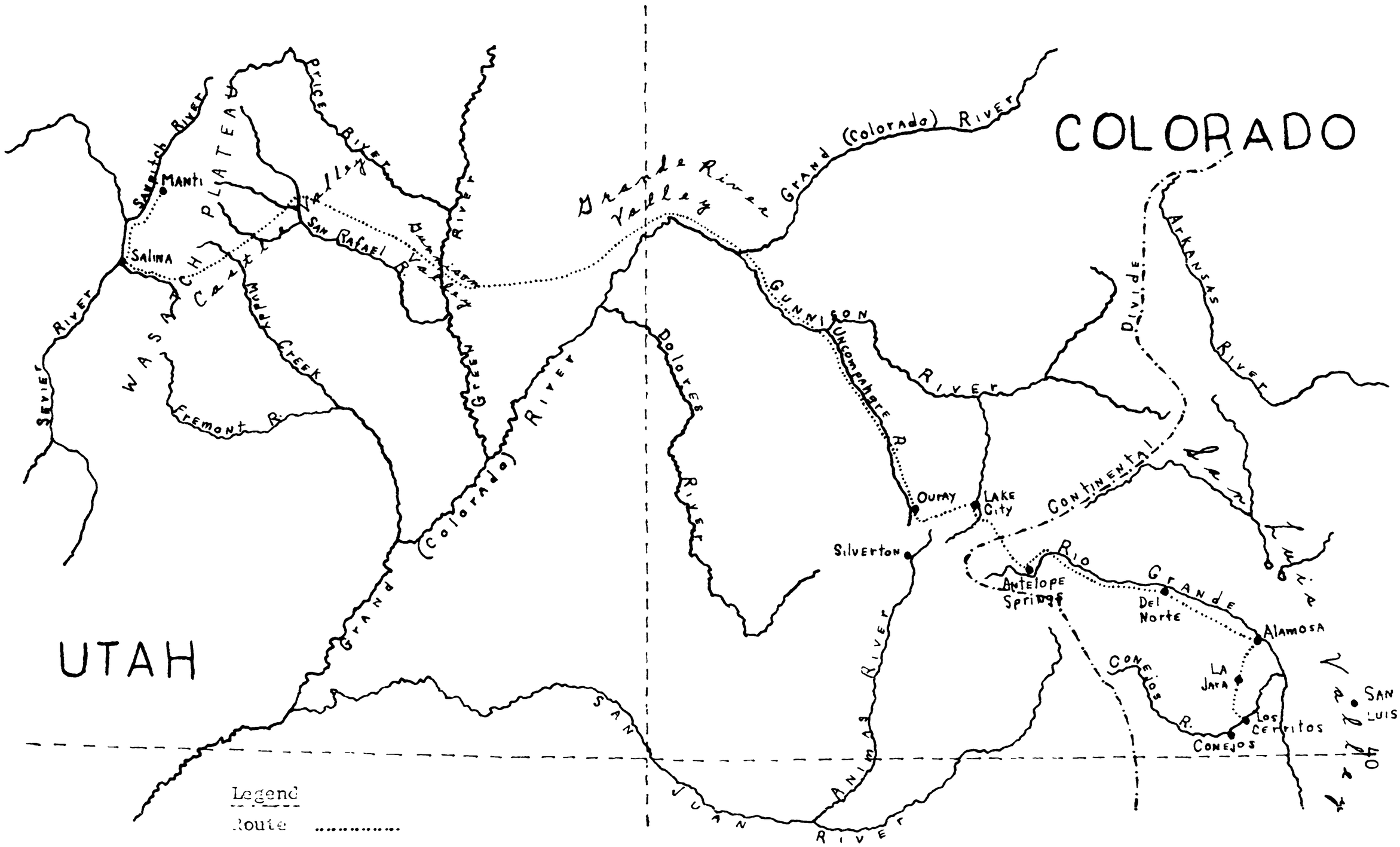
[6]Hans Jensen, "Journal," op. cit., pp. 97-99.

[7]Gunnison's route is described in detail in E. G. Beckwith, Report of Explorations for a Route for the Pacific Railroad, by Capt. J. W. Gunnison, Topographical Engineers, near the 38th and 39th Parallels of North Latitude, from the Mouth of the Kansas River, Mo., to the Sevier Lake, in the Great Basin. U.S., Congress, Senate, Reports of Explorations and Surveys, to Ascertain the most Practicable Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean. 33rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 1855, Ex. Doc. 78, II, 43-71. His official map, N° 4, From the Coo-Che-To-Pa Pass to the Wasatch Mountains, is found in Vol. XI of the same series. Bishop Jensen's "Journal" does not give a detailed account of the entire route taken by his party. However, he does mention numerous key points along the way: Salina, Castle Valley, Gunnison Valley, Green River, Grand River Valley, Gunnison River, Uncompahgre River, Ouray, Lake City, Rio Grande, Del Norte, and La Jara. As each of these points, from Manti, Utah, to Montrose, Colorado, match those of Gunnison's route in 1853, there is ample reason to believe that Bishop Jensen's route was exactly that taken by Gunnison. Bishop Jensen's statement in his "Journal" that information he gave ex-Governor A. Cameron Hunt (then a Vice President of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad) "was the beginning of the D&RG R.R. route that way to Utah" would lend further credence to this belief, as the D&RG route parallels that of Gunnison over much of the journey.

Figure 3

ROUTE OF UTAH SAINTS TO THE SAN LUIS VALLEY, 1878



Cochetopa Pass, they pursued their course up the Uncompahgre River to Ouray, from which point their journey took them eastward to Lake City. Leaving Lake City, the traveled southeast across the Continental Divide to a point along the Rio Grande near the town of Antelope Springs. Following along the Rio Grande, they entered the San Luis Valley at Del Norte and continued along the river to Alamosa. From Alamosa, they turned south through La Jara and on to Los Cerritos, where they arrived at the home of Lawrence M. Peterson on October 6, 1878.[8]

More Saints Arrive from Pueblo

Three days prior to the arrival of the Saints from Utah, the families of Milton H. Evans, Samuel S. Sellers, William A. Jones, Thomas W. Chandler, and Hugh L. Sellers arrived at Los Cerritos from the barracks in Pueblo. They had departed from Pueblo on October 1st, traveling by train as far as Alamosa, now the new terminus of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, located twenty-two miles north of Los Cerritos.[9] Thus, by October 6, 1878, the Saints at Los Cerritos included nearly all of the Pueblo group, in addition to those which had arrived from Utah and New Mexico. Their numbers were now sufficient to give consideration to the organization of a formal church group, and it was to this matter that Bishop Jensen now turned his attention.

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[8]Hans Jensen, "Journal," op. cit., pp. 97-99. The exact route between Lake City and the Rio Grande is not indicated in the "Journal." However, maps of the period indicate the existence of only two wagon roads between these two points; the most direct being that indicated above, the other involving a much longer route by way of Silverton.

[9]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1878," op. cit.

Church Organization and Activity

On October 12th, a Priesthood meeting was held in the home of Lawrence M. Peterson, at which time a local organization of the Church was effected. Bishop Hans Jensen, in Los Cerritos by appointment from the authorities of the Church, had written instructions from Apostle Erastus Snow which designated him as the Presiding Elder of the Group. John Allen and Soren C. Berthelsen were appointed to serve as Counselors. Brother Peterson was appointed as Clerk and Recorder, while Daniel R. Sellers and William A. Cox were selected as Head Teachers. At a meeting on Sunday, October 13th, this organization was approved and sustained by the general body of Saints in the valley.[10]

The harvest for the autumn of 1878 was meagre, and there were many days during which the meals consisted of ground wheat and Mexican beans. Bishop Jensen reported this faire as being sufficiently distasteful as to require "both faith and necessity to keep up our humor and to keep good feelings in the camp."[11] Bishop Jensen wrote to President John Taylor about the conditions and hardships of the Saints at Los Cerritos, and on Christmas Eve received $45 from President Taylor. With this money, flour was purchased and divided among the Saints.[12] Additional assistance came from their Mexican neighbors whose kindness and generosity merited high praise and gratitude from the Saints. Of especial

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[10]Nicholas G. Morgan, op. cit., p. 285.

[11]Hans Jensen, "Journal," op. cit., p. 99.

[12]Letter from Hans Jensen to editors, January 6, 1879, Deseret Evening News, January 20, 1879.

significance to the welfare of the Saints was the action of a wealthy Mexican rancher who, free of charge, loaned them twenty-one cows to use for milk, butter, and cheese.[13]

The United Order which had been established during the winter months at the barracks in Pueblo was continued during the early days of the settlement at Los Cerritos. However, misunderstanding and difficulties soon arose and Bishop Jensen, feeling it necessary for the success of the settlement to do so, disbanded the communal organization.[14]

The establishment of a formal church group was soon followed by the organization of a Sunday School and Relief Society, the latter being a women's organization designed primarily to assist in caring for needy members of the Church. To provide for the education of their children, a school was established, with classes held in an old rented house.[15]

Several of the brethren were assigned to travel around the valley, preaching the Gospel. These efforts at proselyting among their predominantly Mexican neighbors brought the Saints into occasional conflict with local officials of the Catholic Church. One incident, which occurred on January 3, 1879 at a Catholic meeting held in Los Cerritos, was described by Bishop Jensen:

> I and four more of the Saints went into the meeting, stood in front of the priest as innocent as lambs while he scolded us for one hour. He called us thieves, liars, whoremongers, and a very smart set of men, but had the religion of hogs and dogs, and then he went through with his sacrament ceremony: Then he turned against us as a crazy man, and called

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[13]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1878," Stewart, op. cit.

[14]Hans Jensen, "Journal," op. cit., p. 99.

[15]Loc. cit.

> for help to throw us out, although we went quiet [sic] and peaceably. It had a good effect on the people present, for yesterday I baptized twelve and blessed five children, and am now anxiously waiting for the priest to come back and drive off another lot, and we will gladly receive them through the waters of baptism....[16]

Selection of the Townsite of Manassa

At a council meeting held Sunday, February 3, 1879, it was decided to locate a townsite, to be named Manassa in honor of the eldest son of Joseph, of Biblical fame. From this "hub-colony" at Manassa, it was anticipated that numerous other settlements would later be established in the surrounding vicinity. A committee composed of Bishop Hans Jensen, John Allen, and Lawrence M. Peterson was appointed to devise ways to obtain the land desired and to determine the exact site of the proposed town. The selection of a site was made a matter of prayer by the members of the committee and it was felt that they were guided in their decision by the prompting of the Holy Spirit.[17]

The location chosen for the new settlement was on State lands, approximately three miles northwest of Los Cerritos, lying along the north branch of the Conejos River and just north of a series of small knolls which interupt the otherwise flat topography of the area. After the site had been selected, the committee applied to the Colorado State Land Board for the purchase of two sections (1,280 acres) of land. The town of Manassa was to be built on the west section, with the east

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[16] Letter from Hans Jensen to editors, January 6, 1879, Deseret Evening News, January 20, 1879.

[17] "San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1879," op. cit.

section being divided into farming lots which could be purchased by individual settlers.[18]

The Saints were given permission by the State to settle and improve the lands for which they had made application, plus the option to purchase them as soon as a definite policy and price could be determined upon by the State Land Board. However, much negotiation and delay awaited the Saints. They were not to obtain official title to the land upon which Manassa was located until 1889.

Second Migration from the Southern States

In the fall of 1878, when the group of Utah Saints under Bishop Hans Jensen was involved in preparations for the journey to Colorado, Elder John Morgan was busily engaged in arranging for another company of southern Saints to migrate to the San Luis Valley. He had previously written of his intent to continue the emigration movement to the San Luis Valley, and had received the following advice from President John Taylor:

> Your proposal to forward this season's emigration to Colorado or New Mexico meets with our approval. In Pueblo we understand our people are doing well temporally, and perhaps others would be as fortunate, and probably by an increase of numbers and [sic] increase of spiritual strength would also be developed. With regard to the land selected in Conejos Co., we have but one fear and that is that it is somewhat too cold for southern folks, but although it may be cold it will do for a temporary stopping point at any rate. Bro. Peterson (we understand from Bro. Stewart who has just returned home) is now with them; we trust his influence, experience in western life etc., will be of great value in aiding and strengthening the Saints. We

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[18]Nicholas G. Morgan, op. cit., pp. 286-87.

> presume you correspond with him and with others of the new colony, if not, we suggest it would be a source of comfort to the people there for you to do so. With regard to loaning them some Church cattle we should be pleased to do so, if we understood how to get them there. It seems to us that it would cost more than they are worth to send them so long a distance, but perhaps some idea has been presented to your mind that has not to ours, and if you have any feasible plan to suggest, we shall be happy to adopt it.[19]

It was Elder Morgan's expectation that a company numbering between seventy-five and one hundred persons would leave from Chattanooga, Tennessee on November 20, 1878, and his plans for the migration are indicated in a letter written to the editors of the Deseret Evening News.[20] However, a severe outbreak of yellow fever throughout the South forced a postponement of the migration, and Elder Morgan wrote to President Taylor as follows:

> The recent terrible scourge through which the South has passed has paralyzed business to such an extent that the people are scarcely able to realize enough money to pay their taxes, and judging from present indications their troubles are only commencing. There is a widespread feeling that the fever epidemic will not cease entirely during the winter, and will break forth with renewed violence, in the spring.
>
> ...Our emigration should have left on the 20th of this month, but owing to the prevalence of the epidemic at our points of embarkation, and the uncertainty of being able to support the company at Conejos, during the coming winter, it has been deemed prudent to hold the company until March 10th or thereabouts, which will enable the emigrants to arrive in time to sow spring crops.[21]

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[19] Letter from President John Taylor to Elder John Morgan, July 19, 1878, as reproduced in Richardson and Morgan, Life and Ministry of John Morgan, op. cit., pp. 180-81.

[20] Letter from John Morgan to editors, October 3, 1878, Deseret Evening News, October 11, 1878.

[21] Letter from John Morgan to President John Taylor, November 16, 1878, as quoted in Richardson and Morgan, op. cit., pp. 193-94.

On March 17, 1879, Elder Morgan again wrote to the Deseret Evening News with information that a company of Saints was scheduled to leave for Conejos County, Colorado on March 24th. This company was to consist of converts from Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Virginia, who would gather as a group at Chattanooga, Tennessee for departure by train.[22]

The company, totaling about fifty persons, actually departed from Chattanooga on the evening of March 23rd. Leaving Chattanooga, they traveled by train to Corinth, Mississippi. From Corinth, they followed the route of the previous migration through St. Louis and Kansas City, arriving at Pueblo on the evening of March 27th. At Pueblo, the Saints again changed cars for the trip southward to Alamosa, making this last portion of the trip by train in a very heavy snowstorm. In the pre-dawn hours of March 28, 1879, the company arrived at Alamosa, where they waited at the train station until mid-afternoon, when Bishop Jensen arrived with teams and wagons. As it was too late to make the trip to Los Cerritos that afternoon, departure from Alamosa was delayed until the following morning. In the late evening of March 29th, they arrived at Los Cerritos after a long day's trip through the valley.[23]

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[22]Letter from John Morgan to editors, Deseret Evening News, March 24, 1879.

[23]John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

CHAPTER V

THE INFLUX OF MORMON COLONISTS CONTINUES: SETTLEMENT OF MANASSA, EPHRAIM, AND RICHFIELD

The Founding and Development of Manassa

Following the selection of the site of Manassa and the application to the State Land Board for purchase of the same, the Saints proceded immediately with plans for the settlement of this first and largest of the Mormon communities to be established in the San Luis Valley. In March, 1879, John H. Hougaard, a surveyor by trade and one of those from Utah's Sanpete County who had been assigned to come to Colorado to assist in the settlement of the San Luis Valley, made a survey of the eastern half of the section upon which the town was to be built. In a letter to the editors of the Deseret Evening News Bishop Hans Jensen and Brother Hougaard reported the progress made through the spring of 1879, adding indications of their hopes for the future of the valley:

...Over 100,000 acres of land have been appropriated by the Government to the State of Colorado for school and university purposes, and to erect public buildings at Denver, the capital of the State. About 20,000 acres of this land is situated in this county, most of which is agricultural land, and is yet unoccupied. Generally speaking the land is rather gravelly, yet is seems to produce good grain; water for irrigation is plentiful, and there is good meadow land in various places; abundance of timber on the mountain slopes and in the cañons; distance to it from 12 to 16 miles. The climate is somewhat cold and windy, owing to the high altitude of the valley, it being from 7,000 to 8,000 feet above the level of the sea.

This land is all for sale, but as it has not yet been appraised, we can not say what it will cost, but think it will not vary much from government price, $1.25 per acre. We have been in communication with the land commissioners having this business in charge, and find them, as well as the officers of the State in general, quite favorably disposed towards our people. We have located and surveyed one townsite, Manassa, which is one mile north and south by half a mile east and west, laid off in 32 blocks, four lots in each block. We have also surveyed the land in the vicinity to the amount of about 2,000 acres. A beautiful large meadow is laying [sic] southeast near to town, with good range to the west. Water for irrigation can be had from the north branch of the Conejos River, the labor and expense of taking it out is but trifling, one or more towns can be located to the north of us, where there is plenty of land, but the facilities for taking out water are not so good, nor is meadow land so good nor convenient.

The number of our people here now is about 160, which we think will be doubled during the summer and fall by immigration from the southern States, they are all poor, but through the generosity and fatherly care of Prest. John Taylor and the Twelve, who very kindly furnished us $300 to purchase seed grain and farming implements, we have been enabled to put in considerable of a crop.

We have lately made application to the Land Commission to buy from the state some 2,000 acres of land to begin with, and we expect an early appraisement of the same; terms of payment as prescribed by law, is 30 per cent. down at the time of sale, and balance in seven equal annual payments, bearing seven per cent. interest.[1]

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[1]Letter to editors, April 19, 1879, Deseret Evening News, April 23, 1879. Corrections to this letter were printed in the May 13th edition of the same newspaper, and have been included in the quote, above.

The Saints in the San Luis Valley were highly optimistic and enthusiastic about prospects for the future. Land was plentiful and inexpensive, water for irrigation was to be found in abundance, and mining activity in the surrounding mountains gave promise of a steady market for agricultural produce. All this, plus the steady influx of new settlers from the southern states and Utah, gave every assurance of success for the colonial endeavor. Reports reaching Utah described the valley and its budding settlements in such glowing terms that a correspondent of the Salt Lake Herald, a non-Mormon newspaper, was assigned to visit the valley to discern their accuracy. Although his account contains numerous errors of detail, his general description is accurate and has the advantage of being written by one not so intimately associated and emotionally concerned with the venture:

> So much has been heard of, but little known of the preconceived Eden, lately established in southern Colorado by the Mormons, that your correspondent deemed it his duty to visit the settlement and give your readers an account of its location, improvements, etc.
>
> ...The city of Manassa, so named, is situated in Conejos County, seven miles north by east of the county seat on ranges 9 and 10, township 34, north of New Mexico, principal meridian. A more beautiful location would be difficult to find, the site being selected with judicious foresight for agricultural and pastoral enterprises, and the settlers cannot fail ultimately to realize fully the most sanguine hopes of those now building the city.
>
> The area of land comprising the settlement is 3,000 acres, half of which has been applied for, the remaining 1,500 acres belong to the state. An appraisement will shortly be made of each alternate half section, and be purchased on conditions granted by the state authorities. The branch of the Conejos River runs through the settlement in a northeasterly direction, affording the fullest facilities for irrigating purposes. ...The city proper is located in the centre - one mile east and west by one mile north and south - and is laid off in well defined squares, blocks and lots, each block containing six and a half acres, exclusive of streets, and divided into four lots. The centre block

has been donated for public purposes, and thereon will be built the temple, court house, and other public buildings.

The streets of the city are six rods wide, with streams of water running on either side, the immediate intention being to plant shade trees according to the system established in Salt Lake City. Many of these streets are already occupied by the Mormon families, who at the present writing number 156 souls who are living in tents and temporary buildings.

Outside the city limits the land is divided into ten acre lots, on which a number have already permanently located themselves, and are engaged in plowing their land, sowing grain, or building their acequias from the main irrigating ditch. We might here mention that these ten acre fields are to be divided among the resident families for raising of crops, but where the family is numerous they will be donated from ten to twenty acres additional. Wheat, oats and barley are the principal crops being planted, and it is a rather unusual sight to see the women follow the oxen and plow.

...A drive to the head of the ditch, where we were told Mr. Hans Jensen, president or bishop of the colony, could be found, gave us a good idea of the thrift and untiring industry of this remarkable people, who were all busy working as if their lives depended on their individual labor. We were cordially received by the chief dignitary...who said their great desire was to bid strangers welcome to their beautiful home, which they trusted would next season number at least 1,200 souls. ...Manassa will be the nucleus of numerous surrounding smaller settlements, possessing the same unequalled advantages in cultivatable land. A post office has already been established, called after the city, and the people enjoy a tri-weekly mail. Their grave yard has been located, and two little mounds show that death has laid its rigid hand on two of their little ones.

They all firmly believe in polygamy, and that they are a persecuted people, denying the privilege of the United States Supreme Court taking their rights from them; but they say that they will conform strictly to the laws of the state in this regard, as well as all others.[2]

So excellent were the prospects for a greatly increased population that the Saints were prompted to undertake the surveying of a second townsite, to be located three and one-half miles northeast of

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[2]"Mormon Manassa," Salt Lake Herald, May 22, 1879.

Manassa. The name chosen for this second settlement was Ephraim, a name which, in Biblical history, belonged to the brother of Manassa. It is perhaps significant that the names Manassa and Ephraim in the San Luis Valley were duplicates of those given to two small communities in Sanpete County, Utah, from which area the Utah Saints now in Colorado had come. The survey work at Ephraim was done in the summer of 1879 by John A. Hougaard, who was afterwards released to return to his home in Utah.[3] The actual settlement of Ephraim, however, was not begun until the fall of 1880, when a number of new families from Utah established themselves on the site.

The Mormons Encounter Violence and Opposition in the South

On July 21, 1879, an incident occurred in the South which reflected the situation of members of the Church in that area and gave added impetus to the migration of southern converts to the San Luis Valley. On that date Joseph Standing, aged 24, one of several missionaries of the Church assigned to labor in the southern states, was shot and killed by a mob near Varnell's Station, Whitfield County, Georgia.[4]

Opposition to the Mormons in the South had been growing for some time. Elder Morgan was a frequent target of the agitators, who wrote threatening letters and tacked warning posters in areas where converts to the Church were numerous.[5] The death of Elder Standing did not bring

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[3]Letter from Hans Jensen and John H. Hougaard to editors, June 27, 1879, Deseret Evening News, July 2, 1879.

[4]Telegram from Elder Rudger Clawson to Elder John Morgan, July 21, 1879, quoted in the Deseret Evening News, July 22, 1879.

[5]Richardson and Morgan, Life and Ministry of John Morgan, op. cit., pp. 132-35, 190-203.

an end to such opposition, nor did it result in any positive action being taken by the government of Georgia to protect the Saints. Indeed, what governmental action did occur seemed to move in the opposite direction. In the fall of 1881, the Georgia state legislature enacted the following law:

> Be it enacted by the general assembly of the State of Georgia, that from and after the passage of this act, it shall not be lawful for any person in this State, in any address to a public or private assemblage of persons, to counsel, advise, or encourage in any way the violation of the laws of this State forbidding polygamy or bigamy.
>
> Be it further enacted that any person or persons who shall be guilty of the violation of this act shall on conviction be punished by confinement at labor in the penitentiary for any time not less than two nor longer than four years.[6]

And from the citizens of Habersham County, Georgia, came the following notice to the Saints:

> To the Mormons of the County of White and everywhere else:
>
> You are hereby notified not to make any more tracks on this side of the river [Chattahoochee], for you are not fit to pollute the air with your false doctrine. We just give you this note of warning to keep from hurting you; but if you or anybody else comes over in Habersham, telling your big Mormon lies any more, you will be dealt with almost unmercifully; that is, you will not get back with all the skin on your backs. You had better rake up your subjects and leave the State. A word to the wise is enough.[7]

The anti-Mormon sentiment in Georgia was typical of that throughout the South, and that of the South was in many ways only a reflection of the nation-wide wave of popular feeling against the Mormons which

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[6]Editorial, "More About Georgia Anti-'Mormonism'," Deseret Evening News, September 21, 1881.

[7]"Mob Law in Georgia," Deseret Evening News, December 23, 1881.

swept over the country during the years 1879-1884. The Mormon practice of polygamy was the central issue in this agitation, which received governmental, as well as popular, attention. Government action reached its high-water mark when, following lengthy debate and passage in the Senate, the President of the United States signed the "Edmunds Law" into effect on March 22, 1882.[8] This law, in effect, amended the 1862 anti-bigamy law by strictly defining polygamy and further declaring it to be a misdemeanor, punishable by fine and imprisonment. It also imposed restrictions which, in essence, disqualified all Mormons from jury service.

In the South, as elsewhere, opposition against the Saints continued to increase. On August 10, 1884, another act of violence occurred when Elders John H. Gibbs and William S. Berry and two others, friends of the Elders but not members of the Church, were murdered at Cane Creek, Tennessee.[9]

All of this terror and violence had a marked effect upon the rate of emigration by southern converts to the West, and the "spirit of gathering," which Elder Morgan frequently mentions in his letters, was given a considerable boost by the threatenings of the populace. In an address before the General Conference of the Church in Salt Lake City, Elder Morgan stated that the situation had continued to grow progressively worse, "until we scarcely need to preach in the Southern States the principle of emigration, so anxious are the people to escape from

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[8]U.S., Congressional Record, 47th Cong., 1st Sess., 1882, XIII, Part 2, 1152-1163, 1195-1217; Part 3, 2197.

[9]Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church..., op. cit., VI, 89-92.

their surroundings."[10] Whatever the motivating force, Saints from the southern states continued to pour into the San Luis Valley in regular spring and fall migrations for a full decade after that first handfull spent the winter of 1877-78 in the barracks at Pueblo.

Organization of the Manassa Branch

On Sunday, August 24, 1879, the first official Church conference in the San Luis Valley began, with Apostle Erastus Snow presiding and Elder Morgan also in attendance. Meetings of the conference continued through the 26th, and were held in the outdoor Bowery which had only recently been completed. At the final meeting of the conference, held, after an adjournment of several days, on August 31st, Bishop Hans Jensen was released from his assignment in the valley. Soren C. Berthelsen was set apart as Presiding Elder over the Manassa Branch of the Church, which was officially organized the same day. John Allen and Samuel S. Sellers were appointed as First and Second Counselors, respectively.[11]

On September 2nd, lacking only one day of being a full year since he had departed from his home in Manti, Bishop Jensen, in company with his son and daughter, left the valley to return to Utah.[12]

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[10]Discourse by Elder John Morgan in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, May 23, 1880, text printed in full in the Deseret Evening News, August 21, 1880.

[11]"Colorado Conference," Deseret Evening News, September 10, 1879.

[12]Hans Jensen, "Journal," op. cit., p. 100.

Continuing Arrival of Emigrants into the Valley

On November 24, 1879, a company of 110 Saints arrived at Alamosa from the southern states. This was the fifth company of emigrants from the South, making a total of about 250 souls from that section of the country now located in the San Luis Valley.[13]

During the winter of 1879-80 the track of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad was extended south from Alamosa to Antonito, the location of the latter being approximately ten miles southwest of Manassa. A switch was also installed at a point in the line directly west of Manassa, which shortened the distance from the railroad to the settlement to three miles and thus added greatly to the convenience of emigrants arriving by train.[14]

On March 27, 1880, Elder Morgan arrived at Manassa with another company of southern Saints numbering about seventy souls. This was only about half of the total which had been anticipated, many being left behind because of an outbreak of the measles. Those forced to remain behind were instructed to prepare themselves for departure approximately three weeks later. Arriving at Manassa, Elder Morgan also found many who were afflicted with the measles. Several others were suffering from a sickness which he described as being similar to the mumps, indicating that it was his belief that the illness was attributable to the uncomfortable but unavoidable process of accli-

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[13]Letter from John Morgan to editors, December 20, 1879, Deseret Evening News, December 31, 1879.

[14]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1880," op. cit.

matization which affected in some way almost all of the southern emigrants.[15]

The town of Manassa had undergone much change since Elder Morgan's last visit of the previous year. Between thirty and forty houses had been erected and were occupied by the Saints. A hewn-log school house had been completed, where the children met in regular session, and where meetings of the Sunday School were also held.[16] In fact, the development of the town had proceded at such a fair rate as to lead many to predict an eventual fair-sized city. One Mormon observer, viewing the growth of Manassa from his residence in Antonito, was so impressed as to report that the town "bids fair to be one of the leading cities of our country ere long."[17]

Whatever the future prospects for Manassa, the prevailing poverty among the southern Saints arriving in the valley was a constant obstacle to the progress of the settlement, and one which could not be overcome solely by the injection of Mormon families from Utah into the community. Much credit for assisting the new arrivals through the first difficult months was due the Mexicans of the valley who rented homes, farms, seed, and other materials and equipment to the newcomers arriving in their midst. The Saints were thus enabled to begin farming almost immediately upon arrival, thus lessening the burden which otherwise

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[15]Letter from John Morgan to editors, April 2, 1880, Deseret Evening News, April 9, 1880.

[16]Loc. cit.

[17]Letter from D. G. Campbell to editors, June 8, 1880, Deseret Evening News, June 17, 1880.

would have been thrown upon the growing colony in caring for them. In addition, the chance to begin almost immediately in working for their own improvement was an important morale factor.[18] There was, in general, and especially in the earlier years of the Mormon colonization, a kindly and friendly feeling between the Mormons and their Mexican neighbors. The Saints were grateful at finding a peaceful and even helpful welcome extended to them by the Mexicans who, for their part, were equally pleased to encounter a group of Americans who did not rush to take advantage of their innocence in business matters.[19]

On April 17th the balance of the group originally scheduled for the emigration of the previous March arrived in the valley.[20] This brought the total number of Saints then living in and around Manassa to approximately five hundred.[21]

The population was further augmented by the arrival of two companies of emigrants during October and November, 1880. The first, a group of Saints from Utah, arrived on October 25th. This group was composed of members from the Sanpete, Sevier, and Juab Stakes of the Church, the areas of each corresponding roughly to the counties of the

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[18]Letter from John Morgan to editors, April 2, 1880, Deseret Evening News, April 9, 1880.

[19]Discourse by Elder John Morgan in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, May 23, 1880, printed in the Deseret Evening News, August 21, 1880.

[20]Letter from H. W. Barnett to editors, April 29, 1880, Deseret Evening News, May 5, 1880.

[21]Discourse by Elder John Morgan in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, May 23, 1880, op. cit.

same names. Starting from various points, they met in the vicinity of Huntington, on the upper branch of the San Rafael River, and traveled together to Manassa. The company consisted of ninety souls, comprising eighteen families. John Allen Jr. was Captain of the group. Other officers, chosen for the duration of the journey, were Thor N. Peterson, Assistant to the Captain; Andrew Poulson, Chaplain; Howard Coray, Captain of the Guard; and William Christensen, reporter. They came in 28 wagons, bringing with them 82 draft animals, in addition to numbers of good quality sheep, goats, and cattle.[22] The second group, from the South, arrived on November 20th. Totaling 117 souls, they had come under the leadership of Elder Matthias F. Cowley, one of the missionaries working in the southern states with Elder Morgan. They had gathered from Virginia, Georgia, and Alabama to their central point of departure at Chattanooga, Tennessee. While enroute they had picked up additions to their number at Huntington, Tennessee, and Columbus, Kentucky, the group at the latter point having come from their homes in Mississippi.[23]

Included among the number of Saints who arrived from Virginia in 1880 were Mr. and Mrs. John Dempsey, the parents of the future boxing champion who, as the "Manassa Mauller," would bring a degree of national prominence to the small town of his birth.[24]

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[22]Letter from W. Christensen to editors, November 1, 1880, Deseret Evening News, November 10, 1880.

[23]Edward H. Anderson, "Apostle Matthias F. Cowley," Lives of Our Leaders (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1901), p. 227.

[24]Nicholas G. Morgan, "Mormon Colonization in the San Luis Valley," op. cit., p. 290.

In November, 1880, Silas Sanford Smith arrived to take up permanent residence in the San Luis Valley. A cousin of Joseph Smith, prophet and founder of the Mormon Church, Silas was to play the leading role among the Saints in the San Luis Valley for the next decade. In January, 1879, at the time the decision was being made to extend Mormon settlements into such areas as Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico, Silas had been appointed as President of the San Juan Mission, named for its location along the San Juan River in the "Four Corners" area of Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico. Included in this mission were settlements at Bluff and Montezuma, both in Utah; Burnham, New Mexico; and Mancos, Colorado.[25] His responsibilities were later extended to include the San Luis Valley, and at the conference held at Manassa in August, 1879, it was announced that he would have general supervision over the Saints in the valley.[26] In July, 1880, he made a trip into the valley for the purpose of looking into conditions there. While at Manassa he devoted most of his time to visiting among the settlers, giving them encouragement and advice. Observing the need for a grist mill to convert wheat into flour he, in partnership with Brother D. H. Elledge, purchased a flour mill in the town of San Luis, located about twenty miles east of Manassa in Costilla County. The rather considerable distance between the settlement at Manassa and the mill in San Luis

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[25]Albert E. Smith (comp.), Silas Sanford Smith: Pioneer, Statesman, Colonizer, 1847-1910. (Salt Lake City: privately printed, 1963), pp. 13-21.

[26]"Colorado Conference," Deseret Evening News, September 10, 1879.

proved to be a problem, but in spite of this handicap the mill operated successfully for five years before being moved to Manassa.[27]

From his visit in the valley, Silas returned to the San Juan Mission where, at a conference held there in September, he was advised of the need for his presence in Manassa. Apostle Erastus Snow had recently visited the San Luis Valley and he informed Silas that more experienced settlers were needed, and that calls were at that time being made for additional Utah Saints to be sent there. On September 15, 1880, Silas left the San Juan region for Manassa. Shortly after arriving in the valley he received a request to come to Salt Lake City to report on conditions in the San Juan area and at Manassa. He did so, stopping at Denver on his return trip for the purpose of making appointments for future meetings regarding the purchasing of land in the San Luis Valley. Upon returning to the valley he was elected as Agent for the Manassa colony, with authorization to handle all matters pertaining to the purchase of land and the acquisition of title to the same.[28]

With the arrival of Silas S. Smith in the valley came a change in Church organization. Manassa Branch officials remained as before, but Silas was given specific appointment as the presiding official over all of the Saints throughout the valley. Platte D. Lyman was designated to serve as First Counselor to President Smith, and William Christensen received appointment as Second Counselor.[29]

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[27]Albert E. Smith, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

[28]Ibid., pp. 23-25.

[29]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1880," op. cit.

The Settlement of Ephraim

As previously indicated, the townsite of Ephraim had been surveyed during the summer of 1879 in anticipation of the arrival of many emigrants into the valley. The site, located three and one-half miles northeast of Manassa was laid out in a pattern similar to that of Manassa. One mile north and south by one-half mile east and west, it was divided into 32 blocks, with four lots to each block. About 1,000 acres of land around the town was also surveyed and laid off in lots of ten acres each. An irrigation ditch from the Conejos River to the town was located and leveled, a distance of one and a half miles. Good range existed east of Ephraim along the west bank of the Conejos River. However, the nearest meadow land of good quality was located on the La Jara Creek, some six or seven miles to the west. It was anticipated that the facilities in the vicinity of Ephraim were sufficient to sustain between 100 and 125 families.[30]

A number of the Utah families who had arrived in October, 1880, under the leadership of John Allen Jr. settled temporarily on the site of Ephraim shortly after their arrival. However, because most of them were unable to establish permanent quarters before winter set in, only two families spent the winter of 1880-81 at Ephraim. Hans C. Heiselt, the head of one of these families, was appointed as Presiding Elder, and a few meetings were held at Ephraim during the course of the winter.[31]

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[30]Letter from Hans Jensen and John H. Hougaard to editors, June 27, 1879, Deseret Evening News, July 2, 1879.

[31]"Ephraim Ward Manuscript History, 1880-81," account by Andrew Jenson (unpublished material).

In the spring of 1881 several of the Utah families who had resided at Ephraim the previous fall returned. In addition, five families of southern Saints also settled at the new site, bringing the total number of families at Ephraim to eleven. In April, work began on the Ephraim Canal, which had been surveyed the previous February by Thor N. Peterson. The canal, which tapped the Conejos River at a point almost due east of Manassa, was completed in May of the same year. Following the completion of the canal, a small crop of grain and vegetables was planted, from which a fair harvest was realized in the fall. A small log school house, 20' x 26', was constructed in 1882. As in most early Mormon settlements, the structure served for both school and church purposes.[32]

The Settlement of Richfield

In 1881 a number of the settlers at Manassa were given permission by Apostle Erastus Snow to locate a new settlement in the San Luis Valley. The name chosen for the new town was Richfield, and the area selected was immediately east of La Jara, approximately six miles directly north of Manassa. This area possessed good land, but had been previously overlooked as a possible town site because it appeared to be too high to make water from the Conejos River serve for irrigation purposes. However, Brother Thor N. Peterson, using a spirit-level, determined that a ditch could be constructed which would bring water to the new location. Non-Mormons in the area ridiculed the idea that irrigation was possible, saying that "Mormons thought they could make water

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[32]"Ephraim Ward Manuscript History, 1881-82," Jenson, op. cit.

run uphill." Undaunted by the taunts of their detractors, the Saints began work on a ditch in 1881, tapping the Conejos River at the same point as the Ephraim Canal, and running a northwest course of almost eight miles to its destination at Richfield.[33]

During the fall of 1881, the families of Thor N. Peterson and Thomas A. Crowther, both from Utah, built small pioneer cabins in the Richfield area. No survey of a townsite had as yet been made, but in the spring of 1882, following the arrival of several additional families, the survey of a small site was accomplished. The efforts of the Saints in constructing the Richfield Canal was rewarded when work on the canal was completed on April 28, 1882. With water from the Conejos River pouring through the ditch, the planting of crops began. However, owing to the lateness of the season, only a small harvest of wheat was realized in the fall.[34]

In the autumn of 1882 it was decided that the initial location of the Richfield townsite was too marshy, and the decision was made to relocate the town, moving it a short distance further north. A new townsite was surveyed containing 260 acres, and several buildings were constructed on the site that same autumn. Church meetings were held in the homes of the members until February, 1883, when work on a log meeting house was completed. On February 18, 1883, the Saints at Richfield were officially organized into a dependent Branch of the Ward at Manassa. Thor N. Peterson, who from the beginning had been acknowledged as the leader of the group, was set apart as Presiding Elder of the Branch.[35]

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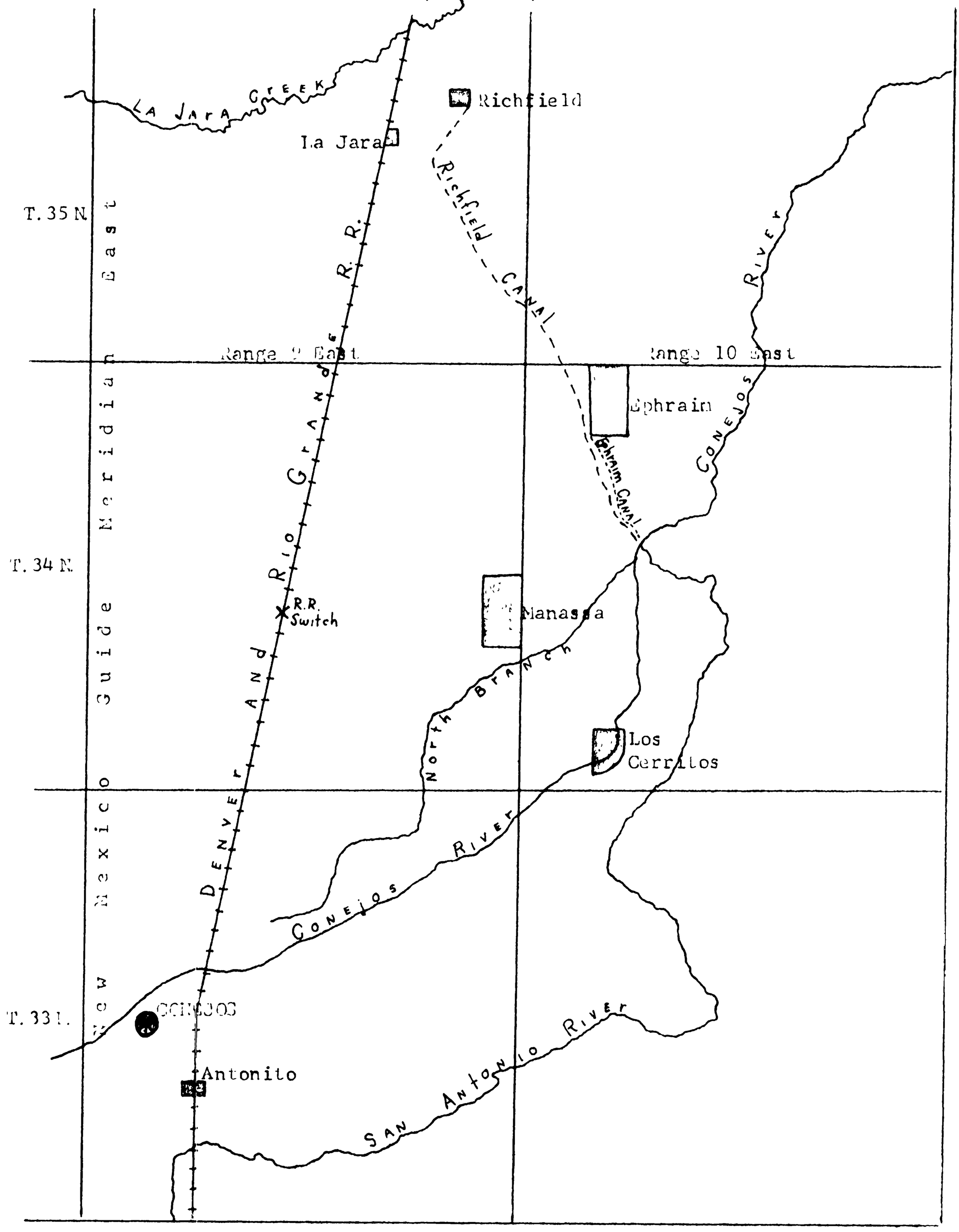
[33]"Richfield Ward Manuscript History, 1881," (unpublished material).

[34]Ibid., 1881-82.

[35]Ibid., 1882-83.

Figure 4: Map Showing Location of the Mormon Towns of Manassa, Ephraim, and Richfield



Scale: 1 inch = 2 miles

Disagreement Between Utah and Southern Saints

Early in 1881 it became evident that a bad feeling was growing between the Saints from Utah and those from the South.[36] The root of this problem lay, not in disputes over doctrine or religious practices, but in the differing customs and culture backgrounds of the two groups.

A majority of the Saints from Utah were of Scandinavian birth or descent. In the same way that most immigrants coming to the United States from Europe found the society and culture of the North more conducive to their aspirations than that of the South, the Utah Saints felt more at ease among their own group than amid the southern folk. This in spite of the fact that they were commonly bound by the same religious views. Too, a great number of those from Utah spoke their native language with greater facility than English, and foreign immigrants in the United States everywhere tended to congregate with their own kind in isolated or semi-isolated groups. These factors contributed to a degree of separateness that could be readily observed from the fact that, in general, the Saints from Utah gathered to the newer communities being built away from Manassa, while Manassa itself became more and more a town comprised of southerners.

For the southern Saints, who found it much more difficult to adjust to their new environment than did those from Utah, there was the added irritant of finding themselves subjected to instruction on everything from church doctrine to farming and irrigation practices. Being native Americans, they found it difficult to accustom themselves to what was

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[36]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1881," op. cit.

essentially a subordinate position under the Saints from Utah, who were generally of foreign extraction. Another point of resentment among the southerners was that, in the main, members of their group had been excluded in the selection of individuals to fill leadership positions in the various church organizations. This was somewhat remedied when, observing the discord which had been engendered, Apostle Erastus Snow and Silas S. Smith recommended a change in the presiding officers at Manassa. Soren C. Berthelsen was released from his position as Presiding Elder over the Manassa Branch, being replaced by William L. Ball, a southerner (who, it should be noted, had resided in Utah for a time before coming to the San Luis Valley). Silas S. Smith Jr., from Utah, and Samuel S. Sellers, one of the first group of southerners to arrive in the valley in 1878, were appointed as Counselors to Brother Ball.[37]

One of the southern Saints in the valley, H. P. Dotson, wrote numerous letters to the Deseret Evening News during the course of 1881, the contents of which were published and eventually reached readers in Colorado. In general, these letters were concerned with reporting the progress of the settlements. However, several of them also contained remarks which gave indication of disagreement among the Saints. On one occasion he wrote:

> Some of the brethren here speak of returning whence they came. They say they cannot make a living here; and truly the prospect looks a little gloomy at times, especially to those who have no money to purchase supplies. There is another drawback to many who have gathered to this valley. They expected to find a people - all who call

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[37]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1881," op. cit.

> themselves Latter-day Saints - purer, more refined, and especially clearer of what are vulgarly called "cuss words," than any other people; but when they hear those professing to be Latter-day Saints use such words as "d--n," "h--l," etc., unsparingly upon trivial occasions, it throws a damper upon us, to say the least. But a little reflection will show that we should not expect to find all who call themselves Saints, just what they should be. The gospel net has been cast into the sea of humanity, and it has gathered of all kinds, good and bad. We also read of the wheat and tares growing together till harvest, at which time the tares will be bound into bundles and cast into the fire.[38]

This kind of comment was little calculated to produce harmony, and given the existence of a degree of hostility between the two groups, it was perhaps natural that the Utah Saints should feel that the critical portions of Brother Dotson's remarks were directed towards them. Their suspicions in this regard seemed justified when, in later correspondence Brother Dotson, after again commenting on the evils of profanity, ended his remarks by indicating that "a terrible sifting will take place soon."[39] And, still later, "The gathering of the Saints from the various nations is a serious matter, and should be well considered. Some, I am persuaded should have waited a little longer before coming."[40]

While some of the factors mentioned above were of considerable significance in causing ill-feeling between the two groups, others

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[38] Letter from H. P. Dotson to editors, February 7, 1881, Deseret Evening News, February 15, 1881.

[39] Letter from H. P. Dotson to editors, August 19, 1881, Deseret Evening News, August 26, 1881.

[40] Letter from H. P. Dotson to editors, November 13, 1881, Deseret Evening News, November 22, 1881.

clearly belong in the realm of trivia. Whatever the cause, the net result of the disagreement was a noticeable reduction in the rate of spiritual and temporal progress in the Colorado settlements. The assistance which was intended to be the effect of sending experienced settlers to aid the newly converted was in substantial measure nullified by the lack of co-operation between the two groups. Although the immediate problems were soon resolved and harmony again restored, resentment continued to linger below the surface for many years. It remains to this day a subject requiring a cautious and tactful approach.

More Emigrants: Manassa Branch Reorganized

Additional Saints arrived from the South in June and November of 1881.[41] Elder Morgan, arriving with the company of November 15th, commented on the developments which he observed:

> The town of Manassa has grown much since our last visit, and many Saints, who 18 months ago were scattered throughout the valley in Mexican plazas, have now been enabled to build houses in town and reside among the Saints.
>
> The houses are composed chiefly of hewn logs, either pine or cottonwood, and covered Mexican fashion with plank and two or three inches of dirt on top; a few shingle roofs can be seen and the manufacture of shingles during the coming winter promises to become quite an item of business. As the temporal progress of the Saints will soon permit them to erect more substantial homes.[42]

Two more companies of southern emigrants arrived in 1882. The first, numbering about 100 souls, arrived on March 27th, with Elders John Morgan

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[41] John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

[42] Letter from John Morgan to editors, November 23, 1881, Deseret Evening News, November 30, 1881.

and Matthias F. Cowley in charge. The second group, whose total number is not recorded, arrived in November.[43]

In February, 1883, William L. Ball was released from his position as Presiding Elder over the Manassa Branch because of apostacy. He had petitioned for, and had been granted, a mission call to the southern states. Such mission calls were normally for a period of approximately two years, and though variation from the two-year period was not uncommon, Brother Ball, acting on his own responsibility, left the mission after a stay of only three months, returned to Manassa, and proceded to stir up disaffection among several of the southern Saints. Upon his release a new Branch Presidency was organized by Apostles Brigham Young Jr. and Heber J. Grant, who were in Manassa for that purpose. John C. Dalton, from Parowan, Utah, was appointed as Presiding Elder. Silas S. Smith Jr. and Samuel S. Sellers continued in the office of Counselors.[44] The organization of the Branch at Richfield, previously indicated, was accomplished at the time of the reorganization of the Manassa Branch.

Organization of the San Luis Stake

On April 1, 1883, Elder Morgan arrived in the valley with a company of Saints from the South, following what he described as "one of the most successful runs we ever made."[45] The number of Saints now in the

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[43] John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

[44] "San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1883," op. cit.

[45] John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

valley totaled over eight hundred, a population sufficient to warrant giving serious consideration to the establishment of a Stake organization of the Church. Such was the subject of much discussion by the presiding brethren of the Church during Elder Morgan's stay at Salt Lake City in April and May of 1883. After much consultation, the decision eventually arrived at was that the settlements in the San Luis Valley should be organized into the San Luis Stake of Zion.

On June 8, 1883, Elder Morgan, in company with Joseph F. Smith of the First Presidency of the Church and Apostles Wilford Woodruff and Brigham Young Jr. arrived at Manassa for the purpose of holding a conference to effect the organization of the Stake.[46]

The establishment of a Stake organization represented the culmination of five years of growth and development by the Saints in the San Luis Valley. Their numbers had increased from a mere handful to more than eight hundred, and three completely new settlements had been established in areas previously occupied only by rabbit brush. From the creation of the first Sunday School in the valley in 1878 (when Sister Blair had been appointed as Superintendent because Daniel R. Sellers, who presided over the first group of settlers until the arrival of Bishop Hans Jensen, was unfamiliar with the Sunday School organization)[47] the organizational structure of local church units had developed to the point that there were now four formal Branches of the Church located in the valley; at Manassa, Ephraim, Richfield, and Los Cerritos.

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[46]John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

[47]Nicholas G. Morgan, op. cit., p. 283.

The first meetings of the conference were held on June 9th. The sessions were conducted in the Manassa school house rather than in the Bowery because an unseasonable and heavy snow had fallen on the evening of the 8th, making it too cold and wintery to meet outdoors.[48] The stand was filled with the presiding brethren from Salt Lake City and various local church officials. Sermons preached during the course of the day generally reflected a concern over some of the difficulties existing among the Saints in the valley, and the members were repeatedly cautioned against permitting division to develop between the southern Saints and those from Utah. The Presiding Elders of each of the Branches in the valley, called upon to report the conditions in their respective groups, responded with an indication that conditions were improving, and that the members of their Branches were working together happily and harmoniously.[49]

A statistical report was given, indicating the membership of the Branches in the valley to be as follows: Manassa, 497; Ephraim, 183; Richfield, 74; and Los Cerritos, 90. It was further estimated that there were approximately 200 additional persons who were members of families belonging to the various Branches, but who were temporarily away from the valley, most often for reasons of employment.[50]

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[48]John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

[49]"San Luis Stake Conference," Deseret News Weekly, July 11, 1883. The Weekly differed from the daily edition of the Deseret Evening News in that, as implied by its title, it was issued only once a week. It consisted largely of a compilation of articles selected from the daily edition, but included other materials as well.

[50]Loc. cit.

On June 10th, conference sessions met in the Bowery, as it had warmed up sufficiently from the previous day to do so. The major item of business was the organization and staffing of the principal positions in the Stake, which was accomplished as follows:[51]

Stake Presidency:	Silas S. Smith, President Richard C. Camp, First Counselor William Christensen, Second Counselor
Stake High Council:	William F. O. Behrman Hans C. Heiselt D. H. Elledge Daniel R. Sellers Soren C. Berthelsen John A. Smith Martin Christiansen John D. Hawkins David Boise James H. Jack John B. Daniels Albion Haggard
Los Cerritos Branch:	Lawrence M. Peterson, Presiding Elder
Manassa Ward:	John C. Dalton, Bishop Silas S. Smith Jr., First Counselor Samuel S. Sellers, Second Counselor
Ephraim Ward:	Peter Rasmussen, Bishop Howard K. Coray, First Counselor Jordan Brady, Second Counselor
Richfield Ward:	Thor N. Peterson, Bishop Milton W. Evans, First Counselor Jens Jensen, Second Counselor

The principal changes brought about by the Stake organization were that Manassa, Ephraim, and Richfield were each established as Wards, and Los Cerritos was made an independent Branch. Previous to these changes only Branches had existed, and although those at Richfield and Los Cerritos had local officials of their own, they were technically attached to the Branch at Manassa.

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[51] "San Luis Stake Conference," Deseret News Weekly, July 11, 1883.

No attempt was made, at the time of the organization of the Stake, to establish any of the priesthood quorums usually associated with Stake organizations. This, however, was made one of the first orders of business of the new Stake. At the first quarterly conference, held at Manassa on September 8th and 9th, 1883, the First Quorum of Elders of the San Luis Stake was organized. Reuben W. Barzee was appointed as president of the quorum, with Hugh L. Sellers and John L. Reed as his counselors.[52]

Church membership in the valley continued to increase throughout the remainder of 1883, primarily through emigration. At the end of the year the population of Manassa stood at 744. At Richfield and Los Cerritos the number of Saints continued at approximately the same level as at the time of the organization of the Stake. However, at Ephraim the population experienced a gradual decline, indicating a growing awareness on the part of the Saints located there that the wet and marshy character of the land made it distinctly less desirable as a place of settlement than had been anticipated when it was first established.[53]

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[52]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1883," op. cit.

[53]Loc. cit.

CHAPTER VI

1884: A YEAR OF OPPOSITION AND DISSENSION

Anti-Mormon Opposition

The atmosphere of success and accomplishment that followed upon the organization of the San Luis Stake was short-lived. A growing crescendo of opposition by non-Mormons gave indication that troubled days lay ahead of the Saints. Opposition to the practice of polygamy formed the basis of the campaign launched by anti-Mormon agitators, who added charges of political corruption, judicial tampering, and economic mis-management to an ever-growing list of complaints. During the opening months of 1884, anti-Mormon sentiment generated a storm of opposition against the Saints of the San Luis Valley. Newspapers throughout the state were full of articles claiming to disclose the true conditions existing among the Mormons in Colorado. The Denver Tribune was in the front ranks of the campaign, and its columns kept up a steady barrage against the Saints. It is worth noting that most of the anti-Mormon

opposition came from Denver and other distant areas of the state, rather than from communities in the immediate vicinity of the Saints in the San Luis Valley. Denver newspapers in particular tended to accept as fact the information given to them by apostate members of the Church, who deliberately distorted their "facts" out of resentment and desire for revenge. To the credit of the city's press, it ceased its campaign of vilification against the Saints after becoming aware of the true character of its informants and of the actual situation in the valley. It did, however, continue to oppose the Mormon practice of polygamy.

Among the more serious of the accusations leveled against the Saints during the heated period of opposition was that of political corruption and manipulation. It was claimed that the Mormon vote was controlled by the Church upon threat of excommunication, and that the Mormons had sold their votes as a block to the highest bidder. Though it seems inconceivable in view of the smallness of their numbers, the Saints were also accused of attempting to dominate political affairs in Conejos County, and of trying to tip the political balance of the state. In an interview with a reporter of the Denver Tribune, Stake President Silas S. Smith refuted the charge that Mormon votes were dictated by the Church:

> Our people have taken no special interest in politics, and our settlements have no political significance. The citizens vote for men rather than party, and we do not bind ourselves to any party. The Church takes no part in elections, nor does it try to control votes. The Bishops merely tell the people to go to the polls quietly and in order, to vote as they please, but do not wrangle over political questions. We do not hold it to be a matter of fellowship as to how we vote.[1]

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[1]Deseret Evening News, March 3, 1884, as extracted from the Denver Tribune of February 26, 1884.

Dealing with the same general accusation, in addition to the charge that the Mormons were attempting to gain a dominant influence over state politics, Elder Brigham H. Roberts, currently in the valley, took up a defense of the Saints. In a lengthy letter to the Denver Tribune, he wrote:

> During the past month a number of articles have appeared in the Tribune respecting the Mormon settlements in San Luis Valley. One of these articles was written by your own regular correspondent--the others were copied from the Salt Lake Tribune.
>
> In these communications are many false statements, which misrepresent and slander the inhabitants of these Mormon settlements; and inasmuch as you have given so much space to those who have misrepresented us, justice demands that you publish our reply to these falsehoods.
>
> San Luis Valley possesses many natural resources. It is an extensive plain, nearly every acre of which can be brought under cultivation. There is an abundance of water that can be easily brought out in canals for irrigation purposes. All grains and vegetables common to temperate climates are raised, the soil yielding plenteous harvests to the husbandman as a reward for his labor. The stock range is extensive and exceptionally good; and although there is but little timber in the valley, on the neighboring hills and mountains are extensive forests of pine, cedar, and aspen--in short, the valley possesses all the facilities necessary to the establishment of comfortable homes; and it is for this purpose our people have come here from Utah. Knowing that lands could be more easily obtained here than in Utah, we have advised the converts to our faith in the Southern States, to come to our settlements in Colorado, instead of going to Utah.
>
> Our settlements in this State have no political significance. We have come to obtain homes, not to increase the political influence some people imagine the Mormons to possess; to make the wilderness glad with our toil, and the desert to blossom as the rose, rather than to dabble in sly games of politics.
>
> Our settlements have a population of about 1,300, and out of this number, but 144 are registered as voters, instead of 250, as stated in your issue of February 3d.
>
> Meeting Mr. J. W. Hughes, attorney for Conejos County, we said:
>
> "Do you know President Smith, of Manassa?"
>
> "Yes sir, I know him."
>
> "Has he taken an active part in politics in this county?"

"No sir. If there is a man who does not meddle in politics, that man is Mr. Smith. He says nothing."

"You have taken a leading part in the politics of this section, have you not?"

"Yes sir, I have for several years."

"Has President Smith ever sought to obtain any political influence?"

"Absolutely none whatever."

A people who were ambitious to become so conspicuous in your state politics as your regular correspondent represented our people to be, would want a more aggressive leader than President Smith; and out of a population of 1,300 would have more than 144 voters registered.[2]

Evidently unaware of the inconsistency in arguing that the Mormon vote could be dictated by the Church and at the same time sold to the highest bidder, the antagonists persisted in their charge that the Mormon vote had been sold in every election since their arrival in Colorado. Elder Roberts continued his defense:

It is charged that the Mormon vote has been sold every year since they have been in the State. I am authorized by the following named gentlemen to say that it was not sold this year: Mr. McIntire, County Judge; C. M. Sampson, County Clerk; Mr. Austin, County Collector; Mr. Brown, Superintendent Public Instruction; Joseph Smith, County Sheriff. All these men received the votes of our people, "And," to use their own language, "we never paid a nickel for them, or even a drink of whiskey."

It is rumored that in 1882 the vote was sold for $600, and that President Smith received the money. I have the official statement of the County Clerk before me that the vote in Precinct No. 11 (which was the district where all the Mormons lived at the time) was 62 in number for that year; that would be about $10 a vote. Isn't that rather high for votes? All your politicians with whom I have conversed say: "A man would be a fool to pay $10 for a vote when so many through the country can be bought for $2.50." Mr. Dorse, of Alamosa, is represented as saying that the Mormon vote had been sold every year, and that he had paid part of the money. We went to see Mr. Dorse, but unfortunately he had gone to his ranch, so we

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[2]Letter from B. H. Roberts to the Denver Tribune, March 3, 1884, as extracted and quoted in the Deseret Evening News, March 5, 1884.

failed to have an interview with him. It is claimed that the Mormon vote was sold in the interest of Mr. Campbell, the Republican candidate for governor, for $600, but those who make this statement will perhaps explain how it happens that the entire Mormon vote was given in favor of Mr. Grant, the Democratic nominee for Governor.

In all the inquiries we have made about votes being sold I have found but one man who has paid any money out in our precinct, and that was in '82. I withhold his name at present. He has taken an active part in politics and has been a county official. Of course it is claimed by him that the money was not used to buy any one, but to buy cigars for the boys, bar expenses, etc. The amount was small--only $40.

"Mr. _____, did Prest. Smith receive this money?"

"No sir, he did not. Wm. L. Ball received $10 of it. The other $20 [sic] was paid to another man, who afterwards wanted me to take it back."[3]

The introduction of the name of former Bishop William L. Ball into the controversy serves the purpose of clarification as to the source of a number of the accusations being brought against the Saints. Angered at being excommunicated from the Church, he had endeavored to stir up opposition from without and dissension from within. In both, he was quite successful. It was he who was at the bottom of the political issue, having claimed that he had been excommunicated for not voting as he had been directed. Elder Roberts took issue with his claim:

> Ex-Bishop Ball, whose statements to the Tribune reporter, and whose private letters to Miss Kate Field have so glaringly misrepresented our people in San Luis Valley, was not excommunicated for voting the ticket his judgement approved, as stated by him. I have access to the minutes of the council that tried Ball, and there is nothing in the charge brought against him about his voting. It was for "fault-finding," "misusing tithing," of which as Bishop, he was made custodian--and his books

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[3]Letter from B. H. Roberts to the Denver Tribune, March 3, 1884, as extracted and quoted in the Deseret Evening News, March 5, 1884.

> show a deficiency of nearly $300; "stirring up strife among the brethren," by saying those who came from Utah hated those who came from the South. These charges were sustained in the estimation of the council, and the Church withdrew their fellowship from him.[4]

While the charges of votes being controlled and/or sold were effectively countered, it was true that the Mormon voters tended to cast their votes in blocks, without the usual and somewhat equal distribution of votes among the various candidates. In the election of 1882, mentioned by Elder Roberts, above, the sixty-two votes cast by Mormon voters all went to the same congressional candidate who, incidentally, lost the vote of Conejos County.[5] Thus, even when voting as a block, the Saints did not have sufficient numbers to tip the balance in any but the closest of elections.

United in their advocacy of the right to practice polygamy, in their efforts to establish themselves in permanent and thriving communities, and in their resistance to what appeared to be a determined outside opposition to these goals, it was perhaps natural that this unity would be reflected in the political views of the Saints. Concerned less with party policy than with their own immediate problems, they cast their vote for individuals they felt would best aid their cause. Candidates taking a neutral course in regard to the "Mormon Question" - and no serious candidate adopted a pro-Mormon stance with

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[4]Letter from B. H. Roberts to the Denver Tribune, March 3, 1884, as extracted and quoted in the Deseret Evening News, March 5, 1884.

[5]Abstract of Votes...1882, in Conejos County, State of Colorado, for Representative in the XLVIII Congress..., filed at Conejos County, Colorado, 1882.

hopes of winning - inevitably received an overwhelming majority, if not all, of the Mormon vote. However, to assert that the purpose of the Saints was to attain a position of dominance in county or state political affairs was too unrealistic to be seriously considered.

Another charge made against the Saints was that whenever violations of law were committed by members of the Church, improper attempts were made to prevent conviction and punishment through the courts.

> It appears that a young man, Lycurgus Sprouse by name, and a Mormon, was accused before the grand jury with stealing cattle. The jury, however, failed to bring in a bill of indictment; and as President Smith, of Manassa, was on the jury, he is accused of using his influence in defeating a true bill, which part of the jury were determined to find, and it is intimated that he used improper means to accomplish his purpose. This is the foundation on which is based the charge against the Mormons of cattle stealing. We visited Mr. Stuart, foreman of the grand jury, and asked if he had ever charged that Mr. Smith had used improper means in defeating an indictment against young Sprouse.
>
> "No sir, I have never charged that President Smith used improper means in Sprouse's case."
>
> "Did Smith take an active part in matters before the jury?"
>
> "Yes he did."
>
> "Was he more active in Sprouse's case than the others?"
>
> "No. He did not appear to be so much interested in that case as in others."
>
> President Smith is a man of too much sense to shield any one guilty of stealing cattle; he knows that even on the shadow of a pretext the charge of cattle stealing would be alleged against the colony over which he presides. He therefore, above all men, would be most likely to bring the offender to justice, provided the testimony would warrant the finding of an indictment.
>
> The following occurrence demonstrates that he realizes the situation: About a year ago two men from Manassa created some disturbance at Conejos, and the officers of the county took no action in regards to it. Some time after this Smith was at Conejos, and meeting some of the County officials he said: "Don't you know that when you fellows up here fail to punish men from our settlements who make disturbance and break laws, that you are doing our people an injustice?"

> Meeting Mr. Austin at Conejos (Mr. A. is at present County Collector and was formerly Judge) I said: "Judge Austin, have you ever known President Smith to manifest any disposition to shield any of our people who have broken the laws?"
>
> He replied emphatically, "No sir, I have not. I remember Mr. Smith saying to me that justice should be meeted out to all alike."
>
> Turning to the County Sheriff, who was present, I put the same question to him, and his reply was like that of Judge Austin's.
>
> In addition to this the Church law reads: If any persons among you shall kill they shall be delivered up and dealt with according to the laws of the land; and if a man or woman shall steal he or she shall be delivered up unto the law of the land; and if he or she shall lie he or she shall be delivered up unto the law of the land." (Covenants and Commandments, Section 42)
>
> This is the law of the Church, and has been ever since 1831. For President Smith to take any other course than is indicated in the above would be contrary to common sense and a violation of the Church law.
>
> We expect no favors from the State government of Colorado; neither do we ask for any but those vouchsafed to all citizens in common. If any member of the Church has violated the laws of the State, as alleged, or shall hereafter violate them, he is <u>individually</u> responsible, and not the whole colony.[6]

It was also charged that the Saints conspired to deny those not of their faith access to public facilities and admittance to public meetings and functions. These charges were also dealt with by Elder Roberts:

> Between Christmas and New Year several persons arranged to have a private party, and those who were wanted were invited. There being no other convenient place, it was held in the hall where church service, for the present, is also held. A number of men who had not been invited came to the party and essayed to take part in it. They were told they had no business there, and when they refused to retire, and said if they could not dance no one

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[6]Letter from B. H. Roberts to the <u>Denver Tribune</u>, March 3, 1884, as extracted and quoted in the <u>Deseret Evening News</u>, March 5, 1884.

> else should, they were ejected by force, as they would have been anywhere else, if the rightful participants were men of courage. Is it wrong for the Mormons to take such steps against those who come with the avowed intent to disturb their peace?[7]

The Mormons were further accused of deliberately deceiving converts from the South with glowing reports of conditions in the San Luis Valley in order to induce them to emigrate. It seems highly illogical that emigrants could be attracted to Colorado over a long period of time on the basis of deceit, and the charge was vigorously denied by Elder Roberts:

> Ex-Bishop Ball and others say the people from the Southern States had been deceived by the Mormon missionaries who preached to them; that the people were induced to leave their homes in the South by the promise of being taken to an earthly paradise in Southern Colorado. This is not true. The following quotation is from a letter of instructions sent by the Presidency of the Southern mission to the travelling Elders in the Southern States: "The Saints who come from the South as a rule are poor, and it would be difficult for them to secure homes in Utah, whereas in Colorado it is an easy matter, as they can obtain land at government prices.** In this connection we would advise that you do not hold out material advantages as inducements to the Saints to gather out of Babylon. If they gather to the place appointed let it be for the Gospel's sake, because God has commanded it, and that they and their children may be more perfectly taught in the things of God and his kingdom." Instructions of this kind have always been given to the Elders in the mission. The writer has spent the last four years in travelling and preaching through the Southern States--he has deceived no one. He was personally acquainted with many of the people who live at Manassa, when they were residents of the Southern States; he can meet them anywhere, and not a man, woman or child can say that he has deceived them. Neither are any of the Elders sent out to deceive, as the above extracts from their instructions prove.[8]

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[7]Letter from B. H. Roberts to the Denver Tribune, March 3, 1884, as extracted and quoted in the Deseret Evening News, March 5, 1884.

[8]Loc. cit.

Of all the accusations directed against the Saints, the one - if poverty can be said to constitute an offense - containing the greatest element of truth was that the Mormon residents of the San Luis Valley were completely destitute and poverty-striken. Though partly true, the economic condition of the Saints was made to look much worse than it actually was by the anti-Mormon antagonists. Much of the exaggeration in this regard was due to stories being circulated by former Bishop William L. Ball. In addition, an appeal for assistance had been made by some residents of the valley to the Kentucky Club of Denver, thus further contributing to the generally unfavorable impression of economic conditions among the Saints. In the final portion of his letter to the Tribune, Elder Roberts dealt with the economic situation:

> A heartrending tale of suffering is told by your correspondent, and that, together with the story of William L. Ball, has called out grandeloquent appeals from Sister Kate Field to the people of Utah to relieve the sufferings of three hundred men, women and children who are represented as famishing for food, clothing and fuel.
>
> That there are people in our midst that are poor, we admit. They were poor when they landed in Colorado, and had to be assisted from the start. But that anyone is actually perishing, or even suffering from want of food or clothing or are likely to in the future, we positively deny. All people who know anything about settling new countries are aware that the pioneers do not enjoy many of the luxuries or even the comforts of life at first; they must be content with the necessaries. There is plenty of food in our settlement; flour, meat, turnips, potatoes and groceries. Those who are not able to provide for themselves are cared for. I visited the same family your former correspondent did, where the old man showed his emaciated limbs. That the old gentleman's person is emaciated is true. I knew him in the State of Alabama--it was so there. And how many men, 71 years of age, surrounded even with the luxuries of life, are there whose forms are not emaciated? Yesterday I called on the family, and in

> answer to my inquiries they stated that when your former correspondent called on them they had flour, meat, vegetables and coffee in the house, and that they had never been denied anything by the Bishop of the place. This man - Mr. Bailey - has lost his faith, and is not considered in good standing in the Church, yet the day I called upon him he had received another supply of food--and the Bishop's books show that he has been furnished right along.
>
> There has been plenty of work in San Luis Valley this winter. Four canals are under construction, and all who wanted work could have obtained it at these places. I am credibly informed that quite a number of teams have stood idle because drivers could not be secured. Wages have been from $1.25 to $2 per day. It is true, this labor was thirty or forty miles distant from our settlements; but who would object to going that far in order to obtain work to support his family? Or what true man is there who would not go many times that distance rather then ask assistance or receive a gratuity, so long as he was able to work? When I read that appeal of Kentuckians to the Kentucky Club of Denver in your paper, I said: "If there are any Kentuckians who sanction that appeal, under the circumstances, with plenty of work within easy reach, and then would consent to wear the cast-off clothes of others, they are some worthless fellows who have been raised on wildcat whiskey, and never knew, or have entirely forgotten, the smell of "Old Bourbon"--they are degenerate sons of noble sires who would have worked in snow neck-deep rather than to receive the castoff clothes even of a prince."[9]

A split in the ranks of the foremost antagonists soon disclosed that former Bishop Ball was behind a campaign to elicit funds and goods from the charitably inclined, ostensibly to relieve the suffering which he portrayed as existing among the Saints in the San Luis Valley. Ball wrote many letters to Sister Kate Field in Utah, who gave them wide publicity, believing them to be genuine representations of conditions in the valley. True to character, Ball embezzled the funds thus gained

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[9]Letter from B. H. Roberts to the Denver Tribune, March 3, 1884, as extracted and quoted in the Deseret Evening News, March 5, 1884.

and appropriated to his own use many of the items of goods sent for relief purposes. He also made off with a substantial amount of money entrusted to him by his associates for the purpose of purchasing land in Kansas. In the internal struggle which ensued, Ball was publicly denounced by the others and deposed as leader of the group.[10] He was succeeded by a man named Moyers, who directed the fraudulent activities of the band until further dissension over the division of spoils and a growing awareness of the true situation in the public mind brought an end to the "sensational" San Luis Valley squabble.[11]

Apostacy and Dissension

Much of the opposition directed against the Saints during the difficult year of 1884 was attributable to the actions of apostate members of the Church. William L. Ball had been quite successful in creating strife and dissension among a number of the southern Saints, for which, among other causes, he was excommunicated from the Church. The combination of frontier hardships, opposition from without, and dissension from within took its toll in the form of a large number of Saints who desired to disassociate themselves from the Church. Though a considerable number had become completely inactive, there is no indication in the records that any formal excommunications took place in the valley before 1884. In that year, however, Stake records show a total of 60 persons, the overwhelming majority of them southern

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[10]"The Situation in the San Luis Valley," Deseret Evening News, April 2, 1884.

[11]"More of the San Luis Matter," Deseret Evening News, April 9, 1884.

converts living in Manassa, being excommunicated from the Church, most at their own request.[12] Although some later rejoined the Church, the majority did not, and of those who remained outside the Church, most either moved to areas in the valley away from the Mormon settlements or returned to their former homes in the South.

Dissension made its appearance in forms other than excommunication. In September, 1884, Richard C. Camp, who had been appointed as First Counselor in the Stake Presidency at the time of the organization of the Stake in June of the previous year, was released from his position. He had, in fact, never filled his calling and had requested by letter that he be released.[13] At a meeting of the Stake conference held in Manassa on December 7, 1884, Soren C. Berthelsen was given temporary appointment to fill the vacancy in the Stake Presidency.[14] During the same conference Bishop Thor N. Peterson was, at his own request, released from his position as Bishop of the Richfield Ward. Cause of this action was some dissatisfaction or misunderstanding between Bishop Peterson and the Stake Presidency, though the nature of the problem is not recorded. For a time, the Richfield Ward was given over to the control of the Stake High Council, with William F. O. Behrman taking charge of meetings. The difficulties between Bishop Peterson and the Stake Presidency were eventually adjusted, and at the Stake conference on August 30, 1885, Bishop Peterson was again sustained as Bishop of the

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[12]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1884," op. cit.

[13]Loc. cit.

[14]Loc. cit.

Richfield Ward, with Brothers Milton W. Evans and Jens Jensen again serving as his counselors.[15]

Positive Accomplishments

Not all that took place during 1884 was negative. Emigrant groups continued to arrive from the South, and material growth and expansion was generally observable throughout the Mormon settlements of the valley. Even in the more spiritual realm improvement was noted, despite, or perhaps because of, the serious difficulties encountered during the year. To a certain extent the dissension among the Saints had resulted in the elimination of a dissident element, and leaders of the various Wards indicated that there was a notable increase of faith and harmony among those who remained.[16] The Deseret Evening News, in commenting editorially about the apostate members who had stirred up so much trouble in the valley, gave little indication of sympathy, stating that "the withdrawal of such a class of people from the Church is a decided benefit to the Saints,"[17] and such seems to be the judgement of history.

At the General Conference of the Church, held in Salt Lake City in October, 1884, Elder John Morgan was called and set apart as one of the First Seven Presidents of Seventy.[18] Though his new calling

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[15]"Richfield Ward Manuscript History, 1884," op. cit.

[16]"Report of the San Luis Stake Conference," Deseret Evening News, March 15, 1884.

[17]"More of the San Luis Matter," Deseret Evening News, April 9, 1884.

[18]Andrew Jenson, "John Morgan," Latter-day Saints Biographical Encyclopedia, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: published by the Andrew Jenson Historical Company and printed by the Deseret News, 1901-1936), I, 204.

involved a broadening of his activities, he continued in his assignment as President of the Southern States' Mission for another four years, and as such he continued to play an important role in the development of the Mormon colonies of the San Luis Valley.

CHAPTER VII

OUTWARD EXPANSION FROM MANASSA:

NEW COLONIES ESTABLISHED IN COLORADO AND NEW MEXICO

Causes Underlying the Expansion of Settlements

The period 1885 to 1890 witnessed a steady increase in the number of Saints in the San Luis Valley. In addition to the regular emigrant companies arriving from the South there were many who came from Utah. These latter came not, as before, because of a call to assist in the establishment of settlements, but as refugees from the prosecution of polygamists which increased greatly during the years that followed the passage of the Edmunds Act in 1882. During this critical period the San Luis Valley became the home of numerous plural families of prominent and leading men in the Church. The refuge afforded by the remote location of the valley was, in the case of many individuals, short-lived, though the tempo of governmental action against polygamists in Colorado never achieved the pace that it did in Utah.

The combination of increasing population pressures, governmental prosecution, and attraction of available land led the Saints to establish numerous new settlements, some at considerable distance from the "hub-colony" at Manassa. Attempts were made to extend Mormon settlements beyond the confines of the valley into New Mexico as a means of providing a haven for polygamists. Even New Mexico was, for some, not far enough away from the searching eyes of federal agents. In search of a home outside the jurisdiction of the United States they turned to the new Mormon colonies being established in Mexico. In the valley itself a number of new communities were established, with varying degrees of success. In general it could be said that the probability of success in the new settlements diminished as distance from Manassa increased, though many factors other than distance were involved.

Sanford

During a visit to the valley by President John Taylor in 1885, he and others of his party pointed out the area where Sanford would eventually be built as a highly suitable location for a settlement. The site was located approximately two and one-half miles directly north of Ephraim, making it six miles northeast of Manassa. By this time it was becoming evident that the location of Ephraim was completely unsuitable as a townsite, and the new location at Sanford had the advantage of being on higher land while still being accessible to irrigation from the waters of the Conejos River. Richfield too, even after having been moved once, proved decidedly less than ideal as a townsite. After consulting with local Church leaders, President Taylor recommended that the

families located at Ephraim and Richfield remove themselves to the new site at Sanford.[1]

The name originally chosen for the new location was not Sanford, but Alma, after the figure of that name in the Book of Mormon. However, it was soon discovered that another town named Alma - presumably of "Gentile" origin - already existed in Colorado. The name was then changed to Sanford, thereby honoring Silas Sanford Smith, the first President of the San Luis Stake.

Action on President Taylor's "recommendation" was swift in coming. Within a matter of weeks the townsite of Sanford was surveyed, and durint the fall and winter of 1885 three homes were constructed on the new site. An irrigation map filed at the Court House in Conejos in 1886 shows that the new town initially covered only a quarter-section of land. However, the dimensions grew rapidly as new families arrived from Richfield and Ephraim between 1886 and 1888.[2] Sanford eventually assumed proportions even larger than those of Manassa, measuring one mile east and west by one and a half miles north and south.

With the influx of substantial numbers of people in 1886, Apostle John Henry Smith, who was visiting the new location, appointed Albion Haggard to serve as Presiding Elder over the settlement. During the same year a log meeting house was erected, which also served as a school house. In 1888 the Saints evacuating Ephraim brought their

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[1]"Sanford Ward Manuscript History, 1885," account by Andrew Jenson (unpublished material).

[2]Ibid., 1885-1888.

meeting house with them, and it was attached to the west end of the Sanford meeting house, thereby doubling its capacity. By April, 1888, the population of Sanford had increased sufficiently to warrant the establishment of a Ward. This was accomplished on April 15th, with Soren C. Berthelsen being set apart as Bishop, and George W. Irvin and William O. Crowther as First and Second Counselors, respectively.[3]

At the Quarterly Conference of the San Luis Stake held at Manassa in May, three dependent Branches were attached to the Sanford Ward. They included Saints located at Richfield (where a few families had elected to remain), Jaroso, and Morgan; the latter two being small communities established by the Saints at approximately the same time as that of Sanford.[4] The earliest statistics submitted by the Stake for the Sanford Ward in August, 1888 showed 140 families located at Sanford, with a total population of 654.[5]

When the Saints began to obtain title to their lands in the late 1880's and early 1890's, it was decided to make two incorporations at Sanford. Those who had moved from Ephraim incorporated the south half of the town as the Sanford Land Company, while those from Richfield incorporated the northern half under the name of the Sanford Town Company.[6] An analysis of the two certificates of incorporation shows no

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[3]"Sanford Ward Manuscript History, 1886-1888," Jenson, op. cit.

[4]Ibid., 1888.

[5]Loc. cit.

[6]William O. Crowther (comp.), Crowthers of Fountain Green, Utah (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing & Publishing Co., 1943), p. 153.

appreciable difference in purpose between the two groups. However, a check of the names of those who signed each of the documents shows all of the signees in both cases to be former residents of Utah and, further, that the overwhelming majority of those forming the "Land" company were of Scandinavian extraction.[7] Sanford was thus at the outset, and continued to be, a town composed almost entirely of settlers from Utah.

Jaroso

In 1884 the first Mormon settlers to locate east of the Conejos River (except those residing in the Mexican town of Los Cerritos) established themselves approximately three miles directly east of the site where Sanford was to be located the following year. The name given to this area of settlement was Jaroso, not to be confused with another town of the same name situated just north of the New Mexico border in Costilla County. The Saints who moved into the area of Jaroso did so independent of any formal, organized program of settlement or expansion, and at no time was any official effort made to promote settlement of the area. In May, 1887, the Saints at Jaroso were organized onto a dependent Branch of the Manassa Ward, later being transferred to the Sanford Ward upon the organization of the latter in 1888.[8] The first recorded

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[7]Certificate of Incorporation of the Sanford Land Company. Conejos County, Colo., No. 5047, April 29, 1889, and Certificate of Incorporation of the Sanford Town Company. Conejos County, Colo., No. 11059, January 30, 1892.

[8]"Jaroso Branch Manuscript History, 1884-1888," no author given (unpublished material).

name of a Presiding Elder at Jaroso is that of J. H. Jack, who held that position in 1889.[9] By 1893 the great majority of settlers had moved away from Jaroso, and those Saints who remained ceased to have a dependent Branch organization, and were incorporated into the Sanford Ward proper. Only one family of Saints remained at Jaroso as late as 1894.[10]

Morgan

The settlement of Morgan occurred at about the same time as that of Sanford. Morgan was located in a flat, open area two miles north of Alamosa Creek, a tributary of the Rio Grande. Situated twelve miles northwest of Manassa, the town was named in honor of Elder John Morgan, who had played such a prominent role in the Mormon settlement of the San Luis Valley.

The first Mormon settler in the vicinity of Morgan was John W. Hunt, who located there in 1885. He was followed by others in 1886, and work began immediately on an irrigation ditch. Water from the Alamosa Creek was easily accessible and the ditch was completed that same year in time for crops to be planted and raised.[11]

The land at Morgan was open to pre-emption and homestead. It could also be settled under the provisions of the Timber Culture Act of 1873,

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[9]Deseret Evening News, November 5, 1889.

[10]"Jaroso Branch Manuscript History, 1893-1894," op. cit.

[11]"Morgan Branch Manuscript History, 1885-1886," account by Andrew Jenson (unpublished material).

which granted 160 acres of treeless land to settlers who would participate in reforestation programs. Capitalizing on the availability of free land, most of the Saints at Morgan obtained their lands through the provisions of such laws.[12] Altogether, Mormon settlers in the area gained title to approximately three and a half sections of land.

In May, 1887, Joseph E. Samples was set apart to preside over the Saints located at Morgan. In April, 1888, the Morgan Branch, which had been established the previous month, was attached to the newly organized Sanford Ward.[13] Meetings were held in private homes until the construction of a small meeting house, 18 x 26' was completed in 1890.

Despite the inexpensiveness of obtaining land, the settlement of Morgan proved to be a difficult task. At the Quarterly Stake Conference in August, 1888, Elder Samples reported that the general condition of the settlement was poor, and that a number of the inhabitants were heavily burdened with debt.[14] Elder Samples resigned from his position as Presiding Elder at Morgan in 1891. He was officially released in April, 1892 and, following a temporary term by Brother Owen J. Optain, was officially replaced by Elder John D. Westbrook.[15]

In 1893 the population at Morgan totaled 80 souls. No actual townsite had as yet been surveyed, and the Saints were desirous of having this task accomplished. However, it was 1899 before the official plat

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[12]"Morgan Branch Manuscript History, 1886," Jenson, op. cit.

[13]Ibid., 1888.

[14]Loc. cit.

[15]Ibid., 1891-1892.

for the townsite of Morgan was filed at the county seat in Conejos.[15] At the turn of the century Morgan was, and has remained to the present day, a sparcely settled community, scarcely meriting designation as a "town."

Renewed Opposition to Polygamy: The Edmunds-Tucker Bill

Except for the activity involved in the establishment of settlements at Sanford and Morgan, the year 1885 was quiet and uneventful - or at least it seemed so in comparison with the upheavals of the previous year. Emigrant companies arrived from the South in February and November,[16] and the same months in 1886 witnessed the arrival of more Saints from the southern states.[17] The year closed quietly enough, giving little indication of what lay in store for the Saints during the months to follow.

The year of 1887 opened on a sour note. Congress, not satisfied with the results produced by the anti-polygamy act of 1882, passed a further amendment to that law, the so-called Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887.[18] This new law extended the definition of polygamy to include what was titled "unlawful cohabitation" and in general dissolved the corporate structure of the Church and its agencies. It passed the Congress in February, becoming law on March 3rd without the signature of the President.

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[15]Plat of Morgan, filed at Conejos County, Colorado, February 22, 1899.

[16]John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

[17]Loc. cit.

[18]U. S., Statutes at Large, XXIV (1887), 635-641.

Utah bore the immediate brunt of the governmental prosecution which followed upon the passage of the Edmunds-Tucker law. In the San Luis Valley, the most noticeable effect was an increase in the numbers of polygamous families arriving from Utah in search of a place of refuge. For some, the valley was their intended destination, and here they remained until the polygamist question was ended. Others utilized the settlements in the valley as a temporary hiding place until more remote locations could be found. Some of these latter, along with a number of families who resided in the valley, eventually fled to Mexico in hopes of finding a peaceful place of exile.

Prominent leaders of the Church were among those who sought refuge for their plural families in the San Luis Valley. Included among them were Apostles John Henry Smith, Francis M. Lyman, and Heber J. Grant; John Morgan, of the First Council of Seventy; and Brigham H. Roberts, soon to be appointed to the First Council of Seventy and later well-known Church author.[19] There were undoubtedly others, but because names were frequently altered and written records studiously avoided in order to escape detection, a complete account is impossible. Even among the Saints, it was not uncommon to be unaware of the true identity of a newly arrived neighbor, and there was a general understanding that questions along this line were best left unasked.

In addition to the refugee families from Utah, the usual increment of settlers from the southern states arrived in March, June, and November

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[19]The names of these individuals are recorded on land records on file at Conejos. John Morgan also mentions frequent meetings with them in Manassa, and alludes to their part-time residence there.

of 1887.[20] The steadily increasing population made it desirable to search out new areas where settlements might be established, and another surge of outward expansion took place in 1887-1888.

Death of President John Taylor

On July 25, 1887, President John Taylor died in seclusion at Kaysville, Utah, having been in hiding for two and a half years. Because of the scattered condition of the general authorities and the continuing governmental search for polygamists which precluded the possibility of meeting together to select a successor, the Quorum of Twelve Apostles assumed the function of composite head of the Church. Wilford Woodruff, as President of the Quorum, took the leading role in the direction of affairs, and at the General Conference in April, 1889, he was officially sustained as President of the Church.[21]

The death of President Taylor had no immediate effect upon developments in the San Luis Valley other than to put a temporary damper on spirits and cast a shadow of sorrow over the Saints. Many in the valley felt his death more keenly because of the isolation and exile which was associated with it - circumstances with which they themselves were familiar.

Land Matters

From the time the Saints had first made application for the purchase of the lands upon which they were settling in 1879, their goal

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[20]John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

[21]Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church..., op. cit., VI, 187-193.

of acquiring title to the same had met with nothing but frustration. It was generally assumed that the interests of land speculators were involved in the constant postponement by state authorities in fixing a value upon the land. It also came to light that the lands upon which the Saints were settled had been withdrawn from the General Land Office and returned as mineral lands to the public domain. This move had taken place at the instigation of petitions to the land board of the State by non-Mormons.[22] Stake President Silas S. Smith had, almost from the first moment of his arrival in the valley, plunged himself into the task of acquiring title to the land occupied by the Saints. In this task he was repeatedly thwarted until the spring and summer of 1887, when the first indications of success appeared. A visitor from Utah described the situation:

> ...What was the consternation of our people may be imagined when, on getting ready to buy the land they had enclosed, they learned that the State, from speculative motives refused to sell for a few years. President Silas S. Smith, than whom no shrewder man in land matters lives in the region of irrigation; went to Denver and took up a labor with the governor and land commissioners and succeeded, after a two days' hard fight, in convincing them that it was the bona fide settlers, like the "Mormons," that had given value to the land, that to refuse now to sell would effectually check emigration and paralyze the colonies already started, and that, while it was well enough to shut down on land speculations, actual settlers should not thus be discouraged from coming into the valley. The result was a promise on the part of the commissioners to sell a tract of 5,000 acres to the Latter-day Saints. The purchase had not been made when the writer left, but sanguine hopes were entertained that when it

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[22]Andrew Jenson, "Silas Sanford Smith," Latter-day Saints Biographical Encyclopedia, op. cit., I, 802.

> was the land would be had at two dollars and a half per acre. ...It was feared that the next purchase would not cost less than $4, and probably over $5 an acre.[23]

More than a year and a half lapsed before the Saints acquired title to the lands upon which Manassa and Sanford were located. In the meantime, however, Silas S. Smith directed his efforts toward the acquisition of land which was being put up for sale at public auction. During 1888 the Saints purchased over 10,000 acres through this source, at a price of $2.50 per acre.[24] The price paid by the Saints for these lands was considerably below that of adjacent lands which were appraised and sold for as high as $5 per acre. President Smith was credited with successfully persuading non-Mormons who were desirous of purchasing the land not to bid against the Saints, thus allowing them to obtain the land at very reasonable rates.

On February 12, 1889, the Saints finally obtained title to the lands which had been selected and settled ten years previously. This land was deeded to President Smith as land agent for the Manassa colony, who, in turn, parceled it out to individual families. At a total price of $2,304 (80¢ per acre) the Saints obtained title to 2,880 acres of land in two separate Townships, located in the vicinities of Manassa and Sanford.[25]

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[23]Letter from N. L. Nelson to editors, April 26, 1887, Deseret Evening News, May 11, 1887.

[24]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1888," op. cit.

[25]Colorado, State Land Patent Record, Conejos County, Book 9, Patent No. 575, p. 39.

Incorporation of Manassa

In February, 1889, immediately upon receiving title to the land on which Manassa was located, the Saints proceded to petition for incorporation. An official petition, signed by forty-three citizens of the town, was made to the County of Conejos on March 18th. To the petition was attached a census of the population of Manassa, showing a total of 138 families and 711 persons.[26] County officials thereupon granted permission to conduct a special election on the issue of incorporation. The election was held on April 22, 1889, at which time, by a vote of 69 to 8, the incorporation of Manassa was passed. On May 8, 1889, by action of the County, Manassa was officially established as an incorporated town in the State of Colorado.[27]

Blanca

The availability of land, combining with improved prospects of acquiring title without excessive difficulty, helped to promote the expansion of Mormon settlements in the San Luis Valley. One of these new settlements was located at the west base of Mount Blanca along the Urracca Creek some thirty-five miles northeast of Manassa, and just a short distance south of the old Zapato Ranch, which had been in

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[26]Stake statistics for the same period show the population of the Manassa Ward as being 202 families and 1,134 persons. The difference is accounted for chiefly by the fact that there were dependent Branches attached to the Manassa Ward whose numbers are included in the Stake figures. There may also have been a few who, for reasons of polygamy, avoided having their names recorded on the census.

[27]Certificate of Incorporation of Manassa Town, Conejos County, Colorado, May 8, 1889.

existence since the days of the Mexican land grants. The primary attraction of this area was that the climate was generally more mild than other parts of the valley, and the growing season longer. It was also freer from the constant and unpleasant winds that prevailed elsewhere in the valley.[28]

The first Mormon settlers in the area of Blanca were not sent as part of an organized program of settlement expansion. Wiley F. King settled there with his family in May, 1887, and was followed a few months later by the families of Abraham P. Caldwell and William T. Leggitt. Other settlers, both Mormon and non-Mormon continued to arrive during the winter of 1887-88, and soon enough Saints had assembled in the area to warrant the establishment of a Church organization. Few of the members at Blanca had been very active in Church affairs, and there was consequently a lack of readily available leaders to preside over the group. Choosing from among those located in the area, Wiley F. King was ordained to the office of Priest and set apart as the Presiding Priest over the Blanca Branch which was organized on February 28, 1888 as a dependent branch of the Manassa Ward.[29]

Included in the Blanca Branch were some ten families of Saints who lived in Alamosa, where most of them were either railroad workers or businessmen. Church activity at Blanca never went beyond a minimum level, and attendance at meetings gradually declined to the point that

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[28]"Blanca Branch Manuscript History, 1887," no author given (unpublished material).

[29]"Blanca Branch Manuscript History, 1887-1888," op. cit.

the Branch was disorganized towards the end of 1892, though a few families of Saints continued to reside in the vicinity for several years.[30]

Although the Mormon settlement at Blanca has been long since abandoned, the old pioneer cemetery located on the slopes of Mount Blanca is still being used by descendants of the early Mormon settlers.

Fox Creek

The settlement of Fox Creek was located in Conejos Canyon, approximately sixteen miles southwest of Manassa. It was situated on a bench strip of land rising between the Conejos River and Fox Creek, one of its tributaries. Numerous factors recommended the area for settlement; the land was unusually productive, wood for fuel was plentiful and easily accessible, and, like the area at Blanca, it was sheltered from the prevalent winds of the valley. These factors had attracted several non-Mormon families into the vicinity before the first Mormons arrived in 1888. Thus, although it properly belongs among the Mormon colonies of the San Luis Valley, Fox Creek was never a typically "Mormon" community, nor was it established as part of a centrally directed program from Manassa.[31]

The first Mormon families to settle at Fox Creek came from the southern states, primarily North Carolina and Tennessee. Some of them were personally acquainted with a Mr. Aaron Von Cannon, a non-Mormon southerner who was along the first to settle at Fox Creek and who bid

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[30]"Blanca Branch Manuscript History, 1888-1892," op. cit.

[31]"Fox Creek Branch Manuscript History, 1888," account by Andrew Jenson (unpublished material).

his southern friends welcome to the area. Several of the Mormon families at Fox Creek had been neighbors and acquaintances in the South, and a number of them were related by marriage. In considerable measure, therefore, the Saints at Fox Creek represented an already-established community transplanted from the South to a mountain canyon in southern Colorado.[32]

Among the first Mormon families at Fox Creek were those of David Vance, Steven A. Hicks, and Isaac F. Holstclaw, all of whom arrived in 1888. Other Mormons had been in the area previous to this time, employed at sawmills, but it appears that they did not spend the winter months there and none settled permanently at Fox Creek. In 1889, additional families of Saints arrived, attracted by the availability of government homestead land. In 1890, work was begun on a ditch to bring irrigation water from the Conejos River to the settlement. Fox Creek, which rises in the mountains some ten miles northwest of the settlement, is useful for irrigation purposes during the early part of the growing season, but it ordinarily dries up in the middle of the summer. There was thus a need for a supplemental source of irrigation water during the latter half of the summer. Work on the ditch continued at intervals until 1893, when it was first utilized for irrigation purposes.[33]

The first three years following the arrival of Saints at Fox Creek passed without any apparent Church organization or activity. The record indicates that the first meetings in the area were not held until 1891,

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[32] "Fox Creek Branch Manuscript History, 1888," Jenson, op. cit.

[33] Ibid., 1888-1893.

when Brother Vance began to take the lead in arranging for and directing such meetings as were held. A more formal organization was not long in following, and at a Stake conference held in November, 1891, Brother Vance was set apart as Presiding Elder of the dependent Branch of the Manassa Ward which was established at Fox Creek. Though regular meetings began to be held from that date, it was August, 1892 before an official Sunday School was organized.[34]

The Mormon population at Fox Creek reached its peak in 1893, when it totaled 94 persons scattered throughout the general vicinity on homesteads. A small building was constructed that same year which served as both school and meeting house. However, from 1893 to 1900 the Mormon population gradually declined as the Saints grew discouraged over economic difficulties and the remoteness of their location. Some of those leaving Fox Creek moved among the Saints in the valley. Others returned to their former homes in the South. Still others moved to Utah or Oregon. By the turn of the century, David Vance had the only Mormon family remaining at Fox Creek, and the Branch was soon afterwards disorganized.[35]

Eastdale

The Mormon community of Eastdale was located just a little less than two miles above the New Mexico border in Costilla County, a distance of about twenty-one miles southeast of Manassa. Anders Mortensen,

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[34] "Fox Creek Branch Manuscript History, 1891-1892," Jenson, op. cit.

[35] Ibid., 1893-1900.

a resident of Sanford, made a trip into the area in 1887 or 1888. Finding the soil to be a dark rich loam which gave promise of producing excellent crops he, along with his brother Ephraim, began to improve the area with a view to settling there. Others were also attracted to the area, and by 1890 active settlement had begun.[36]

As in nearly all new Mormon settlements, work on an irrigation ditch was the first order of business. A reservoir was also constructed, as it was felt that water from the Costilla Creek, which ran along the north edge of the settlement, would not suffice for irrigation purposes through the summers unless some means were found to store the water for use during the drier months. The reservoir was located a mile or so northeast of the settlement, and the cultivated lands extended from the reservoir in a southwesterly direction, continuing along the same line beyond the townsite. The Saints at Eastdale purchased two thousand acres of land at $4.50 per acre from the United States Freehold Land and Emigration Company, which had gained control over a part of the original Sangre de Cristo land grant.[37]

The townsite of Eastdale was surveyed in 1890. However, no homes were built on the site until the spring of 1891, as the first dwellings in the vicinity had been built near the reservoir. The townsite itself contained 100 acres surveyed into twelve blocks, four lots to a block, with three tiers of four blocks each running east and west. Christen Jensen built the first house, located near the reservoir. His family,

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[36]"Eastdale Ward Manuscript History, 1887-1890," account by Andrew Jenson (unpublished material).

[37]"Eastdale Ward Manuscript History, 1890," Jenson, op. cit.

along with those of Ephraim Mortensen and Rial Owens, spent the winter of 1890-91 at Eastdale. The other men who had worked on the canal and reservoir during the summer of 1890 returned to Sanford for the winter.[38]

Several families arrived at Eastdale with the first breaking of spring in 1891, and by the beginning of summer there were 86 Saints located at the new settlement. Regular Sunday School meetings began in March, and at a meeting held August 23rd, Simeon A. Dunn was set apart as Presiding Elder of the group at Eastdale, which was attached as a dependent Branch to the Sanford Ward.[39] During this same year, a 60-foot well was dug on the property of Christen Jensen near the center of the townsite. This well served for several years as the chief source of water for both culinary purposes and watering of stock. The time and effort involved in raising buckets of water sixty feet to serve the needs of an entire community made the task a tedious one. It also meant a continual parade of thirsty people and animals past the front door of the Jensen home, and we are assured that they never lacked for company.[40]

In 1892 most of the houses which had previously been built near the reservoir were moved to the townsite. Harvests, which for the first three years of the settlement's existence had increased with each year, suffered a setback in 1893, when a severe drought caused a crop failure.

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[38]"Eastdale Ward Manuscript History, 1890-1891," Jenson, op. cit.

[39]Ibid., 1891.

[40]Interview with Oliver E. Jensen, July 9, 1965. Brother Jensen is a son of Christen Jensen. He lived at Eastdale during his youth, helping to construct the well, described above.

Water from the reservoir, which up to this time had not been required, could not overcome the effects of the drought.[41]

On January 29, 1894, a Ward organization was effected at Eastdale. Marcus Funk was appointed as Bishop, with Simeon A. Dunn and Ephraim Mortensen as Counselors.[42] For the next several years the population at Eastdale remained rather static. In 1897, Bishop Funk moved to Sanford, necessitating a change in the Ward Bishopric. Christen Jensen was set apart as the new Bishop. Simeon A. Dunn remained in his position as First Counselor, and Andrew S. Nielsen was appointed as Second Counselor.[43]

Lack of water was the most persistent problem for the Saints located at Eastdale, and one which was further complicated by a conflict over water rights with the company from which they had purchased their land. This contest was eventually settled by the courts in favor of the land company, forcing the Saints to abandon the settlement a few years after the turn of the century. In 1900, there were 16 families at Eastdale, totaling 122 souls.[44]

The Mexican Colonization and Agricultural Company

As the campaign against polygamists grew more intense, there was a parallel increase in the feeling among a substantial number of Saints

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[41]"Eastdale Ward Manuscript History, 1892-1893," Jenson, op. cit.

[42]Ibid., 1894.

[43]Ibid., 1897.

[44]Ibid., 1900.

that no permanent place of refuge was likely to be found within the boundaries of the United States. Mexico afforded the most likely possibility of a suitable place of exile, and in fact the Church had, in 1885, purchased a considerable amount of land on the eastern slope of the Sierra Madre Mountains in northern Chihuahua. A number of Saints from Arizona had located there in the same year, establishing the colony of Juárez, which had experienced substantial growth during the ensuing years.[45]

The apparent success of the colony at Juárez, coupled with the sufferings of the Saints under the anti-polygamy laws, prompted a number of polygamous families in the San Luis Valley to seriously consider moving to the Mexican colony. Knowing this to be the case, several prominent figures in the Church who were frequently in the valley met on numerous occasions between April and June, 1888, to plan and arrange for such a move.[46] Their activities culminated, on June 14, 1888, in the organization of the Mexican Colonization and Agricultural Company, which was incorporated at Conejos under the laws of the State of Colorado.[47]

The declared purpose of the organization was to provide for the solicitation and transportation of emigrants to the State of Chihuahua in Mexico, to purchase lands for them and, in general, make provision for satisfying all of the material needs of the Mormons who were leaving

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[45]Roberts, op. cit., VI, 260-61.

[46]John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

[47]Certificate of Incorporation of the Mexican Colonization and Agricultural Company. Conejos County, Colo., No. 3866, June 16, 1888.

to settle in Mexico. The company was established with a capital investment of $100,000, divided into a thousand shares of $100 each. A Board of Directors was created and assigned to serve for the first year of the company's existence; the members being Apostles Moses Thatcher and John Henry Smith, William B. Preston, Alex F. MacDonald, Silas S. Smith, John Morgan, and John C. Dalton.[48]

On June 15th, a meeting was held to further organize the company. Apostle Moses Thatcher was elected President and Apostle John Henry Smith was named Vice President. Silas S. Smith was selected to serve as Secretary, Lawrence M. Peterson was appointed as Treasurer, and Alex F. MacDonald became Manager.[49]

It is easily observable from the records that, although a few local inhabitants figured prominently in the organization of this company, the bulk of its leaders were not residents of the valley. There was some objection to the fact that more local people were not included, but there were few such who had money to invest in business ventures. There was also some complaint that financial motives were behind the organization of the company, and although that was no doubt true to some extent, it was obvious that the company was established in response to a demonstrated demand. A considerable number of families from the valley moved to Mexico during the next few years, many of them through the auspices of the company. Most of those who went to Mexico returned to the valley when the Revolution ousting President Díaz erupted in Mexico in 1911-12.

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[48] Certificate of Incorporation of the Mexican Colonization..., op. cit.

[49] John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

Beulah

Although numerous polygamous families moved to Mexico to elude the federal authorities charged with the responsibility of finding and bringing them to trial, several yet remained in the valley, lacking the desire or the resources - or both - to make the long move. Those who, for whatever reason, elected to remain in the valley found themselves subjected to an ever-increasing tempo of governmental prosecution. Early in 1889, following a threat by non-Mormons in the area to inform federal authorities of the fact that several families of Saints were still practicing polygamy in the valley, it was decided that the wisest course of action would be to seek some temporary refuge where plural families could be located. New Mexico seemed the most likely choice, and Apostle John Henry Smith and Stake President Silas S. Smith suggested that the brethren in danger should move into that state far enough to be securely isolated and further, that they should locate themselves in good fruit country. Accordingly, Bishop Soren C. Berthelsen of Sanford and Andrew J. Downey of Manassa started on a journey to search for a location meeting the desired requirements.[50]

On an elevated bench about one-quarter of a mile from the Rio Chama in Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, the brethren found a site which they felt was well suited to their needs. Located approximately 80 miles south-southwest of Manassa, the soil was productive, the climate seemed well-adapted for the growing of fruit, and there were fourteen acres of

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[50] "Beulah Ward Manuscript History, 1889," no author given (unpublished material).

land, including three houses, which could be purchased from their Mexican owners who had vacated the area the previous year.[51]

After making the necessary arrangements for purchasing these homes and the land upon which they were located, Brothers Berthelsen and Downey returned to the valley. Along with their own families and that of Christen Jensen (who remained only a short while before moving to Eastdale), they left almost immediately for the site on the Rio Chama. Upon arrival, they purchased and divided the fourteen acres between them. Brother Downey moved his family into one of the Mexican homes, while Brothers Jensen and Berthelsen built new homes for their families. Later during the same year (1889) the Stake Presidency from the San Luis Valley visited the new site, which had been named Marianna, after the name assigned to the Post Office of the vicinity. The Stake authorities pronounced the location as satisfactory and returned to the valley, where they advised all polygamists to make preparations to move to Marianna. Most did, and during the winter of 1889-90, a number of families, including those of John R. Holt, William T. Dotson, Samuel Jackson, and Peter Rasmussen moved to the new site.[52]

A majority of these first families at Marianna did not stay longer than the spring of 1890, being greatly discouraged by hardship. The most severe problem was the difficulty they experienced in trying to control the water used for irrigation purposes. The sandy nature of the soil was such as to make it extremely succeptible to washing away, and

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[51] "Beulah Ward Manuscript History, 1889," op. cit.

[52] Ibid., 1889-1890.

the Saints found it impossible to build dams which had any degree of permanence.[53]

The particular difficulty of the situation caused the question of maintaining the settlement to be taken before the First Presidency of the Church, who were at that time in Manassa for a Stake conference. On August 19, 1890, a number of the brethren from Manassa, along with Apostle John Henry Smith and Elder John Morgan, met with the First Presidency on the propriety of attempting to maintain a permanent settlement on the Rio Chama site. Soren C. Berthelsen and Asahel L. Fuller were assigned to conduct a thorough investigation of the current situation and future possibilities of the location at Marianna, which they did during September, 1890. Their findings were reported to Stake President Silas S. Smith, who in turn carried the report to the First Presidency during the October General Conference. There the decision was made that the settlement should be made permanent. Asahel L. Fuller was set apart as Bishop of the colony on March 9, 1891, and additional families were called from the San Luis Valley to strengthen the settlement.[54]

With the reinforcement of additional families, prospects for the new colony seemed favorable. On December 11, 1892, a Ward was established. Alexander B. Kidd and David D. Crandall were sustained as Counselors to Bishop Fuller. As the Marianna Post Office had since been discontinued, the name of the settlement was changed. Hereafter, for as long as the area continued to be occupied by the Saints, both

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[53]"Beulah Ward Manuscript History, 1890," op. cit.

[54]Letter from Asahel L. Fuller To Andrew Jenson, January 26, 1894, as quoted in the "Beulah Ward Manuscript History, 1890-1891," op. cit.

the community and Ward at the Rio Chama site were designated by the name Beulah.[55]

Although generally favorable conditions continued through 1893, difficulties in controling the water time and again destroyed the efforts of the Saints, each time bringing greater financial hardship and discouragement. In 1895 the settlement at Beulah was officially discontinued. Most of the families moved back to the San Luis Valley that same year, although two or three remained an additional year or so before abandoning the area completely.[56]

Sunflower

Located just across the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad line about three miles directly west of Manassa was a scattered group of Saints comprising a community known variously as Mountain View or Sunflower. The Branch of the Church which met there was generally called by the former, and the settlement itself by the latter, name. The membership of the Branch included Saints living in and around the communities of Antonito and Conejos, as no formal Church organization existed in either of those towns. Brother Elihu K. Ball presided over the Branch, the meetings of which were held in a small log structure about five miles west of Manassa.[57] The date for the founding of the settlement is not recorded, though Assistant Church Historian Andrew Jenson

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[55]"Beulah Ward Manuscript History, 1892," op. cit.

[56]Ibid., 1893-1895.

[57]"San Luis Stake, Colorado," Deseret Evening News, December 21, 1893.

writes of it during his visit to the valley in 1893, and the name appears on state maps as early as 1892. The settlement was later absorbed by the town of Romeo, which grew up around the railroad switch scarcely a mile further south during the last year or two of the century.

El Rito

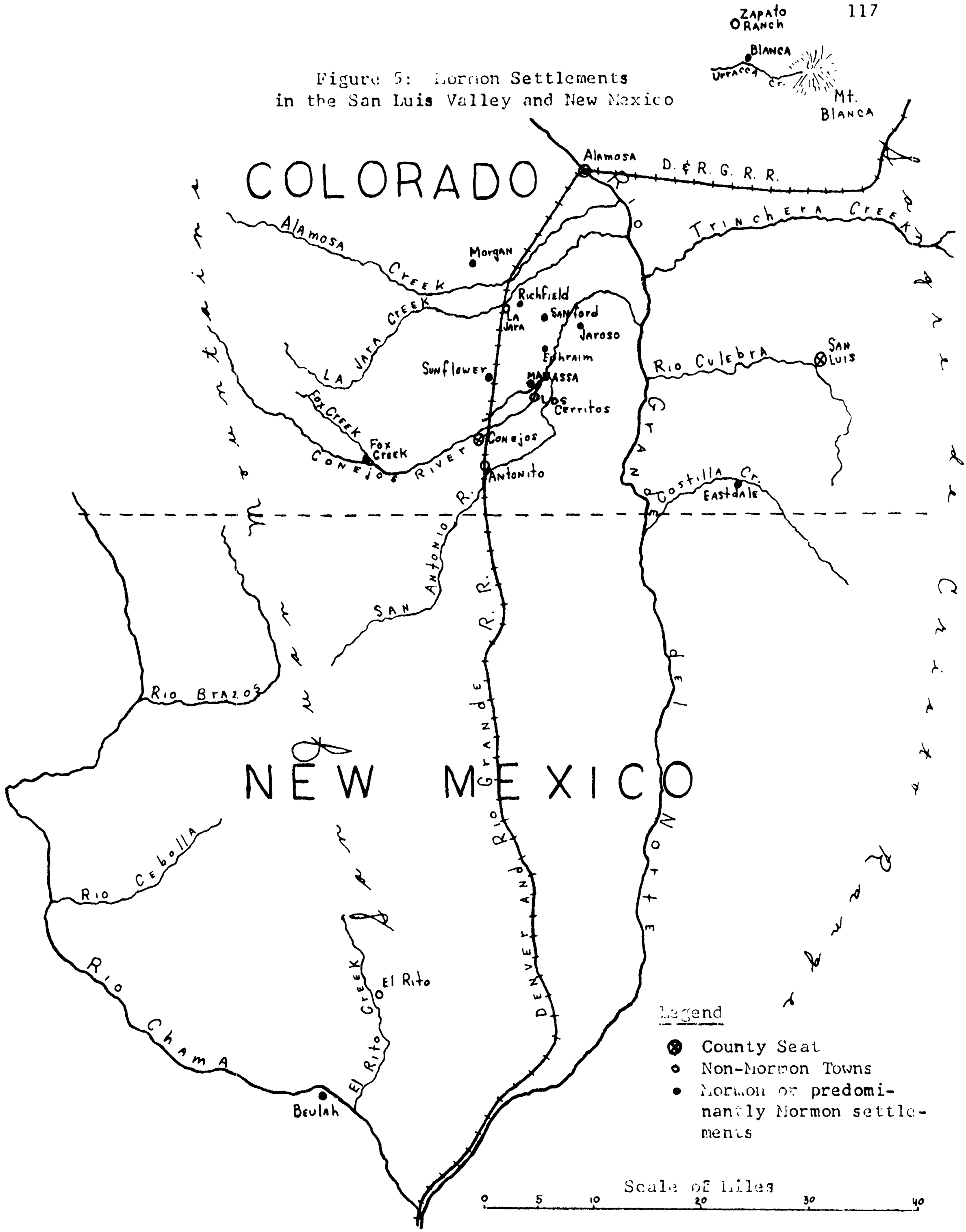
Another settlement, of which little is known, was attempted in New Mexico at El Rito, a Mexican town located approximately twelve miles north-northeast of Beulah on a tributary of the Rio Chama. The initiative for this attempt most probably came from the group of Saints located at Beulah. A narrow canyon mouth near El Rito afforded the possibility of storing water for irrigation, and work on a dam was begun. In 1893, official consideration was given to the possibility of establishing a colony at El Rito, but for reasons not recorded the effort was not successful and the attempt was given up.[58]

Saints Disperse Throughout the Valley

As the Saints became more thoroughly acquainted with the general vicinity in and around the San Luis Valley, they began to disperse quite widely, especially in the southwestern quarter of the valley. This dispersion was initially discouraged by Church authorities as being disruptive of the attempt to establish a few strong and flourishing communities, and also because it tended to remove those involved from the guiding influence of the Church, as well as from intimate association with other Saints. Nevertheless, a substantial number acquired farms

[58] "El Rito Manuscript History, 1893," account by Andrew Jenson (unpublished material).

Figure 5: Mormon Settlements
in the San Luis Valley and New Mexico



in various sections of the valley, or were attracted to non-Mormon communities such as Alamosa, La Jara, and Antonito by employment opportunities. Though there were numerous and notable exceptions, in general it could be said that the majority of those who independently established themselves away from the Mormon communities were not too strong in their attachment to the Church. Quite a number of them acquired much better agricultural land than was to be found in the immediate vicinity of the Mormon settlements. As a result they became, in many instances, more prosperous than those remaining in the towns, causing some of the latter to wonder and perhaps complain a bit about the seeming injustice of it all.

CHAPTER VIII

CHURCH ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS, 1885-1900

Local Church Affairs, 1885-1890

Following the disruptive dissension of 1884, the years 1885-86 were marked by an improvement in harmony among the Saints and by notable growth and development in the various Wards and Branches of the Stake. Political issues absorbed some attention, particularly in local matters, as the Saints were now attaining such numbers as to constitute a minor threat to the traditional Mexican control and domination of county offices. But the Saints refrained so far as possible from entering the strife of state and national politics, deeming it to be the wisest course of action. To have done otherwise would only have brought upon them the attention that many of their number were trying desperately to avoid.

The establishment of several new settlements in 1885-86 brought, at the same time or shortly thereafter, the organization of numerous auxiliary groups within the newly created Wards and Branches. During the

earliest stages of the building up of a new settlement, such activities and meetings as were under the immediate direction of the Ward Bishoprics and Branch Presidencies were frequently the only ones held. As additional settlers arrived and numbers increased, auxiliary organizations were established. Of these, the first to be organized were usually the Sunday School and Relief Society. Where numbers justified, Primaries and Mutual Improvement Associations were also established.[1]

Progress was noted in other ways too. Most observers were able to detect an obvious improvement in the degree of harmony and co-operation existing among the Saints, as is indicated in the following excerpt from the Deseret Evening News:

> ...The Saints...are not only improving temporally in gathering about them the necessaries and comforts of life, but spiritually also. A much better and more united feeling now prevails among them than formerly. Quite a number of those who became disaffected a couple of years since, being honest in their intentions, but deceived by the stories told them by apostates, have since seen the error of their way and returned to the fold.[2]

A further indication of improved co-operation could be found in the approval, in March, 1886, of a measure to consolidate the various school districts which up to that time had existed in each separate

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[1]The Sunday Schools of the Church are meetings held, as the name implies, each Sunday for the purpose of providing religious instruction and training for the membership of the Church. The Relief Society is a women's group, having as its major object the providing of assistance to needy members of the Church. Primaries and Mutual Improvement Associations are both organizations devoted to the youth of the Church: the former concerned with those aged 3 to 12, and the latter concentrating upon the provision of wholesome activity for those aged 12 to 21.

[2]"From Colorado," Deseret Evening News, October 2, 1885.

settlement.[3] However, each community continued to exercise local control over its school, for the decision reflected more the desire to facilitate the handling of administrative and financial matters than to arrive at uniform educational practices.

Missionary activity in the valley received considerable attention. In addition to the usual proselyting activities among non-Mormons, a number of missionaries were specially selected on the basis of having had previous missionary experience in the southern states. Those thus selected, being acquainted with the customs and manners of southern folk, were assigned to work with the southerners residing in the valley. Particular emphasis was directed towards those who had withdrawn their membership in the Church, or who were generally inactive in Church affairs.[4]

A milestone in priesthood organizational development in the valley was reached when, at the Stake conference held in June, 1886, the Ninety-Second Quorum of Seventy was organized.[5] Christen Jensen, later to become Bishop at Eastdale, was set apart as senior president of the quorum which, with the ordination of 34 men to be Seventies, totaled 89 members.[6]

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[3] John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

[4] "San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1885," op. cit.

[5] Andrew Jenson (comp.), Church Chronology: A Record of Important Events Pertaining to the History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2d ed. rev. and enl. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1899), p. 134.

[6] John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

As would be expected, the growth and expansion of the Church organizational structure paralleled the extension of Mormon communities throughout the valley. Branches were organized at Sanford (1886), Jaroso and Morgan (1887), Blanca (1888), and Beulah (1889). The older communities, too, experienced change and development resulting in increased religious activity. By May, 1887, the Mormon population of the valley had passed the one thousand mark and it was decided, at a Stake conference held that same month, to build a Stake House at Manassa. A building committee composed of the Stake Presidency and Ward Bishoprics was sustained to direct the work.[7] It was an ambitious project. The structure was to be a large one, capable of seating 1,500 persons, and the total cost was estimated at $10,000.[8] An expensive undertaking, yes, especially in view of the general financial condition of the Saints in the valley. But they were confident that they could accomplish the task, and the work was begun.

A new feeling of harmony and unity prevailed among the Saints. Perhaps they were, in a sense, driven to it by the passage of the Edmunds-Tucker Act. Though it was not destined to last, there can be little doubt of its existence during the early months of 1887. One observer was led to comment:

> There is in these towns a warm, delightful cordiality, a nearness of brother to brother, and a Gospel spirit of love and co-operation pervading the whole community, that is not met with in older towns. ...Two facts, we

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[7]John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

[8]Heber J. Grant, "Manassa Matters," Salt Lake Herald, December 8, 1889.

> think, will explain this nearer approach to the Gospel ideal of society, the naturally warm-hearted, generous feeling of the southern people and all absence of caste caused by the mutual interdependence of all the settlers in their united battles against the difficulties of pioneer life.[9]

On April 15, 1888, a Ward organization was established at Sanford. A week later, on April 22nd, the Ward at Richfield was officially discontinued. It was replaced, for those who remained, by a Branch organization, with Ephraim Coombs as Presiding Elder.[10] During the same year, Elder John Morgan was released from his assignment as President of the Southern States' Mission, and from this date forward played a less dominant role in affairs of the San Luis Valley, though he continued to exercise considerable influence.[11] William Spry succeeded Elder Morgan in the Southern States' Mission and in that capacity had a degree of supervisory responsibility in the valley.[12]

During 1889 and 1890 much of the efforts and energy of Church officials in the valley were concentrated upon securing a place of refuge for those among their number who practiced polygamy. A curious fact during this period is that although the prosecution of polygamists was a continual problem, there was apparently no interference in the steady stream of leading Church officials who were present in Manassa at the

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[9] N. L. Nelson, "San Luis Valley," Deseret Evening News, May 11, 1887.

[10] "Richfield Ward Manuscript History, 1888," op. cit.

[11] Andrew Jenson, "John Morgan," Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia, op. cit., IV, 381.

[12] Andrew Jenson, "William Spry," ibid.

regularly scheduled conferences of the San Luis Stake. Conference visitors during these two years included Apostles John Henry Smith, Moses Thatcher, Heber J. Grant, Brigham Young Jr., and Francis M. Lyman; Elders John Morgan, Brigham H. Roberts, and others - all of whom were liable under the anti-polygamy laws. On occasion as many as four of these men were present for a single conference.[13]

The Stake conference which opened at Manassa on August 17, 1890, looked, to judge by those present on the stand, as if the General Conference of the Church in Salt Lake City had suddenly been transferred to the San Luis Valley. Present were Church President Wilford Woodruff, his First Counselor George Q. Cannon, Apostle John Henry Smith, Elders John Morgan and Brigham H. Roberts, and George Goddard, the latter a member of the General Sunday School Superintendency. Normally, a delegation of general authorities such as this indicated a significant change or development in the area where it occurs, but nothing of great importance seems to have come from this conference. Matters concerning the settlement at Beulah in New Mexico were discussed and to some extent resolved. Joseph F. Thomas was sustained as Second Counselor in the Stake Presidency, replacing William Christensen, who had been released the preceding May.[14] However, a significant development followed a few weeks after the conference, and its impact was felt throughout the Church.

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[13]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1889," op. cit.

[14]Ibid., 1890.

The Woodruff Manifesto

Scarcely over a month after having presided over the Stake Conference at Manassa, President Wilford Woodruff, on September 25, 1890, issued the "Woodruff Manifesto," which declared the contracting of plural marriages in the Church to be at an end. From that date forward, President Woodruff advised, the Latter-day Saints were "to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land."[15]

Reaction to the "Manifesto" among members of the Church varied. Some no doubt felt a sense of relief at having the matter ended, and with it the governmental prosecution which had harassed them for so long a time. Others were keenly disappointed, for they had suffered much for the principal of plural marriage, and to some extent they now felt that their sacrifice had gone for naught.

In the San Luis Valley, the impact of the "Manifesto" was difficult to gauge. No immediate change was apparent, and things continued pretty much as they had in previous years. One thing, however, was certain: no longer would it be possible to attribute difficulties and failures to the harassment of the government alone. Opposition by non-Mormons did not end with the "Manifesto" and the Saints would still feel the effects of social disapproval as it became translated into political and economic practices at the state level. But a new dimension of freedom was given the Saints by the ending of the polygamy controversy, and with it the responsibility for the success or failure of the Mormon venture in the San Luis Valley was placed squarely on their shoulders.

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[15] Deseret News Weekly, October 4, 1890, p. 476.

1891: Re-establishment of the Richfield Ward

The final decade of the nineteenth century opened ominously. A smallpox epidemic broke out throughout the valley, and Manassa became a town under strict quarantine. Guards were posted around the town and anyone going in or out was required to have a permit. For fear of contributing to the spread of the disease, schools were closed and all Church meetings canceled.[16] Deaths from the dread disease were relatively few. By early spring the epidemic was at an end and things gradually returned to normal.

The town of Richfield proved to be more durable than even the most optimistic had anticipated. The Saints located there proved so tenacious in their efforts to make a success of the settlement that by 1891 their numbers had increased sufficiently to warrant the re-establishment of a Ward organization. This desire was publicly expressed by the residents of Richfield, apparently prompted by an "espirit de corps" as there is no indication of a conflict within the Sanford Ward. Approval for the organizational change was granted and Apostle Francis M. Lyman, at a special priesthood meeting held at Richfield on August 13th, took appropriate measures to discern the choice of those present for Bishop and Counselors.[17] As a result, Ephraim Coombs was appointed as Bishop, with William F. O. Behrman as First Counselor and Peter N. Guymon as Second Counselor.[18]

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[16]John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

[17]George Goddard, "San Luis Valley," Deseret Evening News, August 22, 1891.

[18]"Richfield Ward Manuscript History, 1891," op. cit.

Also taking place in 1891, the expansion of Mormon settlers into more distant areas of the valley resulted in the establishment of two new Branches; at Fox Creek in Conejos Canyon and at Eastdale, on the Costilla Creek in Costilla County.

Reorganization of the Stake Presidency

At the Stake conference held in Manassa on February 17, 1892, Silas S. Smith tendered his resignation as President of the San Luis Stake.[19] This action followed on the heels of a long-standing dispute over the manner in which the operation of the grist mill at Manassa was being handled by President Smith, who was president of the mill company. Economic difficulties and disagreement over the company's financial procedures dated back as far as March, 1887.[20] Although matters had been temporarily straightened out at that time, the basic problems were never completely resolved. Finally, a suit brought against the mill company disclosed the total disarray of the organization's financial affairs. Cause of the financial status of the company was attributed to mismanagement on the part of President Smith. In a community in which religious affairs were inseparable from socio-politico-economic life, the resulting opposition to President Smith made his position as Stake President untenable. Also involved, but superimposed over the particular problem of the mill company was the ever-present, if sometimes submerged, tension between the Saints from Utah and those from the South. As a former

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[19] "San Luis Stake Conference," Deseret Weekly, March 5, 1892, pp. 359-60.

[20] John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

resident of Utah, President Smith quite naturally possessed a "Utah attitude" about things, and his position as Stake President made him the focal point of much of the antagonism felt by the southern Saints. Entries in John Morgan's "Journal" indicate that there was a clash of feelings between himself and President Smith over the manner in which affairs in the valley were being conducted.[21] Elder Morgan's long experience as President of the Southern States' Mission made him more sympathetic towards the position and problems of the southerners than President Smith was inclined to be.

President Wilford Woodruff, upon being made aware of the problem centering around the mill company, assigned Lorenzo Snow, President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, along with Apostles Marriner W. Merrill and Abraham H. Cannon, to attend conference in the valley and to determine upon an appropriate course of action. On February 16, 1892, these brethren held a special meeting with the Stake High Council and Ward Bishoprics. There it was decided that the wisest course would be for President Smith to resign his position. He did so at a special session of the conference held on the 17th, receiving a unanimous vote in honorably releasing him from his position.[22]

At the same session that witnessed the resignation of President Smith, his son, Albert R. Smith, was set apart and sustained as the new President of the San Luis Stake. Levi P. Helm was appointed to the position of First Counselor in the Stake Presidency, and Nelson G. Sowards

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[21] John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

[22] "San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1892," op. cit.

was called to be the new Stake Clerk. No mention is made of an appointment to the position of Second Counselor, though it is probable that Joseph F. Thomas continued in that capacity.[23]

The change in the Stake Presidency did not produce an immediate solution to the problems that existed in the San Luis Stake. However, it did result in the ushering in of another "era of good feelings" between the Utah and southern contingencies. Antagonism and dissension did not cease at this point, but from this time forward open ruptures between the two groups became less frequent, and their significance less pronounced.

Further Church Organizational Developments to 1900

In December, 1892, the Beulah Branch in New Mexico was organized into a Ward, and all indications pointed to a prosperous future for the settlement. However, hopes in that regard were soon disappointed, and both Ward and settlement were discontinued in 1895. Probably just as significant in bringing about its decline as the irrigation problem previously mentioned was that the motivating factor behind its initial establishment no longer existed. With the ending of the polygamy issue in 1890, there was no longer a need for a remote place of refuge such as that offered at Beulah.

At the end of 1892, total membership in the San Luis Stake stood at 2,238, comprising 411 families.[24]

On January 29, 1893, a change was effected in the Manassa Ward Bishopric. Silas S. Smith Jr. was released from his position as First

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[23]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1892," op. cit.

[24]Loc. cit.

Counselor to Bishop John C. Dalton. Martin Christensen, who since September, 1884, had served as Second Counselor in the Bishopric, was sustained as First Counselor, and Joseph F. Thomas, who had been released from the Stake Presidency, was appointed as Second Counselor.[25]

On February 5, 1893, the vacancy left in the Stake Presidency with the releasing of Brother Thomas was filled. At a special meeting of the Stake High Council, with Apostle Francis M. Lyman, Apostle Anthon H. Lund, and Elder Brigham H. Roberts sitting in attendance, Thomas A. Crowther was set apart as Second Counselor to President Albert R. Smith. At the same meeting, Marcus O. Funk was appointed to be Stake Clerk, replacing Nelson G. Sowards, who had moved from the Stake. William Christensen and James C. Berthelsen were appointed to fill vacancies in the Stake High Council.[26]

The population of the Stake continued to increase throughout 1893. A breakdown of the totals for the month of August showed 2 Patriarchs, 29 High Priests, 58 Seventies, 97 Elders, 18 Priests, 51 Teachers, 102 Deacons, 1,168 members (either female or males not holding any priesthood), and 749 children under eight years of age - a total of 2,294.[27] At the end of the year Stake figures record a total population of 2,366 souls.[28] This was the high-water mark of the San Luis Valley Mormon population during the 19th century, as the remaining years of the final decade witnessed a slight decline in numbers.

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[25]"Manassa Ward Manuscript History, 1893," no author given (unpublished material).

[26]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1893," op. cit.

[27]Andrew Jenson, "San Luis Stake, Colorado," Deseret Evening News, December 21, 1893.

[28]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1893," op. cit.

1894 saw the establishment of a Ward organization at Eastdale, with Marcus O. Funk being set apart as Bishop and Simeon A. Dunn and Ephraim Mortensen as Counselors.[29] This increase of an additional Ward in the Stake was nullified the following year as the Ward at Beulah was disorganized. 1894 also witnessed the death of Elder John Morgan, who passed away while visiting at the home of his dear friend Matthias F. Cowley in Preston, Idaho.[30] Elder Morgan's health had never been good, yet he had persisted in faithfully carrying out the many responsibilities delegated to him. His death was justly mourned by the Saints of the San Luis Valley.

On May 19, 1895, eight years of building effort were culminated by the dedication of the Stake House at Manassa, only recently completed.[31] Apostle John Henry Smith performed the dedication during a session of Stake conference. It was a proud moment for the Saints. Under any circumstances, the erection of such a structure would have been notable; it seemed all the more so in view of the financial hardships experienced by the Saints in the San Luis Valley. The building itself was the largest of its kind in the valley. A frame structure, it measured 46' by 80', with a vestry, 16' by 22' attached to the west end, and was topped by three splendid towers.[32] It was destined to serve as the chief meeting place for the Saints of the San Luis Valley for over fifty years.

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[29]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1894," op. cit.

[30]Richardson and Morgan, Life and Ministry of John Morgan, op. cit. pp. 568-69.

[31]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1895," op. cit.

[32]"Manassa Ward Manuscript History, 1895," account by Andrew Jenson (unpublished material).

In February, 1896, the entire Bishopric of the Manassa Ward resigned their positions, stating that they were unable to work harmoniously with the Stake Presidency.[33] Apostle John Henry Smith was assigned by President Woodruff to attend to the matter. At a meeting of the Stake conference on February 16th, a new Bishopric was installed in the Manassa Ward. Samuel Jackson was set apart as Bishop, with Hugh L. Sellers and George J. Koch as First and Second Counselors, respectively. Silas S. Smith Jr. was appointed as Ward Clerk.[34]

During the final years of the 19th century two other changes took place in Ward Bishoprics. In July, 1897, Christen Jensen was sustained as the new Bishop of the Eastdale Ward when Marcus O. Funk moved to Sanford. On January 30, 1899, Soren C. Berthelsen was released from his position as Bishop of the Sanford Ward and was sustained to the Stake High Council. A new Bishopric was appointed at Sanford, consisting of William O. Crowther, Bishop; with Marcus O. Funk and Herman K. Christensen as Counselors.[35]

Apostle John W. Taylor's Visit to the Valley

The most notable and long-remembered event of the last half of the final decade of the century was the visit of Apostle John W. Taylor to

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[33]Letter from the Manassa Ward Bishopric to President Wilford Woodruff, January 29, 1896, as quoted in the "Journal History" of February 6, 1896, p. 2. The "Journal History" of the Church is located in the Latter-day Saints Church Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. It consists of an extensive collection of varied materials relating to events throughout the Church, arranged chronologically.

[34]"Manassa Ward Manuscript History, 1896," op. cit.

[35]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1899," op. cit.

the San Luis Valley in August, 1897. Apostle Taylor was the son of former Church President John Taylor. He was a very colorful, if controversial, individual. His characteristic friendliness and sense of humor made him a great favorite among members of the Church everywhere. He also had a reputation for unusual ability to forsee events and prophesy of things to come. Popularity and prophetic ability notwithstanding, his outspoken opposition to the ending of polygamy in the Church eventually resulted in his removal from the Quorum of the Twelve.

In 1896, Apostle Taylor was appointed to be the President of the newly organized Colorado Mission of the Church.[36] In this capacity he made a trip to the San Luis Valley in August, 1897, to preside over a conference of the Stake.[37] On his way through the valley he stopped at the homes of many of the Saints to introduce himself and to get acquainted with them. In the process, he organized a fishing trip up the Conejos Canyon and invited everyone to come along for a few days of fishing and relaxation before the conference. A personal invitation to spend a day or two with Apostle Taylor was something few Saints could resist, and they followed him into the canyon in such numbers that it appeared a mass migration was under way.[38] The fishing was reported to have been excellent, and the evenings were spent around the campfire singing, telling stories, and the like. A genuine spirit of comradeship

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[36]Andrew Jenson, "John W. Taylor," Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia, op. cit., I, 155.

[37]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1897," op. cit.

[38]Samuel W. Taylor, Family Kingdom (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951), p. 107.

was established through the good humor and amiability of Apostle Taylor, and in the good time that everyone was having, many troubles were forgotten and many personal antagonisms ended. It was observed also that at the evening sessions around the campfire, a considerable bit of gospel doctrine was dispensed, and

> by what seemed coincidence, prominent Church brethren just happened to be traveling through and stopped off at the camp a day or so for the fishing. If pressed, the brethren offered a few faith-promoting remarks at the campfire.[39]

At the end of the fishing expedition, Apostle Taylor led the march back into the valley, where meetings of the conference began. Sessions of the conference were held alternately among the major settlements, and everywhere attracted overflow crowds. Following the final session, which met at Sanford, a large baptismal service was held. Forty-two converts entered the waters of baptism on August 16th, witnessed by over 800 people who had been in attendance at the conference.[40] In addition to those entering the Church as converts, uncounted others experienced a restoration of faith, happiness, and harmony.

Apostle Taylor left the valley trailing a legend of prophecy and inspiration behind him. The San Luis Valley, he had told the Saints, would one day become a very prosperous area. Vast numbers of Saints would come to live in the valley, and a temple would be erected in their midst.[41] Although many of his predictions concerning the future of the

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[39]Taylor, op. cit., p. 107.

[40]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1897," op. cit.

[41]Taylor, op. cit., p. 109.

valley yet remain to be fulfilled, they constitute in large part the basis upon which exists an atmosphere of perpetual anticipation that prevails among the Saints in the San Luis Valley to this day.

CHAPTER IX

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE MORMON COLONIES

Scarcity of Economic Records

Records which deal specifically with the economic development of the Mormon colonies in the San Luis Valley are virtually nonexistent. This absence of records is largely explained by a corresponding lack of corporate and business enterprise in the Mormon communities of the valley. Although such enterprises did exist, they were few in number and small in size. The almost universal economic pursuit of the Saints was agriculture, and the majority of them were small farmers engaged in what was essentially a hand-to-mouth scale of agricultural production. As such, detailed financial records were neither required nor kept. Even of those business enterprises that did exist, few records are available, and much of what is known of their development has been gathered from inference and indirect sources.

General Economic Practices

In the main, economic practices in the Mormon colonies of the San Luis Valley were dictated by natural and geographic factors. The natural environment of the area was such as to insure that agriculture would be the dominant economic endeavor of the Saints. Too, a great majority of those Saints who settled in the valley were themselves farmers who had come in search of land, and this factor also contributed to agricultural predominance in economics. Although mining activity in the surrounding mountain areas was considerable, the Saints made no effort to undertake a mining enterprise. Preferring to avoid the adverse social conditions generally found in mining areas, they were content to concentrate on agricultural production and to concern themselves with the mining communities only to the degree that they served as a market for agricultural produce. However, the mines did offer a good and sometimes necessary source of employment in the off-season or during periods of economic stress in the Mormon communities, and many of the Saints took employment in the mines for varying lengths of time.

In keeping with established colonizing practices of the Church, the Saints attempted to become as completely self-sustaining in economic matters as was possible. Families were encouraged to produce as many of the articles of home consumption as was practicable. Communities, too, were urged to co-operate in the building of flour mills, tanneries, and other similar industries which would produce sufficiently for the needs of the entire community. This need to provide production facilities which could serve large numbers of families contributed to the establishment of co-operative enterprises among the Saints. These, however,

were designed only to meet the needs of the Saints, and no attempt was made to develop large-scale industries. Small retail merchandise stores, blacksmith shops, and wagon shops were typical of the enterprises established in the early Mormon communities of the valley.

To a certain extent, the usual practice of sending individuals possessing a variety of occupational talents to new settlements in order to better insure the success of the endeavor was not much in evidence among the Mormon settlements of the San Luis Valley. Of the first installment of southern settlers, the great majority were farmers, although their numbers did include a few carpenters and three or four other artisans and tradesmen.[1] Between 1880 and 1884, of the heads of 34 families arriving from Utah whose occupations are known, 16 were farmers, 9 were either cattlemen or combination cattlemen-farmers, 5 were carpenters, and 1 each was skilled as a blacksmith, freighter, sawmill operator, and mill worker.[2] While these figures indicate a preponderance of agricultural backgrounds among those settling in the valley, they also indicate that the proportion of farmers and cattlemen to those possessing other skills was about what one would expect to find in an area that was so overwhelmingly agricultural. This same proportion in occupational backgrounds is representative of nearly all of the Saints who came to the valley up to 1900. Thus it was established at the outset that agriculture would be the dominant economic factor in the Mormon colonies of the San Luis Valley.

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[1]Nicholas G. Morgan, "Mormon Colonization in the San Luis Valley," op. cit., p. 276.

[2]Albert E. Smith (comp.), Silas Sanford Smith..., op. cit., pp. 28-29.

Agricultural Development

As indicated in chapter I, cultivation was largely limited by natural environmental characteristics to the western half of the valley, and in that portion, irrigation, at which the Mormons were renowned practitioners, was the key to successful large-scale cultivation. However, irrigation in the valley did not originate with the Mormons. One of the early Mormon settlers reported the existence of irrigation ditches, long unused:

> Old water ditches which can be traced for miles, are a little east of Manassa. When, and by whom they were made, or what success in raising grain, etc., the people had who constructed them, I have not been informed. That a considerable number of years have lapsed since they were used for irrigating purposes, is apparent from the rabbit brush growing in and about them, for it seems to be as large and plentiful there as elsewhere.[3]

Though the Saints were not the first in the valley to practice irrigation, they did so to a greater extent than had been the case with non-Mormon settlers prior to their arrival. However, large companies, generally with financial backing from Denver or the East, also built and operated huge irrigation canals as business enterprises in other parts of the valley during the Mormon colonization period. The Saints nonetheless restricted their efforts to projects which would provide irrigation water sufficient to meet their own needs, and made no attempt to construct large canals for commercial purposes. As the Mormon population in the valley increased and their areas of settlement expanded, there was a corresponding increase in the need for greater

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[3]Letter from H. P. Dotson to editors, March 2, 1881, Deseret Evening News, March 9, 1881.

irrigation facilities. Thus, several canal companies were organized by the Saints on the enterprise system. However, these companies were relatively small in size, and concentrated on serving the needs of the Mormon communities.

The agricultural activities of the Saints began immediately upon the arrival of the first exploring party to enter the valley in the spring of 1878. In preparation for the others who were shortly to arrive from Pueblo, about seven acres of wheat were planted, plus additional acres of potatoes and garden vegetables.[4] Other crops were planted later in the spring, but the harvest realized from this first season's planting hardly sufficed for the food requirements of the small group then located in the valley. Hampered by lack of tools, teams, wagons, and other equipment necessary for farming, several of the Saints took employment in the mines of the nearby mountains or on the railroad line that was being extended through the valley.[5] Such employment proved to be a continuing necessity until about 1880, when farming attained the point of near self-sufficiency and was able to fill most of the foodstuff needs of the Saints. Even after 1880, and continuing to the turn of the century, "outside" employment opportunities were of great assistance to the Saints.

The valley was well suited for agricultural development, particularly in the growing of certain kinds of crops. Wheat was grown

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[4]Deseret Evening News, May 14, 1878.

[5]From the Alamosa Journal (date unknown), as quoted in Frank Hall, History of the State of Colorado..., op. cit., IV, 98.

most successfully, and consistently ranked as the principal agricultural product of the valley. Other small grains did well also, as did potatoes, peas, and alfalfa. Native hay grew in considerable abundance and was harvested for use as feed for livestock.[6] However, the success which attended the raising of certain crops gave rise to overly optimistic hopes that almost anything in the way of agricultural produce could be raised in the valley. One resident reported that he had conclusively demonstrated that sorghum cane could be raised in any amount desired and that all the syrup and sugar required by the Saints could be manufactured in their own midst.[7] Elder John Morgan stated that there was every reason to anticipate complete success in the raising of grains and vegetables. "Small grain of all kinds will do well here," he reported. "Potatoes, cabbage, carrots, beets, onions, peas, beans, etc., will all produce finely."[8] While such reports as these were reliable to a considerable degree, they often tended to exaggerate the quantities of the produce that could be raised. Other reports seem to have represented optimum results as being nearer the average. "We saw turnips that weighed nine pounds and cabbage that weighed sixteen, ruta bagas that weighed fourteen and onions between three and four inches in diameter...."[9] Still further, "...all kinds of hardy small grains

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[6]Geology and Water Resources of the San Luis Valley, Colorado, op. cit., p. 27.

[7]Letter from H. P. Dotson to editors, November 13, 1881, Deseret Evening News, November 22, 1881.

[8]Letter from John Morgan to editors, April 2, 1880, Deseret Evening News, April 9, 1880.

[9]Letter from John Morgan to editors, November 23, 1881, Deseret Evening News, November 30, 1881.

will do well here and it is a wonderfully good country for vegetables; one party here claiming that out of a large crop of cabbage which he raised there was not a single head that would not weigh twenty pounds."[10] There can be little doubt that the Saints experienced their greatest agricultural success in the raising of grains and vegetables. It also seems certain that the reports of agricultural achievements were to some degree calculated to attract additional settlers to the area, hence the rather constant reference to maximum accomplishments.

In their hopes of raising large amounts and varieties of fruits, the Saints met with repeated failure. Some fruits, especially apples, can be grown with varying regularity and levels of success, but the climate of the valley is such as to preclude the planting of large orchards for commercial purposes. Failure in producing fruit in the vicinity of the Mormon settlements in the valley prompted attempts to try the raising of fruits in some of the outlying areas. It was anticipated that the milder climate on the western slopes of Mount Blanca might prove suitable for this purpose, and this anticipation had been a motivating factor in the establishment of a settlement there. The growing of fruit at the Blanca settlement, however, did not prove successful.[11] The establishment of a settlement at Beulah, in New Mexico, was made at least partly in hopes that fruit could be successfully grown there, but the area was abandoned before anything could be effectively demonstrated.

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[10] Heber J. Grant, "Manassa Matters," Salt Lake Herald, December 8, 1889.

[11] Loc. cit.

In dividing up the land to be used for agricultural purposes, the usual Mormon colonizing practice was followed. The land was divided into ten-acre plots, with each family being allotted one such plot. If the size of the family was sufficiently large to justify it, additional acreage would be allotted. Although the parcelling out of land was handled in a manner suggestive of a communal organization, its purpose was to assure that all received an amount of land comparable to their needs, and the actual purchase of the lands so allotted was an individual responsibility. This allotment system applied only to those lands which, by general agreement, were designated as farms lands to be used by those Saints who resided in the towns. Individuals were free to obtain as much land as they were able outside of these designated areas. However, in these outlying areas, a pattern of land acquisition was generally followed in which the Saints purchased only alternating quarter-sections of land. The resultant checkerboard pattern enabled the Saints to gain effective control over an area of land of which they actually had legal claim to only half. Non-Mormons did not wish to purchase land is such chopped up segments as were left, nor could their irrigation projects be easily adapted to such a scattered system of land holdings. Thus, ample land was left available in "Mormon areas" for those Saints who would later arrive to settle in the valley.

By the time the Saints began to acquire title to their lands in the late 1880's and early 1890's, the Mormon population in the valley had begun to stabilize, and those who were financially able began to acquire increasingly larger tracts of land. The acquisition of land soon afterwards ceased to be a community concern and became an individual matter.

Labor Employment Opportunities

Fortunately for the Saints in the San Luis Valley, their arrival coincided with a period of notable transition, development, and economic growth in the valley, which made it possible for them to obtain good employment with relative ease. Although the possibilities of employment were many and varied, a few enterprises rank as particularly significant in providing an almost constant source of employment for those Saints who desired it. Pre-eminent among these were the mining and railroad industries. Numerous mines were located in the San Juan Mountains to the west, all of which offered jobs at good wages. Because of the social conditions associated with the mining camps, a large number of those who took jobs at the mines viewed their employment as a temporary expedient. In many cases, however, economic necessity transformed expediency into permanency.

The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, whose construction of a main line from Denver to Sante Fe took place at the very time that Mormon colonists were settling in the valley, was a consistent and valuable source of employment to the Saints. Early in 1879, Soren C. Berthelsen, who had arrived with the first group of Saints from Utah the previous fall, took a contract to deliver ties for the railroad.[12] Coming at a propitious moment, the resulting employment was of great benefit to the Saints, whose agricultural endeavors were at that time falling short of producing enough for their own needs. In addition to the track to Santa Fe, the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad built numerous branch lines into

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[12]Hans Jensen, "Journal," op. cit., p. 100.

the mining regions of the San Juan Mountains. A line was also built westward from Antonito to Durango, Colorado. All of this railroad construction activity continued for many years to provide employment opportunity for the Saints of the San Luis Valley.

Additional work was available in the building of irrigation canals throughout the western portion of the valley. While this work was ordinarily closer to home than mining or railroad jobs, the pay was usually not as good. Quite a number of Saints also found jobs at sawmills, several of which were located in the mountains surrounding the valley.

There was considerably less demand for skilled than for unskilled labor. Those of the Saints who were skilled artisans usually worked only part time at their trades, the remainder of the time being engaged in either unskilled labor or agricultural pursuits. Carpenters and others with builder's skills were frequently employed in the construction of homes and other buildings. Bridges, both for railroad and wagon traffic, were needed to span the numerous streams which wound their way through the valley, thus providing jobs for those with the requisite skills. Surveyors were needed to lay out new communities, divide farming lots, and plot irrigation ditches and canals. Those with engineering abilities found occasional work in the construction of mills, bridges, and such projects as the building of the water-wheel at Beulah, which was required to provide a 12-foot vertical lift from the river to the townsite.[13]

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[13]"Beulah Ward Manuscript History, 1893," op. cit.

During the earliest years of the Mormon colonization in the valley, "outside" employment played a significant role in providing a financial basis for the purchase of land, cattle, machinery, equipment, home construction materials, and necessary household items. With the gradual attainment of agricultural self-sufficiency there followed a period during which "outside" employment experienced a slight decline as the Saints concentrated their efforts on increasing agricultural production. However, it soon took another upward swing as improved machinery and more efficient methods of farming lessened the need for farm workers and as agricultural development reached the saturation point, causing many of the Saints to look elsewhere for employment opportunity.

Private and Co-operative Enterprise

The goal of economic self-sufficiency required the establishment of business enterprises by the Saints, few of whom had money available for investment purposes. Of those few who did, nearly all were former residents of Utah, as those coming to the valley from the South were almost invariably poor and barely able to provide themselves with the common necessities of life. During the early years of Mormon settlement in the valley there was only the smallest margin of profit from agricultural production and cattle-raising, and thus only those who possessed some capital upon arrival were able to participate in the establishment of private or co-operative enterprises. The fact that this tended to limit business opportunities to the Utah Saints was no doubt another factor in contributing to the disunity that characterized the relationship between the two groups for such a long period of time.

Such enterprises as were established by the Saints were almost entirely limited to those kinds of businesses which would contribute directly to the economic self-sufficiency of the Mormon communities. No attempt was made to create large enterprises which would serve the non-Mormon population of the surrounding area. It was expected that the Mormon population in the valley would soon reach such numbers as to guarantee a market of sufficient size to return a fair margin of profit to business owners. In fact, overly-optimistic estimates of future population figures led to an excessive expansion of small businesses at Manassa. In 1889, Apostle Heber J. Grant, commenting on the situation, reported: "I never saw such a place as Manassa for its size for stores; there are six or seven of them and a two-story adobe, frame front, building is now in course of erection for a general merchandise store."[14]

As would be expected in a frontier settlement, the initial efforts of the Saints were directed to the erection of homes and the cultivation of land, rather than towards the building up of business enterprises. It was 1880 before the first retail merchandise store was established in Manassa. A small co-operative venture, it was organized by Soren C. Berthelsen with an initial capital investment of $325.[15] Later in the same year the flour mill, previously mentioned, was purchased by Silas S. Smith and D. H. Elledge, who eventually transferred it from its location at San Luis, in Costilla County, to Manassa. It was this mill,

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[14]Heber J. Grant, "Manassa Matters," Salt Lake Herald, December 8, 1889.

[15]"Manassa Ward Manuscript History, 1880," Jenson, op. cit.

later expanded into the Manassa Co-operative Milling and Manufacture Company, which became involved in the economic difficulties which surrounded the resignation of Stake President Silas S. Smith in 1892. Co-operative irrigation canal companies were organized by the Saints in each of the major Mormon settlements in the valley, and while these were co-operative enterprise organizations, the motive behind their establishment was not so much profit as the need to facilitate agricultural development in the communities. In addition to the stores in Manassa, small co-operative stores were also opened at Sanford[16] and Morgan.[17] Other private enterprise ventures among the Saints included co-operative cattle and sheep herds,[18] and sawmills located in Conejos Canyon.[19]

Economic self-sufficiency was never more than partially achieved by the Saints in the San Luis Valley. In agricultural production they became most nearly so and no doubt could have subsisted on the foodstuffs raised in the valley. As long as the Mormon communities remained in a "frontier" stage of development they could more nearly supply their wants. However, as the standard of living gradually improved, the Saints became less able to provide themselves with "luxury" items, though the production of articles of luxury was never intended to fall within the

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[16]Certificate of Incorporation of the Sanford Co-operative Mercantile Company, Conejos County, Colorado, No. 9454, October 18, 1890.

[17]"Sanford Ward Manuscript History, 1888," op. cit.

[18]Albert E. Smith (comp.), Silas Sanford Smith..., op. cit., p. 27.

[19]"Fox Creek Branch Manuscript History, 1891," op. cit.

scope of what was meant by "economic self-sufficiency" in Mormon communities. Stabilization of the Mormon population in the valley was perhaps the most significant factor in limiting the development of business enterprise by the Saints, since smallness of numbers and the limited market available made it impractical to undertake the provision of any but the most fundamental and essential needs of the Mormon communities.

CHAPTER X

EDUCATION, RECREATION, AND FRATERNIZATION

Education in the Mormon Colonies of the San Luis Valley

Mormon colonies, wherever and whenever established, always made the proper education of the children of the community a matter of prime concern. The colonies of the San Luis Valley were no exception in this regard, as schools were established almost immediately upon arrival. Even before the first town was established at Manassa, Bishop Hans Jensen arranged for the rental of a house at Los Cerritos in order that school could be held during the winter of 1878-79.[1] In 1879, shortly after the first homes had been erected on the townsite, a school was built at Manassa.[2] As was the case in most of the Mormon settlements during the early years in the valley, the school building

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[1]Hans Jensen, "Journal," op. cit., p. 99.

[2]"Manassa Ward Manuscript History, 1879," Jenson, op. cit.

also served as a meeting house for the Saints. Elder John Morgan reported on the educational undertaking in the colony:

> ...about the first thing they did in the first town they started was to build a comfortable schoolhouse, and during the past winter they have had a school in session the entire winter, expecting that as soon as circumstances would permit, a summer school would be commenced.[3]

A formal school district was established by the Saints early in 1879,[4] becoming an affiliate of the Conejos County school system, which was at that time in its early stage of development. The County Superintendent of Schools exercised only limited supervision over the schools established by the Saints, being primarily that of upholding the minimum standards that were required to qualify for public funds. Teachers were chosen by the Saints with the approval of the County Superintendent, and William Christensen and H. P. Dotson were among the early teachers at the Manassa school. Mormon emphasis on education gave added impetus to the development of the county school system, which first began to attain real stature and significance in 1888, under the capable leadership of Superintendent C. H. Brickenstein, who added many new districts. Progress, however, continued to be slow. A measure of the limited success experienced by the Superintendent's Office can be observed by the fact that, according to the 1890 census, average daily attendance amounted to only slightly over one-third of the county's potential school enrollment.[5]

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[3]Discourse by Elder John Morgan in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, May 23, 1880, printed in the Deseret Evening News, August 21, 1880.

[4]Letter from Joseph F. Thomas to Alamosa Journal, January 1, 1891, quoted in Hall, History of the State of Colorado..., op. cit., IV, 98.

[5]Hall, op. cit., IV, 101.

Control of the various school districts was vested in local school boards. Each of the Mormon communities maintained its own district and board of education until March 29, 1886, when it was voted to consolidate the districts of all the Mormon communities (which at that time included Manassa, Ephraim, Richfield, and Sanford).[6] In the Mormon settlements, educational matters, including the selection of school boards, were handled as though they were ecclesiastical prerogatives. At a meeting of the Stake conference held November 19th and 20th, 1893, a Stake Board of Education was presented and sustained by a vote of those present at the conference. Members of the board, which controlled all of the schools of the Mormon communities in the county, included the Stake Presidency, plus William Christensen, Joseph B. Forbes, Marcus O. Funk, and Ephraim Coombs.[7]

That the Saints in the San Luis Valley would give careful attention to educational matters was further assured by the personal interest of Elder John Morgan in educational affairs. Elder Morgan had, in 1867, founded the Morgan Commercial College in Salt Lake City - a business school which enjoyed a very favorable reputation as an institution of learning.[8] He also took a great interest in public educational matters in the Salt Lake Valley, and in August, 1883, was elected Superintendent of the Salt Lake County District Schools.[9] It was

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[6]John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

[7]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1893," op. cit.

[8]Richardson and Morgan, Life and Ministry of John Morgan, op. cit. p. 34.

[9]Ibid., p. 361.

natural that this concern with things educational should be reflected in his direction of early affairs among the Mormon colonies in Colorado.

The school house erected at Manassa soon proved to be inadequate because of the rapid increase in population. A larger school house, of frame construction, was built in 1882.[10] Also in 1882, the Saints located at Ephraim, most of whom had only arrived the previous year, completed a small (20' x 26') school building.[11] In 1886, when the town of Sanford began to attract settlers from the unsatisfactory locations at Richfield and Ephraim, a small meeting house was erected which served both school and Church purposes. As at Manassa, the increasing population at Sanford soon created a need for a larger building. However, the move to build a new school house suffered a temporary setback when a proposal to that effect, made at a priesthood meeting at Sanford in June, 1887, was voted down.[12] A temporary solution was arrived at when the Saints coming from Ephraim in 1888 brought their meeting house with them. This structure was attached to the school at Sanford, thereby increasing its capacity sufficiently to accomodate the students for another year or two. A better facility was still needed, however, and whatever objections had been voiced in 1887 were apparently overcome, for in December, 1889, Apostle Heber J. Grant, who was then in the valley, was able to report that a two-story brick school house (28' x 38') was almost completed at Sanford.[13]

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[10]"Manassa Ward Manuscript History, 1882," Jenson, op. cit.

[11]"Ephraim Ward Manuscript History, 1882," Jenson, op. cit.

[12]John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

[13]Heber J. Grant, "Manassa Matters," Salt Lake Herald, December 8, 1889.

Manassa's population continued to rise, and it was not long before the new frame school house was filled to overflowing. A much larger brick building was built in 1890, and was attached to the frame structure.[14] This new edifice, combining the frame and brick buildings, proved sufficient for the needs of the Saints at Manassa until after the turn of the century.

The outlying Mormon settlements that were later established also attempted to meet the educational needs of their children. Schools are known to have existed at Eastdale, Fox Creek, and Morgan.[15] There are no records of formal schools existing in the other settlements (Jaroso, Blanca, Sunflower, Beulah, and El Rito). However, it is most probable that in these settlements some instruction in rudimentary subjects was given by individuals who either were delegated or assumed the teaching responsibility on an informal and private basis.

Recreation

Though Mormons pride themselves in hard work and extol the virtues of honest labor, all work and no play has never been their concept of the good life. Time was always taken for a bit of relaxation and fun, even when conditions and circumstances were most trying. Generally, such activities were informal, where the Saints gathered together for a pot-luck dinner, and afterwards frequently enjoyed themselves in singing and dancing. There were always some among their number who could play the

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[14]"Manassa Ward Manuscript History, 1890," Jenson, op. cit.

[15]Reports of schools being constructed and classes held are in the "Manuscript Histories" of each of these settlements.

fiddle, piano, or horn, and others who could call out the dances. Amateur performers - then as ever - were eager to display their talents, and Will Morris and a brothers-sister combination of Will, "Bood" (James), and "Tish" (Hannah) Thomas are remembered among those who loved to perform whenever an audience or an occasion presented itself.[16]

By way of somewhat more formal social gatherings, plays were frequently presented. Using local talent, most of these were the product of the Young Men's and Young Women's Mutual Improvement Associations, auxiliaries of the various Wards and Branches that have been mentioned briefly in chapter VIII.[17] In the San Luis Valley, most of the plays and other activities were held in the meeting houses or schools, which were usually the only places large enough to accomodate them. Even so, smallness of space and crowded conditions sometimes made audience and performers almost indistinguishable. No one seemed to mind, and what may have been lacking in professional quality was more than compensated for by the enjoyment all had in being able to find a brief respite from their daily cares.

Holidays also afforded an opportunity for social activities. Especially was this true of Independence Day and July 24th, which latter date commemorates the arrival of the Mormon pioneers in the Salt Lake

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[16]Interview with John B. Reed, July 7, 1965, at Manassa, Colorado. Brother Reed is one of the few surviving settlers from the period of this study.

[17]The Mutual Improvement Associations form the "activity arm" of the Church, and the majority of Church-sponsored activities are under their direction. Much of their effort is directed towards providing good and wholesome activity and recreation for the members of the Church, especially the young. Particular emphasis is given training in music, speech, and the drama.

valley in 1847. Both were marked by appropriate celebrations in the larger Mormon settlements of the valley, and if the Saints showed a greater enthusiasm for the 24th than for the 4th, they meant no disrespect to the national honor. There was perhaps the more spirited celebration of these events at Sanford, where Utah Saints predominated, whose longer association with Mormon celebrations made them more traditional and somewhat more standardized than those with which the southern Saints were acquainted.

> Literary programs honoring these events were held in a large shed or bowery covered with green boughs of cottonwood cut from native trees not far away. A rostrum was erected in the shade where on July 4, the Declaration of Independence was read, orations and other suitable parts were rendered by local talent.[18]

Similar celebrations were also held at Manassa, which in later years became the site where the Mormon communities throughout the valley concentrated their July 24th "Pioneer Day" activities. In 1886, Elder John Morgan records from Manassa that he "attended a celebration of the Nation's Anniversary at the Bowery, listening to songs, speeches, etc."[19] May Day celebrations were also held at Sanford, complete with Maypole and brass band.[20] So constant was the demand for social activities at Sanford that a thriving business, the Sanford Social Hall Company, was founded on the need to provide a suitable facility where "dances, theatrical performances and other public gatherings" could be held.[21]

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[18]Fred T. Christensen, "Early History of Sanford, Colorado," Colorado Magazine, XXXVI (July, 1959), pp. 221.

[19]John Morgan, "Journal," op. cit.

[20]Christensen, op. cit., p. 220.

[21]Certificate of Incorporation of the Sanford Social Hall Company, Conejos County, Colorado, No. 13699. May 2, 1894.

Relations with Non-Mormons in Colorado

In view of the general opinion which was held about Mormonism at the time the Saints were establishing themselves in the San Luis Valley, they got along surprisingly well with their non-Mormon neighbors. Reports of the early colonists were consistent in their appraisal of the officials of the State as being favorably disposed towards the Mormon inhabitants of the valley. Elder John Morgan, who had the closest contact with Colorado State officials during the earliest phase of the colonizing venture, reported that "The people of the State of Colorado have, as a rule, treated them kindly, have welcomed them to their borders, have endeavored to benefit them, and assisted them in forming their settlements all they could."[22]

Mexican residents predominated in the immediate vicinity of the Mormon settlements. Though a few were generous in the assistance which they offerred to the Saints, most, having had unfortunate experiences in business dealings with other white settlers in the area, were at first reluctant to have much association with the Mormons;

> But after some short acquainance with us, after coming in contact with us a limited length of time, they learned to think better of us, and by their votes elected one of our brethren magistrate over a considerable portion of the county of Conejos.... There is a kindly feeling between them and the Latter-day Saints. I noticed when our people were living in their plazas, as some of them did for a season, that whenever any of them took sick, the Mexicans were on hand to nurse them and to do what they could for their comfort.[23]

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[22]Discourse by Elder John Morgan, op. cit.

[23]Loc. cit.

Some hostility was engendered for a brief period in 1879, when the Mexicans dammed up the North Branch of the Conejos River which ran a short distance from the site which had been selected for the town of Manassa, thus depriving the new community of vital irrigation water. After negotiations failed to conclude a peaceful settlement, Bishop Hans Jensen directed the Saints to tear out the dam, which they did.[24] No further serious incidents of conflict over irrigation water rights are recorded during the period of this study. However, many temporary adjustments seem to have been made which in effect only postponed a very serious rivalry over water rights to the early part of the 20th century.

Difficulty was also encountered when cattlemen refused to keep their herds away from the fields which had been planted by the Saints. Despite some legal obstacles to the erection of fences, the Saints went ahead with plans to fence in their lands:

> An agreement has been entered into to fence in our farming land, for the protection of our grain from the ravages of stock. It has been thought that the law-making power of this State will repeal the Stock, or no fence law, and whether they will or not, it will be well to put in a good and substantial fence around our contemplated crop, and not suffer ourselves to be annoyed as we were last year. ...We aim to fence in, here at Manassa, 960 acres in one field.... At Ephraim they propose, I think, to enclose a section or 640 acres.[25]

It was paradoxical that in an era of anti-Mormonism the Saints were able to establish themselves in the San Luis Valley with a

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[24]Andrew Jenson, "The Founding of Mormon Settlements in the San Luis Valley, Colorado," Colorado Magazine, XVII (September, 1940), pp. 177-78.

[25]Letter from H. P. Dotson to editors, March 2, 1881, Deseret Evening News, March 9, 1881.

minimum of conflict with non-Mormons in the same general vicinity, while at the same time experiencing most of their opposition from internal sources or from distant anti-Mormon elements. Almost from the beginning moments of the Mormon settlement in the valley the Denver Tribune, taking its cue from the Daily Tribune in Salt Lake City, launched a campaign against the Saints. So flagrantly extreme was its position, however, that other non-Mormon publications came to the defense of the Mormon settlers:

> As long as the Mormons who come to Conejos County to settle are as industrious, honest and as good a class of citizens as those now living here, the Independent will extend them a welcome and take sides with them against the Tribune. They are making their part of the San Luis Valley a garden spot, and we wish for more just such law-abiding, hard-working people to settle in our county.[26]

> Seventeen Mormon Elders have been sent to the Southern States to make converts to bring into Colorado. The Mormons are as welcome in Colorado as are those who belong to or who do not belong to other Churches, providing they are good workers, industrious citizens, and mind their own business. One Mormon who lives by labor is worth more to the State than 216 growlers and gabblers.[27]

The Alamosa Independent became a consistent defender of the Saints, although its support of the Mormons was based upon the practical advantages which accrued to the county as a result of agricultural development, rather than from support of doctrinal views or practices.

> The Mormon colony at Manassa is expecting an addition of some thirty-five families. If they are of the same honest, industrious class as our friends who have lived

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[26]Alamosa Independent, as quoted in the Deseret Evening News, September 3, 1880.

[27]Great West, as quoted in Richardson and Morgan, op. cit., p. 261.

> there for the past year or two, they are welcome to the county. This colony has taken an apparently barren section of the county, and by irrigation and hard work have raised good crops, and are making a garden of their place. There is room for a large number of them in Manassa and Ephraim, and they will make the southern part of the county as flourishing as their predecessors did the unpromising looking Salt Lake Valley.[28]

During the height of the controversy of 1884, which has been dealt with at considerable length in chapter VI, the Denver Tribune, relying heavily on information supplied by the Daily Tribune in Salt Lake City (whose anti-Mormon stance in those days was notorious), printed in its columns the charges that Elder Brigham H. Roberts was led to refute in his lengthy letter (pp. 75-86). The position of the Salt Lake Daily Tribune thus became the source of most of the non-Mormon opposition that was directed against the Saints in the San Luis Valley. The articles which appeared in this paper during February and March of 1884 are too numerous and too lengthy for complete inclusion in this study. However, two of them are here reproduced in full as an indication of the general tenor of all. The first is a letter written by the apostate William L. Ball and his associates to the Governor of Utah Territory:

> To His Excellency Governor Eli H. Murray of Utah:
>
> Dear Sir: The undersigned Mormons of this place, having learned of the noble efforts of your Excellency to root out from the Mormon faith the shameful evils that have made our religion obnoxious to the best and most liberal government in the world, and hateful to all right-doing people of our own as well as other religious sects--such evils as the disgusting crime of Polygamy, which reduced woman to the condition of a slave to the lusts of the

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[28]Alamosa Independent, as quoted in the Deseret Evening News, December 3, 1880.

libertine, and enables bad men to cloak the indulgence of bestial passions under the sanctimonious garb of superior righteousness--such crimes as the blood-atonement, by which, as formerly taught openly in Utah, the most awful murders were not only excused, but from the Tabernacle's sacred desk openly justified in the name of Mormonism--such crimes against the government as holding the Church superior to human law, and bringing the United States Courts into contempt by false swearing, the sin of which the Church openly justifies, and promises, through its false and usurping officers, to absolutely remit in the next world--the crime of teaching treason against a government to which we, as Mormons, owe not only the common allegiance of all citizens, but an especial debt of gratitude for having aided us when the people were against us, by sending five hundred of our persecuted brethren and their families to Utah, and giving us a place to practise our religion, when we had no other refuge in the whole world.

To Your Excellency, the representative of that government, we the true Mormons of Colorado, beg to express our gratitude, both in your official capacity and privately, as to a wise and honorable man, dealing honorably but firmly with a misled but conscientious people and a misleading and villainous priesthood, who rob us all of the sympathy of Christian people, by their treason, their polygamy, their blood-atoning murders, such as the Mountain Meadows massacre, and the general evil course of their lives. We are Southerners, sir, and we are proud to recognize in Your Excellency a Southern gentleman, and we beg you to make it known in the most public manner that as virtuous and honorable men we hold polygamy an abomination, and regard the sanctity of marriage the most pleasing thing in the sight of God and the only arrangement compatible with domestic happiness or public duty. We pray, sir, that you will say for us, your brethren from the Southern States, in the most public manner, that it may reach our friends at home, that we were induced to come here under assurances altogether deceptive, and we find ourselves greatly disappointed both in the practical workings of our religion under authority from Utah, and also in the nature of the country, which is a high mountain valley having an arctic climate. We have suffered great hardships, and shall leave as soon as we can arrange to do so. We beg your excellency to advise our brethren of the Southern States not to be induced to leave their homes.

In order that our position may be clear to all we reiterate that we stand by the old Bible that our mothers taught us, and by the old flag that our fathers raised and defended.

> Such of us as believe in the modern revelations utterly repudiate all the abominations introduced into Mormonism by Brigham Young.
>
> We extend to your excellency the heartfelt gratitude and sympathy of a loyal, God-fearing colony of religious emigrants, and we pray you to assure the world that the crimes of the Utah church form no part of our religion.[29]

After commenting editorially about the "representatives of about three hundred Mormons in Colorado who have come out from the priestly tyranny that is so odious a feature of Utah Mormonism,"[30] the Daily Tribune printed an appeal by Kate Field for aid to be sent to the suffering group of apostates in the San Luis Valley:

> A cry of distress is ringing in my ears, from which I can not turn away, yet which I am personally unable to silence. Unless you come to the rescue, three hundred men, women, and children of our own flesh and blood, --simple-hearted Southerners, lured from their homes with the promise of finding an earthly Paradise in Southern Colorado, will continue to want for food, clothing and fuel. I know that the demands upon your purses are many. I realize this fact from my own experience. Stranger though I am, I have already put my hands so often into my own pockets as to have nothing left but the pockets! But I hope and pray that some, at least, of the residents of Utah Territory are more financially blessed than myself, and will hearken to my appeal in behalf of suffering humanity.
>
> You read in last Sunday's Tribune the Colorado apostates' address to Gov. Murray, wherein these brave men repudiated polygamy and proclaimed their loyalty to the flag. They did not tell of their misery, of the inclement country in which they are shivering, unable to get work, eighteen miles from a stick of wood, ostracised by the 1,300 or 1,400 Mormons who surround them. How do I know these things? From private letters, from the testimony of trustworthy witnesses. The truth regarding the San Luis Stake was brought to me weeks ago

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[29] William L. Ball, et. al., "Colorado Mormons," Salt Lake City Daily Tribune, February 10, 1884.

[30] "An Appeal for Aid," (editorial), Salt Lake City Daily Tribune, February 13, 1884.

> by a journalist engaged for this purpose. His statements have since been corroborated by Rev. W. W. Blair, who has seen these people and knows of their distress. Finally, there lies before me a letter direct from Manassa, written by Wm. L. Ball, the Mormon bishop who last autumn dared to tell the president of San Luis Stake that no one should control his politics, for which heresy he was cut off the church. The revolt, begun by Ball, has extended until the rebels now number three hundred. "It is only a matter of time," writes Ball, "when almost the entire body of Southerners will leave the Brighamite Church. My friends say my life is in danger, as some of the Utah Mormons have declared that the ground shall drink my blood. I have no hesitancy in saying that but for the surrounding world and the many apostates, I believe the leaders would blood-atone me.* * * The Southerners here are generally honest, industrious, ambitious and hard working. They would rather die than be considered paupers. They are penniless because they have been deceived. They have risked their all to gather to the mountains of the Lord's house, and escape the judgement of a sin-avenging God! If the world but knew of their pitiable condition, I feel that those who have been more fortunate in life's journey would come to their assistance. If you can tell our story and arouse public sympathy, you will have our deepest gratitude." Will not the generous hearted respond to this earnest supplication? Think of the hungry, frozen women and children far away from their Sunny South! Let us put ourselves in their places and give of our superabundance, no matter how small the gift. It is the drop that makes the ocean.
>
> I will gladly take charge of contributions; so, too, will His Excellency, the Governor, and the treasurer of The Salt Lake Tribune.[31]

Such was the nature of the newspaper commentary directed against the Saints of the San Luis Valley. While there were no doubt some who subscribed to these views, especially in more distant places such as Denver, to the great majority of non-Mormons in the valley who were acquainted with the Saints located in their midst, charges and accounts such as the above were simply too far from reality to merit their

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[31]Kate Field, "An Appeal to the Apostates and Gentiles of Utah Territory, in Behalf of the Apostates of Southern Colorado," Salt Lake City Daily Tribune, February 13, 1884.

serious consideration. A more moderate campaign would have been far more likely to gain advocates than the extreme course of villification pursued by the antagonists.

After the disclosure of the true character of the apostates whose claims and charges formed much of the basis of the anti-Mormon campaign, the Denver Tribune ceased much of its clamor, though it continued to oppose the practice of polygamy and what it conceived to be a potential political threat posed by the Mormons in Colorado. Dealing with the "Mormon political threat" another Denver newspaper, the Republican, took up the cause of the Saints:

> There is a handful of Mormons in Western Colorado, and another handful in the San Luis Valley. But the Mormon Church, as such, has no more influence on the politics of Colorado than it has on the politics of Massachusetts....
>
> The Mormons who come to Colorado are nearly all farmers. They understand farming under irrigation, and they have been acquiring land in localities where ditches have been constructed, and where industrious immigrants are desirable. They are not fools, and consequently they appreciate that in coming to Colorado they must accept the conditions as they find them here, and give up polygamy. These people have no more idea that they can reverse the public sentiment of this State upon the subject of polygamy than that they can elect a President of the United States in sympathy with their peculiar views.[32]

Minor conflicts between the Mormons and non-Mormon residents of the San Luis Valley did, of course, occur. But they were almost always of the type that were everywhere to be found in areas where religious views differed, where diverse ethnic groups were present, where those who tilled the soil confronted owners of large cattle herds, and where

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[32]Denver Republican, as quoted in the Deseret Evening News, December 26, 1890.

earlier settlers felt themselves imposed upon by more recent arrivals. With the potential sources of conflict and irritation that existed in the valley between Mormons and non-Mormons, it is remarkable that as few disturbances occurred as did. Toleration of the Mormons by the non-Mormons of the valley was not meant to be interpreted as sympathy for the doctrinal beliefs or marriage practices of the Saints. But as long as the Mormons, through their industriousness and agricultural abilities, made a positive contribution to the development and growth of the San Luis Valley, and refrained from trying to impose their beliefs and practices upon others, they were welcomed as residents by their non-Mormon neighbors.

CHAPTER XI

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

Status of the Mormon Settlements in the San Luis Valley: 1900

At the close of the final year of the 19th century, the "colonial" period of Mormon colonization in the San Luis Valley could be fairly judged as being at an end. Since that date no new settlements have been established, no major emigrations have occurred, nor has any program of expansion been attempted. Life in the valley's Mormon communities had begun, by 1900, to settle back into the somewhat normal and more comfortable pattern of development that characterizes areas that have emerged from frontier status into mature and well-established societies. It is possible, therefore, to attempt a comparison between the rather static level of development which had been reached by 1900 and the conditions which existed in the valley at the time the first Mormon settlers arrived in the spring of 1878.

In December, 1900, the Mormon population in the San Luis Valley stood at 2,121.[1] Though a greater number of the Saints were then living in scattered areas of the valley than had formerly been the case, most still lived in or near the surviving communities that had been established by the Saints. Of these communities, Manassa, the first to be established, had the largest number of inhabitants; 959. The others, ranked in descending order of population, were the following: Sanford, 746; Richfield, 294; and Eastdale, 122.[2] The town of Morgan should also be included among those Mormon settlements still in existence in the valley at the turn of the century. No population figures are recorded for Morgan in 1900, though it was certainly fewer than 100, which would have placed it behind the others. With the single exception of Eastdale, which in 1900 had a population as high or higher than at any time since its establishment, each of these communities had experienced a decline from earlier peak population figures. The totals for the entire Mormon population of the valley also declined, registering a loss of 245 persons from the high of 2,366 which had been reached in 1893.[3] Again excepting Eastdale, which was abandoned shortly after 1900 because of the loss of water rights in the area, the remaining communities had, by 1900, attained a population status quo which continued well into the 20th century with but little change.

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[1]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1900," op. cit.

[2]Loc. cit.

[3]Ibid., 1893-1900.

In Church organizational structure the San Luis Valley was, in 1900, comprised of four Wards (Manassa, Sanford, Richfield, and Eastdale) and one Branch (Morgan). As with the fluctuations and shiftings in population, the number of Wards and Branches had alternately risen and fallen. The leading Stake and Ward officials in 1900 were as follows:[4]

Stake Presidency:	Albert R. Smith, President Levi P. Helm, First Counselor Thomas A. Crowther, Second Counselor Marcus O. Funk, Clerk
Stake High Council:	Hans C. Heiselt John A. Smith Lars Mortensen James F. Crowther Emanuel D. Smith Ira B. Whitney Elihu K. Ball Harmon Sowards Silas S. Smith Jr. Erastus S. Christensen Soren C. Berthelsen Joseph F. Thomas
Patriarchs:	Silas S. Smith (Manassa) Elihu K. Ball (Manassa) James C. Berthelsen (Sanford)
Manassa Ward:	Samuel Jackson, Bishop Hugh L. Sellers, First Counselor George J. Koch, Second Counselor
Sanford Ward:	William O. Crowther, Bishop Marcus O. Funk, First Counselor Herman K. Christensen, Second Counselor
Richfield Ward:	Ephraim Coombs, Bishop William F. O. Behrman, First Counselor Peter N. Guymon, Second Counselor
Eastdale Ward:	Christen Jensen, Bishop Simeon A. Dunn, First Counselor Andrew S. Nielsen, Second Counselor
Morgan Branch:	Martin G. Price, Presiding Elder

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[4]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1900," op. cit. Ward and Branch officials are found in the respective "Manuscript Histories" for 1900.

A stabilizing of the Church organizational structure in the valley paralleled that of population trends which characterized the various communities in 1900. No new Ward or Branch organizations were created from that date until well into the 20th century, and changes in basic structure occurring since 1900 have been relatively few.

The visit of Apostle John W. Taylor to the valley in 1897 had the effect of reversing an upswing in the number of excommunications during the years immediately preceding his visit.[5] Such had undoubtedly been one of the motivating factors behind his "fishing expedition." The "reformation" associated with his visit had a lingering effect, and in 1900 the degree of unity and brotherhood among the Saints was generally at a higher level than had been true of earlier years. A new generation was being raised up in the valley which had little understanding of or concern with the problems that had caused so much animosity among their parents. Intermarriage between the young adults of both groups also helped to lessen the differences between the southern Saints and those from Utah.

While a high level of prosperity has never been the lot of the Saints in the San Luis Valley, 1900 found them more prosperous than at any previous period following their arrival, and the economic trend was consistently upwards. Increased efficiency in agricultural production methods and the gradual acquisition of improved machinery reduced the manpower requirements of the valley's farms, so that by 1900 there was an increasing number of Saints who sought employment opportunity in more

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[5]"San Luis Stake Manuscript History, 1895-1897," op. cit.

distant places. The stabilizing of the population demonstrated that the normal population increase was being channeled away from the Mormon communities of the valley, most often for occupational opportunities offered elsewhere - a trend that has continued to the present day.

In summary, a comparison of the "Mormon area" of the San Luis Valley in 1900 with the same area in 1878 shows the accomplishments of the Mormon colonizing endeavor in a very favorable light. Land had been cleared, farms laid out, crops raised, homes built, shops and small businesses created, and communities established. Religious growth and development had brought about the organization of a Stake, with its Wards, Branches, priesthood quorums, and various auxiliary organizations. Despite setbacks suffered because of outside opposition and dissension within their own ranks, spiritual progress was notable, and large numbers of recent converts had become solid members of the Church. Peoples of varying backgrounds and environments had been successfully - though not easily - grafted together to form a completely new society. And all of this in the face of outside social and governmental opposition, constant hardships common to frontier settlements, economic difficulties, and the all-too-human failings of members of their own group.

Evaluation

By almost any objective measure the Mormon colonization of the San Luis Valley must rank as a notable accomplishment. Beginning with nothing but barren wilderness they had, to use standard Mormon phrasing, made it "blossom as the rose," and in so doing had overcome many obstacles and discouraging hardships. Mormons, however, as with any special interest group, cannot judge the success or failure of their

own endeavors with detached objectivity. Instead, they must match their accomplishments against the aspirations and expectations that prevailed at the time the project was undertaken. Judged by this latter criterion, the Mormon colonization of the San Luis Valley is described most accurately as a "qualified success."

The use of the term "qualified success" necessarily implies a degree of failure. That the colonizing endeavor in the San Luis Valley witnessed many failings cannot be denied, though they can perhaps be explained. Broadly defined, the most prominent failures experienced by the Saints in the valley were the following: (1) Failure to develop industry and a broadly based economy which would provide for the economic self-sufficiency of the Mormon settlements, (2) The abandonment before 1900 of a majority of the settlements attempted, and (3) The existence of widespread dissension among the Saints which thwarted both material and spiritual progress.

The first of these - failure in economic development - is discussed at considerable length in chapter IX and requires only brief comment here. It is something of a paradox that agricultural development, in which the Saints experienced their greatest success, has at the same time been a limiting factor in the further development of the valley. Agricultural predominance placed an upper limit on the number of inhabitants that could be adequately supported by the valley's economy. While the exact maximum figure cannot be determined, it seems certain that any great increase in population must first await the development of a more broad and diverse economic basis. There is some indication today that renewed mining activity might accomplish this goal.

The second failure - abandonment of the majority of settlements attempted - requires a more detailed analysis. Of the numerous communities established by the Saints in the San Luis Valley, only a minority of them survived to 1900. To ascribe major responsibility for this failure to poor leadership and faulty methods of colonization would be inaccurate. The majority of those assigned to leadership positions in the valley had previously demonstrated their colonizing abilities in similar ventures elsewhere, and Mormon colonizing methods are universally renowned. The reasons for the failure of a large proportion of the settlements must therefore be sought in the peculiar circumstances which surrounded each individual settlement. In all, twelve communities were either established by the Saints or were settlements in which they constituted the largest element.[6] Only five survived the 19th century,[7] and one of these (Eastdale) was abandoned in 1909. The majority of the settlements which were abandoned were located in remote areas of the valley and in New Mexico, giving indication that the chances for success decreased in almost direct proportion as the distance from the "hub-colony" at Manassa increased. A primary factor in the establishment of many of these remote settlements had been the search for a place of refuge for polygamists. Those who fled to these areas were little inclined to regard them as permanent or ideal places of settlement, and the abandonment of these communities, given an end

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[6]The twelve communities were Manassa, Ephraim, Richfield, Sanford, Jaroso, Morgan, Blanca, Fox Creek, Eastdale, Beulah, Sunflower, and El Rito.

[7]Manassa, Richfield, Sanford, Morgan, and Eastdale.

to the polygamy question, was perhaps inevitable. In the case of a few of the settlements later abandoned, notably Jaroso, Blanca, Fox Creek, and Sunflower; they had been established by independently-acting groups of Saints without the direction or leadership of Church officials.

Poor decisions were made in the locating of a few of the settlements. The land at Ephraim proved too wet and marshy for permanent settlement, and the site was chosen in too much haste in the attempt to prepare a new settlement for the expected increase in emigrant arrivals. Richfield also had to be moved from its original location because of unsatisfactory land conditions. Blanca and Fox Creek were simply too remote to make permanent settlement feasible, as was the case later with Beulah and El Rito in New Mexico. Jaroso was never occupied by more than a handful of families, while Sunflower represented little more than a nebulous collection of widely scattered families of Saints that were later assimilated into the new town of Romeo. The official, Church-directed settlements undertaken by the Saints of the San Luis Valley were those at Manassa, Ephraim, Richfield, Sanford, Morgan, Beulah, and Eastdale. Beulah was essentially a temporary expedient during the years of the problem over polygamy. Eastdale's abandonment in 1909 came as the result of a legal dispute over water rights that was not foreseen at the time of its establishment. This leaves Ephraim as the single settlement, the abandonment of which can be directly attributed to poor judgement on the part of those who proposed it. The remainder were successful and thriving, if not overly populous, communities which had been built by the Mormons from the ground up, and which survived to 1900 and beyond.

The third major failing - widespread dissension - was the most disturbing of all, and the least succeptible of objective analysis. Instead of the love and unity in which Mormons are wont to take pride, the Saints experienced a long-lasting factional strife between those who came from the South and those who came from Utah.

Many of the southerners who came to settle in the San Luis Valley entertained unrealistic hopes for the success of the venture. Motivated by the enthusiasm that characterizes the newly converted, to which was added the attraction of cheap land, they arrived in the valley without having given enough serious consideration to the difficulties that would be involved in establishing new homes in the western frontier. Upon encountering obstacles far greater than any they had imagined might exist, disappointment frequently gave way to despair, and despair became the breeding ground for dissension and apostacy.

The Saints who came to the valley from Utah, on the other hand, came more from a sense of obligation and obedience than from hopes of greater opportunities. Tried and tested in frontier life, the very fact that they had been singled out and called to assist in the settlement of the valley was proof that they were well equipped for the task, as well as testimony of their devotion to Church principle and doctrine. It seemed only common sense that in the classroom which was to be the San Luis Valley, they would be the teachers and the southern converts would be the pupils.

Whether or not the clash that developed between the two groups could have been avoided is a matter of conjecture. However, it appears plausible that had there been a firm program of integration of both

groups in each of the various settlements that the chances of widespread dissension developing would have been reduced. However, the Saints were permitted to settle in locations of their own choosing, which resulted in a polarization of the Utah Saints towards Sanford and Richfield, while the southern Saints were drawn towards Manassa. This voluntary segregation of the two groups only served to make an amiable adjustment of the situation more difficult.

How much responsibility should be assigned the dissension between Utahns and southerners in limiting the growth and development of the settlements in the valley is difficult to ascertain. The publicity given to the situation was undoubtedly a factor in reducing the number of emigrants who might otherwise have been attracted to the valley. Lack of co-operation between the two groups could not but have added to the obstacles which nature had so generously provided. However, the temptation to ascribe all, or even a majority, of the failures which the Saints experienced to internal dissension must be resisted. Had the disagreement been as universal and complete as was sometimes indicated by the newspaper space and commentary which was devoted to it, there would have been no basis for any form of association between them. Forces of unity were also present, working silently and unrecognized as a countercheck against dissension. Outside opposition by non-Mormons, especially during the years of the polygamy controversy, united the Saints in common resistance against their antagonists. Ordinary frontier hardships, shared jointly, and frequently requiring the united effort of all of the Saints before they could be overcome, also contributed towards unity. Most significantly, although it received a severe

testing at the hands of the Saints, the religious bond which united them proved stronger than the forces of dissension.

It is too simple a matter to make judgements based on the observance of the failures of others. Much more difficult is the attempt to discern the reasons for such failures and the formulation of a better program of action. To us who observe from the safe distance of three-quarters of a century, it is easy to point out that we would have avoided the mistakes made by the Saints through the simple process of backing up a few years prior to their occurrence and heading in a different direction. Also, we are not hampered by the necessity of demonstrating that our course of action would have been free from error. The actual participants in the colonial undertaking faced a much more difficult task. They were required to work with matters as they were; they could not go back and undo things which had already occurred.

Grant that our current task - that of merely recording and judging - is the easier of the two. Nonetheless, it appears that a more rigid enforcement of the colonial practices which had become almost standard in Church colonial endeavors might have helped to overcome the difficulties experienced in the San Luis Valley. In particular, insistence that the Saints reside in the towns for at least some minimum period of time before dispersing throughout wider areas might have been beneficial. Instead, they were merely "advised" against scattering themselves on isolated farm lands away from the general community of Saints. Many rejected this "advice" and in taking up residence in outlying areas denied themselves, a goodly number of whom were only recent converts to the Church, the religious instruction, spiritual guidance, and close

association with other Saints that community life would have afforded. True, no longer did an Indian menace prevent them from dispersing, and the prosecution of polygamists even made scattering a practical necessity for some, but these factors would seem to be outweighed by the benefits of community life in the Mormon settlements as briefly outlined in chapter II.

It seems also that there was a lack of direct and effective supervision over the colonizing venture on the part of the general authorities of the Church. The fact that the undertaking in the San Luis Valley took place at the very time that the polygamy controversy was raging at its greatest height, and that Church leaders were required to devote their major energies to defensive measures for the protection both of the Church and their own persons, no doubt accounts in large part for the lack of attention given events in the San Luis Valley. Not that matters in the valley were ignored, for in fact they probably occupied a disproportionate share of the time and energies of Church officials. But such attention as was given was generally in the role of "firemen" who responded to discouragingly frequent calls of distress to resolve emergency situations which arose in the valley. What was needed was a firm and constant directing influence which, because of preoccupation with other matters, was not forthcoming.

It is inconceivable that Brigham Young, had he been alive, would have permitted the situation to go as far awry as it did before intervening with stern and drastic action. But this was a new and more modern era. Neither President John Taylor nor Wilford Woodruff were as autocratic as Brigham Young had been in the supervision of colonial

endeavors. Local leaders were given a wider scope of action and authority, and more time to attempt the solution of local problems. Perhaps too much time was given. It would appear that a change in local leadership in the San Luis Valley was justified sooner than 1892. It is unfortunate that Stake President Silas S. Smith is most often remembered for his economic difficulties and intrigues, rather than for the very real contributions which he made to the growth and expansion of the Mormon colonies in the valley. Nevertheless, it was true that he was often uncompromising and unsympathetic in his attitude towards the southern Saints. It was also evident that a "Smith dynasty" of sorts existed in which most of his sons who lived in the valley held prominent Church positions. This "dynasty" continued even after the reorganization of the Stake Presidency, and was a source of resentment and discontent.

The error should not be made of passing judgement on the San Luis Valley settlements on the basis of mistakes made and failures recorded. Any frontier colonial endeavor is in large part an experiment. No one can be certain ahead of time whether it will succeed or fail. There are too many variables and uncertain quantities peculiar to each settlement which cannot be foreseen. Those who actually undertake the venture must experiment on a trial and error basis, casting aside that which does not work and adopting that which proves successful. Men, too, must be experimented with to determine the kinds of tasks to which they are best suited. Thus, the true measure of the Mormon colonization endeavor in the San Luis Valley, as with any other, is not the number of failures that occurred, but the successes that were achieved. And the successes of the Saints in the San Luis Valley were considerable.

People of widely varying backgrounds had been gathered to a wilderness that was the San Luis Valley in 1878. There they had claimed and cleared their lands, dug ditches and canals, and brought life-giving water to the crops they planted. Homes were built from logs which they cut and hauled from the mountains which surrounded the valley. Lands were fenced and thousands of acres brought under cultivation. Large herds of cattle and sheep were built up. Entire communities were planned and settled, and a new society evolved from among the Saints that had gathered to the valley. Infant industries were started and numerous small businesses established. In addition to the daily tasks of frontier life, religious and spiritual development received much attention. Churches were built, Wards and Branches were organized, and eventually a Stake was established in their midst. A badly needed place of refuge was provided for families fleeing the governmental prosecution of polygamists in Utah. Education of the children was given emphasis, and formal schools were established in the larger settlements. All this despite the many problems that beset them, and in the short space of little more than two decades.

Yet, irregardless of the impressive array of accomplishments, there was a lingering feeling among the Saints that they had not achieved the potential which was intended for them in the valley. Basing much of their hopes for the future upon the predictions which had been made at the time the colonization of the valley was undertaken, and more recently upon the utterances of Apostle John W. Taylor in 1897, the Saints were inclined to expect a rapid development of the full potential of the valley. They looked forward with eager anticipation to the day when the number of Saints in the valley would fill it to overflowing; when

prosperity would be poured out upon them in rich abundance; and when, crowning their success, a temple would be built in their midst. Their children and grandchildren today share the same hopes and dreams. The future of the San Luis Valley, as envisioned by its Mormon inhabitants in 1900, yet lies in the future.

At the time of this writing the San Luis Stake has a total membership of approximately 3,200. The geographic center of the Stake has shifted northward from the area of original settlement, as Alamosa, Monte Vista, and Del Norte have experienced recent growth in numbers, contrasted against a gradual decline in the vicinity around Manassa. The Stake is currently comprised of seven Wards and one Branch. The Wards are located at Manassa, Sanford, Romeo, La Jara, Monte Vista, and Alamosa, the latter of which has two Wards. The single Branch is located at Taos, New Mexico, which was only recently incorporated into the Stake after having been initially established under the direction of the Spanish American and Western States' Missions. Reflecting the geographic shift in membership, La Jara (formerly the Richfield Ward) is the site of the new Stake House, which was completed in 1951. Beautiful modern chapels house all of the Wards of the Stake, and material progress is everywhere discernible. Yet, for all the accomplishments to which the Saints in the valley might justifiably point, they continue to look forward, with the same pioneer faith and trust which motivated their forefathers, to an ever brighter future.

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APPENDIX

LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS IN THE SAN LUIS VALLEY, 1878-1900

	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900
San Luis Stake																							
President:																							
Silas S. Smith			(x	x	x	x	x)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Albert R. Smith															x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
First Counselor:																							
Platte D. Lyman			(x	x	x	x	x)																
Richard C. Camp						x	x																
Soren C. Berthelsen							x	x	x	x													
Edward Dalton									x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x							
Levi P. Helm															x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Second Counselor:																							
William Christensen			(x	x	x	x	x)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x							
Joseph F. Thomas													x	x	x	x	x						
Thomas A. Crowther																x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Clerk:																							
Albert R. Smith						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x								
Lawrence M. Peterson															x								
Nelson G. Sowards															x	x							
Marcus O. Funk																x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Manassa Ward																							
Bishop:																							
Hans Jensen	(x	x)																					
Soren C. Berthelsen		(x	x	x	x)																		
William L. Ball				(x	x	x	x)																
John C. Dalton						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
Samuel Jackson																			x	x	x	x	x
First Counselor:																							
John Allen		(x	x	x	x)																		
Silas S. Smith Jr.				(x	x	x)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x						
Martin Christensen																	x	x	x	x	x		
Hugh L. Sellers																			x	x	x	x	x
Second Counselor:																							
Soren C. Berthelsen	(x	x)																					
Samuel S. Sellers		(x	x	x	x	x	x	x)															
Martin Christensen						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					
Joseph F. Thomas															x	x	x	x	x				
George J. Koch																			x	x	x	x	x
Clerk:																							
Silas S. Smith Jr.																			x	x	x	x	x
William M. Christensen																							x

	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900
Ephraim Ward																							
Bishop:																							
Hans C. Heiselt		(xxxxxxx)																					
Peter Rasmussen						xxxxxxxxxx																	
First Counselor:																							
Howard K. Coray						xxxxxxxxxx																	
Second Counselor:																							
Jordan Brady						xxxxxxxxxx																	
Richfield Ward																							
Bishop:																							
Thor N. Peterson						xx	xxxxx																
Jens Jensen									(xx)														
Wesley Hunt										(x)													
Ephraim Coombs											(xxxxxx)xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx												
First Counselor:																							
Milton W. Evans						xxxxxx																	
Jens Jensen								xx															
William F. O. Behrman														xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx									
Second Counselor:																							
Jens Jensen						xxxxxx																	
Wesley Hunt								xx															
Peter N. Guymon														xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx									
Clerk:																							
John David Coombs																							x
Sanford Ward																							
Bishop:																							
Albion Haggard								(xxxx)															
Soren C. Berthelsen										xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx													
William O. Crowther																					xxx		
First Counselor:																							
George W. Irvin										xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx													
Peter Rasmussen																		xxxxxx					
Marcus O. Funk																					xxx		
Second Counselor:																							
William O. Crowther										xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx													
Marion D. Maloy																		xxxxxx					
John W. Taylor																				x			
Herman K. Christensen																					xxx		
Clerk:																							
Peter Rasmussen																							x
Eastdale Ward																							
Bishop:																							
Simeon A. Dunn													(xxxxxx)										
Marcus O. Funk															xxxxxx								
Christen Jensen																			xxxxxxx				
First Counselor:																							
Simeon A. Dunn															xxxxxxxxxxxxx								
Second Counselor:																							
Ephraim Mortensen															xxxxxx								
Andrew S. Nielsen																			xxxxxxx				

	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900
Beulah Ward																							
Bishop:																							
Asahel L. Fuller														(x)	xx	xx	xx	xx					
First Counselor:																							
Alexander B. Kidd															xx	xx	xx	xx					
Second Counselor:																							
David D. Crandall															xx	xx	xx	xx					
Los Cerritos Branch																							
Lawrence M. Peterson					xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	x---	??												
Jaroso Branch																							
J. H. Jack												xx	---	??									
Blanca Branch																							
Wiley F. King											xx	xx	xx	xx	xx								
Fox Creek Branch																							
David Vance														xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx
Mountain View Branch																							
Elihu K. Ball															xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	---	??	
Morgan Branch																							
Joseph E. Samples											xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx					
Owen J. Uptain															x								
John D. Westbrook															xx	xx	xx	xx	xx				
Martin G. Price																			xx	xx	xx	xx	xx

MORMON COLONIZATION

OF THE

SAN LUIS VALLEY, COLORADO, 1878-1900

An Abstract
of a Thesis Presented to the Department of History
Brigham Young University

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

by

Judson Harold Flower Jr.

May, 1966

ABSTRACT

In the late 1870's, missionary successes in the southern states prompted the search for a location to which the new converts could migrate and establish their homes among the Saints in "Zion." The area eventually decided upon for the location of the southern converts was the San Luis Valley, in southern Colorado. Elder John Morgan, the most prominent figure in the early missionary work in the South, was given the leading role in bringing southern converts to the settlements which were to be established in the San Luis Valley. The initial settlement of Saints in the valley took place in the spring of 1878, and regular spring and fall migrations from the South added to their numbers for a full decade. Families of Saints from Utah, experienced in irrigation methods and the ways of the frontier, and firmly rooted in their knowledge of and devotion to gospel principles, were called to assist in the colonization of the valley. Manassa was the first town to be established by the Saints, in 1879. As the population of church members increased, additional communities were founded in the vicinity around Manassa; among them Ephraim, Richfield, and Sanford. Further development and expansion continued until circumstances warranted the establishment of a Stake organization of the Church. In June, 1883, the San Luis Stake of Zion was organized, with Silas S. Smith, a cousin of the Prophet Joseph, as Stake President. Feelings of animosity developed between the southern converts and those Saints who had come from Utah,

which was to be a source of much irritation and disunity in the years to follow. The year 1884, in particular, was a difficult year for the Saints, as false stories circulated by apostate members of the Church brought much opposition from non-Mormons and dissension among the membership of the Stake. The controversy over polygamy also contributed to the difficulties of the Saints. In the years that followed the passage of the Edmunds Act in 1882 the San Luis Valley experienced a notable influx of polygamous families fleeing Utah in search of a place of refuge. The desire for more remote places of refuge, coupled with population pressures and the attraction of available land, prompted the establishment of several additional settlements in more distant parts of the valley and in New Mexico. Most of these newer communities experienced only a temporary success, and were abandoned before the turn of the century. Church organizational development and change paralleled the ups and downs of the colonial endeavor in the valley. Economic and material progress characterized the Mormon settlements, especially in agricultural development. Private and co-operative enterprise experienced only limited success among the Saints in the valley. Spiritual progress, while notable, was marred by the occasional reoccurrence of the factional strife between the southern Saints and those from Utah. This strife, superimposed over a dispute regarding the financial management of the Manassa Co-operative Milling and Manufacture Company resulted, in 1892, in the resignation of Stake President Silas S. Smith and the reorganization of the Stake

Presidency. A general improvement in social, economic, and religious matters was the trend of the final years of the 19th century, marked, most notably, by the visit of Apostle John W. Taylor to the valley in 1897. By 1900 the frontier phase of the Mormon colonization of the valley was completed. The population had reached the leveling-off point, dissension was in steady decline, and the Saints looked to the future of the valley with confidence and optimism.

This abstract, by Judson Harold Flower Jr., is accepted in its present form by the Department of History, Brigham Young University, as satisfying the abstract requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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