

THESIS

**THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE FORT COLLINS MORMON COMMUNITY
DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

Submitted by

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY LINDA C. MCGEHEE ENTITLED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORT COLLINS MORMON COMMUNITY DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORT COLLINS MORMON COMMUNITY DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Separated by the formidable Rocky Mountains from Brigham Young's Utah stronghold, the northern Colorado town of Fort Collins was not numbered among the western settlements founded by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Nevertheless, followers of this sect would be drawn to Fort Collins in ever-increasing numbers. Early Mormons in the town lacked the well-established religious traditions of their Utah counterparts and struggled to define their group identity. Later, the growth of the L.D.S. congregation paralleled the increase in Fort Collins population, as the rapid expansion of Colorado State University attracted large numbers of Latter-day Saint students and faculty after the second world war.

The Fort Collins Mormons gathered often for religious and social activities. They gradually formed a community that fit the definition given by Thomas Bender, who describes "community" as a deeply meaningful social network, bound together by close emotional ties, solidarity and communion with other members of the group. Fort Collins Latter-day Saints found a sense of connection

through three major influences: shared religious beliefs, development of strong emotional ties, and organizational structure provided by the church headquarters in Salt Lake City. Utilizing primary source material from church records, local newspapers and personal interviews, this thesis traces the history of the Latter-day Saints in Fort Collins, examining ways in which church members created a close-knit, identifiable Mormon community in this northern Colorado city.

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PREFACE

Having been affiliated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Fort Collins, Colorado for much of the past thirty years, I enjoyed listening to the stories of long-time members about their community-building activities in the mid-twentieth century. Those who had participated in the Fort Collins L.D.S. branch during the 1940s told of church meetings and socials in the local Odd Fellows' Hall, small gatherings of Mormon women for "Relief Society" activities, and the beginnings of a sense of church identity in this mostly non-L.D.S. college town. This thesis traces the development of "community" among Fort Collins Mormons during the twentieth century.

For the purposes of this study, L.D.S. "church members" will be defined as those persons who take an active part in the meetings and activities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Some individuals, either reared in the faith or accepting baptism as adults, later lost interest in church activity and discontinued attending L.D.S. meetings; a small number openly opposed church policies and asked to have their names removed from the membership rolls. Naturally, these people would not feel as much a part of a Latter-day Saint community as those participating regularly in the church programs.

Primary source material for this study consists of church records, diaries and journals, scrapbooks, and newspaper articles, as well as interviews with individuals who have participated in the Fort Collins Mormon community during the past seventy years. The Latter-day Saint leadership has urged local churches to keep records of their progress and development, and each branch or ward sends membership records and quarterly activity reports to L.D.S. headquarters in Salt Lake City. Although many Fort Collins church records predating 1942 were lost in a fire that destroyed the home of Fort Collins Branch clerk Joseph Thompson, copies of local membership records survived in Utah. Many details concerning Fort Collins members have been gleaned from microfilmed stake and mission records on file in the L.D.S. Family History Center in Salt Lake City. Leaders of the Primary and Relief Society organizations of the Fort Collins Branch began keeping scrapbooks and histories of their activities during the 1940s. I am grateful to Bishop R. Gale Chadwick and his wife Judy of the Fort Collins First Ward for preserving these records and making them available for this thesis.

Journals and diaries consulted for this study include brief notes recorded by an early missionary to the area and a more extensive journal kept by the president of the L.D.S. Western States Mission in the second decade of the twentieth century. I am indebted to Twila Bird for sharing information about these sources, compiled while researching her recent book, *A Century of Saints: A Front-Range History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Englewood, CO: R&M Colour Graphics, Inc., 1997). The *Utah Historical Quarterly* published

several extant journals of Mormon Battalion recruits, and excerpts from the journal of Latter-day Saint pioneer John Brown appear in a *Colorado Magazine* article by LeRoy Hafen and Frank M. Young.¹

Sadly, it appears that few, if any, members of the Fort Collins Branch kept individual journals; however, interviews with current Fort Collins residents have added personalized stories to the names and dates available in the membership records of the church. Audiotapes and notes from these interviews, as well as other primary source material used in the preparation of this thesis, will be filed in an archival collection at either the Fort Collins L.D.S. Institute library or the Fort Collins Public Library Local History Archives at a future date. The *Fort Collins Coloradoan* (formerly the *Express-Courier*) published a weekly listing of church services, which provided clues concerning the activities of the Fort Collins Mormons during the 1920s.

I am grateful to the numerous members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who shared their stories during interviews for this project. Their comments provided helpful insights into the experience of creating a distinctive, vital and ever-expanding Mormon community in the city of Fort Collins.

¹“John W. Hess, With the Mormon Battalion,” *Utah Historical Quarterly (UHQ)* 4 (April, 1931): 47-55; “The Journal of Robert S. Bliss, With the Mormon Battalion,” *UHQ* 4 (July, 1931): 66-87; “Extracts from the Journal of Henry W. Bigler,” *UHQ* 5 (April, 1932): 34-101; “Extracts from the Journal of John Steele,” *UHQ* 6 (January, 1933): 2-38; LeRoy R. Hafen and Frank M. Young, “The Mormon Settlement at Pueblo, Colorado, During the Mexican War,” *Colorado Magazine* 9 (July, 1932): 121-136.

For Bobby and Jessi

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INTRODUCTION

Thomas Bender, in his book, *Community and Social Change in America*, comments upon the modern assumption that the disappearance of small towns and the urbanization of society have led to community breakdown. He proposes new definitions of “community,” which do not rely upon a specific location but instead focus upon mutual interest and emotional ties.¹ Thus, Bender frees us to see a form of community even within the admittedly impersonal setting of a large urban area. A “community” was once defined as a group of people who lived close together geographically and participated in interdependent relationships, sharing significant portions of their lives. The words “sharing” and “interdependent relationships” remain an essential part of the new definitions, which involve deep feelings of connectedness to others within the group. As author Philip Gulley expresses it, “Community isn’t so much a locale as it is a state of mind. You find it whenever folks ask how you’re doing because they care, and not because they’re getting paid to inquire.”² In Bender’s terms, “A community is most rigorously defined as a network of social relations marked by mutuality and emotional

¹Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1978), 6-8.

²Philip Gulley, *Front Porch Tales* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1997), 22.

bonds.”³ This study will illustrate how members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (L.D.S.) in Fort Collins, Colorado, have interacted to create an identifiable Mormon community during the past century.⁴

The Mormon communities of the nineteenth century fit the old definition; they were associated with a strong sense of location. During the first ninety years, followers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints exhibited a compelling impulse to “gather to Zion.” Proselytizing missionaries met with success throughout North America and Europe, especially in Great Britain, and encouraged new converts to emigrate to the gathering places of the Saints, first in Kirtland, Ohio, then in Missouri, then Nauvoo, Illinois, and finally in the Great Salt Lake Valley. Persecution from non-believers served to foster great cohesiveness among the Mormons, and L.D.S. settlements in the Great Basin gained a reputation for clannishness and reluctance to associate with outsiders.

After forty-nine years and six failed attempts at statehood, Utah finally entered the union in 1896. The strong Latter-day Saint majority did not need to fear being driven from their homes again. The next century saw a decrease in the L.D.S. impulse to gather in a central location. The sapling church, now firmly

³Richard Wightman Fox and James T. Kloppenberg, eds., *A Companion to American Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 1995), s.v. “Community,” by Thomas Bender.

⁴Outsiders gave the label of “Mormons” to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints due to the L.D.S. belief in the *Book of Mormon*, revered as scripture in addition to the Bible. Church members generally referred to themselves as “Latter-day Saints,” “L.D.S.,” or “Saints,” although they also began to use the term “Mormon” during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

rooted in the soil of Utah, spread its branches to the horizon. Mormon leaders encouraged new converts to “build Zion” in their own home towns rather than emigrating to join the Saints in Utah. The definition of the Latter-day Saint community evolved, as Mormons found a sense of connection through three major influences: shared religious beliefs, development of strong emotional ties, and organizational structure provided by the church headquartered in Salt Lake City. All three played important roles in creating the Fort Collins Mormon community.

It should be noted that Fort Collins is home also to a congregation of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (R.L.D.S.), whose activities are not discussed in depth for the current study. Though the L.D.S. and R.L.D.S. churches share common origins and both accept the *Book of Mormon* as scripture, their traditions have evolved along different paths during the past 150 years. Interestingly, the R.L.D.S. church gained a foothold in Fort Collins first, advertising church meetings in the local newspaper more consistently during the 1930s and 1940s than the L.D.S. church. This may be due to the R.L.D.S. practice of employing a paid ministry. The Fort Collins R.L.D.S. congregation enjoyed a great deal of stability during the many decades of service given by their late pastor, Glenn Broliar, who lived in the city for most of his life.

Brigham Young’s followers colonized many areas throughout the western United States, but northern Colorado was not among them. Thus, the community experiences of the first Latter-day Saints in Fort Collins differed greatly from

those of their counterparts in such Mormon colonies as Rexburg, Idaho, or Mesa, Arizona. The L.D.S. founders of these towns brought well-established church traditions to their new settlements and enjoyed the advantages of being part of the dominant culture, while the early Fort Collins Mormons struggled to define themselves as members of a tiny minority.

To provide background and context, Chapter One of this thesis offers an overview of Latter-day Saint history and beliefs, while Chapter Two explores the historical development of the city of Fort Collins. After Chapter Three examines the earliest evidence of Mormon involvement in the Fort Collins area, Chapter Four considers the role of the agricultural college/university in bringing Latter-day Saints to the region and providing the local church with leadership. Chapter Five traces the development of the Fort Collins L.D.S. church as it grew from a small ward to an ecclesiastical unit of nine congregations. The experiences of church members reveal how these individuals related to each other to form a tight network of support and fellowship. The epilogue describes Latter-day Saint contributions to Fort Collins, illustrating ways in which the Saints reach out beyond the meetinghouse and their own membership to encompass a circle of interdependent, caring relationships in the city and thereby expand the meaning of “community.”

CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE L. D. S. CHURCH

Major factors influencing the development of the Mormon sense of community include a strong church organization, common religious beliefs, and deep emotional attachments to fellow members. The centralized institutional structure of the Mormon church presents a powerful force for community-building, and deserves some discussion here. Latter-day Saint congregations rely upon a lay ministry, and all adults receive opportunities to serve the membership in some capacity. Members generally do not volunteer for positions but are “called” by inspiration through those higher up in the hierarchy. The ecclesiastical leader, or bishop, of a given congregation or “ward” is chosen by a “stake president,” who presides over five to ten wards in a grouping called a “stake.” A “General Authority” from Salt Lake City selects the stake president.⁵ The ward bishop prayerfully selects members to serve as leaders in the priesthood quorums (men’s organizations), the Relief Society (the women’s organization), the Aaronic Priesthood/Young Women (for those aged twelve to eighteen), the Primary (for

⁵Members of the First Presidency (the prophet and his two counselors), the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, or the Quorums of Seventy are designated General Authorities of the church.

children under twelve years of age), and the Sunday School (for everyone). The heads of these organizations submit the names of members to serve as their assistants and teachers, and the bishop approves the names and extends a “calling” to the individuals selected. Those chosen may refuse a calling, but most believe their leaders to be inspired and accept the opportunity to serve as requested.

Administration by a lay ministry does not mean that each congregation of Mormons represents an independent, self-contained religious unit. Since the man chosen as bishop of a given ward has no formal training in the ministry (he usually earns a living for his family in non-church-related employment), he is supplied with the *Church Handbook of Instructions*. This manual, compiled by church leaders in Salt Lake City, provides information on policies and procedures to be carried out in all congregations of the church throughout the world.⁶ Compliance with the handbook creates a great deal of uniformity; a Latter-day Saint can visit a ward in a distant state or country and find the schedule of services instantly familiar. All of this contributes to the cohesiveness of the Mormon community.

Although the structure of church organization by itself tends to strengthen unity among members, one must examine L.D.S. beliefs to find the motivations underlying the Mormon impulse for community-building. Church doctrine describes all human beings as literal spiritual offspring of God, and teaches that

⁶*Church Handbook of Instructions* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998).

individual eternal spirits existed before and will continue to exist after mortality.⁷ Thus, not only are human bodies related as descendants of Adam and Eve, but human spirits are also related as children of heavenly parents. Those who have come to an understanding of this divine relationship are expected to treat other human beings as brothers and sisters. This belief is put into practice in Latter-day Saint gatherings, where members address each other by the titles of “Brother” or “Sister” rather than those of “Mr.” or “Mrs.” The ward or branch organization is seen as an extended family unit, with the bishop serving as symbolic father and the Relief Society president as symbolic mother of the ward.

The church organization provides members with service, fellowship, and teaching opportunities. These assist each individual who observes the fundamental gospel principles (faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and continuing obedience to scriptural commandments) to one day return to God as part of an eternal family unit.⁸ Working together in service-oriented activities, the Saints build a sense of community as they learn to follow the admonition of Jesus to “love one another.”⁹

⁷Psalms 82:6 and Hebrews 12:9, King James Version of the Bible (KJV); Moses 3:5, 6:51 and Abraham 3:22-23 (in the *Pearl of Great Price: A Selection From the Revelations, Translations, and Narrations of Joseph Smith* [Salt Lake City: 1989 edition]); 1 Nephi 17:36 (*Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: 1989 edition]); Doctrine and Covenants 88:15 (*The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [Salt Lake City: 1989 edition]).

⁸Fourth Article of Faith (*Pearl of Great Price*); 1 Nephi 22:31 (*Book of Mormon*).

⁹John 13:34-35, KJV.

Beliefs that set them apart from mainstream Christianity tend to encourage Latter-day Saints to stick together. Mormons believe that the first latter-day prophet, Joseph Smith, received a heavenly vision in which he saw God the Father and Jesus Christ as two distinct personages.¹⁰ The deities told Smith he would be instrumental in restoring to the earth the church organization and authority given by Jesus to the original twelve apostles. Modern historian Richard Bushman sees these beliefs as fundamental to Latter-day Saint distinctiveness, as he writes,

What distinguished Mormonism was not so much the Gospel Mormons taught, which in many respects resembled other Christians' teachings, but what they believed had happened . . . The core of Mormon belief was a conviction about actual events. The test of faith was not adherence to a certain confession of faith but belief that Christ was resurrected, that Joseph Smith saw God, that the Book of Mormon was true history, and that Peter, James, and John restored the apostleship. Mormonism was history, not philosophy.¹¹

Mormons see themselves as descendants of the ancient House of Israel, a latter-day "chosen people" ("chosen" to spread the restored gospel message to the inhabitants of the entire world). This sense of mission also contributes to the cohesiveness of the Mormon community.

The creation of strong emotional ties, the third element involved in Latter-day Saint community building, arises from the foundation of shared religious

¹⁰The designation, "latter-day," differentiates the prophets and believers of modern times from those whose writings appear in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

¹¹Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 187-88.

beliefs and a centralized church organization. The common ground provided by belief might serve to initiate relationships with others in the church, but willing participation in the service-oriented activities advocated by leaders at church headquarters fosters the development of deep emotional bonding. Active Latter-day Saints spend a great deal of time with each other, not only in Sunday meetings but in auxiliary meetings, service projects, and visiting each other in their homes.

The origin, beliefs, and development of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints shaped the perspectives of early church members and created traditions cherished by those who call themselves Latter-day Saints today.

Mormon historians trace the beginnings of their church to a spring morning in the year 1820. In upper-state New York, a region so frequently set ablaze by the religious fervor of the Second Great Awakening that it was called the “Burned-Over District,” fourteen-year-old Joseph Smith, Jr. had been attending revival meetings near his home in Palmyra with members of his family.¹² Determined to affiliate with an organized church but uncertain of which sect to join, Smith read in his family Bible the words, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.”¹³

¹²Whitney Cross indicates that the Mormon church brought to the American West many ideas popular among residents of the Burned-over District, including lay participation in church priesthood, communal living, direct religious experience, and proscription of infant baptism. See Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (New York: Harper & Row, 1950), 145, 150. Richard Bushman sees Mormonism not only as a product of rural Yankee evangelical revivalism but also as an independent creation, based on Joseph Smith’s revelations: “Joseph Smith is best understood as a person who outgrew his culture” (Bushman, 7).

¹³James 1:5, KJV.

After deciding to ask God which church to attend, Smith walked to a grove of trees near his home to pray. A dramatic vision answered the boy's query:

I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other – *This is My Beloved Son—Hear Him!*¹⁴

Smith was directed not to join any of the existing churches, but to wait for further instructions. These would come three years later through an angelic messenger named Moroni, who informed Smith that he would be given the ability to translate a collection of ancient writings inscribed on gold plates, which contained the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The angel Moroni reappeared annually to instruct the young man, entrusting him with the gold plates during his fifth visitation.¹⁵ After translating the writings and naming the translation the *Book of Mormon*, Smith returned the engravings to Moroni. Following publication of the *Book of Mormon*, Smith and a small group of believers officially organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on 6 April 1830.

From the beginning, church members met with opposition from those belonging to long-established Christian denominations who denounced Smith's claims of divine revelation and new scripture to supplement the teachings of the

¹⁴Joseph Smith-History, chapter 1, verses 8-17 in the *Pearl of Great Price*; Brigham H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Volume I (1930; reprint, Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 54.

¹⁵Joseph Smith-History 1:30-34, *Pearl of Great Price*; Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, Volume I, 71.

Bible. In the decade following the organization of the church, Smith moved his headquarters from the New York/Pennsylvania area to Kirtland, Ohio, then to Independence, Missouri, and finally to Nauvoo, Illinois. For five years the Latter-day Saints enjoyed a period of relative peace and prosperity in Nauvoo, and many church leaders traveled as proselytizing missionaries to Canada and Great Britain. Their effective preaching brought approximately seventeen thousand British converts into the church from 1837 to 1847, more than four thousand of whom emigrated to Nauvoo between 1840 and 1845.¹⁶ British members made up a large percentage of the church's population, which totaled 30,332 by the end of 1845.¹⁷

As church membership and prosperity in Nauvoo increased, so did internal dissension among church leaders. One source of contention lay in the new doctrine of "plural marriage" presented by Joseph Smith to members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. A group of angry dissidents published the first and only issue of an inflammatory newspaper, the *Nauvoo Expositor*, on 7 June 1844. Fearing that the paper would arouse mob violence against the Saints, Smith acted in his capacity as mayor to declare the press a public nuisance, and city officials destroyed it. Spurred by the resulting public outcry, Illinois Governor Thomas Ford ordered Joseph Smith and members of the Nauvoo city council to

¹⁶M. Hamlin Cannon, "Migration of English Mormons to America," *American Historical Review* 52 (April, 1947): 441.

¹⁷*Deseret News Church Almanac, 1989-1990*. (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret News, 1988; reprint, 1989), 203.

report to Carthage for trial. On 27 June 1844 an anti-Mormon mob killed Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum in the Carthage jail¹⁸.

Brigham Young, senior member of the L.D.S. Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, assumed leadership of the church.¹⁹ As anti-Mormon sentiment increased in the state of Illinois, Young carried out Joseph Smith's plan to move the Saints west to the Rocky Mountains. The first wagon train of Mormons left Nauvoo on 4 February 1846, crossing the ice-filled Mississippi River by ferryboat. Although President Young had planned an orderly departure, mob violence quickly induced the panic-stricken Saints to evacuate their city without preparing adequately for the arduous journey. Many church members spent the spring of 1846 struggling through the Iowa mud.²⁰

¹⁸Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, Volume II, 227, 244, 286. For further study of the persecutions suffered by the Mormons, see Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987), 280-88; Warren A Jennings, "Zion is Fled: The Expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County, Missouri" (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, 1962); Robert B. Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965); and Kenneth H. Winn, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty: Mormons in America, 1830-1846* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

¹⁹For a detailed discussion of succession in L.D.S. church leadership, see Ronald K. Esplin, "The Emergence of Brigham Young and the Twelve to Mormon Leadership, 1830-1841" (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1981) and D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," *BYU Studies* 16 (Winter 1976): 187-233. Useful biographies of Brigham Young include Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1985) and Newell G. Bringhurst, *Brigham Young and the Expanding American Frontier* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1986).

²⁰See Richard E. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846-52: "And Should We Die"* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987); Lewis Clark Christian, "A Study of Mormon Knowledge of the American Far West Prior to the Exodus (1830-February 1846)" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1972); and Philip A.M. Taylor, "The Mormon Crossing of the United States, 1840-1870," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 25 (1957): 319-337.

Realizing that it would not be possible to reach the Rocky Mountains that year, Young accepted an invitation to provide a battalion of five hundred Mormon men to join the United States Army in the fight against Mexico in exchange for permission to build a winter camp in Indian territory.²¹ Following negotiations with Omaha and Pottawattomie tribal leaders, the Mormons built an encampment along the Missouri River west of Council Bluffs, calling it “Winter Quarters.”²² About four thousand Saints spent the winter there, with approximately eight thousand more scattered in smaller camps along the trail between Winter Quarters and Nauvoo.

Early in the spring of 1847, Brigham Young and a hand-picked group of 147 followers set out in wagons from Winter Quarters to find a refuge for the Saints in the Rocky Mountain wilderness beyond the boundaries of the United States. The area they chose to colonize, however, did not stay outside U. S. borders for long. Less than a year after Young and the advance party of pioneers arrived in the Great Salt Lake Valley, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo transferred possession of the territory from Mexico to the United States.

President Young left the advance party in the Salt Lake Valley to begin a settlement, while he and others hurried back along the trail to Winter Quarters to

²¹William E. Berrett, *The Latter-day Saints: A Contemporary History of the Church of Jesus Christ* (Salt Lake City, 1985), 217-18. See also Daniel Tyler, *A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War* (1881: reprint, Chicago: Rio Grande Press, 1964).

²²Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, Volume III, 95, 143-46.

oversee the exodus of the rest of the church members.²³ During the next two years, eighteen separate wagon trains transported nearly 6,000 Saints to their new promised land, and wagon loads of believers continued flowing into Salt Lake City for two more decades. Twenty-three Mormon wagon trains (the largest number for any given year) crossed the plains in 1852, and ten wagon trains arrived in 1868, the final year before the completion of the transcontinental railroad provided the Latter-day Saints with a better mode of travel.²⁴ In the most efficiently-organized mass migration of this country's history, Young directed that captains be appointed over each group of ten, fifty, and one hundred emigrants to oversee their needs and ensure their safe arrival in the valley.²⁵

As soon as they had established a foothold, the Mormons sought to define their relationship with the federal government. Early in 1849 the settlers held a convention and put together a constitution for a new state, which they decided to call "Deseret."²⁶ Young sent a representative to Washington with a memorial requesting the admission of Deseret into the Union, but members of Congress noted that the settlement had not yet proven itself even as a territory and saw the

²³Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, Volume III, 292-94.

²⁴*Deseret News Church Almanac, 1849-50*, 172-74.

²⁵"The Word and Will of the Lord," given through President Brigham Young, *Doctrine & Covenants* 136: 1-10. See also Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 101-2.

²⁶The word "deseret," meaning "honeybee," comes from the *Book of Mormon*, Ether 2:3.

move as premature. Therefore, in 1850 they appeased the Mormons by appointing Brigham Young governor of the newly-created territory of Utah.

The Latter-day Saints in Utah Territory made a second attempt at statehood in 1856, but by this time their open practice of polygamy raised public sentiment against them throughout the nation. Non-Mormons objected to the unconventional marriage arrangements and feared a theocratic dictatorship in the Salt Lake valley, suggesting that Mormon loyalty to their church leaders might lead to open rebellion against the federal government. Congress ignored the second application for statehood, and President Buchanan sent Alfred Cumming to replace Brigham Young as governor. The U. S. Army escort provided to ensure a smooth transition in the governorship threatened the Mormons, and tensions ran high during the “Utah War” of 1857-58.²⁷ A negotiated peace led to the installation of the new governor in the spring of 1858, and the Saints’ brief period of freedom from interference by non-Mormon outsiders came to an end.

Brigham Young wasted no time in expanding Mormon influence in the Rocky Mountain region, sending members to establish settlements scattered from Canada to Mexico and from California to Colorado.²⁸ He initiated the Perpetual

²⁷ For an in-depth study of this struggle, see Norman F. Furniss, *The Mormon Conflict: 1850-1859* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1960) and Paul Bailey, *Holy Smoke: A Dissertation on the Utah War* (Los Angeles, Westernlore Books, 1978).

²⁸ Arrington, *Brigham Young, American Moses*, 167-91; M. Guy Bishop, “‘We Are Rather Weaker In Righteousness Than In Numbers’: The Mormon Colony at San Bernardino, California, 1851-1857,” in *Religion and Society in the American West*, ed. Carl Guarneri and David Alvarez (New York: University Press of America, 1987), 171-93; and Eugene E. Campbell, “Brigham Young’s Outer Cordon—A Reappraisal,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 41 (1973): 220-25.

Emigrating Fund in 1849 to assist other church members to gather in Utah.²⁹ As the numbers of Mormons in the West increased, federal restrictions reduced their political power. During and after the Civil War, Congress passed successively more restrictive laws to disenfranchise the Latter-day Saints.³⁰ Ultimately threatened with the legal dissolution of their church, many Mormons were relieved when church President Wilford Woodruff issued the “Manifesto” which signaled an end to polygamous marriages and finally paved the way for Utah to enter the Union as a state in 1896.³¹

The twentieth century saw church leaders renew their efforts to present Latter-day Saints to the nation as industrious, patriotic upholders of national values. In 1902 a small information booth in Temple Square began providing visitors with church literature. Two years later church president Joseph F. Smith (nephew of the first prophet) issued an official statement declaring the church’s intention to uphold the national laws by excommunicating any persons who

²⁹Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, Volume III, 383-84.

³⁰These included the 1862 act prohibiting polygamy in the U.S. territories [*Statutes at Large*, 12, ch. 126, 501-2 (1862)], the 1874 Poland Act [*Statutes at Large*, 18, part 3, ch. 469, 253-56 (1874)], which enabled U.S. district courts in Utah to bring polygamists to trial; the 1882 Edmunds Act [*Statutes at Large*, 22, ch. 47, 30-31 (1882)], which defined “unlawful cohabitation” as the financial support of more than one woman and thus eradicated the need for proof of a second marriage (making it easier to prosecute polygamists); and the 1887 Edmunds-Tucker Act [*Statutes at Large*, 24, ch. 397, 635-41 (1887)], which disincorporated the L.D.S. church and escheated church property.

³¹“Official Declaration 1,” *Doctrine and Covenants*, 291-293; Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, Volume VI, 310-11, 336-37; *Statutes at Large*, 28, ch. 138, 107-112 (1894).

entered into plural marriages.³² Toward the end of World War I, church members helped alleviate grain shortages by selling stored wheat to the United States government. Taking advantage of new opportunities to enhance the public image of Latter-day Saints, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir began weekly radio broadcasts in 1929, and the church sponsored well-attended L.D.S. exhibits at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair as well as the 1939 World's Fair in San Francisco. Evidence of an increasing Mormon respectability came during World War II, when the U. S. government recognized Latter-day Saint participation in the war effort by naming a Liberty class ship the *U.S.S. Joseph Smith*.³³

Although the public image of the Mormon church improved greatly during the twentieth century, L.D.S. policies continue to generate controversy from time to time. In the turbulent struggle for civil rights in America during the 1960s and 1970s, African-American leaders drew attention to the Mormon practice of denying priesthood and temple opportunities to black men. An official declaration by church president Spencer W. Kimball resolved this issue in 1978. President Kimball stated that he had received a revelation authorizing the conferral of priesthood and temple blessings upon all worthy male members of the church.³⁴ Female members, however, were still denied priesthood authority. This policy,

³²*Deseret News Church Almanac, 1999-2000, 497.*

³³*Ibid., 499-502.*

³⁴“Official Declaration 2,” *Doctrine and Covenants, 293-94.*

highlighted by church opposition in the early 1980s to the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, continues to raise the ire of American feminists (including a few Mormons), but it seems unlikely that the practice will be changed. In 1995, an official proclamation by church president Gordon B. Hinckley renewed emphasis on the Mormon view of the nuclear family as a divinely ordained institution with clearly defined male and female roles.³⁵

The twentieth century witnessed many changes in L.D.S. church organization, policies and programs. In 1899 church president Lorenzo Snow received a revelation emphasizing the principle of tithing (the payment of a tenth of one's income to the church), and faithful Latter-day Saint response enabled the church to become free of debt by the end of 1906. Funds became available to expand the building program and purchase important historical sites, as well as to publish church-sponsored instructional materials and periodicals. To stress the importance of the family in the gospel plan, president Joseph F. Smith recommended in 1915 that members hold a monthly family "Home Evening" and teach their children scriptural lessons. In the October 1919 general conference of the church, president Heber J. Grant encouraged members to begin "building up Zion" throughout the world rather than emigrating to Utah. During the 1920s, many Latter-day Saints left Utah to seek employment in California and other

³⁵*Deseret News Church Almanac, 1999-2000, 559-560.*

states, but for several decades converts continued to move to Utah and Idaho in order to associate with others of their new found faith.³⁶

Until the early 1900s, church-funded schools and academies ensured that young members received adequate religious instruction, but in 1912 church leaders established the first seminary adjacent to a public high school in Utah. Beginning in 1920, most of the academies became public schools or junior colleges, and high school students were released from regular classes for an hour each day to attend nearby seminaries. In 1926, the church institute of religion program held its first classes for college students at the University of Idaho. Currently, Latter-day Saint high school and college students throughout the United States, along with those in many other countries, attend seminary or institute classes for religious instruction.

In response to the Great Depression, church leaders inaugurated a church-wide welfare program in 1936 to help members regain financial stability. Wards and stakes built storehouses and purchased farms and canneries where the able-bodied poor could work to produce food for themselves and others. Leaders counseled individual members to live strictly within their means, to store food and other necessities, to save money if possible, and to donate fast offerings (money saved by abstaining from two meals per month) to aid the less fortunate.

³⁶G. Byron Done, "The Participation of the Latter-day Saints in the Community Life of Los Angeles." Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1939, 98-99.

Believing that “the glory of God is intelligence,” and that “whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection,” Latter-day Saints value all forms of education.³⁷ Evidence of this priority appears in several statistical studies. In 1940, census data listed Utah as the state with the highest average level of educational attainment in the entire nation, and a Columbia University study reported Utah to be the birthplace of the highest proportion of individuals listed in *Who’s Who* and *American Men of Science*.³⁸

Since the early days of the church, L.D.S. men (and some women) have served voluntary two-year missions to spread the good news of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. As tensions mounted in Europe before the outbreak of the second world war, Latter-day Saint leaders recalled all missionaries serving there, and then withdrew missionaries from the South Pacific and South Africa at the end of 1940. By 1943, full-time proselytizing missionaries were found only in limited numbers in North America and Hawaii, as many young L.D.S. men entered the military to serve their country. Members attending small branches assumed responsibilities for running church meetings and doing part-time missionary work as the number of full-time missionaries dropped. After the war, Mormon leaders

³⁷*Doctrine and Covenants*, 93:36 and 130:18.

³⁸See United States government 1940 census data in *Utah Economic and Business Review* (Dec., 1947), 58; and E.L.Thorndike, “The Origin of Superior Men,” *Scientific Monthly* 56 (May 1943), 430.

again encouraged young adults to serve missions for the church. As these missionaries redoubled their proselytizing efforts, church membership increased dramatically. In 1900, there were 283,765 Mormons organized into 964 wards and branches and 43 stakes of the church, with 796 individuals serving in the mission field. By 1946 almost a million people called themselves Latter-day Saints. Currently, over ten million members meet in 25,405 wards and branches and 2,497 stakes, and 58,700 missionaries serve in 331 missions throughout the world.³⁹

This brief historical summary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints offers a basic understanding of church policies and programs in effect at the time that Latter-day Saints first began to build a faith community in Fort Collins. We now move on to explore the origin and development of this Front Range city, in order to more fully understand the cultural climate, sociological events, and economic factors that brought L.D.S. church members to the area.

³⁹*Deseret News Church Almanac, 1999-2000, 110, 551-54.*

CHAPTER TWO

FORT COLLINS: FRONTIER OUTPOST TO MODERN CITY

Early Fort Collins residents did not neglect their spiritual needs. In 1911, Ansel Watrous outlined a brief history of each of the fourteen major congregations in the city. According to Watrous, the Catholics appeared first on the scene, when Bishop Joseph P. Machebeuf held religious services in Laporte-area homes during the years after 1858. He celebrated mass in Fort Collins for the first time in 1878 and authorized the purchase of a Fort Collins school house in which to hold church services. The parish, named after St. Joseph, met in the converted school house until the 1901 dedication of the beautiful stone church on the corner of Mountain Avenue and Howes Street.

The First Methodist Episcopal Church organized the earliest religious instruction in Fort Collins in 1867. A succession of circuit ministers served this group, which built a house of worship in 1876. The Methodists, plagued by flooding and seepage from the nearby irrigation ditches, moved their church building in 1878 to a drier and more suitable location. By 1911 they served the largest membership of any Protestant denomination in Fort Collins. Meanwhile, a small group of Presbyterians became the nucleus of the Fort Collins First

Presbyterian Church, organized in 1872. They constructed their first meeting house in 1877, and erected a more substantial building ten years later at the corner of Remington and Olive Streets.

Other churches organized in Fort Collins included: St. Luke's Episcopal (1875), First Baptist (1879), Seventh-day Adventist (1887), First Christian (1890), Christian Scientist (1897), Unity (1898), Second Presbyterian (1902), German Evangelical Congregational (1903), United Presbyterian (1906), First African-American (1908), and Plymouth Congregational (1908).⁴⁰ When Watrous completed his history in 1911, no Latter-day Saints had established a place of worship in Larimer County.

Ansel Watrous, as founder and publisher of the Fort Collins *Courier*, had reported on the happenings of Fort Collins and its environs for thirty-two years when he took on the challenge of compiling a Larimer County history. This very voluminous, detailed work lacks documentation, making it difficult to verify his information. Since it is the earliest comprehensive history of the area, local residents are grateful for his efforts, but one wishes he had revealed his sources. Local historian Charlene Tresner provided a valuable finding aid in her 1980 *Index* to the Watrous history, and her "Errata" pages correct some of its inaccuracies.⁴⁰ Two companion volumes, the more recent *History of Larimer County, Colorado, Volume I* (edited by Andrew J. Morris) and *Volume II* (edited by Arlene Briggs

⁴⁰Charlene Tresner, *Index to the History of Larimer County, Colorado* by Ansel Watrous (Fort Collins, 1980).

Ahlbrandt and Kathryn Stieben), utilize topical entries from local contributors to supplement and reiterate the Watrous history, and cover twentieth century events up to 1985.⁴¹ Again, the contributing authors of these volumes offer little documentation of sources.

Other books by local writers include Guy Peterson's *Fort Collins: The Post-The Town* and Phil Walker's *Visions Along the Poudre Valley*. Both provide interesting stories, told in a folksy manner. Evadene Burris Swanson also tells a good story, but supplements her *Fort Collins Yesterdays* with extensive endnotes that include original sources. More scholarly discussions of specific local topics may be found in John S. Gray's *Cavalry and Coaches: The Story of Camp and Fort Collins* and two books by James E. Hansen, II: the extensive, thoroughly researched *Democracy's College in the Centennial State*, and the informative *Beyond the Ivory Tower*.⁴²

An overview of Fort Collins history will provide a better understanding of the attractions that drew L.D.S. church members to the locale. French-Canadian

⁴¹Andrew J. Morris, ed., *The History of Larimer County, Colorado, Volume I* (Dallas, TX: Curtis Media Corporation, 1985); Arlene Briggs Ahlbrandt and Kathryn Stieben, eds., *The History of Larimer County, Colorado, Volume II* (Dallas, TX: Curtis Media Corporation, 1987).

⁴²Guy L. Peterson, *Fort Collins: The Post, The Town* (Fort Collins, CO: The Old Army Press, 1972); Phil Walker, *Visions Along the Poudre Valley* (Fort Collins, CO: The Old Army Press, 1995); Evadene Burris Swanson, *Fort Collins Yesterdays* (Fort Collins, CO: George & Hildegard Morgan, Publishers, 1993); John S. Gray, *Cavalry and Coaches: The Story of Camp and Fort Collins* (Fort Collins, CO, 1978); James E. Hansen II, *Democracy's College in the Centennial State: A History of Colorado State University* (Fort Collins, CO: Colorado State University, 1977); idem, *Beyond the Ivory Tower: A History of Colorado State University Cooperative Extension* (Fort Collins, CO: Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, 1991).

fur trappers wandered through the area along the Cache la Poudre River as early as 1826 (a few built temporary settlements with their Native American wives), but the region generally remained unpopulated by whites until thirty-two years later. At that time, Antoine Janis led a group of trappers and traders, together with their families, from Fort Laramie along the foothills of Colorado as they searched for the best place to build a town. They decided upon the valley where young Janis and his father had cached gunpowder and other supplies one winter in the early 1830s. The men surveyed the site and founded the settlement of Colona a few miles upstream from the future location of Fort Collins.⁴³ A year later the founders decided to relocate their town a short distance to the east, where the ford across the Cache la Poudre River proved to be lower and more accessible. Since they regarded their new settlement as the gateway to the West, they changed the town's name to La Porte (later spelled "Laporte"), meaning "the gate," in 1860.⁴⁴

The new name proved prophetic. Increasing Indian hostilities soon forced a re-routing of the Overland Stage that led to the establishment of a United States military camp near Laporte on 22 July 1862.⁴⁵ With soldiers posted along the new route to protect the U.S. Mail and other valuable cargo from Indian raiders and

⁴³Members of this group, named in an 1883 letter by Janis, included his brother Nicholas Janis, E. Gerry, Todd Randall, B. Goodwin, E. W. Raymond, Oliver Morisette A. LeBon, John B. Provost and Ravofiere. They and others built 50 cabins on the site of Colona. See Watrous, 44.

⁴⁴Watrous, 45, 165; Tresner, 73.

⁴⁵Gray, 11-12, 16. The previous stage route followed the South Platte River to Lodgepole Creek, then headed northwest to the North Platte River and joined the old Oregon Trail. Gray, map in frontispiece.

white outlaws, the army ordered wagon trains traveling west to follow the stage coach trail through Laporte.

On 9 July 1864, after an unusually heavy rainfall melted the deep mountain snow pack, the Poudre River flooded and washed away military cabins and supplies. The camp, named for Colonel William O. Collins (who commanded troops in Wyoming at Fort Laramie), was relocated along higher ground a few miles downstream. By 23 October the soldiers had completed the move to their new quarters, and dispatches from the post carried the letterhead, "Fort Collins."⁴⁶

The end of the Civil War led the army to abandon Fort Collins in 1866, and a year later the Union Pacific Railroad reached Cheyenne, Wyoming. Suddenly, local economic prospects were in jeopardy. Stagecoach and wagon train traffic through the Poudre Valley had promoted local development during the 1860s. Settlers had produced hay and forage crops consumed by the many horses essential to the cavalry and overland stage, as well as farm goods to supply hungry men and animals in the Colorado mining camps. After the soldiers left, the local farmers searched for other sources of revenue to keep their settlement alive. They saw an answer in the Morrill Act of 1862, which established land-grant agricultural colleges in the United States.⁴⁷ Fort Collins promoters lobbied to replace the patronage of one government institution with that of another. The Colorado

⁴⁶Ibid., 68.

⁴⁷Hansen, *Beyond the Ivory Tower*, 7.

Agricultural College, founded in 1870 by an act shepherded through the Colorado legislature by Representative Mathew S. Taylor (a Fort Collins attorney), opened its doors to students in 1879.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, local settlers joined forces to form the Larimer County Land Improvement Company, which platted the town of Fort Collins on 16 January 1873. Later that year, Colorado's first commercial stone quarry began operations at Petra, later known as Stout (a village in the foothills west of Fort Collins).⁴⁹ However, these hopeful beginnings soon turned to despair. The national financial panic of 1873 led to the failure of the town's first bank, and a succession of grasshopper plagues flattened Fort Collins' population growth for the next four years. Finally, in October 1877 a railroad line connected Fort Collins to Denver and Cheyenne, and 1878 brought an influx of settlers. Between 1877 and 1880, Fort Collins more than doubled its population to 1,356.⁵⁰ Access to transportation by rail, combined with the opening of the agricultural college, breathed new life into the town on the Poudre River. The extension of a railroad line to the Stout quarry in 1882 gave the stone business a boost, and Swedish and Italian immigrants arrived to supply the necessary labor.⁵¹

⁴⁸Taylor took action upon an idea promoted earlier by Fort Collins resident Harris Stratton. See Hansen, *Democracy's College*, 23.

⁴⁹Peterson, 62.

⁵⁰"Pre-Fort Collins." [[http:// www.ci.fort-collins.co.us/ARTS_CULTURE/MUSEUM/history/1870RLC.htm](http://www.ci.fort-collins.co.us/ARTS_CULTURE/MUSEUM/history/1870RLC.htm)]. 20 October 1998; Watrous, 239-40, 243.

⁵¹Peterson, 62; Edith Bucco, "Stout", *The Colorado Magazine* 51 (Fall, 1974), 326.

By the turn of the century, sugar beet farms replaced stone quarries as the major employer of immigrant workers in Fort Collins. When the Great Western Sugar Company purchased the newly constructed sugar factory in Fort Collins in 1904, German-Russians began moving in from Kansas and Nebraska to work in the beet fields. Fort Collins farmers learned by accident in 1890 that lambs thrived on a diet of beet tops and sugar by-products, and lamb feeding soon complemented sugar beet production as a source of local revenue.⁵²

The Colorado Agricultural College contributed heavily to this agricultural success. Shortly after the college opened its doors, professors began conducting farmers' institutes and proposing ideas to enhance the effectiveness of local crop production and irrigation systems.⁵³ The irrigation system received a boost from college ingenuity again in the mid-1920's, when faculty member Ralph Parshall invented a flume to measure diverted water. By 1932 more than 1500 Parshall flumes were placed in Colorado ditches.⁵⁴ The college's Agricultural Experiment Station, supported by the Hatch Act, helped boost sugar beet production in Fort

⁵²Some New Mexican lambs, stranded at Walsenburg in the winter of 1889-90 and shipped by rail to Fort Collins, were fattened on sugar beet tops and brought good prices in the spring sale. See Alvin T. Steinel, *History of Agriculture in Colorado, 1858 to 1926* (Fort Collins, 1926), 150; Swanson, 49.

⁵³The Colorado Agricultural College organized its experiment station shortly after the passage of the 1887 Hatch Act, which provided funding for agricultural experiment stations at the nation's land-grant institutions. Hansen, *Democracy's College*, 85, 88; idem, *Beyond the Ivory Tower*, 8.

⁵⁴Swanson, 48.

Collins.⁵⁵ By 1904 “There were fields of sugar beets from Mulberry to Laurel [Streets] and from Whitcomb to Shields [Streets] . . . All of the tillable area north of town near the factory was put into beets.”⁵⁶

In addition to the farming, stock-raising and stone-cutting industries in the Fort Collins area, numerous manufacturing establishments contributed to the local economy. Some of the more important businesses by 1911 included the two “immense” sugar factories (in Fort Collins and Loveland), stucco and plaster mills, brickyards, a cement tile factory, planing mills and door factories, foundries and machine shops, four flour mills, a produce cannery, an alfalfa mill and some cigar factories.⁵⁷

The growing town kept pace with social improvements in other parts of the country as Fort Collins residents adopted new inventions. The Fort Collins Light, Heat, and Power Company, organized in 1887, provided electrical power to the townspeople, and in the same year the first local telephone connected the city hall with the water works.⁵⁸ Electric streetcars began running in Fort Collins in December, 1907, a few years after the first automobiles appeared on the town streets.⁵⁹ Philanthropist Andrew Carnegie donated funds, which town residents

⁵⁵Hansen, *Beyond the Ivory Tower*, 10.

⁵⁶Swanson, 51.

⁵⁷Watrous, 152.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 249.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 255.

used to build a public library in 1903. A Fort Collins hospital association, formed during that year, finished constructing a hospital in 1906.

The next decade brought many changes to Fort Collins. Following Henry Ford's decision to mass-produce the Model T in 1909, automobiles quickly began replacing horses and carriages on Fort Collins city streets. Enrollment at the agricultural college more than doubled, and after Congress passed an act creating the Reserve Officers Training Corps (R.O.T.C.) in 1916, the State Board of agriculture established an R.O.T.C. unit at the college.⁶⁰ The United States declared war on Germany on 6 April 1917, and within a year this training facility brought an influx of soldiers to Fort Collins. As the war drew to a close in November 1918, Fort Collins residents began fighting another battle— against a virulent influenza epidemic that killed millions of people throughout the world.

World War I devastated European farmlands, creating a great demand for American agricultural products. Fort Collins farmers joined others throughout the country as they expanded their operations to fill the worldwide need. As the war ended and European farmers began producing their own food again, falling prices for American-grown crops led to hardships for local farmers. The creation in 1921 of a Department of Economics and Sociology at the Colorado Agricultural

⁶⁰Hansen, *Democracy's College*, 263, 273.

College, with courses and extension work geared toward understanding rural economics, provided much-needed assistance to Colorado agriculturalists.⁶¹

Economic fluctuations, changes in transportation and innovations in refrigeration led to the transformation of methods for stocking the family larder. Small corner grocery stores proliferated in Fort Collins in the decades before World War II. These local operations offered home delivery and extended credit to regular customers, allowing them to pay their bills at the end of each month. The Depression forced most small vendors to switch to a “cash and carry” operation, since the difficult economic times kept many customers from paying their monthly bills. When the Depression eased, many families purchased refrigerators, which enabled them to buy larger quantities of perishable items from the stores that offered the best prices. Large supermarkets soon replaced the corner groceries. Local truck farm production declined as well, thanks to a combination of improved refrigeration and rapid transportation which brought fresh produce to supermarkets and took customers from the roadside stands.⁶²

The Fort Collins fruit industry had begun when J. S. McClelland planted his first apple orchard in 1876, and prospered from that time forward. Cherry growers

⁶¹The Cooperative Extension Service, established by the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 to implement cooperation between the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture and the land-grant colleges in extending agricultural knowledge to farmers, evolved from farmers’ institutes conducted by college faculty. These institutes began in 1879 in Fort Collins. Hansen, *Democracy’s College*, 41, 210; idem, *Beyond the Ivory Tower*, 8-10.

⁶²Iola Pennock, “Local Home Owned Grocery” and “Early Larimer County Industries,” in Morris, 22.

experienced a boom in the 1930s, providing employment for fruit pickers during the Depression, but the labor shortage during World War II kept growers from harvesting and marketing their crops. In addition, housewives working in jobs vacated by men who went to war had no time to bottle fruit or make preserves. Since grains brought good prices during the war, many berry patches became cornfields.⁶³

World War II wrought additional changes for the people and institutions of Fort Collins. The college added military training programs to its curriculum and leased two local hotels to serve as barracks for servicemen. Regular college courses continued as well, but by 1943 military enlistment had dropped enrollment to 701 (down from 1,637 the previous year) and women students outnumbered men on campus. Many college faculty contributed to the war effort also, either entering the armed services themselves or serving as civilian advisors to the military. The college experiment station and the extension service cooperated in finding ways to maximize the production and efficient use of food in Colorado.⁶⁴

The end of World War II and the opportunity for returning servicemen to obtain a college education through the G. I. Bill brought a tremendous influx of young people to Fort Collins during the late 1940s. College President Roy Green worked to provide housing for the newcomers; one solution was to create a

⁶³Pennock, "Fruit Production: Enjoyable and Profitable," in Morris, 23.

⁶⁴Hansen, *Democracy's College*, 348-50.

“Veteran’s Village” of surplus quonset huts to serve as married student housing. Green effectively petitioned state officials for increased budget appropriations. This funded the construction of new facilities and enabled the college to raise faculty salaries sufficiently to stop the exodus of Colorado professors to better-paying teaching positions in other states.⁶⁵

In late 1951, water began flowing into the newly-constructed Horsetooth Reservoir west of Fort Collins. By the time it was filled several years later, this reservoir (part of the Colorado Big Thompson Water Project initiated in 1938) held 156,000 acre-feet of water.⁶⁶ The availability of an abundance of water in this arid region, combined with the expansion of the college, stimulated a building boom in Fort Collins.⁶⁷ The town’s population grew from 14,000 residents in 1951 to 25,000 ten years later. By the end of the decade, local efforts to modernize government operations resulted in the construction of a new county courthouse and city hall. The college continued to expand, changing its name in 1957 to Colorado State University. Woodward Governor, first among many new

⁶⁵Ibid., 353-56.

⁶⁶For a detailed discussion of this project, consult Daniel Tyler’s *The Last Water Hole in the West: The Colorado-Big Thompson Project and the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District* (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1992). See also Walker, 191.

⁶⁷Policies promoted by the Fort Collins Water Board and Mayor Harvey Johnson ensured an ample supply of water for the city into the twenty-first century. See James E. Hansen, II, *The Water Supply and Storage Company: A Century of Colorado Reclamation 1891-1991* (Fort Collins: Water Supply and Storage Company, 1991), 24-25.

industrial employers in the town, built a Fort Collins production plant in 1958.⁶⁸

In 1976, the Hewlett-Packard electronics manufacturing company moved sixty-five employees from its Loveland plant to start a new division in Fort Collins. By 1993, Hewlett-Packard employed over 2,400 people at its Fort Collins location.⁶⁹

Fort Collins continued to grow in the 1960s, and the population reached 43,000 residents by the end of the decade. Increasing enrollment at Colorado State University motivated construction of many campus facilities, including a much-needed library (named after President William Morgan), a new athletic complex (dubbed “Moby Gym” due to its whale-like appearance), and the 30,000-seat Hughes Stadium. The new social consciousness sweeping the nation inspired programs such as the Peace Corps, which began in 1960 when Professor Maurice Albertson initiated a feasibility study at the university in Fort Collins.⁷⁰

Growing sentiment against the Vietnam War led to organized peace demonstrations on campus during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the activities of Colorado State University students also reflected the national movement for African-American civil rights. Student protests against alleged racist practices of Mormon-owned Brigham Young University led to an angry demonstration at half-time during a C.S.U. - B.Y.U. basketball game in February 1970. Campus anti-

⁶⁸Barbara Allbrandt Fleming, *Fort Collins: A Pictorial History* (Virginia Beach, VA, 1992), 163.

⁶⁹Swanson, 277.

⁷⁰Hansen, *Democracy's College*, 391-92, 401.

war activism reached a peak that spring, culminating May 8 in a peace march of more than 2,000 people to the Fort Collins city hall. That night, an unknown arsonist set fire to the campus R.O.T.C. firing range and to Old Main, the university's oldest building, which burned to the ground despite the united efforts of students, townspeople and firefighters to save the historic landmark.⁷¹

Fort Collins civic leaders, sensing that the city's continuing population explosion threatened its future quality of life, organized a planned development committee which came to be called "Designing Tomorrow Today." Its efforts resulted in the addition during the 1970s of new parks and open space preserves, a city bus system, a new public library, and the Lincoln Community Center, constructed on the grounds of the former Lincoln Junior High.⁷² The city building programs of the 1970s continued into the next decade, as much-needed renovation and restoration projects revitalized the downtown business district. Social programs also received attention, and in 1988 many city residents assisted the Catholic Community Services/Northern agency in building a shelter for the homeless of Fort Collins. During the 1990s, as the booming construction industry struggled to satisfy the ever increasing demand for housing, local leaders gave additional emphasis to enhancing and preserving the quality of life in this city.

⁷¹Ibid., 472-73.

⁷²"Time Line 1970." [http://www.ci.fort-collins.co.us/ARTS_CULTURE/MUSEUM/history/1970RLC.htm].25 November 1998.

With a current population of more than 100,000 persons and no end to growth in sight, Fort Collins now prepares to enter a new century and a new millennium.

This historical survey of the city offers insights into the social and cultural context of the area in which the Mormons built their Fort Collins community.

Because Fort Collins was not among the towns founded by Mormons during the great colonization efforts of the nineteenth century, its L.D.S. citizens struggled to maintain a group identity in the early days, but by the late 1960s the Mormon

congregations of this northern Colorado city resembled their counterparts in Utah.

The following chapter provides more detailed information gleaned from the few surviving records of the earliest Latter-day Saints in Fort Collins.

CHAPTER THREE

MORMON BEGINNINGS IN FORT COLLINS

Sarah Emma Kartchner, the first white baby born in the territory that would become the state of Colorado, came into the world in August, 1846.⁷³ Her parents, part of a group of forty-three Mormon emigrants from Mississippi, had camped for the winter on the Arkansas River (near present-day Pueblo) as they waited to join Brigham Young and the main body of Latter-day Saints traveling to the Salt Lake Valley. During the next few months, three separate detachments from the Mormon Battalion of General Kearny's Army of the West arrived, composed of L.D.S. soldiers too sick to complete the rugged march to California, along with some wives and children. By the end of the winter, the number of Saints encamped near Pueblo totaled about 275.⁷⁴

With the coming of spring, the Mormons prepared to continue their journey. A group of seventeen traveled north to Fort Laramie on the North Platte,

⁷³Minnie Larson Arline, biographical sketch of her great-aunt Sarah Emma Kartchner, typescript in possession of Twila Bird, Lakewood, Colorado. Watrous awards this distinction to Malinda Catherine Kelley, born in November, 1846. Watrous, 26.

⁷⁴LeRoy R. Hafen and Frank M. Young, "The Mormon Settlement at Pueblo, Colorado, During the Mexican War," *Colorado Magazine* 9 (July, 1932): 121, 127-136.

where they met Brigham Young and his advance party on 1 June 1847. The rest of the Pueblo encampment followed close behind and arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on 27 July, three days after Young's "pioneer band."⁷⁵ Ansel Watrous claimed that thirty-four women, sixty to seventy children, and ten to twelve men from the Pueblo group passed through present-day Larimer County during the spring and summer of 1847 on their way to Salt Lake. "They followed the Cherokee trail through Virginia Dale, and thence on to the Laramie Plains and to Salt Lake, via Fort Bridger."⁷⁶ If true, this would mark the first time that Latter-day Saints passed by the future Fort Collins area. However, journals of the Pueblo Saints indicate that they headed north to Fort Laramie (near present-day Guernsey) and then west along what would come to be called the Mormon Trail, rather than taking the route indicated by Watrous.⁷⁷

Few sources mention the presence of other Mormons in Larimer County during the rest of the nineteenth century, but some Latter-day Saints did settle in southern Colorado. Under Brigham Young's vigorous colonization program, groups of L.D.S. emigrants were directed to settle in Arizona, California, Nevada, Idaho, Wyoming, New Mexico, and Texas, as well as throughout the territory of Utah. John Morgan, serving as a Mormon missionary in Georgia and Alabama,

⁷⁵Ibid., 135-36.

⁷⁶Watrous, 25-26.

⁷⁷Later groups of Mormon emigrants, however, may have been among those who were ordered in 1862 by the U.S. Army to follow the Overland Stage route through the Fort Collins area to avoid hostile Indian attacks along the Oregon/Mormon Trail to the north. Gray, 11-12.

wrote in 1877 to advise President Young that many converts from those southern states desired to emigrate to the Rocky Mountain area. The Mormon leader suggested that Morgan lead this group either to Texas or New Mexico to establish a settlement.⁷⁸ En route to New Mexico, Morgan's party spent the winter in Pueblo, and former Colorado territorial governor Alexander C. Hunt encouraged them to settle in the San Luis Valley.⁷⁹ With assistance sent by Brigham Young's successors in Salt Lake City, the emigrants established a thriving community in southern Colorado. A constant stream of L.D.S. converts quickly increased the Mormon population in the San Luis Valley.⁸⁰ By 1883 church growth there led to the organization of the Conejos "Stake of Zion."⁸¹

No large Latter-day Saint colonies of this type appeared in the Fort Collins area during the nineteenth century. Arlene Ahlbrandt's county history mentions a transient colony of Mormons who "squatted" in the vicinity of Upper Boxelder near Red Mountain (northwest of Wellington, past Buckeye) in 1882 and provided the first students for the Upper Boxelder School during their brief stay in the area.

⁷⁸Nicholas G. Morgan, "Mormon Colonization in the San Luis Valley," *Colorado Magazine* 27 (October, 1950), 271.

⁷⁹The first permanent settlers came to the San Luis Valley in 1849 from the area of Taos and Santa Fe, part of Mexican territory until 1848. These colonists brought their Spanish culture and knowledge of irrigation techniques to the valley drained by the Rio Grande. Mormon church leaders purchased land from two Hispanic ranchers for Morgan's colony in 1878. See Virginia McConnell Simmons, *The San Luis Valley* (Boulder: Pruett Publishing Co., 1979), 43-46, 131.

⁸⁰Among the converts who arrived in the San Luis Valley from Virginia in 1880 were Mr. and Mrs. John Dempsey, whose son, "Jack," was born in Manassa. Jack became a well-known boxer. Morgan, 290.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 293.

Alexander Webster built the log schoolhouse in 1883. His fourteen offspring attended the school, which has been restored and moved to the courtyard of the Fort Collins Museum. Other than stating that some of this Mormon group were en route to Utah and others to Missouri, Ahlbrandt gives no indication of what happened to Webster and his family after 1883.⁸²

On 14 December 1896, L.D.S. Apostle John W. Taylor boarded a train in Salt Lake City and headed for Denver with instructions from church President Wilford Woodruff to open a mission there. Assisted by twelve missionaries, Taylor organized the first branch of the Colorado Mission on 3 January 1897.⁸³ Scattered references in missionary journals mention Fort Collins. Though assigned to work in Colorado Springs and other towns during most of his mission, Elder Frederick Crosthwait Graham wrote of a "cottage meeting" held in Fort Collins on 9 March 1898. The next day, Elder Graham walked from Fort Collins to Laporte, reporting that he "Announced a meeting there and called on families. The meeting was not well attended." A Sunday School meeting held in Fort Collins on 13 March proved to be more successful, with forty-five people present. Elder Graham led another gathering in Laporte that evening.⁸⁴

⁸²Arlene Ahlbrandt, "Upper Boxelder School," in *The History of Larimer County, Colorado, Vol. II*, ed. Arlene Briggs Ahlbrandt and Kathryn "Kate" Stieben (Dallas, TX: Curtis Media Corp., 1987), 498.

⁸³Twila Bird, *A Century of Saints: A Front Range History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Englewood, CO: 1997), 15.

⁸⁴Frederick Crosthwait Graham, personal diary, 1897-1898. Microfilm copy in the L.D.S. Church Historical Department Archives Reading Room, Salt Lake City, UT.

Available historical sources do not mention Latter-day Saints in Larimer County again until 1904, when a young man named Glenn Broliar arrived in Fort Collins from Nebraska with his family. The Broliars, however, were members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (R.L.D.S).⁸⁵ The family attended R.L.D.S. Sunday School meetings in the homes of Fort Collins area members during the early 1900s, and by 1916 there were enough Reorganized Latter Day Saints in town to organize a Fort Collins branch of that denomination.⁸⁶ After meeting in a succession of rented buildings during the next twenty-five years, the Fort Collins Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints built a meetinghouse in 1942 (on the corner of East Oak and Mathews Streets), where they still worship today.⁸⁷

Meanwhile, the "Utah Mormons" continued their missionary efforts. John L. Herrick, president of the Western States Mission (the name was changed from the "Colorado Mission" in 1907 to reflect the expanded territory in which the missionaries served) traveled extensively along the Front Range. His journal

⁸⁵Early members of the Reorganized Church separated from the main body of Latter-day Saints after the death of their first prophet, Joseph Smith, Jr., in 1844. They remained in Illinois instead of following Brigham Young to Utah. Reorganized Latter Day Saints decried the practice of polygamy and believed that the young son of Joseph Smith should be the prophet's successor. See Roger D. Launius, *Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Alma R. Blair, "The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints: Moderate Mormons," in *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History*, ed. F. Mark McKiernan, Alma R. Blair, and Paul M. Edwards (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1973), 207-30.

⁸⁶"Latter Day Saints Fort Collins Branch," *Fort Collins Express*, 20 May 1923, p. 8.

⁸⁷Glenn Broliar, interview by Jonathan Anderson, 18 July 1974. Transcript on file at the Fort Collins Public Library.

makes occasional reference to Fort Collins. Recording a meeting with the elders in Greeley on 23 January 1910, President Herrick mentioned that “the four from Fort Collins” also attended.⁸⁸ During the following six years Herrick made frequent trips by train to Greeley, Cheyenne, and Laramie, but recorded only one visit to Fort Collins, for a meeting on 28 November 1915. Along with supervising the proselytizing work, the mission president also found it necessary on occasion to act as spiritual adviser to the scattered members. He related one such incident, which concerned a baby born out of wedlock:

Visited Cheyenne and on return trip decided . . . to return by way of Fort Collins since I had learned that . . . one of our converts there had had a baby and that Bro. D— was the father. I had the number of the house and went directly there after having breakfast and was met at door by Bro. D—. . . I went in and talked to them for a few minutes and he admitted he was the father of the child.⁸⁹

Missionary work continued at a steady pace in the Greeley area, where nine members of a large family with ties to Fort Collins joined the church in 1919. Charles and Fannie Street, together with seven of their ten children, were baptized at that time. Church records show Fort Collins as the birthplace of four of the Street children; three others were born in a log cabin near Fort Collins, while the youngest two were born in Greeley. Two years later the Streets moved to Utah.⁹⁰

⁸⁸John Lester Herrick, personal journal, transcribed by his grandson, John Lyman Herrick in 1991. Typescript in possession of Twila Bird, Lakewood, CO.

⁸⁹Herrick journal, entry for September 2-3, 1917.

⁹⁰Transcript of Conference Record, 1907-1930, Denver Conference, Western States Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Microfilm # 0001836 in the L.D.S. Family History Center, Salt Lake City, UT.

The immigration of new converts to Utah, encouraged by church leaders in the late 1840s, continued during the early decades of the twentieth century. New members frequently desired to relocate to areas inhabited by those who shared their beliefs. For this reason, despite vigorous proselytizing efforts, many branches of the church grew slowly in areas outside of the Mormon colonies. Fort Collins would be no exception to this trend. Church records show that during the 1920s thirty-nine adults (aged seventeen or older) and twenty-five children entered the waters of baptism to join the L.D.S. fold in Fort Collins, yet the town lacked sufficient membership for a permanent branch of the church until 1931.⁹¹

The years 1923 and 1924 were especially busy ones for missionaries serving in Fort Collins. Twenty-two adults and twelve children accepted baptism during this time, although many moved to Utah or to predominately Mormon towns in Idaho within a year. This relatively large number of convert baptisms may have resulted from the enthusiastic efforts of two Mormon elders, Edward G. Matheson and Raymond B. Holbrook, listed in church records as the men who performed most of these ordinances.

Factors other than the desire to “gather to Zion” with the Saints helped to decimate the number of church members in Fort Collins. Some converts drifted away from church activity; others died. Seventeen-year old twins Mary and Laura

⁹¹ Transcript of Conference Record, 1907-1930, Microfilm # 0001836; Denver, Colorado District, Western States Mission, 1908-1942 Membership Records, Microfilm # 0001896; L.D.S. Family History Center, Salt Lake City, UT.

Wood joined the Fort Collins Branch through baptism on 15 Feb 1925. Tragically, Laura Wood fell ill and died two months later of “influenza-pneumonia.”⁹²

Mormon leaders organized a new branch of the church in a given town when membership increased sufficiently to sustain it. If most of the branch members were new converts who lacked knowledge of L.D.S. practices or experience in Mormon service assignments, the church unit might fail to thrive. Occasionally the number of people actively participating in these fledgling congregations decreased to the point that the mission president disbanded the branch. This may have occurred in Fort Collins in the 1920s. The designation “Fort Collins Branch” appeared on the membership records of several new converts during that decade. Also, between 3 October 1924 and 1 February 1929 the “Church Services” section of the Fort Collins newspaper contained listings for both L.D.S. and Reorganized L.D.S. church services under the headings, “Latter Day Saints.” The L.D.S. members met on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. in the Little Colonial Hall, located on the upper floor of the building housing the newspaper office at the southeast corner of Mountain and Remington Streets.⁹³

Less than two years after his baptism in Fort Collins on 22 July 1923, George H. Waibel served as the superintendent of the city’s L.D.S. Sunday School

⁹²Transcript of Conference Record, 1907-1930: Baptisms and Confirmations, 1925; Deaths, 1925. Obituary in *Fort Collins Express-Courier*, 26 April 1925, p. 1.

⁹³“Churches,” *Fort Collins Express-Courier*, 7 March 1927, p. 10; Advertisement for a Saturday night dance, *Fort Collins Express-Courier*, 1 February 1929, p. 5.

and later as “presiding elder” of the congregation.⁹⁴ The group included enough female members in 1925 to organize a Relief Society, which met on alternating Thursday afternoons in the homes of Sarah Rote (baptized 17 February 1924), Minnie Mae Grinstead (baptized 15 February 1925), and Blanche Jacobsen (baptized 10 December 1924 and listed as the Relief Society president).⁹⁵ Despite these efforts at church organization in the town, the congregation disbanded by the end of 1929. Not until 1931 would an attempt to create a Fort Collins branch achieve lasting success.

Of the individuals whose names appear on the branch record for 1940, three remain in Fort Collins. One of them, Rosella Bauer Harris, shared early memories of the Fort Collins L.D.S. community.⁹⁶ Born in 1921, Rosella recalled that she was five years old when two Mormon missionaries knocked on the door of the Bauer home in Fort Collins. After they presented their message, her father (an immigrant from Russia, raised as a German Lutheran) commented that everything the missionaries taught him “just fit together” with his understanding of the

⁹⁴“Churches,” *Fort Collins Express-Courier*, 11 January 1925, p. 10; 4 April 1926, p. 5. Waibel, his wife Seneda and adopted daughter Mary Lou emigrated to Flagstaff, Arizona, sometime during 1929. Argyle L. Taylor, a Mormon from Utah who had taken over Mr. Waibel’s position as Sunday School superintendent in Fort Collins, moved back to Utah with his wife on 23 January 1929 (Denver, Colorado District, 1908-1942 Membership Records). Evidently, few Mormon men were left in Fort Collins to conduct the L.D.S. meetings after 1929.

⁹⁵Transcript of Conference Record, Baptisms and Confirmations, 1924; Baptisms and Confirmations, 1925. “Churches,” *Fort Collins Express-Courier*, 4 October 1925, p. 10; 7 March 1926, p. 2; 4 April 1926, p. 5.

⁹⁶The other two are Rosella’s brother, Jack Clinton Bauer, and cousin Rose Bauer Pingree. Rosella Bauer Harris, interview by author, 19 April 1997, Fort Collins, tape recording.

essence of Christianity, answering questions he had puzzled over since his youth. Mrs. Bauer believed that the story of the angel Moroni giving Joseph Smith the gold engravings of the *Book of Mormon* fulfilled the prophecy of the angel mentioned in Revelation 14:6 of the Bible.

The family received weekly doctrinal instruction from the missionaries and their successors for three years. During that time, Rosella knew of no church members in town, although she heard that the missionaries were teaching other families. The Bauer family did drive to Loveland on occasion after 1927 to meet in the home of George Myron Baker, a Mormon who worked as a salesman for J. C. Penney & Co.⁹⁷ Though the Bauers did not own an automobile, Mr. Bauer operated a furniture moving business and the family rode to Loveland in one of his trucks.

This small group of Latter-day Saints took advantage of opportunities to socialize when they could, building a feeling of kinship with each other. At one memorable party at the Baker home, two young women serving as sister missionaries played a trick on the young elders (male missionaries). The sisters secretly cut a bar of soap into small cubes and dipped them in chocolate, then offered them to the elders. Everyone had a good laugh at the young men's expense. On 15 December 1929, Rosella, her parents, her older brother, and two

⁹⁷Mr. Baker evidently knew of the L.D.S. meetings in Fort Collins, since the "Church Services" notice of the *Express-Courier* listed him as a speaker for the evening service on 1 July 1928, p. 12.

cousins who lived with them officially became members of the L.D.S. Church when they were baptized by immersion in the old Fort Collins Y.M.C.A. swimming pool (where the Elks lodge now stands).⁹⁸

By 1929, the Hout family had moved to Fort Collins from Denver, where they had joined the L.D.S. church. According to the Fort Collins city directory, William L. Hout and his son Leland worked as tailors out of their home on Walnut Street.⁹⁹ By 1938 the family had moved to College Avenue and the tailor shop had expanded into a dry cleaning business. Rosella Harris recalled that during the early 1930s William Hout organized a marching band for L.D.S. youngsters and other children in town, providing them with uniforms. Rosella's older brother Alfred participated in the band, marching in a city parade.

An interview with Lily Frye Hout (Leland's wife), provided additional information on the Hout family. On 25 December 1921, William Hout, his wife Mable, and their two sons, Leland and Donald, were baptized into the Denver congregation of the L.D.S. Church.¹⁰⁰ The Houts' only daughter, Mildred, had died at the age of twelve in the 1918 influenza epidemic, and the heartbroken couple adopted a baby girl later that year, naming her Marjorie. After the Hout

⁹⁸Harris interview. Early Latter-day Saint baptisms took place in rivers, lakes, or irrigation ditches holding sufficient water for total immersion. By the twentieth century, those living outside Utah often used swimming pools for the ordinance. Fort Collins Mormons sometimes traveled to Denver for baptisms after the construction of the L.D.S. chapel at Seventh Avenue and Pearl Street in 1918. The first Fort Collins chapel with a baptismal font was built on Lynnwood Drive in 1961.

⁹⁹*Fort Collins City Directory*. Colorado Springs: R. L. Polk Directory Co., 1929.

¹⁰⁰Transcript of Conference Record, Baptisms and Confirmations, 1921.

family moved to Fort Collins in the late 1920s, Lily met Leland at a youth gathering and later worked for William Hout in his tailor shop. She recalled that the marching band organized by her employer was called the “Hout-witzers,” and that Marjorie Hout, who played the sousaphone, was the only girl allowed to participate.

Several years after her marriage to Leland Hout, Lily joined the L.D.S. Church. Unlike the Bauer family, Lily and later her five children were baptized in a font in the L.D.S. church building in Denver. Her father-in-law, William Hout, served as the Fort Collins Branch president for a time, then moved back to Denver with his wife shortly after 1938.¹⁰¹

The Fort Collins Branch of the Western States Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was officially organized on 13 December 1931. Of the forty-nine individuals listed on the membership records, eight were members of the Bauer family. George Baker, the J.C. Penney sales clerk from Loveland, accepted the calling to be the first branch president.¹⁰² At first, branch members attended Sunday meetings in each other’s homes; then, as the small branch slowly grew during the next decade, they started meeting in a rented room in the Odd Fellow’s Hall at 117 East Mountain Avenue. Mrs. Bauer sponsored

¹⁰¹Lily Frye Hout, interview by author, 29 Oct 1998, Laporte, CO, tape recording.

¹⁰²“December, 1931 Quarterly Report of the Western States Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” L.D.S. Church Archives, Salt Lake City, UT. Baker evidently accepted this responsibility at a young age; he was only 26 years old when he, his wife, and infant daughter moved to California in January 1934.

children's meetings in her home during the 1930s; these usually served her own children and a few neighborhood youngsters, who learned such handicrafts as the construction of birdcages from straws and yarn.

Before the end of the decade, tragedy would strike the Bauer household. Rosella was sixteen when her father died of a heart attack in 1937. Her mother died of cancer within six months, and a year later Rosella married Ernest Harris, the older brother of a young man she knew from school. After farming in Fort Collins for three years, Rosella and Ernest moved to Cheyenne, Wyoming, where he worked as a machinist for the railroad from 1942 until 1959.¹⁰³

The year after Rosella Harris left Fort Collins, Esther Bailey Park discovered the town's slowly growing Mormon community. Like the Bauer family, Esther's family had joined the L.D.S. Church through the efforts of two missionaries; two traveling elders had visited the Bailey farm near Indianola, Nebraska, in 1909. Invited by Esther's father to spend the night with the family, the elders taught them about Mormon beliefs. Amy Bailey, Esther's mother, was suffering from a severe upper respiratory infection, and the visitors offered to give her a blessing. They placed their hands on her head, prayed, and the symptoms disappeared. Impressed by this healing, Amy accepted a copy of the *Book of*

¹⁰³Harris interview.

Mormon from the elders, read it and became convinced that it was divinely inspired. She was baptized a short time later.¹⁰⁴

There were no branches of the church near their farm; thus for twenty-eight years the family's only contact with the Mormons came through the visits of passing missionaries. Esther and her sister were baptized after their sixteenth birthdays, and their father also accepted baptism shortly before his death in 1930. Unable to keep the farm going in the midst of the Depression and hearing of an opportunity for employment harvesting cherries, seventeen-year-old Esther and her mother joined her older sister in Fort Collins in the summer of 1937. They were followed by Esther's school sweetheart, Roscoe Park (a non-Mormon at the time), whom she married a few months later. Esther knew of no other Mormons in Fort Collins for several years, but one day in 1943 the owner of the restaurant where she worked made the comment that "those Mormons are meeting at the Hall down the street." Esther and her mother began attending L.D.S. meetings at the Odd Fellows Hall. This was their first opportunity to enjoy the fellowship of people (other than the missionaries) who shared their religious beliefs. During the next several decades Esther served in the Primary (the children's organization).¹⁰⁵

The Primary organization for the Mormon children of Fort Collins held its first official meeting on 13 June 1945, with thirteen children in attendance. They

¹⁰⁴Esther Bailey Park, telephone interview by author, 24 March 1996, Fort Collins, CO.

¹⁰⁵Park interview.

met on a weekday in the home of Ray Boyack, who served as a “counselor” or assistant to the branch president, and his wife Kate, the Primary secretary. Four of the twenty-two children listed on the roll that first year were members of the Boyack family. The poliomyelitis epidemic of 1946 forced the Fort Collins Mormons to dispense with Primary meetings that summer, and classes did not start again until 9 October. By that time, Kate Boyack was the Primary president, an office she would hold for three years.¹⁰⁶

As church membership increased during the 1940s, the members became acquainted with each other through such community-building activities as dances, picnics, and parties in addition to their regular Sunday meetings. Sterling Olsen recalled a “Green and Gold Ball” held in the Odd Fellows Hall in the late 1940s. Some of the L.D.S. college students managed to obtain decorations used on a sorority float for the College Days parade that spring, and soon had the old Hall looking very festive. The members could not decide which of the seven teenage girls in attendance should be queen of the ball, so they crowned them all.¹⁰⁷

With their growing numbers, Fort Collins L.D.S. women developed a spirit of sisterhood through sharing their feelings and experiences in discussions during their weekly Relief Society meetings, and by visiting each other in their homes. The women’s group was small at first. According to Phyllis Esplin, during the

¹⁰⁶“History of the Fort Collins Primary, 1945-1960,” in possession of R. Gale and Judy Chadwick, Fort Collins, CO.

¹⁰⁷Sterling R. Olsen, interview by author, 27 March 1997, Fort Collins, tape recording.

early 1940s they could all fit into one car to drive to the meeting at the home of one of the ladies.¹⁰⁸

In accordance with the L.D.S. Relief Society “visiting teaching” program, pairs of women were assigned as partners to visit two or three other women in their homes at least once each month. Each female member of the branch thus received a monthly visit from two “sisters” who would build a relationship with her, ask about her interests, check on her well-being, offer assistance if needed, and share a short spiritual message. The men also received assignments to go in pairs as “ward teachers” (later called “home teachers”) to visit each family in the branch and look after their needs and interests. These church programs greatly contributed to the feelings of solidarity among the Latter-day Saints of Fort Collins by fostering friendships and building a support system for each member. Since the Relief Society president and branch president gave assignments to visiting teachers and home teachers instead of simply encouraging them to choose someone to visit, many new friendships developed among members of the Fort Collins Branch.

After a slow start, by the early 1940s the building blocks of common belief, institutional structure, and emotional attachments were finally in place to promote the growth of the Fort Collins Mormon community. The small group of converts who began holding L.D.S. meetings in the 1920s shared common religious convictions and an opportunity to develop some emotional bonding, but their only

¹⁰⁸Phyllis and Lamar Esplin, interview by author, 16 April 1996, Fort Collins, tape recording.

ties to Latter-day Saint traditions and structure came through a succession of missionaries. This would change in the late 1930s, however, when employment opportunities at the local college began to draw educated Utah Mormons to Fort Collins.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SAINTS AND THE COLLEGE:

FROM BRANCH TO WARD

Until the end of the 1930s, the few Mormon men in Fort Collins supported their families through employment unrelated to the agricultural college; they worked as ranchers, draymen, store clerks, tailors, barbers, and mechanics. By 1940 this began to change as job opportunities at the college brought new L.D.S. families into Fort Collins. George Henderson found employment with the college extension office, while civil engineer Leland K. Hill and agronomist Robert Gardner worked for the Colorado experiment station. Lamar Esplin moved to Fort Collins in September 1942 to work as a professor of animal sciences. He remembered church meetings involving nine or ten other Mormon families on Sundays at the Odd Fellows Hall during his family's first few years in the area.¹⁰⁹

Utah-born Nephi A. Christensen received his doctorate at the California Institute of Technology in 1938 and accepted the position as dean of engineering at the college in Fort Collins within a few months. Answering a call to serve his country by conducting weapons research at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in

¹⁰⁹Esplin interview.

Maryland during the second world war, Christensen distinguished himself by making important contributions in the field of rocketry before returning to his duties as dean in Fort Collins.¹¹⁰ According to church records, Christensen served as the Sunday School Superintendent of the Fort Collins Branch in 1940 and his wife, Leda, gave service as a Primary teacher in 1946.

Another Latter-day Saint dean at the agricultural college was Rue Jensen, who received his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree (D.V.M.) in Fort Collins and joined the faculty as a veterinary pathologist in 1943. His scientific successes contributed to the increase in federal research grants awarded to the school. Fourteen years later Jensen became the new dean of veterinary medicine. As a member of the Faculty Council Executive Committee in 1957, he pushed for added emphasis on the liberal arts courses necessary to expand the college into a true university.¹¹¹

The 1940s saw the beginning of a period of unprecedented growth in the Mormon community of Fort Collins, especially after World War II. Much of the increase in church membership during this time can be attributed to the expansion of the college. Roy M. Green, who replaced Charles Lory as college president in

¹¹⁰Obituary of Nephi Albert Christensen, *Fort Collins Coloradoan*, 18 April 1996; Hansen, *Democracy's College*, 313-14, 351. See also Ann Hilfinger, *One Hundred Years of Engineering at Colorado State University: Fulfilling the Land Grant Mission 1889-1989* (Fort Collins: College of Engineering, Colorado State University, 1989), 38-40.

¹¹¹Hansen, *Democracy's College*, 394-95, 407. An extensive account of Jensen's contributions may be found in J. Dennis McGuire and James E. Hansen II, *Chiron's Time: A History of the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at Colorado State University* (Fort Collins: College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, 1983), 118-42.

1940, took measures to accommodate the expected flood of returning G.I.s in the fall of 1945. Enrollment, which had dipped to 701 in 1943-44, reached 1,600 in the spring of 1946 and an all-time high of 3,518 (including 2,517 veterans) the following fall.¹¹² The energetic Green pushed for salary increases to retain college faculty and hired new professors to remain abreast of school expansion. Many Latter-day Saints from neighboring Utah arrived to fill these faculty positions, as well as to pursue degrees in veterinary medicine and related fields. Since most of the L.D.S. students remained in the city only long enough to obtain their degrees, we know little about their activities compared to those of the Mormons who made a permanent home in Fort Collins; but church records indicate that students made up a sizeable portion of the congregation during the 1940s and 1950s. In the Fort Collins Branch quarterly report for 30 September 1949, the clerk wrote, "During the summer months no activities are carried on (other than the basic meeting schedule) due mainly to the depletion of our membership during the summer."¹¹³

A few L.D.S. students, like Rue Jensen, did remain in Fort Collins after receiving their degrees. Newlyweds Leslie and Barbara Ball arrived in town four days after their 1951 marriage in the Salt Lake temple. A descendent of some of the original Mormon settlers of the San Luis Valley, Les Ball served with the 147th infantry in the South Pacific during the final year of World War II. Following his

¹¹²Hansen, *Democracy's College*, 349, 353-355.

¹¹³Quoted in Twila Bird, *A Century of Saints*, 76.

tour of duty, he returned home to Red Mesa, Colorado, to work on the family farm before taking advantage of the G.I. Bill to attend college in Fort Lewis for two years. Accepting an invitation to serve a two-year mission for the church in northern California, he met a Mormon veterinarian named Max Jones in Sunnyvale. Jones, a former instructor at the veterinary school in Fort Collins, encouraged Ball to attend school there after his mission.¹¹⁴ Enthusiastically following this advice, the young missionary proposed to his sweetheart on the day he returned from California, married her three days later and brought her to Fort Collins within the week.

The couple found work and free rent with the “White’s Auto Court” motel on the southwest corner of College Avenue and Prospect Street (the southern edge of town in those days). They later moved into the quonset huts provided by the college for married student housing. After his 1956 graduation Ball worked at a veterinary clinic in Farmington, New Mexico, for three years. He brought his family back to Fort Collins when the college offered him a position as an instructor in 1959. Moving up through the ranks to a full professorship, Les Ball has made his home in Fort Collins for four decades. He is the only member of a group of eight Latter-day Saint veterinary students in his graduating class to remain in this city.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴The faculty directories for 1941-42 and 1942-43 list Max W. Jones as an assistant professor of veterinary medicine in Fort Collins during those years.

¹¹⁵Leslie Ball, notes from telephone interview by author, 29 January 1999, Fort Collins.

Men who worked for the college began to assume many of the leadership positions in the Fort Collins church. The first branch president, George Baker (the J.C. Penney salesman), was succeeded by extension agent George Henderson and then by tailor William Hout. By 1940 the branch presidency had passed to R. Welling Roskelley, a sociology professor at the college (his two counselors held jobs working for the Great Western Sugar Company and in grocery sales).¹¹⁶

Sterling Olsen moved his family to the city in March 1948, when his division of the United States Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.) relocated to Fort Collins. Both Olsen and his wife Grace were born to Mormon families in Spanish Fork, Utah. In Fort Collins, Olsen did soils research, studying radioactive phosphorus to determine fertilizer absorption of various plants. For one experiment he collaborated with Robert Kunkel of the horticulture department at the college. The two men also worked closely together at church, when Kunkel accepted the calling of branch president and then bishop, and Olsen served as his counselor.

Tyler Woolley and Theodore Thatcher joined others moving from Utah to Fort Collins in 1948 when both applied for a position as a zoology professor. Thatcher got the job, but Woolley found work also, as a professor of biology, specializing in entomology. Dr. Woolley taught at the university for thirty-nine years before his retirement. During that time he also served in many church

¹¹⁶Esplin interview.

callings, including those of seminary teacher, bishop, stake president, and regional representative. During his first few years in Fort Collins, Woolley joined other L.D.S. men at the Odd Fellows Hall early on Sunday mornings to empty ash trays, clear away beer bottles, and set up chairs for their worship services. He recalled that some church dances and socials were held in the basement of Old Main on campus.¹¹⁷

The attractions of employment and higher education drew increasing numbers of Latter-day Saints to Fort Collins during the next three decades. As the city's largest employer, the university contributed significantly to local population growth. The expanding L.D.S. church membership in Fort Collins reflected a general demographic trend, as thousands of educated professionals chose to make their homes in the "Choice City" during the latter part of the twentieth century.

The influx of Latter-day Saint adults accompanying the expansion of the college would not be the only factor influencing church growth after World War II. Like many young adults of their generation, Mormon parents contributed to the baby boom. Sterling Olsen provided a photograph showing ten L.D.S. women, a group comprising a majority of the women in the branch, standing in front of the Odd Fellows Hall in the spring of 1950. Each woman held a baby born during the past year in her arms.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷Tyler A. Woolley, interview by author, 23 April 1996, Fort Collins, tape recording.

¹¹⁸Olsen interview. One of those babies, Spencer Woolley, has called Fort Collins home throughout his life, and recently served as bishop of one of the single student wards.

By 1947, the number of Mormons in Fort Collins had increased sufficiently for the branch to plan fund-raising activities to construct a meetinghouse. The General Authorities of the church approve and direct the construction of all church buildings throughout the world, so the branch leaders submitted their plan for a new building to Salt Lake City for approval. Although general church funds have paid all the costs of building new chapels since 1982, before that date local members provided one half of the expenses (in cash and/or labor) and the general funds of the church paid the other half. Representatives from church headquarters bought a vacant lot at the corner of Peterson and Locust Streets in September 1948. One year later, contractor A.W. Burt began construction on the building.¹¹⁹

Branch members assisted with the construction in the evenings and on Saturdays; Sterling Olsen recalled working on framing, roofing, and bricklaying. Olsen also drove to Salt Lake City to meet with LeGrand Richards, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, to request permission from the central church leadership to build a partial basement for storage purposes. In September 1951 the Mormons began holding meetings in their new chapel. The cost of construction, furnishings, and landscaping totaled \$53,173. Church policy dictated that new church buildings were not dedicated until all construction debts had been paid, and so the Fort Collins members held the dedication ceremony for the Peterson Street

¹¹⁹“Latter Day Saints Organized First Independent Ward, 1951,” *Coloradoan*, 29 May 1964, p. 7.

chapel on 28 March 1954. Apostle Marion G. Romney traveled from Salt Lake City to speak at the service and offer the dedicatory prayer.

In addition to donating funds and labor for their new chapel, the Latter-day Saints of Fort Collins also supported the construction of a larger meetinghouse, called a “stake center,” in Denver. The Denver District of the L.D.S. Church, formed on 30 October 1938, encompassed branches in Denver, Englewood, Barnum, Pueblo, Fort Collins, Cheyenne, and Laramie. On 30 June 1940 the Denver District became the Denver Stake.¹²⁰ As a part of the Denver Stake, the Fort Collins Branch members assisted in fund-raising for, and labor on, the new stake center. Sterling Olsen remembered driving to Denver on Saturdays to help with the construction; as one of his assigned tasks he cleaned the excess mortar from the brick walls after the masons assembled them.

To supplement the usual bake-sale type of fund-raisers put on by the women, the L.D.S. men found an opportunity to do weekend chores for George Watson, a non-member, on his ranch near the Wyoming border. Impressed by their hard work and dedication, Watson offered to match every dollar he paid the Mormon men with a contribution of his own to the building fund.¹²¹ Members of the Denver Stake completed construction on their new stake center in the spring of

¹²⁰Wilfred W. Barber, ed., “Crestmoor Ward and Denver Stake,” dedicatory booklet for the new building at 740 Hudson Street, Denver, Colorado, 15 October 1950.

¹²¹Blanche Chadwick Martins, interview by author, 19 April 1996, Fort Collins, tape recording.

1950, and during the next decade the Mormons of Fort Collins went to Denver for baptisms, since their new chapel did not have a font.

As they prepared to move into their new building in 1951, the Latter-day Saints passed another milestone with the reorganization of the Fort Collins Branch into the Fort Collins Ward. Branch president Robert Kunkel continued his leadership role as the first bishop of the new ecclesiastical unit. In 1954 the total ward membership reached 241 souls; approximately half of this number were college students and their families.¹²² By June 1959, church growth in northern Colorado and southeastern Wyoming led to the creation of a new stake, with headquarters in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The Cheyenne Stake boundaries included wards from Fort Collins and Greeley, and ward members gave service in stake callings. In April 1962, Fort Collins Ward bishop Tyler Woolley accepted a call to serve as a counselor to Cheyenne Stake president Raymond Price.

Before fulfilling these responsibilities in the bishopric and stake presidency, Woolley spent several years teaching young adults and teenagers in the institute and seminary programs of the church educational system. Sustained by the branch membership on 13 October 1954 as an instructor for the newly organized Fort Collins L.D.S. institute of religion, Woolley taught a class on the doctrines of the church to college-age members. During the next two school years he instructed Mormon students at the Peterson chapel, covering topics in the *Book of Mormon*

¹²²From a history included in the program for the chapel dedication, 28 March 1954.

and in church history, and then saw many of the same students during his biology lectures on campus. In May 1958 Woolley agreed to teach a pilot seminary program for the L.D.S. high school students in town.¹²³ The success of this class led church leaders to establish the seminary program in Fort Collins in the fall of 1959, with Lyle Brooksby as the seminary teacher. Latter-day Saint high school students attended these religious classes for an hour each weekday morning before school. One dedicated young man, Dale Chadwick, rode his bicycle to the Peterson chapel every morning from his home five miles north of town.¹²⁴

The steadily growing membership of the Fort Collins Ward quickly outgrew the Peterson Street chapel. The original plans for the building made no allowance for classroom space; members assumed that they would add it as the need arose. Blanche Martins recalled teaching a Sunday School class of young children in the church hallway. She laughed as she described the children's faces peeking out from behind the heavy coats hanging on hooks in the hall. Sherry Smith, who moved to Fort Collins from Loveland in 1957, taught a class of eleven-year-old girls in the kitchen; since there were no chairs, the girls sat on the counter and stove. Her husband Owen Smith remembered that even the furnace room in the basement was used as a classroom.¹²⁵

¹²³Woolley interview.

¹²⁴Martins interview.

¹²⁵Owen and Sherry Smith, interview by author, 21 April 1997, Fort Collins, tape recording.

Several other longtime residents told interesting stories about the Peterson Street chapel. Willard Lindsay moved his family to Fort Collins in September 1960 after accepting a position with the agronomy department at the university. He explained that since the Peterson building had no recreational hall, church socials took place in the chapel area after the members moved the pews to one side.¹²⁶ Donal Johnson added that the uneven floor of the chapel made it necessary to replace the benches in the same spots carefully to keep them from wobbling. The building had no stage or curtain, so when the members presented a theatrical production, the actors entered and left the pulpit area through the windows.¹²⁷

Realizing that simply adding classrooms to the small chapel on Peterson Street would not solve the crowding problems in the Fort Collins Ward, church leaders began discussing the construction of a larger building. In April 1960, James Barton (who succeeded Robert Kunkel as bishop in 1956) proposed the purchase of a three-acre lot in the Fort Collins Fairview Addition for a new chapel. This proposal met with unanimous approval from the membership. Officials from church headquarters inspected the lot on South Bryan Avenue, then recommended another parcel of land in the same addition that would be less susceptible to

¹²⁶Willard and Lorna Lindsay, interview by author, 3 November 1997, Fort Collins, tape recording.

¹²⁷Donal and Ruth Johnson, interview by author, 25 February 1998, Fort Collins, tape recording. The Johnson family moved to Fort Collins after Johnson completed his Ph.D. in soil microbiology at Cornell in May 1952. They lived in the quonset huts provided by the college during their first year in town, then gratefully moved to an apartment near the Peterson building in 1953. Johnson later served as dean of agriculture at Colorado State.

flooding.¹²⁸ With the purchase of this lot on Lynnwood Drive in November 1960, fund-raising activities began again; one program to gain contributions for the building fund brought L.D.S. middleweight boxing champion Gene Fullmer to Fort Collins to address a dinner audience in April 1961.¹²⁹ Members held groundbreaking ceremonies for the new meetinghouse on 26 June 1961 and completed the first phase of construction, including the chapel and classrooms, one year later.

In addition to raising money, the Fort Collins Mormons donated their labor on this building as they had on the earlier chapel and on the Denver stake center. Sterling Olsen recalled the early morning and evening work details staffed by volunteers. One rainy day, only four men appeared: Sterling Olsen, Lamar Esplin, Forest Stonemets, and Irving Dunn. Plans called for the roof of the new chapel to be supported by four pairs of massive beams, which were lying in the alfalfa field waiting to be fastened to the concrete footings that had been poured earlier. After a mechanical device lifted each pair of beams upright to their thirty-foot height, one man would have to climb a rope attached to the top of the beams to fasten them together at the peak. After a short discussion (in which one individual asserted that he was too old to climb up there and another professed a fear of heights) Olsen found himself elected to the job. Four times he shinnied up the rope, fastened the beams (and tried not to look down!), and shinnied back

¹²⁸Esplin interview.

¹²⁹*Fort Collins Ward Historical Report*, 30 June 1961, in possession of R. Gale and Judy Chadwick, Fort Collins, Colorado.

down again, while the others held the beams in place and shouted encouragement. Olsen commented that all four men later served as bishops of Fort Collins wards.¹³⁰

Shortly after the Fort Collins membership moved into their new sanctuary in the summer of 1962, the ward members approved a decision to sell the Peterson Street chapel to the Salvation Army for \$50,000 (this reversed an earlier plan to use the Peterson building for the student institute of religion). At present this building serves as a mosque for the Islamic Center of Fort Collins.

In consideration of the needs of college students in the Fort Collins Ward, church leaders created a college Sunday School in May 1960 to foster enhanced interaction among students. On 19 July 1961 a representative from the church headquarters purchased two old houses on adjoining lots near campus on South Meldrum Street. One of these buildings soon provided classroom space for the student institute of religion, while the other housed the family of the city's first institute director, George Pace. Within a year the houses were torn down to make way for a more functional brick building, which opened for religion classes in January 1964.¹³¹

¹³⁰Olsen interview.

¹³¹George W. Pace, telephone interview by author, 26 October 1996, Provo, UT. Pace added that during the construction of the new building, institute classes were held in the Danforth non-denominational chapel, located less than a block away on the Colorado State University campus.

On 11 March 1962 the stake leaders organized a separate ward for full-time college students and their families, naming it the Fort Collins Second Ward of the Cheyenne Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Irving S. Dunn accepted the calling as bishop of the new student ward, which shared the recently completed Lynnwood Drive chapel with the first ward until the completion of construction on the institute building. The church members held dedication services for both buildings on 31 May 1964. Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, an assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve, came from Salt Lake City to offer the dedicatory prayers.¹³²

Fort Collins L.D.S. membership continued to increase steadily during the 1960s, reflecting the continued expansion of the university and the appearance of new industries such as Woodward Governor in the city. Even with the reduction in numbers following the division of the wards, church records show that membership of the Fort Collins Ward totaled 463 people in December 1963. The student ward was smaller; George Pace estimated that 125 L.D.S. students registered at the university during the 1961 fall semester.¹³³ Among the Latter-day Saints moving to the area during this decade were two future stake presidents, both drawn by employment opportunities at Colorado State University. Burns R. Sabey

¹³²“Mormon Church Dedication Services Scheduled Sunday,” *Coloradoan*, 29 May 1964, p. 7.

¹³³“Student Center Set Up for CSU By LDS Church,” *Coloradoan*, 15 September 1961, p. 10.

first arrived in Fort Collins in July 1967. On sabbatical leave from the University of Illinois, Sabey spent a year working with Donal Johnson in the agronomy department. When Johnson accepted the position of associate dean of the college of agriculture, the department head hired Sabey to fill Johnson's former teaching position. After enjoying the unusually mild winter of 1967-68 in Fort Collins, the Sabeyes readily accepted this opportunity to relocate permanently in the city.¹³⁴

Robert Taylor moved his family to Fort Collins in August 1968 when he left his position at Iowa State University to become a professor of animal science at Colorado State. A former branch president for his church unit in Iowa, Taylor's valuable experience quickly earned him invitations to serve in leadership roles in Fort Collins. After fulfilling a calling to preside over the single student branch, he later accepted the responsibilities of bishop and then stake president of the expanding L.D.S. church in the city.¹³⁵ A discussion of church growth during his years of service follows in the next chapter.

¹³⁴Burns R. and Elaine Sabey, interview by author, 8 October 1997, Fort Collins, tape recording.

¹³⁵Robert E. Taylor, notes from telephone interview by author, 16 May 1997, Fort Collins.

CHAPTER FIVE

A “STAKE OF ZION”

By December 1968, L.D.S. church growth in northern Colorado led to the creation of the Fort Collins Stake, which included wards from Fort Collins, Greeley, Loveland, and other areas formerly governed by the Cheyenne Stake. Raymond Price served as the first stake president. Further church reorganization on 24 January 1970 divided the Fort Collins Ward into two separate congregations: the Fort Collins Ward, led by Bishop J. Paul Tullis, and the Fort Collins Second Ward, headed by Bishop Burns R. Sabey. The student ward, shepherded by Bishop Lamar Esplin and formerly called the Second Ward, was renamed the University Ward. On 11 October 1970 the stake presidency created a dependent branch of the University Ward for single students, and called Robert E. Taylor to serve as the branch president.¹³⁶ The University Branch and the University Ward shared meeting space in the institute building on Meldrum Street, while the Fort Collins Ward and Second Ward shared the Lynnwood chapel.

¹³⁶All four of the local church leaders at the end of 1970 worked as professors at Colorado State University: Bishop Sabey, an agronomist, specialized in soil sciences, Bishop Tullis was an assistant professor of civil engineering, while Bishop Esplin and President Taylor taught animal science. The next year, biology professor Tyler Woolley became the Fort Collins stake president. Woolley interview.

The division of large Mormon wards (when their membership starts to climb above six hundred people) facilitates the development of a sense of community among church members. Ideally, a Latter-day Saint ward encompasses between four hundred and six hundred individuals. This provides enough adults to fill all leadership and teaching positions, and yet keeps the ward small enough for each member to serve in a calling and for the members to become well-acquainted. The Mormons of the Fort Collins Stake followed the established pattern of division; stake leaders determined the geographical boundaries of the new wards to provide a roughly equal number of members in each of the church units.

A transition period followed each ward division. Members missed their former opportunities to socialize with those assigned to attend another ward, but most willingly took on new responsibilities and developed relationships with people they had not known as well in the larger congregation. As Burns Sabey pointed out, dividing the ward “does disrupt rather dramatically those associations that you had in the ward. And yet, it also eventually results in new contacts, new friendships, new associations, and an expansion of your individual community.”¹³⁷

Many Fort Collins Latter-day Saints maintained social contacts with friends in other wards, especially the teenagers, who continued to meet as a group for seminary classes every morning before school. Bender describes an individual’s “network of community” as fundamental to one’s emotional life, and writes of a

¹³⁷Sabey interview.

sense of “we-ness” developed by community members.¹³⁸ A well-developed “network of community” fostered kinship feelings among Fort Collins Mormons. Local church leaders provided many opportunities for young members of the divided wards to socialize; stake-wide dances, youth conferences and evening discussion groups supplemented the morning seminary classes in encouraging a group identity as Latter-day Saints. These social ties became increasingly more important in the face of outside criticism of unpopular Mormon beliefs.

The social climate of civil unrest permeating the nation during the 1960s and early 1970s led many Latter-day Saints to cling tighter to church values and teachings.¹³⁹ Mormons who had followed their prophet’s admonition to store a full year’s supply of provisions during the uncertain days of the Cold War and Cuban missile crisis now set aside added time for family activities to encourage their young people not to stray from the fold.¹⁴⁰ Church leaders provided social programs for L.D.S. teenagers to counter the attractions of drug experimentation, loosened sexual restraints, and disrespect for authority.

New philosophies also threatened to draw church members away, as the proponents of zero population growth criticized traditional large Mormon families

¹³⁸Bender, 7-8.

¹³⁹For further discussion of the civil rights movement and student activism in the 1960s and 1970s, see Rhoda Lois Blumberg, *Civil Rights: The 1960s Freedom Struggle* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991); Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Charles V. Willie, ed., *Black/Brown/White Relations: Race Relations in the 1970’s* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1997).

¹⁴⁰“The family is central to Mormon way of life,” *Coloradoan*, 24 December 1976, p. 7.

and black activists protested the Mormon denial of priesthood authority to males of African descent. Since few blacks lived in the city at the time, the church position had not been a major issue for most Fort Collins Mormons in the 1960s, but the black student protest at the C.S.U. basketball game against Brigham Young University (5 February 1970) brought the problem into sharp focus.¹⁴¹ Dean of Students Burns B. Crookston (responsible for disciplining the students involved) had parted ways with the L.D.S. church and disagreed with the church position, but students questioned the impartiality of his disciplinary decisions.¹⁴²

The policy of priesthood denial troubled other Mormons in Fort Collins, but the majority supported the church leadership and trusted that God would reveal any necessary changes to their prophet when the time was right. Donna Witter Fairbank (who moved to Fort Collins in 1975 with her husband, Bill) accepted the L.D.S. policy concerning the blacks and the priesthood but felt sad that many good people did not have access to temple blessings because of their race. This feeling became even more poignant when she developed a close friendship with a black woman who lived nearby. Donna rejoiced with other Latter-day Saints when church leaders changed the priesthood policy in 1978.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹“Protesters Seek Approval For BYU Demonstration,” *Collegian*, 3 Feb. 1970, p. 1; “Halftime Protest Erupts; Seven Persons Arrested,” *Collegian*, 6 Feb. 1970, p. 1, 6-7.

¹⁴²“Students Seek Commitment From Crookston On Issues,” *Collegian*, 6 May 1970, p. 1.

¹⁴³Donna Witter Fairbank, telephone interview by author, 3 April 1999, Fort Collins; “Mormon reaction: ‘Check it out first,’” *Coloradoan*, 11 June 1978, p. A1; “Mormons ordain a black,” *Coloradoan*, 12 June 1978, p. B4.

Although the unfavorable publicity generated by these controversies may have inhibited local Latter-day Saints from discussing their beliefs with non-members, Fort Collins continued to draw Mormon families from Utah and other states. Church growth in the city continued at a steady pace, creating a need for another building. On 13 November 1970 representatives from Salt Lake City purchased a parcel of land in the Southmoor Village Addition, on what would become the corner of Stover Street and East Swallow Road. Forest Stonemets recalled the dismay of other stake leaders when he showed them the proposed site in 1969. At that time it was a huge alfalfa field, with no roads or buildings. Stonemets assured them that by the time construction on the new building was completed, many new homes would surround it.¹⁴⁴

Priesthood leaders planned the new meetinghouse as a stake center, much larger than the previous buildings, with space for two wards to share the building easily as well as offices for the stake presidency and for a local genealogical library. Twice each year the members of all the wards in the stake would meet together in the building for a conference, and the plans allowed a seating capacity of 1800 in the chapel and adjoining "cultural hall" or gymnasium for these conferences and numerous other combined stake activities.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴Forest Stonemets, interview by author, 22 April 1997, Windsor, CO, tape recording.

¹⁴⁵"Mormons set dedication," *Coloradoan*, 13 May 1977, p. 16; "Mormons: Local church building serves many purposes with unusual design," *Coloradoan*, 19 July 1980, p. B1.

The cost of the new building would total well over one million dollars, so several years of preparation and fund-raising preceded its construction. Stake members held groundbreaking ceremonies on 19 July 1975. By the 1970s, church policy regarding ward members working on church buildings had changed, and professional construction workers carried out all the work on the new stake center. No doubt this improved the quality of the construction and conformed to new insurance regulations, but as Burns Sabey commented, the local members lost a “wonderful bonding experience” found in creating their own meetinghouse.¹⁴⁶

Nevertheless, with undimmed enthusiasm the Fort Collins saints took on the challenge of raising funds for construction. In a major project involving the whole stake, church members delivered all the routes of the new northern Colorado weekly newspaper, the *Triangle Review*. Once each week for several years, dozens of family cars converged in the parking lot of the Lynnwood chapel to load bundles of newspapers. The enterprise required good planning and dedicated teamwork, and carriers suffered a few mishaps. Lorna Lindsay, delivering her quota of papers one wintry evening, slipped on the ice and hit her head. She stated, “I literally saw stars, and not just the ones in the sky.”¹⁴⁷ Fortunately, she sustained no permanent injuries. The new building took shape at a steady pace, and on 6 February 1977 members of the Fort Collins Second Ward, led by Bishop

¹⁴⁶Sabey interview.

¹⁴⁷Lindsay interview.

Owen Smith, held the first meetings in the new stake center.¹⁴⁸ Organized into two family wards, a student ward, and a student branch in 1977, within a few years the Fort Collins church added a third family ward.

The next few years brought a new controversy involving Fort Collins Latter-day Saints. In 1979, Congress granted the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (E.R.A.) a three-year extension for ratification by the states.¹⁴⁹ Concerned that interpretations of the amendment's simple wording might constitute a threat to traditional family roles, the L.D.S. church presidency encouraged members to oppose ratification. Offended by the official church position, Fort Collins resident Shirley Wallace (a lifelong Mormon), joined her friend Sonia Johnson (who was excommunicated by the church in 1979) and five other women in Illinois in 1982 to promote ratification of the E.R.A. in that state. Despite their well-publicized thirty-seven-day fast, the June 30 deadline found the amendment lacking ratification by the needed three states.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸Smith interview.

¹⁴⁹For background on the Equal Rights Amendment and other feminist issues, see Diana Wells, ed., *Getting There: The Movement Toward Gender Equality* (New York: Carroll & Graf, Publishers, 1994); Myra Marx Ferree and Beth B. Hess, *Controversy and Coalition: The New Feminist Movement* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985), 127-30; and Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the E.R.A.* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986).

¹⁵⁰"Fort Collins woman, 6 others fast for ERA," *Coloradoan*, 19 May 1982, p. A3; "Ready to die – Fort Collins woman says ERA worth dying for," *Coloradoan*, 26 May 1982, pp. A1, A11; "Fort Collins woman resumes ERA vigil," *Coloradoan*, 11 June 1982, p. B3; "The Best of '82: Woman fasts for 37 days in support of failed ERA," *Coloradoan*, 1 January 1983, p. A6.

Two months later, Shirley Wallace's nineteen-year-old daughter chose to make a public statement against the "patriarchal doctrines" of the L.D.S. church which (she believed) helped defeat the E.R.A. On 5 September 1982, accompanied by a local newspaper reporter, Ann Wallace stood in a Sunday testimony meeting of the Fort Collins Third Ward and read a prepared statement requesting her excommunication from the church. Shocked and saddened by her decision to leave, many female members of the congregation suggested that Wallace's announcement belonged in a secular public forum rather than in a spiritual church meeting. However, those who spoke with her after the meeting were "kind and concerned" about her welfare.¹⁵¹

Interestingly, the Third Ward bishop and his wife (Albert and Laurel Madsen) favored the E.R.A. Bishop Madsen was out of town on the Sunday chosen by Ann Wallace to make her statement in church, but Laurel Madsen was present at the meeting and disapproved of Wallace's tactics. Although the Madsens personally agreed with the amendment, they felt it was more important to support the L.D.S. leadership at that time than to promote the E.R.A. Laurel Madsen (who served as the Third Ward Relief Society president for four years in the late 1980s) knew of no other Mormon women in Fort Collins who supported the amendment. Madsen considers herself a feminist but advocates allegiance to church doctrines. She makes a point of including quotations from prominent

¹⁵¹Terri Cotten, "She's leaving her church," *Coloradoan*, 6 September 1982, p. A1; "Mormon women dispute Ann Wallace's claims," *Coloradoan*, 11 September 1982.

L.D.S. women as well as male leaders in the lessons she teaches at church.¹⁵²

Although a few other Fort Collins Latter-day Saints may have favored the E.R.A., none were as vocal as the Wallaces, and the ripples from this controversy gradually subsided. It appears that the issue served to strengthen Mormon solidarity in the city, as many church members who supported equal rights for women (but not the E.R.A.) spoke in defense of the L.D.S. position.¹⁵³

Attracted by the expansion of manufacturing plants such as Hewlett-Packard in Loveland and Fort Collins as well as by opportunities for higher education at Colorado State University, new Mormon families continued moving to the area. The wards divided once again in 1984, adding the Riverside Ward.¹⁵⁴ Then, at a memorable stake conference held at the university's Moby Gymnasium in April 1985, Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles divided the Fort Collins Stake into two units: the Fort Collins Stake, including the six wards in Fort Collins, and the Greeley Stake, governing the wards in Greeley, Loveland, Berthoud, and Sterling. Robert Taylor, called as president of the new Fort Collins Stake, succeeded former stake president Burns Sabey, who had accepted a calling as a regional representative.

¹⁵²Laurel Madsen, notes from telephone interview by author, 10 May 1999, Fort Collins.

¹⁵³Cotten, "Mormon women dispute Ann Wallace's claims."

¹⁵⁴"Special meeting forms new ward in Fort Collins," *Coloradoan*, 4 August 1984, p. B4.

At the outset of the 1990s, three wards crowded into the Lynnwood building and two into the stake center. The construction of a new meetinghouse on west Harmony Road relieved this overcrowding in 1993.¹⁵⁵ Another ward division created the Harmony Ward, and once again, two wards shared the use of each church building. The stake presidency divided the wards again in 1994, reserving the University Ward for single students and renaming it the Spring Creek Ward. Married students were reassigned to family wards based on where they lived, and portions of the Riverside and Third Wards combined to create the new Parkwood Ward. Two family wards then shared each large church building, and the Spring Creek Ward met in the institute building on Meldrum Street. In the most recent ward divisions of 1998, stake leaders created a second single student ward, named the Prospect Ward, and divided the former Third Ward to create the Miramont and Timberline Wards.

The sense of community experienced by the Mormons of Fort Collins is not tied to a particular building in town. Although a given individual will attend most of his or her Sunday meetings and ward activities in one building, local Latter-day Saints feel a sense of ownership and belonging toward all four church buildings in the city. Ward structure and organization may foster development of emotional ties toward members of one's own ward, but long-time Mormon residents of Fort Collins maintain contact with members in each of the other ward groups. A strong

¹⁵⁵“LDS, new site together on Harmony,” *Coloradoan*, 22 January 1994, p. B1.

sense of membership in a world-wide faith supercedes local congregation boundaries. Members from various parts of the city participate together in stake conferences and leadership meetings, joint youth activities and social gatherings. One group of “old timers” who call themselves the “Empty Nesters” meet on a monthly basis to renew friendships and discuss common interests.

Identity as Mormons as a whole transcends identity as members of a given stake or ward. A high point of this religious group identity in Fort Collins came on 19 June 1988, when church president Ezra Taft Benson traveled from Salt Lake City to address a regional conference of Latter-day Saints from the Fort Collins, Greeley, Cheyenne, and Laramie stakes. Some members journeyed from as far away as northern Wyoming and Sterling, Colorado to attend the conference, the first such gathering in Fort Collins to host a president of the church. This meeting, like the 1985 stake conference, convened in Moby Gymnasium, which barely accommodated the crowd.¹⁵⁶

Rosella Harris recalled that although she arrived early, she had to climb to the top of the bleachers to find a seat; as she looked around, she thought it would be difficult for the latecomers to fit themselves into the packed arena. When President Benson walked into the auditorium, the crowd hushed and stood in reverent silence until he took his seat. Harris was thrilled by a feeling of solidarity with this multitude, united by a common belief and gathered on this day to hear

¹⁵⁶“Mormons hear Ezra Benson,” *Coloradoan*, 20 June 1988, p. C1.

the man they revered as a prophet.¹⁵⁷ In his talk, President Benson exhorted the members to search the scriptures, particularly the *Book of Mormon*, with renewed dedication, applying scriptural lessons to their lives and serving others so as to return to God's presence.

The Latter-day Saints had already taken this admonition to heart. The previous autumn, stake public affairs director John Clarke had suggested that the members of the Fort Collins Stake sponsor a community-wide fast, encouraging other church congregations to join them in abstaining from two meals and then donating the money saved to benefit the homeless of Fort Collins. Donna Fairbank, L.D.S. representative to the Fort Collins Interfaith Council, took the idea to the leaders of other denominations. The city Mormons, already accustomed to fasting once each month and donating funds for the church welfare program, willingly supported the community fast, held on 27 May 1988. The following September, stake president Robert Taylor presented a check for \$6,300 to Sister Mary Alice Murphy, director of Catholic Community Services/Northern, to assist in their construction of a homeless shelter.¹⁵⁸

In addition to helping non-Mormons in their hometown, the Fort Collins Latter-day Saints spent a great deal of time serving each other. Elaine Sabey

¹⁵⁷Harris interview.

¹⁵⁸Taylor interview; "Church members to fast in benefit for homeless," *Coloradoan*, 17 May 1988, p. B2; "Fast for the Homeless' raises \$6,300 for shelter," *Coloradoan*, 5 September 1988, p. B2.

credited the home teaching and visiting teaching programs with fostering feelings of kinship among those within the church, citing the many caring relationships developed by visiting teaching partners with each other and with the sisters they visited. Her husband added, “I think the Lord’s program in a ward is designed to do just that; to develop a sense of belonging, a sense of friendship and fellowship, a sense of concern.”¹⁵⁹

Although the Fort Collins Stake now includes nine wards, the growth of the city L.D.S. church membership from forty-nine people in 1931 to over three thousand in 1999 has not diminished the sense of community among Fort Collins Mormons. Fueled by their common beliefs, unity of purpose, a strong, centralized church organization and deep emotional ties, the solidarity of these Latter-day Saints stands fast amid the social fragmentation fostered by the urbanization of modern society.

¹⁵⁹Sabey interview.

EPILOGUE

BEYOND THE MEETINGHOUSE:

REACHING OUT TO THE LARGER COMMUNITY

Although the amount of time spent serving their church and being with their families may tend to keep them too busy for much involvement in civic activities, Latter-day Saints feel a sense of responsibility to reach out to others who are not members of their faith. In his recent article entitled “A Caring Community: Goodness in Action,” one L.D.S. leader stated:

People are by nature social beings whose lives and feelings are eternally connected and intertwined with those of others. Almost invariably, individuals reach their full potential only in association and in community with others. . . . Volunteerism—freely-given service to others—is a powerful aid in our struggle to forge and maintain strong communities.¹⁶⁰

Since the early days of the Fort Collins Mormon community, when Sister Bauer invited neighborhood children to the activities she devised for her own offspring and Brother Hout involved Fort Collins youngsters in his Depression-era marching band, L.D.S. city residents have found ways serve their neighbors. Often this desire to reach out was manifested by small, individual acts of

¹⁶⁰Alexander B. Morrison, “A Caring Community: Goodness in Action,” *The Ensign of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* 29 (February 1999): 13, 15.

friendship such as taking a plate of cookies to a new neighbor or shoveling a snowy sidewalk. Former First Ward bishop, seminary teacher, and stake high council member Forest Stonemets, an avid gardener in his retirement years, kept his neighbors well-supplied with fresh vegetables every summer. Relief Society president Pam Denison spent many hours transporting a cancer patient to Denver for treatments.

In addition to individual acts of kindness, Fort Collins Mormons have participated in coordinated efforts to assist those around them. Mission rules direct Latter-day Saint missionaries to spend a minimum of four hours per week in service activities unrelated to proselytizing.¹⁶¹ Thus, young elders and sisters serving in Fort Collins have visited nursing home residents, worked one-on-one with children in local elementary schools, and even helped a non-member clean out his barn. During the visit of Pope John Paul II to Denver, scores of Mormon missionaries assisted with crowd control and clean-up.

Church members formed the L.D.S. Blood Club at Poudre Valley Memorial Hospital in the 1960s and reminded each other to donate blood regularly. The Citywide Fast, first proposed by John Clarke in 1987 to aid Catholic Community Services/Northern in the construction of a homeless shelter, has been continued by the Fort Collins Interfaith Council as an ongoing fund-raiser. As current chairman of the Interfaith food committee, L.D.S. member Donna Fairbank facilitates the

¹⁶¹Sabey interview.

Citywide Fast as well as the Humanitarian Canning Project, for which the L.D.S. cannery in Denver provides food, cans, and use of the facility. The cannery then donates all of the food canned by Fort Collins volunteers to the Larimer County Food Distribution Center for distribution to the needy.¹⁶²

In addition to involvement in the Citywide Fast and humanitarian canning, local Latter-day Saints donate their time to service projects initiated by non-L.D.S. Fort Collins residents. During one such project, city Mormons and members of the Foothills Unitarian Church constructed bike racks to promote bicycling as an alternative form of transportation.¹⁶³ Following the Fort Collins flood, a group of L.D.S. teenagers and their leaders joined other local volunteers in the clean-up effort.¹⁶⁴

The list of individual Latter-day Saints who desired to serve the people of Fort Collins as elected officials includes school board presidents Joe Daly and Weston Morrill, and city councilman and county commissioner John Clarke. Morrill arrived in Fort Collins with his family during 1966, when he accepted a position as associate professor of psychology at Colorado State University. He and his wife soon became involved in the Parent Teacher Organization at Bennett Elementary School. Elected to the Poudre School District Board of Education in

¹⁶²Fairbank interview.

¹⁶³“Churches unite to further alternative transportation,” *Fort Collins Coloradoan*, 19 June 1994, p. B2.

¹⁶⁴“Pitching in to clean up,” *Coloradoan*, 10 August 1997, p. A1.

1971, Morrill served as president from May 1977 until July 1978, when he moved to Salt Lake City to fill a position as professor of educational psychology and director of the counseling center at the University of Utah.¹⁶⁵

John Clarke joined the L.D.S. church in Denver at the end of 1969 and relocated to Fort Collins in August 1970. He failed in his first bid to serve on the city council in 1979, but the council appointed him in 1981 to finish the term of a council member who moved out of town. Clarke won the next election and served as a city councilman until 1986, when he resigned to devote more time to his family and to his photography studio. Returning to politics in 1992, Clarke moved with his family to a new home north of Prospect Street (the district boundary) to run for a vacant seat on the Larimer County Board of Commissioners. He won the 1994 election, and during his four-year term as county commissioner he pushed to finance new county facilities, upgrade county technology, acquire open space, and develop the new county master plan (Partnership Land Use System). Clarke also wrote an informational handbook (“Code of the West”) for city residents who planned to move into the county’s rural areas. Despite his popularity as a county commissioner, Clarke chose not to run for a second term in order to devote more time to the family photography business.¹⁶⁶ Clarke’s civic career exemplifies the dilemma faced by Latter-day Saints who desire to participate actively in society

¹⁶⁵“Morrill knows education well,” *Coloradoan*, 7 May 1978, p. A8.

¹⁶⁶John Clarke, interview by author, 8 October 1997, Fort Collins, tape recording; “Clarke refocusing on his career,” *Coloradoan*, 11 January 1999, pp. A1-A2.

but do not want to take important time from their families. As they seek to balance career, family, church and civic responsibilities, most Latter-day Saints remain mindful of the admonition of past church president David O. McKay, who often repeated the quote, “No success in life can compensate for failure in the home.”¹⁶⁷

In keeping with the Mormon emphasis on the family, one of the most significant Latter-day Saint contributions to the residents of Fort Collins is the genealogical library housed in the L.D.S. stake center at 600 E. Swallow Road. Initially created to help Mormons discover the names and vital statistics of their ancestors, the facility soon opened to the general public for genealogical research. Following a recent expansion, it began offering patrons computerized ancestral files as well as books and microfilm readers. A researcher may request microfilms from the huge vault of records stored in Salt Lake City and search them at the Fort Collins facility, which is now called the Family History Center. Staffed by L.D.S. volunteers, the center is open three to four days each week.¹⁶⁸

For Latter-day Saints, the purpose of genealogy work extends beyond the mere desire to learn more about one’s ancestors. The mission of the genealogy library supplements that of the temple, where faithful Saints are baptized by proxy for their deceased relatives. In addition, Latter-day Saints believe that the temple

¹⁶⁷McKay first used this thought in the April, 1935 general conference of the church. He quoted J.E. McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* (Washington, D.C.: Southern Cooperative League, 1924), 42.

¹⁶⁸“Library has valuable research tools,” *Coloradoan*, 2 October 1983, pp. D1, D3.

sealing ordinances provide a way for husbands and wives to be united with their children for eternity. George Rhodes, current president of the Fort Collins Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, pointed out that the stake and ward organizations of the church exist to help individuals form eternal families. “Our single greatest organizational need,” according to Rhodes, “is a direct manifestation of our love and care for one another.” He explained that the bishop and other leaders of a ward experience a true spirit of unity when they work together for this goal, and that “when three to five hundred people all do that for one another,” they become “a people of one mind and one heart.”¹⁶⁹ This last statement refers to an oft-quoted passage of Latter-day Saint scripture:

And the Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.¹⁷⁰

By their actions during the past seventy years, the Fort Collins Latter-day Saints show a desire to reach toward this communal ideal. They exemplify the behavior observed by Dean L. May in his study of a small Mormon community in Utah. Concerning these Utah townspeople, May comments that “their intense interaction with others in a plethora of church-sponsored voluntary activities created a rich social life that helped form enduring bonds.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹George Rhodes, notes from personal interview by author, 8 October 1997, Fort Collins.

¹⁷⁰Moses 7:18, *Pearl of Great Price*.

¹⁷¹Dean L. May, *Three Frontiers: Family, Land, and Society in the American West, 1850-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 281.

The Fort Collins Mormons also created a rich social life. During the first two decades of the Fort Collins branch, the members spent a great deal of time with each other—not just attending meetings but working together each week to prepare the Odd Fellow’s Hall for services, socializing at church parties and dances, and participating in fundraising to build a meetinghouse of their own. The influx of well-established, college-educated church members during the 1950s and 1960s provided strong leadership for the Fort Collins Ward. Building on this foundation, the Mormons created a social network strong enough to weather the challenges of the 1970s and 1980s, when black activists and feminists criticized church beliefs. Between 1970 and 1998, the number of wards in the city grew from two to nine, but L.D.S. stake activities fostered continued city-wide relationships and group identity among local Mormons.

The history of the Fort Collins Latter-day Saints validates Bender’s idea of community as a “fundamental and enduring form of social interaction.”¹⁷² From the earliest years of the Fort Collins Branch, when the few Mormon families met in each other’s homes for worship and social activities, to the creation of a Fort Collins Stake consisting of thousands of faithful members, the Latter-day Saint community has endured in this city.

¹⁷²Bender, 43.

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APPENDIX ONE:

Fort Collins L.D.S. Chronology

- 1883 Upper Boxelder School built, possibly by Mormons enroute to Utah.
- 1898 March 9. Journal entry of Elder Frederick Crosthwait Graham, serving a mission in Colorado, recorded a cottage meeting held in Fort Collins.
- 1922 Nov. 20. Fort Collins resident Seneda Waibel baptized by Harold B. Lee.
- 1923 Ten Fort Collins residents baptized by E. Matheson & R. Holbrook.
- 1924 Twenty-three Fort Collins residents baptized; *Fort Collins Express-Courier* listed L.D.S. Sunday services at the Little Colonial Hall.
- 1929 Feb.1. Last listing of L.D.S. services in the *Express-Courier*; branch seems to have disbanded. Hout family moved to Fort Collins from Denver.
Dec. 15. Six members of the Bauer family baptized in YMCA pool.
- 1931 Dec. 13. Fort Collins Branch of the Western States Mission organized. George M. Baker called as the first branch president; 49 members.
- 1937 Esther and Amy Bailey moved to Fort Collins.
- 1938 Nephi Christensen hired as dean of engineering at the college.
- 1940 June 30. Denver Stake organized as the 132nd stake of the Church.
July 28. Fort Collins Branch made a dependent branch of the Denver First Ward. Branch members met in the Odd Fellows Hall on W. Mountain Av.
- 1942 Lamar and Phyllis Esplin moved to Fort Collins.
- 1943 Rue Jensen joined college faculty as a veterinary pathologist.
- 1945 June 13. First meeting of Primary children's organization; 13 children.
- 1948 Arrival of Sterling Olsen, Tyler Woolley, and Ted Thatcher and their families in Fort Collins.

- 1949 Construction begun on Peterson St. meetinghouse.
- 1951 Fort Collins Ward organized; branch president Robert Kunkel first bishop. Sept. Construction mostly completed, building occupied. Cost: \$53,173. Leslie and Barbara Ball arrived in Fort Collins.
- 1952 Donal and Ruth Johnson arrived in Fort Collins.
- 1954 Mar. 28. Peterson St. building dedication. Ward membership: 241. Tyler Woolley named instructor for new LDS institute of religion.
- 1956 Feb. 26. James R. Barton succeeded Robert Kunkel as bishop.
- 1959 June 21. Cheyenne Stake created from northern part of Denver Stake. October. First official early-morning seminary classes (Peterson chapel).
- 1961 June 4. Tyler A. Woolley succeeded James R. Barton as bishop. June 26. Groundbreaking for new chapel at 1400 Lynnwood Drive. July 19. Two lots on Meldrum St. purchased for institute of religion.
- 1962 Mar. 11. Fort Collins Second Ward, consisting of full-time students, organized, with Irving S. Dunn as bishop. June 3. Construction completed; first meeting held at Lynnwood chapel. Forest L. Stonemets sustained as new bishop of Fort Collins Ward. Sept. 23. Decision made to sell the Peterson building for \$50,000.
- 1964 Jan. Institute building completed and open for classes. May 31. Lynnwood chapel and institute building dedicated. Ward membership: 463. Total cost of building: \$ 133,757.70.
- 1965-66 Cultural hall / gymnasium added to the Lynnwood chapel.
- 1966 April 30. First baptism held in the Lynnwood building.
- 1968 Sterling R. Olsen succeeded Forest L. Stonemets as bishop. December 1. Fort Collins Stake organized by LeGrand Richards, with wards in Fort Collins, Loveland, and Greeley. President: Raymond Price.
- 1970 James Paul Tullis succeeded Sterling R. Olsen as bishop. Fort Collins Ward divided into two wards, with Burns R. Sabey as bishop of the Second Ward. The former Second Ward was renamed the University Ward, with Lamar Esplin as bishop. October. Dependent branch of the University Ward created for single students, with Robert Taylor as branch president. Nov. 13. Land purchased for a stake center on East Swallow Road.

- 1971 Tyler Woolley succeeded Raymond Price as stake president.
- 1974 June 22. James Hurst sustained as bishop of First Ward.
- 1976 August. Robert Taylor sustained as bishop of First Ward.
- 1977 Feb. 6. First meetings held in new stake center at 600 E. Swallow Rd.
- 1982 Sept. 5. Ann Wallace requested excommunication.
- 1984 Ward division; Riverside Ward created.
- 1985 Apr. 28. Fort Collins Stake divided; Greeley Stake created.
- 1988 May 27. Community fast to benefit the homeless of Fort Collins.
June 19. Regional conference addressed by President Ezra Taft Benson.
- 1993 New chapel at 1320 W. Harmony Road completed; Harmony Ward created.
- 1994 Ward division; University Ward renamed Spring Creek Ward for single students (married students assigned to family wards), Parkwood Ward created.
- 1998 Ward division; Prospect, Miramont and Timberline Wards created.

APPENDIX TWO:

Early L.D.S. Converts in the Fort Collins Area

Name:	Birthdate:	Baptism:	Baptized by:	Parents:
Charles Street	9 Apr 1871 (Missouri)	24 Aug 1919	J. D. Dye	John W. Street Annie Mathews
Fannie B. Street	4 Nov 1881 (Nebraska)	24 Aug 1919	J. D. Dye	Joseph S. Mary E. Winders
Adula May Street	5 Jan 1902 Sugar City	24 Aug 1919	James D. Dye	Charles Street Fannie Brown
Albert Grant Street	16 Oct 1903 Fort Collins	24 Aug 1919	James D. Dye	Charles Street Fannie Brown
Ethel Onie Street	4 Aug 1905 Fort Collins	24 Aug 1919	H. J. Hansen	Charles Street Fannie Brown
Clarence W. Street	22 Jul 1907 Fort Collins	24 Aug 1919	H. J. Hansen	Charles Street Fannie Brown
Raymond A. Street	23 Nov 1908 Log Cabin	24 Aug 1919	H. J. Hansen	Charles Street Fannie Brown
Edith M. Street	21 Aug 1910 Log Cabin	24 Aug 1919	H. J. Hansen	Charles Street Fannie Brown
Everett L. Street	25 Sep 1911 Log Cabin	23 Nov 1919	R. R. Widdison	Charles Street Fannie Brown
William Luther Hout	19 Sep 1881 Missouri	25 Dec 1921 Den. Branch	Vernal Bergeson	
Mable Rose Fireovid Hout	28 Apr 1881 Kansas	25 Dec 1921 Den. Branch	“	
Leland Luther Hout	8 Feb 1908	25 Dec 1921 Den. Branch	“	William L. Hout Mable R. Firovid

Name:	Birthdate:	Baptism:	Baptized by:	Parents:
Donald F. Hout	16 Jun 1913	25 Dec 1921 Den. Branch	Vernal Bergeson	William L. Hout Mable R. Fireoved
Seneda Mozelia Waibel	8 Apr 1896 Illinois	20 Nov 1922 (address- Fort Collins)	Harold B. Lee	Mathius M. Ross Elizabeth Smith
George Henry Waibel	14 Aug 1884 Missouri	22 Jul 1923 (address - Fort Collins)	Edward G. Matheson	Louis Waibel Matilda I. Brown
Elizabeth Ann Senior	25 Nov 1870 England	19 Aug 1923 (Fort Collins)	William A. Strong	Mark Welburne Ann Husband
Arthur Wilfred Senior	10 Jan 1897 England	19 Aug 1923 (Fort Collins)	Edward G. Matheson	Cyrus L. Senior Eliz. A. Welburne
Mabel Helena Senior (wife of Arthur?)	19 Dec 1901 Illinois	19 Aug 1923 (Fort Collins)	Wm. A. Strong	Henry F. Marquard Amelia Gertz
Olive Annie Warner	25 Nov 1902 England	19 Aug 1923 (Fort Collins)	Edward G. Matheson	Cyrus L. Senior Eliz. A. Welburne
O. Bertha May Russell	13 Sep 1913 Utah	2 Sep 1923 (Fort Collins)	Edward G. Matheson	Curtis Russell Ellen Docstader
Mary Romanta Russell	5 Oct 1915 Idaho	2 Sep 1923 (Fort Collins)	Raymond B. Holbrook	Curtis Russell Ellen Docstader
Leo William Wright	15 Oct 1915 Ogden, UT	21 Oct 1923 (Fort Collins)	Raymond B. Holbrook	John Leo Wright Sarah Ida Buck
Charles Denham Parsons	24 Mar 1899 Missouri	11 Nov 1923 (Fort Collins)	R. B. Holbrook	George Parsons Carrie Wright
Carrie Pearl Parsons	2 Dec 1893 Illinois	11 Nov 1923 (Fort Collins)	Edward G. Matheson	Amon L. Farmer Bertha Clanahan
Jennie Emma Whitham	6 Oct 1910 Kansas	17 Feb 1924 (Fort Collins)	Edward G. Matheson	William Whitham Alfarata Johnson
Rebecca May Whitham	23 Feb 1909 Utah	17 Feb 1924 (Fort Collins)	Edward G. Matheson	William Whitham Alfarata Johnson
Olive Helen Schroeder	15 Oct 1914 Illinois	17 Feb 1924 (Fort Collins)	Edward G. Matheson	William Schroeder Helen Gunther

Name:	Birthdate:	Baptism:	Baptized by:	Parents:
Helen Schroeder	4 Nov 1892 Illinois	17 Feb 1924 (Fort Collins)	Raymond B. Holbrook	Martin Gunther Anna Cecilia ____
William Schroeder	9 Nov 1892 Chicago, IL	17 Feb 1924 (Fort Collins)	R. B. Holbrook	Otto Schroeder Caroline Wight
Sarah Lane Rote	Missouri	17 Feb 1924 Den. Branch	E. G. Matheson	
Hazel May Rote		17 Feb 1924 Den. Branch	E. G. Matheson	____ Rote Sarah Lane
William Edwin Whitham	2 Aug 1878 Maine	30 Mar 1924 (Fort Collins)	Edward G. Matheson	Samuel Whitham Sarah Bamon
Alfarata Ethel Whitham	13 Mar 1881 Kansas	30 Mar 1924 (Fort Collins)	Edward G. Matheson	Joseph Johnson Rebecca Durnall
Alfarata Bernice Whitham	17 Feb 1913 Kansas	30 Mar 1924 (Fort Collins)	Edward G. Matheson	William Whitham Alfarata Johnson
Andrew Jackson Gwartney	1 Dec 1894 Oklahoma	30 Mar 1924 (Fort Collins)	Raymond B. Holbrook	George Gwartney ____ Cork
Hazel Ellen Gwartney	14 Feb 1897 N. Dakota	30 Mar 1924 (Fort Collins)	Raymond B. Holbrook	Herbert Thompson Francis L. Wallace
Virgil Kenneth Rote	12 Sep 1912 Missouri	8 Jun 1924 (Fort Collins)	R. Holbrook	John Rote Sarah Lane
Beulah Oliver	24 Dec 1877 Missouri	8 Jun 1924 (Fort Collins)	Raymond B. Holbrook	Thomas Rogers America Toomis
Opal Oliver	17 Sep 1910 New Mexico	8 Jun 1924 (Fort Collins)	Raymond B. Holbrook	Martin Oliver Beulah Rogers
Verda Hazel Oliver	3 Jul 1913 Arkansas	8 Jun 1924 (Fort Collins)	Raymond B. Holbrook	Martin Oliver Beulah Rogers
William Samuel Whitham	15 Apr 1907 Wyoming	8 Jun 1924 (Arvada, CO)	Raymond B. Holbrook	William Whitham Alfarata Johnson
Margaret Mary Orleans	10 Feb 1905 LaPorte	19 Aug 1924 (Fort Collins)	Edward G. Matheson	Charles A. Orleans Minnie Douthitt
Martin Oliver	22 Aug 1876 Georgia	19 Aug 1924 (Fort Collins)	Edward G. Matheson	John Oliver Louise ____

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Thelma Elaine Oliver	17 Feb 1916 Kansas	19 Aug 1924 (Fort Collins)	Edward G. Matheson	Martin Oliver Beulah Rogers
LeRoy Seevers	20 Oct 1901 Telluride CO	26 Oct 1924 (Fort Collins)	Milton Bodell	Charles E. Seevers Clarista A. Bruce
Chester F. Minson	age 19	16 Nov 1924	Wm. L. Hout	(husb. of Minnie)
Minnie Belle Minson	age 16	16 Nov 1924	Wm. L. Hout	(wife of Chester)
Blanche Inez Jacobsen	18 Nov 1885 Fort Collins	10 Dec 1924 LaPorte	Raymond B. Holbrook	Benjamin Holland Jennie Metzger
Willie Neal Williams	2 Jul 1910 Scottsbluff	15 Feb 1925 (Fort Collins)	Joseph L. Orr	Dee J. Williams Daisy Paune
Leo Albert Wickham	31 Oct 1911 Fort Collins	15 Feb 1925 (Fort Collins)	Milton Bodell	Albert O Wickham Lottie Hall
Raymond William Orleans	12 Nov 1909 La Porte	15 Feb 1925 (Fort Collins)	Raymond B. Holbrook	Charles A. Orleans Minnie Douthitt
Minnie Mae Grinstead	11 Feb 1882 Missouri	15 Feb 1925 (Fort Collins)	Raymond B. Holbrook	Wm. A. Douthitt Nellie E. Juniper
Otto Henry Jacobson	8 Jul 1906 Fort Collins	15 Feb 1925 (LaPorte)	Joseph L. Orr	Casper Jacobson Blanch J. Holland
Margaret Anna Jacobson	19 Jul 1909? Fort Collins	15 Feb 1925	Milton Bodell	Casper Jacobson Blanch J. Holland
Mary Lorena Wood	25 Nov 1907 Kansas	15 Feb 1925	Geo. H. Waibel	Geo. E. Wood Minnie Steele
Laura Elzina Wood	25 Nov 1907 Kansas	15 Feb 1925	Geo. H. Waibel	Geo. E. Wood Minnie Steele
Edward William Grinstead	5 Oct 1915 Colorado	31 May 1925 (Fort Collins)	Joseph L. Orr	James E. Grinstead Minnie Douthitt
Clarence Henry Greenwood	13 Apr 1915 Loveland	31 May 1925 (Fort Collins)	Vestus A. Mahoney	Henry Greenwood Ida Marie Sessions

Name:	Birthdate:	Baptism:	Baptized by:	Parents:
Earl Lawrence Woodard	26 Feb 1906 Berthoud	4 Jul 1926 Ft. Coll. Br.	Ruben R. Moss	John D. Woodard Lillian P.
Fannie May Gibbs Shoemaker	21 Oct 1890 Nebraska	20 Feb 1927 Ft. Coll. Br.	John F. Kendrick	Edward Gibbs Emma Shankland
Jay Clayton Shoemaker	19 Sep 1911 Nebraska	20 Feb 1927 Ft. Coll. Br.	John F. Kendrick	Henry Shoemaker Fannie May Gibbs
George Frederick Shoemaker	23 Nov 1913 Nebraska	20 Feb 1927 Ft. Coll. Br.	John F. Kendrick	Henry Shoemaker Fannie May Gibbs
Mitchell Martin Oliver	19 May 1918 Fort Collins	20 Feb 1927 Ft. Coll. Br.	Lionel J. Halverson	Martin Oliver Beulah Rogers
Thomas Darwin Rote	12 Feb 1919 Fort Collins	20 Feb 1927 Ft. Coll. Br.	Lionel J. Halverson	John Y. Rote Sarah Lane
David Allen Patton	17 Oct 1877 Kansas	29 May 1927 Ft. Coll. Br.	John F. Kendrick	Samuel J. Patton Clarissa McQuenn
Martha Leah Gist Patton	24 May 1881 Kansas	29 May 1927 Ft. Coll. Br.	John F. Kendrick	Milton M. Gist T. Anna Campbell
Milton Jackson Patton	7 Oct 1902 Kansas	29 May 1927 Ft. Coll. Br.	John F. Kendrick	David A. Patton Martha Leah Gist
Nels Johnson	18 Dec 1887 Sweden	29 May 1927 Ft. Coll. Br.	John F. Kendrick	Andrew Johnson Elna _____
Santiago Sanchez Lucero	New Mexico	28 Aug 1927 Ft. Coll. Br.	Arthur L. Taylor	
Wilebard Lucero	New Mexico	28 Aug 1927 Ft. Coll. Br.	Arthur L. Taylor	Santiago S. Lucero
Margurite Irene Cunningham	age 19	2 Dec 1928	James P. Brockbank	
Adolph George Bauer	30 Mar 1896 Russia	15 Dec 1929 Fort Collins	Clinton A. Chidester	
Lillie Belle Rutherford Bauer	21 Feb 1898 Missouri	15 Dec 1929 Fort Collins	Clinton A. Chidester	
Alfred Wallace Bauer	11 Aug 1918 Fort Collins	15 Dec 1929 Fort Collins	Clinton A. Chidester	Adolph G. Bauer Lillie.Rutherford

Name:	Birthdate:	Baptism:	Baptized by:	Parents:
Rosella Mae Bauer	13 Feb 1921 Fort Collins	15 Dec 1929 Fort Collins	Clinton A. Chidester	Adolph G. Bauer Lillie Rutherford
Rose Bauer (cousin)	20 Apr 1911 Fort Collins	15 Dec 1929 Fort Collins	Clinton A. Chidester	_____ Bauer

Sources: Transcript of Conference Record, Denver Conference, Western States Mission, 1907 - Microfilm # 0001836; Record of Baptisms and Confirmations, 1919, Western States Mission, pp. 874-75; Baptisms and Confirmations, 1925, Denver Conference, Western States Mission, pp.1214-15; Denver, Colorado District, 1908-42 Membership Records, Microfilm # 0001896.