

A HISTORY OF MORMON MISSIONARY WORK
WITH THE HOPI, NAVAHO AND ZUNI INDIANS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
Brigham Young University

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

by
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July, 1965

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PREFACE

All my life I have been fascinated by the Indian people. When I was a child my father and uncles went on trips to the nearby reservations as missionaries. When I was about ten an aunt took me to a Hopi snake dance and this experience, one of Americas most fantastic native religious rituals, was deeply imbedded in my mind. Shortly thereafter we took a small Navaho girl into our Snowflake home and kept her through eight years of schooling. After I was grown and had attended two years of college the L. D. S. Church called me to serve two and a half years in the Southwest Indian Mission. With this background and equal interest I have chosen this topic for my thesis.

Jacob Hamblin is well known as one of the heros of Mormon folklore. Several books and numerous articles have been written dealing with his life and experiences. However, he was but one of the first of many great Mormon missionaries to the Indians whose stories are almost completely untold. To reveal the work of these many forgotten missionaries is an important part of this study.

My primary aim in choosing this topic is to present the Mormon missionary movement among the Hopis, Navahos and Zunis as a unit. Nearly a full century is covered between 1855 and 1947 which is much too long for a thesis were not this primary aim kept in mind. I will endeavor, in these pages, to describe the different phases that the Church missions to these tribes went through during this period. I will describe in detail the missionary methods used and attempt to analyze objectively their

successes and failures. These evaluations will often find the different phases compared to each other, especially the later against the earlier in an attempt to gain insight into the unit as a whole.

History is made by people and despite my preoccupation with the missionary movement as a unit I will not neglect the people involved, as I have already hinted. Adequate coverage is given of the individual efforts of such great Indian missionaries as Hamblin, Thales Haskell, Ernest A. Tietjen and George and Lucy Bloomfield among so many others. Study and writing of such individual efforts is what has made my part of this thesis exciting and enjoyable and the reading of the same is more apt to bring a similar reader reaction than the gathering and relating of strictly analytical data. It is only hoped that the accounts of the work of these individuals will be understood in relation to the Indian missionary movement as a whole.

My sources dealing with the early period include many published biographies of those involved augmented by a few diaries and other primary materials. May it be understood that this use of secondary source material has been done to relate the person or persons written of to the Indian missionary movement as a whole rather than to simply rehash what has already been written. The central portion of this study has been taken largely from several unpublished diaries and from available Church records. The last third comes mostly from Church records supplemented with pertinent additions obtained by correspondence and interviews with many of the actual participants in this movement.

In the interest of historical scholarship, in spite of my obvious identification with this movement, I have tried to be as objective as possible. It is not my purpose to compare Mormon Indian missionary work with that done by other churches but simply to present the objectives and

methods used by the Latter-day Saints and to comment on their successes and/or failures. Also I must make clear that this thesis deals with only a small segment of the total Lamanite missionary work carried on by the Church during this period throughout both North and South America.

Acknowledgements are gratefully given to those who have contributed to this study. The names of many who were helpful are found in the footnotes and often in the narration itself. I appreciate the help and encouragement of many members of the B. Y. U. History Department, particularly Dr. LeRoy R. Hafen and Dr. Ted J. Warner of my thesis committee. Most of all I am grateful to my sweet wife who encouraged me throughout and performed the herculean task of typing the entire manuscript from my barely legible rough draft.

CHAPTER I

THE MORMON AND THE INDIAN

"Latter-Day Saints"

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or "The Mormon Church" as it is known today, came into being under the leadership of a young man named Joseph Smith in 1830 in the state of New York. This new religion gained a great deal of attention and notoriety during its early years due to its basic tenant of continuous revelation from heaven which produced several new volumes of scripture that were claimed by the Mormons to be equal in importance to the Bible. The most important of these was the Book of Mormon, which book provided both the name "Mormon" for the Latter-day Saint people and the reason for their special interest in the Indians.

According to Mormon history the Book of Mormon was given to Joseph Smith by a heavenly messenger in 1827 in the form of ancient writings on golden plates. During the next two years Smith, with divine assistance, translated the ancient text into the English language and had it published as scripture, a companion volume to the Bible. This book was represented as a history of the ancestors of the American Indians, containing record of their coming to this land, God's dealings with them, and even the story of a visit to them by Jesus Christ after he left Jerusalem.

After gaining possession of this record and knowledge of its contents, the Mormons began to regard their Indian neighbors as their brethren

who were remnants of a once vast civilization on this land and that it was the Mormon calling "To bring them to a knowledge of their Fathers" and remove the "scales of darkness" from their eyes.¹ Therefore, in the fall of 1830, only months after the organization of the Church, missionaries were sent to tribes of Indians in New York, Ohio, and Missouri. These Indians were told of the Book of Mormon and members of their tribes who could read were given copies.²

Following these initial visits to their Lamanite (The Book of Mormon term for Indians) friends the Mormon people could find little time for preaching to the Indians due to persecution by their neighbors. Because of their ardent evangelism in spreading their faith and their doctrinal variance with other Christian religions of the day, the Mormons antagonized their neighbors to the extent that they were often subjected to severe persecution. During the first decade of L. D. S. Church history headquarters were moved from western New York to Kirtland, Ohio; from there to Independence, Missouri; and from Independence to Nauvoo, Illinois. There Joseph Smith was killed by a mob in 1844 and in 1846-47 the persecution-weary Saints moved west to the Rocky mountains under their new leader, Brigham Young. During their westward trek several plains tribes, the Pottawattamie and others, were encountered and were treated kindly by the Mormons.³

Upon arrival in the Great Salt Lake Valley in July 1847 the Mormons quickly turned their attention toward securing peace and friend-

¹Book of Mormon, 2nd Nephi, 30:5-6.

²Joseph Fielding Smith, Essentials in Church History (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1953), pp. 115-118.

³Ibid., p. 412.

ship with their Indian neighbors. The policy of President Brigham Young was, "It is better to feed them than to fight them," which was quite a contrast to the frontier attitude toward the Indians at that time.⁴

From the Book of Mormon the Latter-day Saints learned that the ancestors of the Indians were Israelites that had come to this land from Jerusalem centuries before the time of Christ and as genuine children of the Biblical Israel they were entitled to just as many, if not more, promises and blessings as the Latter-day Saints. It was thus the duty of the Saints to lift the Lamanites from their current degraded condition so they could become aware of and prepared to partake of the blessings promised them.

After less than seven years of peacemaking that was, in comparison to the rest of the frontier, relatively unmarred by fighting, an aggressive Indian missionary program was set up. Missions were established among several tribes in Utah and missionaries were sent as far as Idaho and Oklahoma to present Mormonism to the Lamanites.

A major part of this program was the Southern Indian Mission, set up in the spring of 1854 under the direction of Rufus C. Allen, with twenty-five men under his direction.⁵ These men traveled into Southern Utah exploring and surveying the future needs of Indian missionary work in that area and in a few months returned with plans to stay permanently. A fort was built south of the present Cedar City and called Fort Harmony. From this post groups of men were sent out to work with the various tribes of the area, which were mostly Utes and Paiutes.

⁴Paul Bailey, Jacob Hamblin, Buckskin Apostle (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1948), p. 88.

⁵Brigham H. Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), V, 118.

The establishment of the Southern Indian Mission played an important role in the eventual spread of the Indian mission to Arizona, in that it not only provided a jumping off place for trips to the south, but also served as a training ground for many of the elders of the Church who will dominate the pages of this study.

"Children of Israel"

Since the coming of Europeans to this continent over 400 years ago the general concept of the American Indian has been of a degraded people all lumped into one inferior group. The years have done little to dispel this belief and to this day many white people tend to think of the Indians as one conglomerate mass of illiterate humanity. Actually the opposite is true, as some American Indian tribes have more advanced civilizations than others and they have divergent ideas as to what would constitute an Indian utopia. Some tribes are as different from one another culturally as they are from the whites. This is especially true of the tribes in the southwest area.

The largest Indian tribe in this area of the United States is the Navaho Nation, with a present population of approximately 90,000 and a vast reservation that covers a major part of Northern Arizona and New Mexico. They have been identified as part of the Athapascan language group by anthropologists and have been linguistically connected with tribes in the Canadian Northwest.⁶

Their arrival in the Southwest was late compared to that of their Pueblo neighbors. Although they may have been in the country centuries

⁶Ruth M. Underhill, The Navajos (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), p. 4.

earlier as individual groups, it was nearly 1600 before they were identified by Europeans as a distinct tribal group.⁷

The Navahos quickly adopted many of the ways of those nearby. Weaving was learned from the Pueblos and the use of the horse and sheep from the Spaniards. Many authorities believe that the acquisition of the horse was the turning point in their history. This changed the Navahos from simple food gathering nomads to raiders that continually plagued their peaceful Pueblo and Spanish neighbors. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Navahos grew bolder and more carefree in plundering until 1863 when Kit Carson and his soldiers subdued and broke their spirit.⁸

The Navahos had made contact with the Mormons before this time, but it was during their rebuilding years of realization that they were no longer all-powerful and that the Americans were there to stay that the Navahos became fully acquainted with their Mormon neighbors to the north. With an end to most of their plundering and warfare the Navahos crossed the Colorado to trade with the Mormons in Utah and the Mormons soon also crossed the great river to both teach the Navahos their religion and to plant colonies in their midst.

The first Mormon missionaries into Arizona in 1858 were primarily interested in the Hopis.⁹ Located high on their Mesa-top homes in North-Central Arizona, they were the westernmost of the numerous Pueblo tribes of the Southwest. When the first Mormons came the Hopis lived in seven

⁷Ibid., p. 32.

⁸Ibid., p. 117.

⁹The Hopis were called the "Moqui Indians" by the Spaniards and this name, with several spelling variations, was widely used during the period of this study in referring to the Hopis.

villages, on three separate mesas within a few miles of each other, and had been close-knit homogeneous people for several centuries.¹⁰

The village of Oraibi on the third mesa is considered to be the oldest continuously inhabited spot in the United States, and dates as early as 1150 A.D.¹¹ During the centuries that followed, other villages took shape as the tribe grew, with additions which ended with the coming of the Tewa from New Mexico in 1680.¹²

A notable feature of Hopi culture is their long history of opposition to Christianity. Spanish Catholic missions were established among them early in the 17th Century but were destroyed during the Pueblo revolt of 1680. The coming of the Tewa or "Hano" tribe to live with the Hopis at that time was in order to avoid the eventual Spanish reconquest of the Rio Grande Pueblos. The Hopis never again yielded to Spanish pressures and even destroyed one of their villages, that of Awatobi, which they suspected of courting Catholicism.¹³

In the light of Hopi rejection of Christianity and white men in general during this period and the following decades it is remarkable that the Mormons were received with such friendliness among them nearly two centuries later. Because of their friendly, industrious, peaceful nature and the closely-knit village life of the Hopis, the Mormons recognized them as a high class of people and much early effort was directed toward their conversion to the Church, as the later pages of this narrative will indicate.

¹⁰ Harry C. James, The Hopi Indians (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers L.T.D., 1955), p. 19.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 29.

¹² Ibid., pp. 24-25.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 66-68.

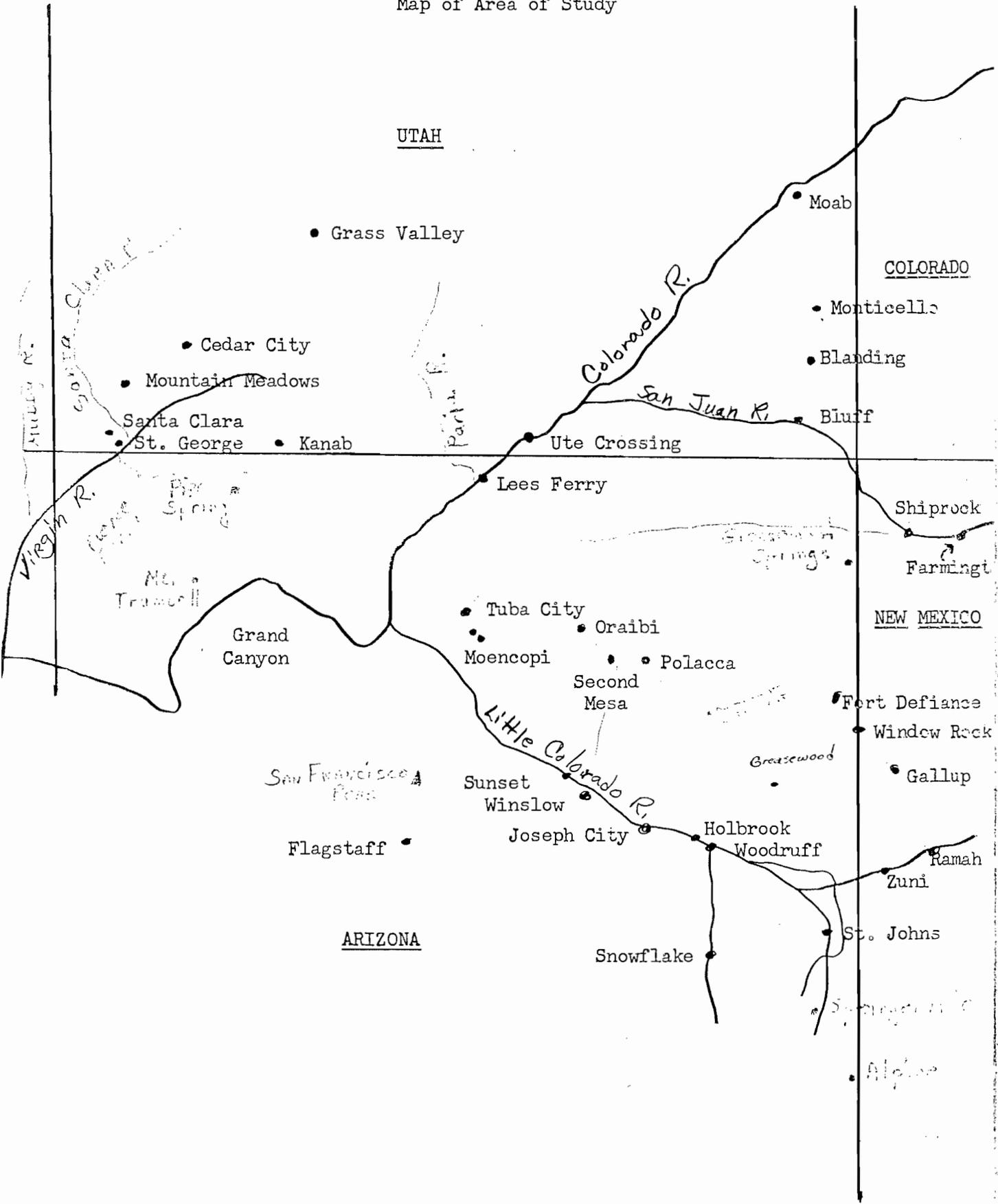
Also of interest in this study are the Zunis. Their village is located in extreme west-central New Mexico and missionary work was carried to this people from the nearby Mormon settlements established in the late 1870's and is closely connected with work among the Navahos and Hopis.

The Zuni tribal history is similar to that of the Hopis and perhaps their biggest difference, as far as the Mormons have been concerned, is that they have been influenced by several modern day Christian religions while the Hopi have remained, in large part, loyal to their native religion.¹⁴

Other nearby tribes such as the Utes and Paiutes of Southern Utah; the Havasupi of the Grand Canyon; the Apaches of Northern Arizona; and the Pueblos on the Rio Grande will be mentioned in this study only in relation to the bearing which they have on missionary work with the Hopis, Navahos and Zunis. It will remain a challenge for future historians to gather accounts of missionary work done among them.

¹⁴Ruth M. Underhill, Redman's America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 203-11.

Map of Area of Study



CHAPTER II

EARLY VISITS AND EXPLORATION 1855-75

First Contact

Soon after their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley the Mormons became aware of and interested in the Indian tribes south and east of the Colorado, through contact with the local Utes. Time itself was the major factor preventing investigation, as it took the Saints a few years to get themselves solidly established in their wilderness homes, but as they branched out into other mountain valleys during the 1850's their interest in the native inhabitants of the land to the south increased. The setting up of the Southern Indian Mission can be considered to be a stepping stone toward their further expansion to this area.

Likewise the tribes of this area quickly heard about the Mormons arriving in Utah. The Navahos and Utes alternately had periods of war and peaceful trading and it was not long until word of the presence of "different" white men was spread to the south. Evidence that these tribes regarded the Mormons in a different light than the average American is seen in their demonstrations of friendship and interest in the Saints at first contact.

The first such contact of which record is found was in connection with the ill-fated Elk Mountain Mission of 1855. The Elk Mountain Mission consisted of a party of men sent to what is now Grand Valley of south-

eastern Utah to establish a missionary post among the natives there. Attempts at teaching them to farm and converting them to Mormonism failed as the Paiutes showed little inclination to improve their lot. Eventually fighting broke out and the killing of several missionaries brought an abrupt ending before the year was out.

During this summer Chief Arapeen of the Utes, a convert to Mormonism, and a small party passed through the Elk Mountain Mission on their way south to visit the Navahos. On their return the Utes were accompanied by four Navaho Chiefs who came to make peace with the Utes in order that they, the Navahos, might learn the ways and customs of the missionaries. An invitation was extended to the elders to visit and teach the Navahos.¹

In response to this invitation five missionaries, led by President Alfred Billings, left their mission stations to visit that tribe. They planned to investigate the possibilities of trade and to learn the attitude of the Navahos concerning missionary work. They returned on September 12 after having traded for horses and several blankets, but they made no attempt at missionary work, not even describing the mission which they had started at Grand Valley. They were, however, invited to come and settle among the Navahos, if they could find a suitable place.²

The sudden ending of the Elk Mountain Mission brought these overtures of peace and friendship to a close at this time and the relationship between the Navahos and the Mormon towns and ranches that spread toward southeastern Utah during the next twenty-five years were of a different

¹Wesley R. Law, "Mormon Indian Missions, 1855," Unpublished Masters Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1959, p. 24.

²Ibid., p. 26.

order. Intermittant raids during this quarter century characterized the Navaho love for fat Mormon livestock and this state of affairs was to continue until the settlements on the San Juan in 1880, to be discussed later.³

"Apostle to the Lamanites"

Attention now shifts to southwestern Utah where the Southern Indian Mission was created in 1854. It was not long after work was begun in this area that one of the missionaries caught the eye of church leaders because of his ability to deal with the Indians and sustain their trust and confidence. This man was Jacob Hamblin.

It is hardly possible to write on the history of early Mormon missionary work and colonization in northern Arizona and southern Utah without continuous reference to the work of Jacob Hamblin. His courage and his faith in times of great danger have become legendary and he has been known by generations of Mormons as their "Apostle to the Lamanites" and indeed as one of the great missionaries of the church.

Hamblin had come to Utah from the east as one of the early converts to Mormonism in 1850 and was asked by church leaders to settle in Tooele Valley west of Salt Lake City. While farming in that area with his family he participated in several community forays into the nearby mountains to recover livestock stolen by the Indians and to punish the offenders. While on these trips he developed a sympathy for the Indians and found that he had more desire to help them than to punish and destroy them. Of this experience Hamblin relates:

³Albert R. Lyman, Indians and Outlaws (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft Inc., 1962), p. 11.

The Holy Spirit forcibly impressed me that it was not my calling to shed the blood of the scattered remnant of Israel, but to be a messenger of peace to them. It was also made manifest to me that if I would not thirst for their blood I shall never fall by their hands.⁴

As previously noted, Hamblin was called to assist on the first mission to the Indians in southern Utah. His early success in learning their language and in winning the respect of the Indians prompted Church Authorities to ask him to move his family to his mission station on the Santa Clara River, near the present town of St. George. This move enabled him to devote more attention to his missionary work without worrying so much about his family's welfare due to long periods of separation.⁵

The movement of the Hamblins and later other families into the area also enabled the Indians to learn from first hand observation the workings of civilization. Missionary work among these Paiutes and other similar tribes of this area was slow and often disheartening. Their way of life gave them more incentive to fight among themselves than work; their diet consisted mainly of gathered seeds and small animal life such as rats, snakes and lizards; and their religious ties to traditional superstitions were almost impossible to break.

Thus missionary work in this area dealt more with teaching them to farm, build good homes and keep themselves clean than in disseminating the theological precepts of Mormonism. This, practical approach to conversions became an established pattern of missionary work with the Indians that has endured in some degree to the present and will be often referred

⁴James A. Little, Jacob Hamblin (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1909), p. 30.

⁵Pearson H. Corbett, "Jacob Hamblin," Unpublished Masters Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1944, p. 30.

to in this study. This policy is simply based on the fact that before the missionaries could improve the Indian's spiritual conditions they would have to provide the physical necessities of life.⁶

The degraded condition of the Paiutes around the Santa Clara and the discouragement of not making much headway at civilizing and converting them soon built within Hamblin the desire to carry the gospel to a more civilized tribe who could better accept and adjust to new principles. Just such a people, he learned from his Ute and Paiute friends, lived south and east of the Colorado. He determined to visit them, and accordingly in November, 1855, set out on the trail in the company of Ute Chief Ammon and four of his tribe to visit the Moquitch (Hopi) nation. After traveling for five days and over fifty miles into the mountains and canyons south of Santa Clara he felt impressed to return home and did so.⁷

Word of Hamblin's attempted venture, undertaken without either a white companion or permission of the mission president, soon reached headquarters in Harmony and he was severely criticized by his superiors. These men, capable and able in their own way, still lacked the intense zeal and devotion to the Indian missionary work that characterized Jacob Hamblin, who impulsively did what he felt to be his duty without regard for proper procedures.

Interest in the Hopis was set aside for the next several years and efforts to teach the southern Utah tribes continued. Mission stations spread throughout southwestern Utah, in eastern Nevada and as far south

⁶Pearson H. Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, The Peacemaker (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1952), p. 77.

⁷Ibid., p. 90.

as the Las Vegas Springs with varying degrees of success and Hamblin played an important part in their establishment.

Further recognition of Hamblin's abilities as a successful Indian missionary was displayed in August of 1857 when Brigham Young appointed him as president of the Southern Indian Mission. Thus in three short years he had become the key figure of all missionary efforts with the Indians in southern Utah and he was to both build upon this reputation and spread his sphere of influence during the remaining thirty years of his life.⁸

First Trip to Arizona

Just a month after Jacob Hamblin's call as mission president the ill-famed Mountain Meadows Massacre took place in a small valley leased by Hamblin himself for use as a summer range. Details of this event can be reviewed elsewhere, but inasmuch as it had repercussions that affected Indian missionary work, a brief account will be given.

During the summer of 1856 Hamblin had obtained rights to the Mountain Meadow to be used by the mission as a herd ground, and the following spring he established his family there for the summer.⁹ While traveling to Salt Lake City during late August of 1857 he met and spent a night with the California-bound Fancher party from Arkansas that had caused considerable trouble in several Mormon communities along the trail. They inquired as to road conditions and he not only advised them in this respect but suggested that they stop in the south end of the meadows, three miles from where his family resided, to recruit their teams before

⁸Corbett Thesis, p. 48.

⁹Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, p. 98.

crossing the desert.¹⁰ Following his advice they camped there and during the week that followed they were massacred, with the exception of a few small children, by Indians and some of the local whites.

This act of carnage had an adverse effect on Mormon attempts toward teaching the Indians of southern Utah to be peaceful and civilized. Three years of missionary work were suddenly set to naught by Mormon participation along side the Indians in an act of destruction the likes of which the missionaries had time and again told the Indians was bad. The effect of this incident on missionary work is expressed by Historial B. H. Roberts:

Since the massacre many of the Indians who had previously learned to labor have evinced a determination not to work . . . the moral influence of the event upon the civilization of the Indians has been very prejudicial! Inevitable consequence! for they had seen that their white neighbors, instructors in industry, had been capable of an act of treachery and savagery equal to their own, even if not more treacherous and murderous. Surely there could be no more white man's moral and spiritual influence over the red men after what the latter had witnessed at Mountain Meadows!¹¹

Thus, by forcing the abandonment of much Indian missionary work in southern Utah, the Mountain Meadows Massacre indirectly stimulated the spreading of the Indian Mission into Arizona.

The second noticeable effect of this event upon our area of study concerns the small children that were spared from massacre by efforts of the Mormons involved. These children were at first cared for in various homes in the surrounding communities and later seventeen of them were gathered for return to relatives in Arkansas. Rumor held that one or

¹⁰Ibid., p. 115.

¹¹Brigham H. Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), IV, 165-66.

more of these children had been taken across the Colorado by the Indians and this gave Jacob Hamblin the chance he wanted to visit the Hopis while looking for them.¹² Further authority for this trip came from Brigham Young who sent word early in the fall of 1858 that an expedition was to be organized primarily to make a search for some children thought to be kidnapped by the Indians and taken across the Colorado River.¹³

Whether Hamblin really believed that the children would be found at his destination is not known but here was the chance to fulfill his dream at government expense. Evidence indicates that the search for the missing children gave them their original and official reason for the trip but during the final preparations and the trip itself this reason was paralleled if not even made secondary to their desire to learn something of the character and condition of the Hopis and to take advantage of any opening there might be to preach the gospel to them and do them good.¹⁴ In their accounts of visiting with the Hopis and of meeting a band of Apache warriors they make no mention of seeking stolen children, although this duty was probably carried out. Another reason for this trip was in response to a request by Brigham Young to check the validity of a report that the Hopis were of Welch descent, spoke the Welch language and were a highly civilized people.¹⁵

James Davis, a recent convert from Wales, was sent along to check on the last named reason for going and others in the party were Dudley

¹²Juanita Brooks, The Mountain Meadows Massacre (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), p. 102.

¹³Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, p. 147.

¹⁴Little, p. 62.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 63.

and Thomas Leavitt, Frederick and William Hamblin, Samuel Knight, Ira Hatch, Andrew Gibbons, Benjamin Knell, Thales Haskell, Lucius Fuller, and fourteen year old Ammon M. Tenney who spoke Spanish, the most likely language to be used in that area. Jacob Hamblin was their leader and they were guided by Naraguts, a Paiute Indian.¹⁶

This was to be a difficult and dangerous trip into a land completely unknown to all of them but the Paiute guide, an area only rarely seen by white men before. The leader and his twelve companions were well chosen, however, as nearly all were veteran Indian missionaries used to the danger, hardship, and privations involved in fulfilling their assignments.

Leaving Santa Clara on October 28, 1858, they traveled for ten days over rugged, trackless country before reaching the Ute crossing on the Colorado. This ford was also known as the "Crossing of the Fathers" and Hamblin's party were the second white men on record¹⁷ to use this crossing since that of the famous Dominguez-Escalante exploring party as recorded by Father Escalante in 1776.¹⁸ A few days later they arrived at the chief Hopi village of Oraibi and were warmly welcomed by this most interesting people. The missionaries were invited into the homes at the Oraibi village and during their short stay were able to visit among the Hopis of Oraibi and the six other villages.

¹⁶Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, p. 150.

¹⁷A Spaniard, Armijo, and his party used the crossing on a Santa Fe to Los Angeles trading trip in 1829. LeRoy R. Hafen, Ann W. Hafen, Old Spanish Trail (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1954), p. 166.

¹⁸Juanita Brooks, "Jacob Hamblin," Vol. VI, of Heart Throbs of the West, ed. Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers Publication, 1945), p. 430.

Some of the missionaries could speak Ute and were happy to find that a few of the Hopis could speak this language also and so it was used as the principal means of communication during their stay. Elder Davis, the Welch interpreter, listened to their strange tongue but could find no similarities between it and his native Welch. The Hopis let it be known that they distrusted the Americans and would not let them into their villages but they had heard that the Mormons were friends. Thus they were very solicitous of the well-being of the missionaries, and leaders of the tribe escorted them through their villages and places of special interest.

Hamblin records that he was pleased to find that the Hopis were as industrious and thrifty as he had heard and he invited them to visit the white settlements west of the Colorado. The Hopis told him, however, that their traditions taught that they should remain in their hill top villages until three prophets from the east came to bring them great blessings.¹⁹

Some indication of the interest they excited among the Hopis can be shown with the story of a very old man who said that when he was a young man his father told him that he would live to see white men come among them. These men would bring blessings such as their fathers had enjoyed and would come from the west. He believed that he had lived to see the prediction finally fulfilled with the coming of the Mormons.²⁰ Thus it seems that rapport was quickly built and sustained between the Mormons and Hopis in spite of the Hopi refusal to leave their villages for a visit to Utah. Further evidence of this is seen in the fact that

¹⁹Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, pp. 156-58.

²⁰Little, p. 66.

the Hopis were willing to share their homes and their very meager food supply with the Mormons at first contact, a contrast to their treatment of Americans in general.

There is no record at any attempt toward teaching any of the concepts of Mormonism to these people during this initial visit. The language barrier would prevent much of that. It seems that the missionaries came with the desire to see and learn and probably even marvel a bit that they had found an Indian tribe with the rudiments of civilization somewhat comparable to their own.

The missionaries had been advised before leaving Utah that if conditions were favorable a few of them would be called to remain with the Indians for a year. When it became apparent that this was the case with the Hopis, elders William Hamblin, Andrew S. Gibbons, Thomas Leavitt and Benjamin Knell were selected to remain with them for a season to study their language, get acquainted with them and offer them the gospel.

The main body of missionaries then began preparation to return home. They had been with the Hopis only a few days, but apparently felt that their mission was accomplished and felt that they should return before the snows became too deep in the mountains. They told the Hopis that they planned to return the following year and asked if they could bring anything. The Hopis replied, "Bring us wool cards, sheep shears, all kinds of coloring stuffs and other implements of home manufacture."²¹

Saying goodbye to their new Hopi friends and to the four elders left behind, Hamblin's returning party of nine left for homes in Utah. The trip back was hard and disagreeable and they had to eat one of their

²¹Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, p. 159.

Young following the return of his party to Santa Clara. During the following months of providing for his family and settling Indian difficulties in southern Utah he made plans for his return the next fall. In September of 1859 he traveled to Salt Lake City to visit Brigham Young personally and tell him more about the first trip and to receive instructions for the next visit.

Since receiving Jacob's written report President Young had worked on plans for another visit across the Colorado and had called Marion J. Shelton to be a member of this party. Brother Shelton was to go to the Hopis for the purpose of studying their language and of teaching them the new Deseret Alphabet.²⁵ The missionaries were also furnished with wool cards, spades, shovels and other articles that would be of value to the Indians and were asked to instruct the Hopis in their proper use.²⁶ Other instructions of President Young were as follows:

As soon as they (the missionaries) become sufficiently familiar with their language present to them the Book of Mormon and instruct them in regards to its history and the first principles of the Gospel. Instill into their minds purity of character and holiness and seek to elevate them above their present low conditions . . . Instruct the brethren to be just and honorable in all of their transactions with them. . . It is for us to improve the privilege so opportunely given to lead them back to a knowledge of the Lord God of their Fathers.²⁷

²⁵Ibid., p. 167. (The Deseret Alphabet was an attempt made by Mormon scholars to simplify the learning of the English language through a phonetic system. It was devised mostly in the interest of European converts but, being popularly supported at this time, it was felt that it would be useful with the Indians. It proved to be unsatisfactory and was later abandoned).

²⁶Frank McNitt, The Indian Traders (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), p. 90.

²⁷Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, p. 168.

Armed with the instructions and encouragement of his leaders Hamblin returned to Santa Clara and made preparations to set out on October 20.

Leaving on this date for the second visit to the Hopis, Elder Hamblin was accompanied by Elders Marion J. Shelton, Thales Haskell, Ira Hatch, Benjamin Knell, Taylor Crosby and John W. Young. As they journeyed southward James Pearce and Isaac Riddle joined them to make a total of nine missionaries on this venture. Traveling more directly southward on this trip, the party crossed the Colorado at the mouth of the Paria (Pahreah) River. This is the first recorded use of this crossing by white men and it later will become important in our study as Lee's Ferry, the crossing over which nearly all Mormon colonization of Arizona took place.

Arriving at the Hopi villages on November 10, the company was received very kindly by the Indians, who told them that some United States soldiers had been there since their last visit. The soldiers had given them tools and told the Hopis to kill the Mormons if they came again.²⁸ This is an indication of the unpopular feeling against the Mormon people that was prevalent throughout the United States at this time. The Hopis were friendly, however, and the missionaries visited among them for several days.

Efforts were made, apparently at President Young's counsel, to induce the Hopis to leave their wind-swept mesas and move to Utah to live among the Mormons. This proposition the Hopis refused, on the same grounds as their refusal to come and visit the Mormons the year before, that they

²⁸ Ibid., p. 176.

horses to sustain them in their last few days before arriving at Santa Clara.²²

The four missionaries who remained, long cold miles from home and families, fought their loneliness through earnest application to their work. Their high quality axes were implements new to the Hopis and the elders used them to an advantage in building ladders and cutting wood. Progress was made in learning the language also, but before many weeks had passed a division occurred among the Hopis concerning whether the Mormons were really those whose coming had been foretold. The missionaries did not wish to cause dissention that would undo the good done thus far and so decided to return that same winter.²³

In evaluating this initial expedition it can be seen that the missionaries failed in a few of their objectives; those of finding the stolen children, getting the Hopis to come to visit in Utah, leaving missionaries to remain with the Hopis for a year and in finding a Welch nation. However, in larger perspective, it can be seen that this mission was a success in its general purposes of becoming acquainted with the land and its inhabitants south and east of the Colorado. Strangely enough there is no record of Navahos encountered although nearly half of the trip was taken through their land.²⁴

The Second Visit to the Hopis

Jacob Hamblin was enthusiastic in his written report to President

²²Ibid., p. 161.

²³Richard Gibbons, "Andrew S. Gibbons, Utah Pioneer of 1847" (notes made by Richard Gibbons in Los Angeles in 1937 now in the possession of Evaline Gibbons Palmer, Holbrook, Arizona).

²⁴Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, p. 162.

could not leave their traditional homes until the appearance of the three prophets that had led their ancestors to that locality. It had been directed before leaving Utah that Elder Shelton was to stay among the Hopis for the purpose of studying their language and teaching them the Deseret Alphabet, but who to leave with him was left to the judgement of Jacob Hamblin. After arrival at the Hopi villages Jacob asked Thales Haskell if he would stay and received an affirmative reply.

This visit was cut short after only six days by the stealing of some of the belongings of the party, thought to be done by the Navahos, and by a rumor, later proven false, that a company of American soldiers would arrive the next day.²⁹ Again Hamblin and his small band said sad goodbyes to the two that would remain and made their way homeward to southern Utah. The two that remained, Elders Shelton and Haskell, turned their faces to the village that would be their home for the next year and the responsibilities they would have to share. Their feelings are well expressed by the pen of Elder Haskell as taken from his diary.

Slowly and sorrowfully I wended my way back to the village. Such a feeling of utter loneliness I never experienced before, for search the wide world over I do not believe a more bleak, lonesome, heartsickening place could be found on the earth where human beings dwell. And here we are, Brother Shelton and me, with strange Indians who talk a strange language, situated far from the busy haunts of men. Who but Mormons would do it? Who but Mormons could do it--could make up their minds to stay here a year?³⁰

The two missionaries were short of food and so traded articles brought along for that purpose and some of their belongings for provisions during their stay. They tried to persuade a young Hopi to learn the

²⁹Ibid., pp. 177-78.

³⁰Thales H. Haskell, "Diary of Thales H. Haskell, 1859-60" (Brigham Young University Library Special Collections, 1943), p. 18.

Deseret Alphabet but he refused. They also worked hard at learning the Hopi language and had some success in doing so.³¹ Like the four Elders who had remained the year before, Elders Shelton and Haskell used their axes and carpentry tools to an advantage in making ladders and similar useful articles that pleased the Hopis very much.

The year 1859 was apparently a year of relative peace between the Hopis and Navahos, as the Navahos frequented the Hopi village to the extent that, according to Haskell's account, the missionaries spent most of their time being visited by and having intercourse with the Navahos of the vicinity. True to their current way of life the Navahos were prone to steal what they could get away with and the elders learned through sad experience to keep close watch on their belongings.

In the early spring their Hopi hosts took the missionaries to see their summer farms located in a wash about forty miles to the west. This place they called Movincapi (Moencopi) and the Hopis extended an invitation to the Mormons to come and settle there and build a mill there.³² The elders left Oraibi to return home on March 9, 1860, as they felt that the Hopis did not want them to remain during the busy summer months.³³ They had stayed with the Hopis for four months and although failing in teaching the Deseret Alphabet they had learned much of the Hopi language and had maintained friendly relations with both the Hopis and the Navahos through the winter.

³¹Ibid., p. 24.

³²Ibid., p. 36.

³³Ibid., p. 37.

The Death of George A. Smith, Jr.

Results of the first two visits to the Hopis had been fairly successful in the purpose of becoming acquainted with and gaining their friendship, but failure had met attempts at inducing them to visit and live in Utah and in establishing resident missionaries among them. Therefore, President Young suggested that Elder Hamblin take a group of missionaries down with provisions ample to sustain the entire party for a full year's stay.

Following these instructions, in the fall of 1860, Jacob made careful preparations for this most audacious and difficult undertaking and hand picked a group of both proven and new missionaries to accompany him. They were as follows: Thales Haskell, Ira Hatch, Isaac Riddle, James Pearce, Jehiel McConnell, Amos Thorton, Francis Hamblin, Enos, a Paiute guide, and young George A. Smith, Jr., the youthful and energetic son of one of the Church Apostles. Knowing that the example of Indian women who had been raised by Mormons would be useful in teaching the Hopi women proper cleanliness and cookery, Hamblin also took along Sarah, the Navaho wife of Ira Hatch and his own adopted Paiute daughter, Eliza.³⁴

After sad goodbyes that foretold an intended year's separation from their loved ones, the missionaries made their way southward over the trail to the Paria ford of the Colorado. Crossing the river in a small boat brought for that purpose, they entered again into nearly a hundred miles of rugged Navaho country to be crossed before reaching the Hopi mesas. The Navahos of that vicinity knew of the Mormons and were

³⁴Bailey, p. 226.

friendly toward them. Their chief in the locality was named Spanneshank and he had visited with the missionaries in Oraibi.³⁵ The missionaries had traveled peacefully through Navaho land four times on their first two trips without contact with the Navahos except at Oraibi.

On this trip, however, a hostile war party from the eastern section of the Navaho country was encountered when the missionaries had reached a point several days' travel south of the Colorado. This Navaho war party demanded that the missionaries turn back, but met refusal. They then demanded trade and while trading was in progress young George A. Smith was shot while seeking his horse which had strayed a short distance out of sight of camp. Emboldened by the shooting of one, the Navahos demanded two others to be turned over to them to be killed in retribution for three of their group that had been killed by whites previously. Hamblin refused and the Navahos grew increasingly hostile until it seemed that the party would all be killed. To go on to Oraibi was impossible, although the Hopi villages were almost in sight. The only alternative was to retreat northward, which they did with the help of four friendly old Navahos who probably played the greatest part in pacifying their younger tribesmen and preventing a total massacre. Young Smith was still alive in spite of three bullet and a number of arrow wounds and he was carefully helped onto a horse and held by Elder McConnell until he died several hours later. His body was wrapped in a blanket and laid in a hollow beside the trail. The hostile Navahos were determined to have his scalp, and to keep the body would endanger the rest of the party; to bury it would only mean that it would be dug up again and muti-

³⁵Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, p. 180.

lated. The next day the missionaries were led by the four old braves to the camp of the friendly Spanneshank where they were safe enough to rest a day before traveling on home.³⁶

Back in Santa Clara, Jacob sent detailed accounts of the tragedy and failure of the expedition to both President Young and Apostle George A. Smith. Later he was asked by President Young to take a party of twenty men southward to recover the remains of young George. This he did in midwinter, finding the body scalped and mutilated as expected with only a few larger bones remaining. While on this trip he was visited by the chief and his wife of the hostile war party who said he was very sorry and that if he had known what he afterwards learned about the Mormons he would have protected instead of injured the missionaries.³⁷

Three Hopi Visitors

The tragic death of George A. Smith, Jr., and the failure of the third mission to the Hopis to reach its destination cooled enthusiasm for the Hopi mission for a short time. Also a factor in letting the Hopi mission rest a while was the new interest in settling the Saints in permanent communities in southern Utah. St. George and other important towns of this area were settled in 1861 in an effort to not only spread the borders of Zion but to boost and diversify its agricultural economy with the cotton and fruit that could be raised in the warm climate of Utah's "Dixie."³⁸ The influx of settlers with their accompanying herds

³⁶James H. McClintock, Mormon Settlement in Arizona (Phoenix; Arizona State Historian's Office, 1921), p. 66.

³⁷Little, p. 80.

³⁸Roberts, V, p. 122.

and flocks of livestock had a devastating effect on the native seed bearing grasses upon which the Paiute Indians of the locality depended for food. Due to the destruction of their major food supply the Indians became increasingly hostile toward the whites and it fell to the lot of Elder Hamblin and his companions to keep the peace and prevent a war.³⁹

The Hopis were forgotten only temporarily, though, and in November of 1862, two years after the last attempt, Jacob was called to lead the fourth mission to the Hopis. The purpose of this company, in addition to visiting the Hopis, was to explore a new route south of St. George as a means of shortening the distance to the Hopi villages.⁴⁰ Over twenty missionaries were called to accompany Jacob on this visit, the largest group to make this trip so far. Crossing the Colorado west of the Grand Canyon they made their way southward between the Canyon and the San Francisco Mountains and then eastward to the Hopi villages.

They were again welcomed by their Hopi friends with whom they visited for two days. Again they heard the Hopis tell of waiting for their three prophets to return before they were to leave their villages, and this time Elder Hamblin and the missionaries decided to try and capitalize on this belief by leaving three of their number, hoping that the Hopis would connect the Mormons with their traditions. Jehiel McConnell, Thales Haskell, and Ira Hatch were selected to remain and again Jacob led the remainder of the band northward toward Utah.

The first night out three young Hopis came into their camp and said that their leaders had reconsidered and decided to send them to Utah

³⁹Little, p. 94.

⁴⁰Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, p. 207.

in Hamblin's care. This was the breaking of a long and time-honored tradition that the Hopis were not to cross the Colorado and was probably done only because of the presence of the three missionaries in their village who could be held as hostages for the safe return of their tribesmen.⁴¹ The party, now larger by three Indians, returned to Utah by way of the Ute crossing east of the Grand Canyon, thus encircling it completely, probably the first time this had been done.⁴²

Arriving in St. George in early January, 1863, the three young Hopi men were entertained there for a few days by the Saints and then taken to Salt Lake City by Elders Hamblin and William B. Maxwell. In Salt Lake City all possible pains were taken to instruct these men concerning the Mormons and to show them that which would gratify their curiosity and increase their knowledge. The three Hopis said they had been told that their forefathers had the arts of reading, writing and making books, a statement which delighted the Latter-day Saints whose Book of Mormon told of the high level of civilization attained by these whom they felt to be the Hopi's forefathers.

Again the curiosity of the Mormons as to the possible Welch origin of the Hopis was found to be false as they were taken to a Welchman who said he could not detect anything in their language that would warrant a belief that they were of Welch descent.⁴³ Elder Hamblin took his Hopi charges to visit President Young, Elder Wilford Woodruff, and several other Church leaders while in the city and the Mormon hierarchy

⁴¹Ibid., p. 209.

⁴²McClintock, p. 68.

⁴³Little, p. 86.

greeted their visitors with much friendship and spared no efforts in learning of the customs and ways of life of the peaceful Hopis.⁴⁴

Hamblin left Salt Lake City in mid February 1863 for southern Utah, and a month later left St. George with four companions to return the Hopis to their homes. Again circling west and south of the Grand Canyon the missionaries took time to explore new territory and possible routes for settlement into Arizona. They descended into the western edge of the Grand Canyon to visit the Havasupi Indians that lived in its depths, visited a day with them and then made their way eastward to the Hopi villages.

Here they found their three companions well and the Hopis overjoyed at the return of their tribesmen. After remaining two days to visit, the missionaries all left to return to Utah, exploring the country around the San Francisco Mountains on the way.⁴⁵ They arrived in St. George on May 12, 1863, and this date marks the end of almost six months and thousands of miles of continuous travels by Elder Hamblin which included two long hard trips to Hopiland and a trip to Salt Lake City. Obviously he and his companions must have been glad to spend some time at home with their families.

The success of these trips surpassed that of earlier visits in that some Hopis had finally been induced to come over the Colorado to observe the civilization of the Mormons. However, invitations by President Young and others to bring their entire tribe to live in Utah had fallen

⁴⁴Mathias F. Cowley, Wilford Woodruff, History of His Life and Labors (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964), p. 427.

⁴⁵Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, pp. 221-23.

on deaf ears as the three young Hopis steadfastly maintained that the home of their people was in the windswept plateau land of Arizona.

Protecting the Frontier

The Navaho Indians, as mentioned previously in this narrative, were by nature a nomadic and active people, especially in comparison to their sedentary Pueblo neighbors. Their inclination to steal and raid as a means of both gaining a livelihood and earning prestige was a thorn in the side of the Pueblos and the later arriving whites. They harrassed the Spaniards, grew worse after American occupation of the West, and almost completely got out of hand in raiding and killing when the American military was drawn east by the Civil War.

In 1863 veteran frontier scout Kit Carson was called on to subdue this untamed tribe and with a small band of volunteers he methodically raided the heart of Navahc land, destroying their homes and food supplies. Carson was aided by Ute, Hopi, Zuni, and Pueblo warriors who were only too glad to destroy the power of their former tormentors. The Navahos were driven, beaten and starved until they either surrendered to a five year exile in eastern New Mexico or fled to parts unknown.⁴⁶

A few small bands of Navahos from the western reaches of their tribal lands were able to avoid Carson's forays of capture and destruction and their presence soon became strongly felt by the Mormons of Southern Utah. Not humbled by Carson's forces, they turned their desire for plunder toward the Mormon towns and ranches that began sprouting throughout Southern Utah after 1861. Thus the task either of trying to

⁴⁶Underhill, The Navajos, p. 112.

recover stolen livestock or making treaties to promote peace with the Navahos replaced the missionary trips to the Hopis heretofore taken.

Defending the frontier was to be the most important duty of the Indian missionaries during the next decade and again Jacob Hamblin is the central figure in the course of events. The depredations of the Navahos in Southern Utah increased until in March, 1864, Elder Hamblin was called to take fourteen men with him over the Colorado to warn the Navahos against stealing any more horses. They also were called to visit the Hopis to try and persuade two of that tribe to return with them to learn the trades of smithing and woodwork. Little contact was made with the Navahos, who probably avoided all whites due to Carson's ravaging of the year before, and the mission to the Hopis again failed to induce a single one to come to Utah and live among the Mormons.

Several meetings were held in which the doctrines of Mormonism were preached. The teachings were well received by the young men and some of the old ones, but they were politely stubborn against any invitation to leave the rock houses of their fathers.⁴⁷ Hamblin was discouraged with their failures with the Hopis and after their return home he spent the summer and early fall in plans and preparation to spend more time with them.

In the fall of 1864 Hamblin left again to visit the Hopis. This time he had seven companions who were tested and proven missionaries to the Indians. They were: Thales Haskell, Andrew Gibbons, Dudley Leavitt, William Hamblin, Ammon Tenney, Ira Hatch, and Isaac Riddle. The presence of the missionaries among them pleased the Hopis very much. The mission-

⁴⁷Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, p. 240.

aries were able to spend much time in learning their language, traditions and superstitions and came to know them better. The missionaries had long talks with the head Hopis about the restored gospel, the Book of Mormon, and again about the Hopis moving to Utah.

The Hopis again said that they were waiting for their three prophets who led them into that country to return and tell them what to do. This time, however, they went further and predicted that the Mormons would yet move into the country south of them and would travel with wagons up the Little Colorado. Aside from their traditions against moving across the Colorado they could not see the reason for going over to live with the Mormons when the settlers would yet move into their country.

It was also Jacob's intention to go among the Navahos looking for stolen horses. However, he was told that the friendly Spanneshank had been discarded by his band and their leadership was in the hands of his unfriendly son who was disposed to raid at any favorable opportunity. For these reasons it was thought that it would be useless and perhaps dangerous to go into their country.⁴⁸ The elders returned to their homes in March, 1865, with much learned about the Hopis and increased bonds of friendship that would help in troublesome times to come.

During the next five years no visits were made south and east of the Colorado. Jacob Hamblin spent nearly a year during this time near death, recovering from sickness caused by the overwork and constant pressure of the past years. Much time was also spent in providing for his family in Santa Clara. Most of his time was spent in pacifying local tribes that grew increasingly hostile with the continuous stream of whites

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 243-45.

arriving in Southern Utah. Much time was also spent in guarding the crossings on the Colorado against Navaho raiding parties. Friendly Paiutes were utilized to help in this respect and this frontier vigilance undoubtedly prevented much stealing that would have taken place otherwise.⁴⁹

The settlers had a small militia which hurried about from one trouble spot to another, but its presence probably had less to do with keeping the peace than the quiet influence of Hamblin and his missionaries. In 1869 Jacob moved his family to Kanab in order to have them closer to him during his long periods watching the Colorado crossings for trouble. In October, 1869, Elder Hamblin was again called to travel into Arizona. This time he was given charge of a large, well-equipped party of forty men and given a detailed list of instructions by Apostle Erastus Snow, a leader of the Saints in Southern Utah. They were to visit the Hopis and establish friendly relations with the Navahos and all other tribes with which they came in contact.⁵⁰

Upon arriving at the Hopi villages after an absence of five years the missionaries were greeted rather coldly, possibly because of their long absence. They were told by the Hopis that the Navahos intended to make another raid on the settlements in a short time. Alarmed by this news Jacob and his party quickly retraced their steps and returned to Utah by way of the Paria crossing only to find that the Navahos had driven twelve to fifteen hundred head of livestock from Southern Utah by way of the Ute crossing.⁵¹

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 261.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 268.

⁵¹Little, p. 100.

The continued raiding by the Navahos brought the need for increased vigilance at watching and defending the crossings on the Colorado and men were sent to both the Ute and Paria fords for this purpose. The raiding also motivated Hamblin's desire to make peace between the Mormons and Navahos and put a stop to their fighting. His opportunity came in the fall of 1870 when he and several companions traveled to Fort Defiance in company with John Wesley Powell of Colorado River exploration fame.

Over eight thousand Navahos were gathered at this place with most of their leading chiefs and it was an excellent opportunity for Hamblin to explain the Mormon desire for peace and friendship with them. The Navahos reciprocated and a treaty was signed allowing for the Navahos to visit Utah to trade.⁵² Hamblin was able to speak at length to them and writes of his experience.

This was probably the first time that the chiefs of the Navajo [sic] nation ever heard a gospel discussion adapted to their circumstances; as well as the first time they had heard, from the lips of a white man, a speech that carried with it the spirit and power of heartfelt friendship. The hearts of many of them were open to reciprocate it.⁵³

On his return trip from Fort Defiance, Jacob visited the Hopis and was able to persuade Tuba and his wife to come to Utah to visit. Tuba was one of the influential village leaders at Oraibi who had been a close friend and ally of Hamblin from the time of the first mission to the Hopis twelve years earlier. The two Hopis spent nearly a year in Utah, where they worked among the Saints and learned much of the white man's way of life. During this time they were converted and baptized into the Mormon

⁵²McClintock, p. 78.

⁵³Little, p. 109.

Church while living with the Hamblin family in Kanab.⁵⁴ Hamblin took them back to Oraibi on his way to Fort Defiance for more peace talks with the Navahos in September, 1871.

Southern Utah began to relax after Jacob had made peace with the Navahos in 1870. Blankets and other native goods were brought north by friendly bands to be traded for livestock and it looked as if peace had come at last to the frontier. Hamblin was busy during the next three years welcoming Navaho trading parties and exploring and building roads on both sides of the Colorado.⁵⁵ The labors of the missionaries never before seemed so fruitful. There was peace with the Navahos, Tuba and his wife provided the first Hopi converts and plans were being made for Mormon settlement into Arizona. This happy state of affairs was brought to a sudden jolt during the winter of 1873-74 by a series of events that rocked Southern Utah and would probably have brought war without the cool courage of Hamblin.

Late in December of 1873 three Navaho brothers were killed and one wounded by non-Mormon ranchers while on a trading trip into Circle, or Grass Valley, of South Central Utah. The wounded brave made his way home to tell of the evil deed and his people, blaming the Mormons, rose in fury on the border, sending much of Southern Utah into panic. True to his calling as a peacemaker Hamblin rode alone into the heart of Navaholand to prevent further bloodshed. He was subjected to a tense and dramatic twelve-hour council by hot-headed young Navaho braves who would have roasted him over the coals at the slightest pretext. He stood firm

⁵⁴Bailey, p. 335.

⁵⁵McClintock, p. 82.

in his courage and his word of truth that the Mormons were not to blame and sat through the entire drama without a flicker of emotion or fear on his face. At one point he was insolently asked "Aren't you afraid?" to which he replied, "Why should we be afraid of our friends? Are not the Navahos our friends and we theirs? Else why did I place myself in your power?" A non-Mormon white man who witnessed this scene wrote "No braver man ever lived."⁵⁶

This is the experience commonly known as Jacob Hamblin's death council, perhaps the most famous of all his adventures and a favorite part of Mormon folklore. Not so famous but equally dramatic was the council several weeks after Hamblin had returned home in which Ira Hatch and John S. Blythe were also subjected to extreme mental pressure in a Navaho attempt to get them to admit Mormon participation in the incident.⁵⁷ Cooler heads prevailed, however, and when spring came a Navaho party came to Utah to view the scene of the killings and went home satisfied to tell their people that the Mormons were not to blame!

A Time of Transition

This peace proved to be lasting and the years that followed were those of transition to a new era in the mission to the Indians of this area. The new era was one in which the responsibility of presenting the Gospel to the Hopis and Navahos would be on the shoulders of the new settlers of Arizona that began to stream southward in the mid 1870's. No longer was there need of long tedious trips from Southern Utah to do missionary work.

⁵⁶Little, p. 135.

⁵⁷Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, p. 363.

Jacob Hamblin was active in guiding and assisting many companies of Saints into Arizona and he was for several years the chief intermediary in trade between the Navahos and the Saints of Southern Utah. Hamblin and others were active in presenting the precepts of Mormonism to the many Navahos that came to Kanab to trade and it is recorded that during the spring of 1875 over a hundred were baptized. This is the first record of Navahos joining the Church.⁵⁸

On December 15, 1876, Jacob Hamblin had his last visit with President Brigham Young. At this meeting in St. George, Jacob's long lifetime of service as an Indian missionary was climaxed by his being ordained to be an "Apostle to the Lamanites."⁵⁹ This ordination placed him among the elite of the Mormons of his generation and is the only recorded ordination of this nature dealing with Indian missionary work. The apostolic calling marked an end more than a beginning, however, as persecution for polygamy forced Jacob, who had several wives, to move to Arizona in 1878. There he served his Church until his death in 1886.

Many of the companions of his travels also passed from the scene of their labors at this time and many others such as Thales Haskell, Ira Hatch, Ammon M. Tenney and Andrew S. Gibbons, continued to serve and will be seen again in the pages of this narrative. Perhaps the best expression of the work of the faithful missionaries of this early period can be found on the gravestone of Jacob Hamblin in Alpine, Arizona, which reads: "Peacemaker in the Camp of the Lamanites."⁶⁰

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 386.

⁵⁹McClintock, p. 87.

⁶⁰Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, p. 424.

CHAPTER III

EARLY SETTLERS IN ACTION, 1875-1903

Early Beginnings

When the early parties of missionaries asked the Hopis to move northward into Utah, as has previously been mentioned, the Hopis countered with the prediction "White men will settle in the regions to the south, in the river valleys. Why should we leave if they are coming here?"¹

The vision of the Hopis proved accurate, as it was not long until President Young brought into action his long-held desire to extend the permanent borders of Zion south and east of the Colorado. The year 1873 marks the beginning of his attempts to establish the Saints permanently in Arizona, although exploration and missionary trips continued to be carried out later, as discussed in the previous chapter. John D. Lee had already been sent to establish a ferry at the Paria crossing of the Colorado in late 1871 as a preliminary to this move.²

In late January of 1873 a party of twelve men, under the direction of Lorenzo Roundy, were guided across the Colorado by Jacob Hamblin to explore the country near the San Francisco Mountains and the headwaters of the Verde and to report on the possibility of settlement there. They

¹See page 33.

²Juanita Brooks, John Doyle Lee, Zealot--Pioneer Builder--Scapegoat (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1964), p. 306.

were also to build a wagon road on a route that Hamblin had selected between Lee's Ferry on the Colorado and the small Hopi village of Moencopi. The men performed this assignment without undue incident and upon their return a report was made suggesting four or five areas as being suitable for settlement.³

This suggestion was acted upon immediately and soon the first company of one hundred men and six women was organized and on its way under the leadership of Horton D. Haight.⁴ They arrived at Moencopi on May 17, 1873, and at the Little Colorado on the 22nd, but what they found was discouraging. Instead of green grass and clear water they found parched alkaline soil and thick muddy water. An exploratory party went up the river over a hundred and thirty miles to see if there were any rich farm lands or good water, but returned with a report of the same discouraging conditions.

While a report on these conditions was sent back over the trail to Brigham Young the party settled down to wait for further orders. However, the desolation and discouragement soon became so oppressive that gradually they began to break up into groups of ten and fifteen wagons that headed back to Utah until, by the time the answer had arrived weeks later, all had recrossed the Colorado.⁵ President Young's answer was for them to stay at their mission no matter how muddy the water, how dry the soil or how scarce the grass, but it was too late.

³Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, pp. 336-37.

⁴Several sources indicate 100 wagons, but this number is unsubstantiated and probably was not so large.

⁵Howard E. Daniels, "Mormon Colonization in Northern Arizona" (Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Arizona, 1960), pp. 41-42.

Jacob Hamblin had served as guide for this initial colonizing effort and assured them that there was better land on up the Little Colorado, but he failed in his efforts to keep them from turning back. He waited in Arizona for further instructions and while there planted crops at the Moenave "Mowabby" springs seven miles west of the Hopi farms at Moencopi.⁶ In late June, Hamblin returned to Utah and his crops were taken over by John D. Lee. Lee had gone to Moenave from his ferry on the Colorado to avoid being taken by federal officials for his part in the Mountain Meadows Massacre sixteen years earlier.⁷ Although he had been excommunicated from the Church in 1870 for his participation in the above-named affair, Lee still considered himself to be a faithful Latter-day Saint and actually did much good for the Church among the Indians of this area.

Quite naturally, in their lack of acquaintance with white-man ways, the Indians had little comprehension of Lee's being cut off from the Church, whether they knew it or not, and thus considered him to be a Mormon. Also, at this time Lee was still in close contact with the Church and worked closely with many of the leading brethren and, as before mentioned, was sent to establish the Colorado ferry upon direct orders from Brigham Young. These facts serve to indicate the reasons that many of the Indians looked up to Lee with a great deal of trust. Looking upon him with the same respect that they bestowed upon Hamblin and the missionaries, the Indians visited him often during his nine months of farming at Moenave.

⁶Little, p. 119.

⁷Robert Glass Cleland and Juanita Brooks, Editors, A Mormon Chronicle, The Diaries of John D. Lee (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1955), II, p. 263.

He fed them and treated them kindly and gained the close confidence and friendship of many leaders of the Navaho and Hopi tribes, an attitude which was rarely extended to the other whites.⁸

It is not recorded that Lee made any attempts to preach Mormon doctrine to any of his Lamanite friends but he does record the significant fact in his diary that there were whites, mostly military men, moving among the Indians trying to work them up against the Mormons to prevent them settling in that region.⁹ This is the second occurrence on record in this area¹⁰ of a drama that has been often re-enacted, at first by the military and later the Indian agents and leaders of other churches also working with the Indians. Some Mormons would describe this opposition as the "Power of the Devil" working against them, but generally they were opposed because of great national prejudice against the Mormons, especially in the early period, and ignorance by those involved concerning the genuine interest of the Latter-day Saints in the welfare of their red brethren. Not all agents and ministers of other denominations opposed the Mormons. There were many that were friendly and helpful and were favorable to the Latter-day Saint missionary program.

Disappointed with the failure of the initial colonizing venture into Arizona under Haight, President Young seriously considered leading the next attempt himself, but his advancing years and heavy responsibilities were taking their toll on his health, and sickness prevented this effort.¹¹

⁸Ibid., pp. 263-342.

⁹Ibid., p. 299.

¹⁰See page 22.

¹¹Cleland, p. 311.

Others were sent during the winter of 1873-74, however, but information as to exact chronology and the persons involved is scant. The most prominent person of this year was John S. Blythe, who led the first colonizing venture aimed directly at the Moencopi area. Blythe was appointed to build a good boat at Lee's Ferry and hauled logs some distance for that purpose during late 1873 and January, 1874.¹²

In February Blythe, with fourteen men, started for the Moencopi but was turned back by Hamblin, who was returning from his "Death Council" attempt at settling the Grass Valley affair. Hamblin suggested that the Blythe party remain west of the river for several weeks more until the excitement died down a bit. After waiting two weeks and not hearing more from Hamblin, Blythe and Ira Hatch rode from the ferry to Moencopi, found things fairly peaceful, and returned for their small party of about ten families.¹³ It was after all were moved to Moencopi that the second "Death Council" involving Blythe and Hatch occurred.¹⁴ Accounts of this settlement are both brief and varied, but seem to indicate that some of the group settled in Indian homes at Moencopi and some took over the Lee ranch at Moenave.¹⁵

This settlement was short lived, however, as there was still excitement and unrest among the Navahos due to the Grass Valley affair and finally it was decided to close the "Moqui Mission," much to the regret

¹²Tuba City Ward Record, Salt Lake City L. D. S. Church Archives, Utah.

¹³Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, pp. 358-62.

¹⁴See page 37.

¹⁵Andrew Jensen (comp), Southwest Indian Mission Record, Salt Lake City L. D. S. Church Archives, Utah.

of Hamblin. A party left Kanab and Long Valley in April to remove the Saints from the Moencopi area.¹⁶ Thus the second attempt at colonization lasted hardly a month.

The Legacy of James S. Brown

By the fall of 1875, Hamblin and his companions had settled the difficulties with the Navahos sufficiently that the attention of Brigham Young was again directed toward expansion to the land southward. With a failure and a partial success behind him, he determined to make good this time and called on a capable and proven church leader to direct colonization into Arizona. Elder James S. Brown was a veteran of the famed Mormon Battalion, had done missionary work in the Pacific, and had filled many other church assignments with a determination beyond that of the average man. He had filled a number of missions to the Indians in Utah and the Northwest and with this experience and determination President Young felt that he had found the man that would not give up easily.

Brown, called to be president of the Arizona Mission, immediately left for Arizona, accompanied by twelve men, most of them experienced companions of Jacob Hamblin. They arrived at Moencopi on December 3, 1875, and erected a stone fort and several homes near the Hopi village and fields, that had as usual been abandoned during the winter. This is the first known attempt by the Mormons to build their own permanent homes at Moencopi. Thales Haskell and Ira Hatch went to visit the Oraibi village and found all peaceful. Upon returning they were accompanied by the Hopi

¹⁶Corbett, Jacob Hamblin, the Peacemaker, pp. 364-65.

leader Tuba and wife who expressed pleasure at seeing the Mormons settling among them.¹⁷

On December 9, Elder Brown took four companions and traveled to the Little Colorado and upstream as far as the present site of Joseph City. He found what he felt was good water, soil, grass, and timber and recommended the site for colonization. Returning by way of the San Francisco Mountains, he arrived back at Moencopi on December 29 and on New Year's Day, 1876, started back to Utah with his favorable report.¹⁸

Apparently anticipating Elder Brown's favorable report, President Young had already taken steps to call two hundred Saints to go in four companies to settle on the Little Colorado in time to plant crops in the spring. This colonization effort was carried forth under the general supervision of Brown and later that of Lot Smith, leader of one of the four companies, and will be discussed in a later section.

Meanwhile President Brown returned to his mission and during the next six months, with several companions, traveled extensively throughout Northern Arizona and into New Mexico. He became acquainted with and taught the gospel to many groups of Indians while on this trip looking for favorable sites to colonize. In traveling through the Navaho reservation in western New Mexico in mid June of 1876 Elder Brown and his companions had a most unusual experience in which they were stopped in the midst of a forest by a Navaho and asked who they were, where did they come from, where were they going and what was their business in Navaho

¹⁷James S. Brown, Giant of the Lord (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), pp. 467-72.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 472-74.

country. Replying in the Spanish language that they were Mormons from Utah they were told to

Stop your wagon under this tree and talk to us; for we hear the Mormons have a history of our forefathers. The Americans and Spaniards say you claim this, but we know they often speak falsely, and we wish to learn from your own lips whether you have such a record, and how you came by it. We want you to stop here till our people can come together, and you can tell us the truth.¹⁹

Elder Brown and his two companions, Seth B. Tanner and Thales Haskell, hardly had time to unhitch their team and set up camp when nearly three hundred Navahos appeared from all directions and gathered about them on the ground. Two chiefs were in the group and sat as near to Elder Brown as they could get and again asked about the Book of Mormon. Brown then told them what the book was about, how the Mormons got it and after telling them what was in it tears came to the eyes of many in the audience and some of them spoke out:

We know that what you say is true, for the traditions of our good old men who never told a lie agree with your story. Our forefathers did talk with God, and they wrote; and when they became wicked and went to war they hid up their records, and we know not where they are.²⁰

This is typical of many Indian reactions to the Book of Mormon story, both then and now, and the telling of this story continues to be the chief tool of Mormon Indian missionaries to this day.

During the summer of 1876 there were several conflicts, cattle stealing, etc., most of which were supposed, between the Navahos and the new Mormon settlers on the Little Colorado and in August President Brown took a delegation of Navaho chiefs to Salt Lake City to settle their

¹⁹Ibid., p. 481.

²⁰Ibid., p. 482.

grievances with President Young. Everything was settled to their satisfaction and relations between this unpredictable tribe and the incoming settlers were improved.²¹ Elder Brown remained in Utah through most of the following winter on assignment by President Young to travel through the various communities to lecture on the country, Indians and possibilities of settling in Arizona in an effort to build up interest in the new mission.

Upon return to Arizona in the spring of 1877 President Brown became even more deeply interested in his Lamanite brethren and the work of settling incoming wagonloads of pioneers from Utah did not keep him from spending much time in Navaho camps near Moencopi, learning their language, and teaching them from the Book of Mormon. He again traveled into New Mexico and through many parts of the Navaho nation. On this trip he was able to meet and preach to Totoso-Ne-Huste, the head chief of the entire Navaho tribe and to many of the subchiefs and many of them expressed their desire to go and meet the Mormon leaders. Accordingly, arrangements were made to meet at Moencopi, from which place Elder Brown took them to Salt Lake City, arriving on August 28, 1877.

President Young was on his death bed and the next day the Navaho party visited him only hours before his passing.²² Following the funeral of his great leader Elder Brown was released from his mission to Arizona. He had lost a leg several years before and had been in poor health since then, but this had not prevented him from filling an important mission in both settling the Saints and working among the Indians in Arizona.

²¹Ibid., p. 483.

²²One Navaho chief told missionaries later that he was the last person to shake hands with President Young.

Elder Brown has been criticized for pushing so hard for the settling of the Little Colorado region which was, in large part, a failure. But in the interest of our study his position of being the first to directly carry the doctrines of Mormonism to the Navahos in their own land is the beginning of a new era. During his many preaching excursions among the Navahos it seems that there was no attempt at conversions but much good was done in securing the friendship and good will of this tribe in anticipation of conversions to come.

"In the Midst of the Lamanites"

Although the first Mormon settlement of Northern Arizona was made at the Moencopi village, the big colonization effort of 1876 was directed toward the Little Colorado River. From the time of their establishment the Little Colorado settlements held sway over all the Church's Arizona communities and continued to do so for the next ten years.

Nevertheless the settlement of the Moencopi area, although not so popularly known, holds a unique place in both Mormon and Arizona history. Its reason for being is three fold. First, being located about halfway between the Colorado and the Little Colorado towns, Moencopi, and later Tuba City, served as an oasis in the desert for travelers on the long dusty trail through dry desolate country. It was an important stop for rest and recuperation of livestock for Mormon settlers of Arizona during the next quarter century. Second, the springs and fertile lands of the area served to entice permanent settlers to Tuba City and Moencopi to build homes and maintain a normal Mormon community. Third, and most important in this study, is the location of a settlement that was literally "in the midst of the Lamanites." The Hopis were next door neighbors in Moencopi and bands of Navahos and Piedades (Paiutes) roamed the nearby hills.

During their few weeks in Moencopi in the spring of 1874 the John L. Blythe party had set out plantings of apples, peaches and grapes and had prepared land for crops.²³ After permanent residence was established by the Brown exploring party of 1875 more land was prepared and in the spring of 1876 some of the missionaries brought their families to stay. Although they probably never numbered over several dozen the few families made their home in the Hopi village of Moencopi for the next two years and lived and farmed alongside the Hopis.

On September 17, 1878, while Apostle Erastus Snow was a visitor at Moencopi, he, with a number of other brethren including the Hopi convert, Tuba, walked from Moencopi to the spring about two miles northwestward. Here they drew on the sand a plot for a community with streets, ditches and roads. They named it Tuba City in honor of the most prominent member of the community which then consisted of nine families.²⁴

The establishment of a new townsite could possibly be interpreted as a Mormon attempt to segregate themselves from the Hopis, but this was probably not the case, since several Hopi families built homes in Tuba City. Generally, however, the Mormons moved to Tuba City and the Indians stayed in Moencopi. Moencopi was a typical disorderly pueblo village, built without consideration of streets and square blocks, and located on a rocky hillside. This may have been the main reason for the move to an area where orderly streets, blocks and gardens were possible. Tuba City grew slowly during the next twenty-five years, reaching a top population of about 150 souls at the turn of the century.²⁵

²³Joseph Brinkerhoff, "A History of Tuba City" (Unpublished notes in the possession of Hazel M. Turley, Mesa, Arizona).

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Tuba City Ward Record.

Relationships between Mormon and Indian during this quarter century are interesting and varied. It seems that the Mormons had little success during this period in their efforts to convert the Hopis to Mormonism. Tuba and his wife Cochenamen were faithful and dependable members but other than these two there is record of only two or three other Moencopi Hopis baptized into the Church. These few Hopis are the only ones of their tribe numbered among the hundred or more Lamanites baptized in Tuba City during the early 1880's.²⁶ It will be remembered that the Hopis were stubborn against being Christianized by the Spaniards and refused to move to Utah at the invitation of Brigham Young and the Mormons. Perhaps it is this same tenacity to their own "Hopi way" that prevented significant conversions to Mormonism during the stay of the Latter-day Saints among them.

From the time of Jacob Hamblin's first visit in 1858, Tuba and his wife became friendly and partial to the Mormon people. They were severely criticized by their own people but still persisted in inviting the Mormons to live at Moencopi, giving the Saints the land on which to build Tuba City and helping in every way to aid the conversion of their people. Despite Tuba's efforts the Hopis continually rejected Mormonism although they generally had a friendly relationship with the Saints.

Tuba went through periods of being virtually an outcast from his people, but always managed to exert much influence due to his ability to bring rain. He was a chief priest of the water clan and several other associated clans of the Hopi religion for years and even after his abandonment of his native religion to take up Mormonism, the Hopis respected

²⁶Christian Lingo Christensen, "Diary" (Brigham Young University Library Special Collections, 1958).

his rainmaking powers.²⁷ This ability of Tuba's may have prevented the Hopis from throwing Tuba out completely and preventing Mormon settlement in the Tuba City area.

During the stay of the Mormons in Tuba City there was a regularly organized ward (congregation) with a bishop and other appropriate officers. This was the first regularly functioning part of church organization made available to the Indians of our area, but Tuba and his wife seem to be the only ones who consistently took advantage of this and were what we would consider to be active members of the Church.

On April 10, 1877, Tuba and his wife journeyed to St. George with Andrew S. Gibbons and family. Here they entered into the newly dedicated St. George Temple to receive the sacred endowments and sealings that constitute a basic and holy part of the Mormon faith. Elder Gibbons interpreted for them and reported that they received their endowments quite understandingly.²⁸ This event is significant in that Tuba and his wife were the first of their tribe to participate in the sacred Mormon Temple ritual. They were also the only known members of the Hopi, Navaho, or Zuni tribes to be invited into the Temple prior to the mid-twentieth century, over sixty years later. This fact points out an interesting aspect of Indian missionary work in that while the Indian people were often preached to and baptized, little effort was made to get them to understand and practice the more complex aspects of Mormonism. This negligence may have been due to many factors, such as language and cultural problems, and will be discussed thoroughly in the next chapter.

²⁷Brinkerhoff notes (Tuba's name is pronounced "Teuve" which literally means "outcast" in the Hopi language).

²⁸Andrew S. Gibbons, "Diary" (Handwritten copy in possession of Genevieve G. Anderson, Salt Lake City, Utah), p. 19.

Another important Hopi conversion of this period was that of Tom Polacca of the Tewa village on first mesa.²⁹ Polacca was a progressive Indian and advocated schools, health programs and other white man ways, much to the opposition of his tribesmen. He favored moving from the mesa tops to the valley below and was the first of his people to do so, establishing a store beneath first mesa that started the Hopi town that now bears his name. He gave up his Tewa-Hopi religion to espouse Mormonism and although there are no records to substantiate his baptism it is generally believed that he was baptized. Family sources state that Polacca lived at Moencopi for several years during the stay of the Mormons in Tuba City and that he joined the Church at that time.³⁰

Outside of these several conversions listed it seems that failure met all direct attempts to convert the Hopis. The few records available dealing with the history of the Mormons in Tuba City indicate many visits and meetings with the Hopis for this purpose, but they did not desire to believe in Mormonism.³¹

Missionary work among other tribes of the area met with somewhat better success. For an account of these proceedings we are indebted to the diary of Christian Lingo Christensen, one of the early community leaders of Tuba City. During his decade as a missionary in the area Christensen records the baptism of a few Navahos and quite a number of the Paiutes that were in the locality at that time.³²

²⁹Although the Tewas have maintained many of their own tribal ways during their three centuries in Hopiland, they are generally considered to be part of the Hopi people.

³⁰Information obtained in correspondence with S. D. Allen, Wood-Ruff, Arizona, February 14, 1965.

³¹Christensen, p. 39.

³²Ibid., pp. 22-25.

Nothing further has come to light concerning these converts. From the standpoint of the historian it seems that many of these conversions were superficial, inasmuch as little or no attempt was made toward changing their native way of life to conform with contemporary Christian living and organizing them into active church units. This seems to have been a common failing of the Church during this period and may also possibly be attributed to the language and cultural difficulties which will be discussed later. An ironic clue to the success of the missionaries is found in the Tuba City Ward record which reads:

Though the Indians themselves were not always friendly, they were in the habit of coming in occasionally for the purpose of being rebaptized and having a feast.³³

Not all conversions among the Navahos and Paiutes of the area were superficial, however, as a few showed a genuine interest in the Church and a desire to conform to its teachings. Indian men were occasionally given the priesthood, which was normally held by worthy Mormon men and boys over twelve years of age.³⁴ Generally, however, the Indians would not change their ways of life and thus there were few results from these labors.

An important event occurred in the Tuba City area with the establishment of a small woolen mill near Moencopi by John W. Young in 1879. Young spent about \$12,000 on the venture and intended to work up the wool which could be bought from the Navahos very cheaply. In a short time, however, it was abandoned and allowed to go to ruin. Tuba took pride in the factory and although it was abandoned for good he watched over the machinery that remained. After his death in 1887 the Indians carried off

³³Tuba City Ward Record.

³⁴Christensen, p. 24.

every belt and piece of iron they could use and the whole thing was a total loss.³⁵ This project seems to have been a worthy effort on the part of Young to upgrade the economy of both the Mormons and the Indians.

In the writings of Christensen we find ample evidence of another important aspect of Mormonism, that of administrations, or the laying on of hands, for the healing of the sick. Miraculous healings were often recorded by Christensen and others as they pursued their missionary duties during this period.³⁶ The unsanitary living conditions of the tribes of our area, even of the semi-civilized Hopis, was conducive to illness and poor health and thus opportunity was often provided for the missionaries to "exercise the powers of their priesthood." Undoubtedly the superstitions of the natives made it easy for the missionaries to capitalize on their healing powers in influencing the Indians.

In making assessment of the Indian mission accomplishments of the early Tuba City settlers we can see that failure was often more apparent than success. Their success, though imperceptible at times, was evident in the almost constant trust and friendship extended to them by the Indians. When the Tuba City settlers arrived in their area of colonization they were so ill-equipped and poor that many had to buy food from the Indians. During later years this situation was reversed, when the Mormons were able to feed their Indian neighbors with the products of their own fields and herds.

This was the period during United States history, the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when Indian agents were political appointees

³⁵Joseph Fish, "History of Arizona" (Unpublished manuscript in Brigham Young University Library microfilm collection, 1906), p. 565.

³⁶Christensen, pp. 26-29.

under the so-called "Spoils System" of government. Many government officials were notoriously corrupt and the Indians were nearly always pushed around and mistreated by the whites in general. Presumably the government was responsible to see to the welfare of their Indian wards, but such was seldom the case and the Mormon settlers did a great service during the last two decades of their twenty-eight year stay in the area by feeding and clothing hungry Indians. The very Christian-like conduct of the pioneers won the respect of the Lamanites and paved the way for conversions in the years to come.³⁷

The Little Colorado Mission

As has been intimated earlier, the settlement of the Saints on the Little Colorado River was the focal point of Brigham Young's plans to colonize Arizona. The decade following 1876 saw both the rise and fall of a number of small communities stretched along the banks of that muddy and treacherous stream and the pages of Arizona history now hold the names of towns that only exist in memory. Towns such as Brigham City, Sunset, Obed, Ballinger's Camp and Allen's Camp fell beneath the ravages of floods, death, and discouragement. It has been estimated by Pioneer Historian Joseph Fish that after a lapse of five years scarcely one tenth of those called to settle on the Little Colorado could be found at their posts.³⁸ Most had gone back to Utah and by 1887 even the tenth that remained moved to other parts of Arizona or to Joseph City.

³⁷Information obtained in correspondence with Lois H. Gardner, Woodruff, Arizona, January 12, 1964.

³⁸Fish, p. 562.

Joseph City is all that remains of the half-dozen or so original towns of the lower reaches of the Little Colorado and its success is a tribute to the tenacity of the Mormons in a most barren and forbidding land. Higher up this river and its tributaries we find the settlements of Woodruff, Snowflake, St. John's, and Ramah, all of which play an important part in the remaining pages of this study and all of which endured hardships and toil in their establishment equal to that of any group of communities in the settlement of Western America.

The new settlements on the Little Colorado started optimistically and energetically from their beginnings in 1876 and soon had fields, canals, and dams across what, at that time, seemed to be a small peaceful river. Towns were laid out and homes built as more families arrived and soon an ecclesiastical stake organization was set up with each of the budding little towns organized as one of its wards. Pioneer leader Lot Smith was the stake president of the Little Colorado Stake of Zion during its decade of existence and played the most prominent part in the futile attempts at colonizing the area.³⁹ However, despite the valiant efforts of Smith and his co-leaders, often stimulated by visits and encouragement from Church Leaders from Utah, the seasonal periods of flood, drouth, sand storms, alkaline soil and muddy water made human habitation of the region unbearable for a civilized, educated and agricultural people.

Early in 1876, while giving counsel to the future leaders called to colonize Arizona, Brigham Young named the several reasons for this venture. One of the most important was "to build a stronghold from which to promote the Indian Mission among the Navaho, Hopi and Apache tribes."⁴⁰

³⁹Little Colorado Stake History (Salt Lake City: L. D. S. Church Archives).

⁴⁰Daniels, p. 50.

Later in the same year President Young advised the settlers further on the subject of Indian missionary work by saying,

We desire that the settlements in the Little Colorado be built up to the Lord in righteousness, wherein an example will be set to the surrounding tribes of the Lamanites, and indeed to all others of the way the Lord will build up Zion.⁴¹

These statements will indicate the keen and unfailing interest of the Mormon prophet in Indian missionary work although he was in his declining years. His intense zeal to see that the gospel was carried to the Lamanites never faltered to his dying day and to Brigham Young falls much of the credit for the introduction of Mormonism among numerous Indian tribes. The stimulation and momentum given to this work by President Young was largely responsible for carrying it forth for over a decade after his death.

Record has been preserved of many letters written by President Young to the Saints on the Little Colorado prior to his death in which he counseled them in detail concerning dealings with the Indians. He advised his people to

Treat them with kindness, . . . set a proper example, . . . Instruct them in the Gospel, . . . Teach them to live in peace, become free from native vices and become useful citizens in the Kingdom. . .⁴²

Later he wrote

Your present position is an important one, surrounded as you are by the Lamanites. The influence of your settlements will spread to every tribe and nation in that part of the country. It is desirable, yes, it is indispensably necessary that that influence be of the proper character. The

⁴¹Letter to Elders Smith, Lake, Allen and Ballinger, July 15, 1876 (Original in possession of University of Arizona Library Special Collection, Tucson).

⁴²Ibid.

Lamanites may receive an immense amount of wickedness from the so-called Christians but from us they are to receive the gospel of the Son of God.⁴³

The value of the enthusiastic support given to missionaries to the Navahos, Hopis and later the Zunis by President Brigham Young can scarcely be overestimated.

In our analysis of the missionary work done with the Indians by the Little Colorado pioneers we come across what might be termed a standard procedure, if any, of efforts to convert the Lamanites, in this case the Navahos and Hopis, to the gospel. This procedure involved the calling of a dozen or so men from the stake to serve as Indian missionaries.

These missionaries were expected to provide for their families through farming or any other chosen occupation and upon occasion take a few days off to go on preaching tours onto the reservation. These missionaries were always men and it may be noted here that all missionary work in this area prior to the 1930's was carried on by the male members of the Church. As mentioned earlier, Hamblin took two Indian women along on one of his early trips to teach the Arizona natives the arts of civilization, but there are no records of women being involved in active preaching to the Indians during this early period. In 1884 C. L. Christensen recorded a missionary excursion by four Tuba City brethren and their wives to the local Indian camps, but the women had no connection with the preaching and conversion attempts that took place.⁴⁴

The success of these early part-time missionaries is difficult to evaluate. The efforts put forth to convert the Lamanites are greatly

⁴³Ibid., (January 10, 1877).

⁴⁴Christensen, p. 55.

varied, as some of the elders spent only an occasional day among the Indians and others conscientiously went on two and three week visits.⁴⁵ The elders were often encouraged to learn the language of the natives and several of them, notably C. L. Christensen, did so. Christensen of Tuba City became quite fluent in both the Navaho and Hopi languages and played a major part in Mormon communications with these tribes, especially during the 1880's.⁴⁶

The identity of the missionaries that served during the existence of the Little Colorado Stake, including the ward at Tuba City, is difficult to determine. Most of them were called and periodically sustained at the quarterly stake conferences and from the conference reports we gather most of our list. No record exists of length of terms expected or of releases of those who had served for some time. They are as follows: Christian L. Christensen, Thomas W. Brookbank, John McLaws, Henry W. Despain, Brigham H. Duffin, Alonzo Foutz, Warren M. Johnson, Joseph Lee, M. P. Mortensen, Martin Mortensen, C. Edmund Richardson, Ira Hatch, Andrew S. Gibbons, Jacob Hamblin, Thales Haskell, William B. Gardner, Charles Readhead, William Gibbons, J. C. Hansen, Nathan Tenney, Joseph B. Wakefield, and Ammon M. Tenney, who was the presiding elder over the missionaries much of the time.⁴⁷ Again, this list undoubtedly omits several whose names are not recorded and the list also contains the names of some who failed to serve, and some, such as Hamblin, who were in the area only briefly.

⁴⁵Diary of Andrew S. Gibbons, p. 21.

⁴⁶History of the Little Colorado Mission, (Handwritten Minute Book of the Little Colorado Stake, University of Arizona Library Special Collections, Tucson), p. 46.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 168.

Although they were not situated as close to the Indians as were the Saints in Tuba City, the relations of the Little Colorado Saints with the Indians were of a friendly nature. Many Navahos and Hopis visited the settlements to express pleasure at having the Mormons nearby. Others came to see the Mormon fields along the river and asked and were granted the opportunity and assistance in growing wheat fields of their own. Prior to the calamities which forced the abandonment of the settlements several Indian families were successful in modern farming.⁴⁸

The stake conferences, held four times annually, were gatherings of both religious and social significance among the Mormons and were looked forward to with a great deal of anticipation. Indian visitors were frequent and both the Saints and missionaries took advantage of the opportunity to teach them Mormonism. At a conference in Brigham City in 1878 C. L. Christensen was called upon to speak to some Navahos present in their own tongue, which he did, telling them why they met and what was talked about.⁴⁹ On another occasion, in 1882, several Indian converts that had applied for baptism were asked to speak in their own tongue in a Little Colorado Stake conference, Christensen interpreting.⁵⁰ These converts were Navahos and this is the first record of actual conversions made during this period in this area.

During Mormon attempts toward converting the Utes and Paiutes of Utah throughout the 1850's and 1860's a few Indian children were brought into Latter-day Saint homes to be raised in the ways of civilization and

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 87.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 108.

⁵⁰John McLaws, Jr., "Diary" (Brigham Young University Library Special Collections), p. 112.

the Mormon religion. Jacob Hamblin himself raised at least three Indian children and had others in his home at various times. This practice was carried out to a lesser degree in Arizona, as several Navaho children were invited into several homes to live and attend school.⁵¹ The practice never became widespread but may have contributed somewhat to the friendly feelings of the Navahos toward the Mormons.

The permissiveness of the Navaho people in letting their children go and live with the Mormons is significant when one considers that the Indians were emerging from a period in which slave trading was prevalent. Early white arrivals in the southwest, primarily the Spanish, paid well for Indian slaves throughout several centuries and although the Navahos were usually the traders, victimizing weaker tribes, they were victimized themselves often enough to keep close watch on their families and be suspicious of white men in general.

Several pages back it was noted that the missionaries of the Little Colorado settlements represented somewhat a standard procedure of Indian missionary work at that time. To carry this idea further we will go into the work of John McLaws, who kept a good diary, to be representative of the missionaries of the period.

John McLaws was Postmaster, carpenter and a farmer in the little town of Joseph City. His job as Postmaster and his skill as a carpenter made him an important economic asset to the small community. His ability to play the fiddle at their dances made him important socially and his record keeping abilities earned him the job of being secretary to many ward organizations. In addition to these responsibilities, McLaws was

⁵¹Ibid., p. 153.

called in 1881 to be an Indian missionary and served in this capacity for at least four years.

Whether it was by assignment or not we are not able to determine, but McLaws did nearly all of his recorded missionary work on the Cottonwood Wash in what is now the Greasewood area some forty miles northeast of Joseph City. During his four years of service he and his companions made about six one-week trips into the area. On these trips the missionaries would hold meetings in the Navaho camps and have long visits with them in an effort to teach them Mormonism. On his second trip in October, 1883, he was accompanied by C. E. Richardson, who spoke Spanish and this language was used in preaching. McLaws knew no Navaho and in many instances used a Navaho that could speak English to interpret.⁵²

Several Navahos became sufficiently impressed with Mormonism to request baptism during the visit of McLaws and Richardson in 1883 and since the wash was dry at the time they were asked to come to Joseph City in six days to be baptized. They arrived, as promised, and twelve were baptized in the Little Colorado.⁵³

One of the greatest single missionary trips in Mormon Indian mission history occurred in early April of 1884 when C. L. Christensen, Brigham H. Duffin and Alonzo Foutz came from Tuba City and with Elder McLaws traveled up the Cottonwood Wash. Many meetings were held throughout a week's time and, with the help of Christensen's knowledge of Navaho, strong preaching was done concerning the doctrines of Mormonism, coming calamities, and the evils of adultery, whiskey drinking, and card playing.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 172-73.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 147-48.

There was opposition among some Navaho leaders who tried to confound the missionaries, but they had little effect, as thirty-one were baptized in the nearby wash.⁵⁴

A number of Navaho chiefs had gathered at that place from many parts of the reservation, whether for the major purpose of listening to the missionaries we do not know. However, the tribal leaders told of their much contact with the Americans and their confusion as to the best way of life. They made an appeal to the Mormons for help.⁵⁵ Here we have beginnings of what the anthropologists call, "Culture in Transition," a process that is still taking place among the Navaho people.

McLaws had to return home but the three others stayed for several more days and baptized fourteen more into the Church including an 80 year old woman. There was much rejoicing and show of happiness among the Indians and the Elders were overjoyed at the success of 45 converts in little over a week.⁵⁶

John McLaws used his carpentry ability to an advantage as he would take a wagon load of lumber along on many of his trips and build a home for a needy family in connection with his preaching. This act of kindness could be called real Christianity and is an example of sincere helpfulness that endeared the Mormons to the Navahos at a time when they were either being exploited or ignored by the whites in general. That other Mormons, although not directly called as missionaries, had an interest in and assisted in the Indian Mission is noted when William J. Flake

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 160-63.

⁵⁵Christensen, p. 51.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 52.

would not accept pay for lumber to be used in building Indian homes. Elder McLaws was given permission to use all he needed for this purpose from Flake's sawmill.⁵⁷

The Ramah Mission

An important part of the great colonizing-missionary ventures of the Church of 1875-76 was the calling of the experienced missionary to the Ute Indians, Daniel W. Jones, to lead a party of elders into southern Arizona and Mexico. Elder Jones and several of his companions, notably Ammon M. Tenney, were acquainted with the Spanish language and were important in beginning the Mormon effort to teach the gospel to the Spanish speaking nations.

The missionaries visited a number of Arizona Indian tribes en-route to Mexico and arrived in January of 1876. Here missionary work began in earnest among the Mexican people. After a short time Elders Tenney and Robert H. Smith were sent northward into New Mexico to work with the Zunis and the Rio Grande Pueblos.⁵⁸ It is not known if the visit to the Rio Grande Pueblos ever materialized or was actually planned, but Elders Tenney and Smith hold significance in this study in being the first missionaries among the Zunis.

The two elders arrived at the Zuni Village on April 2, 1876, and were, according to their own report, gazed at with awe and wonderment as something wonderful.⁵⁹ At first the Zunis were shy and timid, but after

⁵⁷McLaws, p. 149.

⁵⁸Daniel W. Jones, Forty Years Among the Indians (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1960), p. 246.

⁵⁹Robert H. Smith, "Among the Zunis," The Juvenile Instructor XI (1876), 202.

the missionaries had explained to the village governor the object of their visit the Zunis were very pleased and came in large numbers to hear them preach.

We held meeting after meeting with them and explained to them the principles of the gospel, and also told them that the Book of Mormon was a history of their forefathers, which greatly pleased them, as they said it was in fulfillment of what had been promised them by their forefathers. Many of the leading men said they believed all we told them, and that their fathers had often told them that at some time in the future a class of intelligent people would come among them, and bring them a knowledge of whom they were and where they came from.⁶⁰

The two elders spent several weeks with the Zunis with the initial spectacular success that the preceding quote implies. Their success is further indicated by a total of 111 baptisms performed during their stay. The two elders soon returned to Utah where report was made to President Young of the excellent results of their Zuni mission. The Mormon President acted immediately and called Lorenzo H. Hatch and John Maughan to take their families and move southward to make their homes near the Zuni village. Meanwhile Elders Tenney, Smith and possibly others returned to work further with the Zunis. Elder Hatch arrived at the Zuni Pueblo with his family on September 7, 1876, and was received by his fellow elders as president of the Zuni mission. The missionaries and their families established themselves for the winter in the nearby Spanish-American ranching center of San Lorenzo.⁶¹

Missionary work with the Zunis, however, began to take a turn for the worse. After their initial interest in Mormonism and the conversion of over a hundred into the Church they apparently began to divide

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 224.

⁶¹ Ramah Ward Record, Salt Lake City: L. D. S. Church Archives.

among themselves, as the Hopis had done before, when discussing the advisability of Mormons living among them. Many were afraid that the Saints would steal their land and water and so Elder Hatch told them that the Mormons would select another location nearby and prove that they were friends.⁶² The Zunis still wanted the Mormons to preach to them although it seems that much of their enthusiasm for Mormonism had cooled.

Interest in Indian missionary work did not flag at this time, however, as the elders' attention was simply diverted to a new field of labor. Although the area was off their reservation, there were a few Navaho families located in the hills and valleys surrounding the Zuni village. These families showed an interest in Mormonism and several dozen of them were baptized during the fall of 1876 and the spring and summer of 1877.⁶³

Elders Luther C. Burnham and Ernest A. Tietjen arrived in the area in December, 1876, to serve as missionaries to the Navahos and in 1878 a permanent mission station to this tribe was established in the Savoia Valley by William H. Gibbons. Elder Burnham was in charge of the Navaho Mission in the area for several years and the missionaries were instructed to learn the Navaho language as an aid to their work. The person with the most success at this task of language learning was Elder Tietjen and he became the leading figure in the mission to the Navahos during the early Ramah period, taking over the leadership from Elder Burnham who was called to the San Juan Mission in 1880.⁶⁴

⁶²Lorenzo Hill Hatch, "Journal," (Brigham Young University Library Special Collections), p. 90.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 91-100.

⁶⁴Ramah Ward Record.

The Zuni Mission continued to fluctuate during its first years of existence and there were only a few conversions and little success in convincing that tribe that the Mormons meant well. Elder Lorenzo H. Hatch made a report in October, 1877, a year after his arrival, indicating 116 Zuni members and 34 Navahos, an increase of only five Zunis since the first visit of Tenney and Smith.⁶⁵

Elder Hatch traveled to Utah to spend the winter of 1877-78 with one of his families in Utah and in the spring of 1878 returned with the news that his mission to the Zuni Indians was over and that he was to assist in colonizing the Saints in the Little Colorado River section.⁶⁶ Ammon M. Tenney replaced Lorenzo H. Hatch in presiding over the Zuni Mission, which included the Savoia Valley Navaho Mission, and served until 1881 when he was replaced by Elder Tietjen.

During the winter of 1877-78 the Zuni village was struck by a terrible plague of smallpox. When the epidemic was at its height the Zunis were visited by Elder Llewellyn Harris who stopped for a few days at their village in late January while on his way to preach the gospel in the Rio Grande Mexican settlements. Harris stopped there to take advantage of an opportunity to get acquainted with the Zuni traditions, customs and their history. During the fore-part of his eight day stay the children in the house where he was staying came down with smallpox, whereupon he administered to them and, according to his account, they were healed. Word spread quickly and the next day he visited, by request, twenty-five

⁶⁵Irving Telling, "Ramah New Mexico, 1876-1900, an Historical Episode with Some Value Analysis," Utah Historical Quarterly, XXI (1953), 117.

⁶⁶Hatch, p. 101.

families, administering to one or more in each family. These visits of healing continued for several more days until one morning he was taken to a large room where the sick had been brought. He laid hands on the heads of all, offering the Mormon prayer of healing, and as he did so the healed were removed and others that were sick brought in. This continued until long after dark. A Spaniard that was present kept count and said the total was 406.

The next morning his arms were so weak that he could hardly move them but he made his way, two days later, to the John Hunt home at Savoia where he took severe fever and was bedfast for over a week. Recovered, he continued on his mission to the Mexicans on the Rio Grande for the next four months. While returning he stopped at the Zuni Pueblo and learned that all he had administered to had recovered with the exception of a Presbyterian minister, a medicine man and a Navaho, all of whom had opposed his healing efforts. These three had all died of smallpox.⁶⁷

This incident, if true, could stand on record as one of the miraculous supernatural healing episodes of all Mormondom, Christendom, or in all recorded history for that matter. Such an occasion would also serve to refute those who would believe that any beholder of miracles would instantly become a true and lasting believer. Such was not the case as Mormon influence with the Zunis seems to have been advanced little by this event.

During its first three years of existence the Zuni Mission seems to have been an independent unit taking orders and instructions directly

⁶⁷Llewellyn Harris, "Miraculous Healings Among the Zunis," The Juvenile Instructor, XIV (1879), 160.

from Church headquarters in Utah with only slight connection with the nearby Little Colorado Stake. In the fall of 1878 the Eastern Arizona Stake was organized with headquarters in Snowflake and in June of the next year the Elders in the Zuni area were formally sustained as Lamanite missionaries of this stake of Zion.⁶⁸

Administration of the Zuni mission was carried out by the leaders of the Eastern Arizona Stake, Jesse N. Smith being President, throughout the next eight years until 1887. At this time the Snowflake and St. Johns stakes were created from the larger parent unit which was dissolved and administration of the Zuni Mission was then carried out from St. Johns.

Closer to home, the missionaries themselves, in company with arrivals from the faltering Little Colorado settlements, started the little town of Navajo [sic] in a fertile valley a few miles east of the Zuni Pueblo. This community was started in 1882 and up to this time the missionaries had lived in the Spanish American towns or on temporary ranches near their Indian proselytes.

By 1884 Navajo contained a population of 104 and in 1886 the name was changed to Ramah due to a post office name conflict.⁶⁹ Although it was late in starting, the town of Ramah is commonly associated with missionary work among the Zunis and Navahos of the area. The story of Ramah is very similar to that of Tuba City in that it was surrounded by Navaho camps in the nearby hills and also located near a pueblo village. The town was started by Indian missionaries and was initiated to serve the primary purpose of Indian missionary work although Saints later came

⁶⁸Jesse N. Smith, Journal of Jesse N. Smith (Salt Lake City; Deseret News Press, 1953), p. 233.

⁶⁹Ramah Ward Record.

to farm and build a regular Mormon town. The fact that Ramah is still in existence as a Latter-day Saint community is probably the only reason that it is not so colorfully associated with Indian mission history as is Tuba City which passed from Mormon control over sixty years ago.

The Zuni mission operated much the same as the Tuba City and Little Colorado missions previously described. The elders were self-supporting and generally had their families with them. They would work for a period to see that their families were cared for and then go among the Zunis or Navahos to preach for a few days or weeks.

A notable exception in this pattern occurred in 1880-81 when the Atlantic and Pacific (Santa Fe) Railroad was being constructed across New Mexico and Arizona. Local Church leaders contracted much of the grade work in their vicinity and these contracts gave much needed employment to the Saints. As a whole the railroad work probably detracted from Indian missionary work but there were several instances recorded in which the Saints working on the grade preached to the Navaho of the area under the direction of Ammon M. Tenney.⁷⁰

Probably the most prominent Navaho convert to the Church during the entire period discussed in all areas of this chapter was Jose Pino of the Ramah area. He was the leader of the Navahos in the vicinity and was influential enough to help bring many of his people into the Church during this early period.⁷¹ Several Zuni chiefs also joined the Church but did not stay faithful very long. Easiest to convert in the beginning,

⁷⁰Joseph Fish, "Diaries," Brigham Young University Library Special Collections, p. 107.

⁷¹Telling, p. 118.

the Zuni people became divided by dissention and like the Hopis had done earlier, became alienated to the proposals of Mormonism.

The Navajo Ward and later the Ramah Ward which took its place was one of the focal points of Indian mission endeavors. Elder Ernest A. Tietjen was the bishop and he had Indians in his congregation on many occasions. It is not known if any besides Jose Pino were active Church members, but Elder Tietjen's missionary ability and his knowledge of the Navaho language made him popular with that tribe.⁷²

From the various sources used in this section dealing with the Ramah Mission we are able to glean most of the names of the missionaries serving in this area from the Eastern Arizona Stake. They are as follows: Ammon M. Tenney, Ernest A. Tietjen, Thomas W. Brookbank, C. E. Richardson, Gilbert D. Greer, Richard Gibbons, William F. James, Joel Johnson, Brigham Y. Perkins, Samuel E. Lewis, Eujenio Romero, John Harris, J. B. Ashcroft, Brigham H. Duffin, Nathan C. Tenney, William A. Tenney, Luther C. Burnham, Jacob Hamblin, Llewellyn Harris, Ebenezer Thayne, Peter J. Christoferson, Bateman H. Wilhelm, John N. Perkins, Edward Lewis, Joseph Cluff, Joseph E. Cluff, J. C. Owens, Jr., Ira Hatch, Joseph B. Wakefield and W. G. Black.

This list does not include Elders Robert H. Smith and Lorenzo H. Hatch who served and left before the Eastern Arizona Stake was organized. Elder Hatch served as a counselor in the presidency of this stake and was effective in encouraging Indian missionary work. There are many listed who also served as Little Colorado Stake Indian missionaries, many who would not respond to their assignments, and probably some whose names are lost from the pages of history.

⁷²Ibid., p. 122.

The San Juan Mission

Important in the consideration of missionary efforts to the vast Navaho tribe, although not so directly connected with the rest of this survey, is the story of Mormon settlement in the San Juan Basin of southeastern Utah. Although by 1879 conditions had become fairly settled on the western border between Utah and Arizona with colonists streaming into Arizona steadily and the Indians relatively pacified, on the east it was a different story. The Navahos and a fierce little band of Paiutes roamed southeastern Utah and much of the country nearby at will, terrorizing communities and seemingly answering to no one. For this and other reasons it became imperative that the Church build a settlement in the midst of this lawless element in order to quiet it down and bring security to settlements further north.⁷³

In 1879 a select band of proven pioneers was called to settle this area and their principal calling was to win the friendship and confidence of these two tribes of Indians and to preach the gospel to them as soon as they were ready to receive it. The majority of those called to this peace mission arrived at their destination on the San Juan River in the spring of 1880 and immediately set about building a fort for protection and farms for sustenance.

The story of their trials in getting there and in staying there cannot be told in these pages but it should be stated that these loyal pioneers endured incredible hardships and heartbreaks in settling this area and their story has become one of the epochs of Mormon history. As for Indian missionary work, during the first forty years of the stay of

⁷³Lyman, Indian and Outlaws, p. 11.

the Saints on the San Juan there was an average of more than one man killed each year by the Indians. There could be little preaching when they had the problem of staying alive.⁷⁴ Under the leadership of Silas S. Smith and others these settlers let it be known that they would be honest and fair but yet firm in dealing with their Lamanite neighbors. Much was done toward setting a good example of the right way of living and thus their actions may have done more good than actual words of preaching could have accomplished.⁷⁵

The local Paiutes were a small band, mostly located in the mountains west of the small Mormon settlement of Bluff. They were wild and uncontrolled at the coming of the Saints, but because of their lack of numbers they were not considered as threatening as the Navahos.

Bluff was located on the north bank of the San Juan River which was the northern boundary of the Navaho reservation. This tribe had been recovering from their experience at Fort Sumner for over a decade and were once again growing proud and dangerous, made worse by the bitter memory of the recent government crushing of their power, however deserved it may have been. Peace was precariously kept with the Navahos, however, although at times of crisis it seemed that the fledgling community would be wiped out completely. The fact that it wasn't is generally credited to the work of Thales Haskell.

The name of Thales Haskell has been familiar in the pages of this narrative. He served for years as the most constant and trusted missionary

⁷⁴Information obtained in correspondence with Albert R. Lyman, Blanding, Utah, November 17, 1963.

⁷⁵Kumen Jones, "The San Juan Mission to the Indians," (Brigham Young University Library Special Collections, 1941), pp. 32-33.

companion of Jacob Hamblin and with his call to the San Juan soon after its settlement Haskell comes to the fore as a skilled peacemaker in his own right. Thales was an unorthodox Mormon in that he used both liquor and tobacco which were somewhat frowned upon by the Mormon people as being unhealthful. Notwithstanding these habits he was constant in his loyalty to the Church and was well regarded by the Church leaders because of this loyalty, his influence with the Indians, and his willingness to accept any assignment, however dangerous.

Haskell was called to the area to serve as an interpreter and a mediator with the Indians. He was skilled in both the Navaho and Paiute languages but even more valuable was his knowledge and practice of many Indian customs and ways of life which quickly gained the respect of many Lamanites.⁷⁶ When horses were stolen or any disputes arose with the Indians the bishop would ask Elder Haskell to solve the difficulty or recover the stock, often at the peril of his life. His courage has become legendary in the San Juan area but he also served as a missionary in that he often visited the Navaho camps and taught them some of the precepts of Mormonism. His proselyting efforts were mostly directed toward spreading peace, good will, and common understanding between Mormon and Indian.

Later during the 1880's his family moved to the San Luis valley of Colorado, but Haskell stayed. His reason for staying and his loyalty is well expressed by the pioneer historian of the San Juan, Albert R. Lyman:

In 1896 I was in the old log store in Bluff, and Haskell was there when Brigham Young, Jr., of the Quorum of

⁷⁶Lyman, p. 79.

the Apostles came in and said, 'Brother Haskell, how is it you are still here when your family is gone?' Haskell answered, 'I was called here, and I have never been released.' 'Well,' said Brother Young, 'Brother Haskell, you are released with blessing of the authority that called you.' Then it took Brother Haskell but a little while to sell his lot and his little log cabin, and hurry to join his folks.⁷⁷

Of such men as Haskell was the quality and steadfastness of many of the earliest missionaries to the Lamanites. They were so necessary and yet so often forgotten as the Church swept past them to colonize and cultivate the lands made peaceful by their labors.

Support of the Brethren

The extraordinary zeal of many of the early missionaries discussed in this chapter might seem to be quite unusual when observed in the light of later neglect in preaching to the Indians. An insight into this zeal may be had in a look at the leadership, encouragement and support that was given them by their superiors. Daniel H. Wells, a counselor to Brigham Young, was among the first arrivals in the Little Colorado Mission in 1876 and he was accompanied by Erastus Snow and several lesser Church officials.⁷⁸ The presence of those leaders was primarily intended as a morale builder with a little advice given to the settlements at times when needed. Their visits were brief and spread over much territory but usually filled the desired effect of encouraging the settlers and the missionaries.

Erastus Snow, a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, was the leading Church authority responsible for the smooth operation of both

⁷⁷Lyman correspondence.

⁷⁸Hatch, p. XI.

settlement and Indian missionary work in the area for nearly a decade. During this period he spent most of his time traveling among the settlements and back and forth between Utah and Arizona in his capacity of being the official representative of Brigham Young and his successor John Taylor.

Reference has been made to the keen interest of Brigham Young in this work and with his death in 1877 interest did not flag. John Taylor took over the reins of Church leadership due to his being the senior member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles and was sustained as President of the Church three years later in 1880.⁷⁹ He too gave great encouragement to Indian missionary work and at one time told the Saints,

The work among the Lamanites must not be postponed if we desire to retain the approval of God. Thus far we have been content simply to baptize them and let them run wild again. But this must continue no longer. The same devoted effort, the same care in instructing, the same organization and priesthood must be introduced and maintained among the house of Lehi as among those of Israel gathered from the gentile nations. As yet God has been doing all and we comparatively nothing.⁸⁰

Here President Taylor both pinpoints the failure of followup that characterized early Indian missionary work and well describes the utopian Mormon concept of the Indian people eventually being as fully organized and active in the Church as the whites. He had little opportunity to carry out his plans, however, as the period of his presidency and the presidency of Wilford Woodruff that followed was a period of severe persecution of the Mormon people for their belief in polygamy. Plural marriage had been officially practiced by the Saints as a part of their

⁷⁹Brigham H. Roberts, The Life of John Taylor, (Salt Lake City; Bockcraft, Inc., 1963), p. 339.

⁸⁰Paul E. Felt, "The Book of Mormon, The Lamanite, and His Prophetic Destiny," Provo, Brigham Young University Publication, 1964, pp. 37-38.

religion since shortly after their arrival in Utah. The rest of the nation could not see polygamy as a religious concept and thus over the next four decades persecution mounted to the extent that the Mormons were forced to abandon the practice in 1890. The period of most intense persecution fell during the late 1870's and through the 1880's, during which time laws were passed against polygamy in Congress, great unpopular feeling was brought to bear against the Saints because of misunderstanding of their practice of this principle and many Church leaders who practiced polygamy were forced into exile to avoid being arrested and imprisoned. John Taylor eventually died in exile in 1887 and during these final years of polygamy the Church was disfranchised and came close to being broken up.

These events had an effect on the Indian missions. With the problem of keeping the Church unified during the darkest days of persecution President Taylor and other Church leaders had little time for the Lamanites no matter what their interests in them might have been. However, it is ironic to note that in several isolated cases the persecutions for polygamy actually boosted Indian missionary work. Much of the time spent in Arizona by Erastus Snow, Anthony W. Ivins and other Church leaders was to avoid being imprisoned by federal officials looking for them in Utah.⁸¹ They had a lot of time on their hands and used much of it to push Indian missionary work.

During 1879 and part of 1880 Apostle Wilford Woodruff spent most of his time in Arizona and New Mexico, also avoiding arrest for polygamy. He had opportunity to visit and write about the Hopis, Navahos and Zunis

⁸¹Andrew Jensen, Southwest Indian Mission Record.

and also the Pueblos of the Rio Grande. Elder Woodruff was enthusiastic about the possibilities of missionary work with the latter two tribes. He wrote to President Taylor expressing his belief that the Zunis and the Rio Grande Pueblo tribes were Nephites of Book of Mormon origin and were a higher class of people than the surrounding Lamanites. He advocated that at least forty good elders who could speak the Spanish language be sent to these tribes.⁸² The fact that nothing developed from this suggestion is an indication of the outside pressures on the Church at this time.

During the spring of 1883 young Apostle Heber J. Grant traveled through the Arizona-New Mexico mission area. Elder Grant traveled with the local Church leaders through the Navaho and Hopi reservations holding meetings and encouraging the Indian missionaries. He also attended conference meetings with the white members and saw to it that additional missionaries were called. Later, in company with Ernest A. Tietjen and others, he went into Navaholand for a visit with their great war chief Manuelito. They explained to him the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and offered to send missionaries to his people. Manuelito, with Tietjen interpreting, paid a fine compliment to the Mormon people for their honesty and said that he would gladly welcome any missionaries sent among them.⁸³

In 1881 Apostle Brigham Young, Jr., replaced Erastus Snow with the responsibility for general oversight of Church affairs in Arizona and New Mexico.⁸⁴ Elder Young spent most of his time in the area during the next

⁸²Cowley, Wilford Woodruff, pp. 506-529.

⁸³Heber J. Grant, "Visit to the Moquis," The Contributor, XVII (February 1896), 203.

⁸⁴Ramah Ward Record.

six or more years due to polygamy pressures in Utah. An account of his Indian missionary activities is as follows:

Apostle Brigham Young, Jr., spent much of the summer (1886) in the Eastern Arizona Stake, but being cautious about making himself known in public he did not mingle much with the Saints. Most of his labors were directed to the establishment of the Lamanite mission which at the close of the year was in good condition. Twelve Indian missionaries had been called from the Stake and most of them were in the field at the close of the year. Ramah, in New Mexico, was the headquarters of the mission and the brethren who labored as missionaries spent most of their time among the Navahos, the Pueblos, and the Rio Grande Indians. Most of the brethren thus laboring were doing a good work and laboring with much success.⁸⁵

Closing the Missions

This chapter now being completed has not only been the longest but in many ways the heart of my thesis. During little more than a decade, roughly from 1875 to 1887, there was an intensive dual movement to both colonize the area and to convert the Indians. The efforts at conversion were, as has been described, spasmodic at best but one has to admire the valiant efforts of most of these men who generally worked hard at their Indian missionary callings despite trying circumstances. Eventually the colonization calling won precedence and after 1887 there is little record of preaching to the Indians. For many purposes the following sixteen years would belong in the next chapter but for the dramatic instances that closed the Ramah and Tuba City missions prior to and during 1903.

The only reference that has been found concerning the official close of the Indian mission is found in the Ramah Ward record. It mentions that on December 29, 1887, Apostle Brigham Young, Jr., came to Ramah

⁸⁵Eastern Arizona Stake Record. Salt Lake City: L. D. S. Church Archives.

and discontinued the mission on account of the opposition of the government Indian agents. Thereafter Ramah continued to exist as a Mormon settlement but it appears that all proselyting efforts were abandoned. Internal dissensions, periodic crop failures, a dam break in 1897, land title difficulties, and a severe drought in 1898 caused the First Presidency to appoint a committee in 1898 to consider the Ramah situation and possible abandonment. Evidence that the Indians were not forgotten despite a lapse of missionary work for a decade was shown when the committee was asked to take into consideration the question of missionary work among the Zuni and Navaho Indians. The report was unfavorable and the Saints were released from the Ramah mission on January 28, 1900, to go elsewhere if they desired.⁸⁶ Many stayed and became the nucleus of what is still essentially a Mormon community.

The Indian mission on the Little Colorado seems to have faded out of existence along with the stake organization of that area. The stake records contain no reference to the abandonment of the work and even the diary of John McLaws offers no hint of missionary work done after 1885 or explains why it stopped.

In general the last years of the Saints in Tuba City appear to have been peaceful as far as relations with the Indians was concerned except for the killing of Lot Smith in 1892. The well-known pioneer leader was impulsively shot in a dispute with some of the local Navahos.⁸⁷ By the turn of the century there had been an extension of the Navaho reservation westward until it bordered against Tuba City. The settlers had no

⁸⁶Telling, pp. 122-33.

⁸⁷McClintock, pp. 159-60.

title to their land which had not been surveyed and had been initially occupied under squatters rights. The Indians, though friendly, were advised by their agents to crowd the Mormons out and were told the land belonged to them. Eventually the attention of the government was drawn to the situation and it was finally decided that the Saints should vacate their lands in favor of the Indians. Forty-five thousand dollars was paid for their improvements and divided up fairly. The Mormons left Tuba City in February, 1903, to find new homes in Idaho, Utah, and other parts of Arizona.⁸⁸

The abandonment of Tuba City marks the official end of this period of missionary work which really finished for all practical purposes, over fifteen years before.

⁸⁸Tuba City Ward Record.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERIOD OF WAITING, 1903-1936

"The Time is Not Yet"

In reviewing my thesis as written thus far the most striking result of nearly a half century of the Indian missionary work described is its apparent failure in many ways. In the eyes of this historian of the mid-1960's and most probably in the eyes of the contemporary in the first decade of this century it seemed that much of the faithful work done showed little results. Hundreds of Indians of the area had been baptized, mostly between 1875 and 1887, only to run wild again and return to their traditional way of life instead of becoming civilized. The first reason this happened was because there was little sustained followup after the initial successful missionary contacts and the second reason was because the Mormons had little comprehension of the magnitude of their task of converting Indians. An insight into this situation is expressed by S. Lyman Tyler.

The Europeans (Spanish, French and English), at first expected the Indians to eagerly adopt their 'superior' way of life. They expected that when the Indians saw their way of life, when they heard the story of Christianity, almost overnight they would become Christians and become like the Europeans. Four hundred years of experience has taught us that this does not happen rapidly.¹

¹S. Lyman Tyler, "Modern Results of the Lamanite Dispersion: The Indians of the Americas," (Provo; Brigham Young University Publication, 1965), pp. 8-9.

Such an attitude was also held by the Latter-day Saint. In fact, the Mormons were more strongly motivated to civilize the Indians than were the first Europeans to enter this land due to their possession of the Book of Mormon which gave the Indians significance in their religion. The Mormons, too, felt that as soon as they presented their message to the Indians, especially with the significance of the Indians in their religion, the Indians would quickly see the "Light of the Gospel" and the advantages of white civilization over their own and become quickly civilized.

The fact that this did not happen and that the Saints even had to give up missionary work for a while is not an indication of loss of interest in the Lamanite. It is an indication that the Mormon people were coming to realize that converting the Indians was no easy romantic matter and that new methods must be tried and that possibly an even better idea would be to wait for better conditions and more favorable circumstances. Some of the factors in closing the mission and reasons for waiting will now be discussed.

First, it must be made clear that the abandonment of missionary work in this area did not necessarily mean a Church-wide shutdown. During the last decade of the past century and through the first three decades of this century there were various efforts at presenting the Gospel to Indian tribes throughout the West, Canada, Mexico, and into Indian territory (Oklahoma).² These efforts were sporadic and limited, however, and are far from comparable to the well organized present day missionary work being done throughout both North and South America.

²Information obtained in correspondence with Spencer W. Kimball, Salt Lake City, Utah, December 10, 1963.

When Brigham Young, Jr., closed the Ramah mission in 1887³ the reason was expressed as being because of the opposition of the government Indian agents. This continued to be the Church's official reason for not carrying the Gospel to the Hopi, Navaho and Zuni tribes during the next fifty years. In 1931 Lucy Bloomfield, the wife of George Bloomfield, an Indian trader at Toadlena, New Mexico, and a member of the Church, wrote to Heber J. Grant, then President of the Church, suggesting that a mission be opened among the Navahos. President Grant replied,

We hope that at no far distant date we may be able to do some missionary work among the Navajos. [sic]. One of the reasons for not holding Church services among them at the present time is that the agents apportion to the different Protestant denominations the religious work among the Indians and we have no apportionment whatever.⁴

Thus President Grant was hopeful for the future of Indian missionary work but at the moment held to a legal reason for waiting. It has not been revealed whether the Church could have secured an apportionment if they so desired. Possibly not and also possibly they could have just wanted to wait for more favorable circumstances.

Brief attention has already been given to the divergent civilizations of the Whites and Indians which the Mormons hoped to quickly overcome with the conversion of the natives. The lower culture of the Indians, according to the Whites, made them completely unacceptable in their present condition and yet the Indians refused to change rapidly. This human factor of the Indians being unable to quickly adjust to the European standards of food, dress, deportment, etc., made them feel out of place with their white neighbors and the Whites were unable to accept

³See page 84.

⁴Letter from Heber J. Grant to Mrs. George Bloomfield, June 12, 1931.

the Indians as equals, despite religious motivation. Inasmuch as the proper practice of Mormonism depended upon equal fraternization of all without regard to caste or social standing there was a clash between what the Saints were instinctively inclined to do and what they knew they should do.

We find a good example of this clash of values within the Church concerning the Lamanites in a talk given by Rey L. Pratt, President of the Mexican Mission in 1913.

. . . and if we are these who should believe the word which was to be written (Book of Mormon), and who should carry it forth unto the seed of those who wrote it, I ask, Why are there so many of us who are averse to doing the Father's work among the Lamanites? Why so many young men among us who when the subject is mentioned to them of taking a mission to Mexico, for instance, where millions of the remnant of the seed of Nephi dwell, say, 'Oh, let me go anywhere except to Mexico; I wish to go to a country that is civilized, and come in contact with people where I can gain education and polish?' And why will so many parents say to their sons and to the sons of other parents, who are called to fill missions to the Lamanites, 'I would prefer to have my son go anywhere rather than to Mexico', or 'If I were you, I would ask to have my mission changed because you will never come in contact with anyone but savages where you are going.'⁵

The Mormon religion was rigidly based upon European culture and would not yield to lowering itself until a common ground with the Indian was reached. It was all a matter of the Indians making a quick and complete change to the white-man way of life and as Dr. Tyler stated, "Four hundred years has taught us that this does not happen rapidly." Thus, the Church was quite willing to wait for as many generations as necessary for the Indians to learn modern civilization through the government schools and other mediums of contact; then the Mormons hoped to step in and find

⁵Rey L. Pratt, "The Gospel to the Lamanites," The Improvement Era, XVI (1913), 1021.

the Indians more able to live and accept their religion. This philosophy was well expressed by San Juan Stake President Walter C. Lyman at a General Church Conference in 1907.

I rejoice exceedingly in this (the building of government schools at Bluff to educate and uplift the Navahos), my brothers and sisters. Although they have not yet attained to that degree of advancement in civilization that we feel it wise or proper to preach the Gospel among them, whenever that time shall come that they are fitted and prepared to be colonized, to live in homes and houses of their own, their natures and disposition are such that it would be in my opinion a very simple matter to convert a majority of them to the principles of the Gospel.

Some years ago, volunteer elders went to labor among them, and a great number of them were baptized, but owing to the fact that we had no place to colonize them, and the impossibility for them to live up to the principles of the gospel in the condition under which they were living, it was deemed unwise to preach the gospel among them further at that time. But we look to see the time, in the very near future, when the possibilities we have in the section of the country where we are living and laboring will be such that it will be possible for them to have homes and farms of their own, and the gospel may be taught to their children as it is being taught to us and our children.⁶

Probably the most troublesome cultural difference was that of language. Hamblin, Ira Hatch, Haskell, Tenney, and others used Paiute and Spanish as a medium of exchange with the Hopis, Navahos and Zunis. Haskell and Christensen used Navaho and Hopi enough to communicate to some degree, but nearly all communication was through a third language such as Paiute and Spanish or through an interpreter. There were so few that could interpret during these early years that it is often wondered how the elders had any success at all. The cultural disparity was enough, but add to this the inability of the missionaries to always make their message understood and even more, the inability of the Indian languages to express some of the Mormon concepts, it is seen that the early mis-

⁶Talk given by Walter C. Lyman, President of San Juan Stake, in the 78th Semi-annual General Conference of the Church, October 6, 1907.

sionaries faced some real problems. It is small wonder that the Church would be content to wait until the Indians learned English.

The next possible reason for neglect of Indian missionary work in this area was the simple problem of staying alive. The exploring-missionary trips of Jacob Hamblin and his companions were well stocked from an established economy in Utah. Even the first settlers usually came into the area with provisions and equipment enough to set themselves up comfortably. However, the harsh and unpredictable desert climate soon made earning a living a major task which diverted much attention away from missionary work. Sociologist Irving Telling well describes this conflict of values between settlement and missionary work in his comments on the Ramah area which is quite typical of all areas of this study.

. . . It was the mission to the Lamanites that brought the Saints to New Mexico and served as a motive for their remaining there under trying condition. Maintenance of the community served as a means for accomplishing this course of action and was made easier by the values of morality, discipline and improvement, among others. That this machinery was not perfect became apparent when the hardships encountered in the struggle for survival of the community overshadowed the conversion mission. Gradually the mission of building up the waste places of Zion (hitherto subordinate to the first course of action) assumed primary importance until it became no longer a means but an end in itself. . .⁷

The problems caused by the fight against polygamy are the next of possible reasons for Indian mission abandonment. The unpopular feelings against the Mormons throughout the United States, the arresting and driving into exile of many Church leaders, the disfranchisement of the Church, and the escheatment of much of its property brought the Church almost to its knees. After polygamy was given up in 1890 the President

⁷Telling, p. 136.

of the Church, Wilford Woodruff, had all he could do to keep the Church intact.⁸ Succeeding presidents, Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith and Heber J. Grant, all continued in the task of rebuilding and strengthening the Church from within. There could be little time to preach to the Indians until the Church as a unit was again running smoothly. The polygamy problem has to be an important factor in this study.

Often individuals such as Lucy Bloomfield expressed interest in resuming missionary activity among the Hopis, Navahos and Zunis during the three decades discussed in this chapter. The Church was not inclined to act, however, because of the several reasons which have been discussed. The prevailing feeling prior to 1936 was "the time is not yet."

"Keeping the Light Burning"

Although no organized missionary work was done between 1887 and 1936 there were individual efforts of actual preaching or securing friendships that are notable. An interesting episode of this sort occurred in western New Mexico during the summer of 1887, actually while organized missionary work was still under way.

Winslow Farr of Ogden was traveling through the Navaho reservation on a business trip and also to evade prosecution for polygamy. When the Navahos found that he was a Mormon Captain (bishop) they asked him to stop and preach to them. Farr said that he was not there for that purpose but would do so if they desired. He held a regular meeting with them complete with prayers, songs and sermon. In his sermon he told of the Book of Mormon, the future of the Lamanites and told of the importance of friendship

⁸Kimball correspondence.

with the Mormons. The Navahos felt good about it, said that it was true and made him promise to speak on the way back, that they would have an even larger congregation. He did this, whereupon the Navahos told him that the government was after him (polygamy) and if he would stay and preach they would hide him. Farr thanked them but said that he would run his chances.⁹

Others probably had similar, but less dramatic experiences in presenting the Gospel to these Indians during this period, but most Mormon Indian contact was confined to preserving or fostering friendships. A few Latter-day Saints, most of them former Indian missionaries or their descendants, went into business as Indian traders and many of them did excellent service to the Church by dealing with the Indians honestly and fairly. Notable examples of this policy of building trust and friendship are George and Lucy Bloomfield.

The Bloomfields bought the Indian trading post at Toadlena, New Mexico, in 1912 and commenced a long career as Indian traders. At that time the Navahos could speak very little English, wore their hair long and made few departures from the ways and traditions of their ancestors.¹⁰ The Bloomfields quickly earned the trust and respect of the Navahos and the natives soon learned to turn to them in times of trouble or when they needed advice in coping with the ever complex modern white man's world. They were often asked to take the sick to the hospital, to give help and comfort in times of accident or death and even to name babies, which they

⁹Winslow Farr, "Diary of Winslow Farr," Brigham Young University Library, Special Collection, 1950.

¹⁰Nadine Larson, Listen to the Song of Israel: The Missionary Labors of George R. Bloomfield (private printing, 1960), p. 1.

gladly did, performing the short Mormon prayer of blessing (christening) while doing so. They made no undue attempt at pressing their religion on the natives but studied it quietly at their fireside and answered any questions the Indians asked. They loaned or gave a copy of the Book of Mormon to any who would read it.

Soon they saw the rise of a new generation of Navahos that they had known from infancy. Many of these Navahos had made new strides forward in that they had cut their hair, changed their habits of dress and living, and some had learned to speak and write English.¹¹ During the depression the Bloomfields marked off over \$6,000 of bills against their Navaho customers and finally when they sold their trading post it was said that they didn't have an enemy.¹²

Several Indians, notably Howela Polacca, a Hopi, and Clyde Beyal and Harry Turley, both Navahos, became interested in the Church through their friendship with the Bloomfields and were each given a Book of Mormon. Polacca became interested in the Church in the early 1920's and read the Book of Mormon for twenty years before joining the Church. Beyal and Turley died before having a chance to hear more of the Gospel.¹³ The Bloomfields and other Latter-day Saints made the "period of waiting" more productive than is usually realized.

Another example of the friendships that were fostered during this period occurred shortly after World War I and involved a former Navaho soldier, Henry Tallman. Several years after the war was over Tallman,

¹¹Ibid., p. 2.

¹²Interview with Lucy Bloomfield, Farmington, New Mexico, August 4, 1964.

¹³Ibid.

whose home was near Gallup, New Mexico, was in the Snowflake-Taylor area of Arizona working. One night, shortly before Christmas, he heard that there would be a social in Taylor honoring the war veterans and he decided to go. At this gathering he was befriended by Marshall H. Flake, also a war veteran, who invited Tallman to stay in his home in Snowflake. Tallman did this and for over a week during the Christmas holidays he was made welcome by the Flake family and treated kindly by the people of Snowflake. After his work was finished he returned to his home on the reservation.¹⁴

The interesting sequence to this story occurred in 1947 after Marshall's cousin, S. Eugene Flake, had been called to head the Navaho-Zuni Mission in the Gallup area. There President Flake met Henry Tallman who had since become an influential leader in the Navaho tribe. Tallman remembered the kindness extended to him during his Christmas among the Mormons and quickly offered his influence and services in seeing that the missionaries got a chance to present their message to his people. He lent valuable aid to the Church in opening the homes of his people to the elders. Eugene Flake recorded in the mission journal that he later wrote his cousin, Marshall, of this incident and that "your bread cast upon the waters has come back sandwiches."¹⁵

Most of the "Bread cast upon the water" between 1903-1936 was due to individual effort as described in the last two examples. There was one Churchwide movement that was interesting, however, although there is no evidence that direct connections resulted with the Hopis, Navahos or Zunis. This movement dealt with genealogy work.

¹⁴Interview with Marshall H. Flake, Snowflake, Arizona, August 1, 1964.

¹⁵Southwest Indian Mission Record, Book two, Salt Lake City, L. D. S. Church Archives.

An important part of the Mormon religion was interest in the salvation of the dead. The saving ordinances of baptism, confirmation, etc., were performed vicariously for those who had died before having an opportunity to accept the Gospel.

In 1919 a movement was inaugurated to lay the foundation of a Lamanite Society to combine the forces of interest, work and workers in the building of genealogy work for the Indians. It was noted that the Indians were rapidly becoming civilized and educated enough to be able to hear and accept the gospel.¹⁶ The object of the Society seems to have been to bring genealogy work and the work of bringing salvation to their ancestors into the lives of the Indians simultaneously with their being brought into the Church themselves. This was almost a case of putting the cart before the horse and needless to say the movement had little success although they were enthusiastic and meant well.

John Bushman, one of the original pioneers of Joseph City, was asked to assist in this work because of his familiarity with the Navahos.¹⁷ This type of a project would have had even less appeal to this tribe because of their superstition and avoidance of the dead that was strong at the time and still is deeply ingrained into their way of life.¹⁸

Many examples of Mormon-Indian friendships that occurred during this period have never been recorded, but those that we have given serve

¹⁶Annie W. Holdaway, "Redemption of the Lamanites," The Improvement Era, XXIV (1927), 418.

¹⁷Joseph Morris Richards, "Pioneers of Northern Arizona," Phoenix; Arizona State Department of Library and Archives, 1938.

¹⁸The author of this thesis, while serving on a mission to the Navahos during 1958-60, assisted in dressing and burying three or four of this tribe whose relatives asked the missionaries to do this because of fear of touching or speaking of the dead.

to indicate the continued interest of the Saints in the welfare of the Lamanites. A general review of this chapter shows both this continued interest and the reasons for waiting. It is seen that the Mormons did not forget the Indians but were only waiting for their cultural dissimilarities to be narrowed somewhat. Also this period of waiting gave opportunity for the Saints to solidly establish themselves in desert homes and villages and also to solidly unify their Church as an effective unit.

By 1936 the Indians of the area had made great strides. The Navahos were rapidly leaving their traditional life and the transformation was beginning that would really blossom during the World War II period. In 1934 the Wheeler-Howard Act was passed which encouraged the Indians to preserve their cultural arts, crafts and many of their ways of life. This act of Congress also permitted Indian tribes to set up their own tribal governments with councils, judges, police forces, etc. The Navahos, Zunis and Hopis all took advantage of this opportunity for self government. The transition of the Hopis and Zunis to twentieth century civilization has not been as noticable nor as spectacular as that of the Navahos. This is mainly because they had less distance to cover, already being semi-civilized village dwellers. In essence it is seen that by the 1930's circumstances were such among both the Indians and the Mormons that a new era of missionary work was imminent.

CHAPTER V

AWAKENING AND RENEWAL

The Snowflake Stake Mission

About the time Lucy Bloomfield received her letter from the President of the Church, Heber J. Grant, in 1931,¹ informing her that the time was not yet, a movement was being started that would eventually blossom into a fully organized missionary effort. This movement began quite innocently enough and involved three former residents of Tuba City, Joseph Brinkerhoff, L. Stephen Heward and Sessal D. Allen, who lived in the Joseph City, Woodruff area. These three Mormons had maintained friendships with some of the Hopis throughout the thirty years since their abandonment of Tuba City and at this time began to make trips to the Hopi reservation to do missionary work by invitation of some of their Indian friends. These missionary trips were infrequent and undertaken entirely through the interest and initiative of these men in their desire to present the Gospel to their former Hopi neighbors.

On one of these early trips a very interesting experience occurred. The elders were telling of the Book of Mormon and in the course of their preaching they noted that, according to this book, the Indians were once a white skinned people and would in the future again be "white and delightful." When this was translated to some of the older village patriarchs

¹See page 84.

present there commenced an animated discussion among the Hopis in their own tongue. After a few tense moments during which the Indians became very excited, wildly gesticulating and pointing toward the missionaries, things finally cooled off enough so that the interpreter finally turned to the elders and said, "Somebody has been telling our tribal secrets." To which the missionaries said, "No, that your people were once white and will again be white is contained in this book which is the history of your forefathers." This explanation mollified the old Hopi priests somewhat and made them very curious concerning other contents of the Book of Mormon.²

After about two years time Joseph Brinkerhoff conceived the idea of getting the Church to establish a mission among these Indians. He approached his companions and Snowflake Stake President Samuel F. Smith with the idea but they were opposed because they felt that it was none of their business to suggest to President Grant that it was time to start Indian missionary work. No amount of talk or reasoning could get the idea out of Brinkerhoff's head and finally he won out. President Smith instructed Elder Brinkerhoff to write a letter to President Grant about the matter and that Elder Allen was to sign it with him. Brinkerhoff wrote a letter in which he and Allen volunteered to start a mission among the Hopi and Navaho Indians but Allen refused to sign it, saying that he was not volunteering to do anything like that. Joseph Brinkerhoff tore the letter up and explained in the next letter that some missionary work had been done and suggested that a mission be started among these Indians.³

²Information obtained by correspondence with Sessal D. Allen, Woodruff, Arizona, December 15, 1963.

³Ibid.

Allen approved and signed this letter which was finally sent to President Grant in April, 1933.⁴

Heber J. Grant answered promptly and asked the two Elders to meet with Elder Melvin J. Ballard of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles who was to be in Snowflake shortly. A few weeks later they met with Apostle Ballard according to their appointment and he proposed that they get a piece of land through the Secretary of the Interior to establish a mission headquarters among the Indians with agricultural possibilities to support themselves with. Elder Ballard further proposed that the Church would give each of them twenty-five dollars a month and the Snowflake Stake would give each of them twenty-five dollars a month worth of produce, until they could take care of themselves and families without help. The families of these missionaries were to move onto the reservation with them as they carried out this joint Church-Stake effort to establish an Indian mission.⁵

The next few months were spent in making arrangements to carry out this plan. Their Hopi friends showed them a suitable piece of land and preliminary arrangements were being made with the government. However, before any concrete plans were laid, word was received from President Grant canceling the proposition.⁶

It is interesting to note that this abortive missionary-farming project was drawn right out of the past. The very first missions at Elk Mountain and in southern Utah used this philosophy of living among the Indians and teaching them to farm and live in a civilized manner as well

⁴Snowflake Stake minute book in possession of Stake Clerk, Snowflake, Arizona.

⁵Allen correspondence, 1963.

⁶Ibid.

as teaching them Mormonism.⁷ This method of missionary work was carried to Tuba City with the Hopis, to the Little Colorado with the Navahos and to Ramah with the Zunis and Navahos. Apparently President Grant felt that this type of missionary work was successful enough in the past to merit a trial at that time. Further thought and study of the situation must have revealed problems that merited cancellation of the project. In this letter President Grant also stated that a Stake Mission would be established and the Indian missionary work would be carried on by stake missionaries.

The early visits of Elders Brinkerhoff, Allen and Heward were directed primarily at a few Hopi friends, mostly on the second mesa. Apparently few of the Mormons and even fewer of the Hopis knew of these visits, thus setting the stage for the next incident that helped to renew missionary work among this people.

In 1935 Chief Dan Kotchongva of the Hotevilla village on third mesa came to Salt Lake City for a visit. Chief Dan came with two young Hopis as interpreters to ask the Mormons to help him in his search for the white brother of the Hopis who was to soon return and bring relief to his suffering people. The chief had been to Washington, D. C., Chicago, and to Santa Fe, New Mexico, in search of this white brother but had failed to find someone who would take time to listen to him. Several leaders of the Church and a few other interested individuals gave ear to the story of this venerable old man, who told them of the origin of the Hopi people, their reasons for living in Arizona, and many of their traditions. In conclusion of his lengthy recitation of this story Chief Dan said:

⁷See pages 9 and 12 respectively.

This is why I am here today talking to you people and if this word goes out from here maybe he (the white brother) will know of our search for him and come to us. This is the time to which we have looked for generations. We were told that his time was when a road was made in the sky. The road of the airplane is well made. If we do not find him through this effort we will keep on searching and shall not stop looking until he returns.⁸

The Mormons not only listened to Chief Dan but had his story written down and given to one of his young companions for approval and change if necessary. The Hopis were treated in a friendly manner until their return and a year later the manuscript was sent back to Salt Lake City with permission for publication. It was published in the Church magazine, The Improvement Era, in February of 1936 and created a great stir of interest in the Hopis among the Latter-day Saints. The Mormons were only too happy to connect Chief Dan's white brother with the coming of Christ to America and his promise to return as recorded in the Book of Mormon. It was also easy for them to relate many of his tribal traditions to various stories in both the Book of Mormon and the Holy Bible. Thus an undercurrent of interest in the possible conversion of not only the peaceful Hopis but other tribes began to be felt. As intimated earlier, it seems that Chief Dan did not know of the unofficial visits already being made among his people by Elders Brinkerhoff, Allen and Heward, but it may have been just as well. The account of his visit had the desirable effect of stirring the entire Church concerning the closeness of Hopi traditions with many beliefs of Mormonism and the need of presenting the Gospel to this people. Many of the Saints interpreted his visit as an appeal for missionaries to come and teach his people, but

⁸Chief Dan Kotchongva, "Where is the White Brother of the Hopi Indian," The Improvement Era, XXXIX (1936), 82.

it seems that this idea was not really expressed in so many words. The visits did, however, help to build within the Mormons a kinship to the Hopis that is hardly equalled in their feelings toward any other tribe. A foundation for later missionary activity was solidly established.

After being told late in 1933 that a stake mission would soon be established to work with the Indians in their area Elders Brinkerhoff, Allen and Heward continued to quietly teach the Gospel to their handful of Hopi friends, patiently awaiting official organization and recognition of their labors. The Church still seemed to be in no hurry to act and two years passed during which no action was taken. The leaders of the Snowflake Stake continued to appeal for a mission prodded by the three missionaries spoken of who wished to have a stamp of approval on their efforts and their continuation. Finally, in the spring of 1936, two events happened which focused the attention of the Church leaders onto the responsibility of Indian missionary work. The first was the publication of the story of Chief Dan just described. The second came by way of California from the president of the California Mission, Nickolas G. Smith.

Early in 1936 there were several missionaries from the California Mission working among the white people in Flagstaff, Arizona. While engaged in their labors they had occasion to meet several Navaho families who were interested in the message of Mormonism. These missionaries quickly contacted their president, Nickolas G. Smith, who wrote to the First Presidency (Heber J. Grant and counselors) suggesting that a mission be started with the Navahos.

The First Presidency referred him to the Snowflake Stake Mission. Stake President Samuel F. Smith expressed his willingness to act in this manner.

We flatter ourselves with this thought, in connection with the Indian missionary work. We have urged several times that a mission be started out there (on the reservation). Several of the brethren, such as Joseph Brinkerhoff (most active), L. Stephen Heward and Sessal D. Allen have been most anxious to do work, etc. Their suggestions have been carried to the First Presidency by the Stake Presidency but no action taken. We are glad that the urge comes, at this time, from the other way and we are ready to act.⁹

Stake part-time missionary work had been carried on to a limited degree among non-Mormon whites of the area since 1920. In 1934 S. Eugene Flake of Snowflake was set apart to preside over this mission. In 1936 stake missionary work was revitalized with a new program and responsibilities and given Church-wide importance. Elder Flake was retained as its president and was again set apart on July 26, which was considered to be the opening date of the new stake missionary movement.¹⁰

A month later, on August 30, 1936, Joseph Brinkerhoff and Sessal D. Allen were formally ordained to open the mission to the Hopis and Navahos. Elder Brinkerhoff was called to preside over this Indian district. Other stake missionaries were called at this time, but their calling was to work with their white neighbors.¹¹

From the beginning this reorganized stake missionary effort was unusually interested in carrying Mormonism to the Indians. President Flake expressed it this way in September of 1936.

I feel that there is a promise of a great harvest in our field of labor. I am especially enthusiastic regarding our possibilities among the Indians of the Navajo and Hopi reservations. The missionaries of that district have recently purchased a slide picture machine and a number of pictures illustrating ancient American ruins which they expect to show in teaching them of the Book of Mormon. It appears to me

⁹Snowflake Stake Minute Book.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Snowflake Stake Mission Records, in possession of Stake Mission President, Snowflake, Arizona.

that the time is about right for us to do a good work among this people.¹²

It seemed that the calling of Elder Brinkerhoff was to get the mission started, as right after his official call he received an offer to teach school with the Indians in Utah, which he needed to support his family. He was released from his call without making a trip to the reservation as a stake missionary. The job of starting the missionary work to the Navaho and Hopi Indians fell to Sessal D. Allen who had the work to himself for the first six months. Then L. Stephen Heward, Marshall H. Flake, and Alfred B. Randall were also set apart as missionaries to the Indians. A year later, in early 1938, the Indian district was divided into the Navaho and the Hopi districts, with Elders Allen and Heward set apart to preside over them respectively. They remained in charge for the next seven years, until work in the area was taken over by a full time mission.¹³ Thus we have an account of the embryonic beginnings of the first organized missionary efforts of the Church among these tribes since Apostle Brigham Young, Jr., closed down the Zuni mission in 1887.

During his six months of working alone in the newly opened mission Elder Allen had some interesting experiences. His first trip to the Polacca First Mesa area in the fall of 1936 immediately won many friends, among whom was Vinton Polacca. Allen had gone to the store at the foot of the mesa where they had electricity and had arranged to show slide pictures and give a lecture by Hatch and Hatch dealing with the Americans before Columbus. This demonstration dealt with the Book of Mormon and he

¹²Ibid.

¹³Allen correspondence, 1963.

intended to give it that evening. Elder Allen bought a lunch and went out to his car preparing to drive out a short distance from the village where he could rest and eat before the meeting. Just as he was ready to step into his car a small Tewa (Hopi) man with a cloth band tied around his head, who had been sitting on the floor in the corner of the store looking and listening, walked up to Allen with a rope and a bridle in his hand and said, "May I ride with you?" Allen said, "Yes, get in," and they drove out about a mile east of the village and stopped. The Tewa just remained sitting in the car so Elder Allen divided his lunch with him. Allen thought because of his rope and bridle he was looking for his horses, but he remained in the car and Allen finally realized he wanted to talk and so asked him if there was anything he could do for him. Then the Tewa said, "My name is Vinton Polacca. I am the youngest son of Tom Polacca."¹⁴ I would like to know if you are a Mormon?" Allen said, "Yes, I am a Mormon." Then Vinton said, "I have been looking for a Mormon most of my life. My father, Tom Polacca, said, 'Wait for the Mormons, for they have the truth.' I have looked carefully at all white men and could see no difference in them. If I ever saw a Mormon before now I did not know it." Allen and Polacca had a most interesting conversation that lasted until meeting time that evening.

After a successful meeting that night Elder Allen sold ten copies of the Book of Mormon to the Hopi and Tewa Indians. This was all the copies that Stake Mission President S. Eugene Flake had on hand at that time.¹⁵ Vinton Polacca continued in his interest in Mormonism and even-

¹⁴See page 52.

¹⁵Interview with Sessal D. Allen, Woodruff, Arizona, July 21, 1964.

tually joined the Church. He, along with his wife Fanny, was baptized by Elder Allen on October 24, 1937, the first of his tribe to join the Church in his generation.¹⁶

The main reason this account is given is because it is an excellent illustration of what is perhaps the most lasting result of all earlier missionary activity. The greatest success of Jacob Hamblin and his companions and of the early colonists-missionaries was in building friendships with the Indians that would bear fruit at this time. Many of the Indians early recognized the Saints as true friends and this respect was maintained during the time of waiting discussed in the last chapter. Snowflake Stake Mission records and Southwest Indian Mission records are replete with accounts recorded between 1936 and 1950, and even later, which tell of this unusual feeling of the Indians toward the Mormons and their pleasure at the resumption of missionary work. These accounts relate the stories of many old Hopis, Navahos and Zunis who, upon the arrival of missionaries, recalled the visits made to their people years before. Here is another example of one who waited for the return of the Mormons.

In 1950 Elder and Sister J. Virgil Bushman were doing missionary work among the Hopis in the newly organized Southwest Indian Mission. Early in August their mission president, S. Eugene Flake, wrote them a letter, requesting them to pay a visit to some Navahos in the Greasewood area that had asked for missionaries. On August 17 Elder and Sister Bushman entered the Greasewood Valley to fill this assignment. Here they met an 81 year old Navaho named Hosteen Dinnetso and his wife of the same age. The old Navahos were overjoyed to see the two missionaries and quickly

¹⁶ Snowflake Stake Mission Record.

called together the several families nearby and asked for a meeting. Elder and Sister Bushman sang and prayed and Elder Bushman proceeded to tell them of the Church through the aid of a young educated Navaho woman who interpreted.

At the close of the meeting the old man and woman both asked to be baptized. Needless to say the missionaries were dumbfounded. Therefore, Elder Bushman decided to test the old man and said, "How do Mormons baptize?" Hosteen Dinnetso answered, holding his hands out from his waist, "In water up to here," and made a motion indicating immersion, "all the way under the water." Bushman asked him how he knew this, to which the venerable chieftain replied,

Many years ago, when my wife and I were only 18, some Mormon missionaries came here and we believed what they told us. Many of our people were baptized then in the pools of rain water down in the wash nearby. My wife and I were young and a little bit afraid then and decided to wait until the next time the missionaries came back. They never came until now. Other churches tried to baptize me by sprinkling, but I said no, I will wait for the Mormons.¹⁷

Apparently the old Navaho and his wife were present during the visits of John McLaws to the area in the mid 1880's.¹⁸ His tenacity is remarkable considering he waited nearly sixty-five years for the return of the Mormons so that he could join the Church.

As the initial visit by Sessal D. Allen to the Hopi first mesa would indicate, the primary interest of the early stake mission was with the Hopis. This peaceful, village-dwelling people had as much appeal to the missionaries of the 1930's as it had to the first missionary-explorers

¹⁷J. Virgil Bushman, "Inspiration of the Lord," private publication of early Southwest Indian Mission faith promoting experiences, 1951, p. 43.

¹⁸See page 62.

of an earlier era. All of the Hopi villages were visited by the Snowflake Stake missionaries, even Moencopi, which was far to the west and a very long drive from the homes of the missionaries. The most effort was directed to the villages on the first mesa and most of the later converts were the Tewas of that area.

Methods of teaching the Gospel to the Indians were much the same as those used with the nearby whites. These methods included the use of a series of lessons dealing with the Godhead, Restoration of the True Church, Book of Mormon, etc. Tracts written by Church leaders were passed out dealing with Gospel topics. Most of these were far over the heads of the Indian proselytes. One major concession to the Indians was the emphasis on the Book of Mormon. It has already been noted that slide pictures and lectures were used discussing the Americas before Columbus as an attempt to illustrate the truthfulness of this volume. As early as 1937 the stake missionaries recognized the need for religious instructional materials that would appeal to the Indian level of interest and understanding. Opinions were expressed in missionary meetings that the Church should adapt some tracts to fit the needs of Indian missionary work. Little was done for a number of years and for the time being each missionary used his own originality in seeing that the Indians were able to understand the Gospel with their limited education.¹⁹

Missionary work with the Navahos, although usually given less publicity than that with the Hopis, was carried out almost from the beginning of the stake mission to the Indians. Navaho camps were visited at first by the missionaries on their way to and from Hopiland. Later, as

¹⁹Snowflake Stake Mission Record.

has already been mentioned, the Indian district of the mission was divided into the Hopi and the Navaho districts in January, 1938, with Elders Heward and Allen presiding over them respectively.

During much of the Snowflake Stake Mission period of working with the Navahos and Hopis prior to 1944 there were from a half dozen to a dozen missionaries assigned to work in each Indian district. They were all part time missionaries and were usually asked by Stake leaders to spend at least five days out of each month doing missionary work.²⁰ During the first four years or so the missionaries were able to do little but make friends. Vinton Polacca and his wife were the only ones who actually joined the Church prior to 1940 although many were favorable. A list of Snowflake Stake missionaries who did work among the Hopis and Navahos is as follows: S. Eugene Flake, Joseph Brinkerhoff, Sessal D. Allen, Alfred B. Randall, L. Stephen Heward, Marshall H. Flake, Martin D. Bushman, Sr., Roberta F. Clayton, Vernon S. Flake, George Elmer and Lois H. Gardner, Austin Santeo, Don L. and Georgia Hansen, John L. Bushman, Lorenzo B. Decker, Quince R. Gardner, Jesse S. Bushman, J. Leo Seeley, John D. Dewitt, Virgil M. Flake, Jesse D. Dewitt, Tillman Willis, W. Clark Gardner, Harvey Turley, J. Herbert Allen, Frank Gardner, J. Edward Heward, Beulah M. Shelley, George T. Rogers, John T. and Annis Flake, Joel W. Flake, Charlotte M. Webb and Aquilla F. Standifird.²¹

Again, as during the period of early colonization, many were called who conscientiously pursued their callings to bring Mormonism to the Lamanites. Others contributed little to the cause. This business of some

²⁰Information obtained in correspondence with Marshall H. Flake, Snowflake, Arizona, November 21, 1963.

²¹Snowflake Stake Mission Record.

sliding along and leaving the work to others seems to be universal regardless of the period of time involved or whether work is done for a religiously motivated cause or otherwise.

Also of note is the first use of women as missionaries to the Hopis, Navahos and Zunis. After her call to be stake mission secretary in 1936, Roberta F. Clayton had some general association with the Indian missionary work. However, the first woman on record to be called directly to be an Indian missionary was Sister Lois H. Gardner, a former resident of Tuba City, who was called with her husband to work among the Indians in August of 1938. From this time it became commonplace for women to assist in this work. Most of them served with their husbands. Up to this time the women had played only a supporting role in Indian missionary work. Mention has been made concerning the presence of women on a missionary trip²² but they went along more in the sense of a pleasure trip with their husbands. Undoubtedly the women of such places as Tuba City and Ramah played an important part in the missionary work of the earlier period by serving as examples of cleanliness and proper housekeeping. Perhaps the addition of their teaching talents in the missionary sense contributed to later successful missionary work, starting with the call of Sister Gardner in 1938.

In the spring of 1938 the building of a monument to George A. Smith twenty-five miles northeast of Tuba City was carried out. This monument was sponsored by the Aaronic-priesthood-age boys of the St. Johns and the Snowflake stakes and was built by Sessal D. Allen. A plaque was obtained from the Utah Trails and Landmarks Association that told the story of how

²²See page 58.

young George was killed near that spot while accompanying Jacob Hamblin into Arizona in 1860, as related in an earlier chapter of this work.²³ This monument was dedicated by Elder John H. Taylor, one of the general authorities of the Church, on May 7, 1938.²⁴

Two years later a second monument was erected, also by Elder Allen, at Sandhills, the home of the Polacca family several miles north of the Hopi first mesa villages. This monument was dedicated to Tom Polacca of whom much has been said in several of these chapters. The services at the dedication of this monument, June 16, 1940, were under the direction of the Snowflake Stake Mission. Over 270 whites and Indians were present at this gathering at which Snowflake Stake President David A. Butler dedicated the new monument. Two days and a night were spent at this joyous conference which saw the real beginning of conversions of the Lamanite people into the Church.

Up to this time nearly four years of stake missionary work to the Indians had resulted only in the conversion of Vinton and Fanny Polacca as far as actual baptisms were concerned. The picture was changed quickly on this day for a pool was prepared and right after the dedication of the monument a number of Lamanites were baptized. The first and most significant of these were Howela Polacca and his Navaho wife, Ruth, of Crystal, New Mexico, the long time friends and converts of George and Lucy Bloomfield.²⁵ Also baptized at this time was the family of Vinton and Fanny Polacca, Roscoe Navasi, wife and family and the first Navaho converts of

²³See page 26.

²⁴Snowflake Stake Record, Salt Lake City: L. D. S. Church Archives.

²⁵See page 90.

the area, Spencer Bridge Hastini, his wife, and his family of six.²⁶

This was an impressive occasion, one that is still spoken of with fondness by both the whites and the Indians that were involved. In so many ways this conference at Sandhills marks a real solid beginning of Mormon missionary work of this area and of this period.

Another occasion of importance in the Snowflake Stake Mission occurred a year later, in May of 1941. A third monument had been built by the industrious Elder Allen and this one, also capped with an appropriate plaque, was located in the center of Tuba City which had become the western headquarters of the Navaho agency and contained a school, hospital, government offices, etc. This monument was erected to the memory of the community's namesake, the Hopi leader, Tuba. Apostle George Albert Smith was present at this stake missionary gathering and dedicated the monument. Another large crowd of both whites and Indians was present and here Elder Smith expressed his interest in the possibilities of Indian missionary work.²⁷

During the week prior to the monument dedication and missionary conference gathering on May 11 Elder Smith had toured through many of the Hopi villages and other parts of the stake mission. From this time on Elder Smith, who was then a high ranking member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles and four years later became President of the Church, was an enthusiastic supporter of the new Indian missionary work. He deserves a lions share of the credit for bringing the situation to the attention of his fellow general authorities and was the Church official largely responsible for the eventual institution of a full-time mission.

²⁶Snowflake Stake Mission Record.

²⁷Snowflake Stake Record.

An evaluation of the Snowflake Stake Mission brings some cause for a feeling of optimism. In many ways this was the most successful Indian missionary endeavor in this area yet. There were still no regular wards or even consistently functioning branches (smaller congregations) to speak of, convert baptisms were few and slow, missionary trips were irregular and uncertain, and distances from Snowflake and the Little Colorado communities to the reservation were great and over primitive roads. War time rationing on gas and tires after 1941 posed a further problem. Yet the eight years this stake mission spent opening up work among the Hopis and Navahos between 1936 and 1944 was sustained enough to be comparable to any earlier periods as far as over-all success was concerned. However, from a total viewpoint, a start had hardly been made toward the eventual complete conversion and assimilation of the Lamanite people the Mormons hoped to someday achieve.

Other Mission Beginnings

There was missionary work done in other areas prior to the beginning of the full-time mission that is worthy of note. Most significant was the renewal of preaching to the Navahos by residents of Ramah. This missionary work was carried out by stake missionaries of the St. Johns Stake and the conversions resulting therefrom antedated those in the Snowflake Stake Mission. As early as October of 1836 a number of the children and descendants of Jose Pino²⁸ were baptized into the Church by those missionaries.

²⁸See page 70.

²⁹Ramah Ward baptismal records, Salt Lake City: L. D. S. Church Archives.

More of the descendents of Jose Pino, the Pinos and Cohos, were baptized during the next several years to constitute a small group of Navaho converts in the Ramah area. This missionary work, however, failed to gain much momentum due to lack of support. The St. Johns Stake failed to lend as much support to the movement as the Snowflake Stake had done and some of the members of the Ramah Ward were loath to fellowship the Navaho converts and accept them as equals. This condition was most obvious in the Ramah area due to their close proximity to the Indians. However, the same attitude prevailed in the Snowflake and other stakes of the Church, only they were far removed enough from the Indians to avoid much of the conflict of cultures.

Stake missionaries Louis W. Clawson and Jesse D. Lewis, among others, were responsible for what beginnings actually took place at Ramah. Some effort was made to open a mission to the Zunis by these elders, but they had little success for a number of years.

The beginnings of missionary work in the Young Stake area of northeastern New Mexico was motivated jointly by the Snowflake Stake Mission and by Elder George Albert Smith. The Snowflake Stake had been given as large an area of the vast Navaho reservation as they wished to work with. Several of the missionaries had ranged far to the east, even across the New Mexico line in their search for converts. Obviously such a large territory soon proved beyond their means to handle and so they sought help. In 1940 Stake Mission President S. Eugene Flake and Sessel D. Allen made a trip into western New Mexico and went to the home of Ralph William Evans at Shiprock for the purpose of obtaining help in their work on the Navaho reservation. They were told that they should go to nearby Farmington and call upon the Stake President of Young Stake, Roy R. Burnham,

which they did. President Burnham received them kindly and was very much interested in the purpose of their visit.³⁰

Nothing came of this visit, however, until Elder George Albert Smith arrived at a Young Stake conference in May, 1941, shortly after his tour of the Snowflake Stake Mission. Elder Smith was enthused about Indian missionary work and called on Ralph W. Evans to serve as president of a Lamanite mission in the Young Stake. Elder Evans said he couldn't because of a recent physical breakdown and so his father, William Evans, was called to this position and was set apart immediately.

The following month the mission was organized into six districts with William Evans, James B. and Irene Collyer, George R. and Lucy Bloomfield, Oliver Stock, William J. Walker and Paul B. Palmer serving as missionaries. Three of the districts functioned very nicely but the others were neglected due to the inactivity of the missionaries. All of these missionaries were called as regular stake missionaries and could give just part time to missionary activities. Ralph W. Evans of the Shiprock district, although he was never set apart to that mission, did help his father in holding meetings and other missionary tasks as his health would permit.³¹

This stake mission worked almost solely with the Navahos which was the major tribe nearby. It was unique in that it was the first stake mission organization set up to work directly with the Indians only. In the Snowflake Stake the Indian mission comprised just one and later two districts out of the total stake missionary effort. Also of note is the

³⁰Southwest Indian Mission Record.

³¹Ibid.

fact that nearly all of these first missionaries were Indian traders and thus were already well acquainted with their future proselytes.

The Bloomfields who had waited so long for this work to begin were overjoyed at the start of the new stake mission and were by far the most successful missionaries during its two year history. By October of that year, 1941, they had their first converts. These were George and Mary Jumbo of Toadlena and their family. A month later they baptized three more Navahos.³² Others were later baptized by the Bloomfields and other missionaries until the stake mission could boast of several dozen members by early 1943. Several Indian converts were also very energetic in bringing the Gospel to their own people. Mary Jumbo assisted the Bloomfields often and Howela and Ruth Polacca, baptized at Sandhills in 1940, aided in missionary work at Crystal. Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of the Young Stake Indian Mission was the laying of the groundwork for an eventual full-time mission.

The Navaho-Zuni Mission

Elder George Albert Smith of the Council of Twelve Apostles returned to Salt Lake City after his visits in Arizona and New Mexico very enthusiastic about Indian missionary work. He reported his findings to President Heber J. Grant and suggested that the Church look into the possibilities of expanding this mission. From this point the leaders of the Church, prompted by Elder Smith, began to watch the work being carried out by the Snowflake and Young Stakes with interest. Scarcely a year and a half was to pass before an event happened that prompted the opening of a permanent mission.

³²Young Stake Record, Salt Lake City: L. D. S. Church Archives.

In December, 1942, Elder Ralph W. Evans and his wife took George and Mary Jumbo to Salt Lake City where George was to undergo a back operation. While there Elder and Sister Evans took Mary Jumbo with them and went to call upon George Albert Smith. Elder Smith took them in to see President Grant. Here Mary Jumbo, who had been a church member hardly more than a year, made an urgent plea to the President of the Church for missionaries to her people. President Grant replied that the time had come to preach the Gospel to the Lamanites of the Southwest and turned to Elder Smith and urged him to give it attention.³³

Elder Smith did give it attention and just two months later, on February 26, 1943, Elder Ralph William Evans was officially called to preside over the Navaho-Zuni Mission.³⁴ President Evans immediately took over the Young Stake Lamanite Mission, dissolving the same. All of these missionaries were transferred to the new mission in addition to Miss Rhoda Lewis of Farmington. She was the first full time missionary and labored often without a companion except for Mary Jumbo. Sister Lewis served her mission in both Toadlena and in Crystal, New Mexico, which were the most active areas of the fledgling mission for several years.

By the end of 1943 there were seven missionaries serving in the mission. They were as follows: George and Lucy Bloomfield, Rhoda Lewis, John Bushman and Alfred B. Randall at Toadlena, and Joseph F. and Hattie Redd Barton at Crystal. Native helpers were Howela and Ruth Polacca at Crystal and Clyde Beyal and Mary Jumbo in Toadlena. All except Sister Lewis were part time or short term missionaries. She was called to serve

³³Southwest Indian Mission Record.

³⁴"Navajo-Zuni Mission Opened," The Improvement Era, XLVI (1943), 222.

for two years. The Lamanite membership of the mission by April, 1944, totaled 48.³⁵ President Evans himself was an Indian trader by profession and spent only such time as needed to direct the mission.

As a missionary unit the Navaho-Zuni Mission differed only slightly from the Young Stake Mission which preceded it. There was little increase in personnel and the work progressed very slowly. The nation was deep in war and this may have been the major reason for letting things go much as they were until better times.

The first major expansion of the new mission occurred in 1944. On April 8 the stake presidents and the stake mission presidents of the four stakes bordering the Navaho reservation were called to Salt Lake City and gathered in the office of George Albert Smith. These stakes were the San Juan in Utah, the Young in New Mexico and the St. Johns and Snowflake Stakes of Arizona. Also present was Ralph W. Evans of the Navaho-Zuni mission. Elder Smith asked each to express his feelings in regards to the Indian mission. President S. Eugene Flake of the Snowflake Stake Mission expressed himself in this way:

I told him how we had felt for some time, that the Hopi and Navaho Districts of our stake mission should be combined with the Navaho-Zuni mission of the Church as we were so far away that we were unable to do justice to them, and the need of the Indian people is to have full-time missionaries continually among them.³⁶

Elder Smith agreed with the suggestion which well expressed the sentiment of the entire group and turning to President Evans he said that from now on it would be his responsibility. Later Elder Flake took Pres-

³⁵Southwest Indian Mission Record.

³⁶Information obtained in correspondence with S. Eugene Flake, Snowflake, Arizona, December 7, 1963.

ident Evans on a tour of the Hopi reservation and the nearby Navaho camps with which the Snowflake Stake had worked for nearly eight years.

During 1944 the following missionaries arrived into the mission: Albert R. and Gladys P. Lyman, Lansing I. and Rhoda P. Wakefield, Ernest and Hilda M. Wilkins, Loren Black, George and Lois H. Gardner, Martin Ray Young, Sr., and Martin D. Bushman, Sr. There was little increase in size of the mission as many of those called could serve only a limited time and others took the place of earlier missionaries that were released. In addition to the Toadlena and Crystal areas already started, new proselyting areas were established near Gallup, New Mexico, and among the Hopis for a short time.

In July, 1944, Elder and Sister Ernest Wilkins were assigned to work with the Zunis. However, due to local opposition, mostly stirred by other churches, they were forced to leave and were reassigned to work with the Hopis. This was the lone effort of the Navaho-Zuni mission to work with the Zunis. Thereafter their success was with the Navahos and Hopis and so the mission was really misnamed.³⁷

The two great problems in missionary work on the reservation were the opposition of other churches and the lack of legal right to preach on the reservation. When the reservation system was set up the government allowed different churches to Christianize the Indians of the different areas. With the establishment of tribal governments in 1934 a law was made that a religious denomination needed to have permission from the tribal council to preach to that particular tribe. The agents and council of the Hopi reservation were willing to extend some recognition to the

³⁷Southwest Indian Mission Record.

Mormons but the vast Navaho nation never would, despite numerous petitions, during the entire period of the Navaho-Zuni mission. Thus, all missionary work done with the Navahos during this time was actually illegal from a technical standpoint. Nothing was ever done of an official nature to prevent the Mormons in their proselyting because their petitions for missionary privileges were pending.³⁸

The greatest opposition to the entry of the Mormons into missionary work with the Hopis, Navahos and Zunis came from other churches, a situation that is really not hard to understand in view of the circumstances. The Catholic church and various Protestant denominations had long held sway over various areas of the reservations that had been allotted to them by the government years before. There were agreements between many of these churches concerning proselyting areas that usually kept conflicts to a minimum. For example, the Presbyterian and Christian Reformed churches agreed to confine their Navaho mission to Arizona and New Mexico respectively. When the Mormons entered the picture, claiming all of the "Lamanites" to be possible converts, quite naturally many of the other churches became somewhat agitated, especially when the Mormons paid little heed to whether an Indian was Christian or non-Christian in their proselyting. Most opposition was on the local level with individual preachers warning their congregations that the Mormons would lead them astray.³⁹

In August, 1944, President Evans was invited to attend an interdenominational conference at Window Rock, New Mexico. He attended three of their six meetings but was not impressed and so left. He felt that too

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

much time was spent arguing and bickering over trivial matters instead of working in harmony for the advancement of the Indians. Because of unpopular feelings against the Mormons Elder Evans kept quiet to avoid furthering antagonisms. The meeting had been called by the general superintendent over the Navaho reservation, James M. Stewart, to co-ordinate religious work being done among the natives.⁴⁰

The year 1945 produced little change in the mission. The only new missionary was Martin D. Bushman, Sr., who returned for his second short-term mission. During December of this year Apostle Matthew Cowley toured the mission with Elder Evans. Howela Polacca and others pleaded with him for more missionaries, church buildings, etc. Elder Cowley was very appreciative of the Navaho language problem inasmuch as at that time a great majority of that tribe still knew no English. President Evans was the only missionary that could fluently converse with the Navahos in their own tongue.

New missionaries in 1946 were Ellis D. Taft, Edward P. and Irene Lyman, and George W. and Pearl Lee. The last missionary to arrive in that mission under President Evans was Elder Ural D. Burk in 1947. When Elder Evans was released as mission president in 1947 there were five full-time missionaries, Elder Burk, Elder and Sister Lee, and Elder and Sister Albert R. Lyman.⁴¹

Despite the fact that the missionaries had not increased during the presidency of Elder Evans great progress had resulted from these four years of, more or less, full-time missionary work. Expansion had been

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

made into the Blanding area of southeastern Utah where Elder and Sister Albert R. Lyman led a community movement that involved itself in Indian missionary work. With donated money and materials a small school was built for the off-reservation Navahos living in the Blanding area. This missionary-education project caused a great deal of interest in the Indians both in the Church and with the state and local government. Elder and Sister Lyman instructed both Navaho and Paiute children in this school for over two years until the county school system took over.⁴²

In late October of 1946 occurred one of the great events of the Mormon mission to the Navaho Indians. The prime mover of Indian missionary work for many years, George Albert Smith, had become president of the Church and at this time led a party which included Apostles Spencer W. Kimball and Matthew Cowley into the Navaho-Zuni Mission for a visit. This was the first time that a president of the Church had visited the Indians in the area of this study. President Smith and party first visited Blanding where they inspected the small school built by the missionaries and met with the Saints of the area to encourage them in their work with the Lamanites.⁴³

Next the party traveled to Window Rock, New Mexico, to attend a two-day interdenominational meeting at which President Smith spoke forcefully in defense of the Latter-day Saints mission to the Indians. This visit was significant in creating good feelings with both the other churches and with the government agents. It was also an eye opener to the Church leaders concerning the problems of the Indians and their needs,

⁴²Interview with Albert R. Lyman, Blanding, Utah, August 4, 1964.

⁴³San Juan Stake Records, Salt Lake City L. D. S. Church Archives.

both temporal and spiritual.⁴⁴ Six months later Elder Evans was honorably released after presiding over the mission for four years and S. Eugene Flake sustained in his place. The visit of these general authorities was to stir more churchwide interest than had ever been given to these Indians. The calling of a new, full-time mission president was just the beginning of a great new missionary movement.

In retrospect, the Navaho-Zuni mission seems to have been more of a great experiment than anything else. True, growth of the mission was hampered by the war, but mostly this work was not pressed harder because many Church authorities did not share President Smith's beliefs that the Indians were ready for the Gospel. During the four year history of this mission it was visited periodically by general authorities who kept a wary eye on its progress to see if it really could succeed. Even by 1947 not all were convinced but by that time President Smith had rallied enough support for a great expansion effort. At this time we also see the entry of Apostle Spencer W. Kimball into the picture as the foremost champion of the cause of the Lamanites. Elder Kimball more or less took the load off the shoulders of President Smith, who had the responsibility of directing the entire Church, which had gained world-wide influence at that time. President Smith did not lose his great love for the Indian people, however, and continued to express great interest until his death in 1951. He was probably the greatest proponent of Indian missions of his generation.

All of the missionaries of the Navaho-Zuni Mission were called from the four surrounding stakes and nearly all were older people. This was a very different setup from the rest of the Church missions throughout

⁴⁴Southwest Indian Mission Record.

the world where young volunteer missionaries in their early twenties were principally used and came from all over the Church. Some of the methods used by the missionaries in doing missionary work were in holding religious instruction classes for Mormon Indian children in connection with the government schools, conducting Relief Societies, an organization for the women, and in giving practical help in such things as canning foods to alleviate the wartime shortages. President Evans worked hard at his calling. He set up his own office in his home at Shiprock, buying the equipment needed himself. He also did his own secretarial work and paid his own traveling expenses and was very surprised to find after his mission was over that the Church would have provided funds for this had he asked.⁴⁵

In so many ways it is difficult to find a place to end this study. The summer of 1947 was chosen because during this time the direction of the Navaho-Zuni Mission passed from the hands of Ralph W. Evans into those of S. Eugene Flake. Shortly thereafter the missionary work took on much the same characteristic that it has now. This period of transition was by no means abrupt as most of the methods of the earlier Navaho-Zuni Mission were carried on under the Flake administration. The Church authorities came through with a much greater degree of support at this time, however, and to many Latter-day Saints it seemed that the day of the Lamanites had at last begun.

Epilogue

To end my study here would leave many strings untied insofar as the general sequence of this thesis goes. I have presented my material

⁴⁵Ibid.

dealing with the missionary work between 1855 and 1947 with emphasis on the movement as a whole and its various phases. In most aspects the missions to the Hopis, Navahos and Zunis between 1947-1965 are simply a continuity or just another phase of this movement. A study of this final phase that is still being carried out, and perhaps even more detailed study of the phases I have just covered, will some day serve as the challenge to motivate and bring satisfaction to another historian. Meanwhile a brief review of the missionary events that have transpired since 1947 will lend continuity to this study as a whole.

Shortly after S. Eugene Flake became president in 1951 youthful elders such as were being sent to missions throughout the world were sent to the Navaho-Zuni mission. The first ones were given to understand that they were on a trial basis and if they, for any reason, did not enjoy working with the Indians they would be immediately transferred to another mission without any hard feelings. None asked to be sent out for this reason, and in four years the mission numbered nearly a hundred full-time missionaries, most of them young twenty-year old elders and sisters. Also important during this period were the changing of the name Navaho-Zuni Mission to the Southwest Indian Mission on January 1, 1949, and the establishment of permanent missionaries with the Zunis.

President Flake feels that the greatest accomplishment of his mission between 1947-1951 was the change in the attitude of the people of the Church toward the Indian. This was accomplished by persuasion of the leaders of the Church through their talks and through Church publications. The Mormon people had to be converted to sharing with the Indians. During this period missionaries were sent out among practically all tribes of the southwest, as the mission name implies. Seven different

buildings were built and/or dedicated to serve as meeting places for the Lamanites.⁴⁶

In April, 1951, Golden R. Buchanan became president of the Southwest Indian Mission. During his administration a teaching program was developed specifically for the purpose of teaching the Lamanites. Also training programs were developed whereby the young missionaries could learn the Navaho language as an aid in their communications with that still uneducated people.

The Indian members were urged to participate and before long many of them had leadership positions of responsibility in their branch organizations. Last and probably most important was the introduction of the Utah program. This was an organized, licensed program through which Indian children were placed in foster homes in Utah during the school year. There they had the advantage of the best in schooling, the example of a good Latter-day Saint home and were able to return to their own families during the summer. This program has been a great aid to the cultural transition of particularly the Navaho people.⁴⁷

From 1955 until 1958 Alfred Eugene Rohner directed the affairs of the mission which saw the continued building of chapels, an intensified Navaho language training program and expansion of the Utah program. Also important during this period was the emphasis on the religious instruction program carried out with Mormon Indian children at the government Indian schools.

⁴⁶Information obtained by correspondence with S. Eugene Flake, Snowflake, Arizona, March 4, 1965.

⁴⁷Interview with Golden R. Buchanan, March, 1965.

The principal accomplishments of the mission under Fred A. Turley, from 1958 to 1961, were the institution of the Boy Scouting program and quietly working for a greater degree of public relations with the leaders of the various tribes worked with, particularly the Navahos. Also important was the development of the Indian members to the point where they would make good missionaries.⁴⁸

When J. Edwin Baird became mission president in 1961 there were twelve full-blood Indian missionaries serving as full-time missionaries. At present there are over forty in what now comprises two missions. Up to 1961, the number of missionaries among the Indians had held quite steady around a hundred, but under President Baird the number doubled and almost tripled when tribes in the Central States were brought into the mission. In 1964 the Northern Indian Mission was formed, utilizing this new area.

At the writing of this paper in June, 1965, Hal Taylor had just been called to take over the Southwest Indian Mission. He will preside over a mission consisting of several dozen Indian missionaries, hundreds of capable Indian Church leaders and thousands of Church members among the Hopi, Navaho and Zuni people in addition to other southwestern tribes.

⁴⁸Information obtained by correspondence with Fred A. Turley, Mesa, Arizona, March 5, 1965.

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