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The Saint and the Grave Robber

Converted in the Australian goldfields, Frederick William Hurst and John de Baptiste became mining partners and fellow emigrants. But in Utah their paths made a Jekyll-and-Hyde split.

John Devitry-Smith

The colony of Victoria, Australia, produced one-third of the world's gold found in the 1850s; as a result, every imaginable type of person converged on the area.¹ This assemblage, coupled with England's earlier "social amputation" of its worst souls to what was then a place of perpetual exile, transformed the world's largest island into what Robert Hughes in his classic book, *The Fatal Shore*, termed a "wicked Noah's Ark" of small-time criminality.² Amid this upheaval, missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ventured into the goldfields in an ambitious attempt to gain a foothold in an area where supposedly "rum and gold was all the God" the people wanted.³

The Victorian goldfields particularly proved to be a Jekyll and Hyde of tragedy and triumph, where the age-old struggle between good and evil was magnified in one small area of the globe. Two converts of the Victorian goldfields, Frederick William Hurst and John de Baptiste, both members of the Castlemaine Branch and partners in the diggings, especially personify this relationship. These two men, apparently sharing many of the same hopes and dreams, traveled the road of life together for a time but eventually met greatly contrasting fates.

Fred Hurst's experiences, while opening a window on the origins of the Church in Victoria, more significantly demonstrate a metamorphosis from a happy-go-lucky teenager with seemingly little religious inclination to a stalwart defender of the faith with an unshakable commitment to the Latter-day Saint cause. Although a

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virtual unknown in LDS Church history, Fred quickly became one of those quiet people vital to the Church's success. Apostle John A. Widtsoe recalls of Hurst: "[He] had a marked effect upon my life, for I never have spoken with him without feeling that I had received a lift, and was better prepared to carry on in my work."⁴

In direct contrast, a recent article in the *Deseret News* writes of John de Baptiste: "The worst villain in Salt Lake City's early history probably wasn't a murderer or even a member of a band of outlaws. Probably the most gruesome criminal was a grave robber who desecrated as many as 300 burial sites in the city's cemetery"; while "much space has been given to writing about the 'Monster of the Great Salt Lake,' if there was a monster, Baptiste is the best real-life candidate."⁵ Wilford Woodruff records Baptiste's deeds as "the most Damniable [*sic*], Diabolical, Satanical, Helish Sacraleges [*sic*] . . . recorded in the History of man."⁶ Historian Dale L. Morgan adds that the Baptiste affair provided "Great Salt Lake with the strangest episode in its whole history."⁷

Complexion of the Victoria Goldfields

The lure of gold was the impetus for both Baptiste's and Hurst's decisions to venture to Australia, a country still considered a vast prison for England's criminals, an idea perpetuated since the landing of the first convict ship in 1788.⁸ An article in the *Times and Seasons* of April 1845, for example, refers to the colonies as "the great depot for the transportation of British convicts,"⁹ enforcing the idea of Australia as a less than desirable place to live, let alone serve a mission. Indeed, in writing of his mission call to Australia, Thomas Threeves referred to what a searing experience it had been for the last organized group of American missionaries assigned to Victoria in 1856:

Friends . . . informed me that I was called to Australasia, and offered me their sympathy. During the remainder of the week I was the recipient of innumerable condolences. One brother said to me "That's the hardest mission in the world . . . some of the men who were last called to labour in that field [Victoria] [—]educated and experienced preachers—returned in ten months utterly discouraged." . . . Another said "As good a Mormon as I am, I would rather go to Purgatory and preach to the spirits in prison than to take your mission." . . . And finally another one said . . . "The kind of missionary needed in that land is a man like Orson Pratt."¹⁰

When the first LDS missionaries arrived in Australia, their impressions at times seemed contradictory, but the general tenor of their reports was very negative. Charles Wandell, who organized the first branch of the Church in Victoria, illustrates this point: “These colonies have been underated, because they were formerly convict colonies; but permit me to assure you that it would be difficult, even in England to find a more orderly, decent, and hard working population than exists here.”¹¹ But later, Wandell stated: “Australia is the hell into which England casts her devils, and the diggings are the deepest, most fearful pits thereof. Here are literally swarms of convicts, who are absolutely and entirely lost to all fear of God or regard to man.”¹²

Similarly, Augustus Farnham, the third president of the Australasian mission, more often noted the hellish aspects of the area:

[1853] [They] are as hard a set of beings as I ever met.¹³

[1854] It is true, the people of these lands are a peculiar people, being generally dead to interests of religion, caring but little what the true principles of the gospel are; it may, indeed, be said of them, that their faith is a mere tradition, their worship an empty form, the impression being transitory, ending with the service, when they again devote themselves to gold and pleasure. But withal, there are some as good and honest people in these lands, as can be found on the earth.¹⁴

[1855] This wicked people are addicted to every vice. It requires men of some experience to stand the test within the midst of the persecution we have to meet.¹⁵

[1856] This is a land of darkness. The devil himself I believe is ashamed of many of these inhabitants [and] if he is not I am.¹⁶

Although the American missionaries did not often clarify the specific areas in Australia deserving of their most stinging criticism, apparently the colony of Victoria was the worst offender. Farnham reports of Victoria: “It does appear that almost all who have been driven adrift by the different winds of spirits have been driven to this part of the world being the most abandoned characters who disregard all principles of morality Victoria being the greatest sewer of iniquity on account of its being strictly the mining colony has the greatest number of such men.”¹⁷

Similar sentiments were echoed by Burr Frost, presiding elder over the Victorian Conference from 1853 to 1854: “I generally meet

in this country the most profane men of all that [are] addicted to bad habits.”¹⁸ Reflecting on country and people, Joseph Kelly, missionary to Victoria and Tasmania from 1856 to 1857, wrote, “This is as near the gates of hell I wish to be,” adding that he felt little desire to convert the people as “they would only be a curse to our Society at home.”¹⁹

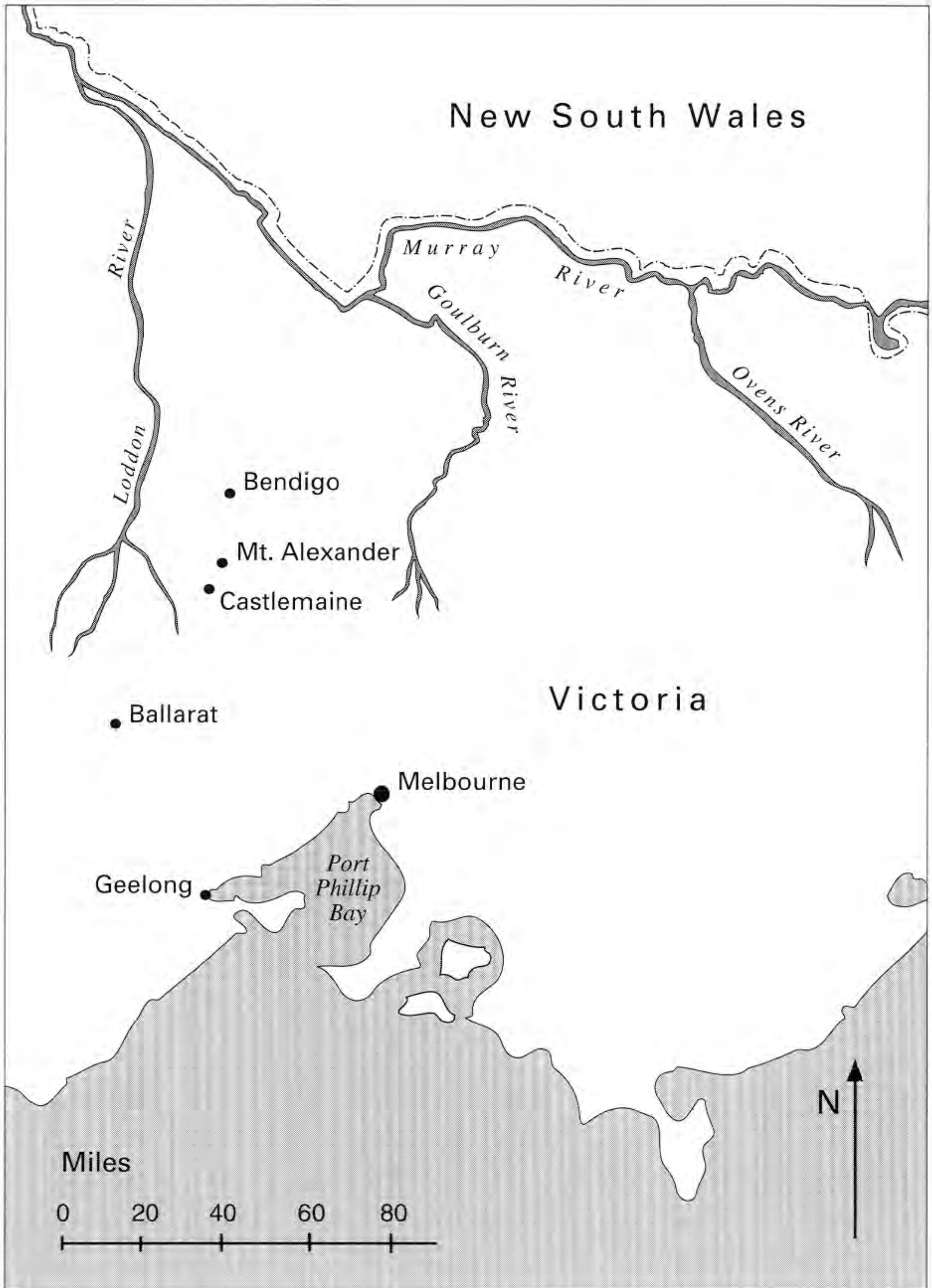
Frederick Hurst’s Conversion and Mission

Mingled in the Australian crowd were John de Baptiste and Frederick William Hurst, two of the estimated 463,000 people to arrive in Victoria between 1851 and 1861.²⁰ Hurst had immigrated with his family from the British Isles to New Zealand in 1840 and at the age of nineteen had decided to join a company of six other men to try his luck in the goldfields.²¹ Fred recorded his initial impressions upon landing at Port Phillip, Melbourne, in the later part of 1852:²²

The city was literally crowded with people. It seemed to me they were from all nations. All was hustle and confusion. Large nuggets of gold were to be seen in the Broker’s windows also large piles of souvenirs [*sic*] and bank notes, specimens of gold quartz. All kinds of reports were in circulation respecting the mines. . . . The roads were lined with teams of all kinds, people of all nations and colours and grades, some few respectable, but the more part escaped convicts, cutthroats, murderers, thieves, gamblers, blacklegs; in fact to make a long story short, the skum [*sic*] of the earth were there. To use a common expression, “all hell let loose.”²³

A contemporary description of Melbourne at the height of the gold rush in the early 1850s agrees with Hurst’s description, calling the city a “modern Tower of Babel, the resort of hooligans, drunks and gamblers, one of the circles of Hell come upon Earth.”²⁴

Eager to leave Melbourne and begin, Hurst’s group walked seventy muddy miles to Forest Creek (near Castlemaine), where, being inexperienced, they dug in “the most unlikely places.” After two weeks of back-breaking labor, out of money and in debt, the disillusioned party disbanded, and all but Fred sold their tools. Left with sixpence but determined to make good in the goldfields, Fred found work at a store some distance from Melbourne. There he made enough money to get started again. At the same time, he



Victoria, Australia. The map shows Port Phillip Bay, where Hurst landed, as well as Bendigo and Castlemaine, the areas where Hurst and de Baptiste worked in the goldfields.

became more acquainted with the area and learned how to stay away from trouble.²⁵

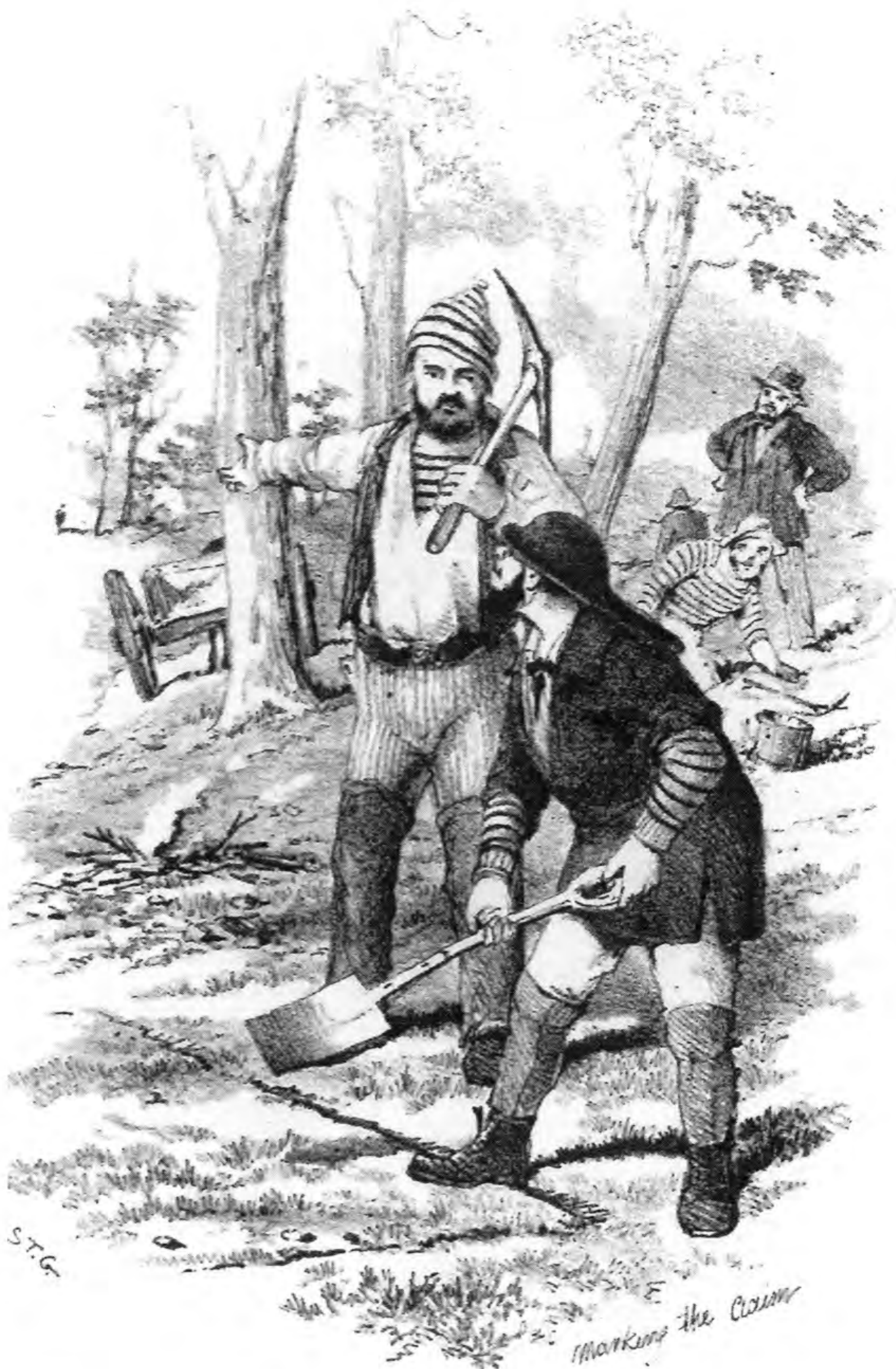
Fred recounted the constant dangers of everyday life:

Not a day or night passed but what some dreadful tragedy would happen. For instance, I was at Moonlight Flat, one man armed with pistols met an elderly gentleman, stopped him in sight of hundreds of men in open daylight and demanded his money or his life. He handed over his money to the robber, walked on about twelve steps, turned and fired at the villain and shot him in the back of the neck and he fell in the road. The gentleman then returned to the body, got his money and left the fellow in his blood. Again, on Montgomery hill close by, two men quarreled, one seized a double barrel gun, fired at his partner and blew his mouth and one side of his face away, the blood and brains flew all over the wall of the house. Again, nearer still, close by our store a man was shot dead. He had robbed Mr. Steel's store of a bag of flour weighing 200 pounds. Mr. Steel watched him come out from the back of the store, fired at him and he fell dead in the public street. The young man who had stolen the flour was well off. Times would fail me to record even one hundredth part of what daily occurred.²⁶

Leaving the store in January 1853, Fred went again to the diggings of Bendigo, where he met an old acquaintance from New Zealand by the name of Francis Evans. Fred had previously known Evans as a "very zealous Methodist,"²⁷ but unknown to Fred, Evans had been investigating the Mormon church. In Bendigo, Fred "made money hand over fist"²⁸ until news of the death of his father forced his return to New Zealand. Fred's family was overjoyed to see him again, his sister Amelia "crying with joy." Little could Fred have realized the wedge soon to be driven between them, resulting in his name being stricken from the family Bible.

After a brief stay, Fred decided to return to the goldfields, this time accompanied by his brothers Alfred and Charles Clement and by their friend, Thomas Holder.²⁹ They arrived in Melbourne in late October 1853. The group made the fateful decision to stay overnight at the home of Francis Evans. At the Evans's home, the three Hurst brothers and Thomas Holder were introduced to an American elder, Burr Frost.³⁰ Frost, along with Paul Smith, was part of a group of ten American missionaries who had landed in Sydney, Australia, in late March 1853 and were assigned to Victoria.³¹

Previous attempts to establish a mission in the colony of Victoria had made little headway. John Murdock, first president



Marking the Claim. By Samuel T. Gill, who went to the goldfields in 1852, traveling to Castlemaine, Mount Alexander, and Bendigo. The next year he published this and twenty-three other sketches of the goldfields (see n. 134). Courtesy of the State Library of Victoria.

of the Australasian mission, arrived in Melbourne on December 19, 1851, with little more than pocket change and a “quantity of books” but found “few men in the city” and the people “in a perfect uproar.” After a stay of about ten days “of extreme difficulty,” feeling the situation a hopeless one, Murdock decided to return to Sydney.³²

Charles Wandell arrived in Melbourne the following year, three weeks after Fred Hurst and company landed from New Zealand.³³ Wandell preached outdoors to what he considered “orderly congregations” and before leaving Melbourne had organized a “very promising little branch.”³⁴ Burr Frost, sent to Melbourne to follow up on Wandell’s initial inroads, had been set apart as the presiding elder of the Victorian Conference.³⁵

As Evans had a cabin in the goldfields and would be remaining in Melbourne for a time, he asked Fred and company if they would like to live there, taking care of the place until his return. They readily agreed to this proposal.³⁶ The next day, the four men continued on to the diggings, arriving at the cabin five days later. On a Sunday night the following week, to the surprise of the Hurst brothers and Thomas Holder, who were still at dinner, a number of Francis Evans’s friends arrived, declaring they were going to hold a meeting. Fred asked one of the “preachers,” William Cooke, if he would take a cup of coffee, and a conversation commenced.³⁷ Fred, remembering Evans as an avid Methodist, was eager to be on his way, as were Charles Clement and Thomas, but Alfred, being quite religious, implored them to stay.³⁸

Fred Hurst remembers the deep and lasting impression Cooke left on him the first time he heard the elder preach, an account most revealing as to the methods of proselyting for the era:

The preacher [William Cooke] came out and said we had better come in for he would do us no harm. I thought it would look rather disrespectful if we went away, so concluded to stay. Well, shortly afterwards the meeting commenced. I must confess I was struck at the peculiarity of the hymns. The hymn books were in pamphlet form and headed “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints”. I thought to myself, the Methodists are getting up. If I was astonished at the hymns and tunes, I was still more so at the prayer that was offered up by the preacher. He prayed to the Lord to bless the Prophet, Seer and Revelator, Brigham Young, his councilors [*sic*], the twelve Apostles and others. I was full of wonder and curiosity. I never had such feelings before in my life. I asked myself the question, “Who can Brigham Young be?” and again, “Who can the twelve apostles be?” It would be impossible for me to tell the hundredth part of what passed through my mind.



Sunday Camp Meeting, Forest Creek. By Samuel T. Gill. From *The Goldfields Illustrated*. Courtesy of the State Library of Victoria.

After singing another hymn the preacher read a passage from the Book of Mormon. "What book can that be?" thought I to myself. I would very much like to read it for I had never heard that there was such a book before. Well, to proceed, the preacher also read part of the 15th chapter of St. Marks Gospel, and then preached Faith, repentance, Baptism for the remission of sins, also the gift of the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands. Talked about Joseph Smith, gave us a brief history of the Church, the persecutions, etc. I cannot describe my feelings. I could not help paying deep attention, yea, I felt inspired, my heart was drawn towards the speaker, I watched for every word for it seemed good to my soul.³⁹

Ironically, as soon as Cooke and his associates had departed, Alfred, supposedly the more religious of the three brothers, "commenced a long tirade against the Mormons," warning his brothers that the Mormons were "a very dangerous people who practiced plurality of wives, a most abominable doctrine."⁴⁰

Nevertheless, Fred and Charles Clement Hurst decided to investigate this newfound oddity for themselves. Fred recalled, "We attended every Mormon meeting and most every evening we went and heard them sing. I got real fond of their company, though the good Christians called us fools, said we were deluded."⁴¹

In the weeks following, Fred and his group worked hard and long hours but extracted very little gold, and Alfred talked of returning home. With the arrival of Francis Evans and family, Fred Hurst admitted, "We had Mormonism from morning until night, and might I say from night til morning." Alfred Hurst could get no peace and finally, after staying three weeks, returned to New Zealand, taking what little gold and cash his companions had.⁴² Fred and Alfred's brotherly friendship would never be the same.

Fred and Charles Clement Hurst were baptized January 12, 1854, followed by Thomas Holder the next week.⁴³ Less than two months after being baptized, Fred and Charles Clement wrote home, detailing their conversion and stating how excited they were to bring their family the news of the restored gospel. The brothers thought that as soon as the family heard the "truth" they would readily accept it. However, the two men were dreadfully mistaken. Their mother and sisters wrote back letters that "contained no arguments" but were "full of false accusations and abuse towards

Joseph Smith and the Church in general,” adding that they were ashamed to own the brothers any longer as members of the family. Fred reflects:

My heart was so sore I could not forbear shedding tears. I then began to realize that I had to round up my shoulders, though forsaken by my own dear mother, brothers, and sisters, and obey all the commandments of God as far and as fast as they were made known to me. . . . To tell the truth, after this I began to realize that all those who obeyed the requirements of the gospel were nearer and dearer to me than all my former friends or relatives. Well, we wrote home repeatedly but received no answer to our letters, although I stated in them if they would prove from the Bible that the doctrines of even Polygamy was unscriptural I would renounce Mormonism.⁴⁴

Fred continued to write and beg for a fair hearing but to no avail. To each family member, he wrote personal letters similar to the following one addressed to his older brother Alfred:

Do you think we would have left our home, and dear mother and sisters behind on mere belief. Again do you think for one moment we lie when we say we know the gospel is true and that it came from God? Do you think we would risk our salvation in this manner? O my dear brother I beg and entreat you to examine these principles and obey them, and then to ask God for a testimony and he will give it to you.⁴⁵

But Fred's efforts were in vain, and after three years nothing had changed. Fred recorded part of a letter he received from his sister Amelia: “She is very much opposed to Mormonism. Wants to know how long Clem is to be a slave to those witches.”⁴⁶ Because Fred was Charles Clement's older brother, he carried the blame for Charles Clement having joined the Church.

The impact that the local members such as Hurst had on the growth of the Church cannot be underestimated, since much of American Elder Burr Frost's time was spent at Melbourne while Elder Paul Smith concentrated on Geelong. Correspondence reveals very little headway was made in these respective areas. Bad weather had restricted Frost to less than half a dozen meetings in the first five months in Melbourne.⁴⁷

With never enough experienced preachers to cover so wide an area, the mission president was forced to continually travel, giving counsel and checking that all was in order. While trying to watch

over present converts and at the same time open new ground, the mission was forced to improvise with whatever men they had that were willing to be called to help further the gospel message. Fred Hurst, for example, was called within months of his baptism and “ordained to preach in the Bendigo Gold mines and build up the saints scattered over the country.”⁴⁸ Little regard was given concerning his inexperience and his inability to bear his testimony, let alone conduct a meeting. Fred admitted “when called upon to speak in public I [would] commence trembling.”⁴⁹

The following experience by Hurst helps illustrate the burden some of the new converts were willing to shoulder on behalf of the Church. After being called on his first mission to Golden Gully, Bendigo, Fred writes of his arrival and subsequent tribulations:

The Brothers and Sisters were all very glad to see me. . . . I felt determined to do my best though I had never preached before. . . . Well the first time I got the Saints together I opened the meeting with prayer, but could not muster the courage to address the Saints, consequently I read portion of the Millennial Star, and as I did not speak myself I felt ashamed to call upon anyone else. I felt real miserable for I felt I was not doing my duty. Sunday come and we had quite a congregation, but I felt worse than I did on Wednesday evening previous although I had prayed and fasted. The very thought of preaching made me loath the sight of food, it took away my appetite entirely.

Before going to meeting I would resolve in my own mind to speak, but as soon as the second hymn was sung I would be seized by a trembling fit, all ideas would flee from my mind and I would have to take up the Star or some other book and read. However, on Wednesday while at work I got in conversation with a man and preached to him about the Gospel. While talking with him I told him if he would come up to meeting that evening he would hear an Elder preach on the first principals of the Gospel. He promised he would come. After he had left me I began to reflect on what I had told him respecting the meeting. I turned sick at the idea. I could not eat my supper but I washed myself and went down hoping the man would not be there, but all my hopes were turned to slopes, for there the man sat as large as life. I cannot describe my feelings at this time, but after saluting him I went into the woods alone and besought the Lord to have compassion on me. After doing so I felt relieved and returned. We opened the meeting and in spite of all hell I arose to my feet, opened to the 3rd chapter of St. John's Gospel, and after reading a few verses my tongue was loosened and before I was aware of it I was preaching. I never have spoken more freely in my life, and it was a strong testimony to me of the truth of Mormonism, and I felt thankful beyond

measure and with my whole heart I praised my maker. The brethren and sisters were very much astonished but not more so than myself.⁵⁰

Near the end of December 1854, Fred Hurst received instructions to relocate to Castlemaine⁵¹ and begin preparations to leave for Zion, as plans were being made by Burr Frost to have a company ready the following year. In Castlemaine, Fred had great success in the diggings, after entering into a partnership with recent convert John de Baptiste. Hurst and Baptiste worked well together and each cleared \$1,000 the first six weeks.⁵²

Baptiste's Conversion

At the outset, Baptiste seemed to fit the mold of “religious seeker,” while in contrast Hurst appeared a more unlikely candidate for baptism as he had an honest skepticism towards religion in general. Nevertheless both men had made a strong commitment to the Church soon after hearing the gospel message: Hurst accepted missionary calls and Baptiste donated his own property for Church use. Both also answered the call to gather with the main body of the Saints in Utah.

While sources provide insight into Fred Hurst's conversion, very little remains to illuminate Baptiste's motives or intentions in joining the Church or the turn his character took.

Baptiste was born in 1814, reportedly in Venice, Italy,⁵³ and was attracted to the Australian goldfields in the early 1850s. He first came in contact with the Church in 1854 at Castlemaine, Victoria. Baptiste had called at the elders' tent just outside Castlemaine, inquiring if he could in some way help cover the costs of the “Church of Christ.” Burr Frost, who was present with a number of other elders, asked Baptiste his name and what he believed. Baptiste answered that he could not speak English very well but believed the Bible to be the word of God.⁵⁴

A conversation followed, and Baptiste told them he had been raised as a Roman Catholic from youth, but he saw much error in it and concluded to join the Church of England, thinking they might be right. He soon tired of them and joined the Methodists and had up to the present time been “advocating their principles.” Elder Frost

replied that the men in the tent were preachers and explained in detail the scriptures and organization of the Church. Baptiste got in “quiet [*sic*] a frenzy” and called out “I will become a baby, I will become a baby, I want to be baptized.” Frost told him not to be in a hurry, that he should carefully consider what they had talked about before making any hasty decisions. “No, No, No I want to be baptized,” responded Baptiste.⁵⁵

Following Baptiste’s baptism, Burr Frost and James McKnight were requested by Baptiste to accompany him home. He took them to downtown Castlemaine and showed them a wooden-frame chapel about 60' x 35' in size, constructed with the best materials and supplied with good seats, chandeliers, and a pulpit. “There, Beloved Brethren, you shall have that to preach in. It is my own property, I have built it with my own hands and at my own expense,” stated Baptiste. He had partitioned off a small section of the building to live in and informed the elders that he had been in the habit of holding meetings every Sunday.⁵⁶

The building was an asset to the local missionaries who previously had had no option other than to speak in the open air or the confines of a tent. Fred Hurst recalls it was the first time he had ever spoken in a chapel with a pulpit.⁵⁷ Baptiste’s “chapel” was also used by the Church members for business affairs such as the payment of gold.⁵⁸

Hurst’s and Baptiste’s Immigration Journeys

Burr Frost had been working for some time to organize the first exodus of converts from Victoria to Utah. Hurst and Baptiste were among the seventy-two passengers who left Hobson’s Bay on April 27, 1855, aboard the ill-fated *Tarquinia*.⁵⁹ An old craft, the *Tarquinia* started leaking after leaving Tahiti and docked for repairs at Honolulu, where a great number of bad feelings surfaced among the group. A number of the passengers, Baptiste among them, decided to remain at Honolulu, feeling they could no longer continue with the company, in part because they doubted the *Tarquinia* would ever get to San Pedro, California.⁶⁰ Over a week later, the vessel sailed again, but after three days, gale force winds strained the vessel so much she began to leak badly on both sides, forcing the captain to

return to Honolulu. Further repairs proved fruitless, and the ship was sold for salvage.⁶¹

At Honolulu work was hard to find, but Baptiste was apparently financially secure. He became part of a branch organized by John T. Caine on August 19, 1855, and was ordained a teacher.⁶²

The majority of the passengers had no money or means to continue on to San Francisco. Fred Hurst, who had approximately \$1,000 in gold sewn up in his clothing, characteristically turned all of it over to Church leaders, leaving himself almost penniless, unemployed, and stranded in Honolulu.⁶³ The local mission leader, eager to take advantage of Hurst's missionary zeal, asked him to accept a mission among the natives, to which he agreed.⁶⁴ For Fred Hurst, hardship and trials seemed to accompany his joining the Church, but his humble heart and ability to make the best of any situation was revealed during the time he proselytized on the island of Waialua in the Sandwich Islands:

I spent the day pleasantly thinking how much better off I am now than I was before I became a member of the Kingdom of God, not in the things of the world, for I have only a suit of clothes and they have seen their best days, for I see my elbows begin to show through my coat sleeves. I am almost barefoot. I have an old pair of low shoes and every now and then I have to take them off and empty the sand out of them as the roads are very sandy and heavy. I have no socks. . . . I do not look for my reward in this life, I look for it in the world to come. I think sometime when I begin to get lonely what Jesus Christ suffered, also the apostles, Joseph Smith and others, and then I feel as if I ought to suffer at times. For one thing I do know it is with much tribulation that we enter the kingdom, and unless I run the race, how can I expect to win the prize. I try to cast all care aside and put my trust in the Lord. My earnest desire is to get the language of this people so I can declare the Gospel of Christ in its purity unto them. No one can tell, except by experience, what pleasure it is to stand up and bear testimony to the truthfulness of this work in the Hawaiian language. I realize already that it pays for all trouble of learning it. So much for my thoughts.⁶⁵

Fred served faithfully until his release in October 1856. The following month, Fred sailed for San Francisco along with his brother Charles Clement, who had not yet turned eighteen. They landed with thirty-seven and one-half cents between them.⁶⁶ Here Hurst and Baptiste crossed paths again. Baptiste had arrived in San Francisco

in late February 1856 and was still there in April 1857. Baptiste gave Fred, who had no warm clothing, a “good cloth coat.”⁶⁷

Despite his success in the Victorian goldfields and his dire financial situation, Fred never hinted at trying the California diggings. Fred’s desire for gold had turned to souls and upon being informed that there was a shortage of elders in the conference, Fred and Charles Clement decided upon a mission to Northern California. Since joining the Church three years earlier, Fred had been continually engaged in missionary work, which had taken its toll on him both physically and mentally. In the following weeks, Fred wrote:

I have felt a kind of low spirit this last day or two. I seem to be tired in both mind and body. I feel there is a great responsibility resting on me, and I feel to realize it more every day. It makes me feel my own nothingness and I feel like putting my trust in the Lord at all times. . . . The Saints all tell me I look pale and thin. I weighed myself when I was in Stockton and instead of weighing 152 lbs I lack 20 of it. The most I could go, walking stick and all, was 132 lbs.⁶⁸

Shortly after, George Q. Cannon met with Fred and Charles Clement and told them “not to kill [themselves] traveling all over the country.” During this time, Elder Cannon also gave Fred a blessing.⁶⁹ In the latter part of September, Fred was sent on a “special mission” to warn all the Saints to be ready to gather “at a moments notice” as government troops were marching on Utah.⁷⁰

Finally, in early October, Fred started for Utah via San Bernardino, arriving in Salt Lake City on March 20, 1858.⁷¹ The following week, he was present to hear Brigham Young speak in the Tabernacle and wrote: “I have felt to rejoice all the day long. I realize that it is a very great privilege to listen to the teachings of the Fountainhead, or the First Presidency. Oh how long and anxious I have looked forward to the day when I could see the Prophets, Brigham, Heber, and hear their voices.”⁷²

Baptiste’s Grave Robbing

Baptiste had also made his way to Salt Lake City around the same time as Hurst and by 1859 had been hired to dig graves and bury the dead at the Salt Lake Cemetery east of the city. He built a small

John Baptist,
MANUFACTURER OF
TRUSSES OF ALL KINDS & SIZES,
HIDING BELTS, SUSPENSORIES, KNEE CAPS,
LACED STOCKINGS, WOODEN LEGS, AB-
DOMINAL BELTS, CHEST SUSPENDERS,
DR. LISTON'S SLIDE SPLINTS &c., &c.

RESIDENCE 144 BROADWAY, CORNER OF POWELL.

The attention of the Medical Faculty is specially directed to the above articles, which are manufactured in the most perfect manner for the purpose intended.

14-1f

Advertisement placed by John de Baptiste. The advertisement appeared in the 1857 *Western Standard*, which was published in San Francisco and was edited by George Q. Cannon.

home next to the graveyard and shortly thereafter married “a simple minded woman.” Together they opened a millinery and tailor’s shop.⁷³

His ghoulish, illegal activities came to light January 27, 1862, but his crime first began to unravel four weeks earlier when a gang of half a dozen lowlifes took it upon themselves to pay back then Governor John W. Dawson, who was fleeing from Utah. Already resented and very unpopular, Dawson had apparently made “improper proposals” to a well-known Salt Lake “Society Lady,” who resented his advances and informed friends of his conduct. Despite Dawson’s quiet and quick exit from Salt Lake, the gang soon overtook the mail stage, almost beat Dawson to death, and robbed the stagecoach.⁷⁴

By January 16, 1862, three of the gang members were dead. Moroni “Rone” Clawson and another were shot to death on 200 South in Salt Lake City while trying to escape from police.⁷⁵ Clawson’s body initially went unclaimed and thus by default was buried in the north Salt Lake cemetery. Local police officer Henry Heath, in a humanitarian gesture, paid to have Clawson properly clothed for burial. In the days following, some of Clawson’s family obtained permission from the sexton, Jesse C. Little, to exhume the body and remove it to Draper, but upon opening the coffin, they found the body naked. Shortly thereafter, George Clawson confronted Officer Heath, expressing his disgust over how his brother had been buried in such a disgraceful manner, despite the lawman’s adamant denial to the contrary. A frustrated and suspicious Heath soon confided in probate judge Elias Smith, who ordered him to look into the matter.⁷⁶

In an effort to quietly resolve the affair, Heath first approached Sexton Jesse C. Little, who could shed no light on the event. From there Officer Heath, George Clawson, and two other men traveled to Baptiste’s home on Third Avenue, where they found only his wife at home. While making inquiries about her husband’s whereabouts, the men could not help noticing numerous boxes inside the house. A casual glance inside one of the boxes raised gasps of horrid surprise, for it revealed a “motley sickening heap of fresh-soiled linen” and “funeral shrouds.”⁷⁷ Many bundles of grave clothes were found throughout Baptiste’s house, along with a large box filled with infant’s clothing, about sixty pairs of children’s shoes, and “about a

dozen men's garments including shirts, caps, socks and many parts of suits of females."⁷⁸

After the initial shock, Officer Henry Heath became particularly incensed over the morbid discovery. He feared the grave of his "idolized" daughter, who had been recently buried in the cemetery, had also been desecrated. With personal feelings overriding his professional calling, Heath calculated the killing of Baptiste then and there in the graveyard if his suspicions should be confirmed.⁷⁹ The men then proceeded through the snow to the cemetery and found Baptiste. One report has Baptiste picking up cobble stones.⁸⁰ Another has him working in the frozen ground digging a new grave. Baptiste was reportedly wearing a "broadcloth Prince Albert suit" in which a local saloonkeeper had recently been buried. Officer Henry Heath later wrote of the confrontation:

I at once charged him with robbing the dead and he fell upon his knees calling God to witness that he was innocent. The evidence was too strong and I choked the wretch into a confession when he begged for his life as a human being never pleaded before. I dragged him to a grave near my daughter's and pointing to it inquired: "Did you rob that grave?" His reply was "Yes." Then directing his attention to the mound of earth which covered my child's remains I repeated the question with bated breath and with the firm resolve to kill him should he answer in the affirmative. "No, no, not that one; not that one." That answer saved the miserable coward's life.⁸¹

A second-hand account by John R. Young states Baptiste was first taken to the grave of Moroni Clawson and accused by George Clawson, the dead man's brother, of robbing the body:

George Clawson, the dead man's brother jerked him [Baptiste] out of the hole, jammed the pistol against his temple, and said, "tell me who robbed my brother, or I will kill you, and bury you in the hole you are digging"? the man on his knees confessed he was the robber. The people went wild, rushed the grave yard, opened their graves and found, so many of their loved ones robbed.⁸²

Heath continued, "The news of our discovery and Baptiste's confession spread like wildfire, and it was with difficulty that we got him to the county jail in safety."⁸³

Oddly, the *Deseret News* made no mention of the Baptiste saga at the time. The possibility of an angry crowd getting out of hand and lynching Baptiste seemed a real possibility, and the newspaper

probably did not wish to throw any more fuel on such a volatile issue. Nevertheless, the whole population seemed aware of the crime by the following evening, “creating a great Consternation through the City.”⁸⁴

Late afternoon, the day following his exposure, Baptiste was carted back to the cemetery to identify the graves he had robbed, but he would point out only about a dozen for fear the people would rise up in anger and kill him.⁸⁵ For his own safety when returning to the jail, Baptiste lay flat in a wagon bed, covered with a blanket to screen him from the public view. Early January 28, 1862, all the clothes found in the Baptiste’s house were displayed at the county courthouse, where “several hundred funeral suits” covered a “broad table fifty feet in length.” During the day, hundreds passed through, examining and identifying most of the clothing. The pathetic spectacle of a grief-stricken mother identifying articles of clothing from a child or a “husband or wife recognizing the funeral apparel of the life partner who had preceded them into the unseen world” was a sight not quickly forgotten.⁸⁶

The following day, January 29, “ten or eleven” graves that Baptiste had denied robbing were dug up with “3 or 4” of the bodies found stripped. The “considerable dirt with the bodies” made the viewing a morbid sight. Another pathetic feature was the fact that Baptiste had not only stripped the bodies but dumped them out of their coffins, which he used for kindling wood “with no more concern than if he were eating his dinner.” Other graves Baptiste admitted to robbing were also opened, and as expected, all the bodies were found naked.⁸⁷

Further questioning revealed that Baptiste had been “carrying on his hellish work” for the past three and a half years, claiming his only motive was to sell the clothes. But another police officer, Albert Dewey, states Baptiste hoarded the clothes about his house as a miser would his gold, admitting “the devil was in him.” Baptiste also confessed that he had robbed the dead in Australia and built a meeting house with the avails of the robbery (the chapel which was used by the missionaries in Australia).⁸⁸

Reports estimated Baptiste had robbed about three hundred graves, principally those of women and children. At first many

doubted that such a thing could possibly happen, but further reopened graves revealed many bodies stripped of their clothing. The locals became so incensed over the situation that it was only with the greatest difficulty that the police were able to control the mobs that gathered each day at the prison and threatened to lynch Baptiste.⁸⁹

The police locked Baptiste in the “farthest recesses of the jail.” Had they not, wrote Judge Elias Smith, “the populace would have torn him to pieces, such was the excitement produced by the unheard-of occurrence.” Wild stories began circulating through the city. Some had dreams; others claimed to have heard rapping on the floor, on the bedstead, and on tables, imagining that they were hearing from the spirits of the dead calling upon their friends.⁹⁰

Burying the dead in the proper clothing was of great importance to the people at the time. In *Popular Beliefs and Superstitions from Utah*, Anthon Cannon helps shed some light on why this issue was so sensitive:

A Mr. F [sic] of Salt Lake dreams that his mother dies, and is buried “improperly dressed,” meaning not in regulation LDS burial clothing. Six months later his mother dies, and he reminded his father of the dream. His father assured him that everything would be done properly. The evening after the burial, his sister found some of the mother’s clothing which should have been put on her. They dug the woman up and put the clothing on her.⁹¹

In response to intense public feeling reaching a “feverish state of excitement” and the wide concern of the people for their dead, Brigham Young addressed the issue at the Salt Lake Tabernacle on February 9, 1862:

“It appears that a man named John Baptiste has practiced robbing the dead of their clothing in our grave yard during some five years past. If you wish to know what I think about it, I answer, I am unable to think so low as to fully get at such a mean contemptible, trick. . . .

“Many are anxious to know what effect it will have upon their dead who have been robbed. . . . [W]e have done our duty in this particular, and I for one am satisfied . . . the Saints will come forth with all the glory, beauty, and excellence of resurrected Saints clothed as they were when they were laid away.

“Some may inquire whether it is necessary to put fresh linen into the coffins of those who have been robbed. . . . I will promise you that

they will be well clothed in the resurrection, for the earth and the elements around it are full of these things. . . . I would let my friends lay and sleep in peace. I am aware of the excited state of the feelings of the community; I have little to say about the cause of it; the meanness of the act is so far beneath my comprehension that I have not ventured to think much about it."⁹²

Soon after the community agreed to gather up the funeral clothing and have the police bury the whole bundle in one grave at the cemetery.

Baptiste remained in jail for about three months before his fate of banishment was finally decided. A suggestion was proposed earlier by Brigham Young in his Tabernacle address:

"To hang a man for such a deed would not begin to satisfy my feelings. What shall we do with him? Shoot him? No, that would do no good to anybody but himself. Would you imprison him during life? That would do nobody any good. What I would do with him came to me quickly, after I heard of the circumstances: this I will mention, before I make other remarks. If it was left to me, I would make him a fugitive and a vagabond upon the earth. This would be my sentence, but probably the people will not want this done."⁹³

Salt Lake's "John the Baptist" had become "such a hated object that the sooner and further away he got from sight without being put under ground, himself, the better every one would feel."⁹⁴ The grave robber was taken initially to Antelope Island in a wagon across a bar through the briny water which at the time was scarcely more than knee deep. Baptiste was met as planned by boatmen at Antelope Island and rowed to an island about five miles north called Freemont Island.⁹⁵

Before Baptiste was allowed to continue with the waiting boatmen to his final destination of Freemont Island, he was tattooed with indelible ink, "not seared with hot irons as many have believed," with the words "Branded for Robbing the Dead."⁹⁶ Another contemporary account says that his ears were cut off, and he was branded on the forehead with the words "GRAVE ROBBER." Officer Albert Dewey stated at the time, "Whatever the indignities, there had been provocation enough."⁹⁷

Freemont Island was often referred to as Millers Island because two brothers, Henry and Dan Miller, had for some time been using the island for their stock. They had erected a small shanty stocked

with basic provisions, which they used on odd occasions while checking on their stock. Calling at the island about three weeks after Baptiste's initial banishment, the Millers found him "getting along very well in his loneliness." A second trip to Freemont Island three weeks later found no trace of the exile. Albert Dewey remembered: "The roof and parts of the sides of the cabin had been torn off. A part of the carcass of a three-year old heifer was lying on the ground a short distance away, and portions of the hide were near by, cut into thongs. It was evident that with the tools found in the cabin Baptiste had killed the heifer, built a raft from the logs and timber of the shanty and with this had made his escape from the island."⁹⁸

As to Baptiste's final fate, Dewey added:

The general belief is that he made his escape to the mainland on the north, somewhere near the Promontory; and it was reported some time afterward, on what would seem to be unquestioned authority that he was seen in a Montana mining camp and on being closely questioned by one who recognized him, confessed to being Jean Baptiste and related how he made his escape. Another rumor is that he joined himself to a westbound emigrant train, went to the coast where he lived for some time before he came to Utah, then left San Francisco, where he feared he would be recognized and made his way to southern California, where he died.⁹⁹

If Baptiste did in fact reach the California coast, the possibility exists he could even have returned to Australia.

One can continue to speculate over Baptiste's fate, but whatever the outcome, John de Baptiste will continue to live on in infamy in Church annals as Australia's most notorious convert. Baptiste had looked among several faiths and seemingly felt he had found what he wanted with the Mormons, yet the chapel he provided for the other religious practitioners of the day as well as for the Saints was built with money from grave robbing.

Hurst's Utah and New Zealand Service

Fred Hurst, like Baptiste, also initially settled in Salt Lake City but in contrast lived a life which drew no unusual attention. Fred married Aurelia Hawkins on November 3, 1858, and they had ten children. Aurelia came from a wealthy English family. A reserved,

deeply religious and stately woman, she enjoyed “very little pleasure in life other than her home and family.”¹⁰⁰

In April 1860, Fred took a position as “Keeper of the Station at Ruby Valley,” about 300 miles west of Salt Lake City on the western route to California.¹⁰¹ True to form, Fred made the best of a situation that included severe winters, hostile Indians, and a new home that looked more like a prison “built wholly [*sic*] of logs and the never failing dirt roof.”¹⁰²

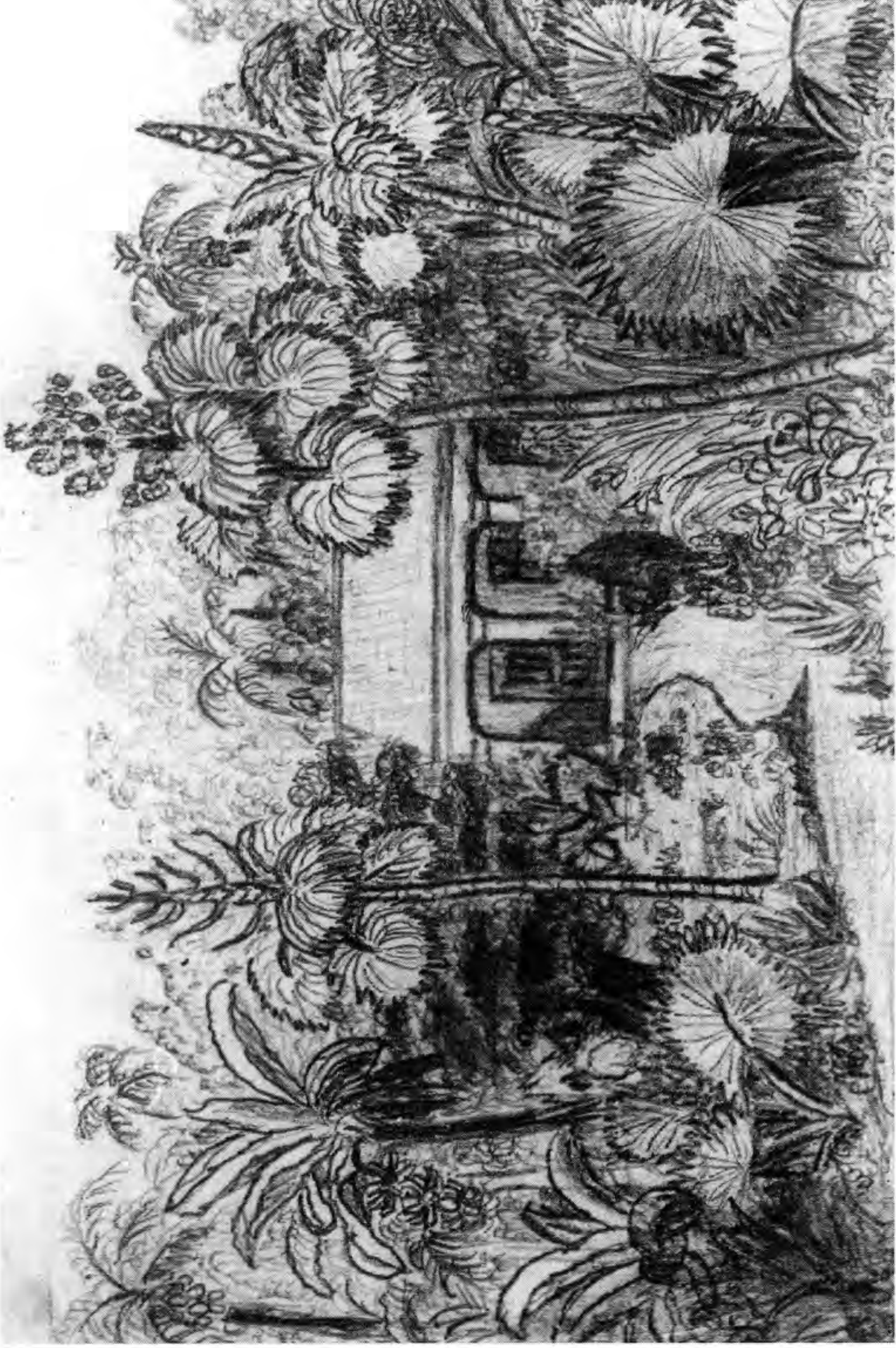
Kate B. Carter wrote of Fred:

Mr. Hurst believed in the policy of Brigham Young—that of feeding the Indians rather than fighting them—and being a naturally kind hearted man, he desired to alleviate their suffering. Many times he gave the Indians who came to the station bread and also a kind of poi he had learned to make in the Islands. At Christmas time he gave them a special treat of a large plum pudding which he had steamed in flour sacks over a bon fire. The Indians were deeply appreciative of these acts of kindness and often warned him of hostile bands who were bent on destroying the station. Thus he had time to secure proper defence.¹⁰³

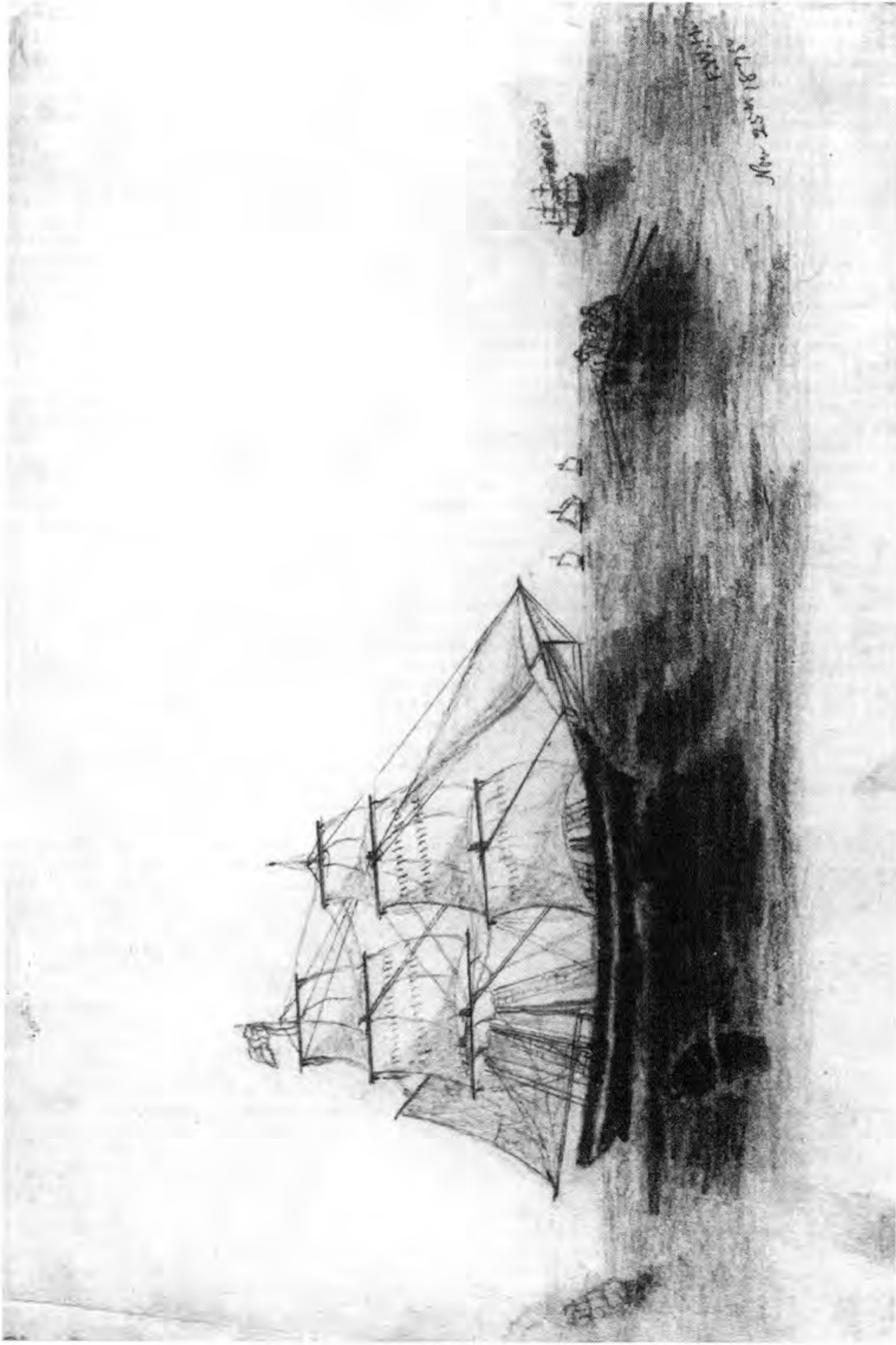
In 1865, Fred and Aurelia moved with their three children to Logan, Utah, where Fred led an unassuming life, farming and raising his family until 1868, when he was run over by a load of hay and nearly killed, his left arm being paralyzed. Forced to quit farming entirely, Fred turned his attention to “house painting, graining etc.,” which he developed into a good business with more work than he could handle.¹⁰⁴

Although Fred had made a new life for himself in Utah, his thoughts must have often been upon his childhood home of New Zealand and a mother he had not seen in over twenty years. As fate would have it, missionary emphasis had shifted from Australia to New Zealand, where by 1887 membership would total an amazing 2,500, of which the vast majority were Maori.¹⁰⁵ Laying the foundation for this growth were brothers Fred and Charles Clement Hurst, who returned to New Zealand in 1875, this time “on a special mission to the Maoris.”¹⁰⁶

Fred left his family in “deep sorrow and anguish”¹⁰⁷ on account of his eight-year-old daughter dying three days before his departure. Fred and his brother Charles Clement arrived in New Zealand on December 14, 1875, and were met with a cold reception:



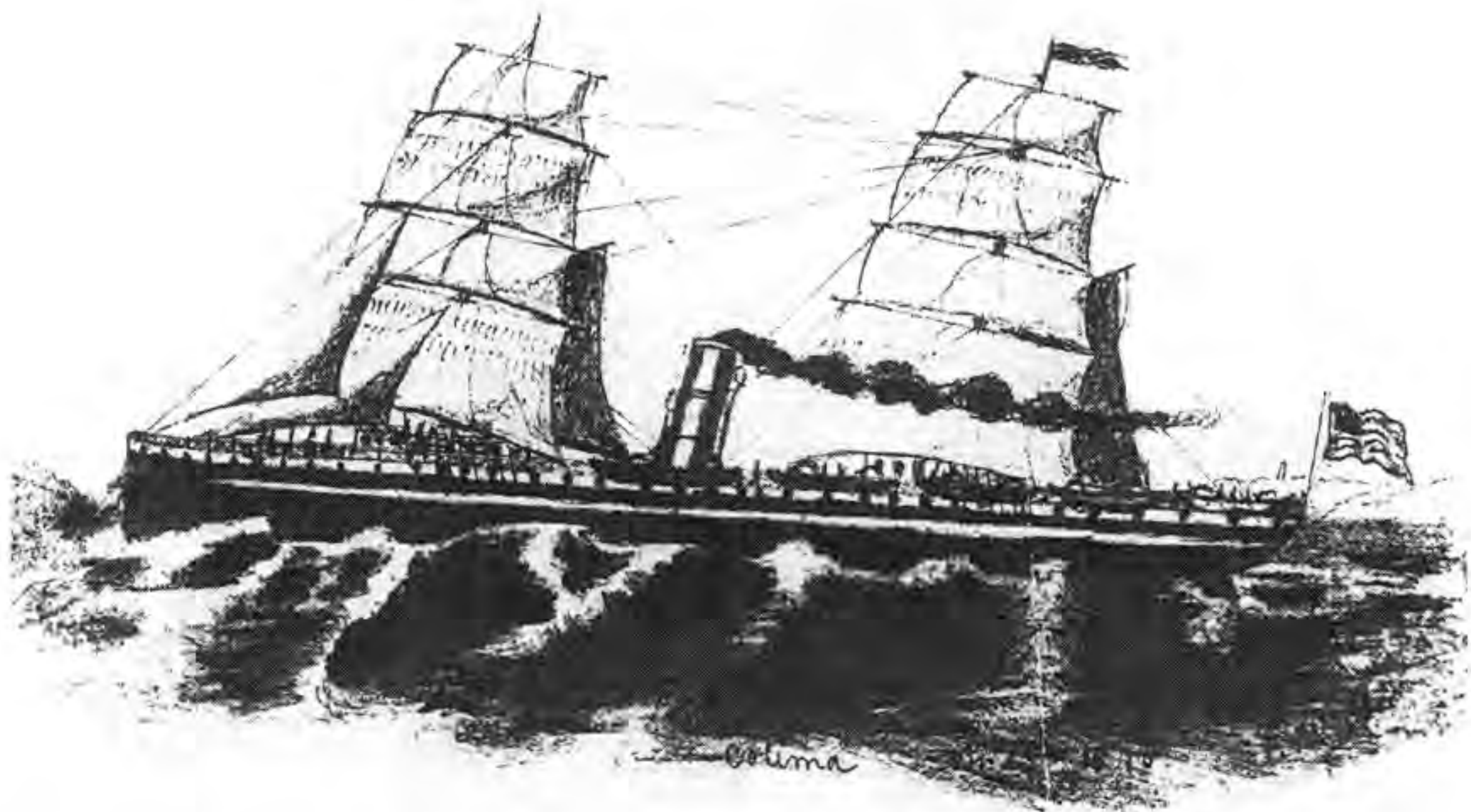
Scene in Honolulu Nov. 22th 1875 Sandwich Islands. Hurst describes Hawaii with an artist's eye: "Nov. 19th. We heartily enjoyed beautiful scenery in and around Honolulu. Owing to recent rains everything looked fresh and charming to the eye" (Hurst, *Diary*, 118). Courtesy of Floyd H. Hurst.



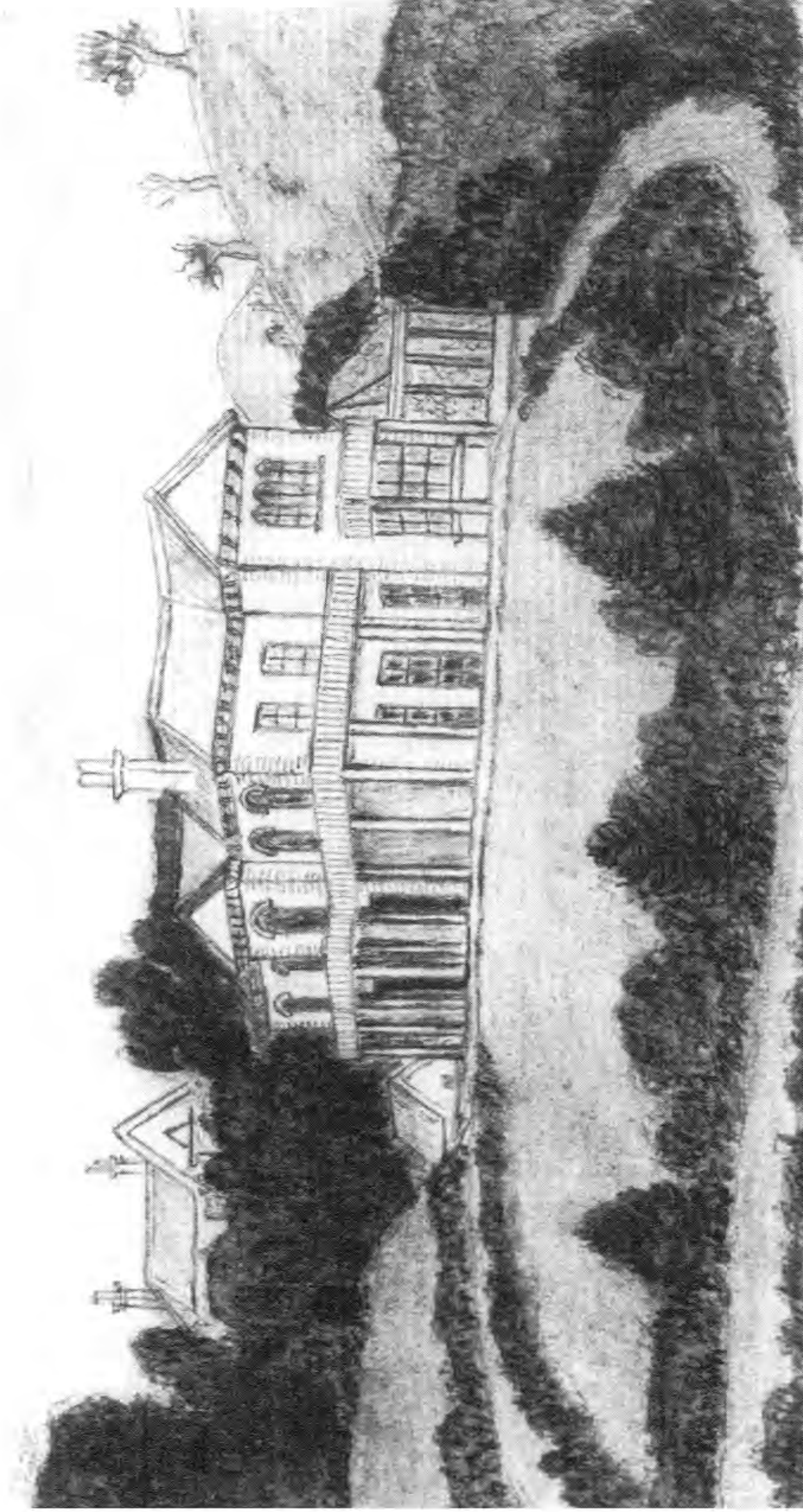
Sailing in the Pacific Ocean. Hurst sketched this scene November 25, 1875. A steamship is shown in the distance. He signed the sketch in the bottom right corner, indicating he believed it was one of his better works. He signed only those pieces which pleased him (Beth Taylor, April 26, 1993, personal communication). Courtesy of Floyd H. Hurst.

The papers greeted us with a dose of billings-gate, and a rehash from the San Francisco Chronicle, stating also that they hoped we would get as cordial a reception as an Elder had experienced in Wellington some time ago when he was saluted with sundry dead cats and other odorous accompaniments [*sic*]. The press actually countenancing and advocating MOB LAW. So much for prejudice and blind bigotry.¹⁰⁸

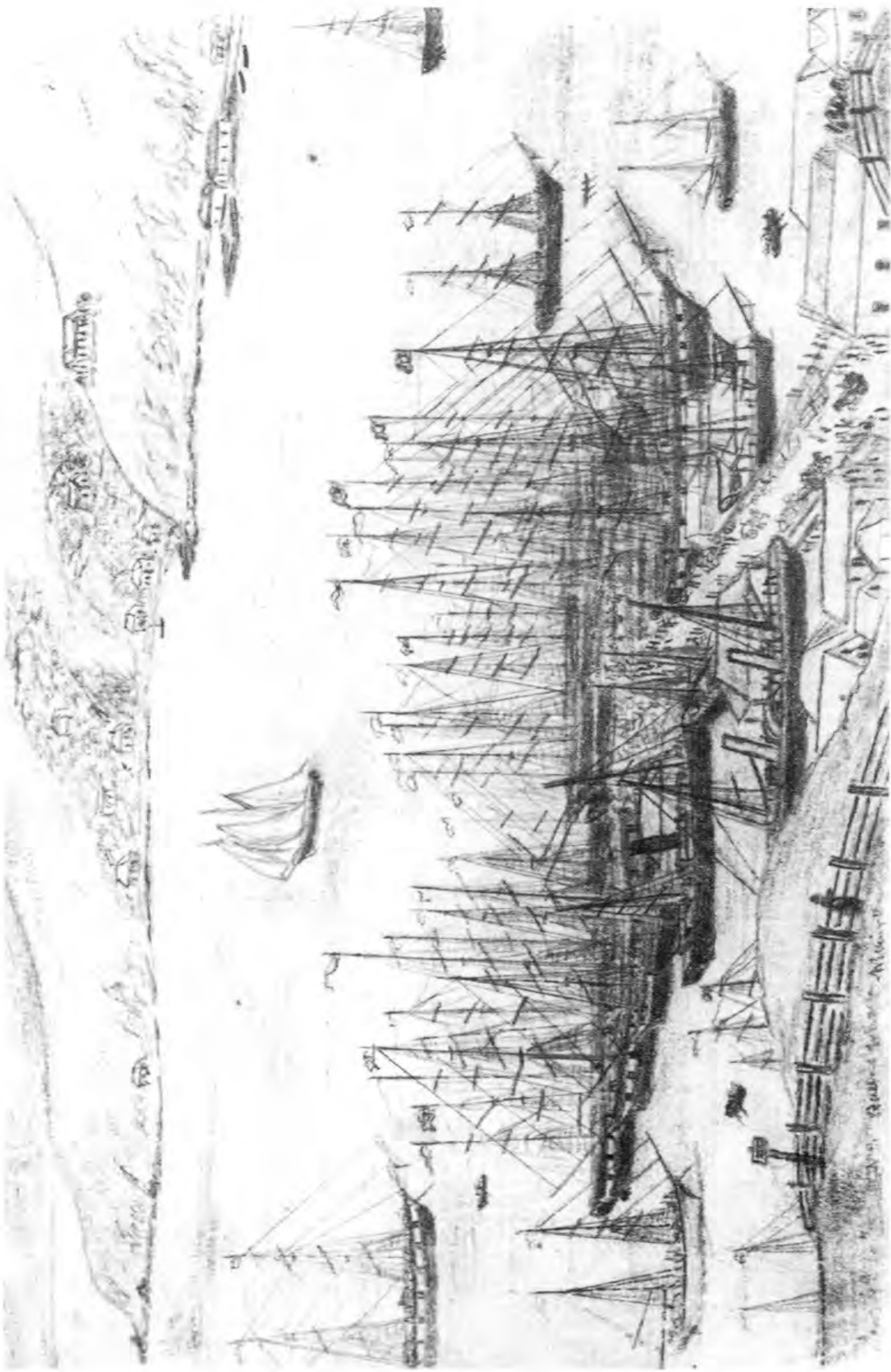
Fred's immediate concern was to locate his mother. When he found her in a very feeble state, Fred recalled, "she was overjoyed at seeing me, but could scarcely realize it was true that we had come at last to see her, after such a long absence."¹⁰⁹ Fred and Charles had planned to link back up with the other missionaries after a brief visit but due to lack of funds, Fred was forced to remain behind and attempt to open the Wellington area to the restored gospel. The following six months would be very lonely and trying for Fred:



Colima. En route to New Zealand from Hawaii, Fred Hurst made this 1875 diary entry: "Nov. 25th. Drew a sketch of the Colima [the steamship he was on]. Run 277 miles, the wind on our starboard quarter. Charley [his brother] getting worse every day, though he says his cough is better. I draw a little every day so that I don't have much idle time. I study the Maori language every morning, I begin to read quite fluently already in the Testament" (Hurst, *Diary*, 118). Courtesy of Floyd H. Hurst.



Our old place near the cemetery, Wellington, N.Z. Hurst wrote in his diary, "January 3rd, 1876. Took a long walk in the cemetery, sketched our old place just above on the hill; also a view of Queen's Wharf [see the next sketch]. Rambled round all our old favorite walks, etc." (Hurst, *Diary*, 130). This house was built about 1852 by Fred's father with help from Fred and the rest of the family. Courtesy of Floyd H. Hurst.



Queen's Wharf, Wellington. Sketched by Fred Hurst on January 3, 1876, while he was on his mission in New Zealand. See the caption for the Hurst family home for more details. Courtesy of Floyd H. Hurst.

I scarcely know what to do, everybody I used to be acquainted with gives me the cold shoulder.¹¹⁰

I got an abusive and insulting letter from my brother, Alfred, but have concluded not to notice. It would be beneath me to stoop so low as to answer it.¹¹¹

January 10th. I took a long walk to find a secret place to retire to, for I felt bowed down and bewildered, not knowing where to go or what to do. Everything seemed shut down for want of funds. In the anxiety of my soul I wished [*sic*] to exclaim: "Oh, Lord, I am here to do thy will and not my own, wilt thou in Thy tender mercy make it manifest unto me what I shall do for the best interest of this mission. If it is Thy will that I should preach in this place, wilt thou provide means to hire a hall, or what shall I do, and whither shall I go to accomplish the most good?"¹¹²

Fred did manage to hire a hall and began preaching regularly, handing out tracts and holding gospel discussions with whomever would lend him a moment, but most only "wanted to know about polygamy [*sic*] and not baptism."¹¹³ The newspapers also "did not spare their abuse and misrepresentation calling Fred a sickly Saint from Utah."¹¹⁴ The *Evening Post* of January 17, 1876, wrote that Fred addressed "a large congregation on Sunday afternoon and was invited by the Evangelist to a public discussion, and that Elder Hurst the Mormon Prophet and all his absurdities were entirely disposed of."¹¹⁵

Fred, with his uncanny knack to turn even the most discouraging situations into something positive, comments:

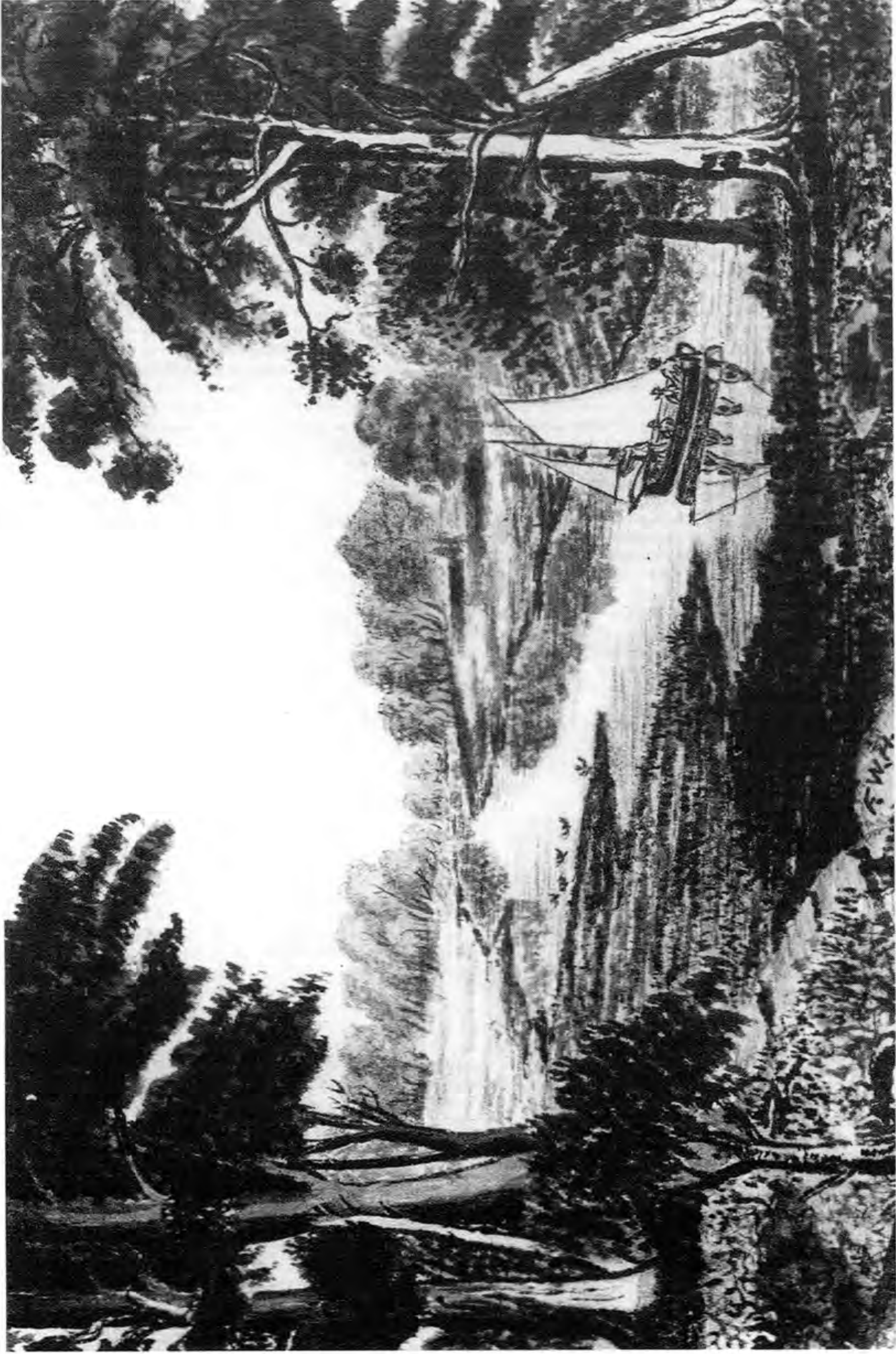
Here am I, a stranger in a strange land, insulted and despised by all that know me, abused by the Press, Priests, and people. And what for? Because I have the Priesthood of the Almighty and a message from High Heaven to warn the people to repent of their sins ere the judgments of God will overtake them as a thief in the night. As I have written in some of my letters, it has never fell to my lot to meet with so many rebuffs, slights, insults, and abuse and crosses and disappointments in such a short space of time as I have since I landed here and yet the hand of the Lord is over me for good, and I often realize it to a marvelous extent.

But it does not do to brood over these things; although things look dark now I firmly believe there will be a change before long even if the Lord has to come and stir the people up by His power. He will do all things well.¹¹⁶

Fred's faith and perseverance were not misplaced. He was possibly the first Latter-day Saint to learn the Maori tongue and



Evans Bay near Wellington, July 12, 1876. Fred made no diary entry for the 12th. However, a July 3rd entry indicates one way he supported himself. Fred told a man who had been admiring a painting, “I had a good notion to sell out to him and if he would give me two pounds for the picture he should have it telling him we were broke. . . . He pulled out his purse and said he would buy. . . . Our hearts were full of . . . gratitude to Our Heavenly Father” (Hurst, *Diary*, 154). Courtesy of Floyd H. Hurst.



Thames River, Auckland, N.Z. Dated July 10, 1876. A later entry reveals that missionary work was slow during this period: "This is July 17. There has very little transpired of note lately. Life is rather monotonous (Hurst, *Diary*, 155). Courtesy of Floyd H. Hurst.

actively try to proselyte among the natives. The following reflection by Fred was indeed prophetic:

I had a very pleasant dream last night, that filled my soul with joy unutterable. A personage was talking to me. He appeared to be standing in the air several feet from the ground and was telling me, or giving me an account of some very great and important events, several of which will transpire within a year from this date concerning the Lamanites [Maoris], and cited me to a certain passage in the Book of Mormon, that was not being fulfilled concerning that people, but when I awoke, alas, the dream and the passage referred to fled from my memory, for which I feel sorry, but presume it is all right.¹¹⁷

Months later a letter was received from Brigham Young confirming Fred's feelings; it requested that the missionaries study the Maori language, "for the time had come for them to hear the gospel."¹¹⁸

While in New Zealand, the Hurst brothers suffered not only public abuse, but also lack of money to meet basic expenses and provide bare essentials. Fred writes: "We are in a very destitute condition, and it requires all our courage, and that would not amount to much without the Spirit of the Lord to comfort and cheer our hearts."¹¹⁹ "Sometimes we go a whole week without meat, butter is a rarity, we live mostly on oatmeal porridge and sop, but we have sickened on oatmeal. . . . We can't both go to town together on account of Charley's [Clement's] boots have given out, and that leaves us with but one pair between us, and we wear them turn about."¹²⁰

Through it all, each difficulty seemed little more than a diversion for Fred. He never lost sight of how his life fell into Christ's scheme of things, never became frustrated or angry, just took it all in stride with a resilience that would anger any skeptic: "Oh how very happy I ought to be for the hand of the Lord has been over, and round about me and mine for good, and my heart swells within me, and my gratitude to devoting myself, my time and my all for the up building of God's kingdom and the spread of truth. And while I'm permitted to live on earth I want to do good."¹²¹

One commodity Fred never lacked was true and sincere friends. When Fred had left on his mission, he was overwhelmed by community generosity.¹²² News of Fred's release was soon followed by \$300 in gold raised by the brothers and sisters of Logan to help pay his fare home.¹²³ Fred commented, "When I thought of such kindness I felt

very humble and asked myself the question, ‘Am I worthy of so much kindness and solicitude?’”¹²⁴

Fred returned to Logan in June 1877. His journal entries for the time highlight the fact that Fred was a man truly loved and respected by his family and friends:

We found quite a large assembly at the station to welcome us. I didn’t really feel worthy of so much honor. Such a cordial shaking of hands.

I will never forget Brother L. Farr hauled us home in his wagon crowded to the guards. We were hailed coming along the streets, and had to jump out every once in a while to shake hands, finally we reached home. Found my dear wife tolerably well but looking very thin and careworn. The twins had grown remarkably and Leo, quite a while after I got home, kept saying, “Take me to my papa, take me to my papa, I tell oo.”

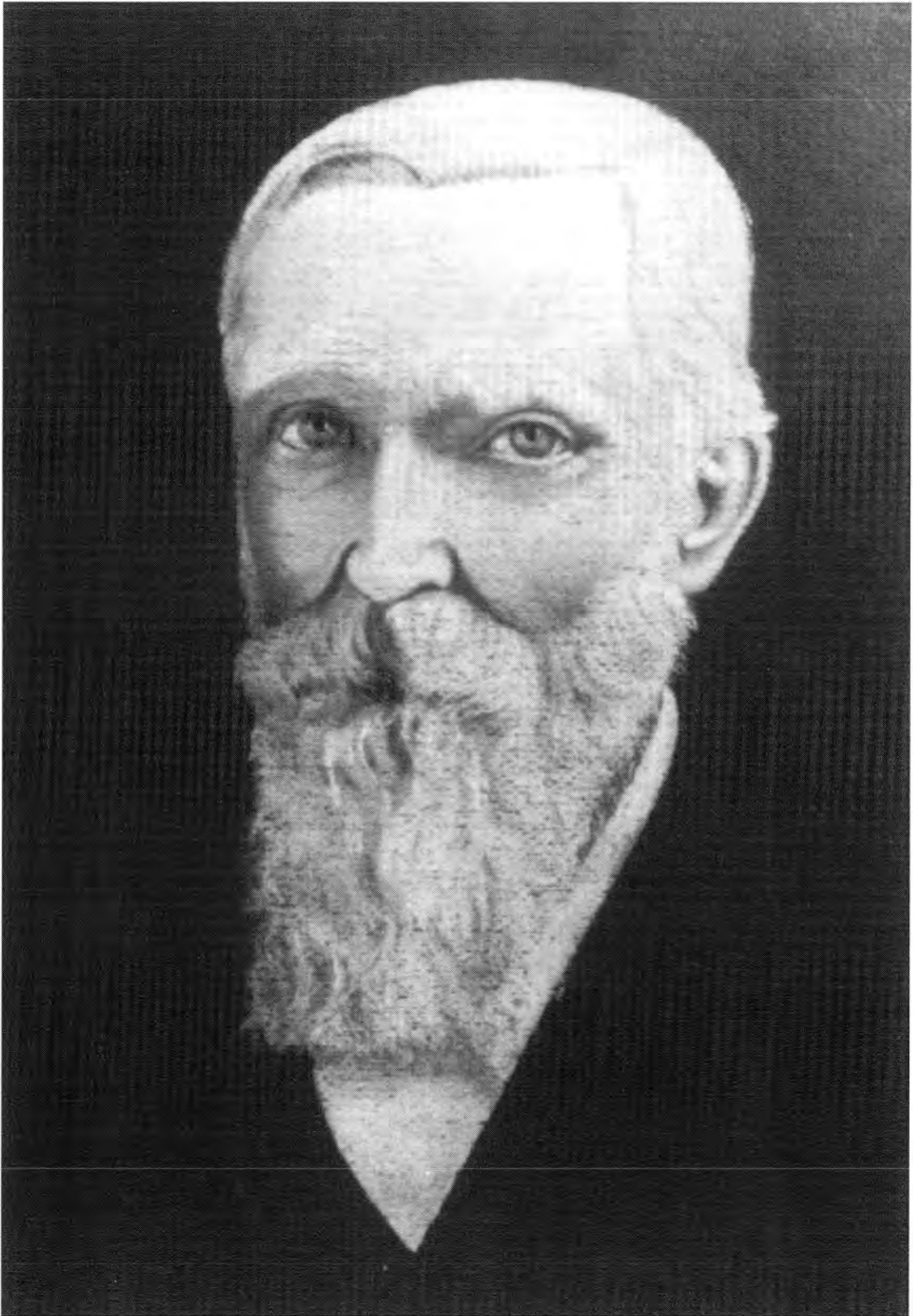
The children were all delighted with the shells and corals that I brought along. Everything was new to them. Besides images and animals carved out of wood, a box made of sandal wood and beautifully carved by Chinese, and then all my sketches, etc.

In the evening a very large company, over three hundred, came down with Brother William Knowles to serenade us. God bless them for their kindness. My wife says, “You must go out and invite them in.” I told her our city lot would scarcely hold them. I made a few remarks to thank them, and felt to bless them in the name of the Lord Jesus.¹²⁵

Fred continued painting part time. He lived near the temple in Logan, Utah, where he spent much of his time doing work for the dead. In 1892-93, Fred’s artistic talents were called upon to engrave and paint the inside of the Salt Lake Temple.¹²⁶ Although “so sick with vomiting,” he believed the completion of the temple was of such importance that he never missed a day’s work until the project was finished.¹²⁷

One of Fred’s last entries in his journal is a truly remarkable one and a testimony to what his life centered upon: family, missionary work, and temple work. Fred recorded:

Along about the 1st of March, 1893, I found myself alone in the dining room, all had gone to bed. I was sitting at the table when to my great surprize [*sic*] my elder brother Alfred walked in and sat down opposite me at the table and smiled. I said to him (he looked so natural): “When did you arrive in Utah?”



A self portrait of Frederick William Hurst (1833–1918). Original in color. Date unknown. Hurst served as a missionary in Australia, Hawaii, California, and New Zealand. He also worked as a craftsman on the Salt Lake and Logan temples. Courtesy of Beth Taylor.

He said: "I have just come from the Spirit World, this is not my body that you see, it is lying in the tomb. I want to tell you that when you were on your mission you told me many things about the Gospel, and the hereafter, and about the Spirit World being as real and tangible as the earth. I could not believe you, but when I died and went there and saw for myself I realized that you had told the truth. I attended the Mormon meetings." He raised his hand and said with much warmth: "I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart. I believe in faith, and repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, but that is as far as I can go. I look to you to do the work for me in the temple. You are watched closely, every move you make is known there, and we were glad you came. We are all looking to you as our head in this great work. I want to tell you that there are a great many spirits who weep and mourn because they have relatives in the Church here who are careless and are doing nothing for them."¹²⁸

Accordingly, Fred later authorized the work to be done.¹²⁹

Frederick William Hurst, foot soldier for the gospel, died October 30, 1918, at age eighty-five.¹³⁰ Like those of a vast majority of less eminent converts, Fred Hurst's life was not characterized by any one great event to immortalize his name in LDS history. Fred served without popular distinction, prominence, or position, but his example truly "influenced people from all walks of life in many lands."¹³¹ For example, youthful John A. Widstoe remembered an aged Fred Hurst:

He always kept a beautiful flower garden at his home just below the Agricultural College at Logan, where I was laboring as President of that institution. Naturally my responsibilities were heavy. In times of discouragement I would often take a walk real early in the morning when all was quiet, where I could be alone with my thoughts . . . [Fred] was always out with a very cheery "Good Morning", and if I gave no signs of being in a hurry he would talk over the fence. It usually was not long until some remark we had made brought from his store of wisdom and experience some story of his early days, and I would listen to him. He had such a marvelous personality, and as his face glowed with faith and cheerfulness, one never tired of his stories of actual living for it seemed his life had reached out into every worthwhile activity of man. He had a cheerfulness that would dispel any worry or fears and I would go back to my labors full of encouragement and faith in the purpose of life, and that God was interested in all of his children, and would overrule for the good and blessing of any who would trust in him to make life or tasks conform to the will of God.¹³²

No one could have mapped out a longer route to Zion either in physical miles or spiritual trials than did Hurst and Baptiste, who

both managed to escape the goldfields and their quagmire of religious indifference, moral leprosy, and isolation. But what turned out to be a refiner's fire for Hurst proved to be little more than a hand-warming flame for Baptiste.

For many people, evil has a perverse and entertaining fascination while the whole and significant sum of a good man's works pass by unnoticed. Good is less likely to catch our interest. This is no better illustrated than in the lives of Fred Hurst and John de Baptiste. The brief appearance of Baptiste in our history catches the mind and stirs the imagination to ponder the sensational, but of the Fred Hursts of the world, President Howard W. Hunter wrote: "There are many great, unnoticed, and forgotten heroes among us. I am speaking of those of you who quietly and consistently do the things you ought to do. I am talking about those who are always there and always willing . . . to do the many simple and minor things that will ultimately make us great."¹³³

John Devitry-Smith, from Molong, New South Wales, Australia, works as an engineer with Intergraph Corporation in Seattle, Washington.

NOTES

¹ John Ritchie, *Australia as Once We Were* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1963), 86.

² Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore: The Epic of Australia's Founding* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 585.

³ Amasa Potter, Journal, Archives Division, Church Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives). Potter referred to the New South Wales gold mines but characterizes a general consensus concerning the goldfields.

⁴ Samuel H. Hurst and Ida Hurst, eds. and comps., *Diary of Frederick Hurst* (n.p., 1961), appendix. Samuel H. Hurst is the same person who participated in the prayer under the pepper tree with David O. McKay, as discussed in the article by Lavina Fielding Anderson in this issue of *BYU Studies*.

⁵ *Deseret News*, December 2, 1991, sec. B, 1-2. This article is basically a rewrite of the article "Robber of the Dead," *Deseret Evening News*, May 27, 1893, 8.

⁶ Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature, 1984), 6:13. Journal accounts refer to Baptiste as John Baptist or Jean Baptiste and, ironically, by his nickname "John the Baptist."

⁷ Dale L. Morgan, *The Great Salt Lake*, ed. Milo M. Quaife (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1947), 274.

⁸ Manning Clark, *A Short History of Australia* (Victoria: Penguin, 1963), 20.

⁹ *Times and Seasons* 6 (April 1, 1845): 857.

¹⁰ Thomas H. Threaves, "Finding Comfort," *Helpful Visions*, Faith Promoting Series, vol. 14 (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1887), 42.

¹¹ *Deseret News*, February 11, 1852. This is a letter from Charles W. Wandell to Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards. Everything in Australia during the period was compared to England, from superior climate to inferior fashion.

¹² "A Chapter on Gold Digging," *Millennial Star*, November 11, 1852, 295. This is a letter from Charles Wandell to Franklin D. Richards. Negative accounts of the colony and people were easy to locate. For example, Wandell later referred to Australia as "this filthy sink of devildom." From missionary William Hyde, we hear, "Truly [we] are in the midst of a perverse people whose God is Gold" (*Deseret News*, December 7, 1854, 39). Josiah Fleming stated, "[I] view myself as being in this far off land of darkness degradation and misery" (Josiah Fleming to Brigham Young, October 30, 1855, LDS Church Archives).

¹³ Augustus Farnham to Brigham Young, June 6, 1853, LDS Church Archives.

¹⁴ *Millennial Star*, December 16, 1854, 798. This is a letter from Augustus Farnham to F[ranklin] D. Richards, September 18, 1854.

¹⁵ Augustus Farnham to Amasa Lyman, December 4, 1855, LDS Church Archives.

¹⁶ Augustus Farnham to Amasa Lyman, February 14, 1856, LDS Church Archives.

¹⁷ Augustus Farnham to Brigham Young, May 5, 1855, LDS Church Archives. Absolom P. Dowdle commented, "That colony [Victoria] is rather worse for traveling without money than the colony of N.S.W. for this reason. The general feeling with the people of Victoria is that a person there has money, and if he has not, they think that he should go to work and get means to travel with" (Absolom P. Dowdle to George A. Smith, George A. Smith Collection, LDS Church Archives).

¹⁸ Burr Frost to Brigham Young, December 26, 1853, Burr Frost, Diary, LDS Church Archives.

¹⁹ Joseph Kelly, Diary, January 15, 1857, and January 21, 1857, LDS Church Archives.

²⁰ Ritchie, *Australia*, 86.

²¹ Hurst, *Diary*, 1, 5.

²² Hurst, *Diary*, 5. The Hurst family originally came from the Isle of Jersey (Hurst, *Diary*, 1).

²³ Hurst, *Diary*, 6-7.

²⁴ Geoffrey Hindley, *Discovery Gold: The Intriguing Story of the World's Most Valued Resource* (London: Orbis, 1983), 122.

²⁵ Hurst, *Diary*, 7.

²⁶ Hurst, *Diary*, 7-8. Noted historian Geoffrey Blainey feels the dangers were exaggerated and writes that although "armed bushrangers molested the main roads to goldfields and cutthroats murdered their mates in tents and golden holes, these signs of violence were only one side of the page, the side the newspapers liked to print. The goldfields chief commissioner noted on 1 October 1852 that the crime rate was no higher on the diggings than in the whole colony" (Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended: A History of Australian Mining* [Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1963], 41). However, other contemporaneous reports and at least

one modern historian disagree with Blainey's assessment. See Ray Aitchison, *The Americans in Australia* (Melbourne: AE Press, 1986), 43–49. American miner Charles D. Ferguson, an “old hand,” had previously worked in the Californian diggings and remembered Bendigo as

certainly one of the worst places on earth in 1852–53. One was not safe going outside his tent after dark, as he was liable to be either shot or sand-bagged and robbed. There was no end of such desperate, murderous rascality. It would take a thousand pages to record what I have personally known, to say nothing of all [that has been] reported from the various districts in the colony. They would steal washdirt, rob a claim, or kill a man without compunction. There were parties that did nothing else but go around thru the day and learn where the best dirt or richest claims were, and come at night and carry off the dirt.

Later he noted that “the greatest change noticeable to an early miner is in the absence of all the old hands, [who] . . . were either hung or died in prison” (Charles D. Ferguson, *The Experiences of a Forty-niner in Thirty-Four Years Residence in California and Australia*, ed. Frederick J. Wallace [Cleveland: Williams Publishing, 1888], 249).

²⁷ Hurst, *Diary*, 9. Francis Evans with his wife and five children emigrated on the *Tarquinia* in 1855, arriving in San Francisco in July 1857 (*Western Standard*, July 24, 1857, 2).

²⁸ Hurst, *Diary*, 9.

²⁹ Thomas Holder would return to New Zealand in 1854 in company with Augustus Farnham and William Cooke as the first LDS missionaries to the land where he remained active in the work. In 1870, Holder was appointed President of the Karori Branch (B. Hunt, *Zion in New Zealand: 1854–1977* [Temple View, New Zealand: Church College of New Zealand, 1977], 6). Fred sometimes called his brother *Charles* and sometimes *Clement*.

³⁰ Hurst, *Diary*, 10.

³¹ After arriving in Melbourne mid-May 1853, Burr Frost (1815–1878) advertised in the local newspaper and began preaching on Sundays near St. Peters Church at the top of Collins Street “upon the first principles of the gospel” to rowdy crowds. On the first Sunday, Frost recorded “[I] had probably one hundred present with as much feeling of mobocracy as ever I saw in my life” (Frost, *Diary*, May 22, 1853, LDS Church Archives).

³² John Murdock, *Journal*, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 55–56. John Murdock was born in 1792. He was an early convert to the church (fall of 1830), being baptized about the same time as Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams. In June 1831, he was called on a mission to accompany Hyrum Smith. He helped obtain permission from citizens of Daviess County, Missouri, to create a Mormon settlement at DeWitt. He served as the first bishop of Salt Lake 14th Ward (Daniel Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Doctrine and Covenants*, 2 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978], 2:365). Murdock was a seasoned preacher and silent strongman of the Church, but by the time he arrived in Australia, he was bordering on sixty years of age; his body could no longer keep up with his spirit. In his own words, he recalled that “considering

the weakness of my body the affliction and trembling of my nerves and badness of my eyesight, I am not fit" (Murdock, Journal, 57).

Melbourne was not only the gate of entry to the goldfields, but also the resort of hundreds of ex-convicts who had flooded across Bass Strait from Van Diemen's Land in search of easy money. The police, never a particularly fine body of men, had almost all resigned and gone to the goldfields. Desperate attempts to replace them brought into the force a riffraff of ex-convicts who saw better pickings as servants of the law than as its proclaimed enemies (Norman Bartlett, *Australia and America through 200 Years: 1776-1976* [Sydney: S. U. Smith at the Fine Arts Press, 1976], 9).

³⁵ George W. Watson had volunteered for a mission to Melbourne, arriving four months before Wandell, but he had not been preaching. Watson was active for a time but could not agree with polygamy, stating "a man should cleave to one wife" (Frost, Diary, September 4, 1853).

Baptized January 5, 1837, at age seventeen, Wandell quickly became an active missionary. A man of great capacity and competence, having a proud, almost arrogant, air about himself, he had a great influence on the early growth and development of the Church in Australia. He organized the first group of converts to leave Australia in 1853, joined the Reorganized Church in 1873, and was called by them to open the gospel in Australia. After returning to Sydney, he became crippled with rheumatism and died shortly after on March 14, 1875 (Inez Smith, "Biography of Charles Wesley Wandell," *The Journal of History* [Lamoni, Iowa: Board of Publications, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1910] 3:461, 466, 4:63).

³⁴ *Millennial Star*, April 2, 1853, 220. Wandell's stay in Melbourne was brief; he departed December 9, 1852. Difficulties within the branch at Sydney forced his early return. In reference to the converts from the British Isles, Wandell issued a stern warning to those thinking of coming to try their luck in the diggings. His lengthy imaginary account concerning a group of Englishmen foolish enough to venture to the goldfields instead of going to Zion reads in part:

They are received by a set of *vultures*, who will, if possible, by fair means or foul, drain them of every farthing before they leave them. Wherever they go they will meet with *extortion* . . . they must pay two-and-sixpence for a dirty meal. They will have to pay two shillings and sixpence per night for the meanest lodgings, with the *greatest* probability of being robbed before morning. . . . Well, what is it? Why it is the lowest pit of England's HELL. (*Millennial Star*, April 30, 1853, 278)

³⁵ *Zion's Watchman*, August 13, 1853, 1.

³⁶ Living conditions in the goldfields were hard, consisting only of the bare essentials. "Our house is nine feet square and is made of canvass, Our furniture consists of a Bed which is made by laying the Bark of trees on the ground and throwing gum leaves on it and four blankets, a blanket to each man, an Ax a pick four shovels and a Colt revolving Pistol apiece completes our Parlor Furniture" (E. Daniel Potts and Annette Potts, *Young Americans and Australian Gold: Americans and the Gold Rush of the 1850's* [St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1974], 63). The work, from dawn to dusk six days a week, was difficult, lonely, and dangerous

and held little glamour, the miners existing basically on “mutton, damper and black tea.” The odds were against a man even making a living in the goldfields with the best of the diggings finished by 1853 (Ritchie, *Australia*, 91, 93).

³⁷ American William Cooke had been baptized only weeks earlier by the mission president, Augustus Farnham, in Sydney and had arrived in Melbourne on June 21, 1853, informing Frost that he intended to continue on to the goldfields at Bendigo. Frost had set Cooke apart to “preach in the mining districts of Victoria in as much [*sic*] as the Lord should open the way before him” (Frost, *Diary*, September 11, 1853). Cooke was instrumental in the development of the Church in the Bendigo-Castlemaine area, the nucleus of the LDS Church in Victoria during the early to mid-1850s. Cooke, the founding father of the New Zealand Mission, was murdered in Logan, Utah, in 1858. Hosea Stout records: “Tuesday 12 Oct. 1858. About 8 o’clock an attack was made by three men on Br. William Cook keeper of the Lock up. Cook was shot through the thigh breaking the bone.” Cooke died a week later after much suffering (Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844-1861*, 2 vols. [Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964], 1:667).

³⁸ Hurst, *Diary*, 11. The Gold Diggers Branch, the first branch of the Church in the Victorian goldfields, was organized by Burr Frost and William Cooke near present-day Bendigo in the tent of Francis Evans, September 13, 1853. By September 1854, the Church in Victoria had five branches and fifty-one members (*Zion’s Watchman*, October 14, 1854, 156).

³⁹ Hurst, *Diary*, 11.

⁴⁰ Hurst, *Diary*, 12. The doctrine of plural marriage from its introduction caused problems for the missionaries. Burr Frost publicly introduced the doctrine into Victoria and received considerable abuse. For example, after the wife of an Elder Symmons (a hot-headed woman at the best of times) obtained a copy of the *Deseret News* containing a detailed account of polygamy, she became so enraged that she attempted to attack Frost in the open street and on another occasion threatened Frost “that if she could see me that she would tare [*sic*] my eyes out” (Frost, *Diary*, October 1852–May 1854). Apparently, of the ten elders sent to Australia in 1853, at least two who were already married took another wife in Australia. Mission Pres. A. P. Dowdle claimed to have married and had three children while John Norton took a third wife (Absolom Porter Dowdle, *Diary*, LDS Church Archives). William Robb, the only member in Australia documented as having taken a second wife, was disfellowshipped briefly for his action (Journal History of the Church, December 12, 1857, microfilm, Harold B. Lee Library).

⁴¹ Hurst, *Diary*, 12.

⁴² Hurst, *Diary*, 12.

⁴³ Hurst, *Diary*, 13.

⁴⁴ Hurst, *Diary*, 13.

⁴⁵ Hurst, *Diary*, 35.

⁴⁶ Hurst, *Diary*, 83.

⁴⁷ As most of the men were at the mines and it was difficult to preach outdoors in Melbourne during the winter, Frost had concluded to stay with James McKnight at the Bendigo diggings. “If I could not preach Br. McKnight said he would Board me two or three months [and] I could help cook and [assist] him when he needed” (Frost, *Diary*, July 3, 1853). Echoing his frustration in Melbourne, Frost wrote, “Got

to meditating upon the wickedness of the people in this country as a specimen of the daily occurrences in this country it is common to read in the morning news of from fifty to [one] hundred cases before the Mayor and police magistrate for drunkenness, Petty thefts, fightings, indecent exposure, etc." (Frost, *Diary*, September 11, 1853).

From Melbourne, July 5, 1854, Alexander Pain wrote, "I preach every Sunday on the wharf, the principles of the Gospel to the great body of the people. I have preached four Sundays and have become quite a favourite with the people . . . I cannot find any Latter-day Saints here, except one or two, who have been like myself, and you know, they would give me no comfort" (*Zion's Watchman*, August 5, 1854, 127). Just as the Californian diggings had been a windfall for the pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley, the fortunes of the Australian Mission seemed to run parallel with the success of the goldfields. Gold from members in the diggings subsidized the *Zion's Watchman* along with other printing, as well as supporting missionary expenses and immigration costs. Salt Lake City also benefited from Australian gold. In 1853 a subscription was taken up and sent to Brigham Young to help build the temple. Miner Clem Hurst, for example, paid over £900 in tithing on one occasion alone to Burr Frost (Hurst, *Diary*, 18).

⁴⁸Hurst, *Diary*, 13. Two varying accounts of Sunday at the diggings read as follows: "On Sundays ordained clergymen or Cornish diggers preached from carts or stumps or pulpits in vast tents to some of the largest congregations that had ever assembled in the land. Revivalist crusades converted hundreds at the height of new rushes" (Blainey, *The Rush that Never Ended*, 41).

With Sunday proclaimed as a day of rest the Commissioner was anxious to stamp out all goldfield trading, especially that associated with the sale of illicit liquor. Sunday, August 10th 1851, was observed in a most heathen-like manner by Sofala's drunken majority. At Big Oakey Creek, a Londoner and Australian fought 18 rounds over 55 minutes for a \$10 stake. Only two hundred yards away, the Reverend Chapman attempted to conduct an outdoor Wesleyan service. The cleric commanded the attention of a mere 30 followers whilst his "opposition attracted a crowd of one thousand onlookers. An afternoon service was marred by noise from a cricket match, foot racing and jumping contests. Others openly gambled, played "pitch and toss" and held target practice for money. (John Rule, *Sofala Days and Turonites* [New South Wales, Australia: Pearl Printing, 1980], 12-13)

⁴⁹Hurst, *Diary*, 13.

⁵⁰Hurst, *Diary*, 14.

⁵¹Sunday meetings held by the Saints attracted good crowds at the Castlemaine diggings where "the size of the turn-outs for a Mormon service surprised the local newspapers" (Potts and Potts, *Young Americans*, 70).

⁵²Hurst, *Diary*, 18.

⁵³Woodruff, *Journal* 6:14.

⁵⁴Hurst, *Diary*, 16.

⁵⁵Hurst, *Diary*, 16.

⁵⁶Hurst, *Diary*, 16. James McKnight (1830-1908), tenth convert and original member of the first branch of the Church organized in Sydney, was baptized at the

age of twenty-one on December 11, 1851, and quickly became an excellent missionary. James married Sarah Howell of the Newcastle Branch in April 1855 and emigrated on the *Tarquinia*. James McKnight paid Frost's and Smith's passage aboard the *Tarquinia* and also gave Smith \$50.00 (James C. McKnight, comp., *James McKnight and His Antecedents in Scotland with an Account of His Early Days in Australia and on His Way to America* [Fort Collins: n.p., 1987], 23, 30). He settled at Minersville, Utah, where he became the first mayor and later the patriarch (McKnight, *James McKnight*, 33).

⁵⁷ Hurst, *Diary*, 16.

⁵⁸ Excerpts from the Journal of Alonzo Colton, LDS Church Archives, 4.

⁵⁹ "Their Contribution to Utah," *Our Pioneer Heritage*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 20 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1958), 1:273. *Tarquinia* is often written as *Tarquenia*.

⁶⁰ "Journal of John T. Caine," *Heart Throbs of the West*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 12 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1943), 5:246.

⁶¹ Conway B. Sonne, *Saints on the Sea* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), 11.

⁶² "Journal of John T. Caine," 249, 280.

⁶³ Hurst, *Diary*, Appendix, 1.

⁶⁴ Hurst, *Diary*, 19.

⁶⁵ Hurst, *Diary*, 45. These types of faith-promoting experiences are typical throughout Hurst's journal.

⁶⁶ Hurst, *Diary*, 67.

⁶⁷ Hurst, *Diary*, 67.

⁶⁸ Hurst, *Diary*, 77.

⁶⁹ Hurst, *Diary*, 206. Hurst recounts of the event: "I attended the conference of the Church in San Francisco, April 6, 1857. Being set apart with some other young Elders, President George Q. Cannon was mouth, I was very much astonished to hear him say: 'Brother Fred, the Lord called you when you were a child, and you received a promise that you should be one of the one hundred and forty-four thousand that should stand upon Mt. Zion and sing a new song:, and now by virtue and authority of the Holy Priesthood, I seal and confirm that promise on your head.'"

⁷⁰ Hurst, *Diary*, 85.

⁷¹ Hurst, *Diary*, 99.

⁷² Hurst, *Diary*, 100-101.

⁷³ J. R. Young Scrapbook, January 1862, LDS Church Archives.

⁷⁴ "Robber of the Dead," *Deseret Evening News*, May 27, 1893, 8.

⁷⁵ For a more detailed account of the death of Clawson, see *Deseret News*, March 26, 1862, 1.

⁷⁶ "Robber of the Dead," 8.

⁷⁷ "Robber of the Dead," 8.

⁷⁸ Historian's Office Journal, November 1861-February 1863, LDS Church Archives.

⁷⁹ "Robber of the Dead," 8.

⁸⁰ Woodruff, *Journal* 6:13-14.

⁸¹ "Robber of the Dead," 8.

⁸² Young Scrapbook, January 1862.

⁸³ "Robber of the Dead," 8.

⁸⁴ Woodruff, *Journal* 6:14.

⁸⁵ Annie C. Carr, ed. and comp., *East of Antelope Island: History of the First Fifty Years of Davis County* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1948), 32.

⁸⁶ "Robber of the Dead," 8.

⁸⁷ Historian's Office Journal, November 1861–February 1863, LDS Church Archives.

⁸⁸ Woodruff, *Journal* 6:14–15. Baptiste's behavior was bizarre enough to raise the question of whether he was sane. Nevertheless, his was a sensational story at the time.

⁸⁹ History of Brigham Young, January 28, 1862, LDS Church Archives.

⁹⁰ "President Brigham Young at the Tabernacle, February 9, 1862," *Deseret News*, March 26, 1862, 1.

⁹¹ Anthon S. Cannon, *Popular Beliefs and Superstitions from Utah*, ed. Wayland D. Hand and Jeannie E. Talley (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984), 306.

⁹² *Deseret News*, March 26, 1862, 1. Brigham Young's first response to the event was recorded in his Office Journal, January 27, 1862, LDS Church Archives, 341–42, the day of Baptiste's arrest.

⁹³ Morgan, *The Great Salt Lake*, 277. What happened to Baptiste? The court records along with the *Deseret News* for the era are silent on the matter. Historian Dale L. Morgan wrote, "The personal journal of Judge Elias Smith is the sole indication that Baptiste ever received a judicial hearing, least of all a trial" (Morgan, *The Great Salt Lake*, 276).

⁹⁴ "Robber of the Dead," 8.

⁹⁵ "Robber of the Dead," 8.

⁹⁶ "Robber of the Dead," 8. Branding notorious criminals was a common legal practice in colonial America. See, for example, *Laws of the Province of Pennsylvania [sic]* (Philadelphia: Bradford, 1714), 38.

⁹⁷ Folklore has it that Ephraim Hanks tied a rock to Baptiste's neck and threw him into the Great Salt Lake (Carr, *East of Antelope Island*, 33).

⁹⁸ "Robber of the Dead," 8.

⁹⁹ "Robber of the Dead," 8.

¹⁰⁰ Family History of Aurelia Hawkins, in possession of Kerry Tingey, Madison, Alabama.

¹⁰¹ Hurst, *Diary*, Appendix.

¹⁰² Hurst, *Diary*, 111.

¹⁰³ Hurst, *Diary*, Appendix, 1.

¹⁰⁴ Hurst, *Diary*, 112.

¹⁰⁵ James R. Moss, R. Lanier Britsch, and James R. Christensen, *The International Church* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1982), 128.

¹⁰⁶ "Their Contribution to Utah," 262; and Hurst, *Diary*, 112. Many changes had taken place in Victoria and the Australasian Mission since Fred's departure on the *Tarquinius* in 1855. A new crop of converts took over in leadership positions in Victoria, and in the latter part of 1856, sixteen more American elders arrived in Australia, the majority landing at Melbourne on November 17, 1856. Four of them were assigned to Victoria.

At face value, progress seemed imminent, but a lack of direction, disagreement, bickering, and frustration with the conditions and a hardening public attitude

combined to stifle any hope of a new high. Missionary Joseph Kelting, after being sent to Geelong, Victoria, early in 1857 found that the members “had all deserted the place” and he “could not find an opening thare [sic]” and so decided to continue on to Ballarat but found that organizing a Branch there looked “almost impossible.” He added that the “Principle Business is digging gold and drinking and spreing [sic] . . . there is as much prostitution as ever I have seen.” Kelting notes that the majority of Saints left on the *Jenny Ford* and what few were left were “dissatisfied [sic].”

The mission was in decline and would not see any permanent signs of revival until the turn of the century (Joseph A. Kelting to Brigham Young, February 22, 1857, LDS Church Archives). A final blow to the Australian Mission in the 1850s was the news that troops were marching on Utah. All American missionaries were called home.

Shortly before his departure, President Andrew Stewart noted: “Since our last Conference in January, the times have been very dull, and great opposition to the work has been manifested in Australia. The attention of almost everyone had been turned to the ‘Mormon war.’ Some say they ought to be killed off. Others are waiting to see the result; and if the Saints are not all killed off, they will come out on the Lord’s side. The Victorian Mission is not doing much. It numbers but few Saints at this time” (Andrew J. Stewart, *Millennial Star*, April 10, 1858, 44). Amasa Potter wrote: “They said that we had preached to them that the God of heaven had spoken in these last days, and had sent an holy angel, and had restored the holy Priesthood and the keys to build up the Church and kingdom of God on the earth, and now, said they, the next ship that arrives from America will bring the news of the destruction of all the ‘Mormons’ in Utah” (Amasa Potter, “Missionary Sketches,” *Millennial Star*, October 3, 1871, 633).

Shortly after returning to Utah, Andrew J. Stewart, the last American mission president to visit Victoria in the 1850s, gave a report in the Salt Lake Tabernacle concerning the conditions in Melbourne: “I saw many females laying drunk in the street. . . . I saw four men with their throats cut in one day it was with the greatest difficulty we got to preach in the first place we had to learn the way of the people at first we went around selling books by this means got to talk to the people” (Provo, Utah, Stake Minutes, General Minutes, vol. 10, 1855–1856, September 25, 1859, 10 A.M.). Stewart’s statement of “seeing four men with their throats cut in one day” is likely an exaggeration he used to illustrate his point.

Converts continued leaving from Victoria in small groups in the years following, and missionary work continued intermittently but with little lasting success, the members being scattered over a vast area and generally unorganized. Efforts were made to reestablish the Australasian mission but with poor results. With the elders being needed elsewhere, Australia became a low priority.

Job Welling, who arrived in Melbourne, Victoria, late in 1875, wrote of the general stagnation: “The people largely English, came here for the purpose of getting rich, and have been in the habit of earning big wages and spending all they could get their hands upon in the most reckless manner. Horse racing, boat racing, betting, gambling of every description are in order, with lots of drinking and lewdness on every hand. Yet churches and chapels abound, religious liberty is of such a cast as to deprive it of all sanctuary. You may do what you please, think what you please, it makes no particular difference. They regard it all about alike, and are extremely indifferent. . . . All classes join eagerly in the outcry at ‘Mormonism’” (*Deseret News*, February 23, 1876).

¹⁰⁷ Hurst, *Diary*, 168.

¹⁰⁸ Hurst, *Diary*, 122.

¹⁰⁹ Hurst, *Diary*, 122.

¹¹⁰ Hurst, *Diary*, 127.

¹¹¹ Hurst, *Diary*, 129.

¹¹² Hurst, *Diary*, 132.

¹¹³ Hurst, *Diary*, 133.

¹¹⁴ Hurst, *Diary*, 133.

¹¹⁵ Hurst, *Diary*, 134.

¹¹⁶ Hurst, *Diary*, 141.

¹¹⁷ Hurst, *Diary*, 157.

¹¹⁸ Hurst, *Diary*, 157.

¹¹⁹ Hurst, *Diary*, 157.

¹²⁰ Hurst, *Diary*, 159.

¹²¹ Hurst, *Diary*, 168.

¹²² Hurst, *Diary*, 112.

¹²³ Hurst, *Diary*, 197.

¹²⁴ Hurst, *Diary*, 197.

¹²⁵ Hurst, *Diary*, 204.

¹²⁶ Frederick W. Hurst, "Pertaining to Temple Work," in *Voices from the Past* (Provo: Campus Education Week, 1980), 101. Although his journal simply mentions that he "worked at painting in the Salt Lake Temple," he probably helped with the engraving. Hurst's journal has numerous sketches along with reference to his engraving and painting. A relative of Fred Hurst's has about fifty-five sketches by Hurst. Confirming Fred's artistic ability is this quote: "a Mr. Carr stepped up and inquired of the boys who had done the carving. . . . 'That is a very handsome piece of work.' Turning to me he said, 'Did you do that?' I replied, 'Yes Sir.' He answered, 'What a pity you should be so foolish as to throw your lifetime and talents in such a place as Salt Lake City among those Mormons'" (Hurst, *Diary*, 164). Page 186 of the "Logan Temple Book" reads: "He [Fred] hand carved chairs for the Logan temple and did gold leafing and some of the murals on the wall." See also Nolan Porter Olsen, *Logan Temple: The First 100 Years* (Providence, Utah: Keith W. Watkins and Sons, 1978), 186, which says the chairs were placed in the sealing rooms. Beth B. Lawrence, direct descendent of Fred Hurst, called the Logan Temple and was told "they had one of Fred's carved chairs in storage" (Beth B. Lawrence, interview, June 1992).

¹²⁷ Hurst, *Diary*, 204. The family picture pedigree chart ("Our Family Pedigree") in the possession of Beth B. Lawrence lists his occupation as "Florist and Oil Painter."

¹²⁸ Hurst, *Diary*, 204.

¹²⁹ Hurst, *Diary*, 205.

¹³⁰ Family Picture Pedigree Chart.

¹³¹ Hurst, *Diary*, Appendix, 2.

¹³² Hurst, *Diary*, Appendix, 2-3.

¹³³ Howard W. Hunter, "What Is True Greatness," *Ensign* 17 (September 1987): 72.

¹³⁴ John Currey, "Introduction," in *The Goldfields Illustrated: The Sketches of S. T. Gill* (Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, 1972), 10.