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James Godson Bleak: Pioneer Historian of Southern Utah

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JAMES GODSON BLEAK, PIONEER HISTORIAN
OF SOUTHERN UTAH

By
Caroline S. Addy

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of History
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah
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INTRODUCTION

There are many unexplored areas in the rich history of Utah, and the student suffers not so much from a lack of material as from the difficulty of giving the subject he chooses to discuss a treatment worthy of it.

One of these unexplored areas is the life and works of James Godson Bleak, pioneer historian of Southern Utah. This thesis seeks to determine the factors in his life which influenced his history writing and make an analysis of its value for future historical reference.

James Godson Bleak's work is concerned with the Southern Utah Mission [sometimes referred to as the Dixie Mission], which later became the St. George Stake, and covers the period from 1861 to 1900. During the period his history covers the mission or stake occupied the southwest corner of Utah and the adjacent areas in Nevada and Arizona [See Appendix I for a map of the area]. The religious, political, economic and cultural center of the stake was the City of St. George located in a hot, dry little valley in the extreme southwest corner of Utah. James helped settle the city which, surrounded by low barren hills of red sandstone and black lava rock, was a far cry from his native England. His conversion and devotion to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had led him to St. George, and it was certainly devotion to the church that kept him there in the first difficult years of its existence.

Indeed, the settlement of the community might have been doomed to failure, but in the early years when things were especially bad St. George
was the darling of the church leaders. There Brigham Young carried out a favorite project of trying to build a cotton empire. The city became his winter home as he attended to cotton affairs and to the later project of building a temple, and the great man also enjoyed the mild winter climate there. Each winter because of his presence St. George became the Center Stake of Zion as apostles and other general authorities gathered around him. With Brigham around the community hummed with activity, public buildings went up, companies arrived and departed to colonize in Arizona and Nevada, and agricultural experiments with crops requiring a long growing season were tried.

In the midst of all this James acquired a status he had never before held. In England he had been a poor clerk a little better educated than the average of his class, but without distinction and with small hopes for obtaining it. But in St. George, a frontier town, his London background, clerical talents, and intellectual bent made him a gentleman and a scholar. These talents enabled him to become the secretary and confidant of the great men of his world. While never helping to determine the policies of the church, he sat in many of the councils of its leaders. He was thus uniquely fitted by nature and opportunity to write a history of St. George Stake. A closer examination of his life and works will show how well he succeeded.
CHAPTER I

Details of the background and early life of James Godson Bleak are very few. Those available come from Bleak family tradition, family genealogical records, some personal letters, and a few scattered references in James' diaries.

James Godson Bleak was born on November 15, 1829, in Southwark, Surrey County, England, the third child and second son of Thomas Nelson Bleak and Mary Godson Bleak. His father was born October 18, 1804, at Castle Lyons, Cork County, Ireland, the son of Thomas Blake and Margaret Nelson Blake. His mother was born September 30, 1797, at Rathcornac, Cork County, Ireland, the daughter of James Godson and Elizabeth Burke Godson. The first child of Thomas Nelson Bleak and his wife, Mary, was a daughter whom they named Margaret and who died in infancy in Ireland.

Sometime between Margaret's death and the birth of James the family moved to England. The exact date of the move and the reason for it are not known. Also it is not known when the family name was changed from Blake to Bleak [both pronounced the same way], but it is a family tradition that the change was made when the family moved to England. James Godson Bleak and his children have been most insistent on spelling the name "Bleak" and pronouncing it "Blake." This change of name has given rise

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1 Iona Bleak Stucki, "Bleak Family Genealogical Records" (Unpublished family genealogical record of unnumbered pages).

2 Iona Bleak Stucki, Grand-daughter of James Godson Bleak, Personal Interview, February 20, 1953, St. George, Utah.

3 Bleak family argument for the pronunciation of the name is, "Steak is not pronounced 'steek,' and Bleak is not pronounced 'Bleek.'"
to speculation among some members of the family that a family quarrel prompted both the move and the change of name, although James claimed that the name was anciently spelled "Bleak" and that "Blake" is the modern version of it. 4

Possibly the move was merely a return to the homeland for evidence shows that the family was English rather than Irish—English colonists in Cork County. 5 James said that branches of the Bleaks settled in Ireland as "per Letters Patent from English Sovereign..." 6 Furthermore, James often corresponded with relatives in England after he came to the United States, and the traditional Irish nationalism is a thing unknown in the family. 7 Rather, James always showed a high reverence for the English crown, and in one of his diaries proudly mentioned that two of his mother's ancestors accompanied Prince Rupert to England to fight for Charles I. 8

Thomas Nelson and Mary Godson Bleak had six children: Margaret, Thomas, James, Thomas, Richard and John. Of the six, records indicate that only two lived beyond infancy, James and John. 9

The family had neither wealth nor distinction. It is not known

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7 James G. Bleak, Miscellaneous Papers (Unpublished and unclassified letters and notes owned by the Bleak Family).

8 "Diaries," January 8, 1880.

9 Iona Bleak Stucki, "Bleak Family Genealogical Records."
what vocation Thomas Nelson Bleak pursued, but his early death in London, England, February 7, 1844, at the age of thirty-nine, made it necessary for the fourteen year old James to quit school and go to work. This was the end of his formal education.10 One of James' employers was William Henry Smith, founder of the distributing firm of W. H. Smith and Son in the Strand.11 James recorded that Mr. Smith's son, William Henry, "wrote with me in the same office," indicating that the nature of their work was clerical.12 He also became apprenticed as a silversmith. It was during his work in this field that he became well acquainted with the Joseph Lewis Thompson family, from which his third and fourth wives, Jane and Matilda, were later chosen.13

Circumstances dictated that James was to be left without a family. His mother died in London January 21, 1816; and his brother, John, passed away June 25, 1818, only a few weeks after his eleventh birthday. In his later diaries James referred often to his father, mother, and brother, always with a great deal of affection.14

About a year after the death of John, James married for the first time in June, 1819. His wife was Elizabeth Moore, daughter of John Moore and Eunice Holden Moore, born March 6, 1828, at Twig Polley, London, Middlesex County, England. They were married at St. James Church, Bethel

10"Diaries," February 7, 1873. See also Samuel Bleak, "Brief Sketch of the Life of James G. Bleak" (Unpublished paper of unnumbered pages read at a Bleak Family reunion in 1925).


13Grace Bleak Thompson, Grand-daughter of James Godson Bleak, Personal Interview, February 25, 1953, St. George, Utah.

14Iona Bleak Stucki,"Bleak Family Genealogical Records."
Elizabeth's family were weavers of silk and silk velvet. Otherwise, little is known of her background, but the history of her later experiences shows her to have been a woman of high character capable of undergoing many hardships.

The nature of James' work during the years before he went to Utah is not precisely known. It may be that he worked as a silversmith or a clerk. In May, 1873, while in England on a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he went to London and visited one of the places where he had been employed. He mentioned in his diary that he found that the business, Hayne and Caters, in Clerkenwell, a place where he had formerly been employed, had been dissolved six or seven years before his visit; and expressed his regrets because Mr. Hayne had always been very kind to him. He said nothing about the business of the firm or the nature of his duties.

On March 22, 1850, a son, Richard Moore Bleak, the eldest of their ten children, was born to James and Elizabeth. Of the ten children, the first four [Richard Moore, Thomas Nelson, James Godson, and Mary] were born in London. The others were born in Utah.

The year 1850 was decisive in James' life for in December of that year he first came into contact with the Church of Jesus Christ of

15 "Diaries," March 6, 1887. See also Iona Bleak Stucki, "Bleak Family Genealogical Records."

16 Grace Bleak Thompson, Personal Interview. See also "Diaries," May 20, 1873; January 1, 1883. James visited Elizabeth's mother and her brother, James, when on his mission to England in 1873. Elizabeth also had a sister, Emma Pimm, living in London, with whom she carried on a correspondence after she came to Utah.

17 "Diaries," May 17, 1873.

18 Iona Bleak Stucki, "Bleak Family Genealogical Records."
Latter-day Saints.19 His conversion was rapid and complete, and he was baptized into the church on February 8, 1851, by Thomas Johnson, Priest, at Pentonville Baths, London.20 Elizabeth was converted about the same time.21 From the time of his conversion and baptism until he went to Utah James was active in the church in England. In May, 1847, he was ordained an Elder by Presiding Elder Henry Savage. In 1852, he was made second counselor to Thomas C. Armstrong, president of Whitechapel Branch, London. In the following year he initiated Sunday School meetings in the branch, and on February 6, 1854, he was set apart as president. Moreover, in 1854, he became Clerk and Auditor of Accounts of the London Conference.22 This appointment was in a sense the beginning of James' life work for the rest of his days were devoted to being a clerk and historian for the church.

19"Diaries," November 15, 1880; February 10, 1881.
20Ibid., February 10, 1885; February 8, 1890; February 8, 1897.
21Samuel Bleak, op. cit.
22Ibid. Also Grace Bleak Thompson, Personal Interview.
CHAPTER II

As is well known, it was the policy of the Mormon Church in James’
day to encourage the Saints to migrate to Utah. In line with this plan,
James began to make preparations in the spring of 1856 to bring his family
from England to Utah. Consequently, he was removed from his positions as
President of Whitechapel Branch and Clerk and Auditor of the London
Conference March 9, 1856. On March 16, he was baptized into the Law of
Consecration, and was promised by the elders of the church that he would
bring his family safely to Utah.¹

The Bleak family left London May 20, and embarked from Liverpool
for the United States May 23, aboard the "Horizon." The ship had 856
passengers, all of whom were Mormons traveling to Utah. Edward Martin was
captain of the company, and his counselors were Jesse Haven and George P.
Waugh. After a smooth, uneventful crossing of twenty-six days, the ship
docked at Boston, where they spent a week and then continued to Iowa City.
There they stayed seventeen days, preparing to cross the plains to Salt
Lake City.²

¹Samuel Bleak, op. cit. Also Grace Bleak Thompson, Personal
Interview. See also Doctrine and Covenants l:2. Baptism into the Law of
Consecration committed the member to the dedication of his time, talent and
property to the use of the church.

²Samuel Bleak, op. cit. See also James G. Bleak, "Handcart
Experiences" (Unpublished MS of unnumbered pages owned by the Bleak Family).
This outline of handcart experiences was found in the home of James' wife,
Jane, on May 9, 1943, by his daughter Rose Bleak Ramsey. Apparently, it
was drawn from a record which James kept on the journey, but which cannot
now be located.
Then began the most arduous task of journeying to Salt Lake City by handcart. Handcart transportation had numerous limitations. It meant that all the company who were at all physically able had to walk the entire distance. Secondly, it limited the supplies of the company to such an extent that they were on short rations most of the journey. Furthermore, it offered inadequate protection from the elements, and the absence of riding animals handicapped defense against Indians. All these factors made themselves felt in James' company; and moreover, they started so late in the season that early winter found them still on the high plains.

In the record which he kept of the journey from London to Salt Lake City, James noted the departure of his company from Iowa City July 26. By August 22, they had reached Florence, Missouri, a distance of three hundred miles. On August 31, he stated that they were 992 miles from Salt Lake City, and with this entry he began to keep a more detailed record noting the daily progress and making brief comments on the state of things.3

The company spent Wednesday, September 3, in camp. In spite of the fact that they had traveled as many as twenty-three miles a day, on Friday, September 5, a violent storm limited them to six miles and later they were snow bound, not moving a step for days. James noted that on September 12, they left a cripple behind. Sunday, September 15, found James ill with bloody flux [possibly dysentery]. He stated that by September 18, the company was 29 1/4 miles from Winter Quarters.

September 23 and 24 were particularly gruesome days for the company passed scattered blood-stained articles and the remains of the

3James G. Bleak, "Handcart Experiences."
Babbitt wagon which had been burned by the Indians. On the twenty-fourth they found part of a human body supposed to be that of Thomas Margetts.

By October 2, the company sighted Chimney Rock, and six days later reached Laramie, Wyoming. They crossed the Platte River October 14 and again on the sixteenth. On this day the flour ration was reduced; where adults had customarily received sixteen ounces a day, they now received twelve, and children, who had been receiving eight ounces, were reduced to six. On September 18, the company had its first death with the passing of Sister Mary Jackson. The next day they crossed the Platte again, and James noted that it was very cold. This was the last move they made for nine days because heavy snows immobilized the company until Wednesday, October 29, when they were able to travel ten miles.

A great deal of snow fell again November 1, and the company moved only nine miles the following eight days. Wednesday, November 5, the weather was particularly severe. The rations were reduced to four ounces of flour for adults and but two ounces for children. James commented, "...a pound for six of us. Through the blessings of our Father we felt as contented as when we had a pound and a ½ sic each."

Sunday, November 9, the company traveled five miles, but nearly all of those on foot were left behind. However, James walked this distance, and as a result his feet were "terribly frozen," so badly that he was handicapped for the rest of his life. He was thus forced to ride the rest of the way to Salt Lake City, and Elizabeth pulled the handcart.¹

November 10, the flour ration was raised to eight ounces for adults and four for children. A week later they were restored to full rations, and learned that they would be taken to Salt Lake City by mule

¹Ibid. See also "Diaries," May 9, 1892; October 9, 1901; October 23, 1901.
team, expecting to travel twenty or twenty-five miles a day.

Friday, November 21, the company reached the Green River. The story is told that here near tragedy struck at the Bleak family. The five year old, Thomas, fell into the river; and when they recovered him, he appeared to be dead. James, Elizabeth and others of the company worked over him trying to revive him; but it was apparently hopeless, and members of the company pled with James to bury the child. James refused. He remembered that he had been promised in England that he would bring his family safely to Utah. Therefore, both he and Elizabeth prayed fervently, and finally Thomas revived.⁵

Sunday, November 23, the company arrived at Fort Bridger, and James noted that he was suffering from an attack of mountain fever. By Sunday, November 30, the company entered Salt Lake City. It was six months and one week since the Bleak family had left their home in England.

It was not until February 12, 1857, that James was able to walk again. On that date he walked to sacrament meeting.⁶

After coming to Utah, James and Elizabeth made their home in North Ogden. On April 3, 1857, James became a High Priest in the North Ogden High Priests Quorum; and on April 23, was appointed a sergeant in the Nauvoo Legion. It was a year of high tension in Utah. James had arrived in the territory just in time to take part in the so-called "Utah War." In October, 1857, he went with Colonel Chauncey West's regiment of the Nauvoo Legion into Oregon Territory to intercept United States troops coming to Utah by the northern route. James was also one of those who went into Echo Canyon to intercept Johnston's Army. He returned from there.

⁵Grace Bleak Thompson, Personal Interview.
⁶James G. Bleak, "Handcart Experiences."
December 4, 1857. 7

While James was with the Legion, his family looked hopefully at a field of potatoes which he had planted for them. Elizabeth almost dispaired of seeing them get anything from the field. She was not able to take care of it well enough because of her many other responsibilities. But the soil was rich, and they harvested a fine, large crop. In telling the story in her later years to her grandchildren Elizabeth declared that they were the finest potatoes she had ever seen. 8

In March, 1858, when the Mormon settlements in Northen Utah were evacuated before the approaching army, James moved his family to Lehi; but they returned to North Ogden in the summer of that year. 9

During this uncertain period James and Elizabeth's fifth child was born, a son whom they named John, at North Ogden, January 22, 1858. 10 On December 31, 1858, James was set apart by President John Young as president of the High Priests Quorum at North Ogden. However, records of his activities between 1858 and 1861 are lacking. It is known that he was released from his position as president of the High Priests Quorum on February 20, 1860, and soon afterwards received his endowments at the Endowment House in Salt Lake City. 11 Sometime in 1860 the family apparently moved to Salt Lake City for in June his daughter, Lillie, was born there. 12

7Samuel Bleak, op. cit. Also Grace Bleak Thompson, Personal Interview.

8Grace Bleak Thompson, Personal Interview.

9Samuel Bleak, op. cit. Also Grace Bleak Thompson, Personal Interview.

10Iona Bleak Stucki, "Bleak Family Genealogical Records."

11Samuel Bleak, op. cit.

12Iona Bleak Stucki, "Bleak Family Genealogical Records."
On November 24, 1860, James took a second wife, Caroline Blanche Gosnold, born March 27, 1830, in Westminster, London, Middlesex County, England, the daughter of William and Mary Martell Gosnold. Less is known of Caroline than any of James' other wives. Their first child, Joseph Gosnold Bleak, was born September 16, 1861, in Salt Lake City.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid. Caroline was the first of James' wives to pass away. Her children, not feeling at home with other members of the family, were early scattered and contact with their descendants has been lost.
CHAPTER III

By 1850 the Mormons had established their outposts south to Parowan 250 miles from Salt Lake City. Within a short time Cedar City was settled. The Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah provided for the organization of Washington County on March 3, 1852, and that spring John D. Lee and a few men located twenty-two miles south of Cedar City on South Ash Creek. They called their location "Harmony."¹ They were followed by others. Small settlements were established at Santa Clara, Washington, Toquerville, and other places in the county. For the most part, however, the area remained unsettled. The few who lived in Washington County in the fifties were mostly Indian missionaries and their families. In 1857-1858 Mormons called back from San Bernardino, California, because of the "Utah War" settled in Santa Clara and other places in Southern Utah.²

But Brigham Young was not without ideas about this area. He desired to make the Mormons economically self-sufficient. In 1855 a quart of cotton seed was brought from Parowan to Santa Clara where it was planted by the Indian missionaries. This quart of seed yielded enough lint to produce thirty yards of cloth.³ A sample of this cotton was exhibited in Governor Brigham Young's office in Salt Lake City. Major Hunt, Indian


³Ibid., p. 31.
Agent, and a Virginian, pronounced it as good as any he had ever seen.\textsuperscript{4} Brigham Young began to think of Utah as being an important center for cotton production. He thought it worthwhile to do a little experimenting. In January, 1858, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Daniel H. Wells, and others, fitted out a small party under the supervision of Joseph Horne to establish a cotton farm on the Rio Virgin. Those in the party were Joseph Horne; William White; Richard Benson; David Miller; Joseph N. Perkins; James Richie; George Pectol; Jacob Peart, Junior; Abraham Hardman; Henry Dixon; Barnabas Stevens; Caspar Bryner; Andres Baker; John Leatham; William Teeples and James Stevenson. They started from Salt Lake City on January 26, 1858, and arrived at the junction of the Rio Virgin and the Santa Clara at what is known as Tonaquint by February 10. They called their location Heberville. Soon the site for a dam on the Rio Virgin was located, and it was finished by March 19. Cotton seed was obtained from Washington and Santa Clara and planted on May 6.

In November, 1858, Horne and others left Heberville for Salt Lake City. They took with them 575 pounds of ginned cotton and 160 gallons of molasses which they delivered to the General Tithing Office on November 22, 1858. Because of the difficulties incident to the experiment, including the building of dam and canals, the cost of producing the cotton had been \$3.40 a pound. It was decided to continue the experiment the next season.

The 1859 season at Heberville brought many problems. Floods in the early part of the season weakened the dam and destroyed part of the canal system. The few living at the Heberville farm had to work very hard, and August and September brought chills and fever [possibly malaria] to

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 32.

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., pp. 58-60.
them. But the cotton they produced in the 1859 experiment cost them less than the 1858 crop—$1.90 a pound. Meanwhile, the settlers at Santa Clara, Washington and Toquerville were also raising cotton. One of the problems facing these early cotton growers in Southern Utah was disposing of their crops. For example, it is recorded that the settlers at Toquerville raised less cotton and more Chinese sugar cane in 1859 because they had not been able to get rid of their 1858 crop of cotton but could trade molasses in Iron, Beaver and Millard Counties for wheat and flour.

It is said that on his 1860 visit to Southern Utah, after leaving Santa Clara and passing Tonaquint, Brigham Young stopped his carriage and, looking northward up the valley where the City of St. George now is, said to those with him that there would be built in that valley a city with many inhabitants. The war between the North and South gave Brigham an excellent opportunity to see that his prophecy was fulfilled. It had been shown that cotton could be grown in Southern Utah. It was probable that other crops requiring a long season could be grown there also. He and his counselors decided that it was time to do something about developing the resources of Washington County. At the General Conference of the church held October, 1861, a large group of settlers were called to Southern Utah.

Among those called were James Godson Bleak and his family. Whatever James had been doing between 1858 and 1861 his special talents had come to the attention of Brigham Young and other leaders of the church. On Sunday, October 20, 1861, in the Historian's Office in Salt Lake City,
James was set apart under the hands of Orson Pratt and George A. Smith, Church Historian, and in the presence of Brigham Young and other church leaders, to be clerk and historian of the Southern Mission. Brigham Young made a statement at this time that he wished the history of the church to be written briefly dwelling on the main events rather than on details.

But to Brigham Young's way of thinking James was not yet prepared to go to the south. Recently arrived in Salt Lake City on September 15, 1861, was Jane Thompson, the daughter of James' "old time friend and companion," Joseph Lewis Thompson. Brigham suggested that James make the fifteen year old Jane his third wife. They were married in the Endowment House, Salt Lake City, on October 26, 1861.

In the census of settlers to Southern Utah James is listed as a clerk from the Seventeenth Ward, Salt Lake City. He left Salt Lake City with three wives; seven children, varying in age from eleven years to two months; one wagon and four oxen.

Brigham's instructions to the settlers were to go to St. George, which he named on October 28, 1861. The site of the proposed city was not precisely located. Brigham merely indicated that it was to be on the

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10 Ibid., p. 102. See also James G. Bleak, Miscellaneous Papers.
11 James G. Bleak, Miscellaneous Papers. The Thompson family left England on June 25, 1855, and settled in Providence, Rhode Island, where Joseph worked for a silverware company. Also Grace Bleak Thompson, Personal Interview.
12 "Diaries," July 7, 1887. Also Iona Bleak Stucki, Personal Interview. See also Iona Bleak Stucki, "Bleak Family Genealogical Records." Jane was born December 1, 1845, at Birmingham, Warwickshire, England.
14 "St. George Stake" (Unpublished MSS in four volumes, L. D. S. Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah), Vol. I, 1861 Record of Missionaries.
slopes north of the junction of the Rio Virgin and the Santa Clara. By
the time the settlers gathered at Cedar City there were a large number of
them. From there they traveled south. Some went to the Upper Virgin with
Apostle Orson Pratt and others traveled on towards Washington and the site
of the new city. The first two of the missionaries called in the October,
1861, conference to arrive in St. George Valley were William Fawcett and
Robert Thompson who entered the valley on November 25, 1861.15 However,
most of the settlers arrived on December 1, 1861, as did the Bleak family.16

James early began to take an active part in St. George affairs.
At a meeting held on December 5, 1861, James G. Bleak and others were
chosen as members of a Camp Council; and at a later meeting on December 11
the camp sustained James as clerk and historian of the Southern Mission.

The new city had many problems of organization, and the Camp
Council took the initiative in getting things going. Committees were
appointed to see about obtaining mail service for the settlements south of
Cedar City, to petition the Territorial Legislature for good roads for the
county, to select a site for the City of St. George, to provide for schools,
and to petition the legislature for a charter for the City of St. George.
James served on the committees on roads and schools, and among his other
activities found time to be one of the witnesses at the first marriage
solemnized in St. George. On January 2, 1862, James recorded the camp
census as follows: "378 Males, 370 Females; 209 Wagons; 121 Horses; 34
Mules; 569 Oxen; 340 Cows; 345 Young Stock; 677 Sheep; 32 Pigs; 92 Plows;"

15"Annals," pp. 100, 101. See also James G. Bleak, Miscellaneous
Papers.

16"Diaries," December 1, 1901.
The year 1861-1862 was the winter of the great rain in Washington County. James reported that it "rained more, or less, for 40 days," beginning on Christmas Day. Great flood damage occurred at Santa Clara and Harmony; but the settlers at St. George, with their lack of adequate shelter were merely uncomfortable. With such a soggy initiation to the county it is unlikely that it occurred to anyone that their major problem in the future would be the lack of water in manageable amounts when it was needed.

However, the rain did not dampen their ardour for meetings or their good spirits. At a meeting held January 6, 1862, James served on a committee on resolutions to protest against the dissolution of the Union. He observed that the demonstration at the meeting was such as would have struck fear into the hearts of the rebels had they witnessed it. At another meeting held three days later James loyally pledged thirty dollars toward the erection of a hall for educational and social purposes. He noted that not one of the one hundred twenty subscribers had a roof over his family.

By January 23, the survey of Plat A of the city was so far completed that people began to move onto the lots assigned them by President Erastus Snow. James enthusiastically noted that, "St. George already assumes the appearance of quite a city—all but the houses."

This year of 1862 saw James well launched on his career. Besides the duties already noted James was appointed to take charge of a Sunday School for St. George. On April 7, the first election for the City of

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18Ibid., p. 117.
19Ibid., pp. 118-120, 122, 131.
St. George was held, and on the evening of election day James was appointed City Recorder by the newly elected City Council. He traveled with Apostles Orson Pratt and Erastus Snow to the settlements up the Virgin to present the problem of financing a wagon road to Harmony. This was the first of many such trips where James accompanied the church authorities over the mission later the stake as they gave advice on temporal and spiritual matters and he collected tithes and took minutes besides occasionally speaking. Before the end of the year James was set apart as one of the counselors to Bishop Daniel D. McArthur of the St. George Third Ward.\[^{20}\]

As part of his duties as clerk James opened the first tithing record in St. George on August 20, 1862, in a little adobe office especially built for this purpose under the direction of Bishop Robert Gardner. This little office was to be James' headquarters for many years to come. It began to appear that whenever three people met together in St. George they formed an organization and appointed James G. Bleak as their secretary.\[^{21}\]

Details about James' family during these early years in St. George are lacking. It is known that James and Caroline proudly took their young son, Joseph, to fast day meeting on March 6, 1862, and had him blessed by Elder Ute Perkins. Otherwise, it can be assumed that James' family suffered the same difficulties that the rest of the population had: very hard work; heat far more extreme than they had been used to; scarcity of food, especially wheat and flour; lack of forage for the animals; quicksand and bad drinking water.\[^{22}\] A bit of local poetry pictures vividly the difficulties suffered during the first years in St. George:

\[^{20}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 142, 143, 149, 164.}\]

\[^{21}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 168.}\]

\[^{22}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 135, 144.}\]
Once I lived in Cottonwood,
    And owned a little farm,
But I was called to Dixie
    Which did me much alarm
To raise the cane and cotton
    I right away must go
But the reason why they called on me
    I'm sure I did not know.

I yoked old Jim and Bolly up,
    All for to make a start,
To leave my house and garden
    It almost broke my heart.
We moved along quite slowly,
    And often looked behind
For the sand and rocks of Dixie
    Kept running through my mind.

At length we reached the "Black Ridge,"
    Where I broke my wagon down.
I could not find a carpenter,
    I was twenty miles from town
So with a clumsy cedar pole
    I fixed an awkward slide
My wagon pulled so heavy then
    That Betsy could not ride.

While Betsy was a-walking--
    I told her to take care--
When all upon a sudden
    She struck a prickly pear.
Then she began to blubber out,
    As loud as she could bawl,
"If I was back in Cottonwood,
    I would not come at all."

When we reached the Sandy,
    We could not move at all
For poor old Jim and Bolly
    Began to puff and loll.
I whipped and swore a little
    But could not make the route
For myself, the team and Betsy
    Were all of us give out.

Next we got to Washington
    Where we stayed a little while
To see if April showers
    Would make the verdure smile.
But oh, I was mistaken,
    And so I went away
For the red hills of November
    Looked just the same in May.
I feel so weak and lonely now,  
There's nothing here to cheer  
Except prophetic sermons  
Which we very often hear.  
They will hand them out by dozens  
And prove them by the Book.  
I'd rather have some roasting ears  
To stay at home and cook.

I feel so weak and hungry now,  
I think I'm nearly dead  
'Tis seven weeks next Sunday  
Since I've tasted bread.  
Of carrot tops and lucern greens  
We have enough to eat,  
But I'd like to change my diet off  
For buckwheat cakes and meat.

I brought this old coat with me,  
About two years ago  
And how I'll get another one  
I'm sure I do not know  
May Providence protect me  
Against the wind and wet,  
I think myself and Betsy  
These times will not forget.

My shirt is dyed with wild dockroot,  
With greasewood for a set;  
I fear the colors all will fade  
When once it does get wet.  
They said we could raise madder  
And indigo so blue  
But that turned out a humbug,  
The story was not true.

The hot winds whirl around me  
And take away my breath  
I have had the chills and fever  
Till I'm nearly shook to death  
"All earthly tribulations  
Are but a moment here  
And oh, if I prove faithful  
A righteous crown I'll wear."

My wagon's sold for sorghum seed  
To make a little bread.  
And poor old Jim and Bolly  
Long ago are dead.  
There's only me and Betsy left  
To hoe the cotton tree.
May heaven help the Dixieite
Wherever he may be.23

Some could not bear up under these hard circumstances and left the mission, but most stayed and in those first years not only built their humble homes but a beautiful tabernacle. With his single-minded devotion it did not even occur to James to leave the mission. He would not have done so unless called away by the authorities of the Mormon Church. Although the same thing cannot be said for his wives and children, the student of James' writings gets the impression that he went through these difficult years with an almost detached manner considering the hardships little compared to the blessings of Zion.

23"St. George Stake," Vol. I, December 31, 1870. The poem was written by George A. Hicks in Dixie in 1864.
CHAPTER IV

In 1871 James Godson Bleak was told by Brigham Young that he would have to quit working so hard or the church would have to send him on a mission to give him a rest. Accordingly, word came by telegraph on March 25, 1872, from the First Presidency of the church that James would be sent on a mission to Europe for a year. James was grateful for the opportunity.

At the conference of the Southern Mission held May 2, James, Erastus W. Snow, and John Keller were sustained as missionaries by the vote of the people. He was eventually released from most of his jobs, but continued to hold the office of clerk and historian of the Southern Mission, Henry Eyring as his assistant taking over the duties of the office while James was away. James, called upon to speak to the conference, said:

...he had spent about one fourth of his life in St. George and traveling in this Stake and of course, experienced a peculiar feeling in contemplating his early departure on a mission to Europe, having to leave behind the associations of many friends as well as those of his families. But he felt to go in faith, feeling that he was called of God and asked the saints to pray for him and the other missionaries called, that he and they might be guided and sustained by the Lord during their absence....

It is not known what provision James made for his wives and fourteen children or how they were taken care of while he was away, or how his mission was financed. It is probable that they received assistance

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1"St. George Stake," Vol. I, March 25, 1872; May 5, 1872; May 9, 1872.

2James living children at the time of his mission were: Richard, Thomas, James, Mary, John, Lillie, Ephraim, Eunice, Joseph, Blanche, William, Samuel, Rose, and Jesse James. Olive was born while he was on his mission.
James left St. George by stage at 4:00 a.m. on May 14, 1872. Erastus Snow, Joseph Birch, Henry Eyring, John Fymn and Robert C. Lund saw him off. The stage traveled to Draperville, Salt Lake County, where the southern end of the railroad was then located, and James took the train into Salt Lake City arriving there May 20. He immediately went to see Brigham Young and George A. Smith. In the next few days James and Erastus W. Snow acted as witnesses in the Endowment House and were set apart for their missions by George A. Smith and Joseph F. Smith. On May 24, 1872, James recorded the following:

...Went this evening to Pres. Young's private office, stayed till after 10 o'clock. Asked President if he had any instructions for me prior to leaving. Nothing special. Asked him if I went with his blessing, said "Yes, as much so, as any man in Israel." Asked him to put his right hand on my head and bless me, which he did heartily. I thank God....

With that blessing James left Salt Lake City accompanied by Erastus W. Snow. They embarked from New York City on June 6, 1872, on the ship "City of Baltimore," and arrived at Liverpool, England, on June 17, 1872. James' missionary work did not follow the usual course Mormon elders are instructed to pursue. He became assistant editor of the Millenial Star. Most of his time was spent in the office of the "Star" at 42 Islington, Liverpool, England. He was accustomed to speaking to the

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4"Diaries," June 6, 1873. See also "Journal History" (L.D.S. Church Historian's Office, unpublished manuscript history of the church), June 17, 1872.

5Grace Bleak Thompson, Personal Interview. See also "Diaries," January 14, 1873.
Saints of the various branches in the area around Liverpool, but did not do active proselyting. Apparently, his only convert was his cousin, Kate Manning.

James did not describe in detail his work on the Millennial Star. On January 11, 1873, he noted that President Albert Carrington, "wrote for some one to be sent to succeed me in editing the 'Star' & 'Journal.'" This was evidently in preparation for his return to Utah. His mission lasted only a year, but this year was one of great interest and stimulation for James as he not only worked for the church, but renewed acquaintances with friends and relatives and with his native land. During his mission, James carried on an extensive correspondence with his family and friends in St. George and Utah as well as with his friends and relatives in England. Mail time was an important time for him, and he always felt very disappointed if there was no American mail for him.

In his missionary efforts James often traveled out of the Liverpool office on week-ends and Sundays to visit with and instruct the Saints. He was usually accompanied by another missionary or missionaries; often by George F. Gibbs who worked in the same office. Such trips led him to Bedford Leigh, Southport, Kirkdale County, Merthyr in South Wales, Birkenhead, Manchester, Sheffield, New Brighton, Swansea, Hereford,

6 James carried on correspondence with and contacted most of his relatives in England and Ireland both before, during and after his mission. They were: the Edward Bond family, the Godsons, the Rice's, the Daleys, and the Wades. Kate Manning's maiden name was Daley. A number of their replies to him are in the possession of this student.

7 James' diary for the first six months of his mission is lost, although he was evidently keeping one for it is referred to in "St. George Stake," Vol. I, May 21, 1872. Most of the information about his mission is taken from his 1873 diary. See also "Diaries," January 11, 1873. By "Star" and "Journal" James means Millennial Star and Journal of Discourses.
Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stockport, Nottingham, Derby, etc. While on these trips James lost no opportunity to visit historic places and inspect industries which particularly interested him. For example, while at Sheffield he went through the iron and steel works of Sir John Brown. These works impressed him greatly, and he wrote about them at some length in his diary.

On April 2, 1873, James G. Bleak, Erastus W. Snow, J. F. Wells and George F. Gibbs met the ship "Manhattan" which brought President Erastus Snow and other to England. Later, in company with President Snow and other missionaries James visited some of the places listed above. At Swansea they visited the copper works owned by Hussey Vivian. They were shown through the works by a Mr. Nettle.

It was also in company with President Snow and other brethren that James visited historic Edinburgh Castle. James was impressed by Queen Margaret's eleventh century chapel, a fifteenth century cannon, the Scotch crown and state relics, and Mary Queen of Scots' bedroom.

When James arrived at Nottingham he was surprised to find some very special instructions awaiting him. He was given a letter from B. W. Carrington who stated that he had received a telegram from his father,

8"Diaries," January 5, 1873; February 10, 1873; March 2-3, 1873; March 9, 1873; March 22, 1873; March 29, 1873; April 7, 1873; April 8, 1873; April 12, 1873; April 15, 1873; April 19-21, 1873. The trip to Merthyr was made in response to a call from Elder John A. Lewis, president of Glamorgan Conference, who was very ill. James visited and nursed him. At Stockport James and the brethren visited a Brother Samuel Moorhouse who was owner of a cotton factory. They urged Brother Moorehouse and his daughter, both church members, "to gather."

9Ibid., March 21, 1873; April 1-2, 1873; April 7, 1873; April 15, 1873. At the Vivian copper works a specimen of Southern Utah copper ore from the Adams lode was assayed. According to James, it was found to contain forty-five per cent copper and seventeen ounces silver per ton.
Albert Carrington, who was with George A. Smith's party; President Carrington instructed James to accompany Erastus Snow to Vienna where they would join the Smith party. While James was gone S. S. Jones would take charge of the "Star." Elder Jones immediately went to the Liverpool office to assume his new duties.

James asked Erastus Snow what he should do about the invitation. President Snow said, "as it was none of my own seeking I had better embrace the opportunity for Prest Carrington had evidently freely accorded it to me."\(^{10}\)

James returned to Liverpool and Erastus Snow went to London. James' reaction to his invitation was unusual. Most people would seize such an opportunity unquestioningly, but James recorded:

I have enquired about the letter sent by Brig to his father relative to me going to Vienna after hearing the letter I appreciate the spirit which prompted Brig, but I do not approve of the letter. I feel also to appreciate the kindness of Prest Carrington in sending a telegram for me to go to Vienna, but I do not feel to go. I feel I cannot properly represent the matter to Bro Snow by writing and conclude to go to London and represent the matter so as to show my appreciation of the kindness of Brig and of his father but still feel not to go. Bro Jones now that he has come will attend to office duties for me for a while.\(^{11}\)

Evidently, James felt that undue pressure had been exerted to obtain the invitation for him, and felt that other missionaries might resent his having such an opportunity. In London James told Erastus Snow

\(^{10}\)Ibid., January 11, 1873; January 14, 1873; January 15, 1873; January 17, 1873; March 17, 1873; March 25, 1873; April 19, 1873; April 21, 1873. Earlier in the year George A. Smith had invited President Carrington and either James G. Bleak or George F. Gibbs to travel with him and his company in Italy, Egypt and Palestine. At first Carrington refused the invitation, saying no one could be spared, but later joined the company himself. From time to time the Liverpool office had received communications from President Carrington describing their experiences especially the dedication and consecration of the land of Palestine from Mount Olivet.

\(^{11}\)Ibid., April 21, 1873.
how he felt, and President Snow told James that he was "too sensitive, and
told me to pack up and go with him to Vienna. So I concluded to go."12

On the evening of April 24, James, Erastus Snow, Erastus W. Snow,
Joseph Birch, and William C. Staines left Victoria Station for Newhaven.
About midnight they crossed the channel to Dieppe where they arrived at
7:00 a.m. After breakfast they traveled to Paris by train where they
arrived about noon. The party went to a restaurant for a luncheon of beef
cutlets, fried potatoes, bread, wine, and cabbage, all of which cost them
the magnificent sum of ten cents each. They stayed in Paris for two days,
and visited the usual sights for which the city is famous: the Tuileries
and Louvre, the Palais Royale, Notre Dame, Place de la Bastille and
Versailles. In the evenings they daringly went out to inspect Paris by
gas-light, visiting the famous cafes, etc.

At 4:00 p.m. on April 27, they left Paris for Munich. They spent
a short time in Strasbourg where they went to see the famous cathedral, and
then joined President George A. Smith's party in Munich. They arrived at
9:30 p.m., April 29, in Vienna, and put up at the Hotel Domser in Herren
Gasse 19. On May 1, the Vienna exhibition opened, and James, Erastus W.
Snow, and Joseph Birch went out to see the sights. They had a very amus­
ing experience. They stopped in an eating place which advertized, "'English
spoken here!" James recorded:

...We called for the English speaker. He said "English Beefsteak?"
This appeared to be about all the English this distinguished man
appeared to be master of. In reply to his question in English we
said Yes! After receiving the beef steak I asked him to bring some
potatoes. He opened his mouth and gave a blank look at me. I saw
he did not understand. One of the party said "Potatoes." He said
"Yes" and started off and returned immediately bringing some Rye
bread. This caused a laugh. Again "Potatoes" was said he started
off and brought a bottle of olive oil. We were convulsed with

12Ibid., April 23, 1873.
laughter. He was evidently plagued....\textsuperscript{13}

James finally asked him in German to bring some potatoes, and the poor, relieved waiter obliged them.

While in Vienna James and the company visited many places of interest. They went to the "Circus Rentz" where James was particularly impressed by the "extraordinary horse performance" and the tumblers. They also went to St. Augustine's and St. Stephen's Churches. They attended the opera where the music was "the finest I ever heard." But the big attraction in Vienna in 1873 was the Exhibition. This opened on May 1. When James visited it on May 5 and 6, he noted that it was in an unfinished condition and the arrangements of the exhibitions incomplete; but it was already attracting many visitors.

On May 7, 1873, James, William C. Staines, Joseph Birch and Thomas W. Jennings said goodbye to George A. Smith, the Snows, and their party, and left for Mainz where they visited the ancient cathedral. On May 9, they started down the Rhine by the steamer "Humboldt," and arrived at Cologne the same evening. Here they were particularly interested in investigating the grape and wine industry, which prompted Joseph Birch to give them a receipt for clearing wine. They also visited the famous cathedral at Cologne. On May 10, they started for London via Brussels, Ostend and Dover, arriving there on the evening of the next day.\textsuperscript{14} It had been a wonderful trip for James and was the climax of his mission.

A few things should be said about James' relationship with some of

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}, May 1, 1873.

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}, April 24 to May 10, 1873. The receipt which Joseph Birch gave for clearing wine was: Beat freely the whites of twelve eggs, add one quart of alcohol and beat freely while adding, then add two gallons of wine still beating freely. Add the whole to a barrel of forty gallons of wine, then roll the barrel freely so as to mix well. Let rest for 7 or 8 days and rack off.
the missionaries. He worked a great deal with George F. Gibbs. Matters did not always move smoothly between them. James did not state the exact nature of the disagreement, but one day he made the remark that "my feelings were very much hurt by Brother George F. Gibbs," and a few days later stated:

Brother George F. Gibbs this morning expressed his deep regret at what transpired last Thursday. I believe it to be an error of the head and not of the heart.  

James seemed to be good friends with Erastus W. Snow although he was twenty years older than the twenty-four year old "E. W." James often corresponded with E. W., and was greatly concerned for him when he fell ill at Birmingham. E. W. came to the Liverpool office to rest and recuperate which "afforded much satisfaction" to James. The two of them then became enchanted with a certain Mademoiselle Beatrice who was the current attraction at one of the Liverpool theaters. They saw her act in a number of plays. E. W. recovered his health and returned to Birmingham, but was soon ill again. James noted:

This morning I received a letter from Erastus W. Snow. He appears to have got a return of his affection of the lungs again. Brother Wilcken his President told me yesterday that he must not be allowed to stay in Birmingham as the atmosphere appears to affect him very injuriously.  

After their Austrian visit E. W. did not return to London with James, but continued on with his father in the George A. Smith party.

After his short trip on the continent, James did not return to Liverpool again until he boarded ship for home. He spent the last few weeks of his mission visiting in London. Besides attending and addressing

15Ibid., January 30, 1873; February 7, 1873.

16Ibid., February 10, 1873; February 17, 1873; February 19, 1873; February 22, 1873; February 21, 1873; March 10, 1873.
meetings James returned to the familiar places where he had lived and had been employed before he moved to the United States. It was a particularly sad moment for James when he found that the graveyard where his well-beloved brother, John, had been buried was now occupied by a railway.17

During these last weeks in England James spent much time with his cousin, Kate Manning. Kate was then a young woman of about thirty-two.18 She had been married twice, the first time to a soldier who dropped dead on the parade ground and the second time to a man of unstable character who evidently deserted her. James wrote:

*I went to see my Cousin Kate. We took a pleasant walk in Hyde Park. She feels disposed to go to Utah, but I do not encourage her to do so as she is not in the Church. I feel sorry for her as she has not relative in London but myself and I shall be soon leaving. She presented me with a nice pocket-book. She seems to esteem me very much, this is I presume because her dear Mother was so very fond of me.*19

James baptized Kate into the church at Pentonville Baths on June 1, 1873. He confirmed her at North London meeting house where he also spoke to the congregation.

James left London for Liverpool on June 2. The first company of church members leaving for Utah was scheduled to leave on June 4, and President Carrington gave James permission to leave with them if he so desired. The company numbered 169 adults and thirty-seven children with Charles H. Wilcken and James G. Bleak in charge. They sailed on the "Nevada." On the first evening out Elders Wilcken and Bleak organized the company. Quite a large number of the Saints suffered from sea-sickness as

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17Ibid., May 17, 1873.
18Ibid., June 2, 1873.
19Ibid., May 19, 1873; June 1, 1873. See also James G. Bleak, Miscellaneous Papers, Letter from William Daley to James.
the sea was rough much of the time. The situation was further complicated by engine trouble and fog. They landed at New York on June 16. Then began the tedious task of getting the Saints in their charge to Salt Lake City. However, the journey was quite different from that which James made in 1856. They left Jersey City at 4:00 p.m. on June 17. Their main problems were seeing that over two hundred people and their baggage made right train connections, and they had to change trains often. The fact that speculators were taking advantage of the needs of the Mormon company by charging exhorbitant prices for food also presented some problems, but the journey was comfortable compared to James' 1856 crossing.

When the company reached Ogden, they were delayed by the burning down of the railroad bridge near Kaysville. James wrote:

Went with Bro C. H. Wilcken to find lodgings and a bed as neither of us have slept much since we left Omaha. After going through several of the streets of Ogden we returned to the cars to lie on the floor rather than put up at any of the houses of accommodation in this fast city. 20

On the morning of June 26, James and Elder Wilcken took an early train down to the burned bridge at Kaysville where they awaited President Young's party which was on the way to Cache Valley. They then returned to Ogden and prepared their company to make the trip to Salt Lake City. James said that he was "engaged in shaking hands till my arm ached." At Salt Lake City James visited Angus M. Cannon and the Woolleys. 21 Nothing is said about his home coming to St. George. The minutes of the November, 1873, St. George Stake Conference show that James was already vigorously engaged in church activity both as clerk and historian and as a member of the High Council. 22

20 "Diaries," June 25, 1873. 21 Ibid., June 2 to June 26, 1873.
CHAPTER V

Over the period of his long life James G. Bleak engaged in many and varied activities and services. For some of these he received remuneration. Others were performed without pay out of James' sense of duty, interest or both.

When James accepted the call to be clerk and historian of the Southern Utah Mission in 1861, he entered upon a task of more than forty years' duration. When the mission was no more and the St. George Stake of Zion was organized, his job as clerk and historian was continued without interruption. James performed a great variety of duties in this position. He not only took the usual minutes at the quarterly conferences and made the usual reports of stake matters to the general authorities, but acted as secretary for Brigham Young and other general authorities during their visits to St. George to take advantage of the mild winter climate. Most of the letters he wrote as secretary for the church authorities were on church business and varied in content from instructions to the saints, to invitations to conference and recommendations for certain jobs. Two typical examples follows:

St. George, Mch 25th 1874.

Elder Jacob Hamblin.
Dear Brother,
I should like to have you attend the May conference (May 1st)

1"Annals," p. 102. See also "Diaries," June 14, 1901. James continued in his position officially until September, 1901, and even after that helped the stake unofficially.

with Bros Ira Hatch, A. S. Gibbons, Taylor Crosby, Ammon Tenney, Nephi Johnson, Saml Knight, A. P. Hardy, Thales Haskell and others to hold a council and talk over and arrange Indian matters.

Praying God to bless you in your labors with the Lamanites for the cause of Zion.

I remain

Your Brother

Jno W. Young

per J. G. B.  

St. George, January 12th 1875.

To whom it may concern:-

The bearer, James A. Little, is authorized, required and appointed, to preach the Gospel; lecture on the Science of Religion, on History, and on all subjects of Science, to teach the Latter-day Saints and their children the way of life and salvation; and to teach any and all truth that is contained in good books, and to make his life useful, and to be faithful in delivering the truth to the people in all humility. And this is his duty from this time henceforth, and the blessings of God will rest upon him in the faithful discharge of this duty.

Given under our hands at St. George the date above written.

[Signed] Brigham Young
Geo. A. Smith

But James also helped the brethren with their personal correspondence. For example:

St. George, February 4th 1875.

Elder Ernest I. Young,
Liverpool, England.

My dear Son Ernest,

Your welcome letter of January 3d was duly received by last mail and was read with much satisfaction.

I am glad that your health is so good in the English climate and trust you may continue to enjoy the blessing of health and vigor to minister in usefulness wherever the Lord may direct you to labor.

I am much gratified, my son, that you are able to write "I feel good continually, and feel that I am blessed beyond expectation." It is your privilege to feel thus as a laborer in the vineyard of the Lord; for the powers of the Heavens are on your side, while you seek to walk in the path of your duty in trying to promote the interests of Zion. True, you must be tested in the great school of mortal experience. There are, as you properly state, "many Temptations seen and unseen to lead one astray; the tempter being always ready to take advantage where he can." This is the common lot of man, but especially


of the young and inexperienced. There is no exception. It was
written by Our Savior that he "was in all points tempted like we are." But our duty is pointed out by him in the words "watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." It should ever be borne in mind that sin does not consist of simply being tempted to do, or to think wrong, but that the sin is in yielding to the temptation. One strong safeguard against doing evil, is to cultivate good thoughts, and when evil ones are presented, to promptly and manfully reject them, to dismiss them from the mind at once. This habit, together with never knowingly or heedlessly putting yourself in the way of temptation will greatly aid in proving to you the truth of the scripture which saith, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." And further, this course will assist in cultivating that high moral and religious tone which is indispensable to those who would wield the power of the Holy Priesthood.

My son, I am pleased to read your expressed determination to pursue a course which shall be acceptable to our Heavenly Father. May God aid you in all your efforts to this desirable end. This determination is right, at home or abroad, at all times and in every place. You, and all the brethren with you, and all the Saints in every land, have my constant prayers that the righteousness of God may increase on the earth.

I am thankful to Our Father that my health is reasonably good. I have deemed it prudent to refrain from speaking much in public this winter. Last Sabbath and the Sabbath before I addressed the Saints in the St. George Tabernacle.

I and Brother George A. Smith leave this city on the 10th inst for Salt Lake City, if all is well. We expect to stay and attend the April General Conference at Salt Lake City and then return to St. George.

We are vigorously pushing forward the building of the St. George Temple, it is progressing finely. A goodly number of volunteers from the North are assisting and a good spirit prevails. Just as soon as the roof is on, and it is safe inside, we shall begin that great and all important work of baptizing for the dead; and attend to other ordinances of the Gospel as the building can be got ready.

Remember me kindly to Bro Joseph F. and to the other brethren with you.

May the God of Israel ever bless and empower you, my son, for every good word and work is the fervent prayer and desire of your father.

[Signed] Brigham Young

As part of his work as Stake Clerk James also received tithing and kept tithing records for approximately twenty-five years. In a small adobe tithing office James opened the first tithing record in St. George on August 20, 1862, with the entry, "...John O. Angus, one pound and a quarter of wool @ .37½¢—.47½¢..." In the first year St. George was

5Tbid., pp. 121-124, 125-127.
settled the four wards there paid $3,201.61. This job required that James travel often with the mission and stake authorities to the various wards in the area where he received tithes from the bishops, audited books, and instructed the ward officers in the keeping of accounts. A typical trip was recorded by James, as follows:

Monday October 28, 1878—Left St George in company with Prest McAllister and Bp D. H. Cannon at 11.15 am. arrived at Washington 20 min after 12 m. took dinner with Bp T. J. Jones and he joined our company and we all traveled to Leeds where we arrived at 5.15 pm. Took supper at Joseph T. Wilkinsons. Attended meeting at which I, Prest McAllister Bp D H Cannon and Thos J Jones—

Attended to office business with Bp Crosby closed bargain for purchase of west 1/3 of meeting house lot for $30.00. 10.00 of which to be in cash—bal in Winsor Canaan or Afc. Slept with Bro Jones at Bp Geo H Crosbys.

Tuesday October 29, 1878—Took breakfast with Bp Crosby Started at 7 min to 8. arrived at Virgen City at 12.12 m. Took dinner at Bp John Parkers—

Started at 2.30 from Virgen City arrived at Rockville at 5 pm. Took supper at Bp C. N. Smiths—

Attended meeting—which was addressed by T J Jones D H Cannon J G Bleak & Prest McAllister—

The School House was full of people—

Slept at Bp Smiths—

Took summary from Bp C. N. Smiths Tithg Office Ledger as per last settlement.

Wednesday October 30, 1878—Took breakfast with Bp Cannon at Bp C. N. Smiths table—

Started at 9 am arrived at Virgen City... 11 o'clock Held meeting with the people addressed by Prest J D T McAllister 35 min T. J. Jones 15 min. D H Cannon 10 min. J G Bleak 15 min. We all took dinner at Bp Jno Parkers—

Started from Virgen City at 3 pm and arrived at Toquerville at 5 pm. Bro McAllister and myself took supper at Bp Bringhamst and Bro Jones & Cannon took supper at Bro Isaac Duffins—

We assembled with the people in meeting. Addresses were deld by T. J. Jones 15 min J G Bleak 27 min D H Cannon 12 min Prest McAllister 30 min Prest McAllister and myself slept at Bp Bringhamst.

Thursday October 31, 1878—Took breakfast with Bp Bringhamst Attended to tithing business... 

... Started @ 1.30 arrived at Harrisburg 4.30. Held meeting with the people after taking supper with Bro W. G. McMullen. Addresses deld by Prest McAllister, Bp Jones, Cannon and myself. Bro. McAllister and myself slept at Bro McMullens.

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Friday November 1, 1878—Arose at 5:15 am to start to Washington for breakfast. Started at 5:45 arrived at Washington at 7:45. Took breakfast at Bro Jones.
Arrived St George at 11 o'clock.

Often these trips were not so uneventful. Occasionally they had trouble with carriages and wagons breaking down or with teams becoming ill. Sometimes the stake authorities themselves became ill or met with some accident such as the time D. H. Cannon and James G. Bleak toppled out of the wagon backwards when the wagon seat loosened. The trips were made several times a year to all parts of the stake, and the weather was often bad. One time John D. T. McAllister and James G. Bleak made the trip to the settlements on the Upper Virgin and back to Harmony and to Pine Valley with the U. S. Deputy Marshals just one town behind them all the way. At Pine Valley, they frantically separated and John D. T. McAllister headed for Salt Lake City while James sought the refuge of the St. George Temple.

At the quarterly conference held June 12, 1881, James was ordained a bishop and set apart as agent in St. George Stake for Presiding Bishop Edward Hunter. He had been acting as Bishop Hunter's agent for more than a year, and had been performing the duties of the office for many years. He carried on as Bishop's agent until 1885, when Franklin R. Snow was appointed in James' place and James turned over all tithing matters to him. While this relieved him from the responsibility of tithing affairs,

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7"Diaries," October 28 to November 1, 1878.

8Ibid., January 8, 1883; August 26, 1887. See also "St. George Stake," Vol. III, August 12, 1887. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595, L. D. S. Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah), pp. 674-675. Hereafter cited as "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 29575).

9"Diaries," June 12, 1881; November 3, 1885. See also "St. George Stake," Vol. III, June 12, 1881; January 10, 1889.
little else was changed in his stake work. During 1872-1873 while James was on his mission he was not released from his position as stake clerk, but Henry Eyring was appointed as his assistant to carry on the work.\textsuperscript{10} In the later years of his service in this office he was given two assistants.\textsuperscript{11}

In addition to these duties James was active on the St. George Stake High Council, to which he was set apart in November, 1862, and he continued in this position with very little interruption until the last years of his life.\textsuperscript{12} During the time of his service the High Council had wide jurisdiction. It was the main tribunal in the area, it acted as a court of arbitration for a great variety of grievances among the citizens, and held itself as the guardian of stake and community morals.\textsuperscript{13} As such, it tried and handed down decisions on everything from drunkenness and the sale of intoxicating beverages in the stake, to the distribution of the waters of the Santa Clara Creek for irrigation, and the problem of timber rights on Pine Valley Mountain.\textsuperscript{14} The council’s chief weapon for enforcing its decisions was the authority of the Priesthood; and its main punishments were public confession, disfellowship, and excommunication from the


\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., Vol. III, August 12, 1893. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27596, L. D. S. Church Historian’s Office, Salt Lake City, Utah), p. 196. Hereafter cited as "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27596).

\textsuperscript{12}"St. George Stake," Vol. I, November 15, 1862.

\textsuperscript{13}The decisions of the High Council show a great deal of insight and justice. For the most part they did a good job. Not only that, cases were disposed of with a minimum of red tape and costs were low—nothing.

\textsuperscript{14}"St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 172-186. See also "St. George Stake High Council Minutes, 1862-1879" (MS, L. D. S. Church Historian’s Office, Salt Lake City, Utah), pp. 156-157. Hereafter cited as "High Council Minutes."
The council acted as a body and no man on it received special distinction, although it was inevitable that a man like Erastus Snow would greatly influence and dominate the council.

In July, 1875, James G. Bleak was given the special assignment of making a report on the jurisdiction and powers of the High Council. In the October 9 meeting of the High Council, James made his report that the powers and jurisdiction of a High Council extend to all subjects temporal and spiritual, in which, as a council they can be helpers to the Presidency of the Stake. Then James cited decisions and statements from the minutes of the council to support his general statement:

...it is the duty of the High Council to assist the presidency of the mission in settling difficulties, and arranging business for the good of the people;... the High Council in Salt Lake City as being confined strictly to hearing cases brought before it, which custom we have mostly followed here but considered we have a wider field of usefulness and that all matters pertaining to the welfare of this Stake of Zion, either spiritual or temporal, to see that the Bps Presiding Elders, civil authorities and all others do their duties in their official capacity;... Consideration of laying out and the making of Roads... Locating and extending Settlements:... On regulating the manufacture and sale of spiritous liquor and otherwise aiding the County Courts of the Stake...

From 1874 to 1877 the chief object of James' interest and labors was the United Order or Law of Consecration which was the ideal economic system of the church. In general, the system was supposed to work on the plan "from each according to his ability to each according to his need." Ideally, all church members "consecrated" their property to the church which returned to them that which they could efficiently run or a

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16 Ibid., pp. 405-406.
17 Ibid., pp. 95-96, 156-157, 405-406.
"stewardship." Whatever was produced on the stewardship was given to the church, and out of the church warehouses the member received enough to provide for the needs of himself and his family. In some cases, such as the Orderville experiment, the property was not held in stewardships but was held and worked communally.

Brigham Young first mentioned the subject of the United Order at a small gathering at Erastus Snow's home in St. George on January 26, 1874. On February 9, at a public meeting for the purpose the officers of the United Order were chosen. James G. Bleak was made assistant secretary. In April, 1874, James was made a director in the St. George Stake Board of Appraisement and General Management of the United Order to fill a vacancy caused by the release of Elder Daniel Hendrix. In this position James conducted a great deal of correspondence and other business for the United Order of St. George, and traveled with stake and United Order authorities organizing the order in the various wards of the stake. On October 1, when the United Order of St. George was finally incorporated in the Probate Court of Washington County, James took thirty-one shares in the order. He signed the Articles of Association and also an affidavit that he was willing to pay for the shares subscribed to and that at least twenty-five per cent of the shares had been paid for. The property which James subscribed to the United Order was:

Capital Stock in Wool Association. $87.68

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19 Ibid., February 9, 1874.
20 Ibid., April 12, 1874; April 19, 1874; May 21, 1874; August 1, 1874. See also "Letter Book," pp. 3-4, 38-39, 40-45, 52, 55-57, 73-74, 80-83, 90-93, 95-97, 98, 101, 102-104, 113-114, 117-120, 155-158.
Capital Stock in Rio Virgen Manufacturing Company. . . . 248.32
Capital Stock in St. George Cooperative Mercantile
Institution. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 171.53
Capital Stock in Canaan Cooperative Stock Company. . . 124.33
Total. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 633.86

Not all members of the church were permitted to join the United
Order, but those considered worthy were baptized into the order, as
follows:

(Name) having authority given me of Jesus
Christ, I baptize you for the remission of your sins, the renewal
of your covenants and for the observance of the rules of the Holy
United Order, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the
Holy Ghost, Amen.22

The order was not destined to last long for insurmountable problems
were encountered in the equitable distribution of labor, evaluation of
property, and the determination of the subscribers' needs. Some worked
more and some worked less, some improved their stewardships while others
neglected them, and some devoted everything they had to the order and
others were half in and half out of it.23 Matters were complicated by the
fact that many members of the community did not belong to the order at all.
Dissatisfaction became widespread, and at a meeting held March 5, 1877, it
was decided that the United Order of St. George dissolve its incorporation.
James voted for dissolution, and as secretary for the organization helped
in taking the necessary steps to dissolve the corporation.24

In addition, James served the church in other ways. In 1869 he

22Ibid., September 5, 1875.
24"St. George Stake," Vol. II, March 5, 1877; Vol. III, February 14,
1878. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 89,
91, 99-101. There was an attempt to carry on after March, 1877, but this
was not successful.
became a counselor to Stake President John W. Young, and held this position until he went on his mission in 1872. 25 At the dedication of the St. George Temple in April, 1877, he was called as a missionary of the Spanish language and conducted a class in Spanish for a number of years. 26 For many years he also conducted a Theological Class every Sunday where church doctrines and principles were taught and discussed. 27 James was also active in promoting educational interests in the community. A few weeks after St. George was settled James was made a member of a committee on schools, and he also conducted a private school of his own. 28 He gave lectures at lyceums and acted as community drama coach and critic. 29 He was one of the incorporators of the St. George Library Association in 1873. 30 In June, 1888, he became a member and secretary of the St. George Stake Board of Education; and later, he was president of the board, which organized a Stake Academy with Nephi M. Savage as principal. 31 He resigned from the board in 1891, but was again serving on the Stake Board of Education in 1911 when it built a new academy which is now known as Dixie Junior College. 32


26 Ibid., Vol. III, May 8, 1883. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 143-1432.

27 "Diaries," passim. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 168-189, 262.


29 "Diaries," August 4, 1891; March 8, 1897.

30 "St. George Stake," Vol. II, November 10, 1873; October 2, 1876.

31 Ibid., Vol. III, June 28, 1888; December 29, 1888; July 19, 1890; March 13, 1891. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27596), pp. 23, 44-46, 99, 120.

32 Plaque in the entrance of the main building at Dixie Junior College [See Appendix II, Plate IX].
In January, 1886, because of the U.S. Government's stand on polygamy, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, fearing the action of the government against the church authorities, made a move to transfer all church property from the President of the church, who acted as Trustee in Trust, to legally incorporated associations of church members in the various stakes. As a result, the Church Association of St. George Stake of Zion was organized on January 26. On June 21, 1886, articles of incorporation for the association were drawn up which James G. Bleak signed. The next year James became secretary and treasurer and also a director of the association, and he was still serving in these positions as late as 1899.

One of James' last jobs for the church was that of St. George Stake Patriarch to which he was ordained by Francis M. Lyman on September 12, 1909.

James' activities were not limited to the church alone. He had a great interest in politics and civic affairs. He served as a delegate to county and territorial political conventions, and was elected to the City Council for a number of terms as well as being City Recorder. He also

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33"St. George Stake," Vol. III, January 26, 1886. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595, p. 573).

34"St. George Stake," Vol. III, June 21, 1886. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 604-616.

35"St. George Stake," Vol. III, March 19, 1887; February 7, 1891; December 8, 1892; February 4, 1899. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), p. 650; (MS 27596), pp. 269, 326. See also "Diaries," passim.

36James G. Bleak, Miscellaneous Papers. Also Grace Bleak Thompson, Personal Interview.

served as Clerk of Washington County Court and Clerk of the Second Judicial District Court.\(^3\) He could always be counted upon to help draw up resolutions and petitions for Congress, or to give orations on Independence Day.\(^3\) He was glad to serve on a committee whose purpose was to encourage railroad men to extend their lines through St. George.\(^4\) Another public service which James performed gratis was that of being St. George Postmaster from 1868 to 1872. The gratis part of the job was accidental, for he exerted every effort for many years afterward to obtain some compensation for this work, but apparently received nothing.\(^4\)

In private business activities, James served as director and secretary for a number of enterprises which were semi-church in nature such as the Zion's Cooperative Rio Virgen Manufacturing Company, Canaan Cooperative Stock Company, St. George Social Hall, St. George Gardeners' Club, and St. George Cooperative Mercantile Institution. He was superintendent of the latter institution and managed their store for some time.\(^4\) These enterprises netted James very little in the way of income—occasional small dividends mostly in produce. What he received from Zion's Cooperative Rio Virgen Manufacturing Company, for example, was not nearly enough to repay him for the time he spent keeping their books and conducting their


\(^3\)"Diaries," May 12, 1890.

\(^4\)Ibid., November 20, 1893; November 27, 1893. See also "St. George Stake," Vol. III, November 20 and 27, 1893. The railroad they were particularly interested in was Nevada Southern Railway Company.

\(^4\)"Diaries," January 20, 1881. It is not known why James was not paid. Perhaps some technical difficulty was the trouble. He may have done the job without being properly appointed.

\(^4\)Ibid., passim. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27596), p. 4.
As may be supposed, most of James' income was from the church. He had a small farm which his boys worked, but he spent very little time on it. The story is told that Brigham Young jokingly remarked to James that he was expected to work for nothing and pay his board, too. James took him seriously. It was finally pointed out to Brigham some six months later that James had drawn no pay whatsoever for his services; and indeed, James' family was destitute, even hungry. Brigham gave instructions that a wagon load of flour should be delivered to James; and if he refused it, to dump it in his door-yard. James could hardly refuse under the circumstances. One of his sons later said that that wagon load of flour looked like a mountain to him.\(^4\)

On February 22, 1886, James recorded that his salary from the church had been raised from $1,250.00 a year to $1,500.00 a year this increase being retroactive to April, 1882.\(^5\) Most of this salary was paid in tithing scrip, and his lack of cash often hampered him.\(^6\) Not only that, but the demands of his very large family caused him to be often overdrawn on the church books.\(^7\) James' income, and more particularly his cash income, was somewhat augmented by his selling magazine subscriptions;

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\(^4\)“Diaries,” passim.

\(^5\)Samuel Bleak, op. cit. Also Iona Bleak Stucki, Personal Interview.

\(^6\)“Diaries,” February 22, 1886.


\(^4\)“Diaries,” April 12, 1898.
taking orders from St. George merchants for candy made by James, Junior, in Salt Lake City; and by making out wills for people and serving as executor and agent for a number of estates. Thus, he served as agent for the executors of Brigham Young's estate. But James often performed these and other services, such as marrying people and helping them with their genealogical records, for nothing. James also spoke at many funerals, made numerous home missionary trips, and was always willing to administer to the sick or dedicate some dying Saint to the Lord.

James performed two other important tasks, which are treated in separate chapters in this work. The one, his labor in the St. George Temple, is treated in a separate chapter because of its importance to James. The other, his history writing, is treated separately because of its importance to this thesis and to Utah history.

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47 "Diaries," October 27, 1878; March 24, 1882; February 14, 1889; April 12, 1891; March 18, 1901; March 26, 1901; September 6, 1902; April 22, 1903. See also "Letter Book," pp. 161-173, 188-189, for a list of Brigham Young's real and personal property in St. George and vicinity as reported to the executors of the estate by James.

49 "Diaries," June 28, 1891; September 25, 1899; November 21, 1900.

50 Ibid., passim.
CHAPTER VI

James' consuming interest was in the church's temples and their ordinances, and in expression of this interest he worked for many years in the St. George Temple. Such work represented to him the greatest blessing his church had to offer.

James attended the meeting held January 31, 1871, in Erastus Snow's house, at which Brigham Young announced that a temple would be built in St. George. Many of the general authorities were present as well as stake and local officers of the church. Young's announcement was enthusiastically received.¹ The construction of the temple will not be told here. James had little active part in it other than keeping certain accounts and helping with correspondence conducted on the progress and needs of the construction. However, on April 14, 1874, a box was placed in the southeast corner of the main wall of the temple. Among other things this box contained an abstract of the history of Southern Utah by James G. Bleak.²

The first ordinances for the dead were performed in the St. George Temple on January 9, 1877, and shortly thereafter James, along with others, was set apart to do ordinance work in the temple. Wilford Woodruff was the first temple president.³

From the first, James displayed an extraordinary zeal in performing


²Ibid., Vol. II, April 1, 1874.

³Ibid., January 9, 1877. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), p. 9.
his duties in the temple. For example, on January 1, 1878, he reported that he had spent 1 1/4 days in the temple in 1877.\(^4\) He often recorded the daily work accomplished and then compiled these into monthly and yearly reports. He entered the register of work done in the St. George Temple for January, 1878, in his diary, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baptisms: Renewal of Covenants</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead</td>
<td>1697</td>
<td>1772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowments: Living</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinations: Living Elders</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead</td>
<td>619</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriages: Living</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead</td>
<td>361</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Sealed to Parents</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption:</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Anointings: Living</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moses Franklin Farnsworth was first recorder for the St. George Temple, and often James assisted him in his duties.\(^6\)

James, of course, eagerly went about hunting up his genealogy, and doing or having the work done for his ancestors. He also did temple work for a number of illustrious names in history: Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington; Edmund Burke; John Milton; Horatio, Lord Nelson; Alexander Pope; Prince Rupert; Samuel Wesley, father of John Wesley; John Bright; the Puritans; and others.\(^7\)

On December 1, 1880, James was set apart by President John D. T. McAllister to attend to all the ordinances of the St. George Temple.

\(^1\)"Diaries," January 1, 1878. \(^5\)Ibid., February 1, 1878.

\(^6\)"St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), p. 88.

\(^7\)"Diaries," June 11, 1879; June 24, 1879; November 27, 1879; November 28, 1879; January 8, 1880; May 17, 1881; May 18, 1881; June 9, 1881; March 27, 1889; June 20, 1893. All the Puritans were baptized for except John Billington who murdered John Newcomen in 1630.
Apparently, Wilford Woodruff had given instructions to have this done. When President Woodruff was in St. George the following spring, he again set James apart to officiate in all the ordinances of the temple. James felt that a special honor had come to him and wrote, "...Lord aid me. Give me Thy Spirit that all I do may be done aright."

James' duties about the temple went farther than officiating in the ordinances and acting as recorder. He assisted the temple president with correspondence; for example, when the temple was struck by lightning he and President McAllister wrote an account to Wilford Woodruff of the damage. He also made monthly reports to President Woodruff of the amount of ordinance work done in the temple; and when the Logan, Manti, and Salt Lake Temples were finished, he sent copies of these reports to them. He helped look after such problems as obtaining enough water for the use of the temple and overseeing workmen making repairs and additions to the temple. Usually, James traveled to Salt Lake City twice a year to General Conference, and one of his duties while there was to attend to ordering supplies for the temple. James also presided in the temple when the president was called away on business.

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8Ibid., December 1, 1880; June 15, 1892; June 16, 1892. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), p. 315.

9"Diaries," August 16, 1878; August 19, 1878. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 435-436.

10"Diaries," October 3, 1888.

11Ibid., May 20, 1881; June 13, 1881; October 29, 1881; January 7, 1882; January 26, 1882; February 20, 1882; July 13, 1882; July 25, 1882; December 2, 1882; January 30, 1883; July 25, 1883; June 23, 1884; July 16, 1887; December 11, 1887. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), p. 392.

12"Diaries," passim.

13Ibid., February 29, 1884; May 9, 1884; November 13, 1885; March 25, 1886; June 29, 1888; July 10, 1895; September 18, 1895; December 16, 1898.
On June 19, 1886, at a meeting called by John Henry Smith and presided over by John D. T. McAllister with James as secretary of the meeting, the St. George Temple Association was organized. Representatives from Salt Lake City, Panguitch Stake, Kanab Stake, St. George Stake, and Arizona were present at this meeting. The articles of association for the organization were read by the secretary, as follows:

... do hereby associate themselves for the purpose of founding and maintaining a place of worship and a school of science in said Temple, for the promotion of religion, for the exercise of religious ordinances and for the teaching of sound learning and scientific knowledge; said school to include departments devoted to theology, astronomy, mathematics, history, languages, laws, natural science and all other principles of true knowledge pertaining to the heavens and the earth, with the distinct understanding that nothing shall ever be taught in this house of worship or school of science which will throw doubt upon the existence of the Supreme Being, or that will detract from His Glorious Majesty, or that will lessen in the least degree, the most exalted faith in His Divine attributes... 14

The real reason for the above organization was the same as that involved in the organization of the Church Association of St. George Stake of Zion--preventing property held by the Trustee in Trust from being seized, by handing it over to an organization of church members. James was made secretary of the organization. 15 In later years when David H. Cannon became president of the temple and James was his assistant, he was not only secretary but vice-president, treasurer and a director of the association. 16 In addition to his other duties, he also handled temple finances. 17

The St. George Temple, being the first temple erected by the Mormons

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14 "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 568-603. See also "St. George Stake," Vol. III, June 19, 1886.

15 "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 568-603.

16 "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27596), pp. 197-198, 243-244.

17 "Diaries," passim.
which they were allowed to occupy for any length of time, became a pioneer in procedures to be followed in the temples. Thus, its officers were called upon, as other temples were erected, to instruct temple officials and workers. James did not go to the Logan Temple dedication, but he was present at the Manti Temple dedication. On May 8, 1888, President John D. T. McAllister received the following telegram from Wilford Woodruff:

“. . . Would like to have you reach Manti by evening of 17th yourself and counselors Farnsworth and Bleak. Bring Ceremony Books. You will take Church team and do the best you can.”

James described the Manti Temple dedication in detail in his diary. His sons, James and Thomas, had worked on the Manti Temple as mason and painter, and so he also had a pleasant visit with them and their families. He stayed in Manti until June 19 to further instruct Manti Temple workers.

Moses Franklin Farnsworth became recorder at the Manti Temple, and with his transfer James became chief recorder of the St. George Temple. He had already been helping with this office for many years, and recorded that he had made improvements in the methods of proving the records.

In 1893, John D. T. McAllister became president of the Manti Temple, and as a result David H. Cannon was made president of the St. George Temple with James as his assistant. In this same year James was delighted to receive an invitation to be present at the first session of the dedicatory services of the Salt Lake Temple. In preparation for ordinance work there

18 Ibid., May 9, 1884; May 8, 1888; May 9, 1888 to June 19, 1888.
19 Ibid., May 8, 1888; June 15, 1892; June 16, 1892.
20 Ibid., May 9 to June 19, 1888.
21 Ibid., February 19, 1886; September 3, 1888.
22 "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 197-198, 207-208.
he copied all the temple ceremonies. He was happier in the temple than any place else, and he would have no doubt remained there continuously if circumstances had not interfered.

Although James had been appointed in 1861 to be historian for the Southern Mission, many other tasks had interfered with his bringing any real concentration to this work. He had done some research and written some abstracts. On April 30, 1900, James recorded:

...Attended opening meeting of Temple workers which commenced at 10 a.m. Read letter of First Presy which was sent to Prest Cannon informing him that they had written to me, releasing me from active Temple labors so that I could devote my best thought and attention to the writing up of the History of the Southern Mission. My co-laborers in Temple labors including Bro. David H. Cannon, are deeply affected. But in my remarks, I expressed my satisfaction with the opportunity to discharge a burden which has been on my mind for so many years, but which my other duties had prevented.

However, the temple still made demands on James' time. He made the financial reports and took charge when President David H. Cannon could not be present. He finally received the following letter from the First Presidency:

Salt Lake City, Utah,
November 8th, 1901

Elder James G. Bleak,
St. George.
Dear Brother:-

On looking into the accounts of the St. George Temple we find that your salary is charged to the temple, notwithstanding the fact that you are no longer connected with it. This will be corrected hereafter.

In the letter of the First Presidency, dated March 26th, 1900, releasing you from working in the temple, you were requested to make reports from time to time to this office in relation to the progress made in your new labors. On inquiry we learn from our secretary that no such report has yet been made by you.

Kindly let us hear from you at an early date in regard to this

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23 James G. Bleak, Miscellaneous Papers, Invitation and Ticket to Salt Lake Temple Dedication. See also "Diaries," March 14, 1893.

24 "Diaries," April 30, 1900.
Your brethren,

[Signed] Jos. F. Smith
John R. Winder
Anthon H. Lund
First Presidency

James was hurt by the above letter as his reply indicated:

11th Novr., 1901.

To Presidents Joseph F. Smith,)
John R. Winder, ) First Presidency
and Anthon H. Lund. )

My dear Brethren:-

Your favor of 8th inst., received to-day, and contents noted.

In regard to my salary being charged to the Temple: This has been done, and has continued, the same as before I was excused from my labors as Recorder, in March, 1900; as the Half Yearly Financial Reports of St. George Temple in your office will show for the six months ending 30th June, 1900; 31st Dec., 1900; and 30th June, 1901. Which Reports you will see are made out and signed by me as Secretary-Treasurer, as well as by President David H. Cannon. Further—no change was made in the amount forwarded Quarterly, from the Presidents' Office, to meet the payroll of this Temple.

I was excused from my "labors in the St. George Temple, as a Recorder,"--as stated in letter of the First Presidency, bearing date, 17th April, 1900, in view of their desire to have the History of the Southern Mission prepared and written. But, I beg to state I did not understand that I was "no longer connected with this Temple, as stated in your letter just received.

My beloved brethren, if I had understood this, I certainly should have stepped aside as Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer of St. George Temple Association.

You will in mercy to me, exonerate me from wrong-doing in continuing to report my name, with my other brethren, on the Temple Roll; and for drawing compensation, which, as was stated in the March, 1900, letter of the First Presidency, should be continued to me. . . .

The First Presidency's reply to James' letter completely released him from all temple duties so that he could devote his full time to the history. Accordingly, on November 19, 1901, James regretfully gave President David H. Cannon his resignation as Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer of the St. George Temple Association. This did not mean that all James' connections with the temple were severed. He was still making

26 Ibid., pp. 149-150.
out their financial reports in 1903; and of course, he continued to do work for his dead, but his official career there was ended.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{27}"Diaries," November 18, 1901; November 19, 1901; January 19, 1903.
CHAPTER VII

One of the interesting aspects of James' life was his acquaintance with Wilford Woodruff. To say that they were very intimate would probably be an exaggeration, but they were good friends. This relationship is treated specifically because of what it reveals about James G. Bleak's personality.

James came to know Wilford Woodruff through their mutual activities in the St. George Temple.\(^1\) He always showed great respect for the general authorities of the church, but James paid President Woodruff special deference. He was very proud to be entertained by President Woodruff and his wives, especially Dora Woodruff, and even prouder when he entertained President Woodruff in his home in St. George.\(^2\)

Their relationship became even closer when James and his wife, Elizabeth, were adopted into the family of President Woodruff. This adoption followed the rather common practice among Mormons of James' day. It was done by temple ordinance; and, in line with Mormon beliefs on the importance of the family here and hereafter, was intended to complete family ties and give the participants greater opportunity for celestial glory. The values were spiritual not temporal as neither of the parties could make any legal claim on the other. After this adoption James often referred to President Woodruff as "Father Woodruff."\(^3\) Later, James' father, mother, mother,

\(^1\)"St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), p. 9.

\(^2\)"Diaries," October 2, 1878; October 5, 1878; February 27, 1881; April 12, 1883; December 26, 1883.
sisters, brothers, and certain women who had been sealed to him were
"adopted to" President Woodruff as were members of Elizabeth's family. 3
For many years James worked on Wilford Woodruff's genealogical records,
and he and members of his family did temple work for the Woodruff dead. 4

When Wilford Woodruff was on a mission in Arizona in 1879, James
kept in touch with him and supplied him with writing materials. President
Woodruff wrote James a long, very interesting letter describing the condi-
tion of the Indians in Arizona, his conviction that they were true des-
cendants of the Nephites and Lamanites, and his hopes for doing a great
missionary work among them. 5 He returned to St. George early in 1880, and
on March 15, James wrote:

... Spent most of the night (till half-past twelve) with Apostle
Woodruff listening to what the Lord had revealed to him in Arizona.
He and I were alone. 6

This long revelation was quite general in nature, but one section
commands some attention:

... Gather yourselves together in your holy places, and clothe
yourselves with robes of the Holy Priesthood, and there offer up your
prayers according to my holy law. Let him who presides be mouth and
kneel upon the holy altar, and there let mine Apostles bring all these
testimonies before my face, and before the Heavenly Hosts, and before
the Justified Spirits made perfect. And thus saith the Lord unto you
mine Apostles, when you bring these testimonies before me, let them
be presented by name, as far as the Spirit shall present them unto
you, the Presidents of the United States, the Supreme Court, the
Cabinet, the Governors of the States and Territories; the Judges and
others sent unto you, and all men and persons who have taken any part

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3Ibid., March 1, 1879; April 9, 1879; March 19, 1880; May 18, 1881.
The relatives of James' and Elizabeth's sealed to President Woodruff were
all dead.

4Ibid., March 3, 1880; December 28, 1883; December 21, 1887;
December 17, 1892.

5Ibid., January 1, 1880. See also "St. George Stake Historical
Record" (US 27595), pp. 232-246. See also James G. Bleak, Miscellaneous
Papers, where the original of this letter is to be found.

6"Diaries," March 15, 1880.
in persecuting you, or bringing distress upon you or your families, or who have sought your lives, or sought to hinder you from keeping my commandments, or from enjoying the rights which the Constitutional laws of the land guarantee unto you. And then, saith the Lord unto mine Apostles and mine Elders, when ye do these things with purity of heart, I, the Lord, will hear your prayer, and am bound by oath and covenant to defend you and fight your battles.

James often spent evenings talking with Wilford Woodruff, and felt especially edified in his company. Moreover, James seemed pleased to be able to serve him in any way. On one occasion when he was very ill for six days James took care of him and attended him almost constantly. Later, President Woodruff asked James to help him with a "serious appointment." James never mentioned the nature of this appointment. On days when he attended to this special duty he recorded the event with a series of initials in his diary.

James felt highly honored when President Woodruff gave him permission to sleep in his bed and occupy his room in the St. George Temple when he was away from St. George. His great indignation upon returning to the temple one morning and finding someone else sleeping in Wilford Woodruff's bed is almost amusing. He was very jealous of his privilege.

In the summer of 1885 President Woodruff invited the officials of the St. George Temple to accompany him on a trip to Fish Lake where the Mutual Improvement Associations of Sevier Stake were holding a conference. The M. I. A. camp was established on the edge of the lake. Every day programs were held with the various wards furnishing talks and entertainment; and of course, Wilford Woodruff spoke telling the group of his many
missionary experiences. In between these more serious hours, President Woodruff, James and others fished for trout and gathered wild raspberries. It is interesting to note that President Woodruff was surprisingly vigorous for a man of his years. He liked to fish, and had done so in all the available streams on the way to Fish Lake as well as at the lake. During their journey, they visited a non-Mormon farmer who took great pride in his stock. He owned a fine stallion which President Woodruff obligingly helped him show off to his visitors. All in all, James, though a number of years younger than President Woodruff, had a difficult time keeping up with him. However, by the end of the trip both were ill with over-doing.

On October 21, 1887, James received a letter from Wilford Woodruff in which he asked, "Who am I, a poor Miller boy, that I should be honored by all Israel? I don't understand it, if you do, I wish you would tell me." This question was asked upon the occasion of his becoming President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. James replied to him as follows:

You have set me a task which I feel inadequate to perform, but yet even I may express a few of the thoughts stirred within me by your remark. There was once upon a time a young man in an idolatrous household, his heart was turned to the true and living God and he by faith and integrity became the Father of the Faithful and reced the promise that in him and his seed, all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

There was a man who at the age of 80 was attending another man's flocks in an obscure part of the Land; while doing so he was called by God to perform a work for which he felt himself unfitted by nature, but God spoke to him face to face as a familiar friend and he became Israel's Great Lawgiver.

There was a young man out hunting his father's lost asses; he was

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11 Ibid., June 28, 1885; July 17-19, 1885.
12 Ibid., July 15, 1885.
13 Ibid., July 13, 1885; July 19-21, 1885; July 26, 1885; July 28, 1885.
14 Ibid., October 21, 1887.
a Benjamite of the smallest tribe of Israel, and his family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin. God chose him to be the first King given to Israel.

A ruddy stripling shepherd-boy was preferred before his seven older and more experienced brothers, by the Lord to be anointed the second King over Israel.

At least one third of the Twelve Apostles in Jerusalem were from that lowly Jewish Class, fishermen, and one a despised tax gatherer. Yet these held the words of Life for a perishing world.

Even their Lord and Master was the reputed son of a carpenter, born in a stable, cradled in a manger, yet He was, and is, and always will be the Lord of Life and Glory, the Great I AM the First and the Last, the Redeemer and Savior of the World.

Joseph the poor farm-boy who could scarcely write his name when divinely called, was, and is, and always will be Heaven's chosen head and Chief Apostle, Prophet, Seer and Revelator for this Grand Dispensation of the fullness of Times.

And the history and power for good of Brigham the Painter and Glazier, of Heber the Potter, of John the Turner, and many others whom God brought out of obscurity, you have before you, for your life and labors, miller-boy though you were, have run concurrently with theirs; and all who contemplate such historical examples of the Lord's doings among men, are constrained to exclaim See What God hath wrought—

In about the same spirit as you make the statement "who am I, a poor miller boy, that I should be honored by all Israel?" a Prophet named Jeremiah once spoke to the Lord, and I know no more fitting conclusion to the present expression of my thoughts stirred by your remark. Jeremiah said "I am a child, but the Lord said unto him, Say not I am a child, for thou shalt go to all that I send thee, and whatsoever I command thee though shalt speak... Behold I have put my words in thy mouth, see, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms to root out and to pull down and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant."

Naturally, after Wilford Woodruff became president of the church, James' contact with him was much less than it had been. Nevertheless, frequent correspondence, both friendly and official, passed between them. James continued to work on the Woodruff genealogy, and when he was in Salt Lake City during session of the General Conferences each year always visited President Woodruff. In the last personal contact James had with Wilford Woodruff, the president materially aided him. James said:

"...Submitted Lists relating compensation matters and giving names & ages of regular ordinance per diem hands. The First Presidency: Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith were exceedingly

15Ibid., October 21, 1887.
kind and considerate of the needs and circumstances of the brethren and sisters of St George Temple. The brethren (First Presy) appreciated the family circumstances of Prest D. H. Cannon and James G. Bleak necessitating overdraft on their Afcs. President Woodruff expressed himself in favor of cancelling the amounts. Bros Geo. Q. and Joseph F. took the same view, and decided the matter should be submitted to the Council.16

Wilford Woodruff passed away on September 2, 1898, in San Francisco, California. James expressed his feelings on hearing this news with, "... The Lord's will be done. A Great man in Israel has gone to his full and complete Reward."17

James recorded one last item about Wilford Woodruff. On July 17, 1900, James took his wife, Jane, to the temple, and then returned to his home to work on the temple accounts. Not feeling well, he fell asleep and dreamed:

... that Prest W. Woodruff, was in a carriage and called to me asking if I was ready to go to his home. I answered I could not go yet as I had to go to my office to do some work. I felt sorry that my work was not done so that I could avail myself of the privilege of accompanying him.18

16 Ibid., April 12, 1898.
17 Ibid., September 2, 1898; September 6, 1898; September 8, 1898.
18 Ibid., July 17, 1900.
CHAPTER VIII

An introduction has already been made to James' family, but an attempt will be made here to discuss his family in greater detail. James' family was polygamous and consequently numerous. He had four wives and thirty-three children, twenty-seven of whom grew to maturity. His first child was born in 1850; his last in 1901.¹ Five of his children are still living.²

The mothers of this large family were Elizabeth Moore Bleak, Caroline Blanche Gosnold Bleak, Jane Thompson Bleak, and Matilda Irene Thompson Bleak.

Elizabeth was the wife of James' youth and the companion of his long, hard journey to Utah. In her later years, she was a fairly heavy woman with dark hair and dignified bearing [See Appendix II, Plate II]. To Elizabeth and James were born ten children, eight of whom grew to maturity.³ She was known as "Betsy" to James and as "Aunt Betsy" to his other wives and their children. Elizabeth was apparently a woman of great stamina as her trip across the plains proves. It is not known how she felt when James took other wives; but she was a devoted church member and an ardent temple worker, and it may be assumed that she believed in the principle of polygamy as taught by the Mormons in her day.⁴ She was much respected by James'

¹Iona Bleak Stucki, "Bleak Family Genealogical Records."
²Ibid. James' living children are Rose Bleak Ramsey, Sarah Bleak Tetzel, Kate Bleak McAllister, Henry Young Bleak and Karl Bleak.
³Ibid.
⁴Grace Bleak Thompson, Personal Interview. See also "Diaries,"passim.
other wives and children. Elizabeth's youngest child was born in 1867.\(^5\) Apparently, James did not live with Elizabeth after 1882 when he took his last wife, but he was often at her place writing and studying as it offered more peace and quiet than the homes of his younger wives where there were young children.\(^6\)

Elizabeth had a reputation for beautiful embroidery work on velvet; she also raised and sold canaries.\(^7\) Her home, built of adobe with a black lava rock foundation, was located at the southwest corner of Third West and Tabernacle Streets in St. George.\(^8\) As may be expected, Elizabeth spent a great deal of time visiting her sons, James and Thomas, who worked on the Manti and Salt Lake Temples when they were under construction.\(^9\) Her eldest son, Richard, went on a mission to Arizona in 1873, and after that spent the remainder of his long life prospecting in Arizona and New Mexico.\(^10\) Elizabeth outlived three of her grown children: Mary died as a young woman of thirty-one. John met a violent death at the hands of Mexicans while he was freighting in Arizona. Ephraim, whose leg had been amputated as a result of an accident with an ax, was thrown from

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\(^5\) Iona Bleak Stucki, "Bleak Family Genealogical Records."

\(^6\) Kate Bleak McAllister, Daughter of James Godson Bleak, Personal Interview, February 26, 1953, St. George, Utah. See also "Diaries," August 20, 1882; August 27, 1882; January 21, 1883; December 3, 1887.

\(^7\) Grace Bleak Thompson, Personal Interview.

\(^8\) Adobe and black lava rock were the common building materials for homes in St. George in pioneer days. The homes of all James’ wives were built of these materials.

\(^9\) "Diaries," July 1, 1879; May 15 to June 19, 1888; July 5, 1888; September 22, 1887; October 19, 1891; March 30, 1893.

\(^10\) "Letter Book," p. 250. See also "Diaries," June 17, 1878; December 18, 1883. See also "Personal Letter Book," pp. 133-134.
his horse and died of a broken neck.  

Elizabeth died at 6:00 p.m. on December 19, 1899. Concerning her death, burial and the settlement of her estate James wrote their daughter, Eunice, as follows:

31st Decr., 1899.

My dear daughter Eunice:

This Sunday morning I have stayed away from my Theological Class to write to you and others of the children.

In the first place I, and Aunt Jane and her children at home, wish you and David and children a happy and prosperous New Year.

You will no doubt have received my letter of Wednesday 20th inst. containing word of your good mother's death on the evening of the 19th.

On Friday 22d, we had funeral service in the St George Tabernacle. As Thomas and James had not arrived from Salt Lake City, I had notice given at the meeting that Mother would not be buried till their arrival; and that the Tabernacle Bell would be tolled half an hour before the funeral would start from Mother's home. The boys got to the Tabernacle just as the people were leaving after the funeral service. The Funeral took place at 10 Saturday morning.

I appointed Thomas James and Lillie to make an Inventory of all the property at mother's home and to divide it among the 5 living children and John's wife and children. Asking them to submit to me the List and Division. This they did, and I have not altered their decision. James asked me if I wished anything out of the house before the division was made. I said "No." But I afterwards stated I would like to have my Desk, which, you may remember, I got Benjamin F. Blake to make for me.

The following is the list of what they allotted to you: 1 chicken feather bed; 2 Quilts; Mother's wearing apparel (to be divided between Lillie and you) Mother's wedding ring, (when the sisters were washing dear Mother, they asked me if I wished her wedding ring to be left on, I said if it was taken off, I would like Eunice to have it, as she was absent; this I said to Aunt Jane and to Lillie, and it was taken off with this understanding); Mother's watch and chain; 1 Table Lamp; 1 Table cover; 2 pair of Window curtains; Mary's and Ephraim's enlarged Portraits framed; 1 pr. Mantle Ornaments; 1 Rope Basket.

11Iona Bleak Stucki, "Bleak Family Genealogical Records." See also "Diaries," May 5, 1884; September 12, 1884; October 13, 1884; February 24, 1885; March 3, 1885; March 17, 1898; March 18, 1898; February 3, 1899. See also "Personal Letter Book," pp. 88-89, Letter to Eunice Bleak Sanders, February 13, 1899. James and his family first heard of John's death through the Salt Lake newspapers. John had been dead three days when found. Under the circumstances it was impossible for the family to have his remains brought home for burial. This must have been very difficult for Elizabeth. Concerning Ephraim, it is probable that he would have survived being tossed by his horse, if he had had the use of both legs.

12"Diaries," December 19, 1899; December 22, 1899.
Mother's chickens, large and small (21 in number) were sold to Aunt Jane, she paid six dollars in cash for them to James. The last day, just before the boys started for home Thomas asked me if I would accept a pair of Decanters out of mother's cupboard and I said I would if they wished.

According to my wish Thomas and James went to each of the Stores in town to learn if mother owed any debts; They found but some little over 5 dollars which they paid. Before their arrival, Lillie in getting some things out of Mother's trunk, found eleven dollars and a quarter in cash and handed it to me. This amount and perhaps more may belong to Sister Hohman, who had authorized mother to sell some furniture for her. There was some eight gallons of wine which mother had made the past Fall but I told the boys it should not be disposed of to irresponsible persons, so it was brought to my care and the boys put the price of $1.00 upon it and said they would issue an order on me for that amount. It just occurs to my mind that James informed me that some $3.00 in Cash and between 2 and 3 dollars in T. O. Coupons have been found but it has not come into my hands.

The Expenses of the funeral Undertaker E. B. Snow's Bill $21.97 and Sexton Geo. Brooks Bill $4.00 I have not yet paid. To aid in doing this the boys left the hay which was at mother's which she had to feed her horse.

The Registered package you kindly sent to Mother, I receipted for and then it was opened by Thomas. I do not know its contents but James & Lillie in addition to Thomas I suppose know. As it is just mail time I will close praying God to bless you all

Affectionately your father

[Signed] James G. Bleak

Very little is known about James' second wife, Caroline. Since she came from London, it is possible that James knew her before he came to Utah. She was baptized into the church in 1855. Caroline was thirty when she and James were married. They had three children.

Caroline's home, built just south of Elizabeth's, was destroyed by fire on August 28, 1879. Fortunately no one was hurt, but the house and all its contents burned. The next day James visited Caroline and their children. Concerning this visit he wrote: "Spoke freely to my wife


14 Iona Bleak Stucki, "Bleak Family Genealogical Records." See also "Diaries," December 2, 1879. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 357-358. James' and Caroline's children were Joseph Gosnold, Blanche Gosnold and William Gosnold.

15 "Diaries," August 28, 1879.
Caroline relative to her improper course, and feel I have fully done my
duty in showing her the consequence thereof [sic] as well as the Lord gave
me power to do. 16 James' action would seem to be an odd way of treating
a wife who had just lost everything she owned. Caroline's "improper course"
is not known, but it is hinted at in the following passage which James wrote
in his diary on his fiftieth birthday:

... This evening all my family residing in St George also my son
Richard from Moencoppy were invited to make dinner with me at my wife
Jane's. All were present except my wife Caroline and Joseph, Blanche
& Willie. Joseph was absent as carrier of the mail to Bunkerville.
Caroline sent word to me that she was not well but I of course under­
stand the cause to be her alienation from members of my family. ... 17

Apparently, there was some conflict within James' family.

The new house which was built for Caroline was small and of peculiar
shape. It looked as if the builders had suddenly run out of materials, and
had no other alternative than to quit when half finished [See Appendix II,
Plate VI]. Perhaps James intended to have it enlarged at a later date, but
Caroline died before this was done. She died suddenly in the St. George
Temple on December 1, 1881, at 1:20 p.m. Her daughter, Blanche, and James
were with her when she passed away. 18 Concerning her death James recorded:

... She had shown no symptoms [sic] of being indisposed at her

16 Ibid., August 29, 1879.

17 Ibid., August 29, 1879. This reference to Caroline's attitude
is the only outward hint James gave that members of his family could not
get along with each other. Difficulties could not help but arise, and it
must have been hard for Caroline to adapt herself to the situation.
Elizabeth was fairly secure in her seniority. Jane was a convert to the
church as a child; and she and her niece, Matilda, grew into the institution
of polygam. But Caroline was, in that day of early marriages, already a
spinster when she and James were married. It is even possible that she
came to Utah with no knowledge of polygamy.

18 Ibid., December 1, 1881.
breakfast at home, but, on the contrary, partook of a hearty meal before leaving for her Temple duty. She was mother of three children, two sons and one daughter. She had frequently expressed to her relatives and friends, that when she did die, she would like to die in the Temple of the Lord in St. George. Her desire was granted. 19

Caroline's funeral was held on December 3, 1881, at 10:00 a.m. 20

It was very unfortunate for Caroline's children that she passed away so early. As a result, they were neglected. James was too busy to realize their needs, and it was natural for his other wives to be more concerned with their own families. Joseph was twenty when his mother passed away, and was already providing for himself. 21 For a time Blanche and Willie went to live with "Aunt Jane," but they did not feel at home there. 22 Willie made frequent trips to visit Joseph, and there is no doubt that his elder brother tried to care for him; but he finally went out on his own. His life was full of mishaps, the worst of which involved serving a term in the territorial prison for forgery. 23 Blanche married a non-Mormon, and spent many years living in Arizona and California. She finally separated from her husband and settled in San Francisco. It is said that she went on the stage. 24

Jane was not quite sixteen when she and James were married. She had been in the United States for several years, but had arrived in Utah just prior to the call of the settlers to St. George. Jane was small

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20 "Diaries," December 3, 1881.
21 Ibid., November 15, 1879. 22 Ibid., December 5, 1881.
23 Ibid., April 14, 1894.
24 Ibid., March 10, 1884. See also "Personal Letter Book," pp. 46-49, 73-76, 80-83, 97-98, 127-128, letters to Blanche advising her against separation from her husband. Also Samuel Bleak, Grand-son of James Godson Bleak, Personal Interview, April 5, 1953, Salt Lake City, Utah.
with dark eyes and black hair, and a very spirited personality which revealed itself often [See Appendix II, Plate III]. She was not afraid of asserting herself, and she was always proud of her correct manners and fine appearance.

To James and Jane were born thirteen children, ten of whom grew to maturity.\(^2^5\) Jane, too, became a regular temple worker, and much of the care of her family fell upon her two eldest living children, Sam and Rose.

Jane is the one wife for whom James displayed an affection amounting to passion, and there are numerous indications in his diaries that she held a favored position. She is mentioned oftener and in greater detail than any of his other wives. Her home, located across the street and a little south of Caroline's, was at first similar to the homes of his other wives; but later he built Jane another house which was larger and more comfortable than their houses [See Appendix II, Plate VII]. In his diaries, whenever he spoke of "home," he meant Jane's house, and Jane and her children had more little luxuries than the others.\(^2^6\) It was probable that James did not willfully show such favoritism. He was very fond of all his family; and he might have supposed that if Jane and her children had these things, the others had them, too.\(^2^7\) But Jane had a way of arranging her household and herself to please James, and she knew how to draw his attention to her needs and desires.\(^2^8\)

\(^{2^5}\) Iona Bleak Stucki, "Bleak Family Genealogical Records." The children were Alice, Samuel Thompson, Rose Thompson, Mercy Thompson, Jesse James Thompson, Olive, Nettie, Sarah Thompson, Frank Nelson, Jane Godson, Wilford Woodruff, Moroni and Lewis. Alice, Mercy and Nettie died in infancy. Rose and Sarah are still living.

\(^{2^6}\) "Diaries," October 26, 1886.

\(^{2^7}\) Kate Bleak McAllister, Personal Interview.

\(^{2^8}\) Jane performed many services for James—polished his shoes, curled his hair, etc. She used any occasion which might have sentimental
The extent of James' feeling for Jane was shown when she made a visit to her married daughter, Rose, in Payson in the summer of 1890. While Jane was gone James was very lonely, and he spent most of his time in the temple where he had many sleepless nights. Jane left for Payson on June 27. On July 19, James spent a restless night, and recorded that while lying awake he had a conversation with Jane in which she told him she would be home in two weeks and concluded by saying, "...Bless you, bless you, bless you, my love." He recorded a number of these "chats" with Jane, and was very comforted by these "strange" experiences. Jane was delayed up north getting her teeth fixed and did not return to St. George until August 22. With her safe arrival in St. George, James was able once again to settle down to business.

Jane became an ordinance worker and cook at the St. George Temple, and for many years was seen each morning driving her mare "Lot" to the temple. In 1898 she became a counselor in the stake presidency of the Relief Society, and spent a great deal of time traveling over the stake. She continued in her temple work until the late 1930's when she fell in the temple. The broken bone which resulted, and which because of her advanced value for James—his mother's birthday, his own birthday, the anniversary of his baptism into the church—as an excuse for giving him a dinner and a party. She was an excellent cook, and all her best dishes were reserved exclusively for James. Indeed, their son, Sam, in later years said that as a child he was not permitted to eat his mother's delicious jelly tarts. Only his father ate them; the children had mush and molasses. Statement made by Samuel Thompson Bleak, St. George, Utah, about 1940.

29 "Diaries," June 27 to August 19, 1890.
30 Ibid., July 19, 1890. 31 Ibid., August 16, 1890.
32 Ibid., August 22, 1890.
33 Ibid., August 10, 1889; March 5, 1895; May 5, 1896.
34 "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27596), p. 320.
age would not heal, did not permit her to do any more temple work. She
died in her ninety-seventh year.\textsuperscript{35}

James' fourth wife was a niece of Jane's. She was born at
Adventure [Rockville], Washington County, Utah, on December 27, 1861, the
daughter of William Henry and Matilda Young Thompson.\textsuperscript{36} In her youth she
was known as "Irene," but after the death of her mother was called
"Matilda."\textsuperscript{37} James and Matilda were married February 3, 1882, in St. George,
Utah. To them were born seven children, six of whom lived to maturity.\textsuperscript{38}

Matilda was a quiet, self-effacing person; and she was a dutiful
wife to James, but she must have been lonely [See Appendix II, Plate IV].
She had little of the companionship which James gave to Elizabeth and Jane.
She was a generation younger than James; and moreover, her home, located
on Second East between First and Second South, was at some distance from
the homes of the other wives [See Appendix II, Plate VIII].\textsuperscript{39} James often
did not know her needs, and unlike her Aunt Jane, Matilda was not the kind
to put herself forward. Surprisingly, it was Jane's son, Sam, who saw
that Matilda's children were remembered at Christmastime and on other
occasions.\textsuperscript{40} However, the impression should not be given that James grossly
neglected Matilda and her children. On the contrary, her home was not far

\textsuperscript{35}Iona Bleak Stucki, "Bleak Family Genealogical Records."

\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{37}Kate Bleak McAllister, Personal Interview.

\textsuperscript{38}Iona Bleak Stucki, "Bleak Family Genealogical Records." The
children were Penelope Thompson, Emma Thompson, Kate, Mark, Henry Young,
Rex James and Karl. Rex James died in infancy. Kate, Henry Young and
Karl are still living.

\textsuperscript{39}James' wives had the deeds to their homes in their own names.
None of these homes is now owned by the Bleak family.

\textsuperscript{40}Kate Bleak McAllister, Personal Interview.
from the temple and he often visited her. Whenever he was made aware of
Matilda's needs, he was very concerned to help her; and he was especially
attentive whenever Matilda or any of her children were ill.¹¹

Matilda also did beautiful embroidery work, and as a means of augmenting her income, took in boarders. She is the only one of James' wives who married a second time. After his death she married one of her boarders, a Mr. Smith, with whom she seemed to be very happy.¹² Matilda died on August 26, 1937, in St. George.¹³

Although James' older children probably knew him fairly well, this cannot be said for many of his children. The fact that James was engaged in so many activities outside his family meant that he could not spend much time with them, and the time he did have for his family was divided [not always equally] among four homes. It is probable that James' children suffered from this situation, but as one of his daughters said: "We did not know Father, but we were always proud of him."¹⁴ James' sons and daughters were especially proud when occasionally their father took a little time to go Maydaying with them, or to hunt wild raspberries and pine gum with them in Pine Valley, or when they had the great privilege of sitting down to dinner with him.¹⁵ Quite often James and his sons went shooting; and many times his families, or as many of them as were living in St. George, gathered together to honor him with a party.¹⁶

¹¹"Diaries," July 4, 1890; July 15, 1890; August 4, 1901.
¹²Kate Bleak McAllister, Personal Interview.
¹³Iona Bleak Stucki, "Bleak Family Genealogical Records."
¹⁴Kate Bleak McAllister, Personal Interview.
¹⁵"Diaries," August 15, 1889; August 16, 1889; August 18, 1890; July 9, 1893; July 16, 1893; May 1, 1901.
¹⁶Ibid., December 25, 1882; January 4, 1883.
It is said that James never spoke harshly to his children; however, he often spoke seriously with them, although there is considerable evidence that he did not deal with them arbitrarily. A number of his children chose paths which were exactly opposite to the one he had chosen for himself and which he desired them to follow. This caused him a great deal of sorrow because he had many times dedicated himself and all his posterity to the Lord. Probably the firmest he ever dealt with one of his children can be shown by quoting excerpts from a series of letters which he wrote to Willie at Escalante:

My dear Son William:

Your favor of 9th inst. came to hand on the 15th. At the time of its receipt your Brother Sam was at the Jackson Ranche. He has now returned. His object in going was to find some of his work animals. He wanted to get "Turk" and its mate—but could not find them. He heard one of them was in Arizona, and the other in Nevada. So he has come back without any team. His Lucern is ready for cutting. The Wells' boys are willing to furnish him their horses, but you will of course know what that means. The use of the horses for each day will be considered equal to his own personal labor—thus taking him just double the time to do his work. Do—please—hasten the delivery of his team which is in your possession. . . .

... Of course I do not know the nature of your business which prevents the return of the team—but it certainly is most unfortunate that some arrangement could not have been made to get the team to him in time for the rush of field work, which you are well aware begins here in early spring. Willie you know my own time is so occupied that I cannot go into the field, and that I rely upon Sam to get me, at least, some of my Lucern; and because he cannot, I also am a sufferer. I trust you will hurry matters up...  

My dear Son:

. . . You must certainly realize that we have been anxiously looking for you. Sam has had to hire team work, which, as you are certainly aware, is a very unusual proceeding for him. And yet his team is withheld from him. Do you wish him to go after it?

47 Ibid., August 22, 1880; November 15, 1889. Also Kate Bleak McAllister, Personal Interview.

Willie in your letter of 9th May, you state, the roads were so that they could be travelled "but my business will not permit me to travel for at least 3 weeks to come. However I expect to come to Dixie with the Team in question, as soon as possible. I also expect to make a satisfactory settlement with my brother."

Now that was six weeks ago. Your word received to-day is "I am coming just as soon as possible, or will make other arrangements as soon as possible to get Sam's team to him."

Dear Willie: put yourself in your brother's circumstances and condition and you can realize to some extent that he has reason to complain.

I confess I am hurt to think that one of my sons is treating his good natured accommodating brother as Sam is now being treated.

You may feel, and no doubt do feel justified in the course you have taken, but with the amount of explanation given in your letters, I do not feel that Sam has been dealt with justly. . . .

It took Sam all summer to get his team. Perhaps James should have taken a little firmer attitude with some of his children.

One thing which James absolutely insisted on with his children was that they not call each other half-brothers or half-sisters. He often said to them: "You're not half there. You're all there. You're brothers and sisters."

James' income has already been mentioned. His salary from the church was a substantial one for that day, but there were two drawbacks connected with it: First, his salary was paid in tithing scrip; and second, his family was so large that supporting it was a major problem. James had a small amount of land which was worked by his boys and which helped provide some of the items of food for his families and his animals. At one time he considered buying a rather large farm in Nevada for his sons to work, but was stopped from doing so by the bald fact that he did not have the money to make the purchase and did not know where he could get

\[\text{49 Ibid., pp. 51-52.}\]

\[\text{50 Ibid., pp. 54-55.}\]

\[\text{51 Kate Bleak McAllister, Personal Interview.}\]
Most of his sons started working at an early age, both to support themselves and to contribute something to the family needs. A number of them sought the mining camps of De Lamar, Kimberly and Eureka. Others hired out as laborers, or freighted. Even his wives contributed their share. Elizabeth raised and sold canaries, Jane sold perfume, and Matilda took in boarders.

Few of James' children had the opportunity for a good education. Most of them went a few years to the schools in St. George. James wished that his children could have been well educated, but the financial condition of the family would not permit. Frank attended Brigham Young Academy for a short period, Penelope went to the Branch Normal School at Cedar City, and Lewis was sent to the Latter-day Saint University in Salt Lake City. The following letter addressed to Wilford Woodruff reflects James' difficulties:

President Wilford Woodruff,
Salt Lake City.
My dear Brother:-

I have for sometime earnestly desired to give some of my children improved educational advantages, but have felt constrained because of limited resources to keep from increasing family expenses. But now I

52 "Diaries," July 29, 1879; March 5, 1880; March 5, 1883; January 3, 1887; April 16, 1887; April 25, 1887; September 7, 1887; October 5, 1887; August 20, 1888; March 30, 1889; January 16, 1893.

53 Ibid., passim. See also "Personal Letter Book," pp. 40-41.

54 Kate Bleak McAllister, Personal Interview.

55 "Diaries," September 6, 1880.

56 Ibid., May 10, 1901. See also "Personal Letter Book," pp. 4, 10-13, 18-21, 215-217. Also Iona Bleak Stucki, Personal Interview. Lewis did nothing but waste time while at school. The university wrote to James and complained of his absences.
feel in my heart as though an effort must be made by myself and my family. My son Frank Nelson Bleak, 18 years of age, is a faithful, obedient boy, and we feel, will be greatly benefitted by attending the Brigham Young Academy.

Expenses in Provo, as in Salt Lake City are understood to be cash. But I learn from Professor Benjamin Cluff arrangements can be made to use Tithing Office Orders for tuition, and for Board by making a discount of 25 per cent face value. I take the liberty, therefore, of asking if you will oblige me with a P. B. Order for One hundred dollars, this amount to be deducted from the Compensation Order to be sent to St. George Temple, the beginning of October; and the One hundred dollars to be charged to my personal account on the Temple Ledger here.

Realizing the many business cares upon you already, causes me to regret that I have to trouble you with my personal matters, but my circumstances are such that I must keep my Frank away from the Provo Academy if I do not ask, and obtain, your kindly aid.

Trusting that you will not blame me for taking the liberty of addressing you on this subject

I remain

Yours dutifully

[Signed] James G. Bleak.57

James was acquainted with Inez Knight, who had stayed with his family while on a visit to St. George, and through her influence obtained part-time employment for Frank and also employment for Jesse at Eureka with her father, Jesse Knight.58

In accordance with the custom of his church in that day, James had a number of women and children sealed to him. On June 24, 1879, James recorded that he had "...several of my kindred females sealed to me."59

It is not known just how many dead women were sealed to James, but the number known is formidable. The process was simple. Usually an enthusiastic church member in the process of having ordinance work done for his dead would come across women relatives who had not been married. Since, according to Mormon doctrine, it is more desirable that they be married, the genealogist would request a man he knew and admired to have them sealed

58Ibid., pp. 3-4, 40-41.
59"Diaries," June 24, 1879.
Mary Hewett, an old English friend, had passed away and he had her sealed to him. Emma Elvina Hamsine Jacobsen, who was born in Denmark and died in Cedar City as a young woman, was also sealed to James. Her parents were still living in Cedar City when he had her remains removed to St. George. Elizabeth Welton, an aunt of Joseph Orton's, a friend of James, was sealed to James at Joseph’s request.

There were at least two cases where James was sealed to women who while living had had husbands. Their children were also sealed to James. One was Mary Ann Miles whose son Francis and her dead children were sealed to James in the Logan Temple. The other was Betty Broughton who with her son, James Hulme Broughton, was sealed to James on January 23, 1890. Other women sealed to James were: Hannah H. Barker, Jessie Henrietta Brown, Charlotte Whitworth, Christiana Whitworth, Ann Walker, and a woman whose mother, Anna Woller, was still living in 1882.

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60 Ibid., October 5, 1880. 61 Ibid., June 19, 1890; March 7, 1890.
62 Ibid., January 14, 1881.
63 Ibid., November 16, 1881; March 17, 1882.
64 Ibid., January 13, 1882. 65 Ibid., July 22, 1886.
66 Ibid., January 23, 1890.
67 Ibid., March 19, 1880; October 21, 1882.
In addition to the above, James "adopted to" himself the Webster family of Cedar City, the Lewer family of Salt Lake City, the Middleton and Unshank families, and possibly others.\(^{68}\) This procedure involved the adoption by temple ordinance of husbands, wives, and children. It was probably intended to increase the celestial glory of both parties and carried no temporal responsibilities.

As a polygamist, James played a fast game of cat and mouse with the United States Deputy Marshals during the latter part of the 1880's. James, of course, stoutly upheld the position of his church on polygamy; and recorded with indignation the arrests of his friends and neighbors. As for himself, he took every possible precaution to avoid arrest. When at home he slept in a "specially prepared place" or "on roost."\(^{69}\) If it was reported to him that strangers were in town, or if word came by telegraph that the U. S. Deputies had left Silver Reef for the south, he did not go out. Oftentimes, en route from his home to the temple he sent his children ahead as scouts to warn him of danger. At other times, good fortune was with him. Such was the time when Jane saw the U. S. Deputies ride up to their house in the moonlight, gaze intently at the house, and finally ride away.\(^ {70}\) An even closer call was the time James left his home and met one of the marshals at the gate. Without losing his composure James bade the marshal good-day. The marshal asked if this was James G. Bleak's home. James said that it was. Then the marshal asked, "Is he inside?" James said, "No he isn't." The marshal went on inside to inquire while James fled to the temple thanking God that he had not only escaped, but did

\(^{68}\)Ibid., April 24, 1890; May 12, 1892.

\(^{69}\)Ibid., January 29, 1887; April 20, 1888.

\(^{70}\)Ibid., September 2, 1887.
not have to perjure himself in so many words.\textsuperscript{71}

The temple was James' sanctuary during this period. It became almost a prison for him. He recorded that he spent 261 days in the temple in 1887. At one time he spent 128 continuous hours there.\textsuperscript{72} It is during this period that he resigned from the Stake Board of Education and other public offices because his limited freedom did not permit him to fill them efficiently. On June 14, 1891, James wrote that he attended the first public meeting he had been to for twelve months.\textsuperscript{73} A number of polygamous stake and temple authorities took refuge in the temple also. Although it is not known that such a raid was actually planned, James and others hiding in the temple received word on June 26, 1890, that the deputy marshals would raid the temple that night. They prepared to keep the deputies out of the temple by force, if necessary, and watched all night; but no raid was attempted.\textsuperscript{74}

James' reaction to the passage of the Edmunds-Tucker Bill in Congress was as follows. When the bill passed the House of Representatives:

\begin{center}
\ldots Well! this is a bad showing for the Nation. Columbia how art thou fallen! But the infamous measure even under these odds, has not yet become law. Whether it does or nay there is to the Saints, at least A God in the matter. \ldots
\end{center}

His reaction when the bill passed the Senate was a little less spirited:

\begin{center}
\ldots Well. I still say it is not law yet! The Bill its makers and supporters and the Latter Day Saints are all in the Lord's hands. \ldots
\end{center}

And when the President allowed the bill to become law without his

\textsuperscript{71}Grace Bleak Thompson, Personal Interview.
\textsuperscript{72}"Diaries," January 1, 1888; March 30, 1888.
\textsuperscript{73}Ibid., June 14, 1891. \textsuperscript{74}Ibid., June 26, 1890.
\textsuperscript{75}Ibid., February 17, 1887. \textsuperscript{76}Ibid., February 18, 1887.
signature, James merely stated the fact without further comment.77

One by one, James saw his friends surrender or be arrested. The impression is received that a number of them did so just to end the nightmare of running and watching.

On June 23, 1888, the U. S. Deputy Marshals subpoenaed James' wives and his daughter, Sarah, to appear before a Grand Jury in Beaver on September 7. Accordingly, a few days before that date his son, Jesse, drove them to Beaver; however, the court lapsed and the members of James' family returned home without appearing. James looked upon this as an answer to his prayers.78 On December 6, James' wives were again summoned to Beaver to appear before the Grand Jury, but concerning this second appearance James said nothing.79

Early in 1889 the marshals visited Matilda's house and asked for James. She told them he was not there and laughed at them.80 The task of the marshals cannot have been an easy or pleasant one. Everywhere but in such Gentile centers as Silver Reef—and even at the Reef there were Mormons who sent code messages by telegraph warning the polygamists in St. George whenever the deputies went south—there was a silent conniving to defeat their purpose. The marshals never left Beaver, or Cedar City, or Silver Reef traveling south but that everyone in St. George knew. It is to be wondered that they were able to take as many polygamists as they did, but they were aided by the very attitude of the people they were hunting. The Mormons felt that they were not criminals, but were merely claiming the religious freedom guaranteed them under the Constitution. Whenever possible

77 Ibid., March 3, 1887.
78 Ibid., June 23, 1888; September 3, 1888; September 7, 1888.
79 Ibid., December 6, 1888.
80 Ibid., January 12, 1889.
they pursued their normal business. Few had the opportunity or desired to go into the type of hiding which James did. And as pointed out above, a number surrendered in order to settle the issue and obtain a little rest.

James, too, was eventually forced to surrender. In the spring of 1890 the Supreme Court of the United States, in *Davis v. Beason*, rendered a particularly sweeping decision against the Mormons on the polygamy issue. The church decided that it was useless to continue the struggle; and in September, 1890, Wilford Woodruff issued the "Manifesto," which discontinued the practice of polygamy among the Mormons. His action was sustained by the membership of the church in the General Conference held October, 1890. Nevertheless, polygamists who had been indicted were still being hunted by the U. S. Deputies. James was one of these, and he remained in hiding for almost two more years.

On September 16, 1892, at the close of the temple session, James went to the altar and prayed to know what to do about his situation. When he finished his prayer he sent his friend, William H. Thompson, to buy him a round trip ticket to Beaver. At Beaver he surrendered himself to U. S. Deputy Marshal McGeary. He spent Sunday with friends from St. George camped in Beaver, and on Monday afternoon appeared before the court. An Attorney Chidester had offered to defend him free of charge, but James refused any legal advice. Judge James Miner presided over the court, and two indictments dated December 12, 1888, under the Edmunds-Tucker Law were read against James. The Judge asked if the allegations were true, and James said they were. Then he was asked if he supported the "Manifesto" and still considered it valid. James replied that he did. All charges against him were then dismissed with a fine of six cents which was paid by Scipio A. Kenner. James rode home in high spirits telling every
sought-after polygamist he met on the way about his good fortune.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{61}Ibid., September 16-21, 1892. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27596), p. 176.
CHAPTER IX

In addition to the things which have been said about James Godson Bleak, there is still a number of things to be said about his personality, habits, interests and feelings.

At the age of seventy James was five feet nine inches tall and weighed 165 pounds.\(^1\) Although he had suffered no really serious disease from the time he was eight years of age when he had typhoid fever, he had many colds and was quite often nervous and upset.\(^2\) One physical handicap which caused him considerable pain and inconvenience was the condition of the foot which had been so badly frozen in 1856. This was still causing him trouble as late as 1901.\(^3\) It is said in his family that finally his wife, Jane, dreamed of the formula for a salve which healed the foot.\(^4\)

In his mature years James always wore a beard and wore his hair fairly long [See Appendix II, Plate I]. When he was young his hair and beard were dark; in old age they turned white. His eyes were blue and eventually became crossed, and he wore glasses. He was very serious [almost


\(^2\)Ibid. See also "Diaries," March 6, 1883; July 1, 1894; passim. James suffered from sciatic, which was likely to attack him when he went to work on the Seep Ditch. He also had hives occasionally.

\(^3\)"Diaries," February 12, 1889; April 9, 1892; September 23, 1901; September 28, 1901; October 3, 1901; October 9, 1901; October 19, 1901; October 25, 1901. While at October General Conference in 1901 James had his foot examined by Dr. Seymour B. Young. Dr. Young told him the foot would heal. It was James' practice to have special shoes made because his feet were so tender.

\(^4\)Iona Bleak Stucki, Personal Interview.
too serious] in manner and dignified in bearing. He took pride in his neat appearance and correct manner, and to appear travel-stained or dirty was a source of great irritation to him.

James did very little manual labor, although he could rise to the occasion if it was demanded of him. Occasionally he went with his sons to the fields to clear the Seep Ditch or conduct some such project, and he sometimes weeded the garden or tended the grapevines on Jane's lot. If there was some little job around the house which needed doing and none of his sons were around, James would do it. Thus, he fixed Jane's screen door, laid a carpet for Matilda, and helped his wives and daughters "pit" plums for drying. Usually, James was so busy elsewhere that he did not have time for these domestic tasks. His wives and children were pleased when he assisted them, but they did not expect his help nor did he expect to give it as the usual thing. He had other more important duties to attend to.

James was very fond of entertaining and being entertained. He usually took his wives and children to the public plays, lectures and dances. Oftentimes, he and members of his families worked on committees to sponsor such entertainments. He enjoyed having his friends and relatives at his home, and he frequently visited them. On holidays such as Christmas or New Years James went about greeting all the members of his family. To those who were not living in St. George he wrote letters of greeting. It was also his habit to write letters of greeting to his children on his birthday. James was frequently called upon to sing at the July 4 celebration,

5 "Diaries," March 6, 1883; March 7, 1887; March 12, 1888; February 8, 1890; February 18, 1890; May 8, 1897.

6 Ibid., August 2, 1890; July 19, 1894.
or other patriotic observance, and oddly enough his favorite rendition for such an occasion was the "Marseillaise."  

James practiced amateur medicine on his family and friends or whoever else might ask for his assistance. His chief treatment was an alcoholic vapor bath. He had receipts for several kinds of medicines, but brandy seemed to be one of the important ingredients of all of them. There is no indication that James' cures were effective; neither is there any indication that they did any harm. He seemed to know a little more about disease than most laymen of his day, and was able to identify the most common contagious diseases. A large number of his diagnoses, however, fell under the classifications of "bilious colic" or "putrid sore throat." James had great faith in the healing power of prayer and the Priesthood. He performed many administrations, and quite often recorded that mysterious powers had healed him. He was also veterinarian for the family animals.  

James cannot be classified as a humble man. He described himself as "strong, decided, self-assertive," but he was not inordinately proud. He was just very certain of his calling and his salvation. At times when assigned to some special duty he expressed the hope that he would do a good job, but he never showed any doubt about the excellence of his performance while doing the task or after it was done. Apparently, Brigham Young had infused James with his ideas of the greatness of Zion, and particularly of the importance of Southern Utah, for James' private records as well as his history reek with momentousness as if James thought they

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7Ibid., December 25, 1880; January 1, 1881; December 25, 1890; November 15, 1891; November 26, 1896; November 15, 1897; and passim.

8Ibid., April 26, 1881; May 1, 1881; February 5, 1882; August 13, 1884; August 12, 1889; August 2, 1890; August 4, 1890; August 30, 1890; July 7, 1893; and passim.

were performing earth-shaking tasks. He lived to see St. George and the southern area lose stature in church affairs, but he never lost faith in the Kingdom and the assurance of his place in it. James quite often expressed his thankfulness for his own righteousness. Usually these expressions came from him on the occasion of his birthday or the anniversary of his baptism into the church. For example:

... 35 years ago to day I was baptized a Member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. . . . Thanking and Praise for evermore be unto God and the Lamb for the great privilege bestowed upon me and for my preservation in life and in the faith. . . . 10

... Anniversary of my birth which took place 64 years ago. By God's favor and blessing my life has been so long spared on earth. But above all by His mercy and aid I maintain my standing in His Church, for which I say Glory to God. 11

Although James was wholly devoted to the church, he was not entirely blinded to the faults of those governing the church. Almost never did he question the dealings of one of the general authorities, but frequently he took it upon himself to correct the stake authorities. Generally, his attitude was reverential in the extreme. He was highly indignant when the town permitted a small celebration of Pioneer Day right after the death of an Apostle; of course, he did not participate. It is clear, however, that he preferred some general authorities to others; for example he referred to George Q. Cannon as "much affected," and he very obviously thought highly of Abraham O. Woodruff. 12

James' self education went on during most of his life. He kept a "Commonplace Book" in which he wrote notes on a variety of subjects from chemistry to how to speak correctly. He subscribed to a number of magazines

10 "Diaries," February 10, 1886. 11 Ibid., November 15, 1893.

12 Ibid., May 17, 1888; July 19, 1896; July 24, 1896; June 29, 1901; November 20, 1901.
to keep himself up to date. He preserved clippings from one called The Bookkeeper which showed that he was interested in shorthand.\textsuperscript{13} There are notes made in his diaries in shorthand, but his use of a system was evidently limited.\textsuperscript{14} James also subscribed to \textit{Current History} and Review of Reviews as well as church publications.\textsuperscript{15}

James seemed to have had a good mind, although he was not original. He was too devoted to authority for that. He readily absorbed information and put it to use. His memory was excellent until his later years. It is said by members of his family that he "spoke fluently" seven languages.\textsuperscript{16} Evidence exists to show that he was acquainted with Spanish, German and possibly some Indian languages.\textsuperscript{17} His formal education was so limited that it is probable that he was his own linguistics teacher. He had a special talent for handling figures. The story is told that once an adding machine salesman showed up at his office determined to sell him an adding machine. James said he would buy a machine if the salesman could demonstrate that he needed one. Whereupon, several contests were conducted to determine which could add a column of figures faster, James or the machine. Each time James won. Finally, the salesman agreed that James did not need an adding machine and went away.\textsuperscript{18}

James did, however, buy a typewriter which he used rather exten-

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{James G. Bleak, Miscellaneous Papers.}
\textsuperscript{14}"Diaries," \textit{passim.}
\textsuperscript{15}"Personal Letter Book," pp. 61, 62, 122, 125.
\textsuperscript{16}Grace Bleak Thompson, Personal Interview. Also Iona Bleak Stucki, Personal Interview.
\textsuperscript{17}"Diaries," May 1, 1873. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 431-432.
\textsuperscript{18}Ruth Bleak Snow, Grand-daughter of James Godson Bleak, Personal Interview, February 23, 1953, St. George, Utah.
sively; but much preferred his own beautiful script when he had a special
task to perform.19

When James reached the age of seventy he became concerned with pre-
serving his mental powers. This concern was probably occasioned by the
fact that he was not actually as alert as he had been in his younger days.
He wrote to Eugen Sandow for instructions on how to preserve his physical
health because he was convinced that good health was necessary to an alert
mind.20 But he vainly fought the battle against old age. In his last
years he lived almost entirely in the past. Often he wandered off on the
road to Santa Clara or Washington. One of his grandchildren would be sent
after him with the horse and buggy. It was necessary that he be approached
from the direction in which he was headed, for if the buggy was turned
around once he was in it he protested vigorously. When they met the con-
versation usually went something like this:

"Good-day, Brother Bleak, where are you going?"
"To the next settlement."
"May I give you a ride?"
"Thank you, my dear."

Whereupon, James climbed into the buggy and was taken home by his grand-
child.21

James died at his home in St. George on January 30, 1918, of the
infirmities of old age.22 He had lived long, had a variety of experiences,
and had served his cause well. As often happens with men who do creative
work, the most valuable contribution he made to posterity is the one which
he was most reluctant to perform.

20 Ibid., pp. 180, 167.
21 Iona Bleak Stucki, Personal Interview.
22 Samuel Bleak, "Brief Sketch of the Life of James Godson Bleak."
CHAPTER X

James' many other services to the church were well done, but his distinctive contribution to posterity was his "Annals of the Southern Utah Mission." As has been stated in the chapter on the settlement of St. George Chapter III, James was set apart as historian of the Southern Mission in October, 1861, and sustained in this position by the people who settled in the mission. At each mission or stake conference held thereafter James was sustained as historian. Naturally, he could not write a history until there was something to write about; but his many other duties, multiplied as they were, kept him from even making an orderly collection and classification of materials to be used in the history, although he haphazardly collected sources which he hoped to use. In a letter written to George F. Gibbs on June 5, 1897, James said:

...Current duties:—Temple and Stake, take up so much of my time and attention that my labors on the genealogy, as well as upon the History of the Southern (Utah) Mission, are sadly, because so frequently, interfered with. ...

As the years went by James became more and more embroiled in other things, and less and less able to concentrate on the writing of a history. Occasionally, as historian of the area he was able to furnish interesting information or perform services considered to be the historian's province. It has already been stated in Chapter VI that James wrote an abstract of

1"Annals," p. 102. See also James G. Bleak, Miscellaneous Papers.
2"Diaries," passim.
the history of Southern Utah which was placed in the box enclosed in the wall of the temple. In 1880, when H. H. Bancroft was writing a history of Utah, James was asked to answer questions which Bancroft asked concerning the settlement of Southern Utah. It is probable that the information James supplied was in part, at least, the same as that contained in the abstract for the temple [See Appendix III for text of the information supplied to Bancroft]. James sent this information to Orson Pratt with the following letter:

St. George, Utah,
17th July 1880.

To Elder Orson Pratt,
Historian's Office
Salt Lake City.

My dear Brother,
In response to your application for Southern Utah Historical data for H. H. Bancroft of San Francisco please find enclosed synopsis. You will of course use your own judgment in relation to its use. God bless you in all your labors for Zion.

Signed, James G. Bleak.

Some of this information later appeared in his more detailed history, but the Bancroft "synopsis" was very short, and James would do considerably more work on the years it covers.

As historian, James was often asked to supply people with bits of information which had no relation to the history of Southern Utah, as is shown by the following letter:

St. George, Utah
16th April 1878.

To Wm. Winter Esq.,
Secy of Association
of Territorial Pioneers
of California.

Dear Sir,
Your communication of 3d inst. is placed in my hands by the widow

4 "St. George Stake," Vol. II, April 1, 1874.
of a departed friend—James M. Ide—as I have at present in my charge some of his papers.

In reply to your question asking for "the correct date" of raising the "Bear Flag at Sonoma in 1846 I will quote from the writing of Wm. B. Ide, deceased:— "The said 'Bear Flag' [was] made of plane [plain] cotton cloth and ornamented with the red flannel of a shirt from the back of one of the men, and christened by the words 'California Republic' in red paint letters on both sides; [it] was raised upon the standard where had floated on the breezes the Mexican Flag aforetime; it was the 14th of June '46'. Our whole number was 24 all told. The Grisly Bear was chosen as an emblem of strength and unyielding resistance."

I will quote a few lines more, though not pertinent to the fact of raising the Flag; still I believe the few following words cannot fail to be gratifying to the companions in arms of Wm. B. Ide.

"The men were divided into two Companies of 10 men each. The l Artillery was busily engaged in putting the Cannon in order, which were charged doubly with grape and canister The 1st Rifle Company were busied in cleaning repairing and loading the small arms. The Commander after setting a guard, and posting a sentinel on one of the highest buildings to watch the approach of any persons who might feel a curiosity to inspect our operations—directed his leisure to the establishment of some system of finances—whereby all the defenseless families might be brought within the lines of our garrison and supported. Ten thousand pounds of flour were purchased on the credit of the Gov and deposited within the garrison. And an account was opened on terms agreed upon for a supply of beef and a few barrels of salt constituted our main supplies. Whisky was contraband altogether. After the first round of duties were performed, as many as could be spared off guard were called together and our situation fully explained to the men by the Commander of the Garrison. It was fully represented that our success—nay, our very life depended on the magnanimity and justice of our course of conduct, coupled with sleepless vigilance and care. (But e're this we had gathered as many of the surrounding citizens as was possible and placed them out of harm's way, between 2 strong walls, they were more than twice our number.) The Commander chose from these strangers the most intelligent, and by the use of an interpreter went on to explain the cause of our coming together--our determination to offer equal protection and equal justice to all good and virtuous citizens, that we had not called them there to rob them of their liberties, or to deprive them of any portion of their property, or to disturb them in their social relations one with another nor yet to desecrate their religion. Here I will desist as my time is much occupied and perhaps I have written full as much as you may care to read, or the Association to hear.

Before closing I beg leave to refer to a newspaper Clipping I find among the papers: it is from the "Daily Alta California" of 20 Jan 1846. appended to a copy of the "Proclamation" is a certificate from Senor Joaquin Torres stating the Flag was hoisted on the date of the Proclamation, June 15th 1846. This you will perceive is incorrect. I have been careful to give you verbatim copy of Ide's words as written by himself. . . . 7

7Ibid., pp. 252-255.
Although James was very interested in history as a whole, he showed little consuming desire to be at the work appointed him. His reluctance increased after he took up temple work so enthusiastically. This is not surprising in a man of James’ views. Important as history was, temple work was to James the greatest responsibility and privilege of all, and it gave him intense joy to be part of it. James had to be forced to write the history. Of course, he had always intended to do it, but there never was enough time. In all likelihood, if the general authorities had not pressed him into it, the history would have never been written. He was the logical person to write it not only because of his calling and ability, but because many of those who had lived the history of Southern Utah had already passed away. James was one of the few left. James himself, conscious that he had not fulfilled the calling made of him almost forty years beforehand, became uneasy and wrote:

...Attended my Theological Class. I have written my resignation of this trust to the Ward Superintendent of Sunday Sch. ...Desiring to lessen my labors as much as possible that I may devote my labors more upon the History of the Southern Mission. ...

His resignation was accepted and he began to spend some time on the history. However, the work was not moving fast enough and in April, 1900, James was released of his work as Recorder of the temple by the First Presidency. A few weeks after being released of his recorder duties, James wrote George F. Gibbs at the President’s Office, stating:

...I have been diligently collecting the missing links in the earliest settlement of this Southern region by our people,—some seven years before the coming of Apostles Orson Pratt and Erastus Snow in 1861—and am still at it. ...

8"Diaries," July 31, 1898; August 21, 1898.
9Ibid., April 30, 1900. See also "Personal Letter Book," p. 149.
In this same letter James asked for the letter of introduction which President Snow had promised him to aid him in collecting the sources.  

In November, 1901, James received a letter from the First Presidency requesting him to make a report on the amount of work accomplished on the history. James replied:

...Now, relative to my labor on the History of the Southern Mission:—I have not sent any written report of my progress since devoting myself more fully to it; but each six months, when at General Conference, I have in a general way reported verbally to our dear President Lorenzo Snow, except this October Conference, just passed, when I did not have the opportunity to do so.

My labors on the history of, particularly the past 40 years have been of such a nature in collecting data and arranging information, that all I could do was to give a general statement—that I was continuing my labors and work. I have done, and continue to do, much searching of records, note-books, minute-books and memoranda obtained from...settlers verbally and by correspondence, that my labor has been scattered over the whole period, rather than on special years. There have been so many missing links in the early years after our arrival in December, 1861, when all had to incessantly toil to make ends meet, and when such memoranda as was made, had to be pencilled or penned on paper of various sizes, texture and colors, because of our scarcity of such facilities as the present day affords. In addition to this, it must be remembered that there has been no office to which historical records and data could be gathered,—and no such office exists to-day, except my dwelling house; and you each, can well understand that a small dwelling-house, with a number of inmates is not adapted to the undisturbed collection and classification of the data belonging to a period ranging from the first settlement of Parowan, in 1851, by President George A. Smith and Company, to the present.

Now, please pardon my plain, and possibly abrupt statement of some of the difficulties which attend my historical labors... .  

The above letter points up some of the difficulties under which James labored: the problem of obtaining information about the early days of settlement and his need for a suitable place in which to work. As a result of this exchange of letters, James was completely relieved of all temple and stake responsibilities so that he could devote his full time to the writing of the history.

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11 Ibid.  
12 Ibid., pp. 150-151.  
13 "Diaries," November 18-19, 1901. See also "Personal Letter Book," p. 153, for James' resignation as Vice-President and Secretary of the St. George Temple Association.
James was very much disturbed that he had no place in which to work other than his home which he felt was not conducive to concentration on the history. When Apostle Abraham O. Woodruff was in St. George on a trip in November, 1901, James appealed to him to use his influence to obtain better working conditions for him. Apostle Woodruff was sympathetic with James' needs, but apparently a place to work was not immediately made available to him.

In January, 1903, the Presidency of St. George Stake addressed a letter of inquiry to James concerning his needs and progress. James replied as follows:

...Your letter of 2d inst. relating to matters of History of Southern Mission, received this morning.

In answer to your first inquiry: "If the facilities at your home are such that you are working to the best advantage, or would you prefer an office, and could you get along better with one set apart specially for your use?"

I emphatically state: the lack of an office where I could work uninterruptedly on the History, has been my most serious drawback since I have been requested to exclusively devote my time to this labor. I spoke, at the beginning, about this difficulty, to President David H. Cannon, thinking I might be allowed the use of one of the many unused rooms in the upper part of the Temple, finding that he did not see his way clear to grant this use, I, sometime afterwards, expressed my thought of asking President Lorenzo Snow if this favor could be granted. Brother Cannon felt it would be better not to do so. I did not learn why I should not ask the privilege, but I did not name the matter to President Snow. When Brother Andrew Jenson, of the Historian's Office, asked me at last October Conference, how my work on the History was progressing, I spoke to him about the disadvantage of not having a place for my work, away from my home where everybody knew where to find me. He recognized the disadvantage and kindly suggested that I mention the matter to Apostle Lund, Chief Historian. This I decided to do, but, Brother Lund started to White Pine settlements before I had an opportunity to see him. I name these things, which to you may appear tedious, but I wish you, and all concerned, to be informed why I have not made greater progress with this very important labor.

Answering the second clause of your letter, I wish to state that as I have received no word of direction from any source, as to the scope of the History of the Sn Mission, it is particularly satisfactory to me, to follow the suggestion of the First Presidency, to send the rough copy of my work to the Historian's Office for comparison with what data

14#Diaries," November 20, 1901.
that Office may be in possession of.

In relation to time limit, I will say that, with a secluded place for my work, I hope to be able to complete my compilation by the end of this year.

Thanking the First Presidency and yourselves for the kindly interest you take in this, to me, all important work. . . .15

James received a room in the St. George Temple in which to do his work, but he was over-optimistic about the time required for him to complete the work. Over a year later, on April 8, 1903, he handed to Church Historian, Anthon H. Lund, the first part of the history to 1868.16 A few weeks later the Stake Presidency again inquired as to the length of time he would need to complete the work. James replied:


Accept my thanks for the book.

In response to your wish to know how far I am along with the work and when I think I will be able to complete it, I will state: I am at the close of 1869,—completed and duplicated; the duplicate to be kept in this Stake for reference, for yourselves, or such others as you may designate to use it.

In relation to when I think I will be able to complete the work,—I confess I cannot set even an approximate date. I wish to state, however, that all my notes, memoranda and documents are now arranged in order of date, each year by itself, up to the end of 1900.

I desire that you shall not infer from this, that all but remains to be done is, simply a matter of copying what is now classified in order of date. There is much more to do in looking up connecting links from Minute books, Letter books, High Council and other Records, &c., which you will, of course, understand cannot be classified under any one particular year having been kept, as they necessarily were, from notes memoranda or documents. In this part of my work I have to fall back upon my memory, or, for references to, or, indeed inferences drawn from, the items which are classified in order of date. It is this part of the work which occupies the greater part of my time,—and which prevents me from using a copyist to whom I could pass over my classified matter. This classified matter, in and of itself is too meager and disconnected to do justice to the past of this Mission.

One thing, my brethren, you may rest assured of:—I earnestly desire to complete the work at the earliest possible date, and to this end I devote myself to the compilation of these Annals, except on Sabbath day, or time to perform such other duties as are required of


16"Diaries," June 30, 1902; April 8, 1903.
me in the Ward or in the Stake... 17

The above letter very interestingly states something of the method James used in writing his history. Once started on the history his enthusiasm for the job increased considerably, and it was his nature to do as thorough a job as he knew how to do. In order to write the history James consulted a number of sources. The most important of these were:

1. Testimony of Old Settlers—This James obtained verbally and by correspondence. Some of those whom he interviewed were Thomas Chamberlain, Francis L. and Maria Porter on the United Order at Orderville; Robert D. Covington on the history of Washington; Daniel Bonelli who led the Swiss Company to Santa Clara; and Edward Bunker who helped settle Bunkerville.18

2. Diaries—Journal of Henry Lunt, Secretary to George A. Smith; diaries of Jacob Hamblin, Zadoc K. Judd, James H. Martineau, and John D. Lee; and James used excerpts from his own diary.19

3. Iron and Washington County Court Records.20

4. Acts of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah.21

5. Letters—Many items of information included in James' history came from the letter book dated 1874-1887, and he also quoted letters not included in that book.22

6. St. George Stake Records—St. George Stake High Council Minutes, Minutes of St. George Stake Quarterly Conferences, Minutes of Sabbath Meetings and Tithing Records.23


20"Diaries," June 1, 1900. See also "Annals," pp. 11-12, 56-57.


22Ibid., pp. 43-44, 324-327. See also "Letter Book," passim.

8. Records in the Church Historian’s Office.  
10. His own memory.

It was planned that the history be prepared in duplicate—a copy for the Church Historian’s Office and a copy for the St. George Stake. The duplicates were to be prepared on letter books, nine by fourteen inches, with five hundred or more pages in each book.

James wrote a letter to the First Presidency, Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund, on April 18, 1904, describing his progress and his hopes for completing the work:

...At the close of the General Conference, just past, I deposited in the Historian’s Office my compilation of the Annals of the Southern Utah Mission for 1874, the year of starting the United Order in this part of the land; and am now going on with 1875.

I am anxious to complete this work at the earliest possible date, up to the end of 1900; and hope by the Lord’s help to be able to do so by the end of 1905.

Ever praying for the continued blessing and inspiration of our Heavenly Father to attend you in your sacred calling. ...

24 "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), p. 260.

25 "Diaries," April 14, 1900. James does not state what records he used, but he does say that the fact that the material at the Church Historian’s Office was unclassified made it very difficult to make use of.

26 Ibid., October 10, 1900. See also "Annals," pp. 18-19. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), p. 289. In the history James tells about a number of newspapers started in the area—Our Dixie Times, The Mineral Cactus, Silver Reef Echo, The Union, The Evening Telegram, etc.—but most of these were short-lived.


28 Ibid., pp. 192-193, 197.

29 Ibid., p. 197.

30 Ibid., p. 207.
It is not known the exact date that James completed the writing of the history, but a letter written to the First Presidency on November 25, 1905, shows that the work was far from finished:

...When in your City at the recent General Conference, I deposited in the Historian's Office my compilation of the Annals of this Southern Utah Mission up to the end of 1880. I have since completed 1881; and am working on 1882.

I was in hope, as expressed in one of my letters to you last year, to have completed my work in this line by the end of this present year, but have found myself unable to do so. I do, however, most earnestly trust that, by the help of the Lord, I may be able to finish during the coming year.

I am keeping a duplicate copy here of what I file in the Church Historian's Office.

Any word of instruction, or advice you may have for me now, or at any time, will be promptly complied with ... .31

James' work on the history was destined to be shortened through the interference of Stake President, Edward H. Snow, who probably gave his instructions on orders from the First Presidency. After the entry dated June 10, 1894, on page 255 of the last book of the history James has inserted the following note:

...At the suggestion of Stake President Edward H. Snow I, further abbreviate entries in these Annals. This is the first word of suggestion from any source, as to enlargement or abbreviation of my work in this Record.

I receive this word from my President with considerable satisfaction, because it lessens my personal responsibility as to extending or shortening my very willing labor.32

It is fortunate for present and future historians of Utah that the above suggestion was not made earlier. Otherwise, the history might be barren of much of the valuable information it contains. The last pages of the work are concerned with strictly church affairs.

31Ibid., p. 222.

32"St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27596), p. 255.
CHAPTER XI

James' history was handwritten in four books, as follows: First Book, 1850-1868; Second Book, 1869-1876; Third Book, 1877-1887; and Fourth Book, 1888-1900.

As indicated in the last chapter, it was planned that the original of this work be deposited in the Church Historian's Office and that a duplicate copy be left with St. George Stake.¹ This student worked with three of the manuscripts in James' handwriting:

Annals of the Southern Utah Mission, Book A, 1850-1869—evidently one of the duplicate copies left with St. George Stake. This copy is corrected and annotated in pencil and there are breaks in the narrative indicating that it might have been a rough draft.

St. George Stake Historical Record, 27595, 1877-1887 (Bleak's History, Book C)—filed in the Church Historian's Office.

St. George Stake Historical Record, 27596, 1888-1900 (Bleak's History, Book D)—filed in the Church Historian's Office.

These manuscripts for the most part are in good condition. James wrote a clear, neat hand, and his use of English is good. However, some pages of the manuscripts have faded so badly that they are no longer legible. It is unfortunate that greater care has not been taken to preserve the manuscripts and their contents.

This student also worked with a typewritten manuscript in the Church Historian's Office entitled "St. George Stake" in four volumes. Comparison with the original manuscripts of the first three of these volumes shows them to be, for the most part, a copy of James' history.

For example, concerning the appointment of James as clerk and historian of the Southern Mission, the "Annals of the Southern Utah Mission" reads:

The first meeting in the St. George Valley took place on Wednesday the 4th Dec., under the presidency of Apostle Erastus Snow, about half a mile due east of where the Temple now stands.

Meeting opened by prayer of President Henry Harriman of the First Council of Seventies.

President Snow proposed the name of James G. Bleak as "Clerk and Historian of the Southern Mission" Seconded by President Jacob Gates of the First Council of Seventies. Carried unanimously. (Brother Bleak had been appointed in Salt Lake City to this position and was set apart in the Historian's office under the hands of Apostles Orson Pratt and George A. Smith, the latter being Church Historian.). . . .

And in "St. George Stake" is found the following:

Wednesday, Dec. 4. The first meeting in the St. George Valley took place on Wed. the 4th Dec. under the presidency of Apostle Erastus Snow about half a mile due east of where the temple now stands.

Meeting opened by prayer of Pres. Henry Harriman of the First Council of Seventies.

Pres. Snow proposed the name of James G. Bleak as clerk and historian for this southern mission. Seconded by Pres. Jacob Gates, of the First Council of Seventies. Carried unanimously. Bro. Bleak had been appointed in S. L. City to this position and was set apart in the Historians Office under the hands of Apostles Orson Pratt and Geo. A. Smith (the latter being Church Historian). . . .

The history is kept chronologically in the form of annals. This form has led those who have had occasion to refer to the work to assume that the events dealt with therein were recorded as they happened, and thus greater credibility may have been given to James' work than it really deserves. Actually, the evidence of James' diaries and letters shows that the history was written, for the most part, between the years 1898 and 1907; and that the research was done in much the same way, as pointed out in the last chapter, as most historians would do. The fact that James quoted verbatim from many of his sources without acknowledging them; that he relied upon his memory at times; and that, though using sources to

verify and detail what he remembered, James was actually on the spot when many of the incidents related in the history took place, gives the work its air of a day by day and year by year recording of events as they happened. The lack of footnotes and much of the mechanical paraphernalia of modern history writing enhances this impression. When James does acknowledge his sources, he does so very informally, as: "Martineau writes: . . ." or "Jacob writes: . . ." or "the County Court of Washington County transacted the following business this year of 1857. . . ."\(^4\)

Some of the information, such as the lists of settlers to Parowan in 1850 and to St. George in 1861, probably came from the records of the Church Historian’s Office; but James does not say as much.\(^5\) In the period from 1850 to 1861 James was not on the spot, and is totally dependent upon what he can gather from other sources. Thus, that part of the history covering this period acknowledges many more sources than does the rest of the history.

James starts his history by giving a brief account of the Mormon's first explorations into Southern Utah. This is followed by an account of the settlement of Parowan; the early settlements in Washington County; and the work of the Indian Missionaries.\(^6\) One event from this period which is still one of the most touchy subjects in Mormon history and which James all but ignores in his work is the Mountain Meadows Massacre. He quotes a little from Jacob Hamblin’s account, as follows:

\[\ldots\] We met John D. Lee at Fillmore. He told us that the Indians attacked the company, and he and some other white men joined them in the perpetuation of the deed. . . .\(^7\)

\(^4\)"Annals," pp. 45, 46, 55. \(^5\) Ibid., pp. 5-10, 87-97.
\(^6\) Ibid., pp. 11-16, 17, 22, 23-29, 29-33.
\(^7\) Ibid., p. 47.
But his main emphasis is on Hamblin’s accounts of the companies which he led safely through the dangerous zone, thus pointing up the Mormon’s regret over the Mountain Meadows tragedy and their active interest in seeing that there was not a recurrence of the same. Much of the history in this period before the settlement of St. George deals with the cotton experiment, the relations with the Indians, and the doings of the Washington County Court.

James writes his history with no attention to achieving a smoothly connected narrative. Chronology is his main standard in classifying and connecting the material. Thus, he deals with Jacob Hamblin’s guidance of a company of emigrants, Zadoc K. Judd’s construction of some crude cotton gins at Santa Clara, and the proceedings of the Washington County Court, all in a very short space, the only logical connecting link being that they all occurred in the year 1857.

When James speaks of the call to St. George and the years following the settlement of that community, his narrative is easier and shows better organization probably indicating his greater familiarity with the period after 1861. Here a more definite chronological form appears as he is more certain of precise dates. From this point on the history deals with each year as a unit, and at the end of each year James writes a summary of that year’s events oftentimes including in the summary information which had been previously left out of the account. A typical year end summary, this one for the year 1862, follows:

8 Ibid., pp. 48-54. James’ handling of the Mountain Meadows incident reflects the official church attitude on the subject.


10 Ibid., pp. 54-56.
At the close of this eventful year of the enlarged population of Southern Utah it may be well to give a brief summary of some matters which have not been enlarged upon in the preceding pages. As one of the outposts, Shoal Creek [afterwards named Hebron] has been settled. The Cañon in which this creek runs has an altitude of some 2600 feet above that of the City of St. George which is 2880 feet above sea level.

Shoal Creek is some 50 miles N. W. of St. George and has been used the past year as a herd ground for the St. George cattle and horses, by the Pulsipher brothers, John, Charles and William, sons of Zera Pulsipher. These brothers were appointed by the St. George settlers to search for a suitable range for surplus live stock. In the discharge of this duty, they found Shoal Creek where, at the time, a small band of indians were located. From these aborigines a purchase treaty was made of the land and waters. Houses and other improvements were at once started until it can now be said a nice little village has been commenced.

This year the Pine Valley mill has been burnt down, but is being built and made larger.

At Washington the settlers, some old, and some new, are troubled, more or less, with chills and fever. The town is watered by springs and Malaria is prevalent.

Washington Ward this year has transacted its own tithing business. Previous to this year it has, since its settlement in 1857, had its tithing affairs under the direction of the Church Authorities in Cedar City, some 55 miles distant.

In February, this year, Albert W. Collins, who has been First Counselor to Bp. Robert D. Covington since 1859, and Robert S. Lloyd, who has been Second Counselor since 1860, were sustained in these positions by the people of the Ward.

Washington, which by Legislative action in 1859 was made the County seat of Washington County, instead of Harmony, still retains that position.

The past summer, Dudley Leavitt, a co-laborer as Indian missionary, with Jacob Hamblin for the past seven years,—settled at a place, on the Santa Clara, about three quarters of a mile higher up the stream than the place formerly located by William Hamblin, or, "Gunlock Will." The latter had removed, and the same name,—"Gunlock," was adopted for this Dudley Leavitt location. Dudley has his family with him, has built a home, taken out the water for irrigation, and has recently been joined by his brother Jeremiah and family. Together with some others.

The Edward Bunker, called at the last November Conference to be Bishop of Santa Clara Ward, was Bishop of the 2d Ward of Ogden City, when called in October, 1861 to come South. He first settled at Toquerville in this mission and remained there till called to reside at the town of Santa Clara.

On arriving at his new field of labor he found division existing between the early settlers and those who had lived there but a year. This division was caused by the depredations of the live stock owned by the older settlers, and which had seriously damaged the crops of the new settlers, who owned but little stock. He endeavored to get the stock owners to take the cattle, goats and sheep, out of the fields. He also advised to fence the land under cultivation. This latter was
promptly done. An adobe meeting house 40 by 28 has been commenced and is being busily worked upon during this winter.

The Tunnel to convey the waters of the Rio Virgen to the St. George fields was commenced this year. It is designed to be 900 feet long, and is found to be a difficult piece of work. The Canal, of which it forms a part, is six miles long, three feet deep and six feet wide.

In the summer of 1862 a small adobe tithing office has been built in St. George, under the direction of Bishop Robert Gardner.

In this little office Elder James G. Bleak, as Clerk, opened the first tithing record for St. George, under date of 20th August, 1862, by crediting "John Q. Angus, one pound and a quarter of wool @ .37 ¼ — $ .47."

This year of the first settling of St. George its 4 wards paid Tithing amounting to $3,201.00.

The following are some of the tithing prices: Cotton lint, $0.50 per lb. Wool, $0.37 ¼ per lb. Beef, $6 to $10 per lb. Tallow 25% per lb. Pork 15 to 25% per lb. Flour, $6.00 per 100 lbs. Wheat, $2.00 per bushel. Corn, 1.50 per bushel. Sorghum molasses $2.00 per gal. Lumber, $5.00 to 8.00 per 100 feet. Shingles $6.00 per M. Mdse: cut nails; shingle nails; window glass 8x10, 25% per light.

The Property assessment for Washington Co. for 1860 was $60,108. The rate of tax was 5 mills Terrl tax $300.54. County Tax 300.54.

Total $601.00

Total property assessment for 1861 was $64,873.00 Rate—5 mills Territorial $324.37. 5 mills County 324.35. Total $648.73.

Total Property assessment of 1862, including, of course, the assessment of those who have responded to call of Oct. 1861 General Conference. . . . . . . . . . . . . $1,414.60.00.

Rate: 5 mills Terrl $707.30
5 mills County 707.30

Following the already demonstrated fact that cotton can be raised on the Rio Virgen and lower Santa Clara, and in keeping with the direct instruction of President Brigham Young, cotton seed was planted by the new-comers, this year, as well as by those who were here before. And about one hundred thousand pounds have been raised. This is very encouraging, and shows the wisdom of the experiment, at Heberville, of President Young, his Counselors, and others in 1858 and in 1859. The fratricidal war which commenced with the secession of South Carolina on the 20th of Dec, 1860, rapidly followed by that of most of the cotton-growing States, and which still continues, has greatly suspended the production of cotton, causing its price in the latter part of 1861, the first year of the war, to be three times its normal cost in times of peace.

The "New York Herald" of 16th Nov. 1861, quoted "middling upland cotton at 2½ ¼ cents;" the same article before the war being about 8 cents. The highest price in 1862 in New York is 69 ¼. The highest price in 1862 in New York is 69 ¼.

Father Joel H. Johnson of Virgen City, announces this fall that he has raised pure sorghum seed from some which he imported from the States. This is a boon to molasses makers, as sugar is very high priced, some costing as high as one dollar a pound.11

11 Ibid., pp. 164-170.
Quoting the year’s prices and the tax assessment was James’ common practice in making these summaries. He also often gave census figures. Sometimes these figures were part of the yearly summary. Sometimes they were church census figures and other times were U. S. census figures. The following is an example of the church census given in 1878:

According to Statistical Report read at this Sept. Conference of St. George Stake we had the following: 16 Wards; 1 Apostle, 6 Patriarchs, 224 Seventies, 168 High Priests, 530 Elders, 28 Priests, 31 Teachers, 190 Deacons, 2675 Members, making, total Officers and Members, 3853, Children under 8 years of age 1459. Total population 5,312. Number of families--879, average per famy. 6.043. The children under 8 yrs. form 27.4% of the population.12

The U. S. Census taken in 1880 by D. H. McAllister is quoted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. George</td>
<td>1533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Clara</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middleton</td>
<td>3213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Occasionally, something very amusing appears in James’ account such as the following census of married men taken in St. George in 1867:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polygamists</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monogamists</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubtful</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total married men Church members</td>
<td>17214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the temple was built James usually gave the number of ordinances performed therein each year as part of his year end summary.15

James oftentimes begins a yearly account with a general statement of conditions:

1863 begins with a spirit of energetic hopefulness. Flour is increasing in price but the winter has been a pleasant one. Some few

12“St. George Stake Historical Record” (MS 27595) pp. 182-183.
13Ibid., p. 288.
15“St. George Stake Historical Record” (MS 27595), p. 260.
have gone north whose return is doubtful, but the people at large feel themselves in the path of duty and are determined, by the help of the Lord, to stay.

Water for irrigation is not as plentiful as some have been used to, in the North. By the City Charter of St. George, the City Council controls and distributes the waters, from natural springs, flowing into St. George. This distribution is of 153 cubic inches of water and gives \( \frac{2}{5} \) two fifths of an inch to each city lot entitled to water. The size of each lot is 128 sq. rods, and the watering time recurs every 5 to 6 days.

In the fields the land owners have organized into working companies, bear the expense of dams canals &c, proportionately according to the shares claimed. Watering time in the fields, recurs every 10 to 12 days, while water is obtainable. Sometimes we have found no water to distribute in the Santa Clara and Virgen fields.

The subject has been discussed of sinking an Artesian well in St. George and meets with approval. . . .

The emphasis of James' history is on church affairs, of course. But in view of the fact that the church was the leading civil as well as religious authority in the area, and that in most cases it was difficult to separate political, social and economic matters from church influence this emphasis is not as serious a weakness as it would at first seem.

The history deals with a variety of subjects. Some of them have already been mentioned. One of the first things the settlers did when arriving in St. George was to plan for the building of a structure for educational and social purposes.\(^1\) This was the first of a series of public buildings which the community helped finance. Two of these buildings are notable for their cost, beauty and construction when the people of St. George were having an extremely difficult time trying to subsist. These are, of course, the St. George Tabernacle and the St. George Temple. James' tendency when speaking of the construction of these buildings is to describe in detail such things as the dedication of the temple and the laying of the capstone of the tabernacle, of which the speeches and prayers

\(^1\) *Annals,* pp. 170-171.

\(^1\) *Ibid.*, pp. 118-120.
particularly those of the temple dedication are reported almost verbatim. But he says almost nothing of the problems involved in building the temple and tabernacle, where and how the labor and materials were obtained, or describes the building and the craftsmanship that went into them. He often mentions the amount of money expended on both, emphasizing Brigham Young's personal donations, but otherwise says little of how the money for construction was obtained.

Of other church affairs, James describes the organization of wards, changes in ward and stake officers, and trips by officers and home missionaries to the various wards of the stake. He usually gives the minutes of each mission or stake conference, records the calling of missionaries—foreign, stake, and Indian—and describes the planning of new settlements. Often these new settlements were organized out of St. George and people were called as missionaries of the church to settle there. This practice saw the founding of towns in Nevada and Arizona as well as southern Utah.

In connection with the extension of Mormon influence into Nevada and Arizona, the stake authorities at St. George came into conflict with the officials of both these states on the matter of taxes. Before the state and territorial boundaries were accurately determined, it was common for the people in Panaca, Nevada, for example, to pay their taxes in Washington.

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18 Ibid., p. 184. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 13, 40-53, 53-63, 63-73.

19 "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 10, 22.


21 "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 1-3.

County. Then the Nevada officials tried to collect taxes from them. The church authorities advised them to stand firm in refusing to pay until the boundaries were determined, and open conflict resulted between the Mormons and Gentiles in Nevada. The same problem occurred in Arizona.23

James describes the organization of other church enterprises:
the United Order, Zion's Cooperative Rio Virgen Manufacturing Company the cotton factory at Washington, the Church Association of St. George Stake of Zion, the St. George Temple Association, St. George Stake Board of Trade, St. George Cooperative Mercantile Association, as well as others.24 Again, the history describes organization, incorporation and board and stockholders' meetings rather than the actual workings of these institutions.

The history describes the organization of the militia, the troubles with the Navajo, Piute, and Muddy Indians, and the effort the settlers of Southern Utah made to protect themselves and obtain some kind of relief from Indian depredations. The raids were for cattle and horses. Apparently, they were faced with no such thing as real war parties, the Indians having no idea of actually driving the white men out of Southern Utah when they could so profitably raid them; however, several lives were lost on both sides. The militia was often sent out to intercept marauding Indians; retrieve, if possible, the stolen animals; and build fortifications and organize the outlying settlements against the raids. In the late 1860's

23 Ibid., pp. 277-278. See also "St. George Stake," Vol. I, August 11, 1870; August 17, 1870.

24 "St. George Stake," Vol. II, January 26, 1874; February 9, 1874; April 12, 1874; May 21, 1874; August 1, 1874; October 1, 1874; November 9, 1874; September 5, 1875; March 5, 1877; and Vol. III, February 11, 1878; January 26, 1886; June 19, 1886. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 83-86, 89, 91, 99-100, 218, 327, 348, 568-603, 573. See also "Annals," pp. 194-195, 217, 263, 282, 292, 367, 372, 407, 431-432, 457-458.
many of the very small settlements of Southern Utah were temporarily vacated as the people gathered to larger places for protection.25

James' history also reports the elections for the City of St. George and for Washington County, quotes the returns, and the names of the officers.26 He points out many of the problems facing the City of St. George, particularly those having to do with water, irrigation, and the building of canals and dams. Extensive reports are made on the canal systems of the Santa Clara Creek and Rio Virgin, and on the problem of water rights.27

Concerning individuals, the history naturally mentions the leaders of the church with great deference, although their comings and goings are seldom described in detail. Brigham Young and Erastus Snow are, of course, the two figures of the greatest stature, although it is surprising what little information is given about either of them. Brigham Young's farewell address given in April, 1877, in St. George is very interesting. Among other things he said:

...I have been with you more than five months. I have this to say to those present and those of this Stake of Zion,—You have done an excellent work. This Temple has sprung up, almost as Jonah's gourd. We shall want a good many to work in the Temple—but we shall not pay a dime as compensation to those who work therein. If they are hungry we should feed them, if naked, we should clothe them. We must labor for the salvation of the dead and not for dimes.

We have done a good and acceptable work the past winter and spring. I am well satisfied with it. Cease not your labors in this Temple, but benefit the great numbers of those who have passed behind the vail [sic].


26"St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 148-149, 167-168, 286, 290.

27"Annals," pp. 171, 183-184, 197, 231-232, 398. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 171-172, 174-175, 184-185, 288, 309.
Peace to you! Blessings attend you! Go not after the wicked, make your path with the just and the upright and then the blessings of God will attend us. Every day that you live, let your course and conduct be such as you can afterwards reflect upon with satisfaction. I say to you all, and to the righteous and the good all over the earth, God bless you and them.28

One other church official who figured prominently in the early years in St. George was Orson Pratt, who at first shared the presidency of the mission with Erastus Snow. Many do not realize that Orson Pratt was ever a part of Southern Utah history. James' history reveals that Orson Pratt and Erastus Snow were often in conflict.29 Orson Pratt finally asked the church for another mission. The difficulty between them is revealed in a speech given by Pratt's son, Orson Pratt, Jr., as follows:

"Brethren and Sisters, for I suppose I may still continue to call you so, as we are all the children of one Father, notwithstanding action may be taken to-day which will sever me from the Church, I shall still continue to look upon those before me as Brethren and sisters; as I also do every child of God.

Brother McArthur visited me this morning and told me my presence was needed here as action would be taken upon my case. I thought I would not attend any more meetings here, as Brother Snow had desired me to resign my position in the High Council. And they wanted me to resign my calling as a High Priest, although on second thought I refused to do so. Not that I was anxious to retain my position, for I have never asked for an office, but I did not know what would be thought at Head Quarters when they came to hear of my resigning my various positions, but they dropped me from the Quorum.

In Salt Lake City I was made a High Councilor, although I was then an unbeliever, as now and continued in the position till I came down here.

In regard to my faith, I wish to say that I have long since seen differently to this people and although I am not in the habit of saying anything in self justification, yet ever since I have been in this Church I have led a godly and upright life; at the same time, I resolved that I would accept nothing that my conscience would not receive. I was at eight years old, baptized into the Church, and I was brought up in the Church. Well if I had been asked at that time what I was baptized for, I should have said for the remission of my

28"St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 74-77.
sins, for I had learned it all parrot like and I had confidence in Mormonism, as I had been brought up in it.

When my father was called on a mission to England I accompanied him and went about distributing tracts, not because I knew anything of what I was doing, but because I liked to see the old women, when they slammed the door, or threw the tracts into the streets in their anger and because my father thought I might take part in it if I chose.

I came out again to the Valleys with my father and we were required to be baptized again. I complied, for all this time I was a believer in Mormonism. But sometime afterwards, there was much said about the receiving a testimony that unless one had the testimony that Mormonism is true, there was something deficient. I asked myself the question, if I had it but was sensible I had not. Yet I saw young men who had come from England and who had not been raised in the Church, stand up in Ward meetings and say that [they] had this testimony. I could not account for it.

During a Conference held in the City I, with some other young men, was called upon to speak, and bore testimony to the work and I set forth the grounds for my belief. Afterwards the President stood up and no doubt without any reference to what I had said, as I presume, he had almost forgotten it, said that, this, that and the other, stood for nothing unless we had a knowledge for ourselves. Well, I thought I would know something about the matter and set to reading the works published in favor of the work, and I came to the conclusions I hold at the present day.

Well, it is strange, how people will form such difference of opinion from the same testimony. It reminds me of a case that was tried in one of the Courts of England where evidence was to be received concerning the existence of a certain monument in London and the testimony varied even as to the color etc. by persons who were constantly passing by it so much that had the natural course been carried out, the testimony would have been entirely rejected.

Well, I have come to the conclusion that Joseph Smith was not specially sent by the Lord to establish this work, and I cannot help it, for I could not believe other-wise, even if I knew that I was to be punished for not doing so; and I must say so though I knew that I was to suffer for it the next moment.

When I was brought up before the High Council they said that I bore a good character and that they had nothing against me, only that I did not believe in some of the principles, for let me here say that there are some of the principles of Mormonism that I believe to be good, though there are others I cannot believe in.

Now let me mention that, let a man be guilty of ever so heinous a crime, if he can stand up and say that he believes the same as you do, you will hold to him and keep him in fellowship and I admit that it makes me feel somewhat strange that, when I find that, because I don't believe the same as you, although nothing can be said against my moral character, yet I must be dropped off. This is the way I feel. I see many friends around me in this congregation, who don't believe as I do, yet I can respect them for all that, for I don't care what they believe. And I claim the same privilege for myself. I am confident of one thing that, while conscience does not upbraid me, and I do not sin against my heavenly Father, none, by their actions can shut me out from the light of His presence.
I wish to speak a few words in regard to another matter. I was called down here and came with my father. I would like the people to understand this matter I am about to refer to. We settled at Grafton. My father had not been down here long, when he found that there was a secret influence working against him. I did not feel it, but I wish to say, that if it had not been for this influence, he would have been in your midst this day. The person would not come out like a man against him, but would keep himself in the dark and work against him like a snake in the grass.

Well, father bore up against it as long as he could without coming to an open rupture and then sought for another mission.

When he went away, the same influences were working against me and he would even meet my wife in the dark and try to make her divide against me by saying to her that 'your husband is not in the right way, he is in the dark' but he was not successful. I will tell you who it was. The individual is Erastus Snow."30

Of course, many individuals are named in James' account. He is very careful to give credit where it is due. Most of these, however, give no insight to the individual as such, except the obituaries of prominent and respected persons in the stake. These obituaries are found throughout the history. Some are more detailed than others. The following, dated May 3, 1877, is an example:

...Father Miles Romney died at 5.30, a.m. in St. George. He was one of the first to receive the Gospel in England, joining the Church in Preston, in that country, during Elder Heber C. Kimball's first mission to Europe. He labored faithfully on the Nauvoo Temple, also at the Church public works in Salt Lake City, and was Superintendent of the wood-workers in the erection of St. George Tabernacle and St. George Temple.31

Whenever he was in possession of the information, James also included the birth date of the deceased. Levi W. Hancock's obituary, dated June 10, 1882, follows:

...President Levi Ward Hancock, who was one of the Presidents of the First Quorum of Seventies, at Kirtland, Ohio, in 1835, died at his home in Washington, St. George Stake. He was the last survivor of the original First Seven Presidents of the Seventies; and was faithful till death.

He was son of Thomas and Amy Ward Hancock; born Thursday, 7th April,


31"St. George Stake Historical Record" (US 27595), p. 78.
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1803, at Old Springfield, Hampden Co., Mass. He was baptized into the Church by Elder Parley P. Pratt, 16th Nov. 1830 at Kirtland, Ohio; was a member of Zion's Camp; also of the Mormon Battalion.32

The history also includes information about schools, libraries, and educational and social activities in the area; but deals more extensively with these activities in St. George.33

Whenever possible James ignores the Gentiles. Very little is said about Silver Reef, the Gentile mining center, considering the fact that its brief existence was an acknowledged economic benefit to the area. James quotes The Silver Reef Miner, as follows:

"The bullion shipments from Silver Reef for the month of June, aggregated $107,315.21, and for the six months ending 30th June $546,910.36. The grand total shipped from that camp in bullion since the first mill commenced work in Feb. 1877 was divided into the three and a half years' work as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bullion Shipped (dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>$480,665.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>1,161,911.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>1,091,567.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>546,910.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>$3,261,054.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Occasionally, James records where St. George came into close and rather alarming contact with Silver Reef. Such was the time that a murderer housed in the county jail was lynched by a party from Silver Reef, and left swinging from a cottonwood tree in the center of town.35 Once in a while, a posse from St. George had to serve writs in Silver Reef. Then the sheriff and his men received careful instructions from the St. George Stake Presidency as to how to keep themselves both alive and free.

32Ibid., p. 385
33"Annals," pp. 192, 200, 270-271, 282, 430-431. See also "St. George Stake," Vol. III, February 28, 1888; December 29, 1888; July 9, 1890; March 13, 1891. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27596), pp. 23, 44-46, 99, 120.
34"St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), p. 289.
from the contamination of that sinful settlement:

St. George, 15th March 1881.

Brother Augustus P. Hardy:

We understand that you have summoned twenty men from this City to form part of a posse to assist you in the service of writs on certain parties at Silver Reef. And take the liberty of offering the following suggestions:

- Be careful of yourself and those thus summoned.
- In the making service of your writ, or writs, do not have all your men go in at once; have enough around to watch that no person being served, or their friends, have opportunity to draw arms, and use them.
- Have total abstinence from anything intoxicating strictly observed in your posse.
- Should the brethren be fatigued, a cup of coffee is recommended.
- Do not stroll away from each other, nor visit saloons or gambling holes. Keep together and be on the watch.
- All attend to your prayers in the morning, and at night before retiring.
- Do not forget your God and He will not forget you.

Your brother in the Gospel,


James' history does make an interesting statement date March 2, 1881, on labor troubles at Silver Reef:

Trouble has been manifest at Silver Reef for a month past. This place had gradually grown in the developing of mines and in all the incidentals of erecting smelters and causing an influx of a mining population. Thus producing a market for the productions of the farming and gardening community.

The general run of prices for products have been corn 3¢; Flour $4.00 to 4.50; butter, 30¢; eggs, 30¢; potatoes, 2½; turnips, beets and parsnips, 2 to 3¢; beans 5¢; onions, 5 to 10¢ and hay, $20.00 a ton.

Four quartz mills run by steam power at the Reef, and Belonging to as many companies, have been working for years; miners nearly all of whom had come from mining camps in Nevada were receiving $4.00 per day. A Miners Union was organized at the Reef consisting of from 300 to 400 men.

In the first of February last Col. W. I. Allen of the Stormont Company, whose hoisting mill and works were located on the Virgen River, some four or five miles from the Company's Mines, gave notice to the Miners that wages would have to be reduced from $4.00 to $3.50 per day; carmen, and all men above ground, to $3.00 per day. The Miners' Union promptly refused to accept such terms, and went and put out the fires at the reduction works, and stopped work at the mines.

After waiting a month, some 60 or more of the Union men went to Mr. Allen's office and told him to leave the Camp; he mounted his horse and was escorted by a detachment of the Union to the Black Ridge on the road North.

36"St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 315-316.
This disaffection among the miners increased, and seriously affected trade at the Reef, so that some $3000.00 per month of freighting was stopped, which of course stopped the sale of hay, grain, &c. (Those events proved to be the beginning of the end, for now, some years afterwards, business in mining and its adjuncts at Silver Reef, is practically a thing of the past.)

One of the losing battles the church authorities in the Southern Mission fought against the Gentiles was in the northwest part of the mission around Panaca, where the influx of Gentile miners very much alarmed the Mormons. Other than the items mentioned above and a few scattered references to Father Scanlon, who held mass in the St. George Tabernacle, and a few Protestant ministers who visited the community, James has little to say about the Gentiles. In most parts of the mission [stake] there were very few of them, and at any rate he would not have considered it part of the scope of his work to include them in it other than to mention how they affected the Mormons.

This study of the history has led the student to note the following defects of the work:

1. The chronological form of the work as the sole standard for organization makes the presentation choppy and confusing.

2. Failure to acknowledge many of the sources used in the compilation of the material.

3. The presentation of mere facts with little statement of reactions and the lack of interpretation or expression of opinion which might have thrown interesting light on the period.

4. A tendency to present the words and the meetings of the people rather than to feature their deeds in any detail. This is probably due to the fact that a lot of the information was taken from minute books.

5. The work carefully skirts those things which might put the

37Ibid., pp. 313-315.

38"Annals," pp. 222-225, 231, 448. General Connor sent a party into this area to explore for minerals. See also "St. George Stake Historical Record" (MS 27595), pp. 219, 331-332.
Mormon Church in a bad light. This defect is to be expected since it was written for the church by a man devoted to the church.

6. The City of St. George is the center of focus of the work. This is natural because it was the religious, political, economic and cultural center of the area; but the emphasis is probably too great considering that the work claims to be a history of the whole Southern Mission.

On the other side of the ledger there are a number of things to be said for the work:

1. It is the sole authority for many events of the history of Southern Utah as other sources have been lost. James used original sources, and they were at his fingertips. The church sponsorship of his work opened many doors to him, and it would be extremely difficult for anyone to go over the ground he did.

2. The history was written by a man who had seen much of it happen. It is as good as an interview with James himself, or with Erastus Snow, or others of the pioneers of Southern Utah.

3. The chronological form and the bald statement of facts without interpretation gives the modern Utah historian the opportunity to use James' work for valuable studies. Details are given; generalizations, for the most part, are left out. It can supply, and has supplied, the basis for studies on the United Order, the cotton industry in Utah, Mormon irrigation systems, Mormon colonization methods, Mormon relations with the Indians, etc., as well as filling a big gap for anyone choosing to write a general history of Utah.

The fact remains, that despite its faults, James' history remains the single most valuable source on Southern Utah. It is the opinion of this student that the work is remarkably reliable within the limitations imposed by the author's devotion to the Mormon Church and the sponsorship of his history by the church. Anyone who has chosen to write histories, whether economic, political, or general, about the area, particularly of that period after 1861, has had to consult him; and historians will have to do so in the future.

39It should be noted that James' other writings, his letter books, diaries, and papers are complementary to the history. A much more complete picture of the area can be drawn if these papers are used in connection with the history.
APPENDIX I. MAP OF THE SOUTHERN UTAH MISSION (DIXIE MISSION)
APPENDIX II. PICTURES OF INDIVIDUALS, PLACES AND
ITEMS OF INTEREST MENTIONED IN THIS THESIS
PLATE II

Elizabeth Moore Bleak
PLATE III

Jane Thompson Bleak
Plate IV

Matilda Irene Thompson Bleak
PLATE V

Home of Elizabeth Moore Bleak
PLATE VI

Home of Caroline Blanche Gosnold Bleak
Home of Jane Thompson Bleak
Home of Matilda Irene Thompson Bleak
DIXIE COLLEGE
ERECTED 1911

THOS. P. COTTAM
SUPT. OF CONSTRUCTION

BOARD OF EDUCATION
EDWARD H. SNOW
PRESIDENT
THOS. P. COTTAM
GEORGE F. WHITEHEAD

DAVID H. CANNON
JAMES G. BLEAK
DAVID H. MORRIS
JOHN T. WOODBURY
SECRETARY

ARTHUR F. MILES
TREASURER

COST COMPLETE --- $55,000
LOCAL CONTRIBUTION $35,000
TRUSTEE IN TRUST --- $20,000

Plaque in Entrance of Main Building
Dixie Junior College

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In recording events of importance, with reference to the founding, growth, and development of Utah's Delta, it will not perhaps be wise to refer to some of the events which preceded the colonization of this extreme southern part of Utah.

In December, 1847, a small party of the pioneers of the Great Salt Lake Valley journeyed South, passing through Little Salt Lake Valley, on their way to California to purchase live stock and provisions.

The Territorial Government of the State, of which we have spoken, had sent their agents, with instructions to Mr. John F. Hall, to organize a company of fifty men and necessary stores and equipment to explore Southern Utah and the adjacent territory. The object of the expedition was to examine the country, ascertain its possibilities to such a population.

This Company, under Mr. Hall, visited Little Salt Lake Valley, near the site of what is now known as Brigham City, some 65 miles South of Salt Lake City. Here the company divided; some were to look out locations for farms, while others were to look for timber in that region. The remainder retired to travel still farther South. Mr. John F. Hall and some of the party were at the junction of the Snake River on the 14th of January, 1848.
PLATE XI

Page from a Diary of James Godson Bleak
(Exact Size of the Original)
APPENDIX III. REPLY TO ENQUIRIES OF H. H. BANCROFT OF SAN FRANCISCO

Relating to Southern Utah and St. George City in Particular.

Question: "What circumstances caused your [St. George] settlement to be made?"

In the winter of 1849-50 pursuant to the instruction of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints—said Presidency at that time consisting of Brigham Young, and his Counselors, Heber Chase Kimball and Willard Richards—Elder Parley Parker Pratt, one of the Twelve Apostles of the Church, together with a company of about 50 men visited the South part of Utah Territory on an exploring tour—This journey of exploration was taken in order to examine the country and learn its facilities towards sustaining a population. On returning to Salt Lake City, the report of Elder Pratt to the First Presidency was favorable to the settlement of this Southern county as soon as circumstances would permit. At this time there were no white residents south of Utah County which is some 250 miles N. E. by N of this city of St George.

On the 8th December 1850 Thirty families left Salt Lake City—this company included one hundred and eighteen men with 600 head of stock and 101 wagons, led by Elder George Albert Smith, one of the Twelve Apostles—These arrived at the site of what is now called Parowan, 250 miles South of S. L. City, on 10th Jany 1851. Here the Company built a Fort, and the same month organized Iron County.

In the Fall of 1851 Cedar City was located and settled, being some 18 miles South W. of Parowan.
In the Fall of 1853 at the October Conference, in Salt Lake City, Jacob Hamblin and others were called as missionaries to come South of Cedar City and labor among the Lamanites or Indians—Some of these studied Spanish under Elder Parley P. Pratt during the winter of 1853-4, to prepare themselves to communicate with such of the Lamanites as might speak that language, and also that they might be able to converse with such Mexicans as they might fall in with.

On the 14th of April 1854 Elders Jacob Hamblin, Ira Hatch, Thales H. Haskell, Richd S. Robinson, Prime T. Coleman, Augustus P. Hardy and others to the number of about 30, under charge of Elder Rufus C. Allen, left Salt Lake City, and county, and arrived at what is called Ash Creek, some 22 miles south of Cedar City. After making camp—Elders Jacob Hamblin, Haskell and Hardy were sent to visit the Indians on the Rio Virgen—and to start a settlement. These three Elders found the Indians on the Rio Virgen and on the Santa Clara quite numerous and somewhat distrustful—In a very short time, however, the natives discovered that these Elders were their true friends and their former distrust, because these were white men, gave place to full confidence. These Elders found the Lamanites cultivating Indian Corn—wheat and squashes—but depending very much on the wild grasses, the seeds of which they used for bread.

In consequence of the mildness of the climate in this region it was considered that cotton could be grown. The first cotton seed planted was about one quart, which was given by a Southern lady, Sister Anderson, of Parowan, to A. P. Hardy, to bring to the Santa Clara. This was planted on the Clara in the spring of 1855 and yielded enough lint to produce 30 yards of Cotton Cloth, which was manufactured by Sisters Hamblin, Haskell, Knight and Curtis. The ginning and spinning being done by hand and the
weaving on a treadle loom.

In the year 1857 more missionaries were appointed in Salt Lake City by Prest Brigham Young, and associate authorities, to come South. 28 families and 8 young unmarried men arrived at the site of Washington on the Rio Virgen on the 5th of May 1857—and were organized as a settlement on the 7th of that month, with Elder Robert D. Covington as President.

The new settlers immediately commenced farm and other labors—In pursuance of the idea that cotton could be produced in this region, these missionaries had brought some cotton seed with them, amounting, however, to but about 30 pounds, and this being of inferior quality much of it failed to produce cotton. The nearest Post Office at this time to Washington was at Cedar City, a distance of 55 miles, and there a monthly mail was received.

In the spring of 1858 the population of Washington was increased to 100 men by members of the Church coming in from Lower California—Most of these, however, left, some went North, others returned to California.

In order to satisfactorily and fully test the practicability of producing the staple of Cotton in this region, President Brigham Young and his Counselors, Heber C. Kimball and Danl H. Wells (2d Counr Willard Richards having died), and some few others, of Salt Lake City, fitted out a small party in the spring of 1858, and sent it under the charge of Elder Joseph Horne to establish a cotton farm on the Rio Virgen. These missionaries raised two crops of cotton one in 1858, the other in 1859, and then returned to Salt Lake City—Owing to the distance they had to travel from their homes in the North, some 330 miles, to where the experiment might be properly tried, together with the difficulties incidental to settling in such a new country—the making of a dam in such a changable river as
the Virgen and the making of irrigating canals from the river to their Cotton Farm—the cost of this experiment was great. The Cotton produced the first year cost three dollars and forty cents a pound—that produced the second year cost One dollar and ninety cents a pound—and was better cotton than the first crop.

It was now satisfactorily demonstrated that Cotton could be produced in this region, also Tobacco, Indigo and other productions requiring a mild climate and a long season in which to mature.

The wisdom which prompted the steps necessary to this demonstration and the benefits resulting therefrom, are apparent when it is remembered that the Cotton growing States of the Union seceded from the other States beginning with the declaration by South Carolina Convention delivered on the 20th of December 1860 that "the Union before subsisting between South Carolina and other States, under the name of the United States of America, is dissolved." The example of separation being rapidly followed by Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina and Tennessee all cotton growing States. The war resulting from this secession greatly suspended the production of Cotton—causing its price in the latter part of 1861 to be Three times its normal cost in times of peace. New York "Herald" of 16 Nov 1861 quotes "middling upland cotton @ 24½ cents," the same article in times of peace being about 8 cents.

But to return to our narrative—In October 1861 some three hundred missionaries were called on in the North to come South. These were to be under the Presidency of Elders Orson Pratt and Erastus Snow, of the Twelve Apostles, and were to bring their families with them, and build up and beautify this barren and desolate looking part of the land—At this time
there were but 79 families south of the "rim of the basin"—this "rim" is 13 miles South of Cedar City in Iron County. By the first of December 1861 most of these missionaries had arrived in this part of Southern Utah. The first company who arrived in this St. George Valley, held their first public meeting on 4th Decr 1861.

The missionaries were instructed by President Young, prior to leaving the North, to locate and build a City on the slope north of the junction of the Santa Clara with the Rio Virgen and to name the new City "St George."

On the 12th Jany 1862 Elder Erastus Snow, one of the Committee chosen by the Camp to make a location of a City, reported that the selection had been made—the report was accepted and adopted by unanimous vote of the 378 Males and 370 Females then in Camp. On the 15th Jan 1862 The Survey of the City of St George was commenced—on the 23d of the same month the people began to move on the City Lots; which were apportioned to them by Prest Snow—Prest Pratt at this time being in the Upper Valley of the Rio Virgen. Prior to moving on to the City plot it was decided, by unanimous vote of the Camp, that the first building to be erected and finished in the contemplated city should be a Social Hall to be used for Social and Educational purposes—till we could erect other buildings on a larger scale for these purposes. The site of this building was dedicated by prayer, and the foundation stone laid, 22d March 1862, and was styled when finished "St George Hall." The original size was 40 ft by 21 ft, but this was subsequently enlarged somewhat—the estimated cost was upwards of three thousand dollars all of which was subscribed for as Capital Stock prior to our moving onto our city lots—(Its eventual cost was more than twice that amount.)
St. George City is in N. Lat. about 37° 9' and in W. Lon. about 113° 35'; and was incorporated by enactment of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah, approved 17 Jan. 1862. The first Election for City Officers took place on 7th April 1862 resulting in the election of Angus M. Cannon, Mayor; Easton Kelsey and Benjn F. Pendleton, Aldermen, Jacob Gates, Walter E. Dodge & Orson Pratt Junr., Councilmen. (James G. Bleak was chosen Recorder by this Council)

Sept 1862 we were visited by Prest Brigham Young, who advised that we "build as speedily as possible a good substantial, commodious, and well finished, Meeting House, one large enough to comfortably seat at least 2000 persons," and, he went on to say, "one that will not only be useful, but an ornament to your City and a credit to your energy and enterprise" The foundation stones of this building were laid, and the site dedicated by prayer, on Prest. Youngs birth-day, 1st June 1863—The building was completed in 1871 and has cost upwards of One hundred and ten thousand dollars. (Exact cost $110,163.15.) The first estimate was $100,000.00.

The former may be too lengthy for the purpose required—therefore I shall be more brief and take up the other questions:—

"What was the appearance of the Site of the Settlement on the arrival of the first settlers?"

The St. George Valley presented a very barren appearance prior to settlement. The soil being mostly strongly impregnated with mineral Salts—There were some patches of Rabbit Bush and Greasewood, and what is known as Salt Weed also some Salt Grass—On the narrow bottoms of the Rio Virgen and Santa Clara the soil was, as a rule, evidently more productive—But there, strong alkaline salts were present in large patches.
"What determined the selection of the Site?" This is answered in the forepart of this communication.

"Who laid out the City, and were there any noteworthy circumstances connected with the laying out of the same?"—Also answered in foregoing.

"Which was the first house, farm, mill, store, school and Meeting House in your settlement and who built it?"

It is difficult if not impossible to state who built the first dwelling house—so many were commenced and progressed together—perhaps the first dwelling house occupied, was one built of red sand stone by Lysander Dayton of the 3d Ward in St George City on Washington and 1st North Stts.

St George Hall, for Educational and Social purposes, was really the first house finished; although the 1st Ward School House, in an unfinished condition, was the first house used for educational purposes. While referring to Schools it may not be amiss to state that a School meeting was called in the Camp on the 27th December 1861 and an Educational Board was then elected consisting of Angus M. Cannon, James G. Bleak and John Oakley, "to choose Competent Teachers and to organize schools." This was immediately done—and day and evening schools were in a flourishing condition prior to the people moving to their City Lots.

After the 1st Ward School House was built, the 2d, 3d and 4th, Wards built School Houses, the expense being met by self imposed taxation.

The people farm on the joint enclosure system and have cultivated what is known as the Rio Virgen field, the St. George Santa Clara field, the Cooper Bottom, and part of Washington and Price fields. The disadvantages attending farming are great: for instance the making and keeping in repair of the Virgen Ditch for the St George field alone from the
the time of its commencement Dec 1861 to 31st August 1866, a period of less than 5 years, was twenty six thousand, six hundred and eleven 50/100 dollars, and there are but 420 Acres under that ditch—

The first Mill built in St George was a Grist Mill by Erastus Snow and Saml S. Adams.

The first Store Building erected for the Sale or Merchandise was by St George Mercantile Institution a peoples' cooperative Company of Stockholders.

At first the meetings of the people convened in Boweries of Cedar and Cottonwood Poles covered by Green boughs—these, with the Ward School Houses and "St George Hall" served for Congregational purposes till the St George Tabernacle was ready—This Tabernacle, before referred to, was built out of the Tithes of the people.

In addition to the Tabernacle, there is also a Temple erected in this City at a cost of nearly half a million of dollars—the groud for which was broken by President Brigham Young, now deceased, on 9th November 1871 and dedicated under his direction, to the service of the Most High God on the 1st of January 1877.

"What are the principal characteristics and productions of your settlement, or city, and county?"

St George has a very mild climate in winter. All the land, both city lots and farm land has to be irrigated.

In addition to the grains and vegetables and fruits raised in the north part of the Territory, we produce Cotton, Wine, Raisens, Figs & Sweet Potatoes. The people are turning increased attention very successfully to the production of Silk.

In conclusion:—the water supply is very Scanty in St George.
Artesian Well was sunk in 1862 after going down 20 feet red sandstone was struck and 185 feet bored through this stone making 205 ft—No water was struck after entering the sandstone—After spending upwards of Five thousand dollars in that early day of our settlement the project was abandoned for want of funds.

In 1865 a site was selected at Washington, 5 miles from St George, by President B. Young for a Cotton Factory and in 1866 the Factory was built. Prest. Young in the Fall of 1866 sent from the North the Cotton machinery to properly fit up the works. The building and machinery furnished at that time cost President Young some sixty six thousand dollars. Prior to the establishment of this Factory the raw cotton had to be transported by Horse, Mule and Ox team from 260 to 330 miles before it could be worked into yarn—except what little was carded and spun by hand in the South.

In 1866 serious depredations were committed by the Navajo and Ute Indians on the lives and property of the people—In January of this year a band of these hostiles made a descent upon Pipe Springs Ranche, Killing Dr James M. Whitmore and Robert McIntyre both of St George and driving off such of the Cattle and sheep as they could find—In April of this year Robert Berry and wife, and Joseph Berry were killed—During this year large numbers of Cattle, Sheep and Horses belonging to the settlers of Washington and Kane Counties were driven off by the Indians.

On the 15th January 1867 the Deseret Telegraph Company finished their line from Salt Lake City to St George—thus putting St George and this Southern country in instantaneous communication with the head quarters of the Church and "the rest of mankind," much to the gratification of the people here—most of whom had contributed freely of labor and means to
accomplish this object.

Indian raids continued to be made more or less during this year—

In April 1867 considerable damage was done to gardens and farms on the Rio Virgen and Santa Clara by floods; and again in December still greater damage was done by the same Cause—"Millersburg," or "Beaver Dams" some 30 miles from St George on the road to the Muddy was so far destroyed by flood on the 20th Decr that the settlers had to abandon it.

In 1868 hostile Indians continued, to some extent, to run off horses and cattle; entailing upon the settlements the necessity of furnishing men, horses and supplies to guard an extended frontier—The loss of life among the marauders far exceeded ours—In consequence of Indian massacres and raids, however, the following settlements of this Southern country were abandoned:—Berryville, Winsor, Upper Kanab, Lower Kanab, Shoonsburg, Springdale, Northup, and Clover Valley; likewise the following Ranches:—Pipe Springs, Short Creek, Goold's, Mocassin Springs, Quitch-umpah and Tenney's. These Indian difficulties together with the great expense of constructing dams in the rivers, making irrigating ditches—depredations by grasshoppers in 1868 and being so far from market have materially retarded the development of the resources of this part of the Country.

1869 The Indians have made periodical raids and Grasshoppers have been very destructive.

1870 the Indians continued to drive off stock with more or less success—but were very severely punished toward the close of the year.

On September 9th 1871 Elder Erastus Snow and others of our people held a Council at Kanab with thirteen Navajo Chiefs and others to the number of seventy nine Indians in all—The result was that the chiefs
promised friendship for the future; a promise which has been kept to the present writing July 1880.

[Signed] James G. Bleak
Clerk & Historian of
Southern Utah Mission.

St. George, Utah,
17th July 1880.
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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the life and works of James Godson Bleak [1829-1918], with particular reference to the composition, contents and historical value of his "Annals of the Southern Utah Mission."

James Godson Bleak was born in Southwark, England, in 1829. His parents died while he was still young, and as a result his education was curtailed and he was forced to seek work. It is known that he was a clerk and was also apprenticed to a silversmith.

In 1849 he married Elizabeth Moore, and two years later they joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Through the encouragement of the church James immigrated to Utah in 1856 and settled in North Ogden. In 1861 the church called him and his family to help settle St. George, and because of his experience as a clerk he was made clerk and historian of the Southern Utah Mission. James took an active part in the work of the mission serving on the Camp Council and on committees on roads and schools besides serving as stake clerk and tithing agent.

In 1872 the church called James on a year's mission to England where he served as assistant editor of the Millennial Star and Journal of Discourses. The climax of his mission was a trip to Vienna with Erastus Snow to meet the George A. Smith party just returning from Palestine. James returned to Utah in June, 1873, in company with a group of English immigrants. The remainder of his life was spent in St. George.
James' whole life was devoted to church service. He was clerk of St. George Stake, High Councilman, Presiding Bishop's agent, bishop's counselor, counselor to the stake president, secretary to the United Order, and stake patriarch. He also served as secretary and director for a variety of cooperative enterprises undertaken by church leaders in St. George, including St. George Cooperative Mercantile Institution, Zion's Cooperative Rio Virgen Manufacturing Company, Canaan Cooperative Stock Company, St. George Stake Board of Trade, and others.

James' greatest interest was in temple work. When the St. George Temple was completed he worked there as an ordinance worker for many years. Eventually he became chief recorder of the temple and assistant to its president. It was through the temple that he became well acquainted with Wilford Woodruff whom he knew better than any of the other general authorities of the church. James and certain members of his family were adopted by temple ordinance into the Woodruff family.

James' family consisted of four wives and thirty-three children, twenty-seven of whom lived to maturity. James married, in addition to Elizabeth mentioned above, Caroline Blanche Gosnold, Jane Thompson and Matilda Irene Thompson. He built separate homes in St. George for each of his wives and their children. James was fond of his family, but of necessity rather aloof from them and his discipline of his children was not strict. Although he was salaried by the church and had a small farm, James had difficulty supporting his large family. As a result, most of his sons went to work early in life to support themselves and help the family. Few of his children were educated beyond the grammar schools of St. George.

James, as a polygamist, spent the latter part of the 1880's successfully hiding from the U. S. Deputy Marshals in the sanctuary of the
St. George Temple. However, two years after the "Manifesto" he surrendered himself, appeared before the court, and the charges against him were "dismissed with a fine of six cents."

James had been too busy to fulfill his appointed task as historian for the mission. By 1898 the church authorities began to put pressure on him to do this work, and he was eventually relieved of all other responsibilities so that he could write the history. He found the sources for his history in the testimonies of old settlers, minute books and records of the stake which James himself kept, diaries, court records, newspapers, temple records, acts of the territorial legislature, and his own memory. Most of his work was completed by 1907.

The history begins with the early exploration into Southern Utah in 1850 and continues to 1900. It is written in a chronological form; and emphasis is given to church affairs, which, however, includes practically all areas of endeavor since the church was the dominant influence in Southern Utah in that period.

The main defects of the work are its chronological form, its lack of interpretation, its avoidance of events uncomplimentary to the church, and its over-emphasis on affairs in St. George.

Points in its favor are the vital facts it furnishes from sources which are lost or which would be difficult for students of the present day to go over, and the basis it forms for future studies in Southern Utah history.

It is of value to note that James used original sources in writing his history, and that he exerted every effort to find his sources. Although he had no formal training, his methods suggest those of modern historians.
It should be pointed out that because of its form the history gives the impression that it was a day by day account, and those who have had occasion to use the work as a source have believed it to be such. The evidence of James' diaries and correspondence presented in this thesis shows that the work was written between 1896 and 1907. However, it is the opinion of this student that the work is remarkably reliable within the limitations imposed by the author's devotion to the Mormon Church and the sponsorship of his history by the church.