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THE SOUTHERN STATES MISSION AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF BEN E. RICH, 1898-1908, INCLUDING A STATISTICAL STUDY OF CHURCH GROWTH IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Church History and Doctrine

Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Ted S. Anderson

April, 1976

This thesis, by Ted S. Anderson, is accepted in its present form by the Department of Church History and Doctrine in the College of Religious Instruction of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

Russell R. Rich, Committee Chairman

Donald Q. Cannon, Committee Member

Aug 27, 1975
Date

LaMar C. Berrett, Department Chairman

Typed by: Karen H. Anderson

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose and Significance	1
Delimitations	2
Methods of Procedure	3
Definition of Terms	4
II. BACKGROUND AND EARLY YEARS	6
The Beginnings	6
Post Civil War	7
Effects of the Anti-Polygamy Crusade	7
The New Era of Tolerance	9
The Size of the Mission	10
The Missionaries	11
The Fruits of Intolerance	12
The Reopening of Georgia	13
III. THE COMING OF BEN E. RICH: BAPTISM IN BIGOTRY . . .	16
Baptism into Mobocracy	18
IV. VIOLENCE AND THE SOUTHERN STATES MISSION	21
A History of Persecution	23

Chapter Page

The Roberts Trial 25

The Smoot Hearings 27

The Friendship of Rich and Roosevelt 28

Roosevelt's Support of Smoot 31

Roosevelt's Action in the Smoot Case 33

A Winding-Down of Persecution 34

The End of the Smoot Hearings 35

V. CAUSES OF CONFLICT--A DEFENSE, THE "STAR" 38

A Violent South in a Violent America 39

A Vigorous Defense--The Star 41

Over the Horizon 44

VI. THE TURN OF THE CENTURY 46

The Plight of the Membership 46

The Elders and the Saints 48

A Reduction of the Missionary Force 49

The "Monumental Beggar" 51

The Missionaries 53

The Financial Cost to the Missionary 54

Mission Finances 56

The Commissary 58

Health of the Missionaries 60

Ohio Added 63

Without Purse or Scrip 66

Conference Time 68

VII. A NEW MISSION AND A NEW "STAR" 70

Chapter Page

A Division and a New President 70

A "Welcome" to the Cities 72

Tragedy Strikes--The Death of Fife 73

An Outrage--The Beating of Olpin 74

The Passing of President Nye 76

The Brief Middle States Mission 78

The Reuniting of the Mission 79

A New "Star"--The Elders Journal 82

VIII. THE MATURING OF THE WORK 86

A Home in the South 86

A Return to Chattanooga 88

The Work Matures 90

Proselyting Efforts in the Cities 91

Charles A. Callis--A New Offensive 94

Changes in the "Journal" 96

The "Close" of the Elders Journal 96

IX. THE MISSION ENDS 100

Years of Preparation 101

A Missionary Family 103

A Home in Centerville 105

A Tribute 107

Contributions to the Southern States . . . 109

Involvement in Politics 109

A Farewell to the South 115

A Final Transfer 116

Chapter Page

X. THE FUTURE OF THE SOUTHERN STATES MISSION
A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS 120

The Administration of Callis 120

The Depression Years 122

Growth During and After World War II 122

The Harvest is Great 125

The Administration of J. B. Ravsten 127

A Period of Stake Creation 129

Other Signs of Growth 129

Analyzation of Growth Statistics 132

The Annual Statistical Reports 132

The 1970 Reports 133

Table 1 135

Table 2 136

The Annual Report Graphs 137

Measurement of True Growth 137

Graph 1 138

Graph 2 139

Graph 3 140

Summary and Conclusions 141

APPENDIXES

A. Southern States Mission Presidents 144

B. Organizational Developments in the Southern States Mission Area of 1900 145

C. Mission Statistics During the Rich Administration 147

D. Deaths of Southern States Missionaries, 1898-1908 148

E. The Missionary Force of The Southern States Mission . . . 149

Chapter Page

F. The Children of Benjamin Erastus Rich and Diana Farr Rich 150

G. Wives of Benjamin Erastus Rich 151

H. Ben E. Rich Family Dates and Movements 152

BIBLIOGRAPHY 153

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 - John Morgan, 1842-1894	8
2 - The New Mission President, Ben E. Rich, 1898	19
3 - Southern States Mission, 1876-1926	64
4 - The Chattanooga Mission Home	89
5 - Charles A. Callis	95
6 - The Family in Chattanooga, 1899	104
7 - President Ben E. Rich in June 1906	108
8 - President Ben E. Rich, Eastern States Mission	118
9 - The Missions of the Eastern United States in 1952	124
10 - Mission Boundaries and Total Branches of The Eastern States as of June 4, 1962	126
11 - Creation of the Florida Mission	128
12 - Three Missions from Two	131
13 - The Southeastern Missions as of June, 1973	131

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Significance

Although no formal mission organization existed in the South prior to 1875, early missionary labors there contributed to the colorful drama of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1875, the Southern States Mission of The Church was organized at Shady Grove, Tennessee. During the decades that followed, the mission was responsible for the propagation of the "Restoration" message to the population of the South. While numerous converts of those early years joined the westward stream of immigrants to Church settlements in the Rocky Mountains, thousands remained and became the nucleus for the development of large congregations, which stand today as monuments to the work of those early missionaries. The success of this endeavor may be attributed in large measure to the dynamic leadership of the mission presidents, many of whom also achieved prominence in the larger realms of general Church affairs and political service. The significance of this study lies with its examination of the Mormon Proselyting efforts in the South and the resulting impact upon the Southerners and upon the missionaries themselves.

In his Master's thesis of 1960, Dr. LaMar C. Berrett detailed the mission history from 1831 to the Civil War. He has also extensively researched mission events to the turn of the century. Beyond that point, writers have treated various aspects of the Southern States

Mission, but no general work has been completed. This thesis will be a detailed study of the mission history from 1898 through 1908, with emphasis upon the growth of Church membership and strength in the South (to 1971), major events during the administration of Ben E. Rich, and causes of opposition against the Southern Church membership.

Delimitations

Following a synopsis of the mission history of the nineteenth century, the body of this study will begin with events that set the stage for the 1898 entrance of Ben E. Rich and will conclude with the transfer of Rich to the Eastern States Mission in 1908.

Of the Southern States Mission during the twentieth century little has been written; but of that, most has greatly emphasized the violent treatment of missionaries at the expense of other equally important facets of the mission. This writer has made an attempt to give more prominence to other phases of missionary life, while not sacrificing the drama of conflict which correctly belongs in any history of the Southern States Mission.

Although individual missionary labors are interesting, a detailed description of these experiences is not practical in this work. Nevertheless, such particulars will be given when they aid in the understanding of significant events or add interest to the narrative.

The sheer volume of material required to research compelled the limitation of this history to the Rich Administration, However, the study does include a statistical analysis of the growth of the Southern Church membership to 1971, when the Southern States Mission was renamed to more correctly designate its reduced geographical area.

The author presents this study from the viewpoint of one in

sympathy with the friendly people of the "Sunny South," having served there as a missionary for the Church from 1961 to 1963.

Methods of Procedure

In the preparation of this thesis, the writer researched materials from the Library and Archives of the Church Historical Department in Salt Lake City, the Brigham Young University Library in Provo, and, to a lesser extent, other libraries in Utah. Information was obtained from official reports, minutes, and manuscript histories of missions, conferences, and states of the South; mission publications; personal and official mission correspondence; personal diaries, papers, and journals; Church General Conference Reports; newspapers; and Masters' theses touching on the subject. Quotes from these sources will be exact and thus will include the errors of the original manuscript. Entirely illegible words in quotations will be denoted by the insertion of a blank line.

Manuscripts researched in the Church Archives include:

1. The "Journal History of the Church," compiled under the direction of Andrew Jenson, comprises hundreds of indexed volumes of chronologically arranged documents including typescripts from diaries, letters, reports, organizational minutes, and newspaper clippings.

2. Historical minutes of Southern missions and conferences.

3. Manuscript histories of missions of the South, compiled under the direction of Andrew Jenson, comprise volumes of documents of the type found in "Journal History of the Church."

4. Letter books of various individuals and missions.

5. Personal papers of various individuals. During the time the author researched, the personal papers of Joseph F. Smith (1838-

1917), were unavailable due to their being catalogued and microfilmed.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for purposes of clarity:

Church. When capitalized will refer to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which was organized in New York in 1830.

LDS, Latter-day Saints, saints, Mormons. Each refers to the Church or to its members. The term "Mormon" is derived from the Book of Mormon, which is regarded by the Church as scripture.

Restoration, restored gospel. The Church claims to be the re-establishment or "restoration" of the primitive Church of Jesus Christ. Hence, its message is that it is the "restored gospel."

Elder. A title to all who hold the higher priesthood of the Church whether they hold the office "elder," "seventy," or "apostle."

First Presidency. The Church President and two counselors.

Quorum of the Twelve or Twelve. Refers to that body of twelve men who are ordained as "apostles," and stand next in authority to the First Presidency of the Church.

General Authorities. Refers to Church leaders who have authority over the general Church membership in the world. This group includes the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve.

Conference. This somewhat confusing term has several possible meanings. It may refer to the semi-annual assembly of the Church

membership in Salt Lake City, Utah. (Also called "General Conference," "April Conference," or "October Conference"). It may also refer to the assembly of officers and members of a local Church congregation or a gathering of several congregations, or to a geographical division within a mission.

Hence, a "conference of the Georgia Conference" is a meeting of members and missionaries in the State of Georgia, and a "conference of conference presidents" is a meeting of the leaders of the various areas within the mission. To eliminate this confusion, the geographical designation "conference" was latter changed to "district."

Branch. Refers to a local congregation of the Church.

Zion. The Mormons hold that the American continents are favored by God "above all other lands," and they are termed "Zion," a land upon which the scattered remnant of Israel is commanded to gather. In another sense, Zion refers to the Church, and more specifically, to the headquarters of the Church. It is in this latter sense the term is used in this thesis.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND AND EARLY YEARS

The Beginnings

Following the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in April, 1830,[1] missionaries were sent periodically into various states and territories of the United States. In the fall of 1830, missionaries passed through Ohio (later included in the Southern States Mission) on their way to preach to Indians on the Western frontier.[2] Later, missionaries proselyted in Kentucky while traveling to Missouri.[3]

Greater numbers of missionaries followed, and the work continued to expand. Among those who labored in the South in the early years,[4] three were later to become presidents of the Church--Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, and Lorenzo Snow. In 1846, with the exodus of the saints to the West, few missionaries entered the South, except into Texas where they labored until the Civil War.

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[1] Joseph Smith, History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts (2nd ed. rev.; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1953), I, 75.

[2] Ibid., 118-125.

[3] LaMar C. Berrett, "History of the Southern States Mission, 1831-1861" (unpublished Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1960), p. 48.

[4] Ibid., Appendix.

Post Civil War

After the Civil War ended, missionaries began to trickle back into the ravaged Southland, making some converts. In 1875, Elder Henry G. Boyle established a branch of the Church at Shady Grove, Tennessee. At the October conference of the Church in Salt Lake City, seven missionaries were sent to join him. At their first meeting with Boyle the elders elected him to preside, although he was to wait until the next October conference in 1876, to be formally "set apart." The missionaries labored successfully in the states of Tennessee, Arkansas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Virginia; local membership grew rapidly, and some of the new members emigrated to Church settlements in the West. In January of 1878, one of the original seven, John Morgan, was appointed to succeed Boyle.[5] Morgan served as president until 1888, and may be justly termed "Father of the Southern States Mission," because of service through these first thirteen difficult years.

Effects of the Anti-Polygamy Crusade

A year into Morgan's administration a period of hatred and violence against the missionaries commenced, precipitated by sensational press reports of the Miles Polygamy case and the imprisonment of Daniel H. Wells in Utah for alleged contempt of court.[6] At the

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[5]Historical Minutes of the Southern States Mission, located in the Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1875, 1878, hereafter cited as Historical Minutes SSM.

[6]B. H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), V, 544.

Figure 1

John Morgan

1842-1894[7]

beginning of his administration, Morgan had also initiated a vigorous and successful propaganda campaign to bring the Church to the attention of the people, resulting, however, in a flood of anti-Mormon literature. Mob violence became increasingly commonplace as more elders arrived in the Southern states. The fatal shooting of Elder

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[7]Courtesy of the Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Joseph Standing near Varnells' Station, Georgia, in 1879, seemed to climax this hatred; but the violence and deaths continued, the most notable being the murders of four men, including Elders Gibbs and Berry at Cane Creek, Tennessee, in 1884. Beatings became so common that some conference presidents failed to number them, reporting simply, "Many mobbings in July," or "May was the month of mobs."[8] Of this period the historian of the Church concluded, "The Southern States Mission has been the scene of more persecution than any other Latter-day Saint mission."[9]

The New Era of Tolerance

Slowly the persecution and bitterness subsided as the twentieth century approached. Mission presidents who served later, William Spry, and brothers J. Golden and Elias S. Kimball, did not have the trying times faced in earlier years by Morgan and B. H. Roberts (an interim president from 1884 to 1886).[10] This increased tolerance was felt by the Church in general and was due in part to the issuance of the "Manifesto" in 1890.[11] However, the refusal of Congress to seat the elected representative of the recently admitted State of Utah,

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[8] Conference reports of 1879 and 1891, quoted by Merrill D. Clayson, "Missionaries are Obeying Christ," Deseret News, Church News [Salt Lake City], December 28, 1940, p. 6.

[9] Andrew Jenson, Encyclopedic History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Co., 1941), p. 821.

[10] See Appendix A.

[11] The "Manifesto" was a document issued by the President of the Church declaring an end to polygamy as practiced by the Mormons. See Roberts, VI, 219-221.

B. H. Roberts,[12] the Smoot Hearings, and an anti-Mormon press agitated further persecution well into the twentieth century.[13] This violence, however, was generally mild compared to that of earlier decades.

The Size of the Mission

In spite of the opposition and with continued support of the Church from headquarters in the West, the Southern States Mission grew; and by 1896, the elders numbered over four hundred, making it the largest mission at the time.[14] During the same time, Church membership in the mission was growing, numbering over four thousand by 1897.[15] This small number of saints was scattered across ten Dixie states from Louisiana to the Atlantic and from Virginia to the tip of Florida. Ten branches and forty-six Sunday Schools had been organized by 1899,[16] but this skeleton organization served only part of the members. Many more were isolated in rural districts and were able to keep contact with the Church only by occasional visits of missionaries who walked through the countryside.

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[12] Roberts, VI, 363.

[13] James B. Allen and Richard O. Cowan, Mormonism in the Twentieth Century (2nd ed.; Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1967), pp. 18, 19, 22.

[14] See Appendix E.

[15] See Appendix C. Reports conflicted somewhat even as to approximate numbers. Two touring general authorities, Elders Francis M. Lyman and Mathias F. Cowley, reported seven thousand members in the mission. See Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, February 17, 1898, hereafter cited as JH.

[16] See statistics for the year ending December 31, 1898, in the Latter-day Saints Southern Star [Chattanooga, Tennessee], I, No. 16, 125.

The Missionaries

The records showing the work of these elders reveal them to be a dedicated and persevering group. Generally they were married men with several children at home, and were financially supported by parents, friends, and other Church members in the West.[17] This alone speaks for their dedication; but when one considers that an elder served in the mission from two to four years, knowing little beforehand of the day of his release, his dedication appears especially impressive. Missionary work was especially difficult because the men, traveling on foot, were exposed to the weather throughout the year. Many suffered serious illness from time to time, while death due to contagions and exposure became almost common. In addition to these physical rigors, the elders abstained from food and water two days each week as instructed;[18] and consistent with their belief in the New Testament, they also carried little or no money, relying upon the usual kindnesses of the citizens for their sustenance.[19]

By 1897, the last year of the Elias S. Kimball administration,

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[17]Although called elders, most of these missionaries held the office of seventy. Ninety-six percent of missionaries set apart for missions to the Southern States between 1893 and 1897, were seventies. See Manuscript History of the Southern States Mission, compiled by Andrew Jenson, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter referred to as Manuscript History SSM.

[18]Elder M. F. Cowley commented, "Their health would not be so good if they did not fast, as the food they had to partake of was not of a healthy kind." However upon finding that the elders were instructed to fast twice weekly, he advised them to observe a monthly fast and on other days as they "feel led." See JH, loc. cit.

[19]St. Luke 10:4. President Elias S. Kimball, who preceeded Rich stressed this principle of elders traveling without "purse or scrip." See Chapter VI, pp. 66-68.

mission secretaries were recording comparatively little mobocracy, yet scarcely a month went by without some serious occurrence. Generally, appeals by Kimball to the state governors for protection brought few results, and the continued persecution tried the patience of the missionaries who were already laboring under difficult circumstances. Late in 1897, Elders Francis M. Lyman and Matthias F. Cowley, general authorities from Church headquarters, arrived to tour the mission, accompanied by President Kimball. They encouraged the missionaries in their work but discouraged them from "washing of feet" against families or localities simply to vent frustration, but to do so only "under special instructions or the inspiration of the Holy Ghost."[20]

The Fruits of Intolerance

In many instances in the South, "fields of labor" were closed when opposition against the elders became so intense that their lives were in constant danger. In one instance an entire conference within the State of Georgia was closed. After the murder of Elder Joseph Standing in 1879, bitterness against the Church in Georgia failed to heal; smoldering hatred fanned into flame with little encouragement. Appeals to the governor for protection were fruitless;[21] by the summer of 1889, incensed by sectarian revivals, news of further emigration of Southern saints, and anti-Mormon news articles, the populace of Georgia became undivided in opposition to the elders. The effect on the missionaries was especially discouraging as they were forced to go

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[20] JH, loc. cit. See also St. Luke 10:10, 11; Doctrine and Covenants 60:15.

[21] Deseret News, April 9, 1898, p. 10.

without food or lodging much of the time. The few members still faithful to the Church wrote the elders, warning them to stay away for their own safety.[22]

In October, the Georgia saints and elders convened in South Carolina because of the impossibility of a Church gathering within Georgia. At this meeting the membership in Georgia was attached to the South Carolina Conference. Under the direction of the president of the South Carolina Conference, two elders returned to Georgia, but within five months these two were again forced to leave.[23] Thus Georgia, the most successful state within the mission during 1889,[24] closed its doors to the Gospel, not to reopen them for nearly a decade.

The Reopening of Georgia

During the night of February 25, 1898, President Kimball fully determined upon a method to reopen the State of Georgia. He had concluded during the recent visit of Elders Lyman and Cowley that the time was right[25] but needed the inspiration to act. In the morning he

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[22] Without the freedom to proselyte, the elders reported, "occupying most of their time in improving them selves [sic] in reading and speaking." See Minutes of the Georgia Conference, located in the Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, August and September, 1889; hereafter cited as Minutes of the Georgia Conference. Upon further transfers of elders from Georgia, the mission secretary wrote, "The people are becoming more unconcerned about the message . . . and are gradually crowding the elders from their midst." Historical Minutes SSM, August, 1889.

[23] Elder D. T. LeBaron wrote the final entry in the Georgia Conference Records, March 21, 1890.

[24] Quarterly reports from February 28, 1889, and August 31, 1889, show the Georgia Conference highest in convert baptisms and emigrants to the West. See Manuscript History SSM, February 28, 1889, and August 31, 1889.

[25] Deseret News, loc. cit.

announced his plans to Elder Albert Matheson, appointing him to preside over the new conference. Together they selected two to six missionaries from each of the other conferences of the mission--forty-two in all. A letter dated February 28, 1898, informed those selected to leave as soon as possible, traveling in pairs without purse or script, proselyting on the way. Upon meeting with assigned companions, they were to fast for two days and then begin the long walk to their assigned counties in Georgia. Matheson and his companion, C. O. Christensen, left mission headquarters in Chattanooga, Tennessee, March 17, on foot and without purse or script bound for the new field. Arriving in Atlanta April 7, they met Elders Fred M. Michlesen and Adelbert E. Cranney, who had walked from northern Alabama. Here Matheson traded companions, taking Michlesen with him because he was "able to sing." Matheson and his new companion then visited Governor Atkinson to get a promise of protection for the arriving missionaries. The governor responded that the courts would be just if conflict arose, but he anticipated no trouble.[26]

In announcing this reopening of Georgia, the Deseret News optomistically attempted to reconcile Church members: "Friends and relatives of missionaries assigned to labor in Georgia need have no fear of trouble there, as that old spirit of mobocracy is being relegated to the past."[27]

The News then suggested that the successful reopening of Georgia was part of the fulfillment of the prophecy uttered by Mormon

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[26] Minutes of the Georgia Conference, April, 1898.

[27] Deseret News, Loc. Cit.

President Wilford Woodruff in his dedicatory prayer of the Salt Lake Temple in 1893:

> Remember . . . all people, that their hearts may be softened when thy servants go forth to bear testimony of thy name, that their prejudices may give way before the truth, and thy people find favor in their eyes.[28]

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[28] James H. Anderson, "The Salt Lake Temple," The Contributor, XIV (April, 1898), 300.

CHAPTER III

THE COMING OF BEN E. RICH: BAPTISM IN BIGOTRY

On the tenth of June, 1898, the Southern States Mission entered a new era with the appointment of a new president, Benjamin Erastus Rich. He was born November 7, 1855, of pioneer parents, Apostle Charles C. Rich and his first wife, Sarah D. Pea Rich.[1] In this traditional Mormon home, Ben had learned from his parents unselfish service in the Church, and in 1880, he had accepted a mission call to the British Isles. In the next three years he developed keen abilities in writing, preaching, and debating. Shortly after his arrival back in Utah he publicly discussed the Gospel with a Protestant minister in the Ogden Tabernacle. Twenty thousand pamphlets dealing with this discussion were published. Later Rich wrote a treatise on the Restored Gospel entitled Mr. Durant of Salt Lake City, 'That Mormon'.[2] This publication grew in popularity and eventually became one of the most widely circulated missionary tracts in the history of the Church. In Ogden, Rich was active in the campaign for Utah statehood. After moving his family to Idaho in 1894, he owned and edited two newspapers, the Rexburg Standard in Rexburg,

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[1] Leonard J. Arrington, Charles C. Rich (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1974).

[2] Benjamin E. Rich, Mr. Durant of Salt Lake City, 'That Mormon' (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons Co., 1893). See also an abridgement of the above, A Friendly Discussion (Independence, Missouri: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1926).

and the Silver Hammer in St. Anthony.[3] Active in political circles, Rich became a lieutenant for United States Senator Fred Dubois, but was defeated in his own bid for the Idaho State Senate. In the 1896 senatorial election he campaigned for Frank J. Cannon in Utah and Francis Warren in Wyoming.[4] At the time of his call to head the Southern States Mission, he was very prominent in the Intermountain West as a political figure and as a popular speaker; he was regarded by many, in and out of the Church, as the most promising political star on the horizon.[5]

When Rich arrived in Chattanooga, June 19, 1898, President Kimball had three days earlier received his letter of release. For the next ten days Kimball oriented his successor to the affairs of the mission and then departed. On July 2, the new president sent a

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[3] Benjamin L. Rich, Ben E. Rich, An Appreciation by His Son, Benjamin L. Rich (Salt Lake City, Utah: August 29, 1950), biographical pamphlet in the Church Library, Salt Lake City. See also the Salt Lake Tribune, September 14, 1913, p. 1; also Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, September 13, 1913, p. 11, hereafter cited as JH.

[4] Many non-Mormons felt that the defeat of Rich for the Idaho State Senate was a result of the opposition of Church leaders because of Rich's friendship with Dubois. In his support of Frank J. Cannon in 1896, Rich opposed some of the Church leaders; many observers suspected political dealings when Rich was appointed in 1898 to head the Southern States Mission. See Tribune, p. 1, 2.

[5] John Henry Smith reported to Church leaders that Rich's name had been mentioned by prominent Idaho politicians as a candidate for the Idaho Representative to Congress. Smith was informed that Rich was being considered as a missionary to the Southern States and that Rich should see the First Presidency before he engaged in any other pursuit. Minutes of a meeting of the First Presidency and the Twelve, April 21, 1898, found in JH, April 21, 1898, p. 2.

salutatory letter to each of the thirteen conference presidents reminding them to have the attributes of Christ, to forgive and pray for their enemies, and to avoid trouble, adding, "but should this be impossible, then let it come, and meet it as humble, charitable, and brave men of God should."[6] Accompanied by a newly called counselor, Elder N. P. Nelson, he then began a tour of the mission, planning to hold conference sessions in every state. As he met with the elders, Rich found that the mission length was about three years. He indicated to these men that he would try to lower the length of a mission to about twenty-four to twenty-eight months, unless the strength of the mission would be jeopardized. However, some missionaries misunderstood and wrote home that they would be released in two years. In the first issue of the mission bulletin, President Rich attempted to correct this impression:

> . . . if we were to release all who had passed the two-year mark, our working force would be cut one-half . . . here we have no two-year mission, or a three-year mission, but a mission until the Spirit says: 'Well done, you may return to your home'.[7]

Baptism into Mobocracy

During this first mission tour, President Rich marked himself as a man who was fearless and bold in his defense of the saints and elders in the mission. On July 30, Rich and Nelson arrived for a conference at Mechanicsburg, Yazoo County, Mississippi. Driving to

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[6] The Latter-day Saints Southern Star [Chattanooga, Tennessee], II, No. 35 (July 29, 1899), 273, hereafter referred to as Star. See Chapter V of this thesis for a discussion of the Star.

[7] Ibid., I, No. 1 (December 3, 1898), 4, 5.

Figure 2

The New Mission President,

Ben E. Rich, 1898[8]

the meeting place about a mile into the county, they observed many armed men along the road. The driver explained that these men were part of a mob which had been gathering for several days to "break up the Mormon conference." As the two elders arrived at the meeting place, a large part of the mob, estimated at two hundred men, accosted the elders but allowed them to pass without harm to the house. In a

[8]Courtesy of Mrs. William M. Palmer, Salt Lake City.

short time a committee of the mob appeared at the door with an ultimatum that unless the Mormons wanted bloodshed they must disband by two o'clock. To this President Rich consented. After explaining the situation to the elders, he told the crowd outside that "they were a set of cowards, who were unwilling to allow others to enjoy the religious liberty they themselves possessed." Then the thirty-four elders were marched out of the building and down the road between the mobbers along either side. They were released at the depot where they boarded a train to Jackson and safety.[9] For the next several years the elders were forbidden to re-enter the county.[10]

President Rich continued throughout the states of the mission to hold meetings with the elders and saints. On this first tour Rich experienced the heights and depths of missionary work. In southern Alabama the meetings were attended by "a wonderful outpouring of the gift of the Holy Ghost," while in the northern part of the state, the elders were presented with signed petitions to leave.[11] Rich was to discover that these experiences would repeat themselves many times during his presidency. Although the mission was to experience an ever increasing climate of toleration, serious incidents of violence would mar diaries of missionaries well into the twentieth century.

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[9] Star, I, No. 36 (August 5, 1900), 286.

[10] Ibid., I, No. 41 (September 8, 1900), 325. Elder Osmer D. Flake reported that during the several weeks prior to this incident the missionaries had been successful in baptizing twenty-two converts in a few weeks. In December, 1898, Flake and his companion accepted an invitation by the saints to visit Mechanicsburg. Before the two could leave town, a mob gathered and threatened the elders with hanging if they returned. See letter dated December 20, 1898, and published in the Star, I, No. 7 (January 14, 1899), 54.

[11] Ibid., I, No. 37 (August 12, 1899), 289-290.

CHAPTER IV

VIOLENCE AND THE SOUTHERN STATES MISSION

During the Christmas season of 1905, two missionaries in North Carolina were invited by residents of Harker's Island (off the coast of Beaufort City) to join with them in their holiday festivities. When enroute on the ferry, the elders were informed by the captain that he had been asked to throw them overboard. Upon their arrival at the island, they found a minister promising the people, ironically, that no Mormon elders would visit them in the future. Bitterness against Church members continued to escalate and on January 16, 1906, after burning the Mormon chapel and school, the organized mob threatened the lives of the elders. Ignoring these warnings, the missionaries outfitted a house, and the school reopened. The mob countered with threatening letters to parents, warning them to remove their children or risk house-burning; four applicants for baptism received anonymous notes threatening them with house-burning if they joined the Mormons. After receiving a menacing note from the Harker's Island Conspiracy," the elders decided it wisest to withdraw, although the members pled with them to stay, offering armed protection if necessary. The absence of the elders only heightened the persecution, however, and in early March the second schoolhouse was burned. On March 11, the saints braved a Sunday School meeting in the open air, since enemies had threatened to burn down any house they should meet in. Finally, the mob warned that

any further Mormon services, indoors or out, would result in the burning of every Mormon house on the island.

Appeals to local authorities had been fruitless, so in February, President Rich sent a lengthy letter to the governor outlining the persecution against the Mormons of Harker's Island. Although the governor promised protection by the authorities, the lack of results prompted Rich to publish an open challenge to the governor for immediate action. This appeal, written to win public sympathy, included a dismal description of the sufferers:

> Isolated from all protection, at the mercy of cutthroats and assassins, afraid to leave their homes after dark, standing on guard through the dreary hours of the night to save their little earthly possessions and the lives of their loved ones, deprived of the association of their spiritual advisors, their places of worship burned to ashes, afraid to mingle with each other in sacred devotion . . . .[1]

This letter and further petitions by the Mormon citizens on Harker's Island failed to bring any answer from the governor. Emboldened by the indifference of the authorities, the mob continued their opposition in the open, boasting, "There is no law in North Carolina for Mormons."[2] The saints, having followed previous counsel to return good for evil, were advised by a July letter from the Church leaders to discontinue meeting, but to "pay their devotions to the Lord in private."[3] By the

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[1] Elders Journal [Chattanooga, Tennessee], III, No. 14 (March 15, 1906), 250. For an explanation of the Elders Journal see Chapter VII, pp. 82-85.

[2] Ibid., III, No. 23 (August 1, 1906), 429.

[3] Historical Minutes of the Southern States Mission, located in the Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, July 1906, hereafter cited as Historical Minutes SSM.

end of the year, although mob activities had ceased, the saints were holding no meetings.[4]

A History of Persecution

This regrettable affair gained prominence in mission annals, yet most of the elements of the Harker's Island persecution, from threats on lives to the burning of homes, were repititious of earlier mistreatment of Mormon converts in the South. Beginning after the Civil War and continuing into the first decade of the twentieth century, the missionaries and saints in the South experienced a veritable stream of abuse and violence. Many were beaten, whipped, stoned, or "egged;" some were wounded by gunfire, kidnapped, or murdered. Due to their practice of traveling without "purse or scrip," the elders relied on the whims of the populace for food and lodging. As a rule they found "entertainment," but occasionally they were exposed to the elements for days at a time. Many of the trials of the missionaries, and many of the persecutions against them are recorded in the minutes of the conferences, but most of the opposition against the Church membership in the South went unreported.

Mission records clearly identify some of the direct causes of this bitter persecution, but only hint at other possible reasons. Threatened with the prospect of diminishing congregations, Protestant ministers waged propaganda attacks against the elders. When this failed to keep the missionaries away, some ministers encouraged

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[4]See various articles in the Elders Journal, op. cit., (February 1, 1906, to November 1, 1906), Vol. III, No. 11-23, Vol. IV, No. 24, 25, 28. Although no citizens of the island were ever prosecuted for these crimes, by 1911 the members were able to hold meetings unmolested.

violence and even directed mobs. President Rich, outspoken in his criticism of ministers, attributed 90 percent of mobbings against the missionaries to "so-called Christian ministers" who either inspired the mob or led them in person.[5] One Protestant catechism on Mormonism asked the question, "How should we treat them?" In answer the response was to be, "When they come among us, we should peaceably assemble and plainly tell them to leave our neighborhood."[6] Although in theory this seemed peaceable enough, in practice the same thought was often expressed in more violent terms. For example, August 12, 1900, elders encountered a minister preaching against the Mormons in Chester City, South Carolina. Two days later they were confronted in the same vicinity by nearly one hundred men; the mob demanded their removal, and the elders left the county.[7] One mission chronicler noted that during the thirty years of mission history "all mobbings have occurred during the revival season."[8] Indeed it appeared that some ministers affected organizations to remove the missionaries: Two women ministers, who led a mob which brutally beat and stoned missionaries in 1905, claimed to be district leaders

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[5] Latter-day Saints Southern Star [Chattanooga, Tennessee], II, No. 10 (February 3, 1900), 79. He expressed the same sentiment to the semi-annual conference congregations in Salt Lake City. See the Report of the Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City, 1902), p. 62. Rich kept a record of all mobbings with the names of the ministers involved. See Rich's letter to George A. Day (conference president in South Carolina), dated September 2, 1899, found in the Letter Books of the Southern States Mission, located in the Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter cited as Letter Books SSM.

[6] Ibid., II, No. 38 (August 19, 1899), 301.

[7] Ibid., II, No. 39 (August 25, 1900), 310.

[8] Elders Journal, II, No. 19 (June 1, 1905), 298.

of The National Anti-Mormon Missionary Organization.[9] Although suits were filed against the two women, the grand jury failed to indict them because of "prejudice existing in the hearts and minds of most of the common people."[10]

As ministers stirred up hatred and prejudice in the minds of the people, some political leaders used the controversial sect to further their own interests. Governor McLaurin of Mississippi, addressing the State Legislature in January, 1900, assailed the Mormons from his "pulpit:" "There is no threatened danger to the state more harmful than the lecherous teachings of the Mormon apostles of polygamy."[11]

The Roberts Trial[12]

Much of the extreme persecution around the turn of the century can be traced to the congressional election case of B. H. Roberts in

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[9] Historical Minutes SSM, May, 1905. See also Elders Journal, II, No. 19 (June 1, 1905), 301, and III, No. 6 (November 15, 1906), 91. See Chapter V, p. 38.

[10] In withdrawing the suits, the prosecution stated in open court: ". . . public sentiment is so completely poisoned towards persons who entertain the religious faith . . . [Mormonism] that it would be impracticable for them to receive justice at the hands of a jury . . . ." Report from the lawyers to Rich, dated June 14, 1906, rewritten in the Historical Minutes SSM, June, 1906.

[11] Star, II, No. 10 (February 3, 1900), 74. Because of prejudice, Rich had withdrawn most of the elders prior to the governor's address. They were never reassigned in great numbers in the few years afterwards because of the climate and the persecution. See Rich's letter to John Henry Smith, dated March 21, 1899, Letter Books SSM. See also Chapter VI, p. 62.

[12] B. H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), VI, 363-374.

1899 and 1900. Roberts, it will be remembered, had served previously as president of the Southern States Mission from 1884 to 1886. Back in the West, his ability in the political arena was recognized, and three years after the creation of the State of Utah, Roberts was elected to Congress on the Democratic ticket. In December, 1898, a convention of ministers in Salt Lake City appealed to the citizens of the nation to protest the admission of Roberts to Congress on the grounds that he was a polygamist and therefore, supposedly, in violation of an alleged "compact" or agreement of conditions upon which statehood had been granted.

During the next year, agitation increased; petitions were circulated to gain support for the exclusion of Roberts from Congress. The Church denied any interest in the nomination, election, or seating of Roberts, claiming it as a purely political issue. In the Southern states, however, the controversy took on tones of a religious war against the missionaries and members, especially new converts who fell away after joining the Church as the finger of scorn became too intense.[13] Prejudice often expressed itself in violent terms, and by September the entire mission seemed to be flooded with persecution. As the time for the convening of Congress approached, the ministers became more aggressive and bitter and the newspapers more indecent and untruthful, advocating mob violence and claiming that Utah had "broken faith with the nation" and re-established polygamy. It was during this period of time that a Mormon chapel in Bushburg, Kentucky was

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[13] Star, II, No. 12 (February 17, 1900), 92.

torn down with hammers, saws, and axes, rather then being burned, to prevent the Saints from recovering the loss by collecting fire insurance.[14]

The Smoot Hearings[15]

On January 20, 1903, the legislature of the State of Utah elected Reed Smoot as United States Senator from Utah. As he was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Mormon Church, his election was loudly objected to, especially by a group of Salt Lake City ministers, businessmen, and professional men who formally protested to the Senate requesting them to deny Smoot a seat on the grounds that the Church controlled politics in Utah and encouraged the practice of polygamy.

Although Mr. Smoot was sworn in as a Senator, the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections opened hearings on January 16, 1904. During the next few years, the press throughout the country published the testimony as fast as it was given. Within a few months of the opening of the hearings, reverberations were being felt by the missionaries in the South. Beginning with a marked coldness from non-members and even some members, the persecution increased to a high pitch by the summer of 1904. The missionaries described it as a revival of the old spirit of persecution and hatred;[16] it included

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[14] Star, I, No. 36 (August 5, 1899) 284. See also letter from Rich to Francis M. Lyman, dated January 9, 1899, Letter

[15] Roberts, VI, 390-402.

[16] Elders Journal, I, No. 11 (June, 1904), 133.

many threats, beatings, and organized mobs. In a report to Salt Lake City, President Rich wrote that in nearly every case of this violence the cause could be traced to the Smoot investigation.[17] Although this letter lays the blame for the persecution upon the hearings in Washington, it was written during the revival season, suggesting that the agitation of the secular ministers was the primary cause of the problem, the Smoot case being only a pretext to attack the Church. An analysis of the conference reports throughout these troubled years (1903 through 1907) confirms the fact that mob activity nearly ceased during the non-revival season (winter and spring), but peaked during the summer and autumn. However, ministers had more to aid them than the revivalistic spirit--namely, press reports of the investigation. While some reporters were fair, others were biased and sensational, losing sight of the real issues and using the investigation as an excuse to assault the Church.[18]

The Friendship of Rich and Roosevelt

In the midst of these critical events, the Southern States Mission, as well as the entire Church, received an unexpected boost to its public image from the President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt. Although Roosevelt had previously traveled in the West, he gained an intimate acquaintance with the Church when he campaigned in 1900, as a vice-presidential candidate. During his tour of Idaho, Roosevelt spoke at a whistle-stop rally at Rexburg. There to greet

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[17] Letter from Rich to the First Presidency. dated June 3, 1904, found in Historical Minutes SSM, June, 1904.

[18] Historical Minutes SSM, February, 1905.

him was Ben E. Rich, on leave from his mission duties to attend the October Conference in Salt Lake City. According to a family history,[19] in introducing the candidate Rich predicted that Roosevelt would become President of the United States.[20] Roosevelt was impressed with Ben E. and invited him to accompany the entourage to Salt Lake City. During the long night ride, the two privately discussed Mormonism and the problems facing the Church. Evidently this discussion won Roosevelt's sympathy and respect; future events proved him to be a true friend of Ben E. Rich and the Mormon Church.

Roosevelt's appreciation of Church problem's was further enhanced in March, 1902, by a visit from Ben E. Rich and John Henry Smith, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. As special envoys of the Church, Smith and Rich were sent to Washington to gain the support of Roosevelt to quash a proposed amendment to the Constitution aimed against the Mormon Church.[21] As Senator Thomas Kearns, a non-Mormon from Utah, presented Smith and Rich, President Roosevelt interrupted and greeted

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[19] Benjamin L. Rich, Ben E. Rich, An Appreciation by His Son, Benjamin L. Rich (Salt Lake City, Utah: August 29, 1950), biographical pamphlet located in the Church Library, Salt Lake City, p. 24.

[20] According to a newsman reporting the September 19th rally, Rich referred to Roosevelt as "the next Vice-President, 'who, I hope, will be inaugurated President in 1904' (Great applause)." Idaho Daily Statesman [Boise, Idaho], September 20, 1900, p. 1. Roosevelt was elected as Vice-President in November, but when President McKinley was assassinated in September, 1901, Roosevelt was sworn in as President.

[21] Sponsors of the proposed amendment claimed it was necessary to force the Mormons to stop practicing polygamy. Since the Church had officially stopped solemnizing new polygomous marriages by the Manifesto of 1890, the proposed amendment was intended to embarrass the Church.

them as "old friends" who needed no introduction. Somewhat chagrined, Kearns withdrew from the private interview of Utah matters.[22] After meetings with the President and Senators friendly to the Mormon Church, John Henry Smith reported to the Church authorities that the agitation for the proposed amendment would have no success and the policy of party leaders was "silence."[23]

In September, 1902, President Roosevelt traveled to Southern cities on a speaking tour. During a parade in Chattanooga on September 8, Roosevelt heard a voice call out: "How do you do, Mr. President." Turning, the President discovered the face of Ben E. Rich. As a courtesy to his friend, Roosevelt then halted the procession, walked to the crowded curb, and warmly greeted Rich. After asking about the work in the mission field and the mobbings of missionaries, Roosevelt then remarked, "I think now by this recognition, you will have more friends in the South." This complement "prediction" veritably came true; Roosevelt's open greeting helped Rich gain esteem of leading men of Chattanooga and the respect of men throughout the mission.[24]

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[22]Deseret News [Salt Lake City], March 19, 1902, p. 1. See also Rich, Ben L., op. cit., p. 26, in which the details of this interview are somewhat confused with a meeting between Rich and Roosevelt in December, 1903.

[23]Minutes of a meeting of the First Presidency and the Twelve, found in Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, On Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 3, 1902, p. 5.

[24]Rich, Benjamin L., op. cit., p. 26. Rich apparently wrote to his friend, John Henry Smith, the same day the incident occurred. In answer to Rich's letter of September 8, Smith wrote that the account was a "jolt to me as well as yourself." A few days later Smith relayed the details to a fellow quorum member: "When President Roosevelt

Roosevelt's Support of Smoot

When public support for the ouster of Senator Smoot began to be taken seriously by the Senate, Church leaders determined to privately call upon Roosevelt for support; the sensitivity of the issue dictated the utmost caution, for although Church leaders considered the attack upon Smoot, in reality, an attack upon the Church, they feared that publicity would damage Smoot's case as well as Church relations with the public. Because of his close friendship with the President, Ben E. Rich was selected for this most delicate mission; John Henry Smith wrote to Rich describing what he was to do:

> There seems to be quite a storm brewing in Washington and I have become impressed with the idea that you had better go on up there at once and without making any noise whatever see the President _____ also feel of our mutual friend DuBois and get at his spirit. _____ all of our old time friends and get the lay of the Land.
>
> Do all you can to modify the feeling that has been awakened _____ _____ and the liberties of all men _____ own religionists among this _____. If you have money _____ report to me at once of the amount that you may need and I will forward it to you.
>
> Let me know how _____ _____ and DuBois receive you and any others you meet. Be on your guard but get mens hearts if you can. Count on my standing by you. See how Reed feels and if he anticipates being able to pull through. Give him all the help you can. Do what you can with Hanna as also with _____ without making any promises we can not carry out.
>
> Keep in full accord with Reed and if you find your presence there is unpleasant to him write to me at once and go into your field. I am serious in this so don't be uneasy. Advise the President he has our friendship and that we will be loyal to him.

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visited Chattanooga the other day in walking in the procession from the _____ Hotel to the Auditorium he spied among the thousands in the streets Ben E. Rich and Rushing out of the Ranks clasped him with both hands and said 'I am mighty glad to see you' Mr. Rich." [Blanks indicate words which are illegible in the original source] See letters from John Henry Smith to Rich, dated September 14, 1902, and to Francis M. Lyman, dated September 17, 1902, in Letter Books of John Henry Smith, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter cited as JH Smith letters.

> Well Ben move at once and feel as quietly as you can. You shall have my prayers and blessing as also that of others.[25]

Upon receipt of these instructions Rich left for Washington. His interview with President Roosevelt (described by Ben L. Rich) was to the point. The President said he had one question to ask and that was: "Is Reed Smoot a polygamist, or has he ever been a polygamist?" After being answered in the negative, he said: "By all that's holy, I say to you that Reed Smoot is entitled to his seat in the Senate under the Constitution and the fact that he is a high church officer makes no difference. I shall do all in my power to help him retain his seat."[26]

Following his interview with the President, Rich visited with other key government leaders of the Senate. (This mission was later credited by Joseph F. Smith, Mormon Church President, as the "greatest single factor in Smoot's victory.")[27] Rich's testimonial to Roosevelt,

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[25] Letter from John Henry Smith to Ben E. Rich, in JH Smith Letters, November 14, 1903. These instructions were sent shortly after President Joseph F. Smith received information from Smoot describing the forming of senatorial opposition against him. See the letter from Smoot to Joseph F. Smith, dated November 10, 1903, from the Smoot Correspondence Papers at the Brigham Young University Library Archives, hereafter cited as Smoot Correspondence.

[26] Rich, Benjamin L., op. cit., p. 26. Ben L. Rich confuses this secret interview with the more publicized interview of John Henry Smith and Ben E. Rich with President Roosevelt in 1902. Conditions in Washington at the time required Rich to keep the news of his interview with the President from the papers (correspondence from Washington to Church leaders subject to prying were sent in cipher or by intermediaries), and documentation of the visit is difficult. Rich did go to Washington however: on November 25, Smoot wrote of Rich coming to Washington, and on November 27, John Henry Smith answered a communication from Rich that he (Smith) was "pleased that our mutual friend [Smoot] has come to the conclusion you may be of use to him." See letter of John Henry Smith to Rich in JH Smith Letters, November 27, 1903; letter from Smoot to Joseph F. Smith November 25, 1903.

[27] Rich, Ben L., Ibid.

combined with Smoot's statement of his own upright conduct,[28] convinced President Roosevelt that Smoot should retain his Senate seat. Roosevelt expressed his opinion of the hearings in October, 1904, following a split into two factions by the Utah Republicans--the Mormons supporting Smoot, the non-Mormons supporting Kearns:

> . . . this unfortunate affair is attributable not in the least to any real movement against the Mormons, but to pure faction fighting . . . . The polygamy business is a mere pretense. At the same time I do not see how I can interfere one way or the other in the matter."[29]

Roosevelt's Action in the Smoot Case

Roosevelt did interfere, however (at least it appeared so). At the height of the development of the Smoot investigation in January, 1905, Roosevelt appointed Robert W. Tayler of Ohio (chairman of the special House committee during the B. H. Roberts trial and now chief counsel for the complainants against Smoot) to a federal judgeship in Northern Ohio. This controversial action created considerable confusion in the ranks of the Smoot opposition because it left them without the caliber of man to replace Judge Tayler. Although Tayler continued

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[28] Describing this interview, President Roosevelt wrote: ". . . he came to me of his own accord, and not only assured me that he was not a polygamist, but, I may add, assured me that he had never had relations with any woman excepting his own wife; and I may also add that it was the universal testimony of all who knew anything of his domestic life that it was examplary in every way." Roosevelt also stated that every Mormon with whom he had ever spoken had assured him of the Church's true renunciation of polygamy. See the letter of Roosevelt to Isaac Russell, February 4, 1911, Elting E. Morrison, ed., Letters of Theodore Roosevelt (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1954), VII, 223-225; hereafter referred to as Letters of Theodore Roosevelt.

[29] Letter to Edward Wingate Hatch from Roosevelt, dated October 1, 1904, Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, IV, 965.

as counsel for the complainants in the hearings before the Senate Committee on Elections and Privileges, the press and the mood of the country swung increasingly in the favor of Smoot.[30]

A Winding-Down of Persecution

In the South the last widespread mob action took place in the summer and autumn of 1905. By January of 1906, monthly reports from the missionaries began to reflect an increased tolerance toward the Mormon religion. From Alabama an elder wrote, "The old time prejudice is nearly a thing of the past in certain localities . . . ." Another in Kentucky added, "The prejudice is gradually dying out, and the people are beginning to see the light of truth." Instances were reported of ministers unable to raise mobs, while a controversy between ministers and elders in Kentucky resulted in "The best citizens and leading men of the city . . . " sustaining the elders.[31] Although much opposition still existed, reports summarizing the year described the mobbings as "comparatively few" and conditions in the mission as "never better."[32]

Parallel to this decrease of persecution of the Church in the South were several Southern newspaper articles favorable to Smoot, with at least one which directly encouraged the retention of the Senator.

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[30] B. H. Roberts felt that Roosevelt made the appointment of Tayler in an attempt to weaken the opposition of the complainants and that Roosevelt was as unethical in offering the judgeship as Tayler was in accepting it. See Roberts, VI, 396, 397.

[31] Elders Journal, I, No. 9 (January 1, 1906), 149; I, No. 21 (July 1, 1906), 397; I, No. 16 (April 1, 1906), 304; IV, No. 3 (November 1, 1906), 70.

[32] Ibid., IV, No. 8 (January 15, 1907), 191; IV, No. 9 (February 1, 1907), 222.

The press in Charleston, South Carolina, after listing reasons why the Senate should not exclude Smoot, chastized religious bigotry in the matter: "There has been a sinful waste of so-called Christian sentiment on Smoot. We hope that he will not be disturbed in his seat."[33]

The End of the Smoot Hearings

Finally the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections made their report in June, 1906. By a vote of seven to five the committee recommended that Smoot be deprived of his seat in the Senate. However, the five minority committee members submitted views contrary to the majority:

> The conditions existing in Utah since Reed Smoot became an official of the Mormon church in 1900 have been such that non-Mormons and Mormons alike have acquiesced in polygamous cohabitation on the part of those who married before the Manifesto of 1890, as an evil that could best be gotten rid of by simply tolerating it until in the natural course of events it shall have passed out of existence.
>
> With this disposition prevailing everywhere in the state of Utah among all classes--the Gentile or non-Mormon population as well as among the Mormons--the undersigned are of the opinion that there is no just ground for expelling Senator Smoot or for finding him disqualified to hold the seat he occupies because of the fact that he, in common with all the people of his state, has not made war upon, but has acquiesced in, a condition for which he had no original responsibility. In doing so he has only conformed to what non-Mormons, hostile to his church, as well as Mormons, have concluded is, under all the circumstances, not only the wisest course to pursue, but probably the only course that promises effective and satisfactory results.
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> [Signed] "J. B. Foraker,
> Albert J. Beveridge,
> Wm. P. Dillingham,
> A. J. Hopkins,
> P. O. Knox."[34]

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[33] From the News and Courier [Charleston, South Carolina], as reprinted in the Elders Journal, IV, No. 10 (February 15, 1907), 236-237.

[34] Roberts, VI, 398.

The Church capitalized on this report and had thousands of copies of the minority report immediately printed and distributed throughout the Church missions within the United States. The final decision of Smoot's standing, however, rested with the Senate itself. From December, 1906, when Senator Dubois introduced the committee resolution, to the following February, the controversy was debated upon the floor of the Senate. Finally on February 20, 1907, the Senate voted and rejected the recommendation of the Committee: Smoot retained his seat.[35]

Subsequent newspaper editorials in the large Southern cities--Chattanooga, Richmond, Atlanta, Montgomery, and Charleston--concurred with the majority vote of the Senate. No Southern journal of any prominence editorialized to the contrary.[36]

To the Mormons, the victory of Smoot was a victory of the Church; the attack on Smoot had been an attack against the Mormons. The general feeling of Church leaders toward Roosevelt was gratitude. Near the end of the Committee hearings, President Joseph F. Smith cautioned Smoot to be independent and be the central figure, although Smoot's political enemies were fighting the Church. Then he asked Smoot to convey a message to Roosevelt:

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[35]Before the Senate made its final decision, Boies Penrose, powerful leader of the Senate with a reputation of a "professional bachelor," said, "I don't see why we can't get along just as well with a polygamist who doesn't polyg as we do with a lot of monogamists who don't monog!" Reader's Digest (June, 1958), p. 142, quoting Francis T. Plimpton at Amhearst College. The vote to accept the Committee's recommendation stood: yeas 28, nays 42, not voting 20. Roberts, VI, 398-399.

[36]Elders Journal, IV, No. 12 (March 15, 1907), 277-279.

> . . . express my most sincere regard and admiration to President Roosevelt. . . . I hold President Roosevelt in the highest esteem, as the President of the United States--of the whole people and not a part of them only--Broad minded, generous, honest and fearless. God bless him! We pray for him constantly.[37]

Upon hearing the victorious news of the Senate vote to reject the resolution of the Committee and retain Smoot as Senator, President Smith sent another message to Smoot: "Kindly say to the President in my behalf, that God alone knows our heartfelt appreciation of his absolutely fair and kindly consideration of your case . . . ."[38]

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[37] Letter to Smoot from Joseph F. Smith, dated May 18, 1906, in the Personal Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith, on microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

[38] Ibid., February 23, 1907.

CHAPTER V

CAUSES OF CONFLICT--A DEFENSE, THE "STAR"

In Mormon mission history, violence against missionaries in the Southern United States was common, moreso than other fields of missionary work within the nation and throughout the world. Caught in the turmoil of the era, elders in the South attributed the mobocracy to the most visible causes: the influence of secular ministers and hostile news reporters who created headlines at the expense of the public image of the Church. This image, however, had been tarnishing since the Mormons had left for the West a half-century earlier. It was introduced and fostered by a potpourri of commentaries and novels, authored by Mormon apostates and crusading religionists as well as serious writers. By the end of the nineteenth century the popular image of the typical Mormon had become the antithesis of the truth. He was a "drunken, abusive husband," although Mormons were generally teetotalers. He was a "procurer" for his polygamist leaders, a seducer of innocent women, and a lustful torturer.[1] As imagined enemies, Mormons became merged with Catholics and Masons: a stereotype of anti-Christ and un-American, grossly immoral, and loyal to a subversive, autonomous group.

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[1]Leonard J. Arrington and Jon Haupt, "Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in the Nineteenth Century American Literature," The Western Humanities Review, XXII (Summer, 1968), 243-260. Arrington and Haupt also list fifty anti-Mormon novels written in the nineteenth century (pp. 257-260) and analyze the earliest four (all written, ostensibly at least, by women) as prototypes of later anti-Mormon literature; Neal Lambert, "Saints, Sinners, and Scribes: A Look at the Mormons in Fiction," Utah Historical Quarterly, XXXVI (Winter 68), 63-76.

The Mormon elder, traveling without money or weapon, was a convenient victim for any would-be assassin under these conditions.[2]

A Violent South in a Violent America

It is to be expected that the Mormons would be an object of violent persecution in America, for although the Mormons considered the Constitution to be divinely inspired and America to be Zion, a land of refuge and safety for the immigrant converts, yet America was a violent host, a country with a history of commonplace and frequent violence.[3]

Another paradox arises, however, in the fact that other sections of the country held the same dislike for the Mormons, yet reacted against them with considerably less violence than did Southerners. The difference is most probably due to the violent nature of the South itself. As shown by insurance statistics, the national homicide rate for the decade 1901 to 1910, for cities over 25,000 population was 7.2 per hundred thousand. The seven highest cities in that study were Southern: Memphis, with a rate of 47.1; Charleston, 27.7; Savannah, 25.6; New Orleans, 22.2; Atlanta, 17.1; Louisville, 16.5; and Nashville, 13.6.[4]

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[2]David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature." The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLVII (September 1960), 205-224. See also Mark W. Cannon, "The Crusades Against the Masons, Catholics, and Mormons: Seperate Waves of a Common Current," Brigham Young University Studies, III (Winter, 1961), 23-40.

[3]America is not more violent than other nations but is more accepting of its violence. Richard Hofstadter, ed., American Violence, A Documentary History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), pp. 3-6.

[4]Frederick L. Hoffman, "Explaining our Homicide Record," Literary Digest, XXXXV (October 19, 1912), 665. Findings reprinted in William D. Miller, "Myth and New South City Murder Rates," The Mississippi Quarterly, XXVI (Spring 73), U. of U. Library, 143-153.

In another study, of the 2,875 lynchings in the United States from 1885 to 1903, by geographical division they occurred as follows: South, 2,499; West, 302; Far West, 63; and the East, 11.[5]

The reasons for the post-bellum violence in the South may never be fully understood, but several theories with obvious possibilities have been presented by scholars in recent times. In a study entitled "Myth and New South City Murder Rates," William Miller suggests that murder became accepted by many as an act of community preservation--"to kill brought community." The old Southern values related to the agrarian feudal system of estate rights, described by the words "honor," "duty," "integrity," fidelity," and "bravery," were severely undermined after the Civil War. Defeat, freedom of the slaves, poverty, and social instability intensified the impulse to preserve the old values; many Southerners developed a homicidal sensitivity if "honor," "bravery," or white womanhood became threatened.[6]

Closely allied with Miller's hypothesis are the conclusions of Sheldon Hackney in his paper, "Southern Violence." After examining several possible theories, he points to guilt, defeat, and poverty as contributing causes of the violence, but defines the Southern sense of grievance as probably the greatest single cause. In the mind of a Southerner, his way of life had been preserved by a continual struggle

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[5] Elders Journal [Chattanooga, Tennessee], II, No. 18 (May 15, 1905), 284.

[6] Miller, op. cit., p. 920. In 1901, elders met by an armed mob commented, "This Co used to be friendly but one of the elders diss obeying [sic] council by paying attention to a young lady caused their hatred to reach the boiling pitch." See Historical Minutes of the Southern States Mission, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, January, 1901.

against the invasion of outsiders--the abolitionists, the blue coats, and the carpetbaggers.[7] To this list then could be added the Mormon elders from the West who threatened and chipped away at cherished values, converted friends and relatives, and then "hustled them off as rapidly as possible to Utah."[8]

A Vigorous Defense--The Star

In the face of the continued propaganda onslaught against the Church by the Southern sectarian ministers and press, presidents of the mission for years had contemplated the publishing of a newspaper to voice the Church position in controversial issues and to respond to attacks on Church doctrine and practices. President Elias S. Kimball had attempted to establish a paper, but due to non-support was forced to abandon the effort.[9]

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[7]Sheldon Hackney, "Southern Violence," The American Historical Review, LXXXIV (February, 1969), 906-925. Hackney's paper critically examines an earlier study, W. J. Cash's classic, The Mind of the South (London: Thames and Hudson, 1941). Cash defines the "Southern rape complex," a tendency of white Southerners to view threats of Negroes against white womanhood as degrading as rape, and therefore termed as "rape." Hence, a criminal charge of "rape" often referred to a less serious offence but resulted in the execution of the offender. For an example of this against the Mormon missionaries see Chapter VII, p. 74, of this thesis. See also Gene A. Sessions, "Myth, Mormonism, and Murder in the South," unpublished manuscript on file in the Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (accepted for publication by the South Atlantic Quarterly.

[8]From the Atlanta Constitution, reprinted in the Latter-day Saints Southern Star [Chattanooga, Tennessee], I, No. 1 (December 3, 1898), 6; hereafter cited as Star. By this time new converts were not encouraged to emigrate, but to remain and strengthen local congregations. See Star, I, No. 10 (February 4, 1899), 76. The missionary effort had been greatly hampered by statements of apostates who had previously emigrated to the West but had become dissatisfied with the climate, the people, and the Church, and then had returned to the South. See Historical Minutes SSM, June 1889.

[9]Star, I, No. 52 (November 25, 1899), 409.

As successor to Kimball, Ben E. Rich was also enthusiastic about the prospect of a mission newspaper. With his background as a newspaper editor in Idaho, Rich obtained a promise of financial support from his missionaries and proceeded to publish the Latter-day Saints Southern Star, the name and the format patterned after the Millennial Star, a missionary journal of the Church published in England beginning in 1840. The significance of the name of the Millennial Star was described in the first issue by its editor, Parley P. Pratt:[10]

> . . . that luminary, which nightly conducted, may be a means in the hand of God of breaking the slumber and silence of midnight darkness, which, like a gloomy cloud, has long hung over the moral horizon--of dispelling the mists of error and superstition, which have darkened the understanding, and benumbed and blunted every great and noble faculty of the soul--and of kindling a spark of light in the hearts of thousands, which will at length blaze forth and light up the dawn of that bright day which was seen afar off by holy men of old--the Sabbath of Creation.[11]

In the first issue of the Southern Star of December 3, 1898, the purpose of the paper was modestly but boldly described under the caption, "Our Salutatory:"

> In making our bow to the public, we do so with some degree of diffidence, on account of the endless array of literary, religious, and other stars glittering in the already brightened canopy of the scholastic world. The Southern Star will represent the interests of the Latter Day [sic] Saints' Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ . . . . It will have no desire to engage in controversial discussions with any one, [sic] striving rather to refrain from noticing any attack made on our gallant Elders, or their teachings. They are and have been struggling

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[10] Editor Parley P. Pratt, a member of the Twelve, composed a stirring hymn, "The Morning Breaks, the Shadows Flee," which was printed on the cover of the first edition of the Millennial Star. Parley P. Pratt, Jr., ed., Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1964, Sixth Edition), 303.

[11] Millennial Star, I, No. 1 (May, 1840), 2, as reprinted in the last edition, Millennial Star, CXXXII (December, 1970), 10.

> against such odds with malevolent preachers, religious bigots and small souled newspapers. It will, however, when possible to avoid decending [sic] to the level of such character maligners wage a dignified and determined war to the dissipation of terror and establishment of truth.[12]

The Star, published weekly on sheets 8-1/4 inches by 11-1/4 inches, continued with 105 numbers until its last issue on December 1, 1900. Its bold frontispiece featured drawings of the bust of Joseph Smith and of the Salt Lake Tabernacle and Temple, and included the statement by the Apostle Paul, "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:8)

In the two volumes of the Star short historical sketches entitled "History of the Southern States Mission" summarized the entire mission history from 1875 to November, 1900. It was feared by some Church leaders that the publication of the "History," especially of the Joseph Standing martyrdom, would create a renewed spirit of persecution. However, President Rich continued to have the articles published, believing they could do no harm but would be a strength to the saints in the mission.[13]

The Star was a manual of instructions, policy statements, and cautions to the elders, and contained letters and reports from the various conference presidents to the mission headquarters. It included

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[12] Star, I, No. 1 (December 3, 1898), 4.

[13] Letter of John Henry Smith to Rich, in the Letter Books of John Henry Smith, February 9, 1899, on Microfilm in the Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; letter of Rich to Francis M. Lyman, in the Southern States Mission Letter Books, April 20, 1899, located in the Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

minutes of the meetings of various conferences and outlines of some of the talks. It served as a "weekly visit from the elders," filled as it was with inspirational thoughts and stories of healings, miracles, and the fulfillment of prophecies.[14] It even listed the weekly obituaries with commentaries such as, "a faithful Latter-day Saint," or "a dear friend to the Elders."

The Star contained a weekly statistical summary which included the number of elders in the mission, the miles walked, families visited, books and tracts distributed, baptisms and blessings, and the number of branches and Sunday Schools organized. This report even numbered the families that rejected the "testimonies" of the elders or refused to shelter or feed them!

Over the Horizon

After a year of publication, the financial condition of the Star was in the black, but it had required constant appeals to the elders and saints for one dollar and fifty cents per year subscriptions.[15] By the end of the second year, with the number of elders assigned to

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[14] Many stories recounted the "retribution" of God because people had earlier rejected or harmed the elders. A typical example is the story of an Elder Perry being brutally whipped while tied to a tree in Cherokee County, North Carolina. The elder had prophesied that the tree would die, and " . . . in three days . . . the leaves became withered as though the tree had been in a fire." Similar accounts told of destruction of homes and cities by fire, hurricanes, etc. See "A Visit to the Stump," Star, I, No. 18 (April 1, 1899), 143; II, No. 21 (April 21, 1900), 168; II, No. 23 (May 5, 1900), 184.

[15] In a request to released missionaries for support, the editors pled, "The President of the Southern States Mission knows of no greater compliment that could be paid him or the mission than an occasional order for the Star . . . ." Star, I, No. 29 (June 17, 1899), 228. The subscription price for Volume II dropped to one dollar to encourage greater circulation.

the mission constantly diminishing, Rich regretfully discontinued the Star while it remained solvent.[16] The last issue included an open letter from the editor to the "Saints of the Sunny South," expressing his love, counsel, and blessing: "May the peace and blessings of heaven attend you, mercy and justice prevail, righteousness increase, love abound, the truth spread, and liberty and freedom extend from pole to pole."[17]

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[16] At its demise, the Star had a circulation of about twenty-five hundred. See Elders Journal, III, No. 21 (July 1, 1906), 390.

[17] Star, II, No. 52 (November 24, 1900), 414.

CHAPTER VI

THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

The Plight of the Membership

The publication of the Star was only one of several methods employed by the Southern States Mission to strengthen the Southern membership, which for years had been depleted of the strongest members by continuous emigration to "Zion." However, at the arrival of Ben E. Rich in 1898, the policy of emigration was markedly changed; Church leaders instructed him to encourage only the strongest members--grounded in the Gospel and with financial ability--to "gather" to the West. The missionary effort had suffered as a result of new converts who had left for the West, encountered financial difficulties, apostatized, and then returned to the South, bitter from the experience and angry at the Church.[1] As a result of this new emigration policy, many of the poor converts remained in the South, isolated from other members and persecuted by their neighbors. In these circumstances, some

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[1]The labor market in the West could not sustain the influx of converts, and many became unemployed and a burden to the Church. The General Authorities also felt a need to strengthen the missions by discouraging emigration. See letters from the First Presidency to Rich, January 16 and 20, 1899, Letter Books of Lorenzo Snow, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter referred to as Letter Books of Lorenzo Snow; and letter from the First Presidency to Rich, dated November 11, 1901, in the Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter referred to as Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith.

of the poor desperately proposed the establishment of Mormon colonies in localities in the South. Although their appeals were heartrending to Church leaders, President Joseph F. Smith rejected the proposals on the grounds that "opposition and even cruel persecution" toward these colonies would result.[2]

When the colonization schemes were not accepted, Ben E. Rich sought to strengthen the membership of the mission through the means at his disposal--the missionaries. Since nearly all the members lived in country districts (previous missionary work had been conducted only in rural areas), Rich assigned some of his five-hundred elders to labor exclusively with the Sunday Schools, organized wherever small groups of saints could meet. As these Sunday Schools grew they were organized into numerous branches of the Church,[3] but by 1900, because of persecution and their small numbers, less than ten branches had constructed chapels.

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[2]Letter dated November 11, 1901, in Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith. President Smith's answer was a response to an appeal for counsel from E. B. Dorman, Bradleyton, Alabama, dated September 13, 1901. His letter is found in the Personal Papers of Ben E. Rich, located in Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter referred to as Papers of Ben E. Rich. After continual requests to allow colonization, Church leaders did investigate the purchase of large tracts of land for settlements in Georgia, Texas, Oklahoma, and other areas of the South; but by 1910, they abandoned the colonization effort. See various letters of Joseph F. Smith, dated May 5, 1905, December 12, 1907, July 30, 1908, and July, 1910, in Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith.

[3]Latter-day Saints Southern Star [Chattanooga, Tennessee], I, No. 10 (March 18, 1899), 125, hereafter referred to as Star. Early records do not number branches or Sunday Schools, but in the year 1898, 46 Sunday Schools and 10 branches were organized. At the close of the year 1898, the mission numbered (including children) about 9,200.

The Elders and the Saints

These scattered saints were responsible, in large part, for the care, feeding, and housing of the elders. During times of persecution, homes of members became the "oases" for traveling elders. Upon numerous occasions missionaries were saved from injury and death by protective members determined to meet the mobs headon rather than allow harm to "their missionaries." When elders visited member homes outside of organized branches, they were, in essence, "the Church;" they administered the ordinance of the sacrament,[4] collected tithing and other contributions, delivered Church publications, and otherwise concerned themselves with the needs of members within their assigned area. Typically, elders were assigned to a single conference for their entire length of mission service, and the bond of mutual friendship between missionary and member became very strong. The members held these representatives of the Church in high esteem, and often refused to have funerals of loved ones "preached" until an elder arrived to conduct the services, even if they were memorial services several months or years later![5]

When the number of elders serving in the mission dropped from nearly 500 in 1899, to an average of 198 in 1901, many members became alarmed, and a common letter to the mission president read, "Where are

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[4]The "sacrament" is the name in the Mormon Church for the ordinance of the "Lord's Supper."

[5]In one instance in 1906, elders "preached the funeral sermon of Sister Winnefred Booth . . . she died in 1901." Elders Journal [Chattanooga, Tennessee], III, No. 16 (April 15, 1906), 308.

the elders?" or, "Send the elders to preach to us."[6] Rich responded by assigning a greater portion of the remaining missionary force to work with the members. In a letter to the saints he encouraged:

> We want to be one large ward, and cannot afford nor do we desire to have any feel that they are not members of the organization. Our Elders are valuable "block teachers" as we call them in Zion, and we feel that their visits are appreciated.[7]

A Reduction of the Missionary Force

President Rich was keenly disappointed with the large drop in his missionary force. In a report to the Millennial Star he lamented the reduction of the great number of Southern States elders, "for some unseen reason," to the few who could "barely keep in touch with those already members of the Church."[8]

The diminished missionary force in the South was a result of several factors, not truly "unseen" by the Southern States Mission President (the reasons had been explained to him), but unacceptable to Rich nonetheless. The basic cause for the drop in numbers of missionaries was due to fewer being called; whereas during the several years prior to 1900, peak numbers of missionaries accepted calls from the Church, the year of 1900 saw a drop of 20 percent; and the next year, another 28 percent. (See Appendix E)

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[6] In 1901 alone, the missionary force was reduced from over 300 to a low of 146. See Historical Minutes of the Southern States Mission for 1901, located in the Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter referred to as Historical Minutes SSM.

[7] Elders Journal [Atlanta, Georgia], I, No. 6 (January, 1904), 55.

[8] Millennial Star, LXVI, No. 14 (April 7, 1904), 210.

A second reason was the decision of the authorities of the Church to send a greater number of missionaries to Europe rather than to the United States, because "results in our missionary fields [in the United States] do not warrent the expenditure of energy and means now bestowed upon them." President George Q. Cannon, counselor to the ill Church President, Lorenzo Snow, urged the reduction of the missionary force in the South; Cannon believed, as the reports of President Rich seemed to indicate, that most of the Southern people had received repeated visits from the Mormon elders and that the Church had done its "full duty to these people."[9] When describing the excellent work of the missionaries, Rich unintentionally left the impression that the Southern mission had been thoroughly canvassed. In the April, 1902, conference he reported the statistics of the proselyting work and then added, "I believe there is not a house, outside of the larger cities of the South, where the Mormon Elders have not tapped at the door." In his conference talk of October, 1904, Rich attempted to correct the impression that the elders in the South had visited everyone. After reporting that only 175 elders were in the Southern States Mission, Rich hinted at the need for more: "There seems to be an awakening in the hearts of the people, a desire to know God's will, and our Elders find plenty of opportunity to preach the Gospel . . . ."[10]

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[9]Letters from George Reynolds, secretary of the First Presidency, to Rich, dated July 25, 1900, and March 15, 1901, in the Letter Books of Lorenzo Snow.

[10]Ben E. Rich, General Conference addresses, Official Report of the Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April, 1902 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, n.d.), p. 62, hereafter referred to as Conference Report. See also Conference Report, October, 1904, p. 39.

During the same years (1899-1901), other conditions in the Southern States Mission--severe persecution, wide-spread illness, and frequent death of the elders--were suggested to President Rich as reasons for not maintaining the large number of missionaries.[11]

The "Monumental Beggar"

In spite of his being informed of these reasons, throughout his administration of the Southern States Mission, Rich hounded Church authorities for more and better qualified missionaries. In August, 1898, shortly after his arrival in the South, Rich pressed George Reynolds, secretary of the First Presidency, for more elders, and requested permission for himself (Rich) to canvass the stakes of the Church, adding, "I will guarantee to the Servants of God, that the Southern States Mission will not go hungry for missionaries."[12] Instead of this course of action, Rich submitted a list of six hundred names of prospective missionaries to be called to the South by Church authorities. Of the six hundred, few were qualified or able to serve a mission, but some were sent to the South from time to time.

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[11] John Henry Smith referred to the difficulty of finding places for the "large body of elders" to remain quiet during the hot months. Letter of Smith to Rich, dated August 16, 1899, in the Letter Books of John Henry Smith, on Microfilm in the Church Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter referred to as JH Smith Letters. A former Southern States Mission President, J. Golden Kimball, confided to Rich the intention of the authorities to not increase the number of elders in the South "on account of the fear of persecution;" Rich felt that this action bordered on "cowardice." Letter from Rich to Kimball, February 18, 1899, in the Southern States Mission Letter Books, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter referred to as SSM Letter Books.

[12] Letter to George Reynolds, dated August 25, 1898, SSM Letter Books.

Not satisfied with secretary Reynolds' response to his frequent pleading for better qualified missionaries,[13] Rich accused Church authorities of making the Southern States Mission a "dumping ground for uncouth, slovenly, and filthy elders." Joseph F. Smith, a counselor in the First Presidency at the time, answered Rich's letter; he denied the charge and explained the efforts of the Church to better train prospective missionaries, adding, ". . . I would personally be glad to turn you loose in the schools of the Church to find any and as many as possible who would be suited for missions . . . ."[14]

All of Rich's efforts to prod the Church for more missionaries were unsuccessful, and the missionary force during 1902-1905 dwindled to between 180 and 200. In August, 1904, after proposing that unmarried elders be released only after they served at least two and one-half years, Rich requested that an average of three hundred elders be assigned to his mission and questioned the logic of having so few elders in the South:

> More converts to the faith can be made in this mission than in all the rest of the missions in the United States put together and I think that when the Southern States was cut down from five hundred to two hundred Elders the cut was a little too deep and painful . . . ."

He concluded this letter to the First Presidency by optimistically adding, "Now I believe you are going to do it [send an average of three

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[13] Reynolds reminded Rich that the Lord takes "weak things" and that "he is continually keeping us in mind of this declaration." Letter from the First Presidency to Rich, dated March 1, 1900, Letter Books of Lorenzo Snow.

[14] Letter from Joseph F. Smith to Rich, dated March 29, 1900, in the Personal Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

hundred elders], and therefore I want to thank you in advance . . . ."[15]

Ben E. Rich lost very few occasions to remind the General Authorities and the Church membership of his need for more elders. In his frequent reports to the general conference sessions in Salt Lake City, Rich informed the congregations of the great need of the religious Southern people for greater numbers of missionaries. In one address he referred to his hounding of the general authorities for more elders and jokingly labeled himself "a monumental beggar."[16]

The Missionaries

Although mission records only describe the elders by name, occasional clues give a profile of those who were called to the Southern States. The average age of the missionary was probably in the mid-twenties. Many were married men, often having several children at home.[17]

Walking down a red dirt road or along railroad tracks, the elders presented a peculiar sight. An Ohio newsman described their appearance: ". . . garbed all in black, with long coats and black ties."[18] The missionary usually carried a "grip" (briefcase containing

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[15] Letter from Rich to the First Presidency, dated August 5, 1904, in SSM Letter Books. By 1906, the number of missionaries in the mission averaged 276.

[16] From President Rich's address, Conference Report, April, 1905, p. 31.

[17] Statistics of the number of married missionaries were not kept. However, one list of elders released during a two-week period in 1899 indicated fourteen married and four single, or about 80 percent. SSM Letter Books, March 4, 1899. A favorite poem of the elders was one entitled "Papa's On A Mission."

[18] Star, II, No. 40 (September 1, 1900), 317.

books, tracts, personal essentials, etc.) in one hand an an umbrella in the other. His uniform consisted of a straw or derby hat (depending on the season of the year) and a suit identical to his companion's. These "Prince Albert" suits, manufactured in Cincinnatti especially for Southern States missionaries, were the standard dress until about 1900, when the mission ordered lighter alpaca suits and changed from the "Prince Albert" style.

The Financial Cost to the Missionary

The Southern States Mission was recognized as the cheapest one in the world, and occasionally elders in other missions and newly-called missionaries unable to bear the added expense of their fields were transferred to the Southern States. Elders in the South could subsist on three to four-hundred dollars during their years of service. The elders, instructed to avoid carrying money on their person to make them "more dependent upon the Lord,"[19] were encouraged to keep a ready account at the mission for the purchase of clothing, personal supplies, books and tracts.

Many of the poorer elders, unable to keep an account of ready cash, drew upon mission funds for emergencies and other needs until the mission was in deep debt. When Rich's renewed efforts to have the missionaries keep at least fifty dollars on deposit at mission headquarters caused additional hardships for supporting families back

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[19] Star, I, No. 15 (March 11, 1899), 116. See also page 66 of this Chapter for a discussion of "purse and scrip."

home, he appealed to home town Church leaders for additional support.[20]

The cost of books and tracts was a constant drain to the missionaries' funds; after purchasing them from the mission headquarters, the elders often gave the materials to investigators too poor to purchase them. Books of Mormon sold for sixty cents, and the elders were continually embarrassed by the Reorganites,[21] who sold them for fifty cents and told people that the Mormon elders were simply "book agents." President Rich finally refused to pay the higher price asked by the Salt Lake firm, Cannon and Sons, and threatened to order them direct from England or print them in the Southern States Mission.[22] Finally, by August, 1902, through the cooperative efforts of several missions, the Book of Mormon was made available for fifty cents; and the elders were invited to renew their efforts to place the books in homes.[23]

In spite of the efforts of President Rich to lower the necessary expenditure of missionaries' funds, the indebtedness of the

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[20]Letter to Presidents of Stakes and Bishops of Wards in Zion, dated March 10, 1900, in the Personal Papers of Ben E. Rich, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Box 1, Folder 5, hereafter referred to as Personal Papers of Ben E. Rich.

[21]The term "Reorganites" was a nickname for the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, organized in 1860, by those who rejected Brigham Young and the Twelve as successors to the martyred Joseph Smith. Their headquarters were at Independence, Missouri.

[22]Letter from Rich to George Q. Cannon and Sons Co, dated May 5, 1899, in the SSM Letter Books.

[23]Letter from Rich to conference presidents, dated August 13, 1902, in the Southern States Mission Papers, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Box 3, hereafter referred to as SSM Papers.

elders to the mission continued to rise. By 1905, the Church, past a financial crisis, paid the costs for all missionary tracts,[24] but still the missionary debts mounted, forcing the mission to refuse further credit to missionaries.[25]

Mission Finances

When Ben E. Rich was called to the Southern States Mission in 1898, the Church was saddled with an indebtedness of $1,250,000 and with creditors pressing hard for payment. This financial embarrassment partially resulted from costs associated with the judicial crusade against Church members and the escheatment and maladministration of Church properties by the Federal government prior to the 1890 Manifesto declaring a cessation of polygamy by the Mormon Church. The indebtedness was a vexing problem for the Church because many members, unwilling to see their donations fall into government hands, had stopped the practice of paying tithing to the Church.[26]

With this large indebtedness hanging over it, the Church leaders were anxious that proselyting efforts not drain the tithing funds more than necessary. They were particularly concerned that results of missionary labors be commensurate with the expenditure of

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[24] Letter from Rich to conference presidents, dated November 15, 1904, in the SSM Papers, Box 3.

[25] Letter to the elders of the Southern States Mission, dated May 14, 1907 in the SSM Papers, Box 3. The mission carried unpaid missionary loans totaling about three thousand dollars by 1907.

[26] Leonard J. Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 376-379, 400-403.

time, energy, and means.[27] At the beginning of his term as president, Rich received direction from Church leaders as to the financial operation of the mission. John Henry Smith, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve and a brother-in-law and intimate friend to Ben E. Rich, took personal interest in the affairs of the Southern States Mission and regularly communicated with its new president. Smith counseled Rich to guard against his generous nature and challanged him to make the mission a financial success:[28]

> Guard with extreme care the business interests of your mission and remember that some people anticipate you will make a failure. Your business ability is with me unquestioned; but I recognize that your free generosity always endangers you in matters financial.

Thus from the beginning of his administration, President Rich initiated projects to make the mission self-sustaining and even a source of revenue to the Church.[29] Undoubtedly the Southern Star was such an enterprise, published not only to spiritually strengthen the Southern saints but to financially sustain the mission as well. When the Star faced declining subscriptions because of the reduced missionary force in the Southern States, Rich discontinued the publication while it yet remained solvent.

The financial success of the mission in the South was a major consideration in the 1903 decisions to combine the Southern and Middle

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[27] Letter from George Reynolds to Rich, dated August 15, 1898, in the Letter Books of Lorenzo Snow.

[28] Letters from John Henry Smith to Rich, dated July 11, 1898, December 31, 1898, and January 11, 1900, in JH Smith Letters.

[29] As expressed by Rich in a letter to the First Presidency, dated June 9, 1903, found in the Joseph F. Smith Papers, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

States Missions and to publish the Elders Journal (See Chapter VII).

In addition to other schemes[30] to strengthen the financial standing of the mission, Ben E. Rich published thousands of copies of the tracts, "Mr. Durant of Salt Lake City" and "A Friendly Discussion," which were used in the Southern States Mission and purchased by other missions as well. The small profits from the sale of these pamphlets ended when the Church purchased Rich's copyright in 1906.[31]

The Commissary

When Ben E. Rich was called as mission president he was instructed to support the mission commissary which had been organized several years earlier by President J. Golden Kimball. The commissary provided regular revenue to the mission by supplying the elders with clothing, stationary, books and tracts, and various other supplies and personal items.[32]

By 1900, the financial affairs of the mission became an enormous business, an $80,000 bonanza to Chattanooga firms alone: the approximate yearly expenditures included $30,000 to the railroad,

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[30] These included "motto cards," sold in the mission for post cards, and two proposed books, The Mormon Scrapbook and The Elders' Companion.

[31] Details of the transaction are found in letters from Joseph F. Smith to Rich, dated January 17, and 29, 1906, in the Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith. See also Chapter IX.

[32] Even the mission office staff had a small business going on the side. They advertised in the Star: "Many of the Elders complain of a loss or thinning of hair. The office elders have found an excellent remedy for this or dandruff. If any desire to try it . . . [we will send a] 25¢ bottle." Star, I, No. 12 (February 18, 1899), p. 95.

$6,000 for clothing, $8,000 for printing, $1,500 for hotels, and $1,000 for groceries.[33]

In his attempt to keep the commissary profits from dwindling, Rich became irritated at the competition from Utah clothing manufacturers who contacted newly-called Southern States missionaries and sold them goods considered by Rich to be inferior and uncomfortable in the humidity of the South. Claiming that some suits sold by Cutler Brothers had had to be discarded, Rich jokingly suggested that Church leaders send a Cutler to the Southern States Mission but require him to wear his own suit.[34]

After continued criticism of the commissary and lack of support of members in Zion, Church authorities investigated the commissary and found it to be in excellent condition. Their report, published in the Deseret News, declared the commissary necessary for the welfare of the mission and the "small margin of profit," a means of preventing the encroachment upon tithes.[35]

The result of the investigation was a victory for the mission and a personal triumph for Ben E. Rich, who had grown impatient with the "scheming of merchants" in the West and the complaints

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[33]The article from the Chattanooga News, dated November 24, 1900, is found in the Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City: On Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, November 24, 1900, pp. 17-19.

[34]Letter from Rich to George Reynolds, dated March 21, 1899, in SSM Letter Books. Rich also printed flyers warning elders to purchase lighter clothing in Chattanooga, but the First Presidency were reluctant to circulate them because they were "rather strong." Letter from Reynolds to Rich, dated May 17, 1899, Letter Books of Lorenzo Snow.

[35]The article from the Deseret News was reprinted in the Star, II, No. 22 (April 28, 1900), 173.

of Church members and leaders. In a congratulatory letter, John Henry Smith cautioned Rich to offer prices that would prevent further complaint and complimented him on the financial strength of the mission and the success of the commissary, adding that it, ". . . overturns the ideas of your inabilities."[36]

Rich completed his campaign to outfit his missionaries by a letter to "Presidents of Stakes and Bishops of Wards in Zion." The letter, signed by all the conference presidents of the mission, announced that the commissary was not for profit or gain but provided proper supplies and clothing in contrast to Western merchants who sold "inadequate clothing" to newly-called elders, while offering to ". . . perfectly fit them out for the South . . . ."[37]

Health of the Missionaries

Effective missionary labors in the South were greatly influenced by the climatic conditions, and comments about the weather in missionary reports usually related to the success of the work. Typical are these June notes from missionaries in southern Alabama: "Little canvassing being done, as the weather was extremely hot long walks were out of order;" [sic] while another from "up north" in Virginia reported the temperature at 140 degrees Fahrenheit "in the shade."[38]

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[36] Letter from John Henry Smith to Rich, dated January 11, 1900, in the JH Smith Letters.

[37] The letter, dated February 19, 1900, is found in the Personal Papers of Ben E. Rich, Box 1, Folder 5.

[38] Conference reports in the Historical Minutes SSM, June, 1901.

The seasonal effect upon the health of the missionaries was especially devastating, unaccustomed as they were to the Southern climate of saturating humidity and blistering temperature.[39] Though the elders generally enjoyed good health, during periods of extreme weather many became ill with chills, fever, and pneumonia; while a few contracted serious contagions of malaria, typhoid, smallpox, and diptheria. Many suffered prolonged illness and, unfortunately, some died. The loss of life was especially frequent during 1899 and 1900, when eight elders died from disease and one drowned.[40]

Climatic conditions, however, cannot be considered as the only contributing factor to the poor health of the missionaries: the rigors of their work tested the stamina of the strongest. The descriptive narration of Elders Horr and Atkins of the Mississippi conference is typical of the hardships of missionaries in 1898.[41]

> We started out for Jackson county on December 14th. We experienced many hardships on the way, spending Christmas eve night under a tree while the rain continued to fall on us. While sleeping here our umbrellas caught on fire. We pushed on, holding meetings on the way; arriving in our county we failed to get entertainment, so had to sleep out the first night. We then labored in Pascagula on the spur of the Gulf of Mexico. Here we had to sleep out again, but finish tracting the city, and then went in the country, wading through water, which at that time was all over the country. It was very thinly settled. On one occasion we went two days and nights without food, until we were so weak we could scarcely travel; but we were blessed with one meal a day for six days, sleeping out five nights in all.

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[39] During summer months average relative humidity in the South not only doubles that of the West (80 percent compared to 40 percent), but the mean temperature is also higher. The National Atlas of the United States of America, Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, Washington, D. C., 1970, p. 101, 102.

[40] See Appendix D.

[41] Star, I, No. 27 (June 3, 1899), 211.

> After finishing tracting we tried the upper part of the county, but here we met with persecution. On one occasion we were invited to come into a house where we were calling, and the man at the house commenced to curse us and swear at us, and with a club of wood he fiercely made for us, but we were in the hands of the Lord and we were safe from his attack.
>
> My companion soon after was taken with chills, caused by wading in water. He became very weak, but we exercised faith and the Lord healed him.

Following the death of Elder S. O. Hale from "congestion of the bowels" in January, 1899, mission leaders made an attempt to educate the elders to preserve their health. Cautioning against eating much bacon or overeating after fasting, a Star article also advised against prolonged fasts, long walks, and exposure to inclement weather. Even before the issue was printed, however, the sad word came of the death of Elder Lewis Warren from malarial fever and pneumonia while making a long trek to a conference in Louisiana.[42]

The subject of the physical welfare of the missionaries was a major topic of the "Conference Presidents' Conference," held in May. In attendance were two general authorities, John Henry Smith and Matthias F. Cowley. During this four-day meet, the decision was made that during hazardous seasons of the year, elders in unhealthy localities would "migrate" out, hopefully reducing the illness problem.[43]

By October, 1899, the twenty-six elders in Louisiana had been reduced to four, and only nine of twenty-six remained in Mississippi. Severe persecution in both states discouraged the reassignment of many elders even during cooler weather; by October, 1900, only six elders remained in Mississippi and four in Louisiana. In November, 1900,

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[42] Star, I, No. 13 (February 25, 1899), pp. 100, 101.

[43] Star, I, No. 24 (May 13, 1899), p. 188.

the Louisiana Conference was transferred to the Southwestern States Mission by decision of the mission authorities in Salt Lake City.[44]

During the spring and summer of 1899, the mission initiated more moves in an effort to prevent further deaths and serious illness. When word was received of many elders sick, especially in the Gulf States, the Star again counseled about using wisdom in what was eaten: "The food used in the South is not so hard on the system as is the change from what we have been used to in the West and the lack of wisdom exercised in eating." The article also advised against being chilled by drafts, walking too far, and bathing in stagnant water.[45]

Ohio Added

Because of the sickness of the elders, President Rich had been considering the possible acquisition of the Ohio Conference of the Northern States Mission to allow him a cooler climate to transfer elders with health problems. In a Chicago meeting he proposed the matter to the Northern States Mission President, L. A. Kelsch, and to a representative of the General Authorities, Francis M. Lyman. On July 22, 1899, authorization was received to proceed with the transfer, and the following day Rich traveled to Chicago to meet with President Kelsch. All arrangements were made concerning removal of missionaries, records, etc., and the transfer was effected August 15, 1899.[46] However, within five days of the Ohio transfer the deaths of Southern

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[44] Historical Minutes SSM, October, 1900. See also map on following page and Appendix B.

[45] Star, I, No. 28 (June 10, 1899), 220.

[46] Star, I, No. 34 (July 22, 1899), 269. See also "History of the Southern States Mission" for July, 1899, Star, II, 342.

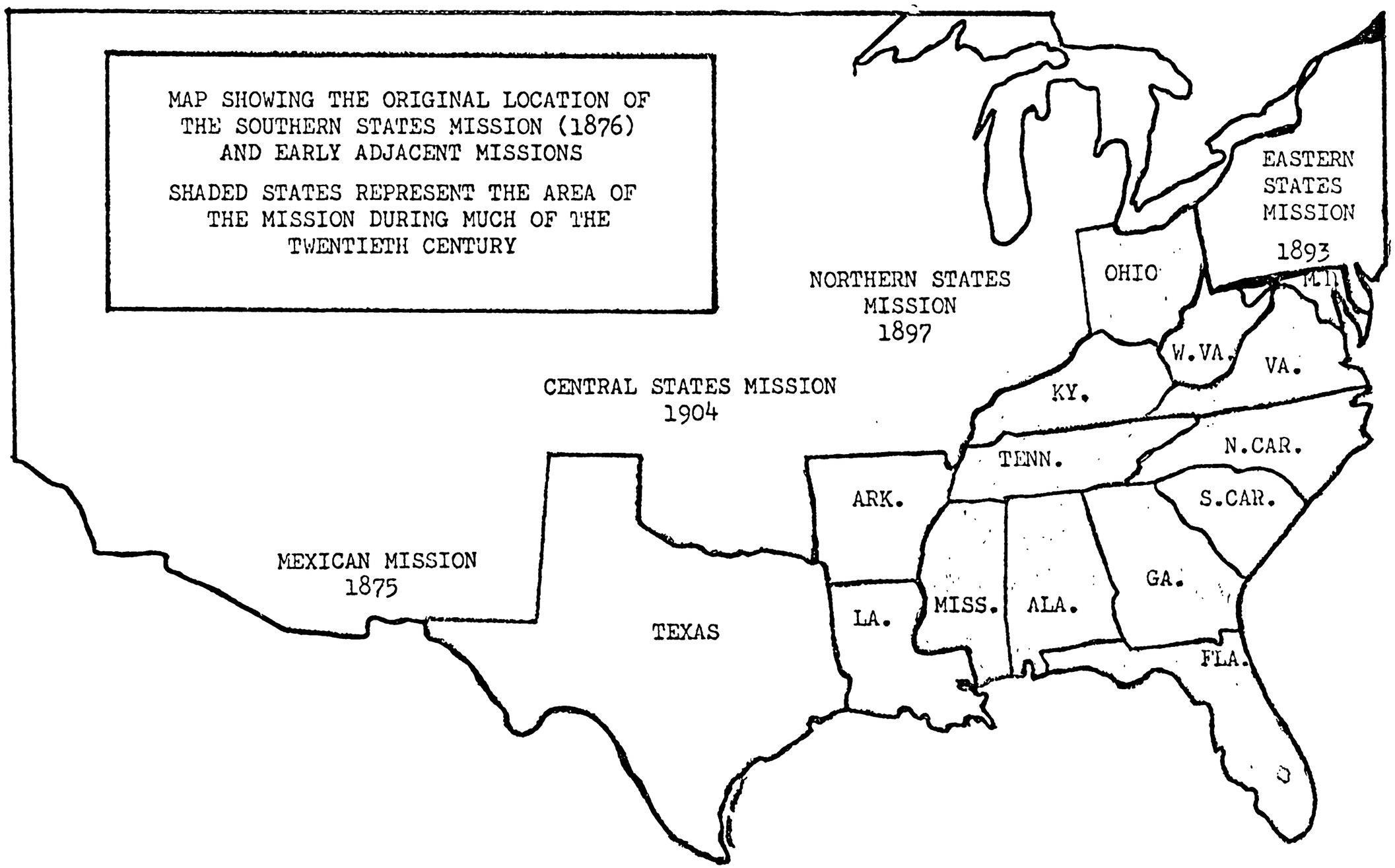

Figure 3

Southern States Mission, 1876-1926

States missionaries resumed. Elder Thomas H. Bell, having suffered "malarial fever" for a week, passed away near Berzelia, Georgia. The attending physician gave as the immediate cause of death, "heart failure."[47]

The loss of his missionaries was especially trying to President Rich. It was during this period of time that he sought and obtained permission to keep two suits of burial robes on hand in the Chattanooga office.[48] Further efforts to prevent missionary deaths seemed fruitless when two elders passed away during the following February. The first, Elder Alva T. Stewart, had been released from his mission because of sickness on February 19. He reached his Arizona home on the twenty-fourth and seemed to feel better, but the following day he passed away. His death was attributed to "quick consumption which was no doubt brought on by overwork . . . ." The second death was that of Elder Bryan W. Peck in Tennessee, February 27, 1900, "the cause of death being a severe attack of the measles, terminating in acute bronchitis."[49]

Appalled at the continued missionary deaths and anxious to prevent further ones, President Rich offered reproof and counsel in an open letter addressed to the home town saints and to the missionaries. Entitled "Martyrdom or Suicide," the Star article implied that some missionaries had brought about their own sickness or death by ". . . violating a law of God . . . " in not caring for their physical

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[47] Star, I, No. 39 (August 26, 1899), 305-306.

[48] Letter from the First Presidency to Rich, dated September 1, 1899, in the Letter Books of Lorenzo Snow.

[49] Star, II, No. 15 (March 10, 1900), 120.

bodies. Upon returning home, some were ". . . physical wrecks and prematurely old men," making them susceptible to disease; seriously ill elders had remained in the field rather than return home (before completing two years of service) to bear "vituperation and scandal" and be "branded as cowards . . . by those who should be their consolers."[50]

In spite of these efforts at prevention, President Rich was to witness the demise of four more elders that same year and several more before his release in 1908. In reflecting upon these years, Rich later wrote, "I think the saddest moments of my life as a missionary have been those devoted to preparing the bodies of my companions for shipment home. I realize, however, that they were merely transferred to labor in a greater missionary field Beyone, ..."[51]

Without Purse or Scrip

Perhaps the greatest challange to the elders laboring in the Southern States Mission was the requirement to travel "without purse or scrip." The practice was Biblical and was justified by the teachings of Jesus Christ to his twelve disciples and ". . . other

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[50] Star, II, No. 17 (March 24, 1900), 132. Rich again chastized Church members during the October conference in Salt Lake City. Speaking of the Southern States Mission, he said, "Sometimes Elders in that mission lose their health, and they are often home years and years with out regaining it. Many times they should come home before they do, but I have had Elders say to me, 'Brother Rich, I would rather stay here and die, than go home before I have been here two years, and fulfilled an honorable mission, such a one as will gain me the approval of my Heavenly Father, and my brethren and sisters at home'." After explaining that there was no two-year mission, Rich challenged the members to have confidence in their leaders, welcome elders' who return before two years in the field, and "cease their gossiping . . . ." Conference Report, October, 1904, p. 39.

[51] Official report to the First Presidency from Ben E. Rich, dated September 15, 1908, in the Personal Papers of Ben E. Rich, Box 2, Folder 3.

seventy also:"

> Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves, for the workman is worthy of his meat. (Matthew 10: 9, 10)
>
> Carry neither purse, nor scrip, now shoes: and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, peace be to this house. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. (Luke 10: 4, 5, 7)

Ben E. Rich, expecting his elders to abide by this principle, gave detailed instructions to new missionaries to avoid carrying money and, upon receiving some, to send it immediately to the office. Rich taught that the practice was directly related to spirituality:

> The less money an Elder carries around in his pocket, the more of the spirit and power of God will he carry around in his heart. If you depend upon money, you will lay out in the woods. If you depend upon the Lord He will remember you and bless you.[52]

Although the practice of carrying no money greatly reduced the financial burden to missionaries, it increased their susceptibility to hardship and vulnerability to enemies.[53] Elders found more success living this principle in country areas rather than in the cities because of the hospitality of the country people and of "Uncle Sam," (the woods) when elders were unable to find "entertainment" (lodging) for the night. Over the years the difficulty of city proselyting resulted in a nearly exclusive country membership, regularly visited by traveling elders. Enemies soon accused the mission of appealing to

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[52]From an address by Rich to incoming missionaries, Star, I, No. 9 (January 28, 1899), 68-69.

[53]Refer to pp. 54 and 61 of this Chapter. See also examples of elders arrested for not paying poll and road taxes, Star, II, No. 1 (December 2, 1899) 8; and Historical Minutes SSM, September, 1901.

only the "ignorant and unlearned" classes of people in the country. To counter the implication that the Mormon "brand" of the gospel would not endure intelligent scrutiny, some missionaries attempted to proselyte within cities. When many of them were threatened with arrest on charges of vagrancy, they were forced to carry money. However, they were still counseled by the mission to purchase food and entertainment only when unavoidable.[54]

Conference Time

Progress in the cities was further hampered by city officials who often denied the elders permission to distribute tracts or hold meetings on the streets. To improve the "country only" image of the Church, Rich requested the conference presidents to arrange future conference meetings in the large cities. In preparation for these meetings, elders were to "canvass" the town announcing the conference. and distributing dodgers (small hand bills) to invite the people to attend the public meetings. These first city conferences were generally successful, and several newspapers cooperated by publicizing the proceedings. At each conference, meetings of the first day were open to the public. President Rich, the conference president, and several other elders discoursed on gospel subjects. Private meetings of the

[54] Star, II, No. 14 (March 3, 1900), 105. A proposed bill was seriously considered by the South Carolina House of Representatives to arrest any person as a vagrant, even if he had money, if he had no occupation to yield support and taught "at varience with or contrary to good morals as recognized by the laws of this state." The Star editors quipped, "Jesus would have a hard time of it if He were to visit South Carolina, traveling without purse or scrip, should the above bill become law." Star, II, No. 17 (March 24, 1900), 135.

elders were held on the second day, including a morning "counsel meeting," when the elders shared their experiences and testimonies of the truthfulness of their work. During the afternoon the elders were assigned new "fields of labor" and new companions. Some were released to go home, while others were appointed to leadership positions in the conference or mission. The conference time was a great boon to the spirit and morale of the elders and a time to renew acquaintances and their dedication to the missionary work.[55]

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[55]For a detailed description of a conference see Star, I, No. 13 (February 25, 1899), 103.

CHAPTER VII

A NEW MISSION AND A NEW "STAR"

With the addition of the Ohio Conference in August, 1899, the Southern States Mission boundaries encompassed an area ranging from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico and from the Atlantic Seaboard to the border of Texas. Even with the transfer of Louisiana to the Southwestern States Mission in November, 1900, the Southern States Mission remained one of unwieldy size.

A Division and a New President

After lengthy consultation with mission presidents involved, in the spring of 1902 the First Presidency of the Church decided to divide the Southern States Mission. President Rich, who had recommended the boundaries of the new mission, was appointed to preside over the new Middle States Mission, including the Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, and Ohio Conferences from the Southern States Mission and the West Virginia Conference from the Eastern States Mission.

Elder Ephraim H. Nye, who had been serving as a conference president in the Eastern States Mission, was selected to preside over the remaining area of the Southern States Mission.[1] Nye came from a

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[1]Historical Minutes of the Southern States Mission, May, 1902, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter referred to as Historical Minutes SSM.

background of extensive missionary service. Born in England, August 6, 1845, Nye immigrated with his newly converted family to Ogden, Utah in 1860. At the ago of thirty-six he was called on a mission to England where he presided over the London Conference until his release in June, 1884. In 1896, Nye returned to the mission field as president of the California Mission, where he served until his release in May, 1901. He had been home about six months when he was called to the Eastern States Mission to succeed President John G. McQuarrie.[2] Nye served in that mission until his call to the Southern States in May, 1902.

After arriving in the Chattanooga mission home in June, the new president, Ephraim H. Nye, accompanied Ben E. Rich on a tour of the conferences to greet the missionaries. Upon returning to Chattanooga, the two mission presidents jointly held a formal conference of conference presidents to discuss the impending division with the missionary leaders. Speeches given by Rich, Nye, and McQuarrie, "Veterans of a thousands field,"[3] [sic] highlighted the occasion. The division was finalized on July 3, 1902, with the shipment of a half

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[2]Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, November 1, 1901, p. 4; May 15, 1903, p. 3; May 16, 1903, pp. 2, 6; hereafter referred to as JH. The First Presidency shortly afterwards deferred this action, requesting Nye to labor under McQuarrie until the release of the latter, at which time Nye was to succeed him. See the letter from the First Presidency to Nye, dated November 4, 1901, in the Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter referred to as Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith.

[3]Historical Minutes SSM, July, 1902.

share of mission supplies and property to Atlanta, the new headquarters of the Southern States Mission.

A "Welcome" to the Cities

It should be remembered that Atlanta, as well as the entire state of Georgia, had only reopened to missionary work since the spring of 1898. Accordingly it was to be expected that the establishment of mission headquarters in Atlanta might stir up the former hatred. However, the debut of the mission home in the "queen city of the South" was quiet, marred only by mild resentment of neighbors and talk of having the home declared a nuisance.

At the beginning of his administration, President Nye adopted the policy of assigning the elders to the cities, where possible, in preference to country districts. Although this required some abandonment of the practice of traveling without "purse or scrip," the results were immediate and encouraging. During the summer of 1902, although elders in Mississippi and the Carolinas experienced considerable opposition, in other conferences the missionaries opened many cities previously closed to their efforts.

In sending the missionaries to the cities, Nye was concerned that the Southern saints would be weakened, scattered as they were in the countryside. Accordingly, he assigned some elders to remain in the country and labor primarily among the members to strengthen them.[4]

Perhaps this vigorous emphasis upon city proselyting was President Nye's greatest contribution to the people of the South. The

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[4]Ibid, July through November, 1902.

saints felt deprived for a time by the policy change, but the establishment of continuous proselyting efforts in the major cities bore the future leadership of large congregations and centers of Church strength in the Southern states.

Tragedy Strikes--The Death of Fife

As was the case with the president he succeeded, Ephraim H. Nye experienced the tragic loss of missionaries who died in the climate of the South. The division of the missions during the previous summer ended the convenience of transferring elders to the cooler northern areas, but sickly elders in the Southern states were occasionally transferred to the Middle States Mission.

Elder John J. Fife, the first missionary to die under Nye's administration, passed away December 7, 1902, near Camden, Alabama, after an illness of one week. The attending physician, Dr. Bension, diagnosed the cause of death as diptheria and recommended the immediate burial of the remains. Desiring that the body be shipped home for burial, President Nye attempted to make the arrangements, but the physician became hostile and signed a death certificate which eliminated any legal shipment of the body. Within hours, the entire community became alarmed, and the elders were threatened with violence if they did not leave. By considerable effort the body was secretly transported during the night to the neighboring town of Selma, where friends offered to help.

The board of health convened at Selma at the request of Nye and determined that the only lawful course was to bury the body, after which it could be exhumed and shipped home (with a permit from each

state board of health along the route). The recommended proceedure was followed, and finally the body was sent home May 21, 1903, after nearly six months of delay.[5]

An Outrage--The Beating of Olpin

Unfortunately, the death of Elder Fife was simply a prelude to another tragedy--the savage assault upon Elder A. H. Olpin in South Carolina, the morning of March 27, 1903. According to his companion, Elder George Bertoch, before breakfast Olpin announced to his host that the work of the day would include some baptizing of converts. As none were scheduled, Bertoch suspected that Olpin's mind was becoming affected. Later in the morning as the two missionaries rested by the side of the road leading to Lake City, a Negro driver turned his wagon aside to avoid Olpin's "grip" which lay in the road. Olpin suddenly began to yell at the driver and chased the wagon. Failing to catch the wagon, Olpin ran into a nearby home and screamed at the frightened occupants, "Why didn't you make that villain [referring to the Negro] bring back my grip." Elder Bertoch overtook his companion; and with the assistance of the home owner, a Mr. Stewart, who had been called into the house, the two succeeded in subduing Olpin and tying his hands. Seeing the vulnerability of the elders' situation, Stewart drew a gun on Bertoch and, in company with several other men, ordered him to run or be killed. Bertoch fled.

According to witnesses, Elder Olpin, hands tied and mind clouded, faced the mobbers in his helpless condition. Without mercy

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[5]Ibid., December, 1902, May, 1903.

they beat him "like wild beasts" and threw him out of the yard. He staggered down the road toward Lake City, only to return a few moments later, disheveled and confused. The cowardly mob viciously beat him again, while he prayed for his life, for those beating him, and for his wife and family if he were killed. In the following minutes, the attackers started him toward town several times, only to have him return, hands still tied, for further abuse. Finally, they knocked him into a ditch and beat him until he could not get out.[6]

To camouflage the deed, the mobbers took him to Lake City and accused both Olpin and Bertoch of "assault with attempt to commit rape." A warrant was issued for Bertoch, and he was arrested and jailed. At a preliminary hearing of the charges, witnesses testified that Olpin had used "insulting language" before a girl in another home after he had been released by them; but the judge became convinced of the unsound mind of Olpin, released Bertoch, and committed Olpin to the county jail.

In the absence of President Nye, who was in Salt Lake City at the time, the mission secretary, Elder N. J. Harris, traveled from Atlanta to Kingstree, South Carolina, to assist the two missionaries. Finding Olpin in a "pitiful condition" in the jail at Kingstree, Harris succeeded in having him transferred to the state hospital at Columbia. After investigating the charges against the elders, Harris

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[6]Historical Minutes SSM, March, 1903. Neighbors who witnessed the beating of Olpin said that because of the memory of the event they had trouble sleeping at night.

sent a letter of report to Salt Lake City.[7] Finally in July, Elder Olpin reached his home in Pleasant Grove, Utah, accompanied by Dr. J. L. Thompson of the Hospital for the Insane, Columbia, South Carolina. Dr. Thompson announced that Olpin was making good progress toward full recovery.[8]

The Passing of President Nye

During his administration in the Southern States Mission, President Nye suffered poor health. In October, 1902, he visited Salt Lake City to attend the general conference of the Church. Upon his return to Atlanta, he reported "feeling much improved in health." The demands of his office sapped this renewed strength, however, and in mid-February Nye suffered an attack of pneumonia, further deteriorating his physical condition.[9]

While visiting in Salt Lake City during the general conference of the Church in April, 1903, Nye received word from his mission secretary, N. J. Harris, of the troubles of Elders Bertoch and Olpin. Seemingly in good health, Nye left for Atlanta in company with his wife and daughter.[10]

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[7]The girl to whom Olpin had supposedly given insult, completely contradicted the witnesses who testified against Olpin at the hearing. She claimed that Olpin had not even spoken to her. This information was supplied in full report from Harris, summarized in the Deseret News, April 13, 1903. Initial reports to the News had been somewhat sketchy, resulting in a headline, "Beaten Until Bereft of Reason." Deseret News [Salt Lake City], April 2, 1903, p. 1.

[8]Elders Journal [Atlanta, Georgia], I, No. 2 (September, 1903), p. 14. See also Deseret News, July 6, 1903, p. 2.

[9]Historical Minutes SSM, October, 1902, February, March, 1903.

[10]Upon leaving Salt Lake City in April, Nye appeared to the Church President to be in the best of health. JH, May 15, 1903, p.3.

In mid-May, Nye traveled to Columbia, South Carolina, to consult with the authorities about the removal of Elder Olpin from the state hospital. As related by Dr. Babcock, the superintendent of the hospital in Columbia, Nye arrived at the hospital May 15, weary from the long trip and the difficulty in finding a place to stop because the city was filled for a reunion of old Confederate soldiers. After visiting Olpin and the physicians, Nye was waiting in the parlor when he experienced a heart attack. He took some glycerine, (he had a history of heart disease)[11] but with no good result. Wired of his condition, his wife and daughter left Atlanta to be with him, but President Nye passed away at 1:00 a.m., May 16, while they were enroute.[12]

Elder N. J. Harris, appointed to take charge in the emergency, expressed the grief of the missionaries at the death of President Nye: "Our rejoicing was now turned to sorrow, and besides his loved ones he left a number of Elders who dearly loved him and he will ever remain in their memories." When word was received several days later of the death of Elder Silas T. Andrus from typhoid fever, the missionaries were stunned: "We stand appalled at the troubles that have overtaken us, and we are awe-stricken in the midst of death."[13]

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[11] Ben E. Rich reported that Nye had had several attacks while in Atlanta. Letter from Rich to Joseph F. Smith, dated May 17, 1903, found in the Papers of Joseph F. Smith, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter referred to as Papers of Joseph F. Smith.

[12] Letter from N. J. Harris to President of the Church. Joseph F. Smith, May 18, 1903, as reprinted in the Deseret News, May 22, 1903, p. 1.

[13] Historical Minutes SSM, May, 1903. See also Appendix D.

The Brief Middle States Mission

During the one-year administration of President Nye, the history of the Southern States Mission was highlighted by the opening of city work, but dimmed with the deaths of three missionaries and the brutal beating of one elder. The Middle States Mission, in existence during the same year, suffered no deaths but experienced a continuation of bitter opposition, occasionally brightened with a glimmer of tolerance.

From his new headquarters of the Middle States Mission in Cincinnatti, Ohio, Ben E. Rich continued the policy of assigning most elders to the country districts where they could travel without "purse or scrip" and strengthen the country members.[14] Although most elders were well cared for, those assigned to West Virginia (transferred from the Eastern States Mission) suffered the worst opposition during that year. In addition to several serious mob incidents, elders were "starved" out of one county when they were continually denied food and lodging. Two other elders, showing an ignorance of the temperment of the people, displayed the United States flag on the Fourth of July, bearing the name of "Utah." Although they simply wanted "to remind the people of West Virginia that Utahs Son's [sic] desired to join

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[14]Historical Minutes of the Middle States Mission (contained in the Historical Minutes of the Southern States Mission), Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 25, 1903, hereafter referred to as Historical Minutes Middle States Mission. Rich believed the country work presented a new elder with more opportunity to hold meetings and become proficient in preaching the gospel. See letter dated February 9, 1903, in the Deseret News, February 14, 1903, p. 22.

them in celebrating the Fourth of July," the people were offended and ordered the elders to take their flag down.[15]

In other parts of the mission, elders enjoyed a friendliness toward the Church. Many people of East Tennessee became interested in the message of the elders, "where at one time, God's servants were not permitted to travel." The mayor of Richmond, Virginia, exhibited an unusually helpful attitude toward the missionaries. As reported by the elders, he promised them protection, saying:

> Your men have never been molested in the city during my career; nor do I propose that they should be as long as I am chief executive of Richmond. Gentlemen, if Mormonism is the only means whereby I can gain admittance into the presence of my God, and be saved, I want Mormonism.[16]

The Reuniting of the Mission

When word was received of the passing of President Nye, President Rich left immediately for Atlanta to be of assistance.[17] He found Sister Nye "prostrate with grief" over the death of her husband. However, the affairs of the mission seemed to be in good hands under the direction of Elder N. J. Harris, and Rich returned to Cincinnatti.

The First Presidency appointed Harris as acting president pending the appointment of a new president. However, Church leaders had not filled the vacancy when they received a letter from Ben E. Rich suggesting the missions be reunited. The letter called

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[15] Historical Minutes Middle States Mission, July, 1902. Utah had only recently gained statehood, and, as shown by the denial of the congressional seat to Roberts, the acceptance of Utah on a par with her sister states was still controversial.

[16] Ibid., November, 1902.

[17] Letter to Joseph F. Smith from Rich, dated May 17, 1903, Papers of Joseph F. Smith.

attention to the self-sustaining nature of the Southern States Mission prior to the division in 1902:

> Until the division of the Mission, we got along excellently but now . . . the expense of running the smaller one is almost as large as the larger . . . [If the Church wishes to be under no expense in running the mission] . . . then I can see no other way than to reunite the Missions and let the work in this part be carried on under one head as formerly.
>
> It is needless to say that there would be more work devolving upon the head, but what man has once done, man can do again, and especially if the servants of God desire it.[18]

Rich's subtle hint of his willingness to resume the greater responsibility of the combined missions was considered by the authorities in Salt Lake City. With their understanding of the demands that the Southern States Mission Presidency made on a man (B. H. Roberts and J. Golden Kimball[19] were former presidents in the Southern States), they decided to reappoint Rich as president of the entire South as before, with the apparent intention of releasing him from his duties in two years.[20] John Henry Smith, a member of the Twelve, informed Rich of the intended two-year tenure and offered him congratulations, ". . . on the increased work that must come to you

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[18] Ibid., June 9, 1903.

[19] After being in the South and beset by problems for eight months, Rich expressed his feelings about the mission presidency to his close friend, J. Golden Kimball: ". . . if anyone imagines for a moment that its a picnic to be president of the Southern States Mission, he is a damn fool . . . ." From a letter to Kimball from Rich, dated February 18, 1899, in the Southern States Mission Letter Books, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

[20] Letter from the First Presidency to Rich, dated July 24, 1903, in the Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith. With their understanding of the difficulty of being president of the Southern States Mission, the General Authorities reappointed Rich with the intention of releasing him in 1905.

by the restoration of the old lines of your mission."[21] Although the size of the mission was disadvantageous, no further changes in its boundaries were made until the transfer of Ohio in 1926, and the creation of the East Central States Mission in 1928. (See Appendix B)

The "new" Southern States Mission included the same area that was within the mission prior to the 1902 division, West Virginia having been transferred back to the Eastern States Mission. Rich selected Elder N. J. Harris as a counselor and moved his family (Nina and four children had accompanied Rich to Cincinnatti in April, 1903) and mission property to Atlanta, Georgia, where headquarters were already established.

Realizing the need for uniformity, President Rich immediately called a conference of conference presidents in Atlanta. Out of respect for the ability of the late president, Rich pledged to ". . . adopt all of the ideas of President Nye that we can . . . ."[22] At this two-day meet, held August 29 and 30, the mission leaders adopted rules and regulations governing all phases of the missionary work. These rules were to be printed, Rich announced, in a new monthly circular, published to communicate regularly with the missionaries.[23]

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[21] Letter from John Henry Smith to Rich, dated June 27, 1903, in the Letter Books of John Henry Smith, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

[22] Letter to the First Presidency from Rich, dated August 22, 1903, in the Papers of Joseph F. Smith.

[23] Elders Journal, I, No. 1 (August, 1903), 2.

A New "Star"--The Elders Journal

At the rejoining of the two missions in August, 1903, President Rich announced to mission leaders the need of a monthly circular to communicate regularly with the elders.[24] The first number of this circular to the elders was published August 25, in Atlanta and was entitled the Elders Journal. It was small enough, with the edges trimmed, to be kept in a missionary's journal. The name was even more significant, however, because Rich considered it as a "resurrection" of the original Elders Journal published by the Prophet Joseph Smith decades earlier.[25] The purpose of the Elders Journal, as explained by Joseph Smith, was republished in the 1906 version as a tribute to the original periodical:

> This paper is intended to be a vehicle of communication for all the Elders of the Church of Latter Day Saints, through which they can communicate to others, all things pertaining to their mission, and calling as servants of the living God, and as messengers of righteousness to the nations among whom they are sent. As there have been many desires expressed by the Elders of said Church to have a periodical of this kind published, it is hoped that the present proposals will meet with their unqualified approbation, and will find a patron and a friend in all those into whose hands it comes.
>
> --Joseph Smith, 1837[26]

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[24]Although Rich had been writing regular letters to the elders he preferred a regular newspaper or circular. See Rich's letter to the Elders of the Southern States Mission, dated January 1, 1901, in the Southern States Mission Papers, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Box 3, hereafter referred to as SSM Papers.

[25]Rich envisioned his publication becoming the realization of the dream of Joseph Smith when he published the original Elders Journal in Kirtland, Ohio, and Far West, Missouri, from October, 1837, to August, 1838. Letter from Rich to John G. McQuarrie, February 15, 1907, SSM Papers, Box 3.

[26]Elders Journal [Kirtland, Ohio], I, No. 1 (October, 1837), Joseph Smith Jr., ed.

In the first volume of Rich's Elders Journal, he attempted to maintain the spirit of Joseph Smith's publication and the appeal of the defunct Southern Star. The Journal quickly became popular and gained a circulation of about one thousand subscribers by the end of the first volume.

At the beginning of the second volume, the Journal (as it was affectionately called) could no longer fit in a missionary's daily journal as its pages were increased in size to six by nine inches. The second, third, and fourth volumes (September 1, 1904, to June 15, 1907), published bi-monthly from Chattanooga, Tennessee, enjoyed increasing circulations and a more professional appearance. The assistant editors of the Journal were carefully selected from among the elders in the mission or from those at home who were especially called to assist in its publication.[27]

By the end of the third volume the Journal had increased in circulation to about five thousand subscribers scattered in the West and in various Church missions throughout the world. The Journal's popularity was a result of its intrinsic worth to Church members and its support by Church leaders, won by the personal magnitism and journalistic ability of Ben E. Rich. The Journal included a section, "Notes From the Field," by which members in the mission became acquainted with one another by shared testimonies, experiences, hopes and dreams. In the midst of persecution, isolated members of the Church could take comfort in the descriptions of miracles and the workings of the Spirit of God:

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[27]See letters dated June 1, July 12, July 20, 1904, in the Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith.

> . . . [Margaret E. Shelley, sixty years old] has been sick for three years and has been confined to her room and bed for two years. She was led into the water and three days after she walked two blocks to visit her son. This was the first time she has walked on ground for two years.[28]

Members of the Church shared eye-witness accounts of the wrath of God upon those who had persecuted the missionaries in the past: "Sister Willie Dillie, of Mississippi says that the leading men of the mob which drove the Elders out of a place in Yazoo County a few years ago, are fast dying, many of them have suffered intense pain before dying."[29] Another wrote of the mobbers who had whipped Elders Stewart and Zundle in Georgia:

> Several of those men lost their minds and only lived a short time. There is also a young lady here now who is insane. When the Elders first came here she was very bitter toward them, and gave a lecture on Mormonism. They say she is a pitiful sight to see, and talks sometimes about the Elders. I can't help feeling sorry sometimes when I meet the surviving mobbers. They look so miserable. I wish they might have a little of that Spirit which gives peace and good will to men.[30]

The Journal won the support of the saints in the South and many expressed their love for the "little Journal" and for the satisfaction it brought to them. Ben E. Rich took great pride in this publication he had initiated. He once expressed his feelings of its value to the First Presidency:

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[28] Elders Journal, III, No. 21 (July 1, 1906) 393, 394.

[29] Ibid., 412. See Chapter III, pp. 18-20.

[30] Elders Journal, IV, No. 10 (February 15, 1907), 236. The mobbers had taken the elders into the woods, held court, and voted whether to kill or whip them. "Those of the whip class gained the day, and secured a buggy trace and prepared to wreck their pent up hate by administering 25 lashes to President Stewart and his companion 15." Historical Minutes SSM, September, 1901.

> The Journal is worth all the expense of publication it has entailed, for it is doing the work of fifty missionaries and covers the ground twice a month, which a hundred missionaries could not do.
>
> When it shall have more generally entered into the homes of the Saints in this part of the Lord's Vineyard, a great missionary work will be accomplished, for then we can counsel and instruct the Saints twice every month if necessary, upon the things pertaining to their eternal salvation.[31]

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[31] Annual report from Rich to the First Presidency, dated March 6, 1906, Historical Minutes SSM, March, 1906.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MATURING OF THE WORK

A Home in the South

Although President Rich had decided to maintain the mission headquarters in Atlanta, the "queen city of the South," he longed to return to Tennessee and the friendship and loyalty of the Chattanooga businessmen which he had won by integrity and loyalty in dealing with them.[1] In recent times of persecution these business acquaintances had appealed to the Southern people for tolerance toward the missionaries and had even published a newspaper article describing their feelings for the Chattanooga missionaries:

> [as] . . . customers, citizens, and gentlemen. [They are a] . . . straight forward, honest, and upright class of citizens . . . [and] . . . have always shown a loyal spirit to the city in which they are located and as a consequence the local merchants and businessmen are the winners.[2]

While administering the mission from Atlanta, President Rich became imbued with the idea of building a permanent home in the South.

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[1]John Henry Smith had encouraged Rich to cultivate the friendship of Chattanooga businessmen as a "protection to our people in the South." Letter from Smith to Rich, dated July (date illegible) 1899, in the Letter Books of John Henry Smith, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

[2]The article, published in the Chattanooga News, November 24, 1900, is also found in the Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

During a trip to visit Rexburg family members in April, 1904, Rich wrote the First Presidency to explain his idea and obtain their approval. In the letter he expressed his great desire to accomplish the project: "I would rather turn my back on politics completely and build that Mission House in the South than to be a maker of half a dozen Senators."[3]

Confident of the First Presidency approval, Rich took another opportunity to gain more support for the proposition several days later. As a guest speaker to a Salt Lake reunion of hundreds of former Southern States missionaries,[4] President Rich expressed his hope for the erection of a Church-owned mission home and meeting house, with the sanction of the Church authorities and the aid of the returned missionaries. The enthusiasm of the large crowd, numbering an estimated six or seven hundred, seemed to ensure the success of the venture. The May issue of the Journal announced the First Presidency endorsement for construction of "suitable mission headquarters" and encouraged financial support from all those who had served formerly in the mission.[5]

A few months later, Rich was offered an option to purchase the former mission home in Chattanooga at a bargain price. Since

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[3]This statement was in response to rumors concerning his management of the political movements of Senator Thomas L. Kearns. See Chapter IX, p. 113; Letter to the First Presidency from Rich, dated March 29, 1904, in the Papers of Joseph F. Smith, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; hereafter referred to as Papers of Joseph F. Smith.

[4]Deseret News [Salt Lake City], April 5, 1904, p. 12.

[5]Elders Journal [Atlanta, Georgia], I, No. 10 (May, 1904), 119.

the lease on the Atlanta home was to expire in July, Rich viewed the option as an opportunity to return to the friendship of Chattanooga and, at the same time, to realize his dream of having a permanent mission home in the South. In a letter to the First Presidency, he listed the advantages of the purchase, including the friendship of the people:

> The people of Chattanooga are very friendly and so are the newspapers. They will welcome us back there, and I believe it is the proper place for us to be established, and that in time of trouble we can reach influential men in the South through the influence we will have in Chattanooga.[6]

Upon receiving permission to proceed with the move, Rich expressed his great delight at the prospects of seeing the Chattanooga building remodled and dedicated, the "consummation of a prayer that I have many times offered."[7]

A Return to Chattanooga

Within a week after receiving permission to purchase the former mission home, President Rich traveled to Chattanooga, closed the option on the new mission home, and made arrangements to move the mission headquarters from Atlanta. He received a warm welcome from his many business acquaintances as well as "half-a-dozen invitations for dinner."[8] By late August, the transfer of the mission

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[6]Letter to the First Presidency from Rich, dated June 5, 1904, in the Papers of Joseph F. Smith.

[7]Rich stated that his work to obtain a permanent mission home made him "happier than anything that has happened in connection with my work in the South," Papers of Joseph F. Smith, July 12, 1904.

[8]Letter to the First Presidency from Rich, dated July 15, 1904, in the Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Figure 4

The Chattanooga Mission Home[9]

headquarters was complete. The September issue of the Elders Journal published in Chattanooga, contained an article, "No Place Like Home," describing the "hearty welcome" by the people of Chattanooga who "have almost made us forget that we are the representatives of an unpopular religion."[10]

The move had been completed, but the work of paying off the mortgage required a greater effort. Rich organized a fund raising effort through the Elders Journal to solicit funds from the saints in the mission and from former missionaries who had returned home. Receipts issued to donors were entitled "Beautiful Certificates" and bore a photograph of the new mission home.[11]

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[9] Courtesy of Mrs. William M. Palmer, Salt Lake City.

[10] Elders Journal, II, No. 1 (September 1, 1904), 1.

[11] Ibid., II, No. 3 (October 1, 1904), 4.

The Work Matures

The purchase of a permanent Southern States Mission home marked the beginning of a gradual decrease of persecution within the mission and paralled a new public relations effort by the Church, spearheaded by President Joseph F. Smith. As the Church paid off its debts, funds were available to purchase historic landmarks and build visitor's centers, the first being the Temple Square Bureau of Information in August, 1902.[12] The Bureau of Information attempted to give a positive impression of the Church to tourists, and its effects were immediate as names of interested visitors were sent to various mission fields. The Southern States Mission reported "much good" accomplished as a result of the Temple Square referrals of 1902 and 1903.[13]

Branch conferences became a regular feature of the mission in rural areas as well as in the cities. These branch conferences generated some opposition but were markedly successful, a source of strength to scattered members who were able for the first time to hear the sermons of mission leaders.

When the price of the Book of Mormon was lowered to fifty cents, mission leaders gave emphasis to sales of the Book, whereas previously such aspects of mission work as the number of miles walked and the number of families visited had been of prime consideration. When reports showed that the elders had sold an average

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[12] Russell R. Rich, Ensign to the Nations (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Publications, 1972), p. 476-478.

[13] Elders Journal, I, No. 4 (November, 1903), 34.

of three copies of the Book of Mormon in eight months, mission leaders instructed them in new methods of distribution, resulting in increased sales.[14]

Proselyting Efforts in the Cities

The emphasis placed upon city work during the administration of President Nye continued to a great extent when the missions were reunited. However, the nature of city proselyting required the elders to carry money and purchase their board and room. Occasionally they were provided "entertainment" by generous boarding houses, but generally they found rooms with private families at nominal cost. During the summer months, most city elders were asked by the mission president to travel into the country, teach tithing to the saints, and administer the Sacrament to them. These excursions into country areas were to be done without purse or scrip, the "old method," as President Rich and the elders referred to it. Rich loved the "old method" and encouraged the elders to follow it whenever possible.[15]

The success of city proselyting had always been subject to the whims of local government and law enforcement officials who, on occasions too numerous to mention, denied the elders the right to

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[14]The Northern States Mission had successfully developed a team system: One elder carried the laundry of other team members to a rendezvous point while the rest carried full grips of Book of Mormon copies to sell. See the letter to conference presidents, September 11, 1907, Southern States Mission Papers, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Box 3; hereafter referred to as SSM Papers.

[15]See letters to conference presidents dated May 26, 1906, and September 7, 1906, SSM Papers; Elders Journal, I, No. 11 (June, 1904), 133, and I, No. 12 (July, 1904), 150.

hold street meetings, sell books, or distribute tracts. Some city authorities had repeatedly refused to allow the missionaries to even be in the city and had imprisoned them if they remained.

For years Ben E. Rich had encouraged the elders to stop applying to town mayors for permission to distribute tracts, since there could be no constitutional law prohibiting such; but out of tradition or habit many elders continued the practice and often met the disappointment of being refused all rights to proselyte in certain towns. At the conclusion of the Smoot hearings in February, 1907, municipal officials as well as the general populace, began to be more tolerant of Mormon proselyting efforts and less responsive to the demands of Protestant ministers bent on a practice of continued opposition to the Mormon elders.

In July, 1907, President Rich, irritated by city officials who illegally harassed the elders, explained an aggressive policy to aid the missionaries working in urban areas. He advised conference presidents that it was nonsense for an elder to ask any mayor for rights guaranteed by the law. To do so only permitted the official an opportunity to bluff the elders and deny them permission to proselyte. Rather than follow this course, Rich instructed the missionaries to get a permit from any city which enforced ordinances prohibiting street meetings or the selling of books. If an elder was unable to obtain the necessary information concerning such ordinances he was to proceed with his missionary work: "If you get in jail it is a sure sign that there is an ordinance; if you don't get into jail

then thank the Lord for the privilege of holding a few meetings."[16] Whether or not President Ben E. Rich was serious in this instruction to the missionaries, his attitude was obviously more aggressive toward those who unfairly harassed the elders and misused civic authority. Recent courtroom successes of the missionaries had boosted his confidence in the fairness of the jury system when trying elders.

In one such trial, Elder Dyal of Georgia and Elder Stinson of Arizona were charged with "tresspass" on a complaint signed by some local ministers. During the proceedings Dyal answered the attorneys for one and one-half hours. Other witnesses were called to the stand and asked if they found any differences between the elders' teaching and that of other ministers. The witnesses answered, "They preached from our own Bible, but they taught us more about it than we ever knew before." After two days of testimony, the jury deliberated thirty-three minutes and announced a verdict of "Not Guilty!" The people invited the elders to preach in the school and in the church, and the obvious friendliness of the community seemed to relegate to the past the sentiment, "There is no law for the Mormons."[17]

In addition, President Rich was bolstered by the addition of another elder with uncommon abilities--Charles A. Callis. The mission had a lawyer!

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[16] Letter to conference presidents dated July 15, 1907, in the SSM Papers.

[17] Elders Journal, IV, No. 13 (April 1, 1907), 302.

Charles A. Callis--A New Offensive

In May, 1906, Elder Charles A. Callis from Coalville, Utah, arrived in the Southern States Mission accompanied by his wife and two children. The Callis's were assigned to labor in Jacksonville, Florida, and by September, Elder Callis was appointed president of the Florida Conference. Callis, innovative and bold in his missionary labors, set up large tents[18] where chapels were unavailable; with his training as a lawyer he was admitted to the Bar in Florida.

Ben E. Rich came to rely on the special abilities of Elder Callis and used him in other areas of the mission when his services were needed. When Elder George Perry was arrested in Darlington, South Carolina, in September, 1907, Rich sent Callis to help defend the missionary. The case was especially serious since the charge had been "trumped up by the Sheriff," and the judge was prejudiced and had declared to the people that they should " . . . shoot the Elders down like dogs . . .," and he would clear them.[19] Perry was charged with "riot" and "intent to kill" and indicted by the Grand Jury. After proving he was a member of the Bar of Florida, Callis assisted in a successful attempt to have the trial continued to the next term of the court because of the strong prejudice in the courtroom. The trouble had a positive effect in the city of Darlington

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[18] Years later as mission president, Callis conducted a "Gospel Tent" campaign in Georgia and Florida. See the Historical Minutes of the Southern States Mission, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, August, 1913, to August, 1914; hereafter referred to as Historical Minutes SSM.

[19] Report of the South Carolina Conference President in the Historical Minutes SSM, September, 1907.

and caused many to investigate the Church. After the proceedings, Elder Callis made many friends for the Church by explaining Mormonism to the assembled attorneys and businessmen of Darlington at their own request.[20]

Figure 5

Charles A. Callis[21]

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[20] Details of the arrest and trial of Elder Perry and his companions are given in a report by Charles A. Callis in the Historical Minutes SSM, October 7, 1907.

[21] Courtesy of the Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Changes in the "Journal"

The increasing popularity of the Elders Journal resulted in several rapid changes to its format and style and eventually led to its termination as a distinct publication of the Southern States Mission. A special supplement to the third volume of the Journal announced that Church authorities had selected it as a medium to publish the writings of each Church leader. Hence, the Journal's fourth volume would be of greater size and would, of necessity, eliminate the many "kind expressions" from friends. Notes from the field were to be published only when of general interest or historical merit.[22]

Issued October 1, 1906, the first number of the revised Elders Journal was sub-titled "A Scrapbook of Mormon Literature." Although Volume IV distinguished itself as a literary gem, of necessity it lacked the intimate "family" feeling that marked earlier volumes. However, the number of subscriptions continued to climb, and by the end of the fourth volume, the Journal's circulation was nearly six thousand.

The "Close" of the Elders Journal

During the winter of 1906-1907, the Central States Mission proposed to publish a missionary newspaper at Independence, Missouri, to serve the needs of all the Latter-day Saint missions in the United States. Ben E. Rich, recognizing that a competing mission paper would threaten the progress of his own publication, argued that the

[22] Elders Journal, III, No. 25 (September 1, 1906), 1, 2.

Elders Journal should be made the official missionary organ of the Church, "as the Prophet Joseph Smith wanted it to be." He welcomed the support of other mission presidents and Church leaders and encouraged at least one, President McQuarrie of the Eastern States Mission, to quietly campaign for the Journal and raise doubts as to the propriety of another publication.[23]

In the March 1 number of the Elders Journal, Rich continued his campaign for support. He published the endorsements, sent in by many of the General Authorities, mission presidents, and stake presidents, of the Elders Journal, "a scrapbook of Mormon literature."[24]

By April, 1907, President Rich had resigned himself to the fact that the Liahona, the competing paper, would be published in spite of his objections. He then used his influence to preserve the independence of the Elders Journal since it was probable that the two publications would be merged. In the April 15 number of the Journal he argued that there was room enough in the United States for two seperate missionary papers belonging to the Church, " . . . while both will have to rely on help from the stakes of Zion . . . ."[25]

However, this last-ditch effort failed when the decision was made that the Church could not support two papers, and they should be

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[23]The Elders Journal had over 2,500 subscribers in the Southern States Mission, as well as nearly 3,500 in the missions of the United States and foreign lands. Letter to John G. McQuarrie from Rich, dated February 15, 1907, in SSM Papers.

[24]Elders Journal, IV, No. 11 (March 1, 1907).

[25]Ibid., IV, No. 14 (April 15, 1907), 334.

merged. Although President Joseph F. Smith desired to see the combined paper named the "Elders Journal," he left the matter to be determined by the Twelve and the mission presidents. They decided to compromise and named the publication Liahona, The Elders Journal.[26]

Even though the new publication was to be a continuation of the Journal (the first volume of the Liahona, The Elders Journal was designated "Volume V"), the loss of the Elders Journal as a distinct publication was a bitter disappointment to President Rich. He quietly withdrew his active support of the new publication and refused to answer correspondence from the editor, Elder B. F. Cummings.[27]

When Cummings found that the new paper would fail for lack of subscriptions and cooperation of the mission presidents, he appealed to the First Presidency to have the Southern States Mission continue the publication of the Elders Journal for another year. Although Rich may have been agreeable to the request, he declined, explaining that the elders trained to publish the paper had been transferred into the field, the contracts with the printer had been cancelled,

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[26]Letter to S. O. Bennion from Rich, May 10, 1907, in the Personal Papers of Ben E. Rich, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter referred to as Personal Papers of Ben E. Rich. Upon receipt of a bound Volume IV of the Elders Journal, President Joseph F. Smith thanked Rich and added, "The Elders Journal has always possessed unquestionable merit; but it seemed to me that its importance and value greatly increased with each Semi-monthly issue, until the end came, which end I most sincerely regretted." Letter to Rich from Joseph F. Smith, dated September 17, 1904, in the Personal Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

[27]Letter to S. O. Bennion from B. F. Cummings, dated May 10, 1907, in the Personal Papers of Ben E. Rich.

and "Our prestige has been transferred to the new paper." He felt it was possible to arrange a number for June 1, but that any attempts to publish further numbers of the Journal would be disastrous for it and the new paper.[28] Rich's offer was accepted, and he published two extra numbers to allow Cummings adequate time to prepare the first number of the new journal.

On June 22, 1907, the first number of the Liahona, The Elders Journal rolled from the press. It announced the support of President Ben E. Rich, the "fortunate possessor" of an extensive collection of early Mormon literature, from which the new paper would heavily draw.[29] The absence of reports from the Southern States Mission was conspicuous in the first three numbers of the Liahona, The Elders Journal and seemed to contradict the earlier announcement of Rich's support. However, later numbers included reports from the Southern States Mission along with those of other missions in the United States. The Liahona, The Elders Journal continued as the organ of the Latter-day Saint missions in the United States until it was discontinued with Volume XXXXII, February 27, 1945.

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[28] Letter to S. O. Bennion from Rich, dated May 10, 1907, in the Personal Papers of Ben E. Rich.

[29] Liahona, The Elders Journal [Independence, Missouri], V, No. 1 (June 22, 1907), 6.

CHAPTER IX

THE MISSION ENDS

In the days when a mission call required a lengthy seperation of a man from his family, circumstances occasionally required the same of mission presidents called by the Church for long term service. During one of the necessary lengthy seperations of President Ben E. Rich from his wife Diana, she had not written to him for quite some time, nor had he written to her. Finally he mailed a brief note, addressing her by an affectionate nickname:

> Dear Nine,
>
> I haven't heard from you for awhile.
> Are you all well? I am worried.
> I haven't time to write more.
>
> Love Ben

She answered:

> Dear Ben,
>
> We are all well. Don't worry.
> If you haven't time to write,
> you haven't time to read.
>
> Love Nine[1]

This brief exchange gives one a glimpse into the private lives of the Rich family as well as the wit of Sister Diana Farr Rich. Both Diana and Ben, offspring of prominent Utah pioneer families, had been

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[1]Nedra Watkins Reese, "Biography of Diana Farr Rich," 1959, p. 7, unpublished copy in the possession of Mrs. William M. Palmer, Salt Lake City, hereafter referred to as "Biography of Diana Farr Rich." Unless documened otherwise, unpublished materials cited in this chapter are in the possession of Mrs. William M. (Nina Watkins) Palmer, Salt Lake City, Utah.

taught the principles of the restored gospel and the virtue of unselfish sacrifice to fellow men and the Church. Both had an intimate acquaintance with struggle and self-denial.

Years of Preparation

Following their marriage in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City, December 27, 1877, Ben and Diana made their home in Ogden, Utah. A few years later, Elder Ben E. Rich responded to a mission call to England, leaving his wife and two children until his return in 1883. Several years later, he built a home in Ogden for his growing family on land given him by his father-in law, Lorin Farr.[2]

In 1892, financial reverses cost Ben his Ogden business, and a warehouse fire destroyed newly published missionary literature, for which he had mortgaged the family home. In abject poverty Ben accepted the editorship of the Idaho Republican newspaper, Silver Hammer, bundled his family in a "pioneer" covered wagon, and traveled to Rexburg, a hamlet in the rugged wilderness of Idaho.[3] During the next few years, Ben "stumped" for the Republican Party, and in 1896, he became chairman of the Republican State Committee and a delegate to the National Republican Convention.[4]

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[2]"Benjamin Erastus Rich and Diana Farr Rich Family History Tour Book," prepared by the Rich Family Reunion, April 12, 1975, unpublished; hereafter referred to as Family History Book. See also Appendix H.

[3]Ida Rich Strong, "The Rich Life of Ida Strong," 1966, unpublished biography, p. 1-8; hereafter referred to as "Ida Rich Strong Biography."

[4]Family History Book.

When Ben was encouraged by friends to run for the United States Congress, he and Diana discussed the questions of their future and decided that he should confer with the Church leaders. When he returned from the visit he announced to his startled family that he had been called as the new Southern States Mission president.[5]

The unexpected call required Ben to leave for Chattanooga at once to replace the departing Elias S. Kimball, newly called chaplain of the Second Regiment Volunteer Engineers mustered for service in the Spanish-American War.[6] The departure of her husband left Sister Rich to care for the large family of eight children ranging in age from twenty to two. She rented the Rexburg home and arrived in Chattanooga with the three youngest children on January 14, 1899, to act as the "housekeeper and matron" of the mission home.[7] When the family was informed that the mission call was to be long term, Sister Rich left for Rexburg at the end of the school year to sell their home and bring three of the older children to the South.[8]

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[5]His mission call letter, dated June 10, 1898, is in the Letter Books of Wilford Woodruff, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; hereafter referred to as Letter Books of Wilford Woodruff. See also the "Biography of Diana Farr Rich," p. 3.

[6]Kimball's letter of release, dated June 9, 1898, is in the Letter Books of Wilford Woodruff.

[7]Latter-day Saint Southern Star [Chattanooga, Tennessee], "History of the Southern States Mission," II, No. 39 (August 25, 1900), 306; hereafter referred to as Star.

[8]The eight children and their ages were as follows: Ben L., 20; Lorin, 18; Fred, 14½, Homer, 12½; Ida, 10½; Don, 7; Andrea, 5; Frank 2½. See Appendix F.

A Missionary Family

The next several years proved to be difficult ones as President and Sister Rich juggled their time in an attempt to fill the mission responsibilities and yet be with their rapidly growing family as much as possible. Sister Rich divided her time between the mission field and Rexburg, her most important concern being the education of the children (see Appendix H). At times the family lived in the West and President Rich planned long visits during general conference meetings in the spring and fall. However, the younger children received much of their public education in the Southern schools in Chattanooga, Cincinnatti, and Atlanta. Family life in the mission home was strenuous, requiring the children to play quietly and not disturb the elders of the office staff who worked and also lived in the mission home.[9] As the children attended the school across the street from the mission home, they became attractions and objects of scorn to the other children. Andrea later recalled:

> I was always conscious of the fact, as a little girl, that I had two counts against me. I was a Yankee and I was a Mormon. That made it very hard for people to accept me and let me be a close friend to their little girls.[10]

The family lived in Cincinnatti (the headquarters of the Middle States Mission) during the summer and early fall of 1903. The children enjoyed their spacious back yard filled with many swings,

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[9] Nedra Watkins Reese, "Summary of Life of Andrea Rich Watkins," dictated in October, 1955, unpublished, p. 2; hereafter referred to as "Life of Andrea Rich Watkins." Andrea later remarked: "How hard it was for normal, lively children to be constantly asked to be quiet."

[10] Life of Andrea Rich Watkins," pp. 2, 5.

Figure 6

The Family in Chattanooga, 1899[11]
Standing: Benjamin L., Lorin, Fred
Seated: Don, Sister Rich, Frank, Ida, Andrea, President Rich, Homer

trees, and neighborhood playmates, until the day fearful neighbors refused to allow their children to associate with them. Andrea described the morning no children arrived to play:

> We called to the children. When they made their appearance out from their homes they would rush back in and shut the door . . . run as they passed our place and failed to speak to us. They ignored our presence and broke our hearts.[12]

When Sister Rich sought the reason from the neighbors for the ill treatment, they refused to discuss the matter. Finally, she found one who hesitatingly revealed the problem. At length Mother Rich

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[11] Courtesy of Mrs. William H. Palmer, Salt Lake City, Utah.

[12] "Life of Andrea Rich Watkins," p. 3.

returned to her heartbroken children and reported the neighbors' story:

> Their minister had visited their homes and warned them that our back yard was a trap for their little girls. Someday, if they let them play there, they would disappear and they would never see them again. The Mormons would kidnap them and take them to Utah where little girls were raised to be dutiful polygamous wives.[13]

In the summer of 1903, the family moved again, this time to Atlanta, Georgia, the new headquarters of the Southern States Mission. When the children arrived in October, 1903, the public schools, already in session, refused to admit them, and President Rich enrolled them in the Catholic parochial schools for the year.

By the start of school in September, 1904, the mission headquarters had been moved back to Chattanooga. Sister Rich, desiring that the children, cramped in the Chattanooga mission home, live normally without fear of interfering with the office force, sent the older children, Ida, Don, and Andrea, to attend school in Utah and live with "Aunt Laura," a plural wife of President Rich.[14]

A Home in Centerville

At the dissolution of the Middle States Mission in 1903, President Rich had been informed by his brother-in-law and confidant, John Henry Smith,[15] that he was ". . . to have a two year time," a

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., p. 4; "Ida Rich Strong Biography," p. 16. See also Appendix G for information concerning the plural wives. At this time, the oldest children, Ben L., Lorin, Fred, and Homer were married, serving mission, or attending schools of higher education.

[15] John Henry Smith and Ben E. Rich were married to sisters, daughters of Lorin Farr.

hint that Rich could expect a release from his mission in 1905.[16] In anticipation of this release, the older children were sent to Utah for school in the fall of 1904, followed by Sister Rich and the youngest child, Frank Cannon Rich, the following summer.[17] The move to Utah to live among those of the Mormon faith relieved (and bewildered) the Rich children who had been scorned as "Mormons" and "Yankees:"

> One effect of so many changes of schooling and environment was to alert me to ever prompt defence of my religion which was anything but popular in those years.
>
> I remember being asked many times when my horns would start to grow. Being a Mormon boy incited much ridicule against me. I learned to fight my way into acceptance by my new class mates at a new school nearly every year. At the beginning of my fifth grade in Salt Lake City I came home after my first day at school quite dejected. My mother detected my mood and asked me what was the matter, to which I replied, "This is the tamest town I was ever in. At morning recess I challanged a boy bigger than myself with the taunt 'I'll bet I can lick you,' to which he replied 'I don't care if you can.' I simply couldn't understand nor puzzle it out.[18]

In 1905, after arriving in Salt Lake City to be with the children for the school year, Sister Rich expressed her desire to her husband to move into the country north of Salt Lake City. Shortly afterwards, President Rich arranged for the construction of a large home in Centerville. In return for the copyright of Mr. Durant of

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[16] Letter from John Henry Smith to Rich, dated January 27, 1903, in the Letter Books of John Henry Smith, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. See also Chapter VII, p. 81. Whether the First Presidency knew of this letter to Rich is unknown.

[17] "After serving his mission for a few years, father felt it wouldn't be much longer before his release would come," "Ida Rich Strong Biography," p. 12.

[18] Frank C. Rich, "An Auto-Biography of My Life," 1969, unpublished.

Salt Lake City, That Mormon, a book published by Ben E. Rich in 1893, the Church allowed him sufficient money to finish the home.[19] Sister Rich and the children had moved to the home before the end of the school year 1905-1906, and the home was completely finished in time for the gala wedding reception of Ida in December, 1906. From this time on Sister Rich's trips to the South were less frequent and the exception rather than the rule. She contented herself to remain in Centerville and be with the remaining children as they attended school.[20]

During the time Sister Rich had labored in the South, she had acted as the "mission mother," assisting with the care of the elders, writing letters of condolence to the parents when missionary sons had died, raising her own large family, and sustaining her husband.

A Tribute

On the eighth anniversary of the Rich administration of the Southern States Mission, President and Sister Rich were given a special tribute by all the missionaries who had labored in the South since 1898, numbering nearly 1600. These missionaries had each been invited by a committee of the office staff to send in letters to be read at the tribute and to contribute 25 cents toward the purchase of an office desk and chair for President Rich.

An evening program, held June 19, 1906, highlighted the

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[19] John Henry Smith assisted with the negotiations. See letters of the First Presidency to Rich, dated January 17, and 29, 1906, in the Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

[20] See Appendix H.

tribute. The letters from the missionaries were read, a quartette sang, and the elders rolled out the beautiful office desk and chair set to conclude the affectionate tribute.

Figure 7

President Ben E. Rich in June, 1906[21]

In honor of President and Sister Rich an additional tribute was published in the Elders Journal outlining their great work while in the Southern States Mission. The tribute issue also included a reprint of a complimentary article published for the occasion by the

[21]Courtesy of Mrs. William M. Palmer, Salt Lake City.

Chattanooga News which read in part: "No man stands higher in the business world in Chattanooga than Mr. Rich . . . . It can be truthfully stated that no one could have done more for his church in this territory than has Mr. Rich."[22]

Contributions to the Southern States

Indeed the work of Ben E. Rich in the Southern States Mission had been particularly effective and the volume of the work particularly impressive. By 1908, the nearly 1,700 elders who had labored under his direction had baptized approximately 6,800 converts into the Church. During his mission presidency the elders had flooded the South with Mormon literature totaling approximately 25,000 copies of the Book of Mormon; 15,000 works of Orson Pratt; 160,000 copies of Parley P. Pratt's Voice of Warning; 150,000 "Mr. Durants;" and 3,500,000 other religious tracts. Except for the copies of the Book of Mormon, all of these missionary materials, in addition to the mission newspapers, the Southern Star, and Elders Journal, had been published by the Southern States Mission.[23] Strong Church congregations, established in many of the cities of the South, stood as the greatest result of the dedication of President Rich and his missionaries.

Involvement in Politics

In addition to his labors in the Southern states, Ben E. Rich

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[22] Elders Journal [Chattanooga, Tennessee], III, No. 21 (July 1, 1906), 385-391.

[23] See Rich's official letter of report to the First Presidency, dated September 15, 1908, in the Personal Papers of Ben E. Rich, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Box 2, Folder 3; hereafter referred to as Personal Papers of Ben E. Rich.

responded to additional requests for his services during the time he was mission president. Through his friendship with powerful political figures, he played a significant role in the influencing of President Theodore Roosevelt and other key government leaders against the proposed anti-polygamy (anti-Mormon) amendment in 1902, and the movement to oust Reed Smoot from the Senate beginning in 1903.[24] These political attacks, as well as the refusal of Congress to seat B. H. Roberts in 1900, were the fruits of rabid opponents of the Church in Salt Lake City and were a continuation of earlier efforts by a "ring" of Utah non-Mormons to gain political dominance of the territory by defeating efforts toward Utah statehood.

In the 1890's, after the failure of the territory to achieve statehood under a Democratic administration, the Mormon Church leadership had responded increasingly to the sentiment of the Republican Party that Utah should be admitted to the Union. Aware of the Mormon Democratic tradition (resulting from the over-zealous Republican campaign against polygamy) which threatened to defeat their attempt to convert Utah into a Republican candidate for statehood, the First Presidency had initiated a campaign to swing the Mormons toward Republicanism. John Henry Smith had been allowed to gather Republican support among the Mormons of the territory, to the exclusion of similar campaigning by Democratic members of the Church hierarchy. Although this action created serious dissension within the Quorum of the Twelve, the territory had elected a Republican majority to the legislature by 1893, and with the support of the Democrats, Utah had been admitted to

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[24] See Chapter IV, pp. 29-37.

the Union in January, 1896.[25]

The struggle to win statehood for Utah had established a dangerous precedent within the leadership ranks of the Church which allowed members of the Quorum of the Twelve to involve themselves in political affairs, especially those sanctioned by the President of the Church. Joseph F. Smith feared future political action in Idaho against the Church if the Democratic Party gained a majority control of the legislature.[26]

Because of his wide political influence, during the earlier years of his mission presidency Ben E. Rich was active in support of the Republican cause in Idaho and Utah, to the dismay of certain Church leaders and the approval of others. After October conference in 1900, Rich campaigned with John Henry Smith for Republican candidate William Budge, stake president in Idaho. Although George Q. Cannon disapproved of Rich "stumping" while president of a Church mission,[27] President Joseph F. Smith privately encouraged him to evidence to the Mormon

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[25] Gustive O. Larson, The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1971), pp. 283-298.

[26] Rich warned Joseph F. Smith that if the Democrats gained control in Idaho they would use the "test oath," still a law "on the books" in Idaho, against Church members. Letter dated July 30, 1904, in the Papers of Joseph F. Smith, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, hereafter referred to as Papers of Joseph F. Smith.

[27] President Smith wrote Rich, "I heard President Cannon express his views against 'Bro R's appearing on the stump, and I shall be sorry if he does'." Letter dated October 26, 1900, in the Personal Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; hereafter referred to as Personal Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith.

people that the First Presidency supported Republicanism. When Church members questioned the propriety of Rich's actions, President Smith responded:

> The fact that Bro. Rich is not now laboring in the Southern States Mission and is where he is ought to be sufficient evidence to most people that he is in the line of his duty as understood by those who have the best interests of the people of our country at heart. I hope he will be successful.[28]

William Budge, however, failed in his political bid in spite of the influence of the Church, and President Rich returned to his duties in the Southern States Mission. In the fall of 1902, Rich was invited by John Henry Smith to campaign for another Republican candidate in Idaho, John A. Bagley. Shortly after Rich left for the West, Bagley withdrew from the race, but John Henry Smith still encouraged Rich to "Do everything in honor to make Idaho republican."[29]

In contrast to President Smith's support of Rich's political activity in behalf of pro-Mormon candidates, the First Presidency instructed him to avoid campaigning for politicians opposed to the Church. When President Rich visited his family in Rexburg in December, 1902, Fred T. Dubois, a former political friend of Rich, was running for reelection in Idaho. John Henry Smith sent Rich instructions from the First Presidency:

> [It is the] . . . wish and hope of your friends that you will not permit yourself to take any part whatever in the election of Idaho's United States Senator, but to confine yourself

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[28] Letter from Joseph F. Smith to William Budge of Paris, Idaho, dated October 26, 1900, in the Personal Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith. See related letters in the same Letter Book, dated October 24, 26, and November 8, 9, 1900.

[29] Letter from John Henry Smith to Rich, dated August 15, 1902, in the Letter Books of John Henry Smith.

strictly to your ministerial labors.[30]

In addition to his dramatic mission to see President Roosevelt in November, 1903, Ben E. Rich took an active interest in the Reed Smoot Hearings. In response to the wishes of President Joseph F. Smith, Rich attempted to win Utah's Senator Thomas L. Kearns to the Smoot camp. In a lengthy letter, he advised Kearns to disassociate himself from the Salt Lake Tribune, Kearn's newspaper which printed daily attacks against Smoot and the Church, or face a "political grave."[31] The warning letter to Kearns was reluctantly written; however, Rich had grown weary of political interventions. Two former political friends, Fred T. Dubois[32] and Frank J. Cannon,[33] were actively waging attacks against the Mormon Church, and President Rich desired to disassociate himself from politics and fully devote himself to the missionary cause. He conveyed his personal feelings in a letter addressed to the First Presidency:

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[30]Letter signed by John Henry Smith, dated December 22, 1902, in the Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith.

[31]The letter of Rich to Kearns is dated April 9, 1904, and is found in the Papers of Joseph F. Smith. Kearns failed to accept the advice of his Mormon friends, lost his bid for re-election, and hired Frank J. Cannon, a bitter anti-Mormon, as editor of the Tribune, in an attempt to regain his lost political power.

[32]Dubois was attacking the Church, according to Rich, to build a national reputation for himself in case he were to lose the next Idaho election. See Rich's letter to Joseph F. Smith dated July 30, 1904, in the Papers of Joseph F. Smith.

[33]Frank J. Cannon, after whom Rich had named his youngest son, lost his re-election to the Senate, supported Kearns in another unsuccessful bid for power, and was excommunicated from the Church in March, 1905. Cannon later expressed his regret that in his second campaign for the Senate his campaign manager "had been taken away." Salt Lake Tribune, September 14, 1913, p. 2, citing Cannon's autobiography. In

> I do not know what your intentions are regarding the Presidency of the Southern States Mission, but I shall say for myself that I am in love with my work, and will be happy to continue in the field and also happy to return home when I have been honorable [sic] released.
>
> I desire President Lund to repeat in connection with this communication, the conversation I had with him wherein I spoke of the many rumors concerning the management of the political movements of Senator Kearns, and my feelings in relation to the same. I would rather turn my back on politics completely and build that Mission House in the South than to be a maker of half a dozen Senators.[34]

According to his wishes, during the years following 1904, President Rich was left free to devote his full efforts to the missionary work. The expected missionary release of 1905 failed to materialize, and instead he was transferred to another field in August, 1908. A month later in addressing the general conference in Salt Lake City, he reflected upon his former political activity:

> I remember the time when Brother Roberts was elected to a political office on the Democratic ticket. There were members of this Church who went from one end of this state to the other trying to defeat him--I was one of that number; that may be the reason he was elected-- . . . .

President Rich then announced his own political status: "I am kept out in the missionary field free from political strife, not mingling in your political quarrels."[35]

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speaking of men like Cannon, Rich later said, ". . . I have seen them, when their fathers--who seemed to be the anchors of their faith--passed to the other side, turn, with all the hideousness of a rattlesnake, against the very men that they had pretended to support before." See the Report of the Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City, October, 1908), pp. 103, 104; hereafter referred to as Conference Report.

[34]Letter to the First Presidency from Rich, dated March 29, 1904, in the Papers of Joseph F. Smith.

[35]Address by Rich, Conference Report, October, 1908, p. 103.

A Farewell to the South

On August 25, 1908, President Rich returned to Chattanooga from the West and announced to the surprised office staff that he had been released as president of the Southern States Mission and appointed to succeed John G. McQuarrie as head of the Eastern States Mission.[36] Elder Charles A. Callis had been appointed as the new president of the Southern States Mission.

The next few weeks were filled with the business of moving and sad farewells. A gala farewell party was held September 11, in the Atlanta chapel to honor the departing president. The Atlanta Georgian reported that the building was crowded to overflowing by participants. The chapel, which had been decorated by lady missionaries, displayed a portrait of President Rich with two large American flags on either side. During the festivities, master of ceremonies, Charles A. Callis, presented Rich with a diamond pin from the elders of the mission.[37]

Later, the new president, Charles A. Callis, paid a tribute to President Rich in a letter of acceptance addressed to the elders. He wrote, in part:

> Brother Rich's ability to adapt himself to every phase of missionary life is well known . . . . He has ably and eloquently expounded the word of God . . . he has been humble and sought at all times the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He has been bold and courageous in defending the Gospel . . . . He has gained access

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[36]The decision to transfer Rich to New York City was made in a meeting of the Church authorities, July 29, 1908. Rich was informed of the decision July 31, 1908. Letter to Rich from John R. Winder, dated July 31, 1908, in the Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith.

[37]Historical Minutes of the Southern States Mission, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, September, 1908; hereafter referred to as Historical Minutes SSM.

> to the hearts of the Elders and the people with the key of love . . . the sacrifice he has made is sacred unto the Lord . . . .[38]

Shortly after the announcement of his release, Ben E. Rich penned a farewell letter to the people of the South, "the land of my fathers."[39] He cited the chivalry and bravery of the Southern men who were ". . . willing to lay down their lives" for the missionaries.[40] Three weeks later he signed his final entry in the Southern States Mission minutes book:

> I hope I have merited the good will of my Father in Heaven . . . . God bless the people of the South. They have been good to the missionaries. God bless the Elders and the Saints. "God be with thee 'till we meet again."
>
> Ben E. Rich[41]

A Final Transfer

As president of the Eastern States Mission, Ben E. Rich executed his office with the same energy and determination as he had shown in the Southern States Mission. Sister Rich remained much of the time in Centerville but visited her husband occasionally in New York. During one of these reunions, made more precious by the celebration of their thirty-second wedding anniversary, President Rich paid tribute to his wife in a letter to their son:

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[38] Ibid., August, 1908.

[39] His father was born in Kentucky, and his mother's parents were from South Carolina.

[40] Rich's farewell letter, dated August 28, 1908, is found in the Personal Papers of Ben E. Rich.

[41] Rich's official statement of report, dated September 15, 1908, Personal Papers of Ben E. Rich. Three weeks later he added his own footnote to his ten years service in the mission: "My heart will never be weaned away from the good people of the South." Conference Report, October 1908, p. 39.

> Through sunshine and storm your mother has been the light and the inspiration of my life. She has rejoiced with me in prosperity, and stood by my side as a comforting angel in hours of almost despair. She has been an anchor of hope and a harbor of safety to all my life. From the first moment my eyes beheld her I knew she was born to be mine. I sometimes shudder at what might have been my fate had I never met her and God knows how often I have praised his holy name for sending her to me. She has always been the light of my soul, the life of my creation, and the strength of my heartstrings. No better, no truer, no more devoted, and no more noble wife has God ever given to man. As a heavenly queen of a wife, so has she been as a mother. To her children she has been guardian angel in nursing and protecting and watching over her little ones throughout all the years of their lives. To see them honest, noble, and good has been the ambition of her very soul. Willingly would she have laid down her life at any moment to have shielded them from wickedness. Her faith in God was only equaled by her ambition to see her children good and great. She will be a queen hereafter and may we be with her. Thank God she is by my side tonight . . . .[42]

During the summer of 1913, the many years of a well-spent life finally caught up with President Ben E. Rich and he suffered a stroke of "apoplexy," the culmination of a nervous breakdown and lingering illness. At first, it was thought he would recover,[43] but when his condition grew worse he was released as president of the mission, August 26, 1913. Although critically ill, he was reluctant to request a release, preferring to die "in the harness" as had so many elders of the Southern States Mission.[44] His desire to remain in the mission,

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[42] Benjamin L. Rich, Ben E. Rich, An Appreciation by His Son, Benjamin L. Rich (Salt Lake City, Utah: August 29, 1950), biographical pamphlet in the Church Library, Salt Lake City, pp. 36, 37.

[43] A plural wife of Rich, Laura Bowering, traveled to New York to be with the ill president, but as his condition grew worse, Sister Diana Rich joined her husband also; interview with Mrs. William M. Palmer, August 6, 1975. See also Appendix G.

[44] Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, September 13, 1905, p. 3; September 21, 1913, p. 6; hereafter referred to as JH.

ingrained in his very soul, was in obedience to his own counsel to the elders years earlier: "Let your release always come as a surprise and your departure be taken with reluctance and with a knowledge of having done well."[45]

To encourage the critically ill president to return to the West, the First Presidency issued a more formal release designed to fulfill the condition, ". . . a knowledge of having done well:"

Figure 8

President Ben E. Rich, Eastern States Mission[46]

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[45] Elders Journal [Atlanta, Georgia], I, No. 6 (January, 1904), 64-65.

[46] Courtesy of Mrs. William M. Palmer, Salt Lake City.

> While deeply regretting the necessity of thus releasing you, we have great pleasure in contemplating the long and faithful service which you have rendered as a missionary in the cause of truth, and we have great pleasure indeed in saying that your labors as a presiding officer have met with our hearty approval and our entire satisfaction.[47]

A few days after receiving this release, President Rich passed away on a Saturday night, September 13, 1913. At his bedside, in addition to Laura and Diana, were two of his sons, Benjamin L. Rich of Salt Lake City and Dr. Lorin Rich of Ogden. As the news of his death reached the people of the South many words of sorrow and regret flooded the mission office. At the funeral, held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, Sunday, September 21, 1913, President Joseph F. Smith eulogized his departed "Brother in the Gospel:"

> He was one in whom no trust was misplaced, no confidence unfulfilled. A man fearless of the world, fearless of opposition, being established as he was on the principles of eternal truth. He was a stalwart defender of the truth, a friend of mankind, faithful to every duty, capable to perform the labors to which he was called, and always willing and ready to perform.[48]

His struggle had ended, his labors were through. The God who loved Ben E. Rich[49] and held his sacrifice as sacred, received an elder who died "in the harness."

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[47] Letter to Rich from the First Presidency, dated September 6, 1913, Letter Books of Joseph F. Smith. See also related letters of August 26, and September 5, 1913.

[48] JH, September 21, 1913, pp. 6-8.

[49] Address by Heber J. Grant, Conference Report, October, 1913, pp. 87, 88.

CHAPTER X

THE FUTURE OF THE SOUTHERN STATES MISSION

A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

When compared to the many tens of thousands of Church converts in the Southern states over the years, the contributions of Ben E. Rich during his ten-year administration may seem insignificant at a glance. However, the creation of wards and stakes in the South in later decades resulted from an accumulation of Church membership and Priesthood strength. The foundation of this strength had begun to grow years earlier as the converts of the missionaries were encouraged to remain in the small branches and Sunday Schools scattered throughout the South. The numerous Latter-day Saint congregations in almost every city of the South today stand as a witness of the dedication of President Rich and his many fellow laborers. This chapter outlines the developments in the mission following the transfer of Ben E. Rich to the Eastern States Mission in 1908.

The Administration of Callis

From his solitary conversion as the "dirty little Irish boy," Charles A. Callis was yet to preside over the Southern States Mission

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[1]Manuscript History of the Southern States Mission, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1908-1934; hereafter referred to as Manuscript History SSM.

for a longer term than had any other president and was eventually to sit among the leading councils of the Church. His administration of the mission began in August, 1908, and lasted until the mid-depression year of 1934. During those decades the membership in the South grew from fourteen thousand in 1910, to almost twenty-seven thousand in 1930.[2]

In 1920, due to excessive travel requirements, President Callis moved the mission headquarters to Atlanta, Georgia, a more central location. This transfer became the prelude to two major boundary changes. Due to better health conditions and a lessened need for missionaries to recuperate in a northern area, Ohio was transferred to the Northern States Mission in 1926. However, a larger subdivision in 1928 created the East Central States Mission with headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky. This new mission included areas of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina from the Southern States Mission, while the state of West Virginia was added from the Northern States Mission. Miles L. Jones served as the first president of the new mission, which had membership strength of 12,289.[3]

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[2]Mission Financial and Statistical Reports, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1910 and 1930; hereafter referred to as Annual Statistics.

[3]Andrew Jenson, Encyclopedic History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Company, 1941), pp. 204, 205; hereafter referred to as Encyclopedic History.

The Depression Years

During the depression of the 1930's, many people of the South saw a return of the deep poverty of the post-Civil War years and of the turn of the century. In this discouraging period, another future member of the Council of the Twelve, LeGrand Richards, accepted the reigns of mission leadership. Although his administration was less than three and one-half years, he had had previous missionary experience, including service as president of the Netherlands Mission.[4] As mission president he compiled his famous proselyting outline later published as the book, A Marvelous Work and a Wonder.[5]

Other mission presidents who served prior to World War II were Merrill D. Clayson in 1937, and William P. Whitaker in 1940. The combined efforts of the mission presidents, together with the labors of hundreds of missionaries in the South, produced a superior rate of growth during the 1930's. Reports of 1940 indicated a 131 percent increase in membership, totaling 26,744.[6] That year also marked the first stake to be organized in the original Southern States Mission area: the Washington Stake, which included a branch in Virginia.[7]

Growth During and After World War II

President Whitaker and President Heber Meeks supervised the

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[4]Marba C. Josephson, "In Conference Assembled," The Improvement Era, LV (May, 1952), 312.

[5]LeGrand Richards, A Marvelous Work and a Wonder (rev. ed.; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1963), pp. v-viii.

[6]Annual Statistics, 1940.

[7]Ibid., Washington Stake.

Southern States Mission during most of the forties. During that time membership growth in the South was substantially less, due in part to the requirements of the military for missionary-age young men. However, the number of those ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood increased at a rate superior to any growth experienced to that time (see graph 3). In 1947, during President Meek's administration, two stakes were created--one in South Carolina and one in Florida (see Appendix B). In 1947, another major mission division occurred with the formation of the Central Atlantic States Mission in October. This new mission consisted of the States of North Carolina and Virginia with headquarters at Roanoke, Virginia. Church leaders also transferred the state of Ohio in October, 1949, to the newly organized Great Lakes Mission (see map on following page).

Figure 9

The Missions of the Eastern United States in 1952[8]

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[8] The Improvement Era, LV (November, 1952), 792.

The Harvest is Great

President David O. McKay was sustained as President of the Church in April, 1951. His name was soon to become synonymous with "growth" and "world-wide" as the Church entered a new historic phase. Building of temples and creation of stakes would characterize the approaching decades. The Church in the South was also to experience phenomenol growth. During the Southern States Mission administration of Albert Choules from 1948 to 1952, the membership in the entire South passed the thirty-five thousand mark, exhibiting a modest growth of about 30 percent since 1940.[9]

Under the leadership of Peter J. Ricks from 1952 to 1955, the continued growth rate dictated another change in the Southern States Mission area. In June, 1955, the majority of the state of Mississippi was combined with Louisiana and Arkansas to form the Gulf States Mission under the direction of LeGrand F. Smith.[10] Headquarters were at Shreveport, Louisiana (see map on following page).

The administration of the Southern States Mission by Berkeley L. Bunker from 1955 to 1959, saw the creation of two stakes within the mission--the Atlanta Stake in May, 1957, and the Orlando Stake in February, 1958. The Church also organized two stakes in the original mission area in Ohio and Virginia (see Appendix B).

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[9]Annual Statistics, 1950. See also Graph 1.

[10]Manuscript History of the Gulf States Mission, June 19, 1955, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Figure 10

Mission Boundaries and Total Branches of The

Eastern States as of June 4, 1962[11]

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[11]Kaye W. Scott, comp., "LDS Missions of the United States" (map), Instructor, LXXXXVII (September, 1962), inside back cover.

The Administration of J. B. Ravsten

In May, 1959, J. Byron Ravsten, a Church leader in Cache Valley, Utah, was appointed to succeed President Bunker. This period of time was marked by two major developments that contributed to an unprecedented rise in the number of convert baptisms throughout the entire South and in many missions of the world. In 1960, the First Presidency announced that young men nineteen years of age could be set apart as full-time missionaries. Heretofore, the minimum age had been twenty years. This innovation resulted in a large increase in numbers of missionaries called. The second improvement was the introduction of a uniform plan,[12] developed in the Northwestern States Mission, for teaching investigators of the Church. In the Southern States Mission alone, convert baptisms per month rose from less than two hundred to over six hundred by 1963.[13] Among the Atlantic seaboard missions, some seemingly over-zealous missionaries baptized scores of children without their parents joining the Church. By 1970, many of these children had not yet become active in the Church.[14]

Due to the tremendous Church growth in Florida, the Orlando Stake, which had been created twenty months earlier, was divided to form the Tampa Stake in October, 1959. Further growth in Florida demanded yet another stake be created, and on November 13, 1960, the

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[12]"A Uniform Method of Teaching Investigators," (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1961).

[13]Southern States Success [Atlanta, Georgia], 1963, official organ of the Southern States Mission.

[14]Annual Statistics, 1970. See the columns for "unordained males."

Miami Stake was organized--the third in Florida in less than three years (see Appendix B). At this time, the mission was experiencing growing pains, and with a subdivision of southern parts of Georgia and Alabama, the Florida Mission was created on November 1, 1960 (see map below). It's first president was Karl R. Lyman.[15]

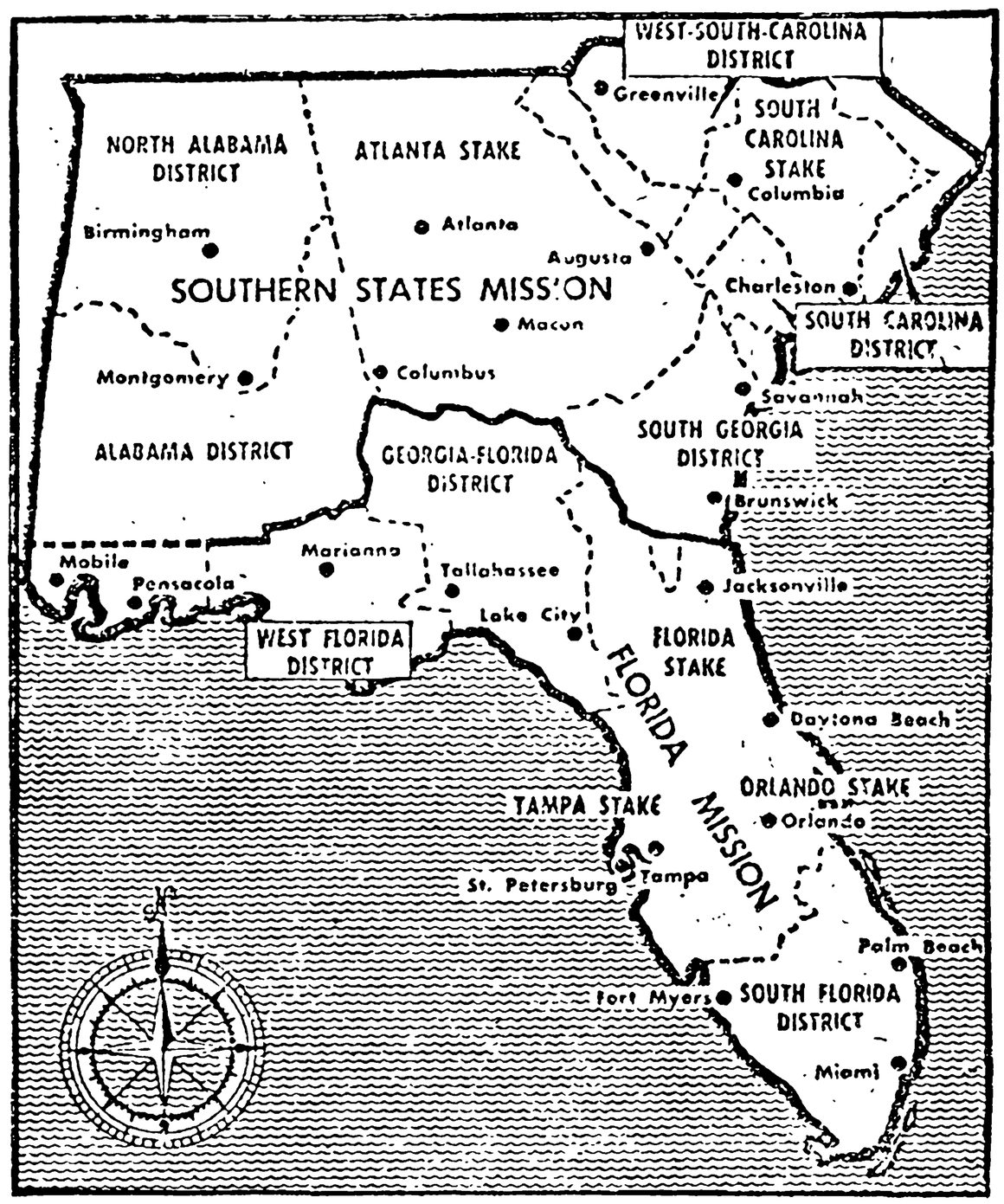

Figure 11

Creation of the Florida Mission[16]

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[15] Manuscript History of the Florida Mission, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, November 1, 1960.

[16] Deseret News, Church News [Salt Lake City], October 8, 1960.

A Period of Stake Creation

Beginning in 1957, stakes of the Church were organized yearly in the South until 1966. In this span of less than nine years, stakes were created at a rate of about two per year, and by June, 1965, stakes were located in every Southern state except Alabama and Kentucky (see Appendix B).

President Ravsten was succeeded in December, 1963, by Fauntleroy Hunsaker, a former stake president and optometrist from Los Angeles.[17] President Hunsaker continued to stress the emphasis begun earlier to baptize entire families, and convert baptism totals dipped after 1963. On July 24, 1964, President Hunsaker's wife passed away, leaving him to direct mission affairs without support of his companion. He desired to remain in the mission, however, and continued to serve until succeeded in March, 1965, by Roy B. Evanson, an agriculturist businessman from Canada.[18] Evanson was replaced in 1968 by Charles W. Nibley, a businessman from North Hollywood, California.[19]

Other Signs of Growth

In June, 1967, the Ohio Mission, an area once in the Southern States Mission, was formed by a division of the Great Lakes Mission.[20]

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[17] Manuscript History SSM, December 18, 1963.

[18] Ibid., 1964, to March 1965.

[19] Ibid., March 1968.

[20] Organizational File, Ohio Mission, located in the Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

This event was followed by a second series of rapid stake creation, commencing with Alabama's first stake in March, 1968. By mid-1972, nine more stakes had been organized in the South including two in Kentucky, at Louisville and Lexington.[21] This made a total of twenty-nine stakes distributed in every state in the South (see Appendix B).

Statistics for the sixties indicated an even higher growth rate than the record totals of the previous decade. By 1970, Church membership in the South stood at 128,593, an 87 percent increase over the total membership of 1960 (see Graph 1, p. 138).

Mission divisions and name changes characterized Church growth in the South during the early seventies. In June, 1970, the Central Atlantic States Mission was renamed the North Carolina-Virginia Mission; and the East Central States Mission became the Kentucky-Tennessee Mission[22] (see lower map on following page). The First Presidency announced the formation of a new Southern mission, the Alabama-Florida Mission, in June, 1971 (see maps on following page). It encompassed Alabama and southern Georgia; a member of the First Council of Seventy, Hartman Rector, Jr., served as the mission president. In the same move, the Florida Mission was renamed the Florida South Mission, presided over by J. Murray Rawson, while the Southern States Mission was to be known as the Georgia-South Carolina Mission.[23] With these changes, the epic name of the Southern States Mission became a part of history.

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[21] Ibid., Louisville Stake and Lexington Stake.

[22] Ibid., North Carolina-Virginia Mission and Kentucky-Tennessee Mission.

[23] Deseret News, Church News, June 26, 1971, p. 5.

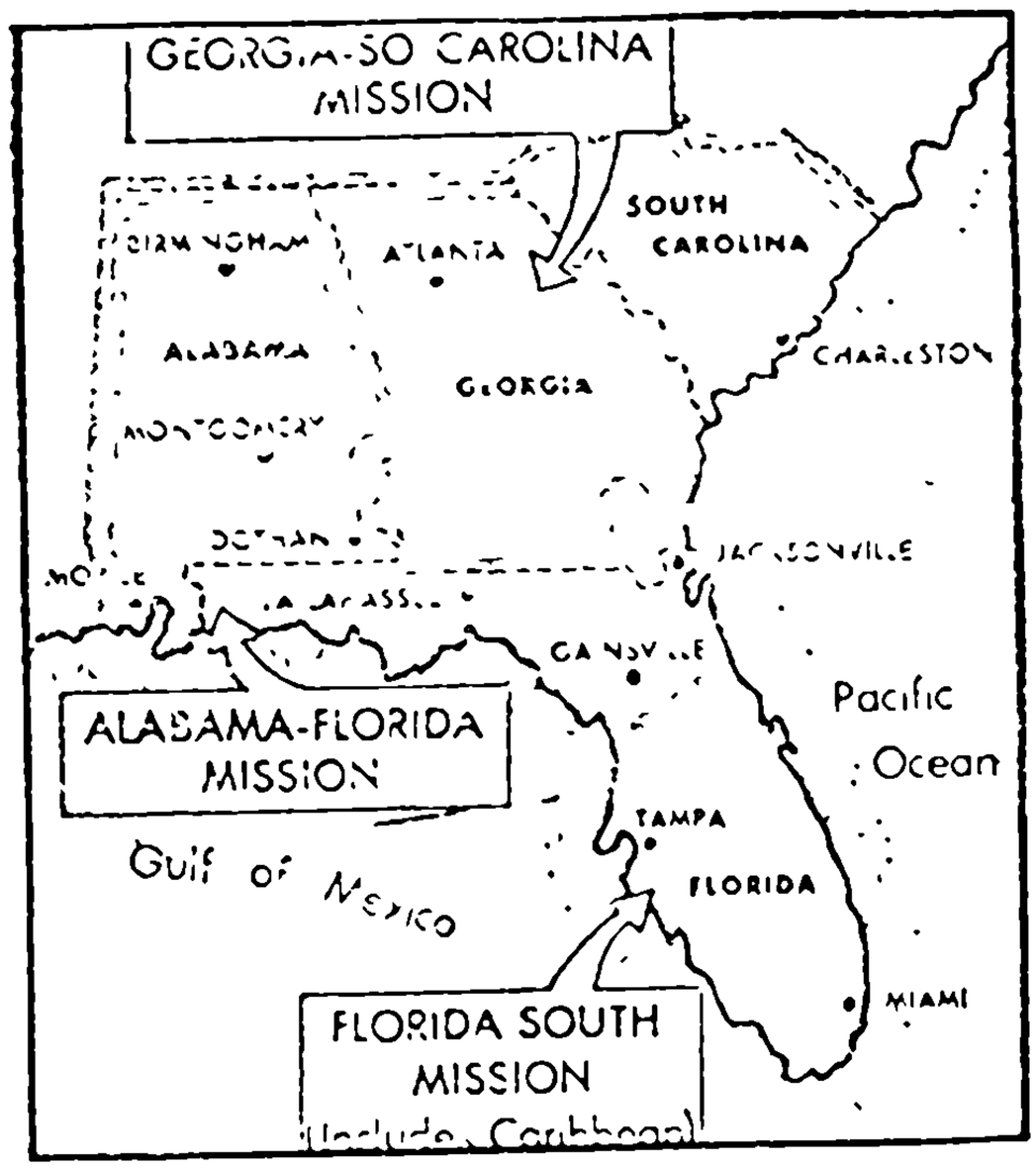

Figure 12

Three Missions from Two[24]

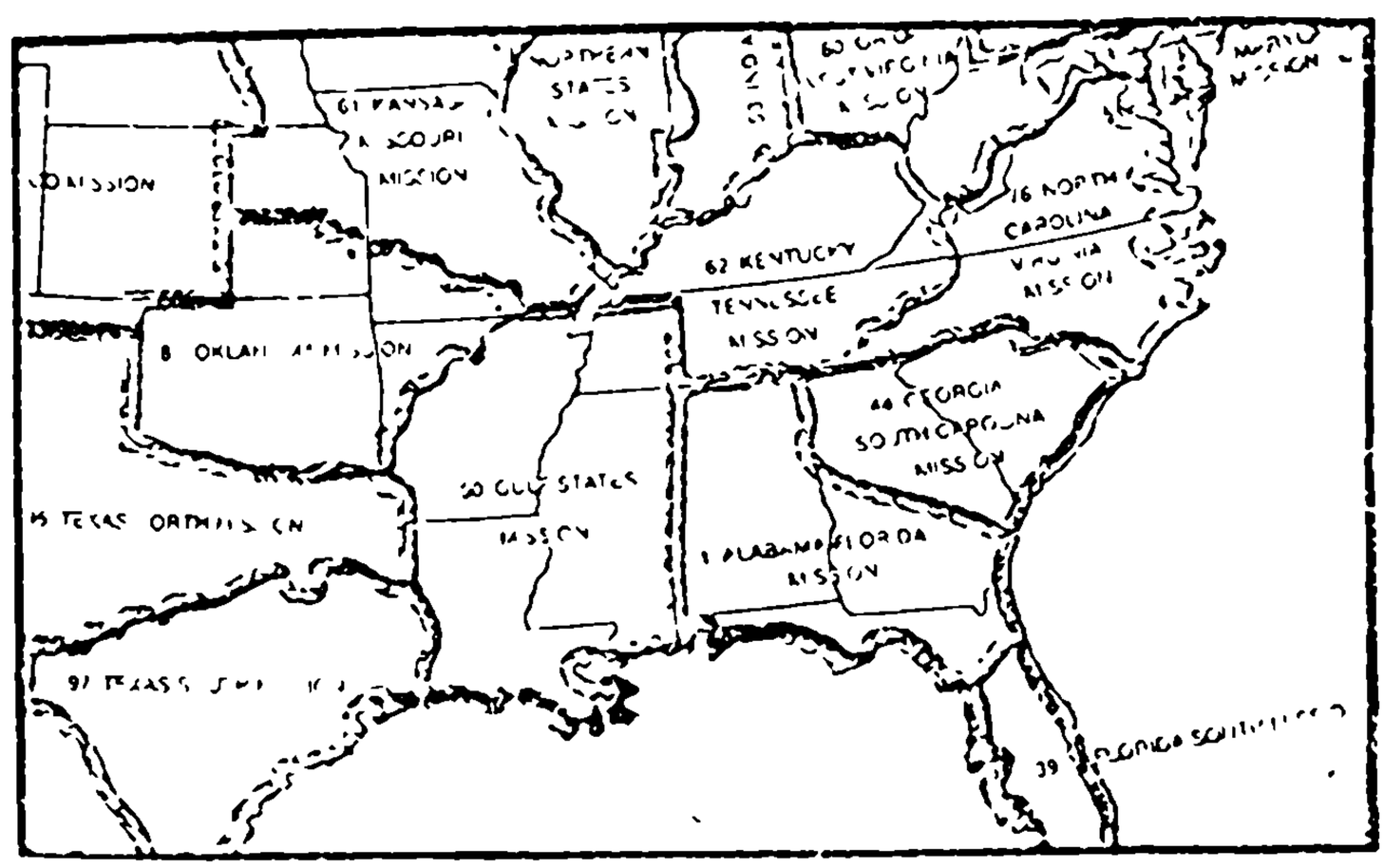

Figure 13

The Southeastern Missions as of June, 1973[25]

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[24] Ibid.

[25] The New Era, III (June, 1973), 20.

Analyzation of Growth Statistics

Because membership figures of the Southern States Mission show interruptions due to its growth and division, a meaningful study must include information from these subdivided missions and stakes. Since this history begins with the administration of Ben E. Rich in 1898, the author analyzed Church membership statistics from those conferences remaining in the mission beyond 1900. Conferences of the original Southern States Mission not included in this study are, with the date of their transfer: West Virginia and Maryland, 1898; Arkansas, 1895; Texas, 1897; and Louisiana, 1900.[26]

The Annual Statistical Reports

Early membership records of the Southern States Mission, often sketchy and inaccurate, show inconsistencies from year to year because of emigration of members from the South (see Appendix C). The earliest available summary of official mission statistics preserved by the Church is dated December 31, 1902.[27] This report contains the totals of members and missionaries in six conferences, i.e.: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. These 1902 figures will not be shown on the membership graph, however, because they omit information from the conferences of the Middle States Mission (see Chapter VII, pp. 78, 79). No further annual report is available until 1906. Containing totals from eleven

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[26] Encyclopedic History, pp. 820-822. See also map, Chapter VI, p. 64.

[27] General Memoranda of the Southern States Mission, on Microfilm, Church Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Reel 71, p. 362.

conferences, the 1906 report gives number of missionaries and details of Church membership increase and decrease.[28]

From 1906, the mission sent in regular annual reports often containing statistical comparisons of three or four previous years. The annual reports of 1910,[29] 1920, and 1930,[30] contain membership and priesthood totals as well as numbers of convert baptisms. However, since convert baptisms are not listed by districts (a term replacing "conference"),[31] convert baptisms for the original Southern States Mission area are impossible to compute from these reports. This situation continues with annual reports of 1940, 1950,[32] 1960, and 1970.[33]

The 1970 Reports

The annual reports of 1970 also included computerized totals by state (see Table 2). A comparison of these totals with 1970 membership totals indicates a maximum error of 3.6 percent. This is reasonable considering the author had no report from the Nashville Stake or from smaller units of stakes with headquarters outside of the

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[28] Annual Statistics, 1906.

[29] Ibid., 1910.

[30] Stake and Mission Annual Reports, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1920, 1930; hereafter referred to as Annual Mission Reports.

[31] Deseret News, Church News, April 12, 1947, p. 1.

[32] Annual Mission Reports, 1940, 1950.

[33] Stake Compilation Form E and Mission Membership Statistics and Officers, 1960, 1970, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

area studied (see Table 1). However, the tables in this chapter will include the computerized membership totals for 1970, or prorated totals (for the priesthood figures) based on the 3.6 percent error. Likewise, graphs will reflect the computerized and prorated figures, correlating more closely with the more complete and simpler data of the earlier decades of the century.

The following table includes data from all missions and stakes in the original Southern States Mission area of 1900, but omits information from single wards and single branches of stakes whose boundaries cross into the 1900 area of study.

Table 1

Membership and Priesthood Membership Totals of all Stakes and Missions in the Southern States Mission Area of 1900[a]

Year	Membership	Melchizedek Priesthood	Aaronic Priesthood
1902	4,355[b]	N/A[c]	N/A[c]
1906	12,787	N/A[c]	N/A[c]
1910	14,071	100	214
1920	20,492	393	458
1930	26,744	540	921
1940	34,247	1,217	2,098
1950	37,345	2,183	3,143
1960	68,795	5,179	7,698
1970[d]	122,039	11,347	15,625
1970[e]	128,593	11,914	16,406[f]

[a]Annual Mission Reports.

[b]Omits figures for Middle States Mission.

[c]Information not available.

[d]No report from Gulf States Mission (includes Mississippi) or from Nashville Stake (organized December 5, 1970).

[e]Stake Compilation Form E and Mission Membership Statistics and officers, 1970, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

[f]Prorated based on computerized membership totals.

Table 2

Computerized Membership Totals of Southeastern States for 1970[a]

State	Stake Membership	Mission Membership	Total
Alabama	3,727	3,813	7,540
Florida	20,230	2,442	22,672
Georgia	8,702	4,755	13,457
Kentucky	1,204	7,270	8,474
Mississippi	6,527	Not Available	6,527
North Carolina	12,874	2,879	15,752
Ohio	16,552	589	17,141
South Carolina	8,361	1,179	9,540
Tennessee	2,013	6,150	8,163
Virginia	16,057	3,269	19,326
Total	96,247	32,346	128,592

[a]Stake Compilation Form E and Mission Membership Statistics and Officers, 1970, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Annual Report Graphs

Graph 1 on the following page illustrates the membership growth from 1906 to 1970, by decade. The reader should bear in mind that an increasing number of members contained in these annual totals were of lost or unaccounted for persons. These members, although listed seperately in more recent reports, were not indicated in statistical summaries of earlier years. Hence, they have not been subtracted from the figures the graphs are based upon.

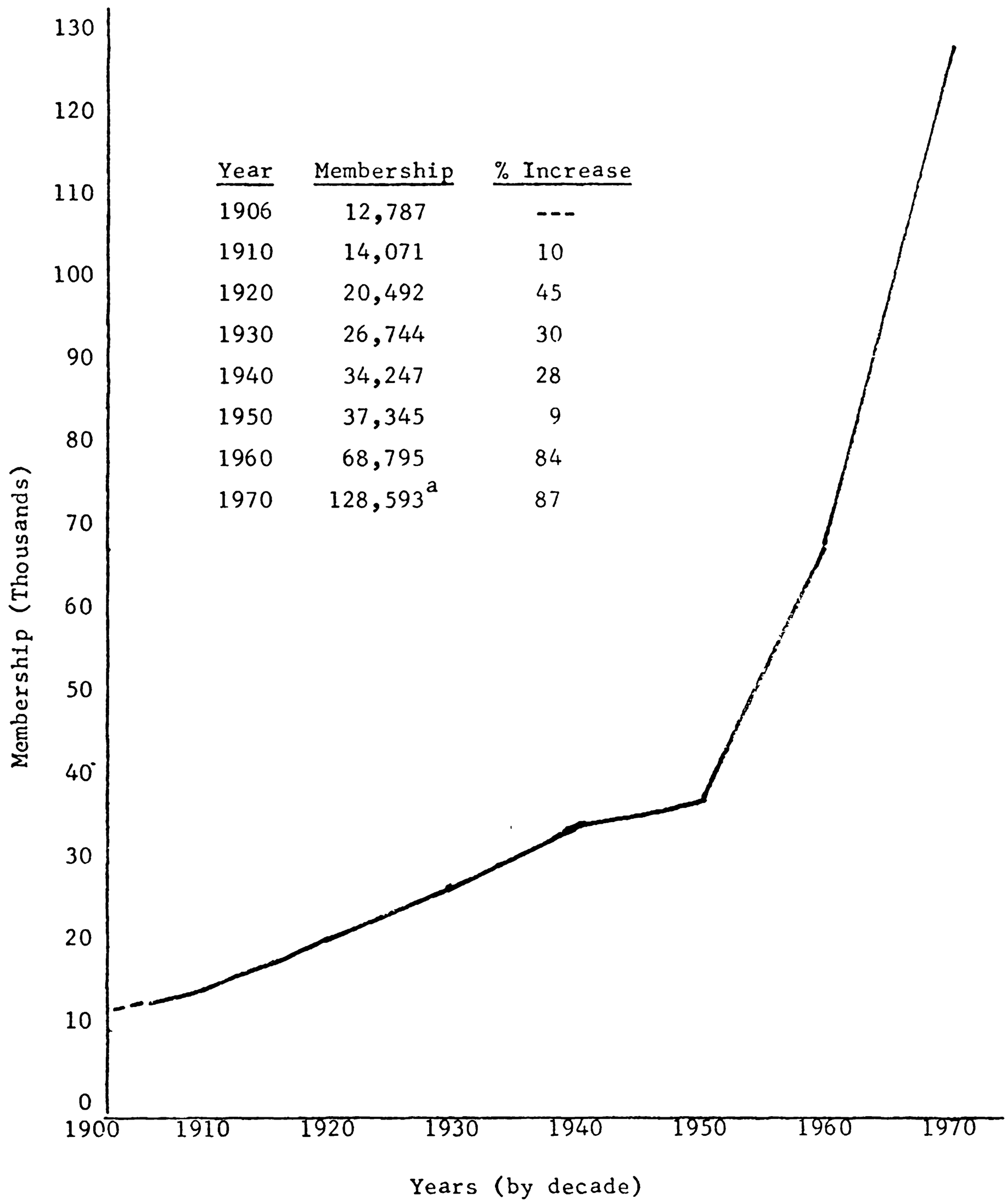
Graph 2 is a comparison of the numbers of those ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood and those who held the Melchizedek Priesthood. Although the number of Aaronic Priesthood holders is greater in each year studied, this figure includes those over eighteen years of age who had not been ordained elders (holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood). These prospective elders, generally speaking, were inactive in the Church.

Measurement of True Growth

Membership totals are only a fair gauge of true Church growth because they contain records for inactive, lost, or unaccounted for persons. A large percentage of inactive adult males are included in the Aaronic Priesthood totals; therefore, these are a poor measure of real growth of the Church. However, Melchizedek Priesthood figures are an excellent gauge of Church growth rate because a high percentage of these men are usually active. With this in mind, the increase of Melchizedek Priesthood figures must be congruent to increased membership to maintain Church strength. Graph 3 is a comparison of Melchizedek Priesthood increases to Church growth in the South.

Graph 1

Growth of Membership in the South by Decade (1906-1970)

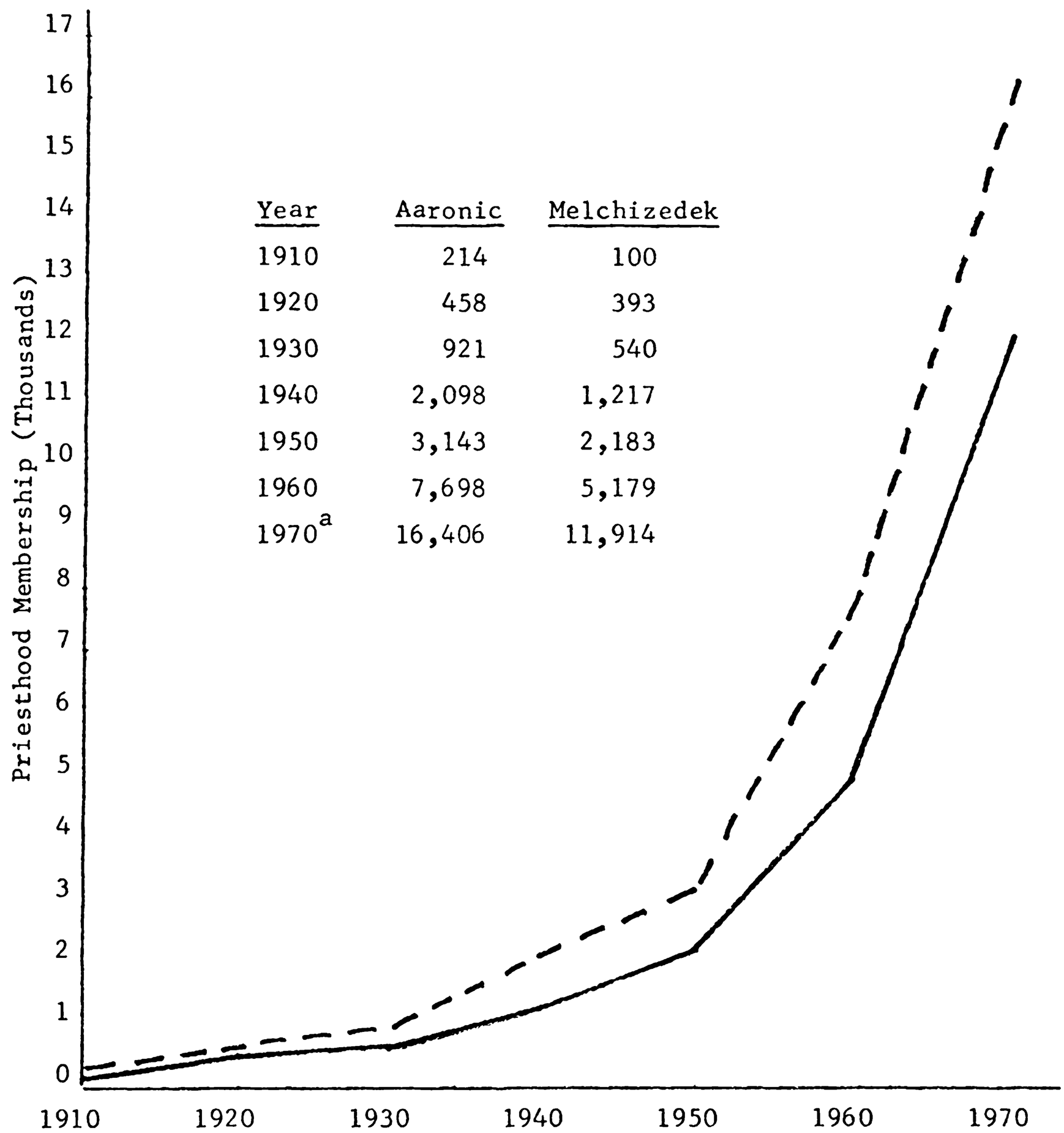


Year	Membership	% Increase
1906	12,787	---
1910	14,071	10
1920	20,492	45
1930	26,744	30
1940	34,247	28
1950	37,345	9
1960	68,795	84
1970	128,593[a]	87

[a]Stake Compilation Form E and Mission Membership Statistics and Officers, 1970, Computerized data.

Graph 2

Melchizedek and Aaronic Priesthood Holders in the South (1910-1970)



Year	Aaronic	Melchizedek
1910	214	100
1920	458	393
1930	921	540
1940	2,098	1,217
1950	3,143	2,183
1960	7,698	5,179
1970[a]	16,406	11,914

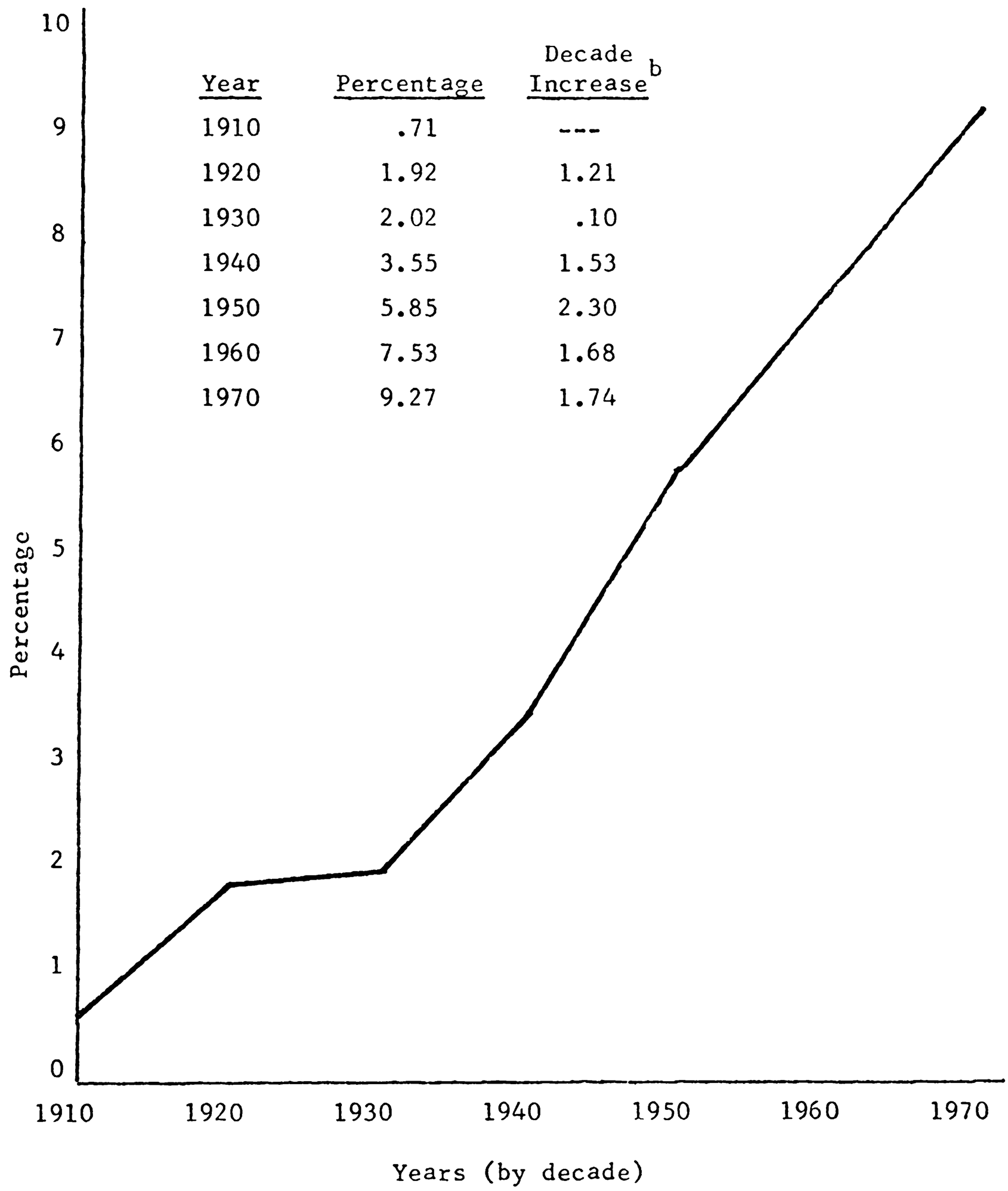
- - - - - Aaronic Priesthood Holders

——— Melchizedek Priesthood Holders

[a]Stake Compilation Form E and Mission Membership Statistics and Officers, 1970, Computerized data.

Graph 3

Melchizedek Priesthood Percentage of Membership (1910-1970)



Year	Percentage	Decade Increase[b]
1910	.71	---
1920	1.92	1.21
1930	2.02	.10
1940	3.55	1.53
1950	5.85	2.30
1960	7.53	1.68
1970	9.27	1.74

[a]A more correct indication of Church strength.

[b]A more correct indication of Church strength increase.

Summary and Conclusions

Research into the period of the Rich administration of the Southern States Mission has yielded the following significant findings:

1. The severe persecution of missionaries in the South during the nineteenth century was prolonged into the twentieth century largely as a result of the Roberts Trial and the Smoot Hearings which gave enemies of the Church excuses to wage further attacks. Protestant ministers were successful in agitating widespread mob action against the Southern States missionaries until 1905.

2. Because of his friendship with the President of the United States, Ben E. Rich traveled to Washington at the request of Church authorities to win the support of Roosevelt for Senator Reed Smoot.

3. The reduction of the missionary force in the South from nearly five hundred to about two hundred elders resulted from fewer missionaries being called and from the decision of Church leaders to strengthen the missions of Europe. Continued persecution of missionaries in the South and missionary deaths due to the Southern climate were also considered by the General Authorities in making the decision to decrease the number of elders assigned to the Southern States Mission.

4. The numerous deaths of missionaries in the South gave sufficient reason for the transfer of the Ohio conference to the Southern States Mission. This transfer precipitated the division of the mission and the creation of the Middle States Mission. The missions were rejoined a year later out of financial considerations--the desire of Church authorities and Ben E. Rich to keep the mission

self-sustaining.

5. The poverty of most missionaries sent to the South and the strict adherence by the missionaries to the practice of traveling without "purse or scrip," resulted in little success with city proselyting in the Southern States Mission until after 1903.

The beginning of the twentieth century brought dynamic changes to the Southern States Mission. At the time of the mission call of Ben E. Rich in 1898, the Mormon people had won their goal of a half-century by the granting of statehood for Utah in 1896. During the next decade, that paper acceptance was to be severely tried, and the South was to be a sore testing ground.

The selection of the president of the Southern States Mission, therefore, was of vital importance to the mission and to the Church. The call of Ben E. Rich in 1898 must be considered an excellent choice because of his successful execution of the missionary work in the South. In addition, his controversial appointment as mission president, while terminating his service to anti-Mormon politicians such as Cannon and Dubois, placed his political savvy at the disposal of Church leaders who called on him from time to time until he expressed his desire to retire from politics completely and devote himself to missionary work.

Ben E. Rich had a workable friendship with Roosevelt and played a significant role in winning the President's support of Smoot and the Church's missionary efforts in the South.

The history of the Mormon Church in the South is truly an epic. Untold are the experiences of thousands of missionaries who

worked there and the stories of the dozens who died there of persecution and disease. The early growth of the Southern States Mission was a result of years of tiring sacrifice and challenging work. These early labors, combined with a consistent missionary effort over the decades, have resulted in the present great strength of the Church in the South.

APPENDIX A

Southern States Mission Presidents

1.	Henry G. Boyle	October 1876-January 1878
2.	John Morgan	January 1878-1884, 1886-1888
3.	B. H. Roberts	1884-1886 (Interim President)
4.	William Spry	1888-1891
5.	J. Golden Kimball	1891-1894
6.	Elias S. Kimball	1894-1898
7.	Ben E. Rich	July 1, 1898-August 15, 1908
8.	E. H. Nye	June 30, 1902-May 15, 1903
9.	Charles A. Callis	October 9, 1908-January 31, 1934
10.	LeGrand Richards	January 1934-June 19, 1937
11.	Merrill D. Clayson	June 18, 1937-July 27, 1940
12.	William P. Whitaker	July 25, 1940-August 1943
13.	Heber Meeks	August 1943-April 20, 1948
14.	Albert Choules	April 20, 1948-April 15, 1952
15.	Peter J. Ricks	April 1952-October 11, 1955
16.	Berkeley L. Bunker	October 11, 1955-May 1, 1959
17.	J. Byron Ravsten	May 1, 1959-December 18, 1963
18.	Fauntleroy Hunsaker	December 18, 1963-March 21, 1965
19.	Roy B. Evanson	March 21, 1965-March 22, 1968
20.	Charles W. Nibley	March 22, 1968-August 15, 1970
21.	J. Orvin Hicken	August 15, 1970

APPENDIX B

Organizational Developments in the Southern States*

1900 - Southern States Mission includes states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia (Louisiana was transferred to the Southwestern States Mission in November, 1900).

1902, June 30 - Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, and Ohio to Middle States Mission.

1903, August 7 - Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, and Ohio to Southern States Mission.

1926 - Ohio to Northern States Mission.

1928 - Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Virginia to the East Central States Mission.

1940, June 30 - Washington Stake (includes part of Virginia).

1947, January 19 - Florida Stake.

1947, October 19 - South Carolina Stake.

1947, October 26 - North Carolina and Virginia to Central Atlantic States Mission.

1949, October 14 - Ohio to Great Lakes Mission.

1955, June 19 - Seventy-five counties of Mississippi to Gulf States Mission. Seventeen northern counties to East Central States Mission.

1957, May 5 - Atlanta Stake.

1957, June 30 - Virginia Stake.

1958, February 23 - Orlando Stake.

1958, November 23 - Cincinnati Stake.

1959, October 25 - Tampa Stake (by division of Orlando Stake).

1960, November 1 - Florida, Southern Alabama, and Southern Georgia to Florida Mission.

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*Organizational File Contained in the Church Archives.

1960, November 13 - Miami Stake.

1961, August 27 - North Carolina Stake.

1961, September 13 - Greensboro Stake (North Carolina).

1962, December 9 - Raleigh Stake (North Carolina).

1963, January 27 - South Carolina West Stake (division of South Carolina Stake).

1963, March 3 - Patomic Stake (division of Washington Stake).

1963, March 10 - Macon Stake (division of Atlanta Stake).

1964, April 12 - Norfolk Stake (division of Virginia Stake).

1965, April 15 - Memphis Stake.

1965, May 2 - Jackson Stake (Mississippi).

1965, June 27 - Hattiesburg Stake (Mississippi).

1967, June 29 - Ohio Mission (division of Great Lakes Mission).

1968, March 3 - Alabama Stake.

1968, April 21 - South Carolina East Stake (division of So. Carolina)

1968, September 15 - Jacksonville Stake (division of Florida Stake).

1969, June 15 - Pensacola Stake.

1970, January 11 - Roanoke Stake (Virginia).

1970, April 26 - Mt. Vernon Stake.

1970, June 10 - North Carolina-Virginia Mission (formerly Central Atlantic States Mission).
Kentucky-Tennessee Mission (formerly East Central States).

1970, October 18 - Ft. Lauderdale Stake (division of Miami Stake).

1970, December 5 - Nashville Stake.

1971, January 30 - Louisville Stake.

1971, June - Alabama-Florida Mission; Georgia-South Carolina Mission (formerly Southern States Mission); Florida So. Mission.

1972, April 23 - Lexington Stake

1972, October 19 - Ohio-West Virginia Mission (formerly Ohio Mission)

APPENDIX C. Mission Statistics During the Rich Administration[a]

	May 1884	Dec. 1898	Dec.[b] 1899	Dec.[c] 1900	Dec. 1901	Dec.[d] 1902	Dec. 1903	Dec.[g] 1905	Dec. 1906	Dec. 1907	Dec. 1908
Membership	1084	6366	7132	8227	--	4355[e]	8592-8729[f]	--	--	9618	--
(with children)	--	9200	10251-10389[f]	10894	--	--	--	10663	12787	13921	--
Mel. Prstd. (including missionaries)		525	587	546	--	--	--	--	--	361	--
Missionaries	92	442	482	446	154	100[e]	198	187	311	--	215
Average for year	--	--	--	--	198	--	--	198	276	225	265
Emigration	--	101	323-382[f]	32	--	Many	122	--	73	--	--
Branches Organ.	22 Existing	10	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Sunday Schools Organ.	--	46	--	--	11	--	--	--	--	--	--
Convert Baptisms (Year)	--	1377	1118	979	804	--	834	589	610-645[f]	843	--

[a]From official statistical reports, missionary newspapers.

[b]Ohio conference included.

[c]Louisiana conference not transferred.

[d]Incomplete, Middle States Mission organization.

[e]Does not include Middle States Mission totals.

[f]Reports conflict.

[g]No information for 1904.

APPENDIX D

Deaths of Southern States Missionaries, 1898-1908

Name	Age	Status	From	Cause	Died	Date
Sampson O. Hale	36	M	Ala.	Congestion of Bowels	Ala.	1-23-99
Lewis A. Warren	33	M	Utah	Malaria, Pneumonia	La.	2-20-99
Thomas H. Bell	--	M	Utah	Heart Failure	Ga.	8-20-99
Alva T. Stewart	22	S	Ariz.	Quick Consumption	Home[a]	2-26-1900
Bryan W. Peck	22	S	Id.	Measles, Bronchitis	Tenn.	2-27-1900
Thomas E. Norton	39	M	Ariz.	Prolonged Illness	Home[b]	7-16-1900
Robert A. Paxton	24	S	Utah	Pneumonia	S.Car.	8-27-1900
J. D. Frankland	26	M	Utah	--	Ala.	9-13-1900
Henry D. Bronson	22	S	Id.	Drowning	Ga.	10-06-1900
John J. Fife	20	S	Utah	Diptheria[c]	Ala.	12-08-02
Ephraim H. Nye	--	M	Utah	Heart Disease	S.Car.	5-16-03
Silas T. Andrus	21	S	Id.	Typhoid	Ga.	5-22-03
Wm. E. Hokanson	--	S	Wy.	Blood Poison, Erysipelas	Ky.	1-17-05
Leroy Hall	23	S	Utah	Typhoid	Ky.	4-29-08

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[a]Released from mission February 19, 1900. Never regained strength. Probably died with quick consumption by overwork.

[b]Released from mission March, 1900.

[c]As diagnosed by a hostile physician who wrote the certificate of death. Other doctors including president of board of health were convinced his death was not due to diptheria.

APPENDIX E

The Missionary Force of the Southern States Mission

Year	Total Number of Missionaries Set Apart[a]	No. Sent to SSM[b]	Percent sent to SSM
1893	317	62	20
1894	162	102	63
1895	526	228	43
1896	746	204	27
1897	922	256	28
1898	943	215	23
1899	1,059	255	24
1900	796	122	15
1901	522	65	12
1902	848	124	15
1903	658	115	18
1904	699	131	19
1905	716	127	18
1906	1,015	178	18
1907	930	159	17
1908	919	117	13
1909	1,014	120	12
1910	933	102	11
1911	882	147	16.7

[a]Missionary Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

[b]Manuscript History of the Southern States Mission, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Appendix F[a]

The Children of Benjamin Erastus Rich and Diana Farr Rich

Name	Birthdate	Birthplace
Benjamin Leroy	October 18, 1878	Ogden
Lorin Farr	October 29, 1880	Ogden
Fred	July 29, 1884	Ogden
Homer Erastus	August 12, 1886	Ogden
Ida	July 6, 1888	Ogden
Don O'Neal	October 13, 1891	Ogden
Andrea	January 18, 1894	Rexburg
Frank Cannon	June 9, 1896	Rexburg

[a]From Ben E. and Diana Farr Rich Family Directory and Family History Tour Book, compiled by Mrs. William M. Palmer, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1975.

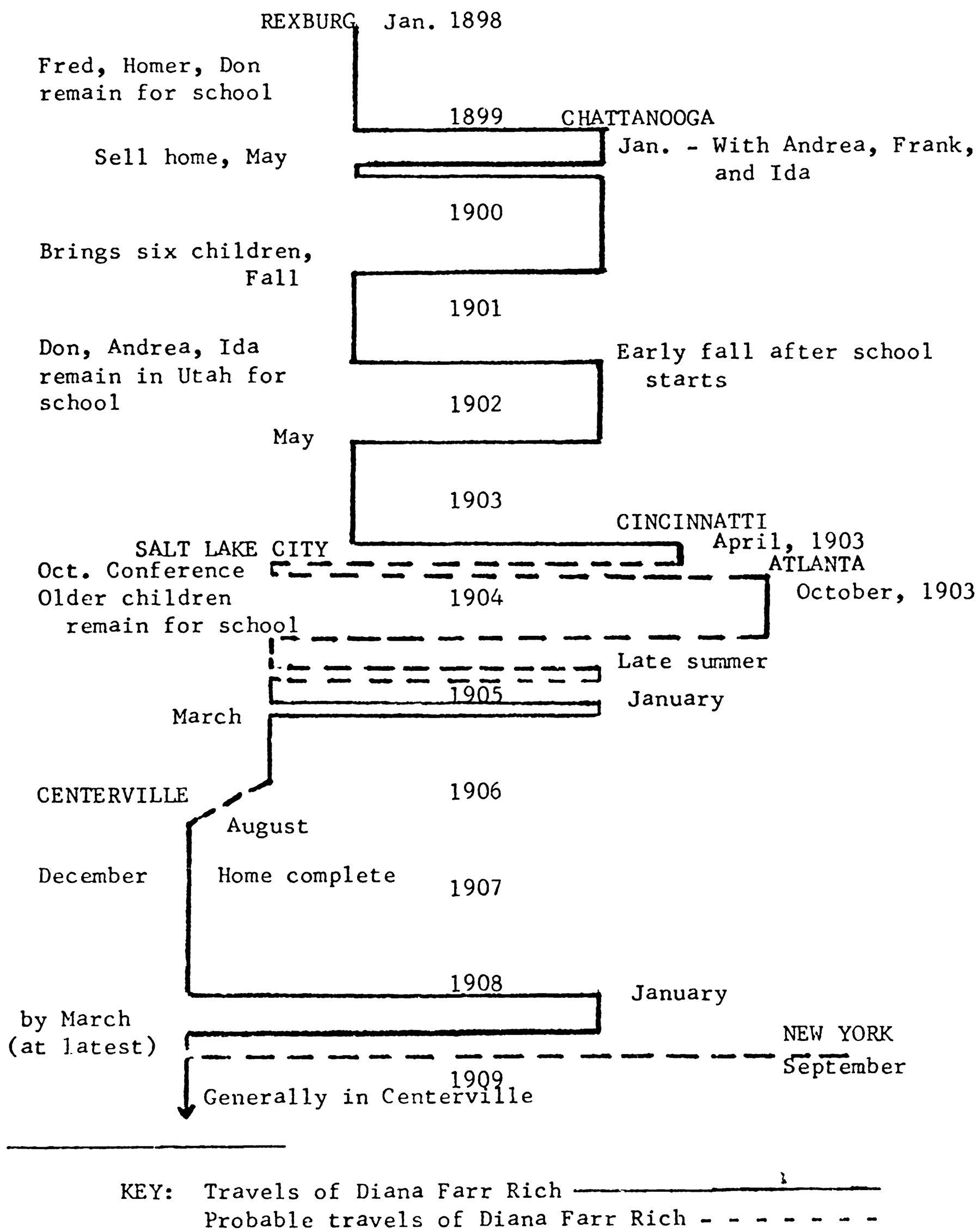
Appendix G[a]

Wives of Benjamin Erastus Rich

Name	Date of Marriage	Other Information
Diana Farr	December 27, 1877	Ceremony performed by Erastus Snow in Endowment House, Salt Lake City.
Rose OsMond	September 12, 1885	"He had promised his father that he would enter into plural marriage." Separated 1888 (no children).
Andrea Jensen	December 13, 1888	Andrea died of diptheria shortly after. Buried in Ogden Cemetary.
Laura Bowering	Date unknown, but just before call to Southern States Mission - 1898.	
Alice Caroline McLauchan	October 4, 1899	One adopted boy, Francis.

[a]From Ben E. and Diana Farr Rich Family History Tour Book and personal interview with Mrs. William M. Palmer, August 6, 1975.

APPENDIX H. Ben E. Rich Family Dates and Movements



KEY: Travels of Diana Farr Rich ————————
Probable travels of Diana Farr Rich - - - - - - -

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THE SOUTHERN STATES MISSION AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF BEN E. RICH, 1898-1908, INCLUDING A STATISTICAL STUDY OF CHURCH GROWTH IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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Master of Arts Degree, April, 1976

ABSTRACT

Although The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sent numerous missionaries to labor in the South prior to the Civil War, a formal mission organization did not exist until the establishment of the Southern States Mission of the Church in 1875 at Shady Grove, Tennessee. This thesis details the significant events in the mission during the eventful years of the Ben E. Rich administration, 1898 to 1908. Following his courageous example, hundreds of missionaries taught the message of the Restored Gospel to the people of the South during a renewed period of persecution and hatred as the acceptance of Utah on a par with her sister states was tested by the Roberts Trial and the Smoot Hearings. In addition to his role as mission president, Ben E. Rich played a significant part in winning the friendship and support of Theodore Roosevelt during the Smoot Hearings.

This study also outlines the history of the mission and the growth of the Southern Church membership following the Rich administration until 1970.

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A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Church History and Doctrine

Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

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