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MORMON MORTUARY PATTERNS AT THE BLOCK 49 AND SECCOMBE LAKE CEMETERIES

by

Howard S. Irvine

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Anthropology

Brigham Young University

December 1998

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Howard S. Irvine

This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Howard S. Irvine in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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ABSTRACT

MORMON MORTUARY PATTERNS AT THE BLOCK 49 AND SECCOMBE LAKE CEMETERIES

Howard S. Irvine

Department of Anthropology

Master of Arts

Death customs perform a socially restorative function among cultures and are a meaningful expression of the value system of any particular culture. Death studies allow the examination of the values considered most significant by the studied culture. This thesis will examine and interpret the material culture recovered at two small cemeteries: Block 49, Utah, and Seccombe Lake, California. One result will show the material manifestation of Mormon religious beliefs in their mortuary practices. The final goal is to suggest that a more thorough examination of a religious sect's beliefs can create a general model of mortuary practices for that religious sect. From general models, we can begin to look at specific sites and understand the social, economic, and/or environmental forces that contribute to mortuary variability among members of the same religious organization.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....v

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....vi

LIST OF TABLES.....viii

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION
Archaeological Research on Historical American Burial Sites.....2
Significance of Mortuary Sites.....5
Suggestions for a Research Strategy.....6

CHAPTER TWO - EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICAN DEATH PRACTICES: THE EASTERN AND WESTERN AMERICAN HERITAGES
1. The Study of American Death Practices.....10
2. Sources of Changes in Attitudes towards Death.....11
3. The Eastern Heritage.....14
4. Material Culture of Death.....16
5. The Western Heritage.....20
6. Conclusion.....23

CHAPTER THREE - DEATH IN MORMON THOUGHT AND PRACTICE
1. Death in Mormon Thought.....33
2. The Spirit World.....33
3. Post-mortal Existence.....37
4. Vision Experiences.....41
5. The Temple Experience.....43
6. Temple Ordinances and Clothing.....47
7. Summary.....52

CHAPTER FOUR - THE BLOCK 49 AND SECCOMBE LAKE CEMETERIES: THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE
1. Introduction.....54
2. Block 49 Project Background.....55
3. Historical Context of Block 49.....57
4. Seccombe Lake Park Project Background.....60
5. Historical Context of Seccombe Lake Park.....62
6. Burial Descriptions.....64
   - Block 49 Cemetery.....65
   - Seccombe Lake Park Cemetery.....66
7. Conclusion.....70

CHAPTER FIVE - CONCLUSIONS
1. Interpretation of the Block 49 Burials..... 74
2. A Possible Interpretation of the Seccombe Lake Park Burials..... 77
3. The Problem.....80
4. Future Research Possibilities..... 81

REFERENCES..... 84

LIST OF TABLES

1. Block 49, Salt Lake City Burials.....67
2. Seccombe Lake, San Bernardino Burials.....68

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Death is the great universality of humankind. With the development of self-awareness comes the subsequent awareness of our own mortality. The universal consciousness of mortality has fascinated anthropologists due to the varied cultural responses to death. Huntington and Metcalf (1979:1) note:

> Corpses are burned or buried, with or without animal or human sacrifice; they are preserved by smoking, embalming, or pickling; they are eaten--raw, cooked, or rotten; they are ritually exposed as carrion or simply abandoned; or they are dismembered and treated in a variety of theses ways. Funerals are the occasion for avoiding people or holding parties, for fighting or having sexual orgies, for weeping or laughing, in a thousand different combinations. The diversity of cultural reactions is a measure of the universal impact of death.

Although the responses are varied, they are not spontaneous reactions. Death customs perform a socially restorative function among cultures. They are also a meaningful expression of the value system of any particular culture. "Life becomes transparent against the background of death, and fundamental social and cultural issues are revealed" (Huntington and Metcalf 1979:2). *Death studies allow the examination of the values considered most significant by the studied culture.*

Keeping this in mind, this thesis will examine and interpret the material culture recovered at two small cemeteries, Block 49, Utah (a more descriptive final site report is forthcoming), and Seccombe Lake, California. One result will show the material manifestation of Mormon religious beliefs in their mortuary practices. The final goal is to suggest that a more thorough examination of the religious beliefs of any sect can create

a general model of mortuary practices for that sect. From general models, we can begin to look at specific sites and begin to understand the social, economic, and/or environmental forces that contribute to mortuary variability among members of the same religious organization.

Archaeological Research on Historical American Burial Sites

Mortuary behavior consists of the disposal of the dead, the rituals that surround the disposal of the dead, and mechanisms that allow an understanding of death in the social and psychic organizations of the survivors. Anthropologists usually approach mortuary behavior through two avenues of inquiry. Ethnologists describe and interpret mortuary behavior to assess the organization, beliefs, operation, and transformation of living societies (Hunington and Metcalf 1979; Kelly and Kaplan 1990; Palgi and Abramovitch 1984). Archaeologists focus on the material remains of mortuary behavior, though research on historical American cemeteries has been substandard when compared with general mortuary studies.

Archaeological investigations of historic American cemeteries are often conducted without adequate historical research of the scholarly literature on American deathways or documentary literature pertinent to the particular cemetery site. The primary reason for this lack of research is that most historical cemetery sites are investigated under unfavorable conditions, such as salvage projects, or as mitigation projects before federal, state, local, or private construction projects. This situation is unfortunate because the inopportunity, or unwillingness, to use both scholarly literatures

as well as local documentary data pertinent to the investigated site " . . . impedes archaeologists from tapping entire contexts of information" (Bell 1987:11).

Historical information used in historical cemetery studies has been generally limited to three purposes: (1) temporal placement and social affiliation of the site, (2) artifact identification, chronology, or status indication, and (3) the study of death practices of specific historical groups.

These approaches have been used extensively to provide information on specific groups, but some scholars (Bell, the most prominent) believe that " . . . historical mortuary sites have not been viewed within the larger cultural context of American deathways" (Bell 1987:11). Bell notes that the description of death practices of specific social and economic groups provide information on inter-group variation, but the participation of specific groups in the larger cultural sphere of American deathways can only emerge from archaeological sites with more emphasis on combining interpretive literature by historians and other scholars with historical and archaeological data (1987:11).

However, most historical mortuary studies have been problematic. "Archaeologists working with historical American cemetery data have often relied on interpretive models derived from prehistoric mortuary sites for more general views of mortuary behavior" (Bell 1987:15). The significance of documentation in the study of historical mortuary practices is often not perceived by archaeologists. Models from the study of prehistoric mortuary behavior are usually used to seriate graves into social and economic status groups. The categorizations are based on the relative quantity or quality

of associated "grave goods" (i.e., coffin hardware, burial clothing, etc.) (Hacker-Norton and Trinkley 1984:13-15, 51; Thomas, South, and Larsen 1977:410, 417; Rose and Stanteford 1985:135-136, 156). The obvious problem with such interpretations is that coffin hardware and/or historic grave goods are considered comparable to artifacts in prehistoric graves.

Similar problems that can be associated with prehistoric mortuary practices, also are alive in historical archaeology. The complexities of behaviors, beliefs, and material culture used in the material expression of specific funerals in historical America are better understood through historical sources instead of material objects only. Quantitative methods alone cannot capture the intricate social factors described in historical sources that affect materially expressed mortuary behavior. Archaeologists must turn towards historical documentation. Bell notes that "the complexity of behaviors, beliefs, and material culture brought to bear on the material expression of specific funerals in historical America is more easily understood using historical sources" (1987:15). Prehistoric models cannot take into account the diverse religious and secular beliefs, and industrialized manufacturing, marketing, and distribution systems realized on continental and global scales (Bell 1987:16; Deagan 1988; Schuyler 1987; Wiseman 1985; Beaudry 1983).

A culture's mortuary behavior can only be understood in its proper socio-historical context. For prehistorians, that context has been developed and shaped over the past 100 years by archaeologists and anthropologists. For the historical archaeologist, that context is furnished by primary and secondary historical research. The use of common

archaeological techniques, such as differential quantities and qualities of artifacts, to determine status at historical cemeteries, without historical research, introduces problems. Thomas, South, and Larsen (1977:41) found problems when analyzing three historic burials in Georgia:

> Certain problems, which arise when one excavates historic period burials, would be more readily solved if comparable archaeological data were available regarding chronology, status differences, technological evolution of grave furniture, and the evolution of early American burial customs.

Significance of Mortuary Sites

Part of the problem of substandard historical research is related to the type of projects conducted. The majority of historical cemetery investigations are conducted under unfavorable conditions, such as salvage projects, or reflect the type of research conducted under a cultural resource management (CRM) framework. Researchers restricted by financial and time constraints use historical data to document the particular site context. The historical information is combined with the recovered artifacts and human remains and results in highly descriptive reports with no theoretical premises (Bell 1987:19). The documentation of the local historical and archaeological site context is necessary to interpret properly a historic cemetery site. Sometimes, it is all that is possible with the materials recovered from excavation. The reliance on this approach, however, obstructs the study of mortuary behavior among different socio-cultural groups by obscuring the place of the local cultural context within the larger regional and/or national context.

Some researchers have gone beyond the documentation of the local socio-historical context to study questions about ethnic variation in mortuary behavior. For example, Koch (1982) used archaeological and historical data from St. Augustine, Florida, to distinguish between Colonial Spanish and British mortuary practices. Combes (1974) and Handler and Lange (1978) discovered the retention of materially expressed African cultural traditions in the mortuary behavior of Southern and Caribbean black slaves. Parrington, Pinter, and Struthers (1986) note social and economic factors that introduced pathological stress among early nineteenth century Philadelphia blacks.

The preceding reports, however, are unusual in their use of historical documentation. Historical data is mainly used to identify and date artifacts, to develop economic indices reflecting coffin hardware cost, and/or to account for particular mortuary practices. Some scholars believe that archaeological interpretations of historical mortuary sites are problematic because they lack any general cultural historical context. Bell (1987, 1994) has been the most prominent proponent of the development of a general cultural historical context for American deathways.

Suggestions for a Research Strategy

Although Bell's call for more generalized research efforts has merits, it is limited by his emphasis on identifying and explaining variability among economic groups. Historical archaeology has the unique position to access both documentary and artifactual evidence and the capability to study topics inaccessible to prehistorians. Part of the

problem lies in the training received by historical archaeologists. Deagan (1988:10) notes:

> Most of us received our methodological training in the context of prehistoric archaeology, and we learned to apply research strategies and interpretive methods designed to inform us about cultures in a pre-global and pre-capitalistic world. The special domain of historical archaeology in the Americas, however, requires additional and sometimes different ways of organizing research and interpreting the results.

The heritage of prehistoric archaeology has obstructed the process of going beyond accepted methodologies to develop others appropriate to the capabilities of historical archaeology (Deagan 1988:10).

The cemeteries at Block 49, Salt Lake City, Utah, and Seccombe Lake, San Bernardino, California, provide a unique opportunity to examine the material manifestations of religious beliefs considered most significant to the nineteenth century members of the Mormon Church. The opportunity is unique due to several factors. One, both settlements were primarily comprised of members of the same religious sect. Two, Salt Lake City was, and is, the center of Mormondom, while the San Bernardino settlement was a colony. Consideration of these two cemeteries allows a comparison of mortuary patterns between the hub of Mormonism and one of its colonies. Three, the early Mormon communities were closed group entities, preferring inter-group activity over intra-group activity. This resulted from religious persecution suffered by church members during the mid-nineteenth century and the cultural isolationism of the Church in Utah before the introduction of the trans-continental railroad. The isolationism, however, means that the Mormon culture was not greatly influenced by cultural trends from the eastern United States until the influx of non-members and manufactured goods

distribution networks to Utah after the completion of the railroad.

From the examination of these two cemeteries, it is proposed that a general model of mortuary practices for the nineteenth century Mormon church may be created. From there, general mortuary models can be developed for the various religious sects in the United States and throughout the world. From the general models, we can begin to look at specific sites and begin to understand the social, economic, and environmental forces that contribute to mortuary variability within any religious sect.

Before developing a general model, the mortuary practices of the nineteenth century Mormon church need to be placed in their proper context. Chapter 2 will examine the general mortuary practices of Americans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, differentiating between the eastern and western American heritages. The eastern heritage used mass-manufacturing to develop an ornate mortuary system of burial receptacles with embellishments and the use of specialized mortuary objects dedicated to mourning the deceased. The western heritage followed a more simplistic pattern of plain burial receptacles and an absence of specialized mortuary objects due to the minimal distribution networks operating in western America during the nineteenth century.

Chapter 3 examines the historical record concerning Mormon mortuary practices of the nineteenth century. Historical accounts of burials will clarify the type of material culture used in Mormon funerals. An examination of religious beliefs will help explain afterlife beliefs of the Mormon church. This chapter shows the important role the Mormon temple and its associated ceremonies and ordinances play within Mormon death beliefs.

From the mortuary practices of nineteenth century America and the Mormon culture, Chapter 4 explicates the material culture recovered from the Block 49 and Seccombe Lake cemeteries. This chapter also provides a brief site and project history for both locations. Both cemeteries will be directly compared to determine whether there is any variability between the sites or divergence from the general American practices.

The final chapter synthesizes all this material and interprets what Mormons believe when they bury their dead. A general model for Mormon mortuary practices will be presented, along with further suggestions for future research strategies for Mormon cemeteries.

CHAPTER TWO

EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICAN DEATH PRACTICES: THE EASTERN AND WESTERN AMERICAN HERITAGES

To understand the material expression of Mormon funerary rites they need to be placed within their larger regional and national contexts. This chapter first considers the funerary behavior of mainstream nineteenth century America and the resultant material culture of that behavior. The regional context is provided through an examination of mortuary behavior in western America during the nineteenth century along with its material culture. This examination provides a foundation from which a comparative analysis between Mormon and mainstream American mortuary behavior may be produced.

The Study of American Death Practices

American funerary behavior has been commented upon by several contemporary observers, beginning with Earle's (1973, 1977) late nineteenth century descriptions of colonial funeral behavior. The study of American funerary behavior became popular in the 1970s and 1980s with the publication of numerous articles, books, and bibliographies (e.g., Farrell 1980:3-14; Goody 1975; Harrah and Harrah 1976; Pike 1980; Stannard 1975; Stitt 1980; Stone 1978; and Wilson 1980). This recent attention towards the historiography of death in America has allowed historians and historical archaeologists to see general historical trends in death practices, especially during the nineteenth century, a

time of social and religious change (Pike and Armstrong 1980:15-18; Hahn and Prude 1985).

Although documentation of seventeenth and eighteenth century funerals indicated funerary rituals were socially complex and materially ornate, the intense investment to keep the memory of the deceased prominent appears to be an exclusive hallmark of nineteenth century American society. Historians have termed this phenomena the *sentimentalization, domestication,* or *beautification* of death (Douglas 1975:65-68; Jackson 1977b:5; Pike and Armstrong 1980:16). The beautification of death was an ideational shift accompanied by social and material transformations. Late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Americans viewed death and heaven in romantic and beautified terms (Bell 1987:32).

Sources of Change in Attitudes towards Death

Explanations of changes in American death practices emphasize transformations in social and cultural spheres. Pike (1980:658) notes:

> The mourning customs of nineteenth century America, especially those of the period frequently called Victorian, accurately reflect that society; these customs comprehend the changes in religious thought, the uniquely idealized status of women, the relationship between the sexes and their relative positions in society, and the growing rigidification of social systems of the latter half of the nineteenth century. That social entrenchment probably occurred in response to the increasing turbulence in society characterized by accelerated urbanization, industrialization and immigration.

Several hypotheses have been advanced to explain the change within nineteenth century American society.

Farrell, in *Inventing the American Way of Death,* suggests the influence of eighteenth and nineteenth century religious movements, along with several social movements, as the explanation for the shift towards the beautification of death. The social movements include Romanticism (a view that valued sentiment over reason and nature over artifice), Scientific Naturalism (best indicated by a popular interest in science and technology), and the effects of industrial capitalism (Farrell 1980). Farrell's (1980:14) approach is the most synthetic by emphasizing "the convergence of several intellectual and social trends that changed American beliefs and behavior concerning death".

The American Arts and Crafts Movement also had an impact on American tastes and attitudes. This movement tried to reform social and moral ills (perceived to be the result of industrialization, urbanization, and the degradation of the environment) through the use of designs based on natural motifs and forms that symbolized native, national material culture (Kaplan 1987). The movement's emphasis on simple, uncluttered design was diametrically opposed to the social and material aspects of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century beautification of death. Bell believes that the movement influenced the public's growing discomfort with the ostentatious display of mourning during the late nineteenth century (Bell 1987:39).

Several authors emphasize the idealization of women, the family, and the home as a contrast to the capitalist transformation of society (Ames 1981:653; Douglas 1975:65-68; Pike and Armstrong 1980:16-17; Stannard 1979:44,46). Pike and Armstrong (1980:16) note, "The nineteenth century brought dramatic change and extreme social

stress. Struggling to live in an uncertain world, Americans retreated. They idealized and sanctified the home, the family, and the women who formed them." As the domesticate sphere became idealized, death and heaven were also idealized. Heaven "became a domesticated haven, a place where all would be welcomed home" (Pike and Armstrong 1980:17).

The nineteenth century preoccupation with death later developed into a full denial of death at the turn of the twentieth century. Jackson (1977a:298) has characterized this period as "a major withdrawal on the part of the living from communion with and commitment to the dying and the dead." Several authors also note that popular contemporary attitudes towards death (utter finality, continuing existence, and a disdain for elaborate and expensive funerals) have their foundation in the death practices of nineteenth century American society. Farrell (1980:4) argues that critics of contemporary American deathways lack:

> . . .any feel for the texture of changes in our past. They misunderstand the historical roots--and thus the intellectual, institutional, and emotional roots--of the American Way of Death. By focusing on the product of past developments, they ignore the complex and intricate processes by which Americans created death as a modern cultural event. Traditions that develop in time acquire authority from people who also develop in time. We recognize this fact in our language itself, when we speak of "time-honored traditions." In an age of instant coffee, instant cash, and instant celebrity, it is easy to forget that temporal events are not always temporary. Thus, although our deaths may yet lie in the future, the explanation for our deaths comes from the past.

The material behavior of the present can only be truly understood through a close examination of past cultural traditions.

The Eastern Heritage

The material manifestations of the beautification of death can be clearly seen through an examination of funerary ritual in eastern America during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. The deathways of colonial America were clearly materially orientated with highly decorated and expensive mortuary artifacts (Earle 1973, 1977; Pike and Armstrong 1980). Andrews (1919:93-95) noted the following of eighteenth century funerary rituals:

> The prominent place which death occupied in colonial thought and experience gave to funerals the character of social function and public events. They were objects of general interest and were usually attended by crowds of people. Children were allowed to attend, often as pallbearers, that they might be impressed with the significance of death as the inevitable end of a life of trial and probation. Everywhere, before the reaction of the sixties, funerals were occasions of expense and extravagant display. It was unusual to find Robert Hume of Charleston declaring in his will that his funeral should not cost over ten pounds, that the coffin should be plain and not covered by a pall, and that none of his relatives should wear mourning. Occasionally a colonist expressed the wish to be buried without pomp or funeral sermon, but such a preference was rare. The giving of gloves, rings, and scarves was provided for in nearly every will, and it is easy to believe the report that some of the clergy accumulated these articles by the hundred. Drinking, even to the point of intoxication, at funerals became such a scandal that ministers in New England thundered at the practice from the pulpit, and Edmund Watts in Virginia was moved to declare in his will that "no strong drinks be provided or spent" when he was buried. But the custom was too deeply seated to be easily eradicated.
>
> The dead were buried in the burying ground or churchyard, though private burial places were customary on the plantations and in many parts of northern New York and New England. At Annapolis a lot in the churchyard was leased at a nominal rent, but interment within the church was allowed for a consideration which was possible only to people of wealth and which went to the rector. A potter's field seems hardly to have been known in colonial times, for we are told that the poorer classes and Negroes in Baltimore buried their "deceased relations and acquaintances in several streets and allies" of the town and that not until 1792 was a special section set apart for their use. A suicide was interred at a crossroads and a stake was driven through the body. Usually, except among Quakers, stones, table monuments, and headpieces were erected over the dead and often bore elaborate and curious inscriptions and carvings more or less crude. The commonest materials, freestone, syenite, and slate, were usually quarried in the colonies, though marble was always brought from England.

Mortuary artifacts like tombstones, rings, and coffin lids were ornately decorated with the recurring motif of a human skull. This motif has promoted the view that seventeenth and eighteenth century American society had a somber and dark view of death (Habenstein and Lamers 1955:393). Earle (1973:365), describing drawings commemorating a funeral, notes, "They were often decorated gruesomely with skull and crossbones, scythes, coffins, and hour-glasses, all-seeing rakish squints, bow-legged skeletons, and miserable little rosette winding-sheets."

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, attitudes towards death began to change in American society. Death and heaven began to be seen in romantic terms, such as an escape from earthly bonds where a good Christian's deeds could secure him or her a place in heaven. Pike and Armstrong (1980:17) note:

> During the nineteenth century, Heaven became much more than a better world; it became a domesticated haven, a place where all would be welcomed home. It no longer held the terror of dreadful judgment and the uncertain salvation that it had a century earlier. In the nineteenth century it offered the comforting prospect of happy reunion to all. Sorrowing mothers and fathers were reassured: May these dear parents remember that there is a meeting with their child.

The popular seventeenth century funeral motifs of the skull and crossbones were replaced in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century by willow trees, flowers, and seraphs. The emphasis was placed on creating objects that commemorated the dead and portrayed a beautified vision of the post mortal existence. Cemeteries are some of the best evidence of this shift, with changes from crowded urban environments to rustic, landscaped parks visited on Sundays (French 1975; Stannard 1975).

The shift in American attitudes towards death also introduced a pattern for formalized mourning behavior that required specific material items. Farrell (1980:34) has

termed this formalized behavior "high mourning" and has provided a general description:

> When an individual died, sentimental survivors directed their private grief into public mourning. They swathed themselves in mourning clothes and decorated their houses with crepe and funeral wreaths. Choosing funeral furnishings to convey a sense of melancholy beauty, they also interred the individual in a rural cemetery that capitalized on the conventions of Romantic naturalism to supply emotional reassurances to survivors. And, finally, they erected an elaborate monument to the memory of the dearly departed.

Formalized mourning behavior that "reinforced the closeness and extended the memorialization of the dead...became greater than a virtue for the living: protracted public mourning was a social responsibility" (Bell 1987:37).

Material Culture of Death

The emphasis on formalized mourning behavior in eastern American society introduced new forms of mortuary material culture. One way survivors indicated their loss to the general public was through stylized mourning clothes. Although the use of mourning clothes was not exclusive to the nineteenth century (Hillerman [1980] has traced the use of mourning clothes back to seventeenth century Europe), the ritual use of mourning clothes became more complex after the early nineteenth century (Habenstein and Lamers 1955:412-413).

Mourning clothing was usually fashioned from crepe in a narrow spectrum of colors (black, white, gray, or violet) and was worn by men, women, and children. Bell notes, "Intricate codes of etiquette, modified to a large extent by personal choice, indicated the proper color, the use of trimmings and accessories, and the duration of the use of mourning clothes, all depending on one's relationship to the deceased" (1987:44).

However, the use of mourning clothes was not a pervasive practice among all American social groups. Hillerman (1980:92) states:

> On the frontier, in particular, harsh circumstances often dictated less formal funeral ritual than that practiced in urban areas. Economic, cultural, regional, religious, and individual peculiarities created variations in mourning traditions and dress, but for those who had the means and the inclination to follow prevailing custom etiquette books and ladies' magazines...offered detailed guidelines.

The use of mourning clothes and other funerary items was dependent upon economic means and accessibility to such items.

Other ways survivors conveyed their loss to the general public was through the use of funeral furnishing and decorative arts. Items included pictorial works such as needlepoint, lithographs, paintings, and photographs. Pictorial works were usually idealized scenes of mourning family members weeping over a tomb that blended the symbolism and sentiment of the nineteenth century Romantic movement (Bell 1987:46). Three-dimensional memorial art or "mourning pieces" were usually more personal, consisting of locks of hair from the deceased framed with mementos, like a baby's shoe or a coffin nameplate, all surrounded by a floral border (Pike and Armstrong 1980:107). Jewelry made in memory of the deceased consisted of rings, brooches, cameos, pendants, lockets, and wristlets. Bell (1987:47) notes, "This jewelry, with stylized or realistic scenes and portraits, could integrate woven hair into the design and was often made of precious materials such as gold, ivory, and pearls." Of most interest, is the change in coffin fittings and burial containers.

Burial containers have also evolved in conjunction with the change in American attitudes towards death. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the hexagonal

"toe-pincher" was the common type of receptacle. The coffin was an Old World form brought to America by English colonists. Wood was the primary construction material, with the type of wood used dependent upon the family's financial circumstances (stained and polished hard woods for the wealthy and painted pine for the poor) (Habenstein and Lamers 1955:256). The coffin was usually constructed by a carpenter. If the deceased was impoverished, family members performed the task.

The beginning of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of full-time coffin-makers and coffin-making as an industry. As a result, "the emphasis in funerals began to shift in the direction of the *coffin*, especially with regard to price, quality, and diversity of purpose" (Habenstein and Lamers 1955:258). For example, an average coffin in the seventeenth century, cost approximately 12 shillings ($1.20), while in the early nineteenth century, coffins surpassed 20 dollars on average.

The increased emphasis on the burial receptacle as a major item in burials resulted in a concentrated "effort to improve the function, style, and composition of these receptacles" (Habenstein and Lamers 1955:259; see Habenstein and Lamers 1955:251-310 for more in-depth discussion of innovative burial containers of the nineteenth century). One outcome of this new emphasis on style and composition was an increased popularity of the casket or rectangular burial container during the mid-nineteenth century.

> The burial cases formerly used were adapted in shape nearly to the form of the human body, that is they tapered from the shoulders to the head, and from the shoulders to the feet. Recently, in order to obviate in some degree the disagreeable sensation produced by a coffin on many minds, the casket, or square form has been adopted.... (Habenstein and Lamers 1955:270).

The new style appears to have been implemented for the burial of infants and children.

Adams (1857:15) characterized the change as "an improvement":

> Their shape is not in seeming mockery of the rigid, swathed body; the broken lines and angles of the old coffin are drawn into continuous lines; they look like other things, and not like that which looks like nothing else, a coffin; you would be willing to have such a shape for the depository of any household article. Within they are prepared with a pearly white lining; the inside of the lid is draped in the same way; the name is on the inside; and a lock and key supplant the remorseless screws and screwdriver.

Discussing the change in shape in burial receptacles, Jackson (1977a:303) states that "this shift, combined with the increasing durability and ornateness of burial boxes, represented a gradual transformation from merely encasing the body to presentation of the dead."

Associated with the growing popularity of casket-shaped burial containers was an increase in the use of container embellishments (handles, metal plates, thumbscrews, escutcheons, etc.). Although not an exclusive nineteenth century trait, the degree of coffin embellishment reached a peak during the early- to mid-nineteenth century with the use of ornamental hardware and fittings. That time period saw a surplus of inexpensive coffin hardware made of white metal (an alloy of tin, copper, antimony, and lead) being produced in the United States (Harris and Levey 1975:202). The mass-production of coffin hardware is one aspect of the increasing commercialization of the funeral industry, but also another sign of the growing influence of the idealization of death in American society. Embellishment of coffins was not limited to ornate hardware; oval glass panes began to appear on coffins in the mid-nineteenth century (Habenstein and Lamers 1955:263). The use of ornate embellishments and glass viewing panes indicate that "the *encasing* of the body, the primary idea expressed in earlier receptacles, is modified toward the *presentation* of the dead in a receptacle designed to provide an aesthetically

pleasing setting for its visually prominent and dramatically centered object of attention" (Habenstein and Lamers 1955:273).

The Western Heritage

As eastern American society concerned itself with the beautification of death, funerary rituals in western America developed along a different course. As Americans began to push past the Mississippi River and settle the far west, they carried the funerary traditions of eastern society with them, but the complications associated with frontier life resulted in the evolution of a very dissimilar funerary ritual. Logistical problems and the individualistic nature of western American society, and a high mortality rate, prevented the elaborate funerary rituals typical of eastern society. Pre-made coffins and other manufactured dry goods were only readily available after the completion of the trans-continental railroad or in the larger settlements which had professional undertakers. Numerous burials occurred without coffins. The very low population density coupled with extremely primitive embalming techniques necessitated the quick burial of the deceased to prevent the spread of disease. The western funeral developed into a tradition of simplicity and primitive neighborliness (Shumway 1975:45-49).

Baldwin (1888:2) spoke of the funeral customs common in western Ohio during the 1810s and 1820s:

> In those days, every man within ten miles was a neighbor and every neighbor was a friend and when anyone died, a boy was sent on horseback from house to house to tell the sad tidings. On the day of the funeral, all the men and women in the country round laid aside their work, however, important, and attended it. Rough wagons, with boards across for seats, perhaps with a chair for some old grandmother, formed the procession, followed often by men on horseback with their wives behind them. They had no hearse

> and the best wagon of the settlement held the coffin, and a homespun blanket answered for a pall.

Dick (1938:252-254) in *The Sod-House Frontier* gives a more detailed picture of funerary customs of western America:

> When death came, kind neighbors closed the eyes of the deceased. Riders were dispatched to carry the word throughout the little community. There was no undertaker except in the larger cities at a comparatively late day. The neighbors came and "laid out" the body, washing and clothing it and making it look as presentable as possible. The arms were folded and held in position until the body grew rigid.
>
> On the ruder frontier where no lumber was available, bodies were then buried wrapped in a blanket or sheet. Men took their wagon boxes to make coffins for their wives. Floors, clothes closets, and cupboards were torn up and sacrificed to furnish caskets for a loved one or a neighbor's loved one. On the occasion of the first death in Garden City, Kansas, a coffin was made of rough pine boards and blacked with shoe polish. When sawmills came, coffins were made to order from black walnut or other native wood by the coffin-maker according to measurement. They were somewhat triangular in shape, wide at the shoulders and narrowed down to a peak at the foot. Newt Ard of Elsmore, Kansas, remembered that as a boy in the sixties [1860s], he rode on horseback to the coffin-maker carrying a stick with marks on it indicating the length and shoulder breadth of the corpse. In town, the casket for an older person was nicely covered with black alpace, and those for children were covered with white cloth.
>
> While the coffin was being fashioned, other neighbors met, and if a graveyard had not been provided, set apart a new cemetery; strong arms supported by willing and sympathetic hearts, dug the grave. If the death occurred in the night the burial was held the next day, for with no embalming the body disintegrated quickly. If death were too late in the day for burial, friends `sat up' with the body, keeping on the face of the corpse a cloth wet with vinegar in order to deter mortification as much as possible. Ministering neighbors placed the muslin shroud on the body and laid it in the casket. If opportunity permitted carrying out the formalism of eastern burials, there was an awful blackness surrounding the burial and all the death trappings. This, however, was usually not permitted on account of the lack of equipment. If a minister was near at hand, a funeral was conducted in a formal way at home or school-house. The neighbor having the best wagon or ox cart, volunteered to use his vehicle for the hearse. A service was also held at the grave. A funeral was the minister's great opportunity to make an impression on the rough frontiersmen. They would listen on an occasion like this which placed them in a receptive mood.
>
> More often, however, a minister could not be called and the body was buried with a prayer or a few words from some member of the community. Possibly the Sunday-school superintendent or some religious women spoke a few words of comfort in the trying hour, and the next time the circuit rider came around, weeks or months later, he held a funeral service at the lonely little grave on the prairie.
>
> There was very little evidence of mourning in the dress of those in attendance at a funeral. Ordinary clothing was worn. If there were flowers on the prairie or near the homestead residences at the time of burial, the women brought them to garland the coffin.

The informal nature of funerary rituals described by Dick continued in the rural areas of the west into the twentieth century. However, by the late nineteenth century, the completion of the trans-continental railroad and the establishment of communities and cities like San Francisco and Denver introduced the necessity of an occupational specialist; the undertaker. At first, the funerary specialist was a part-time worker, usually the local furniture or cabinet maker, who supplied the coffin and possibly the transportation of the remains to the cemetery. As communities grew larger, the position of undertaker became a full-time trade. The railroad also supported the undertaking trade through an influx of manufactured or dry goods which provided western society the opportunity to conduct eastern style funerals at reasonable costs (Shumway 1975:52).

The cemetery also followed a unique development from private plot internment to organized, distinct cemeteries in western America. Habenstein and Lamers (1955:6) note this transition:

> In Grandfather's time, there was no cemetery as we know it today In fact, it was not called a cemetery--it was a "graveyard" or "churchyard" or "God's acre." As our forefathers settled this section of the country, they set aside part of their own land for their own families. It was God's acre, and kept as such. This little tract of ground so hallowed, was convenient and necessary--but later it often became a handicap in the sale of property, for the next owner would not wish the first party's burial lot, and the original owner would not wish to be separated from the dead. One can easily see the complications that would arise from this transaction. The churchyard then became the logical place for burial and this ground was placed in the hands of the church officers, who in turn had authority over the permits. No lots were sold and space was opened for graves as needed. This often meant that husband and wife were separated by as many graves as were used between the two deaths. We have some records where these graveyards were divided into the following groups: married section, single adults, choir, children, and those who were outside the church--not members.
>
> About this time, the duty of grave digging fell upon the shoulders of the pallbearers. They assisted the family and undertaker from the time of the first call to the very end--the closing of the open grave.
>
> The church "graveyard" had its limitations in growing sections, for in many towns of 1500 people there were at least 15 "graveyards". Ground became valuable and the

> boundaries of the lot were limited by houses that had been built on the four sides. Therefore, the central cemetery was the logical growth, and the burial lot passed from the hands of the church to organized and chartered groups who developed the beautiful memorial parks of today.

Graves, like their eastern counterparts, were designated by markers of various materials. The earliest grave markers were made of wood, with very few remaining today. The wooden markers were replaced with sandstone markers, but the sandstone markers were vulnerable to weather changes. Marble tombstones had to be ordered from larger settlements requiring months of shipping time. It was not until more reliable transportation networks were established that hard stone markers became popular.

Grave markers usually noted the bare essentials of deceased individuals like name and dates of birth and death. Sometimes other details like cause of death, a brief history of the person, or poetry were included (Shumway 1975:57). Carvings on markers offer infinite variety but follow a common theme. Motifs like clasped hands, floral wreaths, heaven-pointing fingers, crowns, doves of peace, and the cross are frequently common.

Conclusion

The historical documentation on mortuary practices in nineteenth century mainstream America suggests two general patterns in existence. The eastern heritage developed in eastern America during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries due to a social shift in the attitude toward death called the beautification of death. This attitude shift resulted in elaborate mortuary behavior evidenced, in part, by the use of stylized mourning clothing, a shift from coffins to caskets as burial receptacles, and an extensive use of casket embellishments (i.e., handles, metal plates, thumbscrews, etc.).

The western heritage differed greatly from the eastern heritage due to two main facts. First, the absence of high-volume distribution networks for material goods. Second, the primitive embalming techniques, which necessitated the rapid disposal of the deceased, prevented the elaborate funerals common to eastern America.

As a result, burial receptacle consisted of simple wooden coffins, primarily in the hexagonal 'toe-pincher' shape. There was an absence of coffin embellishments common to the eastern heritage burials. Only basic fastening hardware (i.e., nails or screws) were used for constructing the coffin.

The actual burials were also devoid of embellishments (i.e., extravagant jewelry or mementos). Normal clothing or burial shrouds, rather than stylized burial clothing, was common to the western mortuary pattern. Graves were marked, but unlike their eastern counterparts, materials consisted of wood or soft stone.

The identification of two general American mortuary patterns builds the foundation upon which to build a comparative analysis with the Mormon mortuary pattern. The next chapter will describe Mormon mortuary patterns from historical documentation and explain the importance of Mormon afterlife beliefs in shaping that mortuary pattern.

CHAPTER THREE

DEATH IN MORMON THOUGHT AND PRACTICE

The idea of death lies at the core of all religious and philosophical systems of thought. Meyers (1975:112) notes, "If the function of a belief system is to give meaning to the exigencies of collective history and individual biography, the fundamental test of a world view is how it deals with death." For most people operating in the Judeo-Christian tradition, death is a terrifying experience to confront. However, among the mid-nineteenth century members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), a different attitude prevailed.

Death was a common occurrence among the members of the Mormon Church during the mid-nineteenth century. O'Dea (1957:80) states that by the end of 1846, before the 1400 mile exodus to the Salt Lake Valley, there were over 600 graves in the cemetery at Winter Quarters, Iowa. Biographies and travel reports also describe the large number of burials lining the trail to the Salt Lake Valley. One witness, Mrs. Benjamin G. Ferris, the wife of a government official who served in Utah, met a discouraged widow who had turned back with her surviving children. The woman asked Mrs. Ferris if she would pause by a child's grave farther west. Ferris (1856:55f) noted:

> It will be difficult to distinguish the resting place of this poor child, in the multitude of graves that line the road. The further we go, the more frequent they become; and we are fast growing callous to the mortality and suffering, of which they furnish such abundant evidence. What a history they unfold! Some are found close to the wayside, as if its poor tenant had been hurriedly and carelessly inhumed by strangers; others appear a little further off upon a slight mound, or under a solitary tree, as though its occupant had been laid in its lonely resting place by surviving friends amid tears and anguish-its future guardian, the roving red man-its future requiem, the howling of the wolf.

In the face of large scale death, the Mormon vision prevailed. Stout (1964 1:213), who lost his wife and three children in a five month period, wrote:

> I beheld my family one by one yielding up the Ghost and bereaving me of every earthly prospect with the melancholy reflection that there was yet more soon to follow. How often in sorrow and anguish have I said in my heart: When shall my trials and tribulations end? But amid all these adverse changes, these heartrending trials, not once . . . have I regretted that I set out to follow the council [sic] of the people of God and to obey the voice of the spirit to flee the land of the Gentiles.

Mormons approach death with a tranquillity reflected in their funeral plans. Like every society, Mormons "developed a ritual for disposing of the body, aiding the bereaved in their reorientation to the community, and publicly commemorating the completion of a life" (Meyers 1975:125). Wallace (1966:103) believes that it is a person's belief system that serves "to explain, to rationalize, to interpret and to direct the energy of ritual performance." Mormon historical documents appear to support this hypothesis.

Mormon funerary rituals were generally derived from the simple funerary practices of New England ancestors (most of the early church leaders had New England ancestry).

> Determined to avoid what they considered the "popish error" of saying prayers over the dead, the Puritans held funerals which were models of austerity. The ceremony consisted mainly of friends and relatives gathering together at the tolling of a bell, carrying the dead solemnly to the grave, and after the burial, returning to the church to hear a sermon (Meyers 1975:125).

By the mid to late nineteenth century, New England funerals were characterized by a pomp and rigidity adopted from Victorian England. This emphasis on more elaborate death rituals was the "beautification of death" discussed in Chapter 2 (Bell 1987:32).

The first adequately recorded Mormon funeral was that of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in 1844. After their assassination on June 27th, the bodies were brought back to Nauvoo, Illinois, for burial. A public viewing was organized. The bodies were placed in coffins covered with black velvet, lined with white cambric, and fastened with brass studs. Each coffin had a hinged lid holding a square pane of glass over the face. The actual burial, however, was extra-ordinary. Fearing the exhumation of the bodies by persecutors of the Church, Mormon leaders held a false public funeral with coffins filled with sand. The actual corpses were reserved for private interment (Brodie 1966:396f; Kennedy 1888:250ff; Linn 1963:307; Mayhew 1851:168; Stenhouse 1904:168; Taylor 1971:268-271). Missing from this funeral was a sermon and prayer, elements that later became a standard part of Mormon funerary rituals.

Deaths occurring on the march from Iowa to present-day Utah could not be observed with formal ceremony. Graves were usually shallow trenches marked by upright stones or even less. Once settled in Utah, the Mormons began to observe death in a more formal manner. The Deseret News, from its beginning in 1850, published obituaries. Obituaries for ordinary Mormons usually occupied a few lines, while predominant Mormons received longer, patterned death notices. The obituaries reported:

> the date and cause of death, contained an account of the deceased's last illness, mentioned his parents, listed his survivors, then recounted his spiritual biography, including details of his baptism, confirmation, ordination and missions. The notice might invite friends to attend a funeral service, or if the ceremony had taken place, note that a particular elder or bishop had delivered an appropriate address (Meyers 1975:127).

By the nineteenth century, the traditional wooden coffin was gradually replaced by the casket in the United States (Habenstein and Lamers 1955:281). The common

Mormon choice appears to have been wood, with some individuals leaving directions as to the size and construction of their burial cases. These requests, along with the lack of advertisements of pre-made burial receptacles in the *Deseret News,* suggest that coffins were made to order upon death (Meyers 1975:128).

The custom of viewing the dead was more common to the Mormon elite and usually was limited to an hour or two preceding the actual funeral. Funeral ceremonies were usually held in the deceased person's home. Ceremonies could take place in a public meeting house for a large group of mourners. Church leaders' funerals were usually held in the Salt Lake City Tabernacle after its completion in 1867. Funeral ceremonies are not held in Mormon temples.

Newspaper descriptions of various funerals have been the best source to derive a picture of the typical Mormon funeral. Family members were usually seated around the coffin with conducting General Authorities or local Priesthood leaders seated on a stand facing the congregation. The coffin platform, however, was not the center of attention. The funeral sermons delivered by the Mormon leaders were considered the high point of the ceremony (Meyers 1975:128).

The reading of scriptures was an uncommon practice at Mormon funerals. The "comforting words" usually came from Mormon orators whose sermons were a restatement of beliefs about the post-mortal existence as a place of conscious activity and the inevitable resurrection:

> He is not lost. He has only gone to perform another part of the mission which he has been engaged in all his life, to labor in another sphere for the good of all mankind, for the welfare of the souls of men (*Deseret News*, 17; July 1, 1868).

> From the labors of the flesh they rest, but their work continues. Rest is a change, but not a cessation form labor . . . Having done a great, a glorious work in the flesh, [he] now joins his labors with them in the more extensive labors of the priesthood, the redemption of the hosts of the dead (*Deseret News*, 26; Sept. 5, 1877).

> The very body that lies there in that coffin will be raised at the first resurrection . . . we will see him in the flesh just as we have seen him . . . here; only he will be made pure, holy and immortal. And when we are made pure we shall associate together (*Deseret News* 24; Sept. 8, 1875).

> Every component particle of his body, from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, will be resurrected, he, in the flesh, will see God and converse with Him; and see his brethren and associate with them and they will enjoy a happy eternity together (*Deseret News*, 26; July 1, 1868).

Mormon funerals were usually described, by those attending them, as occasions of joy. Hymns of rejoicing were sung, and prayers (invocation and benediction) were part of the ceremony. Texts of prayers were usually not printed in the *Deseret News*, but the few texts that did appear suggest that the two prayers focused upon "requests that God inspire the funeral orators and open the hearts of the congregation to their counsel; and . . . petitions for His blessing upon the surviving Saints, particularly the deceased person's family, including, and specifically, a man's widow" (Meyers 1975:130). The effect is a secular quality to Mormon funerals. There was no spiritual anguish of death or appeals to God for mercy upon the deceased.

The Mormon emphasis on resurrection constrained them to choose internment rather than cremation as the method for disposal of the dead. Once settled in the Great Basin, the family plot was the common location for internment of the deceased, until the Salt Lake City council mandated the internment of all deceased in the Salt Lake City cemetery in 1856.

The funeral of Brigham Young in 1877 is one of the better documented funeral services (*Deseret News*, 26; Sept. 5, 1877) and, compared to Joseph Smith's hurried and secretive funeral, could be considered an affair of state. After Young's death, the body was carried to the Salt Lake Tabernacle where the body lay in state for twenty-four hours. An estimated 18,000 to 25,000 people viewed the body to pay their respects. The tabernacle was decorated with flowers on and around the organ and stands. The front of the platform was also draped in black. Mourners were seated in reserved and unreserved sections of the building. The front rows were reserved for relatives and various lower church authorities. On the stand were the General Authorities of the church along with visiting dignitaries.

Brigham Young's funeral was unique because he had written instructions, four years before his death, outlining his funeral service. Read by Erastus Snow during the service, the instructions were as follows:

> I, Brigham Young, wish my funeral services to be conducted in the following manner:
>
> When I breathe my last I wish my friends to put my body in as clean and wholesome state as can conveniently be done, and preserve the same for one, two, three or four days, or as long as my body can be preserved in a good condition. I want my coffin made of plump one and one-quarter inch boards, not scrimped in length, but two inches longer than I would measure, and from two to three inches wider than is commonly made for a person of my breadth and size, and deep enough to place me on a little comfortable cotton bed, with a good suitable pillow for size and quality; my body dressed in my temple clothing, and laid nicely into my coffin, and the coffin to have the appearance that if I wanted to turn a little to the right or to the left, I should have plenty of room to do so. The lid can be made crowning.
>
> At my interment I wish all of my family present that can be conveniently, and the male members wear no crepe on their hats or on their coats; the females to buy no black bonnets, nor black dresses, nor black veils; but if they have them they are at liberty to wear them. The services may be permitted, as singing and a prayer offered, and if any of my friends wish to say a few words, and really desire, do so; and when they have closed their services take my remains on a bier, and repair to the little burying ground, which I have reserved on my lot east of the White House on the hill, and in the southeast corner of this lot have a vault built of mason work large enough to receive my coffin, and that

> may be placed in a box, if they choose, made of the same material as the coffin--redwood. Then place flat rocks over the vault sufficiently large to cover it, that the earth may be placed over it--nice, fine, dry earth--to cover it until the walls of the little cemetery are reared, which will leave me in the south-east corner. This vault ought to be roofed over with some kind of temporary roof. There let my earthly house or tabernacle rest in peace, and have a good sleep, until the morning of the first resurrection; no crying or mourning with anyone as I have done my work faithfully and in good faith (*Deseret News* 26, Sept. 5, 1877).

At the conclusion of the tabernacle ceremony, a procession followed the hearse to the Young family's private graveyard. The body was interred in a stone vault according to Brigham Young's instructions.

Sorenson (1974:14) records the funeral practices in the town of Pomerene, Arizona (a colony settled by Mormon pioneers in the early twentieth century).

> The Relief Society has a special role. They prepare the body for burial. Today, the body is taken by an undertaker from Tucson or Bisbee for embalming. In this case the Relief Society members go there to dress the body. The clothing is normally white and if the deceased has been through the Temple, Temple garments are used. Many Relief Societies keep on hand a supply of clothing for such times. The women also assist the family by cleaning the house, cooking, etc., in anticipation of the arrival of relatives from out of the community. They also take care of the flowers at the funeral.
>
> The funeral is usually held in the church and not at the funeral home. Until recently, most funeral were held within 24 house after death. Special friends of the family are often asked to be speakers...The community had a church owned cemetery and the Bishop assigned lots to families as they needed them. There were no deeds to the cemetery lots. While the women were helping the family, the men would go to the cemetery and dig the grave. (After the funeral) a short graveside service would be held, usually a prayer for dedicating the grave. In the case of small children, this might be the only service. After the casket had been lowered into the grave, the men took turns shoveling the dirt until the grave was filled. Women and children watched. The Relief Society would place the flowers over the grave. Often a flower would be given to a member of the family to press and save. It was not until the flowers had been placed on the grave that the people left.

Even with the simplicity of the funerals of Mormon leaders and members, the influence of eastern American traditions began to spread to Utah due to the "technologically-based and professionally-mediated funeral institutions" (Sorenson 1974:17). By the late nineteenth century, the use of black mourning clothing was being

considered a social requirement. The profusion of flowers, expensive clothing, rings, and jewelry led to a growing objection among some Mormons of having temple clothing covering their "finery." A reply to the growing trend of elaborate funerals appeared in *The Improvement Era* (a church published magazine):

> We certainly recommend modesty and wisdom in the use of flowers, the hire of carriages, and the purchase of caskets. In the old scriptures we have numerous examples of simplicity in burials. While we are not called upon literally to follow these, they should be a lesson to us to avoid ostentations, and to attend to these matters with only such displays and preparations as will show due respect for the departed, and proper consideration for the living...[several biblical citations were given at this point]... Relating to dress, the Latter-day Saint burial clothes were all sufficient for our day. Anything more is unnecessary, which good, common sense would clearly suggest; while the burial of jewelry with the dead can serve no good purpose. . . .In like manner, with carriages and caskets, only the necessary and modest should be used (Smith and Anderson 1909:145-146).

The pioneer heritage of simple living and the revelatory beliefs of the Mormon Church gave Mormons a conservative and frugal outlook to life that carried over to their funerary rituals.

A comparison between Mormon mortuary behavior and that of mainstream America suggests that the Mormon behavior fell within general western American mortuary behavior. Western American burials were the antithesis of the elaborate funerary rituals typical of eastern society. Burials were simple, quick affairs utilizing wooden coffins made from available materials. The similarity between Mormon and western American mortuary behavior suggests that Mormon mortuary behavior was also the result of economic and logistical factors.

A discrepancy, however, emerges when Mormon funerary behavior is examined in the period after the railroad reached Utah. Elaborate eastern-style funerals emerged only after large capacity logistical networks made manufactured goods accessible to

western America. In Utah, mortuary behavior did not change with the introduction of the railroad, even among the elite members of Mormon society (evidenced by Brigham Young's funeral). This suggests that economic and/or distribution factors were not influencing Mormon mortuary behavior.

It is my contention that Mormon mortuary behavior was and is directly shaped by Mormon death beliefs. An examination of Mormon doctrine will go a long way to explaining the material expression of Mormon mortuary behavior. Fortunately, the doctrines of the Mormon Church concerning death and the post-mortal existence have not significantly changed since being revealed to Joseph Smith.

Death in Mormon Thought

The sustaining faith of the early Mormon pioneers in the face of large-scale death has been called by O'Dea an " . . . extra-Christian evolutionism" (1957:95). Mormons envision the universe as part of an eternal progression. "The Mormons' beliefs about death cannot be understood apart from their conviction, expressed over and over again, that improvement was inevitable if man kept working towards it" (Meyers 1975:113). To Mormons, death is a transformation of state rather than an abrupt end.

The Spirit World

Mormons have retained the traditional Christian view of death as the separation of body and spirit. Mormon doctrine, however, is unique in its portrayal of the spirit world as a place of conscious activity where the dead work to perfect their knowledge of God's

laws. Brigham Young (1854-1875 (12):313) wrote that, "Father Joseph...and every other good Saint is just as busy in the spirit world as you and I are here. They are preaching, preaching all the time, and preparing the way for us to hasten our work in building temples here and everywhere."

The nature of spirit world activity emphasizes missionary work through the preaching of the gospel to those individuals who did not have the opportunity to hear it during their mortal existence. This doctrine is supported with the Biblical passage written by Peter about Christ "preaching unto the spirits in prison" (1 Peter 3:18-20) during the period between His crucifixion and resurrection. President of the Church, Joseph F. Smith, received the following vision in 1918, which is included in the Doctrine and Covenants and is considered scripture by Church members:

1 On the third of October, in the year nineteen hundred and eighteen, I sat in my room pondering over the scriptures;
2 And reflecting upon the great atoning sacrifice that was made by the Son of God, for the redemption of the world;
3 And the great and wonderful love made manifest by the Father and the Son in the coming of the Redeemer into the world;
4 That through his atonement, and by obedience to the principles of the gospel, mankind might be saved.
5 While I was thus engaged, my mind reverted to the writings of the apostle Peter, to the primitive saints scattered abroad throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and other parts of Asia, where the gospel had been preached after the crucifixion of the Lord.
6 I opened the Bible and read the third and fourth chapters of the first epistle of Peter, and as I read I was greatly impressed, more than I had ever been before, with the following passages:
7 "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:
8 "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;
9 "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." (1 Peter 3:18-20.)
10 "For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." (1 Peter 4:6.)
11 As I pondered over these things which are written, the eyes of my understanding were opened, and the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me, and I saw the hosts of the dead, both small and great.
12 And there were gathered together in one place an innumerable company of the spirits of the just, who had been faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality;

13 And who had offered sacrifice in the similitude of the great sacrifice of the Son of God, and had suffered tribulation in their Redeemer's name.
14 All these had departed the mortal life, firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection, through the grace of God the Father and his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ.
15 I beheld that they were filled with joy and gladness, and were rejoicing together because the day of their deliverance was at hand.
16 They were assembled awaiting the advent of the Son of God into the spirit world, to declare their redemption from the bands of death.
17 Their sleeping dust was to be restored unto its perfect frame, bone to his bone, and the sinews and the flesh upon them, the spirit and the body to be united never again to be divided, that they might receive a fulness of joy.
18 While this vast multitude waited and conversed, rejoicing in the hour of their deliverance from the chains of death, the Son of God appeared, declaring liberty to the captives who had been faithful;
19 And there he preached to them the everlasting gospel, the doctrine of the resurrection and the redemption of mankind from the fall, and from individual sins on conditions of repentance.
20 But unto the wicked he did not go, and among the ungodly and the unrepentant who had defiled themselves while in the flesh, his voice was not raised;
21 Neither did the rebellious who rejected the testimonies and the warnings of the ancient prophets behold his presence, nor look upon his face.
22 Where these were, darkness reigned, but among the righteous there was peace;
23 And the saints rejoiced in their redemption, and bowed the knee and acknowledged the Son of God as their Redeemer and Deliverer from death and the chains of hell.
24 Their countenances shone, and the radiance from the presence of the Lord rested upon them, and they sang praises unto his holy name.
25 I marveled, for I understood that the Savior spent about three years in his ministry among the Jews and those of the house of Israel, endeavoring to teach them the everlasting gospel and call them unto repentance;
26 And yet, notwithstanding his mighty works, and miracles, and proclamation of the truth, in great power and authority, there were but few who hearkened to his voice, and rejoiced in his presence, and received salvation at his hands.
27 But his ministry among those who were dead was limited to the brief time intervening between the crucifixion and his resurrection;
28 And I wondered at the words of Peter--wherein he said that the Son of God preached unto the spirits in prison, who sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah--and how it was possible for him to preach to those spirits and perform the necessary labor among them in so short a time.
29 And as I wondered, my eyes were opened, and my understanding quickened, and I perceived that the Lord went not in person among the wicked and the disobedient who had rejected the truth, to teach them;
30 But behold, from among the righteous, he organized his forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men; and thus was the gospel preached to the dead.
31 And the chosen messengers went forth to declare the acceptable day of the Lord and proclaim liberty to the captives who were bound, even unto all who would repent of their sins and receive the gospel.
32 Thus was the gospel preached to those who had died in their sins, without a knowledge of the truth, or in transgression, having rejected the prophets.
33 These were taught faith in God, repentance from sin, vicarious baptism for the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands,

> 34 And all other principles of the gospel that were necessary for them to know in order to qualify themselves that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.
> 35 And so it was made known among the dead, both small and great, the unrighteous as well as the faithful, that redemption had been wrought through the sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross.
> 36 Thus was it made known that our Redeemer spent his time during his sojourn in the world of spirits, instructing and preparing the faithful spirits of the prophets who had testified of him in the flesh;
> 37 That they might carry the message of redemption unto all the dead, unto whom he could not go personally, because of their rebellion and transgression, that they through the ministration of his servants might also hear his words. (Doctrine and Covenants 1981:286-289)

Mormons believe that it is the mission of all Mormons after death to redeem humankind by preaching repentance and the tenets of Mormonism to all those ignorant of them (Talmage 1919:63). Even with the preaching of the gospel in the spirit world, the physical ordinance of baptism is impossible. Vicarious ordinances were introduced by Joseph Smith, through revelation, in Nauvoo to alleviate the problem.

Mormons believe that this vicarious work is necessary to allow the departed the opportunity to be admitted into their church and allowed to share the endless possibilities for progression (Meyers 1982:121). Baptism for the dead was considered an "ordinance and preparation that the Lord ordained and prepared before the foundations of the world, for the salvation of the dead who should die with a knowledge of the gospel" (Doctrine and Covenants 1981:251). Mormons cited the biblical passage, I Corinthians 15:29, as support of the practice of vicarious baptisms: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" O'Dea (1957:57) has suggested that the ordinance symbolized:

> a curious desire to bind past generations to the present and not cast aside, as lost, those who came before the miraculous restoration . . . It seems, that at the very time when Mormonism was in fact and in belief immensely widening the chasm that separated the converted from the general run of their fellows, there was needed some countermotion, some symbolic link between the separated and their own past in terms of relatives and ancestors.

Post-mortal Existence

The Mormon view of the post-mortal existence is founded upon the visions of Church founder Joseph Smith, Jr. Smith taught that as a direct result of Christ's atonement, every human would receive a resurrected body. The Book of Mormon (a book of scripture to Mormons used with the Bible as a witness of Jesus Christ) says, "This restoration shall come to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, both the wicked and the righteous" (Alma 11:44).

Mormons believe in two general resurrections--the resurrection of the just and unjust. The first was inaugurated at the time of Christ's resurrection when many saints emerged from their graves (Matthew 27:52). The resurrection will be completed during the millennium of Christ's return when resurrected individuals will be sorted into three specific classes: those who kept the laws of God faithfully as to their knowledge of the laws, those who died in ignorance searching for the truth, and those who refused the gospel of Christ, but did not deny the Holy Ghost (Talmage 1919:396-401).

Mormons were and are explicit about the nature of resurrection. John Taylor, third President of the Church, said, "all must come forth from the grave . . . in the selfsame tabernacles that they possessed while living on the earth. Bone will come to its bone and flesh and sinew will cover the skeleton, and at the Lord's bidding breath will enter the body and we shall appear, many of us, a marvel to ourselves" (Deseret News 26, July 1, 1868). With the resurrection of the human souls, the earth will also be resurrected and returned to a Garden of Eden state (Pratt 1855:133-134).

The revitalized earth, however, will be only another preparatory stage for the resurrected. After the millennium of Christ's reign, it will be time for the judgment of the human race. A "divinely foreordained" event, the judgment would be presided over by Christ where every person "will be called to answer for his deeds; and not for his deeds alone but for his words also, and even for the thoughts of his heart" (Talmage 1919:57). Christ would consign each human to either salvation or damnation. According to revelation received by Joseph Smith (recorded in a book of Mormon scripture called the Doctrine and Covenants), there are three degrees of glory and a place of everlasting fire (Doctrine and Covenants 1981:136-144).

Most of the human race was destined for immortality in one of the three degrees of glory. The lowest glory, the telestial kingdom, would be the place of those who refused to receive the gospel of Christ, but did not deny the Holy Ghost. Section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants details who will enter the telestial kingdom (Doctrine and Covenants 1981:141-142):

> 99 For these are they who are of Paul, and of Apollos, and of Cephas.
> 100 These are they who say they are some of one and some of another--some of Christ and some of John, and some of Moses, and some of Elias, and some of Esaias, and some of Isaiah, and some of Enoch;
> 101 But received not the gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets, neither the everlasting covenant.
> 102 Last of all, these all are they who will not be gathered with the saints, to be caught up unto the church of the Firstborn, and received into the cloud.
> 103 These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie.
> 104 These are they who suffer the wrath of God on earth.
> 105 These are they who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.
> 106 These are they who are cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God, until the fulness of times, when Christ shall have subdued all enemies under his feet, and shall have perfected his work;
> 107 When he shall deliver up the kingdom, and present it unto the Father, spotless, saying: I have overcome and have trodden the wine-press alone, even the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God.

108 Then shall he be crowned with the crown of his glory, to sit on the throne of his power to reign forever and ever.
109 But behold, and lo, we saw the glory and the inhabitants of the telestial world, that they were as innumerable as the stars in the firmament of heaven, or as the sand upon the seashore;
110 And heard the voice of the Lord saying: These all shall bow the knee, and every tongue shall confess to him who sits upon the throne forever and ever;
111 For they shall be judged according to their works, and every man shall receive according to his own works, his own dominion, in the mansions which are prepared;
112 And they shall be servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end.

The inhabitants of the middle glory, the terrestrial kingdom, are also detailed in Section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants (Doctrine and Covenants 1981:141-142):

71 And again, we saw the terrestrial world, and behold and lo, these are they who are of the terrestrial, whose glory differs from that of the church of the Firstborn who have received the fulness of the Father, even as that of the moon differs from the sun in the firmament.
72 Behold, these are they who died without law;
73 And also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh;
74 Who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it.
75 These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men.
76 These are they who receive of his glory, but not of his fulness.
77 These are they who receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fulness of the Father.
78 Wherefore, they are bodies terrestrial, and not bodies celestial, and differ in glory as the moon differs from the sun.
79 These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.
80 And now this is the end of the vision which we saw of the terrestrial, that the Lord commanded us to write while we were yet in the Spirit.

These individuals, along with those in the telestial kingdom, are considered damned because they are denied the opportunities of eternal progression.

The highest glory, the celestial kingdom, was reserved for those individuals who through the principles of faith, repentance, baptism by immersion, and the reception of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, gained the presence of God. Section 76 details the requirements for entrance to the celestial kingdom (Doctrine and Covenants 1981:140-141):

51 They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given--
52 That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power;
53 And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.
54 They are they who are the church of the Firstborn.
55 They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things--
56 They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory;
57 And are priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son.
58 Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God--
59 Wherefore, all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's.
60 And they shall overcome all things.
61 Wherefore, let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God, who shall subdue all enemies under his feet.
62 These shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever.
63 These are they whom he shall bring with him, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven to reign on the earth over his people.
64 These are they who shall have part in the first resurrection.
65 These are they who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just.
66 These are they who are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all.
67 These are they who have come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of Enoch, and of the Firstborn.
68 These are they whose names are written in heaven, where God and Christ are the judge of all.
69 These are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood.
70 These are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all, whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical.

The celestial kingdom is further sub-divided into three levels of glory. The lowest celestial state is reserved for those Mormons who had not entered the covenant of marriage on earth. The highest celestial state was reserved for those Mormons who married for time and all eternity in an LDS temple. These individuals could beget children without pain and more:

> the great creative principle, the mechanical work which was performed by our Father and God in constructing creations, and in redeeming and glorifying them; the great principle of knowledge from which our Father and God can call forth from a shapeless mass of dust an immortal tabernacle, into which enters an immortal spirit, all these principles of

> wisdom, knowledge and power will be given to his children, and will enable them to organize the elements, form creations, and call forth from the dust intelligent beings, who will under their charge and control (Lundwall 1945:82).

While Mormon afterlife beliefs originated in the revelations of Joseph Smith, these beliefs have been reinforced through vision experiences of Church leaders and ordinary members and culminated in the necessity of Mormon temple ordinances for eternal salvation.

Vision Experiences

Vision experiences have played an important role in reinforcing Mormon doctrine on the nature of death. Mormons have a strong belief in continuing revelation from God and that any righteous member of the Church may receive a vision from God. Heber C. Kimball, at the funeral of Jedediah M. Grant, told the congregation that Grant had confided in him, saying:

> I have been into the spirit world . . . and, of all the dreads that ever came across men, the worst was to have to again return to my body, though I had to do it. O! the order and government that were there! When . . . I saw the order of righteous men and women; beheld them organized in several grades, and there appeared to be no obstruction to my vision; I could see every man and woman in their grade and order. I looked to see whether there was any disorder there, but there was none; neither could I see any death nor darkness . . . or confusion (Lundwall 1945:71f).

The appearance of individual spirits was apparently a frequent occurrence in the nineteenth century church (occurrences are not usually openly revealed in the present-day church). David King Udall reported the appearance of his sister a few months after her death. Fourth President of the Mormon Church, Wilford Woodruff, reported an

appearance from the signers of the Declaration of Independence in the St. George Temple, who chastised him for not doing their own vicarious redemption work:

> I will here say, before closing, that two weeks before I left St. George, the spirits of the dead gathered around me, wanting to know why we did not redeem them. Said they, "You have had the use of the Endowment House for a number of years, and yet nothing has ever been done for us. We laid the foundation of the government you now enjoy, and we never apostatized from it, but we remained true to it and were faithful to God." These were the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and they waited on me for two days and two nights. I thought it very singular, that notwithstanding so much work had been done, and yet nothing had been done for them. The thought never entered my heart, from the fact, I suppose, that heretofore our minds were reaching after our more immediate friends and relatives. I straightway went into the baptismal font and called upon brother McCallister to baptize me for the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and fifty other eminent men, making one hundred in all, including John Wesley, Columbus, and others; I then baptized him for every President of the United States, except three; and when their cause is just, somebody will do the work for them (Richards et al. 1877:229).

Brigham Young reported the visit of Joseph Smith who gave him a brief view of the organization of the pre-mortal existence. Wilford Woodruff also reports the visitation of Joseph Smith several times. The last time was in a vision about the post-mortal existence:

> In a night vision I saw him [Joseph] at the door of the temple of heaven. He came and spoke to me. He said he could not stop to talk with me because he was in a hurry . . . I met half a dozen brethren who had held high positions on earth and none of them could stop to talk with me because they were in a hurry . . . By and by I saw the Prophet again, and I got the privilege to ask him a question. "Now," said I, "I want to know why you are in a hurry. I have been in a hurry all through my life but I expected my hurry would be over when I got into the kingdom of heaven, if I ever did." Joseph said, "I will tell you, Brother Woodruff, every dispensation . . . has had a certain amount of work to do to prepare to go to the earth with the Savior when He goes to reign on earth. Each dispensation has had ample time to do this work. We have not. We are the last dispensation, and so much work has to be done and we need to be in a hurry in order to accomplish it" (Woodruff 1946:160-161).

Meyers (1975:123) notes, "Mystical experience of this sort reinforced the Saints' thanatological beliefs, and they seem to have been as critical as any physical encounters with dying in shaping the Mormons' attitudes toward death. Clearly death was not a release from striving."

While not a release from work, death was portrayed as a release from suffering. Parley Pratt, a Mormon apostle, described his wife's death as a release from "this world of sorrow and pain" (Pratt 1972:166). Recognition of the right to mourn for lost ones is found in the funeral sermons of nineteenth century Mormon leaders, but more strongly stressed is an admonition that lamentation is inappropriate for Mormons. Brigham Young (1854-1875 (4):131) commented:

> Mourning for the righteous dead springs from ignorance and weakness that are planted within the mortal tabernacle . . . Could we have knowledge and see into eternity, if we were perfectly free from weakness, blindness and lethargy with which we are clothed in the flesh, we should have no disposition to weep or mourn.

That the general Mormon population heeded that admonition is suggested by the common, almost ritualistic line in published death notices that reports that the departed "died strong in-the faith of a glorious resurrection" (*Deseret News* 9 [Aug. 31, 1859]).

Vision experiences helped to reinforce the belief that the post-mortal life would offer further opportunities for personal development. In other words, the Mormons viewed death as a passage from one active existence to another.

The Temple Experience

While visions and revelations shaped the doctrine concerning death and the afterlife, the culmination of that doctrine has been the ordinances of the Mormon temple. Mormons regard the building of temples as part of the restoration of Christ's Gospel and justify temple use through the many statements on temple worship found in the Old Testament. Mormons believe that temple ordinances were taken from the earth after the

fall of the initial Christian church at the meridian of time (time of Christ). The ordinances were restored to the earth, through Joseph Smith, Jr. as a blessing for the Saints and to help in the preparation of the earth for the Second Coming of Christ, and are a requirement for gaining exaltation in the celestial kingdom.

Temple building and ordinance work in early LDS Church history went through three distinct phases from the initial organization of the Church to the completion of the St. George temple in 1871 (the first temple completed in Utah). The first temple built by the Church was in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1836. The Kirtland Temple was unique. Packer (1980:129, 43) states:

> the design and construction of the Kirtland Temple was different from that of all other latter-day temples because its purpose was different. While already in 1836 certain ordinances had been introduced in a limited way which later would form part of the regular temple ordinances, the sacred ordinances and ceremonies performed in today's temples were not done in this first temple.
>
> The design of the temple was preliminary. It was built as a house wherein the Lord could reveal Himself to His servants, where other heavenly beings could restore priesthood keys essential to the salvation of mankind, and where the faithful Saints would be blessed with an increase of spiritual power and enlightenment.

The restoration of these essential priesthood keys occurred in the experience of April 3, 1836. That experience is recorded in Section 110 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

> THE veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened.
> 2 We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber
> 3 His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:
> 4 I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father.
> 5 Behold, your sins are forgiven you; you are clean before me; therefore, lift up your heads and rejoice.
> 6 Let the hearts of your brethren rejoice, and let the hearts of all my people rejoice, who have, with their might, built this house to my name.
> 7 For behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here; and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house.
> 8 Yea, I will appear unto my servants, and speak unto them with mine own voice, if my people will keep my commandments, and do not pollute this holy house.

9 Yea the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands shall greatly rejoice in consequence of the blessings which shall be poured out, and the endowment with which my servants have been endowed in this house.
10 And the fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands; and this is the beginning of the blessing which shall be poured out upon the heads of my people. Even so. Amen.
11 After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened unto us; and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.
12 After this, Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed.
13 After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us; for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said:
14 Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi--testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come--
15 To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse—
16 Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors (Doctrine and Covenants 1981:228-229).

Mormons believe that the restoration of these priesthood keys was required to allow the restoration of the full temple ordinances which are essential for the salvation of mankind.

Other temples were planned in Mormon settlements in Missouri but were abandoned with the expulsion of Church members from the state. The next completed temple arose in Nauvoo, Illinois, which became Church headquarters after the Missouri expulsion. The Nauvoo era is prominent in Church history due to the introduction of all temple ordinances to the general Church population. Cook (1981:250) outlines a general timeline of when the various temple ordinances were revealed.

> Whereas the term endowment has come to be known as the embodiment of certain priesthood ordinances performed in the temple, Kirtland usage of the term connoted, not the ordinances themselves, but rather the outpouring of the spirit upon those who had participated in the ordinances. In Nauvoo the temple ordinances (wherein the Saints performed washings, and anointings and received signs and tokens of the Holy Priesthood), were known as the "ancient order of the Priesthood" or simply as the "endowment," there being no particular attempt to distinguish between the ceremony and the spiritual outpouring. On 4 May 1842, before the completion of the temple, the Prophet initiated nine men into the ancient order. Though Joseph had expected to administer these sacred ordinances only after the temple was finished, yet a sense that he might not live to see its completion urged him to proceed earlier. By June 1844, just before his death, the Prophet had selected twenty-five males and thirty-two females to receive the ordinances of the endowment. After his death, but before the completion of the attic of the temple, another twenty also received the endowment. On 10 December 1845 endowment work

commenced in the attic story of the temple. There, during the next eight weeks, nearly 5,600 members (males and females) participated in these ceremonies. Related ordinances administered by the Prophet before the completion of the temple included eternal marriages, baptisms for the dead, and conferring the fullness of the priesthood. Approximately one hundred fifty people were eternally sealed to their companions under the direction of Joseph Smith beginning 5 April 1841. Baptisms for the dead commenced about 15 August 1840. Initially these ordinances were performed in the Mississippi River and local streams, but with few exceptions proxy baptisms were performed only in the temple baptistry after 21 November 1841. Some of these early baptisms were not properly recorded, but extant records indicate that at least 15,626 proxy baptisms were performed in Nauvoo (either in the baptistry or in rivers or streams).

Joseph Smith, Jr. (1980 (5):1-2), himself, noted the initial administration of the endowment ceremony on May 4, 1842.

> Wednesday, 4.--I spent the day in the upper part of the store, that is in my private office (so called because in that room I keep my sacred writings, translate ancient records, and receive revelations) and in my general business office, or lodge room (that is where the Masonic fraternity meet occasionally, for want of a better place) in council with General James Adams, of Springfield, Patriarch Hyrum Smith, Bishops Newel K. Whitney and George Miller, and President Brigham Young and Elders Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards, instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchisedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days, and all those plans and principles by which any one is enabled to secure the fullness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the First Born, and come up and abide in the presence of the Eloheim in the eternal worlds. In this council was instituted the ancient order of things for the first time in these last days. And the communications I made to this council were of things spiritual, and to be received only by the spiritual minded: and there was nothing made known to these men but what will be made known to all the Saints of the last days, so soon as they are prepared to receive, and a proper place is prepared to communicate them, even to the weakest of the Saints: therefore let the Saints be diligent in building the Temple, and all houses which they have been, or shall hereafter be, commanded of God to build; and wait their time with patience in all meekness, faith, perseverance unto the end, knowing assuredly that all these things referred to in this council are always governed by the principle of revelation.

Endowments were not given during the migration from Illinois to Utah, but they quickly resumed once Salt Lake City was established. Berret (1992 (2):456) reveals:

> The Latter-day Saints occasionally used a mountaintop as their temporary temple, and President Brigham Young dedicated Ensign Peak, a hill just north of Salt Lake City, Utah, as a "natural temple." Though Brigham Young designated a temple site in Salt Lake Valley on July 28, 1847, just four days after his arrival, the temple took forty years to build. In the meantime, the upper floor of the Council House, Salt Lake City's first public building, served 2,222 members of the Church as their Endowment house between February 21, 1851, and May 5, 1855.
>
> A more permanent Endowment house, designed by Truman O. Angell, Church architect, was soon built on the northwest corner of Temple Square. Brigham Young named it "The House of the Lord." It was dedicated on May 5, 1855, by Heber C. Kimball. The main structure was a two-story building 34 feet by 44 feet, with small one-story extensions on both ends. The first floor had a

room for washing and anointing, and also "garden," "world," and "terrestrial" rooms. The upper floor was the "celestial room," with an adjacent sealing room.

On the average, 25 to 30 endowments were given daily, for a total of 54,170 in the thirty-four years it was used. And an average of 2,500 marriages were also performed annually. In addition, the Endowment house served as a place for special prayer circles and the setting apart and instruction of newly called missionaries.

As the Salt Lake Temple neared completion, the Endowment house was torn down in November 1889. The Salt Lake Temple was dedicated April 6, 1893. A long-anticipated holy place for temple ordinances was then permanently established in Salt Lake City.

The overall importance of temple work to nineteenth century Mormons can be seen in a quote from Brigham Young. Before the Mormons abandoned Nauvoo, the temple there operated around the clock so that the members could receive the temple ordinances. Brigham Young announced that the work would cease because of the pressures of persecution and recorded the following reaction from the membership:

> Notwithstanding that I had announced that we would not attend to the administration of the ordinances, the House of the Lord was thronged all day, the anxiety being so great to receive, as if the brethren would have us stay here and continue the endowments until our way would be hedged up, and our enemies would intercept us. But I informed the brethren that this was not wise, and that we should build more Temples, and have further opportunities to receive the blessings of the Lord, as soon as the saints were prepared to receive them. In this Temple we have been abundantly rewarded, if we receive no more. I also informed the brethren that I was going to get my wagons started and be off. I walked some distance from the Temple supposing the crowd would disperse, but on returning I found the house filled to overflowing. Looking upon the multitude and knowing their anxiety, as they were thirsting and hungering for the word, we continued at work diligently in the House of the Lord. (Roberts 1930 (5):579)

Temple Ordinances and Clothing

Mormon temple ordinances are considered sacred and therefore are not openly discussed. General descriptions, however, of the ordinances have been published in literature written by various authors and the general authorities of the LDS Church. There are several published descriptions of the temple endowment. Brigham Young

(1854-1875:637) noted:

> Let me give you a definition in brief. Your *endowment* is to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being able to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell.

Boyd K. Packer (1980:154), an apostle in the LDS Church, described the endowment in the following way:

> The Temple Endowment, as administered in modern temples, comprises instruction relating to the significance and sequence of past dispensations, and the importance of the present as the greatest and grandest era in human history. This course of instruction includes a recital of the most prominent events of the creative period, the condition of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, their disobedience and consequent expulsion from that blissful abode, their condition in the lone and dreary world when doomed to live by labor and sweat, the plan of redemption by which the great transgression may be atoned, the period of the great apostasy, the restoration of the Gospel with all its ancient powers and privileges, the absolute and indispensable condition of personal purity and devotion to the right in present life, and a strict compliance with Gospel requirements.

Burton (1992:455) outlines the four main elements of the endowment ceremony in the Encyclopedia of Mormonism (a non-LDS Church publication):

> First is the preparatory ordinance, a ceremonial WASHING AND ANOINTING, after which the temple patron dons the sacred clothing of the temple.
>
> Second is a course of instruction by lectures and representations. These include a recital of the most prominent events of the Creation, a figurative depiction of the advent of Adam and Eve and of every man and every woman, the entry of Adam and Eve into the GARDEN OF EDEN, the consequent expulsion from the garden, their condition in the world, and their receiving of the PLAN OF SALVATION leading to the return to the presence of God. The endowment instructions utilize every human faculty so that the meaning of the gospel may be clarified through art, drama, and symbols. All participants wear white temple robes symbolizing purity and the equality of all persons before God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ...
>
> ...Third is making covenants. The temple endowment is seen as the unfolding or culmination of the covenants made at BAPTISM. Temple covenants give "tests by which one's willingness and fitness for righteousness may be known" (Widstoe 1986:335). They include the "covenant and promise to observe the law of strict virtue and charity, to be charitable, benevolent, tolerant and pure, to devote both talent and material means to the spread of truth and the uplifting of the [human] race; to maintain devotion to the cause of truth; and to seek in every way to contribute to the great preparation that the earth may be made ready to receive . . . Jesus Christ" (Talmage 1968:84). One also promises to keep these covenants sacred...

> ...Fourth is a sense of divine presence...In the temples there is an "aura of deity" manifest to the worthy (Kimball 1982:534-535). Through the temple endowment, one may seek "a fullness of the Holy Ghost" (D & C 109:15). Temple ordinances are seen as a means for receiving inspiration and instruction through the Holy Spirit, and for preparing to return to the presence of God (original emphasis).

As part of the endowment ceremony, temple garments are given to the member during his/her own initial temple visit. Marshall (1992 (2):534-535) outlines the purpose of the temple garments as follows:

> The word "garment" has distinctive meanings to Latter-day Saints. The white undergarment worn by those members who have received the ordinance of the temple Endowment is a ceremonial one. All adults who enter the temple are required to wear it. In LDS temples, men and women who receive priesthood ordinances wear this undergarment and other priestly robes. The garment is worn at all times, but the robes are worn only in the temple. Having made covenants of righteousness, the members wear the garment under their regular clothing for the rest of their lives, day and night, partially to remind them of the sacred covenants they have made with God.
>
> The white garment symbolizes purity and helps assure modesty, respect for the attributes of God, and, to the degree it is honored, a token of what Paul regarded as taking upon one the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:13; cf. D&C 27:15). It is an outward expression of an inward covenant, and symbolizes Christlike attributes in one's mission in life. Garments bear several simple marks of orientation toward the gospel principles of obedience, truth, life, and discipleship in Christ.

The garments of the nineteenth century were long, down to the wrists and ankles and were worn for the remainder of the member's life [They were removed for washing] (O'Dea 1957:58). During the temple ceremony itself, temple clothing was worn. The temple clothes represented the clothing worn by the priests of Solomon's temple and help remind the wearer of the restoration of temple work to the earth (O'Dea 1957:59).

The other main ordinance conducted in the temple is the sealing ceremony. The sealing ceremony joins men and women in eternal marriage. Mormons believe that without this sealing, marriages are dissolved at death. Hyer (1992 (3):1289-1290) reveals:

> A "sealing," as a generic term, means the securing, determining, or establishment of a bond of legitimacy. Among members of the Church sealing refers to the marriage of a husband and wife and to the joining together of children and parents in relationships that are to endure forever. This

special type of sealing of husband and wife in marriage is referred to as "eternal marriage" or "celestial marriage." It contrasts with civil and church marriages, which are ceremonies recognized only by earthly authority and are only for the duration of mortal life.

The sealing together of husband, wife, and children in eternal family units is the culminating ordinance of the priesthood, to which all others are preparatory. It must be performed by one holding the sealing power and today in an LDS temple dedicated to God. The Savior referred to this sealing power when he gave his apostle Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, saying that "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven" (Matt. 16:19). In modern times this sealing authority was restored to the earth in the Kirtland Temple on April 3, 1836, by the prophet Elijah, who was the ancient custodian of this power (D&C 110:13-16).

> Both ancient and modern prophets have observed that if families are not sealed together in eternal units—if the hearts of the children and the fathers are not turned to each other (as alluded to in Malachi 4:5-6)—then the ultimate work and glory of God are not attained and the highest purposes of the creation of the earth are not achieved. "For we without them [ancestors or progenitors] cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect" (D&C 128:16-18).

Children born to the couple are said to be "born under the covenant" or are sealed to their parents so that the family group may exist in the post-mortal existence. The sealing ceremony is closely tied to the endowment ceremony (both husband and wife have to receive their endowments before being sealed). The sealing is conditioned upon their worthiness to each other, to the gospel of Christ, and to the covenants made during the endowment ceremony.

The importance of the temple garments and clothing to Mormons is evidenced by their use in mortuary practices. The writings of observers of nineteenth century Mormon culture suggest that deceased Mormons were buried in their temple clothing. Thomas Stenhouse (1904:482) noted that the deceased were "clothed with the robes of the priesthood, such as they hope to be seen in when they burst the bands of death." Hand and Talley (1984:306) record the following experience:

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

Brigham Young left instructions that his body be "dressed in [his] Temple clothing" (*Deseret News* 1877, 26).

The importance of being properly attired at death is evidenced by the following event. An assistant grave-digger was found to have disrobed the dead when a search of his house revealed hundreds of burial garments (Stenhouse 1904:482). The quality of this temple clothing and the possibility of economic gain appeared to be the primary motivation. Stenhouse (1904:482) recorded, "The fearful grief of mothers at the thought of their sweet ones lying naked in their graves is beyond description." The women were so distraught that Brigham Young addressed the issue in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on February 9, 1862.

> It appears that a man named John Baptiste has practiced robbing the dead of their clothing in our grave yard during some five years past. If you wish to know what I think about it, I answer, I am unable to think so low as to fully get at such a mean contemptible, trick. . . .
>
> Many are anxious to know what effect it will have upon their dead who have been robbed. . . . [W]e have done our duty in this particular; and I for one am satisfied . . . the Saints will come forth with all the glory, beauty, and excellence of resurrected Saints clothed as they were when they were laid away.
>
> Some may inquire whether it is necessary to put fresh linen into the coffins of those who have been robbed. . . . I will promise you that they will be well clothed in the resurrection, for the earth and the elements around it are full of these things. . . . I would let my friends lay and sleep in peace. I am aware of the excited state of the feelings of the community; I have little to say about the cause of it; the meanness of the act is so far beneath my comprehension that I have not ventured to think much about it *(Deseret News* March 26,1862).

Only this reassurance from Brigham Young prevented the lynching of the grave robber by a large mob of distraught relatives.

The temple ceremonies also played an important normative function in general Mormon society. The manifestations of ideas or beliefs are present in real, physical practices and rituals. "Social groupings, behavior, and material objects embody ideology

and give it reality. The appearances created by these things *fulfill the expectations of the ideology, and through this affirmation recreate and legitimate the ideology*" (McGuire 1988:440; my emphasis). Mormon temple ceremonies recreate and legitimate Mormon afterlife doctrine by promoting the use of temple clothing as funerary clothing. The use of the temple clothes was in anticipation of the resurrection when the interred individual would rise and be suitably attired to immediately serve the Lord.

Summary

An examination of Mormon mortuary practices through material culture suggests behavior similar to the Western American mortuary behavior. The simple funerals and lack of burial goods appears to be the result of economic and logistical factors. However, an examination of the historical record contradicts the general historical trend and suggests religious beliefs as the primary factor behind Mormon mortuary behavior.

The historical record suggests that Mormon beliefs about the mortal and post-mortal existence and temple ordinances shaped attitudes concerning mortuary practices. Mormon funerals are simple because the Mormons do not view death as an abrupt end. The post-mortal existence is seen as a place of conscious decision making activity. Elaborate funerals are and were seen as frivolous.

Associated with the Mormon doctrine of the afterlife are the Mormon temple ordinances. Mormons believe that the temple ordinances are required to receive exaltation. As part of the ordinances, Mormon are given garments that are to be worn for the rest of their lives. Special temple clothing is worn every time a Mormon participates

in temple ceremonies. The importance of the temple ordinances in revealing information necessary to return to the presence of God is evidenced by the burial practices of Mormons. Mormons are usually buried in their garments and temple clothing, so that at the resurrection they will emerge from the grave suitably clothed to meet Jesus Christ.

While the historical record suggests the pattern for Mormon mortuary behavior, the physical evidence has not been available to support it. Mormons consider the grave site as a resting place for the body to wait for the resurrection. Desecration of grave sites is disturbing to Mormons just as much as it is to non-members. The long occupation of Mormon settlements has, also, prevented the study or excavation of Mormon cemeteries. The Block 49, Salt Lake City and Seccombe Lake, San Bernardino cemeteries present an unique opportunity to examine the material manifestations of nineteenth century Mormon mortuary behavior from two distinct and predominantly Mormon communities.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BLOCK 49 AND SECCOMBE LAKE HISTORIC CEMETERIES: THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Introduction

The social-historical context of death practices in Mormon life outlined in Chapter 3 indicated that Mormon funerary rites were the antithesis of general American practices. Mormon funerals and burials were simple, unadorned events of a secular nature. In mainstream eastern America, the beautification of death promoted the use of elaborate and ornate burial containers and hardware. While the Mormons differed from mainstream America in its views of death, the analysis of death practices at two separate Mormon communities helps to determine the degree of conformity to Church doctrine.

This chapter covers the analysis of the burials found in the Block 49 cemetery and the Seccombe Lake Park project. Project backgrounds included here describe each site and the methods used to excavate and analyze the data (a final site report for the Block 49 project is forthcoming). Brief historical contexts have been written to place both project areas within a larger historical picture and to outline the development of both areas. The analysis of the archaeological evidence makes up the remainder of the chapter and provides the data on the material manifestations of Mormon death practices. More important, it allows us to see differences and similarities in the mortuary practices of the two settlements.

Block 49 Project Background

The Block 49 Plat A cemetery (42SL98) in Salt Lake City, Utah, was excavated by the Office of Public Archaeology at Brigham Young University during July 1986 at the request of the Bono Development Corporation. Prior to the commencement of the archaeological fieldwork, no surface evidence of the cemetery existed. A local historian, Mr. Robert Hansen, became aware of the re-development slated for the Block and notified the developers of the possible presence of a cemetery somewhere on Block 49.

The Redevelopment Agency of Salt Lake City contracted Gilbert/Commonwealth, Inc. of Colorado in August 1985, to conduct a search for archaeological/human remains on Block 49 in Salt Lake City. After consideration of the historical documentation, the Project Manger from Gilbert/Commonwealth concentrated the search in Lot 8. A surface survey revealed no indications of the cemetery, and test trenching through Lot 8 also did not reveal any cemetery related artifacts. In hindsight, this initial project's test trenches missed the burials by approximately 50 meters.

With the negative findings of the CRM company, construction continued on the development of Block 49. As part of the new development, a deep excavation took place in preparation of construction of the building foundation. On July 6, 1986, construction personnel cut through two burials while using a backhoe. The burials were discovered by two bottle hunters searching the foundation excavation for artifacts.

After verification by the state archaeologist that the bones were not recent internments, the developer was persuaded to contract a professional organization to remove the burials and record the site. The Gilbert/Commonwealth company was

contracted to carry out the project and sub-contract the excavation work to the Office of Public Archaeology at Brigham Young University. Excavations commenced on July 25, 1986.

Preservation of the coffins was poor and the field crew relied on soil discoloration to indicate the presence of wooden burial containers. Usually only the vertical sides of the coffins were recognizable. The position of nails, tacks, and other coffin hardware were mapped and also provided evidence for the location of the coffin in the grave-pit. Soil removed from the coffins was screened to recover coffin hardware and funerary artifacts, like buttons, that had been disturbed by post-depositional forces. Preliminary field observations of the skeletons were conducted and the remains removed and packed for laboratory processing and study. Photographs, field notes, and drawings completed the project record. The excavation recovered a total of 32 individuals with some associated artifact assemblages.

The skeletons were processed, catalogued, and analyzed at the University of Wyoming, under the direction of Dr. George W. Gill. The work was performed by Lori Tigner-Wise (graduate student) who provided substantial information on demographic trends and skeletal and dental pathology (Tigner-Wise 1989). The skeletons were re-interred in Pioneer State Park, Salt Lake City, Utah. The artifacts from the burials are located at the Museum of Peoples and Cultures, Brigham Young University.

Historical Context of Block 49

The history of Block 49 has its beginnings in 1847 with the entry of the first Mormon pioneers into the Salt Lake Valley. The first formal planning of Salt Lake City took place two days after the entry into the valley on July 24th. Brigham Young designated the location of the Salt Lake Temple and its surrounding block, and the rest of the city was quickly surveyed and planned. The city layout followed a plan developed by Joseph Smith in 1833 that had been used in Mormon settlements in Missouri and at Nauvoo, Illinois. Called the City Plat of Zion, Smith described the city plan and its benefits in a letter to local church leaders in Missouri:

> The city plat is one mile square, divided into blocks containing ten acres each--forty rods square--except the middle range of blocks running north and south; they will be forty by sixty rods, containing fifteen acres, having their greatest extent east and west. The streets will be eight rods wide, intersecting each other at right angles. The center tier of blocks forty by sixty rods will be reserved for public buildings, temples, tabernacles, school houses, etc.
>
> All the other blocks will be divided into half-acre lots, a four rod front to every lot, and extending back twenty rods. In one block the lots will run from the north and south, and in the next one from east and west, and so on alternately throughout the city, except in the range of blocks reserved for public buildings. By this arrangement no street will be built on entirely through the street; but on one block the house will stand on one street, and on the next one on another street. All of the house are to be built of brick or stone; and but one house on a lot, which is to stand twenty-five feet back from the street, the space in front being for lawns, ornamental trees, shrubbery, or flowers according to the taste of the owners; the rest of the lot will be for gardens, etc.
>
> It is supposed that such a plat when built up will contain fifteen or twenty thousand population, and that they will require twenty-four buildings to supply them with houses for public worship and schools. These buildings will be temples, none of which will be less than eighty-seven feet by sixty-one, and two stories high, each story to be fourteen feet, making the building twenty-eight feet to the square. None of these temples will be smaller than the drawing of the one sent with the plat of the city of Independence; but of course there may be others much larger; the above, however, are the dimension of the one the saints were commanded to build first.
>
> Lands on the north and south of the city will be laid off for barns and stables for the use of the city, so there will be no barns or stables in the city among the homes of the people.
>
> Lands for agriculturalists sufficient for the whole plat are also to be laid off on the north and south of the city plat, but if sufficient land cannot be laid off without going too great

> a distance, then farms are to be laid off on the east and west also; but the tiller of the soil as well as the merchant and mechanic will live in the city. The farmer and his family, therefore, will enjoy all the advantages of schools, public lectures and other meetings. His home will no longer be isolated, and his family denied the benefits of society, which has been, and always will be, the great educator of the human race; but they will enjoy the same privileges of society, and can surround their homes with the same intellectual life, the same social refinement as will be found in the home of the merchant or banker or professional man (Roberts 1930 [I]:311-312).

Where Smith received the idea for the Plat of Zion is unclear, but this design was considered a revelation from God as to the proper order of community living. This community was designed for the dwelling place of the Savior and for perfected humans (e.g., free from greed, vanity, etc.).

The first settlement in the Salt Lake Valley was the Old Fort, situated on present day Pioneer park. Twenty-seven log homes were built within the walls of the Fort. The remainder of city blocks were numbered and each family granted a lot of land and a subsequent parcel of farming land outside the city. Block 49 was located one block east of the Old Fort. The Block 49 cemetery appears to have been the communal cemetery for the Old Fort settlers during the winter of 1848. The church authorities in the valley wrote a letter dated March 8, 1848 to Brigham Young at Winter Quarters, Iowa, advising him of conditions in the valley. They reported that "the health of the people is, and has been good, although twelve have died since the date of our last letter to you" (Hilton 1972). In all probability, these twelve were buried in the Block 49 cemetery (Hansen 1986). It was not until the next year that the first large influx of pioneers reached the valley. The initial lot division of Block 49 saw Abraham Chadwick, John Topham, Alexander Wright, Ralph Topham, Ralph Thompson, Robert Holmes, Thomas Sanders, Charles Lambert,

and Vincent Shirtleff as lot owners. Lots 6 and 7 owned by Shirtleff and Lot 8 owned by Lambert were believed to have been used for the cemetery.

The next recorded mention of the cemetery is from the Salt Lake City council records dated April 19, 1856. On that date, the Salt Lake City council had mandated the removal of human internments on private property and their subsequent re-internment in the Salt Lake City Cemetery. However, the council was granting motions to individuals to leave internments on their property. On April 19th, council meeting records note that a motion was made and granted that the remains of the friends of J.M. Grant, V. Shirtleff, General Rich and others, buried on the mound in the Lot belonging to V. Shirtleff be permitted to remain (Hansen 1986:13). No further recordation concerning the cemetery could be located.

Hansen, however, has revealed that the cemetery may have been in use up to 1874. Records concerning Charles C. Rich, whose mother was buried in the Block 49 cemetery, indicate that on his return to Salt Lake City from a colonizing effort in San Bernardino, California, he brought back the bodies of two of his children in metal coffins (Hansen 1986: 14). One child died in 1855 and the other in 1857 on the trip home. A check of the Salt Lake City cemetery records indicate that Charles C. Rich owned a lot and a notation beside the names of the two children reveal that they were buried in the S.L.C. cemetery on October 11, 1874. The location of the bodies during the 17 year period between 1857 and 1874 is not revealed, though Hansen speculates that they may have been interred on Block 49. When city ordinances in 1874 mandated the removal of

all internments to the S.L.C. cemetery, the metal coffins may have been the only two preserved enough to allow transportation (Hansen 1986:14).

The re-internment in 1874 is interesting, because by 1875, a lithograph from the Carter Glass Negative Collection of Salt Lake City shows the Dinwoodey Furniture Factory on the lot. Hansen notes that the original owner of the store wrote "In order to make room for this building, I erected a new Factory in the rear of my dwelling lot by my dwelling house on First West Street, and removed my machinery into it..." (Hansen 1986:31).

Seccombe Lake Park Project Background

In August 1989, two intact human burials and the fragments of four other individuals were found in Seccombe Lake State Urban Recreation Park during grading for an athletic field. One of the complete burials and part of the other were removed for analysis. The analysis determined that the two internments had occurred in the last half of the nineteenth century. The presence of human bone fragments also suggested the potential for additional internments. The possibility of additional burials prompted the City of San Bernardino to initiate an investigation of the area. The investigation goals were to locate any additional burials and provide preliminary analysis of their condition (Marmor et al. 1990:1).

During August and September 1990, members of the LSA Associates, Inc. (LSA) Cultural Resources Division conducted the preliminary investigation of the site. Several preliminary steps occurred before systematic excavation of the site occurred. Vegetation

was removed from the surface, human bones on the surface of the site were mapped and collected, and the burial partially removed in 1989 was mapped (Marmor et al. 1990:4).

The systematic search for the graves involved shovel excavation in conjunction with mechanical trenching and surface stripping. Through these methods 11 burials were found within the project area. Exposure of the skeletal remains was done by hand tools. Traces of coffin outlines were left intact where possible to facilitate measurement of the container. Soil was cleared off the skeletons to allow in-situ skeletal description and photographs and mapping (Marmor et al. 1990:8). Following the investigation, the burials were covered with elevated plywood lids, plastic tarpaulins, and soil while plans were made with the City of San Bernardino for the removal of the remains (Marmor et al. 1991:1).

Phase II of the investigations took place in February 1991 with the removal of all 11 burials. Particular attention was placed on coffin construction. All coffin hardware was mapped as it was removed, including iron screws and nails. Soil removed from the coffins was water screened to recover coffin hardware and small funerary artifacts, like buttons or small bones that had been disturbed by post-depositional forces (Marmor et al. 1991:6).

Once the burials were completely exposed, all remains were photographed and mapped. The maps depicted all visible coffin hardware, associated artifacts, and skeletal materials (Marmor et al. 1991:7). Removal of the burials was supervised by Dr. Phil Walker of the University of California-Santa Barbara. The skeletons were processed, catalogued and analyzed at the University of California-Santa Barbara, under the

direction of Dr. Walker. The work was performed by Dr. Walker and Patricia Lambert (graduate student) who provided substantial information on demographic trends and skeletal and dental pathology (Walker and Lambert 1991).

Historical Context of Seccombe Lake Park

The history of Mormon settlement in the San Bernardino area began in 1849. Apostles Amasa M. Lyman and Charles C. Rich were sent to California to determine the prospect of developing a Mormon settlement in the region. In 1851, Brigham Young reluctantly supported the development of a southern California colony. Mormon policy regarding colonization usually consisted of a number of families being "called" by Church leaders to found the settlement (Lyman 1989:45). It is not clear how many people were called to the California colony, but Church leaders were disturbed at the number of people who showed up to go to California (approximately 500 in total). Brigham Young felt that the colonists were abandoning the kingdom he was trying to build and succumbing to the enticements of the outside world (Lyman 1989:45).

During the first two years the Southern Californian settlement experienced a high level of community spirit (Beattie and Beattie 1951:170-237). Communal efforts resulted in the construction of storage facilities for harvested grain, a mill race for a flour mill, and construction of a road into the mountains north of the community to allow the development of a lumber industry. The most impressive communal undertaking was the financial sacrifices made to assist Lyman and Rich in the purchasing of approximately 100,000 acres of land (Lyman 1989:46).

The Apostles were able to purchase the land for a price of $77,500. The cost, however, required loans at large rates of interest, which would prove the downfall of the community. The economic boon associated with the Gold Rush was subsiding and the Mormon community could not find a market for its lumber and flour products. More devastating was the discovery that the land grant bought by the Apostles only granted half of the expected acreage. The document had been drawn up in Spanish and had not been carefully read by the translator. The community was in a serious situation because loan payments were due and they had less land to sell to pay off some of the debt. Dissension began to emerge in the community (Lyman 1989:48-49).

During this time of financial problems, a steady influx of new Mormon settlers fed the dissension. San Bernardino was beginning to be seen as an escape from the physiographical harshness of Utah and, for some, from the theocratic despotism of Brigham Young. The colony was also becoming a haven for those disillusioned with the Church because of the publicly announced practice of plural marriage (Bishop 1987:181-182). San Bernardino was seen as a transition point for those who found elements of the Church unpalatable, while maintaining ties to the religious movement which had held their commitment (Campbell 1952).

The dissension was further flamed by the attitude of the Church hierarchy. Church leadership in Utah regarded California as a haven for the less faithful Mormons. This attitude was reinforced in discourses where biblical passages were used to describe the California Mormons as the goats who were separated from the sheep or the tares separated from the wheat (Lyman 1989:49).

The lack of Church support, combined with the financial mistakes of Lyman and Rich, resulted in open dissension among community members against local Church authorities. The community had rapidly changed into the antithesis of the early community. Public interest was dismissed in favor for aggrandizement of private interests (Lyman 1989:53).

The Mormon community existed for approximately another two years before it was "abandoned." The so-called Mormon Rebellion and the Meadow Mountains Massacre flamed anti-Mormon sentiment in the settlements of California. By the summer of 1857, Brigham Young was calling the faithful members of the Church to move back to Utah. In 1857, San Bernardino had a population of approximately 3000 people. About 84 percent of them were or had been Mormon, but only half of that group responded to Brigham Young's call (Bishop 1987:183-184).

The burial practices of the San Bernardino are unclear because the original pioneer cemetery records were destroyed by fire in 1886. New records were begun in 1887, and some earlier burials were re-recorded from tombstones. Unfortunately, the earliest burial re-recorded was in 1860, after a large portion of the population returned to Utah. Religious affiliation of the 11 burials is also unclear because identities could not be established.

Burial Descriptions

For more detailed discussion and descriptions of each site see Marmor et al. 1990, 1991; Tobey and Hallaran 1990; and Tigner-Wise 1989.

Block 49 Cemetery

A total of 33 burials were recovered from the Block 49 cemetery. Demographics are outlined by Tigner-Wise (1989) as 24 infants, 1 adolescent, and 8 adults indicating a high infant mortality rate with 70 percent of the burials between the ages of birth to 18 months (Tigner-Wise 1989). Infant mortality for Utah Mormons between 1850 and 1870 fluctuated between 52.2 to 71.4 per thousand, though this not much different from other pioneer populations (Schissel 1988). The survival rate of children increased after the age of two. However, after women reached marriageable age the death rate increased due to childbirth problems (Tigner-Wise 1989:131).

Osteologically the Block 49 burials were different from contemporaneous pioneer populations. "Severe skeletal trauma and signs of human violence were rare by frontier standards" (Tigner-Wise 1989:132). Tigner-Wise believes this anomaly is due to the settled life of farmers in an organized religious group (Tigner-Wise 1989:132). This 'safer' life is also evidenced by the substantial percentage of female burials found at Block 49. During initial exploration and settlement of frontier areas, women, usually, do not accompany men. A study sample of west Texas pioneers revealed a ratio of approximately 5 men to every 1 woman (Gill 1989).

The Block 49 burials were situated in three rows in an east/west orientation. Coffin deterioration did not prevent an adequate wood sample being obtained for analysis (that analysis is currently being performed). The shape of the burial container was determined by soil discoloration around the body.

The Block 49 burials (See Table 1) are unusual because of the lack of artifacts and grave goods. None of the expected burial artifacts (e.g., buttons, shoe leather, etc.) were found. Clothing styles of the mid-nineteenth century had dresses with hooked backs for women and buttoned shirts and trousers for men.

The presence of straight copper pins in most of the infant burials and one adult burial suggests the presence of clothing. The location of the pin, near the spine and pelvic regions, within the burials suggest their use as fasteners for diapers or some type of covering, probably a shroud. The only non-coffin related artifacts found in the burials were a pair of gold, oval-shaped hoop earrings found with a 45-54 year old burial and a string of glass beads found with a 14-16 month child.

The only items found with burials in significant quantities was coffin wood fragments and oxidized nails. However, these items are de facto grave items common to most burials and do not constitute conscious grave goods.

Seccombe Lake Park Cemetery

A total of 12 burials were recovered from the Seccombe Lake Park site. The burials consisted of three adult males, three adult females, one adolescent, and five children. Artifacts associated with the burials are sparse, but more plentiful than the Block 49 burials. The burials are situated in a east/west orientation. All of the adult burials have an eastern orientation, with the feet towards the east. Coffin wood samples were recovered from four burials. The samples were from the Yellow Pine group, a species common to the local area (Marmor et al 1991:Appendix F).

BLOCK 49 BURIALS				
SPECIMEN/ FS NUMBER	AGE	SEX	COFFIN SHAPE	ARTIFACTS
M-1 / F-6	Newborn	M(?)	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood, Oxidized Nails
M-2 / F-47	1-3 months	F(?)	Disturbed	Oxidized Nails
M-3 / F-9	9-12 months	M(?)	Disturbed	2 copper pins/ Pelvic area, 1 copper pin/ Thoracic Vertebrae
M-4 / F-37	1-4 months	-	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, 1 copper pin/ pelvic area, 1 copper pin/abdominal area
M-5 / F-26	12-18 months	M(?)	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood, 15+ oxidized nails
M-6 / F-61	Fetal 7-7.5 months	M(?)	Disturbed	One small pin fragment found during screening
M-7 / F-32	3.5-4.5 yr.	M(?)	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, 1 copper pin/ collar area, 3 copper pins/abdominal area
M-8 / F-62	6-9 months	-	Hexagonal	No Artifacts
M-9 / F-28	12-15 months	F(?)	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, oxidized nails
M-10 / F-31	4-5 months	F(?)	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, oxidized nails, 1 copper pin/pelvic area
M-11 / F-30	Birth-3 months	F(?)	Hexagonal	Oxidized nails, 1 copper pin/ abdominal area
M-12 / F-35	14-16 months	-	Hexagonal	Oxidized nails, 1 copper pin/ abdominal area, a number of small glass beads (1-2 mm) diameter around neck of infant. Each bead has a drilled hole.
M-13 / F-60	Birth-3 months	F(?)	Hexagonal	No Artifacts
M-14 / F-22	12-14 months	F(?)	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, Oxidized nails
M-15 / F-51	4-6 months	F(?)	Rectangular	Coffin Wood fragments
M-16 / F-19	Birth-3 months	M(?)	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, 5 copper pins/ pelvic area, 1 copper pin/under right ribs, 1 copper pin/under sternum, 1 copper pin/left clavicle
M-17 / F-40	Fetal 8.5 months	F(?)	Disturbed	1 copper pin found during screening
M-18 / F-20	4-6 months	M(?)	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, oxidized nails
M-19 / F-49	Birth-4 months	M(?)	Hexagonal	Oxidized nails, 1 copper pin/ under pelvis
M-20 / F-43	1-2 months	M(?)	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, Oxidized nails, 2 copper pins/ lower thoracic, upper lumbar area
M-21 / F-64	20-24 yr.	F	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, Oxidized nails
M-22 / F-11	40-52 yr.	M	Hexagonal	Oxidized nails
M-23 \ F-7	Birth-2 months	F(?)	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, Oxidized nails
M-24 / F-10	50+ yr.	F(?)	Hexagonal	No Artifacts
M-25 / F-21	48-53 yr.	M	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, Oxidized nails
M-26 / F-53	60+ yr.	F	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, Oxidized nails
M-27 / F-44	45-54 yr.	F	Hexagonal	Pair of Gold Earrings, Gold Fillings in Teeth, 1 copper pin/ Upper Vertebrae, 1 copper pin/ Ribs area, 1 copper pin/ Pelvic area
M-28 / F-48	20-25 yr.	F	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, Oxidized nails
M-29 / F39	13-14 yr.	F	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, Oxidized nails, 2 copper pins/ Ribs area, 1 copper pin/ Pelvic area
M-30 / F-38	35-48 yr.	F	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, Oxidized nails, Hair sample under cranium
M-31 / F-36	25-30 yr.	F	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, Oxidized nails
M-32 / F-41	Newborn	-	-	Conjoined twins

Table 1
Block 49, Salt Lake City Burials
(Fieldnotes: Office of Public Archaeology/Brigham Young University)

SECCOMBE LAKE BURIALS				
BURIAL	AGE	SEX	COFFIN SHAPE	ARTIFACTS
1	30-40	F	Disturbed	Coffin Wood fragments, Oxidized unidentifiable coffin hardware
2	40-50	M	Hexagonal	Coffin Wood fragments, Oxidized unidentifiable coffin hardware. Two Prosser compression molding white porcelain buttons (ca. 1840-1910; 3/8" dia.). Two large bone buttons (11/16" dia.) commonly used for pant flies or in use with suspenders
3	25-30	F	Disturbed	One bone button (11/16" dia.) commonly used for pant flies or in use with suspenders.
4	3-4	?	Shape Indeterminable	Unidentifiable oxidized coffin hardware. 304 glass beads used either as a necklace or for decorative embroidery. 182 were blue, 120 were white and 2 were green in color. Common decorative artifact that is not temporally diagnostic.
5	20-30	M	No coffin materials present	One dome shaped metal button (7/16" dia., 1/8" thick) possibly used as a fastener on a male suit vest. One oxidized ferrous buckle or pants cinch.
6	12-13	?	Hexagonal	One oxidized brass or bronze artifact resembling a broken zipper tab.
7	40-60	F	Hexagonal	Coffin wood fragments, oxidized coffin hardware including brass tacks and coffin nails. Two bone cuff buttons with a pearlescent coating (5/16" dia., 1/32" thick). Three oxidized copper or brass pins, possibly hairpins
8	18-30 months	?	Hexagonal	One 2 real piece coin minted in Mexico City in 1772. Coin exhibits considerable wear suggesting a long duration of circulation.
9	40-50	M	Disturbed	Two Prosser compression molding white porcelain buttons (ca. 1840-1910; 3/8" dia.).
10	14-19	F	Disturbed	One gold or gold plated ring with a flat oval face. A precious stone or cameo may have been mounted on the ring face.
11	0.5-1.5	?	Unknown	No artifacts recovered
12	3-5	?	Unknown	No artifacts recovered

Table 2
Seccombe Lake, San Bernardino Burials
(Marmor et al. 1991:13-48)

Unlike the Block 49 burials, the burials from Seccombe Lake had a variety of associated grave goods and artifacts (Table 2). A total of fifteen buttons were recovered from the burials. Several buttons were manufactured by the Prosser method of compression-molding. The Prosser method was patented in 1840 and employed until ca. 1910 to produce utilitarian buttons for clothing (Luscomb 1979:69-70). The other buttons were handmade bone buttons, commonly used for pants or suspenders, common to historical sites in California dating between 1830 and 1850 (Costello and Walker 1987).

One burial had a total of 304 glass beads situated around the neck of the deceased. The dating of beads was inconclusive because the techniques used to produce them were employed from the nineteenth century well into the twentieth century. The common nature of the bead manufacture did not permit an association with any particular ethnic group (Marmor et al. 1991:Appendix B).

Two metal artifacts were recovered from separate burials. One was a corroded iron buckle and the other a coin or medallion. The buckle was too corroded for analysis. The coin was a 2 real piece minted between 1772 and 1790. The coin showed a good deal of wear and appeared to have been in circulation for a long period of time (Spanish coins were considered legal tender in the United States until 1857 and were readily available in California during the early half of the nineteenth century due to the frequency of travelers from Central and South America) (Marmor et al. 1991:Appendix D).

Conclusion

The funerary practices of the San Bernardino and Salt Lake City Mormons share some similarities. Both communities utilized non-elaborate, utilitarian burial practices. Individuals were interred in hexagonal-shaped wooden coffins fastened together by nails and screws. On closer inspection, the differences between the sites become noticeable.

Among the Block 49 burials, there appears to be no evidence of burial clothing, except the presence of copper straight pins in the majority of the infant burials suggests some type of burial shroud or clothing. The Seccombe Lake burials show evidence of burial clothing in the buttons associated with the burials. The Prosser buttons and bone buttons were used as clothing fasteners during the late nineteenth century. The presence of common clothing fasteners suggest that the San Bernardino deceased were being buried in normal clothing, a trait common in the western American heritage.

The obvious question is why there is any difference in the mortuary remains from the two sites. Both locations were isolated settlements with predominantly Mormon populations. There should not be such distinct differences in mortuary remains between the two sites. The most obvious answer deals with the demographics of the communities. Salt Lake City was, in 1847, a Mormon community. The presence of non-members of the Mormon church in the Salt Lake Valley was insignificant. San Bernardino, however, did have the presence of native non-members and influxes of non-members during the development of the community. This is a distinct possibility because roughly 16 percent of the community was non-Mormon by 1857. The religious affiliation of the eleven burials is unclear, because identities could not be established. Tobey and Hallaran

support the theory of Mormon burials through several fields of evidence. First, the proximity of the site to the Pioneer Memorial Cemetery, a known Mormon cemetery. Second, the lack of ornamental artifacts, and the simple unadorned burial containers suggests a typical Mormon burial. Third, the tree species used for coffins was locally available. The lumbering enterprises of the Mormon colony are documented in the historical record (Tobey and Hallaran 1990:56-57; Marmor et al. 1991:50-51).

Other lines of evidence also suggest that the interred individuals were Mormons. First, the number and configuration of the graves in Seccombe Lake Park are indicative of an organized cemetery (Marmor et al 1990:9-10). The 11 graves are arranged in a non-random pattern (3 definite rows) which expresses attributes of a community burial ground. These attributes include: (1) the number of individuals interred; (2) the cardinal alignment of the interments (east-west axis with the feet towards the east); (3) the spatial configuration of rows of interments (3 definite rows spaced 5-8 feet apart); (4) the relative depth of the burials (approximately equal); and (5) the possible association of juveniles with mature individuals (burials 3 & 4 and 7& 8).

An organized cemetery suggests that the interred are Mormon since the San Bernardino area had no permanent, organized settlement before the Mormons arrived in 1851. The fact that these burials were not recorded on the pioneer cemetery records suggests that they were early internments in the community cemetery. Several burials were re-recorded in the Sexton's records from the early 1860s by using grave markers (S.B.V.G.S. 1962-1983 [Vols. 1-20]). The absence of tombstones or remnants of tombstones for the Seccombe Lake internments suggests that either wooden markers were

used and subsequently deteriorated, or the individuals were buried without tombstones. Since the earliest stone grave markers recorded at the pioneer cemetery dated to the early 1860s, the use of wooden grave markers would fall in between 1851-1860. Between 1851-1860, Mormonism was the predominant religious sect of the San Bernardino population.

The theory that the interred are Mormons is also supported by the temporal placement of the buttons found in the burials. The majority of buttons found with the burials were manufactured by the Prosser method of compression-molding (Roger 1991). This method was patented in 1840 and employed until ca. 1910 to produce utilitarian buttons for clothing. Buttons of this type were used as fasteners for men's shirts, vests, and undergarments, and women's skirts, waists, and undergarments. Unfortunately, this gives overly broad temporal placement for the burials. The buttons from burial 7 help to tighten the temporal placement. Burial 7 had two small simulated shell cuff buttons identical to buttons recovered from historic archaeological sites in California dating between 1830 and 1850 (Costello and Walker 1987). While buttons are not good temporal artifacts since they can be reused over a long period of time, these two buttons suggest a temporal placement coinciding with the predominantly Mormon occupation of San Bernardino.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

In Western intellectual tradition, death has signified the end of a person's ability to make decisions. In religious terms, a person loses the ability to act in their own behalf to gain salvation or avoid damnation. Death brings a person to a position where the decisions of his or her mortal existence becomes unalterable. Orthodox Christians believe that death places the destiny of the deceased's soul upon God. The living petition God to be merciful and grant eternal salvation instead of damnation to the deceased (Meyers 1982:132).

As discussed in Chapter 3, petitions on behalf of the deceased had no part in Mormon funeral ceremonies. Mormons believe that after death a person's fate depends upon comprehension of the Gospel of Christ and their diligence in observing its laws. They see a spirit world where mortal relationships were maintained and individuals retained the ability to make certain choices. Specifically, the ability to accept or reject vicarious baptism and the resolution to continue missionary work among the unredeemed (Meyers 1982:132).

Mormons view death as a small step in a person's eternal progression. Progression is considered an eternal process. John Widstoe (1915:31) wrote:

> in each estate, with each onward step, a profounder knowledge of the laws of nature is attained. When conscious, active wills are thus at work, the new knowledge makes possible a more perfect adaptation of man to law. The more completely the law is obeyed, the greater the consciousness of prefect joy. Throughout eternal life, increasing knowledge is attained, and with increasing knowledge comes the greater adaptation to law, and in the end an increasingly greater joy.

Because Mormons believe in a *known* and *knowable* cosmos in which they could calculate the outcome of events, death lost its dark and hidden character. These beliefs are reflected in the Mormons' funeral practices of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 2 showed that by the mid- to late-nineteenth century, eastern American funerals were characterized by a pomp and rigidity adopted from Victorian England. This emphasis on more elaborate death rituals has been called the "beautification of death" by Bell (1987:32). The reasons the Mormons did not adopt this more ceremonial behavior is partly the result of cultural isolation in the Great Basin. Moreover, I believe that it is more strongly related to their beliefs or ideology about death and its place in an "everlasting continuum" (Meyers 1982:125).

As Chapter 4 discusses there are significant differences between the burials at both cemeteries, that appear to contradict this hypothesis. The differences, however, actually support the hypothesis. I will first discuss the Block 49 burials and then the Seccombe Lake burials with an explanation for the variability between the two sites.

Interpretation of the Block 49 burials

The Block 49 burials are unusual because of the absence of artifacts and grave goods. None of the expected artifacts (buttons, shoe leather, etc.) were found. Clothing styles of the mid-nineteenth century had dresses with hooked backs for women and buttoned shirts and trousers for men. It is my contention that the deceased were buried in temple garments and robes, which explains the lack of clothing artifacts. As noted in Chapter 3, Mormon writings and the statements of observers suggest that Mormons were

buried in their endowment garments and temple clothing. Stenhouse (1904:482) observed that the deceased were "clothed with the robes of the priesthood, such as they hope to be seen in when they burst the bands of death." Brigham Young left instructions that his body be "dressed in [his] Temple clothing" (*Deseret News* 1877, 26). Lee (1905 (2):17) wrote that his wife was laid in her coffin in "priestly attire" which "was made of the finest linen." Descriptions of temple clothing are vague, but they suggest loose, flowing clothing. No mention is made of buttons or hooks.

An economic argument could be made that the deceased were buried naked, so that valuable clothing could be recycled into the community. In Chapter 3, however, I noted the grave-robber incident where the deceased were being de-clothed due to the quality of their clothes, suggesting that the burial of deceased naked was intolerable to the Mormons. The economic argument, more importantly, can be refuted through the items found with the burials. The presence of the gold earrings weakly supports the non-economic theory, but it is the use of finished wood and especially nails for coffin construction that refutes the economic argument. The lack of any distribution networks for non-perishable items in the Salt Lake Valley, meant that items like nails were scarce and invaluable for construction projects. If economics were directing the mortuary pattern, then we would expect the use of non-metal fasteners in coffin construction, like wooden pegs and/or woodcrafting techniques like dovetail joints.

The use of clothing is also suggested by the presence of straight copper pins in most of the infant burials and burial 5. The presence of the pins, along with their placement within the burials suggest their use as fasteners for some type of covering,

probably a shroud. If the infants were being covered, it seems illogical for the adults to have been buried naked.

The use of endowment garments and temple clothing as burial clothing is suggested by identities of the individuals buried at Block 49. Tigner-Wise, through the use of Hansen's records, was able to list possible identifications for some of the infant and adult burials. Of the eight adult burials, eleven possible identifications were posited, seven of which had received their endowments before arriving in the Salt Lake Valley. I could not find an exact match for the other four identifications during an examination of Church records and the International Genealogical Index (a publication of the Mormon Church which lists vicarious work performed by the Church up to the present day). However, this does suggest that most, if not all, of the deceased adults on Block 49 were endowed members of the LDS Church.

The deceased of Block 49 did not have to be endowed before they reached the Salt Lake Valley. Once established in Utah, endowments ceremonies were conducted on Ensign Peak before an appropriate structure was constructed. On May 5th. 1855, the Endowment house, a two story adobe structure with two one-story wings, was dedicated for the solemnization of temple ceremonies and used until the completion of the Salt Lake Temple in 1894. This allowed members of the Church, who missed the opportunity at Nauvoo, and new converts to receive their endowment or be sealed.

A Possible Interpretation of the Seccombe Lake Park Burials

The Seccombe Lake Park burials appear to contradict my hypothesis through the presence of buttons with all of the adult burials except burial 1 (Burial 1 was disturbed, so the presence of buttons can not be proved or refuted). However, the historical context of this site must be remembered to explain adequately the differences between Block 49 and Seccombe Lake. In Chapter 4, I noted that the first several years of the San Bernardino colony were marked by a strong community spirit. By 1855, financial blunders and new immigration introduced spirit of dissension within the community. San Bernardino was seen by some members as an escape from the harsh life of Utah and for some, from the theocratic despotism of Brigham Young. The colony was also becoming a haven for those disillusioned with LDS Church because of the publically announced practice of plural marriage (Bishop 1987:181-182). As noted, San Bernardino was seen as a transition point for those who found elements of the Church unpalatable, while maintaining ties to the religious movement which had held their commitment (Campbell 1952).

The dissension was further flamed by the attitude of the Church hierarchy. Church leadership in Utah regarded California as a haven for the less faithful Mormons. This attitude was reinforced in discourses where biblical passages were used to describe the California Mormons as the goats who were separated from the sheep or the tares separated from the wheat (Lyman 1989:49).

The lack of Church support, combined with the financial mistakes of Lyman and Rich, resulted in wide scale dissension by San Bernardino members against local Church

authorities. The community had rapidly changed into the antithesis of the formative years of the community. Public interest was dismissed in favor for aggrandizement of private interests (Lyman 1989:53). It is my contention that the shift in attitude from Mormon colony to haven from Church authority was responsible for the variability between the Block 49 and Seccombe Lake burials. The Seccombe Lake burials are probably of individuals who were disaffected with the Mormon Church.

The primary argument against this theory is, obviously, that the individuals may not have been Mormon. This is a distinct possibility because roughly 16 percent of the community was non-Mormon by 1857, and the religious affiliation of the 11 burials is unclear, because identities could not be established. If the deceased were not Mormon then we would expect to find a mortuary pattern similar to the western American heritage discussed in Chapter 2.

An associated argument is that even if the deceased were Mormons, they might not have been endowed members of the Church. This also is a distinct possibility, because individuals could not be positively identified and checked with Church records. If the Seccombe Lake deceased were non-endowed members of the Church then we would, again, expect to find a mortuary pattern similar to the nineteenth century western American heritage.

The possibility exists that they were endowed members of the church who had become disaffected with Church doctrine, particularly plural marriage. As mentioned, the community increased in size through the emigration of Mormons disaffected with life in *Utah*. If the Seccombe Lake deceased were disaffected members of the Mormon church,

then we would, again, expect to find a mortuary pattern similar to the nineteenth century western American heritage.

The theory, however, that the Seccombe Lake burials were Mormon is supported through several fields of evidence. First, the proximity of the site to the Pioneer Memorial Cemetery, a known Mormon cemetery. Second, the lack of ornamental artifacts, and the simple unadorned burial containers are indicative of a typical Mormon burial. Third, the tree species used for coffins were locally available. The lumbering enterprises of the Mormon colony are well documented in the historical record (Tobey and Hallaran 1990:56-57; Marmor et al. 1991:50-51).

The theory that the Seccombe Lake deceased were endowed Mormons is supported by the importance, to Mormons, of temple ceremonies in eternal progression. The endowment ceremony could be considered a "rite of passage" within the Mormon Church. Without these ceremonies, eternal salvation was impossible. This fact was common knowledge to the membership of the church, so temple ordinances would have been considered more of an obligation rather than an opportunity. The endowment ceremony was available to Church members in Utah just after the Mormons had entered the Salt Lake Valley. The opportunity to receive temple ordinances was available to adult members of the church, even if they had missed the Nauvoo years.

This is what makes the Seccombe Lake burials unusual when compared with the Block 49 burials. While the Block 49 burials appear to recreate and conform to Mormon ideology of death, the Seccombe Lake burials seem to be the antithesis of them. The presence of buttons common to mid-nineteenth century clothing styles suggest that the

Seccombe Lake individuals were being buried in normal, everyday clothing. If this was indeed the case, then the Seccombe Lake burials represent an counter surgency, a disaffection with Mormon cosmology. By being buried in normal clothes, the individuals overtly denied the principles manifested in the temple ceremonies and, as a result, the Mormon ideology of death and the afterlife.

The Problem

The obvious problem with this theory is the broad assumptions used to support the theory that the Seccombe Lake burials were Mormon (Even if the Seccombe Lake deceased were not Mormons, the site does support the western American heritage discussed in Chapter 2 and does provide a contemporaneous sample for comparative analysis with the Block 49 site). The problem is compounded by the small testing sample afforded by the two sites. Another problem is the question of how do we measure the faithfulness of members of any religious sect? Conformity to church doctrine will vary due to individual interpretation of the doctrine. However, it is a compelling theory that poses further questions. Do we find other Seccombe Lake or western American heritage type burials at other Mormon colonies? Is the distance from the heart of the Mormon interaction sphere directly related to the degree of conformity to Mormon ideology of death? It would be possible to continue. The answers to these questions, and to my hypothesis, should be sought in larger scale testing of nineteenth century Mormon burial sites, particularly in comparative analysis between burials from Salt Lake City and surrounding Mormon colonies

Unfortunately, excavation and testing of burial grounds raises social problems, the most obvious one being the wishes of living descendants to not disturb ancient graves. Fortunately, most people would agree that mitigation is less destructive than a backhoe and are willing to allow analysis of the exhumed in return for re-interment in a safe location.

The study of archaeological manifestations of Mormon death practices will continue to be a fascinating subject that can illuminate the beliefs and attitudes concerning life and death. As cultural resources, mortuary sites contain the potential to yield important information, unavailable in other contexts, on the development of the Mormon culture.

Future Research Possibilities

A general model of mortuary practices for the nineteenth century Mormon Church is possible with a larger test sample. While the mortuary practices of the early Church is interesting research, the small Church membership size only permitted a small regional interaction sphere. In addition, when the Mormons entered Utah there was only a sparse indigenous population that was quickly displaced. Mormon interaction with the indigenous population was limited to occasional violent incidents. The influence of Mormon death practices upon the indigenous population is difficult to identify.

While research possibilities on mortuary practices in the early LDS Church are limited, general mortuary models can be developed for the various religious sects in the United States and throughout the world. From the general models, we can begin to look

at specific sites and begin to understand the social, economic, and environmental forces that contribute to mortuary variability within any religious sect.

For example, Catholicism provides excellent opportunities for research for two primary reasons. First, Catholicism is the largest Christian sect in the world with membership spread throughout the world. The opportunity exists of examining the influence of the Catholic Church on cultural traditions in the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Second, more importantly from a historical standpoint, Catholicism was the religious backbone of Spain's colonial expansion during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. This fact becomes more interesting when it is remembered that Spain, in its colonization of Central and South America, conquered two civilizations with complex and very different religious ideologies. Catholicism usurped the religious sects of both continents within very brief time periods. The colonial sites of Central America and the western coast of South America provide excellent research potential in determining the social, political, economic and/or environmental factors that allow the successful acculturation of people with established religious traditions, to a completely new religious tradition.

Mortuary studies will continue to be an effective method of examining the belief structure of any culture. Prehistoric mortuary studies are hampered due to the lack of documentation, and they result in studies focused on temporal placement and social affiliation of a site, artifact identification or status indicators, and/or death practices of specific groups. Historical archaeology has the documentary and material evidence to understand the complex socio-political, economic, and/or environmental factors

influencing cultural traditions and to produce models from which prehistoric cultural behavior may be more clearly understood. For the goal of anthropology is not to understand the material possessions of a person or culture, but to understand the meaning of those objects within that culture

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