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A History of the Development and Objectives of the LDS Church News Section of the Deseret News

Paul T. Roberts
*Brigham Young University - Provo*

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This Thesis, by Paul T Roberts, is accepted in its present form by the Department of Communications of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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--Paul T Roberts
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Introduction

Purpose of the Study

The Church News supplement to the Deseret News has been part of the Salt Lake City newspaper for over fifty years. It has evolved from a weekly eight-page tabloid religious section of the daily newspaper to a weekly magazine of feature articles, photographs, editorials and news of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

An historical study of the Church News has not been done previously. Hence, the intent of this study is to observe how the Church News has served its purposes and goals over its history. The study briefly outlines how the publication has developed and will serve as a springboard for further independent studies in the various areas of interest such as Church News editorials, circulation and advertising.

The following study is not intended to be an empirical, scientific analysis of the Church News. Research began with no preconceived notions of outcome or hypotheses. It is designed as a descriptive historical overview of the Church Section of the Deseret News.
Chapter 1
The Beginning of the Church News

When Chicago was a tiny outpost on the edge of the American wilderness, the Mormons had settled on the western Missouri frontier in Independence. There in 1832 William W. Phelps began work as editor of the Evening and Morning Star, the first periodical publication of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This frontier religious journal was a forerunner of the Church News section of the Deseret News in Salt Lake City, which began publication almost a century later.

After arriving in the Great Salt Lake Valley in 1847, the Mormon pioneers began at once to establish a thriving community with all the services found in the cities of the civilized world. One such service was a newspaper. The first issue of the Deseret News came off the press June 15, 1850 (Smart, 1975, p. 102). It focused on reporting secular events. No religious articles or sermons were included. As it continued to publish local and national news, it began to take on characteristics of a religious journal. Its third issue began to run texts of speeches which Church leaders presented on Sundays, and the News later renewed a serialization of Joseph Smith's biography.
which had appeared in the *Times and Seasons*. However, as
time went on, the use of religious text in the *Deseret News*
began to diminish until by 1866 the only religious speeches
published were those delivered at General Conference.

**Editor Suggests Two Newspapers**

As early as 1856 editors wanted to separate
religious and secular news by publishing two papers. Editor
Albert Carrington explained that when the *News* reached
financial stability through increasing subscriptions another
paper could be started. At that time, he said the Church
paper could be printed in a more convenient size for binding
and would be confined to doctrine, history and religious
correspondence. Carrington's vision of a religious journal,
for whatever reason, was not realized for seventy-five years

The Saturday edition of the *Deseret News* was
carrying Church news under a title "From Various Missionary
Fields" as early as 1896. By 1930, the department was
occupying three pages and came under the banner heading of
"In The Realm of The Church" (Ashton, 1950, p. 304).

That section of the *Deseret News* carried full texts
of Tabernacle speeches and radio talks from General
Authorities and other prominent people in the religious
community. News of LDS wards and stakes and other religions
was in that section and was also scattered throughout the
newspaper, wherever it would fit. Much of it was placed
adjacent to vital statistics and radio logs. It was printed any day of the week, but the featurized material appeared Saturdays in the church department.

The Church Section Comes Off the Press

A boxed announcement was published on the front page of the Deseret News on Friday, April 3, 1931:

FOR THOSE WHO READ THE CHURCH NEWS SECTION of THE DESERET NEWS

Beginning Saturday—April 4—

All subject matter pertaining to doctrine, church news and activities, and other items of interest to those who care for that type of reading, will appear each Saturday in New Magazine Form and Size.

Many persons file away the tabernacle and radio addresses for future reference; many clip and save the genealogy news and information, and numerous other items in the Church realm.

Here it will be found in convenient size

For Keeping Or For Binding.

At the same time it will not "bother" those who do not want it.

The first number of the new Church magazine section will contain a special article by Elder B. H. Roberts "EASTERTIDE IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE, 34 A. D."

All the regular features and departments of Church units will be found, with new ones added from time to time.

It will grow, if it meets the approval of those for whom it is designed.

Read The New Church News Section
While Joseph J. Cannon was editor of the *Deseret News*, Carrington's dream came true. The Church Section began publication in spite of the Depression year of 1931 on April 4, a day on which Latter-day Saints had assembled on Temple Square for the One Hundred First Annual Conference of the Church. It was the day before Easter and the first Church Section, as it was called, featured a drawing of the resurrected Jesus appearing among the Nephites with an article written by Elder B. H. Roberts of the Council of the Twelve.

The section was tabloid size, in keeping with the attempt to create a Church magazine. It featured sermons of General Authorities and other prominent Mormons, just as "In The Realm of the Church" had done previously. It contained notes on activities of Utahns in far-away places such as Chicago, New York, Washington, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Various departments of the Church, such as the Mutual Improvement Associations and the Genealogical Society, had their own sections. Special features included "Fifty Years Ago in Utah" and "From Handcart to Airplane."

A few advertisements appeared in the first three issues of the Church Section, but after April 25, they were removed.

**Henry Smith Becomes Editor**

The first editor of the Church Section was James R. Kennard, who was the Saturday feature editor. He continued
to edit the Church Section along with his other work until September when Henry A. Smith became the first full-time editor of the new section. Smith had started working for the News a few years before when Horace Walker, city editor, hired him as copy boy for $50 a month (Ashton, 1950, pp. 304-305).

Henry Smith was a pioneer of the Church News; it was his idea. He was instrumental in its success because of his integrity and his loyalty. "Henry's loyalty did not only exist to the Deseret News; it was to the Church, and that is what made him invaluable" (Ford, Note 4; Petersen, Note 7). Henry Smith, for most of the next eighteen years, developed the Church Section and moved it away from announcing golden weddings and dinner parties to publishing more news about the Church. Eventually, the eight-page tabloid grew to as many as twenty-four pages (Ashton, 1950, p. 305). (See Chapter 6 for a further discussion of Henry Smith.)

By the time the Church Section became known as the Church News in 1943, it was carrying a worldwide emphasis. It was mailed independently of the daily Deseret News to regions beyond the regular circulation area. The name was later changed back to Church Section for a time, but again became the Church News. On May 16, 1948, a second class mailing permit appeared on Page 2, stating that the Church News was available as a separate publication outside of the Deseret News distribution area in Utah, Idaho and Wyoming.
It was referred to as the "official newspaper of the Church Of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (Church News, May 16, 1948, p. 2).

As Church membership pushed beyond the million mark, the Church News grew in popularity. Henry Smith received a letter from Skive, Denmark, which reflected the paper's mission:

"My companion and I have been in a little town in Denmark for the past ten months. We have no members and no active branch in our near vicinity, so consequently our contact with the Church is very limited. Therefore, one of the brightest spots in the week is when the Church News arrives. It is very inspiring and heartening to read and see how the Church is progressing in all parts of the world" (Ashton, 1950, p. 306.)

Mark E. Petersen Defines Publication's Mission

The new section was established when Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve was managing editor of the Deseret News. He remained a contact for the editors of the Church News for more than a half century. He began writing editorials for the publication on a regular basis in 1943, the year the paper first became known as the Church News. Although the name of the paper changed back to Church Section and assumed other names such as Weekly Church Edition and Weekly Church Section for short periods of time, Elder Petersen continued his weekly editorials through the years. (See Chapter 7 for a further discussion on Church News editorials.)
In the fiftieth anniversary edition of the *Church News* on September 19, 1981, Elder Petersen, the one influence which seemed to have remained unchanged over the years, summarized the intent and mission of the newspaper:

At 50 years of age the influence of the *Church News* is growing. With its circulation of more than 250,000 copies it has over a million readers among the English-speaking members of the Church.

To. . .strengthen our own faith, it is good to know how others grow by living the commandments.

The *Church News* also is a means of bringing General Authorities nearer to the people. Especially is this true with regard to the First Presidency of the Church.

The *Church News* strives always to declare the truth. Always does it support and sustain the program of the First Presidency. Constantly does it advance, uphold and honor the position of all our inspired leaders.

In fulfilling its important calling, it aims to be a strength to every reader. It strives to be a voice in building faith and integrity and in being a wholesome asset to every home. Only through faith and righteous living can we hope to have peace on earth under our present difficult circumstances, and the *Church News* aims to help bring this about (*Church News*, September 19, 1981, p. 20.)

Elder Petersen touched on three areas in which the *Church News* endeavored to serve its readers and the Church:

1. To strengthen the faith of the members of the Church.

2. To serve as a vehicle of communication between the General Authorities and the members of the Church.
3. To declare gospel truth to its readers.

Management at the *Deseret News* always agreed upon governing policies for the *Church News* at editorial meetings. The First Presidency also was consulted on any questionable matters (Petersen, Note 7) because the president of the Church was the sole owner of the *News* and its religious supplement (Ford, Note 4).
Chapter 2

Methodology

This study on the history of the Church Section of the Deseret News was intended as an historical treatment. However, to assist in determining editorial trends in the content of the publication, a content analysis was used as a vehicle of historical inquiry, the process of which is described hereafter.

Historical methodology was the primary procedure for writing this description of the objectives and development of a tabloid supplement of the Deseret News in Salt Lake City which has come to be known as the Church News.

Historical Methodology

History is a custodian of a collective memory which serves as a vehicle whereby the young are made part of society. An awareness of history helps society learn how to behave appropriately in the future. It is also a branch of inquiry which attempts to arrive at an accurate understanding of the past (Landes & Tilly, 1971, p. 5).

Although events happen independently of the historian, a chronicler is needed to synthesize separate records into a narrative which is meaningful to an
interested public. An open mind which adheres to moral values without letting them get in the way of his objectivity leads the historian in his search for truth. He will say all that he can prove without covering up facts that might be incongruent with his own viewpoint.

The historian will be fair and just in his work. He should have a "kindly, magnanimous attitude toward men" and will seek to achieve wholeness. His work should convey truth in a way the public can understand. This wholeness does not mean omniscience. The annalist only strives to know something about something, not everything about everything—not even everything about something. By limiting the subject of research, the historian can be thorough by systematically searching for every bit of information available (Tobler, Note 10).

The historian must justify any study. A primary justification is that a study has never been conducted before (Fling, 1920, pp. 36-37) (no history had ever been written about the Church News) but a newspaper with nearly a quarter of a million subscribers indicated enough interest to justify this particular study.

Once the historian has decided upon a subject, the first step to take is to bring together as many sources containing as much information as possible. He then examines this information in order to evaluate each source. Once the facts are established, the historian groups them
into "logical and chronological order to form a complex whole, and a narrative, based on the outline and accompanied by notes and proof of the affirmations" (Fling, pp. 25-26).

Sources with which the historian must work do not represent the total event. They only present some of the facts from a particular point of view. Analysis of those facts pertaining to the event are the means by which the historian recreates what happened. The researcher should strive to use original sources whenever possible. If secondary sources are necessary, they must get their information from an actual witness of an event. Verified sources establish the difference between history and tradition.

After assembling historical facts, the chronographer must interpret the data. Facts do not speak for themselves; so it is up to the writer to put meaning to them in a fair and competent manner. He achieves wholeness and fairness of the truth by employing a moral sense. To accomplish fairness of truth, the historian must be "something of a saint" (Anderson, Note 1).

It is the historian's responsibility to retain the individuality of the events and people in history. It is almost an artistic quality which makes this possible.

Fling (1920) has drawn an analogy between the work of the historian and the art of assembling a stained-glass window. The artisan carefully fits the colored glass
fragments together until each piece has found its place and the window has been created. The pieces retain their individuality as parts of a unique whole.

This history of the Church News is an assembly of facts drawn from primary and secondary sources. Where primary sources were unavailable—as was the case with Henry A. Smith, the original full-time Church News editor whose failing health precluded an interview—secondary sources were consulted. Because J Malan Heslop, former editor, was serving as a mission president during the time the study was done, sources who worked closely with him on the Church News were consulted.

Issues of the newspaper in bound volumes and on microfilm were used extensively as primary sources. Also mail correspondence and personal interviews with those who had been directly involved in the Church News were used. The information gathered was written into a logical, interpretive treatment of content analysis and historical documentation.

Content Analysis Methodology

Content analysis is a research method "for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication." Objective means that the categories must be of such precision that different people can analyze the same content using the same definitions and get the same results. Systematic means the
sample to be analyzed must be chosen through a formal, predetermined and unbiased means. Quantitative means the results of the study are expressed numerically. Manifest means that the analysis is direct and simple; i.e., it does not read between the line but "on the lines" (Nafziger & White, 1963, pp. 181-182).

Once verbal, nonquantitative material has been transformed into quantitative data through the use of content analysis, the results can be presented in tables containing frequencies or percentages.

The purpose of this study was to examine historical trends in the content of news items published in the Church News over fifty-two years of its existence. This fell within the guidelines set down by Kenneth Bailey (Bailey, 1978, pp. 276-277).

Once the researcher has established the purpose of his study, he has five basic tasks to accomplish:

1. Draw a sample of the documents.
2. Define the content of categories.
3. Define the recording unit.
4. Define context unit. This is sometimes needed to give each recording unit its proper meaning.

A sample of documents for the current study was drawn using a table of random numbers. The last digit of
the chosen random number (for example, the "0" of 82760) was used to determine what year in each five-year period was drawn for sampling. If a digit were larger than five, a five was subtracted from it. In the case of zero, the digit was considered to be a ten. Thus, 10-5=5, is the fifth year of the five-year period. The next to last and the second to last digits were used to designate the week of the year chosen. If these two combined digits were larger than fifty-two, a fifty-two was subtracted from them. Two zeros were considered to be 100. Thus in the example random number 82760, the 76 would have been used to represent the 24th week (76-52=24).

Whenever the same issue was drawn twice, the latter random number was discarded and replaced with another from the table of random numbers. Since Conference issues (i.e., the issues of the week after General Conference) were examined separately, none were used in the random sample. When the random number led to the selection of a Conference issue, a new number was drawn from the table of random numbers. Two issues were drawn from each five-year period. The beginning of each year was designated as the first week in April because the first issue of the Church News was on April 4, 1931. In addition to the random sample, a sample of sixteen was drawn from General Conference issues and sixteen more containing advertising. This brought the total sample size to fifty-three issues.
The categories chosen for this study were put to a test to determine if they could be identified separately. A test was administered to three separate individuals three times to ensure the ability of categorizing each item consistently. The level of agreement between how the researcher categorized items and how the respondents categorized the same items was set at 90 percent. The first test used twenty-five sample items, and the respondents were asked to categorize them using a list of defined categories. The test showed only a 67 percent rate of agreement. The categories and definitions were modified and the test was administered again, using a different set of items. The second test showed an agreement rate of 72 percent. Again the categories were altered, and another test was given. In the third test 90 percent of the respondents' answers matched the researcher's answers. The researcher and respondents agreed upon thirteen identifiable and separate categories.

List of Categories

In the study thirteen separate categories were chosen. Items A and B were used to obtain percentages of editorial and photographic content and were not considered categories. "Editorial" in this usage meant all material except photographs and drawings. The sum of the data compiled equaled 100 percent of available space. Items 1 through 13 were the identified categories in the content
analysis. In measuring each category in square inches rather than column inches, the measurement included not only the body of each article, but all accompanying headlines, photographs, editor's notes, cutlines and white space. The sum of the data in the thirteen categories equaled 100 percent.

**Editorial and Pictorial Content**

A. Editorial content, meaning everything except photographs and drawings.

B. Photographs and drawings, including those found in advertisements.

**Identified Categories**

1. LDS news and features from Church headquarters in Salt Lake City. This excludes verbatim talks and pictorial features but includes items of historical interest. Church headquarters is defined as the administrative complex housing general Church offices and departments. (Hdqtrnews)

2. LDS news and features in the organized stake and ward areas in the region surrounding church headquarters. This excludes verbatim talks and pictorial features but includes items of historical interest. This region is defined as the Wasatch Front area of Utah, including only Utah, Salt Lake, Davis, Weber and Box Elder counties. (HdqStnews)

3. LDS news and features in the organized stake and
ward areas outside of the Church headquarters region but confined to the United States. This excludes all verbatim talks and pictorial features but includes items of historical interest. (USStknews)

4. LDS news and features in the organized stake and ward areas outside of the United States. This excludes all verbatim talks and pictorial features but includes items of historical interest. (WoStknews) 5. LDS news and features in the organized missions of the Church, being confined to only full-time missionaries and mission organizations exclusive of stakes and wards. This excludes verbatim talks and pictorial features but includes items of historical interest. (Missnnews)

5. LDS news and features in the organized missions of the Church, being confined to only full-time missionaries and mission organizations exclusive of stakes and wards. This excludes verbatim talks and pictorial features but includes items of historical interest. (Missnnews)

6. Non-LDS news and features. This excludes verbatim talks and pictorial features but includes items of historical interest. (NoLDSnews)

7. Pictorial features. This is defined as human interest features using at least four photographs with descriptive text beyond the use of cutlines. (Pictofeat)

8. Verbatim talks and/or writings identified as those of General Authorities, including commentaries and
opinions. (Verbat-GA)

9. Verbatim talks and/or writings identified as those of people other than General Authorities, including commentaries and opinions. (VerbnonGA)

10. Commentaries and opinions written by unidentified people. (Unidcmnts)

11. Sports articles involving LDS institutions and people exclusive of organized stakes, wards and missions. (LDSsports)

12. Advertising. This is defined as paid advertising from a company or organization other than the Deseret News or Church News. (Advertsng)

13. Miscellaneous. (Miscellan)

To show the historical trends in the Church News, each news article was considered as one recording unit. Thus each item in the sample was classified into only one of the categories.

The set of categories chosen for this study and the use of each article as the recording unit rendered a context unit (step 4) unnecessary. Each item had its own meaning without placing it into context. The categories did not require redefinition with each item. Hence, no context unit was needed.

Measurement Instrument

In order to discover trends in the Church News, it was necessary to determine if each item was represented
within a given period of time. But that would only tell if it appeared at all in the sample without telling to what extent it appeared. Therefore, a frequency was used to show what classifications were emphasized during a given time period.

To give further information on historical trends, the amount of space allotted to each division in the given time frame was counted. Therefore, three levels of enumeration were used in the study of the *Church News*: Was the category represented? How many times? How much space was allotted?

The following system was used in enumerating each of these levels: The coded name for each category was placed in the first column on the far left. The second column was used to tell whether the category existed, and the third was used to enumerate how many times it appeared. The fourth column was used to record the exact number of square inches falling into a classification. (See accompanying model:)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of issue</th>
<th>Number of pages</th>
<th>Percentage editorial</th>
<th>Percentage photos</th>
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Chapter 3

Results of the Content Analysis of the Church News

Analysis of the content of the Church News section of the Deseret News designated thirteen separate, identifiable categories. Near the end of the enumeration, which was done solely by the researcher, a test was given to an independent person who measured and classified all items in the sample issue of the Church News dated February 6, 1983. The rate of agreement between the researcher's work and the other person's work was 96 percent, indicating that the categories had remained solidly identifiable throughout the study.

Using the aforementioned categories, a random sample size of twenty-one issues of the Church News, and the process described in Chapter 2, a set of figures recording the frequency in which each category was represented and the total square inches per category was compiled from each of the sample issues. Once these figures were gathered, the average square inches of material in a category and the average number of times the item was counted were calculated for each five-year period. This facilitated establishing distributions in terms of percentages rather than raw scores by dividing the average square inches available in the
samples of each time period into the category averages.

The percentages gave meaning to the scores. Without them the figures would be deceiving since the size of the issues varied from the 1930s to the 1980s.

The percentage figures from both the frequency distribution and the distribution of square inches were then plotted together on a graph for each category, creating a set of illustrations to demonstrate the trends in the content of the *Church News* as it developed over its first fifty-two years.

Some explanations are needed to clarify the system of measurement. As was explained in the previous chapter, each item included all accompanying headlines, photographs, editor's notes and white space. The attempt was made to place all available space into a category. However, because extra white space was often placed around photographs, headlines and copy, an exact measurement was rendered impossible. A standard was established to categorize at least 95 percent of all available space in each issue. This standard was met and the unmeasured or uncounted white space was placed in a category of its own to raise the amount of space classified to 100 percent. (See Table 2.)

This content analysis was intended as a tool to observe trends in the development of the *Church News*. It was not meant to serve as a scientific study of probability. The analysis served its purpose in preparing a descriptive
treatment of the history of the Church News.

Research on this project began with no preconceived notion of what would be found in the study. The following descriptions came solely from the statistical facts, and the inferences were based on those facts.

This discussion will refer to the Church Section as the Church News. It originally was called the Church Section and later the Church Edition. Eventually the editors settled on the name Church News, except in the Deseret News circulation area where postal regulations required a name different from Church News. Therefore, in Utah it became known as LDS Church News. However, all discussion contained herein will refer to the publication as the Church News.

Discussion of the Results

Analysis of items by categories showed an emphasis in the Church News over its fifty-two-year history on news and feature articles in the United States but outside of the general Church headquarters region. The sample included 229 separate articles in that category. It also included 162 news and feature articles from church headquarters, 135 mission news items and 133 news and feature stories from organized stake and ward areas surrounding Church headquarters.

Although these figures may appear significant. To get a better picture of what was happening, they were converted into percentages by dividing the number of items
falling into each category during each period of five years by the total average number of articles published in the Church News for that period. The results were tabulated in Table 1. (See Appendix.)

This measure showed the trends that occurred over the years. As was indicated by the frequency distribution, news from the stake and ward areas in the United States but outside the headquarters area of the Church was most heavily represented in the sample. For the period outlined in the study, Table 1 shows whether the various categories were represented in the sample and how often, but it does not give any information regarding how much space was given to each category. Therefore calculations were made to determine what percentage of space was allotted to each category. Table 2 (See Appendix.) indicates how much space was given to each classification. A comparison of Tables 1 and 2 shows a relationship between frequency and space.

Upon examination of the distribution of square inches and Figure 1 (See Appendix.), it becomes apparent that space given to pictorial features outweighed any other single category, despite what the frequency table indicates. Initially no space was given to pictorial features. In the early 1940s the Church News began publishing them, at which time they occupied 13 or 14 percent of the paper throughout the remainder of that decade. They reached a peak in the late 1970s at 30
percent, before slacking off slightly to 28 percent in the 1980s. Photographic feature stories accounted for well over one-fourth of the Church News sample in the 1980s, where they were not used at all in the first 10 years of the newspaper's existence.

Although the number of picture features used in the 1980s remained about the same as when their use began in the early 1940s, square inches given to photo features more than doubled during that time. The sample in the 1980s period showed an unusual number of seven photo features, but the actual number of square inches slacked off from what it had been in the late 1970s.

News from Church headquarters occupied a healthy portion of the paper throughout the period of the study (Appendix, Figure 2). Much of the time the percentage of items which were classified in this category was greater than the percentage of square inches. This indicated that, for the most part, the items were numerous yet brief. Most articles in this group were announcements of programs and policies rather than depth reports or features about the activities of people at headquarters.

The percentage of square inches given to news from Church headquarters was 13 percent in the early years while the frequency in the eight-page tabloid newspaper was 22 percent. In the early 1960s, the amount of space which general Church news occupied reached its lowest level of 8
percent. In the 1980s when the Church was considered a worldwide organization, 16 percent of the space and 19 percent of the articles in the sample were classified in this group. This represents more space given to news from Church headquarters than in 1931 when publication began. It indicates that editors of the Church News continued to regard it as an official organ of the Church to be used in the dissemination of information to membership the world over.

Although news of Church headquarters remained a high priority in the Church News, space given news from the stake and ward areas surrounding Church headquarters dropped sharply from its high priority in the 1930s when compared with its position in the 1980s. Initially 17 percent of the space in the paper and 19 percent of the articles were classified as news from the Wasatch Front area of Utah (Appendix, Figure 3). In the latter half of the first decade, the figure dropped to zero in the sample then began to climb to 13 percent in the early 1940s. In the 1980s, 8 percent of the space in the sample was grouped with Wasatch Front news while only 4 percent of the items dealt with it.

News from stakes and wards in the United States occupied 16 percent of the space in the 1980s (Appendix, Figure 4). The number of such news stories had always been at least 10 percent and reached as high as 39 percent in the late 1950s. However, the curve showing percentages of square
inches for that period indicates that most of the articles dealing with U. S. stake news were brief because of the great difference between space which was classified in the group and the numbers of items. The amount of space represented in the sample only reached 22 percent, and 39 percent of the stories were grouped as news from U. S. stake areas. In the 1980s the frequency reached its second highest level at 33 percent, but the amount of space was only 13 percent.

Articles dealing with Church missions received high priority throughout the period covered by the study. However, mission news articles accounted for only 4 percent of items in the 1980s (Appendix, Figure 5). But the 9 percent of space allotted to the category does indicate that the news presented was substantial rather than mere announcements of chapel dedications as had been the practice in the 1950s. Initially the category was represented by 9 percent of the space in the Church News. Pictures and captions of missionaries constituted most mission news then. The fact that stories from the missions took up greater space may have been attributable to the appeal the Church News was making to a wider audience throughout the United States. When mission news reached its height in the early 1950s, examination of issues in the sample showed that much of it was about branches in missions. By the late 1970s when most branches in missions became wards and
branches in stakes (Deseret News 1983 Church Almanac, pp. 214-216), mission news dropped off and stake news coverage apparently picked it up. Mission news in the 1980s dealt with converts' stories from the field and with the appointment of mission presidents.

The overall average percentage of space given to news in areas surrounding organized stakes and wards outside of the United States was slightly over 1 percent. Two considerations may have been responsible for this limited coverage in the Church News: 1) Readership in areas of the world outside of the United States had been limited. 2) Until the mid 1970s few stakes had been established outside of the United States. Most missions later became proselyting missions, and most branches became wards or branches in organized stakes. News of stakes and wards in other nations never rose above 6 percent. (See Appendix, Figure 6.) It was in the late 1970s when it reached the 6 percent mark. Prior to that, most of the sample showed little coverage of news in the foreign stakes and wards.

When the Church News began publication, verbatim words of General Authorities were a regular feature each week and occupied much of the space and accounted for many of the items (Appendix, Figure 7). Space given to this category rose to as high as 39 percent in the late 1930s, and throughout that decade the category took more than one-fourth of the space. At the same time, the number of
items reached a peak with well over one-fourth of the articles being verbatim words of General Authorities. This high frequency occurrence and even higher space allotment indicated that the items were lengthy. In fact, examination of the sample issues showed that many were full texts of tabernacle and radio addresses or reprints of already published materials.

Verbatim words of people other than General Authorities took up 36 percent of the space (Appendix, Figure 8) in the early 1930s when the Church News printed the full texts of their radio and tabernacle talks as regular features. Many of these talks were laboriously long. Much of the space given to them was taken over later by feature articles with photographs and other illustrations. An emphasis on reader participation columns and digests of public addresses in the 1980s caused an increase in this classification.

No editorial comments and other opinions from previously unidentified people appeared in the sample of the Church News for the first 10 years. (See Appendix, Figure 9.) In the early 1940s, official Church News editorials began to appear in 3 percent of the space. They never occupied more than 5 percent throughout the four decades, yet they consistently were given a powerful location in the paper. They originally were located on the front page. When the Church News began using photo covers in 1948, the
editorial appeared with the large photo for a short time before being moved inside to Page 2. In December 1948 it was moved to the back page, where it remained into the 1980s, except for the period in 1959-60 when advertising filled the back page. During that time, the editorial was on the next to the last page. (See Chapter 7 for further discussion on editorials.)

The primary intent of the Church News was to publish news of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. However, there was a short period when the publication gave 1 percent of the space to a weekly column entitled "News About Other Churches." The articles occupying that space accounted for 13 percent of the items in the late 1960s and later 5 percent in the early 1970s. This indicates that the items were brief because they took only 1 percent of the space for both time periods. Prior to that, items that appeared as non-LDS news and features were fillers pulled from national news services.

Sports outside of organized stakes and wards but including Brigham Young University, Ricks College and other institutions as well as LDS people, had never been covered extensively. Only two time periods in the sample showed them being covered at all--1 percent in the early 1960s and 1 percent in the late 1970s. The latter period filled 3 percent of the space in the Church News with sports articles. This figure along with the 1 percent of items
shows that what was presented was in some depth. Examination of the document showed that most stories were either detailed accounts of spectacular sporting events or personality profiles of LDS athletes.

Although the Church News regularly carried advertising for nineteen months, none showed up in the sample; hence it does not show up on Tables 1 and 2. However, sixteen issues were selected apart from the random sample to be used to measure square inches of advertising and square inches of editorial content. (In this usage, the term "editorial" means everything that is not advertising.) These issues included those from March 1959, the first month the Church News carried promotions; from July of that year; from December 1959, a holiday month; and from September 1960, the last month the Church News accepted advertising.

The average total square inches per issue during that time was 2,660. Advertisements took 438.91 square inches while editorial took the remaining 2,221.09 square inches. They occupied an average of 16 percent of the available space while editorial dominated with 84 percent. The highest percentage of advertising was in the first issue on March 7, 1959, when it took 26 percent of the space. The lowest was July 25, 1959, in which promotions occupied 9 percent of the space. The amount of commercial items in the Church News did not even approach the 60 percent necessary to make the publication self-sufficient but merely helped
offset the cost of production. This may have contributed to the abandonment of advertising after September 24, 1960.

Miscellaneous items usually did not take up much more than 10 percent of the space. (See Appendix, Figure 10.) These included all logos, mastheads, folio lines which were set into copy lines, and other items which did not fit into the 12 other categories. These other items included historical columns and house promotions which did not qualify as paid advertising.

The highest frequency this group reached was 19 percent in the early 1940s and in the late 1970s. It took 13 percent and 10 percent of the space in each of those time periods respectively. The lowest frequency was 8 percent in the sample from the late 1950s and early 1960s, except for the sample from the 1980s with its 7 percent. The least amount of space classified as miscellaneous occurred during the 1930s with 4 percent, although the frequency was much higher at 12 percent.

Conclusions Drawn From the Content Analysis

When the Church News began publication April 4, 1931, the intent was that it would be a voice for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Initially, the publication used talks and texts of General Authorities and other people extensively. This might have occurred for want of other materials to publish, but also because the Deseret News editors sought to provide a service for their readers.
by offering them solid doctrine to study (Ford, Note 4).

The newspaper served as a vehicle whereby policies and programs of the Church were announced and explained. As the Church News evolved, it departed from its role as bulletin board to one of magazine with an emphasis on people, as indicated by the amount of space given to pictorial feature articles focusing on people in the 1980s.

The range of focus also changed from Utah's Wasatch Front to a more global scope. In the early days of the paper, announcements of ward meetings in the Wasatch Front area were part of the Church News. As the publication began to circulate nationwide and eventually throughout the free world, localized announcements were eliminated and items of general Church interest replaced them. In the 1980s many items were from local regions somewhere in the geographic area of the Church, but they were of global interest.

The graphics of the Church News also changed dramatically. In the early years only a few small photographs were published in the Church News. Later photographs were given a more important role in the paper. In 1931, the ratio of editorial (i.e., all material except pictures) to photographic content was nine to one in favor of editorial (Appendix, Table 3). By the end of that decade, it was three to two in favor of editorial. With some variation, the percentage given to editorial and photographs has remained close to the three-to-two ratio.
How photographs were displayed changed dramatically over the years, as was shown by examining the issues in the random sample. Pictorial features became a regular part of the Church News. Photographs were not as numerous in the 1980s as they had become in the 1950s, but are much larger and more appealing to the eye. They were more often pictures that told stories of emotion and human interaction rather than mere photographs of chapels being dedicated.

As the Church News began, it was in the same style as the rest of the Deseret News, which was in keeping with the newspapers of the day. The Church News changed both graphically and in content to keep up with the eventual changes in the Deseret News and with changing times and interests of its readers.
Chapter 4
Circulation of the Church News

When the new Church Section of the Deseret News came off the press April 4, 1931, it was inserted as a section in the regular daily newspaper and was confined to the daily's circulation area. At that time the distribution area included Utah, southeastern Idaho, western Wyoming and parts of Nevada and Arizona (Fairbanks, Note 3). Subscribers in those states generally were the only ones to see the Church Section for the first twelve years.

Circulation Expands

In 1943 the name of the section became the Church News, and it began to diffuse outside the intermountain region. People living elsewhere could subscribe to the Deseret News Saturday edition only and receive the Church News that way. The subscription rate for this was $3.00 per year. Weekly circulation began to grow and soon reached 12,000 beyond the regular distribution of the daily paper. However, the Church News remained only a section of the Deseret News and its name was soon changed back to Church Section (Ashton, 1950, pp. 305-306; Ashton, Note 2).

On May 16, 1948, the Church News, the name it
carried again by that time, published a mailing notice on Page 2. It stated that the Church News was available as a separate publication with a second class mailing permit outside of the Deseret News circulation area. The subscription price for one year remained at $3.00. Anyone living within the daily newspaper's circulation area could receive the Church News by subscribing to the daily Deseret News (Church News, May 16, 1948, p. 2).

As distribution broadened through the years, the editors began to widen the scope of the news in the paper. As Church membership expanded outside of the Intermountain West, the Church News emphasized issues of interest to readers who lived outside the circulation area of the News. Editors did not want it to remain a Utah publication, but they wanted it to become a worldwide Church organ (Ashton, Note 2).

When the Mormon Church was basically a Utah-Idaho organization, the readership was interested in Utah and Idaho news. Dell Van Orden, editor of the Church News (1976- ), said much of the news which was printed in the early years would not have been considered for publication in the 1980s because of the growing Church membership and readership elsewhere.

If it doesn't have some worldwide interest--some churchwide interest--we don't even consider it. They used to print a lot of very local interest stories. Now with over 10,000 wards, we can't print announcements of ward
activities. We do print ward activities, but not advance them. If a ward has some activity that we feel has churchwide interest, then we will cover that.

One comes to mind—a fish fry in Delta as a fellowshipping activity for the whole town. If you're in Florida, you can still relate to that and you can still have interest in it. But we would not print that that ward was going to have a musical on Thursday night because the interest is not there (Van Orden, Note 11).

The Church News went to all fifty of the United States plus U. S. territories by 1980. It also was distributed throughout Canada and 73 other nations. However, over 90 percent of the subscriptions went to the United States. Since the Church News was available only in English, most foreign subscriptions went to missionaries and U. S. military personnel.

Circulation Approaches a Quarter of a Million

By 1980 the total mail distribution of the Church News was 170,148 in addition to 73,372 subscribers to the daily Deseret News, which continued to carry the Church News as a supplement. That put the total circulation at 243,520 customers that year. The mail carried 179,453 copies in 1981 while the daily News reached 70,510 subscribers with the Church News. Total distribution then reached 249,963, nearly a quarter of a million. The 1982 figures showed 178,578 copies were mailed to readers over the year. Added to 70,885 customers of the daily paper, the 249,463 total showed a slight drop in subscribers that year. Church News circulation manager, Kay A. Schwendiman, said the decreases
occurred when the subscription rate for the paper jumped from $6.50 to $9.50 annually. The sudden jump in price was necessitated by increases in postal rates. Subscription figures for May 16, 1983, showed an even greater decrease in copies mailed to 163,059. That figure coupled with about 76,000 readers of the daily newspaper brought the total *Church News* distribution to about 239,000 by mid-year of 1983. Figures for previous years were unavailable since several agencies had handled them in the past. In the shuffle, they were lost. (Ashton, Note 2; Schwendiman, Note 8).

The management of the *Deseret News* sought to keep the price of subscribing to the *Church News* at a minimum because of the desire the General Authorities had to make the publication available to Church members. The subscription rates, therefore, covered only the cost of the physical production and mailing. It did not cover salaries for staff members—only paper, ink and postal costs (Schwendiman, Note 8; Van Orden, Note 11).

**Publisher and Editor Set Goals**

In 1983, *Deseret News* publisher Wendell J. Ashton and *Church News* editor Van Orden were looking into the possibility of translating the publication into other languages, especially Spanish. A major difficulty with such an endeavor was the cost. In most Spanish-speaking countries, Church members were unable to afford the
subscription price for the Church News, something which was not a necessity.

The publisher and editor planned on broadening the scope of the Church News to include more content about the Latter-day Saints in Great Britain and the nations of Europe. This attempt was in keeping with the purpose of the paper: to promote faith, serve as a voice for the Church, and to declare the truth to Church members all over the world.
Chapter 5

Advertising in the Church News

Advertising generally was not the rule in the Church News. For most of the years of its publication, it carried none but relied wholly on the Deseret News for its support. However, there were brief periods of time in which advertising was published in the Church newspaper.

The first three issues of the Church News carried a slight amount of advertising. The first issue had a total of twenty-seven and one half square inches out of 940.5 square inches. This was not even 3 percent. The second issue carried under 2 percent, while the third issue had less at slightly over 1 percent. After April 18, 1931, advertising disappeared altogether from the Church News for the next twenty-eight years.

The advertisements which appeared in those first issues were primarily from Deseret Book Company. Others were from pharmaceutical companies which marketed laxatives and acne treatments (Deseret News, Church Section, April 4, 11, 18, 25, 1931).

The Church News Accepts Advertising

The Church News accepted advertising for a period of
nineteen months in 1959-60. The Deseret News management and the Newspaper Agency Corporation wanted to try to make the Church supplement pay for itself. They also believed that there was a market among Church members for certain types of merchandise and Church-related services (Ashton, Note 2; Jarrard, Note 6).

The first large-volume advertising appeared in the Church News March 7, 1959. It carried 26 percent, the highest percentage of any issue sampled from the period. During that time, General Foods was a regular participant with its Postum advertisements. ZCMI usually filled the back page and Granite Furniture regularly bought space as well. Brigham Young University publicized some of its programs, and travel agencies told about tours to Church historical sites. Deseret Book Company was numbered among the regular participants.

All advertisements appealed strongly to the LDS market. Local Salt Lake City music companies appealed to General Conference visitors to buy musical instruments to help make their family home evenings more inspiring. Many companies had only local appeal, although the newspaper was going far beyond the circulation area of the News.

Occasionally the back page space would be occupied by a Deseret News or Church News house promotion. This occurred mostly around Christmas when businesses bought less space. Advertisements filled 20 percent of the last issue
which carried them. The overall average was only 16 percent in a publication that would need to sell at least 60 percent of its space in order to meet publication costs (Church News, March 7, 1959-September 24, 1960).

**Advertising is Eliminated**

This lack of participation may have led to the decision to suspend advertising after September 24, 1960. But there were other reasons. The Newspaper Agency Corporation wanted to put a higher volume of advertising in the paper while allowing news copy to occupy a small news hole around it. However, the circulation of the Church News was soaring and News management refused to give up space anymore to advertisements, which were then eliminated. At that point distribution increased even more.

Circulation was great enough then that the Church News started paying for its own physical production from the subscriptions alone. In fact, the Church News without advertising proved to be more profitable for the Deseret News than with it.

Another problem with advertising in the weekly supplement was that some copies went to readers through the daily newspaper while others were mailed as magazines. Advertisements in the Church News cost more than those in the daily newspaper. It was hard to differentiate between the Church News as a publication by itself and the Church News as a supplement to the daily News. Advertisers wanted
to pay the lower rates for the daily, instead of higher magazine rates. When local companies started fighting over who would get the back page, advertising agencies began to question why their clients were paying so much to sell their products in Virginia and other places outside of Utah. (Jarrard, Note 6).

Another reason for discontinuing advertising was that editors and management believed it was inappropriate to commercialize the official newspaper of the Church. They believed it detracted from the dignity of a religious journal (Ford, Note 4; Jarrard, Note 6).

The Future of Advertising in the Church News

Three considerations led to the elimination of advertising from the Church News:

1. It did not begin to cover production costs. There simply was not enough of it.

2. Advertisers found discrepancies in rates when one amount was charged for the daily News and a higher one for the Church News supplement. They put their money to use in the daily newspaper rather than the Church News which had a relatively small mail circulation.

3. Management thought advertising detracted from the dignity of the official newspaper of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Publisher Wendell J. Ashton said in some future time, the Deseret News may decide to try advertising in the
Church News again. Although that was not a firm plan in 1983, the feeling was that advertising provided an important service to the reader (Ashton, Note 2).

When the Deseret News sold space for commercial purposes in the Church News, the supplement's circulation was about 13,000. At that time in 1959-60, all LDS Church magazines carried advertising, and most participants chose to put their dollars in those publications with broader circulations.

In the 1980s, no Church periodicals were publishing advertisements. With a circulation of nearly 250,000 subscribers, the Church News could have successfully sold space for advertisements. Deseret News general manager and editor William B. Smart outlined three reasons for considering selling ads in the Church News:

1. To give businesses a nationwide market for their products and services.

2. To provide an additional service to LDS readers by informing them of products and services which might be of interest to them.

3. To give the Church News a financial base on which to expand (Smart, Note 9).

If advertising were ever to return to the Church News, the reason was that it could provide a service to merchants, to readers, and help the newspaper expand. The additional space for news could have helped the Church News
meet its objectives better as long as the commercialism did not detract from the purposes of the publication.
Editors of the Church News

Over its first half century, the Church News had nine full-time editors. The first editor, whose idea it was to publish the Church Section, Henry A. Smith, served longer than any man during that time. Five of the nine served in Smith’s absence as he worked in another position at the Deseret News and as he served as a mission president.

Henry A. Smith Becomes Editor

Henry Smith took over the position of editor of the Church Section in September 1931. For the preceding six months, the News Saturday feature editor, James R. Kennard, did the job, although Smith was the church editor at the time. Smith’s personal friend, Mark E. Petersen, publisher of the newspaper who later became a member of the Council of the Twelve, appointed him to the position. Because he had served as church editor, he easily filled the position as editor of the Church Section (Petersen, Note 7). He pioneered the Church Section and laid the groundwork for what it was to become. He was a valuable asset to the paper because he developed a close rapport with the General Authorities.
He knew what was going on. He knew the protocol of the General Authorities. He knew his place, and he knew how to make friends. He was the type of fellow who had been a trusted servant of the First Presidency and of the Council of the Twelve and other General Authorities. And that was one of the great values of Henry Smith in addition to being a good newspaperman.

Henry sought to assist the General Authorities. Former News managing editor George W. Ford told of Henry's loyalty to the General Authorities and to the Church. One example of this loyalty was when he was going to Cedar City, Utah, to cover a conference for the Church News.

President J. Reuben Clark was going down, so Henry went over to President Clark's office and told him he was going down there, too. "Is there anything I can do for you while I'm down there?"

"Well, you can meet me at the train," President Clark told him. "I'll be down on such and such train and you can meet me and take me over to the motel where I'm going to stay." So Henry met him at the train, got a room at the same motel where he was staying.

When he got him over there, he said, "Now when do you want me to pick you up to take you over to the meetinghouse?"

"Well, haven't you got to cover the story down here?" President Clark said.

"Yes, I'm covering the story," Henry said, "but my main thing right now is to be your servant. If you need any help or anything to get around, why then I'm here to help you." That was Henry's attitude: Be of assistance.

Henry Smith had the confidence of the General Authorities. They gave him information and asked him not to publish it until the time they designated, and he did not tell anyone. He thought it was a silly request, but he
honored it because he said he would. Henry was a man of his word. During General Conference he received advance information about the appointment of a General Authority. He approached the news editor and told him that he had a story and pictures for Saturday morning. He told how much space would be required. The page was laid out Saturday morning and just before deadline at the time the General Authorities designated for release, Henry gave it to the news desk all ready to go to the typesetter.

Henry could get into places at the Church Office Building where even members of the Twelve were not allowed. He was a close friend of President David O. McKay. The president had a very efficient secretary who was very protective of him. She carefully screened the many people who wanted to see President McKay. Most people had a hard time reaching him, but Henry Smith could get in most any time. The secretary knew him and was cooperative with him (Ford, Note 4; Jarrard, Note 6).

Jack E. Jarrard, a close friend of Henry Smith and his successor as Church News editor, said Henry did not put in long hours in the newspaper office.

I can still see him coming in at 2:30 and saying, "Well, see you tomorrow." We'd get in there about the same time in the morning, and he would leave about 3 o'clock. He'd go wandering around the halls of the Church Office Building. He had entry into any office over there. He was worth his paycheck for that (Jarrard, Note 6).

While Henry was either writing about General
Authorities or building his rapport at the Church Office Building, the man doing the job in the newsroom was S. Perry Lee, brother of Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve. He was Henry's assistant editor and filled the job as editor because Henry was out of the office so much of the time (Jarrard, Note 6).

In the early years of the *Church News*, full texts of speeches were published to help fill space. Under Henry Smith's leadership, a network of correspondents in various areas of the Church was developed. Eventually missionaries were writing letters which were written into stories. As the Church grew and its functions became more global, the *Church News* staff grew (Ford, Note 4).

Henry took a short leave from his position as *Church News* editor in 1939-40 when he worked as wire editor at the *News*. During that time John R. Talmage and Conrad B. Harrison were editors of the Church Section. They made no abrupt changes in the publication. Under their supervision it remained much like it was under Henry Smith.

When Henry returned as *Church News* editor, he brought with him some fresh ideas. He implemented the use of large photographic features and a much wider use of pictures. He went from filling the paper with laboriously long speeches, to filling it with attractive photographs and stories. The news began to extend beyond Utah's Wasatch Front and into the mission field.
Servicemen Get Their Own Church News

During World War II, the numbers of missionaries dropped to the lowest level since the end of World War I, but the gospel message was taken abroad by the American servicemen. Under Henry Smith's direction, a special edition of the Church News was prepared for LDS military personnel. The first issue of The Church News: L. D. S. Service Men's Edition (sic) came off the press May 15, 1944. It was 4 1/2" x 2 3/4" and each issue contained 12 pages.

They were just big enough to fit into a man's pocket without violating the service regulation of having a pocket flap undone or anything. This was the same size as the Book of Mormon and the other little book (Principles of the Gospel) that was given to the servicemen.

They didn't start it at the first of the war, but somebody got the bright idea. It's not the full Church News, of course. It's just a small abridged edition that had some of the most vital things the brethren would say and had questions and answers. It had ecclesiastical messages and messages of hope to the guys in all the branches of the service in World War II.

They had all kinds of stories on morals. A lot of them were President Grant's messages, President Clark's "Truth of the Air" and "I Want to Know" questions.

Among the articles found in the servicemen's edition were callings of General Authorities, formation of new stakes, sermons on the Sabbath day and repentance. There was a feature story on the "Ice Cream Girl of the Pacific," an LDS woman who helped servicemen. It listed servicemen's homes, which were places where LDS servicemen were welcome
in the large cities of the nation (Jarrard, Note 6).

The special miniature edition went to about 70,000 LDS men throughout the world. It was "inaugurated by the First Presidency in order to keep more closely in touch with the thousands of LDS members serving their country on every battle front."

A need for such a medium for communicating more readily with Church members was indicated by the many reports coming from combat areas which told of long delays, some as much as six months, in receiving the larger Church publications. Due to certain regulations, which required that the soldier must personally request publications to be sent, difficulties arose which this small edition will overcome.

Small enough to fit inside the regular envelope it can now be sent by first class mail by parents and relatives writing to these men (Deseret News, Church Section, May 13, 1944, p. 1).

Front Page Becomes Photo Cover

By the time the servicemen's edition was discontinued on July 15, 1948, the front page of the Church News had become a photo cover. The first photo cover appeared on February 28, 1948. Accompanying the large photo was a seemingly misplaced editorial. However, two weeks later, the editorial moved to Page 2, leaving a magazine-style photo cover. The photo cover became a regular feature of the Church News, which never returned to the newspaper style front page. However, at times it did return to a multi-element cover of several pictures and an
accompanying feature story.

Single color had been introduced in the masthead on the cover and in the background on the back page by 1952. By 1957 an occasional full-color photo cover was used. During this time Edwin O. Haroldsen served as editor for a few months. Later S. Perry Lee filled the position, followed by Merwin G. Fairbanks. These three men, who had been working on the Deseret News, filled in for Henry Smith while he served as president of the Central Atlantic States Mission from 1956-59. It was during Fairbanks' term as editor that single-color tints were added to the front and back pages and the center spread of the Church News regularly. Also, during that time, the Deseret News tried selling advertising in the Church News (Fairbanks, Note 3; Haroldsen, Note 5).

Upon returning from his mission, Henry Smith resumed his position as editor of the Church News until 1968 when he was called as press secretary to the First Presidency. At that time Jack E. Jarrard became editor for about a year.

Jarrard said the political pressure was unbelievable. Every head of every Church department wanted material in the paper at the expense of someone else's articles. He wanted to get stories in the paper from the mission field to try to eliminate some of the politicking among department heads at Church headquarters.

Cover Gets Full Color

During the year Jarrard was editor, the Church News
began printing full-color pictures on the cover every week. The first regular full-color cover appeared on the issue of June 1, 1968. Jarrard had tried to start running full color, but management feared the cost would be prohibitive. He had worked previously as business news editor and was familiar with the financial workings of the News. He talked to the engravers, who agreed to cut the cost in half if the News guaranteed to run full color on the Church News cover every week after that.

They were willing to do it because they were great. More or less, they worked for us, but they also did commercial stuff. They wanted to get more color going into the paper. So we went ahead and did it. We had to work like crazy to make sure we were getting quality covers and that's where it started. Then as we got into this offset printing, we started getting more color.

After Jarrard had worked as editor for about a year, he was sent out in the mission field to serve as a roving editor and correspondent. He said he preferred working in the field rather than sitting at a desk, and it paid the same. He traveled all over the world, often in the company of the First Presidency (Jarrard, Note 6).

J. Malan Heslop succeeded Jarrard as editor. He had been chief photographer of the News and was assigned to the Church News to give the tabloid a fresh, modern look. He served in the position for eight years. His emphasis was photography, and he made abrupt changes in the graphics of the Church News. He used larger photographs than ever before.
and laid them out in odd shapes, such as photographs which were one column wide and ran the length of the paper. Under him, photo features began to fill more and more of the paper.

In 1976, Dell Van Orden became editor and carried on the trends set down by his predecessor. When he took over, he said he thought the paper was a fine publication. He had worked as Heslop's assistant editor for eight years and many of his thoughts were already incorporated in the publication.

I thought there were some things that we ought to be doing and some of them were mechanically impossible at that time like the use of more color. Now it is mechanically possible that we can use more color and we are doing that. We try to make the paper representative of the Church and also to have a modern look to it.

Church News Objectives Remain Unchanged

Van Orden outlined what he believed to be the purpose of the Church News in 1983:

1. To inform the membership about the news from Church headquarters and other areas.

2. To motivate the membership of the Church to follow the teachings of the gospel.

3. To educate readers about the truths of the gospel through the printed word (Van Orden, Note 11).

As the Church News changed editors over its history, it maintained its purpose as set down by Elder Mark E.
Petersen: To strengthen faith (motivate); to bring General Authorities nearer to the people (inform); and to declare the truth (educate). Elder Petersen's personal acquaintance with all the editors gave him confidence in their ability to represent the Church in an appropriate manner and fulfill those goals (Petersen, Note 7).

The Church News underwent a gradual evolution from a program-oriented bulletin board and discourse journal, to a people-oriented magazine of religious features. It evolved from a gray, laborious publication to a colorful and attractive presentation of emotion-packed photography and meaningful feature articles. But however the appearance and content changed, the goals and intents remained the same.
Chapter 7
Church News Editorials

The single feature in the Church News which did not seem to change and which upheld the purposes of the paper over the years was the Church News editorials. Virtually all of them were written by Elder Mark E. Petersen, a seasoned journalist who knew the business well. He had started with the Deseret News as a youth delivering newspapers. He had worked his way up through the ranks of copy boy, reporter, editor and publisher. By the 1980s, Elder Petersen had spent more time with the Deseret News than anyone else in its history. Management valued him as editorial writer for the Church News because he knew the doctrines and positions of the Church, being a member of the Council of the Twelve (Ashton, Note 2; Smart, Note 9).

The Church News was over eleven years old when the first editorial appeared on November 28, 1942. Although the section in which the editorial was published was filled with news about the Church, it was not actually the Church Section. It was The Deseret News Weekly and had all the earmarks of the Church Section, except it contained a few advertisements. The editorial appeared on Page 1 of the eight-page tabloid adjacent to the Church Section. It was
directed to the American soldiers facing despair in the
darkness of World War II.

The First Regular Editorial

The first editorial to run regularly in the Weekly
Church Edition was published on February 13, 1943. It seemed
to set a standard for subsequent editorials which were
designed to promote adherence to gospel standards:

Recently one of the outstanding stakes in
our Church selected as a theme for their ward
conference the following:

"I will uphold the standards of the Church
come what may."

In some of the meetings the subject was
thrown open for general discussion among the young
people and the question was asked very frankly,
"What are the standards of the Church? What do we
mean by that expression?"

Responses as given by the young people
themselves included:

Living a clean life.
Living up to our ideals.
Sustaining the authorities of the Church.
The Golden Rule.
Not being a hypocrite.
Observing the Sabbath Day.
Paying our tithing and fast offering.
Supporting any program of the Church.
Keeping the commandments.

All of these answers were good and could
well be included among the standards of the
Church. But one of the surprising things about the
discussion was that direct questioning revealed
that a number of the young people present had no
clear cut ideas as to just what do constitute the
standards of the Church.

This is a problem which must be met by the
parents themselves as well as members in the
various organizations. All must realize that before we can maintain the standards, we must know what they are. If children are not taught in the home to know and recognize the ideals for which we as a people stand how can they be expected to cling to them?

The Lord declared in no uncertain terms that the parents in Zion are responsible for teaching their children the gospel of Christ. And this did not mean only theological theories and questions of doctrine. It means also the cardinal virtues of honesty, chastity, personal cleanliness, reverence for the name of Deity, regard for the Lord's anointed servants, sobriety and truth.

The Almighty has declared that he will not hold blameless those parents who fail to teach their children. Example must become one of the outstanding features of this instruction. Like father, like son is an old but true saying. Parents cannot attend to their religious duties by merely sending their children to Church. They must accompany them. They must not suppose that they can teach their children to pray by merely telling them to do so. They must pray with them. They cannot teach their children to respect the Sabbath if they themselves violate it. They cannot teach their children to pay tithing unless they themselves pay tithing. The principle holds true through the whole list of gospel subjects. These are standard of the Church. As a people we must teach our children what they are and what they mean, and then walk with them down the path of obedience and make living the standards of the Church a matter of daily habit in their lives (Deseret News, Weekly Church Edition, February 13, 1943, p. 1).

Elder Petersen wrote the first editorial and nearly every one into the 1980s. News publisher Wendell J. Ashton said having the apostle write the editorials was valuable because he could speak for the General Authorities better than any one of them at the News.
The Strength of the Editorials

Although editorials never took up much space, their position in the newspaper gave them strength. They were located on the front page from the time they started until March 13, 1948. At that time they were moved to Page 2 because of the photo covers the Church News had started using. The editorial remained on Page 2 until December 29, 1948, when it was moved onto an editorial position on the back page. There it stayed except for the nineteen months when advertising occupied that page from March 1959 through September 1960. The back page became the customary location of the editorials because next to the front page it is the most powerful location (Ashton, Note 2).

Some people who occupied high places at the Deseret News disagreed over whether Church News editorials were the official word of the Church or merely a well-formed opinion of the writer. George W. Ford, former managing editor of the News, said he believed the editorials were usually personal opinions:

I would say Church News editorials would be Mark Petersen's opinion. Of course, however, in his position, he certainly should be in a spot where he can give out the official word of the Church. But I would take it in the same light as the publication as a whole—that these editorials are written by knowledgeable people, people who have knowledge of the Church. But to say that the editorials are infallible as a Church issue, I wouldn't think would be the case. I would think that a directive from the Church would come from the pulpit of the Tabernacle during Conference and delivered by the president of the Church with the
First Presidency signing it (Ford, Note 4).

Jack Jarrard, former Church News editor, said he believed the editorials were official doctrines of the Church:

The Church News is one of the official organs of the Church. I don't say that it is the Book of Mormon there, but I'd say it is as much as this Ensign. It's there for the edification of the Church. What is an apostle? You sustain him as a prophet, seer and revelator (Jarrard, Note 6).

William B. Smart, general manager and editor of the Deseret News, said the Church had taken no stand on many issues covered in the editorials. Sometimes there were differences of opinion among the General Authorities, and some editorials reflected Elder Petersen's personal opinions. However, Smart said he knew of no instance when the editorials in the Church News ran contrary to official positions of the Church. On those issues, Elder Petersen's writing had always been in agreement with the Church opinions (Smart, Note 9).

Ashton said he believed people read the editorials and usually followed the counsel. This was the only area over which a General Authority had direct influence in the Church News, but it was a powerful tool in the Church's official newspaper. The editorials traditionally followed the expressed intention of the Church News by promoting faith, expressing feelings of the General Authorities, and declaring truth to the members of the Church (Ashton, Note 2).
Chapter 8

Church News Coverage of General Conference

Publishing articles about General Conference became an important emphasis as the Church News developed, but that was not always the case. Conference coverage was an aspect of the publication's history which took several years to reach the scope it had achieved by the 1980s.

The first issue after General Conference became the Conference issue in later years. But in the early years, the issues of the Church Section which came off the press the week after Conference carried few if any Conference articles. The issue of April 11, 1931, printed the full text of one Conference talk. However, other talks were published in other issues throughout the year. In the samples drawn in the late 1930s, no Conference material was published in what might have been the Conference issue.

However, the picture began to change in 1940. The October 12 issue featured the complete texts of three Conference talks. By 1943, the Church News was printing stories about Conference and publishing the complete talks of three General Authorities. The issue which came off the press October 2, 1943, featured the talk which President Heber J. Grant gave that morning in Conference. By this
time, Henry Smith had built a trusting relationship with the authorities of the Church, so he was able to get advance copies of the texts of the speeches. The next week, an overview of Conference appeared in the Church News along with all talks of each Conference session in summary form.

By 1955 the Church News was giving strong coverage to Conference, including digests of sermons as well as features and pictures of people attending the Conference. This trend continued into the 1980s when the entire emphasis of the newspaper staff was on Conference. Dell Van Orden said Conference was one of the most important events the Church News covered.

There are a lot of people who can't get Conference and want a synopsis of the reports rapidly. The Ensign magazine does a fine job of reporting the text but it is a month later. We feel that our role in this is to give a fast and a short synopsis of those speeches.

Everybody is involved in Conference. There are no vacations and days off during Conference. And we also rely on all the photographers of the Deseret News. We take the written talks and go to the Tabernacle. We don't cover it by television because you lose the feeling. As they talk we want to have the feeling come through in the writing, not just the words.

I'll assign a reporter to cover a session, and he or she is responsible for all the speakers in that session. I ask people to sit in the press row in the Tabernacle and follow the text to make sure the speakers follow the text so we're reporting what they actually said. We have one person who is assigned just to write color--to set the flavor of that session.

We have several photographers. We try to run a picture of the General Authority to go with
his talk, but in addition to that we try to catch the flavor on Temple Square, the feeling on Temple Square, the visitors that come, the unusual dress of various countries. One man who was my assistant editor climbed on top of the temple and shot down so he could have an unusual angle. We try to have the picture look different than we did the last Conference. (Van Orden, Note 11).

General Conference was a time when people from all over the world assembled in Salt Lake City. It was a time of renewing of faith, listening to the words of the General Authorities and learning gospel truth. It was a perfect time for the Church News to serve its readers by sending them the messages of the brethren and of their fellow Church members at General Conference.
Summary and Conclusions

Same Objectives—Different Approach

This study of the development of the Church News over its first fifty-two years has shown the historical trends of the periodical over that time. Content analysis, examination of back issues of the Church News, interviews with some people who had worked on the publication, and correspondence with others, were the means of gathering information and assembling it into a capsulization of the development, objectives, and mission of the official newspaper of the Mormon Church.

In 1931 when the Deseret News issued the first Church Section, management in cooperation with the First Presidency established its objectives and mission. Initially those objectives were aimed at an audience living in the Wasatch Front area of Utah. The contents of the Church Section were largely full-text talks which had been delivered in the Tabernacle or on radio. Various departments from general Church offices had special pages, filling them with news about programs being implemented throughout the Church. This fulfilled the basic objectives of the Church News—to convey news from Church headquarters to members, promote faith, and declare the truth.
In 1943 the *Church News* began circulating outside the distribution area of the daily *Deseret News*. It was folded into the Saturday edition of the *News* and mailed to its readers. News in the paper began to aim more at the audience outside of Utah but retained its focus on Church headquarters. As circulation expanded, so did the scope of the content. Although the focus changed, the objectives remained the same.

Advertising was tried for about a year and a half in 1959-60 in an attempt to make the *Church News* self-sustaining. It did not come close to meeting publication costs and conflicted with the dignity which management believed the *Church News* should retain as a religious journal and official newspaper of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Therefore, it was eliminated and the supplement became fully dependent on the *Deseret News* for its financial support. At the same time, circulation boomed and subscriptions began paying for the costs of paper, ink and postage. It was more profitable for the *News* to keep advertisements out of the supplement.

Henry A. Smith was the first full-time editor of the *Church News*. He was instrumental in the paper's success. He and Elder Mark E. Petersen pioneered the pattern for the publication which remained the same through its first fifty-two years. Most of the succeeding editors added elements to improve the newspaper and keep it up with
advancing times. They continued to broaden the scope of the publication as the one-time Utah-Idaho Church became a universal Church. The intention was to promote faith, convey news of the Church, and declare the truth to a global readership.

Most unsigned editorials were written by Elder Mark E. Petersen. Deseret News officials valued his participation because, being a member of the Council of the Twelve, he was able to express the position of the Church on many issues. He was better able to write knowledgeable editorials on matters of the Church than anyone at the Deseret News. Editorials were the elements which remained unchanged over those decades in which Elder Petersen wrote them so consistently. They were part of the total mission of the Church News.

General Conference was an important consideration for coverage in the Church News. In the early years, coverage was confined to filling space with a few full texts of talks periodically throughout the year. Later a few full texts were published in the issue after Conference, and eventually some were printed the day of Conference. Coverage began focusing on people and the color at Conference, along with digests of the talks to give readers who could not attend a chance to read what it was like. As years passed the Church News became more efficient in reaching its objectives. Advancing technology in the newspaper business
facilitated better coverage and more appealing and prompt Conference coverage.

Two men stood as the power behind the Church News into the second half of its first century. The influence of Henry Smith, who served as editor for most of the first 38 years, remained evident into the 1980s. Although Henry's health was such that an interview with him for this study was inadvisable, sources who knew him well affirmed the strong influence he still had on the Church News even 15 years after he left his position as editor. The groundwork which he laid was the basis for the progress the Church News was to make during the terms of the editors who followed him. Mark E. Petersen, who was working with Smith when the paper started in 1931, continued to have a strong influence as he wrote the expressed opinions of the General Authorities which appeared on the editorial page. He was the writer of nearly all unsigned editorials and, as such, was the voice of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in its official weekly newspaper.

Although the early years of the Church Section fell short of what people in the 1980s might have expected, it was a birth—the birth of a newspaper conceived seventy-five years earlier. Like a child, the Church Section took its time in maturing into the Church News with all the component parts of a modern-day journal. It was built on the framework which had been established for it in 1931—to
convey news from Church headquarters to members, promote faith, and declare the truth.

In the course of its first 52 years, the Church News grew from an eight-page tabloid section of the Deseret News, reaching only readers in the intermountain area, to a global magazine-style newspaper with a circulation of nearly a quarter of a million subscribers. Its editors continued to accomplish the objectives of the publication as Henry Smith had done in the early years. They eventually shifted from focusing on Church programs to centering their attention around people of the Church. As this was done, the Church News appealed to a more universal readership as the Church expanded throughout the world.
Appendix

Tables and Figures
# Tables

## Table 1

Percentages of Frequencies

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Unmeawhsp=Unmeasured white space
Table 3

Editorial and Pictorial Content

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Figures

Figure 1

Pictorial Features

![Graph with line charts showing trends over time]

- **Line 1**: Percentages of space
- **Line 2**: Percentages of frequencies


Graph labels and axes are not explicitly described in the text, but are implied from the context and visual representation.
Figure 2
Headquarters News

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Year 31-35 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 56-60 61-65 66-70 71-75 76-80 81-85

- Percentage of space
- Percentage of frequencies
Figure 3

Headquarters Stake News

Year 31-35 26-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 56-60 61-65 66-70 71-75 76-80 81-85

- Percentages of space
- Percentages of frequencies
Figure 4

United States Stake News

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**Note:** The diagram shows a line graph with percentages of space and frequencies over years ranging from 1935 to 2005.
Figure 5
Mission News

![Graph showing percentages of space and frequencies over different years.](image)
Figure 6
World Stake News
Figure 7
Verbatim Words of General Authorities
Figure 8

Verbatim Words of Non-General Authorities
Figure 9
Unidentified Commentaries and Opinions

Year 31-35 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 56-60 61-65 66-70 71-75 76-80 81-85

- Percentages of space
- Percentages of frequencies
Figure 10

Miscellaneous

Year 31-35 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 56-60 61-65 66-70 71-75 76-80 81-85

- Percentages of space
- Percentages of frequencies
Reference List


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__________, Church Section, April 4, 11, 18, 25, 1931.

__________, Church Section, May 13, 1944.

__________, Church Section, October 31, 1931; December 12, 1931; October 7, 1939; March 9, 1940; November 21, 1942; February 19, 1944; April 23, 1950; August 22, 1951.


Reference Notes


2. Ashton, W. J. Personal interview conducted over the telephone between Salt Lake City and Orem, Utah, on June 21, 1983.


4. Ford, G. W. Personal interview recorded on tape conducted in Salt Lake City on June 8, 1983. Tapes and transcriptions are in possession of the writer.


6. Jarrard, J. E. Personal interview recorded on tape conducted in Salt Lake City on June 8, 1983. Tapes and transcriptions are in possession of the writer.


8. Schwendiman, K. A. Personal interview conducted in Salt Lake City on June 8, 1983. Notes are in possession of the writer.

9. Smart, W. B. Personal interview conducted over the telephone between Salt Lake City and Orem, Utah, June 27, 1983.


11. Van Orden, D. Personal interview recorded on tape conducted in Salt Lake City on June 17, 1983. Tape and transcriptions are in possession of the writer.
A HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE LDS CHURCH NEWS SECTION OF THE DESERET NEWS

Paul T Roberts
Department of Communications
M.S. Degree, August 1983

ABSTRACT

The Church Section of the Deseret News began publication April 4, 1931, with a clearly defined set of objectives. This study outlines the development of the Church News over its first 52 years and how it met those objectives. While the objectives remained the same, the approach varied as the editors expanded the section of a Utah newspaper to a global magazine-style publication.

Henry Smith, the first full-time editor of the Church News, was instrumental to the success and growth of the official newspaper of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His influence laid the groundwork for what the publication was to become by 1983. Another strong influence was Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve, who wrote nearly all of the unsigned editorials for the paper, thus making him the voice of the General Authorities to the readers of the Church News.

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Committee Chairman

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