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History of Latter-Day Saints in Bridger Valley, Wyoming

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HISTORY OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
IN BRIDGER VALLEY, WYOMING

A Thesis
Submitted to
The College of Religious Instruction
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Jerry F. Twitchell
July 1959
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Each individual in the world has the obligation and the responsibility to preserve a knowledge of the past for his posterity. Everything that future generations could profit from should be recorded. Many small bits of information or history, if they had been recorded, might have changed the course of a life. This information at the time may seem to have been unimportant but as the years passed these seemingly unimportant bits of information become gems of great value.

Statement of Problem

The L. D. S. History of Bridger Valley, Wyoming is the name chosen for this project of research into the history of Bridger Valley, Uinta County, Wyoming. This history is intended to cover the settlements in the area.

Fort Supply was the earliest settlement of L. D. S. people in the valley. Men were called to start a mission high in the Uinta Mountains—many were the hardships and disappointments through which they passed during the four years of its existence from 1853 to 1857. It was burned so as not to provide shelter for the Utah Expedition.

There have been many volumes of actual history written
on the famed fort of James Bridger, but none of the volumes cover the sale of Fort Bridger to the Mormons with any reasonable degree of objectivity. It is the intent of this history to clarify the issue of its sale as much as possible.

The trying times in the valley are recorded in many of the sketches of the lives of the pioneers. The method of establishing and developing a town presents a story with many facets. Each area that was colonized by Latter-day Saints followed a definite pattern. This history follows that development from study groups and Sunday schools, to the development of Branches, Wards, and Stakes.

Education plays a large role in every community where people settle and hope to make a livelihood. It is the intent of this history to present a view of the education in the valley from its earliest beginnings to the present time.

Irrigation is the life stream of the Valley. Without the development of the irrigation facilities there would be no settlements in the valley today. One chapter covers the struggle to obtain water for the valley, men spent their time and fortune to make canals, then were unable to meet previous commitments and lost all that they had.

Justification of Problem

To this date, July, 1959, there has never been a history of the Bridger Valley written. There have been many books and biographies written about the history of Fort Bridger, but nothing has been written about the rest of the valley since
it was opened to homesteading in 1890. The writer feels that this is a justifiable reason to make a study such as this to preserve the history of past generations for those generations that are yet to come. At the present time there are a number of men and women still alive who made homesteads or whose parents made homesteads in the valley when they were children. Most of these pioneers have attained an age from sixty-five to ninety-four years, and in the near future will go to their rest taking their knowledge of the past with them if it is not preserved. The value of any history grows as its age increases.

Method of Procedure

An insight into the background, history, and inter-community relationships was obtained through conversation with long-time residents of the valley, and by examination of L. D. S. Church records located in the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City, Utah. Letters of church leaders, ward and stake historical records, and form E. record books were examined. The Uinta County Clerk and Treasurer contributed information concerning land patents, water priority, and school bonds. The County Superintendent of schools provided the writer with information concerning the early schools of the valley.

Residents of the valley supplied the writer with life histories of pioneers written for genealogical purposes and celebrations.

Interviews were made with many of the original pioneers of the valley and included children of the pioneers, who are
too numerous to enumerate.

The writer was allowed full use of the Black's Fork Canal Company records and books in compiling the information on irrigation.

Other information used by the writer came from books, pamphlets, and news articles in the Deseret Evening News and the Bridger Valley Enterprise.

The total information was then assembled in units and written or recorded as objectively as possible. The information used was selected only if there was no record of contrary information, or if there was contradicting information both sides of the argument were presented.

Delimitation of the Problem

This study is concerned, primarily, with the L. D. S. History of the valley. It has been pointed out to the writer, however, that it would be impossible to exclude other settlers if a true picture of the colonization of the valley is given. But the L. D. S. part of the history is more detailed than that part which concerns the other early settlers.

The history of Fort Bridger is too great to be presented in its entirety in this study. A brief sketch of the founding of the fort will be given along with detailed information concerning its sale to the Mormons.

The scope of a study such as this is very large and of necessity is concentrated around early years of colonization. Later or modern happenings are given only brief mention. There
has been no attempt made to cover every incident that has happened in the valley. The incidents that are reported are those in which there is enough reliable information that the story has not been changed in meaning by the attempt of the writer to fill in missing details.

**Definition of Terms**

**Pioneer, Settler, Immigrant.**—These terms are used interchangeably in this study and refer to those people who were original settlers.

**Elementary school.**—Includes grades on to eight.

**Secondary school.**—Includes grades nine to twelve.

**Elder, Apostle, Member of the Council.**—These terms refer to a member of the Council of Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

**Bridger Valley.**—In this study the term Bridger Valley has reference to the eastern portion of Uinta County, in southwestern Wyoming.

**Life Sketch.**—This term as used in this study has reference to a short autobiographical sketch of a person's life.

**L. D. S.**—This term as used in this study has reference to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

**The Church.**—In this study the term Church has reference to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
CHAPTER II

FORT SUPPLY
SOUTHWESTERN WYOMING'S FIRST ATTEMPT AT AGRICULTURE

At the General conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on October 7, 1853, Elder Orson Hyde was appointed to head and organize a group to set up a settlement on the Green River or one of its tributaries. This was but a small move in the church program of expansion. The main cause of this action to send men to the Green River was to aid the trail-weary saints, who were crossing the plains, by providing them with a safe place to stop where they could obtain fresh supplies and stock if needed.

It had been decided that wheat and other grains could be raised on the Green River and hence be a self-supporting outpost. Thirty-nine men were chosen to make up the first company that would make the trip to valleys of the Green River. These men were to travel two men to a wagon. The provisions for each wagon were to consist of three hundred pounds of flour, seventy-five pounds of seed wheat, a half bushel of oats, forty pounds of ends of seed potatoes securely done up against the frost, one peck of barley, one milch cow and one beef. In addition to this the company was to take a variety of garden seed, tools and implements for farming. The men were also instructed to take all the guns and ammunition that they would need to pro-
tect themselves from the Indians and to provide wild game, which was bountiful in the area.¹ The men evidently responded to the call willingly, as the company was ready for departure on the second day of November.

Speaking of the way the people responded to the call to go out into the on-coming winter and make a colony, Orson Hyde stated:

The people generally respond to my call in a manner that became them with some few exceptions. It is not always those who are most able and anxious to be thought forward and liberal who really do the most. It is one thing to wear the name Mormon and another thing to do the work of a Mormon. But I have no complaint. Time will prove who worships the God of this world, and who the God of the world to come.²

The company of settlers was organized after the manner of the Old Testament Tribes, with captains of tens and fifties. John Nebeker was designated as captain of the group with John Harvey First Lieutenant, James Brown Second Lieutenant, and Elijah B. Ward as the Indian Interpreter. The other members of the first company were John L. Ivie, David Brinton, Franklin Neff, William Pierce, Josiah Arnold, John N. Lytle, Augustus Bingham, Leonard Wines, Edmund F. Palmer, George Stringham, Benjamin W. Rolf, Moses Saunders, Reuben Perkins, William J. Smith, Franklin M. Perkins, Ute Perkins, Christopher Merkley, John Larsen, Alexander Robbins, Charles Pulsipher, Albert Knapp,

¹Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 6, 1853. The Journal History from here on in this paper will be referred to as J. H., with the appropriate entry date.
²Andrew Jensen, "Fort Supply" Utah Genealogical Magazine, (Salt Lake City, 1913), IV, 31.

This company had the good fortune of having good weather and they arrived at Fort Bridger on November 13, without any mishap.

It was decided by the group, that because of timber and the richer soil further up the Black Fork, to move to the south-west of Ft. Bridger. They journeyed about twelve miles and found a favorable place on Willow Creek which is a tributary of the Smith Fork of the Green River. The first company of settlers had hardly decided on a place to start their settlement when a second company was organized. The second company had in it twenty-six wagons with from two to five yoke of oxen to each wagon, and with them they took the same provisions as the other company except that they took fifty head of milch cows, and fifty beef cows. Isaac Bullock was appointed captain, William Muir, First Lieutenant, and William Price, Second Lieutenant. Also they took John L. Dunyon, a surgeon. The rest of the men of this second company were: Joseph Henry, Peter Carney, Ransom Hatch, William Neely, Joel Loveland, Orrin Hatch, George Hutchings, Frederick Gale, Thomas Rigley, Robert Alexander, Davies, Pierce, Amenzo Baker, William Perkins, Stephen K. Wilbur, William M. Safford, Charles McKinley, William B. Huchins, John Dillworth, Emanuel Long, Leonard Rice, George Clawson, Nephi Packard, Cyrus B. Hawley, S. J. Lamb, John Faucett, James Ivie, William D. Johnson, Lorin H. Roundy, A. B.

This second company of men arrived at Ft. Bridger the last days of November. Because of their love for their religion and at the request of their beloved leader, Brigham Young, these men had left their own homes and the comforts of family to go and carve a settlement out of the trackless plains and the foothills of the mighty Uinta mountains. It took the courage of great men to attempt such a settlement with winter approaching, knowing that they would be isolated from almost all contact with the Salt Lake Valley until the next spring. The settlement of Ft. Supply stands out as an example of what men can do in the face of necessity. The elevation of the fort was over seven thousand feet, and to most people it would have been thought an impossible place to found a settlement, with the purpose that had been designated for Fort Supply by the leading authorities.

The winter had but little mercy upon these men selected for the task, as the thermometer dipped far below the freezing line. Orson Hyde records that on January 6, 1854 the temperature was a cold 17 degrees below zero, with the always present mountain winds piling the white of snow into huge drifts, some

¹Ibid.
estimated at fifteen to twenty feet deep. As the month of January wore on it became increasingly colder with temperatures of 25 below zero on the twentieth and 30 below zero on the twenty-first.\footnote{Ibid. This information is also found in the "Journal History" entry for March 5, 1854, in a letter from R. Robbins.} The storms and the cold were so penetrating that some of the cattle were frozen to death on foot while some of the men who were caring for them also had their hands and feet frost bitten. A number of Shoshone Indians made their way to the settlement and were very friendly to the saints and spent the winter with them. Isaac Bullock records that they had been instructed to be very good to the Indians. They were to do everything possible to keep them in good spirits as this was legally their land and any misuse or distrust among the Indians might result in raids upon the trains that would, in the future be passing, to obtain supplies at Ft. Supply.\footnote{Isaac Bullock, "Letter" published in the Deseret News, (Salt Lake City, Utah) October 5, 1855.}

Every day during the winter of 1853-54 that it was possible to leave their shelter, the men went into the pine groves around willow creek and cut logs to be used in dwellings and for the corrals and stockades.

There was much disappointment at Ft. Supply when finally the sun began to send its rays into the valley and it was time to start thinking of preparing the land for crops, it was discovered that most of the seed potatoes had been destroyed by the severe cold of the winter. This information was taken to Salt Lake City and there was a call for more men to go and
aid in the establishment of the Green River. After the news
of the winter in the high mountains, the men already establish-
ed in homes in the valley doubted that they wanted to go to
Green River as it was then called and suffer through the winter.
However, devotion to their duty was deemed greater than individ-
ual desires and most of those called responded to the request
for help. Most of the leaders of the L. D. S. church made the
men feel that it was their duty to accept the assignments made
by them for the good of the church, even if it wasn't always
their exact choice or desire to go where they could be of the
most value. The necessity to discharge their duty is demon-
strated by the letter published by Orson Hyde in the Deseret
News, concerning the men who were to go to reinforce the settle-
ment on the Smith Fork of the Green River.

Attention Green River men: The company of men destined
for there, be prepared and go to the tithing office by
eight A.M. April 6. Every man is to be there without ex-
cuse to faithfully discharge his duty. Procure all the
flour you can by donation or otherwise and secure two bush-
els of the best Meshanic potatoes to every man that goes
out. The colony will be short of flour and potatoes for
seed, most of those taken out last fall are frozen. If any
man is to be released from this service it will only be
after he has furnished his provisions and assisted in prepa-
ration and secured the permission of the president of
the Church.¹

Including the new group of men that went to Ft. Supply
there were about one hundred efficient men. These men busily
engaged themselves in clearing land and building on the stock-
ade. The land in the valleys of the Green River was fertile

¹Deseret Evening News, (Salt Lake City), March 29, 1854.
with an abundance of sage brush ranging from two to five feet. Along the river banks for some distance the grass grew rich and verdant and the pine forests stretched to the south as far as the eye could see. The high peaks of the Uinta range of the Rocky Mountains spire up as cathedrals on the southern horizon. In describing the valley as he took a supply of flour to the settlement for the winter Brother Gates remarked: "There is a lot of good grass and water for feed, and plenty of sage for fuel."¹

H. S. Blair in describing Ft. Supply as approached from the east reported, "It is an oasis after the desert, at the base of the Wasatch (Uinta) mountains, with good streams and lush grass valleys."²

The diligence of the men at Ft. Supply was shown by the fact that by the winter of 1854, the stockade which enclosed the houses of the settlement had been finished, and much of the land had been cleared so that it could be planted the next spring. There was a small crop of potatoes and wheat but not near enough to sustain the large group of men that were stationed at the fort. In the spring of 1855 the pioneers planted over seventy acres of wheat and other grains. On August 31, 1855 it was estimated by Isaac Bullock that there would be over 3000 bushels of wheat raised at Fort Supply. The potato

¹Journal History, October 18, 1854. First name of Brother Gates was not given.
²Journal History, October 18, 1854. H.S. Blair had reference to what are now called the Uinta Range of the Rocky Mountains.
crop was good, and the missionaries were all well and in good spirits.¹

The prosperity, that was an apparent fact, was given a severe jolt when on the 17th of September a killing frost hit the area, and the wheat which was not as yet completely ripe was partially ruined. Many men after two long cold winters of hardship and the summers of hard work would have given up in despair and returned to the settlements of the great Salt Lake, but not these courageous men; they busily engaged themselves in saving the part of the wheat that was fit for use. Isaac Bullock described the fall of 1855 when he wrote the following to the Deseret News: "The frost of September 17, killed all of our wheat that was not fully matured. It has cut down all of the potato tops and chilled the leaves of the trees into humble submission, as a preface of what was to come."

Having just returned from a trip to visit his family and friends in the Salt Lake Valley Brother Bullock says: "On that time I arrived here at Fort Supply ice froze one-fourth inch thick in my room. The wheat crop is cut off more than half, it is a very busy time here now. The Indians are coming in all around us, demanding to have a share of our wheat and potatoes despite all our care and diligence."²

The Indians although they were never very hostile to anyone around the Ft. Bridger area, were always present in the

¹Journal History, August 31, 1855.
²Deseret Evening News, (Salt Lake City), October 5, 1855.
fall to receive what they felt was a fair share of what the white man owed them for living on their land. It is recorded that Tabobooindowetsy and his band of warriors were camped on the Black's Fork. He went to George Boyd, who at the time, was in charge of Ft. Bridger and demanded that he give them flour and drink. After this they weren't satisfied and went to Jack Robinson's, a mountaineer who was probably the first white man to settle in the region and shot one of his best work oxen. He warned us not to refuse them the supplies that they desired. Tabobooindowetsy said that he would be going to buffalo country in about twenty days. "We have to exercise a great amount of patience to get along with the natives because of their theiving practices." The policy of the Mormons of "feed them don't fight them" seemed to once again be the best policy to follow.

Although their crop was cut considerably by the frost there was still a considerable amount of wheat at the Fort which needed to be ground into flour. The task of grinding flour by hand was very time-consuming and to take care of the situation Brother Edison Whipple was called to take a grist mill to set it up at or near Fort Supply. The Deseret News reports: "Brother Edison Whipple intends taking a portable grist mill to Fort Supply which will be of great benefit to the settlers in that region. The portable mill will be used until a more extensive one is needed." Brother John Van

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1Deseret Evening News, (Salt Lake City) October 5, 1855.

2Ibid.
Waggoner stated: "The mill will make good flour, and will be sufficient to grind all the wheat and corn which will be raised this season in the Green River County." 

The month of April 1856 was one of great rejoicing and happiness in the settlement at Fort Supply. The happiness was occasioned by the visit of several of the "twelve." Brother George A. Smith gives what is probably the best description of the settlement of Fort Supply and the weather in and around the area.

After a cold and unpleasant journey we arrived at Ft. Bridger on the evening of April 26. The trip over the Wasatch mountains was rugged. An assembly met at two o'clock and were addressed by Orson Pratt, Capt. A. O. Smoot, Marshall Heywood, and myself. General Robinson has begun plowing although the season is backward. Elders E. T. Benson, Erastus Snow and myself accepted an invitation from Judge Bullock to visit his residence, at Fort Supply. We went up black fork road through a very rich and fine bottom land capable of producing the most choice grain vegetables and fruit. We were surprised to find Fort Supply is seven thousand, two hundred feet above sea level as best we can calculate.

There are banks of snow three feet deep around the fort, which is made by setting six feet in the ground a double row of pickets eighteen feet long, about one foot through and pointed at the top, enclosing about ten acres. The work of the stockade is very creditable showing of skill and cooperation.

A two story house is used for a court house and other purposes. Judge Bullock showed us the twenty five dwellings inside the stockade, the correls and stockyards. He showed us inside the stockade all his fine pigs and the animals which wintered here, left by the immigration last fall, which were too poor to go on, and are now in fine condition although the snow has been drifted so deep as to completely cover the stockades.

Over two hundred acres is enclosed in a very good fence, the type which ought to be a model for all other settlements. Twenty five families have just arrived to

1Ibid.
strengthen the settlement.

Some of the wheat raised here is the best I have ever seen, and we ate potatoes and beets as good as can be produced anywhere. Five miles to the south the quality of timber is unequaled. The success of the settlement shows what can be done in the mountain valleys. The generosity and hospitality have been almost unsurpassable.¹

This report of George A. Smith indicates how well the men of this area had mastered the elements and been a generous and courteous people even in the face of the adversity of the weather and the Indians. Since the time of its establishment, the county of Green River had been organized and Fort Supply was made its county seat, with Isaac Bullock as judge and administrator. The two-story court house was used as a social gathering place and as an entertainment center for the fort. The men at the fort were also more satisfied with conditions as they were to have their families come and live with them after 1855.

The entertainment of these people was much like that of any other frontier settlement, quilting bees, wood cutting bees, community celebrations on the national holidays, and an occasional dance which was enjoyed by old and young alike.

The July 24th, 1856 celebration is typical of the participation and the enjoyment of the population in total of community activities.

A bugle sounded at sunrise and the national flag was unfurled, with Captain Meeks band furnishing sweet music. At eight o'clock, A. M. a procession was organized, with Captain

¹Ibid., April 28, 1856. Letter by George A. Smith.
Meeks and band with a banner which had the inscription "Our Mountain Home So Dear" followed by Captain Cole with his rifle company. Cole was followed by Captain Barney Ward with twenty-four buck Indians and banner, "We become a white and delightful people." Captain Sanderson led a group of twenty-four boys with a banner. Captain John Sessions with the serenade band in full uniform, carrying a banner "We are always ready." Captain Alger led twenty-four ladies with a banner, "We instruct our sisters in the forest." Captain James Young and twenty-four little girls in pink dresses and straw hats decked with native flowers, brought up the last of the procession which marched around the fort and called a halt at the council house.

Promptly at nine o'clock the morning sessions of the celebration began in the council house, with prayer and music. There were several short addresses, some by Brothers Ward and Alger who spoke in the native Indian languages.

In the afternoon there was a banquet served out in the open air. The menu was one that was typical of pioneer enthusiasm, in which they supplied the very best that they had for a community celebration. The menu consisted of: potatoes, peas, beets, bread, meat, pies, cakes, puddings, custards, chickens and coffee. Brother Alger made twenty-five gallons of home-made wine for the occasion. The wine was used in making toasts. Some of the Indians gave toasts saying they hoped to become white and have their women look like the white women. There were also games and races and more addresses in
the afternoon, until 5 P.M. at which time the celebration was dismissed until seven to give the brethren time to take care of their chores and prepare for the evenings activities.

The evenings activities began at seven with waltzes, dances and songs until 9 o'clock at which time there was an intermission for supper. When the supper had been terminated there were folk and individual dances, until 1 o'clock A.M. at which time the people departed for their dwellings thanking God for days such as this one had been, and dreaming of the time to come when the next holiday and its gaiety would enliven the life at the fort. When all were safely home it was concluded that it was a day long to be remembered.\(^1\)

It must have seemed to the pioneers that their God had forsaken them as they looked out of their dwellings on September 4, 1856, to see that snow was falling fast and heavy upon the fort. This had been the first year that it appeared that their grain was going to ripen without being frozen, but with only two of over one hundred acres of grain harvested, it must have been heart rending to see the snow descending. It thawed much while snowing, but when it had ceased the next morning there were eleven inches of snow. The grain was all laid down to the ground, making the binding and salvaging of it very difficult. Some was in such condition as to render it useful only for cattle feed. From what had seemed to be a year of prosper-

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\(^1\) Deseret Evening News, (Salt Lake City) July 24, 1856. Letter from Fort Supply to the news concerning the celebration.
ity, a year that supplies wouldn't have to be shipped in from Salt Lake City, once more these courageous men and women had their spirits weighted as low as the "snow had lain the grain." Isaac Bullock reported that there would be only enough supplies and provisions raised and saved from the snow and frost to supply about one-half of the community, "we will have to secure the remainder from elsewhere." 

The prospects that the amount of Indians around the fort would decrease seemed slight as there was a large party of Snakes and Arapahoes on the headwaters of the North Platte who were preparing to war with the Utes.

As the Saints fought back the tears of disappointment at the result of the frost and snow upon their harvest, they were met by another call for humbleness and patience as the Snake Indians began arriving at the fort for their share of the scant harvest. The Saints had been attempting to teach the Indians that they too could till the ground and they succeeded in convincing some of them to try. One of Snakes by the name of Baziell had lived most of the year with the Saints at the fort and had raised about thirty bushel of wheat and some vegetables. Brother Bullock reported that Baziell seemed to be very pleased with his work. He (Baziell) said: "I wish all of my people would till the ground so that they would have corn and flour in their tepees."

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2Ibid., October 1, 1856
In his letter to the Deseret News, Isaac Bullock reported: "Brother Edison Whipple has attached a thrashing machine to his grist mill, it is propelled by water." Also, that "Brothers Alger, Pulsipher and Daniels are erecting a saw-mill which will be ready for use in eight or ten days. The ready availability of lumber should make the fort a little more desirable than it was for the settlers. We will now be able to build the things that we desire without the back-bending task of hand-sawing or bringing the lumber in from other mills. We will be able to construct many of the things for our pleasure that we have heretofore done without."2

Migration

In the late summer of 1856, Major Robert Burton and a detachment of men were sent to Green River County to protect and aid the Saints that were making their migration to the Salt Lake Valley. Major Burton reported in October that all was peaceful in the region and as soon as the immigration was passed that he and his detachment would return to the Salt Lake Valley. Captain C. A. Harper's company had left Fort Bridger and Captain Allred was to Ham's Fork, east of Fort Bridger. The knowledge of these two companies left only one more com-

1Ibid.
2Deseret News Weekly, (Salt Lake City), October 1, 1856. Letter from Isaac Bullock.
pany expected, the company of T. S. Williams and the rear train, which were to have ended the immigration for 1856.¹

There were, however, two companies of handcarts who, because of difficulty, had left Iowa City for Salt Lake much after the time when it was wise to be in the mountains. These were the ill-fated Willie and Martin companies. Elder Levi Savage, with his knowledge of the mountains and the severe cold and storms, and seeing the age of the men, women and children, advised strongly against these companies starting and urged them to stay at winter quarters. When overruled he said: "What I have said I know to be true; but seeing you are going forward, I will go with you; will help you all I can; will work with you, will rest with you, and if necessary die with you. May God in mercy bless and preserve us."²

It is not the purpose of this history to tell details of the sufferings of these companies of handcart pioneers; let if suffice to say that through the storms, which were early that year, the companies came to a complete stand-still relying solely upon the Lord to send them the help that they needed.³

When word reached Fort Supply of the two stranded companies, there was an immediate call for help of the settlers

¹Deseret News Weekly, (Salt Lake City), October 20, 1956. Letter from Major Robert Burton.

²B. H. Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, Vol. IV, p. 89.

³An Account of the sufferings and trials of the handcart pioneers can be found in the Comprehensive History of the Church, Vol. 4.
at Fort Supply. The way that the Saints responded to their brothers in need is recorded in the "Journal History" of the church. "To get aid and relief to the Handcart Companies, every wagon and every ox down to two years of age from Fort Supply was sent to aid the handcarters in the remaining journey to the Salt Lake Valley."¹

The all-out response to duty by the settlers at Fort Supply is illustrated in an article in the Deseret News.

No person can realize the immense self denial and drawbacks of comforts that these men at Fort Supply have had to encounter in the inclemency of mountain cold and storms, well may sinners be astonished at the love and devotion of these saints.²

The Last Fateful Year

The winter of 1856-57 passed at the Fort with the same usual coldness and slowness except that there was less snow than usual. The spring came and once again large acreages of ground were planted into grain, potatoes and vegetables. Again the saints were disappointed on June 26, 1857 their vegetation was cut down by a hard frost. As a result of the frost Elder Brown was sent to the bench three miles north and seven miles east of Bridger to survey some of the land. It was hoped that the four or five hundred feet lower elevation might provide a longer growing season, and eliminate the destruction to the wheat by the frost. The land surveyed by Brown was what

¹Journal History, Nov. 30, 1856.
²Deseret News Weekly, December 3, 1856.
was to be called Lyman Bench and the Smith Fork river bottoms. It was reported: "It seems to be rich and fertile land."  

The battle with elements, it was found, was that year to be just a part of the heartbreak to come, as word arrived in July that a force of U. S. troops were on their way to Utah to put down an alleged rebellion.

In September 1857 Fort Supply became the outpost of the Nauvoo legion or at least some of the detachments sent out to watch the troops, and to burn the feed and supply trains. General Wells himself went this far to meet with Colonel R. T. Burton and Lewis Robinson. These men (Burton and Robinson) were given orders to burn Fort Bridger and Fort Supply as soon as they had cached everything that could be used.  

The torch was applied to Fort Bridger on October 3, 1857 by Lewis Robinson and it is stated that Fort Supply was burned two or three days later. The Utah Militia was given the job of burning the Fort and firing the grass that approached the valley.

The burning of Fort Supply was about equal to the burning being done by Lot Smith to the wagon trains of supplies for the army. The fire lasted for about three days before it consumed the Fort entirely.

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1 Ibid. July 4, 1857.


3 The burning of the wagon trains did not occur until October 5, so this may have been written later.
Some of the last journal entries that exist about Fort
Supply are those of Brother John Pulsipher, September 20, 1857.

President Bullock received a letter from Brother Brigham of the 16th giving us further instructions in regard to carry-
ing into effect the foregoing proclamation. (Martial Law). Altho' the invading army is approaching—but this mar-
tial law must be carried out. Be careful of the lives of
the people. See that there are no more killed than is ab-
solutely necessary to carry out these orders.

Mentions in this letter that it would be well to move the families in from Fort Supply as that is a hard place to live.

Sunday, September 27 Brother Bullock went to Fort Bridger to learn how things are going on the road. We sup-
posed it would be best to move soon if we did not get all our crops secured. Brother Edson Whipple and myself went with the stock here today to be sure they were safe. When we came in at night with the herd Brother Bullock had returned, and it was time to go. So we fixed and loaded wagons in the night for a start in the morning. Brother Charles came to see us.

Monday, 28th right from the enemy’s camps where he and his company and others have been watching the movements and etc. said they will not stop by any fare means— are taking any of our boys prisoners that they can catch—When the Government Proclamation was presented to them they hooted and wanted to know who was Brigham Young—and force marched harder than before. So our boys commenced giving some hints that they might understand that we meant what we said. These plain hints consisted of taking the herds of beef stock to the valley where they will winter well—and of burning the heavy freight trains of supplies—These things were done in daytime and some of it right in sight of the main army and when pursued our boys could easily keep out of their way among these ragged rocky mountains.

Brother Charles also thought it was best for us to move our families soon and helped me hitch up the team which consisted of three cows and one steer. Our company being ready—a few single men, being selected to stay and finish the harvest and keep the Fort, we started in order. Brother Charles went a mile and helped to steady my rude team and visit still more with us, when we parted wishing the blessing of the Lord to attend each other. I to take my family to safe quarters so I can return—and he to stay as a scout in defence of the Saints who have endured
so much persecution.

Our company now was only about 30 families - as some had gone to the valley before - we traveled night and day so that we might not fall into the hands of the enemies 'til we heard they had made a halt on Ham's Fork. Then we went more leisurely with our slow teams and old wagons and in seven days were safe in the valley among friends. Then we separated and went to the different wards or settlements where our former homes had been.

Lord bless that noble band of brethren and sisters that have labored so to build up the Kingdom by making peace with the natives and form a settlement in that cold dreary place in Green River County. We worked hard and by the Lord's blessing on our work were quite comfortably situated to live.

Besides public work, traveling, missionary, making water ditches, building meeting houses, public coral and etc. I have cleared land of its timber - grubbed out willow thickets, for plow and hay land and got some of it fenced all round by itself share of mill, lumber on hand - which at a low rate is upwards of a thousand dollars, of my individual property left - a total loss to me, because of this cruel persecution that Government allows against us. The crops we wish used by our guards.¹

Brother Pulsipher's Journal gives some idea of the blow that the coming of the army dealt to these Saints at Fort Supply. They were able to suffer through the adversity of the weather, but to see all of their suffering go to waste was almost more than the Saints could endure. Because of the burning of the Fort and the destruction of the individual property it is estimated that the loss at Forty Supply amounted to three hundred thousand dollars.²

Thus, the history of old Fort Supply came to an end.


²Andrew Jensen, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
It was an epic of labor, courage, and disappointment. The land at Fort Supply wasn't resettled until the 1890's when the region was opened to homesteading. The land of the old Fort is now, 1959, owned by Lloyd Wall of Robertson, Wyoming, who is using the land to produce native or meadow type grass hay which is used to feed his cattle and sheep.
CHAPTER III

FORT BRIDGER: ITS FOUNDING AND EARLY OWNERSHIP

The purpose of this chapter is to present a brief sketch of the founding of Fort Bridger, and to examine the claims of the Mormons and James Bridger of its ownership in the years, 1855-57.

The early history of the Rocky Mountain West was made by a rather distinct breed of pioneers known as the Mountain Men. During the three decades from about 1815 to 1845, these Americans blazed the trails at the Far West.1

Jim Bridger and Louis Vasquez were two of this distinct breed known as Mountain Men.

Jim Bridger was born in Richmond, Virginia in 1804, the son of James and Chloe Bridger. Very little is known of Jim's parents except that they owned a farm and ran a hotel. In the spirit of the age, the Bridgers moved to St. Louis, Missouri, in 1812. Bridger's mother took sick while in St. Louis and died in 1816. Just one year later, 1817, Bridger's father also died, leaving fourteen-year-old Bridger to look after himself and his sister.

Bridger attempted running a ferryboat on the Mississippi, but after a short while apprenticed to a blacksmith.

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named Phil Creamer. Bridger worked at the blacksmith trade until he was eighteen.

Pierre Louis Vasquez, known simply as Louis Vasquez, was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1794, the youngest of twelve children. He was the son of Benito and Julie Papin Vasquez. Vasquez was well cared-for and had a good education. He spoke French and Spanish fluently.

Vasquez has had many labels attached to him during his life: The Frenchman, The Mexican, Auguste, Lewis, etc.; but all of these had reference to the man who according to the family Bible was christened Pierre Louis Vasquez. These names probably came about because his father was Spanish and his mother from a French Creole family. This fact, coupled with his ability to speak French and Spanish as well as English, undoubtedly earned him his names.

Bridger and Vasquez were to become friends because of an announcement in the Missouri Republican, a St. Louis newspaper, dated March 20, 1822.

To enterprising young men. The subscriber wishes to engage one hundred young men to ascend the Missouri River to its source, there to be employed for one, two or three years. For particulars inquire of Major Andrew Henry, near the lead mines in the county of Washington, who will ascend with and command the party; or the subscriber near St. Louis.

Signed William H. Ashley

The assignments of Vasquez and Bridger took them away from each other, but not before they had formed a friendship

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which was to last for the rest of their lives.

In the year 1837, Vasquez made a trip to St. Louis, and took a license from the superintendent of Indian affairs under the name of Vasquez and Sublette.¹

At this time Vasquez established a permanent adobe establishment known as Fort Vasquez near the present site of Platteville in Weld County, Colorado. It was here that Bridger came to visit Vasquez in 1839. Bridger was, at this time, in partnership with Fitzpatrick and Sublette in the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, but they couldn't run competition with the larger American Fur Company. Neither Bridger nor Vasquez were happy and it may have been at this time when they formed a partnership. If not at this time, it was at St. Louis when Bridger and Vasquez were both there.² These men made plans for a fur trading post near an old rendezvous site in southwestern Wyoming. The object of their plans was soon to become what is now known as Fort Bridger.

The trading post, now Fort Bridger, was established about 1842.³ The Construction of the post was done in late


²Ibid., p. 2. Mr. Bray's information was taken from the Ana Vasquez Papers. These papers are now in the archives of the Native Sons of Kansas City, Missouri, Museum.

³The exact year when the fort was established is a point of dispute among writers of Western History. The year 1843 is accepted by Alter, Crittenden, and Bancroft; while 1842 is recognized by Ellison, Coutant, and also the writings of Louis Vasquez that are contained in the Ana Vasquez Papers.
1842, and the post was opened for business in early 1843. Jim Bridger wrote (dictated, for he could neither read nor write) to Pierre Cheuteau, dated December 10, 1843:

I have established a small fort, with a blacksmith shop and a supply of iron on the road of the immigrants, on Black's Fork, of the Green River, which promises fairly.¹

The site of the fort turned out to be one of the best ones; a majority of the immigrants to California and Oregon passed directly by it. The year, 1843, immigration began in earnest. The fort also received the trade of the local trappers and Indians.

Evidently, Vasquez and Bridger got along with each other very well. Bray described their relationship:

The partnership ran smooth for thirteen years, 1842-1855. Vasquez took care of the business details, while Bridger was the sales manager and public relations man. Their wives got along well--one being a squaw of the Ute tribe, and the other a white woman from St. Louis.²

Both Bridger and Vasquez had side-ventures. Vasquez operated a ferry on the Green River for some time and had a general merchandise store in Salt Lake City from 1849-55. Bridger trapped, blacksmithed, and operated the ferry on the Green River after Vasquez started his store.

Sale of Fort Bridger

There are many questions that need to be answered in

¹Bray, op. cit.
²Ibid.
connection with the sale of Fort Bridger. Did Bridger and Vasquez own the land? Was the Fort ever sold to the Mormons? If the Fort was purchased, who sold it? Did Bridger ever know about it? Did Bridger ever receive his share of the money from its sale?

Alter, in his book James Bridger, states that Bridger claimed his land under an agreement with the Mexican government. Whether there ever was an agreement is not known, but the men were at least permitted to build and maintain their fort without any interference. There is evidence, however, that Bridger did try to comply with the law of the territory of Utah to gain a legal title to the land contained at the fort. He did have a Certificate of Survey made. From the record books of the Third District Court of the Territory of Utah the following was copied:

Copied from "Records" Book B, page 68.

Certificate of Survey made for James Bridger.

$400.00 Aug. 28 1852

Received of James Bridger in full, four hundred dollars for the rights and title of five houses and location in Utah Territory, situated one mile and a quarter from Fort Bridger on the South side of Black Fork, extending three miles up the river and three down.

Witnesses: William F. Shortridge Charles X Sagenes
Edward Lynch mark

recorded Oct. 28, 1853.

A SURVEY OF LAND MADE FOR JAMES BRIDGER. In the Territory of Utah and County of Green River. Nov. 6th /53. Beginning at a Stone Corner marked J on the plot on North
Side of Black's Fork. Running due South 1640 Poles, Crossing said stream in 75 Poles to a stone corner on East side of said stream marked B on the plot. Thence due West 452 Poles; crossing said stream in 160 poles to a stone corner marked R on the plot, thence due North 1120 Poles to a stone corner marked D on the plot. Thence North 40 degrees East 720 Poles to the beginning. Containing 3898 Acres 2 Roods. [\[\]]

Surveyed by John M. Hockaday.

Recorded March 1854 Ths. Bullock G.S.L.Co. Recorder

Course due North 1120 Poles

Contents 3898 Acres 2 Roods

Sold 04/19/1870 South and East

This Certificate of Survey shows that Bridger wanted to get clear title to the land around his fort, sometimes called Bridger's Ranch. The survey of land made by John M. Hockaday encompasses the fort and the land mentioned in the August 28, 1852, Certificate of Survey.

Did Bridger sell the fort and his ranch to the L.D.S. Church? This question has given the writers of Fort Bridger much area in which to do research. Mormon researcher's on the subject say that there was a definite legitimate sale, but non-Mormons have another view. Victor H. Cohen in his James Bridger's Claims gives the following picture of how the Mormons got control of Fort Bridger.

Although Bridger's name was given to the fort, it was established and owned by Bridger and Vasquez. ... The

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1 The above material was taken from the Third District Court records, book B, page 68. (Salt Lake City).
partners prospered under the jurisdiction of Mexico and later the United States. In 1853, however, the Mormons, who wished to secure control of the whole Green River Valley, made efforts to oust Bridger and Vasquez. The desire to depose Old Jim was intensified by the rumor that he was supplying arms to the Indians, with whom the Mormons were at war. Brigham Young issued orders for Bridger's arrest on charges of inciting the Indians against the Mormons.1

Alter adds:

The Mormons accused Bridger of selling arms and ammunitions to the Indians and inciting them to battle, but it is doubtful that he was doing anything that hadn't been done for years before by himself and others.2

Laura Dahlquist, in her book *Meet James Bridger*, goes to great lengths to convince all who read her book that with a little tact there would have been no Indian wars. She holds Bridger up as the "Knight in Shining Armor," the object of the most intense and cruel persecution:

The Mormons, for some obscure reason, entertained grievances against him, and made threats against his life. There seemed to be some bad feelings between Bridger and Brigham Young, for when Jim sent a letter to Young warning him that two Indian chiefs: Walkara and Elk, of the Utes, were on the warpath and were indeed making plans to attack the people in the Utah Valley, Brigham made light of his letter.

For some reason Bridger's preferred friendship and extensive experience with, and understanding of the Red man was set at naught by the Mormons, just at a time when there was a real need for a go-between with these people. Friendship with the natives at this time would have spared many lives and much suffering, besides the much-needed property that marauding Indians took from the impoverished Saints. Time, lives and money were lost in the Indian war that took place shortly after this. A better diplomat than Brigham would have foreseen and averted this tragedy for his long-suffering and subservient people.

But they ignored the warning, and trouble began in

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2 Alter, op. cit., p. 247.
1849, near Draper, which was to spread all over the Utah Valley. It finally ended when Brigham established a militia, and employed a cannon in the subjugation of the Indians.

In a long series of battles the Utes were almost wiped out, except a few women and children who were taken captive.\footnote{Laura Dahlquist, \textit{Meet Jim Bridger} (Kemmerer, Wyoming: Gazette Press, 1948), pp. 21-25.}

Mrs. Dahlquist goes on to quote every writer she could find to show that Brigham Young who knew nothing about the Indians and the government was appointed governor over the protests of Gunnison and Stansbury. She states that the Indians became more hostile and attacked trains of incoming Saints to the extent that a relief base was needed, and so they started to make plans on how to take over Fort Bridger.

There is no doubt that the Saints would have liked to have owned and controlled Fort Bridger to help the travel-weary companies on the last part of their journey into the Salt Lake Valley. It was the policy of the Church to establish supply stops wherever possible. However, Alter, Dahlquist, and Cohen all feel the reason for the Green River Mission, established in November of 1853, was to force Jim Bridger out of his fort. If it is impossible to find Bridger and get him to leave, then colonize the area and force him out that way.

To the writer, these authorities on the life of Bridger and his fort have started out to find the point they had in mind, accepting what supported their claims and rejecting
all others. It is true that a posse was sent to Fort Bridger to bring Bridger to trial, but this is the law-abiding manner of settling grievances which evidently is not the way, according to these authorities, that frontier justice should be taken care of.

Mrs. Dahlquist quotes Alter concerning the opening of the Green River Mission:

The Green River Mission was inaugurated. Thirty-nine men headed by Orson Hyde, were sent out to settle in Bridger's Valley. And although heretofore no one had thought of Fort Bridger as a wintering place, the small party of Saints struggled through the Wasatch Mountains, which were already covered with snow, to arrive November 15, in a snow covered Bridger Valley. They were fully equipped to stay, but when a small group of surly mountain men defied them to stop at the old Trading Post, they went on and settled about twelve miles southwest.

The place was finally abandoned as a failure, when it became necessary to supply their needs from Salt Lake City, and when, after additional Saints were sent out, less people were there at the end of two years, than there had been when the place was begun in 1853.¹

To demonstrate the selection of materials used, the writer will quote the statement of just the beginning of Fort Supply or the Green River Mission:

This company had the good fortune of having good weather and they arrived at Fort Bridger on November 13, without mishap.

It was decided by the group, that because of timber and the richer soil further up the Black Fork, to move to the southwest of Fort Bridger. At the end of two years there were over one hundred families there.²

Admittedly, the above quote is from an L.D.S. source that may be biased, but usually the tendency is to exaggerate


the ill treatment that you receive and not to try and minimize it because you are afraid some descendant might read it.

In the sale of Fort Bridger the material will be presented as (1) the claims of the non-Mormons and (2) the Mormon claims to ownership.

Non-Mormon Claims

In a suit to collect rent due, the family of James Bridger presented some of the following claims:

1. Bridger legally owns the land as part of an agreement with the Mexican government.

2. After Utah was a territory, he had the land surveyed by one John M. Hockaday, and the claim was filed in the General Land Office in St. Louis, March 9, 1854.

3. He leased it to the U. S. government on November 18, 1857, for 600 dollars per year, for ten years.

4. Because he could not read or write, the officers executing the lease purposely worded it to their own advantage.

5. Title to the land should be given because of squatter's rights in the treaty of 1848.

6. He had to leave the Fort because of the threat of death from the Mormons.

7. Improvements made valued at 20,000 dollars.

These claims of Bridger's, however, were against the U. S. while the L.D.S. claims are that they should have had possession of land as their legal property at the end of the Utah war.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in its Journal History records the following transaction:

Louis Vasquez of the firm of Bridger and Vasquez executed a bill of sale of Ft. Bridger and acknowledged receipt of $4,000 on August 3, 1855 and $4,000 today, also acknowledged before Samuel A. Gilbert, clerk of 3rd district court, that Hyrum F. Morrell was his lawfully appointed agent and that he fully approved of the acts and doings of said Morrell in the sale of said property.\(^1\)

If this entry is correct, then there should be evidence of this transaction of money, both on August 3, 1855, and on October 18, 1858. On the following pages are the indentures made by Louis Vasquez on October 18, 1858.

Copied from "Records" Book B, pages 125-127 (form RL)

**SALE OF FORT BRIDGER**

This Indenture, made the eighteenth day of October, in the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty eight, between Louis Vasquez, of the City of St. Louis in the State of Missouri of the firm of Bridger and Vasquez, (formerly of the County of Green River and Territory of Utah), of the first part and Lewis Robison of the City of Great Salt Lake and Territory of Utah (formerly of Green River County in the Territory of Utah) of the second part--

Witnesseth, that: for and in consideration of the sum of Four Thousand Dollars, lawful money of the United States, in hand paid to the party of the first part by the party of the second part, at or before the ensealing and delivery of these presents, and for and in further consideration of the sum of Four Thousand Dollars, which the party of the first part, acknowledges to have been paid in lawful money of the United States at Fort Bridger, in Green River County and Territory of Utah on the third day of August one thousand eight hundred and fifty-five to James Bridger, then acting as his full and

\(^1\)Journal History, October 18, 1858, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
lawful agent, and partnership owner with him in the property personal and real, and claims to lands and improvements hereinafter mentioned, by the above named party of the second part, the receipt of which sums (Eight Thousand Dollars) is hereby acknowledged; said party of the first part hath remised, released, conveyed and forever quit-claimed, and by these presents doth remise, release, convey, and forever quit-claim,—and doth hereby further fully endorse the acts and doings of the aforesaid James Bridger his partner and agent, in the transfer and quit-claim by him made in an Indenture bearing date at Green River County in the Territory of Utah, the third day of August one thousand eight hundred and fifty five (which Indenture is hereby made a part of this and attached thereto) to all the right, title and interest, both real and personal by him claimed individually, and for the firm of Bridger and Vasquez, in the County of Green River and Territory of Utah, consisting of the following, to wit: Twenty miles square of land more or less, in which is included the plat of land surveyed by John M. Hockaday on the sixth day of November, one thousand eight hundred and fifty three (the plot of survey of which I hereby made a part of this indenture) together with all and singular the tenements, hereditaments, and appurtenances thereunto belonging or in any wise appertaining; also the Building known as Fort Bridger, situate on said plat of land, together with all and every article of property belonging to said Fort, and claimed by the aforesaid firm of Bridger and Vasquez, including cattle, horses, groceries, drygoods, and the reversion, and reversions, remainder and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof; and also all the estate right, title, interest, property, possession, claim and demand whatsoever, as well in law as in equity, of the said party of the first part, as well as the said firm of Bridger and Vasquez, of, in, or to the above described premises, and every part and parcel, thereof with the appurtenances, to the aforesaid party of the second part, and to his heirs and assigns forever. To have and to hold all and singular the above mentioned and described premises, together with the appurtenances, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns forever, and to warrant and defend the same against all claims of the said party of the first part or the said firm of Bridger and Vasquez, and of the heirs or assigns of either or both of the parties of said firm forever.

In witness whereof, the said party of the first part hath hereunto set his hand seal the day and year first above written

Louis Vasquez
Bridger and Vasquez
per Louis Vasquez
Personally appeared before me, Samuel A. Gilbert, Clerk of the United States Court for the Third Judicial District of Utah, Louis Vasquez whose name appears to the above conveyance, for himself and as the agent of Bridger & Vasquez, and acknowledged the same to be his free act and deed and that he executed it for the purposes therein mentioned. He also acknowledged that the erasure of the word "formerly" in the fourth line from the top and its insertion in the fifth line was done by mutual consent of the parties to the instrument.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal at Great Salt Lake City, this the twentieth day of October A.D. 1858.

Samuel A. Gilbert, Clerk.

Personally appeared before me, Samuel A. Gilbert, Clerk of the United States Court for the Third Judicial District of Utah Territory, Louis Vasquez who being duly sworn says that Hiram F. Morrell was his lawfully appointed Agent, and as such was authorized to sign the indenture referred to in the indenture hereto attached and bearing this date, and that he, the deponent doth fully approve of the Acts and doings of the said Morrell in the above premises as if done by himself in his own proper person.

Deponent further says that he is duly authorized to act for and in behalf of James Bridger aforesaid, and for him to sign the preceding indenture.

Louis Vasquez

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal of Court at Great Salt Lake City in the Territory and County above named, this eighteenth day of October one thousand eight hundred and fifty eight

Samuel A. Gilbert, Clerk

Recorded, Oct. 21, 1858
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Copied from "Records" Book B, page 128.

(Sale of Fort Bridger)

Fort Bridger Utah Territory Green River Co.

Aug 3rd 1855

This indenture made and entered into this day and date above written witnesseth that Bridger and Vascus [sig] of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of Eight thousand dollars one half in hand Paid, and the other half to be paid in fifteen months from this date have this day bargained sold and conveyed and by these presents do bar- gain sell and convey to Lewis Robison of the second part all the right title and interest both real and personal to which we have any claim in said Green River County, Utah Territory consisting of the following property -- To wit -- twenty miles square of land (more or less) upon which is situated the hereditaments and appurtenances the Build- ings known as Fort Bridger Buildings consisting of the Ranch and Herd Ground together with all the right Title and interest of the said Party of the first part to all and every article of property belonging to said Post in- cluding Cattle Horses, Goods, Groceries etc. -- Now if the said Party of the second Part shall well and truly pay to the said party of the first part the sum of four thousand dollars in fifteen months from this date then this Bond to be in full force and effect in Law otherwise to be null and void and the property above described to revert back to the said Party of the first Part.

In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals this day and date above written

in presence of

Almerin Grow and
Wm. A. Hickman

his

Jas X Bridger
mark

Louis Vasquez
per H. F. Morrell Agent

Recorded Oct. 21, 1858

The fore-shown indentures, signed by witnesses should be suf- ficient evidence for anyone to realize that the purchase was made, but some people question whether or not this was the work of Morrell as an agent for the Church. The writer has searched extensively
to find more evidences of the sale. By reading through the Church Business Letter File a letter from Brigham Young to Louis Robinson dated August 9, 1855, was encountered:

Louis Robinson Esqr. 
Great Salt Lake City
August 9, 1855

Dear Brother:

Your note for Bro. Butler came to home last night. All is right; We are glad the purchase is made. You are right, also in remaining while bro. Butler is absent putting up hay. I send you 2 doz fishlines @ 25 cents each . . . (following was a list of supplies sent to be sold at the Fort.) The account is open with Bridges Ranch. [sic]

All flour in small quantities for twenty five cents per lb sell beef when you can to trains at a high price, say 10 or 12½ cents but it will be needed here, and can be drove in if it will not bring as much as it should there, of course you will sell for the money such only as are as good as they ever will be. I donot see any way for you to do than to make it a point to stay there a good share of the time for the present, to make it as profitable as possible.

Signed Brigham Young
D. H. Wells¹

Also in the same letter file there was a letter on the subject. Heber C. Kimball in writing to Franklin D. Richards who was in England at the time stated:

... The church have bought out Bridger's ranch, and one hundred head of horned cattle, some 7 or 8 horses, some flour, and goods that he had, and pay $8,000 for it, and Bridger is gone.²

The following information has been taken from the Diary of John Pulsipher, who was at Fort Supply at the time

¹"Church Business Letters," Church Historian's Office, (Salt Lake City), Brigham Young to Louis Robinson.

²Ibid. Kimball to Richards.
of the purchase of Fort Bridger:

Tuesday, September 14, 1855. I went down to Ft. Bridger on business and to see our new neighbor Lewis Robinson who has both the old mountaineers claim for the church and he is to take charge of it. We found Geo. Boyd there blind with sore eyes in terrible pain administered to him three times, before the pains stopped.¹

Hiram Vasquez, stepson of Louis, then twelve years old, recalls seeing a large pile of gold on a back table for the sale of the Fort. He couldn't remember the names of the men who brought it, but he thought they were Mormons.² Maude Coleman of La Veta, Colorado, relates that she has heard her father, Hiram Vasquez, tell the story of the pile of gold for Fort Bridger many times.

Judge Carter came to the fort in the winter of 1857, and in his journal he tells of his trip there and his knowledge of the sale of Fort Bridger to the Mormons:

Last Monday, November 10, wind awful, hurricane all night driving snow in every direction--worst night I have ever spent. It was heart rending to listen to the cries of our famished mules as they crowded around camp-fires begging for food. . . . When we awoke this morning storm still raging, and air dark with snow. Mules were strewn about dead others in the last agonies of death. Difficult to get those alive to stand long enough to get a harness on them. . . . At least 50 living horses and mules left in camp as it was impossible to drive them. As soon as they would reach the tope of the hill they would wheel around and start back in spite of efforts to control them.

In evening we reached our prospective camp on sweat-water and among willows found some shelter . . . shoveled away snow built fire and by constant exertion in cutting

¹John Pulsipher, Diary, unpublished, B. Y. U. Library.

²LeRoy R. Hafen, op. cit., pp. 14-22. This was a personal interview of Dr. Hafen with Hiram Vasquez in 1930.
willows, keep ourselves from freezing--unbearably cold, -20 degrees below Zero.¹

In the spring of 1858, following the lease to the government in November, 1857, Bridger returned to his home near Kansas City. His partner Vasquez obtained a sub-contract from Russell, Majors, and Waddell, contractors for transporting army supplies to Utah. He reached Fort Bridger with his train in September, 1858.

A part of his freight was for that post, and while discharging it, he stayed at the house of Judge Carter who purchased the wagons that were unloaded.² While there Vasquez showed him a plat of land claimed by them (Bridger and Vasquez) which he said had been made by John Hockaday and also a copy of the contract or lease with the government, and said he intended to try to get the remaining amount due them by Brigham Young, on his arrival in Salt Lake City.³

On his return, Vasquez informed Carter that he had received all the money due them and that he had transferred the contract made with Captain Dickerson for the government to Brigham Young.⁴

It has never been recorded, to the knowledge of the writer, whether Bridger ever acknowledged receiving his share

²Ellison, op. cit., p. 20.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
of the eight thousand dollars paid by the Mormons. Although according to The True History of Fort Bridger written by Lulie Carter Groshon in 1924: "He (Bridger) had little cause to complain under all of the circumstances."¹ Mrs. Groshon lived at Fort Bridger with her father Judge W. A. Carter for many years and there had many sources of first-hand information not available to others.

The evidence presented herein should prove that the Mormons did pay good money for the ownership of Fort Bridger and that Louis Vasquez, admittedly, received the 8,000 dollars purchase price. The writer and Preston Nibley attempted to find the contract of lease to the government that Vasquez transferred to the Church, but they were unable to do so. The contract may at a future time be found among the titles of the Church.

Some writers, such as Cohen and Coutant, have said that eight thousand dollars was not nearly enough to be considered as the purchase price of the entire fort, but by examining the descriptions and information about the fort the approximate value of the fort can be ascertained. The best appraisal of its value would probably be the value listed in the lease to the United States Army. The Army had the option of leasing the fort for ten years, at the end of which time it could be purchased for 10,000 dollars.

Some of the early pioneers that passed Fort Bridger

¹Ibid. 56
gave opinions of its appearance. July 17, 1846, the Edwin Bryant part enroute to California wrote:

Fort Bridger as it is called is a small trading post established and occupied by Messrs Bridger and Vasquez. The buildings are two or three miserable log cabins rudely constructed, and bearing but a faint resemblance to habitable houses. Its position is in a handsome and fertile bottom of a small stream on which we are encamped. . . . The bottom produces the finest qualities of grass in great abundance. The water of the stream is cold and pure and abounds in spotted mountain trout and other small fish.  

Parley P. Pratt in his Journal on July 7, 1847 wrote:

Bridger's post consisted of two adjoining log houses, dirt roofs, and a small picket yard of logs set in the ground and about eight feet high . . . there are about eight or nine Indian lodges and fifty or sixty Indians around.  

The fort was sold eight or nine years after these reports, and there were undoubtedly improvements made. But Bridger felt that after the Army improvements, it would be only worth ten thousand. Essentially, the thing of value was the 3889 acres of land that the survey of the fort included and the spot in which it was located. It must have been a welcome sight after days of sagebrush and the alkali water for the hundred miles before the fort to come into a little valley with good grass and to drink the water of spring-fed streams.

Uncle Jack Robertson, an old trapper and the only man to live in the valley before Bridger and still be there after, was asked if the water in Smith's Fork (where he lived) was as good as the water in Black's Fork (at Fort Bridger). He re-

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1Ellison, op. cit., p. 12.
2Ibid., p. 13.
plied: "Indeed I can't tell you. I don't drink water. I never tasted it. You see sir, I am getting old, and it might freeze up in me."¹ This answer is indicative of much of the weather in the Bridger Valley. The value of the fertile land was lessened considerably by the shortness of the growing season. Until quick developing varieties of grain were developed, it was difficult to raise grain, because it was generally frozen before it fully matured. The only vegetation which grew without regard to the early and late frosts was the native grass.

It is evident that the only real value Fort Bridger held for the Mormons was as a way station and supply base. The two years at Fort Supply, just twelve miles away, had proven that it was not likely to be of any great value as the producer of the supplies for the way station.

There is very little evidence available to prove if Bridger knew of the sale of the fort. If he did know of its sale, there is a question if he ever received any of the eight thousand dollars paid by the Church to Vasquez.

Mrs. Dahlquist feels that Bridger could not possibly have known about the sale, because he was a pillar of honesty and certainly would do nothing as dishonest as trying to sell the fort twice.

Bray, in his biography of Louis Vasquez, gives the

¹Ibid., p. 40.
following reasons why Bridger leased the fort that had already been sold.

At the time of the lease to the Army the Mormons had not paid the full purchase price, which was to have been paid in fifteen months from the first payment. Jim's hatred for the Mormons and his difficulty with them caused him to feel no qualms in making the contract with the Army. He must have known of the sale and been satisfied, because his farm in Missouri, was bordered on the north by that of Louis Vasquez. These men spent every spare evening they had together.¹

Although it is nothing more than conjecture, it seems improbable that Vasquez and Bridger would have remained good friends throughout their lives if Bridger got nothing from the sale and Vasquez got eight thousand dollars. Their farms were located just two miles from each other in the town of Westport, which is now a part of Kansas City, Missouri.

In the latter part of his life, 1869, twelve years after the lease had been made with the Army, Bridger made the first claim upon the United States for the payment that was due.² The government replied that they would pay the debt when Bridger furnished title to the fort.³ No attempt was made by Bridger to furnish the title until 1872, when a request was made on the commissioner of land office for the survey or claim. The office reported that no claim or survey existed around the Fort Bridger area. Some years later

¹Bray, op. cit.
²Cohen, op. cit., pp. 229-239.
³Ibid.
in Washington, D. C., a copy of the claim was found, but no patent for the land had ever been issued. The family pushed the suit and finally in 1889, nine years after the death of Bridger, the family was awarded six thousand dollars lease money.\(^1\) The Vasquez family never tried to gain a settlement with the United States.

Most of the narratives of Jim Bridger tell of his ability as a trapper, explorer, scout, and guide, but very few of them mention much about his personal traits. One of the few stories the writer has found recorded was in the Reminiscence of John R. Young. He claimed Bridger was of puritanical mold. He never saw him laugh, yet he loved humor and fun. A dude once came to the fort and claimed to be a messenger of Brigham Young. Bridger very seriously eyed the dude and told him to stay and work for him and he would give him a tent and a squaw and make a trader out of him.\(^2\)

The dude agreed and Bridger pointed out a tent and told him he could stay and live with the squaw there. The dude entered and everyone sat around the fire laughing to themselves, when the man tore out of the tent in his shirt tails with Bridger's squaw right behind him with a quirt. Everyone had a good laugh but Bridger who calmly said: "He just remembered the message."

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)John R. Young, "Reminiscence", Utah Historical Quarterly (Salt Lake City: Utah Historical Society, July 1934), III, 16.
Fort Bridger After the Utah War

Fort Bridger became an Army post in November of 1857. Judge W. A. Carter, who was to spend the rest of his life in Bridger Valley, came to make his home. He wielded a great force for good in the valley and over the period of years until the military reservation was opened for homesteading in 1890 was its most illustrious citizen.

Fort Bridger has a lot of important events attached to its short history—the earliest known printing done within the limits of the present state of Wyoming was done by Hiram Burbdage in June 1863. He was the telegraph operator, but also published a little sheet called the Daily Telegraph. The telegraph station and the Pony Express stables were also maintained at the fort.

When homesteading began in the valley in 1890, Fort Bridger was the post office, commissary, and court. The first L. D. S. branch in the valley was held for a time at Fort Bridger.

It was fifteen years after the death of Bridger that the government granted a patent to Mary E. Carter, the widow of Judge W. A. Carter, giving for the first time legal uncontested title to the land at the fort. This took place November 11, 1896. When Mrs. Carter died in 1904, Mrs. Lulie Carter Groshon inherited the immediate site of the fort. June 27, 1928, the state Historical Landmarks Commission of Wyoming purchased the most important parts of the old fort. In 1930,
another part of the fort was purchased from W. C. Casto and added to the landmark and tribute to Bridger. LeRoy Hafen states:

The landmark is a fitting memorial to Bridger and Vasquez, who had trapped beaver, fought Indians and pioneered the west together for nearly half a century, spent their declining years as quiet neighbors on their Missouri farms. Before a fire on long winter evenings they must have refought the blackfeet with many a hair-breadth escape, waded streams to tend beaver traps, or rollicked at the gay summer rendezvous on the Green River, and perhaps a wind from the Rocky Mountains would on occasion blow down the chimney and lade the smoke from hickory hearth logs with an odor of pungent pine, while dimmed eyes of Mountain Men saw buffalo himp-ribs on sharp sticks spitting at the fire.  

\(^1\text{Hafen, op. cit., p. 107.}\)
CHAPTER IV

EARLY PIONEERS AND LIFE IN THE VALLEY

There are many different reasons why men take their families and move to a new, unsettled section of the country --some because of the challenge of conquering virgin land-- others because of failure and disappointment in the place they had previously been--and still others because of a dream of wealth and domain. The people that came to the Bridger Valley came for all of these reasons.

Today, there are six small villages in the valley: Fort Bridger, Urie, Mountain View, Robertson, Milburne, and Lyman. There are two other towns which may economically be considered a part of the valley: Carter, the railroad terminal nine miles to the north; Church Buttes, a natural gas pumping station fifteen miles to the east of the valley. There were three distinct groups of pioneers settle in the valley. They settled at Fort Bridger, Mountain View, and Lyman areas.

Fort Bridger

It is common knowledge to any student of western history that James Bridger and Louis Vasquez were the first two white men to make a settlement at Fort Bridger. The next men
that had an influence on the valley were the soldiers and freighters that came with Johnston's Army in 1857. From these men, a knowledge of the Bridger Valley traveled over much of the United States. There was little opportunity to settle in the immediate area of Fort Bridger because of the declaration of sixteen square miles as a Military Reservation, and only those people who operated businesses were legally allowed to remain. The earliest and most renowned man at the post was Judge W. A. Carter, who owned the store, was district judge and a large cattle owner. Judge Carter was able to procure the franchise to furnish the army post with all of the beef that they ate. One pioneer expressed the feelings of the less fortunate settlers in the valley that Judge Carter procured the contract to furnish the cattle for the army and was paid a good price and then sent his men into the mountains to kill deer which was fed to the army as high-priced beef. ¹

He admits many of the men who took care of the cattle of Judge Carter became some of the first permanent settlers of the valley. Robert, Will and George Harvey and Richard Hamilton all came to Fort Bridger with Judge Carter in 1857. The army had control of Fort Bridger most of the time until 1890 when the War Department formally transferred control of the Military Reservation to the Department of Interior who in turn opened in that year the Reservation to home-

¹Interview with Charles Hamilton, Pioneer, September 14, 1958.
steading. Some of the early people into the area after its opening for homesteading were the Ericksons, Dahlquists, Stoddards, and later the Fillins, Georges, Watsons and Michelis.

In the 1950 census, Fort Bridger was listed as a village of one hundred and eighty-seven inhabitants—this amount includes the small village of Urie which has an estimated eighty inhabitants. Fort Bridger has not changed much in the last twenty years. It consists of one post office, three gas stations, two cafes and bars, one tourist motel, one appliance shop and sports store, and one elementary school. Fort Bridger falls in the Mountain View School District, where their students attend high school. A large majority of the people within the city itself are devout Catholics.¹

Mountain View

Mountain View was settled by non-L.D.S. people. Many of the early settlers in and around Mountain View, however, were a great asset to the whole valley and were helpful many times in assisting the Saints who later moved into the Bridger Valley. In an article for the Bridger Valley Enterprise in 1919, Will H. Thomas wrote a short sketch of Mountain View, which the writer feels covers the subject quite well. Among other things he said:

To write a history of a place, one must know of the people of the different ages as they fit together to make up the finished whole. It is almost necessary that we understand the environments in which they lived, know of their advantages and disadvantages, their likes and dislikes, their standards of education and morals, their code of ethics. . . .

I consider it sufficient to state that the first settlers in this vicinity were of the usual type of frontiersmen, brave and sturdy, full of adventure and seeking to discover Nature's ways on the broad plains.

Such were the courageous pioneers who, following the abandonment of trading post and fort of old Fort Bridger by the U. S. government, had settled Smith's Fork in sufficient numbers by the year 1891, that a post office was granted by the United States on June 11, 1891. William H. Harvey was the first post master.¹

One of the first pioneers in the area around Mountain View was H. J. B. Taylor, a freighter for the government who was originally from Monongahela, Pennsylvania. Mr Taylor was a prominent rancher, cattlemen and horseman.² The Harveys


²Mr. H. J. B. Taylor has recorded in his journal a few of his experiences as a horseman and driver. General Howe came to Fort Bridger to inspect the troops and wanted to go as quickly as possible to Fort Thornburg, now known as Duchesne. He asked the advice of Judge Carter and the Judge told him that Mr. Taylor could take him there in one day across the hills and bad lands if he could stay in the wagon. Mr. Taylor took five, four-horse teams and stationed them at intervals to Fort Thornburg and attached an extra tongue, wheel and double trees to the wagon in preparation for the trip. They left at sun up and went as fast as the horses were able to pull the wagon, with no road to follow. After six hours of the pace, General Howe and his aid, Col. Bisby, told Mr. Taylor to stop for lunch. They got out of the wagon and spread out a red checked table cloth and put their lunch on it. Mr. Taylor had not planned on eating but upon seeing the food expected to be invited to eat—he was mistaken because the General finished his lunch, folded up the cloth, climbed into the wagon and then taking out a flask of whiskey presented it to Mr. Taylor and told him that whiskey was what he usually carried for his driver's dinner. They reached Fort Thornburg at sun down, covering almost sixty miles in one day.
were a family that came into the valley to work for Judge Carter. Jefferson Davis, Agnes Hewett, James Gourley, William Ramsey, John Beckstreme, A. R. Marchessault, Maurice Groshon, Mark Manly all came into the valley early and founded some of the better ranches.

The name Mountain View originated from a ranch at the foot of the Butte, which overshadows the town. The ranch was owned by Mrs. M. A. Groshon and christened by her about 1891 as the "Mountain View Ranch".¹

Following the resignation of Mr. Harvey as postmaster, Mrs. James Lamb was appointed in his place, but she soon became tired of the work. Upon her resignation, Mrs. Agnes Hewett assumed the honor and duties of the post office, but her duties were too numerous in other lines of work and she too resigned. For a short period of time it was impossible to find any one who would accept this appointment, so the office was discontinued by the government and the people were dependent on the Fort Bridger post office for their mail. Soon the people realized how much the post office meant to them and Mrs. Ida B. Harvey was persuaded to accept the duties of postmistress. Mr. Thomas, in his previously mentioned article states:

The postmistress-ship of Mrs. Ida B. Harvey dates the real beginning of the present town of Mountain View, 1893. In connection with her post office, she established in a room of her ranch house, a small store supplied with staple

¹Will A. Thomas, op. cit.
groceries, and from this beginning, the business of Mountain View has grown until the present time.

In the month of January, 1898, W. H. Harvey had had surveyed and mapped the southeast quarter of his mother's, Mrs. Agnes Hewett, homestead and by inscription on said map declared this to be the townsite of Mountain View, Uinta County, Wyoming. Mrs. Hewett has been rightly called the mother of Mountain View. A woman of rare qualities, she was a friend, nurse and doctor to all in the valley that needed her.

Early in the fall of 1898 the Harveys erected a store building on one of the lots of the new town. And when it was nearly completed the whole countryside turned out in true western style—and such a christening to the new town—dancing and eating, eating and dancing until broad daylight, when the party finally broke up with the best wishes and long life to the infant town of Mountain View.

The people felt some place for amusement was demanded, and a community hall was built through donation. While built of logs and finished in the crude architecture of backwoodsmen, it filled a long felt want and the little hamlet began taking on the ways of a village.

At about this time the members of the Fort Bridger Camp No. 629, Woodmen of the World, decided to change their meeting place from Fort Bridger to the Community Hall at Mountain View and the rapid growth in members proved the wisdom of the movement. It was only a short time until the Community Hall was too small to accommodate the vast crowds of people who came from twenty to thirty miles from the surrounding country upon every festive occasion. Therefore the members of Camp 629 erected a W. O. W. Hall, a building which was the best of its kind at the time and which still stands as a monument to their enterprise and industry, by applying business methods and concerted action.

In 1906 the next improvement to change the country of the pioneer state to the fast approaching present, was the installment and operation of a telephone system between Mountain View and many of the ranches along Smith's Fork: the advantages enjoyed by those who had the telephones were soon realized by less fortunate ones.

Soon the Union Telephone Company was formed maintaining more than three hundred miles of line and serving one hundred and sixty stockholders.¹

There have been many advancements in Mountain View.

In the year 1910, an idea that people needed some religious

¹Will H. Thomas, op. cit.
training began to grow, and in that year the L.D.S. Church opened a branch of the Church there, but due to the small number of members and the opposition from the Protestants, the branch was discontinued. In 1913, the Presbyterian Mission Board became interested and organized a church, and when Mrs. G. A. Thomas donated the land, the Presbyterian Church built an edifice which has been used since as the Community Church of Mountain View. The reverend J. C. Whitsett was in charge of the mission.

The town of Mountain View has located within it a United States Land Office, a hotel, a cafe, Uinta County State Bank, a drug store, a hardware and lumber store, several fine garages, a theater, bars, good schools, and a telephone exchange. The 1950 census placed the size of the town at five hundred thirty-nine, which is very near the present size of the town.¹

Lyman

The first L.D.S. settlers to immigrate into the Bridger Valley after the Johnston's Army episode came in the year 1890-91. They came from many different cities in Utah, but principally from the Morgan County area. According to the Church Historian's Office, the first Mormon into the valley after it was opened to homesteading in the fall of 1890 was Hyrum Strong, who arrived in the Bridger Valley on September

¹Seastrand, op. cit.
13, 1890.¹ The little town of Lyman has gone through many changes for different reasons. The town of Lyman is located on a sloping plateau and appears to be higher than Fort Bridger which lies six miles to the west. For this reason, it received its first name, Bench. A post office was secured for the town of Bench. Later as the immigration increased, the people were organized into a ward by Elders Heber J. Grant and Abraham O. Woodruff. The name of the new ward was called Owen in honor of Elder Abraham Owen Woodruff. The members of the ward desiring to have the town called by the same name as the ward petitioned the United States Government for permission to change the name of the post office to that of Owen, but the government refused because there was at that time, 1898, another post office in the state by the name of Owen. Consequently, in 1899 the name of the town was changed to Lyman in honor of Elder Francis M. Lyman.²

Some of the earliest L.D.S. settlers in the town of Lyman were William and Henry Bluemel, who took homesteads just east of the present site of Lyman, S. R. Brough, (whose homestead was purchased for the townsite at the suggestion of Elder Francis M. Lyman), Joseph and King Durrant, Simon Gross, P. C. Larsen, Joseph W. Wall and others. There were also some of the army men who worked for Judge Carter that home-

¹"Journal History of the Church," September 13, 1890.
²"Owen Ward Historical Record" MS, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah, December 27, 1894.
steaded land in Lyman hoping to be able to sell them later for large sums of money. They included Wilson Snodgrass, whose homestead was purchased by George Bradshaw, Ernest Hungerford, whose homestead was purchased by George A. Ellsworth, and a Mr. Diffendaffer.

It seemed almost impossible to the writer that by 1890 there could exist any place so distant that it might require hardship to get to it, but after reading some of the life histories of the settlers who came to the valley, his impression of life in the valley has changed far from what it was when he started. The account of the trip of a group of Saints from Minersville, Utah, to Bridger Valley in 1897 will illustrate the hardships endured by some of the pioneers.

On September 7, 1897, a party composed of the children of some of the early pioneers of Minersville determined to immigrate north to try and better their conditions financially. They had heard of land being opened to homesteading in Bridger Valley, Wyoming, and in Manila, Daggett County, Utah. Most of the good land around Minersville had already been settled. The party comprised Ephraim Marshall, J. W. Rollins, Will Hamblin, and Nathaniel Goodman, with their wives and children. In the company there was a total of thirty-five souls. Among other things, they had eleven wagons, three buggies, thirty work horses and some loose animals which included about one hundred and forty cattle.¹

¹Interview with Raleigh Hamblin, pioneer, September 13, 1958.
Mrs. Ada Dotson Rollins in telling of the day they left Minersville gave the following account:

The day was one in the history of our lives which we will never forget. Time has made indelible on the battle of memory. We all left fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters and many dear friends and it was hard indeed at the parting as we thought that many years would pass ere we should meet them again.

We were all tendered a fine reception at the L. D. S. chapel a few evenings before we left them. Fond farewells were taken from the loved ones at home.

Groups of friends on the street corners shouted good-bye as we passed them. Promptly at two o'clock in the afternoon we left with our faces to the north to see a home we had set out for.

Camping the first night was a novelty to some, I fancy. However we got along fine, some of the horses and cows going back kept the boys bush hunting them which took considerably of their time.1

By the time they arrived at Corn Creek in Millard County, the John Henry Blackner and Wallace Hamblin families had joined the original company making a total of fifty-four souls in all.

As the little band of immigrants struggled along, the wife of W. T. Hollingshead had contracted the mountain fever. Though not contagious, it was infectious and many of those who took care of her also contracted the fever. All but three members of the Charles Rollins family were stricken with fever. It was a struggle to take care of the sick and try to travel all day long in the covered wagons and then try to keep the sick warm and give them baths at night. Mrs. Rollins in her sketch of the trip described the ordeal as follows:

You might wonder how we managed to take care of our

1"Reminiscence of Ada Dotson Rollins," MS, September, 1914.
sick. I know how it was in our group. When the tents were fixed in shape at night, for we were then in stormy country (it rained some every day of the trip) we scraped the damp dirt away, laid a carpet down and propped the springs upon pieces of wood to keep the sick dry. In order to keep them warm a hot skillet of coals was prepared and boiling water was placed in a tub to warm the air before we could bathe the sick ones.

During this time we did not forget the Alwise One who rules the destiny of the human family. Many was the time when we did not know whether we should bury one by the wayside. Thus we sought the aid of him who will help when we seek him in humility.

In the evening by the bedside of the afflicted a prayer ascended to Him, The Father, to keep us and save those afflicted. Many times prayers were offered by those not accustomed to praying for their sick. But supplications were heard in their behalf.¹

They passed through many trying times but the march had to be made and everyone tried to make the best of the situation. As they passed through some of the towns in Utah, they were met by friends and relatives. The sight of an immigrant train was somewhat strange and amusing to the residents of some cities. The amusement was not all at the expense of the immigrants, however. About these incidents Mrs. Rollins States:

As we passed along through some of the Utah towns, relatives came out to meet us. We were glad to see them every time and proved to be quite a curiosity to many. One lady viewed the company as we passed along until the last trail wagon was bringing up the rear. She then hailed the teamster and wanted to know where in the world he was going. He answered her in a jocular way and said, "Well Madam, we are Cox's army and are going to Missouri." She accepted the answer and returned to the house. We all had a good laugh when he told us about it that night.²

Several of the women and some of the boys less than

¹Rollins, op. cit.
²Ibid.
twelve were required to drive a wagon for the five weeks of the trip as the men and older boys were needed to look after the horses and cattle and to prepare future camps. The immigrants reached the home of L. E. Johnson on the Black's Fork on October 11, 1897, but after viewing the great amount of sagebrush decided to go on to the Lucern Valley in Daggett County, Utah. Upon arrival in Lucern Valley, the immigrants were very impressed until they found that water would cost them one hundred dollars an acre or one thousand dollars a share. These immigrants then decided to return to Bridger Valley. The ninth day of November the settlers arrived at Smith's Fork, near the present town of Mountain View where they wintered in abandoned log cabins.

The winter proved to be worse for these people than the fall had been while they were traveling. All of the men in the group and all the boys thirteen years old or older spent the winter in the mountains cutting logs for the houses that they would build the next spring. In an interview with Raleigh Hamblin, who was ten years old when the settlers arrived in 1897, the following description was given of the quarters in which the families spent the winter. Mr. Hamblin reported that the Watson Rollins and the Wallace Hamblin families shared one log cabin, which measured fourteen by twenty-four feet. It was petitioned in the middle with a canvas and there was one wood stove in the middle of the cabin to supply the heat. There was a total of seven children in each family. When they would become discouraged on some of the long winter
nights when the temperature sometimes dropped to twenty or thirty degrees below zero, the families would gather around the stove to be warm as possible and then sing hymns that the Saints had sung while crossing the plains.\(^1\)

For school that winter the children went to the little schoolhouse east of Mountain View, a distance of two miles from where they lived. Like many children they were not always careful to choose the shortest way home. Once while coming home, Ray Blackner found a bobcat trail and ran home to get the family twenty-two caliber rifle. The rifle was the one shot variety which had to have the old shell knocked out with the use of a ramrod. Ray and Raleigh and some other boys tracked the bobcat until at last they found it, and Ray shot it but did not kill it. For fear of being punished for using the gun without asking, the boys all got clubs and ran and clubbed the bobcat to death. The skin was then tanned and used to make caps for the boys.\(^2\)

When spring came Mr. Strong helped them select land. They chose what was called the lower bench just north of the present town of Lyman. They bought out the rights of the Fort Bridger Canal from E. M. Carter for fifteen hundred dollars. As soon as they had the roofs on their cabins they moved their families into them. The next task was to try to get the brush cleared and some crops planted.

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\(^1\)Interview with Raleigh Hamblin, \textit{op. cit.}

\(^2\)Ibid.
In the sketch written by William Bluemel, he gives an idea of the type of day the pioneer spent in clearing his land. Each morning Mr. Bluemel would arise and be in the field by the time the sun was up. He would spend all of the daylight hours following a hand plow and each evening and night until eleven o'clock was spent with a grubbing hoe digging out the sagebrush. He spent every free minute he could find working on his place and clearing it so that it would produce crops of grain and alfalfa. He returned to Randolph, Utah in September of 1894 to "claim a wife." He was married to Emily Pearce, and the next day he started for his homestead which was two days hard drive in a wagon.¹

The summers in the Bridger Valley were beautiful. The days were warm, but the nights were always cool. The winters were cold and long and often the high winds would make travel almost impossible. Consequently, the summers were loved by the settlers but the winters were hated and dreaded.

The little town of Lyman is far different from the group of scattered farms which comprised it when the Saints from Minersville arrived there. In each quarterly conference there was a call for a report of the condition of each ward, and at each conference the report from Lyman would be "prospering, but too scattered to operate smoothly as a ward of the Church."² With this report in mind, Apostles Francis M.

¹William Bluemel, Sketch of his life, written by himself.
²Woodruff Stake Historical Report, January 14, 1899.
Lyman and Abraham O. Woodruff and Elder Andrew Jensen visited the Owen Ward. Elder Jensen wrote the following article which appeared in the *Deseret Evening News*, May 16, 1899:

After first attending the Relief Society conference held at Evanston, Wyoming, May 9, 1899, Francis M. Lyman and Abraham O. Woodruff, of the Council of the Apostles, Andrew Jensen, Assistant Church Historian and John E. Baxter and Byron Sessions, of the Woodruff Stake presidency, boarded the eastbound train at Evanston and traveled fifty-one miles by train to Carter Station, where we were met by Elder Gustaf Youngberg, of the Owen Ward, who took us by team across the bad lands a distance of about ten miles to the residence of Bro. Olind, who lives at Black's Fork, about two miles below old Fort Bridger. After partaking of the hospitality of Bro. Olind and family the visiting brethren continued their journey about six miles further by the way of Bridger, a new town situated immediately east of the old Fort, to the Owen Ward meeting house, on the Bridger Bench, where the Saints were assembled and about to close their meeting having waited for the visiting brethren for several hours. The house was crowded and before dismissing the Apostles and others made appropriate preliminary remarks, and then dismissed the people until ten o'clock the next morning.

After the meeting a number of teams loaded with people, the visiting brethren on the lead, started out on a townsit expedition, and visited a number of localities, which were considered suitable to build a town upon. The examination of these were continued till the darkness of evening admonished all to seek shelter for the night and the visiting brethren put up with Samuel R. Brough and Elder Theodore J. Durrant.

The next morning, (May 10, 1899) bright and early the brethren were again on the move to make further investigation of the lands, in order to select a townsit on which the Saints who lived on their respective quarter sections might gather or make a center of business meeting and school purposes. Precisely at 10 o'clock the Saints and quite a number of "non-Mormons" met according to appointment on a regular townsit meeting, and all present were given an opportunity to express their views freely, and present their claims and preferences for the respective localities which had been thought of in connection with the proposed town. Considerable discussion was engaged in, and different views presented, but finally the people left it for the Apostles to decide where the town should be, whereupon Elder Lyman made the announcement that his choice fell upon Bishop Samuel R. Brough's homestead, which was beautifully situated upon high ground overlooking nearly the entire country on which the Saints
who wanted a townsite had located. This choice seemed to please most of the people and the vote to adopt this quarter section for the townsite was finally made unanimous. Bishop Brough, to whom the choice was a surprise, explained with tears in his eyes, that he had become very much attached to his homestead, having selected it seven years ago, after spending four days traveling over the land for the purpose of locating a homestead for his family; and he explained that nothing but the advice and desire of the Apostles could now induce him to part with it. For the benefit of the people, however, he would let it go freely; but refused to put a price on it. This he would leave for the brethren to do. Consequently a committee of three, consisting of Joseph G. Wall, Charles Rollins and Henry Bluemel, were appointed to appraise the land, to have it surveyed and sell the lots to the people. The best of feelings prevailed in the meeting; and before it adjourned, everybody seemed pleased, and many were very much elated at what they considered a wise choice and a most fortunate selection.

It now appears that Elders Baxter and Sessions of the Stake presidency, in visiting the same grounds last year, had come to the conclusion that Bishop Brough's quarter section was the best place on the whole land for a townsite; but for fear of doing the Bishop an injustice and reluctant in asking him to make the sacrifice, they had suppressed their preference, and had partly decided with the people on a neighboring locality for the townsite.

The new townsite is about five miles east of old Fort Bridger nearly eighteen miles northeast of old Fort Supply, and 14 miles south southeast of Carter station, on the U. P. railroad; it is about two miles from Black Fork and four miles from the nearest point on Smith's Fork.

Owen Ward, which was organized June 8, 1898, by Elders John Henry Smith, Heber J. Grant and Abraham O. Woodruff, embraces all the Saints (at present over one hundred families) living in a scattered condition on and adjacent to the so-called Bridger bench, lying between Black's Fork and Smith's Fork. It includes the sites of old Fort Bridger, Fort Supply and Millersville, and also a neighborhood known as Mountain view. The strip of country referred to is also locally known as the upper and lower bench. The former slopes toward Smith's Fork on the southeast and the latter toward Black Fork on the southwest. The former is by far the most extensive, being more than 25 miles long from southwest to northeast, with an average width of about five miles. Far to the south the majestic and snowclad Uintah mountains present a most beautiful appearance. The Bridger bench is also a complete contrast to the surrounding country which is known as the "bad lands." While these consist of broken unfertile and desolate regions, the Bridger bench, is as a rule, level and fertile. The
water brought onto it comes through a canal which taps Black's Fork about fifteen miles above the new townsite. The upper bench slopes gently toward Smith's Fork, possessing the requisite fall for systematic irrigation. There is still room for thousands of settlers. The climate in this region of country is exceedingly healthy. Though the west winds, which at times assume considerable velocity, make it quite disagreeable; but the brethren, who have spent several years there say that the winds and climate generally have moderated considerably since they first came. The elevation of the Bridger bench is about 6,500 feet above sea level.

At the close of the townsite meeting referred to, a nice lunch was served in the meeting house, after which a general meeting was held in the afternoon. At this meeting the Apostles spoke very encouragingly to the Saints, and at the close Elder Lyman, in a fervent prayer, invoked the blessings of the Lord on the land and its inhabitants.

The visiting brethren then left after a genuine Latter-day Saint hand-shaking all around and considerable expression of joy and good feelings, as well as appreciation of a pleasant. [sic] By way of Fort Bridger the visiting brethren were conveyed by Elder Jarman in a light vehicle to Piedmont. . . .

Latter-day Saints who are looking for homes and who are not afraid to face the hardships of pioneer life in a somewhat cold country, would perhaps do well to cast a glance beyond the eastern boundary of Utah and look upon the country which the late President Brigham Young purchased of Old Captain Bridger, and on which he located the famous Fort Supply, a settlement of Saints, which undoubtedly would have grown to a place of importance at an early day, had the Johnston army complications not put an end to the enterprise.

Later the selection of that locality for a military reservation made settlement impossible, but now all of these obstacles have been removed: The Center is open for settlement, and the facilities are ample to justify Elder Cherry's insistence as a member of the Woodruff stake presidency, in predicting that the Bridger country at some future day will become one of the stakes of Zion. 1

The inspiration of President Cherry came to pass in 1926, when the Lyman Stake was formed at Lyman, Wyoming.

From the choosing of the townsite by Elders Lyman

1Deseret Evening News (Salt Lake City) May 16, 1899.
and Woodruff came an active L. D. S. community. The town has always been an agricultural one and its growth has been slow. In an article in the Bridger Valley Enterprise, the thought is presented that Lyman isn't the kind of town that has mushroomed into existence. There hasn't been gold or any other precious metals found there, but perhaps no people on earth are blessed with a more healthy place to live. Fertile soil, proper drainage, good water and a central location were the factors that were considered in selecting the townsite.

The first public building that was erected in Lyman was a community center used for school during the week and Church on Sunday. The first meeting was held in it on February 11, 1900.¹

The first postmaster in Lyman was Jacob Rasmussen, who operated a small store owned by S. R. Brough in conjunction with the post office. John Guild also had a small store. The town had grown to the extent that it was incorporated October 15, 1913--the only incorporated town in the valley. The Enterprise gave the following list of businesses that existed in the valley in 1919: a modern creamery, first run by Ray L. Blackner; a flour mill, started by Rosco Brough and Clyde Bradshaw; two general stores; a bank; an implement and auto company; lumber yard; hotel; drug store; meat market; two garages; power and machine shop; newspaper and job office; photo

¹Bridger Valley Enterprise (Lyman, Wyoming) December 19, 1919.
gallery; library; electric light plant; confectionery store; theater.¹

The writer in an attempt to find out who was the founder or original operator of each of the above businesses found some disagreement among the "old-timers", but will list the ones on which there was an agreement. The first blacksmith shop was run by William Philips. The theater was operated in the L. D. S. amusement hall by Donald M. Field, but this amusement hall burned down in 1926 burning all of the Lyman Ward records from its commencement up until that time. The first Auto agency was operated by Mr. Jenks and sold the first Ford car ever sold in the valley to Joseph Slade, Sr., who went to Ogden on the train to take delivery and spent two days covering the one hundred ten miles back to Lyman. The first livery stable was owned by Thomas Brough, and Bishop S. R. Brough had the first machine agency which at the time consisted of wagons and plows. He later sold the agency to Joseph Slade, Sr., who still operates an implement house there, at the present time. The drug store and confectionary were operated by Gene Hamblin and the hotel by Ephraim Marshall.²

In the year 1919, the first water system was laid in the city at a cost of forty-five thousand dollars. The bond for the water system was purchased by the State of Wyoming. The water bond was paid for in February of 1958.

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
In the meantime the streams had become somewhat polluted, requiring a large amount of chlorination to make the water safe for human consumption, especially in the fall of the year. In 1956, the city voted for a one-hundred-and-fifteen-thousand-dollar-water bond to pipe the water of a large spring eighteen miles to be used in the city of Lyman. Lyman is now one of three cities in the state with pure enough water that it doesn't need a germicide added.¹

James Ellingsford and Alvin Stewart were the pioneers in electricity in the year 1919. These men supplied power to businesses from the hours of six to ten in the evening. Later in December of 1929, they expanded their facilities to give anyone power who wanted it on a twenty-four hour a day basis. In 1940, the Bridger Valley Rural Electrical Association was formed giving power to all of the towns of the valley.

There have been many improvements in the town but interest would probably limit the mention of others except that of the organization of a voluntary fire department. There had been many serious fires in Lyman and the rest of the valley, so on July 15, 1937, the Lyman volunteer fire department was formed by city ordinance. The residents of the valley are in great debt to the men who have given of their time and money to take care of calls and purchase fire equipment. Mountain View has also purchased a small fire truck to aid in fire

¹Citation medal on record in City Hall, Lyman Wyoming.
The city of Lyman has a population of eight hundred and eighty-six and is the largest of the small towns that make up the valley.

**Milburne--Robertson**

The first settlers to live in the Milburne area were a group of L. D. S. pioneers. They homesteaded on the west side of Black’s Fork in 1898 and made a canal for the purpose of conveying water onto their land. The early settlers there were Brigham, Alfred and Charles Hansen, Charles W. Nielsen, Jonathan Sharp, Charles H. Hurdman, Oscar O. Stoddard, Charles M. Hammond, Joseph Horrocks, and Joseph F. and Alvin Thompson. They built a few cabins that year and raised their first crops there in 1900. Milburne has had very little increase or decrease in population during the years of its existence. The town consists of one general store and an abandoned schoolhouse. At the beginning of the year 1904, Milburne could boast of having the only flour mill in the valley, which was established by Hans Davidson, but unfortunately it burned down a few years later.

Robertson is another small ranching community which is only a few miles south of the Old Fort Supply. Situated on

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1In *Ordinance Book*, MS, Lyman, Wyoming, 1937.
2"Woodruff Stake Historical Record" MS, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, 1889.
3Interview with Nettie Slade, September 12, 1958; also Recorder's Office for Uinta County, Evanston, Wyoming.
the rich bottom lands of the river, it makes a perfect place to raise cattle and sheep. Some of the early pioneers in the area were Andrew Heide, Joseph M. Miller, Newton D. Johnson, George Lamb, Jesus M. Valdez, Thomas Anson, Ed Carter and L. E. Johnson.

The town received its name from the famous old trapper who lived near there known as Uncle Jack Robertson--a man who claimed to have come to the valley in the early 1830's and made it his home until he died in 1884. He seldom had any trouble with anyone, including the Indians.

At the present time the town of Robertson consists of one general store, a gas station and one large abandoned schoolhouse. It has been virtually unused since the consolidation of the schools in District Four.\(^1\)

There are two other towns that are not within the confines of the valley but which affect the valley. These towns are Carter and Church Buttes. Carter is a small railroad station, built in 1869 as a coal and water station for the railroad, but since the development of the diesel engine, it has no usefulness as a coaling station but is used as a freighting agency and mail stop. It was named after Judge William A. Carter.

The town of Carter is located ten miles north of Urie, which is the small town between Fort Bridger and Lyman. Urie has a general store, a gas station, and a motel. It is sit-

\(^1\)Seastrand, *op. cit.*
uated on the crossroads that lead to Mountain View on the south, Lyman on the east, Fort Bridger on the west and Carter on the north.

The other community outside the confines of the Valley is the village of Church Buttes. Church Buttes is located about eighteen miles east of Lyman and is a pumping station for natural gas from the Church Buttes gas field. The school students residing in Church Buttes attend school at Lyman.

The population of the valley, although not as high as it was in 1930 has remained very constant for the last ten years. It is the opinion of the writer's father that he has never been any place where the people live better and make as good a living for the actual amount of time expended in gaining a livelihood.

The major crops of the valley are wild or native hay and grain, which are generally used to feed sheep and cattle, the two major industries of the valley.
CHAPTER V

WARD AND STAKE DEVELOPMENT

Latter-day Saints have among them a spirit of gathering. In most cities, town or countries where a group of Saints exist, there is usually more religious meetings held than in other religious denominations. The early groups of pioneers that moved from Utah to settle in Bridger Valley were no exception. They went to great trouble to try to organize themselves after the pattern set up by the Church. It seemed that in the Bridger Valley there was a need to meet together often, especially in the long cold winter months of the year.

The first meetings of a religious nature in the Bridger Valley were held at Fort Supply. Isaac Bullock in an open letter to the Deseret News gave the following information: "The weather here has been very cold with the thermometer dropping below zero every night for more than one week. Some of the men have frostbite, but all are attending meetings as they should."¹ There is very little information about the organization of the meetings at Fort Supply, but the fact

¹Isaac Bullock, "Letter" Deseret Evening News, (Salt Lake City), January 15, 1855.
that all of the men attended meetings "as they should" even when they were suffering from frozen hands and feet gives a good indication of the type of men who were chosen to establish Fort Supply.

There were no regular meetings of the L. D. S. Church held in the valley from 1858 until 1890.

According to the Church Historian's Record in the *Journal History*, September 13, 1890, Hyrum Strong was the first Latter-day Saint to settle in the Bridger Valley after it was opened to homesteading. The influx of Saints after this time was very gradual. In the sketch of William Bluemel's life, he points out that there was religious study groups held in the various homes before there existed any branch organization.  

There have been L. D. S. wards in only three of the towns of the valley. The organization of the church in these three towns will be considered separately.

**Lyman Ward**

There was a large number of settlers that came to the valley in 1891-92 from different parts of northeastern Utah. These people came mainly from Morgan and South Rich Counties,

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2. The ward history of Lyman Ward was taken from the Woodruff Stake Historical Record because the Lyman Ward records to 1926 were nearly all burned when the ward recreation and amusement hall burned.

These men petitioned the general authorities to let them organize into a branch of the church so that they could enjoy the functions of all of the organizations of the church.\(^1\) In 1894 President William W. Cluff of Summit Stake and Bishop James Brown of Evanston visited the Fort Bridger area. On that occasion in the house of Hyrum Strong, they organized the valley into a branch named Fort Bridger, under the jurisdiction of the Evanston Ward. Lars E. Johnson was appointed to preside over the branch with S. R. Brough and James Christian Larsen as assistants. These men had equal authority as they lived in different parts of the valley and each had charge of the study groups in their locality.\(^2\) The meetings were held in private homes with the location being changed every two or three weeks.

In 1895, a number of families began making homes on the lower bench north of Lyman. Among them were James W. Stewart, one of the pioneers of Utah in 1847, and Joseph Wall who came to the valley to escape the persecution then being

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\(^1\) S. R. Brough, "Life Sketch," MS, (autobiographical).

\(^2\) Woodruff Stake Historical Record, Book 1, 1894, Church Historians Office, (Salt Lake City).
showered upon those men who had taken plural wives. He had four wives and twenty-four children many of whom are prominent and loved citizens of the valley today.\footnote{Sketch of Joseph Wall, compiled by his daughter, Hannah Harris.}

The first Sunday School in the Fort Bridger Branch was organized June 6, 1897, with William F. Lane, superintendent and Theodore J. Durrant and William Bluemel as his assistants. Miss Rhoda Johnson served as the secretary. This Sunday school was held on the lower bench on Black's Fork. In November of 1897, a large group of over fifty Saints arrived in the valley from Minersville. They settled on the lower bench. This prompted the building of a meetinghouse and schoolhouse in March of 1898. The building was built by the use of donated labor and materials. It was constructed just a short distance east of the present town of Lyman and was a log structure which measured thirty by eighteen feet. As soon as it was finished, a Sunday school was organized to meet in that house while the original Fort Bridger Sunday School continued on the lower bench. James C. Larsen was appointed superintendent of the new Sunday school with James H. Syme, first and Thomas Brough, second assistants. Miss Agnes Ethel Rae acted as secretary.

A meeting which was held in the new schoolhouse June 8, 1898, was attended by Apostles John Henry Smith, Heber J. Grant, and Abraham O. Woodruff. President John M. Baxter, and
Byron Sessions of the Woodruff Stake also attended. The Saints were organized into a ward named Owen in honor of Apostle Abraham Owen Woodruff. Samuel R. Brough who was already a High Priest was ordained Bishop. Ephraim Marshall was ordained a High Priest and set apart as first counselor, and Carl Gustav Youngberg was ordained High Priest and set apart as second counselor. Theodore T. Durrant was set apart and blessed as clerk and recorder. ¹

The auxiliary organization leaders of the ward were also chosen by Presidents Baxter and Sessions upon the suggestion of Bishop Brough. They were as follows: Henry Voss, superintendent of Sunday Schools, with James Christian Larsen and William C. Rollins as counselors, and Thomas J. Brough, secretary; William Hamblin was chosen and set apart as president of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association with Charles M. Larsen and Henry Bluemel as counselors and Watson Loraine Rollins, secretary; Mrs. Jensine Wall was chosen and set apart as the president of the Relief Society, with Mrs. Harriet Rider and Mrs. Ada Rollins as counselors, Mrs. Sarah Ann Moyes, secretary; Mary Ellen Stewart was chosen and set apart as president of the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association with Miss Emily Brough and Mrs. Clara Rollins as counselors, and Bathsheba Larsen, secretary; Mrs. Francis P. Hamblin was chosen as president of the Primary Association with Harriet Ann Rollins, and Miss Rhoda Johnson as counselors and Miss Netta

¹"Woodruff Stake Historical Record" MS, Book 1, June 8, 1898.
Marshall, secretary and treasurer.\textsuperscript{1}

A branch sunday school of the Owen Ward was organized November 6, 1898, to accomodate the Saints in the Smith's Fork area. Robert Kidman served as superintendent with William A. Deamander and Peter G. Wall as assistants.

The winters in the valley, as mentioned above, become very cold at times and there is an almost constant wind which piles up snow to depths of ten or fifteen feet. For this reason the following information was recorded:

We have had a very long winter here although it has not been as cold here as in other parts. The thermometer registered thirty below zero today, February 22, 1899. We have organized a sunday school in Fort Bridger for the Children because of the cold.\textsuperscript{2}

As the membership of the Owen Ward grew, the desire for a larger meeting place also grew. In 1899 steps were taken to build a new meeting house which measured thirty-eight by sixty feet. It was erected at the cost of three thousand dollars. This new meeting house was built and dedicated in less than one year, being completed February 11, 1900.

At quarterly conference January 14, 1899, Bishop S. R. Brough reported on the Owen Ward. He reported that it was in good condition and all of the organizations of the ward were complete except for a religion class, but they were not very well attended because of the scattered condition of the people and that if it was settled where the town should be built, it

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid.
would settle most of their problems.

The question of deciding where the town should be built was settled May 10, 1899, when Elders Francis M. Lyman and Abraham O. Woodruff chose the homestead of Bishop Brough as being the ideal site upon which to construct a city. The city then applied to have the name of their post office changed from Bench to Owen, but because of the conflict with another post office in the state by the same name the town was given the name of Lyman in honor of Elder Lyman. In 1901 the church gave their consent to change the name of the ward to that of Lyman.

The ward in Lyman continued to prosper and grow larger until the members felt that once again they should build a new chapel to take care of their needs. This building was constructed in 1914 at a cost of eight thousand five hundred dollars, two thousand of which was appropriated by the church. The building was of frame construction. The main auditorium had a seating capacity of four hundred and fifty, but over six hundred could be seated if there was necessity for it. The full basement had nine large classrooms, four of which opened by use of large folding doors to provide a large recreation hall.

This chapel was used as a community center for programs on days of celebration. Until recent years, one of the

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1Ibid. August 4, 1901.

2"Lyman Ward History," MS, compiled by Andrew Jensen, 1919, Church Historian's Office. (Salt Lake City).
Outstanding events of the year was the July 24th celebration. To try to enumerate all of the things that took place in those celebrations would be impossible, but there was always an outstanding program, a tribute to pioneers, a rodeo, and a dance. One of the favorite poems of the city was, "Sixty Years Ago" by Abraham Wood.

SIXTY YEARS AGO
(by Abraham Wood)

Sixty years ago; yes, sixty years ago,
We didn't know what depression was, sixty years ago,
The men wore homespun pants, the children had no shoes
One man owned a paper, the rest borrowed the news.
All women cooked on fire places until that eventful day
When Stoddards got a cook stove, to see it, they came from far away.
Sheep weren't shorn with clippers as it now is done;
But about sixty years ago it was by far more fun.
First the sheep was caught, then his legs were tied.
After some hard tussling on the platform he'd abide,
One man used the shearsers while the other held him back,
And if the dumb brute tried to move, on his head he'd get a wack.
Finally Brother Banks the champion was declared
For sixteen sheep a day was the number that he dared.

Sixty years ago; yes, sixty years ago,
We didn't know what sugar was sixty years ago.
We chased the cattle over the hills with sore and bleeding feet.
We spread molasses on black bread and thot it was a treat.
The fiddler was paid squash or wheat as was the caller of "Promenade all."
Once a girl in a pink calico dress was made queen of the ball.
And when they danced from left to right, and graceful boys they'd make
Shy youths into their pockets reached, and girls were treated to molasses cake.
The school house was Mrs. Corbridges home where she lived every day.
Then she moved her family back at night after we went away.
We toed the mark and recited our lessons which we memorized.
But the long words we could spell you would be surprised.
We chewed pine gum, made faces and other things we dared. Brother Roberts often found us out and the rod was never spared.

Sixty years ago; yes, sixty years ago, We didn't know what matches were sixty years ago. We borrowed fire from our neighbors when we saw their smoke arise, Apples were put in kids stockings for a happy Christmas surprise. Women spun, wove and dyed their dresses, they wore no paint and never cut their tresses. We had very little money and had no bank account But we'd borrow from friends and neighbors and pack back the right amount. Once we didn't have bread, no flour could be found So we gleaned wheat from morn til night, took it to the mill and had it ground. Then be thankful for your blessings, the store is getting low And think of the happy days we enjoyed sixty years ago.

Poems such as the above-mentioned one never ceased to thrill the residents of the community. A reason that this poem had such an effect was that it was composed in memorium to the Minersville Saints and as almost half of the residents of Lyman were from that section of Utah, it was probably of more interest to them than to other people.

There have been many poems and tributes written to the pioneers of the Bridger Valley. Out of the many, the writer selected one that he felt expressed the feelings of the descendants of these pioneers, even though it is dedicated to but two of them. This tribute was written by Shirlee Blackner to her Father and Mother on their Golden Wedding anniversary.

A TRIBUTE TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER ON THEIR GOLDEN WEDDING.

This couple called Net and Joe Slade Have wonderful progress made
In their lives together, throughout the years.
There's been lots of laughter, and not a few tears.

In the beginning, so I am told
God handed a plan, just for them to unfold.
Now here's how they did it, you young lend an ear
There's example and precept to be followed, you hear.

They came to this country, when it was bare
There was nothing but sagebrush, and it everywhere.
With their parents, and loved ones, they worked very hard
Cleared the land, built homes, no toil was spared.

Time passed, they developed, in Youth's beauty they bloomed
Nettie a 'school-marm', Joe worked the oil boom.
Twas then that he spied her, one of the fairest,
Him dashing and daring, with a heart of the rarest.

God joined them together, they planted a tree
And started the branches of their family.
First came four daughters, Joe about to despair
Till God finally sent them a son and an Heir.

They laughed and loved in the sunshine of life
Nurtured children with courage, regardless of strife-
And when in the climb, the going was tough
They had faith in themselves, they were made of good stuff.

Joe builded a business, bought the town's first ford
And hauled many people, there was always a hoard.
He used his wits to create jobs a plenty
To give to the men, who needed the money.

Nettie worked in the church, health then in its prime,
In every auxiliary, women's sphere was sublime.
She aided the sick, made shrouds for the dying
To the weary she gave, of her loaves of healing.

With her friends she helped found the first women's club
To learn better methods, to garnish a home.
Did she neglect children? No! not by a spade
For Grandma was with us, known to all as Aunt Ade.

The tree waxed strong, its roots sunk deep
The branches grew tall, its balance to keep.
Faith, courage, integrity, all were a part
Of the food that was lovingly fed each branches heart.

Some sickness's came, but always they went
The family was sealed with love's strong cement.
The children grew up, and all went to college
Seemed they were bent on gaining more knowledge.
As Grandma got old, her infirmities spread
The last years of life, she took to her bed.
Twas then that they nursed her, with loves tender care
Every whim, every wish, they were willing to share.

Soon children were married, and grand-children ran
The dear name of Nettie, was changed to Nan.
The tree's branches blossomed, choicest flowers so fair
Came to adorn the tree's silver hair.

Then one of the buds, the largest of all
Went forth to open its bloom 'oer the wall
A branch soon followed, to feed the fair jewel
With Wisdom and Knowledge, the tree's pool.

"Now this is pure religion, in scripture quoth Paul,
To visit orphan and widow, in affliction give to all."  
Joe heard it, believed it, in fact in his creed-
He's practised it, lived it, in his every deed.

"By their fruits ye shall know them," They've done their part
Set a course to be followed by those strong of heart.
Now fruits, please listen to these words give heed,
If you follow their pathway, see to bearing good seed.

They've lived without seeking great fortune or fame
By God's Golden rule, just to honor their name.
So to them we pay tribute, give our love never ending
On this their fiftieth--their Golden Wedding

by
Shirlee Blackner

The Lyman Ward is a little smaller than it was in the
1920's but it still has a membership of over eight hundred.¹

The ward once again began to feel that they needed a
new edifice in which to meet and in 1951 projects were begun
to raise money for that purpose. August 18, 1954, a two hun-
dred and thirty thousand dollar chapel was dedicated for the
use of the Lyman Ward. The building was built to take care

¹Form E. Record, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, 1958.
of stake functions until it could be decided where it would be best to construct a stake house in the Lyman Stake.

The Lyman Ward has enjoyed the direction of ten bishops in its sixty years of existence. They have been Samuel R. Brough, 1898-1916; H. Melvin Rollins, 1916-26; Watson Loraine Rollins, 1926-33; Willis J. Lyman, 1933-37; Amber C. Davidson, 1937-40; Clem G. Eyre, 1940-47; Donald M. Field, 1947-51; Merril B. Asay, 1951-53; J. Grant Broadbent, 1953-58; and J. Leslie Rollins at the present time.¹

**Milbourne Ward**

A small group of emigrants came from the European continent in the early 1890's and settled near Salt Lake City. Being unable to purchase land there because of insufficient funds, these men moved onto the land west of the Black's Fork in Bridger Valley. They founded a little community which is now called Milbourne. These men being converts to the church, desired to be organized into a branch; accordingly, September 8, 1898, the branch was organized as the Bridger Buttes with Olaf J. Hokenson as the presiding Elder. The men wasted little time in building a meeting house out of logs. The size of the branch increased until 1908, in the month of May, they were organized as a ward of the Woodruff Stake with one hundred members. From this time forth the Branch ceased to grow very much because of

¹Bishop's Record, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, 1959.
the limited amount of water that could be supplied to the land. On April 30, 1931, the ward was disorganized and its membership transferred to Mountain View.¹

The Presiding Elders and Bishops of the Milburne Ward have been: Olaf J. Hokenson, 1898-1903; Hans S. Jensen, 1903-1904; Joseph Horrocks, 1904-11; Joseph Fred Kilburn, 1911-1919; William Alvin Stringer, 1919-27; James Sharp, 1927-31.²

**Mountain View Ward**

The history of the ward in Mountain View has been one of constant struggle to exist until the Milburne Ward was added to it in 1931. Since that time, the ward has grown and is now contemplating building a new chapel. A branch under the jurisdiction of Lyman Ward was established in Mountain View, September 10, 1903, with James Graham serving as the presiding Elder. Due to poor attendance and the opposition from the Community Church of Mountain View, the branch was disorganized on the 10th of September 1910, with its membership assigned to the Lyman or the Milburne Wards, which ever was the most convenient for their use.³

There was not another attempt to organization in Mountain View Ward until July 19, 1925, when a branch was again organized with W. Bryan Field as the presiding Elder or

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¹Woodruff Stake Historical Record, MS, Book 1, September 8, 1898.
²Bishop's Record, 1959.
³Woodruff Stake Historical Record, MS, Book 2, September 10, 1910.
Bishop. This time the opposition was not as strong as it had been, and the membership grew until it became self-supporting and was organized as a ward in April of 1939. The Ward built a small chapel in 1940, and later added a small addition to it for classroom facilities. At the present time the ward has a membership of over three hundred and is growing.

The Bishops that have presided over the Mountain View Ward are as follows: James Graham, 1903-09; William A. Stringer, 1909-10; W. Bryan Field, 1925-27; Edward Davidson 1927-39; William Smith Tanner, 1939-48; Wilford Stoddard, 1948-57; and Myron C. Stringer is the Bishop of the ward at the present time.\(^1\)

At the present time there are two wards of the Church in the Bridger Valley, Mountain View and Lyman. Modern methods of transportation have made it possible for the people of Milburne to conveniently attend church in Mountain View. The new hard-surfaced highway from Mountain View to Milburne and Robertson makes it little burden to attend church.

**Lyman Stake**

In the commencement of the settlement of the valley the branches were under the direction of the Summit Stake, but with the creation of the Woodruff Stake in 1898, the membership of the valley passed under its jurisdiction. The Bridger Valley remained under the Woodruff Stake until the fulfillment of the

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\(^1\)Bishop's Record, MS, 1959.
prediction of President Cherry made in 1910.\footnote{1}

The Lyman Stake was organized July 18, 1926, with H. Melvin Rollins as stake president. He selected John C. Walker and James E. Eyre as his counselors, and Albert Reinsch as stake clerk.\footnote{2} The office of the stake was located in Lyman in the Seminary building.

The Lyman Stake at its commencement contained wards at Lyman, Mountain View, Green River, Rock Springs, and McKinnon. This area was very large and inaccessible to the stake being more than eighty-five miles in length and forty miles wide. As the Church in Western Wyoming has grown, the stake has also grown. The stake now runs from Pinedale on the North to Manila, Utah on the South and from Rawlins on the East to Lyman on the west. The stake is now over two hundred miles long in either direction and contains thirteen wards or branches in eleven different cities.\footnote{3}

\footnote{1}{President Cherry of the Woodruff Stake while looking at the place chosen for the Townsite of Lyman made the prediction that at some future date there would be a stake of the Church established in that place. This prediction was made May 10, 1899, and it became a fact July 18, 1926, with the organization of Lyman Stake at Lyman, Wyoming.}

\footnote{2}{Lyman Stake Historical Record, MS, Book 1, July 18, 1926, Church Historians Office, (Salt Lake City).}

\footnote{3}{Directory of General Authorities and Officers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 1958.}
CHAPTER VI

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In every valley or community where people hope to progress and be successful, there arises an immediate need for educational facilities. Although most everyone recognizes the value of education, still there is a constant struggle to organize, to build, and to maintain a school with a qualified teacher or staff. The problems of the Bridger Valley were much the same as those of any other valley populated by pioneer stock.

Judge W. A. Carter recognized the need for schools in the valley earlier than most of the residents. Accordingly, he built the first schoolhouse in the present boundaries of the State of Wyoming.¹ This school, built in 1866 at Fort Bridger, was not a prodigious one, as its size will attest—the measurements being fourteen by sixteen feet—but it was sufficient for the four to sixteen students who were to be taught there.

The next man to try to provide school facilities for

¹Historical Landmark Society of Wyoming, Plaque on the side of the school.
the area, which then consisted of scattered ranches, was Mr. Robert Hereford. In the late sixties, he held school in his home located just west of what is now called the town of Mountain View. Mr. Hereford's descendents are numbered among the prosperous and respected citizens of Bridger Valley at the present time. Will H. Thomas in an article written for the Bridger Valley Enterprise expressed the following about Robert Hereford:

He was a man of superior accomplishments and possessed considerable scholarship. He was naturally quite a leader among his fellow men and his home in the village was the common meeting place of all who were seeking after knowledge: the desire which he instilled into the minds of those who were his pupils at that time, soon caused to be procured the services of teachers who could devote more time to the profession than could a busy rancher like Mr. Hereford. But through necessity, schools were still maintained in a room of some private home.\(^1\)

Then came the school building for general school purposes, built through community effort, and still remembered with pride by some of the older citizens, who claim that the major part of their own education was obtained in this type of school. This school was fourteen by sixteen feet and built of log construction with a dirt roof, a door in the east, and a half window in the north and the south. Mr. Thomas in an article in the Bridger Valley Enterprise said that the favorite trick of mischievous boys was to stuff the chimney full of gunny sacks, smoke the school out, and thus enjoy a holiday.

State-recognized education came to the Bridger Valley

in the year 1891, just six months after the Ft. Bridger Mili-
tary Reservation was opened to homesteading. Joseph Guild
and H. J. B. Taylor were the leaders in soliciting county and
state funds for the valley schools. Mrs. H. C. Carter in an
article written at the request of the Bridger Valley Enter-
prise made the following statement concerning education:

Mr. Taylor and Mr. Guild were the men who in 1891
made application to Miss Strong, then County Superinten-
dent, for the first school in the valley. Replying to
this request the sum of 185 odd dollars out of the county
state fund was placed at the disposal of the improvised
Board. As a result the school was opened in January,
1891, in a frame shack, "Uncle Jack Robertson's kitchen," moved east of Mountain View for that purpose. Mr. Will
Harvey taught this school for the three months term at
sixty dollars a month. The area was called District #4
and comprised the eastern half of Uinta County.
In 1892, $186.50 was handed over by the county and
state, and a like amount in 1893.1

The L. D. S. settlement in the valley started in 1891
but increased until 1898. At that time, the existing schools
became insufficient to meet the demands of the people, as
they were located six to ten miles from the settlement that is
now called Lyman. To provide education for their children,
the people on the lower bench cleaned out an old chicken coop
and fixed it up as best they could and used it for a school.
There seemed to be little boredom in this newly created school-
room, as the students spent what might otherwise have been a
boring time catching the fleas that would drop down from the
straw in the roof, looping a strand of horsehair around the

1Ibid.
fleas attempting to make teams of horses of them. After one winter with the fleas and the lice in the chicken coop, the people of the community got together and built a large building on the southeast corner of the homestead of Henry Bleumel, which served during the week as a school and on week-ends as a church and community hall.

In 1900, a bond election was held and eleven thousand dollars were raised to build eleven schools at strategic places in the valley where they would serve the communities best. Schools were built at Lyman, Lower Bench, Mountain View, Fort Bridger, Milburne, Robertson, and at other sites between these communities.

As the L. D. S. population of the valley grew, there developed an intercommunity friction. In the early 1900's, the town of Lyman was almost completely Mormon, Mountain View was predomiately Protestant, Fort Bridger was strongly Catholic, and the other towns in the valley were of L. D. S. composition. Each town wanted to be the center of any future expenditures for school buildings. It should be noted that until the year 1913, the entire eastern half of Uinta County had been organized into one administrative unit or district.

In 1918, the first part of the rivalry between Mountain View and Lyman was won by Mountain View, as the district voted

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1 Joseph Wall Life Sketch, written by his daughter Hannah Harris.
2 Interview with Raleigh Hamblin, Pioneer, September 13, 1958.
to build a new building there at the cost of seventy thousand dollars. This two story structure was to house all of the grades from one to twelve. Up to this time, only an eighth-grade education had been available at Mountain View. Lyman, however, was not happy with the construction and started an agitation to have District Four divided and a new district formed. On March 10, 1922, District Four was divided in the northeast corner of Uinta County to form District Six. Lyman became the attendance center for the school children of this newly created district. It is interesting to note that the residents living between the two communities of Mountain View and Lyman were allowed to choose which district they preferred to reside in. The boundary line separating Districts Four and Six was then drawn to comply with the preferences of the people. The boundary line which now separates these two districts is quite erratic, inconsistent, and difficult to trace. There is considerable evidence that the argument and friction between the two towns had its beginning long before 1922. It was reported to the writer by local citizens of Lyman that the residents of Lyman were in favor of maintaining and operating a religious seminary in connection with their secondary program. Various differences of opinion concerning the desirability of such a move aided in bringing about the previously mentioned district reorganization.

Following the district division, the residents of District Six voted on a bond issue for the purpose of erecting a high school within the community of Lyman. This new
building was completed in 1925 at the cost of sixty-five thousand dollars and housed the ninth through the twelfth grades. Other significant school building programs have occurred in the valley since 1925 relative to secondary facilities. In 1940, Mountain View added a thirty-thousand dollar addition to their facilities, and in 1956, they added a classroom wing at the cost of one hundred thousand dollars. A two-hundred-thirty-thousand-dollar addition to the secondary school in Lyman was built in 1954, and in this year, 1959, the older section of the Lyman High School is in the process of being remodeled and refaced to give the same appearance as the newer part of the building.

The writer feels that the communities are making some definite progress toward the breaking down of intercommunity friction as is evidenced by the Mountain View School Board allowing all students the privilege of taking seminary classes if they can do so and still gain the state-required number of credits.

Religious Distribution

In the past, residents of the Bridger Valley have had the impression that Fort Bridger has been primarily a Catholic community, Mountain View, strongly Presbyterian and Catholic, and Lyman, a Latter-day Saint community. While working for his Master's Thesis, Gareth Seastrand took a census in 1952 which pointed out that Lyman was 97.9 per cent L. D. S., Fort
Bridger, 55.7 per cent L. D. S., and Mountain View, 69.4 per cent L. D. S.\textsuperscript{1} This may account for the seeming breakdown of the friction between the communities. The percentage of L. D. S. people in the valley is increasing very rapidly. According to Mr. Seastrand, in 1930, 38.6 per cent of the population of the Bridger Valley was L. D. S.\textsuperscript{2} In 1950, the population of L. D. S. had increased to 59.2 per cent.\textsuperscript{3}

The religious distribution of people in the Bridger Valley might seem to be out of place in a chapter on education if it were not for the fact that the schools in Lyman have many more superior facilities than those in Mountain View. This is due partially to the fact that the people of Lyman have usually voted to support a maximum mill levy to support their schools. Mrs. Carter in her article on the Bridger Valley spoke of the attitudes that existed about the school tax in Lyman:

I wish the patrons could arrange to visit oftener the schools nearest them whether they have children in them or not. I also wish that the name "School Tax" could be changed to "Good Boy and Girl tax." When we reflect that the children of today are the citizens of tomorrow, we realize nothing is too good for them, no tax too great.\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{3}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{4}Mrs. H. C. Carter, "Schools in District No. 4," Bridger Valley Enterprise (Lyman, Wyoming) December 18, 1918.
Until the last three years (1954-58) the Mountain View mill levies for education have been four to seven mills lower than those of Lyman.

Both the Mountain View and Lyman High Schools have an enrollment of less than one hundred students, and there would be many advantages in consolidating the two districts. The decrease in administration costs, plant facilities, and faculty is certain, but when approached on the subject, citizens say, "We don't want consolidation; there is too much friction," and "it wouldn't be so bad if Lyman would throw away their Seminary." Consolidation seems to be a long way in the future, even though at the present time the facilities at the Lyman High School, according to state regulations, are sufficient to house over four hundred students.¹

Education in the Bridger Valley as far as facilities and courses offered are concerned matches that of schools in the state having over five hundred students. That there has been a seminary in Lyman since 1922 is a tribute to the people who have the good of the youth of the Church at heart. From the small schoolhouses used in the beginning of education in the valley, the schools that now stand are a tribute to the industry and foresight of the pioneers who sacrificed to make them possible--pioneers who realized the true value of education.

¹Seastrand, op. cit.
The use of teacher potential is the only thing that seems to be very inefficient in the education system in Bridger Valley. The average class room unit is less than fifteen students.

The writer feels that in the future there will be a consolidation of both of the high schools in the valley and as the roads improve, a possible consolidation of all of the high schools in the county.
CHAPTER VII

IRRIGATION FACILITIES

In Uinta County, Wyoming, the land is listed as semiarid. Without irrigation the land is useless for anything except grazing of livestock. When the first settlers came to the valley, the first thing that they had in mind was to settle close enough to one of the small rivers to have water for their crops and livestock. Some of the men, such as Josiah South and Henry C. Sherman who had worked for Judge W. A. Carter realized the soil east of Fort Bridger had great fertility if they could only get water to it. Their beliefs had been proven to some degree by Edgar N. Carter as he made the Carter Canals. These canals took water close to the land Messers. South and Sherman wanted to water.

The Carter Canals carry the earliest priority rights in the valley. Some of the ditch rights have priority dating back to 1862. Most of the Carter Canals, however, were high water ditches and covered a very little area.

The above-mentioned Messrs. South and Sherman envisioned a canal that would exit from the Black's Fork of the Green River high in the Uinta Mountains—a canal that would water thousands of acres of land. These men went to Evanston, the county seat, to draw up articles of incorpor-
ation for a canal company. The opening paragraphs of the articles of incorporation will illustrate the scope or size of the dream of these men.

The objects and purposes for which the said company is formed are to construct, operate and maintain canals, laterals, feeders, continuations, waterways, water meters, and reservoirs for irrigating, manufacturing, mining and mechanical purposes, for utilizing the waters of the Black's and Smith's Fork of the Green River in Uinta County, Wyoming. . . . The number of shares of capital stock shall be two hundred and fifty, at the par value of one hundred dollars per share, equal to twenty-five thousand dollars. The water in question shall be taken from the Utah line to the lands known as the Fort Bridger Military Reservation. Said canal to be about twenty miles in length and expected to water forty thousand (40,000) acres of land.

The number of trustees who shall manage the stock, property and concerns of said company shall be three: Henry C. Sherman of Sterling, Colorado, Josiah South of Fort Bridger, in the State of Wyoming, and John H. Ward of Evanston, in the State of Wyoming.

In witness whereof we have set out hands to one duplicate hereof this first of April, A. D. 1891.

Henry C. Sherman
Josiah South
John H. Ward

A canal which was to have the length of twenty miles required more capital than the above three men could raise. Josiah South had a good friend in Ogden, Utah, Henry C. Bigelow, who was the president of the Ogden State Bank.

When Mr. South explained his purpose, Mr. Bigelow traveled with him to view the country and the possibilities of making a canal. After seeing the valley, he advanced Mr. South the necessary capital to start the construction of the canal.

1 "Articles of Incorporation of The Black's Fork Canal Company." MS.
On April 21, 1891, Mr. South began to lay out the line of the canal. He used six horses on the front of a brush-clearer and ditch-maker to start the line. The location of the canal was determined by the way the water would best follow the ditchmaker. Mr. Charles Hamilton, pioneer, reported to the writer that the ditch progressed very slowly and that the ditcher was often broken by the large rocks that were up-rooted. Mr. South in 1893 subcontracted over nine miles of the canal to Mr. Ferrin. The difficulty in making the ditch twenty miles long is attested by the fact that it took three years to construct and that it was necessary to pay the men five dollars a day to get them to work on the canal.

The cost of the canal soon passed twenty-five thousand dollars, and Mr. South again went to Odgen to get more money from Mr. Bigelow. Mr. Bigelow agreed to give the money if the canal company would revalue their stock and sell each share at five hundred dollars and lower the number of shares to two hundred. This was done, making the capital stock in the company worth one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000). The outlook for the men who put their money and time into the canal would have been worthwhile had all of the settlers who came into the valley settled on what was called the Bench. However, feeling that five hundred dollars a share was too much to pay many of the settlers moved up the Black's Fork

\[^{1}\text{Interview, Charles Hamilton, Pioneer, September 14, 1958.}\]
and settled. By doing this, they were able to irrigate their lands by the formation of small canals only one or two miles long that could be made by hard work without the payment of money.

On January 12, 1895, the Odgen State Bank requested that the loan granted to Mr. South be repaid. Being unable to repay the loan, because of the small amount of sales of stock, Mr. South forfeited the eighty-six shares of stock which had been issued to him for payment of construction, and they passed into the ownership of H. C. Bigelow, who became the next president of the canal company.¹

It was fortunate for the Black’s Fork Canal Company that Mr. Bigelow had the backing of the Odgen State Bank. Mr. Sherman, the other major stock holder in the company, became dissatisfied and returned to his home in Sterling, Colorado. Feeling that the canal company would not last long Mr. Sherman willed his twenty-seven shares to A. P. Bigelow, son of H. C. Bigelow. Under his direction, the canal company began to prosper with the aid of the homesteading of a group of L. D. S. people. Mr. Bigelow financed the Saints so that they were able to prove up on their water. One of the Saints, Mr. S. R. Brough, was appointed to the board of directors of the company.²

¹“Minutes of the Black’s Fork Canal Company”, MS, Lyman, Wyoming, January 12, 1895.
²Ibid.
Some of the homesteaders on the Bench, now known as Lyman, weren't as prompt as they should have been in proving up on their water and having it registered by the state. Meanwhile another group of settlers moved into the valley around Fort Bridger and formed a canal company known as the Twin Butte Canal Company. In the spring of the year there is plenty of water in the valley for anyone who wants to use it, but as summer goes on only those who have the ditches and canals the highest up the river get any water. In 1906, the Twin Butte Canal Company sued the Black's Fork Canal Company for taking water that rightfully belonged to them. The suit was won by the Black's Fork Canal Company as they proved that they had filed for the water in Black's Fork four years before the Twin Butte Company. The case was won, but attorney fees amounted to fifteen hundred and eighty-five dollars ($1,585.00), which was quite a financial burden for the early homesteaders.¹

There are at present many canals in the valley, but one that is preferred to almost any other is the Lamb Supply. This is the canal which takes water out of Smith's Fork to supplement the Black's Fork supply. The priority rights for the Lamb Supply date back to August 1, 1889.

Many of the early L. D. S. settlers that came into the valley settled on the lower bench north of Lyman. Among them were Messrs. Watson Rollins, J. H. Blackner, Ephriam

¹Ibid., March, 1906.
Marshall, Wallace Hamblin and John Carbridge. These men bought out the Fort Bridger Canal for the sum of fifteen hundred dollars.\textsuperscript{1} This canal still serves part of Fort Bridger and the lower bench of Lyman.

There is still a shortage of water in Bridger Valley in the months of July, August and September, but it is hoped that in the near future there will be enough water to take care of the needs of all of the people in the valley. The United States Reclamation Service is in the process of making the final tests so that a dam can be built that will store the water of the valley for the months in which it is most needed. The dam for the Bridger Valley is one of the dams that the United States Congress approved along with the Flaming Gorge dam on the upper Green River.

\textsuperscript{1}Interview with Raleigh Hamblin, Pioneer, September 13, 1958.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The men who first set up a fort in south-western Wyoming did so with the expectancy of being able to make enough money that they could live well without being paupers or burdens on someone else in the last years of their lives. Fort Bridger proved to be the best place that they could have gone to make profit from a trading post. The Fort, on the Oregon Trail where it separated to go to California, proved to be the place where assistance was needed most by weary travelers.

The missionaries that were sent by the Church to aid the trail-weary Saints as they crossed the desert of Wyoming suffered many disappointments in their attempt to establish Fort Supply, but they did prove that it was possible to live and grow agricultural crops high up in the Uinta Mountains. Even though they had to be furnished food that was transported from Salt Lake City, they probably would have succeeded in making Fort Supply a permanent settlement if they had not been forced to burn the fort and flee before Johnston's Army.

The recorded evidence that is preserved, is sufficient to show that there was a legal and lawful sale of Fort Bridg-
er to the Mormons. The civilians who occupied the fort during the stay of the army were, in general, respectable men and a credit to the valley.

When the Fort Bridger Military Reservation was opened to homesteading, not all of the men who homesteaded land expected to stay but had hope of making a fast fortune through sale of their homesteads. Most of these men were forced to leave the valley in very moderate circumstances because of the abundance of land and the scarcity of money.

Most of the pioneers who went there expected to have to work as hard or harder than they had ever done before, but it allowed them the chance to conquer a wilderness by themselves. In general, most of the men prospered and built comfortable homes and respectable villages. These pioneers have worked hard to foster good educational, recreational and religious facilities for the youth of the valley.

As a whole, the valley has fulfilled the need of the pioneers who went there. The homes they established are permanent abodes and will remain as long as there is a need for them. The valley is a tribute to the pioneers who worked so hard to make their settlements.

The future of the valley seems very stable with little growth or decline in population expected.
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Widdop, Buelah, age approximately 75, daughter of H. J. B. Taylor, one of the first ranchers in the valley.
HISTORY OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

IN BRIDGER VALLEY, WYOMING

(109 pages)

An Abstract of the Thesis of

Jerry F. Twitchell

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

The College of Religious Instruction

Russell R. Rich
Lester N. Downing

Chairman, Advisory Committee
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

This thesis contains the Latter-day Saint history of the Bridger Valley, Uinta County, Wyoming. It tells of the part the Latter-day Saints played in the colonization of the valley, and of their association with the non-Mormon settlers.

The L. D. S. history of the valley began when Brigham Young sent a group of men to the high valleys of the Green River to establish a permanent fort and resting place for future emigrants. It records the difficulties encountered by these men as each crop was destroyed or nearly destroyed by the early or untimely arrival of snow. When at last crops were matured at Fort Supply, in the last year of its existence, word was sent of the coming of Johnston's Army. The year ended in disappointment as the fort was burned so that it would not furnish protection to the U. S. soldiers.

The thesis contains a brief summary of the founding of Fort Bridger by James Bridger and Louis Vasquez, but is concerned mainly with that phase of the Fort's history pertaining to its purchase by the Latter-day Saints. Some historians doubt that such a transaction ever took place, but evidence here presented shows that Vasquez, partner of Bridger, did sell the fort and did acknowledge the receipt of the money that was paid for its purchase.

The writer next presents the story of the colonization of the Bridger Valley after 1890, at which time it was thrown
open to homesteading. Mountain View was settled by people, the majority of whom were not Latter-day Saints. The story of the settling of Lyman by groups of Latter-day Saints is presented. They were confronted with many problems in their attempt to provide from the valley the things considered essential to comfortable living.

There have been three wards organized in the valley. Lyman ward has been in active operation from 1898, to the present time. Mountain View had a ward organized but due to persecution, and inactivity the ward was disorganized. When again reorganized it succeeded to the point that it became the majority denomination in Mountain View. Milburne, another small town, was organized as a ward and although there was no opposition to the Church in Milburne, the membership was so small that church authorities felt it wise to add the membership of Milburne Ward to that of Mountain View.

It was difficult to provide education for the youth of the valley. At first school was held only for Judge Carter's children, but soon men such as Robert Hereford started to teach students in their homes. In 1891 a school district was formed and county and state funds were procured to help the educational process. The school district grew, but there was an inter-community jealousy that developed between Mountain View and Lyman. The jealousy was due mainly to religious conflicts as Lyman was strongly L. D. S. and Mountain View was Protestant. The conflict came to a head when Lyman started
agitation to have a religious seminary program in connection with the secondary school. The state allowed Lyman to form a new school district. Both towns at the present have adequate schools.

The pioneers had a struggle in making canals and getting water to the fertile soil to make it produce. There were disputes over the water in Black's Fork, and suits that resulted because of the disputes.

Today the settlements in the valley are small but seem destined to endure as long as there are people upon the land that are in need of agricultural commodities.