

HISTORY OF THE LDS CHURCH IN STILLWATER (LDSSTWH1)

Stake	Organized	President	Remarks
! Indian Territory	6-26-1855	Henry W Miller	! 5-23-1860
	R3-??-1877	Mathew W Dalton	! 9-12-1877
	R4-20-1883	George Teasdale	
*Southwestern States	3-29-1898		
*Central States	4-4-1904	James C Duffin	
	10-??-1906	Samuel O Bennion	
*Oklahoma Stake	1960-1974		
*Okla.City Stake	1974-1981		
*Stillwater Okla.Stake	1981-		
*Kansas-Missouri	6-10-1970		
*Missouri Independence	6-20-1974		
*South Central States	8-4-1969	Albert B Crandall	
	(Organized from Central States Mission)		
*Oklahoma Mission	6-10-1970		
*Oklahoma Tulsa Mission	6-20-1974		

! Disorganized
 * Name changed
 R Reopened

1. 1859 All Elders but one were expelled from Indian Territory by the Indian Agents because of the activity of Johnson's Army.
2. 1883 Indian Territory Mission created by Apostle George Teasdale.
3. 1898, March 29, Indian Territory Mission was changed to the Southwestern States Mission.

Report book of Elder David Jackson--some of the locations that he worked: Palmer post office, Indian Territory; Dolby Post Office; Palmer Post Office, March 3, 1898; Bigler School House; Spring Brook; Buell School House; Perry School House; Center Post Office; Raston School House; Dill School House; Ross? Post Office; Picket School House; PB Post Office, Indian Territory; Egypt School House; Last Chance School House; Buckhead Oklahoma Territory; Denver P.O., O.T. Choctaw City, O.T.; Texas School House; Spring Creek School House; Lone Star School House; Spring Hill School House; Pleasant Valley School House; El Reno City; July 1898 Okarchee City; Calumet P.O. Enterprize School House; Town Luther; Negro Settlement; Coon Creek Flat;

4. 1904, April 11, Southwestern States Mission was changed to the Central States Mission.
 Elder James C. Duffin, President.
 October, 1906, Samuel O. Bennion, President

5. BERRY FAMILY

From the book "Little Tom and Fats" by Veneta Berry Arrington

In Ripley, in 1908, the Reorganized Latter Day Saints had a reunion and had a photograph taken. In the picture are: Children Ester Yates, Ruby Berry, Sam Patton, Dora Berry, Ruth Patton and four unidentified. The adults were: Sam J. Patton, Maude Knowles, Eva Roberts, Mr. & Mrs. Jim Yates, Mr. Hogett, Mr. & Mrs. True, Pearl Plog, Mr. & Mrs. Case and son, Mr. Van Sickle, Amos White, Mr. Chase, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas N. Berry, Laura Patton, Cecil Case, Miss Coyner, Faye Case, Alex White, (former patriarch in the original church) and eight others unidentified, forty-five in all.

The group used to have camp meetings up on Ripley Bluff. The Reorganized Church flourished for some time in Ripley, but before long members moved away or like the Thomas N. Berrys, joined the Western, or Mormon Church.

6. EARLIEST MEMBERS

BERRY FAMILY - PARENTS, 5 GIRLS, 3 BOYS
SLATER
ELSWORTH
NELSON

7. SUNDAY SCHOOL - RIPLEY - October 1, 1933 - BERRY HOME

American Legion Hall (600 So. Main)
Ball Room over Katz Store.
Masonic Hall

WHIPPLE
NELSON
MORRIS

8. BRANCH ORGANIZED - October 19, 1936

CHAPEL (Sixth and Duck) Dedicated - Feb. 14, 1937 - LAND DONATED

The new chapel was dedicated in 1937 by President S.O. Bennion, the Central States Mission President. It was he who prophesied that some day the building would be full of young people. At the time he was looking at an audience of three hundred including thirty missionaries. John O. Ellsworth had accompanied him to Stillwater, and one other authority whom we can't identify.

At this time Apostle Ballard came to Stillwater and prophesied that though our members were very few, some day our building would overflow with young people.

The first baptisms in the chapel were performed by William A. Berry on Jan. 3, 1937. Those baptized were: Ruby Berry Stallings and her daughter Virginia Stallings Hampton, Martha Berry Covey, Jobe Otey, and a Ms. Winters.

(Describe the baptismal font)

9. CUSHING HERE

10. APOSTLE MELVIN J. BALLARD'S PROPHECY (See above)

11. RECREATION HALL ADDED 1948
MURAL

(Describe the church podium and the recreation hall stage)

12. GENEALOGY - GRAVE CANVASSING

13. MIA BASKETBALL TEAM - MISSION CHAMPIONS

MANZER
GRAY, STEVE
GRAY, BILL
BALKMAN, JIM
BRINKERHOFF, JIM
CLARK
THORNE
LUND, (COACH)

14. BRANCH PRESIDENTS

1936	WHIPPLE, John	Peter Nelson	Lawrence Morris	Peter Nelson
1937	MORRIS, Lawrence	" "	" "	" "
1944	BERRY, Jack	" "	" "	" "
1948	BERRY, Jack	" "	Harry Sundwal	" "
1952	BERRY, Jack	" "	Bob Duffin	" "
1954	BERRY, Jack	" "	" "	" "
1955	BRINKERHOFF, Lloyd	Bob Duffin	Ron Pace	Homer Canfield
1955	BRINKERHOFF, Lloyd	" "	August Jausi	" "
1956	BRINKERHOFF, Lloyd	" "	" "	Howard Cordner
1958	BRINKERHOFF, Lloyd	" "	Bob Taylor	" "
1958	DUFFIN, Bob	Hal Miller	" "	" "
1959	DUFFIN, Bob	Bob Taylor	LeGrande Ellis	" "
1959	MONTGOMERY, Bryce	Brinkerhoff, Lloyd	" "	Skidmore and Duffin
1960	HENDERSON, Lavelle	Jay Murray	Willard Williams	Skidmore and Duffin
1960	HENDERSON, Lavelle	" "	" "	August Jausi

15. BISHOPS

Year	Bishop	1st Councilor	2nd Councilor	Clerk
1960	LaVelle -Henderson	Jay Murray	Willard Williams	
	Jay Murray	Jerry Hurst		

1968 Lynn Gee Lloyd Dick Rogers Mr. Lee
 -Brinkerhoff Billy Ward
 Don Williams Larry Hartman

1972 Alvin Mayo LaMont Gee

1975 Lee Manzer Robert Boyce Paul Hummer
 Michael Applegate

Eugene Maughan

Michael Applegate LaMont Gee, Tony Confer, Don Hansen

William Gray Carl Fox, Rick Dixon

Robert Boyce Doug White, Carl Fox

Lamont Gee

16. EARLY MISSIONARIES

1935-37 BILL BERRY - ENGLAND
1937-39 JACK BERRY - HAWAII
 JIM POPE - CALIFORNIA
1944 JERALD HILTON - CALIFORNIA
1958-60 CALVIN SLATER - ALASKA
1941-42 EZMA MORRIS - MISSOURI

17. EARLY UNIVERSITY FACULTY

JAMES POPE
LAWRENCE MORRIS, B.S.A. (Univ. Ariz.), M.S. (Texas A&M)
 Instructor in Poultry Husbandry 1928.
PETER NELSON, B.S. (U.S.A.C.) M.S. (Ibid), Ph.D (Univ. Ill)
 Prof. Ag. Econ. 1935, 1929
HOWARD CORDNER, B.S. (B.Y.U.), M.S. (Mich. St. Coll.)
 Ph.D. (Univ. Maryland) Prof. Hort. 1937
LLOYD BRINKERHOFF, B.S. (Univ. Ariz.) M.S. (Ibid)
 Prof. Hort. 1937.
FENTON GRAY, B.S. (Univ. Utah), M.S. (Ibid), Ph.D. (Ohio
 State Univ.) Asst. Prof. Agron. 1951.

18. UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

DAN NELSON
JIM ARRINGTON - ANNETA'S HUSBAND
DEAN'S, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT HEADS, FACULTY COUNCIL CHRMN,
GRADUATE FACULTY CHAIRMAN, FACULTY CLUB PRESIDENT, ETC.

19. ON-CAMPUS SPEAKERS

1. Skousen, Cleon (At the invitation of Claude Bradshaw, Insurance)

(Religious Emphasis Week Speakers on Campus)

2. Hunter, Milton R. - March 1, 1950
Convocation: "The Dignity and Eternal Nature of Man."
Seminar: "Preparation for Marriage and Family Life."
3. Yarn, Dr. David - March 4, 1959
"Right and Wrong - Who Knows Anymore"
4. Nibley, Dr. Hugh - March 7, 1963
 - a. "Justice and Democracy"
 - b. "Philosophy"

(Other Speakers)

5. Eyring, Dr. Henry
(Guest of the Chemistry Department for the "O.M. Smith Lecture)
6. Eyring, Dr. Henry
(Guest of the College of Agriculture)

Note: Dr. Eyring was Past President of The American Academy for the Advancement of Science.

7. Evans, Richard L.
(Guest of the Stillwater Rotary Club)
Note: Elder Evans was Past International President of Rotary International.
8. Benson, Ezra Taft
(Guest of the University)
At the time Secretary Benson was Secretary of Agriculture

20. UNIVERSITY RELATED RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

- a. (M.I.A. for University credit. 1950-1959)
- b. In classrooms, then Bennett Memorial Chapel

21. INSTITUTE

DIRECTORS:

LAZENBY 1970 -72
BOYCE 1972 - 1987
GORDON 1987-

BRANCH PRESIDENTS/BISHOPS

Lawrence Morrill, Pres., (1976), Robert Peterson, Brent Dahle
Grant Vest, Pres., Clark Maughan, Brent Dahle
Grant Vest, Bishop, Clark Maughan, Brent Dahle
Brent Snow, Bishop, Sam Schmutz, Gary Polson

22. THIS BUILDING 1966

MONEY MAKING PROJECTS:

FAIR BOOTH
HORSE SHOW
STADIUM CONCESSIONS
GARDENING -CORN

1920? - 1938

From material received from Camelia Berry

About 1920 Thomas N. Berry bought a little church building in Ripley, and it became one of the first meeting places of the Mormon Church in the county, with members, very few, from Cushing, Perkins, Stillwater and outlying farms. Mr. Berry often preached to the Indians and several were baptized although the Two Gun family were the only ones who came to church very often.

When the Berrys and others moved to Stillwater around 1922, the meetings were held mostly on the principle that, "Wherever two are gathered in my name, there will I be also." In Jack Berry's memory Lawrence Morris, Peter Nelson and John Whipple were the only holders of the priesthood.

In bad weather the Stillwater people sometimes met with the Lawrence Morris in their home because it was twenty miles to Ripley over bad roads.

The missionaries came through every now and then and baptized people who were ready, though it was very difficult to be accepted. Investigators stayed on probation for years. The missionaries lived for months at a time in people's homes and did their proselyting in the country round about on foot or a-horseback.

Once Mr. Berry was in Perkins when word came to him that the missionaries were in real trouble. A crowd was gathering to tar and feather them. Mr. Berry found the boys and hid them under feed sacks in the back of his spring wagon, and took them home. This must have been in the twenties when the general public still knew the Mormons as the villains in the Zane Grey novels and wore horns.

The Sunday School was organized officially in Ripley, in 1933. There was only one meeting. The names that Jack Berry remembers from his boyhood are John Whipple, lawyer, James Pope, Lawrence Morris, poultry department at Oklahoma A and M and Peter Nelson, Agricultural Economics. The college staff and students from then on have been the majority of the membership in Stillwater.

Probably sometime after 1933, the Peter Nelsons had a car wreck that broke both of Clara's legs. Jack Berry thinks it was after that, that the Stillwater group decided not to drive the twenty miles to Ripley and began to meet, for a time, in the ballroom over Katz store, or in the Masonic Hall, a second story room on Main Street. Plans for a church building must have begun soon after.

Thomas N. Berry gave the corner lot on 6th and Duck and in 1936 the first chapel in Oklahoma was built on it, and a Branch was organized.

Ruby and Martha Berry and little Virginia Stallings were the first to be baptized in the new chapel. William A. Berry was the first

missionary sent out from Oklahoma and Jack D. Berry the second.

The new chapel was dedicated in 1937 by President S.O. Bennion, the Central States Mission President. It was he who prophesied that someday the building would be full of young people. At the time he was looking at an audience of three hundred including thirty missionaries. John O. Ellsworth had accompanied him to Stillwater, and one other authority whom we can't identify.

Mrs. Thomas N. Berry was the first Relief Society President and the Sisters were her daughters, Nellie Myers, Veneta Arrington, and also Clarissa Cordner, Emma Dykes, Sister Morris, Sister Knowles, Annie Warner and Clara Otey.

The cultural hall was not built for several years. There was a small building behind the chapel that for years housed Mrs. Otey, and later was home to the missionaries, when they no longer stayed in the members' homes.

January 19, 1961
Stillwater Ward
Stillwater, Oklahoma

Dear Brother and Sister Cullimore:

We are collecting this history so fast that we can't do a nice dignified document. I'll write this to you as a personal letter, which will naturally account for the inaccuracies that will show up. I have used as sources Peter Nelson's "History Up To 1937," our memories, and letters that Clara Nelson received from James Pope and Lawrence Morris in response to her inquiries. I'll start where Peter begins his history.

There were missionaries in Indian Territory in 1855; three of whom lost their lives, Elders Petty, Cook, and Pratt. Around 1929 the names of the earliest members were Jack and Bill Berry, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas N. Berry, Celia Slater, John O. Ellsworth and Peter.

The Sunday School was organized in Ripley in 1933. The families of membership were Whipple, Nelson, Morris, Berry, Winter, Scruggs, Pope, Fowler, Cordner, Otey, Dante, Sherman, Stallings, and Myers. The Branch was organized in 1936. The names associated with the organization are on the attached list. The Chapel was built in 1937, Thomas N. Berry giving the land.

At this time Apostle Ballard came to Stillwater and prophesied that though our members were very few, some day our building would overflow with young people. This is the favorite story of us "old timers".

There were the lean years in the Branch when few members of the priesthood had all the functions to perform and frequently all at once.

When the college began to train the armed forces during the war, the soldiers and sailors began to come to Church. There was one Sunday morning I'll never forget. People were coming into the Church in the usual way when we heard a far-off martial tramp, tramp, tramp. It got louder and soon had "Hep, Two, Three, Four" with it. While we stood there with our mouths open, the prelude music playing, in marched 60 soldier boys, just kids. They filed in in military order into the pews and our little Church was full! They told us that any time more than fifteen of them were going anywhere they had to go in army style with an officer, down the middle of the street.

After that our Church was full every Sunday. These boys and girls

were from all over the country. They administered the sacrament, made talks taught lessons, organized parties. We all welcomed them in our homes and the Lawrence Morises had service people in their home almost every night.

We still have Airforce officers occassionally getting advanced degrees. Recently we had Major Stricklen, Captains Miller and Stanley, Major Lund and Sergeant Egan.

Our recreation hall was built in 1948. A great deal of the labor was done by the membership and visiting missionaries. Camelia Berry painted a thirty-foot mural in it.

Oklahoma A. & M. College hired more and more Mormon professors. Jack Berry taught the M-Men and Gleaner class at M.I.A. for college credit for about eight years from 1950 to 1959. In that time, it was taught one year by August Jaussi and one year by Victor Christopherson. Our membership rolls began to lengthen. Through the years many wonderful people have come and gone because of the college. We are greatful for those who have stayed with us.

In conclusion, let me mention one or two outstanding items. In our Genealogy Department, we have completed a study and survey of the cemeteries in the western part of Payne County and a typewritten, bound copy of this work has been placed in the Stillwater Public Library, Salt Lake Genealogical Society Library, and the Library of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Peter Nelson, besides writing a history which we are appreciating at this time, was our First Counselor, Clerk, Chorister, and Gospel Doctrine teacher for seventeen years when he retired and left the state. He is inactive at the present because of illness.

Our M.I.A. basketball team won the Mission Championship. This was a tremendous for all of us because we had eight boys and all eight played--no selection. Their names were Leslie Manzer, Steve Grey, Bill Gray, Terry Thorne, Jim Balkman, Buddy Clark, and Jim Brinkerhoff. Major Howard Lund was coach.

We also have our first Cub Pack--six of the dandiest little boys you ever saw. One of course is mine. Joyce Murray is den mother and is amazing. She had them thrilled to death to go to conference, no complaints through two meetings and full of talk about it afterwards. This to me is a miracle.

This is long enough. I'm sure many dates are a bit off and many names have been left out. We intend to make this report more accurate as time passes and keep a diary record for the ward after this.

We want to acknowledge to you our awareness that the tremendous spurt of growth that made us into a stake came after you became District President.

The members of the priesthood that have hepled me put this together say that they know this is so.

We all send our best wishes for your health and happiness in your new calling.

Sincerely,

/s/Camelia Berry
Scrapbook Editor for
Stillwater Ward.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE SCRAPBOOK

FOR

JAMES A. CULLIMORE AND GRACE CULLIMORE

FROM THE
STILLWATER WARD,
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS,
STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED
WITH BEST WISHES FROM

THE STILLWATER BISHOPRIC:

LAVELLE HENMDERSON
JAY MURRY
WILLARD WILLIAMS
AUGUST JAUSSE

(From the "O'Collegian" March 7, 1945)

ENSIGN BERRY LIBERATED

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas N. Berry, south of Stillwater, have been notified of the liberation of their son, Ensign William N. Berry, who was a prisoner of the Japanese since the fall of Corregidor in 1942.

His parents received word of his rescue from the Navy Department which states they had just received information from General MacArthur's headquarters that their son, last reported as a prisoner of the enemy, had been rescued by our forces.

Ensign Berry, a former Aggie and member of the Sigma Nu fraternity, wrote to his parents that he is gaining weight. The letter was dated Feb. 13 and read as follows:

"It is now nine days after my liberation. I don't know my weight, but feel it must be 125 pounds. I do nothing but eat. At present that is important. My weight two weeks ago was less than 115 pounds.

"I am up and around and feel wonderful. Last night I went to a picture show. The first I had seen since the war started three years ago. Tonight I shall see another.

"The next few days I shall make the first leg of my journey home by water. I feel I shall be home before long. It is hard to believe that I am returning. I had given up all hope once or twice but have regained it. My expectations were more difficult regaining."

(From the Stillwater Gazette Oct. 23, 1936 p.1, col.4)

MORMONS TAKE THEIR MEMBERS OFF RELIEF

More than 100 persons gathered at Legion Hall in Stillwater Monday night to hear sermons delivered by Elder George F. Richards of Salt Lake City, Utah, and Elder S. Woodruff of Independence Mo., in the first session of Oklahoma district conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

The visiting elders spoke on the basic foundations of the Mormon church and explained the plans athrough 80,000 members will be removed from the relief rolls by October 1.

John W. Whipple, Stillwater branch president, was a speaker on the program.

(From the Stillwater Daily Press Thursday February 10, 1938)

MORMON CONFERENCE TO BE HELD HERE SUNDAY

Leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) through western and central Oklahoma are expected in Stillwater Sunday for the Western Oklahoma conference of the Church.

Principle speakers will be President Elias S. Woodruff of the Central States Mission of the Church an area made up of Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Missouri.

In attendance will be 14 missionaries of the Church. Persons from Oklahoma City, Enid, Seiling, Ponca City, Blackwell, Taloga, Woodward, Cushing, and Shawnee are expected to attend. The public is invited.

The conference date, Feb. 13, marks the anniversary of the Stillwater Mormon Church building, dedicated a year ago. John W. Whipple is president of the Stillwater Branch.

(From the Stillwater News-Press February 21, 1961 p.4)

Youth Conference Set In Capitol

MIA MEMBERS SET MEET

A group of young people and officers of the Mutual Improvement Association of the City Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints will attend the Oklahoma State Stake Youth Conference to be held in Oklahoma City on Saturday, Feb. 25.

The Youth Conference will feature a basketball tournament , skit and music competition, and a dinner-dance. The Stillwater group will enter and original skit, Faith in Tomorrow.

The skit, which is a choral reading, is under the direction of Sue Smith. Two musical numbers will be presented, one of which was written by the organization's music director, Bob Umberger.

Those who will perform in the competition are: Sue Halverson, Lamont Gee, Margo Gee, Jeanne Henderson, Judy Thorne, Bob Umberger, Cortland Green, Jim Brinkerhoff, Bob Williams, Terry Thorne, Dianne Berry and Leslie Manzer.

Also attending the conference will be, Mrs. L.M. Henderson, Mrs. Jack Berry, Leslie Waltman, Carlene Snavely, Mr. and Mrs. Clark Groseclose Mr. and Mrs. Jan Murray and Mr. and Mrs. Dick Heninger.

The Mutual Improvement Association is an organization whose aim is toteach the youth of the church and others who are interested, through lesson material and recreational activities. One of the classes, separated according to age levels, affords college credit for completion

MIA, as the organization is known, gives youth well planned lessons and activities in the fields of drama, speech, music, athletics, and

sports and dance. A scout troop, under the sponsorship of MIA, is led by Scoutmaster Edward Carey.

The championship Stillwater MIA basketball team is competing again this year in a regional basketball league.

The young men's program of the MIA is under the direction of LeRoy Gibson, Leslie Manzer and Douglas Sellers. The young women's program is directed by Wanda Groseclose, Maureen Henderson and Eilene Gee.

(From the Stillwater News-Press September 29, 1961)

Learning the Hard Way

AN HOUR FOR THEIR RELIGION

Some 16 members of the Stillwater Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints are proving they don't necessarily require an easy way learning more about their religion. These youngsters are really going the full route, rolling out of bed at 6 a. m. five days per week.

B. Clark Groseclose, assistant professor at Oklahoma State University is instructor for the Stillwater Seminary.

The youngsters gather in the local LDS chapel on the corner of Sixth ave. and S. Duck at 6:50 a. m. each weekday, getting their religious training out of the way in time to make 8 a.m. classes in the public schools. The instructor has the same problem meeting his own classes at OSU.

The Stillwater Ward Seminary was initiated this fall semester as one of the four seminaries in the Oklahoma Stake. Officials describe it as a church-wide program to provide means so each young church person can gain a firmer knowledge of the Gospel.

A typical seminary class opens with a short devotional, consisting of a hymn, prayer and a reading. Remainder of the 50 minute class is devoted to presentation and discussion of the lesson material.

Similar to any public high school class, the seminary instructor gives quizzes, records grades and requires much of the same preparation. The chief difference is the devotional and lesson material content.

Instructor Groseclose describes the current course of study as coming from the Book of Mormon.

"This scripture, which complements the Bible in expounding the Gospel of Christ, contains the dealings of God with a group of people who left Jerusalem 600 years before Christ," Groseclose said. "They sailed, under the direction of the Lord, to the American Continent."

The Mormon doctrine refers to these early settlers being ministered unto by the resurrected Savior, being referred to by Him in the Bible

(John 10:16) when the Savior said, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: Them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."

In further resemblance to a public school class, the Mormon Seminary is organized with student officers bearing responsibility of preparing devotional exercises and handling other business such as socials and work projects.

Officers of the Stillwater class include Sue Smith, president; Robert Williams, vice-president, and Jeanne Henderson, secretary.

Ordinarily, high school students enroll in Seminary each of their last four years in secondary schools. During this time, they study the New Testament, Old Testament, Book of Mormon, and Latter-Day Saint church history.

The program grew out of what the church leaders felt was the inadequacy of only one hour per week at Sunday School plus an additional hour at MIA (LDS youth organization)

Since this is a new program in Stillwater, older youth of the ward, not having had an opportunity to attend Seminary, are encouraged to join the improvement program. This accounts for the university students sprinkled among high school students in the Stillwater Seminary.

As is true of each LDS ward, (local congregation) the Stillwater Seminary program is directed by an Education committee, having the responsibility of arranging meeting places and providing student transportation.

The education committee for the city ward includes Lynn Gee, chairman; Mrs. Jack Berry and Mrs. Marlowe Thorne, members.

(From Stillwater Newpress Friday, April 23, 1971)

ECOLOGY NOTHING NEW IN WORLD; 1848 MORMONS FACED PROBLEM

Ecology is "in" nowadays. For the past few years almost everyone seems to have become concerned about environmental quality, fearing perhaps a tilt in the balance of nature. But there is at least one group of people in the United States which for more than a century has had a special appreciation for ecological balance.

The Mormons, who settled Utah and many other parts of the West, like to tell the story of the crickets and the sea gulls. Visit Salt Lake City's Temple Square and one of the first things you'll hear from your tour guide is how the early Mormon settlers - back in 1848 were delivered from a potential ecological disaster by a combination of faith, prayer...and the balance of nature.

The problem was crickets.

Literally millions of the insects swarmed over the newly established "Mormon country" and zeroed in on fields of new grain, on which the

small band of settlers would depend for winter survival in the isolated Great Basin desert.

The "Saints" fought the voracious attackers with a vengeance - and with sticks, shovels and any other weapons they could lay their hand on. But the struggle seemed hopeless. The crickets moved relentlessly forward like a great black wave, ravenously devouring the precious grain.

Adversity was no stranger to the weary settlers. They had experienced considerable persecution in their quest for religious freedom. They had been driven from one place to another since the church was established in New York state 18 years earlier. All this they had endured. But this new adversary was another matter. Their physical defense of the grain was futile. They were whipped. Or so it seemed.

But wait! There was still a chance. They would call upon their maker for deliverance. And so they fasted and prayed. They prayed their crops and their lives, would be spared.

In the proverbial "nick of time" the supplication of the settlers was answered. Before the bulk of the crop could be consumed, another great black wave appeared. But this one was air born.

Seagulls!

Great flocks of seagulls winged in from the nearby waters of the Great Salt Lake. The first thoughts of the pioneers were that a second antagonist was moving in to finish the destruction. Not so. The gulls fell upon the crickets, each of them devouring scores of the insects before flying back to the lake shore to disgorge their bounty and return for more.

This process was repeated over and over until finally, salvation was complete. The crop was saved - at least sufficient to austerily last out the winter.

Call it an ecological deliverance. Call it a spiritual deliverance. Call it a coincidence. Call it what you may. The fact is it happened. And to this day the story is told and retold daily on Temple Square. It is there that the towering Seagull Monument has been erected to help the Mormons remember the occasion. It's not really so much a monument to the gulls say the guides, as to the mercy of the Lord.

But while the Mormons give all due credit where it belongs - the seagull is now Utah's state bird - they recognize that the Lord accomplishes his will in natural ways, according to the law of nature which he, himself, established.

In the years since this eventful ecological episode, studies have shown that the gull has been known to have as many as 192 grasshoppers or similar type insects in his stomach at one time. Could the Mormons' crops have been saved, were this not possible?

There are countless ecological "miracles" being performed by birds daily. R. E. L. Beal estimates that in the state of Iowa alone the tree sparrow destroys some 872 tons of weed seed a year. And other birds have been known to eat surprisingly large meals. A nighthawk had 500 mosquitoes in its stomach and a yellow-billed cuckoo devoured 250 tent caterpillars. Killdeer and bobolinks work the fields for insects as well. A pair of flickers consider 5000 ants a mere snack; a brown thrasher can eat over 6,000 insects a day.

Because of ecological balance such as this - and thanks to the creator who established such a balance - the Mormons not only survived but eventually thrived as they turned their humble desert settlement into one of the nation's cleanest and loveliest cities, and built their church into a vigorous worldwide organization of three million members.

(From the Stillwater Newspress Friday April 14, 1972)

STILLWATER BISHOP ATTENDS CONFERENCE IN UTAH

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

Featuring music by the Salt Lake Mormon Tabernacle Choir, the Annual World Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was held April 6, 8 and 9 in the century-old Tabernacle on Temple Square.

Attending the conference from Stillwater were Bishop and Mrs. Lynn Gee. Bishop Gee is minister of the Stillwater Church of the Latter-day Saints.

Some 3 million church members world-wide celebrate the 142nd anniversary of the church which was organized on April 6, 1830, in western New York by Joseph Smith and five associates. The founder's grand nephew, Joseph Fielding Smith, 95-year-old church president presided at the three-day convention. His counselors, President Harold B. Lee and President N. Eldon Tanner, assisted.

More than 350 radio and television stations carried conference events from coast to coast and to Canada and in many languages to Mexico, South and Central America, the Caribbean, Africa and Europe. These public service broadcasts have been carried the past 40 years on radio and since 1953 on television, with an ever increasing audience.

The 375-voice Tabernacle Choir is known widely for its network radio broadcasts, television and concert appearances and dozens of recordings. Under the direction of Richard P. Condie, the choir has a repertoire of more than 1,000 numbers ranging from classic to contemporary, both religious and secular. Conference numbers harmonize with the timely messages of church leaders.

Speakers are General Authorities of the church who have been chosen from the lay membership since there is no professional clergy.

Thus, they represent a broad spectrum of professions and occupations when they are called to the high councils of the church.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
of LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Sunday, November 6, 1966 - 2:30 to 5:00 P.M.

1720 East Virginia Street

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA

Facts about the New Chapel

This beautiful new building stands as a symbol of the continuing growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This edifice marks the eighteenth chapel completed in Oklahoma.

The building was begun June 30, 1965, with the ground breaking ceremony and was completed in May, 1966, with the planting of lawn and shrubs. It is designed to be expanded as the growth of the membership warrants additional space. The present structure encompasses a total of 7,000 square feet, and the cost of the building and site was \$160,000. When the building is completed with all of its phases, it will contain approximately 20,000 square feet and will include a hall, 70x44 feet, for cultural and athletic events.

The building contains a chapel that seats approximately 250 persons, modern classrooms with teaching aids, an office, and a baptismal font.

Financing in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is rather unique. All worthy members of the Church voluntarily contribute ten per cent of their earnings as tithing. The tithes from the local units throughout the world are sent to the Church Headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah, for use in building up the Church. Part of the tithes are allocated for the construction of buildings for the local units called wards. Seventy per cent of this building was paid for from the tithing funds. The remaining thirty per cent was donated and raised by the local members and their friends in addition to their tithes. Approximately 4,000 hours of labor were donated by the members during the seven months of construction as part of the local share. In keeping with the counsel of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for its members to avoid both public and personal debts, the building is fully paid for.

Facts About

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized in 1830 in Upstate New York. As a result of desiring to know which church was right, a 14-year-old boy named Joseph Smith began to search the scriptures for help in making his choice. His attention was drawn to the Epistle of James, 1st chapter and 5th verse which reads: IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM LET HIM ASK OF GOD, THAT GIVETH TO ALL MEN LIBERALLY, AND UPBRAIDETH NOT; AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN HIM. The passage came with such great force to the youth, he knew he must do as James directs and ask of God. Joseph Smith retired to a secluded grove of trees on his father's farm and attempted the first vocal prayer of his life.

In answer to his fervent prayer, two Heavenly Beings appeared to him, God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Son. Joseph asked the personages which church he should join, and was told he must join none of them, for they were all wrong. All the churches had wandered from the teachings of the original Church established by Jesus Christ and were unacceptable to God. He later received instructions from other heavenly messengers who directed him to a set of Golden Plates from which he translated the Book of Mormon under the Lord's direction. Heavenly messengers also conferred the Priesthood upon him.

In 1830 Joseph Smith was directed to organize the Church. The Mormons believe in revelation today and accept the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, David O. McKay, as a living Prophet called of God to direct His Church. They believe in faith, repentance, and a Godhead consisting of three personages, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. They practice baptism by immersion and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. They believe the Bible to be the word of God, but in addition have further religious scriptures, the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

Today there are approximately 2 1/2 million Mormons located throughout most of the free world. Approximately 12,000 missionaries are in the field. These missionaries are usually young men about 20 years old who receive no salary and are supported from their own savings or by their families.

The Mormons do not believe in a paid clergy. Each worthy male over 12 years old holds the Priesthood. These Priesthood holders comprise the ministry who serve without monetary compensation.

The first influence of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Oklahoma is not known. However, a mission was maintained by the Church in Indian Territory for some time following 1855. Today there are approximately 6,500 Mormons in Oklahoma compared to less than 50 in 1930.

The first formal organization in Stillwater area was a Sunday School in October, 1933, at Ripley, Oklahoma. In November, 1935, the meeting place was changed to American Legion Hall in

Stillwater. On November 1, 1936, the first meeting was held in the chapel at the corner of Duck and Sixth Avenue. The chapel at Sixth and Duck was used until this new building was occupied on March 6, 1966. Today there are approximately 150 members and about 50 families living in the Stillwater area.

If you would like further information about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, please call Fr 2-1496.

Addendum: The above number was that of C. Jay Murray, Bishop.

NOTES FROM STILLWATER WARD HISTORICAL REPORTS:

LDSSSTWH6

23 Oct 1960-The Oklahoma Stake was created from the West Oklahoma District of the Central States Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints under the direction of Mark E. Petterson, Apostle, and Alma Sonne, assistant apostle. The Stillwater Ward was created from the Stillwater Branch.

Set apart by:

Bishop	LaVell M. Henderson	Mark E. Peterson
First Counselor	C. Jay Murray	" " "
Second Counselor	Willard F. Williams	" " "
Clerk	Robert B. Duffin	James A. Cullimore
Assistant Clerk	Edward L. Skidmore	Mark E. Peterson

14 Jan 1961-Stake Leadership in Oklahoma City with Mark E. Peterson of the Council of the Twelve and Sterling W. Sill, Asst. to the Council of the Twelve, visiting General Authorities.

23 Mar 1961-Fenton Gray, his wife, Evelyln, and children: Stephen, Phillip, and Marilyn left for a one year stay in Brazil under the auspices of the United Nations.

18 Jun 1961-Stake Quarterly Conference held in Oklahoma City with Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve presiding. The new missionary program was stressed in all sessions.

7 Jul 1961-A Missionary Farewell Testimonial was held in honor of Leslie Lee Manzer who has been called to serve in the Eastern Atlantic States Mission.

23 Dec 1961-Linda Kay Joyce was baptized by William Gray and confirmed by Bp. LaVell Henderson. Nora Sue Smith was baptized by Terry C. Thorne and confirmed by Edward L. Skidmore.

19 Feb 1962-LaMont Gee was set apart as a foreign missionary. He will labor in the Northwestern States Mission.

4 Jun 1962-F. Michael Gray entered the Mission Home. (Eastern States Mission)

11 Jun 1962-Terry C. Thorne entered the Mission Home. (Northwestern States Mission)

3 Mar 1963-Brother Hugh Nibley of the BYU was a speaker at the college of religious emphasis week. He presented a fireside chat this night for members of the ward.

23 Jun 1963-The Bishopric was reorganized due to the forthcoming moving of Bishop LaVell M. Henderson. New members of the Bishopric are C. Jay Murray, Bishop, Edward Skidmore, 1st

Counselor; Everett Eddington, 2nd Counselor.

18 Jul 1963-The Bishops Certificate of Bishop C. Jay Murray arrived with instructions to record it in the historical record. The number of the certificate was A-1397. He was ordained a Bishop and set aside by Elder Henry D Taylor on June 23, 1963.

17 Nov 1963-W. Cleon Skousen was special speaker at Sacrament Meeting

21 Dec 1963-Christmas tree sale closed this day. Ward members have been cutting and selling trees for the past two weeks.

31 Dec 1963-Stillwater Ward purchased the lot for Chapel building site on Virginia Street.

26 Jan 1964-The Priesthood of Stillwater Ward was presented the proposal from the Methodists to purchase the present Stillwater Ward Chapel for \$40,000.

31 Jan 1964-During the past week the Stillwater Police Department offered the Stillwater Ward their hamburger and concession stand and franchise at the Payne County fairgrounds. They offered in to the Ward Bishopric for \$50. It is planned that the Ward members will operate this stand as a means of supporting the Welfare Program

28 Apr 1964-21 colonies of bees arrived via express. Brother Edington (Everett) and Robert Duffin and Jerry Hurst and Lloyd Brinkerhoff established them in the hives that had previously been prepared by the priesthood.

9 May 1964-An English riding horse show was sponsored by the ward as a fund raising program of the building finance committee.

1-5 Sep 1964-The county fair concession stand was operated by the ward as a building fund project. Approximately \$512 was earned.

26 Sep 1964 The Stillwater Ward took over the concession stands on the south side of the Oklahoma State University stadium for all O.S.U. football games in 1964. Concession would be in partnership with the Cushing Branch.

10 Apr 1965-The Ward sponsored the Cimmaron Valley Horse Show as a building fund project. Many members of the Ward participated, and the net proceeds were \$274.99

30 Jun 1965-A ground-breaking ceremony was held on the church lot at 1720 East Virginia Street.

12 Jan 1970-Second Semester Institute began. Classes were held in Bennett Memorial Chapel on the Oklahoma State University Campus.

22 Nov 1970-Talks were given in Sacrament Meeting by members of three families who had subsisted for two weeks on their stored food.

The Jay Murray, Jerry Hurst, and Donald Williams families participated in the assignment given by Bishop Lynn L. Gee.

4 Mar 1973-Organization of a dependent Sunday School for the Institute students at Oklahoma State University. Bishop Alvin K. Mayo presided and conducted.