

# THE MORMON CULTURE REGION: STRATEGIES AND PATTERNS IN THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE AMERICAN WEST, 1847-1964

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**ABSTRACT.** The Mormons, a distinctive American subculture, have long dominated a large area of the Far West, but the extent of the region and the geographic relationships between Mormons and Gentiles (non-Mormons) have never been satisfactorily presented. Historical analysis of expansions, contractions, and reexpansions from the original Utah nucleus and of concurrent Gentile movements into and around Mormon colonies provides the basis for a refined definition of the Mormon culture region. That region is interpreted as having a *core* in the Wasatch Oasis, a *domain* over much of Utah and southeastern Idaho, and a *sphere* extending from eastern Oregon to Mexico. The most recent and important movement has been to the Pacific Coast cities, producing modifications in theology as well as geography, and suggesting the emergence of a Salt Lake City-Los Angeles axis as a pattern of profound influence in the present and future of Mormondom.

THE appearance of a "Mormon Region" boldly on the maps of two recent studies on the geography of religion in the United States<sup>1</sup> calls attention to a cultural feature of major significance within our national patterns which has never been adequately recognized by American geographers. The concentration of such a large religious group and its great numerical dominance within a particular area are sufficiently unusual features in America as to be emphasized by both authors. As Zelinsky noted, "the Mormon Region is the most easily

mapped and described," and he obviously meant to include it as one of the "only two or possibly three cases of regions whose religious distinctiveness is immediately apparent to the casual observer and is generally apprehended by their inhabitants."<sup>2</sup> The implication is not that Mormons, as persons, are necessarily more religious than others but that, as a group, they constitute a highly self-conscious subculture whose chief bond is religion and one which has long established its mark upon the life and landscape of a particular area. Either residence within or research upon that area can quickly confirm that fact. This paper is a product of both experiences<sup>3</sup> and is offered as

<sup>1</sup> W. Zelinsky, "An Approach to the Religious Geography of the United States: Patterns of Church Membership in 1952," *Annals, Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 51 (1961), p. 193; and E. S. Gausstad, *Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), map in pocket: "Religion in America: 1950." The official name of this religious group is "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." I have used "Mormon" throughout this article because it is the most common term used both by members and nonmembers. Mormons also commonly refer to themselves as "Latter-day Saints," "L.D.S.," and "Saints."

<sup>2</sup> Zelinsky, *op. cit.*, footnote 1, pp. 164, 165.

<sup>3</sup> Of the many persons who shared with him some of their intimate understanding of Mormon culture during his years of residence in Utah the author wishes especially to recognize the contributions of H. Bowman Hawkes and William Mulder, although, of course, neither is in any way responsible for the particular statements or interpretations set forth.

an essay in geographical interpretation which attempts to relate processes and patterns in such a way as to build a refined geographical definition of the Mormon culture region.

#### INTRODUCTION

The existence of the Mormons as a definite, cohesive, readily distinguishable culture within the broader patterns of American national life has been recognized ever since the movement gathered strength and form a century and a quarter ago. Its characteristics have been described and analyzed by a host of scholars in many fields. Theologians and other specialists in religion have of course produced voluminous literature on the subject,<sup>4</sup> while American historians and sociologists have long acknowledged the movement to be of such magnitude and distinction as to merit considerable recognition in even the most general texts. More important for the cultural geographer is the evidence in major research studies focused upon such topics as colonization, settlement patterns, economic organization and development, immigration, and general social patterns which clearly reveals the variant character of Mormon culture.<sup>5</sup> Further confirmation is

found in comparative studies specifically designed by social scientists to determine whatever differences there may be in values and social behavior between Mormons and other groups. The results of these leave no doubt about the integrity of Mormon culture as a distinctive pattern of life.<sup>6</sup>

If we turn to the works of American geographers we will find that whereas the Mormons have not been ignored they have apparently not been considered to be of major signifi-

might be expected from an author who was destined to become one of the General Authorities of the Church, was based upon his doctoral study under Herbert Bolton and is a methodical and extremely useful historical geography of Mormon colonization up to 1877. L. Nelson, *The Mormon Village, A Pattern and Technique of Land Settlement* (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1952), is the definitive study on the origins and character of the distinctive Mormon settlement pattern. L. J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom, An Economic History of the Latter Day Saints 1830-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), is a major and meticulous research study which, though emphasizing how most Mormon programs drew upon much that was common in American experience, nevertheless describes an economic development which in organization, scale, and character was sharply different from anything around it in the American West. The geographer interested in the Mormons will not only find this book essential reading, but will find its 100 pages of references and chapter notes his most useful bibliographic guide for further study. W. Mulder, *Homeward to Zion, the Mormon Migration from Scandinavia* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1957), is the best study of the nature and role of the "gathering unto Zion" which was such an important part of Mormon development. Mulder's "The Mormons in American History," *Bulletin of the University of Utah*, Vol. XLVIII, No. 11, January 14 (1957) is a fascinating interpretative essay and the volume which he edited together with A. Mortensen, *Among the Mormons, Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers* (New York: Knopf, 1958), is a collection which offers an unusually orderly, comprehensive, and revealing perspective upon Mormon culture history. Finally, no one interested in the topic should fail to read W. Stegner, *Mormon Country* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1942), one of the fine volumes in the very uneven American Folkways series.

<sup>6</sup> See especially J. L. Landgraf, "Land-Use in the Ramah Area of New Mexico, An Anthropological Approach to Areal Study," *Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University*, Vol. XLII (1954), 97 pp., and E. Z. Vogt, "American Subcultural Continua as Exemplified by the Mormons and Texans," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. LVII (1955), pp. 1163-72. Both studies derive from the "Comparative Study of Values in Five Cultures" project of the Laboratory of Social Relations, Harvard University.

<sup>4</sup> Two recent bibliographic articles offer a convenient introduction to the standard and the more recent literature: M. S. Hill, "The Historiography of Mormonism," *Church History*, Vol. XXVIII (1959), pp. 418-26, and P. A. M. Taylor, "Recent Writings on Utah and the Mormons," *Arizona and the West*, Vol. IV (1963), pp. 249-60.

<sup>5</sup> Even though this is not designed to be primarily a bibliographic article, the following works are suggested as a minimum collection of major studies which might be considered as the essential general reading for the cultural geographer interested in the Mormons. T. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1957), is the most penetrating holistic sociological study, especially good for its discussion of the tensions within Mormon culture today. N. Anderson, *Desert Saints, The Mormon Frontier in Utah* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1942), is probably the best single volume on the Mormons as an historical movement in the Far West during the nineteenth century. L. H. Creer, *The Founding of an Empire; the Exploration and Colonization of Utah, 1776-1856* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1947), is the best account of the Mormon view of possible refuge areas, their selection of the Great Basin, and their exodus to the Salt Lake Valley. M. R. Hunter, *Brigham Young, the Colonizer* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1940), though somewhat laudatory as

cance. For example, despite their undoubted domination of a large area and their visible imprint upon the land, they have been given far less recognition in textbooks on American geography than in those on American history. In most they receive only incidental if any mention, in none is there any explicit suggestion that a Mormon region exists as an important geographical pattern.<sup>7</sup> Reference to textbooks is pertinent because they tend to reflect the prevailing themes in a field and the character and coverage of its more specialized research. In general, it would not be a gross exaggeration to conclude that the America portrayed therein by American geographers is an area of standardized culture within which economic activities are of singular importance; and these activities, in turn, are largely to be understood as the logical maximization of the opportunities inherent in particular sets of physical conditions and relative locations. A sense of history and a concept of culture are hardly apparent. Predictably, the nontextbook literature shows greater insight into the significance of Mormon regionalism, and geographers who have done fieldwork in the Mormon area are always aware of and usually deal with some of the specific geographical manifestations of the local culture. Nevertheless, in only a few cases have those manifestations been the major focus of study,<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> C. L. White, E. Foscoe, and T. McKnight, *Regional Geography of Anglo-America*, 3rd edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), gives them considerably more space than any other, including a brief sketch of the Mormon migration, colonization, and mention of cultural differences in settlement patterns, agriculture, and demography. The predominance of Mormons in parts of Idaho, Nevada, and Arizona as well as Utah is also noted but the significance of a definite Mormon region is ignored. Perhaps the opening phrase of the Preface is in itself sufficient explanation of such an omission: "Regions are formed by man as he adjusts himself to his natural environment . . .," *ibid.*, p. v. The only regional volume relevant to the area is *California and the Southwest*, edited by C. M. Zierer (New York: Wiley, 1956). Its arbitrary areal limits which include the states of Nevada, Utah, and Arizona would preclude any consideration of the Mormon region as a whole. The Mormons are mentioned briefly in conjunction with several topics but, not surprisingly, are recognized as a separate culture only in the chapter on "rural life," written by the anthropologist W. Goldschmidt (see especially pp. 346-47).

<sup>8</sup> The best example is J. E. Spencer, "The Middle Virgin River Valley: A Study in Culture Growth and

and in only one is the areal extent of the Mormon domination within the larger frame of the American West a topic of concern.<sup>9</sup> In this latter study Brightman offered a succinct and penetrating analysis, efficiently supported by revealing maps, of the evolution of the political boundaries of Utah toward ever greater concordance with the Mormon-dominated area. It is a theme and an example which deserves greater recognition,<sup>10</sup> but though it offers important evidence and is strongly suggestive of the concept of a Mormon culture region it still does not deal directly with the problem of defining that region.

This general neglect by American geographers is further emphasized by the fact that traveling European geographers have usually been quick to recognize that, when in Utah, they are in the midst of a significantly different culture area. Telling evidence of this is the fact that the only geographical monograph on the subject and the only specific recognition by a geographer of a "Mormonland" as a major component within a set of general regional divisions (rather than purely religious

Change" (unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, Geography, University of California, Berkeley, 1936); see also by the same author, "The Development of Agricultural Villages in Southern Utah," *Agricultural History*, Vol. XIV (1940), pp. 181-89, and "House Types of Southern Utah," *Geographical Review*, Vol. XXV (1945), pp. 444-57. A short study specifically emphasizing certain Mormon features is A. L. Seeman, "Communities in the Salt Lake Basin," *Economic Geography*, Vol. XIV (1938), pp. 300-08. It is interesting that although Seeman's article is rarely cited by geographers it was reprinted in the recent sociological collection edited by G. A. Theodorson, *Studies in Human Ecology* (Evanston, Ill.: 1961). Two well-known published dissertations by former residents of the area are good examples of works which specifically take into account certain special features of Mormon culture but in which the principal focus is upon more general types of patterns: C. L. White, "The Agricultural Geography of the Salt Lake Oasis," *Journal of the Scientific Laboratories of Denison University*, Vol. XXI (1925-1926), pp. 117-283, and C. D. Harris, "Salt Lake City, a Regional Capital" (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1940).

<sup>9</sup> G. F. Brightman, "The Boundaries of Utah," *Economic Geography* Vol. XVI (1940), pp. 87-95.

<sup>10</sup> Evidently the only text to cite and make even slight use of Brightman's study is R. H. Brown, *Historical Geography of the United States* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1948), p. 485. Brown adapted some of Brightman's maps, but his focus throughout the book is upon problems of settlement and physical environment and he was not really concerned with the areal dimensions of Mormon colonization.

regions, as in Zelinsky) of the United States are the results of German scholarship.<sup>11</sup> Each of these studies includes a map of the Mormon region but it is clear that in neither case was there any intensive research directed toward determining its bounds. The results are obviously offered only as general approximations and in fact the regions depicted in these two works differ very considerably in size and shape and thus offer no certain guide.<sup>12</sup>

Geographers are, of course, not alone in their concern for regional patterns and it is not surprising to find that a Mormon region does appear, if somewhat cryptically, on a map of "Rural Regions of the United States" compiled by American sociologists a quarter of a century ago.<sup>13</sup> Although titled simply "Central Intermountain," the text makes clear that culturally the region is unique because of the large proportion of Mormons in its population.<sup>14</sup> Other features mentioned are the farm-village pattern, commercial farming with relatively little tenancy, and a unique combination of a high average standard of living, and a

very high birth rate, and large families. Such items are indeed characteristics of Mormon culture, but obviously they describe only a very limited part of it and their selection merely reflects the purposes and methods of this particular study. Nevertheless, the determination of the region on the basis of such specific criteria suggests the possibility of testing whether Mormon culture is so closely bound to religion that a map of religious adherents provides a simple key to the bounds of the culture area. Is the Mormon culture region simply one where Mormons are a majority of the population, or at least of a majority of those who profess any religion?<sup>15</sup> An answer can be quickly obtained by the superimposition of Mangus' "Central Intermountain" region upon the patterns depicted in the studies by Gaustad and by Zelinsky on the geography of religion (Fig. 1). Since both Mangus and Gaustad worked with county units their patterns are most easily compared. Although coincident over a large block of territory there are discordances along nearly every side as well as with respect to noncontiguous outlying areas. Zelinsky's Mormon Region, derived from the same statistical source as Gaustad's,<sup>16</sup> represents a cultural geographer's generalization based upon his own very considerable knowledge of other relevant patterns.<sup>17</sup> Clearly Mormon numerical prepon-

<sup>11</sup> H. Lautensach's short monograph "Das Mormonenland, als Beispiel eines sozialgeographischen Raumes," *Bonner Geographische Abhandlungen*, Heft II (1953) was the product of extensive library research following his traverse with the Transcontinental Excursion of the I.G.C. in 1952. Just forty years earlier a French geographer displayed a similar interest in the Mormons as the result of the 1912 Excursion of the I.G.C.; see L. Gallois, "L'Utah," *Annales de Géographie*, Vol. XX (1913), pp. 185-96. B. Hofmeister's recognition of "Mormonenland," as one of thirteen basic regions in his coverage of "Die Vereinigten Staaten Von Amerika" in *Die Grosse Illustrierte Landerkunde*, Band II (Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1963) pp. 731-915 (Mormonenland, pp. 891-95 and map, p. 830), stemmed from his year of research and teaching at the University of Utah.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Lautensach, *op. cit.*, footnote 11, p. 10 and Hofmeister, *op. cit.*, footnote 11, pp. 829-30.

<sup>13</sup> A. R. Mangus, *Rural Regions of the United States* (Washington: Work Projects Administration, 1940), Figure 2. This study is an important and typical product of the great interest in regional sociology during the 1930's, an era characterized most clearly by the works of Howard K. Odum and his co-workers on the American South.

<sup>14</sup> Mangus, *op. cit.*, footnote 13, p. 30. It is of interest that the committee which produced "Rural Settlement Patterns in the United States as Illustrated on One Hundred Topographic Quadrangle Maps," *National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council Publication 380* (Washington, D. C.; 1956) used Mangus' regions as their basic framework (smoothing out his county boundaries) but replaced "Central Intermountain" with "Mormon."

<sup>15</sup> The use of some key element as a means of delimiting regions of broader significance is, of course, commonplace in geography and it has been a matter of considerable methodological controversy among sociologists and anthropologists. The use of a master factor for the mapping of a social complex is discussed in C. E. Lively and C. L. Gregory, "The Rural Socio-cultural Area as a Field for Research," *Rural Sociology*, Vol. XIX (1954), pp. 21-31, an article of particular relevance to cultural geographers. In their discussions of the value of areal studies, techniques of delimitation, and problems related to the areal dimensions of cultural processes, one senses much that is parallel with, or relevant to, similar considerations in geography.

<sup>16</sup> Both are based upon the data in the bulletins on *Churches and Church Membership in the United States: an Enumeration and Analysis by Counties, States and Regions* (New York: National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 1956-1958).

<sup>17</sup> Zelinsky's study also includes a map (*op. cit.*, footnote 1, p. 179) of the distribution of the total membership of the "Churches of Latter-day Saints." This combines the membership of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints and two very small splinter groups with a larger body, a



derance is not a reliable guide to the Mormon culture area, at least insofar as the latter was established by Mangus.<sup>18</sup> But there are very good reasons why the cultural geographer should not accept the Mangus delimitation as a definitive regional frame. For one thing, the criteria were too limited to features of interest to rural sociologists concerned with governmental policies to be relied upon for broader definitions of culture areas.<sup>19</sup> For another, the use of counties is much too crude for the scale of the problem, partly because many counties in the Western states are so very large; but more importantly because in the geography of cultures, boundaries may have a special importance for they are likely to be critical zones of contact out of which may develop significant tensions and change. Furthermore, the Mangus map provides only a single uniform area, with no gradation between any possible core and periphery.

In sum, there is ample evidence that a distinctive Mormon culture is recognizable and important and that it is dominant over a large area in the Far West. However, despite several studies which give some suggestion of its location, neither singularly nor together do these offer a sure guide to the geographical dimensions of a Mormon culture region. We need to know more precisely just where the Mormons are and just what is the context of their situation in each locality, which means knowing something about when, why, and how they got there and what is their relationship with reference to other local peoples. Or,

logical procedure when mapping so many denominations at the national scale although the differences between the two are important in any study of Mormon culture. However, because the Reorganized Mormons are largely in the Midwest the matter has no marked effect upon the county patterns of concern here.

<sup>18</sup> There is, of course, a difference in date between Mangus' study and the 1952 data used by Gaustad and by Zelinsky. However, the fact that there were some increases in the interim in the proportionate Mormon population of certain counties does little to explain the discordance. Some check on this can be made by reference to Figure 7 in Brightman, *op. cit.*, footnote 9, p. 93, although this shows Mormons as a percentage of the total population, calculated evidently upon the special census of *Religious Bodies: 1926*, U.S. Bureau of the Census (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1929).

<sup>19</sup> Mangus, *op. cit.*, footnote 13, p. 1 and Chapter IV.

to put it more succinctly, even axiomatically, not only must we know the patterns in greater detail but we must know more about the processes which created them. If the culture area concept is to be used by geographers to provide new insights and interpretations rather than merely new compartments for the assemblage of commonplace data, such areas must be viewed not as static uniform patterns but as dynamic areal growths. What follows is an expression of that view, wherein a refined definition of the areal dimensions of Mormon culture is developed out of the perspective of historical geography.

#### THE SEARCH FOR ZION

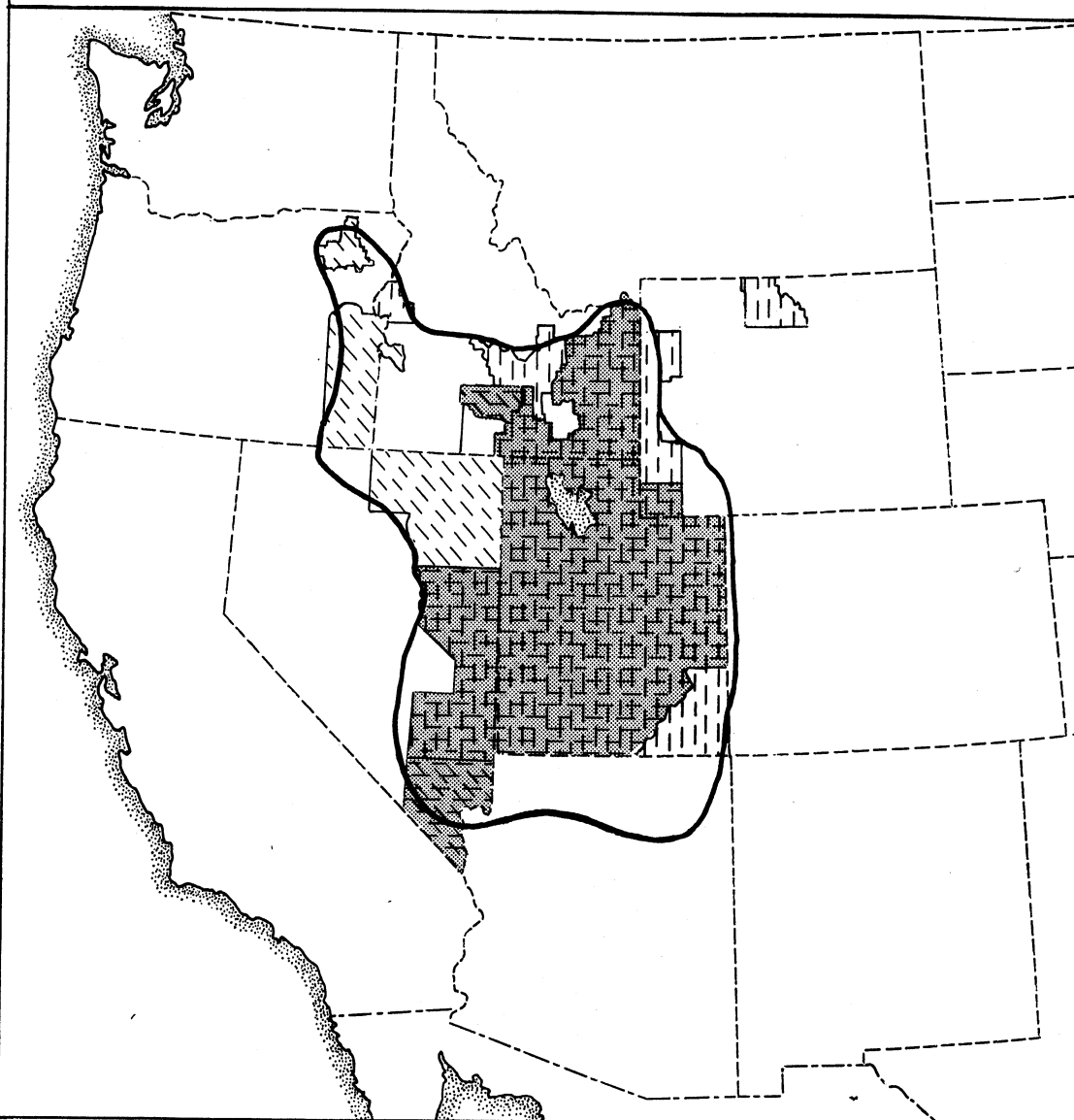
It is not essential to that purpose to delve very far into the origins and early development of Mormonism but some perspective is needed. As is well known, historically, it was but one of many experimental, communal, millennial movements of its time; sociologically it was composed largely of elements recognizable in American culture, though singularly combined and at times so exaggerated that some of the specific manifestations would seem startlingly different and discordant. Geographically its New England roots and its persistent involvement with the moving American frontier are features of special interest.

Both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were born in Vermont, but the New England heritage is more a product of associations in lands of strong Yankee influence than directly of New England itself. Smith had his early visions, produced his sacred text, the Book of Mormon, and in 1830 formally organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, while a resident of western New York.<sup>20</sup> The first temple was built and the first attempt to establish a full society of Latter-day Saints was made at Kirtland in the Western Reserve in Ohio. Both areas were strongholds of New England culture. Such facts do not in themselves explain anything but they begin to give a cultural geography underpinning to such characterizations as that of Emerson, who suc-

<sup>20</sup> Smith's home was in Palmyra, Wayne County; he claimed to have transcribed the Book of Mormon from "golden plates" unearthed at Hill Cumorah, a few miles south of Palmyra in Ontario County; the Church was first organized at Fayette in Seneca County.

# THE MORMON REGION

## SOME RECENT DEFINITIONS



GAUSTAD

MANGUS

ZELINSKY



+50% LDS  
25-49% LDS



CENTRAL MOUNTAIN  
CULTURAL REGION

INTER-  
RURAL  
REGION



MORMON  
RELIGIOUS  
REGION

cinctly labeled Mormonism as "an afterclap of Puritanism."<sup>21</sup>

The Mormon interest in the frontier began with a concern for Indian missions (for the American Indian has a special importance within Mormon theology), but troubles with their neighbors in New York and Ohio soon caused them to look to the fringes of civilization as a more suitable locale for implanting the ideal society. In 1831 Smith visited Independence, Missouri, then the farthest salient of settlement, and he so liked what he saw that he proclaimed it the new Zion. But as the Saints flocked in, troubles with the Gentiles (the Mormon term for all non-Mormons) became worse than ever. A shift into north-central Missouri brought no improvement, and a further move to the northeast across the Mississippi brought into being the handsome Mormon city of Nauvoo, momentarily the largest in Illinois, but only compounded those animosities which culminated in the murder of Smith by a mob in 1844. Finding it impossible to live within the frontier zone the Mormons now prepared to move well beyond it. Actually, Smith had begun to consider the need for a distant refuge some years before. Texas, Oregon, California, and the Great Basin were each given careful consideration by the leaders, and a decision in favor of the last came only after diligent study, most especially of Fremont's recent report on that region.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Mulder, "The Mormons in American History," *op. cit.*, footnote 5, p. 14.

<sup>22</sup> The geographical considerations related to this prelude to exodus and to the migration are well covered in Creer, *op. cit.*, footnote 5, and Anderson, *op. cit.*, footnote 5; some useful additional details are presented in B. L. Peterson, "A Geographic Study of the Mormon Migration from Nauvoo, Illinois, to the Great Salt Lake Valley (1846-1947)" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Geography, University of California, Los Angeles, 1941). It was during this confused period immediately following Smith's death that splinter groups formed. The largest of these, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of L.D.S., remained in the Midwest. A small but famous group, led by James J. Strang, settled first in Wisconsin, then moved to Beaver Island in northern Michigan, from which place, after being wracked by internal factions and external persecutions, they were forcibly dispersed in

For the Mormons these years were a search for Zion, for some ground that could be consecrated to the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God. The need to take root was a powerful one, for, as Mulder has noted, "while other millennialists set a time, the Mormons appointed a place," and it was in the process of finding that place that "the Mormons became a genuine people, a covenant folk like ancient Israel with a shared history and at last a homeland."<sup>23</sup>

#### DESERET

On July 24, 1847, Brigham Young sat in his carriage on a high terrace at the mouth of a mountain canyon, silently soaked up his first view of the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, and said: "This is the place." It became the most famous phrase in Mormon history because it was not simply an opinion but a theocratic pronouncement sufficient in itself to consecrate a new Zion. From it emanated half a century of Mormon colonization in the Far West.

1856; see M. M. Quaife, *The Kingdom of St. James, A Narrative of the Mormons* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930). Another small party emigrated to the Texas Hill country and established a colony at Zodiac in Burnet County, Texas, *A Guide to the Lone Star State* (New York: Hastings House, 1940, W.P.A. Writers' Program), pp. 458-59, and C. S. Banks, "The Mormon Immigration into Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XLIX (1945-1946), pp. 233-44. A group of Mormons who sailed by ship from New York City for the Far West established the village of New Hope in Stanislaus County, California, before they knew for sure where Brigham Young was going to settle. Their leader was so bitter that Young would choose the Salt Lake Valley over the San Joaquin that he left the fold and his followers soon dispersed; see P. Bailey, *Sam Brannan and the California Mormons* (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1959). A group of British converts petitioned, unsuccessfully, for a grant on Vancouver Island, as they wanted to emigrate to the American West but preferred to stay on British soil; see J. B. Munro, "Mormon Colonization Scheme for Vancouver Island," *Washington Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXV (1934), pp. 278-85. All these cases illustrate further how the Mormon movement was an integral and complex part of the American frontier expansion of the time.

<sup>23</sup> Mulder, "The Mormons in American History," *op. cit.*, footnote 5, pp. 19, 14.

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FIG. 1. The Gaustad and Mangus distributions are by counties. The Gaustad proportions refer to percentages of the total membership in all denominations according to the religious census of 1952. Zelinsky's region was generalized primarily from the data in that same census.

Under the guidance of church leaders, irrigation was begun immediately, as was the allocation of resources, and the survey of the new city, modeled upon Joseph Smith's "Plan of the City of Zion" (which had already been used for those aborted Mormon towns in Missouri and Illinois). It was a rigid gridiron of spacious blocks and streets in which one can discern something of the New England town formalized by the Biblical foursquare and expressing a firm belief in the virtues of social concentration and of a rationally ordered society, a fitting frame for the New Jerusalem.<sup>24</sup>

Once such matters were well under way in Salt Lake Valley, a systematic exploration of other localities was begun. Room was needed not just to accommodate those Mormons already moving across the plains or waiting to flee from the Gentiles in Missouri and Illinois, but for the "Gathering of the Saints" through all time to come. For, to quote Mulder again,<sup>25</sup>

the gathering, not polygamy, is Mormonism's oldest and most influential doctrine. . . . The invitation and the promise [of Mormonism] involved more than a trip to the sinners bench . . . [it] meant getting out of Babylon and uniting with God's people to build up the Kingdom and await greater spiritual endowments.

As a high Church official told European converts in 1855:<sup>26</sup>

the commandment to gather out to the land of America is just as binding on the Saints so far as it is possible for them to accomplish it, as it was in the first place to be baptized for the remission of sins.

That made it virtually a sacrament and thus the gathering and the general emphasis upon the large family with its doctrinal amplification through polygamy combined to provide a powerful demographic force.

Characteristically not only was a search for sites undertaken methodically, but an orderly means of peopling them was devised. The Church leadership selected the time and the place and many of the specific persons for important new colonizations. The larger body of young persons and newcomers who needed land would be joined to a cadre of experienced pioneers and essential craftsmen carefully se-

lected for the task. The Mormon term for such selection is "called," and it was tantamount to an order, though one usually willingly obeyed as a proper duty whatever the personal sacrifice.

Such features are suggestive of the distinctive character of Mormon colonization, and how it so differed from the general stereotype of the rather chaotic American westward movement. But, again, our main purpose is not to examine these features but to chart the spread of the culture they represent and that too was undertaken according to an orderly plan.<sup>27</sup>

It seems certain that when Brigham Young first stared at that sun-baked desolate valley his vision was not limited by its mountainous margins and great Dead Sea, but reached far beyond to an imagined encompassing empire of which this would be but the nucleus. It did not take long for him to give that dream a more definite shape and name: "Deseret," a word from the Book of Mormon meaning honeybee, symbolizing the productive industriousness of the ideal society. In March, 1849, Congress was petitioned to recognize the State of Deseret, a huge part of the newly acquired Far West, defined largely in hydrographic terms: bounded on the north by the Columbian watershed, on the east by the continental divide, on the west by the crest of the Sierra Nevada, and on the south by the course of the Gila River (which was the Mexican border until the Gadsden Purchase four years later) (Fig. 2). Only in the southwest corner were the streams ignored, so as to obtain a frontage on the Pacific. Deseret was thus, in the main, a combination of the Great Basin of interior drainage and the watershed of the Colorado River system.

Congress refused to accept Deseret and instead substituted a Utah Territory only half as big and humbly named after the local Indians. But these were not crippling limitations. Brigham Young was appointed governor and Deseret remained real for the Mormons even if unrecognized by the nation. The patterns of activities over the next few years make this

<sup>24</sup> Nelson, *op. cit.*, footnote 5, especially Chapter 11.

<sup>25</sup> Mulder, *op. cit.*, footnote 5, pp. 16-17.

<sup>26</sup> Andrew L. Neff, *History of Utah, 1847-1869* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1940), p. 585.

<sup>27</sup> Colonization of the main localities is well described in the major works previously mentioned, especially in those of Hunter, Anderson, and Arrington, footnote 5, and specific citation will be made only to other studies which add important details or new dimensions to these standard works.

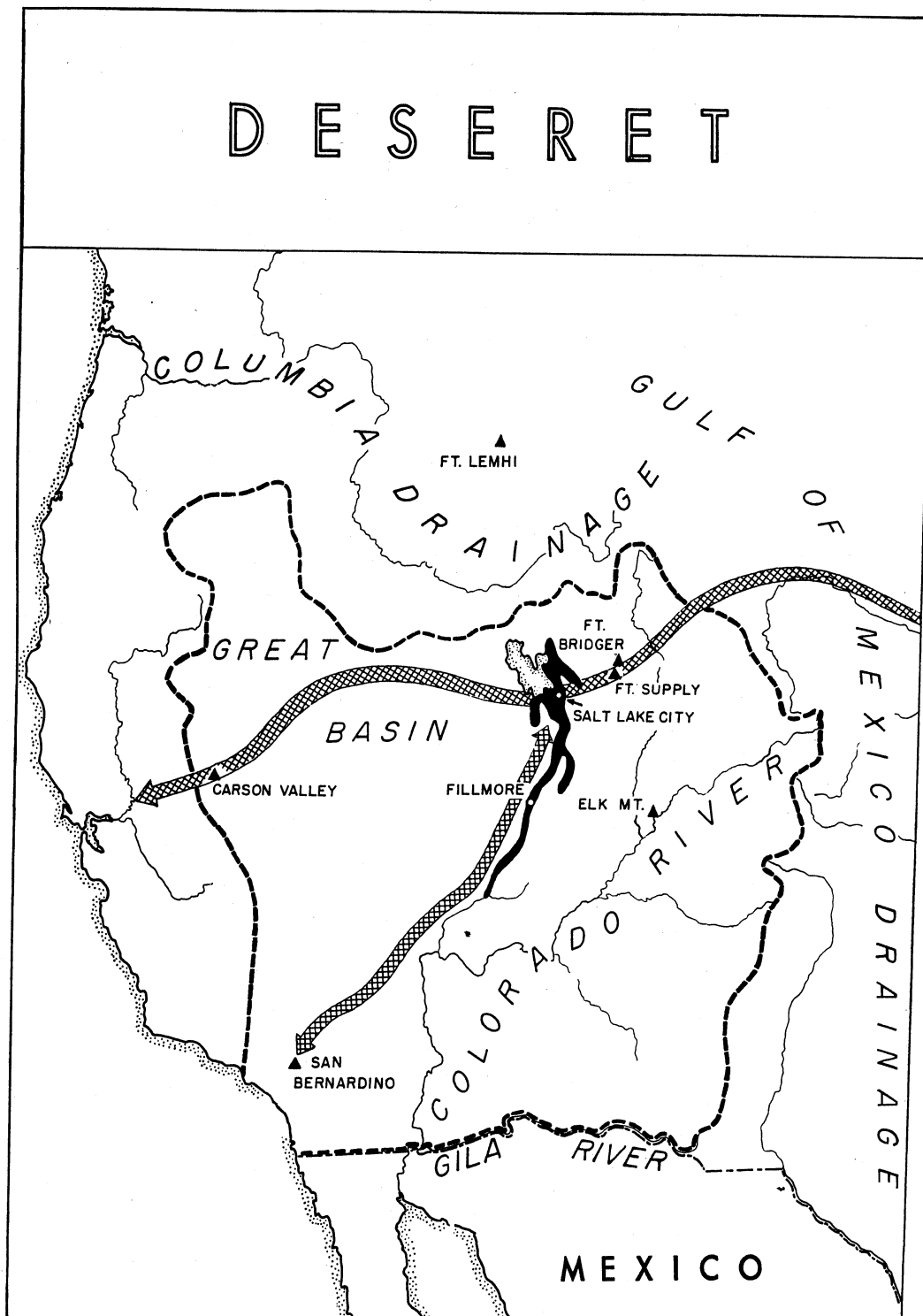


FIG. 2. Deseret, the proposed Mormon state of 1849, showing the several outposts and missions established near its borders during the years 1850-1857 and principal thoroughfares of that era.



clear. Salt Lake City was the capital and a rapid filling in of the valleys immediately to the north and south formed an emerging core area. Actually Brigham Young personally selected a new capital at Fillmore, 150 miles south of Salt Lake City, because he gave priority to a rapid occupation of all possible sites in that direction and viewed such a location as more central within the empire he envisioned. Work on a handsome statehouse was begun but after one session the territorial legislature returned to Salt Lake City as a more convenient place.<sup>28</sup> Generically this may be seen as an attempt to force the pattern of core expansion into a particular direction which failed because settlement was as yet too sparse and intermittent and traffic connections too tenuous to support an adequate level of development and spatial interaction between the Salt Lake Valley and Fillmore.

Around the periphery of Deseret the Mormons soon established a series of outposts which, though not all founded in response to some orderly program of grand strategy, nevertheless clearly indicated their intention to dominate the whole of the area encompassed by that concept. The most important and successful of these outlying stations was at San Bernardino in the Los Angeles Basin.<sup>29</sup> Here the Mormons purchased a Mexican ranch and soon had a flourishing agricultural community. Its main purpose, however, was to establish a grip upon the Pacific frontage of Deseret, and that position was sought not primarily as an outlet to the sea but as a portal of immigration for the gathering of the converts from Europe and Atlantic America. The trail between San Bernardino and Great Salt Lake City was to be the main thoroughfare, the Mormon Corridor. Within ten years colonists had occupied most of the small valleys along

it within Utah; beyond a single important way station was established at Las Vegas.<sup>30</sup>

Another routeway, the California Trail, crossed Deseret from east to west, and, of course, the great majority of Mormon emigrants came in this way.<sup>31</sup> A trading post built in 1843 by James Bridger in southwestern Wyoming commanded this entryway, but since Brigham Young distrusted Bridger and his fellow mountain men he was anxious to have his own advance base to control this portal and to serve Mormon emigrant parties. In 1853 the Mormons established Fort Supply, a few miles to the south, and two years later got possession of Fort Bridger. At the opposite edge of their realm Mormon settlers arrived in Carson Valley in 1851 lured by the opportunities for trade with California-bound emigrants. But such prospects also attracted Gentile traders, and in 1856 the Church dispatched sixty or seventy families as a reinforcement sufficient to dominate the area and to block local Gentile petitions for annexation to California. Genoa and Franktown were platted as Mormon villages and Carson Valley became regarded as an important outpost guarding the border with turbulent California.

Two Indian missions, though different in specific purpose and soon abandoned under the pressure of Indian attacks, were also part of this pattern. Fort Lemhi, in the Salmon River country, was an attempt to work with the important Bannock tribe; Elk Mountain, on the upper Colorado River, was a mission to local Utes.<sup>32</sup> There were strong theological motives for initiating such work, and more was accomplished with some of the Piute Indians nearer to the Utah settlements, but these two efforts can be regarded in addition as strategic political moves seeking to establish amicable

<sup>30</sup> G. S. Dumke, "Mission to Mining Town: Early Las Vegas," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. XXII (1953), pp. 257-70.

<sup>31</sup> Prior to the Mormon colonization the main California Trail branched from the earlier Oregon Trail in southern Idaho and skirted northwest of the Great Salt Lake. Routes through the Salt Lake Valley had been used, however, in the most famous instance by the ill-fated Donner Party whose delays in crossing the Wasatch and the salt desert doomed it to tragedy in the Sierra snows.

<sup>32</sup> Elk Mountain, at present-day Moab, Utah, was where the old Spanish Trail, a by then little-used route connecting Santa Fe and Los Angeles, crossed the river.

<sup>28</sup> The federal government failed to provide the expected funds for such territorial buildings, and the accommodations for the legislators and their families were quite inadequate. See Neff, *op. cit.*, footnote 26, E. L. Cooley, "Report of an Expedition to Locate Utah's First Capitol," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII (1955), pp. 329-38, and "Utah's Capitols," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXVII (1959), pp. 258-73.

<sup>29</sup> H. F. Raup, "San Bernardino, California, Settlement and Growth of a Pass-Site City," *University of California Publications in Geography*, Vol. VIII (1940).

relations with important foreign societies on the borders of Deseret.

Thus within a decade of the entry into the Great Basin, Deseret was transformed from an idea and bold assertion into the developing reality of a Mormon culture region. As yet its substance was far from sufficient to fill the frame. Colonization, expanding as contiguously as nature allowed south from the Salt Lake Valley, was generally confined to a string of lowest and most accessible valleys along the foot of the Wasatch Range and Plateau. But though the limits of Deseret lay far beyond, the vast intervening tracts lay open to Mormon expansion, insofar as this was physically possible, for as yet no Gentile colonizations had intruded into that space and the Indians, for the most part, were widely scattered in small bands with only the most tenuous hold upon the land.

#### CONTRACTION AND CONTIGUOUS COLONIZATION

Failure of Congress to accept Deseret was a good indication that the nation was not going to shape itself geographically any more than socially to accommodate the Mormons. Even in their Far Western refuge the Mormons could not escape entanglement. Whereas in Missouri and Illinois the Mormons had severe trouble with local and state governments, territorial status enmeshed them with the federal government and with little better results. Problems arose from Indians, emigrants, polygamy, and politics and the great exodus was soon followed by new lamentations. By 1857 Mormonism was a national political issue culminating in the dispatch of a federal army toward Utah to stamp out a supposed rebellion.<sup>33</sup>

The Mormons were determined to resist, and in order to concentrate his people and defenses, Brigham Young called in all settlers from the several exposed outposts. And thus within a few weeks all the Mormons of Carson Valley, San Bernardino, and Las Vegas were headed for Salt Lake City. Fort Bridger and Fort Supply were abandoned and burned and the Saints prepared to resist in the stronghold of the Wasatch. Actually no blood was shed and after weeks of tension a compromise was

reached by which a garrison of troops was allowed to exhibit the federal presence and power in Mormondom but without any harsh curbing of the local society.

The whole unfortunate episode solved none of the issues between Mormon and Gentile but it was of major geographical importance; although the idea of a Mormon commonwealth remained, Deseret no longer provided the frame. No attempts were made to reoccupy Carson Valley or San Bernardino. In each area Gentiles were in control either through purchase or occupation of the former Mormon properties. Within two years the discovery of the Comstock Lode brought a swarm of people into the Nevada valley and although it would be a few more years before southern California experienced any real boom it, too, was growing in population. In any case the Mormons could never have simply re-created their former positions and, given their recent experience, they presumably now regarded such locations as too remote and exposed. Accordingly, in what may conveniently be regarded as a new phase, expansion now became entirely a matter of contiguous colonization, a spreading outward from their early nucleus as compactly as terrain and water allowed.

Most of the new expansion of this phase can be conveniently generalized as being a pattern of movement into successive tiers of valleys, each tier being a segmented series of more or less longitudinal lowlands along the front of or within the Wasatch ranges and high plateaus (Fig. 3). Up to 1858 most of the settlement had taken place within the first tier along the base of the main escarpment, specifically in a discontinuous strip from the lower Bear River Valley north of Ogden, southward through the Salt Lake, Utah, Juab, Pavant, Beaver, and Parowan valleys.

The most famous of the subsequent colonizations was the cotton mission into the Virgin River Valley of extreme southwest Utah, an extension southward within this first tier. Lying 3,000 feet below the settlements just to the north it was hoped that the area would be a producer of subtropical products. Brigham Young suggested olive oil, almonds, figs, grapes, sorghum, tobacco, and cotton as possibilities, and the Civil War soon made cotton the most important. Typically, some Mormon converts from the South were called to super-

<sup>33</sup> See N. F. Furniss, *The Mormon Conflict 1850-1859* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960).

# "CONTIGUOUS" COLONIZATIONS

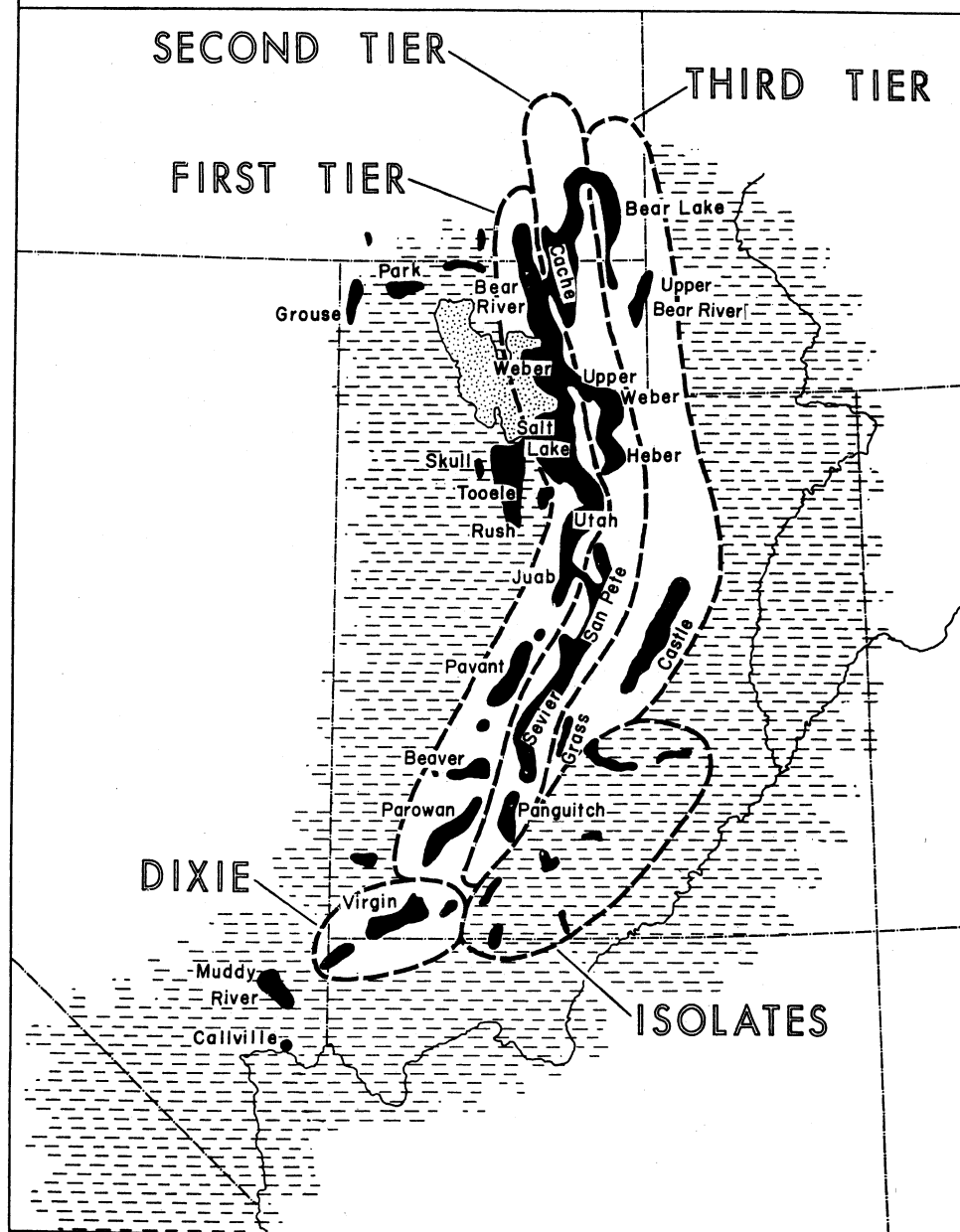


FIGURE 3

vise production and the Church subsidized a mill which was operated by English converts familiar with textile machinery. Although the venture never fulfilled the initial hope of clothing all Mormondom in its own product, it was a considerable success for many years. This distinctive area became noted for its fruits, vegetables, and sorghum molasses as well, and was soon known as "Utah's Dixie," famous for its mild winter climate. The latter was attractive enough to lure Brigham Young into winter residence, occasionally making St. George in effect the temporary capital of Mormondom.<sup>34</sup>

This southward push of the 1860's reached on farther into the southeast corner of Nevada where several settlements were founded along the Muddy River, a meager tributary of the lower Virgin.<sup>35</sup> With no colony in southern California, Las Vegas was not reestablished. The idea of a link to the Pacific was not entirely forgotten, however. Brigham Young directed that a landing be established on the Colorado River in Boulder Canyon (Callville, very near the site of Hoover Dam), and the navigability of the river be examined. But, as army explorations had already demonstrated, the Colorado could not really offer a feasible outlet and the assurance of a transcontinental railroad along the central route soon ended any real interest in the possibility.<sup>36</sup> Faced by the Mohave Desert, Mormon contiguous colonization in this direction was now stalled.

Simultaneous with this southward movement was the expansion into the second tier of valleys, parallel with but elevated above and usually separated by high ridges or narrow canyons from the first. One of the most

accessible of these, the San Pete, had been entered even before 1858. Now more settlers poured in and spread through the whole length of the combined San Pete-Sevier and on south into Panguitch and the upper Virgin. In the north they entered the back valleys within the Wasatch, such as Heber, the upper Weber, and the broad Cache Valley. By 1870 the volume and momentum of this expansion led to penetrations farther eastward into a third tier, a more widely spaced scattering of locations including the Bear Lake Valley and the uppermost Bear River in the north to Castle Valley and Grass Valley in the south-central section. The Uinta Basin was an area of considerably greater potential but it was locked in an Indian reservation and unavailable. Farther southward the settlements became so scattered, the size of each valley so small, and the isolation so great that the tier pattern is broken into fragments, a series of isolates, each a tiny, remote, restricted patch of irrigable land within the depths of the intricately sculptured terrain of the high canyonlands. The implantation and the permanence of these little clusters in such difficult country is one of the remarkable achievements of Mormon colonization. But there was a limit even to the most dedicated pioneering; eastward in this section the surface lowers, aridity increases, the few streams are entrenched in narrow boulder-strewn canyons, and the country in general becomes so bleak and broken that for some time it deterred even exploration of the faintly visible highlands beyond.

Thus this eastward movement ran out of land, and westward expansion into the Great Basin was even more severely limited. Here, too, the meridional mountain and bolson terrain formed a succession of tiers, but the irrigation colonist could barely get a foothold within the first set. Tooele and Rush valleys, lying just west of Salt Lake Valley, offered only a few possible sites within their broad expanses, and the next beyond, Skull Valley, was aptly named since extended trials proved existence scarcely possible. Farther west and south large areas were absolutely sterile, salt flat remainders of shrinking Lake Bonneville, and only here and there along the base of the massive ranges did a spring- or snow-fed creek offer a meager ranch site. Northwest of Great Salt Lake the possibilities were somewhat

<sup>34</sup> There is a large literature on this area. General accounts of Mormon colonization usually give considerable space to the Cotton Mission. Spencer, *op. cit.*, footnote 8, 1936, is the most intensive analysis by a geographer. A recent issue of the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXIX (1961), pp. 191-302, devoted entirely to the area, contains some excellent articles and photographs.

<sup>35</sup> Difficulties with the Nevada legislature caused the Mormons to abandon this Muddy River colony in 1871, but it was recolonized in the 1880's.

<sup>36</sup> Arrington maintains that Young was never really very serious about this Colorado project and sponsored it primarily as a temporary make-work effort to aid the Dixie mission; L. Arrington, "The Mormon Cotton Mission in Southern Utah," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. XXV (1956), pp. 221-38.

greater and colonists did occupy Park and Grouse Creek valleys.

Within thirty years of their entry into the Far West the Mormons were pressing against the limits of the possibilities for contiguous expansion on the south, east, and west, hemmed in by a girdle of wastelands which could be gleaned at their margins by herds and flocks but were barren and impenetrable by the agricultural colonist.

Only in the north, along the linear ranges beyond the margins of Deseret into the upper Snake River country were there valleys as yet unoccupied by farmers. But here, too, there were difficulties. One was an idea, the belief that agriculture in the area would likely be endangered by frost. Like many such preliminary impressions and reasoning this was largely a misconception and, in fact, the area would prove much less afflicted than the high valleys within the Wasatch. Usually such ideas soon gave way in the face of actual farming experiments, but this one existed strong in the mind of Brigham Young and thus did not yield so easily. Young made only one extended trip into that country and returned with a bias against it:<sup>37</sup>

the farther north we go the less good characteristics are connected with the valleys, except in articles of fish, water, and in some instances, timber; and when the people are obliged to live in the north country, that will be high time for them to go there.

His bias was soon reinforced by other problems. The increasing traffic along the Oregon and California trails, which threaded through this sector by several alternate routes, lured a number of Gentile ranchers and traders most of whom had little sympathy for the Mormons. After Idaho was organized as a territory in 1863 its politics were dominated by miners and federal officials who shared this antipathy.<sup>38</sup>

It was in this northern sector that the Mormons first encountered any real competition for the land in the Far West. Now the old Mormon-Gentile competition for footholds on the frontier reappeared, and thus in the 1870's we may discern a third phase in Mormon colo-

nization marked by expansions beyond the broad belt of wastelands and encroachments into Gentile ranching country.

#### PERIPHERAL EXPANSIONS INTO ALIEN LANDS

Brigham Young's obsession with southward expansion produced the most remarkable movements during the early years of this era. In 1873 he sent a scouting party to probe beyond the canyonlands and Navaho country deep into Arizona Territory. That group found little worth reporting, but a second group two years later, nominated the upper reaches of the Little Colorado as an advantageous locale (Fig. 4). Young immediately "called" a group of colonists and in 1876 an expedition set out from St. George and journeyed 250 miles to establish tiny colonies on scattered patches of irrigable land in this high plateau country. In fact, it proved to be an extremely difficult area to domesticate. At one location the dam washed out seven times before finally secured, several sites were soon abandoned, and the main center of development was shifted farther south around Snowflake and Springerville toward the rim of the plateau.

But before such difficulties were fully apparent (and probably despite them had they been) Young vigorously pushed forward his plans for expansion far beyond. An historian of this movement<sup>39</sup> described how

President Young sat with a large map of America before him, while saying that the company of missionaries called were to push ahead as far as possible toward the Yaqui country in Mexico, which would finally be the objective point; but if they could not reach that country they might locate on the San Pedro or Salt River in Arizona.

In 1877 a Mormon party founded Lehi in the Salt River Valley, just east of the little town of Phoenix; in the following year another group laid out the farm village of Mesa nearby. Brigham Young was now dead (d. August 29, 1877) but the momentum of this southward movement continued, if only briefly. In 1878 a small group from the Salt River colony located at St. David on the San Pedro, less than forty miles from the Mexican border. At the same time difficulties in the Little Colorado

<sup>37</sup> M. D. Beal, *A History of Southeastern Idaho* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1942), p. 199.

<sup>38</sup> M. Wells, "Origins of Anti-Mormonism in Idaho, 1872-1880," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Vol. XLVII (1956), pp. 107-16.

<sup>39</sup> J. H. McClintock, *Mormon Settlement in Arizona* (Phoenix: Manufacturing Stationers, 1921), pp. 201-03.



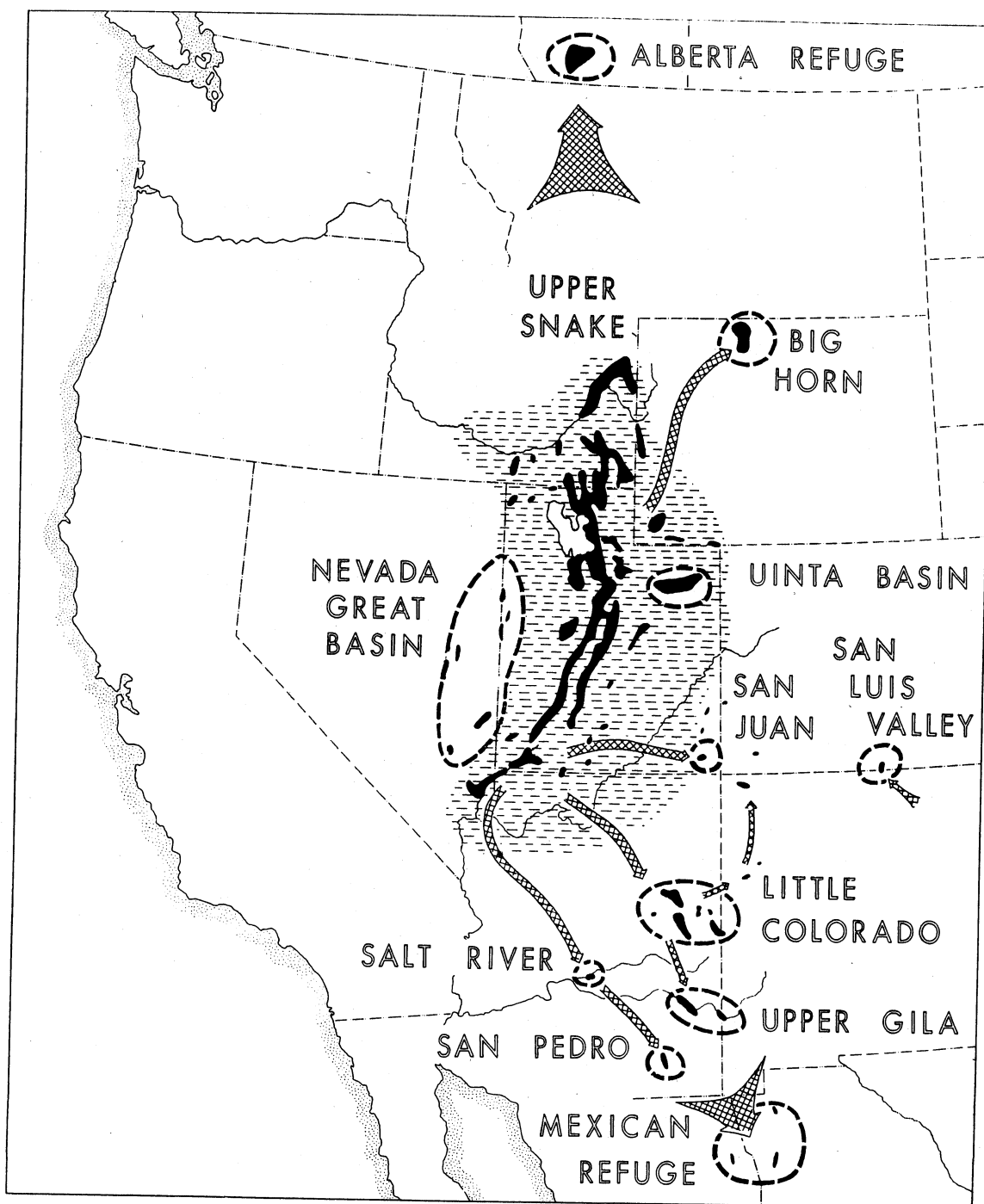


FIG. 4. Mormon colonization, ca. 1870-1900, showing the expansions to the margins of and beyond the "girdle of wastelands" (indicated by the dashed line pattern).

settlements prompted a reconnaissance below the rim and beginning in 1879 Mormons from there began to move in upon the valley of the upper Gila.

The critical feature of all these colonizations was not the problem of taming nature, for that was ever an integral part of Mormon expansion, but the fact that in none of these localities were the Mormons the first colonists. Mines and trading posts dotted the map, Anglo- and Spanish-American ranchers and herders held much of the rangeland and riverine pastures, and many of these sites had to be purchased rather than merely occupied. The resultant pattern, therefore, was one of little clusters or strips of Mormon farms and villages hugging a precious and meager stream, enclaved within Gentile rangelands and mining country.<sup>40</sup>

Expansion eastward was similar in type and difficulties. The most famous trek across the wasteland was that of the "Hole-in-the-Rock" mission, a group of more than 200 which pioneered in the San Juan country of Utah's southeastern corner in 1879-1880. Its name and fame came from its almost incredible passage across the Canyon of the Colorado, made possible only by carving footholds in the red sandstone walls and lowering wagons with ropes. It would ever after stand as a symbol of the faith and determination of Mormon pioneers, who, once called to the task, would see it through against enormous odds.<sup>41</sup> But the whole episode had important geographical meaning, too, for the need of such a journey was a mark of desperation and it led to a Promised Land of so little milk and honey that half the colonists were forced to scatter elsewhere after the first year. And there was not much to scatter to even though such potentially rich valleys as the Uncompaghere, Gunnison, and Grand Valley of the Colorado lay just beyond. At the time of this Mormon outreach all of these and much more of western Colorado lay empty, locked up in an Indian reservation. However, in 1881, following the

Meeker Massacre, the area was suddenly thrown open to colonists, and two decades of often rather frenzied mining and ranching developments in the Rockies just to the east had built up such pressures that this opening unleashed a flood. Before the Mormons could recruit sufficient strength following their exhausting crossing of the wilderness even to explore on farther, the Gentiles were swarming over this Western Slope, laying out towns, building railroads, and speculating in mines and real estate.<sup>42</sup>

Thus any hope of contiguous expansion eastward in this sector was gone and, even within their precarious San Juan foothold, the Mormons had to suffer occasional mild harassment from Gentile cattlemen, a good many of whom had brought in herds from Texas and New Mexico some years earlier.<sup>43</sup>

To the south, expansion eastward into New Mexico was only a little more successful than into Colorado. A few missionaries to the Indians were the vanguard and in the early 1880's small groups of families from the Little Colorado colony established a half dozen tiny communities within the broad, bleak, arid zone between the upper San Juan and the upper Gila. None had sufficient potential to support the upbuilding of a major nucleus from which further expansion might be attempted. In every case relations with predecessors, Indians, Anglo-, or Spanish-American ranchers, were often less than amicable and in two or three instances proved a major factor in ultimate withdrawal.<sup>44</sup> Clearly the Mormons were running out of strength in this remote frontier, but even if they had had sufficient numbers and resources to sustain a further

<sup>42</sup> For example, Grand Junction, Delta, Montrose, and Durango were all founded in 1881, and within a year had railroad connections to the east.

<sup>43</sup> Cornelia Adams Perkins, Marian Gardner Nielson, and Lenora Butt Jones, *Saga of San Juan* (No place of publication given, Mercury Publishing Company, 1957). The chief settlement offshoots from the initial one at Bluff were Monticello, Verdure, and Blanding in Utah, and Webber, just south of Mancos, in Colorado. On the last see I. S. Freeman, *A History of Montezuma County, Colorado* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing Company, 1958), p. 35.

<sup>44</sup> Details on these settlements and their problems are well covered in H. M. Foster, "History of Mormon Settlements in Mexico and New Mexico" (unpublished M.A. thesis, History, University of New Mexico, 1937), pp. 66-99. One of them, Ramah, has become well known among social scientists because of the

<sup>40</sup> R. Kay Wyllys, "The Historical Geography of Arizona," *Pacific Historical Review*, XXI (1952), pp. 121-27, provides a brief but useful overview of the spread of the Mormons, Mexicans, Texans, and Californians into the various parts of the territory.

<sup>41</sup> D. E. Miller, *Hole-in-the-Rock, an Epic in the Colonization of the Great American West* (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1959).

push there was nothing open to them beyond, for the Middle Rio Grande Valley had been filled with peasant irrigation agriculturalists for centuries.

The Mormon colony in the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado is anomalous in pattern and origin. Situated 200 miles east of the Utah border, it was not a direct outward reach from Mormondom (though it was later reinforced by some Utah migrants). The original nucleus was formed by a group of converts from the Southern States who headed west in 1877 to gather with their fellow Saints in Zion. But there was so little room left within Zion that Brigham Young advised that they seek a location somewhere in Texas or in New Mexico. Through various contacts they were finally encouraged by railroad officials to settle along a new line in the San Luis Valley. Within a few years they had established several communities but they were hemmed in on all sides by ranchers and sheepmen and other agriculturists and never had the resources to buy, nor the strength to expand, successfully.<sup>45</sup>

Nor were conditions more directly east of the Wasatch core much more favorable. The best portions of the Uinta Basin were excluded from grasp by the Indian reservation. The Mormons did obtain a few footholds in the small Ashley Valley section farther east and along the northern margins of the Uinta Range in the southwest corner of Wyoming. But in both areas Gentile ranchers were also well established and when, after the turn of the century, allotments within the Indian reservation were allowed the Mormons obtained a dominant but by no means an exclusive position.

Harvard research project previously mentioned. A useful historical article stemming from that study is I. Telling, "Ramah, New Mexico, 1876-1900: An Historical Episode with Some Value Analysis," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXI (1953), pp. 117-36.

<sup>45</sup> Several attempts were made to colonize various marginal localities, most of which failed because of water and soil deficiencies. A brief account of this colonization is A. Jensen, "The Founding of Mormon Settlements in the San Luis Valley," *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. XVII (1940), pp. 174-80. An excellent description of the history and character of these Mormon settlements as well as of others in the area is found in David W. Lantis, "The San Luis Valley, Colorado, Sequent Rural Occupance in an Intermontane Basin" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Geography, The Ohio State University, 1950), esp. Vol. 1, pp. 201-27.

Westward expansion obtained as little as eastward and for the same general reasons. The barren zone was broad and the footholds beyond were few, isolated, and of very limited potential for farming communities. In the 1860's a small colony was founded in Meadow Valley in Lincoln County, Nevada. But within a year or two silver was discovered at adjacent Pioche and the Gentiles were soon swarming over the whole region. In time the Mormons took root in a few other localities on either side of the Nevada-Utah border but a score of ephemeral mining booms spread a semipermanent population over the whole of Nevada and thus as the Mormons belatedly attempted to move into this western half of old Deseret there was little available to occupy, and their imprint here, as along the Colorado border, was but a small scattering.

Only to the north were the possibilities greater, and, significantly, only after Brigham Young's death was there a strong push in that direction. It was not at first a Church-directed colonization, but once under way Church leaders took a strong interest and gave assistance. It was their decision that the town of Rexburg be founded to serve as principal center in the main district. Mormons spread rapidly northward along most of the tributaries of the upper Snake in the 1880's, including Star Valley in westernmost Wyoming, and also occupied numerous locations somewhat to the west in southernmost Idaho.<sup>46</sup> In every locality Gentile stockmen had preceded them. But though this tardy northward expansion entered a country of much greater possibilities than in any of the other directions here, too, a physical barrier set sharp limits to the irrigation pioneer. The Snake River Plains, a waterless expanse of lava and sagebrush, completed the girdle of wastelands around the main body of Mormondom.

By the late 1880's the Mormons were running out of time as well as land. Over the years the propaganda against polygamy had made it a national issue, as evil as slavery, which had to be stamped out. The federal government, armed with harsh new laws, began to move relentlessly against the Church.

<sup>46</sup> Beal, *op. cit.*, footnote 37, gives a detailed coverage of this movement. For the Star Valley settlements see V. Linford, *Wyoming, Frontier State* (Denver: Old West Pub. Co., 1947), pp. 330-31.

It was a terrible crisis, for having been proclaimed by Joseph Smith as a revelation from God, polygamy was first of all a theological doctrine and not a mere social institution. There was no hope of armed resistance this time, but whereas the Church agonized over the problem, there was the need to save the hierarchy from jail. And thus Brigham Young's program for reaching into Mexico took on new meaning. After further reconnaissance and negotiations with the Mexican government, ranchlands in northwestern Chihuahua were purchased and in 1885 Mormon families, chiefly from the Arizona and Dixie colonies, began to move in. Within a few years, six flourishing settlements had been established, plus two more along the Bavispe River in adjacent (though barely accessible) Sonora.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, others looked northward for a refuge and the Church dispatched an exploration party to seek a location in Canada. In 1887 the town of Cardston was founded and Mormon colonists settled along the St. Mary River in the southwest corner of Alberta. At first they relied on cattle and dry-farmed wheat, but later they turned to irrigation and were the first to establish sugar beet production in the Canadian prairies.<sup>48</sup>

Although the critical feature in each of these refuge-settlements was a location beyond the national border, i.e., beyond the reach of United States marshals, these pressures from

the federal government simply gave an added momentum to movements north and south already well under way, and Cardston and Chihuahua were simply the farthest outliers of the Zion-in-the-Mountains whose bounds had been steadfastly stretched outward for forty years (Fig. 4). But time had run out and these foreign refugees would remain as the terminal stations of this elongated, discontinuous spread. In 1890, under the threat of crippling confiscation decrees, the Church yielded to federal power and finally issued a Manifesto prohibiting the practice of polygamy. This forced accommodation marked the end of an era for Mormonism. The society entered the twentieth century far from broken but certainly much subdued in the vigor of its leadership and growth. The Gathering had lost its momentum and the concept of a geographically expanding kingdom was no longer feasible. The days of seizing virgin land were long since past and large blocks of land suitable for group colonization were becoming scarce and expensive. One final example of this latter means took place just at this time. In 1893 about fifty families of Mormons settled in various localities of the Greybull area of the Big Horn Basin in Wyoming. It was not a Church-directed movement, there was no designated leader, and there was little advance arrangement for land and water rights. However, this informal infiltration was sufficiently successful that when the Church leaders learned in 1899 of an opportunity to obtain the concession of an abortive irrigation scheme nearby along the Shoshone, they negotiated directly with the Wyoming government and sponsored a colonization company. In this manner a typical Mormon nucleus, an organized group colonization centered upon nucleated farm villages, was established in this outlying district.<sup>49</sup> Such Mormon success in irrigation pioneering was by now an old story in the American West, but that, too, would have a new and quite different chapter added in the new century. For the really big irrigation proj-

<sup>47</sup> The standard published account of the history of these Mexican colonies is T. C. Romney, *The Mormon Colonies in Mexico* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938). Foster, *op. cit.*, footnote 44, gives a description of each settlement, but by far the most satisfactory geographical study is R. A. Schwartzlose, "The Cultural Geography of the Mormon Settlements in Mexico" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Geography, University of California, Berkeley, 1952). A valuable description of these colonies and their wider setting is found in D. D. Brand, "The Historical Geography of Northwestern Chihuahua" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Geography, University of California, Berkeley, 1933). The Mormons were forced to abandon all of these colonies during the Mexican Revolution, beginning in 1912. The two in Sonora and one of the Chihuahua settlements were never reoccupied. Today the Mormons are very largely concentrated in two villages in Chihuahua.

<sup>48</sup> On the Canadian Mormon Colony see Nelson, *op. cit.*, footnote 5, and C. A. Dawson, *Group Settlement: Ethnic Communities in Western Canada*, Vol. VII of *Canadian Frontiers of Settlement*, edited by W. A. Mackintosh and W. L. G. Joerg (Toronto: Macmillan, 1936).

<sup>49</sup> C. Lindsay, *The Big Horn Basin* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1932), a published Ph.D. dissertation from the University of Nebraska, is the authoritative source on this colonization. The three Mormon farm-villages are Byron, Cowley, and Lovell. Burlington and Emblem are also Mormon communities.

ects had to await the resources of the national government, and though Mormons were often prominent among the colonists of these new federal reclamation areas, they could not move in as a group and proceed to lay out their distinctive villages and organize and allocate the land under the guidance of church leaders as in the past.

Hence, the capitulation of 1890 to the basic patterns of American society was mirrored in the broad patterns of American geography. Hemmed in on all sides by the manifold strands of Gentile expansion and development, the Mormon colonization region was in final form. The pressure to expand outward would continue but it could not be done on the old terms; now it would mean not just competing with but intermingling with the Gentiles, a new geographical as well as social accommodation.

#### GENTILE INTRUSIONS

Although we have traced the most basic patterns of Mormon colonization, there is another side of the matter which is important to the search for a more precise geographical characterization of their culture region. While the Mormons were seeking to flex out their regional boundaries ever farther, the Gentiles were not only resisting and competing at the edges but were infiltrating directly into its very core (Fig. 5).

It is one of the great fateful ironies of their history that the Mormons selected the Great Salt Lake Valley as an isolated refuge, free from that direct mingling with the Gentiles which had brought such disaster in the states, only to find themselves within two years astride the main transcontinental thoroughfare of America directly in the overland path of those heterogeneous hordes bound for the California goldfields.<sup>50</sup> The successive commercial strands of the rapidly growing nation crossed the core of Mormonland: the freighting wagons, the overland mail, the pony express, the telegraph, and the railroad. Salt Lake City

became the principal way station to the Far West, an attractive site for all who sought to serve the varied needs of transcontinental traffic. Although some of the Mormons themselves were quite ready to engage in such trade, the Church did not encourage it, and their meager local resources allowed them to do little more than barter. Thus the Gentile merchants arrived with money, goods, and connections with Eastern suppliers, and without the restraining influence of a theocracy, and quickly transformed the infant Mormon capital from a farm village into a commercial town. The establishment of the army garrison, the arrival of the railroad, and the development of mines and associated industries fostered a continual expansion of Gentile enterprise. The Mormon leadership vigorously promoted essential industries and tried to monopolize the trade of their flock, but for various reasons they were never wholly successful. In time, the Church as a corporation and individual Mormon entrepreneurs would engage successfully in a wide range of commercial and industrial activities, but the early influence and power of the Gentiles in these realms would never be erased. Salt Lake City became the chief focus of Gentile activity in Mormonland primarily because of its strategic location within the broader patterns of a rapidly developing West.<sup>51</sup> From 1869 on that position was shared with another city forty miles to the north. As the junction of the Central Pacific and Union Pacific, Ogden was quickly changed from an agricultural town into a major railroad center and a growing commercial nucleus. These two cities became the chief examples of Gentile intrusions directly into pre-existing Mormon communities.<sup>52</sup> Elsewhere, some Mormon villages were similarly affected on a much smaller scale, but the more common pattern of intrusion was the development of new Gentile towns within Mormon districts. These were, of course, directly related to new

<sup>50</sup> The irony is nicely compounded by the fact that the men who first gathered those big flecks of gold from Sutter's millrace were Mormons, members of a disbanded Mexican War battalion who were pausing in California only to work long enough to reequip themselves for the journey east to rejoin their families in Zion.

<sup>51</sup> R. J. Dwyer, *The Gentile Comes to Utah: A Study in Religious and Social Conflict, 1862-1890* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1941), is a useful narrative and interpretive history with many incidental references to localities but with no attempt to depict the geography of contact and conflict.

<sup>52</sup> It is quite impossible to present any exact statistical measure of the proportions of Mormon and Gentile for any area. Despite the fine series of religious



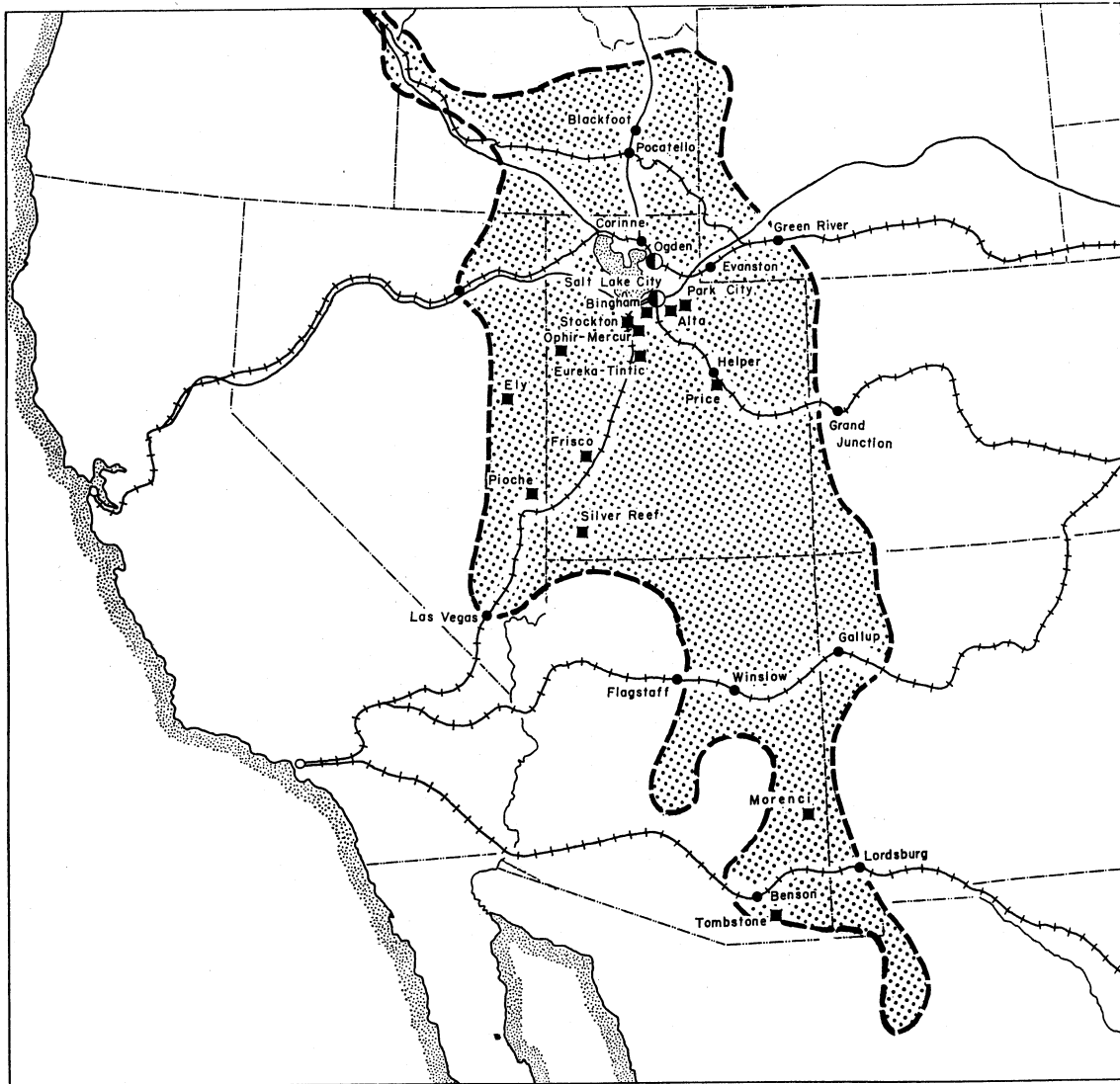


FIG. 5. Gentile intrusions. The map is designed to be indicative rather than complete, showing the intrusions directly into Mormon centers (split circles), Gentile railroad towns (solid circles), mining camps (squares), and the main railway and wagon routes across the general Mormon sphere of influence (stipple).

censuses (1890, 1906, 1916, 1926, 1936) published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census and the 1952 census by the National Council of Churches of Christ (see footnote 16), a host of special problems bedevil the investigator. The principal one involves the definition of membership, which varies among the many different denominations. For example, the Eleventh Census reported a total of 117,640 Mormons in Utah and 9,914 members of other denominations. However, the total population of the state of Utah was 207,905 and there is no way of knowing what proportion of the 80,351 remainder were members of no church and what proportion were children of members or in some way affiliated but not counted as members of

particular denominations. The usual statement in such censuses is that Mormons count all those above about eight years of age in Mormon families as members. Such censuses do, of course, give some indication of where the Gentiles are within the Mormon region, even though no exact proportions are calculable. Thus the first detailed census (1890) listed fifteen different non-Mormon church denominations in Salt Lake County, and Salt Lake and Weber (Ogden) counties accounted for fifty-six per cent of the total state membership in non-Mormon churches. See Zelinsky, *op. cit.*, footnote 1, for a good succinct coverage of the literature and problems associated with using religious censuses.

activities which the Gentiles superimposed upon the Mormon rural kingdom. A notorious example of this was Corinne, thirty miles northwest of Ogden. A creation of the railroad, Corinne became the headquarters for the freighting businesses serving Montana mining districts and was a tumultuous center of strongly anti-Mormon political activity until the completion of railroads northward reduced it to a local trade center. In time, other railroads cut into or through the Mormon region, such as the Oregon Short Line (Union Pacific) across southern Idaho; the Denver & Rio Grande from Colorado across the Wasatch into Salt Lake City and Ogden; the Los Angeles & Salt Lake (Union Pacific) through the southwestern Utah deserts, reestablishing Las Vegas as an important way station to California; the Santa Fe across the Colorado Plateau in northern Arizona; and the Southern Pacific through the border desert country. Each of these passed through or near established Mormon communities. In a few cases the railroad's own needs added new people and activities and thereby altered the old towns, but for the most part, each railroad prompted a whole new string of settlements, varied in size and importance from the livestock loading stations and whistle-stop track-crew hamlets spaced every few miles along the way to major division points, such as Pocatello, Helper, and Winslow. Whatever their size, such places were wholly different in character from the Mormon villages and towns, and thus each of these major rail lines became a Gentile swath cutting through the Mormon region.

Even before the first railroad, though mainly just after, another kind of alien community, the mining town, appeared in the midst of Mormon country. Stockton, where gold was discovered by federal troops just over the range west of Salt Lake City, was the first mining town, but soon there were many more, and some much larger and longer lived. Among the most important ones were the mining camps and smaller towns that developed in several districts around the fringes of the Mormon core: Bingham, Alta, Park City, Ophir-Mercur, and Eureka-Tintic. Others, such as Frisco, Silver Reef, Pioche, Ely, Morenci, and Tombstone, sprang up suddenly in outlying districts near Mormon communities. Coal mines, to serve the railroads, and smelters were

also developed in several localities and especially in Carbon County, eastern Utah, where coal and railroad towns grew up directly adjacent to the farm villages of Castle Valley.<sup>53</sup>

By their nature usually located on the mountainsides but very often directly visible from the valley floors, these sprawling, bustling, smoking camps were a startling discordant imprint upon the bucolic Mormon landscape and their mark upon the regional society was no less vivid. It was the activities within and related to these towns, the mining and transportation centers, that injected cultural variety into Mormonland. They provided the entry for Roman Catholics, Protestants, Anglicans, Eastern Orthodox, and Jews. They were peopled not as the Mormon towns with just a narrow range of Anglo-Americans and converts from Protestant Europe, but with Irish and Italians, Greeks and Slavs, Syrians and Portuguese, Chinese and Mexicans, and they displayed all the social variety that these imply. Whereas Mormon society tended toward uniformity, stability, cohesiveness, and a self-conscious circumscription of its attitudes and activities, the Gentile society of such towns was heterogeneous, mobile, volatile, splintered into a mosaic of sects and parties, and as a whole operated with few curbs upon its activities. In time some convergence of these two would be quite apparent; yet they remain today recognizably distinct wherever they exist side by side.

Added to the initial impetus from their transportation functions, servicing these industrial centers was a great stimulus to the growth and cosmopolitan character of Salt Lake City and Ogden. Their manufacturing, wholesaling, retailing, and financial activities were long more a reflection of their ties to these intrusive or immediately peripheral Gentile centers than to the vast but rural and relatively poor Mormon tributary area. The Salt Lake Valley became one of the world's major smelting districts, and the shadows of the towering smelter stacks striped across the adjacent alfalfa and sugar beet fields became a landscape symbol

<sup>53</sup> Details on the history of the various mining camps are scattered in many sources. One of the most convenient and satisfactory introductions to the various mining activities in Utah is to be found in the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXI (Summer, 1963), an issue entirely devoted to the history of the Utah mining industry.



FIG. 6. A view of the Central Business District of Salt Lake City, looking east, ca. 1930's. The arrow on the left points to the Hotel Utah, with the large beehive, symbol of Deseret, on its roof. The building adjacent with the cluster of spires is the Mormon Temple. The arrow at the far right points to the Hotel Newhouse, the southern, Gentile, terminal of the CBD. The arrow in the center background indicates Fort Douglas, established in the 1860's, on a high terrace overlooking the city, as a tangible symbol of the supremacy of the federal government over Mormondom.

of the close juxtaposition of Mormon and Gentile, yet for many years the farmer and the smelter worker moved in almost entirely separate social circles.<sup>54</sup>

Within Salt Lake City itself, the Central Business District developed along a dualistic spatial pattern which was a vivid reflection of

<sup>54</sup> The smelters are nearly all gone, but a modern counterpart is the Geneva steel plant in Utah Valley which is often photographed with dairy cows in the foreground and expressly presented not only as an intrusion of modern industry into an older rural setting, but sometimes as a symbol of a national industry implanted abruptly in a Mormon locality, though usually, and with some justification, as a symbol of the accommodation between the two rather than a persisting dichotomy.

this social and economic dichotomy (Fig. 6). The Hotel Utah on the north and the Hotel Newhouse four blocks on the south (long Mormon blocks, each the size of a ten-acre square) have long formed the terminals of the main retail shopping district. The prominent Mormon establishments are clustered around one shopping district, whereas the Gentile establishments are clustered around the other. The principal Mormon focus is, of course, upon Temple Square directly across from the Hotel Utah with the temple and more widely known tabernacle, and within a block of it, the Church headquarters and offices and the principal Mormon hotel, department store, bank, insurance company, publishing house,

and radio station.<sup>55</sup> The Hotel Newhouse, on the other hand, was built with money from the silver mines of southwest Utah, and within two blocks of it are large department stores, several banks, office buildings and the stock exchange, all established by non-Mormons, chiefly from the wealth of the region's mining districts.<sup>56</sup> Added to these, across the street from the Hotel Newhouse and thus in a sense counterbalancing Temple Square, is the large building housing the post office and other agencies of the federal government which was, of course, among the earliest instruments of Gentile intrusion. This pattern should not be exaggerated into an absolute cleavage. There has always been considerable interfingering in the blocks between, and certainly it has been a long time since retail shopping patterns were in any important degree socially segregated; yet these clusters are clearly there and they are representative of a feature of profound significance in the heritage of the city and region.<sup>57</sup>

#### THE MORMON CULTURE REGION

It should be evident from the foregoing material that defining the Mormon region is not

<sup>55</sup> To speak of these as Mormon does not necessarily mean that each one is owned, or was begun, directly by the Church as a corporation, although some were, but that at least they were founded by individual Mormons who were also prominent within the Church hierarchy. The internal structure and cohesiveness of the society gives ample justification for the label.

<sup>56</sup> Such matters are common knowledge locally, and there is plenty of biographical data on the men who were involved and their sources of wealth. For example, W. M. McPhee in a recent article "Vignettes of Park City," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXVIII (1960), pp. 136-53, noted that the Kearns, Keith, Tribune, and Judge buildings, the Keith O'Brien Department Store, and the Moxum Hotel, all of which are clustered on the south end of the CBD, were constructed by men who made their fortunes in the Park City mining district. McPhee also gave a succinct account of the character of the local society and its anti-Mormon attitudes during the early mining era.

<sup>57</sup> The separation of Mormon and Gentile clusters was apparent from the first; this specific pattern between the two main hotels began to take shape ca. 1905-1915. For a somewhat more detailed examination of these patterns and their broader context see R. R. Boyce, "An Historical Geography of Greater Salt Lake City, Utah" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Geography, University of Utah, 1957). The new large federal building just completed is a departure from this pattern and may be taken as a symbol of the much more relaxed relationship between the two.

a simple task. The context of the Mormon situation is sufficiently varied from place to place to make any single perimeter deceptive; whatever the criteria, the resultant areal compartment cannot possibly reflect adequately those variations. This is, of course, commonly true of cultures; it is one of the most serious difficulties in mapping them, and has been one of the important bases for criticism of the whole culture area concept. But the problem is easily exaggerated. The most obvious improvement is to make use of some generic concepts which can express the areal dimensions of significant gradations in the content and situation of the culture under study. In the following section the terms *core*, *domain*, and *sphere* will be defined and used for that purpose. Because cultures are areal growths such gradations are also likely to represent a sequential spread from a locality of origin, or *hearth*. Thus these terms will be at least suggestive of patterns in both time and space.

A *core* area, as a generic term, is taken to mean a centralized zone of concentration, displaying the greatest density of occupancy, intensity of organization, strength, and homogeneity of the particular features characteristic of the culture under study. It is the most vital center, the seat of power, the focus of circulation. The *core* of the Mormon region is clearly the Wasatch Oasis, that densely occupied strip along the base of the mountain wall, pivoted upon Salt Lake City and extending about sixty-five miles to the north and to the south (Fig. 7). It qualifies by all the obvious measures of density, intensity, and nodality. It contains the main cluster of cities which have been growing so rapidly in recent years that what was once a string of discrete centers spaced along the north-south routeways has become an increasingly dense and continuous urban strip, the megalopolis of Mormonland. Herein also lies the majority of the industrial plants and output of the region; yet the region remains one of the most productive of the many agricultural districts as well. And the intimate juxtaposition of the two, the sustained encounter between the rural, provincial, tradition-laden sector and the dynamic, national, industrial sector, is one of the important distinguishing features of this core area.

Together, Salt Lake City and Ogden are the

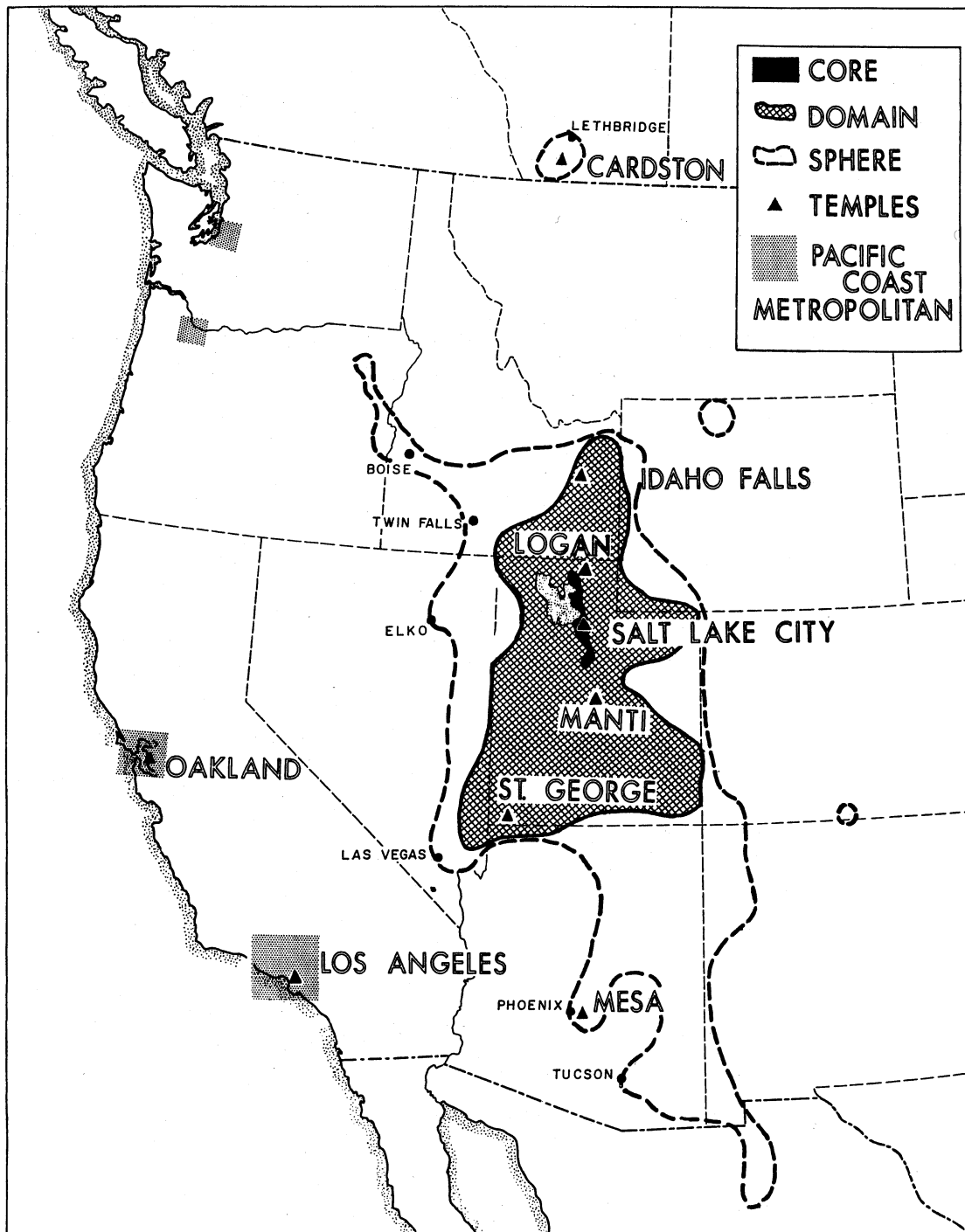


FIG. 7. The Mormon culture region.



focus of all the major strands of communication in the central Far West. Salt Lake City is one of the nation's major regional commercial capitals, serving all of the main Mormon area and beyond.<sup>58</sup> Mormons as far distant as Cardston, California, and southern Arizona are likely to turn to its firms for various needs and services. Its role as a religious capital is perhaps even greater than commonly realized, for the Mormon Church is a rigidly hierarchical theocracy, with power emanating from a pinnacle, and there is an unusually dense traffic of orders, materials, and persons moving within its functional structure. Church members even in the most remote districts are periodically visited by leaders from Salt Lake City. And twice a year, every April and October, representatives from nearly every Mormon community journey to Temple Square for the semiannual Conference to be informed, directed, exhorted, and inspired by their leaders. Such journeys and gatherings can take on the air of pilgrimages for the faithful from the far corners of Zion. In such ways the Mormon region is a nodal region culturally as well as commercially.

It may seem contradictory that this core is not the most Mormon in the sense of numerical or relative dominance; indeed, it has always contained the majority of the Gentiles within the main Mormon area. But the fact that this has been the main focus of sustained Mormon-Gentile contact is another of the important definitive attributes of this core. For that contact has been a creative tension, a source of innovation, both as a stimulus to the definition and defense of differences and to the pressure for adaptation and accommodation. Mormonism today owes much of its character to a century of that tension in this same area, and whatever Mormonism becomes, it will be strongly influenced by this same geographical intimacy between Mormon and Gentile. However, the most single compelling reason for the recognition of a Mormon region is the simple fact that its residents are aware that such a tension still exists, now wholly peacefully, usually amicably, but always consciously.

In recent years the contact between the two

has been somewhat broadened in extent and altered in character. The mining and smelting industries are now much less important proportionately and no longer represent the cleavage between the two groups so clearly. In the one major district remaining, Bingham Canyon, the old mining and smelting towns are virtually gone and the workers, now Mormon as well as Gentile, commute from Salt Lake City and its suburbs. The federal government is by far the most potent instrument, directly and indirectly, of the Gentile presence. There is the usual array of agencies, but also a cluster of major military installations and many new defense industries. Such was the case of the large Geneva steel mill in 1942 and such is the case of numerous chemical and electronic plants of the last decade. Concentrated in this core between Provo and Brigham City, these facilities employ thousands of Mormons; yet they are national in scope, alien in control, and are responsible for steady injections of Gentile people and influences into Mormonism.

The *domain* refers to those areas in which the particular culture under study is *dominant*, but with markedly less intensity and complexity of development than in the core, where the bonds of connection are fewer and more tenuous and where regional peculiarities are clearly evident. The *domain* of the Mormon region extends from the upper Snake River country of southeastern Idaho to the lower Virgin in southeastern Nevada. The generalized pattern on the map includes some mountain and desert areas with no population at all but is drawn so as to enclose all of the areas of contiguous colonization in which Mormon settlers became and remained dominant.<sup>59</sup> In a numerical and narrow sense, this is the most thoroughly Mormon area. Indeed, in the most recent religious census there were eight counties within it which reported no adherents whatsoever of any other denomination, an astonishing homo-

<sup>59</sup> The pattern of the *domain* should be generally clear when related to previous maps. The indentation in eastern Utah reflects the coal and railroad towns of Carbon County and the fact that the country east of these is nearly uninhabited except for a few, mainly Gentile hamlets along the railroad. The indentation along the western border is produced by drawing the boundary arbitrarily through the middle of the broad salt desert.

<sup>58</sup> Harris, *op. cit.*, footnote 8.

geneity for any American region.<sup>60</sup> Older Gentile intrusions were almost entirely focused upon mining and railroad towns; all of the former and many of the latter are now reduced in size and significance. New intrusions are noticeable only in southeastern Utah where oil, natural gas, uranium, and potash developments have attracted a considerable influx of outsiders and here and there in towns along the main highways where the continued growth of tourist and commercial traffic has created new opportunities and lured a few new persons. But no new Gentile communities have arisen and, even though the stereotyped rectangularity of some of the old Mormon towns has been deformed by the highway strip developments common to all America, the Mormon towns and this whole domain remain strongly rural and provincial. Much of it is still back country, remote from the metropolitan touch, and the distinctive Mormon landscape with its patterns of nucleated villages and fields and its prominent ward chapels is everywhere still visible.

The *sphere* of a culture may be defined as the zone of outer influence and, often, peripheral acculturation, wherein that culture is represented only by certain of its elements or where its peoples reside as minorities among those of a different culture. Sphere boundaries are often less easy to define because there may be fine gradations of culture differences and the limits of influences may be rapidly changing. The *Mormon Culture Sphere* is defined as including those areas where Mormons live as nucleated groups enclaved within Gentile country or where they are of long-standing major local numerical significance.

Geographically the Mormon sphere is composed of a fringe, greatly elongated in the south, encompassing the domain, and of a long salient and some outliers on the north and east, each with a special history. For the most part, the circumferential sphere merely encloses those little clusters of rural Mormons which represent the outer ripple of the last

wave of expansion late in the last century. The origins of the three noncontiguous areas have already been described. The narrow extension across southern Idaho and penetration into eastern Oregon represents a strong infiltration reinforced by local conversions. It was not a group movement but a gradual and diffuse migration developing after 1890 in response to various local opportunities. The Oregon position is not the most recent foothold of a contiguous advance but rather an early outlier belatedly joined to the rest of the sphere by more recent migrants to intervening districts. It was initiated by a Mormon entrepreneur who recruited Mormon laborers for his lumber operations in Baker County. Gradually farms in the Grande Ronde Valley were obtained and a growing nucleus established.<sup>61</sup> To the east, new government-sponsored irrigation projects were principally responsible for a steady influx of Mormons into the Minidoka, Payette, Malheur, and Weiser districts. In these areas the Mormons are mostly scattered among the Gentiles in farm and town alike rather than strongly clustered in villages of their own creation. Yet they have become dominant in some localities and are the largest single religious group in most of the counties involved.

Actually, the majority of the Mormons within this sphere today live in urban areas, such as Phoenix, Tucson, Las Vegas, Elko, Twin Falls, Boise, and Lethbridge. In none of these areas are they dominant as they are in the cities of their domain; but in every case they are recognized as a very important social and religious group; in some cities and towns they tend to be clustered in certain residential areas, and in each they have close kinship ties with adjacent rural areas. These urban Mormon groups were originally formed and continue to be sustained in part by local rural migrants.

Thus, although this Mormon sphere encompasses considerable variety in local contexts, everywhere the Mormons have some deep roots in the general locality; are usually in some degree clustered; are recognized by other people as a separate cohesive body who im-

<sup>60</sup> *Churches and Church Membership in the United States*, op. cit., footnote 16. The counties were Franklin and Teton in Idaho, Garfield, Kane, Morgan, Rich, Washington, and Wayne in Utah. In addition, Emery, Millard, Piute, Sevier, and Wasatch counties in Utah each reported fewer than a total of fifty members of all other denominations.

<sup>61</sup> I am grateful to Professor L. C. Johnson of Eastern Oregon College for supplying me with copies of local manuscript materials on the Mormons in this area.

press a distinctive mark upon the local economy, politics, and society; and are highly self-conscious of themselves in the same way.<sup>62</sup> Such in-group solidarity may stem from a view of themselves as being a handful of stalwarts manning a beleaguered outpost against a surrounding hostile world, as in some of the remote rural villages,<sup>63</sup> or the solidarity may reflect, as in the courteous but evangelically aggressive behavior in urban centers, a vigorous and optimistic self-confidence. In either case, it is just such self-awareness and patterned behavior that makes Mormon culture a recognizable and viable thing, and thus makes the definition of its area important.

These three generic categories, *core*, *domain*, and *sphere*, complete our refined definition of the Mormon culture region, yet they leave tens of thousands of Mormons in the American West beyond its bounds. There is, therefore, a fourth category but it is not of the same kind, that is, it does not represent simply a gradation outward from the other three. Reference here is to the Mormons living in the Pacific Coast states, and within these very largely in the main metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay region, Portland, and Puget Sound. Altogether these Pacific Coast Mormons represent nearly a fifth of the total national membership and they have organized their religious and social life into wards and stakes with an intensity quite the equal of those in Utah itself. Yet despite these numbers and this zeal there remain critical differences between these Mormons and those within the *sphere*. For these metropolitan groups are not simply farther outliers of an expanding Zion. Here they are but one small ingredient in a movement shared by Americans of all faiths, and although their total numbers are impressive as Mormon proportions, they are but a small minority of these Pacific Coast populations. Furthermore,

here they are intermingled as individuals in residence and in work with Americans of every sect; their ward chapels stand among those of a dozen denominations in the same general neighborhoods. Here there can be no nucleation, no spatial insularity as a group against the encompassing Gentile world. The Mormons of Seattle, or Oakland, or Los Angeles, unlike those of Phoenix or Las Vegas, have no deep local roots, their families have not importantly shaped the history of the area, they have no ties with a sector of old rural Mormonism nearby. The local society in these coastal communities is not characterized by them nor in any special "Mormon way" importantly influenced by them, and thus, despite their undoubted significance in other ways, because they have not impressed a distinctive mark upon these metropolitan regions as a whole, these Pacific Coast areas are simply not part of the Mormon region as defined in terms of historical cultural geography. We are dealing here not with an expansion of Zion but with a dispersion into Babylon.

Thus, in building their Zion in the mountains, the Mormons have left their stamp upon districts within and along the North American cordillera from a corner of Alberta to a corner of Chihuahua. Such limits represent a lengthy outreach, but viewed as a whole the resulting Mormon region is asymmetrical, discontinuous, and uneven in character. Its elongation southward from its core and capital and the discontinuities in the north are largely the results of the bias of Brigham Young. His obsession with the need for a thrust toward Mexico put the Mormon pioneer only a little behind the first wave of stockmen and ahead of most other farmers in Arizona, whereas his prejudice against the north allowed the whole breadth of Montana to intervene as a Gentile stronghold between the Mormon domain and its belated foothold in Alberta. On the other hand, the slow steady spread of Mormon influence westward along the old once-shunned routeway to Oregon shows that the ability to penetrate the Gentile periphery did not end with the close of the great colonization era at the turn of the century; and the sheer demographic power, the cohesiveness of the society, and a still strong predilection for the rural life

<sup>62</sup> See W. C. Bailey, "A Typology of Arizona Communities," *Economic Geography*, Vol. XXVI (1950), pp. 94-104, on the need to recognize the Mormons as a distinctive group.

<sup>63</sup> See T. F. O'Dea, "The Effects of Geographical Position on Belief and Behavior in a Rural Mormon Village," *Rural Sociology*, Vol. XIX (1954), pp. 358-64, for an incisive commentary on Ramah as an example.

suggests that such penetration may well continue for many years.<sup>64</sup>

If the shape of the Mormon region is discordant with that of Deseret the failure of that original strategy was not an entire loss. For an agricultural people the gain of southeastern Idaho surely more than offsets the loss of most of Nevada. Within the bounds of Deseret, penetration of western Colorado might have yielded more than the penetration of the plateaulands of Arizona, though such a thrust would almost certainly have been just as gravely weakened by the difficulties of distance and isolation. The major loss in the contraction of 1857 was, of course, the withdrawal from San Bernardino. Even though it seems clear that the Mormons simply would never have been able to hold firm control of such an attractive and accessible locale, it does seem possible that if the zeal and determination that went into the Arizona and San Juan colonizations had been focused upon the Los Angeles Basin, a foothold might have been established with sufficient strength to have sustained Mormon control of a specific and significant district amid the swirling patterns of Gentile development. But the main purpose of an historical geography analysis is not to suggest what might have been but to reveal what has been, what is, and what probably will be. Having identified the basic components of the Mormon region and offered some explanation of the processes which created them, we may usefully conclude with a summation of how they are proportioned to the whole and how current trends seem destined to affect them.

#### CONCLUSION

The *core* of the Mormon region appears to be well stabilized in area, character, and significance. About forty per cent of the total Mormon population<sup>65</sup> in the United States is concentrated within its bounds, a proportion

<sup>64</sup> For example, a sample survey in the new Columbia River irrigation project found that the Mormons were the largest single denomination represented, although they comprised only fifteen per cent of the total; M. A. Straus and B. D. Parrish, "The Columbia River Settler, a Study of Social and Economic Resources in New Land Settlement," *Washington Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin* 566 (Pullman: State College of Washington, May, 1956), pp. 10-11.

<sup>65</sup> The proportions in this summary were calculated on the basis of the 1952 religious census (footnote 16).

which has not changed greatly for more than fifty years.<sup>66</sup> Whereas instabilities in defense industries may well affect the short-term rate of growth, the basic economy is so well established and the location so strategic with reference to so many developments elsewhere in the whole Far West that there is no reason to believe that this area cannot continue to support something near that proportion despite the Mormons' vigorous rate of natural increase. That same rate of growth will also likely keep the Mormon-Gentile ratio fairly stable despite the certain continued influx of outsiders. Furthermore, there is ample room within the Wasatch Oasis for such industrial and population growth and little indication of any incipient expansion of the *core* into bordering areas.<sup>67</sup>

In 1952 the *domain* contained about twenty-eight per cent of the total Mormon population. It is almost certain that the proportion is now less and that it will continue to decline gradually. For it is so heavily rural, and so readily served by the *core*, that there is little basis for growth. A few small cities may expand but in general this sector will continue to be a net exporter of people, sending them to the *core*, to peripheral cities in the *sphere*, and to the Pacific Coast. The *domain* is more than ninety per cent Mormon and its known resources offer little reason to expect any major Gentile intrusions. However, it is possible that mineral developments along its eastern edge could draw a sufficient influx to submerge the Mormon population there to a minority position. In our geographical terms such a change would mean a change in category and necessitate a redrawing of the boundary to shift such areas from the *domain* into the *sphere*. Though

They can be no more than approximations, but when put in context with other fragmentary evidence, they appear to be sufficiently accurate for their time to warrant their use for such a general view. More serious is the fact that this source is now more than a decade old.

<sup>66</sup> In 1916 about thirty-five per cent of the Mormons were in this *core* area.

<sup>67</sup> The establishment of defense industries in Tooele Valley and the growth of some commuter traffic between it and Salt Lake Valley may suggest an incipient expansion of the *core* westward but this appears to be a stagnant situation and Tooele Valley is unlikely to have sufficient attractions to compete for industries and residents. It is conceivable that vigorous growth at the northern end of the *core* could lead toward an integration of Cache Valley into the *core* complex, but there is little reason at present to expect this.

the stamp of Mormon culture is indelibly upon this domain, by any quantitative measure it is of declining significance.

The *sphere*, containing about thirteen per cent of the Mormons, is as questionable in its prospects as variable in its past. In general, Mormons constitute about twenty-five per cent of the total religious adherents, but proportions and trends differ from place to place. In southern Idaho and eastern Oregon their position will probably strengthen gradually, though steadily; however, in general the rural areas will surely stagnate. Nevertheless, because of the strong Mormon foothold in such thriving centers as Phoenix, Las Vegas, Boise, and Lethbridge the *sphere* is in a better position to sustain and even increase its proportionate position than is the *domain*. Yet such growth at the edges necessarily requires an ever-greater integration with the Gentile world.

In 1952 about seventeen per cent of the Mormons lived in or near the metropolitan regions along the Pacific Coast. That proportion was then threefold greater than fifteen years before and it has been increasing steadily since. Such growth has been supported by migrations from all the other Mormon areas, from the *core* as well as from the periphery, from the capital as well as from the back valley farms, and it has not only been lured by the great range of economic opportunity and the amenities of life in these coastal districts, but has been driven by the most powerful demographic pressures in America. For the Mormon region has long been a distinct demographic region within the nation, in which an unusually high birthrate combined with an unusually low death rate to produce a remarkable rate of natural increase. In recent years that increase has ranged from twenty-seven to thirty-two per thousand, well more than double the American average.<sup>68</sup> To try to contain such growth within the historic Zion under the conditions of modern America would almost certainly result in the gradual impoverishment of the whole. Thus the idea of a Mormon commonwealth self-contained and

<sup>68</sup> The Church periodically publishes such vital statistics for their membership as a whole: e.g., 1956, birthrate 37.64, death rate 5.53, net increase per thousand 32.11; 1962, birthrate 33.16, death rate 5.42, net increase per thousand 27.74. In 1962 the national figures were: birthrate 22.4, death rate 9.5, net increase per thousand 12.9.

sufficient unto its own future is no longer tenable; not only is the day of the Gathering essentially over but even some portion of those born in Zion must disperse into the world.

The Church leadership has, of course, been well aware of this fundamental change and it has responded with a new strategy. If the Saints cannot all be gathered into Zion, then insofar as possible Zion will have to be taken to the Saints. One of the great reasons for gathering to Zion was to be near a temple, for a Mormon temple is not a place of congregational worship analogous with a cathedral, but a place for the performance of certain sacred ordinances peculiar to their faith.<sup>69</sup> The theological importance of these ceremonies is so great that the religious life of those who do not have at least occasional access to them is considered seriously impoverished. Over the years seven temples were built, spaced out to serve the population of the whole Mormon region (Fig. 6). Members beyond those bounds simply had to journey to Zion or suffer a spiritual deficiency. The dedication of the Los Angeles temple in 1956 was, therefore, a cause for great rejoicing among the Mormons of California, but it was also a geographical fact of profound theological and sociological significance. It was a tangible, irrefutable, recognition that:<sup>70</sup>

there is a way of life, Mormon in its spirit, that does not require literal removal to Utah and concrete participation in a sociogeographical entity. The gathered may now be gathered in spirit, and Zion need not be literally in the mountain tops of Deseret.

Similarly, the erection of temples in England, in Switzerland, and in New Zealand in the last decade was an admission that this spiritual Zion could even be extended to those rooted beyond the bounds of God's chosen continent of America.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Baptism by proxy for the dead and "celestial marriage" are the chief temple ordinances.

<sup>70</sup> O'Dea, *op. cit.*, footnote 5, p. 261.

<sup>71</sup> The Hawaiian temple on Oahu, dedicated in 1919, was actually the first outside of Zion. This was built to serve the converts made in Hawaii and various other Polynesian islands in recognition that it was quite impractical for them to emigrate or even visit the mainland. In earlier years, however, the gathering even of Saints so far removed in culture and distance was encouraged; see Stegner, *op. cit.*, footnote 5, pp. 136-41, for the account of the pathetic attempt of a small group of Hawaiians to colonize the desolate wastes of Skull Valley, Utah.



It is tempting to conclude with the reminder that the original frame of their western Zion included a seashore as well as the mountaintops and that the Los Angeles temple is simply a belated reassertion of the Mormon hold upon a far corner of Deseret. But that would distort the situation. Los Angeles is of enormous importance in the changing patterns of Mormonism, but it is so precisely because the Mormon presence there is not an extension of the Mormon region but a foothold in the outer world. Geographically, the most significant trend in Mormon culture is the fact that the greatest growth in membership is taking place beyond the limits of the historic Mormon culture region, that is, in areas which it cannot hope to dominate. It does not take much foresight to realize that California will someday have more Mormons than Utah (in November, 1964, a temple was dedicated at Oakland to serve the rapidly growing nucleus in the Bay region), but it is essential also to realize that California cannot be captured, for it can only be adjusted to. It is quite reasonable, therefore, to see emerging in Mormon culture a new geographical pattern which can be symbolized as a Salt Lake City-Los Angeles axis. It is a linkage of the old nodal culture region rigor-

ously focused upon Temple Square with the new expanding, relatively wealthy *diaspora* intimately enmeshed in the larger world. It is a link between the old *core* and the new frontier, between the old Zion and a newly appreciated Babylon. Such an axis is already discernible; the Mormon traffic between the two is ever greater, with Las Vegas once more a convenient if somewhat altered refreshment stop along a new-style Mormon Corridor. Mormon and Gentile live together in each terminal. In the one the Mormons set the pattern and the Gentiles intruded, in the other the situations are reversed.<sup>v</sup> Modern Mormonism emerged from that first encounter and the Mormonism of the future will surely reflect this sustained culture contact at both ends of this new geographical axis.

The Mormon region will long endure as a major pattern within the American West and, thereby, will continue to warrant far greater attention from American geographers than it has yet received, but Mormon culture will be ever less completely encompassed within that region and will perhaps be shaped as much by what happens to it outside those bounds as by the happenings inside.