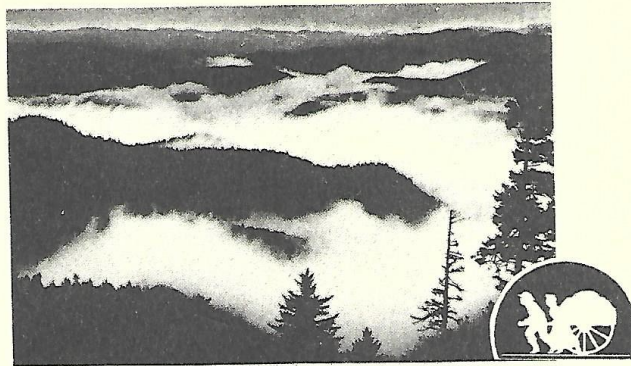


FOOT STEPS

OF

FAITH



**KNOXVILLE TENNESSEE STAKE HISTORY
and condensed Ward/Branch Histories
THROUGH NOVEMBER 17, 1996**

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THROUGH NOVEMBER 17, 1996

A TRIBUTE TO OUR TENNESSEE PIONEERS....WHO WALKED IN FAITH !

A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN THE
KNOXVILLE TENNESSEE STAKE. ITS GROWTH IS RECORDED FROM
ITS EARLIEST DAYS, BEGINNING IN 1834, WITH A HANDFUL OF SAINTS, TO
NOVEMBER 17, 1996,
WITH THE STAKE CONSISTING OF SIXTEEN WARDS AND
BRANCHES AND 4,600 MEMBERS!

Compiled by Freda Borden
Edited by Mitch Borden
under the direction of President Russell B. Barber

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Introduction

Many hands have touched this history, many historical records searched and many memories have been tapped to create the chronological events that will be found in these touching accounts of the Saints in the Knoxville Tennessee Stake area, which encompasses many miles, with boundaries varying from time to time.

It took tremendous amounts of courage for the presiding Priesthood to step out in faith (sometimes it must have felt like thin air) as decisions were made to press forward, with few available resources as well as small numbers of faithful Saints to follow through.

You will read many names of the Priesthood leaders--but never fear, there were many, many faithful Saints, especially the sisters, who kept putting one foot in front of the other to carry out the decisions of the Priesthood. One of our faithful brothers who was a Branch President in the Kingsport area in the early years has said, "It was important to keep the Priesthood brothers informed, but when I needed something done, I gave the responsibility to the sisters".

Writing a history from the end to the beginning reveals turning points that caused chain reactions of progress. After steps of faith and courage, came growth. You will see when a branch or ward was split, it wasn't very long until their membership increased. You will see when a building was constructed or acquired, the congregation expanded and they were split again, with two or more congregations sometimes meeting in one building. Also, because space in this history is limited, only the highlights have been recorded here, leaving out many spiritual details as well as the faith and works of hundreds of area saints.

Brother D. P. and Sister Pearl Taylor Anderson, from the Oak Ridge Ward, wrote a History of the District in 1989, which contains several historical records, as well as excerpts from the "Southern Star," which was furnished to Brother Anderson by Frances Threet of Crossville, Tennessee. Sister Threet obtained the sixty-one pages of excerpts from Elder Rulon Killian, a missionary who was in the Crossville area and who was appointed East Tennessee Conference President in 1924. "Southern Star" was published by the Southern States Mission in 1899 under the supervision of Mission President Ben E. Rich. It carried a serialized story, "History of the Southern States Mission" from 1875 through 1899. Since Tennessee was a part of the Southern States Mission for many years, some moments in our history can be found in this newspaper. (Credits to the Southern Star will be shown as S.S. Vol. 1 No. ___)

When talking recently with Johanna Plaas, from the Pellissippi Ward, she related the history of the

“Star” newspapers. Before the Church Magazines became international, each mission had their own edition of “The Star”, which was given the name of the mission--such as “Southern Star”, for the Southern States Mission. Sister Plaas, while serving a mission in Holland, was a writer for their mission’s “Star”. She would receive the conference talks in English, translate them into Dutch, and print them in their “Star” newspaper for the Dutch Saints.

Some of the information for this history was pulled from Brother and Sister Anderson’s book, as well as historical records in our possession, and writings from the local Saints. Eugene H. Perkins, former District and Stake President, sent us historical records from the Church archives which we have used to establish correct dates, to verify folks’ memories, and to shore up our own fading memories! If memories have failed us, and you find errors in some details, please understand!

May you be blessed with faith and courage as you follow the steps of the Saints in the East Tennessee Area as they grew from a handful to over forty-six hundred!

Knoxville Tennessee Stake

Historical Background

- 1834 First historical records of Missionaries in East Tennessee
---- Southern States Mission closed during Civil War
1876 Southern States Mission re-opened - headquarters in Rome, Georgia
1879 Elder Joseph Standish shot and killed at Varnell's Station, Georgia
1880 Elder John W. Taylor called to the Southern States Mission
1880 Knoxville, TN - The Humes Affair- debate at Knoxville Opera House
1881 Southern States Mission - headquarters moved to Nashville, TN
1882 Southern States Mission - headquarters moved to Chattanooga, TN
1884 Tennessee Mormon Massacre
1885 Powell River Branch organized - July 27th
1885 Powell River Sunday School organized - August 16th
1887 Powell River Sunday School discontinued- Supt. and family immigrated to Utah
with March First Company of Saints.
1889 Church burned - Clinton, Tennessee
- 1900's Early Speedwell Saints met at Pearly Shipley's home for Sunday School
1909 Northcuts Cove Chapel completed - October 24th
1919 Southern States Mission - headquarters moved to Atlanta, GA
1923 Missionaries visited Rockwood, TN - April 23rd
1927 Name of Geographic Division of Mission changed from Conference to
District; East Tennessee District became the official designation of the area.
1927 Sunday School organized in Bybee, TN
1928 East Central States Mission created Dec 9, headquarters in Louisville, KY
1929 East Tennessee District began functioning under East Central States Mission
- 1930 Conference held in Jamestown, TN
1930 Sunday School organized in Knoxville, TN, March 4
1939 East Tennessee District changed to Tennessee East District.
1939 Slate Springs (Crossville) Branch organized
- 1940's Sunday School held in Duff, TN
1941 Sunday School held in Marvin B. and Lurene Greene's home/Knoxville
1943 Knoxville Branch organized-February 14th
1943 Sevier County included in Knoxville Branch
1944 Oak Ridge Branch organized-April
1945 Oak Ridge Branch disbanded for lack of members--Sunday School kept going

- 1947-48 Jamestown Sunday School held in Caleb David Stephens, Sr.'s home
- 1948 Duff, Tennessee Chapel built
- 1949-50 Oak Ridge Branch re-organized
- 1950's Tazewell Saints met for Sacrament Meetings with Knoxville Branch
- 1954 Sunday School organized in Jamestown
- 1954-55 Speedwell Saints built Chapel on Haynes Ridge
- 1955 First District Conference held in Jamestown
- 1958 Knoxville Branch Chapel on Concord St. dedicated by Elder Sterling W. Sill
May 4th
- 1958 Oak Ridge Chapel built on Viking Road-remodeled in the 70's
- 1959 Priesthood Session of 129th Semi-annual General Conference heard by closed
circuit telephone 1st time.
-
- 1960 Maryville Dependent Sunday School with Relief Society and Home Primary
- 1960 Harriman Dependent Sunday School--discontinued 1966
- 1960-62 Dependent Sunday School in Morristown with Relief Society and Home Primary
- 1961 Jamestown Dependent Branch organized
- 1962 Jamestown Independent Branch organized
- 1962 Morristown Branch organized
- 1963 Historical records show Maryville Branch in 1963; later disbanded
- 1965 Broadcasts of General Priesthood Meetings of April Conference held in
three locations: Knoxville, Kingsport and Chattanooga
- 1967 District Center/Knoxville Br. Chapel dedicated October 23rd by Elder ElRay C.
Christiansen
- 1967 Deseret Club chartered at the University of Tennessee
- 1969 Jamestown Chapel dedicated January 19th
- 1969 LDS Social Services established in Atlanta, GA
- 1969 Knoxville North Branch organized (from Knoxville Branch) October 10th
- 1969 Knoxville South Branch organized (from Knoxville Branch) October 10th
- 1969 Knoxville North and South Branches both meeting in Kendall Road building
- 1969 Sevier County included in Knoxville South Branch boundaries
- 1969 Morristown Chapel completed- dedicated Jan 10th 1971
-
- 1970 Tazewell Saints met in home of Charlie England-looked to Morristown for
shepherding.
- 1970 LaFollette Dependent Branch organized; LaFollette and Speedwell Saints
merged
- 1970 Name of District changed from Tennessee East to Knoxville District Mar 1st
- 1970 Kentucky-Tennessee Mission organized June 10th
- 1970 Bristol, Johnson City, Kingsport and Norton became part of Appalachian
District and Corbin became a part of the Lexington Ky District - January
- 1970 Chattanooga Branch was split, forming Chattanooga 1st and 2nd Branches
- 1972 Knoxville First Ward organized (previously Knoxville North Branch)
-
- 1972 Knoxville Second Ward organized (previously Knoxville South Branch)

1972 Knoxville First and Second Wards both meeting in Kendall Road Building
 1972 Oak Ridge Ward organized April 11th
 1972 Slate Springs Branch renamed Crossville Branch
 1972 Knoxville Tennessee Stake created - June 25th
 1972 Stake Genealogical Library created - June 25th organizational meeting held
 1973-74 Stake offices, High Council room, library and Genealogy Library added
 to Kendall Road Stake Center
 1974 Harriman Dependent Sunday School started again
 1974 Institute of Religion established
 1974 Haynes Ridge Chapel sold July 4th (Speedwell)
 1974 Maryville Dependent Branch organized
 1974 Sevier County included in Maryville boundaries
 1974 Washington, DC Temple Dedicated, November 20th
 1975 Maryville Independent Branch organized April 13th
 1975 Rockwood Dependent Sunday School organized
 1975 LaFollette Independent Branch organized July 6th
 1975 Tennessee Nashville Mission organized July 1st
 1976 Tazewell Saints combined with LaFollette in May
 1976 Rockwood Dependent Branch organized in January
 1977 Rockwood Independent Branch organized in May
 1977 Loudon Dependent Sunday School organized -- discontinued 1978
 1977 Knoxville North Dependent Sunday School organized
 1978 Knoxville Third Ward Organized July 16th
 1978 Chattanooga Stake created May 21st (Split from Knoxville Tn Stake)
 1978 Revelation allowing all worthy male members to hold Priesthood- June
 1978 LaFollette Chapel dedicated April 16th
 1979 Tazewell Branch organized Sep 30th (split from LaFollette)
 1979 Sevierville Dependent Primary organized in June

 1980 University Branch organized - closed 1986
 1980 Maryville Chapel dedicated Mar 13th
 1981 Sevierville Branch organized Sep 6th (split from Maryville)
 1982 Local participation for building costs will not be more than 4% - April
 1982 Also operations and maintenance expenditures except utilities will be
 borne 100% by Church - July 1st
 1982 Missions for Elders reduced from 2 years to 18 months
 1982 Bishops' Storehouse built in Knoxville
 1983 Atlanta Temple built - dedicated June 3rd
 1983 Rockwood Branch Chapel - first phase dedicated May 1st
 1985 Rockwood Branch Chapel - second phase completed Dec 16th, dedicated 1987
 1985 Knoxville Third Ward renamed Grove Park Ward
 1985 Second Phase of Maryville chapel completed Dec 8th

 1985 Construction began on Jamestown new Chapel - dedicated Dec 4th, 1988
 1985 Sevierville Branch Chapel - first phase, completed October 20th

- 1985 Oak Ridge Chapel completed at 140 South Jefferson Circle
- 1986 Tazewell Branch Chapel completed October 19th
- 1985-86 Knoxville Stake Center on Kendall Road remodeled
- 1986 Maryville Ward organized October 19th
- 1987 Construction began on new Stake Center in Farragut - completed 1988
- 1987 Grove Park Ward Chapel dedicated May 17th
- 1987 Morristown Ward organized August 30th
- 1988 Sunday Meetings consolidated - letter dated October 3rd
- 1988 Knoxville First Ward renamed Farragut Ward - began meeting in new Stake Center
- 1988 Tazewell Branch - second phase chapel completed in April
- 1988 Knoxville Second Ward renamed West Hills Ward
- 1989 New Knoxville Stake Center dedicated October 15th
- 1989 Tazewell Branch renamed Cumberland Gap Branch

- 1990 Members will no longer have Stake & Ward Budget assessments - January 1st
- 1990 Family History Center established in Jamestown-December 16th
- 1991 Dayton Branch organized - split off from Rockwood Branch and assigned to Chattanooga Tennessee Stake
- 1991 Crossville Ward organized December 15th
- 1992 Second Stake Patriarch called August 23rd (Gary Purcell)
- 1992 Pellissippi Ward organized/split from Farragut Ward
- 1992 Clinton Branch organized in January
- 1992 Sevierville Branch Chapel second phase completed December 12th - dedicated
- 1992 Whitley City, Kentucky Branch organized in May - part of Lexington Stake June 20, 1993
- 1993 Church purchased property in Whitley City for new building
- 1993 General Relief Society President Elaine L. Jack visited Knoxville November 6th
- 1993 Tennessee Knoxville Mission organized
- 1993 New Mission Home built in Farragut - completed July 1st
- 1994 Family History Center established in Oak Ridge in February
- 1994 Church purchased land in Loudon County for new building-dedicated Sep 4th
- 1995 Loudon Branch organized July 2nd
- 1996 Third phase of Maryville chapel completed--first meeting Christmas 199
- 1996 Clinch River Ward organized (previously Clinton Branch) November 10th
- 1996 Whitley City Branch transferred to the Knoxville Tennessee Stake -August 10th
- 1996 Knoxville Tennessee Stake split/ Knoxville TN Cumberland Gap Stake created November 17th
- 1997 President Gordon B. Hinckley held Regional Conference in Knoxville, March 17th
- 1997 Elder R. Lloyd Smith appointed to serve as an Area Authority Seventy

District/Stake Presidents

James E. Travis	1947	
Robert W. Smith	1955	
Leo J. Brady	1961	
Bedford Bird	1969	
Eugene H. Perkins	1970	
Eugene H. Perkins	1972	(Stake formed)
R. Lloyd Smith	1980	
Russell B. Barber	1989	

Southern States Presiding Elders and Mission Presidents

Henry C. Boyle	1886
John Morgan	1888
William Spry	1888
J. Golden Kimball	1891
Elias S. Kimball	1893
Benjamin E. Rich	1898
Ephraim H. Nye	1902
Nathan J. Harris	1903
Benjamin E. Rich	1903
Charles A. Callis	1908
LeGrand Richards	1934

East Central States Mission Presidents

Miles L. Jones	1928
James Mercer Kirkham	1934
William Thomas Tew, Jr.	1937
James P. Jensen	1940
Graham H. Doxey	1943
Thomas W. Richards	1946
James B. Matheson	1950
Cornelius Zappy	1953
Melvin Ross Richards	1955
Frank H. Brown	1960
Alvin C. Chase	1963
Raymond W. Eldredge	1966
William H. Day	1969
George Durrant	1972

Tennessee Nashville Mission Presidents

Emerson T. Cannon	1975
B. Lloyd Pollman	1978
V. Ross Ekins, Jr.	1981
Richard E. Black	1984
David C. Campbell	1987
Serge B. Woodruff	1990

Tennessee Knoxville Mission Presidents

Richard K. Sager	1993
Randy Benson	1996

History of the Knoxville Tennessee Stake and condensed histories of 16 Wards and Branches

The foundation of our Stake was built from the missionary efforts of the Church in the Tennessee area and those faithful convert members who came and went, many of them to the west, with horses and wagons. Those who stayed in the area are the unsung heroes who were brave and courageous, enduring to the end in very trying times with “Footsteps of Faith”.

“The gospel was first introduced into Tennessee by Elders David W. Patten and Warren Parrish in October 1834. These Elders and others that followed were met with much opposition and hardship. Throughout the 1800's, many were threatened and chased by angry mobs, some faced tar and feathers, others sustained severe beatings. - July 1976 “Ensign” by Diane Brinkman

Despite these adversities, much progress was made between 1834 and 1850, and several small branches were organized. The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote in his journal on Saturday, May 15, 1841, “Good news has recently reached us from Tennessee...The Elders are baptizing in all directions.”

In spite of whippings, tar and feathers, and outright murders, the missionary work of the Church was still carried on faithfully.

On March 29, 1835, Wilford Woodruff arrived in Memphis, Tennessee and began his first mission. At that time, his Priesthood office was “Priest”. He later joined Elder Parrish in Benton County and continued his labors there, enduring much opposition and persecution.

On September 3, 1836, a meeting of the Tennessee Conference (which included the State of Kentucky) was held. Elder Thomas B. Marsh, President of the Quorum of the Twelve, presided. Nine branches reported activity.

“On September 19, 1836, the first company of emigrating Saints from the South (Kentucky and Tennessee) left by ox team and horse-drawn wagons en route to Far West, Missouri.”
(Journal of History of August 1, 1837)

Many of the converts of the earlier period emigrated to the West. There are records of whole communities of saints leaving the South to gather in their “Zion of the Mountains. . .” However, we have found accounts of isolated individuals or families whose official records can't be traced, but who are known to have been members, who remained here in the South and in some cases have become the nucleus of later groups of members.

The Harmon family of Cades Cove is an example. A. Randolph Shields, a professor at Maryville College and a native of Cades Cove, in his book, "The Cades Cove Story", page 38, under the section on religion says: "In the later years the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) had a small following, primarily a single family, the Harmons, who were permitted to use one of the Methodist church buildings for services." The exact date is not indicated, but there is evidence that the Cades Cove Methodist Church was on the list of churches on the Little River Circuit in 1830, well before Mormons were in the Cove. There is still a Methodist church building standing in Cades Cove today.
(Maryville Ward History)

Missionary work continued in spite of the troubles at Kirtland, Ohio and in Missouri, but when the Saints were driven from Nauvoo in 1846, missionary efforts, in the South at least, must have been reduced considerably. It is difficult to find historical notes of any continuity concerning the South until the 1870's. (District History)

THE 1870's & 80's

THE SOUTHERN STATES MISSION

"Just before the Civil War broke out, missionaries and many other members left the South for Utah; and it was not until several years after the close of the war that the mission was reopened. Elder Henry C. Boyle was set apart as the President of the Southern States Mission in 1886.

"Headquarters for the Mission was in Nashville until 1882, when it was changed to Chattanooga where it remained for approximately thirty-seven years. Besides being a mission headquarters, Chattanooga was a gathering point for new converts from the South who were emigrating to the West. Among those who served as mission presidents during the Chattanooga era was Elder J. Golden Kimball and his brother, Elias S. Kimball.

The following were Presiding Elders and Presidents of the Southern States Mission: (Tennessee was part of this Mission)

1886 - 1887	Henry C. Boyle
1887 - 1888	John Morgan
1888 - 1891	William Spry
1891 - 1893	J. Golden Kimball
1893 - 1898	Elias S. Kimball
1898 - 1902	Benjamin E. Rich
1902 - 1903	Ephraim H. Nye
1903	Nathan J. Harris
1903 - 1908	Benjamin E. Rich

1908 - 1934	Charles A. Callis
1934 - 1937	LeGrand Richards

When proselyting started in the South again, in the 1870's, the earliest efforts are said to have been concentrated in Tennessee. Various reports show that those efforts spread quickly to surrounding states.

Missionaries were sent to an area singly, in pairs and in groups with no apparent indication that any formal organization was to be found in the area. There was no definite indication of locating a headquarters. However, when Elder Henry G. Boyle succeeded in establishing a branch in Shady Grove, Hickman County, Tennessee in 1875, the initial move toward establishing an organization and a permanent headquarters was begun.

October 1875- At General Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah in October 1875, Elders George Teasdale, D. P. Rainey, Joseph Standing, John Morgan, John D. H. McCallister, David Perry and John Winder were called to labor in the "Southern States Mission". All of these elders were to report to Elder Boyle and, at their first meeting they "elected" him to preside over them. During October Conference in Utah, the following year, 1876, Elder Boyle was set apart to act as the President of the Southern States Mission, thus giving the first official recognition of the Mission under a presiding officer. The Mission consisted of Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Virginia. On April 6, 1877, President Boyle reported five Branches had been organized with a total membership of 276. Eleven missionaries were in the field.

July, 1878, saw a noticeable increase in the violence and resistance experienced by the missionaries in all parts of the mission. Elders were ordered by mobs to leave the State of Georgia and Elders in Lawrence County, Kentucky were seriously harassed. Violence culminated in the murder of Elder Joseph Standing, July 21, 1879 at Varnell's Station, Georgia, a small community near Chattanooga. (S.S. Vol. 1, No. 4 and 8)

A short time before he was murdered, Brother Standing had a dream which made a powerful impression upon his mind, and caused him to have forebodings of approaching trouble. He told it to Elder Clawson, and several times subsequently to other persons in his presence. It was about as follows, as nearly as his precise language can be recollected:

"I thought I went to Varnell's Station, when suddenly clouds of intense blackness gathered overhead and all around me. I visited a family who were connected with the Church. The moment I entered their house the most extreme consternation seized them, and they made it clear beyond any possibility of doubt that my presence was objectionable. They appeared to be influenced by a sense of great fearfulness. There was no clearing away of the clouds nor abatement of the restlessness of the people,

when I suddenly awoke, without my being shown the end of the trouble.”

After his murder the following dispatch was at once forwarded to the Governor of Georgia:

“Catoosa Springs, July 21st 1879

Governor Colquitt, Atlanta:

Joseph Standing was shot and killed today, near Varnell’s by a mob of twelve men.” Rudger Clawson.

This message was also sent at the same time:

“Catoosa Springs, Georgia, July 21st, 1879.

“John Morgan, Salt Lake

“Joseph Standing was shot and killed today, near Varnell, by a mob of ten or twelve men. Will leave for home with the

body at once. Notify his family. Rudger Clawson.” -S.S. Vol. 8, page 9

Eventually, a small park was built along with a monument to Elder Standing’s memory near the site of his murder. The youth from the Knoxville Stake have gone there, in the past, to clean the site and keep it maintained. This work made a big impression on our youth, many who are still in the area, and can remember their feelings as they worked together, their thoughts going back to the past.

In the Salt Lake cemetery where the remains of the young martyr were interred, there stands over the tomb a handsome monument of Italian marble, with data pertaining to the tragedy. Upon the monument - which was erected by subscriptions from members of the Young Men’s Improvement Associations of the Salt Lake Stake of Zion and others - appears the following lines from the brilliant pen of Orson F. Whitney:

Beneath this stone, by friendships’ hand is lain,
The martyred form of one, untimely slain.
A servant of the Lord, whose works revealed,
The love of Truth for which his doom was sealed.

Where foes beset - when but a single friend,
Stood true, nor shunned his comrade’s cruel end.
Deep in the shades of ill-starred Georgia’s wood,
Fair freedom’s soil was crimsoned with his blood.

Our brother rests beneath his native sod,
His murderers are in the hands of God.
Weep, weep for them, not him whose silent dust,
Here waits the resurrection of the just. (S.S. Vol 8, p. 15)

Late in 1880, Elder John W. Taylor (father of Pearl Taylor Anderson, Oak Ridge Ward) entered the

Southern States Mission. Elder Taylor was assigned with Elder Mathias F. Cowley, his boyhood companion, in southern Georgia. (Both Elder Cowley and Elder Taylor would later become Apostles for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.) In the Spring of 1881 Elder Taylor, laboring with a new companion, Elder William J. Parker, in Polk County, baptized 35 souls. Elder Taylor was released from his mission in 1882. (SS. Vol. 1, No. 14)

In April of 1881, the Southern States Mission headquarters was moved from Rome, Georgia to Nashville, Tennessee. (S.S. Vol. 1, No. 15). In April of 1882, the Mission Headquarters was moved again to Chattanooga, Tennessee and remained there for 37 years, until 1920.

Spring of 1881. The “Mormons” were evidently well-known in the Knoxville area during the 1880's. The Fall 1889 issue of the “Tennessee Alumnus” ran an article titled “The Humes Affair”. Two cousins, Charles F. Humes and William G. McAdoo, Jr., were on the debating team for the Chi Delta Society, at East Tennessee University, the forerunner of the University of Tennessee. The topic for the debate in the Spring of 1881 was “Resolved, That Mormonism in the United States Should Be Abolished,” and the cousins were assigned the negative side. Because Mormons were decidedly unpopular outside Utah, “Humes and I were depressed and dumbfounded,” McAdoo recalled. “The nice, respectable people of Knoxville came to the conclusion that there must be something wrong with us, or we would not argue in favor of plural wives.”

The cousins wrote to a Utah congressman for help. At the debate they cited the U. S. Constitution, the Book of Mormon, and arguments furnished by the congressman. “The sympathies of the audience were against us, but before the evening was over, it was obvious that we had made a profound impression” McAdoo wrote. “The judges retired for consultation. When they returned they announced that Humes and I had won the debate.”

The year 1884 was one of great trial for both missionaries and Church members generally throughout the Mission. Threats, beatings, mobbings, and all types of harassments were perpetrated on missionaries and members alike. Many threats were made of beatings and even death in order to drive out the missionaries and, in many areas, citizens of a city, county, or even a state were forced to leave their homes. (S.S. Vol. 1, No. 24)

Feelings against Tennessee Mormons were nowhere quite so bitter as in Lewis County. Opposition was being stirred up by local Protestant leaders. A Baptist preacher in Hohenwald, Tennessee, Reverend John Clayborn Vandiver, allegedly gave wide circulation to an Anti-Mormon newspaper article in the Salt Lake Tribune which did a great amount of damage. The contents of the article were proven to be a vicious fabrication, but none of the local preachers made any attempt to retract their lies. It was in this atmosphere that the Mormon Massacre occurred. On August 13, 1884, a mob under the leadership of David Hinson attacked the home of James Conder of the Cane Creek community. Brother Conder and his family and Elders John H. Gibbs, Henry Thompson, and William S. Berry were in the home. The Elders and the Conders attempted to protect themselves,

but in the struggle Elders Berry and Gibbs and members James Conder, and his stepson, J. R. Hudson, were killed. Rachel Conder, Brother Conder's wife, was seriously wounded. The leader of the mob, David Hinson was also killed. No person was ever tried for the crime. ("Tennessee Mormon Massacre" by Marshall Wingfield)

"At this point it would be most appropriate to name some of the valiant crusaders for truth in the battles for the Church in the south. They include: Henry G. Boyle, John Morgan, Rudger Clawson, B. H. Roberts, William Spry, J. Golden Kimball, Elias Kimball (both are uncles of Spencer W. Kimball), Ben E. Rich, Ephraim H. Nye, Charles A. Callis, Wilford Woodruff, George Albert Smith, LeGrand Richards, and Sterling W. Sill. Many of these brethren spent years, a decade or a score, defending the Gospel, its teachings and the Southern Saints, and as a result of their faithfulness, a change of heart begins to emerge in the lives of the Southern people concerning the 'Mormons'.

"J. Golden Kimball relates a story of his trials 'way down South'..." "During my labors in Chattanooga with Brother Roberts, as it was in the early history of the city, I was thoroughly poisoned with malaria. I was drunken, not with strong drink, but with malaria. I was as yellow as parchment. As I went along the streets one day in Chattanooga, I met a stranger. He happened to be a physician. He said, 'Young man, I don't know who you are, but if you don't do something for yourself, you will die.' 'Well,' I said, 'I won't die, as I am a Mormon --- you can't kill them.' "

"When Brother Morgan came down and relieved Brother Roberts, I was still in the office, looking worse than ever. Brother Morgan looked me over carefully. He said, 'Brother Kimball, you better go home. The mission is very hard-run for money. It will cost us twenty-four dollars to send you home alive, but it will cost three hundred dollars to send you home dead.' It was a matter of business in that office; they had no money. I think maybe that was all I was worth.

" 'No,' I said, 'Brother Morgan, I don't want to go home. I believe I was called on this mission by revelation; at least they told me so in my blessing. Now, God has been good to me and He has been faithful and true; I have tested Him and if He can't take care of me, when I have been as faithful as I have, and made the sacrifices I have made, then He is not the God of my fathers.' "

We can but try to walk in the shoes of the many hundreds of missionaries who have traveled throughout this area under the worst of conditions! We can show our appreciation by following in their steps of faith.

1885 - Powell River Branch Organized - see LaFollete/Cumberland Gap History

"April 3, 1899 Another Church Burned - Clinton, Tenn. By Elder W.E. Dawson

To the Southern Star:

Our dear little church here at Hart's Chapel was burned yesterday (Sunday) morning, and at day-break the Saints assembled to find their hopes of worshiping God in their dearly cherished church blasted. They gathered on the spot at 9:40 a.m. and held mournful services over the ruins of a once beautiful church where they had so often met in Sunday School and meeting, praising God in verse, text and song. The services consisted of songs, prayers and short addresses, thanking God the Father for the knowledge that we are persecuted for righteousness sake, and for the testimony of the Gospel which burns within our breasts. Calling upon our Father, that He may forgive them, for they knew not what they had done; this was the spirit that prevailed. The trustees had just met the week before and nearly completed arrangements for painting the church, and we were looking forward to the time when the little Mormon church would become the Star of the Valley in neatness and beauty. The janitor, though not a member of the church, has taken such pride in keeping it neat and clean inside. His name is Mr. J. F. Brown; be it said to his honor he has given the land on which the house stood and a deed for it is held; this he did when the church was first built; he has always been a faithful friend of the wayfaring Elders since they first came to his door.

Although the Saints are all heart sore at the present loss, they hope it will redound to their infinite gain. They feel to take lessons from the ant and set to work to build them another place to worship. This time they want to build it of brick and feel to put their trust in God, feeling that faith without works is dead; feel to ask the Lord, through the agency of His Saints in all the world (if they wish), to help to rebuild. The hearts of the Saints are sick at the thought of doing without a house of worship, and our only refuge for support is the Saints of God at home and abroad."

(S.S. Vol. 1)

From the very first missionary effort, the missionaries met with a mixed reception. To some they were accepted with kindness and tolerance. In other cases they met with fierce opposition, even violence. This mixed reception lasted through all of the 1800's and into the early 1900's. Reports of positive reaction were almost balanced off with negative reports, about one for one. Positive efforts of the missionaries are recorded in the Ward and Branch histories which follow.

The 1900's Through the 1910's

"After the turn of the century and under the able leadership of Ben E. Rich, then President of the Southern States Mission, an improved image of the Church in the South began. The next Mission

President, President Charles A. Callis, through extensive traveling and defending the missionary effort in the courtroom, with political leaders, judges, and by using the mass media, fought a long, hard battle but won many friends and many converts. President Callis was able to build upon the foundation President Rich had started. His efforts greatly improved the church's image in the South." (From Phil Smart "The Battles of Chattanooga" - Appendix C of District History)

Missionaries Came to Cumberland County TN. The first remembered missionary activity of the Church in the Cumberland County area was in 1906 when Sister Sallie Durham Barnes was baptized in Byrd's Creek in the Linary Community. There were two other members of the Church in the area at that time, also. They were Johnny Carpenter and his mother; however, no knowledge of how or when they came into the church is available.

Probably missionaries were in the area throughout the early 1900's, but in 1918-1919, missionaries came into the Slate Spring Community which is located eight miles north of Crossville on the Genesis Road. Charles A. Robins and Lionel LeCheminant were among the first missionaries, and the following people were among the first converts: Sallie Hyder, Ivan Barnes, Ulysses Barnes, Mae Hyder Swicegood, Carrie Hyder Warf, Nora Hyder Warf, Catherine Hyder Hamby. Cottage meetings were held as the missionaries came into the area. (Crossville History)

Missionaries Came to Pickett County TN. Missionaries were first reported to have come into Pickett County around the "turn of the century" and sometime thereafter were successful in baptizing the family of John Ammonette into the Church. A second Pickett County family, the Fosters, were baptized somewhat later. These two early Pickett County families were complemented by the Stephens family of Fentress County and together with spouses, in-laws, and descendants who accepted the Gospel were the core of the Church in this area for many years.

Missionaries Came to Blount County TN. In 1900 there were only three Latter-day Saint families in Blount County, Tennessee. These were the Garland, Harmon and Russell families. The Garland family lived in the Miller Cove area (Walland, Tennessee), the Harmon family lived in Cades Cove (Smoky Mountains), and the Russell family lived in Maryville. We have no record as to when Joe Garland and his wife were baptized into the Church, but we do have a record of his daughter Lonnie Mae Garland who was baptized in 1917. (Maryville Ward History)

Mormon Missionaries Came to Bybee, Cocke County. In 1905 two missionaries from the Mormon Church were holding meetings in homes in Cocke Co. A Baptist minister asked my grandmother, Anna Eliza Inman Talley, and her family to join he and his wife at the meeting to hear the Normans speak. They refused, but after much persuasion, they decided to attend. The spirit was so strong at the first service that my grandmother, Anna Eliza Inman Talley (widow) knew the gospel was true. Anna Eliza and three of her oldest children, Robert L. Talley, Margaret Paralee Talley and Sallie Kate Talley were baptized. Another family, Alex Moore, wife Lula and all of his children who were old enough, were also baptized. This opened the door for the Gospel in the Cocke Co. area.

Northcutts Cove Chapel

“To the best of our present knowledge the Northcutts Cove Chapel is the oldest standing Mormon Meetinghouse in Tennessee.

“The building of the Northcutts Cove Chapel was the result of the combined efforts of local members, L D S missionaries and friends, all of whom gave liberally of time and materials to construct the meetinghouse. The building was formally completed October 24, 1909, when it was dedicated by Charles A. Callis, LDS Southern States Mission President” - (Don Enders, Researcher for Research Report entitled Pre- 1910 LDS Meeting houses in Tennessee)

On April 18, 1979, the Tennessee Historical Commission entered Northcutts Cove Chapel (near Chattanooga) in the National Register of Historic Places. The little chapel was rededicated on October 12, 1986, with Elder Rex D. Pinegar giving the redidicatory prayer.

“. . . .To the best of our present knowledge the Northcutts Cove Chapel is the oldest standing Mormon Meetinghouse in the South. It was constructed at the interim between two distinct eras of the Church in the South, the former, a period of open hostility to Mormons, and the latter, a time of acceptance of the Church by both the people of the South and the public officials. . . . Near the time the Northcutts Cove Chapel meetinghouse was built, the Church began to take a different stand regarding the gathering of members to its western settlements. It was now time to stay where they were and build up the Church in their own area. Whereas but a handful of houses of worship were built by the Latter-day Saints in the South prior to 1910, many, and considerably more substantial ones were built there in the years which followed . . . In 1908, Northcutts Cove became the headquarters for what was termed the Eastern Tennessee Conference of the Church. Consequently, the Chapel, when built, became the center of many significant gatherings. What was undoubtedly the most influential series of meetings held in the building was a three-day debate (October 24th - 26th, 1909) between Charles A. Callis and a Campbellite minister. For the first time Mormonism, from its own point of view, received a fair hearing through newspapers of the state which aired the debate, thus permitting many Tennesseans the opportunity to see the Church in a different light than previously offered . . .”

On April 18, 1979, the Northcutts Cove Chapel was entered on the National Register of Historic Places. This beautiful Chapel preserves the rich history of the Church in the South, and preserves the memory of some of the greatest missionaries and defenders of the Faith the Church has ever know.” (District History-Appendix C pp 9-13)

Mormon Missionaries Came to Anderson, Claiborne, Cumberland, Knox, Loudon and Hamilton Counties, TN September 8, 1917 with excellent results reported from Elders. (Liahona15:239)

“In 1919 the Southern States Mission headquarters was moved to Atlanta, Georgia.”

The 1920's

Conference held at Knoxville, TN December 31, 1922. Reports favorable from all Conference Areas. Many successful cottage meetings and open air meetings held. (Historical Record 3494)

Elders in Knoxville TN January 31, 1923 receive permission of the Chief of Police to preach in the main part of town three nights or three days a week. Knoxville is probably the last major city in the East Tennessee Conference to grant this privilege.

Missionaries in Rockwood TN April 30, 1923. Much success was reported by Elders Gibby and Goodrich. Elders called to Cumberland County by investigators requesting baptism.

(Historical Records 3494 p. 798)

September 30, 1928. Brother and Sister Barry of Knoxville baptized by Elders Moffatt and Price. These Elders have been assisting Sunday School at Bybee recently. (Liahona 26:235-236)

By 1925 or 1926. Reports of positive, friendly, tolerant reception far outweighed the negative reports. With an average of only 12 to 16 missionaries to cover all of East Tennessee, west almost to Nashville, it was impossible to fill all the requests for preaching services, member-family visits, etc. Remember at this time there were only two or three organized Branches and a few Sunday Schools in all of East Tennessee.

Methods of doing missionary work also changed over the period of years, from the individual approach, one-on-one, to small family groups, to cottage meetings, then to meetings in school rooms, invitations to preach in friendly church buildings (usually Baptist or Methodist), progressing to large halls, such as the Symphony Hall in Nashville. Informal individual discussions on the street progressed to "street meetings" at which listeners numbering one hundred to three hundred were not uncommon.

Early in the 1920's another very interesting approach to missionary work was started. Elders called them "mill meetings" where the missionaries would actually be invited (or allowed) to come into a mill or factory and preach to the workers during their lunch period. Mill management was often cooperative to the point of shutting down the machinery to reduce the noise.

Two Elders working in Oneida, Tennessee in 1925 tell of preaching with great interest shown, during the noon hour in a large mill. A man who lived nearby took them to his home to stay the night. They retired early and about eleven o'clock they were awakened by a loud knocking on the door and voices of men outside. Since considerable trouble had been experienced in this vicinity previously, the Elders assumed more trouble was at hand and began to dress hurriedly. Before they finished dressing their host came to the door and informed them that some men from the mill wished to speak to them.

To their surprise they found six or eight men had come to ask them to come to the mill and talk to the night crew. This the Elders did from eleven to midnight. Afterward they thanked God that they had been mobbed “to preach” rather than being mobbed “because of preaching”.

(Liahona 23: 179-180) (District History pp 25-26)

March 27, 1927. The name of this geographic division of the Mission was changed from Conference to District, thus East Tennessee District became the official designation of this area.

(Historical Record B 4439 P. 92)

NOTE: On December 5, 1939, the name of the District was changed from “East Tennessee District” to “Tennessee East District”. See below for an outline history of the District.

December 9, 1928. A portion of the Southern States Mission was divided to form the East Central States Mission, headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky. Miles Lavendar Jones was the Presiding Elder of this new Mission. On January 1, 1929, the East Tennessee District began functioning under this new Mission.

To what extent the East Central States Mission Presidents began building mission staffs to guide, supervise and motivate the formation of auxiliary organizations throughout the mission is not documented in the material available until 1957 during President Melvin Ross Richard’s service. At that time his staff included seven Elders quorums with Presidents, a president of Relief Society, a Supervisor of the Sunday Schools, a Superintendent of YMMIA, a President of YWMIA, and a Primary Supervisor with one counselor. None of the others had counselors or secretaries.

(District History)

Tennessee East District

In 1947, the Tennessee East District was organized with all local members. James E. Travis was called as President of the District. President Travis is the brother of Sister Ruth Travis Precise of Oak Ridge. (District History)

District Presidents

President	Years of Administration	Counselors
James E. Travis	1947 - 1955	
Robert W. Smith	1955 - 1961	Frank H. Brown, Eugene H. Perkins Leo J. Brady
Leo J. Brady	1961 - 1969	Eugene H. Perkins, Arthur C. Neeley, and Bedford Bird
Bedford W. Bird	1969-1970	Edgar Snow, William Ashby, Emory Henry
Eugene H. Perkins	* 1970-1972	William Ashby, Arthur C. Neeley

*The name of the District was referred to as Tennessee East District in historical records provided by Eugene H. Perkins dated September 5, 1939.

When we were the Tennessee East District, the District covered many miles, from Bristol/Kingsport to Chattanooga. The Branches varied from time to time, but included:

Athens	LaFollette
Bristol	Maryville
Chattanooga	Morristown
Corbin Ky.	Norton, Va.
Jamestown	Oak Ridge
Kingsport	Oneida
Knoxville	Slate Springs
Speedwell	

(Relief Society History 1957)

In January 1970, Bristol, Johnson City and Norton became part of the Appalachian District and Corbin,KY became part of the Lexington Kentucky District.

On March 1, 1970, the name of the Tennessee East District was changed to the Knoxville Tennessee District.

The 1930's and 40's

As you have read previously, many missionaries and members went to Utah before the outbreak of the Civil War, leaving small groups of Saints holding Sunday Schools here and there through out the hills and valleys of East Tennessee.

In Sister Lurene Greene's writings found in the early history of the "Knoxville and Area Saints", she says: " We moved to Knoxville in January 1930. There was a Home Sunday School and Sacrament Meetings held at the home of Sister Ada Atkinson. ...In 1931 a Relief Society was organized.... We moved to Nashville and were there for three and a half years. When we returned to Knoxville, things were about the same; we still had no Priesthood holders and, in 1937, the missionaries were still holding a Home Sunday School on Jones Street and in Sister Allen's home."

March 4, 1930. Sunday School Organized in Knoxville Tennessee
(Historical Records provided by Eugene H. Perkins)

In a letter dated February 22, 1990, by Earnest J. Whiting, Jr. of Mesa, Arizona, he writes of his days as a missionary in the East Tennessee District:

“I appreciate the opportunity to tell a little of what I remember after 53 years when I served as a missionary in the East Central States Mission, assigned to the East Tennessee District. I arrived in Tennessee the first time in May 1937, but returned home for a Court Trial that lasted for three months. I returned to the Mission in August 1937 and again was assigned to work in the East District of Tennessee. I served with Elder James Wallace Wilkins; he was the District President until December 15th, 1937 when he returned home, and I was asked to be the District President and presided until November 1938.

“If my memory will serve me, I believe that the membership in the East Tennessee District was about 1300 members of record. When the individual membership records were started in 1938, we found that this was somewhat overstated. There were small branches of the Church in Kingsport, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Crossville and Altamont that had a small chapel, the only church building in East Tennessee at Northcutts Cove, about 12 miles from Altamont. The headquarters for the Southern States Mission was in Chattanooga for a number of years, but membership was not strong in that area. The strongest branch was at Kingsport and seems to have continued to grow.

“There were small Sunday Schools at several locations in the District; Cumberland Gap, Oneida, Jellico and some others that I can't recall their locations. The membership of the District was scattered over the entire District, and it was not easy to visit them and encourage them in their membership responsibility.

“During my assignment as District President, we tried to visit as many of the members as we could and held many wonderful meetings throughout the District. We began to see the leadership improve with people starting to move into the area on the TVA and other pre-war Government projects. During these years there were usually eight missionaries assigned to the District; two Sister Missionaries in the Kingsport area, two Elders in the Bristol-Johnson City area, two in Knoxville and two in Chattanooga. During the months from April to November the six Elders worked in the rural areas. My assignment for the summers of 1937-38 was in the Cumberland Gap and surrounding areas. During these months the Elders lived with the members of the Church and our proselyting was done through holding meetings in the homes of the members, public buildings--such as school houses and Court houses--and we always tried to hold as many street meetings as we could. We were asked to travel without purse or scrip at times but it was quite hard as we did need some public transportation at times. We found some pockets of animosity towards us, but in most cases it was just indifference as we find even today.”

Branch organizations manned by local members did exist in Chattanooga, Knoxville, Morristown, Oak Ridge and possibly other communities. (District History p. 35)

Summer of 1939, Slate Springs Branch Organized.

February 14, 1943. Knoxville Branch Organized.

April 1944. Oak Ridge Branch Organized.

The 1950's

“During the 1950's, through vigorous fund-raising activities, the small band of Saints in the Knoxville area built their first chapel. They outgrew it during the 1960's and sold it to a group of orthopedic surgeons who now use it as a professional building.

1949-50 - Oak Ridge Branch re-organized.

1950's - Tazewell Saints met for Sacrament Meetings with Knoxville Branch.

1954 - Sunday School organized in Jamestown.

1954-55 - Speedwell Saints built Chapel on Haynes Ridge.

Dec 19, 1954. Oak Ridge organized Boy Scout Troop 320. This is the first Historical Record of a Scout Troop being organized in the area. This troop is still “alive and well, in the Oak Ridge Ward. (Historical Records provided by Pres. Perkins)

1955 - First District Conference held in Jamestown.

1955 - New District Presidency called Robert W. Smith as President with Frank H. Brown, Eugene H. Perkins and Leo J. Brady as Counselors. They served from 1955 to 1961.

1958 - Sterling W. Sill dedicated Knoxville Branch Chapel (Concord St. Bld).

1958 - Oak Ridge Chapel built on Viking Road.

1959 Priesthood session of 129th Semiannual General Conference heard by closed circuit telephone 1st time. (Historical Records provided by Pres. Perkins)

The 1960's

District Personnel trained by East Central States Mission.

Until the Stake was created in 1972, the Mission had great influence upon the affairs of the area, and were the governing body over the Districts. With the East Central States Mission Headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky, most training meetings for District Leaders were held there.

Sister Wilma Honaker remembers when she was called to the position of the Relief Society President of the Tennessee East District of the East Central States Mission by the District President, Robert Smith, in October 1960. President Frank H. Brown was the Mission President while his wife, Deliah, was our Mission Relief Society President. The Mission consisted of seven Districts - Kentucky Central, Kentucky East, Kentucky West, Tennessee Central, Tennessee East, West Virginia North, and West Virginia South.

“Having little information (from the previous Relief Society President) I made plans to visit the seven Branches of the District, the farthest being 225 miles one way. The seven Branches of our District were: Johnson City, Kingsport, Bristol, Knoxville, Oak Ridge, Chattanooga, and Slate Springs. Many of our training meetings were held in Louisville, Kentucky.” (Stake R.S.History)

The 1960's was an era of growth with more leadership positions being filled. It was a time for expanding and growing to eventually get us ready to become a Stake.

1961 - A new District Presidency called. Leo J. Brady called as President, serving from 1961 to 1965. During this period, Eugene H. Perkins, Arthur C. Neeley and Bedford Bird served as Counselors. .

1965 - A new District Presidency called. Bedford Bird was called as President, serving from 1965 to 1970. During this period Edgar C. Snow, William C. Ashby and Emory Henry served as Counselors.

1965 - Broadcasts of General Priesthood Meetings of April Conference held in three locations: Knoxville, Kingsport and Chattanooga.

1965 - Third Quarterly District Conference held in the Jewish Community Center and Young High School.

1966 - District Conference held at Young High School February 27, 1966.

The middle and late 60's brought more and more “transplants” moving into the area as jobs were opened up to them. The University of Tennessee brought many folks here as well as The Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The strength of these members brought much needed assistance to the courageous and brave East Tennessee Saints who had sacrificed so much to spread the Gospel, not only with their testimonies, but with their examples when “anti-Mormonism” could have certainly discouraged even the most valiant of Saints.

The District Center- Knoxville Branch Chapel on Kendall Road

With the help of Church building missionaries, the saints in the Knoxville area built the beautiful chapel on Kendall Road. Since Knoxville was the center point of the District, the new building was designated as the District Center also. The Saints spent lots of money, energy, and determination to build this beautiful building. The footers and foundations were laid in late 1964; construction began on the building in 1965, and it was completed in 1966.

“Ray L. Pearson was the Branch President of the Knoxville Branch at the time the building was being constructed. Brother Marion Wilson, a Church building contractor serving a 3-year building mission, came to Knoxville as the superintendent of this project. Don Jordan was serving a Church building mission in Ohio, and came to Knoxville for the last 6 months of that mission to help with the building. Under the direction of these two men the building process was in full swing.”

Countless hours were spent by the local members and the building missionaries sent by the Church to work on the building. The local saints housed and fed the missionaries and worked 4-5 nights a week, plus all day every Saturday, for over two years.

“What a feeling of satisfaction these saints must have felt as they finally were finished and settled into their new building - - feelings of love and cohesiveness as well as the feelings of a job ‘well done’. The building was special, built with their own hands. The building was dedicated October 23, 1967 by Elder EIRay C. Christiansen. Their efforts of several years - which had broken down into days, weeks and months of commitment - had finally come to an end. Our early pioneers gave their all to give us the foundation we have today, not only with this building, but with their diligence in living the gospel and enduring. Many of these early saints are still in the wards in this area. Look around you and be grateful for our heritage!

“This chapel was special and needed someone special to care for it who would feel just the same as the saints who built it, so Brother Art Amos and his wife Sister Ruth Amos from Kingston were hired to be the caretakers. They cared for the building like it was their own, and when the children would bounce balls off the walls and leave black marks, or swing on the curtains at the stage, or mar and scuff things, they were upset and wanted everyone to care for it like they did - - like their own home.”

The Deseret Club

In 1967 - The Deseret Club was Chartered at the University of Tennessee with Ken Kenney as the Faculty Advisor and Mitch Borden as the teacher. This Club was a precursor of the Institute of Religion that would come into our area a few years into the future. The chartered student organization at UT at the present time is the LDS Student Association, which is overseen by the Church Education Department at the Institute of Religion near the UT Campus.

Some of the students who attended the Deseret Club are still in the area at the present time (1997) and can recall some of their experiences. Pat Bryson was Vice President; then for the next school years, 1968 and 1969, Pat was the President. Some of the other students were Patricia Buchanan, David Bowman, and Steve Ayres.

“1967 also brought Seminary to the District. With the completion of the Kendall Road building, early morning Seminary began the school year of 1967, with Edgar Snow as the first Seminary teacher. Some of his students were Cindy Barron (who was also the first Seminary Graduate from Knoxville), Billy Barron, Shane Cruze, Robin Snow, Patricia Buchanan and Jerry Wayne Ward.

Church College of Hawaii Volley Ball Team Comes to Knoxville

In the Fall of 1969 the President Ray Pearson of the Knoxville Branch announced that he had received a letter from the Church College of Hawaii. It seems the NCAA Volleyball Championships were going to be held at the UT campus here in Knoxville and the local members were being asked to open their homes to the young men of the Church College of Hawaii Volleyball team so they could hold down the costs of the trip to the Church. The local membership seemed to be excited at the prospect, and within a short time all the team members had a place to stay.

There was a reception held at the District Center for the team members on the evening of the day they arrived in Knoxville. The reception was more of a giant fireside hosted by the team, for they took over the program, introduced themselves, sang a number of native songs for us, and talked of their origins and folklore. It was a memorable evening for all and there was a great feeling of fellowship in the air. Finally, when the team members were assigned to their families, the team presented to those families native shell jewelry and cases of fresh pineapples from the Dole Plantation fields that had just been picked that morning! For most of us, this was our first taste of REAL fresh pineapple (there isn't any comparison with what passes for fresh pineapple in the supermarkets after you've had a taste of the real thing!).

For the next several days we fed our team members breakfast (we quickly discovered they did NOT want any of the pineapple, but LOVED blueberry pancakes!), took them to the UT campus for their tournament play, then picked them up in the afternoon, brought them home, fed them supper and entertained them in the evening. We had two players in our home; one was a native Hawaiian and a member of the Church, the other was from California and a non-member whose name was Dennis. During the time they stayed with us we felt a special kinship to them, treating them just like they were our sons, and thoroughly enjoyed their presence. Any time we could sneak away from whatever else we were doing, we were there at the Stokely Athletic Center, cheering them on! CC of H didn't win the tournament (seems like they came in 4th or 5th that year), but they did win a lot of friends in Knoxville (while at the same time helping further a real sense of unity in the Branch - at least in those who housed the team!).

Several years later we heard from Dennis, he wrote to tell us that, partly because of the special love he felt from the Knoxville Saints, and more especially in our home, he had been influenced to eventually join the Church, and he shared with us his great joy and happiness now that he had done so. (This letter was written from Ireland where he was serving a mission for the Church.)

All the other families who let these special young men into their homes were similarly blessed with an outpouring of love and fellowship, and certainly created within all of us a greater appreciation of volleyball at a professional level and made us rabid fans of Church College of Hawaii (now BYU-Hawaii). (Footprints history p. 34-35)

Many members in the District housed these special young men and were pleased to share their homes with them. We never realized the impact we would have on these team members.

LDS Social Services

In 1969 the LDS Social Services was established in Atlanta, with the Indian Placement program within some of the Georgia Stakes. Later, LDS Social Services expanded to include the Knoxville area, working mostly with unwed mothers. At the present time (1997) counseling service is available every other month in the Knoxville Tennessee Stake.

Diane Brinkman was the first Social Services Director
Carolyn Purcell worked with her for a year or so and then
was called as Director for the Knoxville Tennessee Stake.
Carolyn Purcell is the current Social Services Director

The 1970's - The Years of Progress

A new District Presidency was called in 1970, with Eugene H. Perkins as President, and with William Ashby and Arthur C. Neeley as counselors. President Perkins recalls that the goal of his administration was for the District to become a Stake. His focus was on this goal, which brought about the changes to make it happen.

President Perkins and his family moved to Oak Ridge from Utah in September of 1958, where he joined the Biological Division of Oak Ridge National Laboratory as a research scientist. He holds many honors and received international recognition for his various scientific endeavors. In 1977 he was the organizer of the 10th Annual Southeastern Immunology Conference which he hosted in Oak Ridge, Tn. Besides his remarkable talent and ability in his chosen profession, he worked diligently in the Church.

President Perkins served as a member of the mission staff in the East Central States Mission, then the Kentucky-Tennessee Mission and finally the Tennessee Nashville Mission. Simultaneously, he served as a Scoutmaster and Explorer Advisor for over 18 years in the Oak Ridge Ward and during

this same time as a member of the Tennessee East District Presidency.

It is of interest to note that Oak Ridge, Anderson County, Tennessee, is only a short distance from Cookville in White County, Tennessee, where Perkins Cemetery is located and where some of President Perkins' early progenitors are buried. As the second and third generation of his immigrant ancestors (Perkins line) left Maryland, their route of migration was always to the unsettled frontier. Over a period of 100 years, these families lived first in North Carolina, then South Carolina and finally Tennessee before migrating to Hancock County, Illinois. It was here, where the Mormons founded Nauvoo, that they were converted and moved West with them. President Perkins' assignments in the South enabled him to become familiar with the former frontier locations of many of these ancestral families. President Perkins has an ancestry of many generations of Mormons! His testimony and commitment to the Gospel stands firm and strong on this great heritage.

In His Own Words

by Pres. Eugene H. Perkins

“Experiences throughout my life, have convinced me that the significant part of life is accomplishment and have demonstrated that man’s destiny is closely linked with an unseen power that can provide continuous guidance to each that desires it; that life offers gifts which are priceless, but to have them each individual must initiate the action; that life is a divine commission and not a mere existence; that all have contributions to make; that conduct and attention to little things are more important than seeking monumental undertakings; that life is but a brief shining moment of finite time that must not be wasted; that each must be responsive to inner promptings to ignite that spark of divinity that lies within; that man’s real joy and happiness in this life as well as his eternal progression and final destiny is dictated by his daily activities which are not centered in but outside of himself. Holocausts do not come from atomic explosions and misguided power, rather man simply destroys himself through ignorance, indifference, lack of commitments, and a do-nothing attitude. To enjoy the truly “abundant life” we must be “doers”, continually participating in the three-fold mission of the church and not be merely “hearers of the word” if one is to escape the seemingly sedentary existence of many “Wasatch Front” High Priests.” President Eugene Perkins

The District moved forward under the direction of this great man. In January of 1970, Bristol, Johnson City, and Kingsport, Tennessee, as well as Norton, Virginia, became a part of the Appalachian District and Corbin, Kentucky, became part of the Lexington Kentucky District. March 1, 1970, the name of the District was changed from Tennessee East to Knoxville District. Then in October the Chattanooga Branch was split, forming the Chattanooga First Branch and Chattanooga Second Branch, and the challenge was on to meet the goal of becoming a Stake. The District boundaries then included Chattanooga First Branch, Chattanooga Second Branch, Knoxville First Branch, Knoxville Second Branch, Oak Ridge Branch, Crossville Branch, Jamestown Branch, Morristown Branch and LaFollette Dependent Branch. The saints, and especially President Perkins, were committed to their callings and to their responsibilities for the united goal of Stakehood. Finally the day arrived--

25 June 1972: A Stake is Created in Knoxville, TN

Knoxville (Tenn.) Stake was formed from the Knoxville District of the Kentucky-Tennessee Mission, June 25, 1972 under the direction of Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of Twelve, assisted by Elder Berkeley L. Bunker, Regional Representative of the Twelve.

Membership of the new stake is 2,341 organized into five wards, three independent branches and one dependent branch: Chattanooga, Chattanooga Second, Knoxville, Knoxville Second and Oak Ridge Wards; Crossville, Jamestown and Morristown Branches and LaFollette Dependent Branch.

Eugene H. Perkins, President of the Knoxville District was installed as president of the new stake with William C. Ashby and Arthur C. Neeley as counselors.

Pres. Perkins was born Feb 18, 1926 in St. George, Utah, a son of Clyde Eugene and Ella Viola Hafen Perkins. He married Mary Belle Hendrix of Overton, Nev., and they have 10 children". Church News, week ending July 1, 1972

<u>Stake Presidents</u>		<u>Counselors</u>
Eugene H. Perkins	1972-1980	R. Lloyd Smith, Dennis Duran, Brent Miller
R. Lloyd Smith	1980-1989	Gene Muggridge, Bruce Morgenegg Russell B. Barber
Russell B. Barber	1989 -	William C. Jones, Darrell Talley, Leon Ebbert, Stuart Clark

Knoxville Stake's First Patriarch

June 25, 1972: Brother Leo J. Brady was called, ordained and set apart as the Knoxville Tennessee Stake's First Patriarch. Brother Brady, as noted above, was the District President for some time. In 1969 he was called to serve on the Mission Board and remained there until his ordination as Stake Patriarch.

In reading the Oak Ridge history, you will find that the Leo J. Brady family was one of the five or six remaining families in the area after the war. He was very instrumental in keeping "body and soul" of the Church together in the Oak Ridge area for many years. Brother and Sister Brady still live in Oak Ridge along with their son, Kendall and his wife, Barbara.

Family History Library Established

Written by Keith Honaker

In the evening of 25 June 1972 following the organization of the Knoxville Tennessee Stake by the Apostle Mark E. Petersen, our Regional Representative Berkeley L. Bunker, called a meeting to be

attended by the Stake Executive Secretary, Keith Honaker, and Clerk, Mitch Borden. It was during this meeting that the means of financing the Stake Genealogical Library, which was non-existent, was discussed. Since many non-members were to use the genealogical library, Brother Bunker stated we should get financial assistance from donations from non-members as well as the members. What other monies were needed the Stake had to provide. Other means of financial support would come from the Stake High Priests Quorum, mainly from the sale of books the High Priests would sell during Stake meetings. However, presently most of the finances come from the Stake budget and from rental of films, etc.

The following is the list of Directors and Stake Advisors of the Genealogical Library and today called the Family History Center:

<u>Directors</u>	<u>Advisors</u>
Sis. Chris Brown	Bro. Ray Pearson
Sis. Betty Jordan	Bro. Keith Honaker
Sis. Pearl Lyons	Bro. Wendall O'Bryant
Sis. Joyce Boyce	Bro. Ray Pearson
Bro. Keith Honaker	Bro. Ray Pearson and Bro. Randy Cluff
Sis. Nora Snow	Bro. Randy Cluff

The operations of the Family History Center requires about thirty staff members to administer the program, with technicians included to maintain the equipment, instructors, patrons relations, etc.

1973-74: The addition to the Kendall Road building for Stake offices, High Council Room, library and Genealogy Library was built.

During the 70's money was always needed and in short supply. The area Saints were assessed certain money amounts for welfare, budget, and building projects. As the area Saints took on welfare projects, individual commitment had to run high as getting dirty in a garden, peach orchard or working with the bees became "several week day" occurrences.

Institute of Religion Established

1974: The building that houses the Institute of Religion was purchased in the early 1970's. Much work was needed to get it ready for the students. It was remodeled again in 1990, with new carpets, painting, etc. On January 19, 1991, Elder Richard Chappel, our new Regional Representative, came to Knoxville to rededicate the remodeled building. Prior to the establishment of the Institute of Religion in Knoxville, Elder J. Steven Jones from Columbia, South Carolina, the equivalent of an Area Director, supervised the Deseret Clubs, which were the precursor to the Institutes of Religion in the Church; Rick Anthony, who was the coordinator in Morgan, West Virginia, was also over this area at one time.

Institute Directors

David Trainer	1974 -1975
Glen Seabury	1975 - 1977
Robert Cloward	1977 - 1990
Max Lehman	1990 -

“For Time and All Eternity” The Washington D.C. Temple

The Washington D. C. Temple was dedicated November 20, 1974! The Saints had previously made the 2,000-plus mile trip to either Salt Lake or Idaho Falls or some other points west for their endowments and sealings. Saints in this area were assessed an amount of money to cover the building of this beautiful Temple and were very grateful and pleased when it was finally completed.

“When we were raising money for the Washington Temple, people would pledge certain amounts, and by using one of their talents, were able to meet their individual commitments, It was a great time of cooperation and love,” states Wanda Barron.

The Saints were grateful and most pleased when this beautiful edifice to the Lord was completed. Now, instead of piling into their family car to go west, groups of saints rode a bus, chartered by the Stake, and went east. These bus trips were special in that the Saints were able to develop a great deal of love and comradery while on their day-long trip to and from Washington D.C. The saints usually left about 6:00 a.m. on Thursday morning, traveling all day, doing a little work in the Temple that evening, then worked in the Temple all day and evening on Friday, returning to Knoxville on Saturday. Memories abound regarding these trips and the saints were grateful for the opportunities this special Temple gave them. (Footprints History p. 47)

1976: An article written by Diane Brinkman for the July Ensign, titled ‘The Saints in Knoxville Stake’, describes the stake in 1976 very aptly.

The Knoxville Stake has 2,750 members and covers an area of 13,750 square miles. The stake is comprised of ten independent units: Knoxville First and Second Wards, Chattanooga First and Second Wards, Oak Ridge Ward, and the Crossville, Morristown Maryville, Jamestown, and LaFollette branches; and three dependent units: Rockwood, South Chattanooga and Athens. Chapels have been built in Oak Ridge, Chattanooga, Morristown, Jamestown, and Crossville with the Stake Center in Knoxville.

Stake President Eugene H. Perkins says, ‘Even though we are small in population, we are moving forward at a much accelerated

rate. Our public image has changed dramatically, and the respect we have now was unheard of ten years ago. We're accepted and a credit to the communities we live in.'

Stake membership includes native East Tennesseans as well as 'transplants.' 'Transplants' are those who have migrated to Tennessee after accepting employment in the area. They are usually natives of one of the Mormon settlements of Utah, Idaho, Idaho, or California.

We therefore have a blend of the South and the West in the Knoxville Stake and, despite the difference in backgrounds, the general feeling is one of tremendous pride in each other."

When the Knoxville Stake was created in 1972, the Chattanooga Wards were included within those boundaries. In talking with President Eugene Perkins recently, he remembers the Knoxville Stake as being "bar-bell shaped" with large groups of Saints on either end. It soon became apparent that Chattanooga should be made a separate Stake. The membership grew, leaders became stronger and enough Priesthood was available to create the Chattanooga Stake six years later on May 21, 1978. That was a great day for celebration. Another giant leap of Faith had been taken!

Historical Records for Chattanooga Stake for 1978 state: "21 May: This stake was organized this day under the direction of Elder Russell M. Ballard. All presented by him for sustaining by the members of the new stake were sustained. The Old Tullahoma Tn. District was split, as was the older Knoxville Tn. Stake. The units of the new stake were Chattanooga 1st Ward, Chattanooga 2nd Ward, Altamont Tn. Branch which became a ward, Tullahoma Tn. Branch which became a ward, McMinnville Tn. Branch which became a ward, Cleveland Tn. Branch, Chattanooga Valley Branch and Dalton Georgia Branch. The president of the new stake was Pres. Earl Eugene Callens, Jr., and he called us together for our first P.E.C. meeting this afternoon. May reports showed we had 1,808 members."

June 1978: Priesthood given to all worthy male members

"Without a doubt the most significant change that occurred within the Church was the revelation received by President Spencer W. Kimball during June 1978 allowing all worthy male members to receive the Priesthood. This revelation has greatly influence the Church and missionary work. In the Oak Ridge Ward this resulted in an increased proselyting among the blacks in their area, though the results weren't as large in numbers as hoped. Four black members have been baptized and welcomed into the Oak Ridge Ward since 1978."

(Oak Ridge History)

**May 1979: “The Life and Times of the Prophet Joseph Smith”
May 11-12, 1979**

Lelia Anderson, who was our official playwright, poet, or story teller as needed, did it again when she wrote the play for the Knoxville Stake youth entitled “The Life and Times of the Prophet Joseph Smith”.

The play was beautifully written, with several intense scenes that took authentic clothing and much attention to detail. Leaders spent hours of research before they were ready to do any casting. The play was under the direction of the YMMIA Stake Leaders. Many people were involved behind the scenes to stage and produce this huge undertaking. The goal was to involve every youth in the Stake. Finally the production was ready. The end result was worth all the effort!

Leaders worked with individuals in each scene for many weeks before they were ready to put the whole play together. The choir director and pianist spent innumerable hours of rehearsals to get the music “just right”. The youth were ever faithful in coming to these rehearsals, many from miles away! Parents and youth leaders were behind this undertaking. Grumbling and gripes were at a minimum! What a choice time for all involved!

After many weeks, the individual rehearsals were complete. The choir was at it’s best, decked out in their dark pants/ skirts, white blouses/shirts and vests that had been made by the sisters in the Stake. It was time for dress rehearsals, which went more and more smoothly as time went by. Finally, it was time to present the finished production to the Stake membership.

How magnificent the Youth were! They certainly rose to this special occasion. The soloists were outstanding. Those in duets had voices that blended beautifully. The choir members outdid themselves. It was as if “Angels” were singing. Two performances were given at the Kendall Road Stake Center.

As the play progressed, the cultural hall got quieter and quieter, until we were to the “Prison Scene”. As this scene opened, we heard the wail of a harmonica playing “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief”. The spirit in the building was so strong, the quiet so intense, you could have heard a pin drop! As David Werner sang the words to this beautiful, poignant song, many an eye was filled with tears.

Both evenings the cultural hall was filled. Both evenings the same affect was felt. Those who attended were filled not only with the Spirit of the Lord, but with a wonderful appreciation for the person our beloved Prophet, Joseph Smith the man, really was. What an experience was had with such choice young people!

The 1980's

1980: A New Stake Presidency was called. Elder Rex Penegar presided at the reorganization of the Knoxville Stake, June 15, 1980, where R. Lloyd Smith was sustained as the new Stake President, with Bruce Morgenegg and Eugene Muggridge as counselors. A total of 1,054 members assembled for this conference. Elder Rex Pinegar concluded the conference with a sermon on the subject of "Fathers". After the conference had adjourned, Eugene H. Perkins accepted a call to serve as counselor to President Lloyd Poelman of the Nashville TN Mission. President Morgenegg later moved from the area and Russell B. Barber was called to replace him. (Notes by Gene Muggridge)

The University Branch

President Smith had a great love for the youth of the area. He was especially concerned for the number of young people between the ages of 18 and 25. Under his care and guidance, the University Branch was formed in 1980 and was in existence for 6 years. President Smith received special permission from the General Authorities to form this Branch. Special permission was required because it would have less than 100 young people involved.

The organization of the Branch came about through President Smith's concern for the number of young people between the ages of 18 and 25 who could be considered in-between's. These young people didn't feel they fit into the usual ward or branch organization and were getting lost between the cracks.

President Smith called Hyrum Plaas as the first Branch President and it was decided that the young priesthood brethren would be his counselors, with the understanding between President Smith and President Plaas, that he would not involve the counselors with any of the personal problems, because it was felt that they would be too immature as well as being too close to the young people.

A great portion of these young people came from the First and Second Wards and many of the young brethren were returned missionaries, so this was a great learning experience for them. They functioned well and were committed to the Branch and wanted it to succeed. The young brethren had good rapport with each other as well as being very tolerant of the young people who came into the Branch. Also, this group of young men had grown up together here, (although maybe in different wards or branches) and knew each other well, had played sports together, been in scouting programs together, all of which made them a cohesive and committed group. Brother Plaas was very committed to this endeavor because he, too, was aware of the transition problems this age group encountered. He found that the young men were outwardly oriented through their upbringing in the Church, through their goals of scouting and their missions, as well as service that holding the Priesthood brings; thus, they were more fitted to the Branch and dedicated to making

things happen. Brother Plaas remembers many happy times with the youth with the parties and the spiritual times they all shared.

What he encountered with the young sisters was a little different in that he felt they were lonelier and they were more concerned with their own problems and so their interests were directed inwardly, not outwardly as with the young men. Many of these young sisters were just wonderful and worked well in the Branch, but he did find that some of them were not so very tolerant of the younger ones (18-year-olds) and, in comparing them to the young men, he felt that his success with them fell short of the goals he had set. The biggest problem he felt (in looking back) was in not having mature counselors with whom he could discuss things, as most Branch Presidents and Bishops can. He began to have health problems, probably relating to all the stress, and was released in 1983.

“The first year and a half, we led the mission in baptisms and the Stake in total baptisms,” President Plaas recalls. However, as time went on he remembers that the commitment of these new converts was shaky and before long resulted in much inactivity. However, there was one young lady who found the branch all on her own without anyone leading her there, who had a good Protestant upbringing and came out of curiosity. When Brother Plaas saw her come in he remembers that he sighed a sigh, and said, “Finally, a golden contact”. This young woman was Alyson Newman, later to become President Plaas’ daughter-in-law.

Brother Plaas remembers the highlight of the Branch while he was Branch President had to be during the 1982 World’s Fair which was held in downtown Knoxville, when the BYU Young Ambassadors were here. He believes they were here three months and attended the branch that whole time. The Young Ambassadors had been in the area twice before to give concerts, but this time they were here for the WHOLE summer. This time they were here long enough to leave a lasting impression on the young people at the branch.

The young people got to discover what a real “Mormon Gang” was like and how much fun could be had with folks who had the same goals and commitments. Prior to this time, their attendance was 100 on some Sundays, but during this time the youth came out and attendance was never below 100, not including the BYU dancers, so it often went over that amount. Brother Plaas recalls the great choir they had that summer; they always had a choir but, now that the BYU folks were included, so much more was added to the Branch’s efforts.

Dorothy Brown writes of the Young Ambassadors stay in Knoxville: “The Young Ambassadors were here for several months during the 1982 World’s fair. As they always do, they gave wonderful performances (and were the hit of the Fair as a matter of fact) and everyone seemed to enjoy them. While they were performing, the seats were full. Some of their costumes, however, were heavy and no one had told them about the humidity in East Tennessee so I think that was somewhat of a problem for them, but they carried on.”

Even with all the stress and difficulties Brother Plaas continued laboring in the Branch. After interviewing him, I feel that he must remember these as having been wonderful years and is grateful for the influence he had with these young people. “They were great times,” he says, with a large portion of pleasure emitting from his voice — “A marvelous experience”, as his voice trails off with a bit of wistfulness.

Brother Bob Cloward was called as the next Branch President with Brother Frank Davis and Brother Gary Purcell as his counselors. Stake leaders had learned from experience that it was best to have mature married brethren involved with these young people and, as a matter of fact, that is now Church policy. The Branch flourished for the next three years until Church policy changed and the Branch was disbanded in 1986. (Footprints History pp.65-67)

A Building for Every Unit

President Smith also was determined that every unit should have a building of the right size for their congregations. With that thought and commitment in mind, Oak Ridge, Grove Park, Jamestown, Sevierville and Tazewell built new buildings; also, Rockwood, Morristown, Maryville, Crossville and Tazewell all added second phases to their buildings. The Stake Center was renovated as well.

President Smith points out that all of this building was possible only because we as a Stake were tithing sufficient, and the buildings could be 96% financed by the Church through tithing funds.

April, 1982: Recent announcements from Church Headquarters released by the First Presidency:

“Increased faithfulness and obedience to the law of tithing will assist building new meeting houses. An expected percentage of full tithing payers will be established for the unit, taking into account the number of Melchizedek Priesthood holders. Where this established percentage is met, along with the requirement of current and complete statistical and financial reports, and the continued practice of also an established number of members attending Sacrament Meeting, the local participation in the cost of the building will not be more than 4%. Additionally, effective July 1, 1982, the cost of all operation and maintenance expenditures except utilities will be borne 100% by the Church.”

What joy was experienced by the local Saints when we realized our Stake would have these blessings! The Saints who had been here “forever and ever” remembered all the fund raising projects held to acquire financing for all their financial needs. Dime-a-dip dinners, pancake breakfasts, doughnut sales, and bazaars are only a few of the projects that brought desperately needed funds. When the call went out for needed funds, the Saints responded with their time and talents. Remember the “grapes”, Sisters, that so many of you made and sold? Now the

blessings had come with the above announcement!

Elder George P. Lee presided at the Knoxville Stake Conference held June 15-16, 1981. Elder Lee spoke on the subject of why Americans were wealthy; so they could spread the gospel to all the world. Prophecies have been fulfilled that the Lamanite people would be scattered by the gentiles. Now it is up to Americans to gather the elect from the scattered peoples in all nations.

January 31, 1982. A Knoxville Regional Council (Chattanooga, Kingsport and Knoxville Stakes) was held with Regional Representative Elder Robert N. Brady presiding and conducting. Elder Brady spoke of Church finances and that the United States members are destined to finance the major portion of the lord's restored Gospel in foreign countries. It is in those countries where many poor people live who without help from members in America, could never enjoy a Chapel or a Temple. Tears came to the eyes of many council members as the spirit of that message filled the room and penetrated every heart, confirming to the mind that talents must be developed to hasten the work. There is more that each can do. (Historical notes by Gene Muggridge)

1982 brought another blessing. General Conference could now be seen and heard at the Knoxville Stake Center with the installation of a satellite dish. In the mid-1970's, WBIR television station in Knoxville carried the Sunday morning session of conference, but that didn't last very long. Oh, how grateful we were to get the broadcasts right in our own Stake Center.

June 19, 1982: Elder Carlos E. Asy presided at the Knoxville Stake leadership meeting and during the first session of Stake Conference. The priesthood leaders were instructed on financial management. Elder Asay taught that families must live within a budget and never buy unless they could pay. No bondage is greater than that of consumer debt. (Muggridge)

You can't say our Stake Leaders weren't adventurous fellows! July 18, 1982, the Knoxville Regional Council meeting was held under the direction of Elder Eugene H. Perkins, Regional Representative. During lunch, a side dish of 'Possum was served. The dish was prepared by Arnold Sams, featuring about 30 chunks of golden crisp meat on a large platter, surrounded with sweet potatoes, red tomatoes and green parsley. Now that was a mighty tempting dish! Unbeknownst to the council, groundhog and turtle had to be substituted for 'Possum. The opossum run had been slim this year. The side dish was a treat. Not a single piece remained. (Mugridge)

Another Church-wide change in 1982 affected the local saints; the length of full-time missions for single young men was reduced from 2 years to 18 months because of economic stresses on the families and local supporting units. There was a provision, however, for the young men to voluntarily extend their terms for another six months. This change affected many of the local saints who had sons going to the mission fields. Many of the young Elders, however, chose to extend their mission for the additional six months, attesting to their dedication and faith! This policy lasted for about three years, after which the two-year term was reinstated.

“For Time and All Eternity” Atlanta Georgia Temple

The open house for the Atlanta Temple located in Atlanta, Georgia, was May 3rd to May 21st, 1983. The Atlanta Temple was dedicated by President Hinckley on June 3rd.

“June 3, 1983, families from the Knoxville Stake attended the Atlanta Temple dedication services during the day. Lines formed as members fellowshiped while waiting to enter the House of God. President Gordon B. Hinckley conducted and presided. Presidents Kimball and Romney were unable to attend because of health problems. President Muggridge and Wilma were seated in the celestial room with other members of the Stake when President Hinckley and the other General Authorities (Neal A. Maxwell, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Thomas S. Monson, James E. Faust, J. Richard Clark, and Ezra T. Benson) entered the room. The congregation enjoyed a special spirit when they entered and many were moved to tears. President Ezra T. Benson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve, spoke on ‘Blessings we receive as a people’. Neal A. Maxwell spoke on ‘Temples are sanctuaries and schools’. Richard J. Clark talked about, ‘The Temple is a tangible link to the other side’. Thomas S. Monson was the concluding speaker. How blessed we are to have a Temple erected to the Most High God in Atlanta, Ga.” (Historical notes by Gene Muggridge)

From the humble missionary efforts of the past, a Temple has been built. Saints from all over the Southeast rejoiced with a Temple in their midst. Now, instead of going west to Utah or northeast to Washington D. C., we can now go south approximately 200 miles to this beautiful Temple of the Lord. We should be ever grateful and remember the sacrifices of the early saints so that we may have the privilege of Temple worship so close by.

Women have had a special privilege given them in the last few years. A woman can now receive her endowments whether or not she is married. This has certainly increased the spirituality of the sisters as well as their Temple work.

Spirits are high as the Saints within many miles of Atlanta now have a Temple, but no more so than in the Knoxville Stake. What a blessing to have a Temple within a 3 - 4 hour drive away instead of being several days drive away.

Bishops Storehouse in Knoxville

June 1982: Ground was broken for a Bishops Storehouse in Knoxville. It received good press coverage and an informative message given by President Smith was later broadcast on the evening news. (Relief Society History p. 82)

The Bishop’s Storehouse and Cannery was opened in June of 1983. The Storehouse provides commodities for welfare recipients from the Knoxville, Chattanooga, Asheville & Kingsport Stakes.

The first managers, Keith and Wilma Honaker, were called before the Storehouse was furnished. They were responsible for getting and ordering much of the needed furnishings, drapes, typewriters, and other office equipment as well as anything else that was needed for the inside of the building. They began their work on May 1st, 1983. The store house was dedicated in June.

Managers	Year Called
Keith and Wilma Honaker	1983
Wendell and Ila O'Bryant	1985
Rupert and Etta Mar McGuire	1987
Jim and Mary Foust	1989
John and Peggy Norton	1991
Ronald and Donna Staley	1993
David and Helen Dickey	1996
Carl Coatnee	1997

There must be a special place in heaven for the Storehouse managers. Not only must they have all the needed skills to run a small business, but they must do it all without any pay or paid labor.

Our Stake and Ward Leaders are hard workers too! June 10, 1983, several members-- (R. Lloyd Smith, Edgar Snow, Rupert McGuire, from Knoxville First Ward, David Moser and wife from the Rockwood Branch, James Goans, Joseph Harris, Gene A. Perkins and Gene Muggridge, from the Oak Ridge Ward-- spent the afternoon hoeing beans in the Stake Welfare Farm near Oliver Springs.

Stake Leaders Committed To Our Youth

In reading over historical notes, much time, commitment and effort was put into the youth program by our Stake Leaders. Here is just one encampment that will be included in this history:

An Area Aaronic Priesthood and Scouting Encampment was held at Branden Springs, Tennessee (Land Between the Lakes) June 25 to July 2, 1983. Many staff members had been busy for several weeks preparing the camp. By Sunday before the Encampment there still remained much work to be done. Elder Blaine Vorwaller, Regional Representative from Jacksonville, Florida, declared Sunday, the day prior to the Encampment, a day of rest. The staff participated in church services and made plans to complete the mountain of work before the boys began arriving on Monday. Work crews were organized to begin work at 12:01 Monday morning.

F. Eugene Muggridge, of the Knoxville Stake, served as Staff Assistant Program Coordinator, responsible for printing a daily newspaper, the opening and closing campfire, the camp photography, the mountain top experiences, the Wednesday night entertainment featuring Charlie Walker, the Eagle Scout Banquet, and the See-and-Do Activity. The weather was nice with daily showers and temperatures during the day from 90 to 100 deg. At night it cooled to about 85 deg.

President R. Lloyd Smith was a Scoutmaster and was with the approximately 80 young men attending from the Knoxville Stake. James Smith and William Smith worked the waterfront activities with Robert Woods. Rupert McGuire had program responsibilities including designing and clearing trails and trail activities. Chris and Marilyn Dapp were the Camp Photographers. Allen Short served as editor for the daily newspaper and managed a multitude of other office duties.

During Friday, military personnel set up a field stove and cooked a buffalo. The buffalo was served at the Banquet on Friday afternoon. Eight serving lines were set up to serve the 900 boys and 300 adult staff. The buffalo meat was served as either steak or ground patties. Many of the young boys rejected that ole buffalo steak but went for the hamburger (buffalo) patty. The boys came back a second and third time, taking a hamburger patty not realizing that it, too, was buffalo meat!

January 31 -February 1, 1986, an Area Young Women's Conference was held in Savannah, Georgia, under the direction of President Vaugh J. Featherstone. Those helping with the meetings and workshops were Ardith Kapp (General President of Young Women), Sister Turley (Counselor to Sister Kapp), Carol Rasmus (Executive Administrator), Sister Mortensen (Young Women Board Member), Robert W. Wells, and Ronald Poelman. The conference addressed Young Women issues and programs, emphasizing that Young Women are Children of God. Many new ideas came to mind; however, no new programs were presented. On February 4, 1986, a special Stake Fireside was held. Sister Carol Rasmus spoke to the congregation. (Historical notes by Gene Muggridge)

Sunday Meetings Consolidated

In 1980 the First Presidency instituted a Consolidated Meeting Schedule after first trying it out in selected areas. This program called for all of the Sunday meetings to be held in succession, instead of having the members return to the meetinghouse in the afternoon or evening for Sacrament Meeting. Its purpose was to reduce the economic burden on some members who had to travel long distances as well as to provide more time for families to spend together on the Sabbath. The success of the program was evident in the letter from the First Presidency as quoted below:

The following is an excerpt from a letter dated October 3, 1988 which was sent

To: General Authorities; Regional Representatives; Stake, Mission, and District Presidents; Bishops; and Branch Presidents

Dear Brethren:

Sunday Consolidated Meeting Schedule

“The Sunday consolidated meeting schedule has been in effect for the past eight years. It has blessed our members and also made time available for families to be together on Sunday in spiritual and family activities. It has also helped in economizing travel and energy costs for families and the Church and has made it possible to better utilize our chapels.”

1986 - A Period of Building

The growth patterns of the membership began to change with most of the new folks in the area moving into west Knox County. The presence of these saints was being felt so, when activities were planned for the youth, a lot of them were planned west instead of at the Stake Center on Kendall Road. It was quite evident that, in the not-too-far-distant future, a ward building would have to be built further west. It seemed also that a new Stake Center was called for, so Ray Pearson was appointed to work with a real estate agent to find a suitable building site.

Before this process went too far, however, President R. Lloyd Smith, our Stake President, was determined that every congregation would have a building of the right size before a new Stake Center was built. With that thought and commitment in his mind, Oak Ridge and Grove Park Wards each built new three-phase buildings; Jamestown built a new phase-two building; Sevierville and Tazewell built phase-one buildings, plus Rockwood, Morristown, Maryville, Tazewell and Crossville all added second phases to their buildings. The Second Ward (West Hills) building on Kendall Road was completely renovated, too. We continued to hold meetings in the building as First Ward (Farragut) was meeting in that building, also. Ceilings were torn out, electrical work torn out, plaster fell down around our ears, carpets were torn out — the whole works. It was a great year for hearing what was going on from one end of the building to the other, as the acoustics were wonderful with no walls to cut the noise. But we survived and the building is beautiful.

President Smith pointed out that all of this building was possible only because we as a Stake were tithing sufficient, meaning that the percentage of Melchizedek Priesthood holders who paid tithing was high enough so that the buildings could be 96% financed by the Church through tithing funds. If we had not been tithing sufficient, no buildings could have been built at all.

With everyone situated in new quarters, President Smith could turn all his efforts to a new building in the west end of the county. They had been looking for land for quite a while and one piece had caught President Smith's eye as being perfect, situated just far enough from Campbell Station Road, but close enough to the Interstate to be accessible. There was just one problem - - the realtor who was working with Brother Pearson inquired as to its availability and was told that, since it was part of a planned subdivision, the developer wasn't interested in selling it. They continued to look elsewhere and were almost ready to buy some land on Sonja Drive but the details just were not coming together. Other pieces of land were found, but they were either too expensive, as they were right on Kingston Pike, or too far out, or some other reasons kept us from purchasing the land.

President Smith is a persistent man and told Brother Pearson to find out for sure who owned the land he had his eye on which had attracted his attention from the very first. It was determined that a man by the name of Morgan Shubert owned it and, sure enough, he planned to use it as part of a subdivision. Ed Snow knew Mr. Shubert and, through a realtor friend of Ed's, the Church was able to buy the property which was on Grigsby Chapel Road.

The sale was finally completed and the ground breaking for the new Stake Center was in the Spring of 1987. The new Stake Center was started in the Summer of 1987 and completed in April of 1988.

Dedication of the New Stake Center

October 15, 1989-What could be more fitting than to close out the 1980's with the Dedication of the Knoxville Stake Center. This occurred on Sunday, October 15, 1989 at 5:00 p.m. During this service the poem written by Lelia Anderson for the Kendall Road building dedication was read, which seemed very appropriate. Many of the Saints who were present at that first dedication were present at this new Stake Center dedication.

The following dedicatory prayer was given by President R. Lloyd Smith:

“Our Dear Heavenly Father: We gather today on this special day, on this historic occasion, to dedicate this beautiful Stake Center and Ward building.

We are grateful for those that have gone before us. We are thankful for the restoration of the Gospel and the Prophet Joseph Smith, for the restoration of the keys of authority that have come to us and make it possible for us to administer Priesthood ordinances and enjoy the blessings of the Gospel in its fullness.

We are thankful for Thy Son, Jesus Christ, for his atonement, for the sacrifice that He made, for the opportunity that He affords us to return to Thy presence through His atonement and through His resurrection.

We are grateful also, Father, for a living prophet, Ezra Taft Benson. We are mindful of his age. We are mindful of those brethren that work with him. We ask Thee to bless President Benson and his Counselors. We ask Thee to bless the General Authorities of the Church and all those that work and labor within our Stake. Bless our Stake Presidency, our High Council, our Bishops, our Branch Presidents, and all the auxiliary and Priesthood leaders that work in our Stake that they might be blessed with the vision of that work which they are doing. Bless them that they will be untiring in their service. Bless them that they will have courage and wisdom and insight to do those things that will bring about continued growth of Thy kingdom here.

Father, we are grateful for the 26 missionaries that are serving from our Stake in other parts of the land and other parts of the world. We are mindful of those that are supporting them and we are mindful also of the sacrifices that they are making. Bless their missionary efforts and bless them and protect them wherever they serve that they might be fruitful in fulfilling Thy commandment to search out each and every kindred tongue and nation. We are grateful for the missionaries that serve in our Stake, for those that have been sent here by faithful parents and leaders, that sacrifice their time to assist us with our missionary work. Help us, Father, that we will be able to have a better understanding of the responsibility that we have to share the gospel with our friends and neighbors that we will be able to better show them the great blessings and great things that we have and enjoy in our lives.

Now, Father, we are mindful of the early leaders that have gone before us, for the real sacrifices of their time and their talents and sometimes their fun family times to make it possible for us to be here and to enjoy this Stake Center. We recognize the great foundation they've laid by their personal sacrifices and their work and their time, and bless them for their efforts. And Father, bless us in times of our struggles and hardships, that we might be able to maintain a perspective of what has gone before us, that we might be able to understand and take the things that we are asked to do, and view them not as such difficulties and challenges as we might think.

Now, Father, we are grateful for this beautiful building, for the funds that have been provided through the sacrifices of Thy sons and daughters; for the tithing that has been paid, for the contributions that have been made, for the time, material and labor, and tithing funds. We are mindful of those that have made sacrifices to make this building possible. We are grateful for its beauty and we're grateful for its design, for its simplicity, but yet for its efficiency, for the building that we have to make best utilization of the various rooms. We are grateful for the inspiration that designed the building, for those who worked hard to give expert craftsmanship to make this building attractive and beautiful, and Father we ask that we be reminded that we have a responsibility to be wise stewards over this building, that we have a responsibility to take care of this building and we have a responsibility to teach our children and teach those others that we work with, who come here to worship, that we need to take care of and to control our actions that we might preserve its beauty.

Now, Father, according to the Priesthood and in the Name of Jesus Christ, we dedicate this building. We dedicate this building from the foundation to the tip of the tower. We dedicate the building from the baptismal font to the cultural hall to the chapel to the various meeting rooms and offices that are in the building, and we pray that the things that have been designed might be utilized maximally. We pray that this building might be a source, a haven or a strength for people to come, not just the spiritually well but the spiritually sick also, that they might become healed through worship and find peace, and that their hearts and minds be on Thy Son and on His mission.

Father, we pray that we will bring our children here and that we will teach them and others will come and be inspired and directed and that we will instruct them.

We ask Thee to bless the building that it might be protected from the elements, that it might be protected from natural disasters like earthquake, fire, storm and tornados. We ask Thee to protect it from vandalism, that it might be protected from those that would come and desecrate and damage and deface the building.

Now, Father, we give thanks to Thee for the blessings that we enjoy that we're able to come and have this building to use. May we be ever mindful of the great blessings that we have to live in this time of the restored gospel in its fullness. Help us that we will be able to be wise in those things that we have and care for this building so that it will continue for our use for years to come.

We give thanks for these blessings in the name of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, Amen!"

(Footprints History pp 79-81)

End of An Era

The End of An Era Occurred Sunday, November 19, 1989!

Elder Richard G. Scott, newest member of the Quorum of the Twelve, called a new Stake Presidency, releasing President R. Lloyd Smith, F. Eugene Muggridge and Russell B. Barber. President Smith had been in this office for 9 ½ years and had been a counselor in the Stake Presidency prior to that. Having grown up in the area, and knowing the people so well, he was a very effective President, and his influence will continue to be felt for a very long time.

Elder Scott, in speaking of President Smith, said, “He is a man of God and loved by all”. Elder Scott read a letter that had been sent to President Smith by the First Presidency of the Church regarding his upcoming release which told of their appreciation regarding his substantial term of office. The letter gave President Smith and his counselors an “Honorable Release”.

Elder Scott then told of the steps that are taken to call a new President, pointing out that two witnesses (he and Elder Eugene Callens) interviewed almost 30 leaders of the Stake and received confirmation of the spirit as to whom should be called to this important position. Elder Scott said he felt very comforted to kneel in prayer with Elder Callens and receive confirmation of their selection.

President Russell B. Barber was then sustained as the new Stake President with William C. Jones as First Counselor and W. Darrell Talley as Second Counselor.

It was very touching to hear both President Smith and President Barber speak of their great love for their wives and show appreciation for their support, speaking of them as their best friends.

President Smith left a loving message to the Saints in the Stake, telling us that he knew that “Heavenly Father has chosen President Barber to be the new Stake President”. He admonished us to follow where President Barber asks us to go, hoping that we will stretch, hoping that we will be obedient, hoping that we will follow. He said “I saw your sustaining vote, I will wait to see your sustaining actions.” (Footprints History p. 82)

Reflections on Stake Presidency Service

by President R. Lloyd Smith

I have been fortunate to have two great Priesthood mentors in my life. The first was my father, Robert W. Smith. From him I learned by example how to be a righteous father, Priesthood holder and patriarch. I observed dedication, obedience, sacrifice and consecration in church service. When opportunities for me to serve came, it was easy to respond to the call because of what I had seen my father do. My second great teacher was Eugene H. Perkins. He called me to be a bishop and several years later to be one of his counselors in the Stake Presidency. During the five years

we worked together in the Stake presidency, I observed his energy, enthusiasm, and love for people. I saw his dedication and faith as we traveled about the stake. Those were exciting years as we tried to strengthen the Stake so that a new Stake could be organized in Chattanooga. Monthly leadership meetings were held in Knoxville on the third Saturday afternoon and evening of the month, with a ward or branch conference on the next day. On the fourth weekend of the month, the same leadership meetings were held in Chattanooga. We would spend the night and attend ward and branch conferences in the southern half of the stake the next day. During the many hours of travel together, I learned much from his understanding of church leadership and government.

When I was called as Stake president, the most important decision I made was to choose two men who proved to be excellent counselors. They were dedicated and gave me wise and frank counsel over the years. We became great friends and we enjoyed complete unity in the presidency. We had lots of fun together in late meetings as well as in scout outings and youth conference trips. Bruce Morgenegg served as the First Counselor in the Stake presidency and Gene Muggridge served as the Second Counselor. When Bruce moved to Denver, Colorado, after about six years in the presidency, Russ Barber was called into the Stake presidency as the other counselor. Russ had served well as the Stake Executive Secretary for several years and it was a smooth transition for him to move into the presidency.

President Morgenegg was eager to accept assignments and looked for ways in order to lift some of the weight of leadership from the president. I once remember that we as a Stake presidency had made a difficult decision that was not going to be well received by one of our bishops. We were discussing how we were going to inform the bishop of our decision and Bruce spoke up and said, "Let me give him the answer; let me be the bearer of bad news", and thereafter he became the messenger of the Stake presidency to bring the unpopular messages. He said, "Let me be the hatchet man in the Stake presidency".

President Muggridge worked with our youth leaders. In a discussion with our Stake Young Women's president, Sherron DeVos, she asked me if I had seen the proposal that she and her presidency had given to President Muggridge to discuss for Stake presidency approval. I indicated to her that I had not yet seen it and with some frustration she shook her head and said, "You know that when President Muggridge puts something in that briefcase of his, it is like going into a black hole!" After that we frequently teased him about what he had in the "black hole" that he hadn't yet shared with us. President Barber was a quiet, insightful counselor who was always prepared and quick to complete any assignment.

I remember after I was called as the Stake president, the responsibilities seemed at times intimidating and overwhelming. Particularly challenging was the problem of leadership in the smaller units. The leadership ranks were thin and sometimes in small branches there were only two or three men who were effective leaders. We would plan and encourage and visit the smaller units, but still the performance results were sometimes disappointing. After two years of serving as Stake

president, I began to feel a little frustrated because things weren't moving along as well as we thought they should. I began to wonder was I really the right man for the calling and could I really do the job. I remember one night after everyone in my family had gone to bed, reading in the Book of Mormon, Ether 12:24. Moroni was struggling with his confidence and he was told by the Lord that with humility and faith, his weaknesses could be made his strengths. As I read that over several times, I realized that this was the answer to my questions and that I could do the job if I would have the faith and be humble. From that point on I went forward with renewed confidence and assurance.

During the years, it was our pleasure, as a Stake presidency, to work with many wonderful men and women who served in leadership positions in the stake as well as the wards and branches. Each person brought special talents and unique qualities that helped the Stake grow.

As a Stake Presidency, we focused a lot of effort on the youth and enjoyed success with the youth programs. We supported regional Aaronic Priesthood encampments and regional youth women's encampments. Scouting was emphasized and we encouraged our adult leaders to take advantage of the Wood Badge training course for advanced leadership. We had good youth conferences and instituted a unique experience called the Wilderness Youth Conference. This was a 2-1/2 day event that required a huge amount of planning and support for a special and rewarding experience for the youth and adult leaders.

Looking back, if I had one thing to do differently, I think I would spend more time in strengthening the Melchizedek Priesthood Quorum Presidencies and Group leadership. I think that we could have spent more time and focus on giving Elders Quorum Presidencies and Group Leaders more encouragement and more support in looking after their members.

Between the 6th and 7th years of our presidency, our Stake Conference visitor was Elder J. Richard Clark, a member of the Seventy. He gave us an understanding of how to improve the performance of our Priesthood home teachers. He taught us to raise our expectation to visit every family and not be satisfied with half or 2/3. With his methods of follow-up and encouragement, we were able to increase from about 50-55% home teaching to 80-90% visitation of our families.

Another area of progress was made in the construction of our chapels. Policy changes in the building program made it possible to build buildings for smaller units that earlier had been out of the question. Jeff Lyons served on our High Council as the Physical Facilities Representative, and through his untiring efforts as well as the supervision of Gene Muggridge, we were successful in building a new building or putting on additions or remodeling just about every building within the Stake. We were also successful in building a new stake center in Farragut.

It was an enjoyable 9-1/2 years to serve as a Stake president. I remember the good times and have forgotten the tough times. There were a few tears shed along the way, but the details are not remembered. Any successes that occurred were, in most part, due to the unity of the Stake

Presidency and the support of others. Any time we serve in the Church, our service is made easier when we enjoy the total support and understanding of our spouse and family. Our service is more effective when we know that we have that support at home. I am grateful for that support from my eternal companion and our children.

President R. Lloyd Smith

The 1990's

What a difference 50 years makes in an area!

Our challenge now is to have enough saints so the Stake can be divided. Did we ever dream, after the early years of struggles, hardships, blessings, and growth that we would ever be big enough to have two Stakes in the Knoxville and surrounding area?

When the Chattanooga Stake was created in 1978, that seemed like a great leap, but two stakes in our area? President Barber was challenged at the beginning of his administration, as were all the Presidents present at an area meeting, to split the Stake before he was released. As you will see from President Barber's writings further on in this history, that has been his primary goal. Reactivating less active members and new baptisms eventually made the split and a second Stake possible.

1 Jan 1990: Change in policy for financing local Church Units in the United States and Canada

“A change in policy for financing local Church units in the United States and Canada has been announced by the First Presidency.

“In a letter to Local Church leaders, the First Presidency said because of the faithfulness of members in paying tithing and other offerings, ward and stake operational funds in the U. S. and Canada will come from general Church funds.

“According to the letter, beginning Jan. 1, 1990, members will no longer have stake and ward budget assessments.

“Members of the First Presidency, in the letter read in wards on Sunday, Nov. 19, said they had looked for the day when the faithfulness of members would result in operational expenses coming from the general funds of the Church. The leaders said the Church has reached the point where, initially in the United States and Canada, general Church funds can be used to cover ward, branch and stake expenses.

“The First Presidency also expressed concern for members for whom paying ward budget assessments was a hardship.” (Church News, week ending Nov.24, 1989)

Increased Public Affairs Activities in the 90's

Over the last several years, the Stake has called Public Affairs Directors who are responsible for media coverage for the Church as well as being involved in the religious community at various functions throughout the area. With their continued aid, many articles have been submitted to the local newspapers, with excellent coverage for newsworthy events in the Church. Because of the effort of these wonderful brothers and sisters, the message of the Church is being heralded throughout the community, creating good will for us all, creating more feelings of acceptance for the Church and our beliefs.

Tolerance for folks of different religions at the present time (1997), in Knoxville and the surrounding area, is growing. We have a diversity of ethnic groups which includes people from Iran, China, Japan, India, to name a few, with all sorts of religions.

In the last few years the Public Affairs Directors, as well as many saints have worked with other churches, so the flow of anti-Mormon feelings is less. The Church strives to counter these remaining feelings with kindness, community work and by contributing to local food pantries and, when deemed necessary, with funds. However, "anti" feelings still remain high for some other churches. Over the last four or five years several black churches have been burned throughout the South and, a year or so ago, one of our own inner-city black churches was burned.

The Church responded to the plight of these African-Americans. The following article appeared in the Knoxville News Sentinel. (2-8-97)

MORMONS GIVE TO BURNED CHURCHES

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has contributed \$100,000 towards the reconstruction of 28 church buildings in the South destroyed by arson fires.

The Inner-City Church in Knoxville and the First Baptist Colored Church in Jellico both received donations. Local leaders of the Mormon Church met with heads of the predominantly black Protestant congregations in the South to determine their needs. The amount of financial assistance was based on the need and size of each congregation. In some cases, the contributions were coupled with donated labor by Latter-day Saints. The 28 churches that received assistance are spread over 10 southern states.

The Rev. Willie Coleman, a Baptist minister from Greensboro, Ala., received assistance for his church and expressed gratitude to the Greensboro Mormon congregation, which has no permanent building itself and meets in a rented storefront.

1992 - Knoxville Stake's Second Patriarch

Patriarch Leo J. Brady was the first Patriarch for the Knoxville, Tennessee Stake in 1972, after the creation of the stake. As need necessitated the calling of a second Patriarch, Brother Gary Purcell was called as Patriarch in June; was then sustained on August 23, 1992; then ordained and set apart on Tuesday, August 25, 1992

In speaking of his call by President Barber, Brother Purcell remembers it was a very special spiritual time, with emotions clearly close to the surface for both of them. When he was ordained and set apart, his family was in the room and all felt the Spirit nearby. President Barber counseled with him before the ordination with one thing sticking in his mind. President Barber said, "As a Bishop or Stake President, we can muddle through, but as Patriarch we have to get it right."

Brother Purcell was apprehensive and fearful that he might not be able to fulfill this new and great responsibility, but after he was ordained and set apart, all his fears left. Most of the folks in the room wept! Patriarch Purcell's first blessing was on the evening of his ordination to Nelson Davis, who was leaving the next day for school at BYU. In speaking with him about the office he holds, he says that the Holy Spirit takes over with even the words being guided and placed in his mind. Sometimes it is necessary to find the right word, but that comes, too. Sometimes he wonders, as he gives a blessing, just how this will happen in the recipient's life, but he knows that it will if the person will stay true and faithful.

In Memorium

Stake Patriarch Gary Purcell was called home May 6th, 1997. I'm sure he was met with the words "Well, done, thou good and faithful servant." He will be sorely missed by his beloved family and friends. The following article appeared in the Knoxville News Sentinel, May 9th, 1997.

"Gary R. Purcell, former director of UT graduate school library, dies

Gary R. Purcell, former Director of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Tennessee, died Tuesday at his South Knoxville home. He was 61.

Mr. Purcell had been affiliated with UT for more than 25 years. Upon retirement, he received the Tennessee Outstanding Award from former Gov. Ned McWherter. The Gary R. Purcell Scholarship Fund was also established in his honor.

Actively involved in the West Hills Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Mr. Purcell served as Patriarch for the Knoxville Stake of the Church. He was also a former Bishop for the West Hills Ward.

Mr. Purcell received recognition earlier this year for his leading role in the passage of the Medigap Portability Act of 1997. The act ensures equal retirement benefits for the disabled.

Mr. Purcell is survived by his wife, Carolyn; daughters Kristen, Beth Burgin and Kay Abernathy; daughter-in-law Colby Purcell and three grandchildren.

1993: New Mission Home - Tennessee Knoxville Mission Organized

Background History

1876	Southern States Mission Organized
1876 - 1881	Headquarters were in Rome, GA
1881 - 1882	Headquarters were moved to Nashville, TN
1882 - 1919	Headquarters were to Chattanooga, TN
1919	Headquarters moved to Atlanta, GA
1927	The name of the Geographic Divisions of the Mission changed from Conference to District
1928	A portion of the Southern States Mission was divided to form the East Central States Mission, Dec 9
1970	Kentucky-Tennessee Mission Organized, June 10
1975	Tennessee Nashville Mission Organized, July 1
1993	Tennessee Knoxville Mission Organized

East Central States Mission - Headquarters, Louisville, Ky

Presiding Elders / Mission Presidents

1928 - 1934	Miles L. Jones
1934 - 1937	James Mercer Kirkham
1937 - 1940	William Thomas Tew, Jr.
1940 - 1943	James P. Jensen
1943 - 1946	Graham H. Doxey
1946 - 1950	Thomas W. Richards
1950 - 1953	John B. Matheson
1953 - 1955	Cornelius Zappy
1955 - 1960	Melvin Ross Richards
1960 - 1963	Frank H. Brown
1963 - 1966	Alvin C. Chase
1966 - 1969	Raymond W. Eldredge
1969 - 1972	William H. Day
1972 - 1975	George Durrant

Tennessee Nashville Mission - Headquarters, Nashville

1975 - 1978	Emerson T. Cannon
1978 - 1981	B. Lloyd Pollman
1981 - 1984	V. Ross Ekins, Jr.
1984 - 1987	Richard E. Black
1987 - 1990	David C. Campbell
1990 - 1993	Serge B. Woodruff

Tennessee Knoxville Mission - Headquarters, Knoxville

1993 - 1996	Richard K. Sager
1996 -	Randy Benson

When we received the news that a new mission was being organized and it would be right here in Knoxville, excitement ran high. As soon as a lot was purchased for the Mission Home, we would go by frequently to see what progress was being made on the home's construction.

Little by little the foundation was laid, the walls were going up and almost like magic the roof was on. The time span from beginning to end was short as we had beautiful weather and we knew that Heavenly Father was watching over the whole construction job.

Finally it was complete. Ed Guyer and some of his physical facilities crew spent many anxious hours of labor putting up beds, making beds, hanging pictures, and doing all the other odds and ends required to get the home ready for its new inhabitants.

Richard and Lois Sager were called to preside over the new mission. They had originally filled out papers to serve as regular proselyting missionaries. President Sager chose to leave a very successful law practice early to serve the Lord with his sweetheart. Instead of being called as regular missionaries, however, they were called into Church Headquarters and extended a call to be Mission President of the Tennessee Knoxville Mission, effective June 30, 1993.

Owen Hughes was the Knoxville Stake Mission President when the announcement came about the new Tennessee Knoxville Mission being formed. Owen wrote a letter to President Sager, telling him what things were like here and welcoming him. Later, President Sager said how much he appreciated the letter and getting to know something about this new place where he and Sister Sager would be serving.

There were many details that had to be taken care of in setting up a new mission. The Sager's first week was spent in a hotel as they waited for the new mission home to be finished. The landscaping was still in progress, so mud and dirt was in plentiful supply. But it didn't take long to transform the lawn into a thing of beauty. The Mission Office was located in a small shopping center on Campbell Station Road in Farragut, Tennessee.

President Sager related how the mission home remained partially unfurnished for several months until news came that Elder Russell M. Nelson would be at our Regional Conference in September of 1993 and that he would be staying at the new mission home. All of a sudden, said President Sager, the final furnishings were promptly delivered. President and Sister Sager named one of the guest bedrooms in the mission home "The Nelson Room" in honor of their first General Authority guest. Other General Authorities who toured the Tennessee Knoxville Mission (and most stayed at the mission home) during the Sager presidency included Richard P. Lindsay, Lionel Kendrick, Steven Nadauld, F. Burton Howard, and Alexander Morrison.

President Sager chose Terry Glaze and David Fagerburg of the Chattanooga and Kingsport Stakes as his counselors and Owen Hughes of the Knoxville Stake as his executive secretary and vehicle coordinator. Later, Gordon Rich replaced President Glaze when Terry was called a Branch Pres.

The Zone Conferences at Christmas time were always very special and looked forward to by the missionaries. A special Christmas feast was prepared and served by the Knoxville Stake Relief Society at this conference. Sister Sager would also bake leavened bread for the Sacrament at the conference. It was torn into three inch pieces, and when it was passed, each person would take the large piece and then break it off piece by piece. The Sacrament was blessed by the Mission Presidency and passed to the missionaries by the Zone Leaders. For the first Christmas Zone Conference, President and Sister Sager wrote each missionary's parents and obtained a special letter of love from each of them for their missionary child. The second year, President Sager gave each missionary a gift of love from him and Sister Sager which was a hand-tooled key chain that he made himself. The last year, he gave them a hand tooled book mark he had made. Few people visited the mission home without playing the special chimes the Sagers had brought with them. What fond memories so many of us have of tapping the hand-held chimes as Sister Sager pointed to the numbered music notes of familiar songs.

President Sager kept the brash new missionaries humble as he would offer to play them a friendly game of ping pong. The Elders, and some unsuspecting members, found out too late that President Sager was a very serious and accomplished ping pong player. He was especially merciless on young Elders who had attended BYU before their mission. He was a die-hard University of Utah fan and made sure we all knew it. Even with this one fault, he was good natured when chided about Utah's frequent loses to BYU in football. It didn't matter what President Sager did, whether it was missionary work or ping pong, he gave it his best effort and loved to win.

President Sager was consistent in the counsel he gave his missionaries. He told them there were three things they had to do to have a successful mission -- work, work, and work. He would regularly have the missionaries recite "Work, Work, Work" by President Ezra Taft Benson. This recitation, along with "The Standard of Truth" by Joseph Smith and Section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants were recited at each Zone Conference. He and Sister Sager were tireless in teaching these principles by their example.

Sister Sager was a woman of many talents. She was an excellent cook, as many of us found out first hand, and had published her own cookbook. She was also an excellent seamstress and did a marvelous job decorating the mission home. When the missionaries went home, Sister Sager would cut off their ties (or piece of the Sister Missionaries skirts) symbolizing that she was cutting their ties with their mission and that they needed to move on with their lives. She then used these swatches of clothe to make a quilt to remind her of each of these special individuals.

Another treasure that the Sagers took with them when they completed their very successful missions were hundreds of letters written by new converts as they shared their testimonies with President and Sister Sager. President Sager occasionally read excerpts from some of these letters in talks during the latter part of his mission, and could seldom finish the letter without shedding tears of love. We were all sad as we said a final goodbye to the Sagers in late June of 1966. They will always hold a special place in our hearts, and we will truly miss them. But we were also very happy to greet President and Sister Randy Benson, as they arrived to carry on the great work the Sagers started.

The following article, dated July 13, 1996, appeared in the Knoxville News Sentinel just shortly after the Bensons arrived in Knoxville.

Mission President focuses on service, family

by Rebecca Simmons

It takes a special family to give up a job, community, pick up stakes and move to another part of the country on faith. But, for the Bensons, formerly of Bountiful Utah, now of west Knoxville, it's a new opportunity to serve the Lord.

Randy Benson recently became the new Tennessee Mission President for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, succeeding Richard Sager, who served in the position for three years. Sager returns to Star Valley, Wyoming, where he is an attorney.

With the help of his wife, Elaine Benson, he will supervise and assist the 140 full-time missionaries in the district, which extends from Kingsport to Chattanooga. In many ways he will serve as a spiritual advisor to the 19-25 -year-olds in his charge. Most of the missionaries are men, but about 20 Mormon women missionaries serve in the Tennessee Knoxville Mission area. About 28,000 Mormons live in Tennessee.

Mission Presidents in the Mormon Church are chosen and installed by First President Gordon B. Hinckley and the Council of the Twelve Apostles after an interview and selection process. It is considered an honor to be chosen by church officials for this service, and the Mission Presidents are highly regarded by the missionaries. Recently a record number of 138 church leaders from 17 nations completed their mission presidency training in Provo, Utah.

Like the missionaries, mission presidents generally serve away from home for several years. They take leave from their regular jobs to serve without pay during their tenure. With their family, mission presidents move into a church-owned home where they live on savings for a three-year term.

Like most Mormon families, the Bensons are tightly knit. Although he has new duties, Benson says, "First of all, I am a husband," as he squeezes his wife's hand. "I've got my best friend by my side. My next responsibility is to my children. Then we will do what we can to take care

of our missionaries - - - to make sure they are healthy and cared for.”

For Elaine the duties are home-centered, she says. “I will work very closely with him (Benson), but I am also a mother, and I will stay involved with my children and their schools.”

Elaine says they were curious about their new location; but she says the call to move was accompanied by an “extreme peacefulness” because they knew the assignment was from the Lord. She says, “This is the most beautiful place in the world... We feel really blessed to be here in Tennessee.”

The Bensons have moved into the large, plushly decorated brick mission home close to Farragut. They’ve brought their beagle “Beau”, who has been dubbed the “mission mascot”, and pictures of their 8 children and 8 grandchildren to make the house their own. Five of the Benson children are grown. But Becca, 15, a rising high school sophomore, and Jon, 12, will live at the residence during the family’s stay and attend Farragut schools. Daughter, Sara Lyn, 17, will spend part of her summer in Knoxville; she will be a freshman at Brigham Young University this fall.

Unlike most men called to be mission presidents, Benson is employed by the church in his professional life as Director of Human Resources. (His job in Salt Lake City will be held for him while he serves in Knoxville.) His responsibilities include church staffing and service missionaries, who generally teach basic skills in underdeveloped nations.

Now Benson is in charge of a different type of missionary - - the proselytizing ones who go door to door sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It’s hard for Benson to describe his feelings about being a mission president. He calls it a humbling experience. “You are way beyond yourself in an experience like this, he says. “It’s beyond what I could ever imagine.”

Church service is nothing new for Benson. He has been a Stake President, Bishop, and a missionary himself. He reels off the foreign locales where his sons served their missions, including, Hong Kong, Portugal, the Philippines, and Eastern Europe. The mission experience, says Benson, “is better than any finishing school.”

History of the Tennessee Knoxville Mission from June 29, 1996 to November 17, 1996

written by Sister Elaine B. and President Randy J. Benson

Jan 4, 1996

Elaine B. Benson and Randy J. Benson were called to preside over the Tennessee Knoxville Mission by President Gordon B. Hinckley. There had been a preliminary interview with Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. President Hinckley asked some of the same searching questions about finances, family, marriage and testimony, then extended the call. He said it would be an English-speaking mission. Although he didn’t know where they would be called to serve, it would be the “Best mission in the church.”

Jun 12, 1996

Randy J. Benson was set apart as President of the Tennessee Knoxville Mission by Elder Neal A. Maxwell. Elaine B. Benson was set apart by Elder F. Burton Howard. Both were informed in their settings apart that they had been foreordained to these callings. Each of their patriarchal blessings, given by different patriarchs at different times, included an identical line that the time would come that they would be called to serve missions. Mission service began June 29, 1996.

After appropriate transition meetings with President and Sister Sager, President Benson met with each of the missionaries between July 1st and July 11th and began meeting with priesthood leaders. In these meetings, he found the missionaries to be hard working and having a great interest in serving the Lord and that priesthood leaders and members in general were very missionary oriented. The day after the Bensons arrived, they were scheduled to be interviewed by the press. The Knoxville News Sentinel did a very nice and mostly accurate, full page write up of the missionary effort in the Knoxville area. For the next several months, the arriving missionaries were approached on the plane by local residents who had read the article. They told the missionaries that they knew what they were coming to do and that they knew about their mission president and family. It was a friendly introduction for them and for the local residents.

With the beginning of mission service also began a continuous stream of opportunities to speak in wards, branches, and leadership meetings in each of the three stakes in the mission at that time. During the month of August each set of missionaries were visited in their apartment for interviews to gain further acquaintance and determine strengths in areas needing developing. These meetings were followed by Zone Conferences in each specific zone.

The Mission Presidency consists of President Benson as President, President David Fagerburg from the Kingsport Stake as 1st Counselor, President Gordon Rich from the Chattanooga Stake as 2nd Counselor, and Brother Owan Hughes from the Knoxville Cumberland Stake as Executive Secretary. The presidency meets monthly to review progress and make plans for mission growth. Another significant activity in the Mission is the regular event of new missionaries arriving in the Mission and missionaries departing from the mission. This occurs at least monthly. Some months there have been as many as three separate times for arrival because of various missionary circumstances. It is difficult to describe the emotion of seeing missionaries leave for their future lives from missionary service. These feelings include gratitude, a sense of missing close associations and a wonderful feeling of expectation as future lives will be lived and service will continue to be rendered. It is not appropriate to list all of those who have served in leadership and office assignments during this time of service in the mission, but each as made an imprint and had significant impact on the work of the mission.

August 11, 1996

The Whitley City Branch was transferred from the Lexington Kentucky Stake and the Kentucky Louisville Mission to the Knoxville Tennessee Stake and the Tennessee Knoxville Mission.

October 21-25th 1996

The visit of Elder F. David Stanley of the Quorum of the Seventy was significant for the Mission in the training received and also to the stakes as he provided a fireside where he testified and taught members and investigators. Elder and Sister Stanley, along with President Benson and Elder Stanley, held half-day Zone Conferences in each of the seven zones in the Mission. Each evening a Stake Fireside was held with remarks from President Benson and Elder Stanley as the main speakers. The Knoxville and Kingsport Stakes held Youth Firesides with investigators invited. The

Chattanooga Stake had an investigator open house prior to the fireside for members, missionaries, and investigators. They had beautiful displays about the Church on the stage and in the cultural hall with a lovely refreshment buffet served. Elder Stanley emphasized a testimony, the scriptures, and how to receive pure revelation through analyzing a scripture, linking it up with other similar scriptures, and offering a prayer of faith. The mission was magnified and blessed by his visit.

November 17, 1996, marked a significant time in the history of the Mission and the Stakes in Eastern Tennessee as the Stake Conference of the Knoxville Tennessee Stake was held in the Tennessee Theater. Elder John Carmack was the presiding authority. A new stake, the Knoxville Cumberland Stake, was created. The Mission was then re-aligned with two zones per Stake, creating eight zones for the Mission. One of the couples in attendance at the conference had previously served in the area as younger missionaries. They wrote following the experience.

“Dear President Benson,

We really enjoyed stake conference and were tickled to see two great stakes come about from the small branch of sixty or so in Knoxville when we were here in 1950 and 1951. We were really thrilled.”

Elder Royal J. Fulton and Sister Beverly Love served when Tennessee was part of the East Central States Mission under Presidents Thomas Richards and John B. Matheson. They served from 1949 through 1951.

Baptisms in 1996-

There were 404 baptisms in 1996, up 66% from the 257 baptisms in 1995. Also during 1996, the church continued to receive favorable publicity in local newspapers. In addition to the printed media favorable coverage locally, the church also has intensified its efforts through television to reach people providing them with the opportunity to see videos related to the church, receive copies of the Book of Mormon and The Bible, and be taught. Also, in the Grove Park area on Broadway, a sign 14 feet by 48 feet has proclaimed to all that pass by that the Book of Mormon, another witness of Christ, can be available to them if they will call the reference number. All of these efforts through the media, in addition to providing materials to individuals and some teaching experience, increase the awareness as missionaries and members talk to their neighbors about being taught the gospel. These efforts are having a positive impact in their lives.

Tribute To Women

No history would be complete without a tribute to women everywhere but especially to the sisters in the Tennessee area. Most of the sisters have gone the second and third miles to support their Priesthood Leaders, in whatever endeavor was asked of them. Mary McLeod Bethune wrote this thought...”The true worth of a race must be measured by the character of its womanhood.” Our women are the epitome of womanhood.

Many, many of the Sisters have played an important role in the growth of the Church in the Knoxville area. The Relief Society Sisters have given countless hours over the years. Those who served as Stake Relief Society Presidents include the following:

	<u>District</u>
1958	Nora Snow
1962	Wilma Honaker
1964	Virgie Shuman
	<u>Stake</u>
1972	Margaret Fuqua
1975	Sonya Sasser
1980	Dorothy Barnes
1983	Cheri Lyon
1986	Sharlene Barber
1990	Freda Borden
1994	Donna Daly
1996	Judy Smith

The Knoxville Regional Women’s Conference held November 6, 1993, at the Knoxville Stake Center, featured two guest speakers--Sister Elaine L. Jack, Relief Society General President and Sister Carol Lee S. Hawkins, Relief Society General Board Member. The conference included the Knoxville, Kingsport and Chattanooga Stakes with Knoxville being the host Stake.

This was a special privilege for the sisters, a time to appreciate their contributions to the growth of their stake, a time to listen to the General President tell them how wonderful they are, a time to be fed, a time to learn and grow, a time to be renewed and made ready to go back to their own wards and branches and continue with uplifted spirits! The sisters did go home with renewed faith and hope, knowing they could carry on in their corner of Heavenly Father’s vineyard!

“In the Spring of 1842, Eliza R. Snow wrote up a constitution for the women of the Church and submitted it to President Joseph Smith. After reading it, the Prophet replied that the constitution and by-laws were the best he had ever seen. ‘But,’ he said, ‘this is not what you want. Tell the sisters their offering is accepted of the Lord, and He has something better for them than a written constitution.’ He followed up by organizing the women after the pattern of the priesthood. He further said, ‘The Church was never perfectly organized until the women were thus organized.’

“This was the beginning. The women of the church, united in purpose, administered to the needs of those in destitute circumstances, sickness, or distress. They helped bury the dead and comfort the sorrowing. These activities were carried on by the women during the persecutions in Nauvoo, the exodus, the journey across the plains to the West and in the early settlements of Utah.

“Now the women of the church span the world, and their charitable acts continue to heal and lead. The women of the Knoxville, TN Stake, are part of that world-wide sisterhood. The women of the Knoxville Stake are timeless. They are ancient, yet modern; changed, yet unchanged. These women represent Ruth in the fields of Boaz, Corrie ten Boon in the concentration camps. These sisters are a symbol proper to her time; portraits of growth, faith, self-esteem, prudence and courage.

“Like countless others before, they moved down a path made fresh and new by their eagerness and willingness to make the journey. Obstacles were met, and outdistanced. The words of Sister Barbara Brady could be expressed by any number of women who have helped build and strengthen the Stake.

‘I have had the experience of sitting in the hospital with a sister whose husband was dying, of visiting teaching where the route took us to the Kentucky line and we spent the entire day visiting people where we were the only contact, of helping a sister clean her home because she was bedridden, of taking out an elderly sister’s feather mattress to air and dropping her loaded pistol when we moved the mattress, of listening to the testimony of a sister who saved her tithing all year long in a glass jar, called me into her bedroom to give it to me secretly - - telling me how much was tithing and that the rest could be used where needed and seeing where that same elderly sister read her Ensign and underlined each line as she read it, of marveling at the faith of a mother whose husband was not a member, but how (because she lived in a remote area) held all meetings in her home for her children so they were able to have the full program of the Church.’

(Taken from a talk given at the Knoxville TN Stake Women’s Conference, 1996)

“We salute and honor all women, past and present, for their abundant contributions to building the Kingdom of Heaven here in the Knoxville Stake.” (written by Sharlene Barber)

We received a letter from Sister Jack upon her return home, dated November 12, 1993, addressed to the Knoxville Stake Relief Society Presidency.

“Carol Lee and I want you to know how much we enjoyed our visit in your area last weekend. ‘Eastern’ Tennessee is truly a spot graced by God for its beautiful scenery and warmhearted people. Louise, Becky, and so many other sisters from your region proved this to us.

“Thank you for your thoughtful care of us. The dinners, the reception, the luncheons and the meetings were so well planned and organized. You masterfully coordinated every detail of the conference, and we greatly appreciate the many women and men who assisted you in this effort. Please relay our thanks to the many dear souls who made our stay so memorable.

“You and the sisters from your stake are a great strength to us as we listened and learned from you. Please tell your sisters how much we appreciated their support and sacrifice in attending the conference. We particularly are grateful for the evening gathering with you and your counselors. It allowed us an opportunity to learn more about the concerns of your callings and bask in the success of your work.

“Also, please relay our thanks to the dear sisters from your area who participated in the information gathering session on Saturday morning. Carol Lee reported that the meeting provided an exchange of insights and gave her an enlightening view of the circumstances your sisters are facing. I hope that what you and the other Relief Society presidents heard and shared will be useful.

“Again, thank you for three glorious days. Our hand-painted china plate will be a constant reminder of the beauty of the church in Knoxville. May the Lord continue to bless you and your dear families in all you are doing to carry out his will and to serve his daughters.”

Sincerely, Elaine L. Jack
General President

In His Own Words

By President Russell B. Barber

When I was called as Stake President, William Jones and Darrell Talley were called as my counselors. We had 12 units in the Stake, 6 wards and 6 branches, and about 3200 members. At one of the early training meetings for Stake Presidents, the Area Presidency challenged all Stake Presidents to split their Stakes before they were released.

As a result, trying to help the Stake grow was a major thrust of our presidency. We have always had a major emphasis on missionary work and reactivation. With support from some great Stake leaders, we had such themes as finding the lost sheep and all leaders be involved in shepherding less active members and missionary work.

During most of the first 7 years, we asked for feedback from both the Priesthood leaders and Relief Society leaders on how many shepherding visits were conducted each month and how many missionary experiences leaders had during the month. We encouraged Bishopricks to have their ward councils and PECs share missionary experiences each time they met. As Stake leaders, we went on shepherding visits after each Ward or Branch Conference. Over the seven years, between November of 1989 and November of 1996, we were blessed with a lot of growth. There were 897 baptisms in the seven years, starting strong in 1990 with 159 baptisms, and finishing with 189 in 1996. At the time of the Stake division, we had about 4600 members, which was an increase of 1400 members, of which 64% came from baptisms.

Another thing that helped to foster growth and activity, was the formation of new units. The Clinton Branch was formed in January of 1992, the Pellissippi Ward in September of 1992, and the Loudon Branch in July of 1995. Also, the Whitley City Branch was moved into our Stake from the Lexington Stake in August of 1996. Each new unit gave more members the opportunity to serve and grow and was resulted in activation of many members. The following events also were significant in the growth of the Stake which led to it being divided in November of 1996.

On June 1, 1990, we had a Regional Auxiliary Training meeting which was attended by members of

the General boards of the Church plus Elder Jeffrey Holland. He stayed over Friday night with us. This was the first time we had a General Authority stay in our home, so this was very special. He offered the family prayer Saturday morning and gave our family a beautiful blessing. Since he was the former President of BYU, our children especially enjoyed visiting with him. Elder Callens, our Regional Representative, also visited with us in June. Sharlene and I had the opportunity to talk to him for about 2 hours. He really gave me some insights. One thing in particular he talked about was the need to communicate more with the Lord. We must all have more personal revelation to help save our families. The Church can only take us to Christ, but then we, through personal revelation, must seek direction from the Lord on what each of us individually needs to do.

In November 1990, Elder LeGrande Curtis was our visiting authority with Elder Callens also in attendance. Again, we had the opportunity to have both of them stay overnight and visit with them after the Saturday Conference session. This is clearly one of the great blessings of being the Stake President. In his address, Elder Curtis reminded us of our responsibilities to teach our children (he referred to his adult children as “the poor, the sick and the needy”) correct principles and referred to the recently released “For the Strength of the Youth” pamphlet and stressed the importance of our youth only dating those with high standards.

In November 1991, Elder Morrison was our visiting General Authority. He introduced a new reporting program that we will participate in as a pilot stake. It focuses on those missing from the meetings and hopefully causes us to think more of those that are not there. This program was later adopted for the whole church.

On December 15, 1991, President Talley and I went to Crossville to organize the Crossville Ward. Jerry Hassler was installed as the Bishop. He had already served as Branch president for six years, but we felt impressed that he should serve a time longer as the Bishop.

On January 19, 1992, Elder Richard Chappel, our new Regional Representative, came to dedicate the remodeled Institute Building. He was later called to be a Mission President in Russia.

On January 26, 1992, we formed the Clinton Branch from the Oak Ridge Ward and called Fred Phillips to be the Branch President. The Branch had about 100 members, and had some very strong Priesthood. The Church bought property near I-75 and Anderson High School to eventually build a chapel, but for the time being, the Branch met in a store front building on Clinton Highway.

One of the most spiritual experiences I have had as Stake President, was when I extended the call to Gary Purcell to be a second Stake Patriarch during late June, 1992. He was just being released as Bishop of the West Hills Ward. After receiving authorization from the First Presidency, I asked he and Carolyn to come into my office to talk to them about his new call. As I went to extend the call, the Spirit was so strong that I could hardly talk. I had never become so emotional before when extending a call. It was an absolute confirmation that the Lord had called Brother Purcell to be the

Patriarch. I was grateful to have been a part of the process.

Each call of a new Bishop or Branch President was also a special experience. As a Stake Presidency, we really labored over who should be called to these critical offices. Over the years, we extended calls to:

President Web Gudmunson of the Rockwood Branch in September of 1990
Bishop John Harding of the Maryville Ward in May of 1991
Bishop Leon Ebbert of the Farragut Ward in June of 1991
President John Stewart of the Sevierville Branch in October of 1991
Bishop Jerry Hassler of the Crossville Ward in December of 1991
President Fred Phillips of the Clinton Branch in February of 1992
Bishop Max Lehman of the West Hills Ward in June of 1992
Bishop Gene Boxx of the Farragut Ward in September of 1992
Bishop Leon Ebbert of the Pellissippi Ward in September of 1992
President Harold Meservy of the Jamestown Branch in October of 1992
President Carl Walter of the Cumberland Gap Branch in February of 1993
President Darrell Perkins of the Clinton Branch in January 1994
President Ray Pearson of the LaFollette Branch in January of 1994
Bishop John Humphries of the Morristown Ward in February of 1994
President Joseph Turner of the Clinton Branch in July of 1994
President Eugene Muggridge of the LaFollette Branch in January 1995
Bishop Donald Hinckley of the Jamestown Ward in April of 1995
Bishop Harold Grieshop of the Crossville Ward in June of 1995
President Elwin Davis of the Loudon Branch in July of 1995
Bishop David Delk of the Jamestown Ward in September of 1995
Bishop Russell Williams of the Oak Ridge Ward in October of 1995
President Lonnie (Trey) Smith of the Cumberland Gap Branch in October 1995
Bishop Richard Barnes of the Pellissippi Ward in April of 1996
President William Nichols of the Sevierville Branch in April of 1996
Bishop David Taylor of the Maryville Ward in May of 1996 and
Bishop Joseph Turner of the Clinch River Ward in November of 1996

Selection of a new leader involved identifying potential candidates, considering their circumstances, and then prayerfully considering who the Lord would have us call. We often struggled for some time as to who should be called. For example, when the Pellissippi Ward was formed in September of 1992, and Bishop Ebbert was called as the Pellissippi Ward Bishop, I had initially eliminated Gene Boxx from consideration as the new Farragut Bishop because he had previously served as Bishop and because he traveled so much. As I continued to pray about who the Farragut Bishop should be, his name kept coming back to my mind and being put back on the list, even though I had marked it off several times. I finally received the confirmation that he indeed was the one who should be called.

Splitting the Farragut Ward and forming the Pellissippi Ward in September of 1992 was an exciting time. We considered a number of options on where to place the boundaries. We had to have at

least 250 in each ward, but wanted to leave as many as possible in the Farragut Ward to allow us to form the Loudon Branch as soon as the numbers were there. We finally set the boundary basically along the Interstate and also added a small part of the West Hills Ward in the new Pellissippi Ward. The boundary location meant that our daughter and son-in-law and other very good friends would be in another ward, which made us sad. There were lots of mixed emotions by everyone on the Sunday the split was made but, overall, I think everyone felt very good about what took place. Both wards were very strong and lots of new people were given the opportunity to serve.

In September, 1993, we had a Regional Conference with Elder Russell M. Nelson as the visiting authority. The conference was held in the Knoxville Civic Auditorium and there were over 3000 in attendance. Elder Nelson didn't stay with us but stayed at the new Mission Home. The Tennessee Knoxville Mission had been formed in July of 1993, with President and Sister Sager serving. What a great event that was when the new Mission was formed.

In December, 1993, I first talked to President Nichols from the Lexington Kentucky Stake about Whitley City coming into our Stake. The people in the Branch didn't want to change, so we decided to let things ride for the time being. We both realized that eventually a change would be needed, since we had people from our Stake attending that Branch and it is closer to our Stake Center.

In January, 1994, we called Ray Pearson to be a Stake Missionary and Branch President in LaFollette. He and Leah had been planning to go on a full time mission, but accepted our call to serve a full time Stake Mission instead. This really gave the LaFollette Branch a boost. Ray and Leah moved into an apartment in LaFollette and did a great job for a year, and then went on a full time Genealogy Mission in Salt Lake City.

Elder Stephen Nadauld was our visiting authority for the November 1995 Stake Conference. He asked to go on shepherding visits to meet some of the people of the Stake. That was very special for the four families that we visited to have a General Authority in their homes.

In July 1995, we established the Loudon Branch and called Elwin Davis to be the Branch President. This had been something that I felt needed to be done for some time, but had to wait until we had enough members left in the Farragut Ward after the Branch was broken off. The addition of Loudon gave us 15 units in the Stake. The Branch did very well right from the start. Several members became more active and very involved in the Branch. The result was that all the active adults prepared and went to the Temple. At our Youth Conference in July of 1995 we have a very special experience. The theme of the conference was preparing for the temple. We had invited Gerald Scott, Atlanta Temple President, to come and speak at our testimony meeting at the conclusion of the conference. His brother, Richard Scott, one of the members of the Quorum of the Twelve, was visiting with him so came to Knoxville with President Scott and was a surprise visitor at our testimony meeting. Both of them talked to the youth. It was a great meeting. Not very many youth conferences have an apostle participate in them.

In July we had a Priesthood temple trip and then, in October, a Women's Conference at the Atlanta Temple with a special meeting with a member of the Temple Presidency. Both were very well attended with about 100 at the Priesthood Session and 150 at the Relief Society Session. We had members of the Stake officiate at four or five sessions for each of the special trips. This was the first time we had enough restricted and part time ordinance workers from our Stake to be able to do this. Several of the Bishops and two members of the Stake Presidency and several of their wives were set apart and trained as restricted ordinance workers in order to have this great opportunity. There were nearly 300 sisters involved in the total Women's Conference.

Elder F. Burton Howard was our visiting authority at the November 1995 Stake Conference. I discussed with him about splitting the Stake and he agreed we should proceed to do so. We had hoped to accomplish the split at our next November Conference, but he thought it may be possible to move it up sooner. We had already determined that if we brought in the Corbin Ward and the Whitley City Branch from the Lexington Stake, and the Athens Branch from the Chattanooga Stake we would only need to add about 200 in the next year to qualify.

We challenged the Stake to have 200 baptisms over the next year so we could accomplish our goal of being split. When I went back to President Rhyne of the Chattanooga Stake, he told us that we probably wouldn't be able to include Athens after all, because they were losing several of their units to a new stake in Northern Georgia. President Nichols of the Lexington Stake agreed that Corbin and Whitley City could still be included; however, the Bishop of the Corbin Ward was reluctant to make the change. We decided to go forward without either Athens or Corbin and see if the First Presidency would make an exception and let us split the Stake without having the minimum of 2500 in each stake.

In March we reviewed the numbers we had and the proposed Stake split with Elder Howard. He said we should wait a couple of months before sending in the formal request for the split. He said there was another request for exception in process and we should wait until that had been resolved before we made our request. We had gathered all the numbers and were disappointed that there would be a delay. We decided to go ahead and request switching Whitley City into our Stake, since the boundary problem really needed to be corrected. On August 11, 1996, we joined the Lexington Stake Presidency at Whitley City at the Branch Conference and brought them into our Stake as the 16th unit.

We sent in the official papers in July of 1996 requesting approval from the First Presidency to split the Stake and to form the Clinch River Ward. We finally received approval on October 25, 1996, that our requests had been approved. On November 10, we held a special 2:00 PM meeting in the Clinton Chapel where we presented the proposal to form the New Clinch River Ward and install Joseph Turner as Bishop. Since its formation in 1992, the Clinton Branch had grown to have about 150 members. In order to split the Stake, we needed to have another ward, so each Stake would have the required 5 Wards. Therefore, we revised the boundaries of the new Ward, which was

named the Clinch River Ward, to include all of the Clinton Branch, about 30 people from the Oak Ridge Ward, and about 90 people from the Grove Park Ward. This gave us the required 250 people needed to form the new Ward.

On November 16, 1996, the big day finally arrived. Elder John Carmack, our visiting General Authority, and Elder Lloyd Smith, a visiting Area Authority (and former Stake President) interviewed over 30 Priesthood holders and then selected Richard Riggs as the Stake President of the new Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake. He chose Tom Dahl and Mike Moffatt as counselors, and I chose Stuart Clark as my new counselor to replace President Darrell Talley who was in the new Stake. On Sunday, November 17, the proposal to form the new stake and the changes in leadership were presented and approved at Stake Conference. The Sunday session was held in the Tennessee Theater with over 1500 in attendance.

There were many mixed emotions associated with splitting the Stake. There was happiness, because an important goal had been accomplished. But there was much sadness, because many good friends would no longer serve together. President Talley, Steve Lewis, Mike Gettings, many high councilors and other Stake and Ward leaders had become close friends and were now in the new Stake. But there was a great deal of satisfaction to see the work of the Lord go forward and the growth take place. We were confident that the split would help the work go even faster in the future.

From 1989 to 1996, the Stake grew from 3200 members to 4600, an increase of 1400 members. After the split, there were 2200 members in the Knoxville Stake made up of 5 wards - Farragut, Pellissippi, West Hills, Maryville, and Crossville, and 3 branches — Sevierville, Loudon and Rockwood. The Cumberland Stake had 2400 members, also with 5 wards — Oak Ridge, Grove Park, Clinch River, Morristown and Jamestown, and 3 branches — Cumberland Gap, LaFollette, and Whitley City.

Where there was one, now there are two. Each Stake goes forward with many new opportunities and challenges. There are many more of our Father in Heaven's children waiting to receive the Gospel. Many current members of the Church will be led to East Tennessee to make their homes. Growth will continue. What will the next 10 years bring. Perhaps another Stake or two. Perhaps a Knoxville Temple. The work will continue to go forward. It is the work of the Lord. I had been blessed to be a small part of this great work.

President Russell B. Barber

And Finally,

No greater news could we have, than that President Gordon B. Hinckley, our Prophet, Seer, and Revelator would hold a Regional Conference in Knoxville. The following article appeared in the Knoxville News Sentinel, Monday morning, March 17, 1997.

Church ready to share its message, president of Latter-day Saints says

By Stephanie Spellers, News-Sentinel staff writer

Not so long ago, America wanted nothing to do with the Home grown Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Now, the church's president and prophet thinks the nation desperately needs their message — and he's ready to share.

"We live in an unstable world," said Gordon B. Hinckley, the small but powerful man who leads the world's 9.7 million Latter-day Saints.

"The family is falling apart all across the world. People are looking for a solid anchor in a world of shifting values, and we have that to offer."

The 87-year-old leader laid out his vision during an interview Sunday, just before he addressed more than 8,000 local members gathered for a regional conference at Knoxville Civic Coliseum.

For most of the church's 167-year history, the Christian world has flatly denied the Latter-day Saints — commonly but incorrectly known by many as the Mormons — were even part of their fold.

By the 1840s, the Latter-day Saints met mob action and state-issued extermination orders throughout the nation. Thousands finally left their homes to journey to Utah, a promised land of religious freedom where the group was finally able to flourish.

Even today, it's tough for Latter-day Saints to carve out their place in the Christian mainstream. Recently, the group launched television and radio campaigns to remind viewers of their family-oriented Christian faith.

Local members said they're finding it's getting easier to establish common ground, particularly among Southern evangelical Christians who share their views on abortion, homosexuality, chastity, and fidelity and gambling.

"The Christian values are so high here, it's a great place to be," said Russell Barber, the president of the Knoxville unit.

"Our daughters both married men who grew up outside the church," his wife Sharlene Barber explained. "But we believed many of the same things: that we are all in Christ, that we should emulate his life"

Hinckley said that message is spreading. These days, you'll only find one-sixth of the nearly 10 million Latter-day Saints in Utah. The rest are scattered throughout America and about 160 other nations.

And they're growing: In Tennessee, the Latter-day Saints have jumped from 14,500 members in 1975 to 25,000 in 1995.

That doesn't mean the battle is over. Today, many outsiders think the group advocates polygamy and deifies its founder and first prophet, Joseph Smith. Hinckley said it does not.

Other Christians question the Latter-day Saints' use of their Book of Mormon and other scriptures as companions to the Old and New Testaments.

"We don't believe the canon was filled 1,000 to 2,000 years ago with the Bible," Hinckley stated. "If revelation was needed in those times, it is certainly needed in this complex and difficult age."

Such differences are nothing to ignore. But Hinckley said they're no reason to re-enact a history of rejection and persecution.

"We are all Christians, and we all believe in the Lord, Jesus Christ," he said. "We can retain our individual theological backgrounds without having this get in the way of our work, bringing to pass good works in his name."

Upon his return to Salt Lake City, President Hinckley sent the following note in response to a letter of appreciation sent to him by President Clark.

"Dear Brother Clark:

Thank you for your kind letter of March 22, 1997, concerning the Knoxville Regional Conference. Please know it was my great privilege to be with you on that occasion. I felt we had a good Saturday afternoon meeting and a wonderful Sunday meeting. The saints, into whose faces we looked, were wonderful. What good people we have.

My very best wishes to you.

Sincerely,

/s/ Gordon B. Hinckley"

"We Thank Thee, O, God for a Prophet", to guide us, lead us and spiritually feed us, as President Hinckley did the weekend of March 15th and 16th, 1997. What a wonderful way to end the history for the Knoxville Tennessee Stake!

And One Last Note

The little boy who went home and emptied his dime bank to contribute to the building fund for the Knoxville Branch building on Concord Street is the man in the following article which appeared in the Knoxville News Sentinel, April 12, 1997.

Knoxvillian Chosen by Latter-day Saints

Knoxville Radiologist R. Lloyd Smith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been appointed to serve as an area Authority Seventy.

He is among 134 men to be ordained to serve over 160 nations around the world. Smith's duties in the newly created position include:

- Founding new stakes (groups of congregations) and training their presidents;
- Training mission presidents;
- Regulating the church in his area;
- Reporting to general authorities.

Smith was appointed by church President Gordon B. Hinckley at last week's General Conference at Salt Lake City, Utah. He is a former bishop and Knoxville stake president.

As President Gene Muggridge says,

“Isn't it great to be a Mormon!”

Knoxville Branch and Area Saints History

Historical Background

- 1930's Sunday School held on Jones Street and Sister Ada Atkinson's Apartment.
 1931 First Relief Society Organized. First President Ada Atkinson, secretary
 Lurene Greene
 1941 Sunday School held in Marvin B. and Lurene Greene's home.
 1941 Relief Society Organized
 1943 February 14: Knoxville Branch Organized
 1944 February 14: First Annual Banquet held S & W Cafeteria.
 1948 About 15 families in the Knoxville Branch
- 1958 May 4: Sterling W. Sill dedicated Knoxville Branch Chapel on Concord St.
 1958 February 14: last historical record of Annual Banquet at S & W Cafeteria
 1958 Scout Troop 140 organized August
 1959 August 15. Mission Scout Camporee at Cosby, Tn. Local Branch Troops
 participated.
 1959 Oct 10 - Priesthood session of 129th Seminannual General Conference heard
 by closed circuit telephone line, first time.
- 1960 Regular General Priesthood Broadcasts now piped in from Salt Lake City.
 1967 Oct 23 - Elder ElRay C. Christiansen dedicated Knoxville Branch and
 District Chapel on Kendall Road
 1967 Deseret Club Chartered at the University of Tennessee
 1967 Early Morning Seminary Began
 1967 First Road Show - titled "Gonna Build A Chapel"
 1967 First Baptisms in new Chapel
 1969 Knoxville Branch split into Knoxville North and South Branches - Oct
- 1973-74 Building Expanded for Stake Offices
 1985-86 Building remodeled

Branch Presidents

Elder Grant Skinner	2/1943
John C. Wood	5/1943
Marvin B. Greene	9/1944
James E. Travis	5/1947

Counselors

John C. Wood, Marvin B. Greene
Marvin B. Greene, LeRoy Russell
R.C.Eggers, James E. Travis

R. C. Eggers	1949	Homer Talley, Dick Buchanan
Edgar C. Snow	2/1960	Dick Buchanan, Bruce Rankin, Grover Cruze, Doc Shuman
Grover Cruze	1963	Ralph Payne, Bill Barron
Ray L. Pearson	4/1965	John Marion, Don Jordan, Earl Visage, Bob Davenport, Don Hoskins, Donald Brown, and Mitch Bordon
David Fuqua	5/1969	

The Early Years

The gospel was first introduced into Tennessee by Elders David W. Patten and Warren Parrish in October 1834. These Elders and others were met with much opposition and hardship. Throughout the 1800's, many were threatened and chased by angry mobs, some faced tar and feathering, others sustained severe beatings. There were two tragic incidents where missionaries were shot, and tragically enough, the murderers of these elders were acquitted in each of the trials.

Despite these adversities, much progress was made between 1834 and 1850, and several small branches were organized. The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote in his journal on Saturday, May 15, 1841, "Good news has recently reached us from Tennessee. The Elders are baptizing in all directions". (July 1976 Ensign article by Diane Brinkman)

Through the efforts of these valiant missionaries, there were pockets of saints throughout the hills and mountains of East Tennessee. These saints were strong even though they were spread out over a vast area and very seldom saw each other nor authorities of the church. The saints rejoiced when the Elders came through and would invite them to stay in their homes as well as to leave their belongings in the homes when they were out proselyting in the area. Those early saints would save their tithing and give it to the Elders to take back with them to the mission home.

These Latter-day pioneers were the forerunners of the Knoxville Branch which was first organized on February 14, 1943. During this time the United States was in World War II; materials were rationed, workers were scarce and the saints were meeting in a Woodsmen of the World Hall; located on Walnut Street in downtown Knoxville. Prior to this time, Sunday School was held in the home of Marvin B. and Lurene Greene. The following information was obtained from Sister Green who is now 93 years old, but still going strong.

"We moved to Knoxville in January 1930. There was a home Sunday School and Sacrament Meetings being held at the home of Sister Ada Atkinson who lived upstairs in an apartment at the corner of Broadway and Central Avenues. There was no one there who held the priesthood except

the full-time missionaries, who presided and conducted. In 1931 a Relief Society was organized with Sister Atkinson as president, and I was set apart as Relief Society Secretary, which was my first job in the church. We moved to Nashville and were there for three and a half years. When we returned to Knoxville, things were about the same; we still had no priesthood holders and, in 1937, the missionaries were still holding a Home Sunday School on Jones Street and in Sister Allen's home.

“We would rent the hall on Walnut Street for a few months, then, when no one but our family went, we started to have Sunday School in our home (1941) and held it continually until the Branch was organized in February 1943.

“The first Branch President was Elder Grant Skinner, a full time missionary from Arizona with Brother John C. Wood, first counselor, and my husband, Marvin B. Greene, second counselor. In May 1943, Elder Skinner was released and Brother John C. Wood was called as Branch President with Marvin B. Greene first counselor, LeRoy Russell (from Maryville) as second counselor, and myself as branch clerk. This was the first time the church was organized with all local brethren.

“Brother Wood moved back to Utah in September of 1944 and at that time the Mission President over the East Central States Mission, and Elder Ezra Taft Benson presiding, called my husband to the office of Branch president and he had the honor of having Elder Benson assist in setting him apart at their hotel room the next morning. President Greene's counselors were R. C. Eggers of Maryville and James E. Travis. Brother Travis had moved to Knoxville from Alabama to work at Oak Ridge.

“Many LDS members moved in during this era to work at Oak Ridge. A large Branch was organized in Oak Ridge with Elder Eldred G. Smith as Branch President. We all met together for MIA and many church social functions. Brother Smith later became the General Patriarch of the church and was a direct descendent of Hyrum Smith. My husband was also a part-time local missionary and he and Brother Smith had some great experiences together. The branch grew during the war and some new members were added to the branch.

“We celebrated the organization of the branch every year with a banquet at the S & W Cafeteria for about 9 years.” Sister Mary Alice Ward remembers that this celebration continued for 2 or 3 more years after the Greenes moved to Arizona. (Historical Records - SL show last banquet was in 1958.)

At one of the banquets, Elder R. Lloyd Smith remembers hearing the following poem read. It was written by Sister Lelia Anderson which has become a classic among the saints.

Conversion of a Hillbilly

Many years ago on a beautiful day;
Some “hard preaching Elders” headed this way,
Let's “gird up our loins”, we might as well see,
What the Hillbillies are like in old Tennessee

Let's "hitch up our wagons, and follow a star,"
And head for the land where the Hillbillies are.
"You're wasting your time," the sisters piped in;
"The Tennessee people are as ornery as sin."
"Your dad tried to teach them, without any luck;
Teaching the Gospel to them is like drowning a duck."

But, their sons were rebellious, said, "We're gonna try;
Suppose that we didn't and the whole pack should die?
So, they wrapped up their Bibles and their black tailored suit,
The Doctrine and Covenants, Book of Mormon to boot.

They prayed and fasted, then landed in town,
Full of the "spirit", looking around;
After much gallivanting, first here and there,
They landed in Knoxville — on a "rim and a prayer."

They shined up their old shoes and slicked down their hair,
It was enough to make any Hillbilly wonder and stare.
"City slickers," they said, "Pa, go fetch yer gun."
The Elders knew then it was too late to run.

So, they practiced their Scriptures, were collected and bold;
But, the Hillbillies weren't buying so easy, I'm told.
It was like a "Snake Charmer" with a bag full of tricks,
They soon had the Hillbillies in a heck of a fix.

After much speckulatin', fuedin', and fightin'
They soon had some of them readin' and writin'.
"You can't chew 'tobacky', the Elders would tell 'em,
"White lightning's a sin," but, you just couldn't sell 'em.

"My pappy," they said, "weren't nobody's fool,
And he lived to be ninety, without keeping that rule."
"The Bible's the only thing we're gonna read,
Git gone with that 'new stuff' --we don't want your creed."
"It's the Word of the Lord," the Elders would preach,
But, just one in a hundred they were able to reach.

When the Elders got tired, and their feet full of blisters,
They would just say, "Let's rest and call on the sisters."
For those gals weren't fooling, with their smiles and good looks,
They soon had them reading from all of the books.

So, the raving and ranting grew loud and strong,
And them "long suffering" Hillbillies soon joined in the throng.
It will long be remembered --- that fateful day,

Before they knew what the ‘score was” they were “calling the play”.

“My goodness,” they said, “Tain’t bad as we thought.”
“Why all of our Kissin’ Kin ought to be taught.”
The water felt good, too, as they pushed them all down;
And that’s how “Mormonism” entered the town.

Now the way that they “hooked” them that historical day,
Was by agreeing with everything the “Billies” would say.
If they wanted to say, the day was the night,
The Elders would say, “Sure, fellows, you’re right.”

Now this was strange doctrine, they had to agree,
And slick as a ribbon they were soon on their knees.
And the Elders will tell you, that once you have got ‘em,
They don’t come any better --- the whole stubborn lot of ‘em.

They will fill you and dine you, as fine as you please,
With their Southern fried chicken, cornpone and peas;
With their black strap molasses and hominy grits --
And them luscious hush puppies, will just give you fits.

But---

When an Elder goes home, now ain’t this a dilly?
He’s one quarter Western and three quarters HILLBILLY.
So, it’s hard to decide ---just who changed the most,
That crafty Hillbilly or the guy from the coast.

Brother and Sister Greene moved to Knoxville in 1930. She writes: “We spent many happy hours, working in the church in Knoxville. The Branch included Maryville, Louisville, Friendsville, Clinton, Norris, and Jefferson City. We visited all the members living in those places and held meetings with them as they could not always attend meetings in Knoxville due to gas shortages during the war years, illness and no transportation. Many times our family drove straight from Sunday School to one of these places and just made it back in time for Sacrament Meeting that evening before we went home.

“I feel all of these experiences have given my children a stronger testimony of the Gospel and greater appreciation for all the modern conveniences we enjoy in our lovely ward buildings. Even though I’ll never live there again, my heart will always be there. I am glad that my grandsons and great grandchildren are still there. I hope some of my posterity will always be there.”

(Foot Prints history p 5)

There were many faithful saints in the Branch who were spirited, spiritual, and strongly committed to the gospel. Sister Iva May Posey was one of those who was known for her missionary efforts

and spurred the members on with genealogy research. She was instrumental in getting the first missionaries into Oak Ridge in 1949. After Wanda and Bill Barron joined the church, Wanda recalls the following about Sister. Posey:

“Sister Posey was the genealogist of the Concord Street Branch. Her talks were always started to motivate us not to forget our kindred dead. Her favorite story to liven up her talks was about the time she was in a cemetery in her native Louisiana. A mother hen had made her nest in the weeds around a tombstone. Posey,(as she was affectionately called) was down on her hands and knees looking at the names on the gravestones, when the mother hen flew out in a full-fledged attack against the intruder. When she told that story with gusto, everyone sat up and listened.” (Foot Prints History p. 7)

“In 1947, Bob and Ruth Smith moved to Knoxville. Bob’s company had opened an office here and he was the new manager. They had three sons-- Lloyd, Bill and Jim. The boys were little ones when they arrived (Lloyd, the oldest, was just 5).

“Bob was born in the church and was raised in Atlanta. His mother was very active in the church and Bob became much involved with the missionaries and the priesthood brethren. He was a good friend of Paul Callis, President Charles A. Callis’ son, (Brother Callis was the President of the Southern States Mission) and can recall going with Paul to pick up the incoming missionaries. They usually came in on Sundays just before sacrament meeting and he and Paul would take them directly to the chapel.

“The high school Bob attended was 12 miles from his home, with the mission home in the middle. Bob remembers walking from school to the mission home on Mutual nights. He would spend the afternoon helping the missionaries with whatever task they were involved in, attend Mutual that evening, then ride the bus home at 9:30 or 10:00 p.m.” (Footprints History p. 7)

Bob and Ruth have both passed on. They were tireless in their commitment to the church in this area. Ruth’s commitment was as great as Bob’s. Bob’s job took him out of town most weeks. Ruth would keep the home fires burning while he was away, then pack for the weekends when they were on the road for the church in his calling as District President. I once asked Ruth about this commitment to the growth of the church. Her reply was, “What else could we do? There was no one else, and the gospel had to go forward!”

Lelia Anderson was such a colorful member of the Branch. Her talent as a poet and playwright was used over and over again! Her poem, “Conversion of a Hillbilly”, was printed earlier and mention of her play “The Life and Times of the Prophet Joseph Smith” is in the Stake section of this history, as well as in the Grove Park Ward history.. She wrote a second poem, a tribute to the Knoxville Branch saints, which tells of these special saints who committed their all to the growth of the church in the Knoxville and surrounding area.

The 1950's

Bruce Rankin, who owned the Rankin Sign Company, made a large metal sign which he erected in front of the Concord Street chapel. It said, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." Would you like to know what has happened to that sign? Old signs don't just fade away, they keep on working. Read on in the history and you will find the answer. The sign now stands in front of the building the LaFollette saints are renting while their chapel is being renovated. Brother Rankin would be pleased to realize his original gift to the Knoxville Saints has been used by many.

Brother R. C. Eggers was Branch President from 1949 to February of 1960. In the mid-1950's the chapel was built on Concord Street (this building now houses a doctor's office). The Concord site was purchased April 1, 1953 for \$6500.00, with the dedication of the building May 4, 1958, by Elder Sterling W. Sill.

When this chapel was built, the members had to raise 30% of the cost for the building and lot. "We sold doughnuts and painted houses to raise this 30%", President Eggers recalls.

Sister Ethel Visage, (now of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina), and Bob Smith remember a Brother by the name of Joe Walt who was attending the University of Tennessee while the saints were still meeting on Walnut Street. Joe left to serve a mission in Switzerland and came back to Knoxville at the end of his mission to find things about the same. He got up during a Sunday morning meeting and promised the saints that he would match dollar for dollar whatever money they could raise that afternoon, either in cash, pledges, or promissory notes, in order to purchase a lot and build a new building. Joe had inherited some money and felt things had been as they were long enough and was willing to donate his money to the cause. He said "The time is close---we need to get on with this building."

Everyone scurried around and though Ethel cannot remember the amount brought in that afternoon, she does remember it was a large amount and Brother Walt kept his promise to match it. Lloyd Smith was a youngster at this time, and remembers going home and bringing back the contents of his dime bank to contribute to the effort.

Alice Ward recalls that Brother Visage came to their home that afternoon (they were not at church that day) and asked for whatever money they could contribute to the new building. Maynard and Alice were saving for a house but they gave Brother Visage a great deal of their savings. It took a lot of faith on their part to give up their savings, and, furthermore, in discussing this incident with Alice, she was not aware until I told her that Joe was matching the funds, dollar-for-dollar. Bob Smith remembers that Joe stayed in the area for a while and taught school at Clinton.

Having to raise 30% of the cost of their new building was still a monumental task for such a small group of people. The sisters made pillow cases and quilts and had bake sales, but Ethel especially

recalls most of all the bunches of artificial grapes they made (at least 200) which they sold for \$10.00 each. Alice still has a bunch of grapes and several of the pillow cases. Bob Smith recalls the hundreds and hundreds of doughnuts that they sold — at UT football games as well as door to door or any place else they could sell them.” (Footprints History p. 10)

When a building goes up, the membership seems to increase, and after the Concord Chapel was completed, their numbers grew. Brother Eggers recalls, “One Sunday a.m., I recall we had 145 members at Sunday School. Bedford Bird was the Sunday School President at the time.” Brother Eggers continues, “One last thought: one cold night in the winter at Sacrament Meeting in the old hall, there were four people present --Brother and Sister Greene, and Brother and Sister Eggers. I can testify of the growth of the church in East Tennessee over the past 46 years. If the percentage of growth from 1943 to 1989 would continue over the next 46 years, there will not be many non members in East Tennessee.” From small things great things shall come to pass - from 4 to 144!

The 1960's

President Ed Snow, Branch President from February 1960 to 1963 and his counselors reaped the joys of the Concord Street Chapel , but the little group soon outgrew the building and parking became a big problem . It was time for these stalwart saints to pull themselves up by their boot straps again and build another chapel. Late in the year of 1963 or early 1964 the building was sold for \$75,000. The focus of this branch presidency was on expansion.

Jewish Community Center

With the sale of the Concord Street Chapel, the saints were without a meeting place. President Bird lived in West Hills and had a neighbor who knew of the Jewish Community Center and knew that they rented out the building to groups. Through him and President Bird the saints were able to rent the building for Sunday meetings and Primary. They held Relief Society in people’s homes as well as having District Conferences at Young High School. The saints moved into the Jewish Community Center in March of 1964.

There are lots of stories to be told about the Jewish Community Center. Now this is not the lovely Jewish Center on Deane Hill Drive, no this one was downtown and the saints recall how it was necessary to sweep and clean before they could hold meetings. Also, they could never allow their children to get down on the floor, or they would look like little street urchins before the day was over. Life became a new trial for the saints, but discouraged? Never!

During President Snow’s administration there were four areas that were having home Sunday School: Morristown, Maryville, Tazewell and Speedwell, with everyone coming to Knoxville for Sacrament Meeting. Brother England was assigned as the Elder over Tazewell, but Maryville, Morristown and Speedwell necessitated that a member of the Branch Presidency be in attendance

every Sunday morning. Also, Maryville and Morristown had Relief Society and Home Primary which required some monitoring. These were hectic days for all concerned. The brethren were busy with the problems of the new building and the sisters served in every capacity imaginable.

In a talk given in recent years by Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles he said: “Involve newcomers quickly in the Lord’s work. They had been called to his vineyard not just to admire but to perspire --- not to ‘ooh’ and ‘aah’ but to ‘hoe’ and ‘saw’.”

The Knoxville area saints perspired, hoed and sawed--one for all and all for one, probably coming very close to living the law of consecration. (Footprints History pp 16-17)

During President Ed Snow’s administration the lot for the chapel on Kendall Road was purchased for \$9,000. Brother Grover Cruze recalls that Earl Visage located the Kendall Road property. TVA owned this land and it was perfect except there were power lines running across it. Ed and Nora put the property in their names with a \$100 to \$200 deposit and a 90-day note. Church headquarters had not approved the purchase yet, but with the approval of the priesthood brethren, Ed and Nora went ahead with the purchase.

With power lines running over the property, an engineer had to draw up plans as to the placement of the building as TVA would not allow any buildings under their electrical lines. With the drawing in place and with TVA’s approval, the church approved the purchase. The church purchased the lot from Ed and Nora in 1963.

The saints came into a windfall through this purchase. It seems that TVA had to pay the owners of any property over which their electrical lines ran a usage fee and, in this case, it amounted to \$3,000.00. This was (and still is, I gather) a one-time fee and, when the title search was done, it was found that the fee had not been paid to the original owners, therefore, it was paid to the present owners, the church. This eased the money crunch somewhat.

Brother Bird, (who was a counselor in the Mission Presidency by this time and was most helpful to the local saints) stood on the property and said: “This is the perfect location. In 15 years, this will be the center of town.” Just the other day (1989) Grover Cruze read in the paper that West Town Mall is exactly the center of Knoxville now. At the time of this purchase, few of the saints would have believed this. They were strung far and wide over the area and West Knoxville seemed very far away. (Footprints History)

Building a New Chapel

During President Cruze’s administration (1963-1965), things were going full steam ahead on the Kendall Road Chapel. They knew the cost to build the chapel would be \$300,000. And President

Cruze's greatest concern was money. Church headquarters would not let you begin building a building until you had your goals in line as far as fund raising was concerned. The local people had to raise 30% on this building also, just like for the Concord Street Chapel. The saints were faithful in pledging their money and raising the necessary funds to keep up with the needed money, but the leaders still felt the stress of this obligation.

President Cruze, Brother Snow, and other Brethren as well, went to Bowling Green, Kentucky to be informed of the missionary building plan. The brethren visited Nashville and had decided to build a similar chapel, but later the Cornell Plan was presented to them which was a much larger building. The thinking was that Knoxville was the center of the District and the new building should house the District as well as the Branch, thus the reasoning for a larger building. The smaller building seemed quite a challenge, but the larger building seemed an obstacle almost too large to overcome. Brother Cruze wrote the following:

“The spiritual experiences were many. We experienced problem after problem swept away as if they were nothing. I remember one night in our Branch Presidency Meeting, we just sat and recalled these experiences and marveled how the Lord was working, and discussed our seeming lack of faith as we worried over every little thing and wondered how we would clear this new hurdle.

“The matter of rezoning, so we could sell the old chapel, as most of you know, is in an area where citizens groups have successfully defended any rezoning attempts for years. There were a lot of contacts made by the members to those they knew on the (City) Council, but I have no doubt that the Lord made a few also. I never will forget the last reading, we felt for sure that the grand try would be made that night by the group and their attorney. I remember, we of the Branch Presidency, asked for a fast that day, and to our surprise the councilman who represented this section of the city made a short talk as to why he would no longer oppose it.“ We were so thrilled. I came by Mutual and stopped a dance and announced that we were going to have a new chapel.

“We were concerned how we could build a new building, as we knew the financial status of the Branch. However, in going to Bowling Green (where we were introduced to the building missionary plan) I felt the spirit of the Lord as I never had before. We were thrilled, because we knew we could build.

“Then the bombshell of the Cornell Plan. We weren't planning a chapel of this size and magnitude. We worried again..how could we build one this size, even under this (missionary building)

program. We decided that if the Church represented the Lord, the building department did too; and this was their recommendation, which we asked for your sustaining vote..and you sustained it in every way...the Lord had shown the way, and finally I stand before you and say we are going to have a new chapel here in Knoxville.”
(Foot Prints History pp 17-18)

While Brother Cruze was Branch President the building was begun, with all the foundation and grading work finished (grading work began the 2nd week of November 1964) as well as the hiring of engineers for the job. The only thing that made the building possible, however, was the Building Missionary Program which had just begun and we were able to get in on it. Otherwise, it would have been next to impossible to build the chapel. This was just a small window of time because the building program was stopped shortly after the building was completed.

When the building got past the foundation stage, Brother Ray L. Pearson was called as the Branch President (1965-1969). Several brothers have commented recently that only Brother Pearson would have had the patience to deal with the myriad of problems that came up during the building process.

Brother Marion Wilson, a church building contractor serving a 3-year building mission, came to Knoxville as the superintendent of this project. Brother Don Jordan was serving a building mission in Ohio and came to Knoxville for the last 6 months of that mission to help with the building. Brother Jordon liked Tennessee so much he stayed! Under the direction of these two men the building process went into full swing.

“Church headquarters sent young men to serve a mission to work on the building. This was not a proselyting mission but a building mission. President Pearson pointed out that these were young men who were sometimes in some kind of trouble, who were not really eligible for the usual mission, but the Church felt they would be able to serve this type of mission. Without these young men it would have been impossible to have built this large of a structure.

“The Saints in the area housed these missionaries, fed them, provided transportation to and from the job site and washed their clothing. Ed Snow remembers that he cut their hair every other week. Besides all of this, the saints provided them with a weekly allowance of \$2 - \$3. Many of the saints gave this allowance to the missionaries while their own children went without.

“Bob Smith remembers that they kept one and often two of these young men in their home. The Smiths had their basement set up to accommodate these missionaries and Bob can recall many a night after all was still in the house, hearing the clink, clink of pool balls - instead of sleeping these young men were playing pool on the pool table which was kept in the basement. At one time Bob got wind that the young men were sneaking out at night after the family had gone to bed. They went over to Papermill Rd to play Putt-Putt. Doesn't that sound just like a couple of young men!

“President Pearson states that the Sisters did a yeoman’s job of taking care of the Missionaries--feeding them, transporting them, sending lunches with them every day, helping these young men to become grown men and reach beyond their troubled pasts to find commitment and determination, fortitude and joy in the service of their fellow men as well as to the Lord.

“Another task that President Pearson recalls the sisters were in charge of was the Saturday lunches, which they prepared and brought to the building site. The sisters were divided up into four committees, each group taking a specified Saturday, to provide lunches for the workers. Remember that the outlying saints sometimes came to work, so the workers swelled on weekends to at least thirty. Mary Alice Ward was chair of one of these food committees and remembers how the four chairmen (I should say chairwomen) met and formulated the menus they would prepare. For example, one week one committee would prepare Tuna Casserole, Tossed Salad and Garlic Bread. This menu would be served when it was their week to provide the food. Sister Ruth Whaley brought the desserts and those would vary from week to week. Alice commented that a lot of the less-active people were involved with the Saturday food preparation. Sister Hurley from Morristown is one sister who is remembered as always coming to Knoxville on these Saturdays and bringing a cobbler.

“Besides all the things already mentioned that the sisters did, they also worked on the building. Many sisters recall the hours of sanding, varnishing, painting, laying tile, flooring, etc. Once the heavy work was done by the brethren, there were many tasks that the sisters could do. President Pearson says that three to four nights a week people were working side-by-side to erect the building plus all day every Saturday for over two years!

“Edgar Snow is one of those valiant ones who spent many, many hours laying brick. Nora figured up the number of hours and it was well over 1,000 plus his usual 40-hour-a-week job to provide for himself and his family. The missionaries and the saints were the runners for him, called hod carriers or mud mixers. The saints had to work fast and furious to keep up with Brother Snow and most of the time they couldn’t get the mortar to him fast enough. (One sidewalk superintendent commented that maybe it was the saints who were slow and not Brother Snow who was fast.)

“One of the building missionaries was a good young man, but he had a problem; he was just a little bit slow, but strong as an ox. He loved to push the wheelbarrow and was not always safety conscious. He would climb the scaffolding and try to take the wheelbarrow up with him, which was one of the milder things that happened.

“One day he was cleaning up around the place and came across a loose wire and gave it a hefty tug. Instead of it coming loose (it being attached to the scaffolding), he pulled the scaffolding, Brother Snow, the bricks, the mortar -- everything-- down! The saints were very fortunate that Brother Snow was not hurt other than being badly bruised. They were grateful, and I’m sure there were those who would have liked to do something drastic to that little missionary.

“Besides all the supervision of these missionaries with all their interesting problems, President Pearson faced another problem regarding them. Whenever the brethren were out of town with their jobs, it was necessary to find the Elder living in their home another place of residence. Some of the sisters were afraid to have the missionaries there without their husbands being home; Church policy also stated that when the husband was gone, the missionaries were to be housed elsewhere. At any rate President Pearson found himself scurrying around trying to find homes for the missionaries.

“Through the whole building process (except for Ed tumbling down with the scaffolding) only three mishaps occurred; a missionary’s broken eyeglasses, Ray Pearson’s broken toe from having a 100 pound plank dropped on it and the death of Brother Arthur M. Vermellion in a traffic accident on his way back to work in Knoxville from his home in Bristol. The Lord certainly blessed the saints as they endeavored to accomplish a task that seemed insurmountable.

“The following is a partial list of the faithful band of saints who built the Chapel:

Marion Wilson, Supt.	Bay and Renee Underwood
Bob and Ruth Smith	Doc and Vergie Shuman
Ray and Leah Pearson	Lucille McKnight
Earl and Ethel Visage	Ed and Nora Snow
John and Betty Marion	Maynard and Alice Ward
Grace and Bedford Bird	Mildred Boyles
Glen and Mary Goss	Ray and Merita Cunningham
Bill and Wanda Barron	Ann Lamb
Jack and Iva Mae Posey	Martha and Clifford Webb
Imogene and Dick Buchanan	Dorothy Seah
Libby and Grover Cruze	Joyce Trottie
Bob Davenport	Ernest and Willie Roberts
Ken and LuJuana Kenney	Alta Mae Wheeler
John and Coralene Valentine	James and Pluma Gideon
Dick and LaRue Zanker	Linda Lay
Bruce and Dorothy Rankin	Ralph and Mildred Payne
Arlie and Ruth Whaley	Hyrum and Johanna Plaas
Paul and Lynn Barnett	Dorothy Brown

“President Pearson pointed out that the outlying saints were asked to come and help on the building on Saturdays and, while some of them did, for the most part it was this small band of saints and the building missionaries who built the chapel. President Pearson commented again and again how much the Lord’s hand and guidance was in this project. ‘Whenever we needed help, it just appeared,’ he recalls. For instance, they were in need of a carpenter and suddenly a fellow by the name of Hatfield came to the area to do genealogy work and he was hired to do the carpentry. Bay Underwood lost his job, and President Pearson was able to hire him to do the finishing carpentry work. One brother, Arthur M. Vermellion, was hired but lived in Bristol. He would work all week and go home on weekends. One weekend he came to Knoxville with his family for District Conference. He took his family home to Bristol and was headed back to Knoxville, when he went to

sleep at the wheel, hit a culvert and was killed. There was sadness over the death of this brother. “A very spiritual person from Tazewell, Charlie England, was sickly and could not come to work on the building. He felt so bad about that and, since he had money available to him through the furniture store which he owned, he would come to Knoxville at least once a month and give President Pearson an envelope. In the envelope would be a \$100.00 bill. President Pearson had to continually raise money to keep the building project going so these \$100.00 bills were most helpful.

“James Gideon had a coal hauling business, as well as a mop and broom factory. Whenever we needed gravel, he would send his driver to get it. They used lots of gravel so this was an ongoing process. Whatever Brother Gideon’s profits were from this hauling, he donated to the building project and this amounted to thousands of dollars.

Others who contributed many hours of skilled labor were:

Jack Posey	Electrical work
Don Jordan	Electrical work
Earl Visage	Plumbing work
Ed Snow	Brick Masonry work
Bob Smith	Duct work
Goss Brothers	Built the rafters
Bruce Rankin	Provided truck with sign erector for putting up rafters
Pluma Gideon	Provided skills for the landscaping

“By the way, the rafters were put up in the middle of winter, and you can ask any one of these saints just how much fun that was! I was talking with Bob Smith about this period of time, and he said when they were working on these rafters, the neighbors were so intrigued that they called the newspaper about it and before they knew what was happening a reporter was there talking with them and taking pictures. Though the reporter was not told, Bob said the reason they were doing this on such a wintry day was - that was the ONLY day the truck was available from Brother Rankin.

“Alice Ward remembers that there was a drought the summer of 1965 and it did not rain until the roof was put on the building about January of 1966. She had discussed this drought with her co-workers at Millers Department Store, who were quite impressed that it actually did not rain until the roof was on. They were quite impressed” because she had told them in advance that would be the case.

“It wasn’t long after Hyrum and Johanna Plaas’ arrival in Knoxville, that they were in the middle of the building project. Johanna can remember the first time she saw Ruth Smith - - - Ruth was on her hands and knees backing out of one of the air conditioning ducts. She was helping Bob and some of the men install the ducts, and she, being small, was just perfect for the job at hand. Johanna remembers that she and Ruth put at least 5 (maybe 8) coats of varnish on the wood trim

that is in the front of the chapel as well as the wood around the cultural hall. This entailed varnishing, then sanding, then varnishing, then sanding . . . every coat.

“Johanna remembers the building missionaries and describes this as being a ‘most trying time- - - it would have been easier to have done it ourselves’. Isn’t that how we feel about our children sometimes when we are trying to teach them a skill? She goes on to say, ‘this was the greatest time of sacrifice’ for the saints. Their whole beings and complete efforts were centered on getting this building built.

“Johanna laughs with glee when she recalls in her mind’s eye, Earl Visage and Jack Posey trying to seat the toilet bowls in the women’s rest room. Funny now, not funny then.... Johanna was called as Primary President shortly after coming to the area, and the tales she can tell about the Jewish Community Center would keep you laughing for a long time.

The Knoxville Branch Chapel was dedicated October 23, 1967, by Elder ElRay C. Christiansen. Sister Lelia Anderson wrote a poem prayer especially for the dedication which was read at that time; it follows:

Dear Heavenly Father:

With humble hearts and willing hand,
This Holy Edifice now stands.
A beacon light...for all to see,
A symbol of purity, charity.

Accept this offering as thine,
Lord, may thy Spirit always shine...
Within these walls... Upon this ground,
Within our hearts, may love abound.

Lord, may this work be not in vain,
Let truth spread forth as gentle rain.
Bless those who labored...far and near,
To ever feel thy Spirit here.

Bless those who come in future years,
Forgive our grumbling sins and fears.
Warm all our hearts by charity’s flame...
This prayer we ask in Jesus name.

This dedication was the culmination of many, many hours of labor as well as hundreds of letters being written back and forth between architects, attorneys, and such other preparatory work that had to be done before any building could begin. Words cannot begin to convey the dedication, footsteps of faith and willingness of the saints to do whatever was necessary to cause this building to come to pass. Hours and hours of commitment went into this effort.

With the chapel complete, Relief Society, Primary and Mutual could make big strides forward. The branch leaders held early morning Seminary for the first time beginning in 1967, the Mutual had their first road show titled "Gonna Build a Chapel", Scout Troop 140 was going strong, and the college age youth were able to attend the Deseret Club which had been chartered at the University of Tennessee. The first baptisms were performed in the new baptismal font! What days of rejoicing! What love the saints felt for the beautiful building their hands had built! What thankfulness to a loving Heavenly Father. Their faces must have shown with joy, their humble spirits full of thankfulness. Sister Anderson's words say it all:

"With humble hearts and willing hand,
This Holy Edifice now stands,
A beacon light ...for all to see,
A symbol of purity, charity."

It is not possible to mention all the folks in the branch, but Sister Lelia Anderson did a pretty good job of it in the following poem.

Recollections of the Knoxville Branch
By Lelia Anderson

Several years ago, on a beautiful day,
A few "Mormon" families headed this way.
"We'll hitch up our wagons and follow a star
And head to the land where the "hillbillies" are.
I've oft' heard it said, "They're ornery and mean,
And the stubbornest ritters that you've ever seen!"
They landed in Knoxville and started the search,
Of "ways and means" of building a church.

As time moved along, or so I've been told,
A few "ornery hillbillies" came into the fold.
Then in came the "drifters" from many a way;
They liked it so well they decided to stay.
It was like a "big melting pot", or a Mulligan stew,
Each state represented, and of course, TEXAS, too.

The work was laid out for each ambitious soul;
The needles were flying--and doughnuts were sold.
If you needed a new suit--the old one did fine;
(You sincerely hoped nobody noticed the shine!)
The ladies announced, "Folks, put in your uppers!"
Then started all those spaghetti suppers!

Oh! Sure, they were fine, but it still brings the tears,
To remember the spaghetti pushing out all our ears.

The church has grown some--the spirit's the same--
So let's toss a few "orchids" to our pioneer names:
The Greenes head the list, Sis. Greene and her brood;
They were always on hand and accomplished much good!
Jim Travis and Veda we cannot forget,
And we continue to hope they'll rejoin us yet.
At Oak Ridge, Brother Brady, that old pioneer;
Hey! Look around, folks, and see if he's here!

While we're handing out orchids, there's R.C. and Pearl!
As leaders they're really the best in the world.
There's another "old timer" who needs this attention,
Brother Carver is one we pause now to mention.
The "Bird" flew in late, but you gotta say,
No finer "birds" ever headed this way!

Then there were the Guernseys, who certainly weren't shirkers,
The Ormes and the Harmons were the same willing workers.
Now, who could forget Sister Posey and Jack"
One of the nicest couples to join up with the "pack".
Now the way Lelia Anderson has worked is a sin--
Driving "Duck" to church with the ole rolling pin!

Joe Shipe in the lessons, knocked Jack up for a "loop",
Jack got so balled up, he felt he'd been "duped".
There's Bill and Naoma, great teachers, you bet,
Bill says that Naoma is his "teacher's pet".
The Paynes come and go, but the branch is real proud,
To have such a couple to mix with our crowd.
Next came Earl and Ethel, dancing our way,
Our thanks to them now for the part that they play.
The Whaleys and Nelsons don't come anymore,
But Posey and I think they'll soon join us once more.
While we're working in "mud" and having our fun,
We're working on those "gals" in more ways than one.

We couldn't have got by without Renee this year,
The way she's handled mutual is something to cheer.
But they gave Bay a job that may put them asunder--
Putting our pews together, he'll soon be "snowed under".
It's not the job so much as the words that may come
When he gets real busy and mashes his thumb!

There's Nora, our "songbird", a musical soul;
Bet "she'd knock 'em dead" with some old "rock and roll".

Let's also give credit where credit is due,
For her boy, John, is a swell guy, too.
Dot Rankin is precious, a pearl of great price,
And everything her Bruce does is real nice.

Now, Jean's quite a worker, you won't find her quitting,
So long as old Dick will do her "baby sitting".
The Hitches and Webbs are of course down here too;
Their pioneer spirit is really true blue.
The Wheelers and Dosna, all their duties do,
And we're happy to say we love them all, too.

We can hardly catch Mary, for the Polio Drives,
But a spirit like hers keeps our branch alive.
Then there are the Griffins, we don't want to pass,
For Roma's a wizard in the genealogy class.
We have a new girl who is sweet as can be;
You all know our new one--it's Joyce Beebe.

When the church wants someone to do a good job,
There's a couple we know--called Ruth and Bob.
To all of our children, who've all done their part,
We now want to thank from the bottom of our heart.
We want to include our young Elders, too,
And give them our thanks for the fine work they do.

And remember the dear ones who've taken their leave,
Like Baumann and Stock and old Elder Gleave.
We'll remember them, always, our "long gone neighbors",
For a lot of us here are the fruits of their labors.
You may be a "hillbilly", a "drifter", or Jew,!
But whatever you are, He's depending on you.

Our chapel won't climb, lest we work one and all,
For a house that's divided surely will fall.
We know from small acorns, mighty oaks grow,
So throw in your 'small change'.
and watch Big Dollars Grow!
R. C. will pick it up!

We have so much to thank them for!

In just short two years, October of 1969, this Branch was split, creating the Knoxville North Branch
and the Knoxville South Branch

CLINCH RIVER WARD
(Clinton Branch)

Historical Background:

- 1889 April 3, 1889, Clinton Church at Hart's Chapel burned
- 1944 Oak Ridge Ward organized
- 1992 Clinton Branch organized Jan 1992; split off from Oak Ridge Ward
First Missionary from Branch - Joella Palmer
- 1996 Clinton Branch made a ward November 10th with new name,
Clinch River Ward
- 1996 Clinch River Ward made a part of the new Knoxville Tennessee
Cumberland Stake, November 17th

Branch Presidents/Bishops

Counselors

President Fred Roland Phillips	1992	Joseph Turner, Gene Carnes
President Darryl Perkins	1994	Joseph Turner, Brian Blomquist
President Joseph Turner	1994	Brian Blomquist, Scott Pope
Bishop Joseph Turner	1996	Brent Cassady, Gerald Howard

History of the Clinch River Ward (condensed)

Before the Oak Ridge Ward, the Clinton Branch or the Clinch River Ward came into being, there was a little church at Hart's Chapel in Clinton, Tennessee, where a small group of saints happily worshiped and sang praises to their loving Heavenly Father. When arriving for church services on Sunday morning, April 3, 1899, they found their little church burned to the ground. This was recorded in the Southern Star as follows.

April 3, 1899

Another Church Burned - Clinton, Tenn.
By Elder W. E. Dawson

To the Southern Star:

Our dear little church here at Hart's Chapel was burned yesterday (Sunday) morning, and at day-break the Saints assembled to find their hopes of worshipping God in their dearly cherished church blasted. They gathered on the spot at 9:40 a.m. and held mournful services over the ruins of a once beautiful church where they had so often met in Sunday School and meeting, praising God in verse, text and song. The services consisted of songs, prayers and short addresses thanking God the Father for the knowledge that we are persecuted for righteousness sake, and for the testimony of the gospel which burns within our breasts.

Calling upon our Father, that He may forgive them, for they knew not what they had done; this was the spirit that prevailed. The trustees had just met the week before and nearly completed arrangements for painting the church, and we were looking forward to the time when the little Mormon church would become the Star of the Valley in neatness and beauty. The janitor, though not a member of the church, has taken such pride in keeping it neat and clean inside. His name is Mr. J. F. Brown; be it said to his honor he has given the land on which the house stood and a deed for it is held; this he did when the church was first built; he has always been a faithful friend of the wayfaring Elders since they first came to his door.

Although the Saints are all heart sore at the present loss, they hope it will redound to their infinite gain. They feel to take lessons from the ant and set to work to build them another place to worship. This time they want to build it of brick and feel to put their trust in God, feeling that faith without works is dead; feel to ask the Lord, through the agency of His Saints in all the world (if they wish), to help to rebuilt. The hearts of the Saints are sick at the thought of doing without a house of worship, and our only refuge for support is the Saints of God at home and abroad. (S.S. Vol. 1).

The Clinton Branch was formed in January 1992, with Fred Roland Phillips called as Branch President in February. Some members were taken from the Oak Ridge Ward and a few from the Grove Park Ward in the formation of the Branch. The Branch had about 100 members and some very strong Priesthood. The Church bought property near I-75 and Anderson High School to eventually build a chapel, but, for the first few weeks, the saints met at the Oak Ridge Chapel, then met in a store front building on Clinton Highway.

Sister Jeanne Phillips recalls her determination to make this “shoe store” feel more like a chapel, a special place for the Clinton saints to meet. Through her undaunted efforts, with a great deal of her family’s own money, as well as items brought from their home, she turned that shopping center building into a place of beauty.

The only walls in the building that went clear to the ceiling were the Branch President’s office. Room dividers were brought in, chairs, a podium, as well as a few other basic items. A divider was put in for the Relief Society sisters at the front of the building, which had a big plate glass window. Lace curtains were made for the front window, and a divider placed there, also, so that passers-by would not stare into the meetings. A small foyer area was created for mothers who needed to remove their children from the general meetings. An old easy chair was placed in the foyer. Sister Phillips used her creative mind and put place mats on the arms to cover the holes. She brought a round table, placed a beautiful cloth on it, a gorgeous flower arrangement for the table and a mirror from home to create a place of beauty as one entered the building. Other plants and arrangements were placed strategically in the building as well. Lace fabric was purchased to make a table cloth for the sacrament table. Now they were ready.

When the building was finally ready to be occupied, some of the saints were hesitant about this “shoe store” building, having just come from the beautiful Oak Ridge or Grove Park Chapel. But the love that went into the furnishings soon made them feel at ease, which helped the branch saints develop a sweet closeness within a short period of time, like a family!

At an early Branch Conference, the Stake Relief Society sisters pulled into the shopping center for the very first time, not knowing exactly what to expect. The shopping center was open for business, with shoppers and cars all around, but the chapel quickly was spotted because of the

beautiful lace curtains at the window.

Stepping inside the door was rather like stepping inside the Temple where the world is left behind. The scene inside the chapel, likewise, was different from the busy-ness of the outside. The beauty was breathtaking with its simplistic layout, reverence and peace creating an oasis of warmth and love.

The Stake sisters were immediately enveloped with the special love that the Clinton Branch saints have. They felt their closeness, their one-for-all and all-for-one determination. They were committed to making their Branch a peaceful haven for all who entered their doors. They made the sisters feel at home in ‘their’ home, leaving the conference uplifted and grateful for these beautiful saints that were working so hard in their corner of Heavenly Father’s vineyard.

Sister Phillip’s determination made the chapel a place of beauty. President Phillip’s determination made this unit prosper and grow and become well established. He personally called on every single person on the Branch list and was able to bring back several people to activity . Several of these saints remained faithful, but some did return to inactivity.

Relief Society

The Relief Society was up and running in the branch from the very beginning. Sister Phillips was the Relief Society Homemaking Counselor and with no facilities to accommodate homemaking meetings, it just seemed reasonable that her home would be the center of these activities. The craft activities were held in her kitchen, with a dinner provided afterwards.

For one Relief Society activity in the early spring, the Relief Society leaders decided to make it a “husband and wife ” affair. President Phillips took the brothers outside and played horseshoes and other such activities while Sister Phillips taught a class on fancy desserts to the sisters. The fancy desserts were served to the delight of everyone. They had so much fun, this activity was continued for 2 or 3 years.

So Many Firsts!

With the new Branch, there were many firsts! The first missionary sent from the Branch was Joella Palmer the daughter of Lamar and Joanna Palmer; and the first marriage performed was for Charles and Monica Irwin (Monica is the daughter of the Madewells.)

Home Study/Early Morning Seminary

The Clinton Saints were determined to have as many programs of the Church working in their branch as possible, with seminary being at the top of the list. The first (and current) seminary teacher is Melody Blomquist, who has three small children. Like any other seminary teacher, she arises early (at 4:00 a.m.). Her husband takes the two oldest children to school. She then meets him at Raccoon Valley Road after seminary, to pick up the baby so he can go on to work.

Sister Blomquist is willing to do whatever it takes to keep seminary exciting and wonderful for the youth. Melody had a Christmas activity at their barn, decorated for the telling of the Christmas story. When the students arrived, they saw a sign that said "No Room in the Inn, go to the barn". At first this was a home study seminary group, which included lots of homework for the youth. Never did they fail to complete their work! Seminary is now held each morning at the home of Mark and Debbie Andrus. Reliable sources tell us if these youth don't go to anything else, they all go to seminary. That is quite a credit to these young people and their teacher.

Another Youth Activity

Well, we all know how youth love basketball, but Ruth Sweat, the girls basketball coach, has to be tops! Sister Sweat is somewhere in her seventies, and can run up and down the basketball floor, keeping up with these little teenagers-- and this is a woman who has already had heart bypass surgery! What fun it must be to watch this saintly woman work with these young women!

Creation of New Stake and Clinch River Ward

President Barber writes:

"We sent in the official papers in July of 1996 requesting approval from the First Presidency to split the Stake and to form the Clinch River Ward. We finally received notice on October 25, 1996 that our request had been approved. On November 10, 1996, we held a special 2:00 PM meeting in the Clinton Chapel where we presented the proposal to form the new Clinch River Ward and install Joseph Turner as Bishop. Since its formation in 1992, the Clinton Branch had grown to about 150 members. In order to split the Stake, we needed to have another ward, so each Stake would have the required 5 wards. Therefore, we revised the boundaries of the new ward, which was named the Clinch River Ward, to include all of the Clinton Branch, about 30 people from the Oak Ridge Ward and about 90 people from the Grove Park Ward. This gave us the required 250 people needed to form the new ward."

The Clinch River Ward is one of the eight units that comprise the newly created Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake. They bring strength, commitment, courage and spiritual maturity to their new stake.

With the formation of the new ward, the saints found themselves meeting in the Grove Park chapel, watching as their new building took form. The saints living near the site of the new Clinch River Ward Chapel/Stake Center rejoiced as they watched the foundation completed, the walls go up, and the roof go on. They saw it go from lumber, flat boxes and building supplies in stacks and piles to a beautiful edifice ready for occupancy.

And Finally,

The first meeting held in the Clinch River Ward building was on Sunday May 4th, 1997, with many testimonies of thankfulness being offered by the grateful Saints to a loving Heavenly Father.

Crossville Ward

Historical Background

- 1939 Slate Springs Branch Organized, summer
- 1943 First Relief Society Organized
- 1951 Construction on New Chapel on Genesis Road began
- 1957 Chapel dedicated
- 1960 Additional 2½ acres purchased to build larger building
- 1969 Young Men Basket Ball team Champions of the Northeastern United States

- 1970 Young Men District Volleyball Champions
- 1972 Land purchased on Genesis Road near Crossville
- 1972 Crossville Branch; name changed from Slate Springs Branch
- 1974 Ground Broken for new first phase building, October 6
- 1974 Crossville's first missionary reported to MTC, November 2
- 1974 Authorization letter for construction was received December 15
- 1976 Congregation moved to new building June 19
- 1976 Entered float in Bi-Centennial Parade, July 4 - won 2nd place
- 1979 Building dedicated on January 28

- 1983 Mr. Hugh Davenport donated 3 acres of land to Crossville Branch
- 1983 Phase II added to building
- 1983 First meeting in Phase II building, October 9
- 1983 Open House held November 13
- 1984 Building dedicated June 17 by Elder Spencer Osborne

- 1991 Crossville Ward organized December 15
- 1991 President Hassler ordained First Bishop, December 15
- 1995 Harold Grieshop ordained and set apart as Second Bishop, June
- 1996 Family History Center organized at Crossville
- 1996 Crossville Ward remains in Knoxville Stake when Stake split

Welfare Projects:

Raised pigs, grew garden vegetables, as well as sugar cane for molasses.

Branch Presidents/BishopsCounselors

Jonas Glenn Goss	1948	
Randal G. Brewer	1956	
W. Harold Goss	1964	Randal G. Brewer
Elder Ray King	1965	Randal G. Brewer
Elder Doral Cutler	1968	Randal G. Brewer
Gordon Oliverson	1970	Randal G. Brewer
Randal Brewer	1972	James M. Hamby & M. Earl Goss
John H. Cullen	1974	L. Austin Hamby & W. Harold Goss
Austin Hamby	1976	W. Walter Rector, Jerry Hassler, Leslie Randal Brewer, Tom Jenkins
Jerry G. Hassler	1985	Tom Jenkins, Roger Hyder, Rufus Smith
Bishop Jerry G. Hassler	1991	Tom Jenkins, Roger Hyder, Leslie Goss, Rufus Smith, David DeVos, Howard Gordon
Bishop Harold Grieshop	1995	Roger Hyder, Lennis Cooper, Mike Mills

HISTORY OF THE CROSSVILLE WARD

(Condensed)

The first remembered missionary activity of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Cumberland County area of Tennessee was in 1906 when Sister Sallie Durham Barnes was baptized in Byrd's Creek in the Linary Community. There were two other members of the Church here at that time - Johnny Carpenter and his mother (name unknown). We do not know when or how they came into the Church.

In the early years of the Church in Cumberland County, the Branch was part of the Southern States Mission headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. As the Church membership grew, this area became part of the East Central States Mission headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky.

The 1900's to 1920's to 1920's

Probably missionaries were in the area throughout the early 1900's, but in 1918-1919 missionaries came into the Slate Springs Community which is located eight miles north of Crossville on Genesis Road. Charles A. Robins and Lionel LeCheminant were among the earliest missionaries and the following people were among the earliest converts: Sallie Hyder, Ivan Barnes, Ulysses Barnes, Mae Hyder Swicegood, Carrie Hyder Warf, Nora Hyder Warf and Catherine Hyder Hamby. Cottage meetings were held as the missionaries came into the area and meetings were sometimes held in public buildings when they could be secured.

After these conversions, missionaries came into the area on a more regular basis - a couple of times a year. One of the earlier missionaries, Elder Rulon Killian now of Kaysville, Utah, related that he and his companion came into Crossville on the train and inquired the way to the Barnes residence. They then walked in the mud and rain approximately eight miles to the Barnes residence where they were warmly received. Elder Killian and his companions, Karl Goodrich, A. H. Norbert, T. G. Gibby and A. R. Sparul were in the area during 1922-1924. Several baptisms were performed; among these were Noah and Stella Hamby, and children Richard, Marie, Ruby and Jim; Lona Hyder Barnes, Frances Hamby Goss; Bill and Edna Hamby with children; Ruth Tollett Hamby and children, Mildred and Mabel; Jesse and Amanda Adams and children, Ralph, Cato, Baxter and Lena; Sallie and Noah Hyder's children, Mae, Leonard, Alva and Mabel; also children of Zack and Frances Goss, Harold, Lenora and Mayme.

The missionaries traveled without purse or script, and they stayed with families in the area - Noah and Stella Hamby, Noha and Sallie Hyder, Charlie and Sallie Barnes, Zack and Frances Goss, and possibly others. The missionaries traveled with only about one change of clothes, carrying only what would go in a small suitcase. They helped with whatever work was taking place, assisted with sitting with the sick and conducting funerals and visited with people in the evenings after the

work was completed. The missionaries held meetings on weekends, on street corners, at the courthouse, or anywhere they could get a group together.

The missionaries insisted on doing their own laundry which was rather strange in this part of the country. They always attempted to look presentable even though they often walked in the rain and slept out in barns, hay stacks etc. The missionaries were very dedicated to the work and had strong testimonies of the gospel. Church growth was continual.

Elder Killian related that he once conducted a street meeting in Crossville dressed in overalls after getting his own clothes wet in a downpour. At the street meeting, he introduced himself as a representative of the Church Of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, told of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, of the restoration of the gospel by heavenly visitations, and of the plan of salvation. Several people stopped to listen, but he was unable to give away any copies of the Book of Mormon.

Elder Killian, on one of his return trips to Crossville, related how the missionaries, especially in the rural areas such as this, would always try to secure lodgings early in the evenings as farm people went to bed early. He and his companion had stopped at a farm house, and when the lady of the house came to the door, they introduced themselves and asked if it would be possible to stay the night. She invited them in, told them her husband would be in shortly, and invited them to supper. The husband came, they began to eat, and the husband wanted to know what church they represented. They told him which church, whereupon he told them they were welcome to finish their supper and then to take their departure. This was the evening before Thanksgiving. After supper, they left, and it was so late that all the people had gone to bed and there were no lamps shining anywhere. Elder Killian said it was the longest, coldest night he ever remembered. They had no light, and eventually took tracts from their suitcases and built a small fire, trying to keep warm. He said he was never so glad to see the sun rise in the morning.

They proceeded on their way and had only gone a short distance when they saw a lane leading to a house off the road. They turned in and found the people all engaged in killing hogs. They inquired if they might have breakfast and were fed but not invited to stay any longer. They went back to the main road and walked about 25 to 30 miles to Bristol and spent the night there in a hotel.

As was mentioned earlier, meetings were held in homes and public meeting places. Physical abuse was rather uncommon in the 20's, but occasionally it did happen. The missionaries were holding meetings in the Slate Springs school house and the meetings were well attended. Several men of the community were intent on running the Mormons out, but were unsuccessful due to the intervention of people friendly to the Church. The Elders were invited into another community and they had eggs and tomatoes thrown at them. Missionary effort continued, people were converted, and local members began assuming some responsibility. Several of the men were ordained and advanced in the Priesthood, and it was possible to have meetings on a regular basis.

The 1930's

Ivan Barnes served as Sunday School Superintendent for many years, assisted by Harold Goss and Richard Hamby. Sunday School was held regularly; hymns were sung from hard back hymnals, and classes were taught from Sunday School manuals. There were usually three classes - the Adult Class taught by Ivan Barnes, the Intermediate Class taught by Mabel Hyder and the Primary Class taught by Stella Hamby. Ruth Hamby also assisted with Primary. Occasionally plays were presented, poetry read, stories told and parties held.

Elder Wayne J. Stephens moved into the Crossville area in 1938. During that year and the spring of 1939, he and his wife, Ethel, labored diligently to organize the Slate Springs Branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

In the summer of 1939, Elder and Sister Stephens invited all the Elders and Lady Missionaries in the surrounding areas to meet with them and President Tew, President of the East Central States Mission. This conference lasted two days with the missionaries remaining as guests in the Stephens' home. The Slate Springs Branch was organized as a result of this conference.

Sister Mayme Goss Pugmire related that the one and only time she ever walked to Crossville was when she went with her Dad and others to a meeting held in the Courthouse at which President Callis was in attendance. The meeting was good, and when it was over, some of the Elders went to the back of the hall and thanked people for coming and gave out tracts. Some of the group took a lot of tracts and, when the Elders went outside, the tracts were all down on the street or walk. Someone had placed them on the street to be walked on. The Elders gathered them up, brushed them off, put them in their grips, and one said, "That was too bad they did that, for one day they'll want to know what was in those tracts."

Church conferences were usually held in Knoxville, Tennessee, during the late 30's. Elder Stephens, mentioned above, would take a truck off the line he used for motor freight, build seats in the back and transport all those who wished to attend conference. He also used this mode of transportation for church picnics in the Smoky Mountains and to other points of interest.

An Area Conference was held in Crossville at the First Congregational Church by permission of the Reverend Abram Nightingale. People attended from Jamestown, Altamont, Silver Point, Mayland etc.

Of the records now available, William Harold Goss may possibly have been the first in the area to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. He was ordained to the office of an Elder in 1938, having been ordained a Priest in 1930.

The 1940's

Meetings were held in the community school house. When school was no longer held in it, the building became very run down. The members talked among themselves about a place to meet and what to do about it, but money was very scarce. In 1946, two lady missionaries, Rowena Russell and Meta Johnson came into the area, lived with members, organized the Primary and began obtaining pledges from members. The members then began obtaining pledges from friends and business people to construct our own chapel. One-third of the cost of the building and a clear title to the land were required before the building could be started. Also the pledges could be in work performed.

The Relief Society had been organized in the area in 1943 with the assistance of the Elders and were meeting monthly in members homes. Officers were as follows: Stella Hamby, president; Amanda Adams, First Counselor; Frances Goss, Second Counselor, and Minnie Goss, Secretary. Many of the sisters worked on the building of the chapel, furnishing lunches, cleaning, etc., whatever and whenever needed.

The 1950's

A tract of land about 6 ½ miles north of Crossville on Genesis Road, above what is known as the Lavender Cemetery, was purchased from Lawrence Smith for the sum of \$100.00. Working with church officials, a plan was obtained for a small four-room chapel with a foyer and two restrooms. Actual construction began in 1951, and labor was furnished by volunteers with Harold Goss supervising the construction. The building was of masonry construction, with concrete floors, acoustical tile ceiling, and was heated with a wood stove. The chapel was dedicated in the spring of 1957.

Glenn Goss was ordained to the office of Elder in October 1948 and was called by the East Central States Mission President, President Williams, to be the first Branch President. Glenn Goss served as the Slate Springs Branch President until 1956.

Once the Chapel was available, the programs and activities of the Church expanded. The Relief Society was now able to meet in the building and even had a Singing Mothers' Choir, with a nonmember as pianist and others in the choir. The Primary, YWMIA, YMMIA, and Priesthood became organized and active.

The 1960's

In 1960 an additional 2 ½ acres of land adjoining the church property was purchased from Trixen and Robert L. Phillips for the sum of \$187.50. The membership was growing, attendance was improving, and the need for a larger building was becoming apparent.

Many missionary couples came into Slate Springs during the next few years (1965 thru 1971). The missionaries who served as Branch Presidents were Elders Ray King, Fred Nash, Stephen Bunnell, Lavon Powell, and Doral Cutler. These men gave much to our area and hastened the growth here. We will ever be thankful for them. Our area and our activities expanded during these years. Our area, at varying times, included parts of Rhea, Bledsoe, Putman, and Pickett Counties in addition to Cumberland County. Our activities included youth conferences and sports activities.

In 1968, the basketball team consisted of James Hassler, Jerry Hassler, Terry Hassler, Sammy Hassler, Dale Ford, John Ford, Ernest Barnwell, Leslie Goss, Danny Crabtree and Richard Lambert with coaches Dennis Adams and Jack Murphy. They won the East Tennessee Tournament in Knoxville, the Tennessee-Kentucky-West Virginia Tournament in Charleston, W. Va., and entered the World Championship Tournament in Salt Lake City, Utah, as champions of the Northeastern United States. The young men were eliminated from competition by being defeated by teams from Colorado and Utah, but it was an experience they shall ever remember. Members of the branch worked diligently raising funds for these young men to make the trip to Utah. They traveled in a U-Haul truck, riding and sleeping in the back, cooking "home-made meals", and also taking some lodging from friends in the West.

The 1970's

In 1969 the young men earned the District Sportsmanship award in basketball. In 1960 they also won the soft ball competition. In 1970, they again won the District Basketball Sportsmanship award. Also in 1970 they won the District Volleyball Championship.

As membership and attendance grew, it soon became apparent that the church needed to be more centrally located. In 1972, land was purchased from Hugh and Helen Davenport on the Genesis Road closer to Crossville. Also in 1972, at the time the Stake was created, the Slate Springs Branch was renamed the Crossville Branch. However, Slate Springs will always be remembered as the place the gospel got its start in this county.

Plans were made to build a larger chapel, and this time \$8,000.00 would be needed. It took many bake sales, bazaars, yard sales, dinners, assessments, etc., to reach the goal. In addition to raising the necessary funds, attendance had to be raised, also. Many visits were made encouraging members to more active participation and involvement. We finally had an average of 45 people attending weekly.

On October 6, 1974 ground was broken for the new building, and on December 15, 1974, the letter authorizing construction was received. The construction cost for the new building was estimated to be \$123,000. The congregation moved to this new and spacious single phase building on June 19, 1976, and it was formally dedicated January 28, 1979 (per historical records from Salt Lake). The attendance at the dedication was approximately one hundred.

During the time funds were being raised for our new building, an assessment of \$1,740.00 for construction of the Washington D.C. Temple was also received. The assessment was received on February 23, 1969. On May 3, 1970, the Slate Springs Branch received a plaque for completing their temple assessment, the first to complete their assessment in the District. Several of the branch members including Harold Goss, Frances Patton, Lenora Elmore, Linda Potter, and Sandra Goss went to the Washington Temple open house in the fall of 1974. During 1975, members had their very first opportunity to participate in temple ordinances at the Washington D. C. Temple. Bus excursions were organized by the Stake to transport members to the Temple to perform temple ordinances. A partial listing of those attending were Austin and LaRue Hamby, Glenn and Mary Goss, Jim and Bernice Hamby, Tom and Ellen Jenkins, Jerry and Sharon Hassler, Dennis and Juanita Adams, Amanda Adams, Roger and Gail Hyder, Frances Patton, Linda Patton, Linda Potter, Hilda Geer, Sherron Devos, Myrtle McDonald and possibly others.

On November 2, 1974, our first missionary, Elder Terry G. Hassler, reported to the MTC in Provo, Utah in preparation to fill a mission to the Netherlands. Neither of Terry's parents were members of the church, but he had the support of the members of the area and filled a very successful mission. In 1983, Claire Jordan, a convert to the church and Keith Hamby were called on missions to South America. Also John and Margaret Raper left our area to serve a mission at the Salt Lake Temple and Joseph and Eleanore Barney were called on a mission to Wyoming. These mission calls greatly increased the spirituality of the members.

On July 4, 1976, the Branch entered a float in the Bi-Centennial Parade and won second place plus a fifty dollar prize. The float depicted the Mormon Handcart Pioneers. This was the first and only endeavor for a float.

As the Stake grew, our involvement did, too. Welfare assessments were given out, and members had many opportunities to work together to meet these assessments. The Crossville Branch raised pigs, grew potatoes, yellow crookneck squash, pimento peppers, sweet corn and grew sugar cane to make molasses. The fellowshipping on these projects was as important as the financial gain.

In 1976 Austin Hamby was called as Branch President and served faithfully for 10 years. During his administration, the branch matured and grew in spirituality and Priesthood strength. Some of this strength came from newcomers who chose Crossville as a great place to retire.

The 1980's

As membership and activity grew, it soon became apparent that a second-phase addition to the existing building would be needed. Plans to develop the new addition began in 1981 with a goal to reach an average attendance of one hundred persons in Sacrament meetings. Again much work was done to raise the necessary funds and also to raise the attendance. On March 27, 1983, the membership began meeting at various places while construction workers joined the old building with the new. During this time when construction interfered with the meetings, the group held meetings in the National Guard Armory, the Art Circle Library, and eventually on the patio of James M. Hamby's home. The members began meeting again in the enlarged building on October 9, 1983. The first meeting was a Fast and Testimony meeting.

“March 17, 1983, President F. Eugene Muggridge and Brother Mac McKoy, Southeast Area Real Estate Representative, met in Crossville with Mr. Hugh Davenport who donated three acres of land to the Crossville Branch. The land is adjacent to the present church property and was deeded to the Crossville Branch.” (Historical Notes by Gene Muggridge)

An Open House was held in the enlarged building November 13, 1983. The dedication was held on June 17, 1984, during the Crossville Session of Stake Conference. There were 265 in attendance. Apostle Russell M. Nelson and Elder Spencer Osborne of the Quorum of the Seventy were the visiting General Authorities during the Stake Conference. Elder Osborne dedicated the building addition which included a new chapel.

The Crossville Branch began the Sunday Consolidated Meeting Schedule which was recommended by the Church during 1980. The purpose of the Sunday meeting schedule was to allow members more time for productive family life, individual and family study of the scriptures and the gospel, and self-initiated Christian service. The Branch implemented the program using schedule B which began with Sacrament Meeting, then Sunday School and concluded with Priesthood, Relief Society, Young Women and Primary classes. Later the Branch changed to Schedule A, which began with Sunday School and concluded with Sacrament Meeting.

At various times, Home Study and Early Morning Seminary classes were held. Ronda Geer and Keith Hamby were the first to complete the four-year seminary program and receive a diploma. The class has grown every year as more and more youth reach high school age.

The church grew throughout the Crossville area. It became possible to receive Church Conference Broadcasts via a satellite receiver at the Stake Center and many journeyed there to watch the conference sessions. A satellite receiver was purchased for the Crossville building so that members can now watch the televised broadcasts in our own chapel.

Also a temple was built in Atlanta, Georgia that serves the people of this area. Assessments for constructing the temple were given out, the financial assessments were met, and many went to the temple during the open house and dedication. Members began getting their lives in order to obtain temple recommends. During 1988 and 1989 over three hundred ordinances were performed by members of the Branch. The spirituality of the Branch has increased since the members began attending the temple.

The Relief Society Visiting Teachers have attained 100% visiting teaching many times, and the home teachers have attained over 90% visits to the Branch families. Much work is being done to improve the fellowshipping of members and nonmembers. Pot-luck suppers are held regularly; the choir has functioned beautifully many times, thanks to Sister Cynthia Barker, director and Sister Colleen Goss Wallace, pianists.

In 1985 a Jerry Hassler was called as the new Branch President. He served for a total of 10 years, either as Branch President or Bishop, giving many wonderful years of service and leadership to the Crossville Saints and also, previously, as counselor to President Hamby. So his years of service were long and devoted to the saints in this corner of Heavenly Father's vineyard.

In July of 1989, our first Pioneer Day celebration was held at the chapel with a chicken barbeque and trimmings and even Blue Grass music. Around twelve hundred dollars was raised, and this will probably be an annual event to help with the financial responsibilities of the Church.

Missionaries have recently been assigned to this area again and in October 1989 we had two baptisms and are looking forward to many more people coming into the Church. There were many past missionaries instrumental in our growth. We are thankful for all those who have helped us along the way. Also, we have been blessed with wonderful Stake leadership and high councilmen who have been committed to their callings.

By 1989 there were 235 members in the Crossville Branch, and 141 families being visited by 26 home teachers and 30 visiting teachers. There were 6 High Priests, 22 Elders, 2 Priests, 5 Teachers and 3 Deacons. There were 105 sisters in Relief Society, 9 young women, 17 young men, 14 primary children with an average attendance of 74 in Sacrament Meetings.

The 1990's

The 1990's brought glorious changes to Crossville. In December of 1991 the Crossville Ward was organized, with Bishop Jerry Hassler called as the new Bishop. President Barber writes: "On December 15, 1991, President Talley and I went to Crossville to organize the Crossville Ward. Jerry Hassler was installed as the Bishop. He had already served as Branch President for six years,

but we felt impressed that he should serve a time longer as the Bishop.”

Bishop Hassler served for another four and a half years before being released with the calling of Harold Grieshop as Bishop of the Crossville Ward in June of 1995. In reading the history of the Crossville Ward, you will find that Bishop Hassler grew up in the Crossville area, and was among the youth on that great basketball team that received so many awards. I'm sure many of the saints can remember teaching this young “Jerry” as a child and teenager. Then to see his spiritual growth, to become their Branch President and Bishop, his teachers and leaders must have felt their spirits soar to know they had some influence into the making of this great man!

The Family History Center was organized in the Crossville Ward in 1996, with the formal dedication and a reception planned for Sunday, June 1, 1997 at 3:00 p.m. Sister Barbara Cooper has been involved in Genealogy work for many years as well as being the Ward Name Extraction Coordinator. Her tireless work will forever be remembered, as she was the catalyst behind much of the Genealogy work in the Ward for many years, long before the Family History Center was established.

With the creation of the Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake, November 17, 1996, eight of our Wards and Branches went with the new stake, and eight remained in the Knoxville Tennessee Stake. The Crossville Ward was one to remain! The time difference between Knoxville and Crossville causes these great saints to rise a little earlier than most of us to reach the Stake Center for meetings.

In His Own Words

Bishop Harold Franklin Grieshop

In selecting a location to retire to, I was drawn to the Crossville, Tennessee area at first through an article I read in Mother Earth News. Upon visiting the town and the Crossville Branch (it had not been made a ward at that time), I knew I wanted to be with the warm, caring people that made up the body of Saints in the Crossville area. After serving as Bishop here for two years now, I still feel that way. I have come to love the way the Crossville Saints truly love and serve one another.

The day I entered my office for the first time as the new Bishop, I wrote on the blackboard “What Would Jesus Do?” I have asked myself that question every time I have made any decision concerning the Crossville Ward and the special people that are members here. The work of the Lord is moving forth on this beautiful plateau in the Cumberland Mountains. I foresee the Ward splitting in the near future. The missionaries serving in this part of the Lord's vineyard have had great success. I believe the work will continue to move forward as long as these people continue to love one another, nurture new members and open their arms and their hearts to the newcomer as they had done to me.

I have a testimony of the truthfulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I know that He stands at the head of His Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I know that Joseph Smith was called as a Prophet and representative of the Lord Jesus Christ and that Gordon B. Hinckley is a living Prophet today. President Hinckley receives inspiration from Jesus Christ Himself to conduct the affairs of His Church. I have a testimony that the Lord is aware of the Saints in the Crossville Ward and that His Hand has guided the decisions I have made on their behalf. I know that God loves His children and wants what is truly best for them. I am thankful to be a part of His great work and leave you my testimony in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Bishop Harold Franklin Grieshop

And Finally

Isn't it great, the love the Gospel brings to all His children! Crossville is truly blessed with loving hearts and open arms.

LaFollette/Cumberland Gap Branches
(and Speedwell Saints)

Historical Background

- 1882 Spring of 1882, Elders W. H. Joseph and James Adams visited Powell River Area
1882-85 Elders continued to labor in Fincastle, Campbell, Claiborne, Union, and Hawkins Counties
- 1885 Powell River Branch organized, Monday, Jul 27--Frank Housley, Branch President.
Members who were present at Branch organization:
George Sheperd, Eliza Jane Paul, Martha Eleanor Riggs,
Nancy Housley, Frank Housley, George Washington Riggs,
Minerva Jane Arthur and Mary Elizabeth Riggs
- 1885 Sabbath School organized in Powell River Branch Aug 16
Frank Housley - Superintendent
- 1887 Sabbath School continued under Frank Housley's leadership until the latter part of February, when he and his wife, Eliza Ann, immigrated to Utah, going with the March First Company of Saints
- 1887 Powell River Sunday School discontinued.
Early Speedwell saints met at Pearly Shipley's home for S.S.
First Church established on Weaver's Knob on Jones' Ridge
- 1948 Duff, Tennessee; small church building built
- 1950's Speedwell members - dependent on the Knoxville Branch
- 1954-55 Haynes Ridge Chapel built by Speedwell Group
- 1969 Speedwell Saints dependent on Knoxville South Branch, October
- 1970 Speedwell members were transferred from Knoxville South Branch to the Oak Ridge Branch, October 10
- 1970 The merger of the LaFollette and Speedwell members did not include the Tazewell, Tennessee Group
- 1970 LaFollette Dependent Branch organized in November--Brother Muggridge called as Branch President --Dependent on Oak Ridge
- 1971 First combined Preisthood meeting held - January 17
- 1971 First Sacrament Meeting held- January 17
- 1971 First combined Relief Society meeting - held January 26
- 1974 Haynes Ridge Chapel sold July 4 to Silas Mosingo, it burned a few years later.
- 1975 LaFollette Independent Branch organized July 6--Brother Omer Delker was called as Branch President
- 1976 Tazewell Group combined with LaFollette in May
- 1977 Ground breaking for new LaFollette Chapel, February 26
- 1977 First meeting in new building - November 13
- 1977 Open House held November 27

- 1978 Chapel dedicated April 16 by Eugene H. Perkins
 1979 Tazewell Branch organized/split from LaFollette, September 30
 1996 LaFollette Branch became a part of the new Knoxville Tennessee
 Cumberland Stake, November 17

List of Meeting Places and Dates

- 1970 22 Nov - Small home with chain link fence located on the corner of 13th and West Hemlock Street. Held the first combined sacrament meetings.
 1971 7 Nov - Home in Fincastle community. Held the first combined Sunday School
 1973 4 Nov - Moved back into Allen Quinn's home located behind the present day Middle School
 1974 24 Mar - Moved to Rogers Dock, home and office of Mary Benton
 1974 14 Apr - Moved to Carl Shipley's home in Claiborne County, 2 miles east of Powell Valley schools
 1974 13 Oct - Moved into Hugh Claiborne's home located 5 miles east of LaFollette on old Highway 63.
 1977 Jul - Moved into the Speedwell Community Center located at the Powell Valley Schools, approximately 20 miles east of LaFollette on old hwy 63
 1977 13 Nov - Moved into the New Church owned building located on Yoakum Circle

LaFollette Branch

<u>Presidents</u>		<u>Counselors</u>
F. Eugene Muggridge*	1970	Alan Quinn, Grover Smith
Omer Delker	Jul 1975	Omer Delker, Roy Gene Smith
Wesley D. Leishman	Oct 1977	Roy Gene Smith, Lynn Chumley
Lynn E. Chumley	Oct 1978	Lynn Chumley, Roy Gene Smith
Larry L. Elam	Nov 1980	Ernest Gibson, Charlie Riggs
		Bruce E. Williams, Arnold Jones,
		Charlie Riggs, David Grigsby,
		Russell Figueria, John Coble
Wayne Finstad	Jan 1984	Roy Gene Smith, Charlie Riggs,
		John Coble
Allen O. Quinn	Sep 1985	Larry Elam, Charlie Riggs
Randal Brewer	Oct 1987	Larry Elam, Charlie Riggs
Ray Pearson	Jan 1994	Larry Elam, James Smith
F. Eugene Muggridge	1995	Larry Elam, James Smith, Ivan
		Armstrong, Jorge Galvan, Mel
		Loudermilk

(*) I was called to serve as the Acting Branch President to a not- yet- identified Branch. Arthur C.

Neeley, First Counselor in the Knoxville District Presidency, called and set me apart. My assignment was to receive the Speedwell members into the Oak Ridge Branch, combine the Speedwell and LaFollette Groups, unify the group, find and secure a building site, and build a church building. In this assignment, I was to report weekly to the Oak Ridge Branch President. The arrangement was set up under Kendall L. Brady, Oak Ridge Branch President. Interestingly, in this assignment, I received no priesthood “keys” to support my position as Acting Branch President. I conducted no temple recommend interviews, held no worthiness interviews, nor was I responsible for financial matters. Lamont Bate, Financial Clerk for the Oak Ridge Branch kept me honest and maintained excellent financial records for the LaFollette Branch. However, I did conduct personal worthiness interviews. I let each member know what the Lord expected.

Cumberland Gap Branch (Tazewell)

Historical Background

- 1950's Tazewell Group met for Sacrament Meetings with Knoxville Branch
- 1970 Tazewell Group met in the home of Charles England. This group looked to Morristown for shepherding.
- 1976 Tazewell Group combined with LaFollette Group - approximately May
- 1979 Tazewell Branch Organized/split from LaFollette - September 30
met in Charlie and Birtie England’s home
- 1982 Tazewell Branch moved to Gap Creek Church in Arthur, Tennessee
- 1986 Tazewell Branch Chapel on Highway 63 completed - October 19
- 1987 Second Phase of Chapel began in July
- 1988 Tazewell Saints met in newly completed building in April
- 1989 Tazewell Branch name changed to Cumberland Gap Branch - September 24
- 1996 Cumberland Gap Branch became a part of the new Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake - November 17
- 1997 Cumberland Gap organized into Ward - March 9

Branch Presidents/Bishops

Counselors

Br. Pres	Allen Chamberlain	1979	Charlie England, Mike Swanner
Br. Pres	Lynn Chumley	1981	Wayne England, Larry Martin, Johnny Smith, Mike Swanner
Br. Pres.	Wayne England	1986	Bruce Taylor, Lynn Chumley, Carl Walter, Trey Smith, Dallan Leishman
Br. Pres.	Carl Walter	1993	Fred Roark, Mike Hoskins, Trey Smith
Br. Pres	Lonnie “Trey” Smith	1995	Robert Cobb, George Crowder
Bishop	Lonnie “Trey” Smith	1996	Robert Cobb, George Crowder

History of LaFollette/Cumberland Gap Branch and early Speedwell Saints

It is nearly impossible to untangle the histories of these two Branches. Not only are they close geographically, they are closely related as families as well. I'm always finding out new family relationships as I talk with the Saints from this area. The stories about the early Saints in Campbell and Cumberland Counties, who are ancestors of these lovely Saints, pioneers of the Church, go back to the late 1800's; so their history will be told together.

President F. Eugene Muggridge was kind enough to spend many hours writing the following history for the LaFollette Saints, which, of course, sometimes crosses over into Speedwell, Tazewell and Cumberland Gap.

Many of the early converts from the East Tennessee area were encouraged to join the saints in Utah. Martha Jane Beeler, daughter of Thomas Jefferson Riggs, remains in the LaFollette area. After the death of Brother Riggs, a chest containing many items and records of the period were found. He left a record of missionary activities from spring 1882 through December 31, 1913 as well as a record of the Powell River Sunday School. During 1883, Elders Hunter and Godfry held meetings in Fincastle, but soon left due to a prejudiced community. East Tennessee communities were hostile to Mormon Missionaries in the early days as the Church developed.

A small building was built in Campbell County by the members living in Duff, Tennessee. The local members maintained and owned the building. These Latter-day Saints families who were isolated by great distances from Church Headquarters made unofficial decisions in behalf of the Church. The building was constructed during 1948 using member donated materials, erected with donated labor, on land donated by Charles Wright. The Duff, Tennessee members used the facility for several years. When the coal mines downsized, the brethren and their families migrated north to find jobs in the automotive industry. The little building was later purchased by Mary Wright in order to control the use and to protect it from abuse. Sister Wright rented the building for a family dwelling place and later the building was torn down.

During 1954-55 the Speedwell Group took it upon themselves to build their own meetinghouse on Haynes Ridge. The Speedwell members worked hard growing green peppers, corn, squash and other crops to earn money for their church building. The little building was located on the crest of Haynes Ridge overlooking the valley, accessible only by several miles of narrow dirt roads. When the winter and spring rains came, the roads were almost impassable. The members were kind, gentle and loved the land. The building on Haynes Ridge was sold on July 4, 1974 to Silas Mosingo, then it burned a few years later.

Merging the Two Groups, LaFollette and Speedwell

LaFollette, Tennessee, first came into my personal agenda during the fall of 1970. During the summer of 1970 President Eugene H. Perkins (new District President for the Knoxville area) discussed with President Kendall L. Brady, President of Oak Ridge Branch, his desire to transfer the Speedwell group, located in Claiborne County from the Knoxville Branch to the Oak Ridge Branch. President Brady then began a series of discussions with his counselors (Lewis Edgel and Gene Muggridge) on how to manage the large new territory including most of Claiborne County.

President Perkins felt that the Campbell County and Speedwell members of Claiborne County ought to be combined for strength, to find a building site and then build a Chapel for the combined group. President Brady worried with how to manage the new area and the challenge of traveling there for meetings on a regular basis. Due to the distance, rural and backwoods communities, most thought it not an attractive assignment. During deliberations on the subject at a Branch Presidency meeting in Oak Ridge, a clear, pure feeling flowed over me and the thought came into my mind, "Send me, I'm single and have no family obligations to tie me to Oak Ridge." I spoke up and suggested to President Brady that he assign me the task. He looked at me with an expression of surprise and then pleasure. After some further discussion, President Brady assigned me to go with President David Fuqua on the appointed Sunday to accept the new members. I was directed to work with the two groups, to merge the Speedwell and the LaFollette groups into one, to begin holding sacrament meetings in LaFollette, to find a building site acceptable by both groups, and build a building.

On October 11, 1970, the Speedwell, Tennessee members were transferred from the Knoxville South Branch to the Oak Ridge Branch. (On this same day, Lyle B. Sasser was sustained as the new Oak Ridge Branch President and Kendall L. Brady assigned to the Knoxville District.) The official member transfer took place on Haynes Ridge in the member-built wood building. (The transfer did not include members from the Tazewell, Tennessee group.) David Fuqua, President of the Knoxville South Branch, Dick Zanker, Branch Clerk for the Knoxville South Branch, and Gene Muggridge, First Counselor in the Oak Ridge Branch Presidency attended the historic meeting. President Fuqua presented the concept to the Speedwell congregation for discussion and their sustaining vote. The concept was voted on by the members in attendance and sustained, thus transferring priesthood authority to the Oak Ridge Branch for shepherding the membership of the Speedwell, Tennessee congregation. David Fuqua handed Gene Muggridge the official member roster listing the names of all known members for that area, 52 members of 27 families.

During the meeting, I was introduced to Wilma Smith, a young widow, and her two daughters, Dana and Susan, members of the Speedwell Group. Approximately one year later, Wilma and I were married in the Salt Lake Temple and were sealed with her two daughters.

Members of Claiborne County lived in Tazewell and Speedwell, each area separated by approximately twenty miles distance. Speedwell is approximately twenty miles from LaFollette,

the distance from the Claiborne County line to Oak Ridge being 52 miles. The Tazewell Group met in the home of Charles England, Tazewell, Tennessee. This small group looked to Morristown for shepherding and merged into the LaFollette Branch at a later time.

The Speedwell members met in a member-built one-room wood building located on Haynes Ridge. Their Priesthood Leader was Carl Shipley, a local farmer and saw mill operator. He lived in the valley near Powell Valley School. Each Sunday morning, Brother Shipley drove up the mountain to Haynes Ridge to the one-room Chapel. Members along the way would see Brother Shipley and his mother, Pearly. They would follow them to the Church for Sunday School.

The LaFollette Group at that time met in the home of their Priesthood Leader, Allen Quinn, a local Pharmacist. During 1970, the Oak Ridge Branch boundaries covered parts of several counties that included all of Anderson and Campbell County.

The Struggle to Keep a Place for Church Meetings

A meeting place was rented in LaFollette at the corner of 13th Street and West Hemlock Street. The Speedwell and LaFollette groups joined together on November 22, 1970 at 6:30 PM and held their first sacrament meeting with 35 in attendance.

President Perkins was inspired to combine the two groups. He felt that both groups, when combined, would create a critical membership group that would be self-sustaining. His influence was felt throughout both communities for good. The Speedwell Group wanted to build the new Branch building in the valley, near Powell Valley School, or near the Speedwell Post Office. Several sites were inspected in those areas. The Speedwell Group were in full agreement that the church meeting place ought to be moved off Haynes Ridge, to a more prominent and accessible location. The Haynes Ridge meeting house served its purpose in unifying the Speedwell members and brought into focus a regularity in Sunday meetings.

Approximately fifty potential building sites were inspected in both Campbell and Claiborne Counties, many of them by Church Real Estate staff. Donald A. Jordan, District and Stake Physical Facility Director examined every one with President Muggridge. The present site was inspected by Gene Muggridge, Roy Gene Smith and Omer Delker several months prior to becoming available for purchase. When making the first walk over the property, the spirit confirmed to each that this was the right place to locate the LaFollette Building. Several months later, Ms. Fannie Richardson telephoned Mavis Gibson to say the Myres family had decided to sell the three acres to the Church. I received a letter dated May 6, 1975 from Ms. Richardson re-stating her verbal conversation, that she was ready to sell three acres of land, worth \$15,000 to the Church. I received a formal appraisal for the three- acre tract, dated May 20, 1975, from the Tom C. Leach Real Estate Company, listing the land's fair market value at \$13,500.

The two groups supported the common cause, feeling the spirit of rightness, focusing their resources, and accomplishing the task. The members are to be commended for their righteous effort. Today, there is a Chapel, Cumberland Gap Branch, erected in the valley on State Highway 63, approximately five miles east of Powell Valley School; thus, fulfilling the dream of those Speedwell Saints who so willingly obeyed President Perkins' leadership and direction. .

During the approximately five years that I presided over the LaFollette Branch, we relocated the meeting place eight times, partly due to local resentment, sale of property, and inadequate facilities. It required great effort and coordination to physically move all the furniture, piano, and materials.

Diplomatic efforts were made to combine all the Speedwell and LaFollette Groups so that the newly- created branch appeared seamless and unified. The first combined priesthood meeting was held on the afternoon of January 17, 1971, just prior to the evening Sacrament Meeting. The first combined Relief Society meeting was held January 26, 1971.

During a rainy Saturday morning, November 6, 1971, being moved by the spirit of the Lord, Wilma and I drove to the Fincastle Community in search of a new meeting place. I inquired about the neighborhood for an available building to rent, without any positive results. I drove to a small country store to make one last inquiry. I knew that the owner did not favor Mormons. He was alone in the store and I ask him about a house or building to rent. I was careful not to mention the Church. He immediately walked from behind the counter, and began to pace the floor, his head bowed as though in deep thought. He paced for what seemed several minutes before speaking. As he paced, the feeling came to my mind that he had information about a building. Finally, he said, "Yes there is a house across the road; however, I'm sure they will not rent it to a church group." Never at any time did I mention a church. I thanked him and left, called the owner, rented the house, notified Grover Smith, and prepared for church meetings in the new building the next day, Sunday.

The lease expired on the rented house in Fincastle, and all furniture was moved on October 30, 1973, to Carl Shipley's home in Speedwell. The youth began meeting at Mavis Gibson's home, Primary meetings were held on Thursday afternoon at Brother Quinn's home, and Sunday meetings were held at Allen Quinn's home.

During March 1974, the members moved into a home at Rogers Boat Dock that Mary Quinn rented for an accounting office. Parking was limited to 4 cars at the home. The KOA office parking lot was adequate and within walking distance. However, neighbors protested and the place was used only four Sundays. We then moved during April 1974, to Carl Shipley's home near Powell Valley School. Brother Shipley's was not large enough to accommodate the members. During October 1974, we moved into a small home near Fincastle owned by a Mr. Hugh Claiborn.

During the Spring of 1974, Silas Mosingo had indicated to Grover Smith that he wanted to purchase the Speedwell Chapel and convert it into a home. He was moving from Michigan to Speedwell as soon as he could obtain a home. A price for the building and the one-acre lot was

given by Brother Jim Judge, Church Real Estate Office. The Power of Attorney was delegated to me by the Church to finalize the transaction. Brother Judge sent me a warranty deed which had been prepared and signed by the Presiding Bishop, Victor L. Brown. The strange thing was that Mr. Mosingo insisted on meeting at Cove Lake State Park to make the final exchange of money for the deed. He absolutely refused to meet at the bank in LaFollette. He and I agreed to meet on July 4, 1974 at high noon at a designated place in the park. Not knowing the man, I was very apprehensive about the meeting place and about receiving a large sum of money.

I lay awake worrying about the unusual arrangement. In preparation for the meeting and in an attempt to remove the fear that was beginning to gnaw inside me, I made arrangements for Roy Gene Smith, Grover Smith, and Leck Mayes to stay close to me during the exchange. These men were Elders, each weighed 250 pounds or greater and carried no fat. The Lord had blessed each with much physical strength. They could be tough if they had to be. Leck Mayes had just moved to Cumberland Gap from Cody, Wyoming where he had been running a ranch and wrestling cows for thirty years. Grover was 6 feet, 4 inches tall and could run like a deer. Roy Gene worked at repairing coal mine equipment and didn't know his own strength. I felt good hiding behind these good men.

We met at a previously chosen place. Mr. Mozinso came alone and counted out the cash money on the tail-gate of Grover Smith's truck, while we four looked on. While the money lay there in full view, I gave him the warranty deed for the Speedwell building and Grover Smith occupied Mr. Mosingo in small talk, I picked up the money and stuffed it into a bag, then we transferred the bag to the bank. I was a little nervous to say the least, until that money was safe in the bank.

During July 1977, the Branch moved to the Speedwell Community Center located on the Powell Valley School grounds. This was the last move before moving into our new building during the first few days of November 1977. With all the difficulty in keeping a meeting place and moving eight times, the Branch never missed a Sunday meeting. Grover Smith was blessed to move the piano each of the seven times. Finally, on the eighth move, the piano was taken into a member's home for family use.

Eugene H. Perkins, President of the Knoxville Stake, phoned me at 6:30 am, Sunday, July 6, 1975 to tell me of his plans to re-organize the LaFollette Branch. The change had been previously discussed by President Perkins with Bishop Sasser and myself. I was released as the President of the LaFollette Branch that day, July 6, 1975. Omer Delker, retired newspaper manager who resided in White Oak community was sustained as the new Branch President. He and his wife, Jenny, and young son, Donny (8 years old at the time) moved from the Dayton, Ohio area onto her parent's (Newt and Sara Ida Arnold) thirty-acre farm in White Oak and lived in the home of her childhood. To Jenny it was like returning to relive childhood dreams with their young son. President Delker was a man sent by Heavenly Father to Campbell County. The people loved him and supported him to finish raising approximately \$34,000 of local funds to pay the local member share for the new building on Yoacum Circle. The Tazewell group was combined with the

LaFollette group approximately May 1976.

Omer Delker conducted and Eugene H. Perkins presided at groundbreaking ceremonies held on Saturday, February 26, 1977. Those speaking were F. Eugene Muggridge, past Branch President, Donald A. Jordan, Stake Physical Facilities Representative, and Eugene H. Perkins, Knoxville Stake President. Turning the first shovels of earth: Brother Perkins, Brother Jordan, President Delker, Arthur C. Neeley, First Counselor in the Stake Presidency and Brother Muggridge. An open house was conducted during November 27, 1977 to show the new building to the public.

President Delker was stricken and nearly died with Guillaume-Barre Syndrome (GBS). His wife, Jenny, nursed him to nearly full recovery during the winter of 1975-76 in the very isolated community of White Oak. Several times that winter, they were without power for long periods of time due to ice and snow. During the long, hard winter, while Omer was sick and nearly incapacitated, Jenny made a commitment that she would not allow her family to live through another winter in White Oak, Tennessee if she could do anything about it. President Delker did recover. They did live in White Oak one more winter. During the early fall of 1977, Jenny made a trip to Utah to visit a daughter; and while there, she purchased a home. Sister Delker phoned President Delker to inform him. It was during a Branch Presidency meeting, when the phone call came from Jenny announcing her purchase of their home in Utah. She urged him to come quickly. With tears streaming down his face, President Delker announced the news to his counselors. He didn't want to go, but stated that he had finished his mission in LaFollette. Due to President Delker's sudden need to move, Wesley Leishman, Cumberland Gap State Park Manager, was appointed as new Branch President approximately October 30, 1977. Omer Delker never had the opportunity to meet in the new building. He moved to Utah two weeks before the members moved into the new building. President Leishman actually lived in Middlesboro, Kentucky. His counselors were Roy Gene Smith, a machinist, and Lynn Chumley, a coal miner, both of whom lived in the Speedwell community of Claiborne County.

The New LaFollette Building

The LaFollette, Speedwell and Tazewell members moved into the new building and held their first meetings using the new facility on November 13, 1977. The record shows that the building, furnishings, and landscaping cost \$200,000. During 1975-76 the member portion of the building cost reduced from 40 percent to 30 percent of the total cost. When the change occurred, it was learned that LaFollette already had their required amount, \$34,000, in the bank. The Stake portion was \$26,000 for a total of \$60,000 local share.

The dedication services were conducted on April 16, 1978 by Wesley Leishman, Branch President. Mavis Gibson wrote the special hymn "Bless Thy House", sung by the Branch choir. Speakers for the service were Omer D. Delker, and F. Eugene Muggridge, both former Branch Presidents. The facility and grounds were dedicated by Eugene H. Perkins, President of the Knoxville Stake.

A note from the journal of Mavis Gibson- 16th of April, 1978: “ A day the members of this area had dreamed of for a long time came at last! This was the day our chapel was dedicated to the Lord for His service. All of our former Branch Presidents spoke - President Muggridge, President Delker (who came all the way from Provo, Utah to be with us) and our present President Wesley D. Leishman. We sang ‘We Love Thy House, O God’ for our opening song and performed a special number by the choir that I wrote called ‘Bless Thy House’. We really do not have an organized choir that can call themselves accomplished. We had not had an opportunity to practice much. In our prayer of our final practice that morning Elder Ekstrand prayed that we might have help from unseen voices. This might well have been, for we had many compliments about it having been the most beautiful music they had heard.” The words to the song follow:

With thanks to God our hearts are filled.
Our eyes are wet with tears.
This is the dream for which we’ve worked
and prayed for many years.

To raise a house to Thy great name,
A place to call Thine own.
To do Thy work within it’s walls,
And worship at Thy throne.

Thou hast blest our efforts, Lord,
And strengthened us when weak,
And led us in a straightened way,
When truth adorned our feet.

So calm our trembling joy, oh Lord,
And let Thy spirit bide.
Please bless this house we dedicate to Thee,
To dwell inside.)

“All of the talks touched on the theme that we can now go forth to touch the life of the community with the principles of the Gospel. Through our efforts the whole community can be made better.”

Branch President A Second Time

by Eugene Muggridge

Nineteen years and six months passed since my first assignment ended in LaFollette. President Russell Barber, President of the Knoxville Tennessee Stake, invited me into his office on Wednesday, December 7, 1994, following a High Council meeting and discussed a new priesthood leader for the LaFollette Branch. At the time, I was not concerned about my being selected to serve in LaFollette. We discussed several individuals who could serve as the new Branch President. President Barber said that he felt that I was the next Branch President. Ray and Leah

Pearson had moved to LaFollette and served there during the past year, a one-year assignment, as a missionary couple. Ray was the Branch President. The Pearsons were scheduled to be released during January 1995 to end their one-year mission. I dismissed the thought that I could be the next Branch President. (In January, 1994, we called Ray Pearson to be a Stake Missionary and Branch President in LaFollette. He and Leah had been planning to go on a full-time mission, but accepted our call to serve a full-time Stake Mission instead. This really gave the LaFollette Branch a boost. Ray and Leah moved into an apartment in LaFollette and did a great job for a year, and then went on a full time Genealogy Mission in Salt Lake (President Barber's Stake History)

I was serving as High Councilman assigned to the Cumberland Gap Branch. During the Stake High Council meeting of January 4, 1995, President Barber presented my name to be sustained as the new LaFollette Branch President replacing Ray Pearson. At 9 PM that evening I was sustained. At that moment a great burden descended upon me, consuming my very being. The remainder of the meeting had no relevance. I had completely discounted such a possibility.

I dreaded this new priesthood assignment. President Barber planned to present my name to the LaFollette Branch members on January 15, 1995. I did not want the assignment and began listing reasons to justify my not taking it. The very thought of the assignment was unbearable and overwhelming to me. There were several other brethren who lived in Campbell County. They can serve. Why not call one of them? Several times I felt to phone President Barber and strongly suggest that he consider another - but I didn't.

Early on the morning that I was to be sustained, I expressed my thoughts with pen on paper trying to find relief. As I wrote, the realization came into my mind that revelation comes from God. President Barber had been inspired to select me over all the others, even those who lived in Campbell County. I had intended all along to accept the new call but I had been silently grumbling and complaining. I did not have the spirit of Heavenly Father with me. It was true that I did not want the assignment. I was enjoying my high council work immensely and wanted to be left alone. I had even stayed away from high council meeting this morning. I felt that I couldn't afford to be driving to LaFollette. As I wrote, the feelings of gloom and despair dissipated. Instantly, a fresh spirit of peace swept over me as though someone had turned on a light switch. I immediately felt that I could gladly accept the assignment. During the early hours on Sunday morning, a new feeling flooded my being, faith replaced fear, peace was sweet, and I became a new man.

On November 17, 1996 the Knoxville Tennessee Stake was split, forming the Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake. The LaFollette Branch was one of the eight units within the new Stake.

And Finally, A New Era

The members accepted the challenge to increase sacrament meeting attendance in order to qualify for a chapel addition. In 1994, average Sacrament Meeting attendance was approximately 50. In 1995, it increased to 70, and in 1996 to 80. The member response exceeded expectations and

approval has been granted to add a full chapel and additional class rooms.

A pre-bid meeting was held during March, 1997. The bid-opening meeting was held on Wednesday evening, April 23, 1997 and Harbin Construction Company was the apparent low bidder. Start of construction has been temporarily delayed, but it is expected to start by mid-summer 1997.

Prior to the start of construction, the Branch will move into a rented building located on Highway 63 just east of the Tennessee State Highway Garage. Jason Richburg repainted the church sign designed with Church Logo by Bruce Rankin of Rankin Signs. The sign was built for the original Knoxville Chapel. The sign has been in storage at the LaFollette Branch tool shed for several years. The sign has circulated around the District/Stake and has been used by several of the Branches in this area. It now stands in front of the rented building on Highway 63! As President Muggridge says:

“Isn’t it Great to be a Mormon!”

History of the Cumberland Gap/LaFollette Branch (Condensed)

Sister Carole Chumley spent many hours researching old documents and papers, and spent hours typing up additional information so that the history of the Cumberland Gap Saints could be complete. Thank you, Carole, for all your hard work!

As you will read further on in this history, Missionaries were in and out of Claiborne County since the 1880's, with Saints scattered about the area. In the late 1940's and early 50's some of these Saints had Sunday School in their area, but attended Sacrament Meeting with the Knoxville Branch. Members in the county lived in Tazewell and Speedwell, each area separated by approximately a twenty-mile distance. The Speedwell Saints were combined with LaFollette in 1970, but the Tazewell Group was not included in the merger. They met in the home of Charles England, in Tazewell and looked to Morristown for shepherding.

Finally, as numbers increased and boundaries changed, this small group of Saints was combined with LaFollette in May of 1976. These wonderful members fit right in with the LaFollette Group. They pitched in with raising money for the new LaFollette Chapel that was to be located on Yoakum Circle and rejoiced at the first meeting in the new Chapel on Sunday November 3, 1977, and were grateful to Heavenly Father at the dedication on April 16, 1978.

The Tazewell Saints got to enjoy their new building for about two years before their own Branch was organized on September 30, 1979, with Allen Chamberlain as President, with Charlie England and Mike Swanner as counselors. The small group began meeting in the basement of Charlie England's home located in Tazewell, Tennessee.

While meeting there, Lynn Chumley and his family were asked to attend the Branch and Lynn was called to serve (his second time) as Branch President, having already served as Branch President in LaFollette.

The Branch boundaries included Claiborne County Tennessee, Belle County, Kentucky, and Lee County, Virginia. However, several families from Claiborne County continued on in LaFollette Branch for a period of time. Even today, because so many families are related, you can often find Cumberland Gap Saints at LaFollette Branch functions (or visa versa) to attend special events within their family- - like baptisms, blessings of babies, etc.

In 1983, the little Branch rented the Earl Whitaker house located on Highway 25, going into Tazewell. President Chumley's only had one counselor at this time, Wayne England.

The search for land for a new meetinghouse was soon underway and Charlie England was negotiating about land in the area at the time of his death. He passed away thinking that he had

finally found land for the new church building. However, after his death, land seemed to be impossible to find in the Tazewell area. The search continued and other communities were considered. Then in 1982, land was found! Not only found, but also a church building came with it!

The saints were overjoyed and excited to think they were finally going to have a real church building to meet in. The purchase was finally complete and we began meeting in the old Gap Creek Baptist Church. The Baptists had just built a big new church building and were almost ready to move in - - but not quite. The LDS saints were ready to move in two weeks before the Baptists were ready to move out, so they met in the morning and we met on Sunday evenings.

The second Sunday that we were going to meet in the building, the Baptists held their regular worship service that morning. As the song leader gave out the hymn number and began singing, the song leader found himself singing quite a different hymn than the congregation. Embarrassed, he looked at the front of the hymnal and found that he was singing from a Mormon songbook! The whole congregation was astounded to say the least, for only the pastor and the realtor knew the Mormons had already moved into their building. While meeting in the Gap Creek Meeting house, President Chumley had Larry Martin and Johnny Smith as his counselors as well as calling Wayne England at a later time.

The building at Gap Creek was a very old building and needed a lot of restoration and remodeling to meet the standards the Church has for it's meetinghouses. Soon we were working toward a new attendance goal and working very hard to raise money for the building fund. Our attendance soared as the less active came back to church and accepted callings and grew strong again.

Mostly it was through reactivation that our little Branch grew in spirit as well as in numbers. We learned together, prayed together, laughed together, cried together and worked together and this gave us strength.

We grew sugar cane and had stir-offs where we made the golden molasses that sold like hotcakes in these East Tennessee hills. We had bake sales and dinners and made the famous homemade Hershey chocolate candies that the Mormons in this area were known for making.

We reached our attendance goal and the financial goal, purchasing land in the Powell Valley, between Speedwell and Arthur, on Highway 63. The building was started in May of 1986 and completed and we moved in on October 19, 1986. Wayne England was called to serve as Branch President one week before we moved into the new building. He called as his counselors, Bruce Taylor and Carl Walter. President England served as Branch President for about 7 years, and the membership continued to grow. The Stake made the dividing line for the LaFollette and Tazewell Branches at the county line of Claiborne and Campbell Counties. Due to this change we once again gained an increase in membership.

Less than a year after we moved into our new building, plans for the second phase were approved and work was underway in July of 1987. We met in the new completed phase II building the following April of 1988. Another change came along on September 24, 1989, as the name of the Branch changed from Tazewell to Cumberland Gap.

While still meeting in the Gap Creek building, our first missionary was called. Brent Leishman, son of Wesley and Elaine Leishman, served a mission in England. After moving into our present building, several of our youth have served missions. Kara Ford, daughter of Judy Walter served her mission in Utah. Clark Leishman, son of Wesley and Elaine Leishman served in California, as well as Scott Hoskins, son of Mike and Kathy Hoskins. Aaron Leishman, youngest son of Wesley and Elaine went to South America to serve his mission. We also have had several couples to serve missions: Roger and Chris Smith are now serving a working mission on a cattle ranch in Vernon, Utah and Carl and Judy Walter served on an Indian Reservation in Montana. Upon returning from their mission, Carl Walter was called to serve once again, this time as Branch President. He was called February 28, 1993 and had Fred Roark and Trey Smith as counselors.

The Youth have been a high priority for the Cumberland Gap leadership. We have had Seminary since meeting in the Gap Creek Church. It used to be home study where they met once a week on Wednesday evenings, but has been early morning Seminary since, under the leadership of Judy Walter, Sandy Smith, Neva Sutton and presently Vickie Crowder.

On October 15, 1995, Lonnie "Trey" Smith was called to serve as our new Branch President, with Counselors Robert Cobb and George Crowder. Attendance at that time was 50, with 13 Melchizedek Priesthood holders. President Smith's goal was to get our Branch to the point where we could become a Ward. The very thought was incredible to us. We would need a much greater attendance as well as 29 Melchizedek Priesthood holders before that could come about.

And Finally

When the Knoxville Stake was split and the Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake formed, Cumberland Gap was one of the eight units to become a part of the new Stake. Just four short months later, on March 9, 1997, President Smith's goal was realized----- we became the Cumberland Gap Ward! Attendance at this historic meeting was 215!

What made the difference from 1995 to 1997? The Saints had a fast for new move-ins as well as baptisms, and asked the Lord to touch the hearts of the people. Bishop Smith's goal to become a Ward was always there for the members to aspire to, the positive outlook that it could happen, and with the Lord's help, it did!

President Smith was ordained and set part as the First Bishop of the new Cumberland Gap Ward.

Early Missionary Activities in Campbell and Surrounding Counties of Tennessee

-Submitted by Charlie and Cedell Riggs, LaFollette Branch

A Record of the Powell River Branch of Campbell County of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as in a history given to me by Lindsay Eastridge

Elder Roy Richards Silver of Salt Lake City, Utah, and Elder Arell D. Martin of Mesa, Arizona, while searching out the members of the Church in LaFollette, Tennessee and vicinity met Sister Martha Jane Beeler, who was a daughter of Thomas Jefferson Riggs, one of the first members of the Church in the vicinity. Brother Riggs died and left behind a chest with many mementos of by-gone years. Among those we found an invaluable record of the activities of the missionaries and saints in the adjoining area to Powell River. This record has the names of the Elders that labored there from the Spring of 1882 to January 1, 1914. Their activities are recorded, along with the baptisms, confirmations, etc. The activities of the Powell River Sunday School are recorded, along with the visits of authorities such as B. H. Roberts and others. The site of the old Sunday School is now covered by the waters of the Norris Dam and this history is all that remains as a memorial to those valiant Elders and Saints. The original has been returned to the rightful owners and a copy follows:

In the Spring of 1882, Elders W. H. Joseph of Adamsville, Beaver County, Utah, and James Adams, visited this section and held meetings first at Cedar Creek, where they met with but little success, as the second time they were to hold a meeting there, the school house was closed against them. They then applied for and got the privilege to hold a meeting in the Housley Schoolhouse at Powell River. Shortly after they came here, Elder Adams was released to return home and Joseph S. Hunter of Cedar City, Iron County, Utah was sent to take his place and labor with Elder Joseph. They tried again to hold meetings at Cedar Creek with little or no success, as the public houses were closed against them. Though they made some friends, being entertained by Mr. John Willoughby, Thomas Riggs, Thomas McFarlain and others, they held several meetings at the Housley Schoolhouse. They made several warm friends who kindly entertained them, among whom were Esquire John Housley and Frank Housley, P. H. Selosshan, George W. Riggs, John Sweat and others of the Sweat family, Frank Ivy, Alice Craig, Thomas Heatherly, Mr. Bridges and others. The Elders continued to labor here and in Union County, making this their headquarters part of the time, stopping at Esquire John Housley's a good portion of the time where they were kindly cared for. They also stopped at P. H. Selooan's where they got their clothes washed and otherwise kindly treated by him and his wife.

While traveling through this country they met with a man by the name of George Shephard who had heard the Gospel preached some forty years ago in Virginia by Elder Gediah M. Grand. When he heard the Gospel, the same doctrine preached again by the Elders, he readily embraced it. He and his wife were among the first that were baptized in this section. Also, a Mr. James Butler and wife, who lived on Davises Creek, were baptized about the same time. He and his family later immigrated to Colorado. The Elders met with the usual amount of opposition, mostly from the

preaching fraternity, who being unable to stand before them with the Bible, resorted to falsifying and slandering, invariably their next mode of attack.

Early in the Spring of 1883, Elders Thomas Godfrey and Thomas Griffin, both of Clarkston, Cache County, Utah, came here. Elder Godfrey was appointed to travel with Elder Hunter in this field, while Elders Joseph and Griffin were to labor together, which they did mostly in Union and Claiborne Counties. They frequently visited this field while Elders Hunter and Godfrey visited Union County holding meetings wherever they could get the opportunity during the summer of 1883. Elders Hunter and Godfrey held some meetings in the town of Fincastle, but much prejudice existed there. The doors of the public houses were soon closed against them, so they were compelled to go elsewhere during the summer. Sister Eliza Paul was baptized, also Martha Eleanor Riggs and Nansy Housley.

Around the middle of September 1883, there was a two-day meeting of all the Elders in this locality, including President B. H. Roberts and John A. Bevan, who had just come in from Utah. The meeting was held on Corpses Creek, Union County, at which Elder W. H. Joseph was released to return home. Elders Hunter and Bevan were to go to Hawkins County, while Elders Godfrey and Griffin were to travel together in this field and in Union County. At this time Elder Samuel Jackson who was then president of this conference was here and in company with President Roberts and Elder W. H. Joseph. There were meetings here at the Housley Schoolhouse, where much good counsel and instructions were give by Brother Roberts, after which, Elder Jackson and President Roberts went to Middle Tennessee and Elder Joseph went to his home in Utah. Shortly after this time, Esquire Housley, who was one of the school directors of this district, received a letter from the County Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Baird or Beard, that the Housley School was to be closed against the Mormons, as their doctrine and presence would defile the house. In reply to this, Elder Godfrey sent him a Deseret News and some Tracts. Mr. Housley gave the Elders the privilege of holding meetings at his house whenever they wished.

In the month of March, 1884, Elder Griffin was released from his labors on account of being lame; this left Elder Godfrey alone. Elder Hunter having been released from Hawkins County, this left Elder Bevan alone. They had been notified to attend conference in Putnam County. They went together, leaving here on April 4th and returning on May 2nd. After holding meetings here and in Union Counties, they went to Hawkins County where they were joined by Elder James Roskelley of Smithfield, Cache County, Utah. He arrived about the 11th or 12th of June and in about three weeks Elder Elias S. Kimball of Salt Lake City, Utah arrived. He and Elder Godfrey were assigned to labor in this field and in Union County, which they continued to do during the rest of the summer, holding meetings and visiting among both Saints and sinners.

In September, Frank and Eliza Ann Housley, who lived in Fincastle, were baptized by Elder Godfrey and assisted by Elder Elias S. Kimball. The Elders had held meetings at his house before he joined the Church and they continued to do so afterwards, being made welcome at any time. In February 1885, Brother Godfrey was released to return home. Elder Roskelley had been

traveling with him for a while and was now left alone to labor here and in Union County. He did so until March 8th, when he was joined by Elder Bevan who had come from Hawkins County, he also having been along for a while owing to Elder Kimball who had been traveling with him, having gone to New Orleans. While Elders Bevan and Roskelley were here they held some meetings in the vicinity of Cedar Creek at the house of Mr. Kenny Chapman and Mr. Silas Arthurs. They were kindly treated and entertained there. They also received kind treatment from Mr. Ribe Shephard and others. They remained here and in Union County until the last of April when they went back to Hawkins County. While they were there in the month of May, they met Elder Andrew S. Anderson, who had just come in from Rexburg, Bingham County, Idaho. As this brought three of the Elders together, it was decided for Brother Roskelley and Brother Anderson to remain in Hawkins County for a while and labor together and Elder Bevan to return here. He held meetings here and at Cedar Creek alone until joined again by Elder Kimball who came from Middle Tennessee where he had been traveling with Elder Nathan Tanner, Jr., who had charge of this conference. They continued their labors here and in the latter part of May they baptized George W. Riggs. Elder Kimball officiated. Shortly after this, Elders Roskelley and Anderson came from Hawkins County and remained here while Elders Bevan and Kimball went to Hawkins County, for which place they started from Union on the 16th of June.

Powell River Branch

On July 26, 1885, all Elders of this locality met in Union County and held two meetings in connection with Elder Tanner and President John Morgan of the Southern States Mission. President Morgan and Elder Tanner, with the other Elders, after holding two meetings at Esquire John Housley's house, organized a Branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Brother Frank Housley was called as President, he having been chosen and sustained by the Saints and Elders. He was ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood and set apart to the office of Priest and as President of the Branch. President Tanner officiated in the ordination, just previous to the evening meeting. On this same day, Sister Minerva Arthur was baptized in the Powell River by Elder John A. Bevan and confirmed at the meeting at Mr. Housley's residence by Elder Tanner.

The Elders and Saints had a very enjoyable time together on this occasion, receiving much good counsel from President Morgan and the rest of the Elders. All of the Elders seemed to be alive to their duties, manifesting a willingness to continue their labors as missionaries wherever required by the Lord. In accordance with counsel from the proper authority, Elder A. S. Anderson was honorably released from his mission to continue his labors in the European Mission for which place he started on the 31st of July, 1885. This left three Elders in this field, Elders Bevan, Roskelley and Kimball. It was decided that Elders Roskelley and Kimball should go to Hawkins County while Elder Bevan should remain here and in Union County. He remained here holding meetings at each place. Just previous to Elder Roskelley going away, he and Elder Bevan held a meeting at a meeting house on Cedar Creek, but owing to the door having been barred against them by William Heatherly, they were unable to fill the appointment they had previously given out.

Powell River Sunday School

On August 16, 1885, there was a Sabbath School organized in this Branch with Brother Frank Housley as Superintendent, twelve names being enrolled. The first school was held at Brother Frank Housley's house, with Elder John A. Bevan in charge. The following are the names of this branch at its organization, Monday July 17, 1885: George Shepherd, Eliza Jane Paul, Martha Eleanor Riggs, Nancy Housley, Frank Housley, George Washington Riggs, Minerva Jane Arthur, and Mary Elizabeth Riggs.

Elder Bevan continued to travel alone here and in Union County until the 8th of September 1885, when he was joined by Elder George Cunningham, who left his home in American Fork, Utah, on the 1st of September 1885, and was assigned to labor in this field with Elder Bevan.

They continued their labors until the 5th of October, then they went to Hawkins County where they met Elders Kimball and Roskelley. They visited there until the 26th, when Elders Roskelley and Cunningham came back to this area and labored here. On the 31st of December 1885, Mary Elizabeth Riggs was baptized by Elder Roskelley and confirmed by Elder Cunningham.

The Sunday School has continued and the scholars are improving rapidly. The schools were held at the home of Brother George W. Riggs. The Thursday night meetings being held at the home of President Frank Housley and most of the Saints bearing their testimonies.

On the 9th of December, Elder Tanner came and visited here a few days holding meetings and gave good instruction. He then went on his way toward Hawkins County. On the 14th of January 1886, Elder Tanner returned to this area. He visited and held meetings until the 25th, giving all a spiritual feast. Meantime, Elder Cunningham, after being very ill, received his release the 24th day January 1886; this left Elder Roskelley alone.

On the 4th of January 1886, Elder Roskelley was joined by Elder John V. Bluth, just new in the field. Elder Bluth's home was in Ogden City, Weber County, Utah. They labored together until the 3rd of March in this area. After this they went to open a new field of labor.

The Sabbath School was continued at Powell River under the leadership of President Frank Housley until the latter part of February 1887, when he and his wife, Eliza Ann, immigrated to Utah, going with the March First Company of Saints.

From the time Elders Roskelley and Bluth left Powell River on March 3, 1886 to May 27, 1887, there were no Elders in or near this county. When Brother Houseley left, there was no one to take the lead in the Sabbath Schools and they discontinued. (Note- the Powell River empties into the Northwestern tip of Norris Lake at about the line dividing Union and Claiborne Counties)

Elders Continue Their Labors

In Hawkins County, Elders S. H. Head and Ira W. Hatch were laboring as missionaries of the Church, and as people in that area were indifferent towards the message these brethren bore, it seemed but very little good could be accomplished. They, the Elders, left the Hawkins County area on the 17th of May and by the goodness of God, on the 27th of May 1887, arrived in this area, not knowing before that any Elders had traveled here, or that a branch of the Church had been organized.

By an investigation, it was soon learned why Elders Head and Hatch had been lead to Campbell, Union and Claiborne Counties. They discovered their presence was much needed, as some of the Saints were "falling away", Mrs. Arthur having united herself with the Baptist Church and others in Claiborne County doing the same. On Sunday, May 29th, a meeting was held at Mr. John Housley's home and the members of the Church were exhorted to faithfulness. No action was taken against Mrs. Arthur as her case had not been fully investigated. Seeing that much work was necessary, these Elders returned to Lee Valley, Hawkins County, to get their clothing, etc., so they could remain for an indefinite period of time.

On their way to Lee Valley, they visited a new prospect and Saints in the vicinity of Compensation, and on the 4th of June, they left J. T. Cooper on their return to Lee Valley. The Elders traveled all day without anything to eat and at evening, just east of Tazewell, they began making or trying to make arrangements for lodging, etc. In vain they did visit house after house, until nineteen were called upon and after 10:00 p.m., they were compelled to seek shelter in one of William Hodge's barns. June 5th, 1887, it is said that William Hodges refused them breakfast. Several places were visited before breakfast.

July 22nd, Elders Head and Hatch arrived from Hawkins County, at New Prospect Branch. On July 24th, they held meetings at Squire Silas Williams' and on the 26th they arrived at the Powell River. August 7th, a meeting was held at Mr. John Housley's home, and by unanimous vote of the members, Minerva Jane Arthur was cut off from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for apostasy.

July 1st, 1898, Elders A. L. Thorn and W. E. Dawson, visited the Saints of the Powell River. They found the saints well and feeling well in the Gospel. The Elders had not visited the Saints here since September 1897. The Saints were well pleased to meet the Elders. They met at Brother George W. Riggs' home, Friday evening, July 1, 1898 and held prayer meeting. The Saints met at T. J. Riggs' home Saturday night and held a Sunday morning meeting. The Elders and Saints all attended the Baptist Sabbath School. Elders Thorn and Dawson wanted to get the meetinghouse to hold the meeting, but there was an appointment for a meeting so we gave out our meetings to be held at the home of T. J. Riggs, but there was but a few came besides the Saints. Elders Thorn and Dawson are visiting the Saints and Sabbath Schools in this conference.

The following are the names of the Elders that have visited and labored in this area:

James Adams		
William H. Joseph	Adamsville, Beaver County, Utah	
M. H. Randall, Jr.,	Centerville, Davis County, Utah	May 1900
F. H. Tsom,	Virgin City, Washington County, Utah	1900
Orson W. Rawlings	Murray, Salt Lake County, Utah	Nov 1901
Amasa Rasmussen	Fairview, Sanfrete County, Utah	Feb 1903
Zadock Allen Bethers	Heber, Wasatch County, Utah	Feb 1903
David S. Warren	Syracuse, Davis County, Utah	Nov 1903
R. S. Bishop	Hinkley, Utah	Aug 1906
C. O. Whiting	Mapleton, Utah County, Utah	Aug 1906
George L. Hobson	Hoytsville, Utah	May 1907
Jno. H. Batty	Toquerville, Utah	May 1907
P. L. Fillmore	Bursville, Utah	Jun 1907
W. S. Taylor	Abraham, Utah	Jun 1907
J. W. Jones	Mesa, Arizona	Jul 1907
Gus Williams	Teasdale, Utah	Jul 1907
John W. Willis	Henrieville, Utah	Aug 1907
John S. Hill	Sterling, Canada	Aug 1907
Ira O. Spencer	Salt Lake City, Utah	1908
Alvin T. Thorup	Salt Lake City, Utah	Sep 1908
James L. Marler	Lewisville, Idaho	Oct 1913
Z. H. Stephens	Mancos, Colorado	Oct 1913

Elders Stephens and Marler are on the visit through their appointed field of labor and at this writing are at Brother John Riggs' home on R. F. D. 4 from Jacksboro. They are holding meetings and visiting and encouraging the Saints and will labor in Campbell, Fentress, Overton, and Putnam Counties, preaching tithing until January 1, 1914.

Mr. and Mrs. George Shephard moved to Kentucky before their genealogy was received.

Eliza Jane Paul, born on June 14, 1824, Powell River, Campbell County, Tennessee was baptized by Joseph S. Hunter, confirmed in June 1883 by William H. Joseph.

Martha Eleanor Riggs, born December 24, 1839, Campbell County, Tennessee, was baptized by Joseph H. Hunter, confirmed in the same year, 1882.

Nancy Housley, born on January 18, 1830, Powell River, Tennessee, was baptized by Joseph S. Hunter in about the year 1882 and confirmed the same year.

Frank Housley, no date of birth, was baptized September 1884, by Thomas Godfrey and confirmed by Thomas Godfrey.

Eliza Ann Housley was born on May 25 (no year given) and baptized September 1884 by Thomas Godfrey and confirmed by Elias S. Kimball. Her birthplace is in Parmleyville, Wayne County, Ky.

George Washington Riggs was born on August 9, 1835 at Powell River, Tennessee. The date of his baptism isn't given, but he was baptized by Elias S. Kimball and confirmed by John A. Bevan.

Minerva Jane Arthur was born on September 8, 1843, was baptized by John A. Bevan and confirmed by Nathan Tanner, Jr. She was cut off from the Church August 7, 1887.

Mary Elizabeth Riggs was born September 11, 1869 and was baptized by James Roskelley on the 31st day of December 1885. She was confirmed a member by George Cunningham.

Family History Compiled and Written by Cedell Cox Riggs
Describing Events occurring 1925-1976 in Claiborne and Morgan Counties

This portion is written and submitted by Cedell Cox Riggs with excerpts taken from Retha Mayes Simmons history and personal knowledge of Cedell Riggs.

This part of history of early Saints in East Tennessee, Claiborne County, is about my mother, Rutha Mayes Cox, my aunt Retha Mayes Simmons, my grandparents, Eli and Ella Bostic Mayes, my great-grandparents, Henry Alum Bostic and Sarah Hartsock Bostic, and my great uncle Obern Bostic and other relatives mentioned.

In the year 1925, Rutha Mayes was twelve years old and Retha was ten the first time they saw a Mormon missionary. They lived on the Powell River in Claiborne County, Tennessee. This was before the TVA backwaters covered all their farmlands. Rutha and Retha went on the river land where Grandpa Henry Bostic and his wife Sarah had built a beautiful house with well kept yards and gardens. Uncle Obern Bostic (brother to Ella Bostic Mayes) was visiting his parents, Henry and Sarah Bostic. Religion was mentioned to Rutha and Retha. They told of the experience of a missionary Baptist revival that they had attended only one time and Uncle Obern Bostic told them about some different preachers that had the true gospel. Rutha and Retha and family said that they thought they would be just like the rest. He said, you will see. My great grandfather, Henry Bostic, came to Tennessee from Virginia. My mother, Rutha Mayes, has related this story to me, Cedell Riggs. It is part of the Retha Mayes Simmons history.

Two or three years before he (Henry Alum Bostic) left Virginia, he had a dream that he was plowing in his field on the hill side and he saw two young men coming toward him. They told him they were ministers of the Gospel. He thought this only a dream, but in reality, one day while plowing, he saw the young men and they told him they were ministers of the Gospel. He was very puzzled and asked what religion they were. They told him they were Mormon missionaries. He felt betrayed by his dream, as he had heard of Mormons and they were not liked in this part of the country. They talked a while and made it known they were looking for a place to hold a meeting. He told them his wife was in the house cooking dinner for them. They were to tell her to let them leave their suitcases there. Grandma Sarah Bostic had heard ill rumors about the Mormons also,

but people in the southern states being humble and gracious, never let strangers on foot leave without eating. Grandma said Grandpa treated them very cold and she tried even harder to be gracious to them. The missionaries left and found a meeting place and came back and ate supper with the Bostics. They then invited them to come to their meeting. Grandpa refused to go, but said Sarah could go. The missionaries left pamphlets for Grandpa to read while they were gone. He read them all while they and Grandma had gone to the meeting. It is said many times that Grandpa burned the midnight oil reading everything he could get. He and Grandma would often discuss the Gospel until daybreak. Many years he read and studied the Gospel waiting on Grandma Sarah to be ready to be baptized, until his soul was filled with a burning testimony of the truthfulness of the Gospel.

Years went by and age crept up on him along with heart problems. This time when the Elders came he asked Grandma Sarah if she was ready to be baptized. She said nothing but he knew he was going to be baptized this time while the Elders were there. By this time Grandpa was unable to walk. My Grandma, Ella Bostic Mays knew the Elders and had been teaching her father, Henry, so she and Uncle Obern (her brother) and his wife, Tina Bostic (Obern and Tina Bostic are great grandparents of Phyllis Moffitt of Morristown) and Ella's sister, Della Bostic Williams had met with them as often as possible and also were converted. Ella Bostic went to her parents' house on July 1, 1926, and took an extra dress with her, not telling anyone her intentions. With Grandpa Bostic being unable to walk, they hitched a horse to a sled and took him to his beautiful Powell River, with Grandma Sarah Bostic and others walking behind the sled.

My Grandma, Ella Bostic Mayes, and my great uncle, Obern Bostic, were baptized the same day. They lifted Grandpa Henry Bostic out of the sled and helped him into the river and baptized him. Grandma Sarah was so overcome with the spirit that she ran into the water still wearing her apron and asked to be baptized. What a happy day for Grandpa and his other two children. That evening, they were sitting on Grandpa Bostic's porch facing the Powell River and they all saw a big white bird come and dip in the water where they were all baptized. He dipped three times then flew right toward the setting sun until they could no longer see him.

As for the conversion of Rutha and Retha Mayes, they first heard the Gospel sermons preached from Eli and Ella Bostic Mayes' front porch. One of the missionaries was Elder Robert L. Gordon from Los Angeles, California. A few of the neighbors came to hear them. My Grandma Ella sat two kerosene lamps on the wall shelf and a lamp on a small table for their books. Everyone else sat on wooden benches from the front porch arranged in the yard like a meeting house. The two humble Elders sang a song and then stood to offer prayer, then a talk. Before that missionary sat down, Retha and Rutha stated they knew as sure as they lived that they had heard the true Gospel.

The missionaries did not get to our home very often since they walked everywhere they went. Five years had passed, but Grandpa and Grandma Bostic, Uncle Obern and Aunt Tina taught us many things they had read. When the Elders returned, we knew we could not wait to be baptized until

they returned again as they said it would be a year. So this same night the missionaries held a cottage meeting and announced that on the morning of November 8, 1930, Rutha and Retha Mayes were to be baptized. Rutha was 17 years old and Retha was 15 years old. The morning of our baptism, we were up early and got all our chores done and we walked four miles to Powell River, which is now covered with TVA waters. It was a cool morning and the water at the river edge was frozen. The services began with the hymn, O My Father. Our dear Uncle Obern who had first told us about the missionaries and the Gospel was there along with many others. A talk was given standing in the middle of the road. We then went down the river bank to a place where the water was deep enough. Uncle Obern Bostic, Aunt Tina, the two Elders, Rutha and Retha got into a canoe and went out where the water was deep enough. Uncle Obern stopped paddling the canoe, Elder Walter Weston got out into the water. What a warm feeling was present even though we stood in the icy waters with a blanket wrapped around us and received the Holy Ghost.

Sometime before her death, I, Cedell, wrote my Aunt Retha for information that she had on members on the Powell River. She writes that to the best of her knowledge Joseph Haynes, the Grandfather of Bill Haynes, now of LaFollette, was the first member of the Church in Claiborne County, Tennessee. She says that her Grandfather, Henry Alum Bostic, told her the next members were Eli Mayes, Alexander Walker and his wife Ava Jane. Brother Joseph Haynes was the father of Pearlie Haynes Shipley. Joseph Haynes was the Grandfather of Carl Shipley of the Cumberland Gap Branch.

Henry Bostic related that on the day he was baptized Joseph Haynes walked miles on the Powell River to come to his house. The two men sat up all night discussing the Gospel. Others to be baptized later were: Howard Bostic, a brother to Henry Ollie Bostic Smith, John and Lillian Bostic (children of Obern and Tina Bostic), Doskie Williams Eastridge, a cousin of Rutha and Retha Mayes, Sarah Williams Stiner, also a cousin. A few years after all these baptisms in the beautiful Powell River, the TVA Norris Dam was built and these members along with their neighbors had to leave their homeland to the backwaters of the dam and find new homes. These people were scattered in many directions. Most of my relatives moved to Morgan County, Tennessee next to Deer Lodge in the Gatewood Ford Community. My mother, Rutha Mayes Cox, was one of the first groups to move. Grandpa and Grandma Bostic passed away before all had to move and are buried in Stiner Ridge Cemetery in Union or Claiborne County.

All this family being hard working people and with many boys, soon built a house, which at the time to me seemed huge, but there were a lot of people to fill this house. During all this move, my Grandparents, Eli and Ella Bostic Mayes knew the importance of continuing to have their meetings. To the best of my knowledge no records were kept as far back as I can remember. During the years of approximately 1945-1948 meetings were held in my Grandparents home. I can remember by this time several of my uncles had married. Also my aunts and I had lots of cousins. All us children sat on the long stairway which came down into the big open kitchen and dining room area. We all listened to what was being taught and learned some songs. The missionaries finally came

through and visited. The long kitchen and dining area had a long table with benches on each side to accommodate the large family. That is where the adults would sit. I remember the meal and flour bin behind the big wood stove in the kitchen. There were so many people, we sat wherever we could. That is the beginning of my strong testimony of the Church.

In about 1949, my Grandparents being ridiculed and made fun of by neighbors, decided they would move west with the influence of a missionary named Sterling Threet. They decided since they still had some children not married, they would move west, where they could be active in the Church and their unmarried children could find mates with the same belief. My Grandparents, Eli and Ella Bostic Mayes had all ten of their children sealed to them in the Idaho Falls Temple. My mother, Rutha Mayes Cox was married to John Cox, a non-member who refused to move west. Bertie Mayes England was also married and lived in Tazewell, Tennessee. She married Charles England, also a non-member who did not want to uproot and move.

This left my mother the only member that I know of in Morgan County. This left her nowhere to go to church or take all of us children. Rutha's children are as follows: Cedell Cox Riggs, Wanda Cox Lynch, Ezell Cox, Johnetta Cox England, and Jerrell Cox.

My dad did not agree with our religion either, but my mother with her sweet, gentle ways stood her ground with him. We had missionaries come by our house once in a great while. We once had a cottage meeting at our house and I remember Brother Leo Brady and his wife, Eugene Perkins and his wife being there with Brother Robert Smith and Ruth, his wife (parents of President R. Lloyd Smith). My dad was rude to them but my mom again in her gentle way stood her ground. I remember my sister Wanda and I sang, We thank Thee O God For A Prophet. My dad was a very good man and believed strongly in the family so every weekend was family time spent together. In approximately 1956, my dad started taking us to Jamestown as there was a small branch there. We all rode in a big log truck as this was our only transportation. He has since been sealed to my mother with Wanda and myself being sealed to them.

In Jamestown we met in a small old building on a back street. The first members I remember there were the Beatys, Ammonites, Fosters, and Stephens families. This may tie into the history from the Jamestown Ward.

The Bostic and Haynes families lived on the Powell River are at approximately the same time as the history of the Joseph Smith Riggs and Thomas Riggs history. The Thomas Riggs record was given to me by Lindsay Eastridge, who married Doska Williams. This was given to me after Charlie E. Riggs and I were married in 1976. This history includes information about the Riggs in Campbell County and my family, the Bostics, in Claiborne County.

I am still active in the Church with a deep testimony of the Gospel. I live in the LaFollette Branch with my husband Charles E. Riggs. My two children are also active, being Regina Kennedy and Noah Riggs. I have two granddaughters, Savanna and Kelli Kennedy.

Letter from Elder Earnest J. Whiting, Jr.

February 22, 1990
Earnest J. Whiting, Jr.
1249 North Allen
Mesa, Arizona 85203

I appreciate the opportunity to tell a little of what I remember after 53 years when I served as a missionary in the East Central States Mission, assigned to the East Tennessee District. I arrived in Tennessee the first time in May 1937, but returned home for a Court Trial that lasted for three months. I returned to the Mission in August 1937 and again was assigned to work in the East District of Tennessee. I served with Elder James Wallace Wilkins, he was the District President, until December 15th, 1937 when he returned home, and I was asked to be the District President and presided until November 1938.

If my memory will serve me, I believe that the membership in the East Tennessee District was about 1300 members of record. When the individual membership records were started in 1938, we found that this was somewhat overstated. There were small Branches of the Church in Kingsport, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Crossville and Altamont that had a small Chapel, the only church building in East Tennessee at Northcutts Cove about 12 miles from Altamont. The headquarters for the Southern States Mission was in Chattanooga for a number of years but membership was not strong in that area. The strongest branch was at Kingsport and seems to have continued to grow.

There were small Sunday Schools at several locations in the District. Cumberland Gap, Oneida, Jellico and some others that I can't recall their locations. The membership of the District was scattered over the entire District and it was not easy to visit them and encourage them in their membership responsibility. During my assignment as District President we tried to visit as many of the members as we could and held many wonderful meetings throughout the District. We began to see the leadership improve with people starting to move into the area on the TVA and other pre-war Government projects.

During these years there was usually eight missionaries assigned to the District; two Sister Missionaries in the Kingsport area, two Elders in the Bristol- Johnson City area, two in Knoxville and two in Chattanooga. During the months from April to November the six Elders worked in the rural area. My assignment for the summers of 1937-38 was in the Cumberland Gap and surrounding areas. During these months the Elders lived with the members of the Church, and our proselyting was done through holding meetings in the homes of the members, public buildings such as school houses and court houses, and we always tried to hold as many street meetings as we could. We were asked to travel without purse or scrip at times but it was quit hard as we did need some public transportation at times. We found some pockets of animosity towards us, but in most cases it was just indifference as we find even today.

I regret that I didn't write more in my Journal of the Saints, and their beginnings there. Missionary work was much different at the time. I'm sure that we had challenges that the missionaries today there don't have. Our success was slow, and we had a number of baptisms, but many of them were children and members of the families already in the Church. I spent two summers in the Cumberland Gap area, and so I am more familiar with this area. The missionaries had visited this area for many years and had received some very poor treatment in years past. There were a number of years that missionaries didn't visit the area.

Sister Haynes, I believe her first name was Mary and her four daughters, were early converts in the area. We had three other families that some of them belonged to the Church in the area but was only active when the missionaries came to their homes and held meetings and met with them. The people there were very poor, and they loved to see the missionaries come and gave of everything that they had. Many nights I have seen the parents or the children give up their bed to us. I was never mistreated in any way while serving there, and never had to sleep out one night. I learned to love the people and it was during my second summer, 1938, that we seemed to have a number of baptisms. As I recall, we had about 50 baptisms during the year, a number of these being children.

One of the greatest members of the Church that I have ever met was Sister Pearley Shipley and her family of Carl and Lois. They were so good to me and all the missionaries and I know that some of the success that we had was because of the lives that these wonderful members of the Church lived and we see their children and grandchildren still active in the Church. Sister Shipley had the greatest faith of any woman I have ever met. She loved the Church with all her heart and knew that it was true, and never failed to tell those that she came in contact with. She did so much for the missionaries and I know that I still love that family with a love that will abide forever. It is pioneers like Pearley Shipley that made it possible for the Church to grow in strength and numbers in the East Tennessee District. I only wish that my memory would serve me better and that I had kept better records of my missionary work there, but I know God blessed me while there and I will always be grateful to the wonderful people of this area of the Church.

Sincerely your Brother, Earnest J. Whiting

The Speedwell Saints

In 1899, the first member of the Mormon Church in Claiborne County on top of Haynes Ridge was Pearly Shipley. Pearly was the daughter of Mossie Bostic Mayes, and the granddaughter of Henry and Sarah Bostic, who have been written about earlier in this history. Pearly was baptized down on Powell River. The missionaries who baptized her were Elder Elmo Pollard and Elder Jensen. In 1924, the missionaries started working full time through here. They would come at least once a year, staying at Pearly Shipley's home for about a week and holding cottage prayer meetings. The missionaries came and stayed at other homes for weeks at a time, preaching and teaching the gospel.

In 1936-1938, the most favorable missionary, Elder Earnest J. Whiting, came through. He was from Utah, robbing about the gospel and teaching in a stern way how to live. Yet he showed the love that made a person grow. Carl said he was 16 years old and Elder Whiting was about 19, and he loved him dearly. Carl recalled Elder Whiting telling them he was going home in about a week and he would love to baptize him. Not only did he get to baptize Carl but 19 others with him. Those among the newly baptized beside Carl, were Opal Smith Evans and her sister Ruth Smith Burkhart. Carl said he started preparing for baptism without letting Elder Whiting know about it. The day Elder Whiting came to ask Carl about being baptized, Carl stepped out and said, "J., I am ready." This was very pleasing to the young Elder.

Carl Shipley recalls another incident involving his mother. He states:

"In 1899, along with my mother, Pearly Shipley and his sister, the Elders were leading them into the water and my Grandmother, Harriet Haynes, was a Primitive Baptist, but my Grandfather wasn't anything. Harriet said, 'Wait there, Elder, I want to be baptized, too.' This lending a surprise to the girls. Joe Haynes, the Grandfather said, 'If the old woman is going to be baptized, I'm going to be baptized also.' So he went in along with them."

After the baptizing, persecution of Pearly Shipley arose. All manners of evil were said against her but she kept the faith; yet, she was very afraid of bodily harm. However, she held if she died for the Lord, there was no worry. She alone was a good missionary and bore a strong listening in the Church. She helped a lot of people come into the Church in 1930 - - one was Sister Nancy McCreary. Nancy was a strong and faithful member, remaining faithful until her death.

Pearly Shipley was responsible for holding the small flock of saints together. She opened her home for Sunday School and Church. Her home was always open, even when the missionaries were scarce, and there was no priesthood authority. This never stopped Pearly. We would meet, pray and read the literature. We could not administer the sacrament at the time, but when the Elders came through once or twice a year, we had sacrament. People grew to respect her because she kept the faith. People gave testimony that she had a great impact on their lives. One person, Roy Gene Smith, stated, "If it had not been for her, I would not have been a member." The critics began to ease off because they knew Pearly was a good and humble woman who loved the Lord.

Shell Shipley, Pearly's husband, was not a member of the Church. He died in 1941. However, a few days before he died, he asked Pearly to have the temple work done for him. It was said, after his death, he would come to Pearly's bed and ask her when she was going to have the work done for him. She said, "Shell, I will as soon as I can." He pointed his finger at her and said, "See you do that". About four months later, the missionaries came by and Pearly had the papers drawn up and sent them to Salt Lake City, Utah. Again Shell appeared to Pearly and said, "You haven't had that

work done for me yet.” In about a month following, he appeared to her again, smiling and said he was going to be baptized. The Mormons were going to baptize him. He had a chair in his hand and said he was going to sit down and they were going to confirm him a member of the Church. He then went away smiling. Nearly a month passed and Pearly received the papers back that the work had been performed for Shell.

The Church was harassed a lot by the nearby churches. It was not safe to be a Mormon. One thing for sure, the Mormons stayed true to the faith and never sought revenge on anyone. In the 1940's, a hanging was being formed in LaFollette. Herman Brown formed a mob to hang the missionaries but they were shipped out of town and taken to Knoxville. The missionaries were humble and kind to everyone. They helped the farmers do their work and this brought about more care for them.

The early missionaries stayed with Joe and Harriet Haynes on Haynes Ridge. They also would stay in the valley with Shell and Pearly Shipley. There were only a few families that would keep the missionaries. The hostility was so strong, one could have gotten burned out merely because they let the missionaries spend the night. People were really set against this religion for a long time. It was dangerous to be a member. People would slip around and do you bodily harm or burn up something you had. It was a chance you took --- being a Latter-day Saint --- back in those early days. Carl said, “I have feared many times that I would be shot or hit, or maybe hurt pretty bad. I was, however, never hurt in any way, but I’ve had rocks thrown at me.

The missionaries would also stay with Will and Cora Smith who lived on Smith Ridge. One day, as the missionaries were sitting around talking with Will, he put his hand in his britches pocket and started jiggling the money he had there. As one of the Elders had crossed his feet, Will saw that he had worn a hole in his shoes and that his socks were showing through. Will pulled his hand out of his pocket with the money in it, and stuck it toward the astonished missionary saying, “Here, go buy you a pair of shoes, or you’re going to wear a hole in your sock”. The missionary told him he couldn’t accept his money, whereas Will staunchly replied, “My money is as good as anybody else’s!” Then the young missionary had to explain that they were not allowed to accept money from anyone, and besides, by the time he got back to Knoxville there should be a package waiting for him from home with a pair of shoes in it.

Ruth Smith Burkhart, who related this story, is the eldest child of Will and Cora Smith. She also said that her Daddy took his Book of Mormon and Bible with them wherever they would go looking for work, for sometimes they had to move around. She said her Daddy and Momma would read the Book of Mormon every night. One time while they were living across the mountain in Ky, a man named Weaver asked to stay with them until he could find a boarding house to stay in.

He came into the home one evening and saw the Book of Mormon lying on the table with the Bible, picked it up and slung it off the table. “Daddy gave him a good ‘raking out’ and told him to never do that again saying, “It’s just as precious a book as that Bible lying there”, states Ruth.

When the missionaries would hold their cottage meetings over at Pearly's home, they would often go on up to Will and Cora's to eat supper. Cora always had a good supper and they really enjoyed eating her food. Well, one night after filling themselves up, they started in on her famous blackberry cobblers. After taking one bite of cobbler, Elder Whiting jumped up from the table and bolted for the back door, making a strangling noise as he went. Cora didn't know what was wrong, but she knew it had to do with her cobbler. And so she cried. Finally, when Elder Whiting was able to tell her what was wrong with him - - she cried again! She had mistakenly put salt in it instead of sugar! Everyone who knew Mamaw Smith knows what a great cook she was!

Then there was Grandma VanBebber - - . Grandma VanBebber would have the missionaries in her home, as they were giving her the lessons and teaching her about the Gospel. One of her sons, Uncle Howard, was very hostile against the missionaries, and came into the home one day and tried to run them out, making Grandma very upset. She was so upset that she ran Uncle Howard out of her house. She watched him as he went off down the road, for she knew that he would try to waylay the missionaries. As she watched, he hid behind some bushes. Grandma grabbed the old shotgun and took off down the road, where he lay in wait, shouting, "Howard, I don't want to shoot you, but I will if I have to. The missionaries are in my house, not yours, so you better leave them fellers alone!" Apparently he did. Today one of her great-granddaughters, Nancy Smith Sproles has her Book of Mormon. It is one of her most prized possessions.

Another great-granddaughter, Kathy Hoskins, relates the story of Grandpa Isaac VanBebber. One day while riding in the woodlands, Granddaddy came upon a group of men who had been drinking and had apparently "caught themselves a missionary". They already had the noose around his neck when Granddaddy came upon them. Well, if the truth were known, Granddaddy had probably been drinking, too. He was also carrying a pistol. Even though he was not a member of the church, he was quick to defend the young Elders. He pulled out his pistol and shouted to the angry mob of men to "Turn that Mormon loose!" After a few run-ins with people like Granddaddy VanBebber, people let up on such hostile persecution.

In 1936-37, the idea to organize the Speedwell Saints originated with Elder Whiting and Elder Tilman Smith. They were meeting at the little community church on Weaver's Knob out on Jones' Ridge, called the Piney Grove Church. Different denominations could meet there. The Baptists met in the morning, the Mormons met in the early evening. During this time about 20 people committed to being baptized, among them were Ruth Smith Burkhart, Opal Smith Evans, Tillman and Maggie Belle VanBebber Smith, Carl Shipley, Ethel Helton and others.

On September 18, 1938, a baptizing was held at the old Ausmus House, where there was a creek that was fed by a spring. Ruth remembers it well, saying that the water was so cold it just boiled up out of the ground. The water came up to the Elder's waist, as Ruth stepped into the water. She was the first Smith in the family to be baptized. She is very proud of this honor. She remembers

that there was a large crowd that had come up from Knoxville to see the “big baptizing”. There were Sister missionaries there also; they were the first Sister missionaries they had ever seen.

While meeting at Piney Grove Church, the Elders went to the church house early one Sunday only to find the doors had been locked against them. Another time the holiness preacher and a host of people gathered around the missionaries asking, “With these people as my witness, how many wives do you boys have back home in Utah?” One Elder spoke up and said, “Enough that we won’t be bothering yours”. This turned the tide and he left the Elders alone.

In the 1957, Mark Haynes gave the church some land to build a church house on the ridge. Sister Pearly Shipley and Dave Smith signed a note to obtain the lumber and other materials to build a new meetinghouse. The members were hard working and were always doing projects to raise money needed for their church. They used to raise and sell sugar beets and green peppers on Grove Smith’s land which was close to the new meetinghouse.

The Saints met on Haynes Ridge for about seven or eight years. Most of the time we would walk to the little church house from around the ridge at Will and Cora (Papaw and Mamaw) Smith’s house. In the summertime, the little children would just go barefoot, as we were just a little country church.

We would start out with just a few of us and as we passed each house on our way, the crowd would get a little bigger and bigger, until finally we would have a good size crowd by the time we reached the church house. Carl Shipley was over the Sunday School and taught us the lesson each Sunday, while Pearly never missed bringing a bag of cookies or candy to hand out to everyone after church let out.

Sister Carole Chumley first started going back to church after she married her husband, Lynn, who later joined the church. Lynn later became the Branch President of two separate branches, then took her to the Washington Temple to be sealed. However, before he joined the Church, he would always run the car out of gas on Saturday night so she wouldn’t be able to go to church on Sunday mornings. He thought she would stay at home, but she had too much of Cora Smith in her to let that stop her. The next Sunday she walked out to the end of the lane from her home and caught a ride with the Shipleys as they went by. Lynn wasn’t openly hostile toward the church, but he did his best to keep Carole from going.

When the church moved out of the valley, Carole became inactive for several years, refusing to go to any church, if she could not attend her own. Heavenly Father certainly softened Lynn’s heart, for when he suggested they start attending church several years after the birth of their daughter, Michelle, he was overwhelmed by the love and fellowship that all the Saints attending the LaFollette Branch in Fincastle had for him and his family. The Chumleys have been going to church ever since that first Sunday.

In 1964 Grover Smith, along with Chris Cobb Smith, was baptized in the large house located across

from Cumberland Motors in Middlesboro, Kentucky. They did not have a baptismal font but used a large sized bathtub that had been raised up to baptize Grover, who was a big man, weighing about 300 pounds at that time. Both Grover and Chris were baptized on the spur of the moment by James Smith, who was on his way home to Michigan after visiting his family, the Will Smiths and the Jim Cobbs.

From the little church house on Haynes Ridge, the Saints were called to make a sacrifice again. They were combined with the members from Tazewell, and Middlesboro, and met with the Saints from LaFollette in a house in Fincastle.

The story of Birtie Mays England holds much persecution and hardships as she reaches into the future of love and marriage to Charlie England. Birtie was not baptized until she was married. She married at the age of 17 and Charlie was critically hostile to the Mormon missionaries. Charlie threatened to burn Birtie's Book of Mormon and all her literature. "He being a bit jealous of the young missionaries," says Birtie. The England's were married September 23, 1928, and it wasn't until 25 years later that she was baptized in 1953. She was baptized by Elder Charlie Collins, her brother-in-law. Charlie was always antagonistic about the Church. Birtie would always put the Book of Mormon up after she read it. However, one night she left it lying on the table. When Charlie saw it he said, "Why are you reading that? Why don't you read the Bible?" She said, "I do." He replied, "I am going to burn that book." She said, "If that is what you want to do, go ahead; but you might as well burn the Bible, too." He turned around and laid both books down and never said anything about burning them again.

Charlie always took Birtie to church and even took her to Knoxville for five years. This was the first church she had attended, all the others were cottage meetings. After five years, Charlie started taking the lessons with the missionaries coming all the way from Knoxville. After a series of twelve lessons, he came in one Saturday afternoon and said, "Get my white socks, shirt and clothes. I am going to be baptized Saturday evening." He went to Knoxville and was baptized. Birtie was thrilled to death, laying aside any persecution and having a forgiving heart.

Charlie and Birtie were sealed in the Temple in 1959. Brother and Sister Eli Meredith Mays stood proxy for Charlie's parents. He was sealed to his parents along with his four sisters (who were dead). Following this, Charlie and Birtie attended the Morristown Branch for about five years, as well as a branch at Middlesboro for a year or so, where several baptisms were performed. One baptism was Lola Martin and her children. The England's also attended church on Haynes Ridge after the days when they had gone to Knoxville. (Brother England contributed to the work on the Knoxville Chapel - See Knoxville Branch History)

Brother Charlie England was always faithful in trying to get the Church established in Claiborne County. The day he passed away he had been working on buying land for a Church building. One would assume God would give Brother England a special reward for the work he did after his conversion. One month following his death, Wayne and Larry England were baptized.

In His Own Words

By President Allen Chamberlain
(First Branch President-Tazewell Branch)

When the company I was working for sent me to Kentucky to manage their newly acquired coal mine, one of the first things I did was to look up the Church. The LaFollette Branch seemed to be the closest Branch and I found the people there very friendly. Even President Chumley seemed to have time to take me to his home for dinner and get to know me very quickly. Even before I actually moved to Tennessee I felt at home.

I arrived at the Holiday Inn at Cumberland Gap on a Tuesday night with my wife and two young sons. Wednesday night I received a call from the Stake Executive Secretary who said that President Perkins wanted to meet me on the following night at the Chapel in LaFollette. Unsuspecting, I went to the interview.

Sunday the Tazewell Branch was organized. I was called as the Branch President with two wonderful counselors, Charlie England and Mike Swanner. The Elders Quorum President was Johnny Vaniman.

It was one of those wonderful days that changed my life and many others. The members of the Branch were excited to have a church closer to home and worked diligently to share that excitement with other inactive members and also with their friends and relatives who were not members of the church. They didn't even seem to mind that the Branch President was young enough to be the son of his counselor. My inexperience was tempered by the insight and inspiration of Charlie as he helped me understand the people of the area and more specifically the members of the church. As a Branch Presidency, we were committed to helping the members strengthen their testimonies and to spreading the gospel whenever possible. I believe that while there is always room for improvement, to a certain extent these goals of the Branch were met.

The members reached out to loved ones in and out of the church in many ways. There were socials held in the old England home where we first met as well as work projects in the fields donated by Charlie England. There were cake sales, wood cutting projects and, of course, the cane field and molasses stir-off that was done to raise money to meet the financial needs of the Branch.

Important as the financial boost was from these projects, it paled when compared to the spiritual strength that was received from within the Branch as we worked together, laughed together, cried together and shared our testimonies by example to those who worked with us. Not all those loved ones we tried to bring in with these methods have joined the church yet, but I believe we all feel that there is still tomorrow and sooner or later they will see fit to enter the waters of baptism and fully embrace the Gospel. Family members who have been so supportive over the years will be blessed for that support and will yet be counted among the saints.

There are also those who were touched by one thing or another and embraced the Gospel. There were youth who brought in other youth, neighbors who were influenced by so much activity and also the gentle words of understanding from faithful members. And lest we forget, there were many who were drawn to the church at the time of Charlie England's death and subsequent funeral service. I will never forget the eternal influence Charlie had lying there in his temple clothes. Charlie worked and loved for many years trying to bring his family into the church as well as anyone else who would listen. He told me many times that he wished his tired old body would allow him to do more. Then he found a way.

Among the people influenced by seeing Charlie in his temple robes, was his son, Wayne, who was soon to embrace the gospel and in a short time became the Branch President. Other family members were also touched as were all in the community who knew and loved the England family. The sermons and eulogy given at the service and the subsequent discussions at the cemetery were eternal blessings that just needed to be recognized. I will never forget those experiences and hold them sacred. Just thinking about them to record in this short note brings tears to my eyes and a burning in my bosom. I, for one, will be eternally grateful for the lives of Charlie and Birtie England. I single out this family for mention only because they seemed to touch everyone they came in contact with. Were I to try and relate the feelings for each individual and family, volumes would have to be written.

The spirit testified to me that the members of the Tazewell Branch were special in the eyes of their Heavenly Father and that if they would endure to the end wonderful things would come to them. The years of love and hard work are slowly beginning to bear fruit. The Chapel is beautiful, especially when filled with people. Now that a Ward has been created, there will be additional opportunities to serve and new challenges to be met. I have every confidence that these opportunities will continue to strengthen the members and not-yet-members alike. Much work is yet to be done. What better people to do it than the saints in this new Ward.

I want each member of the original Branch to know, and believe they do, that I truly love them and their families. You are still in my prayers. I will now also pray for the entire new Ward and their ability to pull together similar to the out pouring of love and concern which was demonstrated when the Branch was organized. The first organization did marvelous things. The Ward is also a first and will do even better things in the future. It's only a beginning.

Allen Chamberlain

And Finally

As we close out the history of these beloved pioneers, who kept and are keeping their faith, how can we not be grateful for their perseverance, determination and stubbornness as they lived and are living the principles of the Gospel. Our faith can be built upon their faith and the beautiful example they have set for all of us to follow!

FARRAGUT/PELLISSIPPI WARDS

Historical Background

- 1943 Knoxville Branch organized February 14 -predecessor of Farragut and Pellissippi Ward
- 1944 First Annual Banquet held at S & W Cafeteria, February 14th
- 1958 Scout Troop 140 organized, August
- 1958 Last recorded Banquet held at S & W Cafeteria, February 14th
- 1969 Knoxville Branch split - Knoxville North & South Branches organized Oct 1
- 1970's Welfare Project: Bee Keeping
- 1970's Fund Raising Project: Hand-dipped Chocolates
- 1972 Knoxville First Ward: name changed from Knoxville North Branch
- 1973-1974 Extension Built on Kendall Road Building for Stake Offices/Genealogy Library
- 1977 North Knoxville Dependent Sunday School formed
- 1978 Knoxville 3rd Ward formed July16 from 1st & 2nd Wards and boundaries realigned.
- 1985-86 Kendall Road Building renovated
- 1987 New Ward Building/Stake Center started in summer
- 1988 New Ward Building/Stake Center completed, April
- 1988 Farragut Ward: name changed from Knoxville First Ward
- 1988 First Meeting in New Ward/Stake Building, May 8
- 1989 Dedication of New Ward/Stake Building, October 15th
- 1992 Farragut Ward split: Pellissippi Ward organized in September
- 1992 Scout Troop No. 14 organized in Farragut Ward
- 1996 Pellissippi Ward remained part of Knoxville TN Stake when Stake split
- 1996 Farragut Ward remained part of Knoxville TN Stake when Stake split

Welfare Project: Bee Keeping
Fund Raising Project: Hand-dipped Chocolates

Branch Presidents/Bishops

Branch Presidents/Bishops

William Barron	Oct 1969
Larry Jeffery	Spring 1971
Larry Jeffery	Jun 1972
R. Lloyd Smith	Jan 1975
Anthony Oxborrow	Jan 1977
Rupert McGuire	Dec 1979
William C. Jones	Dec 1980
Larry VanTassell	Jan 1989

Counselors

Grover Cruze, Roger Bowers
 Roger Bowers, Dick Sturgis,
 Keith Ward
 Dale Haus, Dallas Ayres,
 R. Lloyd Smith
 Stan Bohne, Dallas Ayres
 Wendell O'Bryant
 Wendell O'Bryant, Jim Smith
 Larry Jeffery, Ed Schmidt
 Elwin Davis, Leon Ebbert
 John Pew, Frank W. Davis,
 James Noblitt

Farragut Ward Bishops

Leon Ebbert	Jun 1991
Gene Boxx	Sep 1992

Counselors

Milt Olsen, James Noblitt
 Corbet Curfman
 Bill Cox, Jim Skovran,
 Elwin Davis, Lynn Whipple,
 Steve Burns, Ken Duke

Pellissippi Ward Bishops

Leon Ebbert	Sep 1992
Richard D. Barnes	Apr 1996

Counselors

Corbet Curfman, James Noblitt,
 Mark Francis
 Jim Smith, Mark Francis

History of the Farragut/Pellissippi Wards

The Farragut and Pellissippi Wards have the same origins, beginning with a handful of saints in the Knoxville Branch which was organized February 14th, 1943. The two groups of saints were together from 1943 until 1992 when the Pellissippi Ward was organized. Thus, the history for these two wards are together as well.

The 1970's

In October of 1969, the Knoxville Branch was split, with the Interstate being the boundary line. The area south of the Interstate was called the Knoxville South Branch and that to the north became known as the Knoxville North Branch (which was the forerunner of the Farragut/Pellissippi Wards). David Fuqua was the Branch President at the time of this split and he remained the Branch President of the South Branch.

William (Bill) Barron was called as the Branch President of the North Branch. We were the smaller of the two branches and I can remember, as Primary President, going out and beating the bushes to call less-active sisters to staff the Primary. We were tiny, and if any of the larger families like us or the Barrons were out, it left a huge gaping hole in the congregation. We were rattling around like loose dried peas in a can!

Brother Barron relates some of his experiences as Branch President in his own words. "I was called as Branch President when the Knoxville Branch was split into two groups. David Fuqua was Branch President of the Knoxville Branch and remained as President of the south group. I believe the split was made during a District Conference as William Day (the Mission President) was picked up at the airport by Bedford Bird (the District President) with myself taggin' along as the District Clerk. The branches and the area for each branch were finalized during the short trip back to the Knoxville chapel. Bedford Bird had presented my call at my home in West Knoxville, so I knew who was going to be the new Branch President, and will take some credit for hanging the cumbersome name to our new group. I called Grover Cruze as my first counselor and Roger Bowers as my second counselor. Margaret Sturgis was Relief Society President, Richard Sturgis as Sunday School Superintendent (which was a major calling in those days), and Mitchell Borden was Branch Clerk and acted as a good sounding board for solving the various problems that arose. Mitchell probably holds the worlds record for two-finger typing and could whip out a response to a report needed in ten minutes or less. (He still types with the two fingers--one on each hand).

"My first concern was where to sit and the second was where to put my feet, as Brother Fuqua had all the office furniture, being their 'firstest' and with a large part of the 'mostest'. Mitch came to the rescue. We bought the needed furniture from a small office company on Broadway on time-payments. The mission reimbursed us for our payments so we could pay the next month's

bill. Thus we had a beautiful executive desk, chair and the works for about \$150.00.

“We had control of the building, scheduling events, but also had to pay the utility bills and other building expenses that were incurred each month by the two branches and the district offices which were maintained in the building. Our branch maintained the building for almost six months before we got help from the South Branch and the District. The District President called me in one night to explain why I had dipped into the Fast Offering funds to pay a budget or maintenance bill, and when I explained that was the only place we had any money and that we were not getting any help as explained above, the South Branch was directed to pay their part and Brother Pearson wrote me a check for the District part. With that money we bought Sunday School supplies for the new year and brought the building maintenance back into the black.

“During the time I was Branch President the Washington Temple was being built and we reached the goal of contributions required for our membership. Brother Bob Smith made the final contribution so we would be debt free in this area. When the Temple was opened we had good response to do endowments and other temple work which accelerated when the Atlanta Temple came into being. Maintaining a good genealogy program was always one of my goals.

“Our youth program was always a major concern in my 18 months as Branch President. We had an active Scout Troop, athletic program and participated in District programs such as road shows and the Gold and Green Ball. Both the young men and the young women were very active and our softball team won several District/Regional tournaments and the men were eligible to go to Salt Lake one year. We played in Church basketball and softball against non-Latter-day Saints and had some good seasons. Oak Ridge was a major competitor and winning against them made our season great.”

To help us understand just what hardships there were, but what determination the early saints had, Wanda Barron related the following to me. “When we had been in the Church about a year, we decided to go to Atlanta for our Patriarchal Blessing. We left the older children with some of the members but took Carol with us— she was about two. It was winter. The car heater blew cold air all the way to Atlanta. When we got into the city the heater performed beautifully. Then when we started home the cold air returned. We wrapped up in a blanket as best we could to keep from freezing.”

Wanda and Bill and their children have always been strong, wonderful people. In speaking with them about this history, their great desire is to come back “home” to Knoxville. They are now living in Paducah, Kentucky, in a small branch located many miles from the Stake Center. They feel like they have started all over again and feel some sadness that they cannot be here to partake of the many blessings that are ours. They are hard workers and have dug in their heels and are working just as hard there as they ever did here. They truly are a “Golden Family” that the missionaries found so long ago and of course, this child Carol that they refer to is our own Carol Avery.

Larry S. Jeffery became the next Branch President in the Spring of 1971. The Branch was still pretty small when Brother Jeffery was called, with a great portion of the District Leadership coming from the Branch. We were a branch for a little over a year then became the Knoxville First Ward, when the Stake was created on June 25, 1972. Brother Jeffery was ordained a High Priest and called as Bishop by Elder Mark E. Peterson. Due to the high rate of moving in and out by members of the Ward, several counselors were called and released during Brother Jeffery's tenure.

Bishop Jeffery recalls: "I look back at the time I spent as Branch President of the Knoxville North Branch and Bishop of the Knoxville First Ward as a period of growth and change. We had many good people come and go. Most of the time our membership level was below the 300 normally needed to be a ward. Our membership dropped as low as 240 and may have reached 310. We provided members that filled many Stake positions. These excellent members kept things going in spite of the fact that many of them wore 3 or 4 hats. The greatest asset that I had was having members who were committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and were willing to give their all for it. Many were transplants and therefore, they were only semi-permanent but this did not stop them from planting trees where they were for the moment and helping to make the orchard grow."

Larry Jeffery remained our Bishop until January of 1975. He and his family were strong, hard workers, and left many footprints in the historical sands of our Ward. Not long before the Third Ward was formed, Larry and his family moved to North Knoxville and were the driving force behind the early beginnings of that Ward. He became the first Bishop there, also. He and his family are remembered with much love by the folks of that Ward as well as the folks in our Ward.

Our chapel, the Kendall Road Building, housed First and Second Wards plus the District Offices before we became a Stake. After the Stake formation in 1972, it soon became apparent that an addition was needed for Stake Offices, a High Council Room, and an extended Genealogy Library. Plans were made with the addition being added during 1973 -1974. The addition was added to the back of the building which allowed space to be freed up for Knoxville First and Second Ward classes and auxiliaries. We all felt less cramped and could stretch out a little to allow for more growth! As you will soon see, it wasn't long until we were divided and the Third Ward was formed in the Knoxville area.

R. Lloyd Smith became the next Bishop of the First Ward from January 1975 to October 1977. He had returned to Knoxville in September 1974 to accept a position with St. Mary's Hospital. Bishop Smith served our country in Vietnam and upon his return completed his residency in Memphis where he served in their Bishopric. While he was in Vietnam, Judy and the girls lived here in Knoxville with his parents, Bob and Ruth Smith. You will recall he grew up in Knoxville as a child and many of the saints who were here when he was a child were still here and found the young boy they had taught in Primary and Mutual, to be their Bishop.

Bishop Smith's counselors were Stan Bohne and Dallas Ayres. He said his main aim was to

“eliminate feelings of competitiveness and adversity between the two wards.” He opened up communication between the two Bishops regarding use of the building, sharing of equipment, and expenses, etc., which in turn caused more friendliness to occur between the saints in the two wards.

In this frame of mine, he had observed the Second Ward and their candy project. He felt that a project where the members were all working together would be helpful. Sonja and Lyle Sasser from Oak Ridge had introduced the candy project to the Oak Ridge Ward and they were quite successful. The Second Ward’s project was successful, and so we began a project that remained an annual event until the Church changed the budgeting policy in the early 90’s.

At this time, Bishop Smith said the Ward was in terrible financial straits with lots of debt left over from the building projects, because it was just prior to this time that the addition for the Stake offices and Genealogy Library was added to the Kendall Road building. Even though it called for financial sacrifice on the part of the members, the Genealogy Library has been a wonderful addition to church activities as well as to the community. Along with that and other budget deficits, plus outstanding building and maintenance funds, finances were in terrible shape. The candy project was just what was needed to help with this problem.

SO, WE BEGAN....in December of 1975 with Tony Oxborrow as the first chairman. Candy making became a Ward tradition and even if we moaned and groaned, we all worked together and found the love and cohesiveness Bishop Smith was looking for. (Footprints History pp 41-42)

Another commitment Bishop Smith had was to the youth! There were about 56 youth in the Ward at this time. (As you can see, we grew quite rapidly from the Branch of 1969 to this present size.) With 56 youth, he started all kinds of activities for them; this coincided with the Stake really pushing youth activities at this time. Bishop Smith started the Hiwassee River Float Trips, which folks like Gene Borden (or any of the older Borden “boys”) the Barron “kids”, the Jeffery “kids”, all recall as being one of the highlights of their youth.

The First Official Turkey Bowl began with Bishop Smith. Originally the Turkey Bowl was a football game between the youth (boys) and their leaders on Thanksgiving morning. Then gradually the game went to equally dividing the youth and the men on teams, no longer being a game between youth and leaders. Though the Turkey Bowl wasn’t a yearly event and highly advertised, it continued on for several years. These youth are now grown men with families of their own and have scattered throughout the country. However as late as 1989, President R. Lloyd Smith or the Bishop received phone calls from local people and many of the out-of-towners who were home for the holiday, to ask “WHERE IS THE TURKEY BOWL BEING PLAYED?”

As a side note to this, Darryl Borden and his family moved to San Antonio, Texas in September of 1989. Guess what their Ward does each Thanksgiving Day? You got it! They hold a Turkey Bowl, just like he remembers from his youth. Who started it? You got it! He did! So the tradition lives on in San Antonio, Texas.

Because the youth needed something special to do on New Year's Eve, Bishop Smith, sensing this need, began the first New Year's Eve party. This was the fore-runner of the New Year's Eve party which expanded to include folks from Maryville, Oak Ridge, Grove Park and the Second Ward.

Judy Smith recalls the very first party that was done. There wasn't enough money for decorations so they went out and bought their own-----BALLOONS-----balloons were cheap and balloons now abound at this party. This party continued through the time we were known as the Farragut Ward.

Bishop Smith brought much to the First Ward, but his time as Bishop was all too short--he was called into the Stake Presidency in the fall of 1977.

We shall always remember Bishop Smith for his contributions, and his one great loveICE CREAM. Wherever there was Bishop Smith there was ice cream, and wherever there was ice cream, there was Bishop Smith. Still true? Oh, yes! (NOTE: President Smith continued the traditions of Bishop Smith: He would frequently bring ice cream to the Stake Offices on Wednesday nights, and we would all participate in an ice-cream party after all the work was done--but ONLY after ALL the work was done! --Mitch Borden)

Bees, Honey and Beekeeping

Ila and Wendal O'Bryant and their younger children moved to Knoxville the summer of 1975. One great contribution they have given us was their work on the Bee Project. Much of the equipment was stored in their garage and a most of the work was done or supervised by Wendell.

Diane Brinkman writes this paragraph in her article in the 1976 Ensign:

“In the Spring of 1975, the Knoxville First Ward bought a ‘Welfare Farm’ consisting of 20 honeybee hives. This project was very successful its first year. ‘We got honey twice a year — once in June from the Knoxville area and then, when the weather gets hot, we move the hives to the Cumberland Mountains in Crossville where it is cooler, and we get the fall honey from the sourwood flow,’ states Bishop Smith.”

When the Bee Project was started, it was done so as a welfare dollar production assignment by the Church. We had to find a project that would earn money that the members could work together on, and so in 1975, our Ward got a loan from the Church and got started with bees.

President Lloyd Smith recalls that the bees were shipped in by Greyhound Bus Express and “They called us promptly as soon as the bees arrived as they were very interested in an early pickup.” The bees were sitting outside and one can only imagine what the bus people were thinking if the bees were to get mad or to get loose.

Two things I've learned about bees while writing this history---they know when it is going to rain and they don't want their hives disturbed---smart bees! On this beautiful sunny day, Wendell was

tending the bees at his home, unaware that a storm was imminent. Ila recalls that he came out of the woods looking like a man from MARS, covered from head to toe with bees, almost completely black from their bodies, arms outstretched, yelling for Ila to do something.

“What do you want me to do?” is her question. “Do you want me to spray you with the garden hose?” The answer is a resounding YES! Well, she does; however, the bees then followed the stream of water up to Ila and ended up all over her; in her hair and hair curlers. Both Ila and Wendell had several stings that day. I’ve always known there was a reason I have never liked bees!

Another time Wendell was mowing and yelled for Ila to come out, only to discover the whole front yard black with flying bees. They watched for about 10 minutes and saw the bees swarm into the top of a cedar tree. They called Jim Smith to the rescue! He and Wendell cut the tree down, shook the bees back into their hives but missed so many that another method was called for.

They discovered it is really true! If you put down a WHITE sheet leading up to the hive, the bees will march right up and into the hive. SURE enough it happened, so the bees were saved as well as the O’Bryants and Jim. (Footprints History p 48-49)

Brother O’Bryant writes: “The Bee Project started with 10 hives (President Smith said 20 hives) constructed diligently by members of the First Ward. A small four-frame extractor was purchased. Most of the honey was purchased by Ward members for their use and for food storage, with the proceeds going to the Welfare System.

“In 1977 a decision was made to expand the project to 100 hives and to purchase equipment to automate the processing of the honey. Initially, hive equipment was purchased for sixty hives and assembled by members. The automated extracting equipment was set up in the basement of the O’Bryants. For the next several years the ward (AND THE BEES) produced between 2000 and 2600 pounds of honey per year.

“The ward was in the process of purchasing equipment to expand to 100 hives in the spring of 1983 when we were notified of the Church Welfare Department’s decision to abandon the small welfare projects in favor of large, more economically feasible projects. With this decision the project was terminated and the hives and equipment sold to various ward and stake members who had become interested in beekeeping. This project began in 1975 and ended in 1983.

“This short historical summary of the project is not complete without relating some of the many memorable experiences members of the ward had in taking care of the not always docile members of the bee family. The very most memorable experiences always involved Larry Jeffery. Brother Jeffery and bees should not even be mentioned in the same paragraph; however, to relate the experiences it is necessary to take a few liberties. Brother Jeffery, although he would never admit it, had a genuine respect and fear of the bees and usually put on a brave front by fearlessly attacking

any duties or problems relating to the bees and showed his mastery of the situation by dropping a super, tipping over a hive, shaking a honey super to get rid of the bees and mashing a few in the process, or otherwise doing what is necessary to make a raging hornet's nest out of a few docile, fun-loving bees. The ward member who was chosen to be Brother Larry's partner in the bee-keeping operation of the day was sure to have a memorable experience in dealing with cantankerous bees for Larry's very presence in the apiary was sufficient to irritate and aggravate the gentlest of bees."

There are stories galore about Larry Jeffery and the bees. President Smith remembers once when they were getting ready to transport the bees, when Larry appeared and said, "What are you all sitting around for?" And evidently just the sound of his voice agitated the bees and out they came all over Larry and before you could say scat, he was in a ditch covering his head. Another bee story concerning Larry---one time they had the bees at one of their dropping off points and the bees were mad, swarming all over, but mostly over Larry. He jumped over a fence, hit a cow pie and slid quite a distance while some of the brethren laughed in glee---realizing almost too late that this was not really the time to laugh!

"One summer we moved about 40 hives to Crossville to take advantage of the later honey flow in that area. We started out with about 10 ward members and loaded the hives on trucks just before dawn. The secret of moving hives is to block the hive entrances before daybreak so the bees can't escape and to handle the hives so that the propolis used by the bees to cement the hive bodies together is not disturbed, which would allow the bees to escape. I, (Brother O'Bryant), was Larry's work partner for the day. In loading our truck we managed to break the propolis seal on a couple of hives releasing several thousand bees. For the most part these bees clung to the outside of the hives for the trip to Crossville. We were not welcomed with open arms when we had to stop at a service station to refuel along the way.

"By the time we arrived at Crossville it was mid-morning, very hot and humid and the bees were not in the best of moods. The bees on the outside of the truck presented all kinds of problems in the unloading process. Needless to say the other trucks were unloaded as far away from us as possible. When the entrance blocks were finally removed releasing the bees from captivity the sky was black with bees within seconds and we became the victims of this adventure. We all made a hasty retreat back to Knoxville.

"The project provided many opportunities for ward members to get together on work projects to construct hives, hive new swarms of bees, move hives to new locations, feed and inspect the hives, remove and extract honey and generally maintain the equipment. Many members contributed a great deal of time to this project."

As you can tell by reading this summary, the bee project was a gigantic task---the spirit of the people shines through, as being industrious and willing to do whatever it takes to complete a task.

We salute all the beekeepers of the ward! And they did it for many years!”

With our ward boundaries covering everyone north of the Interstate, our members came from far away to attend meetings. To alleviate some of their travel, the North Knoxville Dependent Sunday School was formed in 1977 with Grover Cruze as Sunday School President.

On January 8, 1978, this group had expanded and held their first Sacrament Meeting, which was a testimony meeting, with one hundred twenty saints attending. They were meeting in an elementary school building; later they were able to rent the Old Broadway Church, where they stayed until their new building was completed.

Because of very expensive housing in the west end of Knox County, most of the affordable homes were in the north area, like Clinton, Powell and North Knoxville. Many of the saints that moved in moved north, not west, increasing the membership in that area. On July 16, 1978, the First and Second Wards were divided and the Knoxville Third Ward was created. It seemed to us who were here at this time that we had just about time to turn around once or twice between the formation of the Stake in 1972 and the formation of this new ward.

Because ward boundaries were changed to make the new ward, many of us who had been together for several years were now separated, and new people were included in the ward, many we didn't know. We were at as much of a loss trying to figure out who was new and who had just joined us from the Second Ward. (Knoxville First and Second Wards shared the Kendall Road building for meetings for several more years.) The youth, especially, felt the effects of these changes. These were young people who had grown up together, growing like brothers and sisters, one-for-all and all-for-one, attending primary, mutual and seminary together. (Footprint History pp 51-52)

We had one last road show together! We used all the youth! And we Won! What a fun night that turned out to be! What a sad time it turned out to be! As the youth left after the show, they were never together again. It was particularly difficult for the Knoxville Third Ward youth! They had been used to so many youth, and a big basketball court. Some of them drifted for a while until they could get back on an even keel again, and some drifted away and never returned to activity.

The 1980's

The First Ward ushered in the 1980's with the old cliché: “The more things change the more they stay the same!” The things that were the same were the Bee Project, the Candy Project, the Scouting Program and the Seminary Program. The Scouting and Seminary Programs are both the mainstay for our youth.

Scout Troop 140

Scout Troop 140 was organized in August 1958 in the Knoxville Branch. Bill Barron, soon after his baptism in 1959, became involved in the troop. In talking with Grover Cruze about these early events, he referred to Bill Barron as the “eternal Scouter”. In this first troop were a couple of black boys, and even when some folks resisted these youngsters, Brother Barron continued on as usual and finally the resistance wore down. Brother Barron was the Scoutmaster until 1963, and then you will find him as Scoutmaster on and off for several years. Brother Barron’s leadership and love for the boys and scouting affected many lives. Those of us who had sons under his leadership are eternally grateful! Several brothers have worked hard keeping this scout troop going. In looking over past scouting records, Jim Smith’s name keeps coming up. It is comforting to know that the brethren in the ward realize the value of scouting and continue on with this important program. Troop 140 is still going strong in the Pellissippi Ward. When the Pellissippi Ward was formed in 1992, Farragut Ward started their own Scout Troop, Troop # 14.

Seminary

The Seminary Program is such a spiritual force in the lives of high-school-aged youth. With the completion of the Kendall Road building, Early Morning Seminary began the school year of 1967 with Edgar Snow as the first Seminary Teacher. Some of his students were Cindy Barron (the first seminary graduate from Knoxville), Bill Barron, Shane Cruze (who lived clear out on Jones Road - check your map for how far that was!), Robin Snow, Patricia Buchanan and Jerry Wayne Ward.

When the Branch was split in the fall of 1969, the seminary was not split, but remained together until the fall of 1982-83. Thus the youth from both branches (and, later both wards) were together on a daily basis which helped them to remain a close-knit group. When the 1982 split came, Sister Kathy Cloward, a First Warder, continued to teach the Second Ward seminary for a few more years. The First Ward seminary was able to meet at Farragut High School where we rented the Drivers Education Room. This enabled the class to begin at a little later time - 7:00 am to 8:00 am. We rented this space for three years; the next few years we rented space at the Lutheran Church which is just up and across the road from the high school and FINALLY, with the completion of the new stake center, we could hold seminary in our own building again.

Prior to 1982, home study seminary was offered, which several youth took advantage of. This was taught for a good many years by Wanda Poore of the Second Ward. However, when the two groups were divided, First Ward no longer offered home study seminary. Kathy Cloward wrote the following information about seminary: “Daily classes at such an early hour are a major source of both stress and strength to students, parents and teachers. Over the years families have sacrificed enormously of sleep, morning togetherness, and gas money to transport their teenagers to seminary. It is a major disruption of a family’s morning routine. Teachers have sacrificed to prepare a stimulating lesson for each day’s class. Sometimes they don’t sleep well at night for worry over

the students, the coming lesson or whether they will hear the 5:00 AM alarm. Most teachers need to spend three to six hours every day in studying, planning, and teaching. They have to be always well prepared because the clever, bright minds of our young people will soon ‘eat alive’ a teacher who is hesitant or uninformed. They want a teacher who brings spiritual meat to the classroom, who knows the scriptures and the Lord, and who will help the students know them, too. Teachers’ families also give. They must do without the parent each morning and work around the teacher’s study needs. Seminary teachers’ spouses and children are the unsung heroes of the program. It would not be possible without their generous support. Finally, the seminary students themselves give up that extra hour, getting up very early to get to seminary every day.

“Why would so many people go to so much work and sacrifice? This question is often asked by both members and not-yet-members of the Church. The answer lies in the value we place on passing on our spiritual knowledge and commitment to the Lord to our young people. Seminary is designed to supplement the training children receive in the home and to give students a rich experience in both gospel knowledge and testimony. Since we don’t rely on professional ministers, we need each person to know the scriptures, to live the principles of the Gospel, and to be prepared for a life of service and leadership in the Church.

“Seminary students and teachers can testify of the Lord’s help in making the program possible and successful. A teacher may be inspired to say or do something in the classroom, finding out later that it was just what a certain student needed. The Lord blesses those teachers, helping them to love their students, to love Him and the scriptures, and to crawl out of bed in the morning. He fills in for some of their weaknesses (but not all). Sometimes the Spirit is so strong in the class that the teacher can hardly feel her feet on the ground. Other times the fatigue and frustration bring the teacher to tears on the way home. Most of the time she prays, prepares, and hopes. Teachers love their students and continue to be interested in them as they graduate, go on missions, marry and make a place for themselves in the world.

“Teaching seminary is probably the most stressful and most spiritual thing that I have done. When I was first called to teach, a week before school started, I had a seven-month old baby and a first-grade son who were filling most of my available time. My husband, who is the Seminary Coordinator, laughed. He knows that I have a terrible time waking up and that I need a lot of sleep. It takes me several minutes in the morning just to get both my eyes going the same direction. But my husband said he would care of the boys in the mornings, and I said I’d teach.

“The first year was the hardest. It was 1981-82 and we had Church History/Doctrine and Covenants. I had twelve students in a combined First and Second Ward class. (Some were in Home Study then.) I struggled to feed students who wanted to come late and leave early, talk to each other, have fun, learn the gospel, and bait the teachers. Many days I drove home in tears. We had lots of fun times, too, and other days I went home on a spiritual ‘high’. The continual fatigue was overwhelming. Making time to prepare lessons drove out most of my personal interests. But the Lord helped me

just enough to keep my chin above water. I could tangibly feel His help. He helped me to love them and yearn for them to spiritually see. Once in a while in class it was like I could see into their hearts, and many times I knew I was teaching far beyond my own ability. I would know what to say or what to do for an activity, and sometimes I would find out later that it was just what one student needed. Most of the time you don't find out, you just hope you are getting through. When I was bone-weary, He would wake me up. The whole first year I didn't sleep well because I was afraid I wouldn't be able to wake up, and all those students would be left out in the cold, in the dark with no teacher. But I made it every day, until the last week. After the first year, it didn't seem quite so hard.

“After teaching seminary for four years, I feel very attached to ‘my’ students. They are beginning to scatter, to set out on their own paths, and my heart is frequently turned to them, wondering how they are. I have the names of all the kids who have come through my classes in my journal, and I watch them and pray for them. I rejoice for them and mark beside their names when they go on missions and marry in the Temple. A few have moved away and I have lost track of them.

“The most important thing I learned from four years of teaching Early Morning Seminary is that one factor makes all the difference: when you have the Spirit of the Lord you have a great class, but if you don't, even the most interesting parts get dull, and most of the life goes out of the class. Successful teaching does not depend as much on the teacher's talents, wisdom or pizzazz with the students as it does on faith, prayer and preparation. I have learned how it feels when the Spirit fills in and supplies the words and carries them into hearts. Looking back I realize that I gained more than I gave in Seminary. I learned to love the students and see them a little like the Lord does. I learned to know and love the scriptures and to see the power in them. I learned to rely on the Lord and to love Him.” (Footprints history pp 62-64)

Donna Blackburn, one of the current Seminary teachers in the Pellissippi Ward, writes (3/29/97) of one of those spiritual experiences Sister Cloward was speaking of:

“My most treasured memory of teaching Seminary this year has been just recently. Last week a young lady sat across from me eager to pass off all twenty-five of her scripture mastery verses to me in one sitting. She took a deep breath, while wringing her hands, and with sounding scared yet determined, she accomplished her goal. She is a first-year student who had decided from the start that she was going to be a Master Scriptorian all four years in Seminary. To see her set her goal, then to meet her goal, left us both shaking and excited.

“I crowned her (literally) as our 1st Master Scriptorian this year and led her to each class, where the other students applauded and congratulated her and some even kissed her blushing cheeks. It was wonderful. She not only memorized the scriptures, but as she told me ---‘You have to apply them to know them’. Doesn't that say it all?”

A New Bishop Called

In December of 1980 a new Bishop was called for the Knoxville First Ward; William C. Jones as Bishop, with counselors Larry Jeffery and Ed Schmidt. Later, when these two counselors moved away, Bob Cloward and Leon Ebbert were called as Bishop Jones' counselors. Bishop Jones had just celebrated his 29th birthday when he received this call. Being a convert to the Church, this was quite a challenge for one so young in years as well as one so young in the Gospel.

At this time the ward was still feeling the after-effects of the realignment of ward boundaries and the formation of the Third Ward. We found ourselves in the dubious position of being the smallest Ward in the Stake, but with much of the Stake Leadership coming from our Ward, plus having little money and lots and lots of debt again. Because of this, the focus of Bishop Jones' administration was to try to restore financial stability, but much of his time was spent with the youth, either with their programs, problems, or youth conferences. He feels grateful for the youth, their parents and youth leaders, and especially praised Ed Snow and Judy Smith for their commitment to the youth. Most of the young men in the youth programs during Bishop Jones' administration served missions. Needless to say the youth were ever-present on his mind. He seldom cried, but when he did, it was when some of the youth had problems and he was asked to help them.

Youth Conferences stand out in Bishop Jones' memory as good times--the best of times--BUT here is how it usually went.

Everyone arrived on the first day and the leaders just knew that THEIR kids would be perfect. They all settled down for a good night's sleep and as soon as the leaders let out their first snore, the youth were up and gone. The next morning when the leaders found out what had gone on the night before, they had a BIG meeting. They all agreed that something had to be done! They agreed they must chaperone the inside of the building, the outside of the building, all the hallways, the rooms, and THEY would stay UP all night to see that the youth stayed DOWN all night. Bishop Jones was usually the one assigned to stay UP all night as he had difficulty sleeping in those days because of a bad back. So-o-o, the leaders were up but by this time the kids were pooped out and went to bed, slept all night - - SOUND ASLEEP - - with leaders bleary-eyed from loss of sleep. Oh, the things that youth teach us!

Bishop Jones said of his impressions of the Farragut Ward: "I was always impressed with how much everyone gave of themselves to make the programs work. If we needed cars, chaperones, money or whatever, the folks always came through." He described the Ward as being filled with good, solid LDS who care about their children and other LDS people - - - Good Solid People!"

When we were still meeting in the Kendall Road building along with the Second Ward saints, and the building was being renovated, he encountered all sorts of things to handle. Things were

chaotic. There were contractors to meet with, deadlines to meet, plus almost everything being torn up except the walls, making it nearly impossible to hold all the necessary services in the building. Luckily, by this time the consolidated meeting schedule had started and we were only there on Sundays and Wednesday nights for activities. Even at that we would sometimes take our lives in our hands just to pass through the building. Being calm, cool, and collected, was only what one saw on the outside of the Bishop, I'm sure, because on the inside things were churning away. This renovation took longer than expected to complete so we had to learn to live with the mess for several months. . . Bishop Jones left his lasting influence on the ward especially on the youth. He remained Bishop until January of 1989. (Footprints History pp 68-70)

NOTE: It was during the renovation of the Kendal Road chapel that the superintendent of the construction company approached Bro. Don Jordan, who was overseeing the project for the Stake. "Mr. Jordan, " he asked, "do you folks have some kind of a service that resembles what we call Communion in our churches?" Bro. Jordan replied that yes, we did, only we called it Sacrament Meeting. The superintendent paused for a moment, then asked, "Well, do Cheerios have anything to do with your Sacrament Meeting?" It seems that, when they pulled the pews out of the chapel to recarpet the area, they had found hundreds and hundreds of Cheerios, so just naturally assumed that we used Cheerios for the sacrament emblems! --Mitch Borden)

The 1980's brought us the Knoxville Regional Bishops Storehouse as well as the Atlanta Temple and a new Ward Building/Stake Center. All three changed the lives of the members in our ward.

New Ward/Stake Building!

The growth patterns of the membership began to change and most of the new folks in the area were now moving west. The presence of these saints was being felt and, when activities were planned for the youth, a lot of these were planned west, instead of in the ward building on Kendall Road. It was quite evident that in the not-too-far-distant future award building would have to be built further west. It seemed also that a new stake center was called for, so Ray Pearson was appointed to work with a real estate agent to find a suitable building site.

Property was finally found, the sale finally completed and the ground breaking for the new Ward Building/Stake Center was in the Spring of 1987. We were all excited to have our Ward housed in the new Stake Center. Sharlene Barber writes about her feelings as their family watched the new building go up.

"For those of us living in the west end of the ward boundaries, the building of the new stake center/ward building was an exciting occasion. We were especially excited since we lived just 2 miles from the site. We were (in comparison) 10 miles one-way from our old building. We watched the progress of the building inch-by-inch and day-by-day. We wandered over there and examined the progress about once a week. Having a large family, with members involved in every auxiliary, we spent many hours on the road to the church building. It was like a dream come true, when the building was completed, and we realized we could now drive to the new church in just 5

minutes. Our family will never forget this event in the history of the Farragut Ward since it meant such a drastic change in hours and miles we would spend coming and going to church.

“The first Farragut Ward meeting took place in the new building on May 8, 1988. (Our name was changed from the Knoxville First Ward, to the Farragut Ward with the move to the new building.) May 8th was made even more special to our family because Julie (our 16-year-old) was one of the speakers in Sacrament meeting. It also happened to be Mother’s Day, and she was asked to speak on the things she loved about her mother and mothers in general.

“There was a special feeling there that day; just the newness of the building and everyone sitting down on the pews together for the first time. We felt very reverent, humble and blessed. Blessed to be able to attend our meetings in this beautiful new building. I’m sure all the speakers in church that day felt special, as well as the organist, the Bishop and everyone else performing their duties in the building for the first time.”

AMEN! We all felt the same. It was a great day and each Sunday we meet reminds us of the beautiful workmanship in the building and it should remind us of the sacrifices of those who have gone before. We didn’t have to raise 30% of the cost of this new building, only 4% - - - 2% was paid in donated cash funds, and 2% was paid by the ward members doing the landscaping. (Footprints History pp 75-76)

Larry VanTassell became our new Bishop on January 20, 1989. He was born and raised in Kamos, Utah, served a mission in Southern California, received his PhD at the University of Texas. After receiving his degree he and his family moved to Knoxville where he accepted a job with the University of Tennessee.

Bishop VanTassell was very optimistic about the Farragut Ward. He would have liked for us to have been more missionary oriented and his two main goals were “Increasing the love and service of the ward members, and increasing home and visiting teaching”. He felt that the temple work was going great and had temple preparation classes in session most of the time so that others would be ready to go to the temple.

There was a large youth group in the ward - - between 50 and 60 youth with most of the group between the ages of 12 and 16. In May of this year, the Deacons Quorum was divided, which is an event that rarely happens. Bishop VanTassell was very committed to the youth and he could often be found at one of the ball games. Knowing how busy he was and how much his family needed him, we realized how great his sacrifice was for the ward. Bishop VanTassell is a quiet, reserved, private man but had a great love for the folks in the ward.

There was much growth in the ward over the years, as it seemed as though almost weekly there was a new family in our midst. We can see now, as in the past, that when a new building is built the

numbers increase. We have been most blessed to have warmth, love and compassion among us so that new ones feel immediately tucked into the fold, safe from outside forces, and made to feel a part of our ward family - - - among friends.

Dedication of Farragut Ward Building/Knoxville Stake Center

What could be more fitting than to close out the 1980's with the dedication of the Farragut Ward Chapel/Knoxville Tennessee Stake Center. This occurred on Sunday, October 15th, 1989 at 5 PM. During this service the poem written by Lelia Anderson for the Kendall Road building dedication was read, which seemed very appropriate. Many of the saints who were present at the first dedication were present at this new Ward/Stake Center dedication, also. The dedicatory prayer was given by Stake President R. Lloyd Smith. (See the Stake section of this history for the prayer.)

The 1990's

Leon Ebbert was called as Bishop of the Farragut Ward in June of 1991; then as Bishop of the Pellissippi Ward when it was split from Farragut, with Gene Boxx being called as Bishop of Farragut.

Stake President Russell Barber writes, "Splitting the Farragut Ward and forming the Pellissippi Ward in September of 1992 was an exciting time. We considered a number of options on where to place the boundaries. We had to have at least 250 in each ward, but wanted to leave as many as possible in the Farragut Ward to allow us to form the Loudon Branch as soon as the numbers were there.

"We finally set the boundary basically along the Interstate and also added a small part of the West Hills Ward in the new Pellissippi Ward. The boundary location meant that our daughter and son-in-law and other very good friends would be in another ward, which made us sad. There were lots of mixed emotions by everyone on the Sunday the split was made, but overall, I think everyone felt very good about what took place. Both wards were very strong and lots of new people were given the opportunity to serve."

Bishop Ebbert recalls, just before the formation of the Pellissippi Ward there were 550 members in Farragut Ward. Because the Stake was looking to form the Loudon Branch in the future, the division left the Pellissippi Ward with 257 members, just 7 more than was required for a ward!

The Pellissippi Ward was organized Sunday, September 27, 1992, with only the Bishopric, Elders Quorum President and High Priest Group Leader being sustained, leaving the rest of the ward positions "blank"! The Bishopric had just two weeks to get those positions filled and the new Ward ready to function by Sunday October 11th. What a feat! Bishop Ebbert recalls much prayer and fasting went into who would staff the Ward . . . but they were ready. At the first meeting

of the new Pellissippi Ward, a large segment of time was taken up in sustaining folks in their new callings. Bishop Ebbert remembers it was a “challenging and spiritually stretching experience”.

I had the opportunity to sit down with Bishop Ebbert recently and talk with him about his feelings, objectives and goals for the Pellissippi Ward. Once again, I was touched by his sweet, loving spirit, and gentle nature. He was such a boon for the Farragut and Pellissippi Wards. He provided a secure, gentle environment for the ward members to stretch and grow without fear of being reprimanded with harshness when errors in judgment were made; a safe place to feel of his love and his gentle but determined reminders of our need to be faithful in all things. What a peace we all felt with this great man of God!

Bishop Ebbert is a convert to the Church, but because of his wonderful Christian upbringing, is what I would call a second-generation Mormon. Converts must learn and accept the Gospel step by step and receive a testimony of each one. At first, a convert knows that Joseph Smith was a Prophet and the Book of Mormon is true. Then each new principle is added one by one as the years go by. We folks would be first generation Mormons. Those who are children of first generation Mormons, would then be second generation. By the time we get to third generation Mormons, it is a way of life. Bishop Ebbert bypassed the first generation and became second generation almost at the time he was baptized. He knew, already, from past experiences and accepted the teachings of the Church immediately; it was his “Way of Life”. His determination to live all the teachings of the Gospel were apparent. His acceptance of all the teachings shown brightly as he taught us by his sweet example. But most of all, we felt the love in his heart. We knew he loved us, we knew he cared, we knew he spent many hours in prayer and fasting for us. We knew! Not very often does such a notable Man of God come along. We should be especially grateful to have had him called as a Counselor in the Stake Presidency in the Knoxville Tennessee Stake. Elder Carmack set President Ebbert apart as counselor in the Stake Presidency. In the blessing he mentioned “the influence that my fore-runner church had in my life.”

Bishop Ebbert is especially mindful of those around us of other faiths, mindful that we must avoid any form of arrogance or prideful religious smugness. We Mormons, he feels, do not have the monopoly on faith and high standards, and must respect everyone’s right to worship as they please and be tolerant and patient with each other. Bishop Ebbert operates under two great principles: A soft word turns away wrath and the stretch theory - - - having goals a little bit out of reach. His emphasis, as Bishop, was on the three fold mission of the church:

Proclaiming the Gospel
Redeeming the Dead
Perfecting the Saints

With that in mind, he emphasized not only quantity but quality of Home Teaching and Visiting Teaching, as these are essential to the overall health and well-being of the Ward Family. He

emphasized 100% for both Relief Society and Priesthood Leaders so that all Ward members were well taken care of. Other things he emphasized was to:

Persuade members to read the scriptures every day
Have daily prayers and family prayers
Live the Law of the Fast
Attend the Temple

And always, his heart was with the Youth! Bishop Ebbert speaks of the youth with love and respect. They are excellent, he says, obedient, faithful and righteous examples, with seminary attendance in the upper 90%. As the youth go, so goes the Church!

Often among his concerns was gossip. He knew the value of kindness and gentleness, and treating others with respect. Gossip negates these values. So much good can be done with words, but the wrong words cause irreparable damage for years to come. Knowing when to speak and when to remain silent are great attributes that most of us have to learn.

Another great concern of his was how we treated each other. He wanted the Brethren to learn how to love and respect women, to understand that women are not subordinate but equal - - to be cherished, treasured and respected - - to be watched over, protected and kept safe. He knew when these qualities became a part of the Priesthood holders' lives, the women would respond with more gentleness and kindness in the home and with the family.

How could we members of the ward help but become better, with these concerns brought to our attention often. He kindly, but steadily pushed us forward. The ward members responded. We became better, kinder, gentler, more loving and concerned for each other. Bishop Ebbert was our Bishop until April of 1996 when he was called into the Stake Presidency. What a legacy he left behind! What a legacy he will become to the Stake!

“The Pellissippi Saints are a kind and loving people and willingly give of their talents and are capable of much more. They are an extraordinary people with strength and faith. It was a great privilege to have been their Bishop.”

Bishop Leon Ebbert

In His Own Words

by Bishop Gene Boxx, Farragut Ward

I was called to be Bishop when the Farragut Ward was divided in September of 1992. At that time, I had been teaching the 15 and 16-year-olds in Sunday School and truly loved working with those young people. One evening, President Russell Barber called my wife and I over to his church office that night for an interview. After entering his office and having prayer together we talked about what I would consider to be small things, then he said, "I am almost afraid to ask you to do this because of your busy schedule and because you have already done this once before; but I must extend the call". President Barber then extended the call to be the Bishop of the Farragut Ward. I was stunned! I was almost speechless. I only asked him one question, "President, are you sure this is what the Lord wants?" His reply, "You go home and ask Him if it is His will, then you will know for yourself." I went home that evening and received confirmation from the Lord of the call.

I remember the next week to ten days were filled with great anxiety, emotion and concern. We were splitting the Farragut Ward into two units, which truly was exciting, but what I found out was that all of the current leadership of the Farragut Ward including the Bishopric, Priesthood quorums and auxiliary presidencies would remain in the new Pellissippi Ward because of the new ward boundaries. I would have to start all over with totally new people in every organization in the Ward-- talk about being alone! I also found out we would be in a new office with no furnishings or supplies of any kind. Since the old Farragut Ward Bishopric was already in place in the new ward, they would not have to experience the same organizational challenges. We also would be sharing the building with each other as well as with the Stake organizations. Yes, we had great fun, Bishop Ebbert and I, as we labored to work out all of the meeting schedules, organizational needs, and other details. These were challenging and exciting times for the both of us.

Our new Bishopric was formed. Bill Cox was called as 1st Counselor, Jim Skovran as 2nd Counselor, Rob Ivey as Ward Clerk and Greg Nilsson as Executive Secretary. Our Ward Council was completed with the following new members: Barney Cornaby as High Priest Group leader, Mike Ziegler as Elders Quorum president, Brad Seaton as Ward Mission Leader, Joyce Boice as Relief Society President, Lynn Giles as President of the Aaronic Priesthood Young Men, Marjorie Jones as Young Women's President, David Vaughan as Sunday School President, and Deanna Ivey as Primary President. Suddenly we were off and running!

My first goal with the Ward Council was to identify and locate all of our ward members. What a choice experience! Since our ward consisted of west Knox County south of the Interstate and all of Loudon County, we had to spend a great deal of time traveling to find everyone. It took us six months to finally locate and identify all of our members. Many were surprised to see a Bishop or other council member at their door; many were pleased to see us, and yes, there were some members who did not want to be found by anyone for any reason.

Another goal from the very beginning was to split off the members living in Loudon County and organize an independent branch there. We had more than 80 members of our ward living in Loudon County at that time who had to travel quite a distance just to get to church. It was not as convenient to participate in the programs of the church, especially those during the week, while living so far away. We felt a great need to strengthen these members and help them grow to become a self-sufficient unit. Our Elders Quorum Presidency started holding meetings in Frank Adkins home to find and strengthen members. Missionaries became involved in finding, fellowshiping and home teaching. The Relief Society Presidency continually visited and shepherded the sisters. But the real effort and credit for branch organization came from a core group of families that actually lived in Loudon County. These families, the Adkins, the Collins, the Johnsons, the Roses, the Nashes and the Roemiches, caught a vision of what could happen. They were committed to forming the branch. If it were not for these families and their dedication there would not have been a branch organized in Loudon County as soon as it was in the summer of 1995. It took 2 ½ years to reach our goal.

Our Aaronic Priesthood Young Men's and Young Women's program was another great concern to us as a Bishopric. We had over 70 active youth 12-16 before the ward split and now, with less than 50% at mutual because of the ward division, our young people missed their friends; they didn't like meeting on Thursday nights, nor did they like change. I had made up my mind that our youth program would be the best it could be. We needed good people to roll up their sleeves and go to work, to sacrifice their time as well as their talent. Brother Lynn Giles and Sister Marjorie Jones quickly took charge and led the activation and activity efforts of our youth. We had great support from parents in all of our activities. Sharlene Barber and David Sexton provided great influence and leadership in establishing standards. I took great pleasure in attending SED's. These monthly Sunday Evening Discussions with our youth became special faith-promoting spiritual experiences, for many of our youth were being challenged in high school about their beliefs by their peers and teachers alike. Seminary also played a key role in the spiritual development of our young people. Teachers like Shirley Davis and Ruth Cox were sources of positive reinforcement and constant strength and devotion in following truth in keeping gospel standards.

I had promised President Barber, at the time of my call as Bishop, that I would try to prepare every young man at the appropriate age to be worthy and ready for a full-time missionary call. We had strong leaders in Lynn Giles and David Sexton and a great brotherhood existed in the priests quorum with many opportunities to serve. These young priests developed strong interpersonal relationships one with another through their selfless priesthood service. Testimony meetings in the quorum were special and sacred. During my years thus far as Bishop of the Farragut Ward, I have been privileged to participate in sending off a number of missionaries both young and old, male and female. They have helped set the standard for the rest of the ward to follow in missionary work. Included in this group are: Aaron, Autumn and Tyler Cornaby; Brian and Jarom Boxx, Nelson and E'Shuan Davis, Brad Barber, Jon Duke, Brad Watts, Heather Grose, Jennilyn and Nathan Duce, Helen and Jim Drake, and Ray and Leah Pearson. The call has been issued and others are yet

preparing to serve when their time is come.

This past year our ward goals have been expanded to include three areas: 1) to have each and every member establish and maintain a personal, intimate relationship with the Savior through personal study of the scriptures and personal prayer; 2) to get outside of ourselves in the community in selfless service to provide opportunities for each of us to bring others unto the Savior; 3) to get every member qualified, youth and adult, to attend and worship the Lord in the Temple on a consistent and frequent basis. We have had great success thus far. Our home teachers are now encouraging families in these three areas. Activities have been planned to assist all of us to reach our goals.

With the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the entrance of the pioneers into the Salt Lake Valley this year, our ward has embarked on its own pioneer journey to read the Book of Mormon in 111 days. This is the same amount of time it took the saints to cross the plains from Winter Quarters to Salt Lake. Each ward family has a wagon to track along the trail with their reading. Hopefully we can all move our wagons through scripture study and arrive on time.

Eight months of planning paid off in our efforts to get our ward to the temple. It was truly a glorious experience on March 27- 28th of this year to bring our primary children, youth and adults to that sacred building to be edified and instructed by the spirit. We had qualified our own people to officiate in all of the ordinances that we participated in, including baptisms for the dead, initiatory work, sealings and the endowment. After our sessions in the temple, James E. Hill, President of the Atlanta Temple, spoke to our unit as a ward family in the Stake Center behind the Temple. He counseled us to take care of our little ones and to return often to the "Lord's university" to be instructed. It was an experience that has united the members of our ward. We are all anxious and motivated to do it again. Our goal is to make it a biannual experience.

Bishops are blessed through the experiences of their members no matter how difficult and trying those experiences may be. How thankful I am for all that I have been taught by the faithful saints of the Farragut Ward. I am humbled by the love, devotion and service given by these good people to each other. They give, and give, and give, even in times of trial, adversity, physical hardship and temptation. Continual acts of kindness are given with no thought of remuneration or recognition. Through my discussions and interviews with individuals and families over the years, my testimony has been greatly strengthened by the varied experiences our members have suffered, some of which would have left many members bitter and even driven them away from their faith. Most of the time these learning experiences are never shared. They are quietly endured with hope in our Father that He truly knows what is best for us. It is only through such trials that the Master can prepare us for the refiner's fire. The only reason I know about the ones I do, is because of the position I hold and word sometimes slips out from others. My life has been enriched because I have had such a great opportunity to be in this position. How blessed I am to be a Bishop in Zion.

I have a real testimony of the existence of our Heavenly Father and His son, Jesus Christ. I know beyond any shadow of a doubt that our Heavenly Father lives. That He loves us. That this is His plan. That Jesus Christ is truly His Son, the only begotten in the flesh; that through His Son, all mankind might be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. I marvel at how merciful and kind our Father is toward us; that He is so patient, so understanding and yet forgiving of our faults; how slow He is to anger, but so quick to bless us even when we don't deserve it.

I know He hears us when we pray. That He does answer our prayers— not according to our own personal or selfish desires, but according to what is best for our individual growth and development. I know that Father loves us so much that He does not want us to wander in darkness, or walk alone in this life without guidance. He gives us living prophets to discern the way, to prepare the path, to be the example. He extends His influence through Priesthood Leaders, through auxiliary teachers and leaders. I know He hurts when we hurt, that He has joy when we have joy. I also know that He is saddened when we are disobedient, when we turn from Him, when we choose unwisely and have to suffer the consequences of our own actions. I am thankful for all that I have been given, for all that I have been taught. I am grateful for my Savior. I pray that I one day might have the opportunity to thank Him personally for life here in this second estate. I owe my Father more than words can express.

I am also thankful for the members over the years that have touched my life and that of my family. Many have given time, talent, resources and personal sacrifice to help us as a family. Many will never know of the great influence they have been. I could never repay that which I have received. How fortunate I have been to live in these challenging but special times. May our Father be with us always as we dedicate our lives to Him who created us.

Bishop Gene Boxx

In His Own Words

by Bishop Richard Barnes-Pellissippi Ward

I was called as Bishop of the Pellissippi Ward in April of 1996. By that time we had been separated from the Farragut Ward for almost four years, and the pains associated with dividing and then finding our new space again had quieted down for the most part. The ward which I inherited is a strong, mature ward, not really what one would expect from a ward that is so young in years. While this is probably due in part to the long heritage which many of the ward members have in the Church and in this area, I believe that it is more primarily due to the steady and calm leadership which Bishop Ebbert, now President Ebbert, provided during the several years since the division. Thus, my position has seemed to me as more of keeping things moving along well, rather than of shoring up any deficiencies. However, I do have certain areas identified in which I have wanted to place an emphasis. Like most Bishops before me, I have felt a strong obligation to the youth. But more than this, I have also felt a strong desire to be with them, to get to know them, and to be a friend to them. To this end, I have tried to place a priority on interviewing the young members of

our ward regularly, including the primary children, although their interviews have been in groups. I have also tried to be at all of the youth activities, including dances, youth conferences, and yearly camps. While I often don't know what to do or what to say, I have hoped that just being accessible and familiar would enable them to feel comfortable in coming to me, should they have a problem.

I also have a great desire to strengthen the ward in temple attendance. I am pleased that there are so many in the ward who sacrifice to attend the temple regularly. I firmly believe that any person, regardless of their current state of progression, will experience more rapid growth in their testimony, personal righteousness, and dedication through regular temple worship. In this regard, we as a bishopric have scheduled regular monthly temple trips for the ward. We have also scheduled additional temple trips for the youth. While the additional youth trips have placed some burdens on the ward budget, I cannot think of a more worthwhile area in which to spend these sacred funds. It is my desire that the ward establish a firm tradition of regularly attending the temple as a group.

Finally, I believe that it is not enough for a good deed to be done or the good service to be rendered. The attitude with which the deed is done and the services rendered is equally important. In this spirit, the bishopric has attempted to set an example of cheerful service, even when that service comes at a difficult time; of support for our leader's decisions, even when those decisions may not be what we would have chosen; and of always thinking the best of others, even when those others are difficult to love. If we can develop this attitude as a ward, then we will truly be a Zion society. I am grateful for the opportunity which I now have to serve the Pellissippi Ward. I love the people here, and am very grateful for the tremendous strength that is here. I am grateful for the gospel of Jesus Christ. I know that the correct teachings and authoritative ordinances of His Gospel are found in this church. I know that He took upon Himself our sins, and that we, by striving to follow His example and live His commandments, can be lifted up to be with Him at the last day. I know that this is only possible if we continue to pursue Him and endure to the end. That we may do so is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Bishop Richard Barnes

GROVE PARK WARD

Historical Background

- 1943 Knoxville Branch organized February 14 - See history, p. 66
1944 First Annual Banquet held at S & W Cafeteria, February 14th
- 1958 Scout Troop 140 organized - August
1958 Last recorded Banquet held at S & W Cafeteria, February 14th
1969 Knoxville North Branch Organized October 10
- 1972 Knoxville First Ward/organized in June when District became Stake
1973-74 Extension Built on Kendall Road building for Stake Offices/Genealogy Library
1977 North Knoxville Dependent Sunday School formed
1977 Sunday School met at Christenberry Junior High School
1978 Knoxville Third Ward formed - July 16
1978 Church rented old Church on Broadway as new meeting place.
1979 Scout Troop #3 organized
- 1980 Fund Raising Project- Funnel Cake Booth at Fair
1984 The Harbin Construction Co. won contract for new chapel
1984 Ground Breaking service for new chapel - May 14
1985 Approval for name change to Grove Park Ward, March 24
1985 Last meeting in old rented building- May 19
1985 Saints moved into new building May 26
1987 Grove Park Chapel dedicated May 17
- 1996 Grove Park Ward became part of new Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake, created Nov 17th.

Welfare Project: Garden - tomatoes, corn, okra
Fund Raising Project: Funnel Cake Booth at Fair

Bishops

Counselors

Bishop Larry Jeffery	1978	Jim Halliburton, Dallas Ayres
Bishop Jesse Dunn	1979	Grover Cruze, Brent Bingham, Scott Fransen
Bishop Grover Cruze	1982	Scott Fransen, Dallas Ayres, Owan Hughes, Joe Hinson
Bishop Richard Riggs*	1987	Charles Crosby, Randy Jordan, Steve Lewis, Frank Holland, Dwayne Buchkovich, Dennis Taylor, Richard Anderson
Bishop Kevin Cruze	1996	Greg Kellar, Mike Gibson

* President Riggs was Stake President and Bishop for 3 weeks - Nov 17th to Dec 8th

History of Grove Park Ward

(Condensed)

Although some of the most senior Church members in East Tennessee reside and have resided in the Grove Park Ward, it has had a relatively short existence as a Ward. Because of very expensive housing in the west end of Knox County, most of the affordable homes were in the north area, like Clinton, Powell and North Knoxville. Many saints that were moving in during the 1970's moved north, not west, increasing the membership in the North area. With so many members in the North, a dependent Sunday School was organized in 1977, dependent on the Knoxville First Ward.

Brother Grover Cruze, was the first Sunday School President, serving under Bishop Oxborrow. The North Knoxville Sunday School met in the Christenberry Junior High School building. A little later the Sunday School expanded and held their first Sacrament Meeting January 8, 1978. One hundred twenty saints attended this first Sacrament Meeting which was a testimony meeting. The Knoxville Third Ward was organized July 16, 1978.

“Members were pulled from both the Knoxville First and Second Wards to create the Third Ward. The boundaries of both First and Second Wards were changed as well, now going North and South, whereas before, they were going East and West. It seemed to us who were here at this time that we had just about had time to turn around once or twice between the formation of the Stake in 1972, and this formation of the Knoxville Third Ward.

“A lot of the saints who had been together from the early years were now separated. I recall it was about this time that the McGuires moved here (to Knoxville First Ward) from Chattanooga. They felt that we were a pretty unfriendly bunch, but we were at as much of a loss trying to figure out who was new and who had just joined us from the Second Ward, as they were trying to figure out why we were so unfriendly. With the boundaries of the two wards (Knoxville First and Second) going across the city instead of up and down, several of the families who lived south of the Interstate became a part of our ward and several of the families who lived east of the new boundaries became a part of the Second Ward. . . then to make things even more difficult, some of our very best friends were now a part of the newly created Knoxville Third Ward. At the time the Third Ward was organized, I'm not sure what the boundaries were, but in 1989 they included that part of Knox County north of a line formed by Clinton Highway, Pleasant Ridge Road, Western Avenue, Vine Avenue, Dandride Avenue, Riverside Drive, and the French Broad River, together with that part of Union County which lies south of the Clinch River arm of Norris Lake. (Of course now, in 1996, with the formation of the new Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake, new boundaries have been formed again.)

“The youth, especially, felt the effects of these changes. These were young people who had grown up together, growing like brothers and sisters, one-for-all and all-for-one, attending primary, mutual and seminary together.

“We were in the middle of working on a road show at the time the Third Ward was organized. The powers that be let us continue. Since this would be the last time all these youth would be together, the youth were determined that we would be successful in our efforts and win first place this year. There were over 50 youth in the Knoxville First Ward. We were determined to use every one of them since this was the final year they would be together.

The theme given us from the Stake was ‘The Old South’. We had learned from previous experience that the first two ideas that pop into your head when thinking on the theme should be discarded because there will be many shows written around that idea. So out went the first two ideas; we had to dig deeper so as to find a unique road show that would win. The first few ideas were all about southern belles, long skirts, etc., but our third idea was along the southern tradition of baseball. We entitled it ‘Take Me Out to the Ball Game’, with a hero named Little Jocko, who was small but fantastic on the ball field. Little Jocko was an idea created by Eddie Snow..

What made Little Jocko so unique was that he was only 4 feet tall. We had the usual dancers, ball players, skit-type road show except at the end Little Jocko was interviewed by a newspaper reporter. This left people almost rolling in the aisles. The boys placed a table on stage with a sheet covering it to the floor. One boy was standing behind the table with a baseball cap on, a T-shirt over his body encasing his arms, with his hands slipped in a pair of socks and tennis shoes. Another boy was standing behind him with his arms through the sleeves of a T-shirt, arms around the first boy, and that was all that was visible of this young man.

The boy who was the arms was not seen nor could he see, but he proceeded to feed the visible boy cereal, brush his teeth, all the while the first boy was crossing and uncrossing his legs (arms) standing on his tip toes, etc., as well as talking with the newspaper interviewer. This made one of the most hilarious scenes one can every imagine. It was great fun. We used all the youth in the show and they were ecstatic when we took first place. It was a final tribute to their youthful escapades together.”

In March of 1979, we had the chance to get these wonderful young people together again. The play, “The Life and Times of Joseph Smith”, written by Lelia Anderson, was a Stake play for all the youth in the area. We asked the youth in for a special day of casting. We listened as the youth read their lines, watching their expressions and their body language, taking notes as we went along. The final selections for the cast were taken from these notes as well as the youth’s overall personality. Some characters needed to be gentle and kind; others required boisterous, noisy characteristics.

The hardest character to cast was Joseph Smith. We narrowed the choice down to three young men. After much meditation and prayer, the choice was made. David Werner, of the Knoxville Third Ward, was chosen as our Prophet Joseph Smith. David was in more of the scenes than any other cast member and proved to be the one whom Heavenly Father wanted for this part. He was outstanding in his performance. I know that Heavenly Father must have been very pleased!

The Werner Family was among the Saints included in the Knoxville Third Ward boundaries. Recently reminiscing with Sister Werner about her sons and especially David's performance in the Joseph Smith play, she said that David's grandmother was a Smith and a direct descendant of one of Joseph Smith's uncles. Ironic isn't it, that a descendent of the Prophet would portray him!

David, soon thereafter, went on a mission to the Bolivia, South America Mission. We felt that the influence of this great play had something to do with him deciding to serve a mission as well the influence of his family, his wonderful leaders and teachers who kept him on the right track.

Following is a letter he wrote home:

Dear Third Ward, Como Esta ustedes? (How are you all?)
A Mission is the greatest thing I feel you could ever do. Thinking of myself, I, personally have learned a lot about my testimony, the gospel, the scriptures, the Church, people; in all, the way to go back and live with my Heavenly Father.

I remember the "MTC" and there is a scripture in Ezekiel that describes that experience perfectly: Read Ezekiel 2:4-10; 3:1-6. The MTC was a terrific experience. Literally we eat the roll, but I can testify that it was honey for sweetness as we entered into the mission field and began sharing the gospel.

The first day, I'll never forget as we got off the plane I remember that warm Santa Cruz tropical breeze and people speaking a language which we thought was QUECHUA. Somehow the Spanish we spoke in the MTC didn't match the Spanish we heard there, and my first discussion to this day I know not what went on. Since that time, 8 months have passed, and it is fun to see the new Elders experience those same things.

Missionary work brings a lot of joy, happiness, work, sorrow, pain, prayer, fasting, study, goals, a few letters, ups and downs, and with every goal - prayerful desires of Bautismos. Bringing families into the Church is a beautiful thing to see, and for missionaries it is: la tuti', lo Mejor, lo Maximo, Numero Uno. It is what we are here for and it is a joy hard to explain. I saw a man and his wife baptized the other day; what a testimony builder that was to feel the Spirit that radiated from that couple; the spirit there was so strong there was no one that could deny it.

I've seen many beautiful experiences through teaching and working. I've seen doors slammed in the face and I've seen the gospel come into the homes of people where the discussions were taught by candlelight. I've seen the drunk become sober, the unlearned become learned, the sick healed; and everything coming through one thing - the restoration of the gospel. I know the Church is true. I know that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God and Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet of God sent to guide

us in the paths of righteousness. I know that the Book of Mormon is true, and I know that the authority of God that was lost has been restored to the earth, and I've seen the power of it. I know these things are true and I leave this testimony with you, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Elder David Werner

What a great testimony to the saints in the Grove Park Ward and his wonderful parents!

Larry and Raili Jeffery and their children moved to North Knoxville some time in 1977. Brother Jeffery was the Bishop of the Knoxville First Ward from 1971 to 1975. He was called as the first Bishop of the Knoxville Third Ward at its formation July 16, 1978. He worked long and hard to make the Christenberry School a "Chapel" for the Saints; but soon thereafter the Old Broadway Church was rented. A lot of progress was made during his tenure!

When it was learned that Bishop Jesse Dunn, the second Bishop of the Ward, might be moving and his release was anticipated, Stake President Lloyd Smith counseled with the Bishopric concerning the next Bishop. Upon request from him, Grover Cruze, a counselor to Bishop Dunn, made a number of recommendations. President Smith noted that he did not mention himself, and asked him what he would do if he were called as the Bishop. Grover replied, "shoot myself". Grover and his wife, Carol, had a strong feeling that he would be the next Bishop, but time passed and they lost the feeling.

Brother Cruze had been very much involved in the Knoxville Branch and then the Knoxville North Branch. In 1961-62 he served as counselor to Branch President Edgar Snow with an assignment to a Dependent Sunday School in Speedwell, where he traveled twice a month. In 1963, he was called as Branch President. During this time, land was purchased for what would become the Knoxville Stake Center on Kendall Road. He was blessed with participating in that building program. In later years he served as counselor to Branch President William G. Barron. I'm sure Brother Cruze was pretty tired from all this past service and really felt like he would "shoot myself" for sure if called as Bishop of the Third Ward.

Funnel Cake Booth

by Grover Cruze

The Fall of 1979, Grover Cruze was serving as Fund Raising Chairman for the Ward. We were not moving very fast in raising funds to erase our Stake assessment. Brother Bruce Rankin and I submitted a plan to the Bishopric to try a project in connection with the TVA&I Fair.

In an effort to decide what should be sold from our booth, Brother and Sister Rankin, Carol and I visited Silver Dollar City (now Dollywood) to try to come up with ideas. We had not looked very long until we came upon a booth with something we had not seen before - - Funnel Cakes! We all had the same reaction - - this is for us! We obtained a recipe and returned very excited to try it. Brother Rankin made all of the necessary contacts at the Fair and obtained us a choice spot. In his

sign shop he made the metal fry rings and along with Pam and Charley Crosby, obtained the necessary utensils, etc. Sister Dale Halliburton was Relief Society President. She and the sisters made nice, white aprons for all of the workers to wear. Brother Dallas Ayres handled fair ticket distribution for the workers, and in the Fall of 1980 we opened for business.

It was a success! We probably averaged clearing \$5,000.00 a year through the years for the efforts of the Ward. The members responded wholeheartedly and made it a success. From the Ward Newsletter dated October 1983, we read:

“The Knoxville Third Ward’s annual funnel cake booth at the TVA&I Fair raised a net total of more than \$6,000.00. This represents the largest amount raised in the four-year history of the project. . . Special congratulations and appreciation go to Bob Rankin, Wally Loper, Pam and Charley Crosby, and each member who mixed batter, and manned the booth. It was a champion effort.”

Over the years individuals such as Pam and Charley Crosby, Sister Becky Zellers, Sister Lynn Hughes and several others coordinated the work shifts. In the early years Sister Carol Cruze was “purchasing agent”, and for the past several years, Sister Debbie Riggs continued the job and procured “great deals” in supplies. Brother Steve Lewis was in charge of the booth, which meant organizing Priesthood assistance in getting the booth painted every year, and adjusting to new city codes, etc. Brother Ken Langtimm was called upon year after year for carpentry alterations to the booth. Over the years hundreds of faithful saints contributed to making this project a success.

The Church and Stake forgave our building debt and assessment. After the Church discontinued fund raising, the booth was not used for the Ward budget, but Bishop Riggs used it for a time to help young men on missions. Currently, individual families have taken it over and use it to help with their own missionary needs. Many Ward members continue to volunteer to work in the “family missionary fund” booth.

The Grove Park Fair Booth was right on the main path, near the lake, going into the Fair. Folks came and went morning, noon and evening. This booth became a special spot as the workers were always friendly, helpful and kind to all who bought from them.

New Bishop Called

On Wednesday, October 6, 1982, President Smith called and asked Brother Grover Cruze to come for an appointment, and on Friday, October 8th, Brother Cruze received the call and on October 17th became the third Bishop of the Knoxville Third Ward. Almost three years later, in May of 1985, the congregation moved into their new building in the Grove Park area of Fountain City under their new name of Grove Park Ward.

In 1982, Bishop Cruze gave the following talk:

Brothers and Sisters,

I want to talk to you for a few minutes about what has been done in regard to finding property upon which to build a new chapel. Obviously we have not been successful in whatever we have been doing or we wouldn't be joining our prayers together this day and seeking the help of our Father in Heaven in this matter.

I wouldn't even begin to try to guess how many pieces of property that we have looked at in the past three or four years. When I say we, I mean all of us. This search started even before we became the Knoxville North Sunday School. Bishop Oxborrow, the First Ward Bishop, gave us a charge in Priesthood one morning to begin looking for property in this area for a future building when he told us of the future plans for a separate Branch or Ward in "North Knoxville".

All during the time we were a Sunday School, meeting in the old Christenberry School Building, a search was being conducted more in the North East Area. Bishop Jeffery, Brother Ayres, and Brother Halliburton were leading the charge at that time. On New Year's Day, I remember going with the Bishopric and Stake Presidency and spending all day looking at property. It was pretty much narrowed down to the Buffat Mill location, and after much work and negotiations with the owners by Bishop Jeffery and his counselors, the Stake Presidency felt that we should concentrate more in the Halls Area. So we started over.

Within the past two years we have literally had an army of people looking for the right piece of property. The right piece just hasn't been made available to us yet. We have come awfully close on one or two of them, but they were turned down by either the Stake or our Atlanta Building Department for one reason or another. I know this has been discouraging to some of you who have spent unbelievable time looking ... like Brother Rankin and especially Brother and Sister Werner.

But Brothers and Sisters we are close. We can feel it as a Bishopric. We feel it not only as pressure from our Father in Heaven but just from the fact that we are almost bursting at the seams here. We feel it because we sense a real spiritual growth in the membership of this ward. In the recent past, we felt only the physical pressure to have a new building. We were constantly feeling that we were not quite ready as a Ward to accept the tremendous responsibilities of a building program.

We seem to have done some growing spiritually. We show this in many

ways. We can look back one year ago and we have certainly made strides. One thing, a year ago we did not qualify in numbers alone for the three-phase chapel we were challenged to work towards. We now have a Ward membership of 307 and we are averaging 168 to 175 attendance at Sacrament Meeting. This is fantastic. A few weeks ago when the primary gave their program, we had something like 210 here.

Now it is time to seek the answer that we need from the Lord. He will give it to us if we will but show him that we are ready, and make this a matter of constant prayer. So in regard to my opening statement. . . . What are we doing? Exactly what are we supposed to do? This is the way our Father operates. When the restoration of this great gospel began, it was in answer to a boy's prayer . . . As it was restored line upon line and precept upon precept, each of these were given in answer to prayer, sometimes mighty prayer and fasting.

One of the greatest (answers to prayer) in the history of the Church regarding Priesthood being made available to all worthy males, came only after years of prayers by recent prophets trying to seek the will of the Lord in this matter.

Just when the Lord may show us the piece of property that he has prepared for us, I don't know, but one thing I do know is that He will and it will be after we have done all we can to be spiritually ready and after many righteous prayers.

Finally the right place was found!

Recently talking with Brother Cruze, he reminisced about the property for the Chapel, and the building process. When the Church approved the land for purchase for the new Chapel, which was located in the middle of a beautiful subdivision, much opposition arose against it. Brother Bruce Rankin was serving on the City Council at the time and, had it not been for him and the people he knew, the land would never have been approved for a church building. Finally, the approval came and the purchase was completed.

Even though the Council approved it, the Fountain City people were determined there would not be a Mormon Church there. A lot of hard work went into convincing the neighbors. The Bishopric walked the neighborhood, often, talking with the neighbors, making friends with them, and eventually convincing most of them that the Church would make a good neighbor. They worked so closely with the neighborhood that the neighbors felt like it was their building - - - all except one family who was really disappointed with the landscaping -- just little twigs! - - and made her feelings quite evident in a letter to Bishop Cruze.

April 6, 1984, The Harbin Construction Company won the contract with a low bid of \$1,130,000 to build the Grove Park Ward Chapel. "On May 14, 1984, members of the Knoxville Third Ward met at 8:00 p.m. at the Grove Park property for the ground breaking for the new chapel. Bishop Cruze

gave a brief speech and so did President Lloyd Smith. President Smith, Dallas Ayres, Joe Hinson and Bishop Cruze each turned out a (gold-painted) shovel-full of dirt and then Brother Richard Morse a shovel-full because he was a 'Brigham Young look-alike'."

Within a short while, construction began. Bishop Cruze remembers this well, as he watched over the process and dealt with the neighbors, who were watching the whole thing from foundation to roof. He had done this before with the building of the Stake Center on Kendall Road and had lots of experience!

Speaking of the roof! It was about half on, when he saw it. It was this horrible, bright orange color, reminding him of a Howard Johnson's, a Pizza Hut or something other than a church. He halted the roofing job, and called President Smith! He finally allowed the roofing to continue when he was convinced that the sun would eventually dull the color and it would blend in beautifully with the decor of the neighborhood.

March 24, 1985, "Today, Brother Ray Pearson, our Stake High Councilman, made a special trip out to our Ward to read a letter from President Gordon B. Hinckley, which gave approval for renaming the Knoxville Third Ward to Grove Park Ward. We were thrilled! A new building, a new name."
(Journal entries by Carol Cruze)

May 20, 1985: "Yesterday May 19, was the last meeting for us in the old, rented building. We were supposed to be in our new building long ago, but one problem after the other has delayed us. Next Sunday, May 26, will be our first Sunday in the new building and our Ward Conference. All three members of the Stake Presidency will be speaking as well as Bishop Cruze, and others by invitation! The Stake Presidency consists of President Lloyd Smith, President Bruce Morgenegg and President Eugene Muggridge. Sister Ina Fransen directed the choir before and during conference."
(Journal entries by Carol Cruze)

A day of rejoicing! They had been in rented facilities for a very long time and were so grateful for a permanent place to call home. The neighbors have finally accepted the members into their beautiful neighborhood. One of the famous Dogwood Trails goes through the neighborhood! It is certainly beautiful to behold!

May 17, 1987 the Grove Park Ward was dedicated. Brother Richard Anderson wrote a beautiful hymn especially for the dedicatory service titled, "Through the Long and Perilous Night", which the Ward choir sang.

The following was printed in the bulletin from the Dedicatory Service:

A noteworthy welcome is extended to Bishop Larry S. Jeffery and Sister Raili Jeffery who came back to Tennessee from their home in Utah for our Chapel's dedication.

Grove Park Ward extends a special thanks to Brother Richard Anderson for the use of his notable composition, "Through the Long and Perilous Night", sung by the Ward Choir.

We are especially appreciative that R. Lloyd Smith is dedicating our building. He is the former Bishop of many of the members of the Grove Park Ward whose roots stem from the Knoxville 1st Ward before the Grove Park Ward was established.

The quilt displayed in the south foyer was created by the sisters of the ward - and a few brothers - as a project for Tennessee Homecoming '86 and as a Relief Society Homemaking activity to teach quilting skills. The design of the quilt symbolizes the uniqueness of each family and the unity of the ward that results from having a group of individuals committed to a common goal.

Large blocks at the corner and in the center represents items that are important to us. At the top left is Christ and the children representing our commitment to God and our Family. The Angel Moroni signifies the restoration of the Gospel. The Church logo in the center represents the Lord's Church being central in our lives. The block at the lower right depicts our State and City and the block at the lower left is the logo for Tennessee Homecoming '86.

The quilt is not meant to be a portrait of all who have lived in this ward or those who yet will, but rather, a snapshot of our Ward family as it appeared for a brief moment in 1986.

Leslie Hinson, R. S. Homemaking Leader

On September 6, 1987, Bishop Cruze was released. He had been Bishop for over five years. In looking back through his biography, we find him as Branch President in the Knoxville Branch for many years, and a counselor in both the Branch and the Third Ward several times. He was involved with the building of the Chapel/ Stake Center on Kendall Road as well as the Grove Park Chapel. He had much experience in dealing with cantankerous problems in the building process. No wonder he has such great patience!

Bishop Richard Riggs was called as Bishop September 6, 1987. Under his leadership the Saints progressed, becoming more and more committed to the Gospel, striving to become the best that they could be. His focus on the youth was paramount in his mind and efforts. He began having SED's (Sunday Evening Discussions) with the youth, which was a fireside with the Bishop, where the youth could candidly ask questions and get answers, as well as have open discussions with the Bishop. These were in addition to the other meetings the youth had. Also Early Morning Seminary has always been held in the Grove Park Ward, but the last two years there have been two classes for the youth.

On November 17, 1996, Bishop Richard Riggs was called as the President of the newly created

Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake. He remained as Bishop of the Ward for a few weeks until a new Bishop could be called. He soon issued a call to Kevin Cruze, son of Grover Cruze, to be the new Bishop of the Grove Park Ward. Many of the early Saints remember teaching Kevin in their Sunday School and Primary classes. They are reaping the results of their faithful teaching, as they see Kevin, as a grown man and now their leader. What a choice experience!

In His Own Words

by Bishop Richard Riggs

The Riggs family moved to Tennessee in late April 1980, a few days after I graduated from BYU Law School. We first rented an apartment in the Knoxville First Ward. We were promptly informed by our new friends that we would be making a big mistake when we purchased a home in the Third Ward area.

Before moving to Tennessee, we had served diligently for the past year as Ward Gold and Green Ball Representatives (our only Church calling) and had grown accustomed to standing on the sidelines. Things changed when we began attending the Third Ward as I was called as Elders Quorum President within a month of moving in and Debbie was soon serving in the Sunday School and then the Relief Society and Primary Presidency.

On August 23, 1987, President Lloyd Smith called me into his office and informed me that with a wife as good as Debbie, that I should be ready to serve as Bishop. Two weeks later, on September 6, 1987, I was set apart as Bishop of the Grove Park Ward. I served as Bishop for over nine years until I issued the call to Grover Cruze's son, Kevin, to serve as Bishop of the Grove Park Ward. Three weeks after the stakes were split, I released myself and set apart Kevin Cruze as the Bishop of the Grove Park Ward.

While serving as Bishop of the Grove Park Ward, I had a lot of fun. I enjoyed working with the youth and the youth generally enjoyed working with me. Nearly all of the young men who turned 19 went on missions and the young women were equally righteous. We're not sure if the youth were more righteous because of me or if I spent more time with them because they were already good youth.

I relied heavily upon the great sisters of Grove Park, especially the devoted Relief Society Presidents: Ina Morgan, Becky Zellers, Lynn Hughes, Cheryl Williams and Lisa Isom. I always knew these sisters had the toughest, most demanding calling in the Ward.

When called, I was serving as Ward Mission Leader. During the next 9 years, Grove Park had some of the Church's greatest Ward Mission Leaders, including Dave Connatser, Charles Noe, and Kevin Cruze. Because of the leadership and spirit of these and other great men, Grove Park consistently led the mission in convert baptisms and convert retention.

I was always also able to call counselors who were willing to work harder than me. Although I

may have worn them out, I am deeply grateful for their service and devotion, (Charles Crosby, Randall Jordan, Steve Lewis, Frank Holland, Dennis Taylor, Dwayne Buchkovich and Richard Anderson).

Grove Park has always been a ward of converts, as most of the members and most of the leaders are first-generation Mormons. It is truly made up of modern day pioneers. These people have for years shown “faith in every footstep”. During my 9 years as Bishop, there were not more than one or two times that anyone turned down a call that I issued to them from the Lord. That is an incredible fact that I came to take for granted while serving as Bishop. I loved serving in the Grove Park Ward and love the people of the Ward. I thank the Lord and President Barber for allowing me to serve so long. Even after being called as Stake President, it was not easy to pass the mantle of Bishop on to younger, more capable hands. But the time was right; the Grove Park Ward was ready for a change, and under the guidance of Bishop Kevin Cruze, the Grove Park Ward is growing faster and better than ever before.

I wish to testify that this is the Lord’s true Church; that our Savior, Jesus Christ, is at the helm; that He leads and guides us today through His Prophet, Gordon B. Hinckley, through the General and Area Authorities and through our local leaders. We are happiest when we choose to follow Christ. Everything the Lord asks us to do - - even those things we don’t want to do - - is to help us have peace, joy and happiness. This is a time of peace, joy, prosperity, and growth in the Stakes of Zion. Living and sharing the Gospel, no matter how difficult it may seem, will not be much easier than it is now and in time, it will be much more difficult. We need to take advantage today of the opportunities for personal, family, Ward and Stake growth. ‘For behold the field is white already to harvest’. Let us thrust in our sickle with all our might and be a part of the growth of the Lord’s Kingdom as it begins to fill the whole earth. Together let us serve our brothers and sisters as we serve Him, I pray in His name; even Jesus Christ, Amen. Richard Riggs

(President of the Knoxville Tn Cumberland Stake)

And Finally,

The Clinch River Ward and new Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake temporary building was completed and ready for occupancy as of Sunday May 4th 1997. Though furniture is scarce, President Riggs’ desk arrived! Furniture was borrowed from other facilities so that meetings could commence on this first beautiful May Sunday!

Early Members of the Grove Park Ward

Polly Ann Lamb

Several of the Grove Park Ward members go back many years in the history of the Church. Polly Ann Lamb, Ann, as she is lovingly called, was born in White County and her grandparents on her mother’s side of the family joined the Church the first time the missionaries came to their home in

the little town of Smithville when her grandfather had gone into town on some business. He came home and told her grandmother he had met some Mormon missionaries in town. She asked him did he think to invite them to come for dinner. He told her he had. They came for dinner and taught the whole family and baptized them. That was 1885. There was so much prejudice in Tennessee against the Church that it did not grow here for many years.

Ann recalls, "I remember Elder Glen Allen and his companion, Elder Earl C. Robinson, were ordered out of Johnson City, Tn. They had been to our home near Cookeville and left, going to Johnson City. A few days they were back and said they had been told to leave town. They (the anti-Mormon people) gathered at the bus station to make sure they left. That was in 1925.

"When I came to Knoxville, Brother and Sister Marvin Greene were the only family in Knoxville who belonged to the Church. I think there were a few other members, two or three from different families. I did not know them. There were also some members in Maryville and some in Crossville. I think sometimes they held a conference and all these would come. Brother Greene had Sunday School in his home for their family. There were three or four other members. They came slowly from other places. I didn't get to go when they started having Sunday School in the hall on Market St., because I lived so far out and did not have transportation.

"On April 4, 1953 they bought a lot on Kingston Pike and Concord St., for a new Church building. On September 23, 1956 the first Sacrament Meeting in the Chapel on Kingston Pike was held. There were 52 members at that first meeting.

"Tennessee was a slow state to be converted. The scattered members were few and far between. I remember the bad things the children in my grammar school would say to me about the Church. It did not bother me for, at an early age, I had a strong testimony of the truthfulness of the Church and was hoping even then that some day I might get to be a Temple Worker. Can you imagine how happy I was when fifty-five years of age brought my call to go to the Washington Temple?"

Sister Lamb has gone home to be with her Heavenly Father, but we feel sure that she is smiling down on her family. Her son-in-law, Richard Cooper, recently joined the church. He and her daughter, Sandra, will be going to the temple to be sealed for time and all eternity sometime in late April 1997. The Cooper's are members of the Loudon Branch. Ann has other children in several of the wards and branches throughout the area.

Iva Mae Posey

Another early saint, Iva Mae Posey has a long history in the Church in the Knoxville and surrounding area. You can read of some of her escapades in the Oak Ridge history, as well as in the Knoxville Branch history. Sister Posey was loved by many.

Sister Posey was the oldest of three children born to the union of Thomas S. Siau and Ina May Truit. She was born in Kibbyville, Texas and has one brother, Elmer and one sister, Myrld. As a child her parents wanted the best for their children. Her mother taught Sister Posey out of the Bible. Her father was a hard worker. As the young family grew, they often walked by a nice but humble home in a small nearby community and dreamed of owning that home one day. When Sister Posey was eleven years old, her father was killed in a construction accident. The insurance money from her father's death paid for the little home they had longed for as a family.

The Siau family was repeatedly warned by neighbors not to move into that house. It was in a "Mormon Community" and if she moved into that house she was sure to have seven husbands! She moved into the house anyway--without seven husbands! This "Mormon Community" converted the whole family. They truly learned much. As Sister Posey said, "One of the little Mormon girls taught me how to tat". Now the Grove Park Ward has a new Sacrament cloth with the finest tating around it that can be made.

Sister Posey's bedtime prayers were answered in 1924 when she was baptized. She relates the story that when bedtime came she would always say her prayers before retiring. Her prayer would always end with, "... help me to join the right church." Her father's death left a large void in the family. Upon hearing about doing work for the dead, Sister Posey took upon herself a new meaning for genealogy to do her father's work. To this day she still knows the importance of doing your genealogy.

Sister Posey has been active in the church from it's beginnings. She remembers attending when the Branch met on Walnut Street in the Lodge Building. The Posey's also lived in Oak Ridge when Elder G. Smith was the first Branch President. Two Elders also lived with the Poseys until they could settle there. The first branch building in Knoxville was on Kingston Pike and Concord Street and was built by members. She also remembers bringing lunch on Saturdays to the members working on the Stake building.

Sister Iva Mae Posey has seen tremendous growth in the Knoxville area. Much of that can be attributed to her service in the church as a Relief Society President, Genealogy teacher, visiting teacher, and numerous other callings where she has served diligently. - Both Brother and Sister Posey have gone home to be with their Heavenly Father, but greatly missed by those of us left behind. Sister Posey died December 18, 1985 at the age of 76.

Dorothy Alta-Mae Greene Rankin

No history would be complete without reading about Dorothy Alta-Mae Greene Rankin. Dot, as she was affectionately called, was born September 6, 1930 to Marvin B. Greene and Lurene Francis Martin Greene in their home on Katherine Avenue in Knoxville, Tennessee. She was the second child and first daughter. Knoxville became her home, where she would spend her entire 54 years,

growing up, marrying and raising 5 children of her own. In those early days, her parents and family were among the first members of the Church in East Tennessee. Dot recalled that church meetings were held in their home. Missionaries lived with them regularly. Dot had a strong faith which began early as she served in church callings from the time she was small. She was 37 years old when the first stake center was built in Knoxville. She always said that Knoxville was a most golden mission field because Satan put his angels to work there to keep the church from growing.

Judy Rankin Prince, Dot's daughter writes: "Mother had a great sense of understanding, of compassion, a gift for teaching us to achieve and overcome our trials. She believed in faith, especially with fasting, and fasted often for us and her own trials, which were many. She had a reverent glow about her, radiating love and peace. She knew what she knew, and her testimony was never moved. The last paragraph she wrote in her journal, entered April 20, 1981 records:

I have always felt love and compassion, not only for my children but for all my family members, regardless of the lives they lived or their personal traits and different personalities. I came to realize long ago that fasting and prayer and extending love were all I could do to control their lives, and if I could do this for them, I would be extending a great gift.

"Mother's lymph cancer was discovered in August 1977. She was to live 7 ½ years, struggling with cancer, always continuing to serve in her calling as Spiritual Living Teacher in the Knoxville Third Ward. The progress of the church was like another one of her children. Many of those members could write testimonials of her example and teaching. I will always remember her special glow in the temple. She belonged there - Daddy, too. I know she is radiating her love throughout the heavens now. She died quietly December 21, 1984, with her husband and all her children around her, knowing it was her time to go, willing to go, knowing the Lord's will was done, and good would come to her family with her passing. She knew they would become stronger and be closer to the Lord, in order to be with her again eternally."

Grover Douglas Cruze

December has been an eventful month for Bishop Grove Douglas Cruze, who was born on Christmas Day. He was first introduced to the Gospel by his brother who learned about the Church from an army buddy. As a youngster he roamed cemeteries with his brother learning about genealogy and the Gospel. His brother encouraged him to be baptized and even hitchhiked from Arizona to baptize him, but their mother felt that he was too young to make such an important decision.

Years later missionaries, tracting the neighborhood where he lived, knocked on his door and gave him the discussions. Being an avid reader, he read everything (including negative materials) about the Church he could find; but the more he read and studied the more convinced he became that the

Church was true. On December 25th, 1959, his birthday, he was baptized a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was baptized at the only Chapel in Knoxville which was located at the corner of Concord and Kingston Pike. Upon leaving the baptismal service, he went into the parking lot to find his car gone. It had been stolen and turned up days later at the bus station in Chattanooga. He has been able to overcome such hurdles in his life and has grown in the Gospel

In 1960, he served as District Clerk and Branch Sunday School Superintendent and later that year served on the District Council, being assigned to Corbin, Kentucky. In 1961-62 he served as a counselor to Branch President Edgar Snow with an assignment to a dependent Sunday School in Speedwell, where he traveled twice a month. In 1963 he was called as Branch President. During this time land was purchased for what would become the Knoxville Stake Center. He was blessed with participating in that building program. In later years, he served as a counselor to Branch President William G. Barron.

Bishop Cruze and his family were living on the “right side of the tracks” when the Knoxville Third Ward began meeting as a Sunday School in the Christenberry Junior High School building. Bishop Cruze went into that Sunday School serving as Sunday School President under Bishop Oxborrow. The Sunday School became a ward with Bishop Larry Jeffery being the first Bishop and Grover serving as counselor to him. In 1978 an old church was rented for the congregation and Grover was again blessed with being involved in the land search and later the building program.

When it was learned that Bishop Jesse Dunn, the second Bishop of the ward, might be moving and his release was anticipated, Stake President Lloyd Smith counseled with the Bishopric concerning the next Bishop. Upon request from him, Grover, a counselor under Bishop Dunn, made a number of recommendations. President Smith noted that he did not mention himself, and asked him what he would do if he were called as the Bishop. Grover replied, “shoot myself”. Grover and his wife, Carol, had a strong feeling that he would be the next Bishop, but time passed and they lost the feeling. On Wednesday, October 6, 1982, President Smith called and asked Grover to come for an appointment, and on Friday, October 8, Grover received the call and on October 17th became the third Bishop of the Knoxville Third Ward. In May of 1985, the congregation moved into their new building in the Grove Park area of Fountain City under their new name of Grove Park Ward.

Dallas Sillus Ayres

Dallas Sillus Ayres was born March 7, 1934, of Creed Sillus Ayres and Bertha Mae Peace. He was the third son of a third son and grew up in the Baptist Church. Dallas married Velma Joann Burnett on May 25, 1952, in Rutledge, Tennessee by Reverend Eugene Eldridge, a Methodist minister. He joined the Methodist church and was an active member, holding many offices and singing in the choir.

In keeping with retail management habits, he was transferred to different areas of the country. While in Roanoke, Virginia, in 1957, the family was visited by Mormon missionaries. They were one of eight families from Cave Springs Methodist Church to respond to the promptings of the Spirit and listened to the teachings of the Gospel. The challenge was given and a date set for their baptism. The week before the baptismal date, Dallas was transferred again. No date change was suggested and the family moved without being baptized.

After returning to Knoxville in 1961, some small effort was made by some church members to establish contact with little results. In June of 1971, their son, Stephen, began dating a Mormon girl. The missionaries again became part of their lives. In September 1971, Steve was baptized into the Church. Dallas and the rest of the family continued to “entertain” the missionaries. In February of 1972 Dallas gave up coffee! On May 25, 1972, Stephen baptized his father, mother and two sisters, Susan and Jane into the Knoxville North Branch of the Kentucky-Tennessee Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Brother Larry Jeffery was the Branch President.

Dallas was ordained a Deacon on June 4, 1972, and a Teacher on July 23, 1972 by Brother Bob Smith. He was ordained a Priest on October 15, 1972 by his son, Stephen. He was ordained an Elder in the Melchizedek Priesthood on April 1, 1973, by Brother Frank Davis and a High Priest on June 27, 1973, by President Eugene H. Perkins. On that date (June 27, 1973) he became Second Counselor in the Ward Bishopric, serving with Bishop Larry Jeffery. He later became the First Counselor and served under Bishop Lloyd Smith and again under Bishop Larry Jeffery when the Knoxville Third Ward was organized.

Having been Sunday School Superintendent in the 6 months prior to (Third Ward) becoming a dependent Sunday school, with no thought but being led by the Spirit, Dallas and Bishop Oxborrow had called all the Sunday School teachers in Knoxville First Ward who lived in the area of the newly organized Sunday School.

Dallas served several years as counselor in the Stake Young Mens Presidency. He also served 5 years on the Stake High Council, serving three of those years as Activity Director. The highlight of his years as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was his meeting personally with the Prophet Spencer W. Kimball in 1976.

JAMESTOWN WARD

Historical Background

- 1920's Church membership records show some members were baptized in 1921, 1924, and 1925.
- 1930 Conference held in Jamestown
- 1947-48 Caleb David Stephens, Sr. held Sunday School in his home.
- 1954 Sunday School Established.
- 1955 Relief Society Organized, Myrtle Amonette 1st Pres.
- 1955 First Testimony Meeting held
- 1955 First District Conference held
- 1961 Dependent Branch of Slate Springs
- 1962 Leased store building
- 1962 Jamestown Independent Branch Organized
- 1962 Branch Relief Society held "first ever" bazaar.
- 1963 First Branch Conference
- 1967 Property purchased with home on it.
- 1968 Renovations completed
- 1968 First Primary held in new building January 27
- 1969 Jamestown Branch Chapel Dedicated
- 1972 Young Women won Stake Basketball Tournament
- 1976 Branch Members attended Solemn Assembly in Atlanta
- 1985 Construction begun on new chapel
- 1988 First Elder called to serve full time mission.
- 1988 New Chapel dedicated-Dec 4th
- 1989 First Sister called to serve full time mission.
- 1990 Family History Center Established - Dec 16th, Director called
- 1995 Jamestown Ward Organized
- 1996 First Scout Troop organized
- 1996 Jamestown Ward became part of the new Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake, created Nov 17th.

Branch Presidents/BishopsCounselors

Pres. Carl L. Olson	1962	Bobby Tinch, Louis A. Beaty
Pres. Landy M. Foster	1963	Louis A. Beaty, Austin Choat
Pres. Louis A. Beaty	1964	Austin Choat, Wayne Stephens
Pres. Walter Kemp	1965	Carlyle Amonette
Pres. Matthew T. Mildon	1966	Carlyle Amonette
Pres. Abraham A. Stout	1967	Carlyle Amonette, Louis A. Beaty
Pres. Herman Fluckiger	1969	
Pres. Hurstle Jeffers	1971	Louis A. Beaty, Robert Lehrschell
Pres. Robert Lehrschell	Mar 5, 1972	Louis A. Beaty, Charles Franklin
Pres. James C. Crabtree	Oct 15, 1972	Louis A. Beaty, Charles Franklin
Pres. Wade E. Reed	1974	Marlin W. Beaty, Charles Franklin
Pres. Buddie H. Conatser	1977	Marlin W. Beaty, Leslie C. McDonald
Pres. Leslie C. McDonald	1982	Marlin W. Beaty, James Dickens
Pres. Edward C. Stephens	1989	Marlin W. Beaty, Donald S. Hinckley, James A. Dickens
Pres. Harold D. Meservey	1992	Donald S. Hinckley, James A. Dickens, David R. Delk, Leslie C. McDonald
Bishop Harold D. Meservey	1995	David R. Delk, Donald S. Hinckley
Bishop Donald S. Hinckley	1995	Leslie C. McDonald, David R. Delk
Bishop David R. Delk	1995	Marlin W. Beaty, Edward C. Stephens

Welfare Project: Making molasses

History of Jamestown Ward

(Condensed)

The Jamestown Ward lies in the Cumberland Plateau area of north central Tennessee. Missionaries are first reported to have come into Pickett County around the “turn of the century” and sometime thereafter were successful in baptizing the family of John Amonette into the Church. A second family, the Fosters, were baptized somewhat later. These two early Pickett County families were complemented by the Stephens family of Fentress County and together with their spouses, in-laws, and descendants who accepted the Gospel were the core of the Church in this area for many years.

According to the story told by the Amonette descendants, John Amonette was walking home one day and met a Mormon missionary at the Y (a fork in the road near the Amonette Cemetery). The missionary was sitting on a stump trying to decide which road to take. According to the story, his companion had been killed somewhere in Georgia, and he was traveling through Tennessee alone. John stopped and talked with him, and then invited him home. The young missionary spent several

days with John and his family, who then joined the church.

There is very little information available concerning the early missionaries in Fentress County. It is possible that they traveled into the county at the same time that they were in Pickett County. The earliest information from the Historical Department of the Church in an article in the Liahona Journal, Volume 28, pages 213-213, which states: "On Sunday, September 14, 1930, on this and the preceding day, a conference was held in Jamestown and the building was filled to overflowing and a spiritual feast was had by all. On the 14th, a baptismal service was held, at which 3 more souls entered the fold of Christ." While this is the earliest account of missionary work in Fentress County, the Church membership records show some members were baptized in 1921, 1924, and 1925.

One of the early members, Harden Stephens, played an important role in the growth and progress of the Church in the Jamestown area. He served a full time mission in Georgia, and for many years was a home missionary in Tennessee. He was the only member in the area holding the Melchizedek Priesthood, and was called on often for administering to the sick, blessing babies, baptisms, and other priesthood ordinances. Many of the early converts of the Church here can trace their membership in the Church to his missionary efforts. He had the gift of healing to a great degree, was an excellent teacher, and his leadership ability held the members together until a permanent organization was put together in 1954. In the later years of his life, he became inactive, but never denied his testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon.

The Saints were saddened at the death of Brother Stephens. His funeral was held on January 2, 1973. This strong leader of the Jamestown Saints left his everlasting legacy of faith and leadership in the East Tennessee Area. Without leaders like Brother Stephens, we would not have what we have today!

Much of the information that we have about early events in the organization comes from the journal of Elder Izatt quoted below:

"Elder Richardson and I looked continuously to find a place to hold Sunday School. On the 13th of October, 1954, Caleb Stephens, Sr., Elder Richardson, and myself found an old rock building just off Main Street to hold Sunday School in, for \$15.00 a month rent. Elder Richardson and myself, along with some of the members, got the building ready to use. Brother Caleb Stephens helped a lot to get the building ready to meet in. On November 1, he helped to find a heating stove at the Wallace Hardware and a lady there said she would give us the stove pipe if Wallace Hardware would give us the stove, and they did. The Mayor gave us \$5.00 for coal and we sure did appreciate it all. We borrowed chairs from the Looper Funeral Home to use for the first few meetings."

On October 29, 1954, Cornelius Zappy, the Mission President, Sister Zappy, and President

Christensen came to Jamestown and held a special service in the Jamestown York High School. There were 58 people present and President Zappy spoke to the congregation about loving their children and keeping them in the Church.

November 14, 1954, the first Sunday School was held in the old rock building with 40 people present. For the next two years attendance averaged between 35 and 80 people. The first officers in the Sunday School were: Wayne Stephens, Sunday School Superintendent; Harden Stephens, Adult Sunday School Teacher; Ruby Beaty, Teacher for ages 8 through 12; and Deanna Beaty, Teacher for everyone under the age of 8. Sam Benton Stephens was the Song Leader. As of February 8, 1959, the Jamestown Sunday School was listed as a dependent Sunday School of the Slate Springs Branch.

Elder Izatt and Elder Richardson consulted with Wayne Stephens, who was a carpenter, about making some benches, so the Saints wouldn't have to borrow chairs each Sunday. With the help of Wayne Stephens and Caleb Stephens, Sr., they made 10 benches and did a great job. These benches have followed the branch through its many moves until the new chapel was built.

January 2, 1955, the first Testimony Meeting was held in the Jamestown Sunday School. There were 58 members present and 9 stood and bore their testimonies. It was a good meeting and the Elders felt that their effort was starting to bear fruit. On January 15, evening services were begun.

Elder Izatt writes:

“On May 12, 1955, Brother and Sister Carlyle Amonette received their call to be part-time missionaries, the first from our unit, and another part-time missionary couple were called later, Brother and Sister Douglas Beaty. . .The Sunday my folks and Gayle and I were in Jamestown after my release, there were 80 people present. I want you all to know that it was harder to leave the mission field than to leave home to come to the mission field.”

April 9-10, 1955, the first District Conference ever was held in Jamestown at the York High School building. On the afternoon of the 10th, several baptisms were performed. The conference was a real boost for the members and the area.

In August of 1955, President M. Ross Richards, our Mission President, came to Jamestown and organized the first Relief Society with Myrtle Amonette as its first President.

Sometime in the latter part of 1959 or early part of 1960, we had to leave the little rock building, and for the next two years the Sunday School went through a very difficult period. Attendance was poor, we had no really permanent place to meet, and some of the members became discouraged; but somehow we struggled through this period and succeeded in maintaining a somewhat organized unit.

The 1960's

In 1960 we met in a small building at the rear of the local Electrical Co-op. Another Church held their meetings there in the mornings and we met in the afternoon. This building is now used by the Electrical Co-op as a storage room. We have no solid information of when we left this building, but it was probably sometime toward the end of 1960.

After we left the Electrical Co-op location, we held service for a short time in the local American Legion Hall. Again, there is not much information available as to how long we held services in this location, but some problems evidently arose because after a short time we were locked out of the building. Some of the members can still remember arriving for services one Sunday morning and finding the doors locked

In 1961, Jamestown Sunday School became a Dependent Branch of the Slate Springs Branch. Slate Springs was an independent Branch that covered the east central portion of Tennessee, and their meeting place was located near Crossville. Over the years until 1962 the Jamestown Branch experienced many up and down periods in membership and member activity. Meeting places were difficult to obtain, and often their meetings were held in the homes of members. However, by 1962 the membership and priesthood activity in the Branch substantially exceeded that of the Slate Springs parent Branch.

On December 3, 1961, Randall G. Brewer was released as Slate Springs Branch President and Carl L. Olson was sustained as the new Branch President. Elder Olson and his wife, Verny, were a missionary couple from Salt Lake City and played a very important role in the growth and progress of the Jamestown Branch. They probably baptized more converts while serving here than any other missionaries in the history of the Branch. They re-organized the Relief Society, organized the M.I.A., held Teacher's Training Course, and got the Home Teaching in the Branch operating. Under their leadership, Jamestown soon had outgrown its parent Branch. It had more Priesthood holders, and half again as many members as the Slate Springs Branch.

Early in the year 1962 the Branch was able to lease an old stone, store building just south of Jamestown in which to hold their meetings. For the first time they had sole occupancy of their own meeting place. Perhaps because of enthusiasm of the branch members with their newly obtained meeting place and also the strenuous efforts of the Branch presidency, 1963 brought 65 convert baptisms — almost doubling the active membership of the Branch. While it was helpful to have the sole use of this rented facility, it had many shortcomings as a Church meeting house.

On September 9, 1962 the Jamestown Dependant Branch was formally organized as an independent branch. From the minutes of the Jamestown Branch: "September 9, 1962 — a special Priesthood meeting was held in the Jamestown meeting house. The District Presidency presided and the

meeting was for all Priesthood bearers in the branch. The purpose of the meeting was the organization of an independent branch in Jamestown. Each of the members of the priesthood present were asked for their approval or disapproval of such action being taken, and if they would lend their support to the new branch. Each member arose in turn and gave approval and promised to support a new branch.”

Fund raising was begun in 1962, shortly after the Saints leased the old stone store building just south of Jamestown, to acquire a more appropriate church owned building for the Branch. This effort reached fruition in 1967 when property, including a home thereon, in the center of Jamestown was purchased and the home remodeled to serve as a meeting house. On January 12, 1968, weather conditions moderated enough that the brethren could begin work on the roof of the area being turned into a cultural hall. A double garage and laundry room were being remodeled into a cultural hall and this required work on the roof, new flooring, insulation, and brick work.

The cultural hall was finished sometime in March and it was decided that a new wing was needed to furnish much-needed classrooms. On April 28th, the membership voted to build the wing and on May 1st, permission was granted by the Church to proceed with the work. Though delays with city zoning laws delayed this project until June 1st, work began on the 3rd. Although meetings were begun in the new building before the end of 1967, work continued in 1968, adding a new wing to the building.

On October 21, 1968, the new wing was finished with grading and graveling completed. The branch building was complete and application for the dedication of the building was made. On November 11th, a check for \$900.00 was mailed to the Church Financial Department. It was the final payment on the building loan. On November 23rd an open house was held at the new chapel for the members and the public. One hundred and twenty-five people attended. The final structure was dedicated on January 19, 1969!

Sunday, January 19, 1969 the Chapel was dedicated by President Raymond W. Eldredge, President of the East Central States Mission. A poem on the back of the program read:

This house we dedicate to thee,
Our God, our father's God.
Wilt thou accept and deign to bless
The path our feet have trod?

Wilt Thou Thy servants here inspire
When in Thy name they speak?
And wilt Thou bless each contrite soul,
Who here Thy face doth seek?

Here may our sons and daughters come
And find that peace which swells
From grateful hearts, when touched by Thee,
Wherein Thy spirit dwells! Henry W. Naisbett

Over the next several years very little growth in activity or membership occurred in the branch. The Branch carried out the full scope of the Church programs, although at times some classes and activities suffered from small or no attendance. One highlight was that the Jamestown Young Women for several years regularly won the Stake Young Women Basketball Championships.

The 1970's

The 1970's brought new horizons that developed hope for things to come and it began with the Young Women. On February 26, 1972, the young women of the Branch began a tradition in the Stake Basketball tournaments that continued for many years. They won the basketball championship in the Stake and held that title for several years. Every year it seemed that the team to beat to win the trophy was Jamestown. The Young Women kept their winning streak up, almost continuously, until 1983 when they lost to the LaFollette team.

On June 25, 1972, the last conference of the East Tennessee District was held. During the conference the Knoxville Tennessee Stake was organized and the Jamestown Branch became a unit of the new stake. The organization of a stake in our area represented a giant step forward in progress of the Church in East Tennessee. Charles Franklin was sustained and ordained to the office of Elder in the conference, the first Elder in the Branch ordained in the new stake.

Now that the temple was under construction in Washington D. C., the Jamestown saints were assessed money for the Visitors Center. To kick off this fund raising effort, a pie supper was held on March 17, 1973, with great success.

Tragedy struck the Jamestown area on April 3, 1974, when a series of killer tornadoes swept through the area. Five people were killed in Pickett County and seven in Fentress County. No members of the Church were killed, but there were a few injuries and two member's homes were destroyed. Douglas Beaty and his family's home in Pickett County was so badly damaged that they had to move, but no one was injured. Barbara Threet's home was completely destroyed and she was seriously injured, but had a priesthood blessing and fully recovered. There were three children in the house, also, but they only suffered a few cuts and bruises. It was a miracle that no one in the house was killed because very little of the house was left standing. Some of the other members had relatives who were injured in the storm. Greater love was experienced as President Reed set the example of helping the Beaty family get a house fixed up to live in. Many Branch members helped in this activity. All the members felt blessed that the branch escaped without greater damage than there was.

Solemn Assembly in Atlanta, Georgia

On January 10, 1976, a Solemn Assembly was held in Atlanta, Georgia. Only those in priesthood leadership positions were allowed to attend and a Temple Recommend was also required. Five of

the members of the Branch went.

The trip was made in a van with no heat in 8-degree weather, which made a very cold 250 miles; however, participating in this spiritual feast was worth the miles of discomfort. The General Authorities present were President Kimball, his Counselor Marion G. Romney, Apostle Bruce R. McConkie and Assistant to the twelve, Joseph Anderson. I'm sure the discomfort of the trip home was nothing after attending such a meeting.

Making Molasses

The Saints have been involved in this welfare project for several years. On September 24, 1977, the branch members spent the day harvesting sorghum cane and making molasses. This project was sponsored by the Elder's Quorum but most of the members participated. Some years crops weren't very good, but this yearly activity brought the members together in love and friendship. The project raised about \$200 for our welfare assessment of \$600. There were a couple of minor accidents this year; Nora Lee Robbins cut her finger and Christine Palmer got run over by a pig! That's right, a pig! (Someone knows all the details, but we're not telling them in this history!) The next year's cane wasn't very good. Many jars of molasses didn't sell, so profits were lower, but still many members were involved and a lot of fellowship came out of the event.

The 1980's

When the consolidated meeting schedule was instituted throughout the Church, it didn't affect us as much it did other units. Jamestown had been on a condensed schedule with most of the meetings for years because of the distance that some members had to travel. This new arrangement did, however, change meeting times a little. Sacramento was rescheduled to begin at 10 a.m. with all meetings ending by 1:00. It was hoped that a later start on Sunday morning would result in better attendance.

The Atlanta Temple

Each unit was asked to raise money for building the Atlanta Temple, with Jamestown leading the way. These committed Saints were the first ones in the Stake to complete their assessment. All the members were excited about the new Temple as it would be closer to the branch. It is about 250 miles to Atlanta compared to about 600 miles to the Washington Temple.

On August 7, 1983, it was announced that the branch would begin a drive toward an average attendance of 100. This was to be the first step toward qualifying for a new two-phase chapel in Jamestown. Everyone was encouraged to begin contacting inactive members to try to get them to attend church meetings. Efforts to locate a piece of land suitable for a building site was also started.

On September 11th, Branch Conference was held with the largest crowd in over ten years. There were 131 people in attendance. In November, we reached our goal of attendance by having an average of 105 for the past 3 months, but the land that was being considered for the building site

was taken off the market and it was decided that it would be necessary to keep up the attendance through the month of November and December. It was necessary to have 113 each Sunday to reach this goal and on December 25th the goal was reached.

On February 1984, Brother McCoy from Atlanta came to purchase land for the new chapel. The final parcel was a little over 7 acres in the center of town. A down payment was made for a 90-day option to buy. Final approval for the purchase of this land went through in March. Now the Branch began intensive efforts toward raising the money for their share of costs and getting approval for the building to begin.

June 18th was the date! The amount of money that had to be raised was \$15,000. These wonderful saints did like all the rest of us and raised the money! Members of the Elders Quorum planted one and a half acres of pumpkins. Some members sold personal items, gave money saved for other purposes, and some even borrowed money in order to reach this goal, but reach it they did! August 19th the money was in and the old chapel went up for sale.

Because of time required to solve legal problems concerning the property, construction did not begin until October 1985. Construction was completed and Branch meetings were begun in the new two-phase meeting house in December 1986. What a great Christmas gift it was to have this beautiful building with all the added space and conveniences. After the landscaping was completed, the new chapel was dedicated December 4, 1988. What a day of rejoicing for these wonderful saints who had labored so long and diligently!

Sister Frances Leslie donated \$500 toward buying a satellite dish in memory of her husband, Harry, who passed away sometime during the year (1984). They had served as missionaries in the area and Sister Leslie wanted to give something in his name. The Branch raised the remainder of the cost of \$1,000 and were able to watch Church broadcasts at the local chapel instead of having to travel to the Stake Center in Knoxville. This precious gift has been enjoyed by all.

The Jamestown Branch continues to make progress. On July 10, 1988 a missionary farewell was held for Elder Mark Wright. He made history in that he was the first full-time missionary ever sent out from the Jamestown Branch. Then on July 30, 1989, Sister Sherri Geer left for a one-year mission. These were the first full-time missionaries to serve from the Pickett and Fentress County areas since Brother Harden Stephens served a mission in Georgia about 50 years ago.

The 1990's

Winds of change ushered in the 1990's for the Jamestown Saints.

The Jamestown Saints have battled "Anti-Mormon" antagonism in their city for most of the years that the Branch has been in existence. Mitch Borden, who served for over 25 years as the Stake Financial Clerk, recalls he had to be most careful in dealing with the utility companies, because

the slightest error brought the “Anti” sentiments raining down on his head as well. Brother Marlin Beaty writes: “Over the years there has been a lot of anti-Mormon feeling in this area, but it has mostly been in the form of misrepresentation of our beliefs. I know of no instance where missionaries or members have been actually assaulted physically. There have, however, been instances of discrimination in areas such as political office and jobs.

“Today there are still several religious sects who actively pursue a policy of misrepresentation of the Church. The worst of these sects is one of the local Baptist pastors who has shown the Anti-Mormon film, “The God Makers,” several times. Almost every time we have someone investigating the Church, he and his associates step in and use all manner of persuasion and lies to keep the individual from joining the Church. If they don’t get to them during the conversion process, they’ll get there after the baptism and use what influence they can muster up to try to wean them away from the Church. They use family, friends, and any tactic they can to try to get them back. We have lost many investigators, new members and some inactive members to their efforts.

“Except for this type of thing, there has been a general softening of public sentiment in the community toward the Church. We have several faithful brethren and sisters whose examples have helped bring this about.” During the late 1980’s, the saints made a concentrated effort to become better known in the community. The sisters did special projects at the nursing homes, the Branch held special open house events, and in 1991 the Branch adopted a stretch of Highway 127 to keep clean of litter.

Brother Beaty writes:

“On May 5th it was announced that the branch Priesthood has adopted a stretch of Highway 127 near Clark Range to keep clean of liter. They are to clean up this stretch of road at least four times a year. A sign with the Church’s name on it was placed at the beginning and end of this section of highway. It is a good way to serve the community and give the Church more exposure in the community.”

Family History Center Established

With the establishment of the Family History Center, another arm of the Church reached into the community and touched the hearts of the people, quelling “Anti-Mormon” feelings! We had been working for some time to get a Family History Center in the Branch, since it is so far to the Stake Library. We were finally given the go ahead to set up a center here. Sister Debra Dugan was called to serve as the Family History Director, December 16, 1990.

On April 25th, 1992, the Branch was invited to bring items from the Branch Family History Center to the Fentress County Historical Society’s annual get-together. Our exhibit turned out to be the most popular item there. It has been a good public relations activity and sparked a lot of local

interest in our Family History Center. On April 24th, 1993, the Branch was again involved in an exhibit at the local Historical Society's annual production. This year the computer and Family Search Program was taken to the event. It created quite a stir and many in the community interested in family research have expressed an interest in using it. In the afternoon members of the Branch helped to clean up an old cemetery. They received a lot of thanks for their help.

Tragedy struck the Saints on June 18, 1992. Brother Douglas Beaty was killed in a traffic accident. He was one of the pioneer members in the Branch. He served as Sunday School Superintendent in the days when the Branch was only a Sunday School, and helped hold the unit together during its first difficult years in the 1950's. He also served as Elder's Quorum President and Sunday School Teacher. He will be missed!

An outpouring of love was felt on February 20th, 1994 at a special meeting and dinner which was held after Sacrament Meeting. For over a year members of the Branch had been involved in a fund-raising project to buy a van for Marlin Beaty, a handicapped member of the Branch. They had gotten businesses in the area, members of the Stake, friends and returned Missionaries in Utah, and members in the Branch involved in this effort. They had finally come up with the necessary funds and purchased a nearly new van already equipped with a lift and hand controls for a wheelchair driver. Today at this special meeting they presented the van to Brother Beaty.

This was a very special time not only for Brother Beaty but for all who were involved in this project. A lot of work, planning, and sacrifice had gone into this and represented an outpouring of love, which has drawn the Branch closer together. A magnificent gift which was greatly appreciated.

Jamestown Branch Becomes a Ward

A day of rejoicing for the Jamestown Saints came: "On the 12th of March, 1995 a conference was held to organize the Jamestown Branch into the Jamestown Ward. This has really been an historic event for us. It took our unit 41 years to grow from a Sunday School in 1954 to a Ward today. Not exactly what you would call an explosive growth cycle! It has really been a struggle at times holding everything together, but we are hoping this will be the start of better things for Jamestown.

"The new Bishopric called is Harold D. Meservey as Bishop, Leslie C. McDonald as 1st Counselor, and David R. Delk as 2nd Counselor. The High Priest Group Leader is Edward C. Stephens. The Elder's Quorum presidency consists of James A. Dickens as President, David A. Madewell as 1st Counselor, and Adolph Baum as 2nd Counselor.

"Many of the members who have been here through the years were asked to stand and bear their testimonies and express their feelings about this change in the unit. Others were recognized for their contributions to the Church and their faithful service over the years."

First Scout Troop Organized

On January 17, 1996, it was announced that we have finally gotten a scouting unit organized in the Ward and have received our certification!

In His Own Words

by Bishop David R. Delk

I know beyond a shadow of doubt that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that Jesus Christ is my Savior, my redeemer, my Comforter, and my constant companion whom I look to often for guidance. I know that Christ gave his life on the cross so that I can be forgiven of my sins, allowing me a chance to return to my Heavenly Father. I know that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God who endured many trials and tribulations so that I may gain the understanding needed to reach the Celestial Kingdom. I know that we have a prophet in these latter days in President Hinckley to lead, guide, and direct The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I know that reading the scriptures every day can help me be a better Latter-day Saint. I know that if I use these scriptures, that they will help me solve any problems that may arise. I know that if I listen to the promptings of that still, small voice that my family will be blessed, that my testimony will grow, that I will gain a better understanding of the gospel principles, and that I will be a better husband, father and servant of the Lord.

The Ward has faced difficult problems the last few years, but I feel as though good things are ahead of us. We have started a choir, which is really improving, our meetings are more organized, we are going to the Temple more often, we are stressing genealogy work, we are encouraging our youth to excel in many areas, and we are holding regular youth firesides and interviews. I also feel as though, if the Ward is to continue to grow, then we as leaders need to set a good example and strive to be as righteous as possible and follow the Savior's example.

I have so much to be thankful for: my wife, my children, my relatives, my friends, my Counselors, the Church, the Church members, this great nation where I can worship as I please, and the list goes on and on. I often wonder why the Lord called me as Bishop, but I have come to realize that I shouldn't ask why but just do the best I can. I know that I have been blessed so very much in this calling and I feel as though if I keep doing the best that I can the Lord will continue to bless me and everyone that I try to help. I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Your Faithful Servant, Bishop David R. Delk

And Finally

In the early 1970's, Jamestown was struggling to maintain their little branch and keep the programs functioning. These wonderful Saints have made great strides over the ensuing years. They are a great testimony of "Enduring to the End".

LOUDON BRANCH

Historical Background:

- 1943 Knoxville Branch organized February 14
1944 First Annual Banquet held at S & W Cafeteria, February 14th
- 1958 Scout Troop 140 organized - August
1958 Last recorded Banquet held at S & W Cafeteria, February 14th
1969 Knoxville North Branch organized October 10
- 1972 Knoxville First Ward (organized in June when District became a Stake)
1973-74 Extension Built on Kendall Road Building for Stake Offices/Genealogy Library
1977 Loudon Dependent Sunday School formed, discontinued 1978
1978 Knoxville Third Ward (Grove Park) formed July 16
- 1985-86 Kendall Road building renovated
1987 New Farragut Ward Building/Stake Center started in summer
1988 New Farragut Ward Building/Stake Center completed in April
1988 Knoxville First Ward name changed to Farragut Ward
1988 First Meeting in New Ward/Stake Building, May 8
1989 Dedication of new building, October 15th
- 1992 Farragut Ward split to form Pellissippi Ward in September
1994 Church purchased property in Loudon County for new building
1994 Dedicated new property September 4
1995 Loudon Branch organized July 2
1995 First Meeting at Farragut Ward Building
1995 Second Meeting held in auditorium of rented High School
1995 Found permanent home in September in "old" Loudon High School
1995 Scout Troop Number 707 organized in Branch
1996 First Branch Missionary sent to Mission field: I'Kang Davis
1996 Loudon Branch remained part of Knoxville TN Stake when Stake was split.

Branch President

Elwin Davis

7/1/95

Counselors

Larry Collins, Frank Adkins

History of the Loudon Branch

(Condensed)

by President Elwin Davis

Early History of the Church in Loudon County

A dependent Sunday School was organized in Loudon County in 1977, with Bill Jones as Sunday School Superintendent. Total attendance was about 26, with the Jones' family providing a good number of those. The early saints met on Sunday morning in the Seventh-Day Adventist building in Lenoir City and then met for Sacrament meeting at the present West Hills Ward building. The Sunday School lasted about 10 months and then it was discontinued.

Both Sister and Elder Missionaries have been worked in Lenoir City for many years with limited success. Several newspaper articles appeared warning citizens not to listen. The investigators were fearful; those who did join felt neglected and lost, primarily because of the long distance to West Town and the lack of social interaction with those closer to the ward building. In spite of the distance, however, some members still traveled to West Town, and home/visiting teachers visited and taught faithfully for many years. Nevertheless, many still fell into inactivity.

Events Occurring Just Prior to the Branch's Creation

Approximately a year prior to the organization of the Branch, anticipation was high. Members in Loudon County scoured the county looking for a building site. Finally, a very large piece of land (33 acres) overlooking the Tennessee River was found; the Church purchased the land, partitioned the land into two parcels (28 acres and 5 acres) and sold the larger portion to a land developer. The property was dedicated September 4, 1994, a year before the Branch was organized.

Also prior to the organization of the Branch, an inactive sister, Joan Tindell, was suffering with a brain tumor and only expected to live a couple of weeks. When the Branch was organized the Relief Society under the direction of the second counselor, Amy Collins, coordinated 24-hour assistance for Sister Tindell. Instead of assisting for only a couple of weeks, the time stretched out for more than two months; the Relief Society was in need of relief themselves. Rose Marie Cameron, the Relief Society President, returned from out of town and took over. May Ann Butler of the Farragut Ward was consulted regarding government-sponsored assistance. Sister Tindell's family was also brought in and told that the Branch was only there in a supportive role and not to take over their fundamental responsibility of caring for their mother. Her children responded and the Relief Society got a breather. Sister Tindell passed away about two weeks later and the Church conducted her funeral. Many spiritual experiences occurred during the service of the Relief Society at this time which strengthened the testimonies of the members of the Branch.

Non-members were also strengthened in their testimonies of the reality of Christ. The non-members' experiences did give the local ministers a healthy realization that God answers the prayers and efforts of Latter-day Saints; criticism of the Church was temporarily stopped because of non-members' support of the Church. The branch was blessed abundantly for their untiring service to Sister Tindell.

Another event which prepared the way for our acceptance in Loudon County was a Stake Youth Conference with community clean-up projects. The projects received favorable coverage in the local newspaper and provided an initial positive image for missionary work. Unfortunately, "anti" feelings returned quickly at the increased success of the missionaries' teachings.

Preparation for the Creation of the Branch

In anticipation of the formation of the Loudon Branch, President Russell B. Barber wrote the following. 'Splitting the Farragut Ward and forming the Pellissippi Ward in September of 1992 was an exciting time. We considered a number of options on where to place the boundaries. We had to have at least 250 in each ward, but wanted to leave as many as possible in the Farragut Ward to allow us to form the Loudon Branch as soon as the numbers were there. We finally set the boundary basically along the Interstate and also added a small part of West Hills Ward in the new Pellissippi Ward.' "

Creation of the Branch

Continuing, President Barber wrote, 'In July (2nd) 1995, we established the Loudon Branch and called Elwin Davis to be the Branch President. This had been something that I felt needed to be done for some time, but had to wait until we had enough members left in the Farragut Ward after the Branch was broken off. The addition of Loudon gave us 15 units in the Stake. The Branch did very well right from the start. Several members became more active and very involved in the Branch. The result was that all the active adults prepared and went to the temple.

Loudon Branch was formed out of the Farragut Ward on 2 July 1995. It included all of Loudon County and a small slice of Knox County. On the day of organization the Branch met in the Farragut/Pellissippi building, but thereafter commenced meeting in the auditorium at the Loudon High School; we felt so small in such a large room! As it was summer, there were only small inconveniences; we were allowed to keep hymnals, etc., at the school. However, when school began we no longer had those conveniences. As we began looking for another place to meet, the "old" Loudon High School became available and by October we had a new home in which to meet.

Our Family's Home

When the present building was first visited, there was a strong feeling that renting the building was the right thing to do. Before we moved in, a cleaning party was organized. Floors, walls, and windows were all cleaned and new rugs installed. An organ became available, as did a piano! Chairs and tables were brought in from the Maryville Ward whose building was being renovated. After moving in, everyone agreed that it really felt like home.

We saw the great potential in the four rooms and two small administrative offices. Frank Adkins spearheaded building a library and five additional teaching areas in the existing rooms designated for Primary and the YM/YW. Few branches have been so blessed with so many quiet teaching areas! On the other hand, not all has been wonderful; whenever it rains, it pours: outside and inside. We have also lacked simple conveniences like hot water. Those problems will be resolved in time.

Enthusiasm for our own Branch was high; several who felt that Farragut was too far to travel soon became active. Our meetings consistently averaged in the mid-50's, but as time passed our numbers dropped into the high 40's; recently we have experienced a slow but consistent increase and we are back into the low 50's.

We are finding people who had no idea we were here; we are also receiving records from Salt Lake for people whose last unit is unknown. We have built a Branch and the inactive records come. We hope that through our efforts and love, and through the Spirit, the hearts of these people will be touched and they will choose to join with us in the worship of our Savior and our Father in Heaven.

The Original Branch Organization

President:	Elwin Davis
1st Counselor:	Larry Collins
2nd Counselor:	Frank Adkins
Exec. Secretary:	Jeff Johnson
Clerk:	Aaron Roemmich
Relief Soc. Pres:	Rose Marie Cameron
Melck. Pres. G. L:	Logan VanLeigh
Mission Leader:	Brett Hilton
YM Pres:	Brett Hilton
YW Pres:	Betty Rose
Primary Pres:	Catherine Adkins
Public Affairs:	Amy Collins
Seminary Teacher:	Bonnie Hilton

The above leadership remains to this day, except Lee Rose is currently the Branch Mission Leader and Kim Johnson is the YW President.

Successes

Not a lot of people have joined the Church since the Branch was formed, but many have become active and involved,” says Bonnie Hilton. Last April every active member who held a Temple Recommend went to the Temple. Betty and Lee Rose, Kim and Jeff Johnson, and I’Kang Davis received their endowments. Kim was sealed to her parents, the Roses; Dana and Zachary Johnson were sealed to their parents; and Christina Adkins was sealed to her parents, Catherine and Frank Adkins. Everyone was happily surprised to see that President Barber, who had faithfully home taught some of our Branch members for many years, officiated during the endowment. In June, Alice Roberts, Sharon Lopez and ‘Bud’ Dilbon attended the Temple to receive their endowments; a large number of those holding active recommends also attended with them.

Others who have joined the Church, remained faithful during the last year and are preparing to go to the Temple are Olivia ‘Libby’ Smith, Richard Cooper and Mike Kemp. Each is married to members Fred Smith, Sandra Cooper, and Cheri Kemp, respectively. The Coopers will attend the temple in April and the Smiths in August. Mike and Cheri will attend next year. The missionary work is strongly supported by the members of the Branch who split often with the missionaries, but most importantly, keep them fed so that they have the energy to do the work they have been called to do.

With the creation of a new Branch, there are many firsts! But high on the list of firsts has to be the first missionary to be sent to the mission field. The Loudon Branch’s first missionary is I’Kang Davis, the son of Branch President Elwin Davis and wife Shirley. I’Kang was called July 3, 1996 to serve in the Hawaii Mission.

Something for Everyone

The Branch is operating with a full program which has meant that at least one member has temporarily carried the responsibility of more than one major calling; Brett Hilton was the Young Men’s President, Scout Master and Branch Mission Leader. It has been through the dedication of Brett and others like him that has made the Branch what it is and allows the Spirit to dwell therein. As the number of members grow, the responsibilities will be spread over more people and the burden lightened.

We have a small, but active, youth group. The Young Women have an average of four in attendance and the Scout Troop have five young men on average. We have a small, but strengthening Cub Scout Pack also. The Seminary Program has an average of three attending; as our youth become older, we expect to see that program strengthening.

It is a testimony to me of the desire of the members to live righteously and to serve our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. With the dedication to serve that the members have exhibited, the Spirit of the Lord must dwell in our midst. As the Church membership in Loudon increases in numbers and spirituality, the lives of the people amongst whom we live will also be blessed.”

President Elwin Davis

And Finally,

What a joy it is to see the area grow. What a joy it is to those of us who have been in Tennessee a very long time, to see these lovely saints working diligently to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all corners of Loudon County! Loudon Branch remains as part of the Knoxville TN Stake.

MARYVILLE WARD

Historical Background:

- 1900 Three Latter-day Saint families in Blount County
- 1909-11 Charles H. Russell and wife, Mattie and older children baptized
- 1926 Sister (Doris) Blanch Russell Hitch baptized
- 1926 20 members in Blount County
- 1943 Knoxville Branch organized February 14
- 1943 Maryville Saints were part of Knoxville Branch
- 1944 First Annual Banquet held at S & W Cafeteria, February 14th
- 1944 Maryville Saints stayed with Knoxville Branch many years
-
- 1960 Maryville Dependent Sunday School, with Relief Society and Home Primary
- 1960-61? Scout Troop 282 organized
- 1963 Historical Records show Maryville was a Branch in 1963; later disband
- 1969 Knoxville South Branch organized October 10
-
- 1972 Knoxville Second Ward Organized in June (when District became Stake)
- 1974 Maryville Dependent Branch organized - Dependent on Knoxville II Ward
Meeting at Catholic Church in Maryville
- 1974 Maryville Youth still meeting with Knoxville Second Ward Youth
- 1975 Maryville Independent Branch organized April 13
- 1977 Groundbreaking for Phase I building
- 1978 Moved into new chapel
-
- 1980 Maryville Chapel dedicated March 23
- 1981 Sevierville Branch organized September 6 - Maryville Branch split
- 1984 Groundbreaking for Phase II building - November
- 1985 First Meeting in new Phase II Chapel December 8
- 1986 Maryville Ward organized October 19
-
- 1995 Maryville Chapel Phase III started November 1995
- 1996 Maryville Chapel Phase III completed-moved back in Christmas 1996
- 1996 Maryville remained part of Knoxville Tn Stake when Stake was split.
- 1997 New Chapel dedicated March 1997

Branch Presidents/Bishops

Counselors

Br. Pres. Jim Holder	1963	Claude Cruze, Lenny Eastridge
Br. Pres. Lenny Eastridge	1966-69	

[NOTE: In 1969 the Maryville Branch was dissolved and added to the Knoxville Branch. The Knoxville Branch was split, forming the Knoxville South Branch and the Knoxville North Branch. In 1972 the Knoxville District was made into the Knoxville Tennessee Stake. On June 23, 1974, the Knoxville South Ward was split into the Knoxville South Ward and a dependant Maryville Branch. Russell Port was called to be the Branch President. (Notes from Ray L. Pearson)]

Br. Pres. Russell Port	Jun 23, 1974	Adrian Tindell
Br. Pres. Adrian Tindell	1975	John Norton, Tony Port
Br. Pres. Jim Dale Hensley	1978	Melvin Loudermilk, Lloyd Collins
Br. Pres. Melvin Loudermilk	1980	David Taylor, Lloyd Collins
Pres. John L. Norton	1981	Lloyd Collins, Jim Large, Ken Tyre, Mel Loudermilk
Bishop David Dickey	1986	Robert W. Ferreira, David Taylor, Roger Virgin
Bishop John Harding	1991	Wm. T. Lyon, Johan Scott Hardin, Nolan R. Vance, Mike Lovstedt
Bishop David Taylor	1996	Mike Lovstedt, Jorge Galvan, James Everett
Bishop Chip Lyon	1997	Roger Walters, Don Drake

History of Maryville Ward (Condensed)

In 1900 there were only three Latter-day Saint families in Blount County, Tennessee. These were the Garland, Harmon and Russell families. The Garland family lived in the Miller Cove area (Walland, Tennessee), the Harmon family lived in Cades Cove (Smoky Mountains), and the Russell family lived in Maryville.

We have no record as to when Joe Garland and his wife were baptized into the church, but we do have a record of his daughter, Lonnie Mae Garland, who was baptized in 1917, and is still a member of the Church. The same holds true for the Harmon family, but we do have a record of Ether Harmon and his family, his wife Wondith was baptized in 1938 and they had six children all of which became members of the church. Charles H. Russell was baptized in 1909, and his wife Mattie E. Lane, was baptized in 1911. They had two sons and two daughters, of which three became members of the Church. Only the oldest son refused to join.

The 1920's

These were still the only known members of the Church in 1926. We probably had a total of twenty members in the whole county. There were no meetings outside of the home, but there was priesthood leadership in each family that held these members together. The only time they held formal meetings was when the Elders would come by once or twice a year, and sometimes they would not see them for a year or two. It's a wonder that these families stayed true to the Gospel and Church. These families had little contact with one another, and probably didn't see each other but once a year.

When the Elders would come by, the families would take care of them. They were never turned away by these members. They would take care of their clothes and feed them. When the Elders would go out tracting, they would leave their trunks with the family until they returned in two or three weeks. The neighbors just hated to see the Elders in the neighborhood, and made it rough on them. The Elders got into very few homes to preach the Gospel, so they started preaching on the street corners of Maryville. This went on for only a short time before they stopped all together.

There was an interesting story that was told. "There was a death in one of the Mormon families and a neighbor told the wife that she could borrow the car to go to the funeral, but she could not allow the Mormon Elders to ride in it. She refused to use the car and walked to the graveyard." The neighbors got along with the Mormon families, but when the Elders would come by preaching the Gospel, the neighbors would become hostile. Amazing what the truth will do to people, not only 100 years ago but also today.

Concerning tithing, these families would give their money to the Elders when they came by or they would send it to the Mission President in Louisville, Kentucky. Here we have families that have no contact with the Church, no meetinghouse, very little contact with each other, and they are paying their tithing. What a message for we members today!

This writer talked to one of our oldest members, Sister Blanche Hitch (Doris Blanche Russell). She was born October 9, 1915 in Maryville, Blount County. Her father was Charles H. Russell and mother was Mattie E. Lane. They were converts and were baptized in 1909 and 1911. They had two boys and two girls, of which three of the children were members but the older brother never joined the church.

Sister Hitch said that the only time we would have any formal meetings was when the Elders would come by, and we would have what we called Cottage Meetings. Sister Hitch was baptized 26 January 1926, by Elder Ruel L. Wanlass and confirmed 26 January 1926, by Elder O. F. Garfield. She can first remember the Elders coming in 1918 when she was three years old, that her mother would do laundry for them, and in general take care of them. "I had three cats when I was little and I would name them after the Elders. We didn't have a Church to go to, so when I was growing up I went to the Baptist Church sometimes with my girl friends, but I always stayed true to the Church and never joined another Church. I was baptized in Cripple Creek in the dead of winter. They had to break the ice on the water to make room so I could be baptized, but I remember the water being cold. Joe Garland gave me twenty five cents for being baptized. I thought that was the most money I had ever seen. Cripple Creek was in Blount County on old Block House Road. We never once turned the Elders away. We stayed true to our faith. We mailed our tithing into the Mission President in Louisville, Kentucky."

The 1940's

At best as I can remember the Knoxville Branch was formed sometime in 1943, and we started meeting in a Lodge Hall on Walnut Street, Knoxville, Tennessee. We stayed there for many years, and then we started meeting in a house on Brown School Road, Maryville, Tennessee. We had about 25 members.

The 1960's -70's

Then in 1961 we started going back to Knoxville after the first Church building was built, and were a part of the Knoxville Branch. (Historical records show that Maryville was a Dependent Sunday School, and had an organized Relief Society and Home Primary. They attended Sacrament meeting with the Knoxville Branch. Historical records also show that Maryville was a Branch in 1963, but later disbanded. Brother John Holder was the first Branch President of this earlier Branch). A Dependent Branch was formed again in Maryville in 1974. Our first Branch President was Russell Port, who was also on the High Council. We were meeting at the Catholic Church in Maryville,

Tennessee.

The Maryville Independent Branch was formed 13 April 1975, under the leadership of President Adrian Tindell, First Counselor John Norton and Second Counselor Tony Port, Branch Clerk Jerry Whitehead, Elders Quorum President Robert Hooks, Sunday School President Lloyd Collins, Junior Sunday School President Cindy Cruze, Primary President Peggy Norton, and Relief Society President Marsha Haase. Our first Sacrament meeting was held at 6:00 PM, April 13, 1975, opening song, "Onward Christian Soldiers", our speakers were Marsha Haase, Tony Port, John Norton, and President Tindell; opening prayer given by Robert Hooks and closing prayer by Ether Harmon. We had 56 members present. We had this meeting at the Catholic Church in Maryville.

Our meeting times were: Priesthood 8:00 AM, Sunday School 11:15 AM, Sacrament Meeting 6:00 PM, Relief Society was on Wednesday 7:00 PM, and Primary was on Thursday 4:00 PM. The Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women were still meeting with the Knoxville Second Ward until Branch was fully organized.

Through the first year, 1975, our attendance was 50 members per meeting; of course, we are still meeting in the Catholic Church. Everything is moving along in good shape. We have our property now and hope to start building in 1976.

The year 1977 brought the groundbreaking for the start of our Phase I chapel. President Adrian Tindell, John Norton, Jim Hensley and Lloyd Collins participated. We moved into our new building the first part of 1978. Stake President Eugene H. Perkins dedicated the building on March 23, 1980, under the leadership of Branch President Jim Hensley, 1st Counselor Melvin Loudermilk and 2nd Counselor Lloyd Collins. We had 115 members present at this service. Our total membership is now 236. We have come a long way since we had 20 members back in 1926.

President Tindell had leadership of the Branch from April 13, 1975 to June of 1978. We went from fifty members in attendance to nearly 100 each Sunday, property was bought and Phase I building started under his leadership. He was a good, kind man with a lot of love for his his brothers and sisters. We will always be thankful for his leadership in time of need.

In 1978 Brother Jim Hensley was called as the Branch President.

Under the leadership of President Jim Hensley from 1978 until July 13, 1980, we moved into our new building; the first meetinghouse in Maryville history. Our attendance is up to 110 members. Our building was dedicated in March of 1980. President Hensley is a good faithful member of the Church. He will always be appreciated for the time and the love he showed his fellow brothers and sisters.

The 1980's

The Consolidated Meeting schedule was incorporated into our Branch on Sunday March 2, 1980.

On July 13, 1980, President Jim Hensley was released as President of the Maryville Branch and Melvin Loudermilk was called and sustained as President, with Counselors David Taylor and Lloyd Collins. Our attendance is now about 105 members each Sacrament Meeting. Our brothers and sisters of the Sevierville area are also members of our Branch.

The Maryville Branch was split on September 6, 1981, and the new Sevierville Branch was organized. The new Sevierville Branch had 67 members, leaving 197 members in the Maryville Branch. Our new Branch President is John L. Norton, with Counselors Lloyd Collins, and Jim Large. We had 110 members present at this Sacrament Meeting. We are sorry to see our brothers and sisters from Sevier County leave, but it now gives them a chance to grow in their own area. Our membership now totals 197.

John R. L. Norton was our Branch President from September 6, 1981 to October of 1986.

He has been in this calling longer than any past President of the Maryville Branch. Even with the split of the Branch, we still have seen growth. We have 259 members and are baptizing about 15 converts a year. We have seen our new building and chapel (Phase II) completed. We are looking forward to moving on to Phase III. We have come a long way since 36 members first met at the Catholic Church in 1974. We still have a long way to go.

We are moving forward in the Maryville area. I can't say enough about the leadership that we have had over the past eleven years. President Norton cares for the brothers and sisters and suffers deep inside himself, searching for the answers that will help his fellow human beings. He has spent many hours in his calling and does it willingly. He does love and care.

In November 1984, we broke ground for our new Phase II Building, breaking ground was President John Norton and his two counselors, Ken Tyre and Mel Loudermilk. There were 100 members present. We are looking forward to moving into our new chapel.

Our first meeting held in the new Phase II Chapel was December 8, 1985. It is so beautiful and the members love it so much. We have waited a long time for this chapel, some as long as 70 years. It is going to be a great blessing for the members of the Branch. We are now looking forward to going on to a Phase III Building and growing in the Maryville area.

The Maryville Branch was organized as a Ward October 19, 1986, with Brother David Dickey called and set apart as our first Bishop.

The 1990's

Brother John Harding was called and set apart as Bishop in October of 1991. His focus was on the youth. Bishop Harding is in the medical field by trade, but is a substitute teacher at the High School whenever his work allows. His love of young people is well known in the area, so it wasn't hard to keep the youth foremost in his mind. His Bishopric organized a youth trip to the Hill Cumorah Pageant with 43 high school age youth making the trip. It was highly successful and from his commitment and as a direct result of this trip, several of the Juniors that graduated the next year went on missions. Looking at the freshmen who were on the trip, who are now seniors, probably 8 or 9 will go on missions.

Another commitment Bishop Harding had to the youth was a Bishop's Fireside held every month in addition to the regular Youth Fireside. Bishop Harding answered their questions, talked openly with the youth. He feels the Young Women especially gained a lot from this undertaking.

Around the year 1993-94, there was a lot of "Mormon Bashing" going on by a minister at one of the large churches in the Maryville area. They were showing the film, "The God Makers," as well as talking against Mormonism. The Mormon youth were taking a real beating from them at school. Bishop Harding and Counselor Chip Lyon made an appointment with the minister. They had a good 2-hour discussion with him, asking pertinent questions as to how a church that professes to be followers of Christ could do these things to another church group. The result of the meeting? Great! All "anti-Mormon" antagonism stopped from that church. The Church now enjoys more acceptance and is a very important part of the area church community. Recently there was a Area Church Women's Conference held and 6 or 7 of the LDS sisters from the Maryville Ward were invited to participate, because of the importance our Church places on families.

What little time Bishop Harding had left over was solving building and equipment failures. After struggling several years, final approval was given in late October or early November of 1995 to begin the Phase III addition to the building as well as remodeling everything. During this building phase, beginning in November 1995, the Maryville Saints met at Harper Place in downtown Maryville. The building was hardly adequate for such a large Ward, but they made do. There was only one large room and three small rooms, so "cramped" was the order of the day. For the last few weeks of November 1996, the Maryville Saints met at the West Hills Ward Chapel. How happy they were to finally get into their brand new, beautiful, building at Christmas time.

Brother David Taylor was called as the new Bishop in March of 1996. In talking with him recently, the focus of his administration was "to become of one heart and mind". He feels there is a tremendous potential in the Blount County area for spreading the Gospel through the righteous

example of the members of the ward. As the saints become spiritually stronger, their influence will be felt throughout the area but especially in their own midst - - - in the ward itself!

And Finally

The few early saints still in the area must feel great pride and joy to see the growth of the Church and the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Blount County. May we move ever onward with righteous goals and inspired leadership!

MORRISTOWN WARD

Historical Background:

- 1905 Missionaries come to Cocke County
- 1905 Anna Eliza Inman Talley and three children join church
- 1927 Only members of branch were Anna Eliza Inman Talley's family
- 1927 First Sunday School organized at home of Bernard and Callie Talley in Bybee, which continued til his death in 1943

- 1944 Homer Talley, called as Sunday School Superintendent
- 1949 Bybee Branch Relief Society organized September 5
- 1949 Bybee Branch Primary organized September 5
- 1952 Members met in Coca Cola Building
- 1952 Sunday School moved from Bybee to Morristown
- 1956 Members met in courtroom of Morristown-Hamblen Count house

- 1960-62 Dependent Sunday School, with Relief Society and Home Primary-
(dependent on the Knoxville Branch)
- 1962 Officially organized as Morristown Branch
- 1963 First MIA organized
- 1963 Morristown Branch Relief Society organized
- 1963 Morristown Branch Primary organized
- 1968 Members met in rented Baptist Church on Valley Home Road
- 1968 Property on Lincoln Avenue purchased for Chapel
- 1968 Ground breaking for 1st phase building November 9
- 1969 Moved into new chapel at 841 Lincoln Avenue

- 1971 Chapel dedicated January 10
- 1979-82 Bybee members a separate Branch

- 1987 Morristown Ward established August 30

- 1996 Church approved new building for Morristown Ward in Alpha-Talbott area
- 1996 Morristown Ward became a part of the newly created Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake - November 17

Branch Presidents/Bishops

Counselors

Br. Pres. Richard W. Johnson	1963	Homer Talley, John Fowler
Br. Pres. Homer Talley	1964	John C. Fowler & Claude H. Hurley
Br. Pres. Dwayne F. Fowler	1971	Darrell Talley, James L. Gray, Helm Sexton
Br. Pres. Phillip H. Pollard	1975	Gary L. Simmons, Claude H. Hurley
Br. Pres. Delmar Phillips	1983	Michael Moffat, Dean Ford
Br. Pres. Michael Moffat	1984	Helm Sexton, Dean Ford
Bishop Michael Moffat	1987	Helm Sexton, Joe Hurley, Steve Keck, Clint Hurley, James Bogert, Bob Turner
Bishop John Humpherys	1994	Clint Hurley, Helm Sexton, James Burum, Brian Boyd

History of the Morristown Ward

(Condensed)

The early records of the Bybee, Cocke County, TN Branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints cannot be located so I, Gertrude Fowler Hurley, am writing this as was told to me by my parents, and with the help of some of the members. Also, some of the information came from the records kept by Elder Homer Talley and family members now deceased.

In 1905 two missionaries from the Mormon church were holding meetings in homes in Cocke County. A Baptist minister asked my grandmother, Anna Eliza Inman Talley, and her family to join he and his wife at the meeting to hear the Normans speak. They refused, but after much persuasion, they decided to attend. The spirit was so strong at that first service that my grandmother, Anna Eliza Inman Talley (widow), knew the gospel was true. Anna Eliza and three of her oldest children, Robert L. Talley, Margaret Paralee Talley (my mother) and Sallie Kate Talley were baptized. Another family, Alex Moore, wife Lula and all of his children who were old enough, were also baptized. (This family moved away soon after joining the church.) This opened the door for the gospel in the Cocke County, TN area.

When these missionaries returned to their homes, they sent money to build a chapel. Land for a building was given by Mr. Keasling in an area called Keasling Hills in Bybee, TN. The chapel was never built and no record of the money was ever kept. Through the following years the missionaries visited Bybee, holding two or three cottage meetings in the homes of the members. The younger children of Anna Eliza Talley--Bernard Talley, Luther Talley and John Talley--were baptized.

Around 1926, Thomas Turner was baptized, adding to the Bybee Branch. In 1927, the members of the Bybee Branch were the members of Anna Eliza Talley's family and Thomas Turner. With no priesthood holders, meetings were held only when the missionaries visited. On May 23, 1927, Elders Carlos S. Moffett and Ruell Wanless baptized John D. Fowler, husband of Margaret Paralee Talley, and four of her children--Gerturde, John C., James L. and Raymond. Also baptized were Luther Talley--son of Anna Eliza Talley--his wife Flora, and two of their children, Homer and Hurcel. Robert Talley--another son of Anna Eliza Talley-- and his wife Minnie with two of their sons, Benjamin and Jessee, were also baptized. Bea Wilder, a young girl, attended the cottage meeting and was baptized. Soon after her baptism she moved away.

Twenty-two years after the first baptisms, the members of the Branch were Anna Eliza Talley's children and grandchildren. This year, 1927, the son of Anna Eliza Talley, Bernard Talley and his wife, Callie, started a Sunday School in their home with Bernard Talley presiding. Brother Talley taught the adult Sunday School, with the younger members taking turns teaching the children. Brother Talley kept his home open for classes until his death in 1943

The 1940's

We found some records beginning with March 1944:

Homer Talley, grandson of Anna Eliza Talley, was set apart as Sunday School Superintendent by Elder Lyman S. Wisner. At this time Sunday School was changed to members' homes, so that each member held a meeting in his home. At Christmas, Brother Talley's widow, Callie, decorated her home for Christmas and the Bybee Branch presented its first Christmas program. Around 1948, Ephraim Moore, his wife and two children moved to Morristown, TN and attended Bybee Home Sunday School. The first Relief Society of Bybee LDS Branch was organized on September 5, 1949, at the home of Zoe Talley Yarbrough. Ruth Moore was called as President with Zoe Talley Yarbrough as 1st Counselor and Callie Talley as 2nd Counselor. The first Primary of Bybee Branch was organized September 5, 1949 with Kathleen Talley as President, Mary Talley as 1st Counselor, Leola Talley as 2nd Counselor and Betty Jo Talley as Secretary. For lack of attendance Relief Society and Primary were unable to keep operating; however, Sunday School continued progressing even though it was still moving from home to home, along with some members going to the Moore home in Morristown, TN.

The 1950's

In 1952 the missionaries rented an apartment in Morristown. Prior to that they stayed in the homes of members. They found a large room over the Coca Cola plant in Morristown so they moved the Sunday School from Bybee, TN to Morristown, TN. There was one large room for Sunday School with Homer Talley presiding. The Talley family had moved in many different directions, but the active members continued to fill callings in the Morristown location. The new address created new interest in the Gospel and two new families joined the church. They were Nellie Hughett and children, and Ruth Courtney and children. It was no longer only the Anna Eliza Talley family.

In 1956 the Coca Cola Company decided to remodel so we had to find another place to meet. This time we used the Courtroom of the Morristown-Hamblen Courthouse. This gave us separate classrooms.

In the records, I found Homer Talley was set apart as Superintendent of Sunday School on July 8, 1956 by Elder Lyman S. Wisner; his first assistant was John C. Fowler, set apart by Elder Leo J. Brady; second assistant was Martin Luther Talley, set apart by Garth Ray Nealson. John C. Fowler was set apart by Elder Paul Holden Mortensen to teach course #15 "The Church of Jesus Christ in Ancient Times". His assistant was Nellie Hughett. Other teachers were Ruth Courtney, set apart by Elder Homer Talley; Gertrude Hurley, set apart by Boyd I. Hill and Ada Ruth Henry. We were still holding Sunday School only, but as we began to grow and have enough attendance and priesthood we began to hold Sacrament Meeting at night. The gospel began to grow in Morristown. Two more families with children were baptized, William Thomas, his wife, Ruth, and

their children; Larry Gray and three children; Sister Gray was a member before moving to Morristown. Also baptized were Helm Sexton and the children of the Soloman family.

The 1960's

In 1960, Sunday School and Sacrament were held in the Courthouse rooms, Relief Society was re-organized and held in Zoe Yarbrough's home in Bybee, TN because the Courthouse could be used only on Sunday. The missionaries asked Gertrude Hurley to teach the Spiritual Living Lesson.

In 1961, another new family moved into the Branch; Brother Richard W. Johnson, wife Betty and four children. He had been transferred to Jefferson City, TN to work for Magnavox Company. The Johnson family chose Morristown for their home.

(Historical records from the Knoxville Branch show Morristown had a Dependent Sunday School from 1960-1962, with a Relief Society and Home Primary and were dependent on the Knoxville Branch)

We were officially organized as the Morristown Branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1962, with Elder Richard W. Johnson called as Branch President and his wife Betty called as Relief Society President, at which time Relief Society was moved into Morristown to the home of President Johnson.

In 1963, President Johnson organized the first Mutual Improvement Association (M.I.A) in the Morristown Branch with Betty J. Hurley as President. The meetings were held in the home of Brother James E. Sherwood, another new family in the Branch. Also in 1963 Brother Lowell Boggs' family moved to Morristown from Kentucky. Sister Boggs was called as the first President of the newly organized Primary Organization.

Fifty-seven years after the first members were baptized, President Johnson was told to look for property on which to build a chapel of our own. Very soon, property was found on Lincoln Avenue in Morristown. Words cannot express my feelings about our growth. I felt this was the most beautiful property I had ever seen.

After the property had been located and approved, the next question was how to pay our required part. We were still small in numbers, so the Relief Society started working in their work meetings to help raise the money for the building fund. The sisters worked together making quilts, pillow cases, aprons, pot holders and cushions. We sold these to Relief Society members until it became a financial burden for us. We would load the remaining items in our cars and sell to the community. We started rummage sales, we also made a cookbook with the local merchants buying advertisements, and after all this we sold hundreds of small hammers

In 1964 President Richard W. Johnson and family moved to Indiana and Elder Homer Talley was called as Branch President, with John C. Fowler as First Counselor and Claude H. Hurley as Second Counselor.

The property on Lincoln Avenue was purchased and on November 9, 1968 ground was broken for the Morristown first phase building. Several city officials attended along with Denton and Price Architects, Calloway and Black Contractors, the presiding presidency and wives. Several members and photographer Chet Brogan took pictures for the Morristown Tribune, our local paper.

At this time the County decided to remodel the courthouse so we were asked to move. We rented a one-room church from a Baptist Church on Valley Home Road, about five miles from Morristown. This building had not been used in a while and was in bad condition. We cleaned it thoroughly and installed curtains to have separate areas for class rooms.

In the latter part of 1969, we moved into our new chapel at 841 Lincoln Avenue. Joy was felt by all the members. If only Anna Eliza Talley could have been there to see this first phase of the chapel completed, she would have been truly happy and proud of her family. She was represented by many grandchildren and great grandchildren that will carry on the gospel. Only the first phase was completed, but it was wonderful to have separate classrooms, blackboards and a piano.

The 1970's

In 1971, Dwayne F. Fowler was called as Branch President. First Counselor was James L. Gray with Helm Sexton as Second Counselor. Clerk was Elder Homer Talley with John C. Fowler as assistant clerk.

On March 23, 1975, sustaining votes for the following members of the Morristown Branch Presidency were as follows:

Phillip Houston Pollard, President, Set apart by President Arthur C. Neeley
Gary Lynn Simmons, 1st Counselor, Set apart by Bro. Hyrum Plaas
Claude H. Hurley, 2nd Counselor, Set apart by President Phillip Houston Pollard
Elder Homer Talley remained as Branch Clerk, and Billy Neal Cody as Executive Secty.

(During the time President Pollard served as Branch President, the second phase of our chapel was built.)

The Morristown Branch had grown in number until the Knoxville Stake felt the Bybee members could have a separate branch. In 1979 Joe Zachariah Hurley was called as Branch President of the Bybee Branch. No counselors were called and the branch operated until 1982, when it was closed for lack of support. The members returned to Morristown.

The 1980's

In 1983, Delmar Phillips was called as Branch President. While he was Branch President, Michael Moffat and Dean Ford served as counselors. Brother Moffat succeeded President Phillips as Branch President with Helm Sexton as First Counselor and Dean Ford as Second Counselor, and the second phase of our beautiful building was dedicated.

Morristown was a Branch within the Knoxville Stake until August 30, 1987. At this time we were made a ward with Michael Moffat ordained as Bishop, Helm Sexton as First Counselor, and Joe Zachariah Hurley as Second Counselor. Our Stake visitors were Stake President R. Lloyd Smith, Eugene Muggridge, and James Smith. As you can see Bishop Moffat served about three years as Branch President before being ordained and called as Bishop, and wasn't released until 1994, for a total of 10 years of service to the saints in the Ward.

Since the Branch was fully organized, the auxiliaries have functioned beautifully and accomplished many things. Each year some spiritual outings are planned and attended in good numbers. We also celebrate Pioneer Day every year in July.

I am very proud of the growth of the Gospel in Morristown and the beautiful chapel in which we worship.

Gertrude Fowler Hurley, Granddaughter
of Anna Eliza Inman Talley

The 1990's

The 1990's finds the Morristown Saints carrying on the traditions of their pioneers, those saints who struggled to establish the church in the area. Sacrifices are made by these present-day saints, just as before. Commitments run deep, love abounds, with a one-for-all, all-for-one attitude prevailing throughout the Ward. Michael Moffat served as Branch President for three years and Bishop of the Morristown Ward for seven years before a new Bishop was called. In 1994, John Humpherys became the new Bishop with Helm Sexton and Clint Hurley as counselors.

In His Own Words

by Bishop John Humpherys

The mid- 90's brought much growth to the Morristown Ward as it grew from a small Ward into a large one that exceeded the capacity of the building that the early saints in this area worked so hard to obtain. There were many new baptisms, but much of the growth came due to families moving in, being brought by the industrial expansion in the area.

In a short period of time, the Ward turned from a one- or two-family pioneer ward to a ward of many transplanted families, most with much-needed experience and strong testimonies. To accommodate the growth, the Stake approved a new building for the Ward. It will be on Collinson Ford Street in the Alpha-Talbott Area, just west of Morristown. It will sit upon a hill looking out into the countryside. The building is set up for two wards in anticipation of a split shortly.

New attendance records are set each month as the Church in Morristown continues to grow. If only the early church members in Morristown could see what was built on their foundation. It is with excitement and vision that church members look forward to a Stake being formed in Morristown within five years with smaller branches being split off in the surrounding areas. The 90's will truly be looked back upon as the "growth" years.

Bishop John Humphreys

And Finally

On November 17, 1996 an historic event took place in the Knoxville Tennessee Stake. The long range goal of splitting the Stake was realized with the creation of the Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake, with the Morristown Ward becoming a part of this new Stake. Michael Moffat, former Branch President and first Bishop of the Morristown Ward, was called as 2nd Counselor in the new Stake.

OAK RIDGE WARD

Historical Background:

- 1940's Sunday School held in Duff, Tennessee
1944 Oak Ridge Branch organized in April
1944 First Meetings held in President Eldred Smith's Home
A little later, group met in small music room at Elm Grove School
1945 Branch disbanded; lack of members; 5-6 families remained after war
1945 Remaining members agreed to keep the Sunday School going--meeting
in Linden School
1948 Small Chapel built in Duff, Tennessee
1948 Oak Ridge Relief Society organized
1949--50 Oak Ridge Branch again organized
1953 Branch was meeting in Pine Valley School
Mid-1950's Church purchased small military church in East Village as first
L.D.S. chapel in Oak Ridge
1954 Scout Troop 320 organized December 20
1958 Ground Breaking for new Chapel on Viking Road
1963 First Missionary from Branch, Bruce W. Anderson
1969 Fund Raising Project: Candy
1969 LaFollette a Dependent Branch of Oak Ridge

1970's Chapel on Viking Road remodeled
1972 Oak Ridge Ward Organized April 11
1972 District became Stake June 25
1976 Washington Temple completed; First Oak Ridge couple married in
Washington Temple was Bruce Williams, Jr. and Lorna Gibson

1980 Ward Welfare Farm purchased Jan 27
1983 Atlanta Temple completed: First Oak Ridge couple married in
Atlanta Temple was James Hebenstreit and Melissa Rickertsen
1984 Land purchased for new Oak Ridge Chapel at 140 S. Jefferson Circle
1985 Members took occupancy of new Chapel in October
1985 New Chapel dedicated October
1994 Family History Center opened in February
1996 Oak Ridge Ward became part of new Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland
Stake, created Nov 17

Fund Raising Project: Hand-dipped Chocolates

Welfare Project: Small Truck Farm

Branch Presidents/BishopsCounselors

Br. Pres. Eldred G. Smith	1944	Melvin Dunkey & A. J. Carter
Br. Pres. Wendell Larson	1949-50	Stanley F. Fairbourne
Br. Pres. Stanley F. Fairbourne	1950-53	
Br. Pres. Raymond C. Rhees	1953	Ernest Henderson, Wayne S. Brown, & Dean Allred
Br. Pres. Dean Allred	1955	Ernest Henderson, Arthur C. Neeley, Gene Davis, Howard Sweat
Br. Pres. Arthur C. Neeley	1956	Lamont Bate, A. Eugene Davis, Oma Lou Ellington, & Joe Auston
Br. Pres. Oma Lou Ellington	1960	Charles Wheeler & Richard Hanks
Br. Pres. Charles Wheeler	1963	Kendall Brady & Lewis Edgel
Br. Pres. Don Ulmer	1966	Lewis Edgel
Br. Pres. Kendall Brady	1968	Lewis Edgel & F. E. Muggridge
Br. Pres. Lyle Sasser	1970	F. E. Muggridge, Harrell E. Patterson
Bishop Lyle B. Sasser	1972	Wm. D. Dusenberry, N. David
Bowman, C. Holden Brink,		Richard A. Perkins & Larry Rickertsen
Bishop Julian P. Brielatt	1977	N. David Bowman, R. Douglas Carlson
Bishop Larry Rickertsen	1977	W. Darrell Talley, Jeffery Lyons
Bishop W. Darrell Talley	1980	Jeffery Lyons, Don Bosley Randolph Gainer, Marvin Tedjamulia, Brent Pulsipher, Richard Wheeler, Seldon Kinsel, Kendall Brady, Rick Forbes
Bishop Tom Dahl	1989	Ron Pope, Art Lovell, Don Sloan, Jim Dunn
Bishop Russell Williams	1995	Brent Cassady, Forrest Swingles Mike Chris

History of Oak Ridge Ward (Condensed)

The Oak Ridge area geographical boundaries at one time included not only the communities immediately surrounding the city but extended from the Ten Mile community south of Kingston to the Kentucky line as a northern border. So far as we can determine member families resided chiefly in the Duff, Oneida, and LaFollette area at least since the very early 1900's.

Albert Ayers, his mother Nancy (Douglas) Ayres, and a brother James L. Ayers were baptized in the early 1900's. Sarah Ayres, wife of Albert, who was born 17 May 1889 in Pine Mountain, Campbell County, Tennessee, was also an early member. Rachel Ayers, sister of Albert, attended conference in Dayton, Ohio in 1926 at which Southern States Mission President Charles A. Callis presided. Martha Jane Beeler had tithing receipts of her father which were signed by Charles A. Callis in 1926.

Mary Ellen (Riggs) Wright was baptized by missionaries in Cedar Creek in 1912. Her husband, Charley Montgomery Wright donated the land on which a small chapel was built near Duff, Tennessee in 1948. They were the parents of Joe and Belle Riggs who were baptized by traveling missionaries. Albert Riggs, Mary Ellen Wright's brother, provided priesthood leadership for the Duff group until he moved to Ohio when the small Duff Sunday School was discontinued.

During this early period, the Saints were essentially on their own in carrying on any Church- related activities. There was no organized leadership from District or even Mission headquarters. "We just saw the missionaries when they came through. The missionaries would mostly stay with members," an early member recalls. "They stayed many times with Sister Wright."

Missionaries, then as now, were known as Elder so & so. Therefore, first names are rarely recalled. Elder Kleimon or Climon is remembered from the 1920's. Elder Pocock baptized the daughter of Albert and Sarah Ayers. Elder Martin assisted materially with the construction of the chapel near Duff in 1948, by providing much of the electrical equipment and supplies which his folks shipped from his home out West. Elders Silver, Thayne and Flake were also early missionaries to that area.

When President Rhees was Branch President in Oak Ridge he made a special effort to reach out to these early converts. He held cottage meetings and later President Ellington and President Neeley made many trips to Duff and LaFollette to bring these members to the special conferences and other meetings and activities being held in the branch. Sister Messamore was an early member from Clinton.

The 1940's

Because of the strategic nature of the military project which was the reason for the existence of Oak Ridge, it became the Nation's secret city. One hundred and fifty thousand people were moved in to a rural area in the rolling hills of Tennessee where no town formerly existed. The members of this community were brought in from all parts of the nation because our country was at war. It was the hope of the leaders of our nation that this project being developed here in Oak Ridge, the "Manhattan Project", would be instrumental in helping to bring this terrible war to an end.

At this time about thirty families came to work at Oak Ridge from the general Salt Lake area in Utah. This group became the nucleus of the first Oak Ridge Branch. As this group of westerners started holding informal meetings, they found there were members of the Church who had come from Nevada and Idaho and a few other western states. In April 1944, the first branch was officially organized with Eldred G. Smith as President and Melvin Dunkey and A. J. Carter as his counselors. This organization was done under the direction of Graham H. Doxey, President of the East Central States Mission.

Sister Iva Mae Posey was always helping the missionaries. In the early days of Oak Ridge before the gates were open, no one could visit the city unless they were in the company of someone who lived in Oak Ridge. One day Sister Posey was riding around Oak Ridge with the missionaries when the police stopped them. The officer told Elder Sorensen that he was breaking the speed limit by going 50 miles per hour in a 45 mile zone. About the time that Elder Sorensen was ready to apologize and promise to do better, Sister Posey turned to the officer and said, "Officer, do you know who you are talking to? These are our Mormon Missionaries." The officer was very patient but turned to Sister Posey and said, "Ma'am, they may be, but the law applies to them also."

Early one Sunday Morning, two Mormon Missionaries arrived at one of the guard gates and inquired if the guard knew where the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) held their church services. They told the guard that they remembered that it was at a school building that had the same name as a tree. The guard smiled and replied, "It could be Pine Valley, or Willowbrook, or Cedar Hill, or Elm Grove, or Linden. The schools are all named for trees."

During the time that Brother Smith was the Branch President most of the meetings were held in his home which was a temporary type of dwelling designated as a "C" Cemento home. A little later they had an opportunity to move into a small music room attached to the Elm Grove School. When the war ended, these Branch leaders, along with most of the members of the small Oak Ridge Branch returned to their homes to pick up their lives and participate in their post-war occupations, leaving only five families in the Oak Ridge area.

After Pres. Smith and this group left, there were only a few families remaining. Dan Drumiler was made Sunday School Superintendent with Keith T. Coleman as assistant. When these leaders also left to return to their homes in the west, Leo J. Brady was set apart as the Sunday School

Superintendent with Major Warwick C. Palfreyman and Stanley F. Fairbourne as counselors. Brother Brady remembers when the last member of the original Branch Presidency left, he gave Bro. Brady \$15. which remained in the Branch fund and said, "This will probably be enough to last as long as you are able to hold meetings here in Oak Ridge." The small group met and pledged their support in carrying on the Sunday School organization.

Then Major Palfreyman's family left, leaving five remaining families who chose to keep the Sunday School in operation. On May 9, 1948, Leo J. Brady was set apart as the Sunday School Superintendent. The Oak Ridge Sunday School group met in the Linden School. There was no one with apparent musical talent to become our organist. However Sister Loraine Brady volunteered, although she was quite "out of practice" at the time. From the point of almost picking out the melody of the hymns with one finger, Sister Brady developed over the years into a very accomplished accompanist for both congregational singing and for various choir groups. (Another of the original five remaining families was Brother and Sister D. P. Anderson.)

In 1948, under the direction of the East Central States Mission President, Graham H. Doxey, the Relief Society was organized with Iva Mae Posey as President and Belva Fairbourne and Helen Chelius, as counselors with Ruth Precise as Secretary.

The 1950's

Late in 1949 or early 1950 the Oak Ridge Branch was again organized with Wendell Larson as President with Stanley F. Fairbourne as his counselor. President Larson served only a short time and was replaced by Bro. Fairbourne who served as Branch President until he also returned to Idaho in 1953. Raymond C. Rhees became the Branch President in 1953 with Ernest Henderson and Wayne Brown as his counselors. During this period our group was meeting in Pine Valley School.

The Oak Ridge Branch at this time was very unique in that we had an extremely high turn-over in membership because of the reactor school. Ordinarily a branch as small as ours was, would have been struggling along with a lack of priesthood leadership. However, that was certainly not the case for us. The reactor school brought some very distinguished branch members who had held very responsible priesthood positions in their home wards.

From the notes made by Brother Dean Allred at the time he was serving as President Rhee's counselor after Brother Wayne Brown had returned to the west in June 1945, I'd like to quote the following information concerning the boundaries of the Oak Ridge Branch:

"New Branch Boundaries - Principally the following counties:
Anderson, Campbell, Morgan, Roane, and Scott. With Sunday Schools at (1) Harriman/Kingston; (2) Oneida, (3) Speedwell/LaFollette. Basically the Oak Ridge Branch area covered the area between the Kentucky border on the North; Highway 27 on the West; Highway US 25W on the East; and US 70 on the South."

Since Oak Ridge was a community under military supervision, when the community was planned, two small military type chapels were built as part of the overall plan. When it became evident that our continued use of school facilities as a meeting place for our Church group was no longer wise, we purchased one of these small military churches in East Village and this became the first L.D.S. Chapel in Oak Ridge.

Scout Troop 320 Organized

President Rhees and his counselors, Dean Allred and Ernest Henderson were very concerned about having the Church-approved program for helping to hold the young men of the Branch close to the Church. Since the program of the Boy Scouts of America was the official program approved by the General Authorities, the Branch Presidency took steps to get this program organized for the young men of our Branch.

At the sacrament meeting held on December 20, 1954, Scouter McWade was the guest speaker. Following his talk, the Charter for Troop 320 of the Great Smoky Mountain Council to be sponsored by the Oak Ridge Branch of the Church was presented to President Raymond C. Rhees. This was the beginning of official scouting in the Oak Ridge Branch.

During the time when D. P. Anderson was serving as Superintendent of the Mission Young Men's organization, he asked for Brother Eugene H. Perkins to be his Mission Scouter. During that time, Scouting throughout the whole mission was greatly improved.

To illustrate the growth of the Scouting program through the years, let me quote from an article in the December 2, 1982, Oak Ridger: "A Scout Court of Honor was held on December 1 at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 109 Viking Road, by Troop 320 of the Great Smoky Mountain Council, under the direction of Jim Watson, Scoutmaster. Mark Lyons, Junior Assistant Scoutmaster, was Master of Ceremonies. Assistant Scoutmaster Joe Baker presented awards to Jay Kaine, Leonard Pruitt, Hugo Yang, Brian Buckley, David Lyons, and Bob Bowman. Recognition was given to new Boy Scouts Eric Amos, James Crowley and Jonathan Newport. Three troop members, Jay Kaine, Leonard Pruitt and Bob Bowman were advanced to Tenderfoot in the Court of Honor. A film on Philmont High Adventure Scout Camp near Cimmaron, New Mexico was shown, after refreshments were served."

Proposal to Build a New Chapel

It was suggested that the Branch should plan to leave the East Village Chapel and start making plans for a chapel which they would help to build, but there was much opposition because many felt their group was too small and too transient to undertake such a project. The average attendance was between 25 and 35.

It was proposed that the Branch build a chapel which would cost approximately \$45,000, with the Branch's portion being \$13,000. Before the building could be started, the members had to raise \$6,750. We held all sorts of building fund projects; Aaronic Priesthood Christmas Tree sales,

Primary Carnivals, Tupperware parties, and prepared sack lunches to sell at conferences. By June 1954, the Branch still had to raise \$3,000 in order to start construction.

Probably the first organized attempt to acquire and operate a welfare farm in this area was during the period when Elder Zappy was President of the East Central States Mission. President Zappy visualized that such a farm could provide both food and work for many of the unemployed church members throughout the mission in this Appalachian region. Contributions were made by members throughout the mission toward the purchase of the farm. Plans changed and these contributions were later returned to the members. Since the Oak Ridge Branch at the time was actively pushing for contributions to their church building fund, several of the local members simply turned over the funds being returned to them from the mission to the Oak Ridge Chapel building fund. Even though the Mission Welfare Farm did not materialize, perhaps it was a blessing in disguise because it sped up the building of the Oak Ridge Chapel.

About this time Brother Henderson and Brother Neeley were released and Gene Davis and Howard Sweat were called as counselors to President Allred. In talking with President Neeley about this history, he said that at the time he was a counselor to President Allred he was very much opposed to trying to build a chapel, but when Brother Allred returned to Colorado and Brother Neeley was called to be the Branch President, his attitude changed completely and he became very much in favor of building the new chapel.

It was necessary to purchase land for the chapel, and when the decision was made to buy the lot on Viking Road, the downtown shopping area existed only on the drawing board of the master plan for Oak Ridge. Towards the end of our fund-raising efforts, it was decided to hold a special pledging conference. Letters were sent out to all the members and the group met in the Oak Ridge High School cafeteria. After this special pledge, our funds finally were adequate and the ground breaking took place in 1958.

During the time the chapel was under construction the missionaries were working with a big tall Texan. He became very interested in this large building project being done with the help of many of the members. When it came to finishing the painting of the high chapel ceiling which was to be a deep chocolate brown, several of the men tried to do the job - but it turned out very splotchy. One day while this tall Texas investigator stood watching the painting, he said, "Why don't you just let me be responsible for painting that ceiling. I think I can do it." He did and it turned out very well. In the process, he gained a testimony of the gospel and before long he was called as our Branch President, Oma Lou Ellington.

When the inside finish work started, the Relief Society sisters worked under the direction of Florence Angel, whose husband had been a church building contractor before his retirement. The sisters learned to paint walls in classrooms, finish woodwork and lay tiles. Sister Angel was an expert at finishing skills. The new Chapel was completed, the saints moved in, where they spent many happy years in their new facility. At the time we moved into our new Chapel, the number of members averaged between 130 and 150.

The 1960's

Our first full time missionary to leave from the Oak Ridge Branch was Bruce W. Anderson who filled a mission in the Mexico West Mission from 1963 to 1965. Bruce is the son of D. P. Anderson who was one of the five or six families, members of the Church, who remained in Oak Ridge at the time the war ended and Eldred G. Smith and most of the others from the Salt Lake area returned to their homes in the west. Bruce is the Great Grandson of President John Taylor, the Third President of the Church.

Brother D. P. Anderson wrote most of the Oak Ridge History, in the late 1980's. He wrote a letter to President Charles (Chuck) Wheeler (Br. President from 1963-1966) asking for some information concerning the period when he served as President of the Oak Ridge Branch. "I received a very choice letter in which he related several faith-promoting experiences. I'd like to share two of these in his own words:"

"There was a very nice sister in Norris, 78 years old at the time. This was before Lou Ellington left. She had been having a lot of trouble with worn-out discs in her spine. She had X-rays by her doctor and a specialist, and they both agreed she should have an operation, in spite of her age. A few days before she was to have the operation, she called for us to come to come to administer to her. During those few minutes I felt the spirit so strongly that I knew the pain was being taken from her back. The next day she called her doctor and told him she felt so much better that she didn't need the operation. He insisted that she come and be examined anyway. He obviously didn't believe her. He took another set of X-rays, and sure enough the problem had gone away. The specialist also was astonished when he looked at the X-rays, and had another set taken. Same result, she didn't have the damaged discs. As a matter of fact she was back doing her garden work a couple of days later. That was my first experience with direct healing."

"One of the most delightful experiences, and inspiring to me, was the day that I conducted the funeral for Brother William Tecumseh Sherman Campbell. He was a very fine old gentleman who lived up in a very pretty hollow somewhere near LaFollette, Tennessee, I think. I had been to visit him and his wife several times in their home during our home teaching, so felt that I knew him as a brother. It was a typical Tennessee public relations kind of a day, with blue skies and fresh breezes making a nice setting for a talk about a good man who had come to talk with God. The casket was in the living room, and I preached the sermon from the front porch. The congregation was gathered in the front yard. It was a very uplifting occasion for me, because through Brother Campbell I was able to catch a glimpse of the world beyond. We then went up the hollow and buried him under some big old trees, with the blue sky above, beckoning to us all."

Since “Chuck” was the father of six small children, he had always felt that having a sports jacket and slacks was an adequate Sunday-best outfit (since he had plenty of places to put his modest income) the following incident is very interesting.

“Another item which confirmed for me that we were engaged in the correct work, was “The Suit.” For several weeks Donna had been looking for an appropriate suit for conducting meetings . . . Everything we had seen was either too expensive or could not be altered to fit my long body, broad shoulders, small waist, and short legs. Finally one day Donna was in the store (in Clinton, I think) which handled merchandise from defunct businesses, fire sales, etc. While browsing through the suit rack she found a soft black one which looked like it might be near the right size. It had been altered to fit another person, but had never been picked up. She got me and took me to the store, and it fit as if it had been tailor made for me. It was the best suit I ever had and for a price that didn’t even dent our slim budget.”

“From the very practical viewpoint, those were very valuable days, back in the hills of Tennessee . . . Those humble members taught me invaluable lessons in faith, humility, and love of our Heavenly Father. I learned so many things which have stood me in good stead in several wards since. Once having been a Branch President, not even being called to the Stake High Council is as intimidating, enlightening, or stimulating.”

The 1970's

Brother Lyle Sasser was called as Branch President in June of 1970. He gives the following account of the Chapel on Viking Road when it was remodeled: “I remember when I became Branch President in 1970, the floor along the north side of the hallway was already beginning to settle. The problem seemed to be that the cement slab was poured on fill dirt which settled over the years, leaving a space between the cement and the fill dirt. As the building dropped, the walls began to crack and the doors would not close properly. We knew that something had to be done. We also needed more classroom space in the building. So it became a decision between building a new building or remodeling the old one.

“When we talked to the building committee in Salt Lake we found that we could build only a Phase I building (similar to LaFollette’s and Rockwood’s) because our attendance at Sacramento Meeting was not great enough to qualify us for Phase II with a chapel. This didn’t seem satisfactory because we would really lose on space, so several options were considered to enlarge the building. This included one plan to lengthen the chapel to the west with classrooms below, which was actually developed before the wing began sinking. Other plans were to lengthen the chapel to the east, widen it to the south and others. After a couple of years probably hassling over the problem, it was decided the best option was to remodel the north wing and add classrooms below.

“I don’t remember the name of the contractor or the architect but the construction was completed in ‘74-’75. The ward members did the painting, the ceilings and the hanging of the folding doors. The folding partitions to make additional teaching stations in the old cultural hall were ordered at a later time - 1976 or 1977. The folding door which was ordered for the cultural hall was never received.”

Oak Ridge was organized as a Ward in April of 1972. Brother Lyle Sasser was called, ordained and set apart as the First Bishop. In June the Stake was formed with Oak Ridge Ward being one of the larger wards in the newly created Stake. Many of the Stake leadership came from the Oak Ridge Ward. What a day of rejoicing this was for these valiant members who had kept things going with 5 families just after the war, to then become a congregation large enough for a ward in the year 1972.

Washington D. C. Temple

Due to the fact that many of the members who came to Oak Ridge to participate in the Reactor School Program were young couples who had been married in the temple, temple marriage was a part of the gospel teaching which seemed to be stressed a great deal. This was especially true of programs presented at the small fireside meetings which were held in the homes of members. At the District Conference meetings held sometimes in Knoxville and sometimes here in the school auditoriums, temple marriage was usually a very important theme. To some of the new converts, this seemed to be asking a lot since they would have to travel clear out to Utah to be married in the temple. Nevertheless, quite a few faithful couples did put forth the effort and expense to go to the temple.

What a wonderful blessing it was for the members in the area when the temple in Washington D. C. was dedicated and became available for young people to be married for time and eternity. The first young couple from our area to be married in the Washington Temple was Bruce Williams, Jr. and Lorna Gibson. His brother, Russell Williams, and Charlotte Gail Patterson were the second young couple from our ward to be married for time and eternity in the Washington Temple.

Many members took advantage of this opportunity to do genealogical work in the temple and made the trip to Washington by car. As interest increased in the temple trips to Washington, excursion trips by bus were organized by the Stake to encourage more members to become involved in doing their temple work. The first person called as a temple worker from the Oak Ridge Ward was Sister Eleanor Neeley (lovingly known by all members of the ward as Grandma Neeley.) Sister Neeley served in this capacity for two years. Others who have served as temple workers are Brother James Goans, Sister Gertrude Goans, and Sister Louie Mae Jordan; Sister Jordan continued her service in the Atlanta Temple after it was dedicated.

The first couple in Oak Ridge to take advantage of being married for time and eternity in the Atlanta Temple were Melissa Lynne Rickertsen and James Bernard Hebenstreit. Following their

temple marriage they came back home and had a lovely reception in the cultural hall of the Oak Ridge Chapel. This will undoubtedly become the pattern to be followed by many couples in the future.

Oak Ridge Ward Welfare Farm

In the year 1978, ward leaders (Bishop Rickertsen, Bishop Talley as counselor--he became Bishop in 1980) were advised to acquire land for production of certain truck garden crops in anticipation of assignments to be received later from the Stake Bishop's Storehouse and cannery.

A plot of approximately ten acres of good land was found in the tri-county area near East Poplar Creek. The cost was \$33,000, sixty percent, or \$19,800, to be paid by the church and forty percent, or \$13,200, to be paid by the ward membership at \$2,500 per year. Brother Flake of the regional office approved the purchase on December 2, 1979 and purchase was completed January 27, 1980.

During the first four years of operation, very good crops of green beans and sweet corn were produced and marketed to pay the yearly ward allotment. Other garden crops such as tomatoes, zucchinis, butternut and acorn squash, potatoes, cucumbers, and melons were produced in quantities sufficient for all ward members who wished to harvest them. Although many members contributed many hours of hard work at the farm, special notes must be made of the contributions of Brother Arnold Sams, who operated the power equipment, doing the major part of all plowing, disking, planting, spraying, and harvesting of the crops.

In compliance with a major change in policy in the Church Welfare Plan, production of farm produce for sale to the public was stopped. The land was transferred from the ward to the stake and the final \$2,500 ward payment was canceled. Use of the land for private gardens for members in 1984 and 1985 has resulted in very low utilization of this potentially high-production land. Most members felt that the distances which one had to travel to get to the farm made it unprofitable. The land was sold soon thereafter, which ended our welfare project.

Candy Fund Raising Project

Since the Candy Project was a part of our yearly activities for about 17 to 18 years, beginning in the early 70's, many members of the ward became experts at different aspects of the candy making process. Some became exceptional sales representatives for the project. Because the candy produced by our group was of a consistently excellent quality, it has made a good name for the church in the community. In the last year or so of production, we produced between 900 and 1,000 boxes and the majority of the boxes of candy were sold by repeat orders from satisfied customers who came to us and asked to have their names put on the list for candy. Depending on the amount of candy we produced, the profit each year and especially in the last years has been between \$3,000 and \$4,000. The money from this project was used for the budget and other needed expenses. One of the best things about the Candy Project was that almost everyone in the Ward participated in some way. We all worked together and this created a good feeling of fellowship. The project was

basically completed in three or four days. Because the candy was always of top quality, it has made a good name for our Church group in the community. We are all proud to say, "Yes, we belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - we are the ones who make those good homemade chocolates.

The 1980's

The 1980's brought many changes for the saints in Oak Ridge. The Welfare Farm was sold and land was purchased for their new chapel, and Brother W. Darrell Talley was called as the fourth Bishop of the Ward in December of 1980. Bishop Talley called Jeffery Lyons and Don Bosley as counselors.

It is very natural and normal for a branch to have some turnover in its membership, but because of the Reactor School and in later years, the Associated Universities Program, the turnover in leadership personnel has been unusually high. To realize what this really means in the normal operation of a Ward, one might consider what has happened in our Bishopric. Since Bishop Talley was called as Bishop, he has had nine counselors and five of these changes were made due to these counselors moving way from Oak Ridge.

In 1980, when Brother Talley was called as Bishop of the ward, an important change occurred in the Church. The consolidated meeting schedule was introduced. This new schedule was intended to give families more time together on Sundays. It was also introduced to cut down on the amount of traveling which was required in areas where members had long distances to travel to attend their meetings.

The consolidated program required more teaching stations so that all the programs outlined could be carried on at the same time. We had realized for a long time that our chapel was not adequate to take care of all the classes and we were using every possible space available, even to the kitchen and mechanical room. Therefore this consolidation program intensified our need for a search for a new building site. Many members wondered why it was necessary to go to the expense of building a new building when the one on Viking Road seemed very adequate in many ways. A second remodeling was considered, but when the new building allotment policy was taken into consideration, it seemed much wiser to plan to build a new chapel.

Land Purchased For New Meetinghouse

In 1984, we were successful in finding a two-acre plot of land for our new meeting house. This plot of ground is located at 140 South Jefferson Circle. Our building faces the Oak Ridge Turnpike which is the main east-west traffic route through Oak Ridge. This is an advantage because it is very easy to locate.

Under the new change in Church participation in building new chapels, the Church pays 96% and the local unit pays 4% of building costs. At the time we were building our first chapel on Viking

Road, a good bit of the work on the building was done by members. The new Church policy is to have all labor done on the building by the official contractor. We took occupancy of our new chapel in October 1985.

At the first meeting in our new chapel, the Bishop announced that John Lard had received his call to fill a mission in the Las Vegas Nevada Mission. This was certainly a good way to start our church participation in our beautiful new chapel. It is also interesting that John Lard is the grandson of Ruth Precise, who served as secretary in the First Relief Society in Oak Ridge and he is also the Grand Nephew of President James E. Travis who served as the First District President in the Knoxville area.

Ordinarily as a ward grows in membership in the Church, it is the policy of the authorities to divide that ward and form two smaller wards, both meeting in the same building. Sometimes in areas where there is a great deal of growth in membership there are as many as four wards using the same building. Therefore, it seems a little strange that the Oak Ridge Ward has not been divided in this manner.

However, this can be explained because we have had a different kind of growth. Since the early history of the branch, Oak Ridge has been responsible for several dependent Sunday Schools. Now some of these groups have grown to the point where they have become independent branches. By looking at some notes from the membership books, we can understand where our growth in membership has gone:

Feb 7, 1970 - Scott County memberships were transferred to the Jamestown

Branch - 35 members - 11 families

May 2, 1971 - Speedwell records transferred - 48 members - 22 families

Sep 1, 1971 - LaFollette and Speedwell records transferred out of Oak Ridge

Branch - 111 members - 62 families

May 31, 1977 - Rockwood Branch records transferred out of Oak Ridge

Branch - 85 members - 27 families

Bishop Talley was released and called as a counselor in the new Stake Presidency in November of 1989. Brother Tom Dahl was called, ordained and set apart as the new Bishop of the Oak Ridge Ward.

The 1990's

Another group of saints was taken from the Oak Ridge Ward in January of 1992, with the formation of the Clinton Branch. For a little while this new Branch shared the Oak Ridge Ward building until a building could be found for their meeting place. There were about 100 members in the new branch with strong priesthood leadership. The Oak Ridge saints pulled together again to keep their ward going strong.

In February of 1994, the Family History Center was opened in Oak Ridge. As usual, this is opened to the community, which enhances the opportunity of church members to be a shining example to those outside the Church. The Oak Ridge members hold a high standing in the community and are well-known in the area.

In October of 1995, Brother Russell Williams was called as the next Bishop of the Ward.

November 17, 1996 when the Knoxville Stake was split and the Cumberland Knoxville Stake formed, Oak Ridge became a part of the new stake, being one of five wards and three branches that made up the new Stake.

In His Own Words

by Bishop Russell Williams

The Oak Ridge Ward continues to grow as individuals and in character. As the Saints in Oak Ridge give of themselves to their fellow man, the Lord continues to bless us. I'm appreciative of the Oak Ridge Saints both past and present, who have given of themselves so others could be more comfortable! From the youngest of our primary children to the older members of our ward, Oak Ridgers have always pulled together for the better part of our community.

I'm thankful to have been part of the past here in Oak Ridge and I am excited for our continued growth in the future. I know the Gospel is true, and the Lord continues to bless us as we give of ourselves!

In the name of Jesus Christ,

Bishop Russell Williams

And Finally,

As noted earlier in this history, many of the saints were pulled from the Oak Ridge Ward as Stake Leadership. The same is true today. Much of the High Council and the counselors for the new Stake Presidency come from this great ward. The Oak Ridge saints add strength and spiritual insight as they step into the new Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake!

ROCKWOOD BRANCH

Historical Background:

- 1923 Missionaries in Rockwood, April 30
- 1960 Harriman Dependent Sunday School
- 1966 Harriman Dependent Sunday School discontinued
- 1974 Harriman Dependent Sunday School started again
- 1975 Rockwood Dependent Sunday School
- 1976 Rockwood Dependent Branch organized in January
- 1976 Met in rented building on Gateway Avenue in Rockwood
- 1976 Patton Lane property purchased for new building
- 1977 Rockwood Independent Branch organized in May
- 1977 Ground Breaking ceremony for construction of new building, winter
- 1978 Actual construction began in Spring
- 1979 First couple from Branch sealed in Temple; Rudolph & Rachel Robinette,
November 23

- 1980?-? First Missionaries sent to the Mission Field from Branch
- 1983 Phase I Chapel dedicated May 1
- 1984 Phase II ground breaking ceremonies held October 27
- 1985 First official use of Phase II addition, December 16
- 1987 Branch Conference and dedication of Phase II Addition by Pres. Smith
- 1991 Branch Split to form Dayton Branch, which became part of Chattanooga Stake
- 1994 Institute Class Began in September
- 1996 Rockwood Branch remained in Knoxville TN Stake when Stake was split.

- Welfare Project: Peach Orchard
- Fund Raising Project: Hand-dipped Chocolates

Branch Presidents

- Gary Dunford, 1976
- Tom Dahl 1977
- Johnny Hutson 1979
- Dave Moser 1982
- Tom Dahl 1983
- Melvin Schill 1986
- Webster Gudmundson 1990

Counselors

- Kenneth Henderson, Tom Dahl
- Johnny Hutson, Jim Brown
- Webster Gudmundson, Dave Moser
- Rick Forbes, Rudy Robinette, Art Crawford
- Terry Willard, Lucky Witske
- Webster Gudmundson, Rudy Robinette
- Rudy Robinette, Herb Ross, Paul Ely,
Scott Butler

History of Rockwood Branch

(Condensed)

April 20, 1923: Missionaries in Rockwood, Tennessee. Much success was reported by Elders Gibby and Goodrich. Elders called to Cumberland County by investigators requesting baptism.

The History of the Rockwood/Harriman Saints began in 1960 when a Dependent Sunday School was started by church missionary Elders at Harriman. The American Legion Hall on Roane Street was used as a meeting place. This Sunday School continued till December of 1966 when it was discontinued due to lack of local priesthood holders.

Brother H. E. Patterson remembers the starting of the old Harriman Sunday School with contributions by Sister Peggy Britt and Sister Virginia Powers. To my knowledge, the first members to join the Church prior to the Harriman Sunday School were Annette Pierce and Virginia Powers. They were baptized in March in the Knoxville Seventh Day Adventist Church font in March of 1949 by church missionaries. They attended church meetings in an Odd Fellow Lodge in Knoxville. Soon afterward they started attending Sacrament meetings at the old Linden Elementary School in Oak Ridge, the meeting place of the Oak Ridge Branch that had recently been organized. This location was closer for the Harriman members. Their transportation to Oak Ridge and back was by bus. Often they did not arrive back in Harriman until midnight, or later. Sister Powers' daughter, Barbara Harris Bryant, was also baptized about 1949.

At the time I joined the Church in 1961, the Sunday School was being held in the Harriman American Legion Hall. Occasionally the hall would not be available for our Sunday morning meeting, and Brother Earl Britt, who lived nearby, would arrange for our alternate meeting place, the Adkisson's Flower Shop in Harriman. Although an unusual meeting place, it was lovely having the beautiful flowers around us during class. Sometimes when we were meeting in the Hall, someone from the Legion would fail to clean it up from a party the previous evening. Church members would sweep up the debris before the class was held. During the time I lived in Harriman and attended the Harriman Sunday School, our classes were held in one or the other of these two places.

At the time I joined, the Sunday School was held by the full-time missionaries, Elders Charles Rodney Craygun and Vaughn M. Austin; they were also in charge. Those of us baptized during this time were baptized in the Oak Ridge Branch font. The Branch was located on Viking Road then. It was only a few days after I was baptized that President Arthur Neeley from the Oak Ridge Branch came over. He and I went home teaching. From then on I was a Senior Home Teacher under assignment from the Oak Ridge Branch. We had help from them in order to see all the members.

When the Sunday School first started, there were only eight or nine of us attending. Later the membership grew to 40-50 persons, although generally we averaged around 30 in attendance. Bad weather would occasionally greatly reduce the number, but we always had enough to hold Sunday School. At one time we had four missionaries in the Rockwood/Harriman area — this included both

male and female missionaries. The area was an ideal place for a branch, I felt. We had people attending from Harriman, Rockwood, Kingston, Midtown, and Oakdale. This was a large area to draw from and serve. Often members would pick up others from out of the way places to attend.

In 1961 and part of 1962, Brother Bert Erickson from Oak Ridge was called by the Oak Ridge Branch President to assist us as Sunday School Superintendent. His wife, Betty, served as chorister. She was extremely musical and played the piano very well. I became S. S. Superintendent some time in 1962 or 1963 and held that position until October 1966. Sister Britt, with Lucy Abston's help, held Primary class some of the time in homes. Neighborhood children would come and participate, also.

There were several of the Harriman members who held positions in the Mutual Improvement Association (MIA) in Oak Ridge during this period. I worked as Explorer Leader in that Branch and held other positions; also Sister Opal Brown and Peggy Britt were called to teach MIA. These meetings were held on Wednesday evenings. Quite a few of the Harriman children really enjoyed the MIA meetings even though they were not as active in regular church meetings.

For the first year or so after I became a member, we attended District Conference at the chapel on Concord Street in Knoxville. The chapel would be filled and overflow into the basement and outside. About a third of the attendees would not be able to get into the building. Loud speakers would carry the program to the ones in the basement. Since the chapel would not seat all the conference attendees, Young High School on Chapman Highway, Knoxville, and Jefferson High School, Oak Ridge, were used - - and possibly other area schools as well. Because the schools were not air conditioned, these buildings were extremely hot in the summertime. The Oak Ridge Branch gave us support with official visits, and sometimes members served as guest speakers. They would come over any time they were requested for counsel. They included us in many of their activities and meetings. Also, we used the Oak Ridge Chapel for baptisms.

We had outings to Cumberland State Park, Smoky Mountain State Park, Roane County Park, Rockwood Beach, and cookouts at member's homes. We always made sure the missionaries had an opportunity to attend and that they had permission. This gave us all the privilege of getting to know one another better and meeting nonmembers who sometimes joined our outings. We used to have "cottage meetings" where we would meet in a home, talk, and visit. These meetings are now referred to as "fireside meetings". We included all members in these outings. If children went on a hike with us, we took turns carrying the little ones when needed.

Because we did not have a permanent meeting place in which to store our supplies, members took song books, sacrament cups, etc., home each week and returned them the following week. Sacrament cups were furnished to us by the OR Branch; and on one occasion our cups did not arrive as planned. I went out and bought paper cups to use for sacrament. The cups looked so strange on the sacrament tray, but we got by. In September 1966, I moved to Oak Ridge and joined the Branch there. Within a month or so after my leaving, the Harriman Sunday School closed for lack of local priesthood leaders. Some of the Harriman members started attending in Oak Ridge after that time.

The 1970's

In March 1974, the Branch Presidency in Oak Ridge called Brother Kenneth Henderson as the Sunday School superintendent when the Dependent Harriman Sunday School was restarted. Brother Henderson states: "I was the only local priesthood bearer at the time. Then Mike and Carolyn Amos started coming with their children and Brother Harris from the Oak Ridge Branch used to come once a month to help us. Sister Eloise Jordan was baptized and her family started attending with her. Later that year, about June or July, Gary and Fran Dunford with their children came into the area and joined us." At this point in time, the saints were meeting in peoples' homes, but shortly thereafter, they rented a building on Gateway Avenue in Rockwood.

The Gary and Fran Dunford family remembers their experiences in Tennessee when they moved to Rockwood in 1974: "For most of our lives, going to Church meant an easy walk to the nearby chapel. Meetings were attended several times each Sunday, and during the week also. There were a lot of Mormons and their chapels close. Moving to Tennessee was a huge change for us."

There were few Saints in Roane County: The Britts, Sanders, Forbes, Amoses, Bryants, Hendersons, Thompsons and the two Ledgerwood sisters. The Evelyns were early members from Dayton. Vickie Henley joined the Church early after the Branch was organized. Though it was difficult for them to participate in the full program of the Church, they were faithful and had been for many years.

In 1976, we were asked to organize a Branch of the Church in Rockwood, dependent on Oak Ridge. We met in our home the first day after we had moved in, and Bishop Sasser from the Oak Ridge Ward came to help organize our Branch. I was asked to be the President of the Dependent Branch. We had only a piano in our living room as we were unable to buy furniture for a year or so after we moved, so it was a good place for our little group to meet. Bill Thompson lent us some folding chairs from his school; we stored the chairs in Connie's and Jill's closets between meetings. After Sunday School and Sacrament meeting, Bishop Sasser directed us to organize the Primary, with meetings being held in Pat and Bill Thompson's home. Next the Relief Society was organized. The Bryant's home was opened to house this meeting. Our group continued to grow, and soon every room in the downstairs of our home was used for Sunday School classes. Several social activities were also held in our home and we grew close to the members in the Branch and loved each one in a special way.

As our membership increased, we began to look for a larger place to meet. Barbara Bryant found a "chapel" for us in Rockwood on the highway in the south part of town. It was a cinder-block building, old and musty, that had been used for years to house rug-weaving machines and, just prior to our occupancy, as a fabric store. The rent was cheap enough for us, so after a day of cleaning and painting the floor gray and the walls white, we moved in. We all have a lot of memories of this chapel. There was no heat in winter except a few inefficient space heaters, so we wore heavy coats and blankets. It was interesting that we could see our sermons in the form of white clouds coming from the speakers' mouths. You could always tell who was singing' too. Our motto:

“Many are cold, but few are frozen.” Pity the poor pianist trying to play with frozen fingers. We found that our heater placed behind the speaker meant long meetings, so we learned to place it so that much was said in a short time.

Our pianos were another experience to be fondly remembered. We were given two at different times and, in moving them to Rockwood, lost them out of the back of the pickup truck. I saw one of these “dropped” pianos behind Mike Amos’ home in Kingston. I had no idea how many pieces it took to make a piano until I saw them laid out on the ground. Later, our missionary, Sister Roundy, found a lady in Maryville willing to donate a piano to us; and some of the brethren went all the way there to get it. It fell out of the truck as they were pulling up a hill onto the highway. We finally got another one to the chapel, though I think we sometimes wished it had been dropped, too. I’m still not sure it hadn’t. Several keys wouldn’t play; the ivory was chipped; and the pianists would actually get splinters in their fingers if due care was not exercised. The piano tuner, Mr. Abston, I believe, said the instrument was beyond repair and so declined the job because wet pads had become hardened and mice had dined on much of the felt in the innards. But it did “make a joyful noise unto the Lord” even if it did sound a bit like an old-timey saloon piano. (What could be more joyful than that?) For a while, before we got the “prized piano,” we had used a small electric organ that Fran’s Aunt Madeline had purchased at a rummage sale for \$5 in Shreveport. Fran’s parents brought it to us on one of their visits. The Thornhills (Fran’s parents) also supplied us with a large library of visual aids for teaching, Church magazines, a lot of large pictures, and maps that were not being used in their ward library.

In the summer, there was no cooling. We fiddled with a couple of air conditioners mounted high on the walls to no avail. Our motto: “The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning” got us through the summers as we enjoyed the spirit in abundance. In spite of the uncomfortable environment year round, the faithful Saints were unwavering in their support and in their eagerness to embrace the teachings of the Gospel.

When we felt that we had done all that we could do, like “manna from heaven”, the Lord sent wonderful people to the Roane County area. They added their talents and financial support to the building up of the Kingdom. As our group was enlarged with these good people moving in, we needed additional rooms and were given permission to move into the back rooms of our chapel. So with another cleaning and painting day, we prepared these rooms for us. All day we worked to move junk back or out and clean one to two inches of mud (left from a flood) and grease from the weaving machines from off the floor so we could paint. We also had to put plywood on the floors as they were quite rotten. I stepped through the floor on a few occasions. The floors were very weak, and if someone bounced a baby on their knee at the back of the chapel, the ripples could be felt clear up to the front. It was a little like having church on a trampoline, and each time the kids started jumping in the back room, I held my breath for fear the floor would give way.

Fran and I had been visiting members of the church south of Rockwood one day and came by a dumpster on our way home. Someone had evidently just finished re-carpeting their home and

thrown the old carpet away. We were delighted to grab it out of the big bin, and ignoring curious glances of passersby, we tied it to the top of our car and delivered it to our chapel. That's how the green rug in the back room came to be, and it added a nice touch. We ignored the few cigarette burns. Wouldn't those people be surprised to know what happened to their old rug?

But, of course, the chapel was the scene of some pleasant and spiritual experiences even though we had to stop and contemplate while trains went by. Our meetings were held consecutively and that helped our attendance as some still had a considerable distance to travel. The Branch covered about a 60-mile radius. Some came from Dayton, north of Harriman and Kingston, and, the mountain.

We were pleased to have the Mission President, George Durrant, begin sending missionaries into the area. We requested a good pair of Elders and got a great pair of Sisters, Sisters Roundy and Smith. They brought a special spirit and gave us all a boost. They were followed by other Elders and Sisters who worked diligently to spread the Gospel. Sandy Edwards was the first convert in our Branch through missionary efforts after the Branch was organized, though some members, like Virginia Powers, had been converts by missionaries many years before.

Soon after the Branch was organized, we began efforts to build a chapel. We were instructed by President Perkins to look for a suitable location. It seemed almost too much to hope for that our little group could think of building a chapel. But, by this time, others had come to help such as Sister Powers, the Dahls, Grumbles, Garrisons, Halls, Gudmundsons, Howards, Phelps, Shepherds, Witzkes, Mosers, Botts, Thurgoods, Hearlds, Hutsons and Browns. The Blakes had moved back to their ancestral home on the mountain, so we were feeling more and more optimistic.

I investigated several lots, and when I was ready with some possibilities, Stake leaders came from Oak Ridge to look them over. We were most excited about a hillside just in front of Roane State Community College. It was about midway between Rockwood and Harriman, and Kingston with good access. I liked it for the closeness to the college and felt it would give both a "touch of class" and perhaps be useful for institute instruction later. I could also see the site from my office window. It was a great thrill to watch as the chapel rose from the hill later.

The property was satisfactory to most of the leaders and approved by Brother Jensen of the Church Real Estate Office; so we proceeded with the negotiations. It was owned by an elderly lady related to the Blakes. I felt the price was a bit high, a real-estate agent agreed, and I thought perhaps we could appeal to her charitable side to lower it. So, I arranged for the Blakes and myself to get together at her house for a meeting. We had a nice visit, but the price remained the same - - five acres for \$25,000. However, she did allow us the choicest part of the cornfield which would place the chapel on a beautiful knoll. It overlooked an arm of Watt's Bar Lake and the hills beyond. I don't believe we could have found a lovelier place. There is a wooded hill above that would make a beautiful temple hill. The next Sunday, I took families one by one into the back room of our chapel, and told them of the plans and our need for money. No one refused, and we had our share of the price of the property almost immediately.

I was released as Branch President soon after that and replaced by Tom Dahl. We spent a lot of time agonizing over ways to get the chapel started. President Dahl and I met with President Perkins in the Oak Ridge Chapel to discuss matters. One of the obstacles that we faced was that the Stake had been organized for a long enough time that we would soon lose the 80% participation of the Church from its funds. It would soon go down to 70% which would mean we would have to raise the other 30%. We weren't sure that we could raise our share fast enough to receive the benefit of the other 10% from Salt Lake. President Dahl was really positive that it could be done. As we talked in the parking lot afterward for a few minutes, I could see he was so enthusiastic that I began to feel that it just had to be. President Perkins was willing to try to get the deadline extended for us by telling the Salt Lake officials how worthy, deserving, and poor we were. So, after many telephone calls and letters, he was successful. Of course, starting a building fund meant sizeable contributions from the members. But the desire was so great that there was even talk of second mortgages on homes. Since we Dunfords were struggling like everybody else at the time, we were worried about what we would do when a "fortuitous" tragedy struck our home.

The home builder (Mr. Lemon) of our home in Dogwood Heights had left the water pipes out from under the slab (along with the termite treatment we found out later). The pipes were accordingly installed across the ceiling of the garage and along the north wall to the kitchen. They were not well insulated, and during a very cold January night, they froze. We had been leaving a water tap running a little, but we forgot this night to do so. For a few days we carried water from the Bryants who lived above us on the hill. We put heaters in the garage to no avail as the water sill wouldn't come 'unglued'. Finally, we put a kerosene heater there and built a large fire in the fireplace. Fran slept on the couch by the fireplace to keep the fire blazing.

She awoke about two o'clock one morning to put another log on the fire and stepped into icy-cold water. The pipe was obviously unfrozen and had flooded the bottom floor of the house. I dressed as soon as I could and ran up to the street to turn off the water. I had to dig down through the snow and ice to find the valve and finally got it off. Then we began the agonizing chore of getting the water out. We started in the garage where the water was deepest and tried to push it out. We pushed water out the doors, and it was so cold, it just froze on the door sill and made the job harder. We sponged water out of the carpets with towels and squeezed them into the sink. Some furniture, like the china closet, we had put on blocks. After several hours of frantic labor, we had done all we could do.

As it turned out, nothing was harmed by the soaking. A plumber came over the next day and replaced the pipes. A lot of wallboard was cut up in the process because along the north wall of the garage many feet of pipe had shattered. Why was this a blessing? Well, the insurance paid \$650 for the damage, and the plumber charged \$45. I bought tape and plaster for the wallboard repairs, which I could do, and the rest just met the first installment on the building fund. The Lord works in "mysterious ways", but I wish He wouldn't scare us so much.

Besides floods at our house, there were other fund-raising projects. Our first was a taco booth at the Roane County Fair held in the county park. Frank got an undertaker to loan us a grave tent, and

we set up a beautiful booth. Mary Anne Hearld did some of her art magic, and we were in business. Now you know, tacos in rural Tennessee were not particularly well known, not at all like biscuits and sawmill gravy. But they were soon popular, even if the name was often mispronounced, much to our delight. We cleared about \$500 from the effort and were mighty proud.

The Oak Ridge Saints had supported us wholeheartedly in our growth. They came en masse to a Spanish dinner we catered at their chapel. This was an interesting affair, and I'm sure those who worked on it will always remember the experience. The Branch members also learned to be experts in the art of hand-dipping chocolates after some trial and error. As soon as Thanksgiving dinner was over, the members started cooking fondant for the early December project. Many who thought they could not cook this candy successfully were soon teaching the newcomers to our Branch. The dipping was a project for all the adult members. The market grew every year and so did production. For the children who were permitted a glimpse, it was like a trip to Willie Wonka's.

Ground Breaking on November 19, 1977, for the chapel was a wonderful experience. Though it was cold on the hill with a chilly wind, the "Spirit of God Like a Fire Was Burning" in our hearts that day. Many members were there. I could watch the chapel rise on the hill from my office window at school. Each brick placed was a thrill. Needless to say, it was also a topic of much conversation at the college. Unfortunately, all did not go smoothly with the building, and the contractor did not do the kind of work required. Among other things, the footings were not true and the air conditioning ducts were installed improperly. Members had to meet to remove some of the brick for a second try. Our little "makeshift" chapel in Rockwood was not satisfactory any more, so we were allowed to move into the new chapel before it was dedicated. Soon after, Brother Dahl was made Branch President and I became the Stake Seventies President. This meant a lot of traveling for me through East Tennessee, so I missed many Sundays in our Rockwood Branch. The chapel was not dedicated until long after we left Tennessee. That was an event we longed to attend.

Our thoughts go back often to our Tennessee home. Our prayer is that God will continue to bless the good people there. I believe He Will. (The Dunfords presently live in Utah.)

Back-Packing with the Scouts

The following article by Brother Dunford, as Branch Scout Leader, tells of one of the scouting trips he took with the young men. "Probably our most memorable scouting trip (that was more adventure than misadventure) was a back-pack trip along the Appalachian trail in the Smokies the last summer we were in Tennessee. Guy and Craig Thompson, Jody Phelps, Jeff, and I made the trip. Brother Phelps drove us to the Cosby Ranger Station where we could hike to the first shelter. On the Appalachian Trail, you are required to stay in the rock shelters each night. The shelters are long affairs with three rock walls and chain-link fence across the front. Bunks are formed with a framework of logs covered with wire fencing material stretched between them. Before bedding down, it was always wise to look over the "bed" to turn down any broken wires sticking up ready to

puncture any delicate parts. Staying in the shelters protected one from the bears and the flora from the many hikers. It also saved one from having to carry a tent. We quickly learned that it was necessary to tie our pack up to the roof to keep it away from critters who made a good living from careless hikers.

The first day's trek ended at Cosby Knob. As we hiked the next day to Tri-Corner Knob, we started to pass others who told of several bears around the shelter so we anticipated some fun. I was a bit worried the scouts might get too brave if we met bears. We had heard of the "Kamikaze" bear who learned to climb trees and to jump out on packs tied off the ground between trees. Another bear chased hikers till they dropped their packs to run faster. Then he would devour whatever was edible. I have wondered what a bear would feel like after a big meal of freeze-dried food and then taking a drink of water.

We got to Tri-Corner Knob in the early afternoon and put our packs in the shelter and stood around close to the gate, thinking bear. Sure enough, one soon ambled around the corner. We dove for the shelter and closed the gate. We felt a little silly being inside the cage. (One hiker told us of running into a shelter to get away from a bear, slamming the gate, then turning around to find another bear in there with him.) Soon the bear left, and we were fascinated to watch a female with two cubs amble down the trail. So we settled down to watch the show. She obliged by having them scramble high up a tree for us.

After they all left, Craig and I grabbed the canteen and the collapsible plastic jug to get some water. The spring was about 100 yards down the hollow. Of course, we watched carefully, but since there were no bears around we went our merry way. We got the water; and on the way back up to the shelter, we decided to crawl through the bushes, make some bear noises, and give the others a scare. Craig took the lead, and when he was nearly to the shelter, he began to make rather authentic bear sounds and rattled the bushes. I was back where I could see the others at the shelter, and it seemed they were preoccupied with something else, and they didn't appear to be too impressed. Just then, Craig jumped and made a mighty roar and came face to face with a bear on the other side of the bush. The bear roared much more authentically than Craig had. Craig quickly retreated down the hill. Luckily, the bear was as startled as we were, and he retreated just as quickly the other way. We took a circuitous route back to camp and didn't press our luck any more that day.

Our next day's hike was to the Ice Water Springs Shelter. This was the most open country. On top of the balds, the scenery changed from dense forests to open areas of purple rhododendron in bloom. The weather cleared but left the patches of fog in the hollows below us that give the Smoky Mountains their name. It was very inspiring, and its memory creates a lovely view yet. The trail led around Charlie's Bunion, then was cut into a cliff. We were coming closer to Newfound Gap, so we began to see many day hikers. Ice Water Springs was a little hole with running water situated in the middle of the trail. We were the first ones to arrive at the shelter in the early afternoon, so we staked our claim to a bunk and checked for protruding wires. We had plenty of time to lay on the grass in the sunshine and relax.

During the night, about three in the morning, we learned again why smart hikers tied their packs high off the ground. A big skunk came through a crack in the fence to forage for food. He scratched through whatever trash he could find, growling and muttering to himself (or herself). It wasn't long until another skunk came in and the two began fighting ferociously. They screeched and howled. In the darkness, all we could see were two white stripes twisting around and around. I can imagine that if the skunks had looked at the edges of the bunks, they'd have been startled to see some very big eyes staring back at them. The skunks finally left at dawn.

The last part of the trip was to Newfound Gap. We took a side trip to the Jump Off. This was a high pinnacle of rock overlooking a broad vista of the Smokies. The view was breathtaking and, of course, gave the scouts a great opportunity to see how far they could throw rocks. From there, it was downhill to the Gap. Wayne had borrowed a car from President Dahl and was soon there to pick us up. By then, we looked and smelled like seasoned backpackers, but he let us ride anyway. We stopped in Pigeon Forge for milk shakes and hamburgers, which were a real treat after days of freeze-dried food."

Brother Tom Dahl writes:

"I became familiar with our Branch on July 4, 1976. It was also the day we moved into this area. The Branch at that time was meeting in an old abandoned cloth shop which was in very poor condition. When I first began attending, the average attendance was around 18. Within a year or two, we had built attendance up to 40. After about two and a half years or so, attendance leveled off at about 60 to 80.

"Brother Gary Dunford was the Branch President when we moved to the area. He was a Seventy and very good with music. On many occasions, he had no counselors to assist him. It seemed rather amusing to us that he would get up and begin the meeting; welcome the meeting; then he would walk over and lead the singing or play the piano as his wife led the singing; then he would come back and bless the sacrament; then walk around to the front of the table and pass the sacrament; and come back and introduce the speakers. Essentially, he was a one-man Branch Presidency. Soon after, I was called as one of his counselor and served with him from the fall of 1976 until May 1977. At that time I was called as the Branch President, and Brother Dunford was then called as a Seventies President of the Stake. It was during President Dunford's administration that the Branch was created.

"Plaster was falling off the walls (in Gateway Building), but it was home to us, and there was a very strong spirit in the Branch in those days because only very strong members would attend under the adverse conditions that we had. Looking back, it was humorous at times. The Scouts met in the back portion of the building, and sometimes while scuffling, someone would fall through the floor.

"I remember a very interesting event, at least in my mind. It was one of the early miracles in the Branch. We were planning and needing to start a Junior Sunday School the winter before we went down and started meeting in the new building. We had reached a point where we needed more space and we needed more facilities. We had expanded into the old building all we could. We had

cleared out the back part of the building and made all the classroom space possible. At first, Gary and the others had expanded it from one large room to a large chapel area and a small room in the back with a partition; then we had moved into the back part of the building and made one large room back there (that is where the floor caved in with us); from there we expanded even further in the back and wound up making about four rooms back there. Even so, we were hurting very badly for space, and we were hurting very badly for a Junior Sunday School I think you would have to go through the experience of starting with an 18-member Branch and build it up to about 60 members to really appreciate the trials and strains we experienced. Still, the Priesthood was so thin that it was not unusual for the Branch Presidency to be the ones that were blessing and passing the sacrament. President Dunford was not only the Stake Mission Leader, but he was also the Scoutmaster. Everyone had what you would think of as three full-time church jobs. I think back on that time and have very warm feelings toward the members and have very high admiration for the things that they did and the sacrifices they made. They had to be pretty hardy stock.

“By this time we had gotten ourselves a full Branch Presidency. We all felt united, and we really needed to go with a Junior Sunday School, but we had no idea how we could arrange it. We called Sister Denise Grumbles as the Junior Sunday School Coordinator. We asked her to do the best she could, and we would try to provide her the best that we could. She needed small chairs; she needed space; and we didn’t know where we were going to get either. The very next week after we had issued her that calling, we had a load of chairs arrive. We didn’t know where we were going to put them. My wife and I started calling around. We phoned the Bryants, and they contacted the owner of the building. In back of our building, there was a small efficiency apartment that was vacant at the time. When Mrs. Bryant told the owner our plight, he told us to go ahead and take the apartment, store the chairs, and use the space anyway we needed. When we were notified of that, at first we thought that was a great place to store our chairs. Then we got to thinking about what he said - - use the space anyway we needed. We made four more rooms and provided an area for our Junior Sunday School plus increased the number of chairs. At first it looked like a tragedy, but out of it we had accomplished so much. The Lord prompted us; we made the commitment; and the doors were open.

“During the time I was Branch President and we were in the construction phase of the new building, many interesting things happened. I remember one day the sheriff drove up to my house and delivered a summons to us, citing us for not paying our construction bills. It was, of course, the Church the merchants were suing, but he (the sheriff) only knew to deliver it to me. Another time, also during the construction phase, all the furniture, library materials, etc., arrived before the building was ready and were delivered to my house or to the construction site. It was a confusing time for all. The problems with the contractor were quite numerous. Of course, when a church is built, the Church (Salt Lake) owns the building, so any liens are placed against the Church. The building construction division representative of the Church got involved with our church, their lawyers got involved, and there was court action between the Church and the contractor. This situation dragged on for approximately two years after we had taken occupancy of the building.

“In the Spring of 1979, we took custody of the building and moved in, although it was not finished. So it was after President Moser became Branch President that the building was finally dedicated. “During Dave Moser’s Branch presidency, reactivating, bringing, being with, and strengthening the members were themes under him. He brought the Branch from an average membership attendance of around 80 to over 100. This qualified the Branch for the building of the Phase II addition on the church. The church grew in three ways: spiritually, financially, and in numbers. The building addition was approved by his efforts and steering also.”

Brother Moser remembers the Rockwood Branch, the peach orchard, home teaching and other members. He writes: “We moved into the area in May 1979. Tom Dahl, the Branch President came to visit us in our hotel room and invited us to church. He talked about the building fund. It seems like we have been involved in the building fund, in building, or in fixing buildings since the beginning. Our first Sunday to church was the first Sunday in the new Branch Chapel. It smelled so nice with the new carpet and all. Still some odd jobs were being completed by Branch members.

“In August 1979, my wife, Barbara, was called to Primary. Also at that time, I was called as Second Counselor in the Branch Presidency. Johnny Hutson was Branch President and Web Gudmundson was First Counselor.”

The 1980's

Early in 1980, the members decided to put in a peach orchard. Brother Moser continues: “Before the approval from the Church was given, Stake President Perkins encouraged us to go ahead and plant the peach trees as a welfare project. We spent a lot of time on those trees. Although we never had quite the participation I would have liked, planting and caring for those trees gave some of us fun as a family project.

“I guess to me, the most memorable time about the peach orchard was when my wife Barbara was pregnant with Thomas. All our children had been delivered by C-section, and we had scheduled her next delivery, also by C-section, to be done March 17, 1981. Barbara had been pruning the peach trees about two hours each day for a week. On Friday, she went back and finished them. She was up and down, squatting around the small trees pruning them and . . . anyway, Thomas was born March 13, rather than March 17, as planned.” (Editors note: When the Church disbanded welfare projects Church wide, the Rockwood Saints continued harvesting fruit from their trees. However, at this time there are probably only 3 or 4 trees that are still alive and producing fruit.)

“I was called to be Branch President on Easter 1982. The thing I enjoyed and remember most was finding the few people who had moved into the Branch and letting them know we had an active church here. Several folks started coming. We started getting more inactive members to come, and our attendance increased to over 100 for Sacrament meetings. This allowed us to go ahead with Phase II of the building. Also during this time we went from being several months behind in paying our Stake budget and other obligations to being caught up by the end of 1982. The

financial burdens changed, and for the first time, our church was out of the red. The Church forgave the welfare debt and some on the building. They went from 30:70 participation ration to 4:96 ratio. That helped considerably.

“During my presidency we were able to finally dedicate our church. The church was two years old. The date was May 1, 1983. We had 144 people attend the ceremony; the dedication was done by Stake President Lloyd Smith, with others speaking as well.

“Seminary was held at the Rockwood Chapel on Patton Lane while I was Branch President. Later part of the class was held across from the Rockwood High School and taught by Sister Bronna Willard in her home. The rest of the class was taught in the Kingston area by Sister Clayetta Hutson in her home. At times these classes were taught in the evening, although now they have reverted back to being taught in the morning.

“Our first Branch youth to go on missions were Rick and Scott Schill. They are sons of Melvin and Patricia Schill. We had such pride in the two young missionaries and wished them well. Two of our young women, Kathy and Colleen Usery, married young men in the Temple. They are daughters of Lucky and Barbara Witzke.”

August 1983, Brother Moser was released and Brother Tom Dahl was called again (the second time) as Branch President. He writes: “Oddly enough, it was again during a construction phase (due to the labors of other brethren) that I was again going to see the Phase II of the building built and reap the benefits. Ground breaking ceremonies for our Phase II addition were held October 27, 1984. The first official use of this new addition was December 16, 1985, with the building being dedicated by President R. Lloyd Smith at a Branch Conference in September of 1987.”

Youth Trip, Summer 1989

In July 1989, the Young Men/Young Women took a trip from Tennessee to Canada to visit and learn about some of the Church’s historical sites. In addition to Church sites, they enjoyed visiting Washington D.C., and Niagara Falls. Below are comments from the saints who went on this trip.

The following members of the Rockwood Branch made the trip:

Brother Brent Patterson	Steven Gudmundson	Seth Hearld	April Schill
Shanda Patterson	Nathan Gudmundson	Jared Hearld	Sister Pat Schill
Shila Patterson	Sister Sue Lantz	William Moser	

The itinerary was:

Day 1: Left Rockwood Chapel at 7 AM (set up camp near Washington).

Day 2: Toured Washington D.C., Arlington National Cemetery, the Vietnam Wall, and Temple Visitors Center.

Day 3: Drove to Palmyra, New York; attended the pageant.

Day 4: Sunday attended services at the pageant site; went to the Visitors Center; visited Sacred Grove; toured Grandin Building; visited the Whitmer Farm where the Church was organized.

Day 5: Drove to Canada and viewed Niagara Falls from the Canadian side; returned to the American side and rode the Maid of the Mist.

Day 6: Toured Kirtland Temple; Newell K. Whitney Store; and the Johnson Farm.

Impressions of the trip:

Sister Pat Schill: We visited the Kirtland Temple. It stands for a great deal of love and sacrifice by the early Saints. Even though the Temple is owned by the Reorganized Church, it is a very sacred and special place. It was very exciting and humbling to stand in the place where Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery visited with Christ, Elijah, and Moses, and to know the Prophet Joseph received revelation from Christ for many of the Doctrines of our faith. We also visited the Newell K. Whitney store at Kirtland where the Prophet received the Word of Wisdom and many other revelations. The Spirit was very strong in this place, and our testimonies were greatly strengthened by our visit.

William Moser: My favorite parts of the trip were: Niagara Falls, the Pageant, Kirtland Temple, Hill Cumorah, Whitney Store, shopping in Canada and New York, touring Washington D.C., the Ponderosa Steak House, the Washington Temple Visitors Center, the Hill Cumorah Visitors Center, and camping at KOA resorts.

Seth Hearld: My favorite parts of the trip were the Pageant (except for the cold), the STEAKHOUSE!!!!, and the KOA campgrounds and resorts.

Shila Patterson: The Johnson Farm was a very special place. This was the place in which Joseph, his wife, and twins stayed for a period of time while the Church was being established. This place was where the mob dragged Joseph out of bed, tarred, feathered, and beat him; and then he was left to die. In the process they left the door open, and one of his twins, who was sick, got a draft from the cold air and died. When Joseph crawled to the house, his wife saw him and passed out. The women worked all night removing the tar - - a painful task. But the next morning, there was a crowd on his front lawn waiting, and he gave a sermon on forgiveness. Through all his pain and the loss of a child, his sermon was on forgiveness.

Nathan Gudmunson: The whole Hill Cumorah trip was fun. Even though we went to

many interesting places, the best part of the trip was the pageant. Niagara Falls was fun, and all the church history places were very interesting. The camps we went to were fun, too.

April Schill: My most special experience, along with the pageant itself, was the opportunity to visit the Sacred Grove. A very special Experience happened there between an earthly man and our Father and His Son, Jesus. As I walked through the Grove, many people were there. Some had gone off the path to find spots to stop and ponder. I felt very calm and peaceful. The entire Grove was an abundance of beauty and spiritualness. We had a very special experience, and I am so thankful to my Heavenly Father for His blessings upon us.

Steven Gudmundson: The trip to Hill Cumorah was fun. I liked Niagara Falls and Washington, D.C. I also liked some of the camp sites we stayed in, and I wish we could have had more time to do things at the camps. I liked the Hill Cumorah Pageant itself. I wish the trip could have lasted longer than it did.

Jared Hearld: The most spiritual time was when we went to the Washington Temple. It was nice to see it again. It was like we were already back home.

Shanda Patterson: I thought the Hill Cumorah trip was a very spiritual experience. My favorite thing was the Hill Cumorah Pageant when Christ descended over the people. It looked like it was real.

Sue Lantz: We beheld so many wonderful sights and heard so many interesting and spiritual stories that it is difficult to choose a favorite. I looked out the front door and imagined Joseph standing on the front steps addressing the crowd in his front yard. My heart still leaps when I think of the faith our dear Prophet had in the Savior and the love he had for our Heavenly Father and for God's children. I marvel at the strength it must have taken to stand on those steps after spending the night being cleansed of the tar and feathers he had received from the enemies of the Church. His heart must have been genuinely filled with love in order for him to preach forgiveness in the face of the evils he had suffered. As I heard the story and looked out the door, I heard an inner voice say, "Only a true man of God could show such love and compassion." I hope I never lose the feeling of awe

I felt then and still now feel.

Brent Patterson: I thought the pageant was very good at Palmyra, New York. The huge open-air theater was interesting, but our group could have used coats and blankets because it got very cold in the theater after the sun went down. I enjoyed all the pageant, especially the special effects of Christ ascending to God the Father. I thought the Kirtland Temple was inspiring since it escaped destruction from church enemies. Crystal had been donated from church members to be ground up and used in the stucco for the outside finish of the building. It must have been beautiful to watch the glass crystal catch and reflect the sun's rays on a sunny day. Sadly, though, most of the stucco has been removed, chip by chip, by tourists.

What a wonderful trip! What wonderful spiritual experiences! What joy in experiencing faith in our great heritage!

The 1990's

In 1991, the Dayton Saints, who had made themselves well known in Rockwood with their diligence and hard work, were split off from the Branch, forming their own Branch and becoming part of the Chattanooga Stake. The first meeting of the Dalton Branch was held on July 21st, 1991. The Rockwood Saints became rather discouraged after the split, but realized the Dayton Saints could grow more on their own. It didn't take these stalwart Rockwood Saints long, however, to get over their discouragement, put their shoulder to the wheel, and stride forward in faith.

Progress has been made in the Branch. Little by little, as these saints step forward in faith, new programs are added. In September of 1994, we began an Institute Class which runs weekly from September through May. The first year we studied the Old Testament, the second year the New Testament and this year we are studying the Doctrine and Covenants. Sister Annette Marler has successfully taught the class since it's beginning. Her knowledge of the gospel is extensive and she has increased our enthusiasm for learning. Certificates are given out to the participants, which become keepsakes as these beautiful saints learn and grow in the Gospel.

We had 13 baptisms in 1995 and 4 in 1996. We have 90 families in the Branch with a total of 180. With several less-active members, the visiting teachers and home teachers are spread rather thin, but continue to keep their visiting percentages up. They go into the less-active members homes with love and concern, never pushing, but gently loving and being their friends, realizing that at any time something will be the catalyst to bring these folks back into full fellowship within the Branch.

In His Own Words

by President Web Gudmundson

The Rockwood Branch has not sustained any growth in numbers during this decade. Some wonderful active families have come and gone in response to work demands at the TVA and Oak Ridge plants. Company downsizing has caused us to lose several families. In addition we lost part of our Branch to the Chattanooga Stake. We had five families living in the Dayton area that traveled faithfully the forty to fifty miles to attend our Branch. On July 21, 1991, this Branch became part of the Chattanooga Stake. We also gave up the city of Wartburg to the Oak Ridge Ward. We have had our share of deaths which have removed from our society some wonderful friends. We've had a very few number of births and added their joyful baby sounds to our Sacrament meetings.

We feel we have the prettiest site for our chapel in the whole southeastern region of the Church. It sits atop a hill overlooking a fork of Caney Creek and is surrounded by well kept grassy slopes. It is next to the Roane State Community College and is well known in the community for its beauty.

When we have doubled our membership we have room on the hill to expand our building. Somewhat before that time, we should become a ward. We have been close at times to being sufficiently prepared for being a ward. With perseverance, it will happen in its own due time. As it is, we feel that our members have every bit the same advantage even now as a medium-sized branch of the church. Many of our members are well prepared for the service that they render and they do a wonderful job.

Several converts who have come into the branch have remained faithful and are now enjoying the fruit of the gospel and are among our leadership. Four young missionaries have been sent from the Branch in the 90's, serving in Guatemala, Argentina, Columbia and North Carolina. Two more missionaries are now preparing to go.

One major Branch goal is to prepare every member for the blessings of family exaltation available in the holy Temples. We know that these blessings need to be made known to everyone who lives within the branch boundaries. We realize that a great missionary work is needed both within and without the branch membership. We want all our young men to prepare for and serve missions in the Church. All our young men and women should be married in the Lord's House. We extend an invitation of the prophets to all our members who have gone adrift, to come back and return to the blessing that they once enjoyed.

We realize that service is important in the lives of our members. We hope that everyone will accept a calling and feel that they can contribute to the Lord's work. We especially want the youth to know the value and fruits of work, service and sacrifice. We would hope that all youth would

partake of the early morning seminary study. We want them to stay free from the thoughts and sins of this world.

I know that the Church is true and is led by the Lord's prophets and revelators. The Lord has a plan for our Branch. If we are faithful, that plan will be realized.

C. W. Gudmundson, Branch President

And Finally,

The Rockwood Saints continue with deep commitments, unselfish service, and a great deal of love for each other. A small branch creates a family atmosphere for the saints, with close ties to each other, creating a "laboratory of learning", a special place of acceptance and love. This describes the Rockwood Branch! What a beautiful place to live!

SEVIERVILLE BRANCH

Historical Background:

- 1943 Sevier County included in Knoxville Branch boundaries;
organized Feb 14th.
- 1969 Sevier County included in Knoxville South Branch boundaries;
organized Oct.
- 1972 Sevier County included in Knoxville Second Ward;
organized Jun 25th
- 1974 Sevier County included in Maryville Dependent Branch
- 1975 Sevier County included in Maryville Independent Branch;
organized April 13th
- 1979 Sevierville Dependent Primary organized Jun.
- 1979 First Primary meeting held June 19th .

- 1981 Sevierville Branch organized Sep 6th.
- 1981 First Meeting Place: Reed Sisters Show Hall, Sep 13th.
- 1982 Second Meeting Place: American Legion Post, Mar 14th.
- 1982 Last meeting in American Legion Post Building, Jun 29th.
- 1982 Met in member's homes for sacrament meeting after leaving ALP bldg.
- 1982 Third Meeting Place: Bldg. on Wears Valley Road, Pigeon Forge, September
- 1983 Fourth Meeting Place: 601 West Main St. (Chapman Hwy), September
- 1984 Property purchased for new Sevierville Branch Building, January
- 1985 Groundbreaking service for new Chapel on Hardin Road, January 5th
- 1985 First-phase Chapel completed, Oct 20th

- 1992 Second phase added to chapel and connected with first phase Oct 25th.
- 1992 Work completed on Chapel Dec 12th.
- 1993 Chapel dedicated Jun 20th.
- 1996 Sevierville Branch remained with the Knoxville Tennessee Stake when the Stake
was split Nov 17th

Branch Presidents

David Ellis Taylor	1981
James Price	1983
Merritt Entreken	1986
John Stewart	1991
William Nichols	1996

Counselors

James Price, Harry Hart
Robert A. Taylor, Rex Fresh, William Relf, Jimmie Steward
William Culver, Creg Hinckley, Jimmie Steward, Robert Taylor, James E. Price, John Stewart
Eric Johnson, Earl Raney
Alan Azpurua, Gary Pickering

History of Sevierville Branch

(Condensed)

Sevier County was first included in the boundaries of the Knoxville Branch which was organized February 14, 1943. When the Knoxville Branch was split in October of 1969, forming the Knoxville North and South Branches, the Sevier County Saints were a part of the Knoxville South Branch.

Stories abound of when the Knoxville South Branch visiting teachers went to Sevierville to visit with their sisters. The Visiting Teachers packed their lunches and stayed the day in order to visit with all the lovely sisters in Sevierville and Sevier County. It was approximately 50 miles one way for the Visiting Teachers, then whatever other miles necessary to reach the sisters in and around the hills and valleys of beautiful Sevier County. It was always a beautiful drive and a wonderful experience, though I'm sure winter time created it's very own challenges, with some sisters not being visited because they were too far up snow-drifted roads.

Because of the long distance to the Knoxville Chapel, there were lots of less-active saints in the area. However, once the Maryville Branch was organized, Sevier County was within its boundaries, making life easier for the Sevierville Saints who began meeting with the Maryville Saints.

The Sevierville Dependent Primary was first organized June of 1979 with their first meeting held June 19th, 1979. Historical records state that the President and teachers were called and sustained for this new Dependent Primary. The Primary being held in Sevierville was much easier on these early saints, because traveling to Knoxville was just as difficult for them as our traveling to them.

The Maryville Branch's membership increased enough so that on Sunday the 6th of September 1981 at the Maryville Branch Chapel, the Knoxville Stake President R. Lloyd Smith called for the formation of the Sevierville Tennessee Branch. President David E. Taylor was released as first counselor in the Maryville Branch and was sustained as President of the newly formed Sevierville Branch. "And we became a Branch . . . the First in Sevier County!"

Minutes of the first Sevierville Branch Sacrament Meeting, held September 13, 1981 follows:

Sunday, 13 September 1981

This our first meeting was attended by 29 members
President David E. Taylor presided and conducted,
along with President James E. Price. Sister Jannis Taylor
played a small chord organ. President Taylor welcomed
every one to our first Sacrament meeting.

Opening Hymn was 196 - “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet”
Opening Prayer - - - Sister Jannis Taylor
Helen Rita Price - - - was called as Relief Society President, Geneva Sneed as 1st
Counselor; Debora McPherson as 2nd Counselor, and Linda Helton as Primary
President

Sacrament Hymn #217 “While of These Emblems We Partake”
Elder Borgquist and Brother Luther Sneed administered and
passed the sacrament

Speakers were: Beth Price, Rita Price and Crystal Price,
James E. Price and President David E. Taylor

Closing Hymn #70, “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing”
Closing Prayer - - - Michelle Helton

Six brothers attended Priesthood meeting
Ten sisters attended Relief Society
Nine children attended Primary

In the early days, attendance at meetings varied from 29 to 43, with about 100 members of the church in Sevier County. Several of these members were baptized by Elder Mel Robison, a full-time missionary. He and his wife were a great help to the Branch.

“Our Missionaries at this time are Elder and Sister Borgquist. They had been assigned to Sevier County some time before we became a Branch and had arranged with Brother Reed to use their building on Chapman Highway, The Reed Sisters Show Hall. The Reeds reside in Clinton, Tennessee. (They have since moved to California.)” Historical notes by Clarence Matthews

Difficulty came in finding a satisfactory meeting place. Meeting at the Reed Sisters Show Hall, though right on the highway with easy access, it also gave easy access to the rats, which were prolific. It was a common occurrence for rats to run across members feet, chew up things for nesting materials, or appear unexpectedly during meetings. In a few short months--that seemed very long-- the saints left the place to the rats.

Events that stand out in history include a sacrament meeting on February 21, 1982 that was almost delayed by rats eating one end of the sacrament cloth, a Pioneer Day Picnic with the Maryville Branch on July 24, 1982 and a Branch Conference on September 12, 1982. Speaking of rats, and mice and roaches.... Clarence Matthews, the Branch Historian writes, “ 13 December 1981, President James E. Price presiding and conducting. There are roaches, rats, and mice in the building. We had a mouse attend Sunday School today, running around under the chairs. When the sisters found out, they picked up their feet and then grabbed their purses. The rats attended PEC and Priesthood also.”

“President Price received word from the Stake, February 25, 1982, that we can meet at the American Legion Post on Chapman Highway, just down the road from where we are now meeting. March 14, 1982, 32 souls attended Sacrament Meeting today. This was our first meeting at the Sevierville Tn American Legion Post on Chapman Highway. What a blessing it is to meet in this clean, spacious and warm building.” Historical notes by Clarence Matthews

The saints remained in this building only through June 20, 1982. Sacrament meetings were then held in members’ homes, until a lease was signed on the 28th of August for a building on Wears Valley Road. Members thought this was their permanent home, but were forced to move once again in September of 1983, to a nice rock home on Chapman Highway; there they remained until the new Chapel was built on Hardin Lane.

“July 25, 1982, President Taylor asked to meet with the Priesthood. President Taylor spoke to the Priesthood about sustaining our participation in the purchasing of a Chapel site. The vote was in favor. All voted yes, so we are committed.” Historical notes by Clarence Matthews

Though still struggling to keep the Branch going, President Price writes December 25, 1984:

“Tis the Season...”

“As we come to the end of another year our thoughts return to days gone by in the short history of the Sevierville Branch. We remember the difficult times in the beginning when we met in what was then the Reed’s store. We had rats as big as cats and absolutely no heat. The lighting was poor, we had no music, no song books, and only a handful of adults, but quite a group of children!

“We’ve come a long way since then. We now meet in a much nicer building and will soon break ground for a brand new building of our very own. We still have heat problems but at least it’s tolerable.

“We now have 55 families in our Branch and over 100 Saints in Sevier County. Our branch seems to be growing again after a very difficult period last winter when several of our families moved away. We pray this trend will continue and that Heavenly Father will bless us with additional new families, both as members moving in, as well as convert baptisms.

“I must say, in all humility, that I am very proud of the Sevierville Branch and the good Saints that dwell within its boundaries. Many of you made great sacrifices of time, effort and money to help carry this work forward. I know Heavenly Father is pleased. Others have not, as of yet, stood up to be counted; have not yet contributed as they could have. It is not too late. It is time for all Saints to ‘Put your shoulder to the wheel’.

“The Lord has counseled:

‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.’ (Matt 11:28-29)

“This season of the year is one which brings joy to our souls as we think of loved ones far and near; as we feel that special ‘something’ in the air at Christmas time; as our thoughts drift back in time to a small manger and a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, a scene that occurred almost 2,000 years ago.”

January 9, 1985, the following article appeared in The Mountain Press:

Mormons to Build New Church

SEVIERVILLE — It was a cold windy day Saturday but plenty of warm hearts took shovels in hand to break ground for the construction of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Hardin Lane.

Before the soil was turned there was singing on the grounds: “Come, come, ye saints, no toil or labor fear. But with joy wend your way. All is well. All is well,” was told in song. It’s an old English tune by William Clayton.

Elder Jim Price, President of the Sevierville Branch, was the presiding officer as Mayor Gary Wade, Elder Robert A. Thomas, Elder Bruce L. Morgeneegg, stake presidency, and Elder Bill Relf took their turn with the spades.

Sevierville Alderwoman Geneve Sneed and her husband, Jay, were there. They became members of the church several years ago, Aldermen Fred Cate, and Amos Marshall and City Administrator Russell Treadway were the guests of the Sneeds. Ruby Fox represented the Chamber of Commerce.

Engineer Neal Woodland of Burke Construction Co. of Knoxville, stood by as spading continued. He was wearing his hard hat, an indication that he was ready to start work immediately. “While they’re shoveling they might as well go ahead and dig the foundation,” Woodland quipped. “Seriously, we’re going to build 3,200 square feet here,” Woodland said as he surveyed an area ringed with ribbons.

“The church family may be able to move in by August.”

“We’ll be moving in one month after the last brick is laid,” Elder Price said. He went on to explain that the building will be paid for before that happens. “Four percent of the construction funds will come from local membership. The other 96% will come from world-wide members. It’s their statement of faith in what may occur here.”

Once the building is completed the members will start thinking about phase two of their construction program, featuring the familiar spire associated with their churches.

“On March 24, 1986 we started to plant trees and shrubs and rake the stones from the lawn at the Church at 402 Hardin Lane, Sevierville. The trees were planted and the lawn all raked. The job completed on Wednesday, April 2, 1986. All the church members, girls, boys, men and women worked side by side. Brother Merritt Entekin was in charge of the grounds.

“On the 1st of September 1987, we had a contractor move the trees and lay new grass and plant bushes and shrubs; that was done by the Green-Bee Nursery and Florist. On June 1st, 1988, our tower was installed. But later it had to be turned around. And now we are in the process of putting in another parking lot on the west side of the building.” Hist. Notes by Clarence Matthews

The Sevierville Saints soon outgrew their first phase building. The Second phase was added in 1992, with the two phases connected together on October 25th; with all work completed December 12, 1992. The dedication of the Chapel was June 20, 1993.

Approval has been received (1996) for a Family History Center to be opened in Sevierville, which will increase the spirituality in the area, as well as the Church becoming even more well known in the area because of the outreach of the genealogy work that will be done at the Family History Center.

When the Knoxville Stake was split November 17, 1996 and the Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake was created, the Sevierville Branch remained as one of the units in the Knoxville Stake.

In His Own Words

by President William L. Nichols

I was called to be Branch President of the Sevierville Branch of the Knoxville Tennessee Stake in April of 1996. My own testimony is that Jesus is the Savior of the world, the Son of God and that we are all sons and daughters of the same living God. I also know that when Joseph Smith went into the woods to pray, the Father and the Son appeared to him, and through him restored the Savior’s true church with all of its power and glory here upon the earth, to prepare the world for the millennium.

I know we have prophets today who are guided by the Lord as in the days of old. That today that authority to speak for the Lord lies within President Gordon B. Hinckley. I know that if we pay heed to his prophets and search the scriptures that testify of Him, we will one day stand in His presence and be welcomed home.

I know these things, not by study or by learning alone, but by the power and prompting of the Holy Ghost. And this I share with you in His Holy name, even Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Wm. L. Nichols

And Finally,

Much progress has been made in the Sevierville area. From September 6, 1981 when the Branch was organized to December 30, 1989 there were 76 baptisms, and 45 missionaries working in the area. The same kind of statistics can be found from 1989 to the present time. At the Sacrament Meeting which was held March 23, 1997, there were 80 members in attendance. Because of the commitment of these wonderful saints, within the next few months this branch will become a ward!

WEST HILLS WARD

Historical Background:

- 1943 Knoxville Branch organized Feb 14th.
1944 First Annual Banquet held at S & W Cafeteria, Feb 14th.
- 1967 Kendall Road Building dedicated Oct 23rd.
1969 Knoxville South Branch organized Oct 10th
1969 Scout Troop 586 organized--Troop 140 stayed with Knoxville North Branch
- 1970's Fund Raising Project: Hand-Dipped Chocolates
1970's Welfare Project: Garden
- 1972 Knoxville Second Ward (organized in June when District became Stake)
1972 Knoxville First Ward organized and meeting in building with Second Ward
1973-74 Extension Built on Kendall Road Building for Stake Offices/Genealogy Library
1977 North Knoxville Dependent Sunday School formed
1978 Knoxville Third Ward formed, Jul 16th
- 1985-86 Kendall Road Building renovated
1988 West Hills Ward created: name changed from Knoxville Second Ward
1988 Farragut Ward moves out of Kendall Road building into new Stake Center -
 April
1996 West Hills remained part of the Knoxville Tennessee Stake when Stake was split
 Nov 17th

Fund Raising Project: Hand-dipped Chocolates

Welfare Project: Garden

Branch Presidents/Bishops

Counselors

David Fuqua

David Matson

William Lloyd

Brent Miller

Bruce Morganegg

Richard Barnes

1979

Rollin Hochkiss

1982

Danny Dunn

Gary Purcell

1989

Max Lehman

1992

Lynn Ellsworth, Gary Purcell

Paul Barnett, Keith Cottam, Keith Ward

Paul Barnett

Bill Culver, Mike Kazerian, Richard Barnes,
Dennis Monson

Dennis Monson, Charles Sellars

Dennis Monson

Mark Kunkel, Phil Anderson, Charles Sellars,
Gregory Kellar

Richard Barnes, Roland Roberts, Charlie
Sellers

Lee Adams, John Smith, Robert Tucker

History of West Hills Ward (Condensed)

The beginnings of the West Hills Ward lie in the first group of members that met in Knoxville many years ago. From this early group of members was formed the first Knoxville Branch, which met for years in a rented hall in downtown Knoxville, where the cigarette butts had to be cleaned out every Sunday morning before church services were held. Eventually a small meetinghouse was built on the north-west corner of the intersection of Cumberland Avenue and Concord Street. The building was used for many years until it was “bursting at the seams,” parking being one of the biggest problems. The building is currently used as a doctor’s office, housing a group of Orthopedic Surgeons. A larger chapel was finally built by the members and building missionaries 1965-1967, composing parts of the existing present chapel. Because the chapel was in the center of the district, it was also housed the District offices, then later became the Stake Center. (See the Knoxville Branch History as well as the Stake History for further details.) The chapel was dedicated October 23, 1967 by Elder ElRay C. Christiansen. This building is on the southeast corner of Kendall and Gleason Roads, behind the present West Town Mall.

The Branch boundaries originally included all of Knox County and most of the other surrounding counties. The branch had many of the district leaders living in it’s boundaries, and they spent many, many weekends traveling in semi-reliable cars over gravel and dirt roads throughout the mountains of Eastern Tennessee and Kentucky, visiting small groups of members, teaching them how the church operates.

Over the years, small, dependent Sunday Schools and Branches were formed out of the original branch boundaries. Among those split off include the present Maryville Ward. The Knoxville Branch was eventually split into the Knoxville North and South Branches on October 10, 1969. Since the formation of the Knoxville North and South Branches, the two have shared the building. Most of the time this arrangement worked well, but occasionally scheduling became a problem with both branches needing the building at the same time.

The West Hills Ward has a history of being active in missionary work. While the name of the first missionary leaving from the Ward is unknown, it is known that several missionaries were sent out from the Knoxville South Branch during its existence, and that this tradition continued once it became a ward. There has usually been at least one or two missionaries from the ward were serving a full time mission, going to all parts of the world.

The 1970's

When the area was organized as a Stake rather than a District in June of 1972, the Knoxville North Branch was organized as the Knoxville First Ward and the Knoxville South Branch was organized as the Knoxville Second Ward, with both units still meeting in the same building. Up until 1982, the Seminary students still were together either at Early Morning Seminary or Home Study. These youth grew up together and were like brothers and sisters.

When the Knoxville Second Ward was formed, the Ward's boundaries were wide. Our boundaries included the UT area, extended north to Interstate 40; eastward the boundaries extended almost to Chapman Highway, the south border was the river — although there was an area along Alcoa highway and on south that was included in the Ward, and at least during some of its existence included areas close to and including Maryville— and westward the limits extended out past Cedar Bluff.

In 1973-74 an extension/addition was added on to the building so that Stake Offices and a Genealogy Library could be housed there. Remembering the building of this addition, I recall that both Wards continued right on with meetings as usual.

In 1977 when the North Knoxville Dependent Sunday School was organized, most of the members for the Sunday school came from the Knoxville First Ward, but several came from the Second Ward as well. On July 16, 1978, the boundaries of the two Knoxville Wards were rearranged again, and the Knoxville Third Ward (eventually named the Grove Park Ward) was created, making three wards from the area previously served by two. The Knoxville Second Ward boundaries were shortened on the west to a point just west of the present chapel. They were expanded on the east to include Chapman Highway, extending and set at the county border on the south, so that most of South Knoxville was now included. The northern borders were slightly extended up at a point just west of the University, so that a “triangular” area was added, formed by Middlebrook Pike, Interstate 40, and the western boundary as previously mentioned.

As with all changes, this caused both good and difficult situations. The youth group was especially affected by the changes by a reduction in numbers and splitting of close friends. The youth that went with the Knoxville Third Ward were hit pretty hard. They were used to a “large” youth group, a “large” basketball team, a “large” gymnasium for practices, “large” dances and parties and a “large” seminary group. Now they were in a rented building with few conveniences. Some made the changes easily and others struggled for quite some time.

A little later boundaries were changed again between the First and Second Wards, which seemed to become common practice. We were shifted from time to time with the dividing line North and South with the Interstate as the boundary, then East and West with somewhere east of Cedar Bluff as being the dividing line; so over the years, we were never sure when we would have the same

friends or have to create new friendships as these changes occurred. The youth of the two wards were hit hardest with these splits as they were now separated again and again from their close friends, but keeping the Seminary together helped them adapt. As a result, however, the members of the two Wards knew each other well, and many of us are still friends today.

During the early part of our Ward's history, we had a large and very active youth group. They had frequent and successful activities. The youth ward basketball team was quite successful and regularly played for and often won, the Stake championship. Another highlight of the year for the youth was the yearly road show, which, with a few exceptions, would win a well-deserved first place in the Stake competitions. After the church stopped giving first place awards our ward continued its excellence by regularly receiving high honors.

Our Ward has always been very musical. There has often been a large and active ward choir. For example, for two successive years, Gary Purcell was the ward choir director. He had a faithful brother who excelled in accompaniment, and later Linda Merrick, then the music department chairman at Knoxville College and a faithful member of our ward, as choir pianist and organist. The ward choir practiced months each year in preparation for a Christmas Sacrament meeting which included many key excerpts from Handel's Messiah. This presentation was well advertised and was well attended by both members of our ward and other wards from around the Stake. Many who were in attendance said that it was one of the most spiritual experiences they had ever had. The West Hills Ward has enjoyed special musical numbers during our Sacrament meetings at least twice a month, as well as numbers from the choir.

Other ward traditions included large Fourth of July and Christmas celebrations. The 4th of July programs have traditionally included a flag-raising ceremony by the Primary — often at 7:30 in the morning, followed by a breakfast customarily cooked by the Bishopric and a patriotic program. This has occasionally been replaced by an afternoon program followed by a cookout on the church lawn. Some years there has been a parade around the parking lot by the Primary children and other members. In more recent years this celebration has been combined with a 24th of July Pioneer Day Celebration. The Ward Christmas programs traditionally consist of a nice dinner, followed by a program. This program usually includes a nativity program by the Primary with other organizations providing music. Santa Claus always attends and gives out treats.

The 1980's

There was steady growth in the Knoxville Second Ward membership until the early 1980's when all the young single adults' membership records were transferred to the Student Branch. Even with this change, we remained the largest (in total membership) unit in the Stake, but the membership growth slowed and began to decline. Our Ward has been greatly influenced by the demographic changes that Knoxville has been experiencing for several years, with many members moving out to the west end.

In 1980 a student single's branch was formed which met in the Institute Building on the University of Tennessee campus on the corner of 16th Street and Clinch Ave. The Branch Presidents over the 6 years of its existence were Hyrum Plaas and Robert Cloward. Counselors included Jim Buchanan, Frank Davis, and Gary Purcell. The branch served the single students who were attending UT, but also drew other singles from the stake, some of whom attended other local schools and colleges. A few drove significant distances to attend the Branch. The Branch proved to be moderately successful at getting the various single members together, but success became harder and harder to come by as time went on. Many YM and YW were inspired to go on missions while involved in activity there, and many temple marriages resulted from among the acquaintances. For the last several years of its existence, Sacrament Meeting attendance averaged 25 weekly, occasionally getting as high as 30 or 40. When the church reorganized its single adult programs in 1986, the Branch was dissolved and its members were encouraged to attend the local wards. Most of the Branch members who were University students, became part of the Knoxville Second Ward again.

Since UT is a part of our Ward, students and faculty have often played a key role in the membership of the ward. This has added to the vibrancy of the ward but also added to the instability and constant change that we have experienced. Frequently these students and faculty have had backgrounds with significant church experience, and have blessed our ward with their knowledge and abilities. Key leadership positions in our ward have frequently been filled by students (especially grad students). For example, two of the three past Relief Society presidents, several of the previous Primary presidents, and many of the counselors have been wives of graduate students - - a few have been students themselves. Three of the last four ward clerks have been students and several bishopric counselors have been students. Our ward has also been abundantly blessed by the faculty members who were here and are church members. Over the years there have been many outstanding faculty who have been members of the church who have added depth, experience, and consistency to the ward amid the yearly changes brought by students. Several past Bishops have been faculty members. Bruce Morgenegg, who served both as Bishop and as a member of the Stake Presidency, came as a member of the UT faculty. Several other active, long-term members who are associated with the university have held many and various positions over the years.

In 1985-86 when chapels were being constructed all over the Stake, the West Hills Building, which was also the Stake Center was renovated. The Stake and both Wards remained in the building, holding meetings amidst dust, dangling overhead wires, no walls, no carpeting; not much of anything except the outside shell, and the inner walls in the Chapel, but mostly a big mess. However, we all survived the renovation and were so grateful for the beauty that surrounded us when all the work was completed.

The West Hills Ward has been influenced considerably by Oak Ridge and the industry and business there. Early in the development of Oak Ridge laboratories, many of the members who worked there lived in Knoxville, a majority residing within our Ward boundaries. More than one of the Bishops, many counselors, as well as other ward leaders have been members brought into the ward from other parts of the nation by Oak Ridge Industry. Members who worked in Oak Ridge

continued to be a major influence in our ward until the mid-1980's, when west Knoxville began to develop rapidly. At that time, the "Oak Ridge members" who still lived in our Ward, with only one or two exceptions, moved closer to Oak Ridge - - either to the Knoxville Third Ward or to the Oak Ridge Ward itself.

In 1987 this became a painful problem for our Ward. Within a short period of time many members moved out of the ward boundaries, not only into other wards in the area, but out of the area for other jobs or retirement and several graduate students graduated and moved on as well. At the time the Knoxville First and Second Wards were both meeting in the building on Kendall Road. While the Second Ward's attendance was falling to less than 75 per week at Sacrament meeting, First Ward was averaging more than 300 per week. In fact, during Bishop Dunn's tenure the Ward was so reduced in size that the Bishopric entertained the thought of requesting the Stake to change the Ward boundaries or to make our Ward a branch. It was becoming a real burden to the members to continue to run a full program both with regards to time and finances. A special fast was held in early 1988, praying that our ward would be strengthened, or that the proper course of action be made clear. Even at the special meeting held to discuss our ward situation and to announce the fast, another long-time member announced that his family would be moving out shortly.

In the months following that fast, several members were reactivated and many more moved into the Ward. We were blessed by increases in numbers of both families and single members. By 1989 we averaged 150 at Sacrament meeting. With the discontinuance of the Student Branch, approximately one half of our ward members were single. We had a flourishing Young Adult Program. Our Primary had approximately 40 average attendance. The Young Women's Program had approximately 10 active young women. The Scouts had six active members, with some non-members attending meetings. The Relief Society and Priesthood attendance increased. It is not inaccurate to say that our ward is flourishing.

In recent years, the Ward has revived the camp-out tradition which once had a prominent position on the calendar. The ward camp-out is held in the late Spring or early Summer at an area camp-ground on a Friday night. There is a campfire program that night with singing and stories. The next morning everyone eats breakfast together, which usually includes pancakes, bacon and eggs, cooked by the Bishopric. Following breakfast, there are several hours of relay games and sports activities — softball, volleyball, and so on — for all of the ward members.

In the summer of 1987 construction of the new Stake Center began with the building being completed in April of 1988, and dedicated October 15, 1989. This new Stake Center was also to be the new home of the Knoxville First Ward, whose name was changed to the Farragut Ward. At this same time, the Knoxville Second Ward's name was changed to the West Hills Ward.

For the very first time since 1969, the West Hills Saints inhabited the Kendall Road building alone. The Stake offices were moved to the new Stake Center on Gribsby Chapel Road in Farragut along with the newly named Farragut Ward. On Mother's day, May 8, 1988, Farragut Ward held their very first sacrament meeting in the new facility; and probably the saints in West Hills Ward felt like

they were rattling around in a huge building with plenty of closet space, classrooms and office space to spare.

The 1990's

The 1990's brought more folks to the Ward; now the chapel is filled with Saints from all areas of the country. Many are here to obtain their degree at the University of Tennessee, which still makes us a transient Ward. Because there are many young families in the Ward, Primary is filled with their young children, making Primary a very busy place. The YM/YW programs are flourishing; Seminary is going strong and the youth remain top priority for the Ward leaders. The West Hills Saints are a loving, kind, gentle people who gladly serve and help others not only in the Ward but in the Community!

In His Own Words

by Bishop Max Lehman

Every area that I have lived in since my conversion in June of 1977 has provided opportunities and challenges, each of which have strengthened my testimony of the truthfulness of the work of assisting God's children in returning to His presence. That which impresses me most are those who quietly and confidently not only magnify their own calling but find the time and expend the energy to bless others as they progress in their divine assignments. Sacrifice is the yardstick in this church which measures the faithfulness of the saints. I see those who are terminally ill, those who have lost loved ones, those who are just trying to make ends meet, those who carry heavy family and church responsibilities who continue to press forward by worthily presenting themselves before the sacrament table each week, attending General Conference sessions, keeping the Sabbath day holy, paying a full tithe and giving generously to the fast offering fund. These are the experiences wherever I go that build and strengthen my testimony that this is the Lord's true church. I find these same great souls in West Hills. It is a pleasure to be able to serve with them and to learn from them.

I testify that anyone who sincerely seeks divine truth will find it through the sacred scriptures, humble prayer, and genuine obedience to the simple commandments that God has granted unto us to free us from the blood and sins of this generation. Heavenly Father lives. He sent His son, Jesus Christ, to redeem all those who are willing to follow Him and endure in faithfulness to the end. Jesus Christ lives. He loves us. He wants us to return to His presence. Joseph Smith is a prophet of God and today we are led by Gordon B. Hinckley, a Prophet of God. To these things I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen

Bishop Lehman

And Finally,

On November 17, 1996, the Knoxville Tennessee Stake was split and the Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake was formed. West Hills remained as one of the 8 units in the Knoxville Tennessee Stake. What a joyous day it was for the early saints, who are still in the area, to see the growth from the tiny Knoxville Branch to two stakes!

WHITLEY CITY BRANCH

Historical Background:

- 1900's Early 1900's, Missionaries in area
- 1925 Elders preaching in Oneida
- 1991 Somerset Branch began getting referrals from Whitley City--November
- 1992 Whitley City Branch organized - May - part of Lexington Ky Stake
- 1993 In late 1993 the Church purchased property for new building
- 1996 Whitley City Branch became part of Knoxville TN Stake, August
- 1996 Whitley City Branch became part of new Knoxville Tn Cumberland Stake when it was created Nov 17

Branch President

Harold Hansford 1992

Counselors

Michael Stephens, Clarence Loudermilk,
Basil Massey

History of Whitley City Branch

Includes saints in Oneida Tn

(Condensed)

In the early 1900's missionaries went into the Kentucky area, finding folks willing to listen to their message of the Gospel, who were baptized, establishing a Sunday School in the Day Ridge community in McCreary County. This was a "ward-size" Sunday School which continued in this mining community for several years until the mines closed down. These early saints met in a school house on Day Ridge Road near the Natural Arch Bridge. When the mines closed, folks left the area, leaving a few scattered saints throughout the area. The only time they saw any Priesthood holders of the Church was when missionaries from Somerset came through.

Elders in the Oneida Area

Two Elders working in Oneida, Tennessee in 1925 tell of preaching with great interest shown, during the noon hour in a large mill. A man who lived nearby took them to his house to stay the night. They retired early and about eleven o'clock they were awakened by a loud knocking on the door and voices of men outside. Since considerable trouble had been experienced in this vicinity previously, the Elders assumed more trouble was at hand and began to dress hurriedly. Before they finished dressing their host came to the door and informed them that some men from the mill wished to speak to them. To their surprise they found six or eight men had come to ask them to come to the mill and talk to the night crew. This the Elders did from eleven to midnight. Afterward they thanked God that they had been mobbed "to preach" rather than being mobbed "because of preaching". (Liahona 23:179-180) (District History pp 25-26)

Somerset Branch

In November 1991, the Branch in Somerset began getting referrals from Whitley City; finally a Dependent Sunday School was organized, meeting in a rented room in the electric company's building. There were between 40-45 people attending this Sunday school, most of them nonmembers. Eventually several of these folks joined the church. The first year there were 32 people baptized, but some dropped into inactivity. The Whitley City Saints met at the Somerset Branch, which is part of the Lexington Kentucky Stake, for morning services, then held Sunday school in the afternoon at Whitley City.

The David Grisby family from Oneida Tennessee, which was attending Jamestown Ward, and the Basil Massey family, from LaFollette Branch, came to Whitley city to help with services. After 6 weeks of meeting in the electric office, the building was no longer available. Through a friend of Brother Grisby the saints were permitted to meet in an old Church of God building. Brother Elvie Gilliam's baptism was the first one for the Whitley City Branch. His daughter saw an ad on television, called the 1-800 number and requested a copy of the Book of Mormon. President

Hansford, knowing the area, took the Missionary couple, Elder and Sister Brodies to find the Gilliam's home. In just a few short weeks, after receiving the missionary discussions, Brother Gilliam was baptized.

Whitley City Branch Organized

In May 1992, the Branch was organized, meeting in a large rented building on Main Street. It used to be the welfare office building. The members cleaned and painted the building. The Church put in new carpet. The building is large with lots of space for growth; plenty of room to expand when they become a ward. A large sign outside proclaims they are the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Not long ago Sister Jamie New, who moved to California from the area, and joined the Church, returned to Whitley City for a visit. Seeing the sign out front of this large building, she was amazed and incredulous that there was a branch here. Never in her wildest dreams did she imagine that the little city of Whitley would ever have a branch of the church.

In late 1993, the Church purchased property located on the main highway into Whitley City which aroused a lot of "Anti-Mormon" tactics from the local churches. One minister from one of the largest churches, called a meeting of all the area churches (Mormons not included) to get support against the Church's purchase of the land for their new chapel. Of course, this is rather like Elder McConkie's address at a General Conference when he said, (paraphrasing) "Dogs may bark and yap at the wheels of the wagon trains, but the wagons will go forward." - so will the Church! President Hansford asked his brother, who attends this big church, why they didn't ask a Mormon to come and answer their questions; they had gotten an outside "authority" on Mormons to attend the meeting. President Hansford said he would have gone for "free"!

At a recent meeting of the Christian Men's breakfast, one of the local ministers told the group, "If any of the members of my church go to that Mormon Church, they will not be welcome back in my church". Well, it looks like these Whitley City Saints have their work cut out for them, doesn't it? However, President Hansford may be the only Branch President to carry keys to the Church of God, where his parents attend. The church has made the Mormons welcome and they may use the baptismal font when needed. So "Anti-Mormon" feelings are not everywhere, but it probably feels that way.

The community seems to have a "wait and see" attitude; "wait and see" if the branch will last and remain a constant influence in the area. The Church has come and gone before, in and around the area, though several folks have been baptized and are actively involved. Some of the recently baptized brethren hold leadership positions in the Branch. As time goes on, and these sweet saints continue to live the Gospel, the community will see the wondrous changes the Gospel can bring to one's life. As these saints continue to be shining examples, things will gradually change and many folks will join the Church. Other areas have had "Anti-Mormonism" things going on too, but the Gospel continues!

The branch experienced a slowing in growth for several months, but is back on track with several new converts. We have had 11 baptisms so far this year. A recently baptized family is so excited and Brother Justin Ammons, in his calling as Branch Executive Secretary, is enthusiastic about the work of the Lord. We have about 55 people attending services at the present time.

President Barber writes about splitting the Stake and switching the Whitley City Branch into the Knoxville TN Stake:

“In March(1996) we reviewed the numbers we had and the proposed Stake split with Elder Howard. He said we should wait a couple of months before sending in the formal request for the split. He said there was another request for exception in process and we should wait until that had been resolved before we made our request. We had gathered all the numbers and were disappointed that there would be a delay. We decided to go ahead and request switching Whitley City into our Stake, since the boundary problem really needed to be corrected. On August 11, 1996, we joined the Lexington Stake Presidency at Whitley City at the Branch conference and brought them into our Stake as the 16th unit.”

The Whitley City Branch had been part of the Lexington Ky Stake since it was organized in May of 1992; however, within a time span of 90 days their stake association changed twice. First they were broken off from the Lexington Stake in August of 1996, to become part of the Knoxville Tn Stake. Then on November 17, 1996, they became a part of the new Knoxville Tennessee Cumberland Stake, being one of the 3 Branches and 5 Wards that now comprise the new stake. The Whitley City Branch is the only branch located in Kentucky from the Cumberland Stake, but does include the Oneida, Tennessee Saints within the Branch boundaries.

In His Own Words

by President Harold Hansford

After reading how the Whitley City Branch was started you can see my conversion to the Church was not an easy thing for me or my wife. Marrying Marilyn Stephens on November 26, 1970, I knew she was LDS but she had never been active, so this was not a problem.

In 1983, before the Atlanta Temple was to be dedicated, Marilyn and her mother asked that I take them to see the Temple. After arriving in the parking lot of the Temple, I prayed that Heavenly Father would not let anything happen to me while we were in this building.

As we left the Temple that day, Marilyn signed a card to have the missionaries to come to our home. This continued for several years, until a missionary couple by the name of Sister and Elder Larry Whitworth came by my office one day. I was busy at the time they arrived. I could hear the two ministers who work for me, giving him a hard time. Elder Whitworth, seeing he was outnumbered stepped outside to wait for me. I felt badly about the way he was treated, so I asked

him to come by my house that evening at 7 PM and I would sit and talk with him. Over the next 7 months Elder and Sister Whitworth came to our home a couple of times a week (1984). Elder Whitworth did his best to convert me but, even though he had changed my views on many things, I still wasn't having any part of it.

Elder Whitworth died a short time after returning home, but not before we had exchanged many letters on our views on the Holy Scriptures. Six years and many missionaries later, along came Elder and Sister Jim Wilkins, fireballs in the mission field. Well, I wanted nothing to do with them either, until Marilyn told me Jim was in the same business that I was and was very successful. I decided if I let them come by, I might learn something from him, but not the Gospel. To this day, Jim has never talked with me about business.

During this time things had grown very tense in our home. After leaving a client in a nearby city, I prayed to Heavenly Father that I wanted to know the truth and I would look at the Church for 6 months with an open mind and would attend Church every Sunday during that 6 months. This was May of 1990. Every Sunday I was up and ready to go with Marilyn and the children to the Somerset Branch. The last week of October 1990, the missionary couple followed us home. The Elder said he wanted to talk with me. He said, "Harold, you come to Church every Sunday and take part in the Branch activities. How come you have not been baptized?" "No one ever asked me," was my reply. He said, "Well, I'm asking." I said "Okay, let's do it on Wednesday." That's been six years and the best six years of my life, for I know the Church is true and we have a living Prophet today to lead and guide us in these latter days. I leave my testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

I see the Whitley City Branch becoming a ward in the next few years and continuing to grow. The branch is here to stay and Heavenly Father has great things in store for this area and it's people. I see many leaders coming from this area to lead Heavenly Father's children back to him.

President Harold Hansford

And Finally,

With President Hansford's "anti-Mormon" attitude before he joined the Church, he understands when he is confronted with that attitude in others. He seems to be able to quiet the fears of non-Mormon spouses, and bring peace to their hearts. President Hansford is committed to the Gospel and knows why others are afraid. Heavenly Father certainly has special callings for all of us in the right time and at the right place.

Early Converts

Cornelius and Ethel Garland and family

Sister Marilyn Stephens Hansford is from a part-member family. Her mother, Opal Garland

Stephens was born September 28, 1917. She was baptized October 30, 1926 by Elder Norman Johnson and his companion Elder D. H. White. Opal's father and mother, Cornelius and Ethel Garland were converts to the Church. In 1938, Opal married a good man, Raymond Stephens who was a member of the Church of God. Marilyn and Brenda, the Stephen's daughters, were baptized in 1962 by Elders who rode a bus to Whitley City to visit members still living in the area. Marilyn Stephens married Harold Hansford, a non-Mormon, and as he says her being LDS didn't concern him because she was not active in the Church. Without an LDS Church in the vicinity to attend, Marilyn attended other churches but never felt comfortable there.

When the Atlanta Temple was built, Marilyn and her mother, Opal, convinced their husbands to take the family to the Open House. After visiting the Temple, Sister Hansford felt compelled to find an LDS Church to attend. She found there was a Branch in Corbin, Kentucky that covered the Whitley City area, but the Church was 50 miles away. However, in 1982, she began attending and got fierce opposition from her husband, but something propelled her on.

After the death of her father, July 19, 1983, Marilyn and her mother found the Branch in Somerset which was only 30 miles away. Opposition was still great. Her husband, Harold, couldn't understand why she wanted to go. In the mean time her husband, Harold, had worn out several sets of missionaries, but one particular missionary, Elder Whitworth, touched his heart. Elder Whitworth was in the insurance business, like Brother Hansford, and they hit it off really well, becoming friends. Elder Whitworth told of a dream he had that he, Brother Hansford, would some day be as Paul was. After Elder Whitworth was released from his mission and returned home, he persisted and wrote to Brother Hansford until his death a short time after returning home. This touched Brother Hansford deeper than anyone knew.

Out of the blue, it seemed, May of 1990, Brother Hansford decided to start attending Church with his wife. She wasn't sure what his reasoning was, but kept quiet, waiting to see what would happen. October 31st, 1990, Brother Hansford was baptized and is now the Branch President of the Whitley City Branch. He didn't tell his parents because they were so against the Church, and they didn't find out until he invited them to Church and dinner with his family. It so happened it was Branch Conference. He was conducting. Can you imagine the surprise and dismay of his parents, not only to see him on the stand conducting, but to realize he was the Branch President. This meant he had joined the Church! His Mom and Dad have mellowed now, and can see they had nothing to fear from his membership in the Church. They are supportive and helpful to he and his family.

There is a lot of history in the area that has not been recorded. Hopefully this small history will inspire others to dig into their past and find the pioneers who have walked in faith before them!

Afterthoughts . . .

After spending several months reading through these records and accumulated histories, one is filled with a sense of wonder and awe for the bravery and dedication of our Tennessee Pioneers, who literally did “walk in faith”. Under circumstances that most of us have never experienced and few can even imagine, these valiant predecessors of ours kept the faint sparks of faith alive, even though the winds of adversity were blowing mightily to extinguish them. The debt of gratitude that we all owe to them can only be repaid by our bending our every effort to see that their strivings were not in vain.

May each of us exhibit the same courage and dedication to the Light of the Gospel as did they, that in future years our descendants may look back on our lives with the same degree of gratitude. When this history is rewritten in future decades, may our names, too, be written with the valiant few who made it possible for us to have all the blessings of the Gospel in our lives.