

**Celebrating Zion:
Pioneers in Mormon Popular Historical Expression**

by

Eric Alden Eliason, M.A.

Dissertation

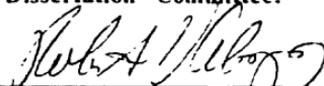
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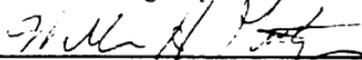
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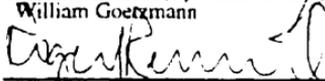
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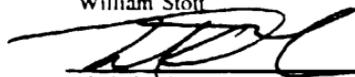
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Dedication

To my parents, Dan and LeAnn

Acknowledgements

The following people have read this manuscript whole or in part and have provided invaluable insight and suggestions: Robert Abzug, William H. Goetzmann, Roger Renwick, Howard Miller, Tad Tuleja, Neil Kamil, William Stott, Jan Shipps, Stephen Olsen, Stephanie Smith Eliason, Robert Crunden, Ben Bennion, William A. Wilson, and John Alley.

Tad Tuleja deserves special mention for inviting me to write an essay for his collection of scholarly articles on the uses of history by American folkgroups. This opportunity sparked an idea which evolved into this dissertation. An earlier version of the first section of this dissertation entitled "Pioneers and Recapitulation in Mormon Popular Historical Expression" appears in Tad's edited volume *Usable Pasts: Traditions and Identity in North America*. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1997).

Over the past four years, countless people have provided me with their impressions, opinions, and recollections of Pioneer Day and pioneer veneration in their lives. Ron Walker helped introduce me to the scholarly literature on the Mormon Cultural Region. Thanks is due to KSL television in Salt Lake City for broadcasting Salt Lake City's "Days of '47" parade and to the people of Fairview.

Spring City, and Manti in Sanpete County, Utah for their Pioneer Day festivities and pageant spectacles in which I was participant observer. My wife's grandparents Marion and Wanda Smith shared many of their own reminiscences and documentation of Snowflake, Arizona's Pioneer Day celebrations since the 1870s. My parents Dan and LeAnn Eliason, my wife Stephanie, and children Shelby and Caleb have been great cheerleaders and a wonderful support.

The Charles Redd Center for Western studies assisted this project with a generous grant without which the research for chapters five through eight would not have been possible. The University of Texas at Austin Office of Graduate Studies also made fellowship money available. In the course of this research, I spoke on the phone with over two hundred mayors, city-council men and women, city and county government workers, chamber of commerce personnel, historical society volunteers, LDS bishops and Relief Society presidents, and other designated festival organizers—all of whom were gracious and helpful.

My own curious interest in this topic stems in part from the fact that I am a Mormon who is neither a convert from outside of the LDS Church nor an "ethnic Mormon" descended from plains-crossing pioneer ancestors. My liminality betwixt and between these two categories highlighted by my culture have given me somewhat of an outsider/insider perspective on the Mormon historical experience. "Mormonism" is the religion I practice. I came to do so as a "convert from the inside" rather than a proselyte. As far as this study is a study of religion, it is reflexive ethnography. As far as it is an ethnography of Mormon regional culture, my qualifications for being an "insider" are somewhat more ambiguous

having grown up the child of an Air Force pilot and having lived five years in Utah and four in a historically Mormon part of Arizona.

Nevertheless, Mormon pioneer history is my “identity history”—the history of the people with whom I identify (even if they are my “spiritual” rather than biological ancestors) and to whose genealogical heritage I am linked by marriage. I am grateful to the Latter-day Saints who, with their heroic transcendence as well as with their human frailties, established Zion in the wilderness and gave it a strong base from which to reach out and touch the lives of my twentieth-century ancestors in South Dakota and California. I am what I am today because of the legacy they bequeathed me through their sacrifice.

**Celebrating Zion:
Pioneers in Mormon Popular Historical Expression**

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From 1846 to 1869, eighty thousand Mormons took wagons and handcarts across the Great Plains to the Rocky Mountains to perform the Western Hemisphere's largest ever religious migration. This dissertation examines how Mormons celebrate this pioneer experience as an identity-defining touchstone of their American-born religion. In the 1990s, Latter-day Saints still remember their precursors' flight from persecution in folklore: art: numerous museums and monuments: as well as annual plays, pageants, and parades throughout the West. The most significant uniquely-Mormon holiday is Pioneer Day—the yearly July 24th celebration of Brigham Young's arrival in the Salt Lake Valley.

While several studies have recounted the story of the Mormon Exodus itself, my dissertation will be the first to examine the historical development, geographic distribution, and cultural function of Latter-day Saint remembrances

of their pioneer past as Mormondom has responded to the challenges of rapid global growth and increased contact with the “Gentile” world.

In so doing, this project suggests a new area of scholarly inquiry—the study of sacred migrations or “trek studies”—as a useful tool in understanding the history and identity-forming processes undergone by many peoples.

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Introduction: The Mormon Trek in a Comparative and Biblical Perspective

In the decade following the founding of their religion, persecution forced the Mormon people from New York to Ohio, to Missouri, and then to Illinois. After Joseph Smith's murder in the summer of 1844, Brigham Young led the Latter-day Saints on their famous hejira to the Rocky Mountains. From their 1846 expulsion from Nauvoo, Illinois to the 1869 arrival of the transcontinental railroad in Utah, Mormon pioneers drove wagons and pushed handcarts across the American West to perform the largest, and most persistently celebrated, religious migration in the history of the Western hemisphere.

Amidst a prolonged national crusade against their cultural autonomy and polygamous marriage relationships,¹ Mormons developed a cohesive cultural identity and founded over 350 cities and towns. They built a rich, communitarian society in a distinct cultural region and became significant threads in the complex cultural tapestry of the American West.² From its American base established in the nineteenth century, Mormonism has experienced explosive growth in the last

¹Since Mormons in Utah did not practice polyandry (having more than one husband), in proper terminology they practiced polygyny (having more than one wife) rather than polygamy (having more than one spouse). A long tradition by Mormons and Gentiles alike of referring to Mormon "plural marriage" as "polygamy" has contributed to polygamy's popular meaning of "more than one wife."

²There are several one volume works that cover the basics of Mormon history and Mormons' significance in America. The best two are widely recognized to be Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1979), and Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana and Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 1985).

few decades of the twentieth century to become a world-wide religion of over ten million adherents that, as a significant occurrence in world religious history, has caught the attention of religious studies scholars.³

Throughout the American West, the individualistic efforts of westward-moving settlers have been an important component of popular historical consciousness.⁴ Among Mormons in general, and in the “Mormon Culture Region”⁵ in particular, commemoration of the cooperative and purposeful Mormon pioneer migration has achieved a particularly well-developed form.

³See for example Jan Shipps, *Mormonism* and Rodney Stark, “Modernization and Mormon Growth: The Secularization Thesis Revisited,” in *Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspectives*, eds. Marie Cornwall, Tim B. Heaton, and Lawrence A. Young (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 13-23.

Since Islam got its start in the seventh century, perhaps only two movements besides Mormonism—Sikhism and Bahai—can lay reasonable claim to new world religion status based on their longevity, millions of adherents, world wide distribution, and doctrinal uniqueness. Of these three, the origin and development of Mormonism is the best documented and most easily accessible to Western scholars. In the last few decades, there has been increased interest in Mormon studies, but this increase does not yet do justice to the significance of what is happening. Since Latter-day Saints unequivocally regard themselves as Christians that practice the restored religion of Jesus and his apostles, it is perhaps more accurate to categorize Mormondom as a new fourth division of Christianity along with Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism. Theologian Harvey Cox suggests that Pentecostalism is also a new division of Christianity which would make them fifth and Mormonism still fourth. See Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twentieth-First Century* (Reading Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1995). Arguably, Mormonism differs historically, doctrinally, culturally, and canonically more from the other three or four great divisions of Christianity than they differ from each other. Therefore, in comparing doctrinal content, Mormonism seems to fall somewhere between being a new world Christian tradition and a distinctively new world religion.

⁴For an examination of the place of pioneers in the popular history of the Western United States as part of a general analysis of American commemorative events, see John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

⁵The Mormon West, Mormon Culture Region, or “the Book of Mormon Belt” as established by nineteenth and early twentieth-century colonization includes all of Utah, most of southeastern Idaho, the western edge of Wyoming and much of eastern Nevada, and outposts in eastern Arizona, southern Alberta, northern Wyoming, northwestern New Mexico, southern Colorado, and Northern Chihuahua. These areas are the legacy of Brigham Young’s colonizing efforts and are still dominated and defined by Mormon culture. Through later migration and conversion, significant Mormon minorities have appeared in many places throughout the United states but

This dissertation examines how Mormons imagine their pioneer experience as a defining touchstone of their religious identity. Mormon nostalgia for their flight from persecution and hopeful arrival in a haven from oppression has produced a complex inter-connected cultural system of commemorative activity including several heritage organizations; numerous museums, monuments and trail markers; a fine arts tradition; historical novels of both popular and literary aspiration; abundant oral folklore about ancestral endeavors; and scores of annual sermons, plays, pageants, and parades.

The flagship pioneer-reverencing event in Mormondom is the July 24th "Days of '47" celebration in Salt Lake City which boasts the third largest annual parade in America.⁶ Similar Pioneer Day events claim the public space of Main Street in over 80 Western communities, and smaller celebrations occur on Church property in thousands of LDS congregations world-wide.⁷ During Pioneer Day celebrations, Mormons as well as many "Gentiles" commemorate the anniversary of Brigham Young's arrival in the Salt Lake Valley. World-wide Interest in the Latter-day Saint pioneer experience was particularly high in 1997 since this year

especially in Hawaii, California (which contains the most Mormons of any state besides Utah), Colorado, Texas, and the Pacific Northwest. The seminal work in defining the Mormon Culture Region is D. W. Meinig, "The Mormon Culture Region: Strategies and Patterns in the Geography of the American West, 1847-1964," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 55 (June 1965): 191-220. For more recent scholarship see S. Kent Brown, Donald Q. Cannon, Richard H. Jackson, eds., *Historical Atlas of Mormonism* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994).

⁶Pasadena's Rose Bowl parade is the largest and New York City's Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade is the second largest.

⁷Chapter Eight explores in detail Pioneer Day's relationship to the Mormon Cultural Geography.

marked the sesquicentennial of the first Mormons' arrival in the Salt Lake Valley.⁸

This study is not a history of the Mormon trek itself—several fine works already cover this topic—nor is it a chronological history of the development of pioneer expressive culture in Mormondom.⁹ Rather this study examines the cognitive origins, geographic distribution, cultural functions, and inner-tensions of the “pioneer myth”¹⁰ within world-wide Mormondom—and between Mormons and Gentiles in the Intermountain West—at the end of the twentieth century.¹¹ This study is a macro-ethnography of one aspect of a large diverse religious culture that is itself one aspect—to greater and lesser degrees—of the lives of people all over the world.

⁸“Mormons recall flight from Illinois.” Associated Press, 4 February 1996. Harold Schindler, “Modern ‘Pioneers’ Trek Mormon Trail In Re-Enactment,” Salt Lake Tribune Webpage, 5 April 1997. The sesquicentennial celebratory events of 1997 deserve their own dissertation length treatment. This dissertation focuses on celebratory activity not tied to a particular anniversary.

⁹Richard E. Bennett, *We'll Find the Place: The Mormon Exodus, 1846-48* (Deseret Book: Salt Lake City, 1997); Wallace Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail* (Lincoln and London: The University of Nebraska Press, 1981); LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion: The Story of a Unique Western Migration, 1856-1860* (Lincoln and London: The University of Nebraska Press, 1992); William Mulder “The Mormon Gathering,” in *Mormonism and American Culture* eds. Marvin S. Hill and James B. Allen (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 87-100.

¹⁰Throughout this dissertation I use the term “myth” not in its popular meaning as a bogus story or a widely-held misconception, but in the manner common among scholars of religion. In this tradition, myths are stories defined not by their lack of credibility to outside observers or by the ostensible failure of their truth claims to withstand critical analysis, but by the sacred and ontological significance attributed to them by the cultures from which they emerge.

¹¹Two important essay length treatments of Mormon historical expression are Steven L. Olsen, “Community Celebrations and Mormon Ideology of Place,” *Sunstone* 5 (May-June 1980), 40-45 and Davis Bitton, “The Ritualization of Mormon History,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 43 (Winter 1975), 67-85.

The understanding that Latter-day Saints and their neighbors entertain of the nineteenth-century Mormon Pioneers is not simply a traditional legacy of remembered historical facts, an un-contested extension of the past into the present, or an uncomplicated projection of unifying community values into a ritual environment.¹² To meet the changing needs of a growing religion and a wide variety of evolving local communities, Mormons and Gentiles creatively refashion—occasionally with some contention and sometimes without success—the meaning and constitution of the pioneer myth and its cultural practices.¹³

The popular historical expressions commemorating the Mormon Exodus constitute an example of “invented tradition” as first identified in the influential 1983 book *The Invention of Tradition* edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger.¹⁴ Pioneer cultural expressions also serve to symbolically “construct” aspects of Mormon identity and community.¹⁵ As methods of examining cultural

¹²Early work from Emile Durkheim to Victor Turner stressed the straightforward, community-unifying power of ritual. Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1915). Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, (New York: Aldine, 1969).

¹³The meanings ascribed to the July 24th Pioneer Day flagship holiday display regional variation and change through time similar to the development of Christmas and other holidays. See Penne Restad, *Christmas in America: A History* (New York: Oxford, 1995).

¹⁴Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). Hobsbawm and Rangers’ work has influenced many scholars. A collection of work relevant to North American cultural groups can be found in Tad Tuleja, ed., *Usable Pasts: Traditions and Group Expressions in North America* (Logan: University of Utah Press, 1997).

¹⁵Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991). This is an important study of the modes by which various communications media “culturally construct” national, ethnic, and religious identities. Anderson relies on pioneering concepts of the cultural rather than innate differences between racial and ethnic groups that were laid out in Frederick Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Boston: Little Brown, 1969). Other important studies of memory and identity include: Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-*

phenomena. “invented traditions” and “constructed identity” have provided many fruitful new approaches for scholars and caused major rethinking in several fields. Unfortunately, some studies have tended toward gleeful dismantlings and exposés of the “false consciousness” of identity or they have subjected to veiled ridicule popular historical understandings deemed sacred or quasi-sacred to the groups who maintain them.

While this study does not shy away from pointing out discrepancies between scholarly historical understandings and popular conceptions, this is not its main purpose. Rather, it traces the influence of popular historical thinking about pioneers through various aspects of Mormon and Western American culture to see what it can tell us about the people who mobilize its symbols and the general nature of popular historical consciousness development in various environments.

Trek Studies

Mormons’ usage of their pioneer past is by no means wholly unique. Launching from a basis in the dialogues about invented traditions and constructed identities, one goal of this study is to suggest a new inter-disciplinary enterprise—

Fashioning: From Moore to Shakespeare (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968.); Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1993); John Bodnar, *Remaking America*; David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Allasandro Falassi, ed., *Time out of Time: Essays on the Festival* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987); and Richard Bauman, ed., *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments: A Communications-Centered Handbook* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

“trek studies.” The Mormon trek and its cultural system of commemorative activities resembles other sacred and quasi-sacred migrations that have served as crucibles of identity formation and helped define the historical consciousness of peoples all over the world.

Few events serve better than a duress-induced migration to provide a central historical touchstone for a people’s identity. Through its representation in art and public historical displays, such a trek can galvanize generations if its drudgery is valorized, its most dramatic moments highlighted, and its embarrassing episodes forgotten. At least since the time Moses led the children of Israel to the Biblical promised land, disparate groups of individuals in various places at various times have come to see themselves as a distinct people through participation in, or shared remembrance of, a great trek.

One such group is South Africa’s Boers or Afrikaners from whose language and historical experience English acquired the word “trek.” Fleeing British encroachment in 1836, the Boers left their homes near the Cape and headed in covered wagons for a promised land in the Transvaal. In classic romantic nationalist style,¹⁶ today’s Afrikaners remember the struggles faced by their “voortrekker” ancestors as the ordeal that made them a people and gave them the character traits needed to build Africa’s “richest and most powerful nation.”¹⁷

¹⁶William A. Wilson, “Herder, Folklore, and Romantic Nationalism,” in *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres*, ed. Elliot Oring (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1978), 21-37.

¹⁷See for example: Vernon February, *The Afrikaners of South Africa* (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1991) and Allister Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990).

Like Mormons, Afrikaners celebrate their Great Trek in art, monument, song, pageant, and parade.

In China, the 6000-mile “Long March” that the People’s Army made to escape the Nationalists in 1936 is likewise regarded as the event that birthed modern China. Today, the route taken by the Long Marchers is memorialized by countless trail markers and thousands of nostalgic societies who meet regularly to commemorate—and for a few of the very old to reminisce about—significant events of the March. Stories and reenactments of the Long March still constitute an important part of the official school curriculum of “character development” for Chinese children.¹⁸

In the context of the American West, Mormon pioneer remembrance overlaps significantly with a larger tradition of pioneer nostalgia which includes the Oregon Trail and the California Gold Rush ‘49ers. Other commemoration-spanning migratory events include Muslims’ flight to Medina and triumphant return to Mecca and the 1630s Puritan “Great Migration.” This latter migration has served as a popular conceptual model for American immigrant freedom and opportunity, to a greater or lesser degree, for most subsequent American immigrant groups. New group identities emerged from, and somber popular memories endure of, tragic migrations as well, such as the Trail of Tears of eastern Native Americans or the Middle Passage that brought Africans into slavery in America.

¹⁸Jean Fritz, *China’s Long March: 6,000 Miles of Danger* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1988).

Such events often tend to purposefully conceptualize themselves in terms of previous similar events. For example, the Biblical Exodus still celebrated throughout the Jewish Diaspora was self-consciously re-lived by the American Puritans fleeing England in the 1630s, the Boers in the 1830s, and the Mormons in the 1840s. Later, the Exodus was metaphorically reapplied by African Americans to their struggle for civil rights in the 1960s. The Mormon errand into the Utah wilderness also invoked their New England Puritan ancestors' escape to religious freedom even as it recapitulated the Biblical Exodus.¹⁹ Outside chroniclers have referred to a "Mormon hegira"²⁰ even though Mormons only occasionally refer to their own experience in reference to Islamic history.²¹

Such events have not yet been rigorously compared, nor are they fully understood as constituting a unified analytic category. While this dissertation is

¹⁹In his tabernacle sermon "Persecutions, Duties, and Privileges of the Saints" given to the children who formed the procession for the 1854 July 24th celebration, Brigham Young's councilor Daniel H. Wells drew parallels not only to the Biblical Exodus and the Puritan Great Migration but compared July 24th to July 4th saying "This day, in reality, is the Anniversary of our Birth-day as a free people." *JD*: 2:25.

Mormons thought of Pioneer Day not only in terms of the Exodus but its antecedent Passover. In an 1884 oration, Judge Warren Dusenberry of Provo, Utah said:

We commemorate the day with feast and festivity, as a sacred Passover and escape of the oppressed from their oppressors. We annually hail its return with joy and thanksgiving, because it is the anniversary of a triumph for religious liberty, and the laying of the foundation of a great commonwealth. (*JH*, July 24, 1884, 4.)

²⁰John D. Unruh, *The Plains Across: Emigrants, Wagon Trains and the American West* (Chicago and Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 252.

²¹The words "exodus," "hegira," and "trek" each emerged from different and specific historical experiences, but their core similarities are evident in their roughly equivalent metonymic meanings in contemporary English usage. It is telling of the power of historical experience to fashion life meaning that one can scarcely speak of this topic without using a term once associated with a specific event. ("Migration" is too broad and mundane in its designation.) I selected "trek" not to privilege one historical experience over another, but because it is the most common term in referring to identity-forming migrations in general and its historical referent is the least closely linked to the semantics of the word.

not a comparative study, I hope it will help open the way for such studies in the future and help develop modes for theorizing sacralized migrations.²²

Typology and Ethnogenesis

In comparing the migrations described above, it becomes apparent that, for many of them, their similarities are not random or arbitrary. Rather, they follow a particular pattern of biblical recapitulation called typology—especially those migrations instrumental in forming new group identities rather than merely an aspect of some regional or national historical consciousness. Understanding this style of reading the Bible and the sense of identity it produces is central to understanding how the 1847-69 trek came to have such a powerful grip on Latter-day Saints' historical imagination and commemorative practice.

Drawing on scholarship about typological Biblical hermeneutics and contemporary theory about the formation of ethnic groups, German scholar of American ethnic literatures, Werner Sollors, has provided some useful outsider insight into the complex issues of identity formation in the context of the American experience.²³ To Sollors, this Biblical dimension is not just illuminating

²²Pilgrimage is a concept similar in significance to sacred migration that already enjoys its own scholarly literature. Treks seem poised for a such a development as well. On pilgrimage see: Mary Lee Nolan and Sidney Nolan, eds., *Christian Pilgrimage in Modern Western Europe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989); N. Ross Cumrine and Alan Morinis, eds., *Pilgrimage in Latin America* (New York: Greenwood, 1991); and Jean Dalby Clift and Wallace B. Clift, *The Archetype of Pilgrimage: Outer Action With Inner Meaning* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996).

²³Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

but central to understanding how migrations form groups and group identity in a process he calls "ethnogenesis."²⁴

In the early twentieth century, in its scholarly as well as popular conceptions, ethnicity was distinguished from other forms of identity by its focus on non-voluntary and hereditary criteria of inclusion. One was born into an inescapable ethnicity tightly bound up with notions of race whose roots ostensibly extended into the mists of the past.²⁵ In the 1960s several scholars, most notably Fredrik Barth,²⁶ began to question the notion of an uncomplicated hereditary basis for ethnicity and posited instead that ethnic identity was "emergent" within, and relative to, various geographic, national, and historical contexts. In this view ethnicity is constructed and ascribed rather than inherited and essential.

These new scholars of ethnicity pointed out several examples of the historically-contingent and relatively-recent nature of ethnicity formation. American ethnic groups formed within American historical and sociological processes that were different from those in other times and places. For example, for generations the "one drop of blood rule" made, and for the most part continues to make, "Blacks" out of American people who in a colonial American context or a contemporary Caribbean context might be considered mulatto or "brown."

²⁴Sollors borrows this term from sociologist Andrew M. Greeley. Andrew M. Greeley, *Ethnicity in the United States: A Preliminary Reconnaissance* (New York and London: John Wiley, 1974), 309.

²⁵Harold J. Abramson, *Ethnic Diversity in Catholic America* (New York and London: John Wiley, 1973), 175.

²⁶Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*.

Also there are no “Hispanics” in Mexico, Cuba, or Puerto Rico, but rather this identity is ascribed by American cultural debates and Census Bureau policies about the proper determination of ethnic identity for Americans with Spanish-speaking ancestors. The term Hispanic encompasses diverse groups of people who in their (or their ancestors’) country of origin would understand themselves as part of several country-specific “logics of ethnicity.”

For example, a Chicana immigrant from San Antonio, upon visiting her family in Monterey, re-enters a different classificatory world that historically would evaluate her as Creole (Spanish “blood” but New World born), Indiano (indigenous), or most likely Mestizo (mixed) based on the particulars of her ancestors’ participation in a history and culture that viewed native-European intermarriage in a much different light than was the case further north. These evaluations—if not manifest in local knowledge about her genealogy or, as is most often the case, expressed in her wealth and social class—would be deduced from attention to nuances of her physical appearance that might very well be lost to most white North Americans.

The literarily inclined members of immigrant groups literally inscribe their identity through political affirmation in “ethnic literatures” that define and reinforce the symbolic nature of identity.²⁷ For example, African Americans from Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. DuBois, Richard Wright, Martin Luther King, Malcomb X, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Cornell West have all drawn from and added their own twists to the collective African

²⁷Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity*, 35.

American experience. Each American identity-group has its own cadre of identity shapers and commentators not just in *bell letres* but in art, folklore, politics, popular culture, and theology.

In the mid-1970s, sociologist Talcott Parsons began to suggest that ethnicity is not only recent, emergent, and socially constructed rather than innate and essential, but also that it has a strong “optional and voluntary component.”²⁸ Through assent and mobilization of recognized social symbols, one’s ethnicity is achieved and maintained. To be ethnic, then, is to participate in an at least somewhat shared historical memory, to recognize a set of aesthetic and moral stances, and to be able to decipher and resonate with a complex, interwoven set of group-associated, but not necessarily group-unique, cultural symbols.

This shift in thinking about ethnic identity allows for a greater recognition that all types of identity—religious, regional, ethnic, and even racial—are fashioned from conceptually similar historical and cultural causes.²⁹ In other words, various types of identity can be seen as different manifestations of an overarching set of related processes rather than discrete qualities that are fundamentally different from each other in regards to the processes by which human beings come to be part of them.³⁰ This shift in the theorization of ethnicity

²⁸Talcott Parsons as cited in Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity*, 35.

²⁹Even the idea of race is now thought not to be so much biologically determined as it is a part of various cultural determinations and understandings of the nature, meaning, and significance of biological inheritances and their phenotypic expressions. For a popular treatment of this idea see James Shreeve, “Terms of Estrangement,” *Discover* 15 (November 1994): 56-63.

³⁰This fact makes the debate about whether or not Mormons constitute an ethnicity seem somewhat anachronistic. For there to be clear cut issues over which to debate, both sides need to rely on a pre-Barthian concept of what ethnicity means. Post-Barthian ethnicity theory, whose criteria can be modified to apply to religious identity, makes it difficult to sustain an either/or

away from biological determinism to historically-contextual emergence, it is possible to see the Mormon experience as an ethnogenesis. While debates continue in Mormon Studies over the appropriateness of calling Mormons "ethnic," a shared sense of historical experience and common set of religious and cultural rituals and rites of passage have earned Mormons an entry in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of Ethnic Groups*.³¹

The new scholars of ethnicity enabled a fuller understanding of the nature and processes of *what* happens in "ethnicization." Sollors' contribution has been to show *how* this has happened in many cases in the American experience. As a combined tool for understanding American ethnogenesis, Sollors links the new theorization about identity with an understanding of the popular "typological" style of Biblical interpretation.

According to Ursula Brumm, typology is "a form of prophecy that sets two successive events into a reciprocal relation of anticipation and fulfillment."³² In this interpretive strategy, the Biblical narrative provides a "type" (or, in other words, a foreshadowing or prefiguration) which has a fulfillment or recapitulation in a later "anti-type." In popular applications of scripture,

question over Mormons' ethnicity since strong religious and strong ethnic identity come about and are maintained in such similar ways. For an argument in favor of Mormon ethnicity see Dean L. May, "Mormons," in *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, ed. Stephen Thernstrom. (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belnap Press of Harvard University Press, 1980): 720-731. For an argument against Mormon ethnicity see Armand Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle With Assimilation* (Urbana and Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 1994).

³¹May, "Mormons," in *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, 720-731.

³²Ursula Brumm, *American Thought and Religious Typology* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970). On typology see also Sacvan Bercovitch, ed. *Typology and Early American Literature* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972).

typological interpretations span a wide range from retrospectively reading types as ironclad predictors of specific, singular, pre-determined historically occurring anti-types which prophetically and completely fulfill the type to, on the other extreme, being merely loose metaphoric imagery that can be applied to a variety of situations which are in some way reminiscent of scriptural events.

Typology is no new style of scriptural application. Jesus, Paul, and other Christian founders employed typological interpretation in a fairly strict sense to point to Jesus' life and the emergence of Christianity as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah and the Kingdom of God. For example, Moses's raising up on poles of serpents to which the children of Israel could gaze to be healed as well as the religious practice of blood sacrifice of a perfectly-formed lamb were understood by New Testament writers as foreshadowings of the crucifixion and atoning work of Jesus. Robert M. Grant and David Tracy rightly suggest that the primary stance of New Testament figures toward the Hebrew Scriptures is one of typological interpretation.³³

Typology, when strongly present in this way, can be a major part of the process by which mundane lives become sacred history, by which amorphous groups gain a shared identity, by which old religious traditions are revitalized, and by which new religions are fashioned to emerge from older ones. As with early Christians' use of the Old Testament, Mormonism's stance toward the Jewish and early Christian scriptures is primarily typological.³⁴

³³Robert M. Grant and David Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 36. As cited in Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 66.

³⁴Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 66-73.

Of course, typology is only one of many often over-lapping styles and methods by which readers have approached scripture. Some look to the Bible as a perfect guidebook for morals and doctrine or for the earliest record of how Godly people lived. Some look for solutions to contemporary problems such as “proof texting” a particular doctrinal position or finding the best way to combat racism. Some read for poetic or literary enjoyment and with the interpretive eye of a critic. When Biblical scholars practicing higher criticism interpret the Bible, they emphasize the need to understand the Bible in the cultural context and social conditions in which it was written. They seek to find out what the original manuscripts were, who the original authors were, and what their intent for writing and what their intended meanings might have been. As with most scientists, their methods neither claim nor provide answers as to how believers ought live their lives.

These are tendencies in interpretation and not clear cut distinctions. Indeed, many approaches often operate together in any interpretive exercise. Different streams of thought within Judaism and Christianity have focused on different styles of interpretation at different times. While professional scholars of religion may be interested in typology as a subject matter, they have little use for it as an interpretive method, but for those who live a religion, or reform, or found one, typology continues to be a prominent approach to understanding the relationship between scripture and contemporary life.

Typology as a method endures because it succeeds in fulfilling some of the most basic human needs serviced by religion: the needs for a meaningful conception of one’s place in the cosmos and accessible narrative structures

through which to make sense of one's experiences.³⁵ Typology provides a ready-made template for understanding one's own trials and accomplishments—a template that puts one in league with chosen peoples in the age of the Gods and thus has the potential to sacralize ones' own mundane or insecure existence.

It is not surprising then that in a land of new opportunity, wrenching dislocation, and few familiar indigenous templates for immigrants to make sense of the their experiences, that typology became the main American mode of Biblical interpretation. It has been commonplace for scholars to see the United States as a country emergent from, and to some degree still continuing in, a bath of Biblical metaphors of self-understanding since so many immigrant groups applied typology to their own migration to, and experience in, America.

No group did this more dramatically than the "first Americans" of our historic mythology—the Puritans.³⁶ From small details such as Cotton Mather's dubbing of John Winthrop "Nehemias Americanus" and several early ministers as "John in the Wilderness"³⁷ to the over-arching themes of "Exodus," "errand into

³⁵Holocaust survivor Victor Frankl sensitively proposes that the need for meaning undergirds most religious desire and expression in Victor Emil Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (New York: Washington Square, 1985).

³⁶In the nineteenth century, many Americans even made sense of the indigenous peoples, who are understood today as the first Americans, in Biblical terms as being part of the lost tribes of Israel. Popular science and fiction of the time promoted this view. See for example: Ethan Smith, *View of the Hebrews* (Poultney, Vermont, 1823); Josiah Priest, *American Antiquities* (Albany, New York, 1833); Solomon Spaulding, *Manuscript Found* (1812).

³⁷Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity*, 36, 43.

the wilderness.” and “City on a Hill” Puritans conceived of themselves in Biblical terms as a chosen people, a new Israel, with a central role in world history.³⁸

Sacvan Bercovitch suggests that Puritan modes of thought, especially typology, have continued to influence American ideas much more than is commonly acknowledged.³⁹ African Americans made another significant use of typology in their emergence from slavery and civil rights struggle. The question of whether to allow the Christianization of their slaves vexed slave-owners throughout the Western hemisphere. Most relented to the requests of missionaries hoping that planters could maintain control over how Christianity was presented and interpreted. Slave-owners hoped they could use admonitions such as Paul’s in Colossians 3:22 “servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh” and Jesus’ seemingly uncritical use of parables involving masters and servants to add a dimension of religious fatalism to their slaves’ lives that would help legitimate their subjugation.

But once they had the Bible in their hands, slaves soon discovered the Exodus story of Moses’ leading the children of Israel out of bondage to the promised land. To Christianized Blacks, Moses’ demand of Pharaoh in Exodus 5:1 to “let my people go” proved ultimately more inspiring than Paul’s admonition to servants. In the Christianization of slaves, people of different languages from different parts of Africa began to acquire a shared identity under a

³⁸Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: the Seventeenth Century*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954).

³⁹Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978). Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975).

new religion from whose sacred history they fashioned a millennial, emancipatory hope. As one of the most thoroughly Christian groups in America, Blacks put Exodus language at the center of their struggle for emancipation and the end of segregation. From Nat Turner to Frederick Douglas to Martin Luther King, Black leaders interpreted the African American experience in terms of the Israelite Exodus. They saw their subjugation as an evil, but also saw their suffering as a sign of chosenness. They hoped their eventual freedom was a millennial inevitability.

Like the Puritans, African Americans' typological application of scripture to their own lives figuratively reversed the Biblical order of books making an "exodus" the cause of their "genesis" as a people. This pattern of "exodus recapitulation as ethnogenesis" is the definitive typology of the American experience for the nation as a whole and wave after wave of immigrant groups.⁴⁰

Perhaps no American group since the Puritans have so thoroughly conceived of themselves in typological terms as Mormons have. Latter-day Saints even exceed the Puritans in the literalness and pervasiveness in which they regard their faith as a return to Biblical religion. Chapter One looks in detail at the

⁴⁰Philip Barlow calls the Exodus the "type above all types." Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 66. Michael Walzer identifies the exodus as one of, if not the, prime metaphor for action for the past two thousand years in the Western World. Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985). The Biblical typological approach to history does not explain all trek-reverencing in all cultures world-wide. Its explanatory power breaks down when trying to understand the place of the trail of Tears and Chinese long march in the traditionally mostly non-Christian cultures that maintain a memory of them. Only by the longest stretch of the imagination seeing Marx's concern for social justice as a sublimated reflection of his Jewish roots and vestigial cultural affinity for Old Testament prophets such as Moses and Amos, can we see communist Chinese as recapitulating ancient Hebrew history. Perhaps the nuts and bolts human activity of treks themselves leave a more powerful impress on the minds of a people over generations than the interpretive template used by the groups experiencing and remembering the events.

particulars of Mormons' typological recapitulation of the Biblical narrative. It is important to realize that Latter-day Saint typological understandings work on a level much deeper than just curious historical correspondences. These understandings made Mormon history not just an anti-type of scriptural events, but they placed Latter-day Saints *in* scriptural narrative itself—or rather they extended the scriptural narrative to include the happenings of Latter-day Saint history.

Mormons were not merely ritualistically repeating Biblical history, but were according to Philip Barlow, “*living through* the stories of Israel and early Christianity—reestablishing the covenant, gathering the Lord’s elect, preaching the gospel, building up the kingdom, living in sacred time and space.”⁴¹ Mormons believed that the canonical clock of sacred history had restarted and that they were at center-stage in the unfolding drama leading up to the Second Coming of Christ. Part of that drama was for all truths and practices from previous eras to be gathered together in the “dispensation of the fullness of times.” Just as the early Christians had done with Judaism in the emergence of their new religion from older Jewish themes, Mormons re-appropriated in order to reinvigorate and transform. Latter-day Saints did this not only with Old Testament religion like the early Christians did, but they also re-appropriated apostolic era Christianity—complete with early Christian religion’s appropriation of the religion of the Hebrew scriptures.

⁴¹Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 69.

The events that established Mormonism are typological at their core. When Mormons speak of the "Restoration" of Christianity led by apostles, or of being "modern Israel," they mean much more than just reverential patterned emulation. They mean divinely directed re-institution, a re-opening of the heavens to unleash new revelations. Latter-day Saints have an open scriptural canon and understand themselves to have the same chosen relationship with God, and to be operating in the same sacred history, as New and Old Testament Biblical peoples.

So while Mormons speak of Brigham Young as "the American Moses" because he, in his own words, led "the exodus of the nation of the only true Israel from these United States,"⁴² they do not mean that Brigham Young *is* Moses but that he is *like* Moses in the same way that Moses is like Jeremiah or Jeremiah is like Paul. They are men of God living in sacred history, open to revelation, and authorized to add to the canon.

In following the American pattern of the typological creation of ethnic groups, Mormons are a special case. They are the only group to gain its identity by an exodus out of, rather ^{thru} into, the United States.⁴³ The United States has since enveloped and permeated most of the nineteenth-century Mormon Culture Region and Mormons have made their peace with the American nation-state and political culture. But the unique circumstances of the Mormon ethnogenesis still pose the question: As America's indigenous contribution to universal world religions, in

⁴²Brigham Young as quoted in Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 75.

⁴³The only possible exception to this are the descendants of repatriated slaves in Sierra Leone and Liberia who maintain an ethnic self-conception as "Americans" even after their ocean-crossing exodus out of slavery.

what ways is Mormonism the most, or perhaps the least, “American” of American religions? Chapter One explores this issue in more depth.

Werner Sollors only cursorily touches on the Book of Mormon as a touchstone of Latter-day Saint identity that typologically provides a Bible-like history for ancient America, and he misses the Mormon exodus as the “lived literature” that is the major typological exercise contributing to Mormon ethnogenesis.⁴⁴ However, his linkage of typology with identity-formation greatly illuminates the Latter-day Saint experience and the place of Pioneers and Pioneer Day in that experience.

Beyond typology and ethnogenesis, Sollor’s identifies a long and wrenching historical shift away from “descent” to “consent” as the means by which identity and inclusion in American culture is legitimated.⁴⁵ While consent, more specifically conversion, is the most original means of “making Mormons,” descent from those who crossed the plains came to make for a special class of Mormons. In the late twentieth century world-wide growth of the Church, consent by new converts seems to be again taking center-stage in the Mormon drama.

⁴⁴Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity*, 47. Sollors seems to posit that Anglo-Mormons have a typological affinity with the people described in the Book of Mormon as a New World remnant of the House of Israel who experienced an Exodus to the Western Hemisphere, nineteenth-century Mormons, and most white Mormons today, see themselves in terms of Levantine Israel and New Testament Christianity. On the other hand, Latter-day Saints whose ancestors are indigenous to the Americas and the Pacific islands do often view themselves in terms of, and as descendants of, Book of Mormon peoples.

⁴⁵R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Moore would add “dissent” to the list of “-ents” by which American identity has been legitimated. He argues that because of America’s unique history of religious diversity and unique constitution to protect it, outsider religions can, and have, laid claim to being more “authentically American” by virtue of their dissent from the mainstream rather than in spite of it. Mormondom has certainly participated in this discourse of legitimization through full utilization of America’s expansive tradition of religious freedom.

Anthropologist John L. Sorenson's contention that Mormondom is America in miniature⁴⁶ is true at least in the sense that both cultures have struggled internally about coping with the differences between citizens produced by enculturation vs. citizens produced by acculturation. Since the Mormon people's ancestral relationship to the 1847-69 gathering has been a problematic issue in contemporary Mormondom, these tensions have shown up in popular historical expression as we will see in later chapters.

While typology does not provide the impetus behind all celebration of Pioneers in Mormon culture, it provided the germ around which a tradition emerged that is informed by a variety of pious and recreational impulses. Mormon peoplehood is maintained through ritual enactment and popular historical expression. This dissertation explores the shape and strains on Mormon identity in the contemporary world as viewed through the lens of the place of Pioneers in Mormon cultural practice.

Structure of the Dissertation

Rather than adhering to a traditional linear narrative structure or a set monograph form, this study tries to follow organizational principles suggested by the nature of its subject matter. Clifford Geertz once suggested that cultures, or systems of meaningful activity, are like octopuses. They do not necessarily fit together in orderly, fully-interconnected, and well-contained ways but they sprawl in unexpected directions taking on strange shapes; each arm of the system, while

⁴⁶John L. Sorenson, *Mormon Culture: Four Decades of Essays on Mormon Society and Personality* (Salt Lake City: New Sage Books, 1997).

somewhat connected to a nervous center, acts semi-autonomously in response to its own stimuli and its own operating code.

While an octopus has a certain vibrancy, a tree metaphor allows for multiple branching and suggests the possibility of following limbs out to the related creatures living at the extremities—the birds' nests and Spanish moss of a cultural system. This study follows the tentacles/branches of “pioneer ideology” through various zones of the cultural expression of Pioneer consciousness. Some branches are long and full of foliage others are less well developed. Acting as participants in multiple regional and national identities with their own sets of commemorative practices, and in the midst of neighbors who are not LDS, many branches of the “Tree of Pioneer Influenced Activity” brush with the branches of other cultural trees.

Section One of this study sketches the genetic blueprint for the whole of the tree and examines the constitution and living processes of the “trunk” of Mormon pioneer ideology and practice. Chapter One discusses previous scholarly interpretations of the Mormon experience as an American phenomenon, and reviews key LDS concepts that help illuminate how Mormons' Pioneer past was understood by those who participated in it, and how it continues to be understood by those who entertain a cultural memory of it as a “usable past” constituting a uniquely Mormon sacred history.⁴⁷ Chapter Two examines the various “genres” of creative activity in which this usable past is shaped and maintained.

⁴⁷Ray B. West, *Writing in the Rocky Mountains* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1947), 74. West suggests that the past serves as a resource for creative endeavor in the present. Groups, such as Mormons, who are knit together by a especially distinctive and heroic shared historical memory enjoy pasts that are particularly “usable.”

Chapter Three looks at the selection process by which specific sets of people during certain periods came to be regarded as “pioneers” of varying degrees of authenticity. It also discusses how pioneer-commemorating practices have responded to the dual challenges of world-wide LDS Church growth through conversion and the increased sensitivity to cultural diversity within the Mormon Culture Region. It also warns of the easy and debilitating scholarly arrogance displayed by some approaches to “constructed historical memory” studies which evade serious grappling with the subjective experiences of cultural belief systems.

Section Two examines in more detail the main limb of Pioneer cultural expression—July 24th Pioneer Day celebrations—particularly those in the Mormon Culture Region of the American West. This section relies on my own lifetime of participation in Pioneer Day celebrations throughout the world; interviews with Mormon and Gentile family, friends, and acquaintances; and fieldwork done in Salt Lake City, Fairview, and Spring City, Utah during the summers of 1994 and 1995. However, the core of this section emerges from an “experiment in ethnography”—whose design, advantages, and limits are described in Chapter Four—that allowed access to almost every civic-sponsored Pioneer Day in the American West through a month-long series of telephone interviews.

Chapter Five discusses the usefulness of various “key words” used by folklorists in analyzing festivals and delineates the features of a composite “normal form” civic Pioneer Day celebration. Chapter Six identifies and discusses Pioneer Day celebrations as a form of Mormon “carnavalesque”—a style of celebration present in many societies.

Chapter Seven compares and contrasts civic Pioneer Day celebrations throughout the North American West to discover the commonalities and variations among different local manifestations of this folkloric festival and to understand the contested cultural poetics taking place within, and at the edges of, the Mormon Culture Region. Special attention is paid to the interaction between Pioneer Day and Independence Day in the United States and also to the state of Mormon celebrations in areas with unusual degrees of bi- or multi-cultural interaction.

Chapter Eight moves the study toward the extremities of the tree—away from phenomena centrally concerned with pioneering to ones uniquely related to, or influenced by, it. Chapter Eight shows the Mormon Culture Region to be the geographic legacy of the Mormons' pioneer enterprise: its contemporary borders are marked out in part by the presence or absence of civic Pioneer Day celebrations. This chapter also examines the significance LDS temples⁴⁸ to an emergent world-wide Mormon cultural geography. Like Pioneer Day, but even more central to Latter-day Saint religiosity, temple worship is a ritual appropriation of sacred meaning from the past—an ongoing cultural activity that indicates a Mormon presence on the world's complex cultural landscape.

This final chapter is not a conclusion and does not seek closure to the study. Rather it is purposefully open-ended. It is a “declaration of scholarly opportunity”—a birds' nest in the Pioneer Tree—a different creature related to a larger system and launching pads from which other inquiries might take flight.

⁴⁸Unlike chapels which are similar to the meeting houses of many other denominations and are open to visitors. Temples are only open to Latter-day Saints who meet certain standards of worthiness. Temples are the site of many of the practices that theologically distinguish Latter-day Saints from other Christians including vicarious ordinance work for the dead.

SECTION ONE: PIONEERS AND RECAPITULATION IN MORMON HISTORICAL EXPRESSION

Chapter One: Understanding the Mormons and their Exodus

I am he who led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; and my arm is stretched out in the last days, to save my people Israel.

A revelation to Brigham Young on January 14, 1847 as he prepared to lead the Latter-day Saints to their refuge in the West as it appears in the LDS book of scripture Doctrine and Covenants 136:22.

The emergence of Mormonism as a new world religion begs the question, “Why did America serve as its cradle?” Exploring answers to this question serves to illuminate the complex historical and cultural relationship between the Mormon religion and the American experience, as well as to help explain the prominent place of pioneering in both the American and Mormon imaginations.

A common Latter-day Saint answer to this question is that considering a history of centuries of religious oppression in Europe, the relatively free and tolerant climate of the mid-nineteenth-century American frontier was the earliest possible time and place in history where the fullness of God’s restored truth had any chance of long-term survival in a world hostile to religious diversity. Gordon Wood, a leading historian of the early republic, suggests that despite the tension Mormonism’s emergence caused early on, the new religion fulfilled a need so

crucial to the American experience that if Mormonism did not exist, Americans would have to invent it.¹

The early nineteenth-century American national experience needed a religion to match its own originality, vitality, optimism, and divinely sanctioned position of being at center stage of God's unfolding drama on Earth. As the new nation sought to define itself after independence, Americans searched for ways to downplay and forget their European intellectual and cultural heritage. A major problem in this endeavor was Americans' continued adherence to religious movements begun in Europe. To address this problem, nineteenth-century American romantics sought religious themes in America's nature and their own imagined spiritual images of Indian "noble savages."² While little hint of nature worship exists in Mormon theology, and Richard Bushman has persuasively shown that the Book of Mormon is scarcely a Romantic or American republican document,³ Joseph Smith had his formative religious experiences, not in church buildings, but in what came to be known as "the Sacred Grove" in the woods near his home as well as on a hillside from which he took the Golden Plates that gave America and its aboriginal inhabitants a panoramic sacred history in which

¹Gordon S. Wood, "Evangelical America and Early Mormonism," *New York History* 61 (October 1980): 359-386.

²While American Romantics looked to "things American" for inspiration, the Romantic era ironically represented a high point in American intellectual linkage with Europe since it borrowed heavily from German thinkers, Coleridge, and Rousseau for the concept of "noble savage."

³See Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

Europeans took no part. Suddenly, in the rapidly-developing Mormon world-view, America had its own ancient footing.

In an eccentric but creative reading of the meaning of religion in America, literary critic Harold Bloom, makes Mormonism's link with the American experience even more fundamental than does Wood. Bloom suggests that Latter-day Saint doctrine's combination of radical insistence on every individual's responsibility, perfectibility, and immediate accessibility to divine revelation coupled with its this-worldly communitarian imperatives make it uniquely an "American Original"—the American Religion.⁴ Even for non-adherents, the native-soil story of Mormonism is emblematic of Americans' self-perceived uniqueness, and its whirlwind of cleansing new revelations provides a clean break from troubling historical continuity with European religious corruption. Because of this, and Mormonism's ongoing optimistic vitality, Bloom predicts that Latter-day Saints will come to play a major defining role in America's religious future.

In stark contrast to Wood and Bloom's positive assessments stands that of anti-Mormons who likewise have claimed to act in accordance with the highest American ideals in denouncing Mormonism from its inception.⁵ It is not for

⁴Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 77-112.

⁵No comprehensive history of anti-Mormonism has yet been written. The visual images of America's homegrown bigotry to match its homegrown religion are discussed in Gary L. Bunker and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Graphic Image, 1834-1914: Cartoons, Caricatures, and Illustrations* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983) and Terry L. Givens, *Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). David Brion Davis discusses the similarities between various nineteenth-century Nativist concerns in David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (September 1960): 205-24. He interprets what this means about the nature of American political thought and self-conception in the nineteenth century. Also see Leonard J.

nothing, they argued, that Mormons were forcibly ejected from America in the nation's sole instance of expelling a whole religion from its body. According to anti-Mormons, America can tolerate any religion except those patently anti-American in their very nature.

In the rhetoric of anti-Mormons who used American republicanism in defense of their activities, Mormon secrecy, polygamy, and hierarchical theocracy (like the sexual and social "aberrations" of Catholicism and freemasonry) represented a dangerous barbaric throw-back to the days before the rise of enlightened Christian democracy in America.⁶ These concerns crystallized into the mob violence and vigilante activity that brought about several prelude Mormon exoduses from Ohio and Missouri and the final exodus from Illinois to the Rocky Mountains. Eventually the attention of an increasingly sophisticated and nationally respectable anti-Mormonism would follow the Latter-day Saints to Utah and deem what was occurring there to be perhaps the biggest threat to America after the slavocratic South. In 1856, the newly-formed Republican Party's platform proclaimed its unyielding opposition to the "twin relics of barbarism" slavery and polygamy. Despite the then current political philosophy of

Arrington and John Haupt. "Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in Nineteenth Century American Literature." *Western Humanities Review* 22 (Summer 1968): 243-60.

⁶Kenneth H. Winn, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty: Mormons in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989). Winn suggests, somewhat deductivistically, that a fundamental difference of conception about the meaning of American republicanism lay at the heart of Mormon/Gentile violence in Missouri. Howard Lamar suggests that this same argument about what American values should take precedence (religious liberty vs. separation of church and state) formed the core of the government campaign against polygamy and the delay of Utah's admission to the union as a state. Howard R. Lamar, "Statehood for Utah: A Different Path," in *Mormonism and American Culture*, eds. Marvin S. Hill and James B. Allen (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 127-141.

popular sovereignty, the federal government deemed Mormons unfit for self-rule and dismantled, in the name of Americanism, Latter-day Saints' political autonomy in the post-Civil War "Reconstruction of Utah."⁷

Laurence Moore suggests Mormons' history of persecution and "outsiderness" gave Latter-day Saints rhetorical resources for claiming to be more rather than less American. Even considering the stigma and vilification they have endured, who has benefited more than the Mormons—and other unpopular religions shut off from power—from the uniquely American religious freedoms provided by the Constitution? Latter-day Saints recognize their religion's prelude in, and debt to, revolutionary Americanist ideals. American Mormons hold the United States Constitution in near-canonical esteem and regard the founding fathers as near Saints.⁸

Perhaps what divided Latter-day Saints from their detractors was not the "reality" of which group was more "truly" American, but rather differing conceptions of what it means to be American, or different levels of emphases

⁷Terry L. Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth*, 121-152. Givens describes the literary processes by which Mormons were constructed as "others" not worthy of participation in American governmental institutions or inclusion within national borders. See also Howard Lamar's discussion of the "Americanization of Utah." Lamar, "Statehood for Utah," 127-141.

⁸The Mormon scripture The Doctrine and Covenants 101:80 declares that the framers of the constitution were "wise men...raised up unto this very purpose" of establishing a free country in which the gospel could thrive. According to the late Mormon apostle Ezra Taft Benson who viewed the records of the St. George Temple, the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence and other dignitaries appeared in 1877 to LDS Church president Wilford Woodruff who said, "Before I left St. George, the spirits of the dead gathered around me, wanting to know why we did not redeem them. Said they, 'You have had the use of the Endowment House for a number of years, and yet nothing has ever been done for us. We laid the foundation of the government you now enjoy, and we never apostatized from it, but we remained true to it and were faithful to God.'" *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 603. These events helped incorporate Americanism as part of Mormonism. This story is widely known in American Mormon folk-history.

placed on shared (sometimes paradoxical) touchstones of Americanism. Highlighting one's own outsidership as a dissenter, a radical, a revolutionary, or marginalized minority, has perennially been a way of positioning one's self as truly American. In Laurence Moore's view, the religious counter-currents rather than mainstreams have been the most American of religions.⁹

Outsidership as Americanness is perhaps the case as a beginning at least. But virtuous outsiders in American ideology and mythology can "make it" in the American dream. What could be more emblematic of America's mythic opportunities than the rags-to-riches success story of Mormondom's on-going transformation from a despised sect-on-the-run to a major American religious subculture and an increasingly respected world-wide faith?

A central reason for the Mormon celebration of Pioneer Day is that, in popular Mormon conceptions of history at least, the Saints' arrival in the Salt Lake Valley marked an easily-identifiable turning point—late nineteenth-century setbacks notwithstanding—in this transformation. This understanding of July 24th in the Mormon celebratory calendar was articulated early on in a 1851 general conference address given in Salt Lake City by Brigham Young's councilor Daniel H. Wells who proclaimed:

Among all the anniversaries that might be celebrated ... the 24th Day of July, the anniversary of the arrival of the pioneers in this valley, has been selected as the dawning of a brighter day, as

⁹Perhaps this partially explains the phenomenon that sociologists Roger Finke and Rodney Stark notice—that the mainstream in American religiosity is *always* in decline in the face of up-and-coming religions. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

an era in the history of this people upon which turned the axis of their destiny.¹⁰

As subsequent chapters will show, Mormon pioneer nostalgia in general, and Pioneer Day in particular, have been a volatile symbols signifying both Mormon Americanness and the lack thereof to various interpreters of their meaning.

Understanding the Mormon Exodus

To understand how these symbols came to be and to approach an understanding of the complex depth of the pioneers' significance in Mormon popular history we need to more closely examine the religion's beginnings in Joseph Smith's visions and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and explain these events as Mormons view them. The purpose here is neither to proselytize on behalf of Mormonism nor to "debunk" any aspect of Mormon belief. Instead, the purpose is to allow access into the sacred history of which the pioneer experience is a continuation, and into the religious world view and culture of which the pioneers and their commemorative tradition are a part.

Mormonism began in the 1820s with a series of revelations to Joseph Smith, a young religious seeker in rural upstate New York.¹¹ The two

¹⁰*JD*, 1:2, July 24, 1851.

¹¹In understanding the emergence of Mormonism, in the context of America's intellectual environment and on America's geographic landscape, it is important to consider two things in relation to the topic of pioneers in Mormon popular historical expression. While Joseph Smith's revelations form the core and starting place of what is unique about the Latter-day Saint *theology*, the pioneers' trek and the colonization of the Intermountain West served as Mormons' historical

manifestations that came to be the most important to Latter-day Saints are a visitation by God the Father and Jesus Christ, who informed Joseph that he would be the medium through which the true church and the kingdom of God on Earth would be restored to a world engulfed by religious conflict and false teachings, and the appearance of the angel Moroni, a resurrected prophet from an ancient American civilization established by refugees who had fled from Israel before the 600 B.C. destruction of Jerusalem. Moroni presented Joseph Smith with the famous Golden Plates which, after they were translated, became The Book of Mormon—a history of Moroni's people that explained (to the satisfaction of its believing readers) the origins of the American Indians and recorded that Jesus had visited the Western Hemisphere after his resurrection.

The world view and sociality brought about by Joseph Smith's restoration was so all-encompassing and transformative that it has defied, or perhaps even exploded, usual categories for understanding social and religious phenomenon. Not fully understanding the deeply typological nature of Mormonism, American religious historian Sydney Ahlstrom points out the difficulty of sociologically classifying Mormonism in his seminal *A Religious History of the American People*, "One cannot even be sure if the object of our consideration is a sect, a mystery cult, a new religion, a church, a people, a nation, or an American subculture; indeed, at different times and places it is all of these."¹²

epiphany of a regional *cultural* identity. The place of this epiphany in the diverse sectors that make up "the Mormon imagination" continues to be rethought.

¹²Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1975), 613.

Unlike Finneyites who believed that preachers through their own initiative could ferment revival and unlike Campbellites who believed the original Church could be reconjured through excruciatingly close reading of the New Testament alone, Latter-day Saints believed that true Christianity came just as it did in the primitive Church—only by revelation from Christ himself to his authorized representatives on earth.¹³

As far as Mormons were concerned, “The Restoration”—as Latter Day Saints collectively refer to the visions and ecclesiastical accomplishments of Joseph Smith—was also a sign to Mormons that the Biblically prophesied “dispensation of the fullness of times” and the era for the “restitution of all things” had arrived—the time when all truths ever preached and correct principles ever practiced would emerge again together in a great summing up of history in preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

In this spirit of all things gathering together, Old Testament themes such as temple worship and polygamy naturally coexisted with New Testament themes such as the centrality of Jesus Christ’s atonement and Church leadership by twelve apostles. Early Mormons expected to be involved in restorative and recapitulative activity.

While not a theological imperative, recapitulating the Exodus fit into the spirit of the times. In their sensitive ethnographic reconstruction of the world view of early Mormonism, Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen describe the spirit

¹³For an examination of various forms of American primitivism and revivalism see Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630-1875* (The University of Chicago Press, 1988).

of awe and wonder early Saints had at being the beneficiaries of the angelic visitations that were establishing God's Kingdom on Earth.¹⁴ Early Mormons expected the marvelous to unfold before their eyes and were astounded but not surprised to experience miraculous outpourings like those experienced by the Children of Israel and the Early Christians. The Latter-day Saint's Restoration collapsed ancientness and newness into an American timelessness in which Mormons could literally see themselves as modern Israel and figuratively reenact ancient Israel's attainment of their promised land.

Armed with a divine mandate and a new book of scripture, the young prophet quickly began attracting followers but also a great deal of antagonism.

In the early years of the Church, Mormons believed that to follow their mandate to establish the kingdom of God on Earth they needed to "gather" together in the same communities and participate in exclusive, communitarian economic arrangements.¹⁵ These attitudes aroused the suspicion and hostility of their neighbors, who violently forced Joseph Smith and his Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints along the fringe of the cresting wave of American westward expansion—always marginalized and continually persecuted. Having been driven off their land in the late 1830s by vigilante mobs in Ohio and three different places in Missouri, Joseph Smith's flock, by then numbering in the tens of thousands, built the city of Nauvoo in western Illinois. It was here, during a brief

¹⁴An insightful, rich, and sensitive treatment of Joseph Smith's far ranging and inclusive understanding of the Restoration that Christ was bringing about through him can be found in Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence*, 133-152.

¹⁵William Mulder, "The Mormon Gathering," 87-89.

hiatus from harassment, that Joseph Smith received his boldest and most distinctive revelations about the special mission of his people.

In Nauvoo, the Biblical restoration theme of Joseph Smith's teachings began to markedly emphasize Old as well as New Testament motifs. For example, he introduced secret temple ordinances and began introducing a few close and trusted associates to the doctrine of plural marriage. Polygamy, as it later came to be called by detractors, drew inspiration from the familial arrangements of the Biblical patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Rumors of Joseph Smith's involvement with plural marriage began a sequence of events that led to his arrest and martyrdom in the summer of 1844 by yet another mob jealous and frightened of Mormon power.

After the Prophet's death, the largest faction of the movement accepted Brigham Young's claim to church leadership and followed his lead to flee continued persecution and search for sanctuary in the wilderness. In 1847, Brigham Young left his followers in the temporary settlement of Winter Quarters in what is now Nebraska, and led an advance company of Mormon leaders to the Rocky Mountains where he selected the Salt Lake Valley as his people's ultimate destination. By 1848, most of Nauvoo's inhabitants who would be coming had made the trek to their promised land.

From Salt Lake City, Young immediately began sending out groups to colonize as much as they could of the Great Basin, concentrating on the valleys along the Wasatch Front of the Rocky Mountains. Highly successful Mormon proselytizing continued, especially in Great Britain and Scandinavia where European Mormons outnumbered their American counterparts during much of the

mid-nineteenth century. However, in the continuing spirit of gathering, these converts were expected to come to Zion as soon as they were able. Scores of thousands came. Most came by ship, rail, and/or riverboat to Iowa City from whence they headed to Salt Lake City by wagon. Some came by wagon from California after having rounded Cape Horn. Between 1856 and 1860, when Church money was particularly tight, some immigrants even pushed and pulled their meager belongings across the plains in handcarts.¹⁶

The use of wagons stopped after the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, but immigrants continued to come by rail. What Mormons remember as “The Gathering” remained Church policy until it began to be de-emphasized near the turn of the century. In the 1920s, the Church began to encourage its new converts not to gather physically in Utah, but to gather spiritually with nearby Mormons and to build up the Church in their own homelands. By 1955 the Church had built a temple in Switzerland, its first outside of traditional gathering areas and a sure sign of its shift in emphasis from Western Gathering to long-term world-wide growth.¹⁷

The Mormon trek to Zion drew much of its symbolic potency from the fact that its participants, and their descendants, understood it to be a recapitulation of the Biblical exodus. As evidenced in pioneer journals, the Mormon migration to Utah was regarded from the start as sacred history in the making.¹⁸ While not

¹⁶See Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion*.

¹⁷1997-98 *Deseret News Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1996), 435.

¹⁸Wallace Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion*.

necessarily a theological imperative, a grand recapitulation of sacred history fit nicely within the Mormon typological self-conception of their religion as being the restoration of all religious truths preached in both New and Old Testament times. Joseph Smith's reintroduction of other Old Testament ideas such as temple rituals and plural marriage undoubtedly prepared Mormons to heed Brigham Young's call to reenact the Exodus. In fact, Brigham Young earned the title "the American Moses" for leading the Mormons to their promised land and realizing Smith's visionary plans for a Mormon kingdom in the Rocky Mountains.¹⁹ Under Brigham Young's direction, the bedraggled bands of refugees that left Nauvoo at gun point in 1846 became forward-looking and sacred-history enacting "pioneers."

Part of Young's strategy for accomplishing this feat was to use Moses's organizational model and organize the Saints into hierarchical groups of 10s, 50s and 100s.²⁰ Parallels with the Exodus did not end here. Mormon oral tradition and pioneer journals record that the Mississippi froze at an opportune time to allow the first pioneer wagon trains to cross, much as the Red Sea had parted to allow Moses's followers to escape Egypt. After the Mormons crossed the Mississippi, flocks of quail miraculously wandered into pioneer camps like manna from heaven to feed the poorest of the straggling travelers. After time spent in the wilderness, the Latter-day Saints came upon a land where a river ran between a

¹⁹"American Moses" is the subtitle of the seminal scholarly biography of Brigham Young. Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985).

²⁰The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints records this in Brigham Young's only canonized revelation, comprising Doctrine and Covenants 136:1-42.

fresh water lake and a salt water lake. It was only appropriate that the Mormons named it the Jordan River after its counterpart in Palestine.

Figure 1. Map showing the similarity between Palestine and Salt Lake valley, Utah. This Rio Grande Western Railroad map was published in William E. Smythe, *The Conquest of Arid America* (1899).



A factor that heightened the realism of this link with ancient Israel was that most Mormons had received “patriarchal blessings” modeled after blessings given by Biblical patriarchs to their children. In these blessings, most Saints were told, by church members specially called for this purpose, that they were literal descendants of the Hebrew tribe of Ephraim through whom—according to the Bible and Joseph Smith’s revelations—all the nations of the earth would be blessed.²¹ “British Israelitism” or the belief that Anglo-Saxon peoples are literal descendants of Biblical Israelites was a common idea in the lands of the British diaspora in mid-nineteenth century.²² For the Mormons who recapitulated the Exodus, identification with the Israelites through their own version of British Israelitism made their chosenness and their “living through again” of sacred history much more literal and significant than a mere reenactment.²³

Because the early Mormons made new sacred history by recapitulating old sacred history, they have bequeathed to today’s Mormons a “usable past” that sets them apart as a new religious tradition distinct and different from the American Christian milieu out of which they emerged. This occurred in much the same way that early Christians created a new religious tradition by incorporating and

²¹Irene Bates. “Patriarchal Blessings and the Routinization of Charisma,” *Dialogue: a Journal of Mormon Thought* 26, no. 3 (1993): 1-29. Melodie Moench. “Nineteenth Century Mormons: the New Israel,” *Dialogue: a Journal of Mormon Thought* 12 (Spring 1979): 42-56.

²²John Wilson. *Our Israelitish Origin* (Philadelphia: Daniels and Smith, 1850). Stephen Epperson. *Mormons and Jews: Early Mormon Theologies of Israel* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992).

²³The parallels between the Mormon pioneers and the Biblical Exodus were so compelling that there are even unorthodox Mormon splinter groups who maintain that the pioneers of ‘47 were the literal reincarnation of Moses’s followers. See Steven L. Shields. *Divergent Paths of the Restoration* (Los Angeles: Restoration Research, 1990).

reworking themes from the Hebrew religious tradition out of which they grew. Jan Shipps, a perceptive scholar of Mormonism whose interpretations of Mormon history have been highly influential in recent years, suggests the pioneers' story stands next to the sacred history of the Israelites in the Old Testament and that of Jesus and the apostles in the New Testament as a "third sacred text" to which Mormons look for guidance, instruction, and inspiration.²⁴

Another key to understanding Mormon reverence for the pioneers is to place their saga within the broader context of the Romanticism that permeated American culture at the time. Several historians suggest that the content of the Mormon gospel and the trek to establish a Godly kingdom in the West (initially outside the boundaries of the United States) constituted a rejection of the romantic "age of boundlessness," and of American democratic and capitalist mores, and of what the Mormons viewed as the increasing disorder of ante-bellum America.²⁵

However, the Mormons' self-conception of their destiny also reflected many aspects of American Romanticism. For example: The ancient history of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith's personal religious history, and the pioneer trek together provided for Mormons—and they hoped for the entire nation—a grand unifying sacred history for an American culture "cursed" with a troubling a-historicity by its newness and its cultural pluralism.²⁶ Also, reflecting the

²⁴Jan Shipps, *Mormonism*.

²⁵Klaus Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 214. Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana and Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 1984), 139.

²⁶Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: the Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books 1993), 50-52.

contemporary notion that “primitive” civilizations must give way to “advanced” ones.²⁷ Mormons fully believed—especially during the Civil War—that America would eventually turn to them for guidance and leadership.²⁸ Latter-day Saints shared with the Romantics the vision of a great untamed wilderness waiting to be harnessed, tamed, and made fruitful by a growing nation that God had chosen as his own. The sense of drama this endowed to all of America’s westward expansion was shared by the Mormons, but they experienced it primarily in terms of their own history only.

Another important contribution of Romanticism that reverberates still with modern Mormons is the era’s historiographic approach. At the time of the pioneer trek, historians depicted America’s past as a grand unfolding drama of the progressive triumph of superior civilization and good over ignorance and evil. If a historian wrote detached or dispassionately and failed to convey these truths, peers would have deemed his work as slighting the significance of the past. Truth according to popular historiography in the nineteenth century was best illuminated through “glowing pictures” that highlighted heroism and sacrifice.²⁹ Mormons viewed the telling of their own history in a similar light. In this view, God caused the United States to be established so his revealed religion could be restored in a country constitutionally committed to religious freedom. These historiographic

²⁷Ibid., 46-47.

²⁸Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, 210.

²⁹Robert W. Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 242. David Levin, *History as Romantic Art: Bancroft, Prescott, Moteley, and Parkman* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959).

ideas continue, in tempered form, in Mormon circles today and inform modern Mormon celebrations and artistic depictions of the pioneer era as a glorious achievement wrought by self-sacrificing heroes.³⁰

³⁰For a treatment of Mormon historiographic approaches to Mormon historic sites in general see Paul L. Anderson, "Heroic Nostalgia: Enshrining the Mormon Past." *Sunstone* 5 (July-August 1980): 47-55.

Chapter Two: Genres of Pioneer Celebration

Being thus imbued with profound significance in its dual role as a recapitulation of sacred history and as the vanguard of America's prophetic destiny, the pioneer trek was charged with the potential to become a long-lasting cultural memory and the subject of generations of commemoration. In fact, the first public celebration of the pioneer trek took place on July 24, 1849, only two years to the day after Brigham Young's party entered the Salt Lake Valley. Events included a large outdoor dinner, parades, music, and numerous speeches and sermons that focused on the great future that lay ahead of the Saints now that they had begun to gather in Zion.¹ The pioneer era was already being celebrated when it had barely even begun.

The 1849 Pioneer Day celebration was a harbinger of things to come. From this point on, the pioneer mythos grew and shot tendrils into all aspects of Mormon cultural expression. Today, several interrelated institutions and genres of activity support and recreate pioneer memories. Ten of the most visible and significant are: commemorative organizations, markers and statues, song, art, literature, museums, dramatic presentations, living history, oral tradition, and July 24th Pioneer Day celebrations.

¹Eugene E. Campbell, *Establishing Zion: The Mormon Church in the American West 1847-1869* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988). Steven Olsen, "Community Celebrations and Mormon Ideology of Place," *Sunstone* (May-June 1980): 40-45. Ronald W. Walker, "'A Banner is Unfurled': Mormonism's Ensign Peak," *Dialogue: a Journal of Mormon Thought* 26, no. 4 (1993): 71-91.

Commemorative organizations: Of course The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints itself is active in maintaining pioneer memories and utilizing these stories as a means of inspiring today's Mormons to remain true to the legacy of faith bequeathed to them. Church leaders mention the pioneers in public sermons, commission works of art in their honor, support museums, and regularly use images of wagons and handcarts in their official publications. However, the Church has relinquished much its role as maintainer of popular celebrations of pioneer heritage to several voluntary organizations. The most significant of these are the Sons of the Utah Pioneers (SUP) and the generally more active and ambitious Daughters of Utah Pioneers (DUP). These groups modeled themselves after the Daughters of the American Revolution, and like the DAR they dedicate themselves to historical preservation of a particular event by collecting relics and documents, staffing museums, publishing books and pamphlets, and organizing commemorative occasions. Also in the spirit of the DAR, the DUP restricts its membership to women with pioneer ancestry. They are the self-appointed guardians of Mormonism's pioneer heritage by virtue of their birthright. Another group, "Days of '47 Inc." grew out of the SUP in 1947 to take over the Pioneer Day festivities in Salt Lake City. They conceive themselves as a public interest organization responsible for planning civic events that serve the whole Salt Lake City community and not just LDS Church members.

Markers and monuments: The DUP, SUP, the Mormon Trail Association, the state of Utah, the National Park Service, the LDS Church, and other organizations erect and maintain monuments and plaques to the pioneers at various sites along the Mormon Trail and throughout the Mormon West. Stanley

B. Kimball's *Discovering Mormon Trails* has been a popular guide book to these resources.² The most impressive and famous is the "This is the Place" Monument where Emigration Canyon empties into Salt Lake City (Figure 2 and 3). From atop his perch on a 60 foot high column of granite, a bronze Brigham Young along with Mormon leaders Heber C. Kimball and Wilford Woodruff scan the Valley their people colonized and reminds today's Utahans of their legacy. A state commission made up of people from various faiths designed and built the current marker in 1937 in anticipation of the 1947 Pioneer Day centennial. In addition to Mormon leaders, seventeen bronze friezes and two smaller statues adorning the 206 foot long base of the monument the monument honor various trappers, immigrants, Native Americans, and Spanish and U.S. government explorers.³

²Stanley B. Kimball, *Discovering Mormon Trails* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979).

³Edgar T. Lyon, *This is the Place Monument, Story and History* (Salt Lake City, 1955).

Figure 2. This photograph of Mormon dignitaries was taken at the dedication of the first This is the Place monument during the Diamond Jubilee Pioneer Day celebration in 1922. Standing in the center of the group are then Church President Heber J. Grant and Lorenzo Zobieski Young—last survivor of the original pioneer company of July 1847. Notice the pioneer costumes worn by many in the photograph. Photograph from James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976) p. 510.



2007: The pioneer period with the first settlers waiting for the

Figure 3. The current "This is the Place" monument.

time. These hymns dwell on the hardships of the pioneer life and the importance of

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and "This is the Place" survive to the day as Mormon favorites.

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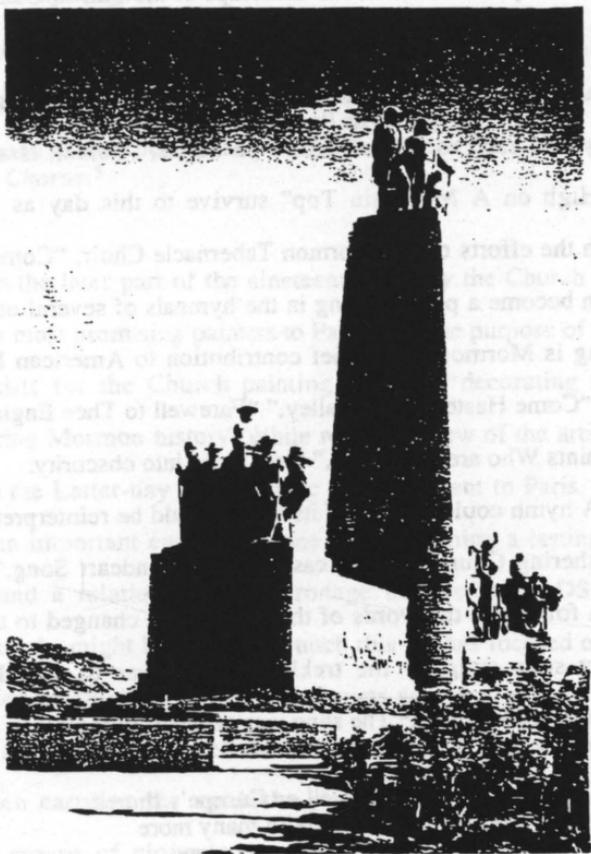
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Song: The pioneer period was the most fruitful hymn writing era in Mormon history. Most of the hymns unique to Mormonism were written at this time. These hymns dwelt on the hardships of the trail to Utah, the importance of leaving Babylon to gather in God's kingdom, and on the religious, political, and economic deliverance the Saints expected to find in fleeing to Zion. Many of these hymns, such as "Come, Come ye Saints," "Israel, Israel God is Calling," and "High on A Mountain Top" survive to this day as Mormon favorites. Through the efforts of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, "Come, Come ye Saints" has even become a popular song in the hymnals of several other denominations. The song is Mormonism's chief contribution to American hymnology. Others such as "Come Haste To the Valley," "Farewell to Thee England," and "A Word to the Saints Who are Gathering," have faded into obscurity.

A hymn could survive if its theme could be reinterpreted as relevant in a post-Gathering Church. In the case of the "Handcart Song," the most famous Mormon folk tune, the words of the hymn were changed to transform it from a marching song sung by the trekkers themselves to a children's hymn that remembered their efforts.⁴ The song was originally sung:

Ye Saints that dwell on Europe's shores
Prepare yourselves with many more
To leave behind your native land
For sure God's Judgments are at Hand
Chorus:
For some must push and some must pull
As we go marching up the hill,
As merrily on the way we go

⁴Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion*, 257-276. Thomas E. Cheney, *Mormon Songs from the Rocky Mountains* (Austin and London: The University of Texas Press, 1968).

Until we reach the Valley, oh!

Today the hymn goes:

When pioneers moved to the West
With courage strong they met the test
they pushed their handcarts all day long
and as they pushed they sang this song:
*Chorus:*⁵

Art: In the later part of the nineteenth century the Church sent some of Mormondom's most promising painters to Paris with the purpose of training them as official artists for the Church painting portraits, decorating temples, and visually honoring Mormon history. While relatively few of the artists who have contributed to the Latter-day Saint artistic "canon" went to Paris, the Paris Art mission was an important early milestone in establishing a lasting tradition of Mormon art and a relationship of patronage between the LDS Church and Mormon artists. As might be expected, much this art has focused on the pioneer experience. Pioneer "high art" invariably depicts scenes of tragedy, e.g. burying of those who succumbed to the elements on the trail (Figure 4. Price); heroism, e.g. young men carrying the aged, the young, and the sick across rivers; or triumph, e.g. groups of pioneers entering the valley (Figure 5. Teichert). In Mormon art one rarely, sees depictions of the pioneers stopping for a rest or enjoying themselves around a campfire.

⁵"The Handcart Song." *Children's Songbook* (Salt Lake City: Corporation of the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989), 220.

Some of the most frequently reproduced Mormon historical images come from Danish convert C. C. A. Christensen's "Mormon Panorama"—a series of 22 eight-by-ten foot paintings on one long canvas that recount dramatic episodes in the history of the Restoration. (See Figure 6.) During the nineteenth century the Panorama was scrolled on two long poles and each painting was shown individually and sequentially accompanied by a dramatic narration often performed by Christensen himself. In an era before movies and television, the panorama toured Mormon settlements and was used in proselytizing illiterate Native Americans. Panoramas were common throughout America in the nineteenth century and the "Mormon Panorama" may be the last surviving example of this genre.⁶ The first panel of the Panorama (now lost unfortunately) depicted Joseph Smith's first vision and the Panorama climaxed with the last few panels depicting the exodus and arrival of the pioneers in Utah. In culminating with the arrival in Utah the Panorama helped contribute to a sense among Mormons that this event constituted the "end of sacred history," or at least the end of the heroic era of Mormon history.⁷

Pioneer themes are also a distinctive feature of Utah folk, commercial, and tourist art. Covered wagons and handcarts adorn products ranging from quilts to refrigerator magnets and help peddle products as diverse as condominium time-shares and t-shirts celebrating the International Olympic committee's awarding the 2002 Winter Olympics to Salt Lake City. (Figures 7 and 8.)

⁶Private conversation with Ron Tyler, professor of art history at the University of Texas at Austin, 1997.

⁷*Mormon Panorama Homepage*, <http://cougarnet.byu.edu/tmcbucs/moa/CCA.html>.

Figure 4. Kelly Clark Price, *The Martin Handcart Company*, 1980.



Figure 5. Minerva Kohlhepp Teichert (1888-1976). *Handcart Pioneers*. 1930.

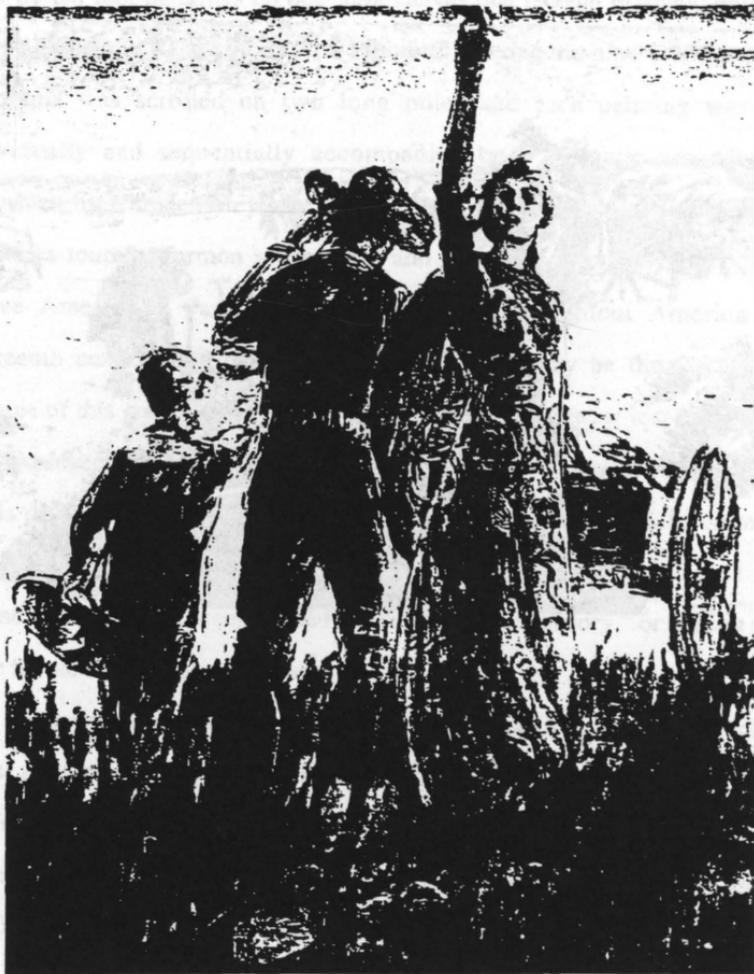


Figure 6. A panel from C. C. A. Christensen's "Mormon Panorama."



Figure 7. A Salt Lake Tribune Advertisement, 15 July 1995.

Even the Pioneers Vacationed!



Spend July 24th in beautiful *PARK CITY*
Bed & Breakfast ♦ Condominiums ♦ Dorm Space

PARK CITY RESERVATIONS

800 453-5789 Ju

Figure 8. A Salt Lake Tribune Advertisement, 15 July 1995. (Notice the creative 11 year time conflation of juxtaposing a handcart with Brigham Young's famous pronouncement.)

"ZIS IS ZEE" T-SHIRT FOR ALL YOU OLYMPICS FANS



Salt Lake Tribune cartoonist Pat Bagley's editorial sketch the day after Utah became the 2002 Winter Olympics site is now in color on a 100% cotton t-shirt. It's fun. It's foolish. It's available only at the TribStore for \$12.50. Comes in large and extra-large. To get yours send check or money order to..

TRIBSTORE

143 S. MAIN
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84111

HOURS: MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY 10 A.M. TO 3 P.M.

Literature: The pioneer trek-memorializing book and pamphlet series published by the DUP under the long and vigorous leadership of Kate B. Carter were widely read in the past but are lesser known today.⁸ However, the internationally read official Church magazines regularly recount faith-promoting episodes from 1847-1869 pioneer history. Bookstores catering to LDS clientele throughout the American West sell historical novels and children's books featuring pioneer themes. In high-brow Mormon literary circles, many critics consider Virginia Sorensen's 1949 novel *The Evening and the Morning* to be the best Mormon novel yet published. Its plot unfolds in the context of six days of reminiscing around and during a 1920s July 24th Pioneer Day celebration in rural Sanpete County, Utah.⁹ Author Gerald Lund's series of historical novels, *The Work and the Glory* has achieved the greatest popular and financial success in the 1990s, and perhaps ever, for Mormon literature. As with the "Mormon Panorama" these novels climax and end with the Pioneer's arrival in the Salt Lake Valley reflecting a common cut-off point of popular interest in Mormon history. The introduction to the first of popular Mormon author Dean Hughes' *Children of the Promise* series set in 1940s Salt Lake City self-consciously states that it sets out

⁸Kate B. Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, twelve volumes (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, various years). Kate B. Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, six volumes (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, various years). Kate B. Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, seventeen volumes (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers).

⁹Virginia Sorensen, *The Evening and the Morning* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949).

explore an important era in Church history whose events are not often recounted.¹⁰

Museums: The LDS Church's Museum of Church History and Art houses hundreds of paintings on pioneer themes and displays pioneer artifacts in a walk-through exhibit that recapitulates pioneer chronology. The DUP's far less polished but even more well-stocked Pioneer Memorial Museum in Salt Lake City bills itself as the "world's largest collection of pioneer artifacts"¹¹ and has enshrined not only such notable antiquarian items as Brigham Young's wagon but numerous pistols, blankets, tooth brushes, and other items brought by the pioneers to Utah. Scores of smaller DUP "relic halls" scattered throughout the Mormon West have similar collections of local history artifacts.

dramatic presentations: Mormons have long used theater as a means of transferring the memory of significant historical occurrences to those who did not live through them. Since their earliest arrival in Utah, Mormons have commemorated their trek in various dramatic productions. Since its composition in conjunction with the 1947 pioneer centennial, playwright Crawford Gates's musical *Promised Valley* has been a favorite of professional and community theater companies throughout the Mormon West. In honor of the 1997

¹⁰Dean L. Hughes, *Children of the Promise, vol. 1: Rumors of War* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), ix.

¹¹Magazine advertisement for the DUP museum in *This is the Place: Salt Lake City Visitors Guide, 1993-94* (no publication information).

sesquicentennial of the pioneer's arrival in Utah, the Church commissioned a new play with the intention that it be performed in local congregations world-wide.¹²

In a cultural expression similar to theater but on a grander scale, Mormon-sponsored historical pageants draw tens of thousands of Mormons and Gentiles alike to Hill Cumorah, New York, Nauvoo, Illinois, Independence, Missouri, (all places with historical significance to Mormons), the temple grounds in Manti, Utah, and Oakland, California, and most recently at the country music Mecca of Branson, Missouri. These extravagant spectacles employ hundreds of young Mormon volunteers as cast members and utilize spectacular pyrotechnics and visual effects. They recreate and celebrate historical episodes from the founding of America, the Book of Mormon, and especially in the case of the Nauvoo, Manti, Oakland, and Branson pageants, the trek of Utah's pioneers.¹³ Recently, the pioneer trek worked its way into film when it served as the climax of a big-budget, 70 millimeter film, *Legacy*, that has become a major tourist attraction in Salt Lake City.

Living history: Historian Jay Anderson explains that living history is people employing the clothing, tools, and manner of a bygone era to "time travel" (or create the experiential impression of going back in time) from the mundane present to a revered past.¹⁴ Time travel through living historic reenactment is a

¹²Telephone interview by author with a Church administrator in the Office of the Presiding Bishopric, Salt Lake City, Utah, January, 1994.

¹³Interestingly, Mormon pageants thrive today despite David Glassberg's assertion in his seminal work on American historical pageantry that such events had all disappeared by World War II. David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*.

¹⁴Jay Anderson, *Time Machines: The World of Living History* (Nashville: The American Association for State and Local History, 1984).

particularly attractive prospect to Mormons, whose past is not only revered but sacred. Not long after the end of the pioneer period, Mormons began celebrating Pioneer Day by donning gingham dresses and sun bonnets, or straw hats and boots, in emulation of their ancestors. This practice had already begun while many trek participants were still living. (See Figure 2.) While Pioneer garb—often of dubious similarity to actual pioneer fashions—is sometimes worn for a party at the local church meeting house, in other cases it is a facet of participation in a pageant or parade where the participant also pulls a handcart, rides in a wagon or delivers an oration in pioneer persona.

The State of Utah also honors pioneers through its maintenance of Pioneer Trail State Park, which houses a model pioneer village staffed by living history enactors. “Old Deseret” is a composite historic settlement, representing Utah life from 1847 to 1869. In a major park renewal project that took place in the late 1990s, the park’s curators debated about whether “generic” or markedly Mormon pioneers would be depicted in the living historical displays modeled after similar enterprises at Virginia’s Colonial Williamsburg and Massachusetts’ Plymouth Plantation. While detractors feared that actors portraying Mormon Pioneers would put-off certain prejudiced potential visitors, the winning faction maintained that tourists would be shocked *not* to find Mormon pioneers at a Utah historic theme park.¹⁵ A similar enterprise, “Sons of the Utah Pioneers Village,” is an attraction at Lagoon—Utah’s chief amusement park.

¹⁵Telephone interview by author with Pioneer Trail State Park employee, February 1997.

In modern Mormon country, youth and young adult groups often load bare necessities onto handcarts and rough it in the wilderness for several days seeking reform, self-awareness, increased teamwork, and/or challenging escapism from the banalities of suburban living. Organizations ranging from rehabilitation efforts for delinquent teenagers such as the Utah-based "Challenger" and "Anasazi" programs, to the decidedly sober and ambitious Brigham Young University student government use this strategy.¹⁶ People often return from these "dude pioneering" struggles with feelings of renewal and betterment not unlike those reported by returnees from dude ranches.

BYU student association president Wesley McDougal said the main purpose of the 1995 "Leadership Trek" he organized was to train new leaders and bond the disparate student service organizations of the University more closely together. Historians of Mormonism suggest that developing leadership and creating a sense of unity and identity through shared experience is exactly what the 1847-69 trek accomplished for the whole of the Church. Surely, McDougal hoped that his efforts would recapitulate this effect for the smaller world of BYU student government using a particularly resonant symbol (the handcart) with which all the participants would be familiar.

¹⁶Rebecca Broadbent. "BYUSA officers, student leaders participate in pioneer trek." *The Daily Universe*, 11 July 11, 1995, 3.

Figure 9. BYU students pull a handcart as part of a leadership exercise. July 1995.



Rebecca Broadbent/Universe

BYUSA PULLS ACROSS THE PLAINS: Thirty students, including BYUSA officers and other leaders, pull together to get handcarts up a steep hill

as part of the Student Leadership Trek that took place last weekend. Participants traveled approximately 15 miles on a dirt road.

Until 1997, the most ambitious assumption of pioneer personae took place during the SUP's 1947 centennial recreation of the advance party's journey from Nauvoo to the Salt Lake Valley. Great care was taken to include the same number of participants in the right male-to-female and child-to-adult ratios, to travel the same number of miles per day, and to camp in the same sites as Brigham Young's party did. Unfortunately, the disruption caused by World War II scuttled plans to travel in real covered wagons, so canvas-covered automobiles adorned with plywood oxen jutting from their hoods served as substitutes.¹⁷

For the 1997 sesquicentennial, thousands of Mormons and Western history buffs recapitulated the trek again in a way that strove not to exactly recapitulate any particular one of the nineteenth-century pioneer companies, but to capture the "spirit and purpose" of the whole 1847-1869 plains crossing experience.¹⁸ This time real wagons and handcarts were used and a core group of participants strove for authenticity down to the last detail of costume and cooking while others came as they were. Some walked or rode wagons the whole way from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City, other signed up to walk or ride only for a few days. Regional newspapers, Church magazines, and Internet sites and news groups followed the progress of this endeavor. Church public relations work focused on raising positive national awareness through news coverage of sesquicentennial activities

¹⁷James D. Cannon, ed., *Centennial Caravan: Story of the 1947 Centennial Reenactment of the Original Mormon Trek from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Salt Lake Valley July 14 to 22, 1947* (Salt Lake City: The Sons of the Utah Pioneers, 1948).

¹⁸Interview with Brian Hill, president of the 1997 Mormon Pioneer Trek conducted at the Mormon History Association Meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, 23 May 1997.

including the trek recapitulation. By the end of the trek, it had become a minor world-wide media phenomenon.¹⁹

Oral tradition. Perhaps the practice most responsible for keeping the pioneer memory alive is talking about them. It happens formally and informally at church and on special occasions such as Pioneer Day. For many Mormons, pioneer stories are part of their oral family history and shared stories of heroic ancestors help bind together extended families whose filial piety focuses on the pioneer era of their ancestry. Traditionally, in talking about pioneers, Mormons express respect and gratitude for their accomplishments and remind themselves of their duty to live true to their memory and carry on the work they began.²⁰ These stories are also provide humorous release and are used by story-tellers to illustrate principles of faith, dedication, and commitment that Mormons still find relevant today.

Since the 1950s, folklorists and their students at Utah State University and Brigham Young University have amassed in the folklore archives of both institutions a prodigious collection of transcribed folklore about Pioneers from the Mormon oral narrative tradition. The living dean of Mormon folklore, William A. Wilson, considers the large body of pioneer narratives to be the Latter-day Saints' "most gripping cycle of stories."²¹

¹⁹Matthew Brown, "World Media Shine Spotlight on Wagon Train Hoopla," *The Salt Lake Tribune* website, 21 July 1997.

²⁰Olsen, "Community Celebrations," 40-45.

²¹William A. Wilson, "Mormon Narratives: The Lore of Faith," *Western Folklore* 54, no. 4 (October 1995): 307.

Below are three examples drawn from Brigham Young University's archive that give a sense of how late twentieth-century Mormons of Pioneer descent maintain a living connection to the sacred past of their family and their faith.²² The theme of carrying on with the Saints toward Zion despite families torn apart by conversion and death dominates these stories. Mormon folklore touches repeatedly on this theme highlighting a central value of Mormon culture. Story #1 shows a striking way in which material objects link Mormons to the pioneer stories of their ancestors. Stories such as #3 show that while humor is absent in pioneer art, it laces oral narratives accounts of the trek. This story also deals with tension between genders over the value of religion and personal belongings set against the need to gather.

#1

My great grandmother was a member of one of the numerous pioneer companies that came across the plains to Utah. One night, when the company was within the region of Wyoming, my great grandmother slept next to a little girl. The weather was especially bad and the temperature that night went far below zero. When they awoke the next morning, they found that the little girl had frozen to death and my great grandmother's long hair was frozen to the stiff body. The only way they could get them separated was to cut my great grandmother's hair. The pair of scissors they used have been passed on from generation to generation since that time and are now in the possession of my aunt.

(Collected December, 1965, by Mary Strong in Springville, Utah. The narrator is a woman.)

²²Special thanks is due to William A. Wilson and BYU folklore archivist Kristi Bell for their help in assembling these stories.

#2

The McCareys were among the several thousand Mormons who lost all their worldly possessions in the tragic mid-winter exodus from their beloved homes in Nauvoo, [Illinois]. With little food and scant protection from the elements, they suffered greatly from hunger and disease at Winter Quarters, [Iowa], and during their long migration to Salt Lake City. Yet on reaching the Platte River crossing, they were still in sufficiently good condition to kneel together and thank the Lord for getting them through the worst part of the journey.

During the river crossing, cholera broke out among the members of the company. The terrible disease raged throughout the camp. Dozens died. It was necessary for James McCarey to assist in digging graves for the victims. James was a willing worker and finished three graves that October morning, even though he began to feel a little ill as he started the third. A short time after the last grave was completed, James was dead from the effects of cholera. His young daughters Victoria and Mary helped their mother wrap him in an old blanket, place him in the grave, and cover him with the dirt he had spaded up two hours earlier.

(Collected December, 1964, by Steven C. Walker from his mother in Spanish Fork, Utah. Walker is the great-great-grandson of one of the little girls who helped bury her father.)

#3

Some ancestor of mine, I don't know exactly who it was, but it was some lady, was coming across the plains in a covered wagon she was sharing with some other folks. Well, they got so far and the wagon wouldn't go any further, it was too heavy, so they told the folks that they'd have to leave behind some of their belongings. They went a little farther and it still got to be too heavy, so the folks had to eliminate some more of their personal belongings. When they finally reached the Salt Lake Valley, they unloaded the wagon. What did they find then, with many of their belongings gone, but a whole collection of big rocks that my ancestor had been collecting all along the way.

(Collected by Peggy Hansen in July 1971 in Provo, Utah. Told by Judy Bentley who learned this story from her own father. He related the story in a Mormon gathering some time ago, when

different members were requested to relate pioneer tales of their ancestors crossing the plains.)

The number of family pioneer stories such as these turned in to the BYU folklore archive have steadily declined since the 1960s.²³ This may be the result of changing emphasis among different folklore professors at BYU and/or the increasing percentage of students whose parents were converts to Mormonism. It may also simply reflect the fading significance of pioneers and the increased number of generations between story-tellers and those who experienced the events. Whether or not the 1997 sesquicentennial prompts a long-term revival of the Pioneer stories genre of Mormon folklore remains to be seen.

Pioneer Day parades: The most well-developed expressions of the pioneers' importance in Mormon cultural memory are the annual July 24th "Pioneer Day" celebrations. In honor of the pioneers, costumed recreations of pioneer events, commemorative lectures at local Church buildings, and especially parades are held on this day in over 80 towns and cities throughout the Mormon West. Sociologist Thomas O'Dea has called Pioneer Day "the greatest Mormon Holiday."²⁴ In most communities where it is observed, Pioneer Day functions outstrip in participation and significance even those surrounding the Fourth of July. The saga of the pioneers is especially well-suited to commemoration in a parade format. As trek reenactors parade down various main streets, they perform "micro-treks" that recapitulate in miniature the events that they honor.

²³Personal conversation with William A. Wilson, March, 1997.

²⁴Thomas O'Dea, *The Mormons*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1957).

Being the end point of the Mormon trail and the geographic center of Mormondom, Salt Lake City hosts the largest celebration of pioneer heritage in North America—the annual month-long “Days of ‘47” civic celebration. After Pasadena, California’s Rose Bowl Parade and New York City’s Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade, Salt Lake City’s Day’s of ‘47 celebration boasts the third largest annual parade in the United States, with 150,000 to 300,000 spectators lining the streets and simultaneous telecasts in seven states.²⁵ Floats with pioneer themes and pioneer reenactors riding wagons and pushing handcarts are central features of this event.

To provide historical background for making sense of the contemporary Pioneer Day celebrations analyzed in later chapters, it is useful to examine the origin and evolution of Pioneer Day celebrations. Unlike other holiday traditions whose antecedents and influences are often multiple and ancient, the origin of Pioneer Day celebrations can be pin-pointed in time. This is not to say that the forms of Pioneer Day celebratory practice were not influenced by preceding and surrounding cultural patterns, but these forms were given their current meaning and set on their current course of development on July 24th, 1849 when the first Mormon Pioneer Day was celebrated.

To a remarkable degree, the first Pioneer Day etched grooves along which celebratory activity has flowed to this day. The general conception and types of activities that characterize Pioneer Day remain surprisingly similar even though some forms and sensibilities have changed with the times.

²⁵“Saints Celebrate Pioneer Day.” *The Ensign of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* 10 (1993): 75. A Day’s of ‘47 Inc. flyer in my possession. (no publication information).

The features of the first "Pioneer Day" were strongly influenced by the concerns of Mormondom in the late 1840s. As the years progressed, the shape of participation in Pioneer Day manifested the evolving, often tense, relationship between Mormondom and the United States government. In March of 1849, the Mormons petitioned Congress for a territorial government. The request Dr. John M. Bernhisel carried to Washington D.C. proposed Brigham Young as territorial governor and included an endorsement by Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois as well as the supporting signatures of numerous Latter-day Saints.²⁶

After this petition left for Washington, the provisional government of Deseret held its first session in Salt Lake City on July 2, 1849. Full of enthusiasm about their new society and eager to enjoy greater autonomy than that which would be provided by territorial administration, the Deseret legislature decided to supersede the territorial petition with a memorial proposing Deseret's admittance to the Union as a state. They quickly drafted a state constitution and elected Almon W. Babbitt as a delegate to congress and sent him to Washington to plead their case.²⁷

No resolution on either measure was announced until September 9, 1850, when President Millard Fillmore signed legislation making Utah a territory. News of this decision did not reach Utah until January of 1850. During the summer and fall of 1849, in the absence of information, Mormondom bristled with optimism, entertained grand visions of its potential, and reveled in the power of self-

²⁶Edward H. Anderson, "How the First Pioneer Day Was Celebrated," *Improvement Era* 12 (July 1909): 693.

²⁷Anderson, "The First Pioneer Day," 693.

determination and government-making. Minds were turned to romantic nationalist plans and ideas. Full of confidence, the Provisional Government of Deseret went ahead and made laws and passed measures—most of which were later adopted by the Territorial Legislature.²⁸

This is the political climate in which the first Pioneer Day took place so close to 1849's 4th of July. Edward H. Anderson identifies three issues that were uppermost in the minds of the organizers and participants of the first Pioneer Day celebration 1) American patriotism surrounding Independence Day that was reinforced by the fact that Utah now lay within the boundaries of the United States of America since the victorious 1848 end of the Mexican War in which Mormons participated one year before; 2) the second anniversary of the Latter-day Saints' entrance into the Great Salt Lake Valley; and 3) the hope of entering the Union with the autonomous rights and privileges of a full-fledged state.²⁹

At 7:00 AM on July 24th, 1849, cannon fire and martial music awakened Salt Lake City's inhabitants for the first "July 24th Celebration."³⁰ (It was not known as Pioneer Day until all of the Nauvoo's inhabitants who were coming had by about 1850.) In the brush and timber provisional tabernacle called "the Bowery" on Temple Square, the Saints gathered to enjoy "music, firing of musketry and artillery, shouts and hurrahs, the unfolding and hoisting on a large

²⁸Anderson, "The First Pioneer Day," 694.

²⁹Anderson, "The First Pioneer Day," 694.

³⁰Grand Scribe of the July 24th, 1849 celebration as quoted in Tullidge's *History of Utah*, as quoted in Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, vol. 7, 90.

liberty pole of an immense national flag made by the ‘Mormon women.’”³¹ A procession followed consisting of such features a brass band, 24 bishops carrying banners of their respective wards, twenty-four young women each carrying a Bible and Book of Mormon with one carrying a banner proclaiming “Hail to Our Chief.” One young man in the procession, Richard Ballantyne, carried a copy of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States which he solemnly presented to Brigham Young with a prepared speech reaffirming the sacredness of these founding American documents, Latter-day Saint loyalty to their ideals, and Latter-day Saint fealty to Brigham Young as “our future governor and defender of our rights.” This was followed by three cheers of “Long live the Governor of the State of Deseret.”³²

Mormon apostle Erastus Snow then read the Declaration of Independence to the assembled crowd and led them in a “Hosanna Shout”—a Mormon practice recapitulating ancient Israel—reserved only for the holiest and happiest of occasions such as temple dedications. Feasting, games, and contests followed the procession and presentations. Sixty Indians as well as hundreds of Gentile immigrants on their way to California celebrated together with the Saints.³³

The Mormons’ sense of Americanness and their association of the first Pioneer Day with Independence day can be seen in Richard Ballantyne’s calling July 24, 1849 a “celebration of our Independence.”³⁴ Brigham Young underscored

³¹Anderson, “The First Pioneer Day,” 694.

³²Richard Ballantyne as quoted in Anderson, “The First Pioneer Day,” 695.

³³Tullidge’s *History of Utah* as quoted in Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, vol. 7, 91.

³⁴Richard Ballantyne as quoted in Anderson, “The First Pioneer Day,” 695.

this parallel, as well as displayed his practical-minded sense of humor, by remarking on the first Pioneer Day, "The reason we are celebrating the twenty-fourth instead of the Fourth of July is that twenty more days were needed for some of our vegetables to mature. We waited so that we could have beets and cucumbers for our feast today."³⁵

On the first Pioneer Day, martial bands, veterans groups, and general militaristic participation were established as appropriate features. The especially patriotic and Americanist tone surrounding the special circumstances of 1849 have not been as pronounced in subsequent celebrations, except during war-years.³⁶ Still, a flag raising ceremony is standard on any year for any Pioneer Day celebration in the United States.

As later chapters will show, the principle of community inclusion, especially of Native Americans, continued and grew in importance over the years. The nature of this inclusion, and in many communities, the nature of the celebration itself, responded to the broad systematic rethinking of American race-relations that happened during the 1960s. Feasting, sports, contests, and games continue to dominate Pioneer Day celebrations while the procession has evolved into a parade as the central focused event in most communities. In many smaller communities, cannon firing, anvil blasting, fire engine racing, or some other raucous enterprise still wakes the community for the day's festivities.

³⁵Brigham Young as quoted in Annie Lynch, "Celebration of Utah Pioneer Day, 1918," *New West Magazine* 9 (July-August 1918): 37-50.

³⁶Annie Lynch, "Celebration of Utah Pioneer Day, 1918," 38.

The hosanna shout has disappeared as have the features of Pioneer Day that focus on Mormon hopes for immanent endowment of autonomy. Today, the holiday is much more retrospective than forward looking and Mormons no longer hope for an immediate attainment of political self-determination for their geographic Kingdom.

In the nineteenth century, Mormons and antagonistic Gentiles held very different views about the significance of Pioneer Day. To Mormons, July 24th was an extension and reaffirmation of their exceptionally strong patriotism as loyal citizens especially protected in their unpopular beliefs and practices by uniquely American constitutional liberties. To their Gentile detractors, Pioneer Day seemed clear evidence of Mormons' split allegiance between the United States and Deseret that favored Mormon theocracy over American democracy. The "Hail to our Chief" banner marched in the 1849 procession could have just as easily referred to Brigham Young as president Fillmore. To Mormons, such expressions made patriotic sense; to the Gentiles such expressions were highly worrisome and eventually contributed to U.S. government punitive intervention in Utah.

On July 24th 1857, while celebrating Pioneer Day in Big Cottonwood Canyon with an encampment of saints, a rider brought word to Brigham Young that the United States Army was on its way to Utah to "put down rebellion" and remove Brigham from office as Territorial governor.³⁷ It struck Brigham Young and the Latter-day Saints as particularly ironic that the Mormons would learn of

³⁷Orson F. Whitney's *History of Utah*, as quoted in Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, vol. 7, 92-96.

the U.S. Army's imminent invasion of Utah on a day its citizens devoted to celebrating their patriotism. According to Mormon leader Orson F. Whitney. On this day "the stars and stripes were unfurled from the summits of two of the loftiest peaks surrounding the encampment; also from the tops of two of the tallest trees."³⁸

To Col. Albert Sidney Johnston who led the occupational force, it was appropriate that his Army's arrival should spoil the Mormons' celebration of their foundation of a political domain incompatible with, and outside the pale of, American civilization. While his expedition turned out to be an embarrassing fiasco for President Buchanan, and while many of its long term goals were sidetracked by the Civil War, The "Mormon War" did remove Brigham Young as governor and signaled the beginning of the federal government's successful campaign against Mormon polygamy and theocracy.³⁹

³⁸Orson F. Whitney's *History of Utah*, as quoted in Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, vol. 7. 95.

³⁹See Charles P. Roland, *Albert Sidney Johnston: Soldier of Three Republics* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993).

Figure 10. An invitation to the 1856 Pioneer Day Picnic Party.

PIC-NIC PARTY
AT THE
HEADWATERS OF BIG COTTONWOOD.



Pres. Brigham Young respectfully
invites Mrs H. B. Clawson Es. and
family to attend a Picnic Party at the
Lake in Big Cottonwood Canyon on
THURSDAY, 24TH OF JULY.

You will be required to start from the city very early on Wednes-
day morning, as no one will be permitted, after 2 o'clock, p.m., of the
23d, to pass the first mill, about four miles up the Canyon.

All persons are forbid to make or kindle fires at any place in the Kan-
yon, except on the camp ground.

G. S. L. City, July 13, 1856.



In the later nineteenth century, invitation to, and participation in, July 24th celebrations were litmus tests of the tensions of the day. After the failure of Reconstruction in the South, the federal government took up the more manageable task of "reconstructing" Utah. It made no ham-handed use of federal troops this time, but relied instead on legislation, federal marshals to arrest polygamists, and forced receivership of the territory under a five man Utah commission selected by congress to run the territory and disenfranchise the Church.

In the 1880 Jubilee celebration of the organization of the Church, while Mormons prepared for an especially extravagant Pioneer Day, Salt Lake City Gentiles under the direction of Utah's Governor Eli H. Murray planned a counter-celebration on the 4th of July. There was a small parade with a large group of spectators. Murray conspicuously snubbed Brigham Young and no Mormons were invited to participate. To the Latter-day Saints, the Gentiles' message about Mormon unworthiness to participate in Independence Day celebrations was made clear.

For their celebration on the 24th, the Mormons sent invitations to Governor Murray and other federal officials. Most accepted their invitations. Governor Murray's acceptance letter was especially gracious. He said he would be delighted to honor "the Pioneers, [for their role] in opening up the great west and this beautiful valley." However, apparently after some consultation, governor Murray and all the federal officials decided to stay away from the Mormon

celebration lest their presence aid Mormons in their efforts in presenting a respectable public image before the country.⁴⁰

By 1880, Pioneer Day parades included 1847-50 Pioneers as honored participants in the parade.⁴¹ Also, the practice of floats creating scenes of American history beginning with Plymouth Rock and leading up to representations of Mormon pioneers “attired in old fashioned style and surrounded with rude furniture and implements” had been established.⁴²

Pioneer Day became a showcase for what we today might call cultural diversity—such as it existed in Utah. In 1883 members of the Chinese community in the town of Bountiful carried a dragon in the Pioneer Day Parade. According to observer Annie C. Carr “The din of pans ... could be heard for blocks.”⁴³ Mormons prided Deseret as a mini-melting pot and the Church as an umbrella under which people from all cultures could find refuge. During the 1880 Salt Lake City Pioneer Day celebration, the aged apostle Orson Pratt organized an event designed to show the varied backgrounds of the Latter-day Saints gathered in Zion. While Elder Pratt spoke, 25 Mormons in national costume arranged themselves on a platform before the assembled Pioneer Day celebrants. They represented their lands of origin and all 25 “countries in which the mission work of the church had been introduced.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, vol. 7, 97.

⁴¹“The Twenty-Fourth,” *Contributor* 1 (August 1880): 259-63.

⁴²“The Twenty-Fourth,” 262.

⁴³Annie C. Carr as quoted in Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, vol. 7, 107.

⁴⁴Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, vol. 7, 97.

In most communities, Mormons were especially eager to ensure Indian participation by inviting nearby Native American communities to feast, march in the parade "in Indian regalia," and participate in historical recreations. Many late nineteenth and early twentieth-century accounts tell of Indians, and/or whites dressed as such, abducting parade participants, willing and unwilling, who were later released after parlaying with the Brigham Young impersonator. In other instances, as was often the case, the abductee would be burned at the stake and later be found out to be made of straw.

Over half of the accounts of various towns' late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Pioneer Days collected by Kate Carter for *Heart Throbs of the West* relate this apparently very popular practice of faux attacks and abductions perpetrated in front of surprised audiences by Indian impersonators and sometimes real Native Americans. These raids seem to have been similar to Santa Claus stories in that children were led to believe that they were real but by adulthood people realized they were a sham. The place of Native Americans in Pioneer Day celebrations is treated in more detail in Chapter Six.

The 1890 manifesto announcing that the Church would cease sanctioning plural marriage marked the beginning of a new era in Church policy and heralded the beginning of reconciliation between The Church's hierarchy and the United States' Government, as well as between Mormons and Gentiles in Utah.

At the Semi-Centennial Pioneer Day Celebration in 1897, one enthusiastic observer proclaimed,

The Mardi Gras festival and fiestas of other cities ... are not to be compared with the splendors of the past five days in this city. Gorgeous floats, which were never equaled in number or in effect, thousands of marching children, a band of pioneers who, 50 years ago, first turned their eyes upon this valley in all the beauty of its barrenness; the richest products of the field, the mine and the factory, and above all, an American manhood and womanhood which are the crowning glories of the state—.⁴⁵

The positive mention of mining in the same sentence as “products of the field” would have been odd in Brigham Young’s day when the Church encouraged agriculture and strongly discouraged the development of Utah’s mineral wealth while influential Gentile developers encouraged just the opposite.⁴⁶

As tensions eased, Pioneer Day lost its meaning as a shibboleth dividing Mormons and Gentiles and quickly began to serve again as a community celebration in the various municipalities where it was held. The Salt Lake City parade of 1910 highlighted the degree of rapprochement that had occurred in the twenty years since 1890. In 1857, Mormon guerrillas were burning U.S. Army supply trains and in 1880 federal appointees in Salt Lake City thought it best to steer clear of Pioneer Day. But in 1910 Mormons responded enthusiastically to the War Department’s authorization for troops from Ft. Douglas to march a full brigade in the Pioneer Day parade.⁴⁷ Long forgotten were the tense days of Ft.

⁴⁵*The Millennial Star* as quoted in Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, vol. 7, 98.

⁴⁶See Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976).

⁴⁷H. B. Folsom as quoted in Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, vol. 7, 100.

Douglas' founding when Col. Patrick O'Connor moved his garrison north from Camp Floyd 50 miles south of Salt Lake to give his artillery immediate command of Brigham Young's house and Temple Square from Ft. Douglas' perch in the hills east of the Salt Lake Valley.⁴⁸

Pioneer Day's spread across the West closely followed the general pattern of Mormon colonization. With little resources and other more pressing concerns, a new village's first Pioneer day or two was often little more than a religious service. Soon after its founding however, each new community would begin celebrating Pioneer Day following established patterns. Mormon villagers saw being able to put on a decent pioneer day celebration as a sign of successful colonization. For example, Jennie Walker Johnson records that the Pioneer Day celebration during Pleasant Grove Utah's founding year of 1850 was "in the nature of a religious meeting. The program consisted of songs and speeches and experiences of the founders of the community. A little later parades were instituted as part of the enjoyment" and the celebration took on more of the tone of revelry.⁴⁹

With its large Gentile population, as the Church's headquarters, and as the capital of the Territory of Utah, Salt Lake City's Pioneer Day celebration reflected the tightening and releasing of grand tensions between Mormondom and the American government. In the isolated villages of Deseret, Pioneer Day was relatively unaffected by such issues and reflected the more local concerns of each

⁴⁸Dean L. May, *Utah a People's History* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987).

⁴⁹Jennie Walker Johnson as quoted in Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, vol. 7, 120.

specific community. The challenges encountered by latter-twentieth-century Pioneer Day celebrations, and the special concerns some of them have faced will be dealt with in later chapters.

conclusion: Through these genres of pioneer remembrance, modern Mormons appropriate their sacred past into their own experience in the present. This is important because many of today's Mormons suspect that despite the fact the LDS scriptural canon remains open and the Church is led by a living prophet of God, their heroic "living through" of sacred history peaked in the nineteenth century, making their own lives rather mundane when compared to the cosmically significant pioneer endeavor. However, through recapitulations and renditions of an idealized pioneer past, modern Mormons can return to sacred time and space.⁵⁰ Mormon pioneer reverence and recapitulation are examples of the process described by Mircea Eliade in *The Myth of the Eternal Return* where communities remember and contact an idealized "age of the Gods" through the enactment of myths.⁵¹ The pioneer era is part of the Mormon "age of the gods" and the gathering to Zion is one of its central stories.

⁵⁰In all forms of Mormon pioneer memorialization, it is the pioneer sacred story that is the focus of the celebration—not the Israelites whose history had been recapitulated. After the Mormon arrival in Salt Lake City, the focus of recapitulative remembrance almost immediately shifted from ancient Israel to the pioneers themselves. Thus, pioneer celebrations recapitulate an event that was itself a recapitulation. This raises the interesting question of whether recapitulations of recapitulations can be fully sustained by any culture or if one degree of removal in (re)creating sacred history is the maximum limit.

⁵¹Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954).

Chapter Three: The Construction of a Memory and a Challenge to Mythic Unity

Pioneer Day celebrations and Mormon historical pageants periodically emerge and dissipate in cyclical fashion; and pioneer art, museums, and monuments steadily and consistently provide inspirational touchstones for historically-minded Mormons. But these genres of pioneer remembrance are by no means straightforward representations of historical events—nor are they intended as such. They are the products of a selective combing through history that has chosen certain aspects for highlighting while omitting and downplaying others. The genres of what David Glassberg calls “public historical imagery” and what Michael Kammen calls the “social production of memory” described in the previous section have been the central arenas for articulating, maintaining, and reshaping Mormon historical consciousness.¹ This chapter examines the content of that consciousness and the “combing process” that created it.

In discussing this process, University of Utah historian Davis Bitton draws a distinction between “history by historians,” whose purpose is to instruct and “tell it all,” and popular history, whose purpose is to revere, celebrate, display, and transfer cultural values. According to Bitton, ritualized popular history such as pageants, plays, and parades serve the Durkheimian function of “upholding and

¹“Public historical imagery” is a term coined by David Glassberg to refer to popular mobilizations of historic or traditional themes in public performative events. Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*. 2. See also Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 9.

reaffirming at regular intervals the collective sentiments and collective ideas which make [a society's] unity and personality."² In performing this role, Bitton says history is "simplified" to be made easily memorable, and it is presented in a impressive and entertaining way.³

Simplification implies a selective elision and highlighting of past events. It is a process with political implications and ramifications. The construction of the pioneer myth is no exception. Simplification raises questions such as these: Whose experience qualifies them for being revered as a pioneer? Which parts of the pioneer past have been forgotten, and which events become draped in sacred significance for later remembrance and why? What has been the end result of nearly a hundred and fifty years pioneer reverencing? In short, what kind of cultural memory has been produced by the interwoven activities of pioneer-honoring institutions and genres, and what does it tell us about today's Mormon and Utah communities?

On the eve of the twentieth century, the time between 1847 and 1869 is understood as *the* pioneer period in Mormon history. This has not always been the case. According to late Mormon historian Eugene Campbell the "time window" in which one might be classified as a pioneer expanded in the following manner:

In the Great Basin they [the Mormons] were no longer outcasts but "pioneers." Although the term initially referred to members of the 1847 advance company, Mormons who made the journey later the same year also came to be known as the "Pioneers of '47." And by the 1870s, virtually everyone who had "gathered

²Durkheim, *The Elementary forms of the Religious Life*.

³Bitton, "The Ritualization of Mormon History," 67-85.

to Zion” before the completion of the transcontinental railroad could lay claim to the title “pioneer.”⁴

The completion of the railroad in 1869 shut the time window for pioneer romance.⁵ Nevertheless, between 1869 and about 1900, tens of thousands of Mormon immigrants continued to make great sacrifices to “gather” to Utah and join with their fellow saints.⁶ Because the 1869-1900 immigrants took the train, their experience does not carry the same valence for succeeding generations, and descent from them does not qualify one for membership in any special organization such as the DUP or SUP. (Many Mormon rail immigrants would step off the train and walk for a small portion of the journey just so they could say in jest that they too had “walked across the plains to Zion.”) During the Great Depression, Church leaders made a permanent policy change and encouraged Mormon converts *not* to come to Utah. Today in fact, Mormons who have recently immigrated to Utah—far from being honored as pioneers—often feel a

⁴Campbell, *Establishing Zion*.

⁵The Utah Genealogical Society extends the pioneer designation by offering “Utah Pioneer Certificates” to two classes of people who can prove direct descent from pioneer ancestry: “Founding Pioneers” from July 1847-9 September 1850 (the time it took for all of the organized parties of Nauvoo Mormons to come to Utah) and “Territorial Pioneers” whose ancestors lived in Utah before 4 January 1896 (the date of statehood). Utah Genealogical Society Pioneer Certificate application form in author’s possession.

⁶Robert W. Sloan, *Utah Gazetteer & Directory of Logan, Ogden, Provo and Salt Lake City for 1884* (Salt Lake City: Herald Printing and Pub. Co., 1884). Sloan’s figures show only a slight drop in the numbers of immigrants after the 1869 completion of the Transcontinental Railroad and sustained immigration for several decades.

slight stigma associated with failing to stay abroad and help “build up the Church” in places where it is new and struggling.⁷

It should be remembered that even before the extension of rail service to Utah that most Mormon converts traveled by rail for at least part of the way to their destination—as close to Utah as the then current rail service could take them. Many also took ships from Europe or steamers up the Mississippi before reaching the destination from whence they would “walk across the plains” to Zion. The rail and waterborne stages of Mormon immigrant journeys are little celebrated and rarely appear in popular historical expression. Only the final stage of Mormon pioneer journeys has inspired much reenactment and celebration.

Of the groups that came to Utah during the 1847-1869 period, two in particular emerged as stereotypical in the Mormon imagination—Brigham Young’s 1847 advance party and the handcart companies of 1856-60. Both account for only a small fraction of all immigrants during the Pioneer period. The advance party numbered only 147, and the handcart pioneers accounted for fewer than 3000 out of an estimated 85,000 pre-railroad immigrants, yet these two groups, especially the latter, are disproportionally represented in art, sculpture, and eulogy.⁸ The advance company was of course important because it was first and the handcarts stand out because of their uniqueness in American history. Two

⁷As a student at BYU, several international fellow students told me of their encounters with concerned American BYU students who had served as missionaries abroad. These missionaries expressed their frustration that after having worked hard to establish Mormonism abroad, the “best and brightest” immigrated to the United States.

⁸Richard D. Poll, *History & Faith: Reflections of a Mormon Historian* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989).

of the handcart companies became stranded in winter blizzards and were rescued only after many had perished. This tragedy, coupled with the presumed difficulty of all handcart travel, made the handcart companies ripe for romantic remembrance.⁹ Yet, only in the case of the first Saints expelled from Nauvoo and the two stranded handcart companies did deaths occur in uncommon numbers by nineteenth-century traveling standards.

Moreover, Mormon pioneers on the whole probably suffered less angst and hardship on their journeys than did their westering Gentile counterparts due to the atypically well organized and corporate nature of their migratory enterprise and the fact that a community of fellow believers awaited their arrival.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the stereotype of pioneers suffering greatly and burying their kindred dead on the trail to Zion is a particularly enduring one in Mormon popular consciousness. Because the saga of the Mormon pioneers serves as heroic sacred history that exemplifies the spirit of sacrifice that Mormons still today regard as being expected of them by God, the experiences of the least typical, but most exceptional, groups form the basis of many Mormons' mental constructions of pioneer reality.¹¹

⁹Handcart nostalgia, as one might imagine, benefits from the assumption that handcart travel must have been extremely difficult compared to ox-drawn wagons. This is a debatable point; one of Brigham Young's justification for the handcart idea is that it would be easier because it eliminated the difficulties of using animals. See Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion*.

¹⁰For a general examination of the idea of a perilous Mormon pioneer journey see Richard H. Jackson's "The Overland Journey to Zion," in Richard H. Jackson, ed., *The Mormon Role in the Settlement of the West*, (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1978). Jackson points out that most pioneer journals relate their crossing of the plains as a mixture of monotonous walking with moments of adventure and discovery, not unlike a pleasure trip or one-way family vacation.

¹¹The various groups of pioneers can be put into a "hagiographic hierarchy" of importance. Such a list would descend roughly as follows: handcart pioneers who died, anyone who died, handcart

The handcart pioneer has become the quintessential Mormon folk hero and occupies a place in Mormon culture somewhat analogous to the trail drive era cowboy in American culture—a repository of all the culture's self-perceived unique traits and values in a limited historical experience that is atypical in the broader cultural experience but nevertheless regarded as unique to it.

While the processes of constructing Mormon popular historical consciousness has highlighted certain parts of the pioneer experience, other episodes in Mormon history have been almost studiously forgotten. Drama and Biblical parallel alone do not explain the inclusion of past events into celebrated public history. To constitute a usable past for Mormons, drama and historical recapitulation must conclude triumphantly. For example, Mormons do not commemorate their brave and resilient struggle against the United States government during the polygamy raids of the 1880s. During this time the government confiscated all of the Church's property and froze its assets; the Church leadership went underground for years, and hundreds were thrown in jail for practicing plural marriage. Thousands of men, women, and children endured long separation from their families, near starvation, severe disruption of their livelihoods, and ridicule in the national spotlight to protect a way of life they felt God had required of them.

Under extreme duress, the Church officially discontinued the practice by revelation in 1890. Jan Shipps suggests that the polygamy raids and the eventual abandonment of the practice complete the parallel with Israelite history by

company members who survived, the advance company of 1847 pioneers, all 1847 pioneers, and finally anyone who crossed the plains before the railroad.

providing Mormons with an “Babylonian captivity phase” and a “restitution phase.”¹² However, Mormons do not exploit this potential parallel in constructing their popular historical consciousness. The martyrological potential inherent in these events, which arguably caused more suffering than the westward migration, was lost when the Church officially curtailed plural marriage. To celebrate resistance now would be to memorialize a “lost cause” that many modern Mormons would rather forget—a struggle for a practice that the Church now vehemently opposes. Also, since Mormons have always regarded themselves as the consummate patriots, the fact that Mormons once practiced radical civil disobedience to what they regarded as unconstitutional anti-polygamy legislation is difficult to square on a popular historical level with the image Mormons hold of themselves as a people who regard obedience to civil authority as a serious religious principle. As a result, the polygamy raids in spite of their tempting Biblical parallel and heroic underdog drama, have virtually vanished from Mormon popular memory.

Challenges and Responses to Mythic Unity

Traditional historical and anthropological analyses of Mormonism have interpreted public celebration of the pioneers as an expression of shared cultural

¹²Shipps, *Mormonism*.

values and concerns.¹³ Eugene Campbell called the Mormons' pioneer heritage "a source of pride and unity in Mormon culture."¹⁴

Such characterizations concern the 230,000 member Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints based in Independence, Missouri. RLDS historians point out that between a half and a third of the Mormon population of Nauvoo (some of whom later joined the RLDS Church when it was founded in 1860) chose not to follow Brigham Young to Utah.¹⁵ In this light, the trek of the pioneers of '47 was at first not a unifier at all, but an aspect of the greatest schism and the worst era of cultural disintegration ever faced by the Joseph Smith's followers.

To say that pioneer nostalgia unifies the Salt Lake City headquartered church is problematic as well. The most significant challenge to the unifying potential of traditional modes of pioneer commemoration has been the breakdown of the isomorphism between Mormondom's cultural region and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At one time, regional history and identity and Church history and identity were virtually inseparable. This is no longer the case. Today, due to emigration and convert growth, less than 16 percent of LDS Church members reside in Utah and only about 25 percent live in Rocky Mountain

¹³Steven L. Olsen, "Celebrating Cultural Identity: Pioneer Day in Nineteenth-Century Mormonism," *BYU Studies* 36, no. 1 (1996-97): 159-177.

¹⁴Similar assertions have been made many times by many authors. Especially well thought out are the works of Bitton, "Ritualization of Mormon History," Olsen, "Community Celebrations," Shipp, *Mormonism*, and Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion*.

¹⁵See Alma R. Blair, "The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints: Moderate Mormons," in *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History*, eds., F. Mark McKiernan, Alma R. Blair, and Paul M. Edwards (Lawrence: The University of Kansas Press, 1973).

States.¹⁶ Most of today's ten million Mormons, particularly those in the fast growing international church, are not descendants of Utah pioneers. Also, Utah is no longer a functionally independent theocracy but a state in a religiously pluralistic America. Today over 50 percent of Salt Lake City's population are not Mormons, with more Gentiles moving in all the time.

These situations provide the multiple challenge of finding ways of celebrating the pioneer story that make it a community-building experience both for all Mormons (in and out of Utah), and for all Utahans (Mormon and non-Mormon). This has been difficult, but has resulted in creative reinterpretations of how "pioneers" should be understood in a heterogeneous Utah and a multi-national Diasporic and convert Mormondom.

Pioneers for All Utahans: The Day's of '47 in Salt Lake City: In her book *Parades and Power*, Susan Davis points out the inadequacy of the "common sense" way of viewing parades as "straight forward reflections" of consensual notions held by all performers and observers. What she says about Philadelphia's 1832 parade in honor of George Washington's birthday could also be said about the Salt Lake City's "Days of '47" parade. "Upon closer examination ... the procession's meanings for performers and audience seem less unified. This performance was a selective version of local social relationships that hardly represented all communities [and] all points of view."¹⁷ In Salt Lake City as well,

¹⁶For contemporary statistics see *Deseret News Church Almanac 97-98* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1996).

¹⁷Susan G. Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 4.

all do not share the same interpretation of the pioneer story, and feel that Pioneer Day is lacking as a community event because it has traditionally featured only the dominant group's collective historical memory.¹⁸

In the Days of '47 Parade, notions not only about social relationships but also about the sacredness of certain historical events and the divine destiny of Utah's dominant culture have been literally paraded in public. But as Salt Lake City's Gentile population has increased, the "tone" of the parade has changed. Mormon themes still dominate the Pioneer Day Parade, but parade entries in recent years have employed symbols that bridge the Mormon/Gentile divide or are specifically non-Mormon in character.

One theme that has emerged as a "bridge" is the completion of the transcontinental railroad.¹⁹ As the railroad closed off the time window of the 1847-69 pioneer era, it opened the possibility for a new "progressive romanticism" celebrating the modern world coming to Utah. Today the railroad is remembered on Pioneer Day as ushering in a new age of Mormon/Gentile cooperation in Utah—a memory open for appreciation by a larger percentage of Utahans.

The inclusion of floats that celebrate the transcontinental railroad is of course antithetical to older understandings of what "Pioneer Day" was designed to

¹⁸I once had a discussion with a non-Mormon former professor at a Utah university who claimed to have hidden in his room during the whole week of Pioneer Day because public displays of Mormon cultural identity disgusted him. Unfortunately, this man's reluctance to appreciate Utah's cultural life made his stay in Utah short and unpleasant.

¹⁹"Saints Celebrate Pioneer Day." *The Ensign of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* 10 (1993): 75.

celebrate, and it is a sign that the parade is being secularized and broadened to allow for the inclusion of more non-Mormon participants. Other signs of the breakdown of Mormon religious exclusiveness have been the inclusion of floats honoring the establishment of Salt Lake City's Catholic cathedral and Jewish synagogue.

When speaking to the gathered crowds at the 1992 Day's of '47 celebration, LDS church leader Loren C. Dunn acknowledged the contributions of "pioneers of other faiths" who also came to Utah.²⁰ The official theme of 1994's "Days of '47" celebration was "All are Welcome Here." Certainly this theme was chosen, in part at least, as a corrective to what some see as the Parade's past exclusivity and Mormon-centeredness. Religious themes—while still important—have lost their former dominance in Salt Lake City's Day's of '47 celebration. Floats that promote business establishments and bear corporate logos have become more prominent as well. Many feel that reasons other than the remembrance of sacred history, including fun in and of itself, threaten to undergird the Days of '47 celebration rather than be only ancillaries to it.²¹

²⁰"Pioneer Day Activities Celebrate the Heritage of early Saints." *The Ensign of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* 10 (1992): 70.

²¹Mirroring the changes made in Pioneer Day celebrations, Pioneer Trail State Park's "Old Deseret" model pioneer village and Lagoon's "Sons of the Utah Pioneers Village" have sometimes downplayed the "Mormonness" of the history they seek to recreate, and enact generic frontier community scenes. The perceived "secularization" of Pioneer Day celebrations is not uncontroversial to some. A community leader in Sanpete County, Utah complained to me that he regarded the demolition derby and ATC pull that had become the premier Pioneer Day activities in his community as inappropriate modes of Pioneer Day celebration. His sentiment is understandable, but it ignores the long history (and still current practice) of holding rodeos and baseball tournaments on Pioneer Day. Demolition Derbies are a modern version of the kind of recreational activities Mormons have always regarded as wholesome and appropriate even, and perhaps especially, when done in conjunction with pioneer remembrance. Spring City, Utah informant, interview by author, 20 July 1995.

These changes have coincided with shifts in responsibility for organizing the parade. In pioneer Utah, relationships between public events and authority were intimate. Mormon leaders initiated and delegated the planning and performance of Pioneer Day celebrations. Gradually, responsibility for the parade passed into the hands of the SUP and DUP, even though the Church continued to provide financial support. In 1936, "Days of '47 Inc." grew out of the SUP as a non-profit, unaffiliated organization responsible for organizing the Pioneer Day festivities. Today Church leaders no longer organize, even indirectly, Pioneer Day affairs but participate as honored guests in their important symbolic function as the living heirs and continuing administrators of Brigham Young's kingdom. Thus, even though the Pioneer Day Queen must still be a descendant of the 1847-69 pioneers, and Brigham Young impersonators and representatives of the current LDS leadership still occupy important positions in the parade, community organizations have been allowed to take control of a tradition of public historical celebration once centrally controlled by the Church. Mormon leaders, realizing Pioneer Day's expanded significance, have willingly released control and have encouraged inclusiveness.

In this context, the Mormons' sacred Exodus-recapitulation has been refashioned into a secular "origin myth" for a diverse cultural region. The hopeful statement of LDS Utah governor Mike Leavitt at the occasion of the sesquicentennial trek reenactors arrival in emigration canyon reflects this changing role for the Mormon pioneers in Utah: "Whether you celebrate this as a

remembrance of the coming into the valley of your own ancestors, or if you're a newcomer to this state, I invite you to embrace this as part of your heritage."²²

Despite these developments, it will probably always be impossible to completely separate church from state in public functions in Utah. Popular public expressions of significant events in Utah's history will always face the fact of Mormon dominance in that history, and Mormons will probably always see sacred significance in Utah's pioneer heritage. Also, even with a continued influx of Gentiles, demographic trends indicate that Utah will likely retain its Mormon majority indefinitely. There is, and will continue to be, a high correlation between prominence in Utah society and leadership in the LDS Church. For these reasons, attempts to provide public displays of history that meet the spiritual needs of Mormons as well as the community-building needs of Utah's increasingly Gentile urban areas will continue to be challenging.

Pioneers for all Mormons: The pioneer myth faces challenges abroad as well. Borne by ever-increasing legions of Mormon missionaries, the pioneer myth has escaped the bounds of the Mountain West and has become a part of a belief system that engages the members of a fast-growing, world-wide religious tradition.²³ Today, Mormonism's traditional heartland in the American West contains only about 25 percent of total Church membership, and over half of all Mormons live outside the United States.²⁴ The increased cultural and national

²²Christopher Smith, "Triumph, Tears at Sentimental Journey's End," *Salt Lake Tribune Webpage*, 23 July 1997.

²³Jan Shipps, *Mormonism*.

²⁴*Church Almanac 1993-1994* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1993).

diversity of Mormonism has placed heavy demands upon the pioneer symbology that sprang from, and is specific to, the American West. In the world-wide Mormon community of faith, the place of the pioneers has become problematic. As some Mormons begin to question and reconceptualize the hagiographic status of the Utah pioneers, it is increasingly difficult to claim that “group consciousness” is unambiguously being maintained by honoring, celebrating, and reenacting pioneer history.

Thanks to missionary effort, the pioneer myth and its accompanying celebratory cultural practices are spreading around the world. However, intimate knowledge of pioneer history, and especially elaborate forms of public pioneer reverence, have not spread as fast as the Mormon gospel, and a very small percentage of today’s Mormons participate in Pioneer Day festivities: some have never even heard of the celebration at all. One hundred years ago, when pioneer-honoring events formed the centerpiece expression of Mormon community identity, non-participation in, and unfamiliarity with, pioneer stories and celebrations would have been unthinkable for faithful Mormons. Today, as living in a nearly exclusively Mormon agricultural village in the Mountain West has become the exceptional rather than typical Mormon experience, pioneer-honoring cultural expressions have necessarily taken on new forms and new meanings for Mormons.

Part of this “pioneer problem” springs from the Mormon heartland itself and changing perceptions of Utah in Mormon popular consciousness. Once upon a time Utah was Zion—the place where Mormons gathered to build their social and spiritual Utopia in preparation for Christ’s immanent Second Coming. As is

evident in early versions of “The Handcart Song” the land and its people were the supreme object of desire for the converts that streamed to it. Today, in the post-gathering Mormon world, Utah Mormons, and pioneer descendants in general, are rightly or wrongly sometimes seen by Mormons outside of Utah not as examples of righteousness, but of self-righteousness, and as too often lazily resting on the laurels of their impressive genealogy. Utah is also perceived by some as provincial and embarrassingly narrow-minded for being the center of a world-wide religion. On the other hand, others are shocked that liquor is sold in the state, and that many stores are open on Sunday like anywhere else in America. However, Utah is still a central point of attention and all faithful Mormon eyes turn there when the prophet speaks at the tabernacle in Temple Square. Despite this fact, the region is by no means regarded as the idealized place of piety it once was.

The problematization of Utah and its people in the Mormon imagination has caused many to question what they regard as the overly sentimentalized, unrealistic, and “tacky” reverencing of pioneers often displayed by those whose roots in Mormonism go back generations. As the pioneer era retreats further into the past, as new generations of Mormons emerge, and as the number of people who knew pioneer grandparents diminishes, this sentiment is growing—even in Utah. Many younger Mormons view the trappings of “the cult of the pioneers” as “kitsch,” “old-timey” and irrelevant. Membership in the SUP and DUP is declining. Some adults call for a more “realistic” treatment of the pioneers in

Mormon discourse and historical writing.²⁵ They fear that Utah's colonizers have come to represent a false ideal—superhuman paragons of a pious perfection never attainable by modern Mormons.

To some, another problem with the pioneer legacy is the fact that the honor acquired by participants in great migrations often passes on to succeeding generations of their offspring—especially in the minds of those who are themselves descendants of migrating cultural heroes. This tends to create a social distinction between those descended from cultural-historical figures and those not descended from cultural-historical figures. This is certainly the case in Mormondom. In Utah especially there exists a quasi-caste system that distinguishes between 1) post-pioneer era convert Mormons and their descendants, 2) families descended from pioneers, and 3) families descended from pioneers who were also Church leaders. The continued insistence by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers on biological descent as a requisite for membership contributes to this system.²⁶ In prestigious social circles in Utah, the question, “Who did you say your ancestors were?” occasionally serves the same function as “What do you do for a living?” would serve elsewhere. Richard Gomez, a former-Catholic who converted to the LDS Church, and who is the bishop of a Spanish-speaking congregation in the Salt Lake City area, explains

²⁵I have frequently encountered such sentiments expressed by LDS people in many contexts—particularly fellow teenagers growing up in Mesa, Arizona, and later by my students at BYU.

²⁶The kind of relationship the DUP has to Utah society is not unique to that state. In Texas, the social prestige associated with descendant from the former republic's first Anglo families is fostered in an aggressive manner by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. The DUP and the DRT and their philosophy of history can be seen as regional versions of the nativism and historical “preservationism” of the national organization the Daughters of the American Revolution.

that he “feels left out” when “Pioneer Day” celebrations in Salt Lake City are opened by asking who among the assembled people was descended from one of the original (Anglo) founders [of Utah].”²⁷

Officially, the LDS Church has sought to down-play these kinds of distinctions in recent years, and has always emphasized that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ’s atonement and correct individual choices—not lineage. Nevertheless, efforts at building egalitarian sentiments on this topic are difficult to achieve without diminishing the importance of what the pioneers did in bequeathing a legacy of faith to the modern LDS Church.

The Relevance of Pioneer Day to an International Church

Considering these issues, will the 1847-1869 pioneer experience survive as a central touchstone in Mormon popular historical consciousness? Some predict its demise with the internationalization of the Church. Anthropologist and Dutch LDS Church leader Walter E. A. van Beek recently voiced concerns similar to those of Bishop Gomez and reflective of a stream of LDS thought about the pioneer experience that is not uncommon outside of the United States. In a recent letter to the editor of an unofficial LDS magazine, van Beek discounted the Utah pioneer’s relevance to the International Church in general and The Netherlands’ seven and a half thousand LDS people in particular.²⁸ He casts the Mormon pioneer epic as an “unusable past” for the international Church that unduly

²⁷Emily Gurmon, “Latinos and Latter-day Saints: Minority Mormons,” *Christian Century*, 16 Feb. 1994, 157-159.

²⁸Walter E. A. van Beek, “O Pioneers!” *Sunstone* 20, 1 (April 1997): 2.

privileges "American history." He suggests that during the 1997 sesquicentennial Mormons in Holland ought to have celebrated local national heroes that displayed heroic Christian virtues. Conversely, Dietrich Kempfski, an LDS Church leader from neighboring Germany responded to van Beek's letter by explaining the many ways in which Latter-day Saints in his American West infatuated country were going to enthusiastically celebrate the sesquicentennial.²⁹

Concern over such privileging of an American experience in an international Church is understandable. However, Kempfski's response suggests there are ways of understanding the Mormon pioneer story that van Beek does not consider. These interpretations may allow the myth to survive internationally, if perhaps in truncated or modified form, well into the future.

More than American history, The Mormon pioneer experience is primarily Latter-day Saint history—the history of a community of which van Beek is a part. The Great Salt Lake Valley was in Mexico when the Mormons first arrived, a fact that pleased some Mormons happy to be out of a country that had rejected them. Most of the hardship Mormons endured in Utah was at the hands of the United States government. Most of those who made the trek were not native-born Americans but European immigrants who were coming specifically to gather with the Saints in Zion and only incidentally to America. These Europeans included many from van Beek's homeland of the Netherlands. The Pioneer epic was the story of a Church already international in the nineteenth century. It was an

²⁹Dietrich Kempfski, "Pioneers? Yes!" *Sunstone* 20, 2 (July 1997): 2.

international church in the process of consolidating its resources and establishing a homeland from which it became solidly international again later.

Not recognizing possible interpretations of the Pioneer epic as sacred “time out of time” that transcends concerns of nationality. Van Beek questions official Latter-day Saint attention to “American history.” As time passes and Mormons come to more fully understand the foundational history of their new religious tradition, might arguments such as the following be made?: Jews and Christians regard the Hebrew scriptures as much more than merely Egyptian, Iraqi, Israeli, and Palestinian history. Christians regard the new Testament as much more than merely Greek, Italian and Turkish history. Do Mormons and other Christians begrudge the “privileging” of these geographic regions and the nation-states that currently administer them receive in sacred history? Are the stories contained in the Acts of the Apostles any less meaningful or universal to Christian believers because of their location? Mormon leaders and the Mormon multitude will shape the answers to questions similar to these about the place of the 1847-69 pioneer trek.

At this point in the on-going formation of the Mormon scriptural canon only Brigham Young’s revelation—section 136 of the Doctrine and Covenants—of organization, encouragement, and instruction given to the Nauvoo Saints as they prepared to move west are officially considered scripture. No further canonization seems immediately forthcoming. This leaves the place of the nineteenth-century Westward migration in Mormon sacred history open to reevaluation even by orthodox Latter-day Saints who would never think to

question essential pillars of their sacred history such as the place of Joseph Smith's first vision or the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

This openness to reevaluation will be especially well exercised in a religion where more and more adherents participate in it with multiple cultural allegiances. The days of Mormons' shared multiple cultural identity as American, Western, Anglo-Scandinavian Mormons are over. The internationalization of Mormonism occasions a differentiation of these identities that Mormondom has not before had to see as separable. Teasing out a usable Mormon historical past that does seem to privilege white Americans' experience will be difficult. Bishop Gomez the Mexican-American Mormon, Dietrich Kempster the German Mormon and Wouter van Beek the Dutch Mormon are only a small slice of the diverse multiple cultural allegiances that will grapple with this issue.

As the Church has grown, leaders and members have had to decide what aspects of Mormon Regional Culture need to be exported and what can be left behind in bringing the Latter-day Saint gospel to the world. This situation recapitulates the development of early Christianity. To a certain extent early Christianity became inseparable from some aspects of the Roman Empire, and Europe became "Latinized" to a certain degree as it was Christianized; this continued even after the political and military Roman Empire had disappeared. Likewise, expanding Mormondom extends and transplants elements of American culture as it transforms peoples and places with not only Latter-day Saint religion but American hymnody, sports, church architecture, organizational principles, styles of dress, and a religious historical consciousness grounded in events that happened along the American frontier.

Responses to the Pioneer Dilemma

So far several responses have emerged to the dilemmas faced by the pioneer myth and its associated cultural practices within Mormonism. These responses have relied on the following general strategies: abandonment, exportation, substitution, and reinterpretation.

Abandonment: In many ways, challenges to the pioneer myth's relevance and usefulness have already caused it to slip into popular historical unconsciousness. While once conversion almost required immigration to Utah and thus actual participation in pioneer sacred history, today the pioneer trek and the establishment of Zion are not even mentioned in the program of instruction that Mormon missionaries teach to potential converts. While dramatic varieties of pioneer reverence once formed a frequent and central part of virtually all Mormons' community experience, such practices now engage only a small percentage. The further one gets from the Mormon West, the less one hears about pioneers, and it is in many of these far away places that the Church is growing the fastest. Even in Utah, the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers may be on its last leg. Women in their fifties are no longer joining in the numbers that they once did.³⁰

A college friend of mine remembers the decline of Pioneer Day in his home town of Tucson—Arizona's second largest city.³¹ Tucson lies outside of the

³⁰Kristi Bell, interview by author, April 1997. Kristi Bell is a columnist for the *Provo Daily Herald*.

³¹Brent Bingham, interview by author. Provo, Utah, January 1995. Brent Bingham is a Tucson native.

state's Mormon cultural areas but witnessed some important scenes in Mormon history and has a long-established and sizable LDS minority. Until recently, Tucson's LDS population would traditionally congregate at a Church-owned stadium on Pioneer Day. There thousands would sing, eat, participate in sports tournaments, and view a "pioneer spectacular" where covered wagons circled the stadium track. A large fireworks display crowned the evening's events. In the course of my friend's lifetime this event was abandoned and individual LDS wards (congregations) began with less extravagance to celebrate several smaller celebrations.³² Usually, this involved little more than a ward potluck dinner and children dressed in pioneer garb pulling kiddy-wagon sized floats around the church building in a children's parade.

³²A word about the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is in order. Like Catholic parishes, LDS congregations are determined by geographic boundaries rather than the individual preferences of Church members for one congregation or another. Wards are typically kept to only 200-500 members to help create an "extended family" community environment in which volunteer Church responsibilities are available to all members. Wards are frequently divided due to Church growth. Wards are presided over by a Bishop who, like all local LDS Church volunteers, receives no salary and keeps his regular job.

LDS stakes (analogous to a diocese) are usually comprised of 5-15 wards and are administered by a stake president.

Bishops and stake presidents are appointed through inspiration to their hierarchical superiors, according to LDS belief. What little distinction between laity and clergy that exists among Mormons is fluid and transitional as people enter and leave positions of Church authority after periods of service usually more than a few years but rarely as much as a decade.

The LDS usage of the term "ward" evolved from an urban political administrative unit particularly common in Illinois. Chicago still uses them and Nauvoo, which was larger than Chicago in the 1840s, did before the Mormon exodus. In Utah, Church leaders divided Salt Lake City and other urban areas into wards for administrative and ecclesiastical purposes. Wards in the Mormon West lost their political significance and became increasingly important as a Church administrative unit for the organization of Sunday worship and other religious activities. In rural areas many villages tended to be about the size of one ward. While most Mormons are unfamiliar with the semantic history of the term ward, they do think of their congregations in terms of a neighborhood or village community.

The term "stake" refers metaphorically to stakes in the expanding tent of Zion.

Brent remembers the day Pioneer Day died in his ward. The ward held a potluck but no one came in pioneer costume or with a float. For tradition's sake the baffled kids were induced to circle the church. Brent does not remember any ward Pioneer Day celebrations after this empty event and assumes Pioneer Day faded because people ceased to find motivating meaning Pioneer commemorative symbols. This experience may not reflect the experience in all Tucson wards. Many waning pioneer celebrations world-wide were revived at least temporarily in anticipation of and during the sesquicentennial.³³ It has yet to be seen what, if any, lasting effect the sesquicentennial will have on the slipping of Pioneers from Mormon popular memory in many quarters.

Exportation: Another response to the pioneer dilemma has been for Mormondom to export the pioneer reverence and its manifestations. Though it is by no means as common as in the Mormon West, Mormons from places as diverse as Samoa and Japan have dressed up as Utah pioneers and paraded with handcarts for Pioneer Day festivities.³⁴ In 1993 the Church's magazine reported major Pioneer Day celebrations in Papillion, Nebraska; Sacramento, California; and New York City. Four thousand people attended the Church's first annual Missouri Youth Pioneer Pageant in Branson, Missouri.³⁵ So, public historical forms of pioneer reverence *are* expanding and growing, although not at a fast

³³Matthew Brown, "World Media Shine Spotlight on Wagon Train Hoopla," *Salt Lake Tribune* website, 21 July 1997.

³⁴"The Church in the Pacific," *The Ensign of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 28 (February 1997): 79-80.

³⁵"Saints Celebrate Pioneer Day," 75.

enough pace to penetrate fully all corners of an even faster growing religious tradition. Wouter van Beek's views represent one rationale for resisting exportation that may prevail worldwide. Dietrich Kempfski suggests reasons to expect its continues exportation.

Replacement: Another response to the increasing problematization of the pioneers has been to turn to an even older source for a uniquely-Mormon unifying mythic history—the Book of Mormon. The ancient history recounted in the Book of Mormon, like the Bible and pioneer stories, is replete with miraculous occurrences and emulable examples of faith, obedience, and sacrifice. In the past few decades, the Book of Mormon has gained on the pioneer saga as the chief resource for sacred and instructive history.

Recent Church President Ezra Taft Benson played a pivotal role in this shift. He repeatedly emphasized the Book of Mormon's centrality in Mormon faith. He encouraged a "Book of Mormon Renaissance" by calling on Mormons to read it daily, use it as a proselytizing tool, and make it the object of increased scholarly, literary, and artistic emphasis. His call caused an upsurge in art based on Book of Mormon themes, which may push pioneer topics to the sidelines of the Mormon art scene. A Mormon-run company produces a popular animated video series that features several stories from the Bible and the Book of Mormon, but none about the pioneers.

Book of Mormon sacred history is well suited for an international religion of many cultures and regions because even though its content could be read as privileging the Western hemisphere and Native Americans, its history is so ancient that it is detached enough from any modern Mormon subgroup to be

equally accessible to all Mormons and potential converts. The pioneer sacred history, with its close ties to Mountain West regional culture and the family memories of “ethnic” Mormons, does not provide the same equal access.

Reinterpretation: the most innovative response to the pioneer dilemma has been to expand the term “pioneer” to apply not only to the traditional 1847-69 pioneer period, but to any Mormon today facing a new or difficult situation.³⁶ For example, at a church social in Austin, Texas, two Mormon women performed a set of dramatic monologues entitled “Pioneers: Now and Then.” One woman dressed in traditional pioneer garb and spoke of the hardships of pioneer life such as weeding the garden, preparing food, and mending clothes. The other woman wore modern clothes and discussed new challenges such as violence on television, protecting her children from drugs, and managing a busy schedule.³⁷

Mormons of African descent are a special case for pioneer designation. Since 1978, Mormons of all races have been allowed full access to the ordinances of the Church. This change—instituted by prophetic revelation—reversed over a century of restricted temple access and a ban on priesthood ordination for Mormon males of African descent. Since 1979, African Americans have converted to Mormonism in unprecedented numbers and Mormon missionaries have enjoyed much success in Africa and the Caribbean. Brigham Young University historian Jessie Embry—reflecting a widespread positive attitude about

³⁶This shift is considered in Matthew Brown, “World Media Shine Spotlight on Wagon Train Hoopla.”

³⁷These events occurred during the Austin Oak Hills Stake Pioneer Day Celebration on 24 July 1994 in Austin, Texas.

the 1979 revelation among Mormons—has suggested that African American Mormons are “just as much pioneers as those who crossed the plains to Zion.”³⁸

It has also been increasingly common to refer to converts in regions of the world new to Mormonism as pioneers. One of many examples of this appears in “Ng Kat Hing: Hong Kong Pioneer”—Kellene Ricks’s recent article in *The Ensign*, the Church’s official devotional publication.³⁹ Almost all *Ensign* articles about Church members outside of the American West draw this modern pioneer parallel. This kind of reinterpretation of the term pioneer has been officially promoted by the Church, and was a focus of the Church’s 1997 sesquicentennial celebration of the Mormon arrival in Utah.⁴⁰ These expansions of the term “pioneer” beyond its traditional designation of “the first of those to cross the plains” can be seen as attempts within Mormon culture to seal potential points of fissure within a community that has always valued equality and unity in faith.

Not only does the “pioneerification” of modern Mormon converts show that the Church’s leadership is sensitive to the concerns of Mormons like Bishop Gomez, but perhaps more importantly this concept of “modern pioneers” is a way of keeping the Mormon present in sacred time—a situation where Mormons are really the most comfortable—by redeploying a symbol from a previous sacred time. This strategy helps give the Mormon present a sense of being “sacred

³⁸Jessie L. Embry, *Black Saints in White Church: Contemporary African American Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994).

³⁹Kellene Ricks, “Ng Kat Hing: Hong Kong Pioneer.” *The Ensign of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* 22 (September 1992): 51-52.

⁴⁰Church administrator in the Office of the Presiding Bishopric, interview by author, Salt Lake City, Utah, January 1994.

history in the making.” As new Mormon converts in Nigeria struggle to build a community of believers in the face of prejudice and misunderstanding, they recapitulate the trials of the Utah pioneers—who in their time recapitulated the trials of the Israelites. This recent reworking of the pioneer concept takes Jan Shipps’s notion of the sacralization of the present through the recapitulation of a sacred past to another degree of separation. The lives of modern Mormons become sacred history in the making by living through again what is already a recapitulated sacred history. It is important to note however, this backward-looking aspect of Mormonism is only one aspect of Mormonism—the one that happens to be the subject at hand. Mormonism, more importantly even than being a history reverencing religion, is a millennial religion with a prophetic forward looking stance.

Implications and Conclusions to Section 1

In the last decade or so, analyzing the relationship between collective memory and group identity in large-scale societies such as nations, ethnic communities, and religious institutions has been a matter of intense interest among scholars. Accompanying sharp insights into the means and purposes of socially-constructed folk and popular historical conceptions, the temptation has existed among many to be overly cynical in their debunking of “invented traditions,” and they thereby perhaps damage the societies to whom they are obligated in the reciprocal ethical relationship that arises in scholar-subject

interaction.⁴¹ Historian Michael Kammen warns against cynical analyses of popular history and states that the “invention of tradition” is often done for benign reasons.⁴²

This study strives to be at once critical while retain respect for its subject matter and the people who hold it dear. I would add to Kammen’s observation that even in the cases where we may suspect the “foisting of false consciousness” our analysis can be critical and charitable at the same time. Rather than regarding invented traditions and identities as pathological false consciousness, as some studies do, they can alternately be viewed as creative responses to new situations and innovative strategies for providing a meaningful existence to their creators.⁴³

In the environment of mutual hostility that sometimes exists between the members of the academy and members of conservative religious bodies like the LDS Church, it is especially tempting to exploit the story of the invention of

⁴¹Richard Handler’s treatment of nationalism in Quebec typifies this cynical approach to the cultural creativity expressed through “invented traditions.” Richard Handler. *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec* (Madison: the University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

⁴²Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 31.

⁴³I believe a root cause of these kinds of problematic analyses is the ascension of “cultural studies” as the discipline most vigorously theorizing culture. Emerging from 1950s British Marxist theory and focusing on the politics of cultural forms in complex post-modern societies, cultural studies has become a, if not the, dominant method of cultural analysis in Western scholarship. Without acknowledging class, gender, ethnicity, nation, race, and sexuality as a limited set of sufficiently explanatory human concerns, cultural studies has failed to even acknowledge religion as a significant aspect of human experience and identity let alone provide any useful theorization of its operation. Cultural Studies has not moved far beyond Marx’s facile “opiate of the masses.” Without acknowledgment, religion and religion-like cultural forms tend to be marginalized and grossly misunderstood by scholars influenced by cultural studies. A more productive counter-trend among historians and folklorists has been to take religious movements seriously on their own terms and phenomenologically investigate religious experiences while bracketing their truth claims.

popular Mormon historical consciousness to stoke the fires of existing antagonisms and strengthen the walls of academic self-righteousness. This would be a mistake, and would blind us to numerous insights attainable only through humbly trying to grasp the Mormon version of pioneer heritage on its own terms and occasionally letting Mormons speak for themselves.

In so doing, we find that because it typologically recapitulated Biblical history and occurred in the context of America's romanticized Westward expansion, the trek of the Mormon pioneers became the defining historical motif of the Mormon experience in America. As in other societies, Mormon highlighting and romanticization of the pioneer story provided a mythic historical "rallying point" for a newly emerging cultural identity. Pioneer mythology, as it has been passed on to modern Mormons, has been shown to be a construction created, reinforced, and maintained by popular public displays and celebrations. Changing conditions in Utah and world-wide Mormonism have demonstrated that the usefulness of traditional renditions of the pioneer story are showing some wear, and its associated rituals are no longer quite—and perhaps never really were—the unifying principles some scholars have described them as being. The significance, meaning, and worth of the pioneer myth will continue to be matters of reinterpretation and discussion among members of an expanding world-wide religion and a diversifying Mormon geographic region. While this tradition of popular historical expression has slipped somewhat from its once illustrious position in Mormon thought and practice, the Mormon pioneer concept is being innovatively reworked and is showing continued vitality in the face of its challenges.

SECTION TWO: MORMONDOM THROUGH THE LENS OF PIONEER DAY CELEBRATIONS

Chapter Four: An Experiment in Ethnography

While Latter-day Saint religion is practiced all over the world, in the Mormon West, “ethnic” Mormon culture is expressed in its fullest and most complex forms. This section seeks to elucidate the many facets of one of those forms—the civic Pioneer Day celebrations that claim the public space of main street every July 24th in communities throughout the Intermountain West. With the reverencing of pioneers so much more developed in the Mormon Culture Region than in the rest of Mormondom,¹ these celebrations are one of the most distinctive living signs of Latter-day Saints’ imprint on America’s regional landscape and the main site for enacting pioneer nostalgia in Mormon culture. Hence they deserve special attention in this dissertation.

This section seeks to give a broad overview of the nature and significance of civic Pioneer Day celebrations in Mormondom while also focusing in on a few key features of a few local celebrations that are especially illustrative of peculiarly Mormon practices and Mormonism’s relationship to surrounding cultures.

¹ Mormon Country is unique in the American West in that so much of its population has old and deep roots in the West. All other western states are made up of much more recent move-ins. This ancestral connection, almost as much as the special religious significance of Mormon pioneers, may explain the popularity of the “cult of the pioneers” in the Mormon Culture Region.

Study Concept and Goals

As the traditional face-to-face communities that once defined the fields of anthropology and folkloristics, have undergone radical transformation, scholars in these disciplines have called for a general reevaluation of how fieldwork should be done in the post-modern world of high technology and complex inter-connecting cultural matrices.² The following chapters benefit from an “experiment in ethnography” as has been called for in this general reevaluation of fieldwork. Rather than taking an intense look at Pioneer Day practices by working with many informants in one community, I seek to cast an interpretive net over an entire cultural region to get a broad overview of the whole civic Pioneer Day phenomenon.³ I do this by identifying every city, town, and village in the West whose Mormon community asserts their cultural inheritance of the settlement’s main thoroughfare on July 24th. During a summer of 1995 telephone survey funded by the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, I interviewed hundreds of people with local knowledge of each Pioneer Day celebration in the American West.

This experiment was precipitated in part by the insurmountable logistical difficulties of doing traditional, prolonged fieldwork to study a celebration that happens only once a year—for only one day or weekend—in scores of towns—the actual number turned out to be about 80—within a geographic area covering

²This argument is well documented in John D. Dorst, *The Written Suburb: An American Site, An Ethnographic Dilemma* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

³A similar “broadcast” approach to cultural phenomena that has many local manifestations can be found in Richard R. Flores, *Los Pastores: History and Performance in the Mexican Shepherd’s Play of South Texas* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995).

several states. Fieldwork in several locales augmented this telephone research, including Salt Lake City's 1994 "Day's of 47" events, Manti, Utah's 1994 "Mormon Miracle Pageant," and Spring City and Fairview's 1995 Pioneer Day.

The original narrow goal of this research sought to reexamine Mormon Cultural Region scholarship in the light of the late-1990s geographic distribution of civic Pioneer Day celebrations—essentially to make a new Mormon Culture region map based on the presence and absence of Pioneer Day celebrations.⁴ However, as is often the case once research begins, serendipitous opportunities expanded the scope of this project. Many opportunities to reap insights into the internal structure and patterning of civic Pioneer Days, and into the reasons behind their presence and absence in Mormon Country, presented themselves as the phone research progressed.

First, I realized that after having gone to the trouble of tracking down local Pioneer Day organizers long-distance by phone, it would be useful to gather ethnographic data about the Pioneer Day activities in the contacted towns rather than merely ask them if their town celebrated Pioneer Day or not. I developed a questionnaire (reproduced at the end of this chapter) to assist in my note-taking. In the light of recent scholarly thinking on folk festivals, Chapter Five uses data from these questionnaires and my fieldwork to uncover the common building blocks of civic Pioneer Day celebration. The shape that emerged of Mormon civic Pioneer Day celebrations suggests parallels to festive cultural forms in other times

⁴This reevaluation of Mormon cultural geography is presented in Chapter Eight.

and places. Chapter Six proposes some speculative interpretations of these similarities in an "experiment in interpretation.

My second realization was that other factors such as climate, history, changing demographics, arrangements with other towns, and particularly the presence of other significant community events led to some "very Mormon" towns not celebrating Pioneer Day. Also, many Pioneer Day celebrations display variation due to a host of factors, mostly having to do with cultural heterogeneity within the domain of a certain celebration. Following these discoveries, the phone survey began to ask questions about the other events that displaced Pioneer Day in so many towns that, because of their mainly Mormon history and demography, were seemingly prime candidates. I also asked my telephone informants about the effect inter-cultural contact has had on specific celebration sites. Chapter Seven examines the reasons and patterns of Pioneer Day presence, absence, and variation.

The third realization was that a phone survey was not only an excellent opportunity to rethink the Mormon Culture Region based on the presence or absence of Pioneer Day celebrations, but also on local perceptions of whether or not a given locality was in "Mormon Country" or not. I began asking questions like "Do you think the consensus in your area would be that your town is a Mormon town?" and "Do you and your neighbors consider yourselves to live in a Mormon area?" These questions were designed to elicit statements reflecting a sense of place rather than uncover any "objective" of statistical reality.

Demographic studies that only uncover the relative percentages of the various cultural group affiliation in a given area can miss the prevalent sense of

place in a region. For example, Salt Lake City is less than 50% Mormon but for reasons of history, architecture, city layout, continuing cultural and political influence, as well as being the headquarters of the LDS Church, few would characterize it as anything but a “Mormon town.” Chapter eight recounts geographic data and displays maps of various ways of conceptualizing the Mormon culture region before and after using the information gleaned by this study.

As the scope of this study evolved and expanded, the central question remained: “What can looking at the nature and distribution of Pioneer Day celebrations, as a quintessential Mormon cultural performance, reveal about the current nature of the Mormon Culture Region?” This region has been traditionally defined in terms of static material culture indicators rather than on-going activities and perceptions by the living breathing people whose presence and characteristics call the Mormon cultural region into being.

This section is, in a sense, an inversion of social historians’ use of anthropological and sociological insights to assist in their telling of historical narratives. I use community-enacted performances of local historical consciousness to get at some of the tensions and solidarities that constitute the shape, culture, and identity of “Mormon Country” in the late twentieth century.

Study Execution

Using telephone directories from Brigham Young University’s Harold B. Lee library and information gleaned from previous phone calls, I called towns throughout the West using telephone numbers for whatever community leaders I

could find—mayors, city-council men and women, city and county government workers, chamber of commerce personnel, historical society volunteers, LDS bishops and Relief Society presidents. I asked these people if their town held a civic Pioneer Day celebration. Upon hearing from two separate sources that a town did not have a Pioneer Day celebration, I proceeded no further with that town except to ask why the town did not celebrate the holiday. I began with all the towns within the traditional boundaries of the Mormon Culture Region and moved outward from there. With every person I contacted, I always asked for tips and leads as to what other towns to call next. This technique worked well since people tended to be knowledgeable about happenings in theirs' and surrounding towns. I followed over-lapping zones of individual local knowledge to track down which communities held pioneer Day celebrations and which did not.

If the town did have a celebration, I asked for the telephone number of someone knowledgeable of, and preferably in some way responsible for, the town's Pioneer Day celebration. Usually only two to four calls were necessary to connect me with people "in the know." My phone inquiries produced numerous invitations to "come on down and see for yourself." I took up the invitation to Spring City and Fairview, Utah which share a Pioneer Day celebration and spent all day of 24 July 1995 in these two towns.

The results of this project, which took several weeks and over 500 phone calls to complete, were compiled in binders geographically organized according to the grid in Delorme Mapping's *Utah Atlas and Gazetteer* for Utah and Rand

McNally's *1994 Road Atlas* for Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Alberta, Arizona, and Nevada.⁵

Definitions and Assumptions of the Study

This study infers that the traditional presence of a public, community Pioneer Day celebration in a given municipality indicates a deepness and pervasiveness of Mormon culture not indicated by private celebrations held on Church property. Only public celebrations intended for the whole community were included in this analysis. Celebration size did not figure into the selection process. For example, the large Pioneer Day celebrations in Tucson, Arizona did not indicate that Tucson is a Mormon town, only that it has a large LDS minority. The rest of Tucson paid little attention to these Mormon goings on and Tucson civic leaders were not involved in its organization. Many of the celebrations included in this study were much less elaborate than Tucson's but involved the whole of smaller communities with much higher percentages of Mormons.

I quickly realized that distinguishing between an LDS Church celebration and community celebration in many Western towns is a self-defeating exercise. In reaction to the question "Is Pioneer Day a community or Church event in your town?" I received some hearty laughs and several responses of "What do you mean?" The Church is the community and the community is the Church to such an extent that on Pioneer Day in Mormon Country, Mormonism takes on some of the roles of a civic religion—even for Gentile minorities.

⁵*Utah Atlas and Gazetteer* (Freeport, Maine: DeLorme Mapping, 1993). *Rand McNally 1994 Road Atlas* (Skokie: Rand McNally, 1994).

A disproportionate amount of Utah's Gentile population lives in the Salt Lake City and Ogden greater metropolitan areas, leaving rural Utah about 80% LDS. Several Utah counties have no organized congregations other than LDS wards. This is absolutely unique in America, where Christian denominational diversity is remarkable and county denominational dominance is rare. Besides Utah only Rhode Island has a simple denominational state majority.⁶ The confluence of religion and community in rural Mormon culture and the continuing practice of what is not only a Pioneer remembrance but also a summer harvest festival recalls medieval European village life.⁷

The organizational bodies that take on Pioneer Day in rural Mormondom are diverse and for the most part secular—the town council, the chamber of commerce, or as is often the case, especially in larger rural towns, a special Pioneer Day committee. In a significant minority of cases, Pioneer Day is actually organized through local LDS Church ecclesiastical channels. This is especially the case in communities with less than 500 people or about the maximum size of an LDS ward. The trend seems to be away from Church organized Pioneer Day celebrations since many towns reported a recent transition from Church to secular organization.⁸ Even so, Church and state intertwine in Pioneer Day organization. LDS Bishops often formally call ward members to serve on the town's Pioneer

⁶See Barry A. Kosmin and Seymour P. Lachman, *One Nation Under God: Religion in Contemporary American Society* (New York: Crown Trade Paperbacks, 1993).

⁷See John Bossy, *Christianity in the West: 1400-1700* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

⁸Informants in a dozen towns reported transitions to non-Church organization in June 1995 telephone interviews.

Day committee. In larger towns, the committee may ask one ward to organize a carnival and another to take on the rodeo. In at least one case the town pays the local LDS ward to organize Pioneer Day.⁹

The variety of options for Pioneer Day organizational bodies seemed to make little difference as to the nature of the celebration they organized. This is perhaps in part due to the fact there tends to be so much overlap in community leadership with many people wearing several church and secular hats. Leadership of both varieties tends to run in families. In one town I talked to the mayor. His brother was the bishop of the LDS ward whose boundaries were virtually isomorphic with those of the town.¹⁰ Each year the mayor and the bishop “sat down together” to plan Pioneer Day.

These factors suggest that the fundamental criteria for determining whether or not a Pioneer Day celebration indicates the presence of the Mormon Culture Region are not absolute size or whether or not it was organized through Church auspices. Instead, Mormon Country Pioneer Day celebrations (or what I call “civic Pioneer Day celebrations”) are large relative to the whole community what is in many cases the biggest town event all year.

Although I did not inquire into the religious affiliation of my informants, but instead asked questions about the demographics and attitudes of the town in

⁹Unless, they specifically gave me permission to mention them by name I have chosen to let all my informants remain anonymous. I have also chosen to keep anonymous the names of any community whose celebratory practices might be construed as controversial. While no informants expressed any particular fear, I can see no interpretive advantage or greater good that justifies exposing them to even the slight possibility of trouble.

¹⁰This kind of ward and town isomorphism is not uncommon in rural Utah.

general, it should also be noted that several of my informants volunteered that they were not LDS themselves but participated along with other Gentiles in organizing and celebrating Pioneer Day celebrations. While ethnic and religious percentages affect how towns celebrate Pioneer Day in various ways, as will be shown in subsequent chapters, for the most part the religion of my informants did not seem to affect how they described Pioneer Day in their community.¹¹ This fact underscores the largely geographic community nature, rather than religious community nature, of contemporary Pioneer Day.

Limits of this Ethnographic Technique

“Telephone ethnography” provides several advantages over more traditional fieldwork methods. It allows for a broad outline overview of a geographically dispersed cultural phenomenon; it provides copious data for comparing various festivals; it uncovers the footprint of Pioneer Day on the American West; and it displays the internal diversity of this widespread cultural practice.

However, limits inherent in this experiment should temper and qualify any analysis and conclusions. Foremost among these is the lack of deep ethnographic penetration into the complexities of any one municipal community’s symbolic activity. This lack emerges from several factors: the impossibility of participating in every Pioneer Day celebration; the limited interaction with a small number of

¹¹While my informant in Hagerman, Idaho was a Gentile and my informant in Moab, Utah was Mormon this seemed to make little difference in how they described the reasons behind the decline of Pioneer Day celebrations in their town except that the informant in Moab seemed more personally saddened.

informants associated with each celebration: The problem of a necessarily limited number of informants exacerbates a problem common to all ethnographic enterprises—informants' variability in perception, knowledge, and "talkativeness." Not that variability in perception and reporting somehow clouds "the real," rather this variability *is* what is real and therefore requires drawing on multiple informants for analyzing any complex cultural activity.

This study's reliance on only a few informants per festival can only provide a few peoples' understanding of what Pioneer Day celebrations represent and accomplish. The kinds of people I called tended to be proficient in "people skills," knowledgeable about their local traditions and eager to inform. However, I suspect that a drawback to relying on community leaders and their staffs is that I may have missed critical and disapproving views of Pioneer Day celebrations since these informants, as event organizers and town promoters, may have had vested interests in putting a positive spin on community activities.

There was no way to ensure the completeness and accuracy of this project. Some people may have been wrong about the details of Pioneer Day celebrations in their town and even whether or not a celebration was held. For a few towns that seemed likely to have civic Pioneer Day celebrations, I was simply not able to procure a phone number for anyone who could answer my questions and/or would return calls. In making a map of Pioneer Day celebrations, I included Kirtland, New Mexico. The best information available was the word of a librarian in a nearby town that assumed that since she had pictures of the celebration from several years ago that it was still going on. This is of course a problematic determination because of the dynamic nature of the celebration. In Trenton, Utah I

was likewise unable to contact anyone but several people in nearby towns attested to its annual celebration. These are the two most marginal cases included in the map. All others are based on actual discussion with someone in town.

Despite the reliance on the telephone, this experiment is not a sociological survey. Questions were formulated to elicit open-ended response and discussion, not just yes or no answers. This experiment purposely blurs the distinction between qualitative and quantitative social science research. It seeks both to quantitatively map Pioneer Day on the American landscape and also interrogate meanings and structures out of the collective experience of Pioneer Day celebration.

Below is a map showing the location of all the civic-sponsored Pioneer Day celebrations in the American West. Chapter Eight takes a closer look what this information says about the nature and shape of the Mormon Culture region today.

Figure 11. Map of all civic-sponsored Pioneer Day Parades in the American West.

Figure 11. Map of all civic-sponsored Pioneer Day Parades in the American West.



Pioneer Day Questionnaire and Town Information

Town: _____ population: _____

Person interviewed: _____ telephone number: _____

- Do you have a July 24th Pioneer Day celebration in your town?
- How many people usually show up? (Do non-LDS come?)
- Does your celebration include a Parade? (on main street?)
- How many floats does it regularly have?
- Do non-LDS churches and organizations participate in your parade?
- Who is the organizer? person? organization? (DUP, CoC? the Church?)
- Is it more a church event or more a community event?
- About what percent of your community is LDS?
- When did your town start having pioneer day? Has it ever not had it? Why?
- Are there traditional things to do such as:
 - Brigham Young Impersonator?
 - People in Pioneer Costume?
 - Sports tournaments?
 - Dances?
 - Rodeo?
 - Family Reunions?
 - Fireworks?
 - Covered Wagons?
 - Handcarts?
 - Lectures?
 - Pageant/Play?
 - Crafts/Food Fair?
 - Other?

- What other towns do people come from to participate in your Pioneer Day celebration?
- Are there any other towns close by that might celebrate Pioneer Day?
Such as... (suggest names of possible towns)
- Can you give me the phone number of someone (in that town) who might know more details about celebrations in your town and nearby towns?
- Do you have any other yearly festivals or other town holidays in your town?
The colonization day of the town?
(Is this celebrated in conjunction with Pioneer Day?)
Priesthood restoration? Relief Society organization?
4th of July? Memorial Day?
- How does your town's celebration reflect the cultural diversity of your area?
- (If no Pioneer Day) Where do people in your town go for Pioneer Day?
- Do you think the consensus in your area would be that your town is a Mormon town?
- Do you and your neighbors consider yourselves to live in a Mormon area?

Chapter Five: Terms and Patterns for Civic Pioneer Day Celebrations

The passage of time ... diminishes our appreciation ... of the courage and steadfastness that characterized our pioneer progenitors. It is an occasion like this that wipes the dust from our memory pictures.

Mack Larson's 1993 Pioneer Day speech in Snowflake, Arizona.

Each local Pioneer Day celebration is a metonym for the pioneer trope in Mormon popular imagination. Collectively, civic Pioneer Day celebrations help sustain the pioneers' place in Mormons' regional imagination. Despite some variation from town to town, some major recurring patterns emerge in comparing all of the civic Pioneer Day celebrations in the Mormon Culture Region. With a broad overview of information provided by fieldwork, former participant interviews, and a 1995 telephone interview, this chapter describes and interprets the patterns and meanings of civic Pioneer Day celebrations.

Key words

To understand the cultural forms of July 24th celebrations in Mormon Country, some definitions of key words are in order. During her scholarly career, Beverly Stoeltje has refined the word *festival* into a useful keyword in folklore scholarship.¹ In the specialized meaning Stoeltje suggests, festivals are events

¹Beverly Stoeltje, "Festival," in *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments: A Communications-Centered Handbook*, ed. Richard Bauman (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 261-271. Beverly Stoeltje, "Festival in America," in *Handbook of*

rooted in community life and often linked to religious devotion. They “occur at calendrically regulated intervals and are public in nature, participatory in ethos, complex in structure, and multiple in voice, scene, and purpose.” Festivals consist of numerous events that are loosely related in purpose and cluster around one time and place. They provide various opportunities for performing and/or observing stylized yet structured devotional, competitive, and creative activity. Participants and observers select from the various festival events the ones to which they will lend their time, energy, attention, and bodily presence.

Some events, such as the parade in most Pioneer Day celebrations, or the sporting contests in others, form the festival’s central nexus and draw nearly all of the community as well as visitors from neighboring communities. Not everyone goes to all events and many occur at the same time. Many events atrophy and die over the years due to changing social mores and sparse attendance; new events may emerge and develop to take their place.

Stoeltje suggests that “festival” in the technical vocabulary of folklorists is an analytic term. Any events self-consciously marketed as “festivals,” particularly “folklife festivals,” are probably folklorismus rather than genuine cultural expressions emergent from folkgroup activity.² More specific than a just a

American Folklore, ed. Richard Dorson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 239-246. On “keywords” in general see Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Revised Edition (New York, Oxford University Press, 1983).

²The results of, or propensity toward, conscious out-of-context appropriation and confabulation of “authentic” folk culture by popular media or for political purposes (often as a means of maintaining hegemony) by persons of no, or only pretended, organic relationship to the community is often called folklorismus. The term “fakelore” coined by Richard Dorson also applies especially to culture that frames itself as “folk” but has no genuine organic relationship to face-to-face community tradition. However, the border between “fakelore” and “folklore” is porous and blurry and the whole relevance of this distinction has increasingly been called into question. Perhaps the goal should not be to pass judgment and divide events between “genuine”

“cultural event” and, as of yet, not a confabulated “festival of Mormon folklife” but an organic expression of community and historical consciousness, Pioneer Day is *the* festival of Mormon regional life. Nevertheless, throughout this study I use the term “celebration” more often than “festival” because “celebration” is the emic term most often employed self-referentially by those who practice the Pioneer Day tradition.

Besides “festival,” other key words useful in theorizing Pioneer Day include: *ritual*, *celebration*, *parade*, *procession*, and *community*. The following definitions are my proposals of how best to use these terms in relation to Pioneer Day celebrations.

Ritual: Ritual enjoys, or is burdened by, a vast corpus of philosophical analysis.³ In a narrow usage of the term, a ritual can be defined as a repeatable performance with supernatural efficacy in a religion’s theology. Something is brought about—wine is transubstantiated into the Body of Christ through Roman Catholic Mass or sins are washed away by baptism. Often, other intense meaningful repeated activity that reflects cultural concerns beyond the immediate purview of the performed actions themselves can be seen as ritual in an expanded or metaphorical sense of the word. Pioneer Day events fall between these narrow

and “spurious” but to understand and elucidate the cultural poetics behind using or ignoring a word like “festival” in promoting one’s event. See Alan Dundes, “The Fabrication of Fakelore,” in *Folklore Matters* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 40-56.

³Victor Turner was a founding scholar in ritual studies. See Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969). Ronald L. Grimes provides an excellent bibliography and explores various directions ritual studies have taken in *Ritual Criticism: Case Studies in Its Practice, Essays on Its Theory* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990). For a collection of case studies in ritual see Michael B. Aune and Valerie DeMarinis, eds., *Religious and Social Ritual: Interdisciplinary Explorations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

and broad definitions of ritual. While they express many religious sentiments and recall sacred history, Pioneer Day is theologically completely dispensable in Mormonism and thus not a Mormon sacred ritual such as baptism or the temple endowment ceremony.

Celebration: An oppositional meaning emerges from comparing ritual to celebration. Both are participatory, meaningful, framed activities but ritual is “for real” while celebration is “for fun.” Festival participants in going from event to event, and even within the events themselves, slide back and forth between, and derive energy from, both ritual and celebratory poles.⁴ Acting out in pioneer garb slides one toward the celebratory pole during Pioneer Day watermelon seed spitting contests and slides one toward the ritualistic pole while participating in a trek reenactment. The sporting events associated with Pioneer Day celebrations, however seriously they may be taken on their own merits, are celebratory in relationship to commemorating the pioneers. Flag raisings and public lectures on Pioneer Day, on the other hand, are rituals of Mormon civic religion.

Parade: In parades, groups of people move through important community space along a pre-determined path. The location of the path itself is important. The parade and its meanings claim the significant community public space, often main street, through occupation and imply that the symbols mobilized at the parade have a right to a central place in the community. Parade participants usually move in groups emblematic of something larger than themselves—an

⁴Roger D. Abrahams, “An American Vocabulary of Celebrations,” in *Time out of Time: Essays on the Festival*, ed. Alessandro Falassi (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 173-183.

occupational or recreational organization, an age group, or a social group. Sometimes these groups exist only for the purpose of parade participation, in which case they are likely to be more elaborate in their parade presence by constructing “floats”—a purposely ephemeral genre of cooperatively built mobile folk-sculpture. The values of the parade are often interpreted by community members to be expressions of not only the values of the parade organizers but the whole community as well.

Procession: “Parade” and “procession,” like “ritual” and “celebration,” can be seen as forming opposite poles on a spectrum distinguishing two similar things. Both processions and parades involve organized sequential movement of groups along pre-established paths, and both involve the fashioning and mobilizing of event-specific material culture. However, “processions” differ from parades in much the same way that rituals differ from celebrations. Parades tend to be more “for fun” and secular while processions are more “for real” and religious. More significantly, parades are observer-centered and exist for spectacle’s sake, while processions are participant-centered and exist for performance’s sake. Neither a parade nor a procession can exist without participants, but a parade requires observers and processions do not. Also, a procession’s movement often exists for a purpose or goal. Something, offerings and/or artifacts, are placed and/or collected by the marchers. For example, as mentioned in Chapter Two, the original 1849 Pioneer Day procession ended at the Salt Lake City Bowery where copies of the sacred documents of Americanism of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence were presented to Brigham Young and the next phase of the ceremony continued.

Over the past 150 years, organized movement through public space on Pioneer Day has shifted from being participant-focused to observer-focused and from existing primarily for devotion to existing primarily for entertainment. That Pioneer Day has undergone a desacralization process over the years is evident in the shift from the term "procession" (common in nineteenth-century accounts)⁵ to "parade" (the only viable term today) in describing the event. Also, the percentage of purely religious symbols and concepts mobilized in Pioneer Day processions/parades has declined in the wake of the increasingly secular self-conception of Utah.

Community: The telephone helps break down geographic data-collection barriers in this experiment in ethnography, but the loci of Pioneer Day celebration has changed little due to the rise of modern communications and transportation.⁶ Pioneer Day celebrations are still organic to local "communities" that are more often than not still isomorphic with towns and villages founded by Mormon colonizers in the nineteenth century.

As early as the 1920s, Howard W. Odum emphasized "community" as a key word in the study of "folk regional sociology."⁷ Later, Robert Redfield examined community among Mexican peasants. He posited a "folk society" marked by a single culture, isolation, and intimate communication as a Weberian

⁵Steven L. Olsen, "Celebrating Cultural Identity: Pioneer Day in Nineteenth-Century Mormonism," in *BYU Studies* 36, no. 1 (1996-97): 159-177.

⁶The major exception to this generalization is the Salt Lake Valley. See Chapter Seven.

⁷Howard W. Odum, *Folk, Region, and Society: Selected Papers*, ed. Catherine Jocher (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964).

ideal type on one end of a spectrum of sociological categorization.⁸ Modern urban city-scapes with high levels of cultural diversity, connection to the outside world, and complex, long distance communications media occupied the other end of the spectrum.

Twentieth-century rural villages in mono-cultural Mormon country frustrate Redfield's spectrum. Rural Mormons enjoy satellite television, VCRs, fax machines, and Internet access even as they participate in face-to-face village harvest festivals whose roots extend back to the European Middle Ages. Denizens of the Mormon Culture Region are not alone in this way. Much the same could be said for rural Quebec, Texas' Rio Grande Valley, Louisiana's Cajun Country, or other distinctive North American cultural areas.

In the 1970s, folkloristics' "folklife" movement used the concept of "community" to refocus folklorists' specialized attention from just the music, just the material culture, or just the oral narratives of a group to analyzing the full range of a group's expressive activity together as part of a whole lifestyle.⁹ Folklife scholars sought to distinguish their endeavors from the broader goals of anthropology. "Instead of studying all of a culture, folklife scholars concentrate on the particular ideas and behaviors that demonstrate localized social patterns which are connected to family, neighborhood, town, or region."¹⁰ Since this study

⁸Robert Redfield, *The Little Community and Peasant Society and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

⁹Don Yoder, ed., *American Folklife* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1976).

¹⁰John Michael Vlach, "The Concept of Community and Folklife Study," in *American Material Culture and Folklife*, ed. Simon J. Bronner (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985), 63-76.

does not seek to interpret the many aspects of Mormon culture shared with other rural, American, and world-wide peoples, it is an examination of one aspect of Mormon regional folklife.

In the 1990s, “community” still carries a stronger connotation of actual group cohesiveness and self-awareness than does the term “folkgroup”—a term used by today’s folklorists in the broadest possible manner as any set of at least two people bound by at least one thing in common.¹¹ Festival performances designate, and help create and maintain, the “epicenter” of a community. On Pioneer Day in Mormon Country, villages present to themselves signs of the tastes, values, and folk historiographic beliefs that distinguish them as a people, and constitute the complexities of their regional and religious identity.

“Event Structures” in Pioneer Day Celebrations

Certain features common to civic Pioneer Day celebrations emerged from comparative fieldwork, interviews, and telephone surveys. The event structures described below were common enough to constitute the building blocks of a “normal form” for civic Pioneer Day celebrations. The concept of a “normal form” in folkloristics refers to instances of material and expressive culture that display the required elements to be evaluated, from within the culture in question, as a “standard” manifestation of the genre of folklore in question.¹²

¹¹See Alan Dundes’s 1977 essay “Who are the Folk?” reprinted in his *Interpreting Folklore* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1980), 1-12.

¹²For more on “normal form” see Georges, Robert A., and Michael Owens Jones, *Folkloristics: an Introduction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 127-132.

A “normal form” rural Pioneer Day would have to occur on the week of July 24th and have a parade; some sort of competitive tournament(s) or games; and some opportunity for community feasting. These are the least common denominators of a Pioneer Day celebration in Mormon Country. As long as they occur sometime during the week of July 24th, celebrations without one of these features may still be Pioneer Day celebrations but would be judged to be a variation from the standard variety. No value judgment is implied here. Indeed many Pioneer Day celebrating towns have a “gimmick” to make theirs stand out or more specifically reflect their local culture and history. A common Pioneer Day variation is for the town to put on some form of dramatic or musical entertainment.¹³

The events of a typical civic Pioneer Day celebration loosely follow the general categories of festival “event structure” proposed by Stoeltje—opening ceremony, ritual, drama and contest, the feast, Dance and music, and concluding event.¹⁴

Pioneer Day opening events often include a community breakfast sponsored by the Lion’s Club, Boy Scouts of America, volunteer fire department, or another community service organization. Proceeds from the breakfast benefit the sponsoring organization which in turn aims to serve the town.¹⁵ In some cases,

¹³Municipalities that do this include Spring City, Monroe, Salt Lake City, and Ogden, Utah and St. Johns and Snowflake, Arizona.

¹⁴Stoeltje, “Festival,” 264.

¹⁵Almost every informant in every town less than 1000 people indicated having a community breakfast, (telephone interviews, June 1995).

the fire department runs their engines through town at dawn, sirens blaring, to wake the people for festivities.¹⁶ In some towns antique cannons are fired for the same purpose. Residents of Snowflake, Arizona use high explosives to launch an anvil high into the air to kick off their Pioneer Day festivities.¹⁷ A prayer service and a flag raising at the Church, court house, or Pioneer cemetery are also common.

¹⁶Spring City's volunteer fire department is particularly enthusiastic about this tradition. Spring City telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

¹⁷Snowflake, Arizona telephone informant, interview by author, July 1995. Blasting an anvil into the air is an old, almost vanished Independence Day tradition known to be practiced in Appalachia and elsewhere. See Emyl Jenkins. *The Book of American Traditions: Stories, Customs, and Rites of Passage to Celebrate our Cultural Heritage* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1996). How it came to be practiced in Snowflake's Pioneer Day celebration is undetermined. On the similarities between July 24th and July 4th see Chapter Seven.

Figure 12. Spring City fire engines parked after their Pioneer Day wake up call.

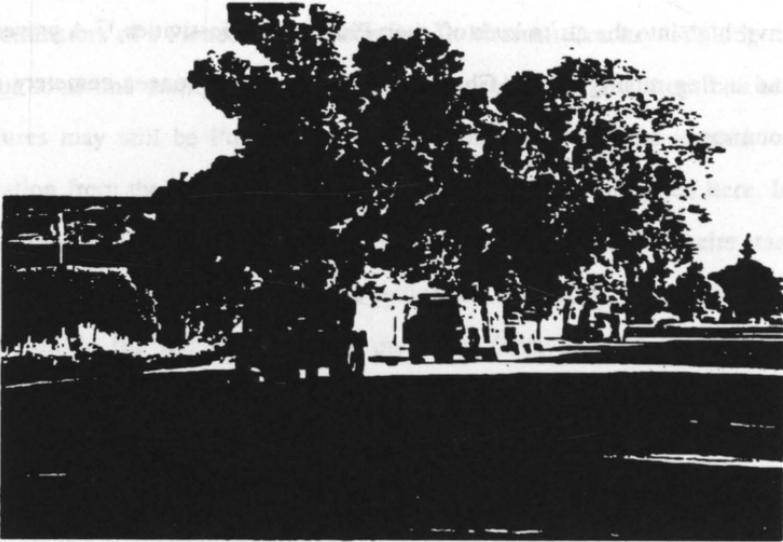
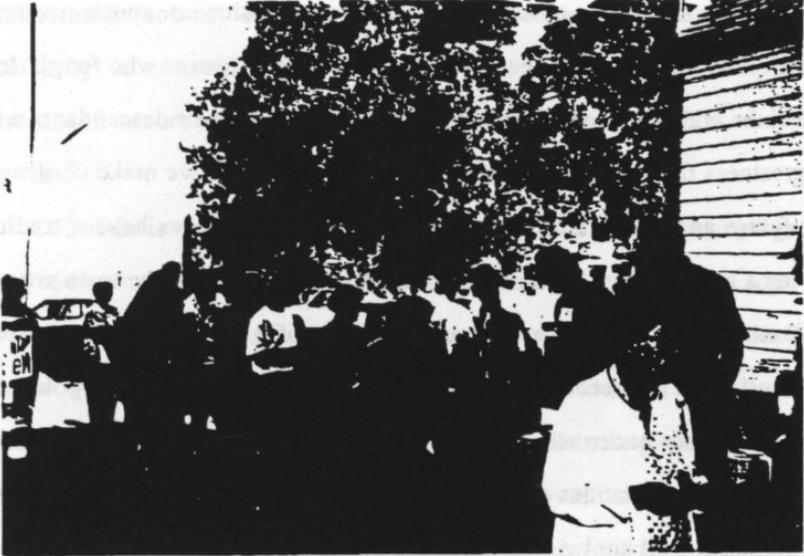


Figure 13. Pioneer Day pancake breakfast served by Spring City volunteer firefighters.



After these opening events, people begin to assemble along the parade route or ready their floats. Some will go to a formal ceremony honoring the Pioneers. Designated speakers such as historical aficionados, town dignitaries, or especially youth being honored for some accomplishment, speak reverentially about the brave and noble deeds of their pioneering ancestors who fought Indians, tamed the wilderness, and lived in faith to bequeath to their descendants a legacy of greatness that we today must always keep in mind as we make choices about our future and the future of our community.¹⁸ Some towns have a tradition of having a special guest lecture by a native son or daughter of the town who left to "make it big" but has come back as part of one of the numerous family reunions held during the Pioneer Day Season.¹⁹ Late July in Mormon Country witnesses a great temporary backwash of the twentieth-century urbanization of Mormonism. Rural village populations swell with family reunion participants in an expression of Mormons' well known emphasis on family togetherness.

Pioneer Day Parades in Mormon Country resemble the summer parades of any small town in America.²⁰ In their parades, Mormon Americans put their own values and meaningful activities on display through their selection of parade

¹⁸Mack Larson, "Pioneer Day July 24, 1993," speech manuscript in author's possession. Marilyn Larson, "July 24th Celebration.....July 1993," speech manuscript in author's possession. Mack and Marilyn Larson, who now live in the greater Phoenix city of Mesa, Arizona, were invited guest speakers for Snowflake's 1993 Pioneer Day Celebration.

¹⁹Holden, Panguitch, Orderville, Utah as well as Snowflake, and Benson, Arizona telephone informants, interviews by author, June 1995.

²⁰For treatments of American festivals in general see Emyl Jenkins, *The Book of American Traditions: Stories, Customs, and Rites of Passage to Celebrate our Cultural Heritage* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1996).

entries. Typical entries include farm implements, 4H livestock, historical re-creationists dressed as pioneers, antique and high performance cars, as well as vehicles and participants from the day's sporting contest. In a celebration of American democracy and entrepreneurialism, the mayor and other dignitaries cruise by in convertibles provided by local car dealerships displaying the intermixed nature of celebrity, political office, commercialism, and political power.

Subdivisions within the community such as Church congregations or service clubs often collaborate to construct floats built on a theme. Floats provide spectacle during a parade and draw attention to the float's theme. To draw attention, floats are elevated and brightly ornamented and may be reused or refashioned from year to year. Floats commonly celebrate pioneer nostalgia with living dioramas of popular pioneer stereotypes. Any relic of a town's pioneer past, such as period quilts or wagons, are prime candidates for transportation by a float in a Pioneer Day parade. Not only age and tradition are celebrated by Pioneer Day parades but also youth and the future, as is seen in another common float theme—local beauty pageant royalty. (See Figure 14 and 17.)

Figure 14. Miss Fairview City and her attendants prepare to give their Pioneer Day speeches in the cultural hall of an LDS chapel in Fairview, Utah, 1995.



¹⁹Mark Larson, "Pioneer Day July 24, 1994," speech manuscript in author's possession. Mark Larson, "July 24th Celebration . . . July 1993," speech manuscript in author's possession, which was written by Mark Larson, who now lives in the greater Phoenix area. Mark Larson was invited to give the speech for Snowflake's 1993 Pioneer Day Celebration.

²⁰Holmes Vangundy, "Orderly Utah as well as Snowflake," and several Arizona Pioneer Day celebrations, interview by author, June 1995.

²¹For historical of American festivals in general see Roy L. Jenkins, *The Quest of America as Festival: Stories, Customs, and Rites of Passage to Contemporary Cultural Heritage* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1966).

Business and enterprise are a major strand of society anywhere in America and many floats rely on corporate sponsorship for funding. Businesses such as agricultural equipment manufactures, sellers of hybrid seed grains, dairies, grocery stores, nursing homes, hunting supply shops, and automotive dealerships may sponsor floats that focus on their own services or they may simply provide financial assistance in exchange for advertising space on floats whose theme is not directly related to business enterprise.

The photographs on the following pages are a selection of representative participants in Fairview, Utah's 1995 Pioneer Day Parade. Their presentation in relatively undigested format, except for captions, is intended to provide a sense of the flow of a whole a Pioneer Day parade in a medium-sized town in rural Mormon Country. A loose structure organizes the parade entries. A children's' parade serves as a prelude to the major parade which is led by a military honor guard. Local pageant royalty and city dignitaries follow. Then the parade continues with a variety of entries by local individuals, clubs, and businesses climaxing with a procession of cars to participate in the evenings' demolition derby.

Figure 15. The National Guard troops in the colors to begin the parade. A float in the children's parade.

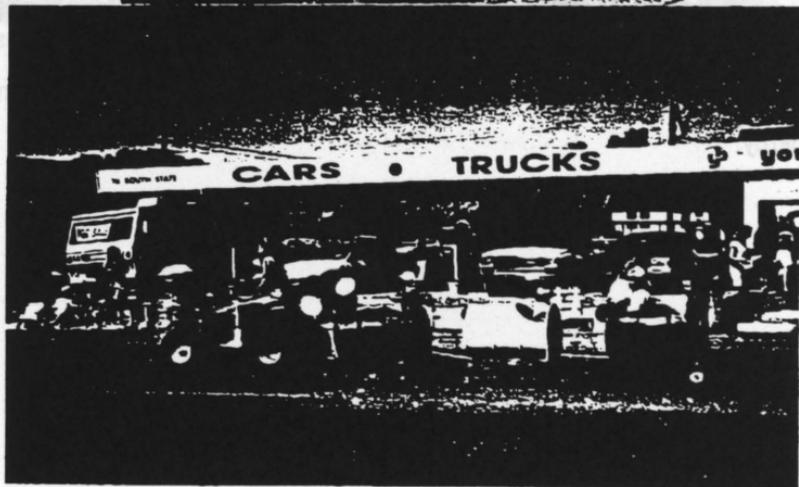


Figure 16. A girl in pioneer garb. A parade participant or an observer?



Figure 17. Miss Fairview City and her attendants. Local dignitaries.

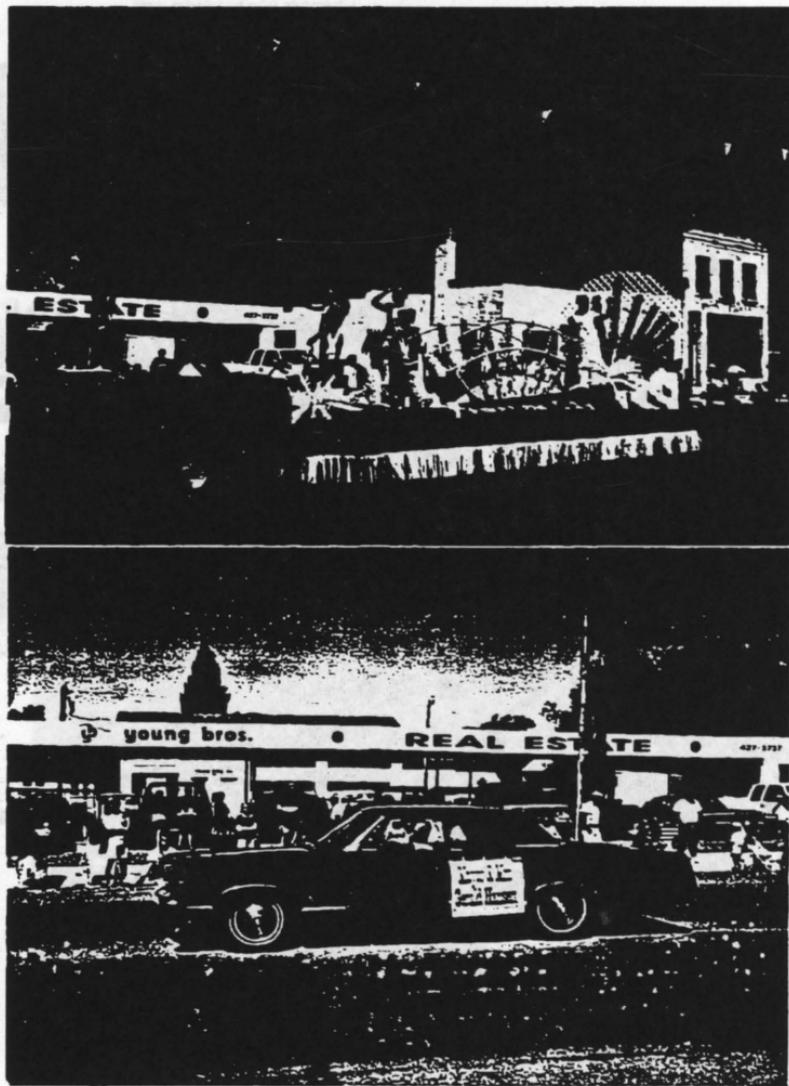


Figure 18. An advertisement for a local pageant. The local chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

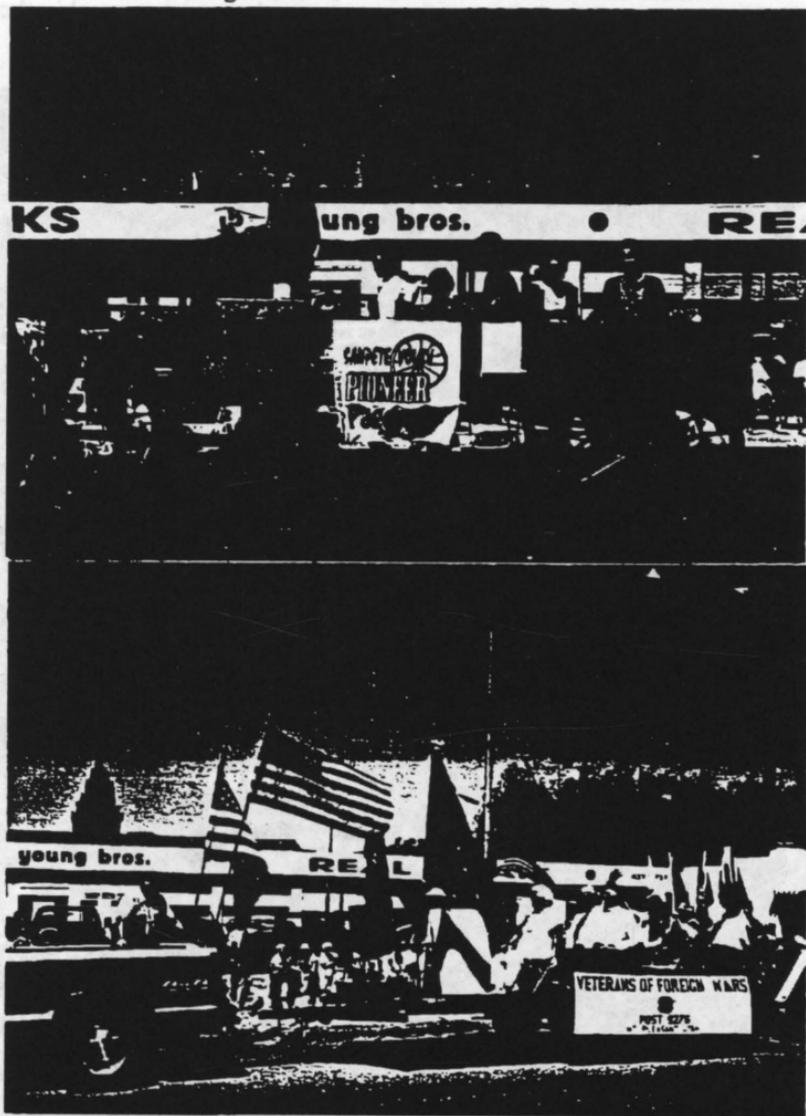


Figure 19. Quilts—a folk art for which rural Mormondom is renowned. A float in honor of Rozella Collard, a living daughter of a plains-crossing Pioneer; Rozella waves from underneath the pink parasol in the second photograph.

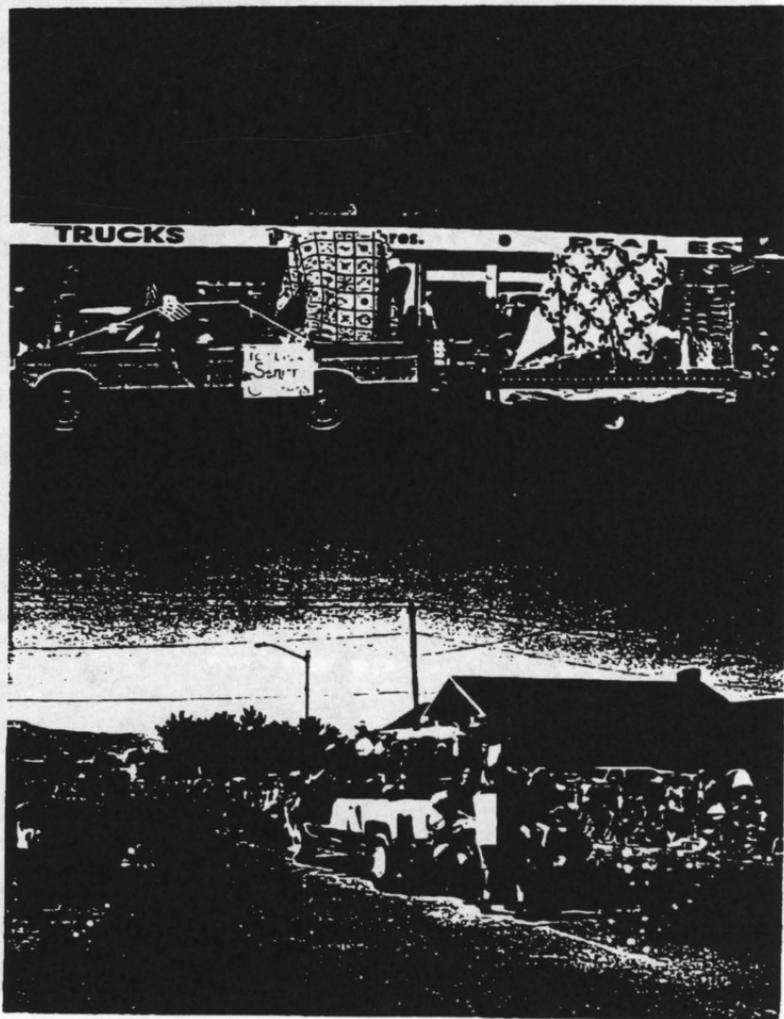


Figure 20. A hunting supply store combines parade participation with advertising. A Clown rides a vintage John Deere Tractor.

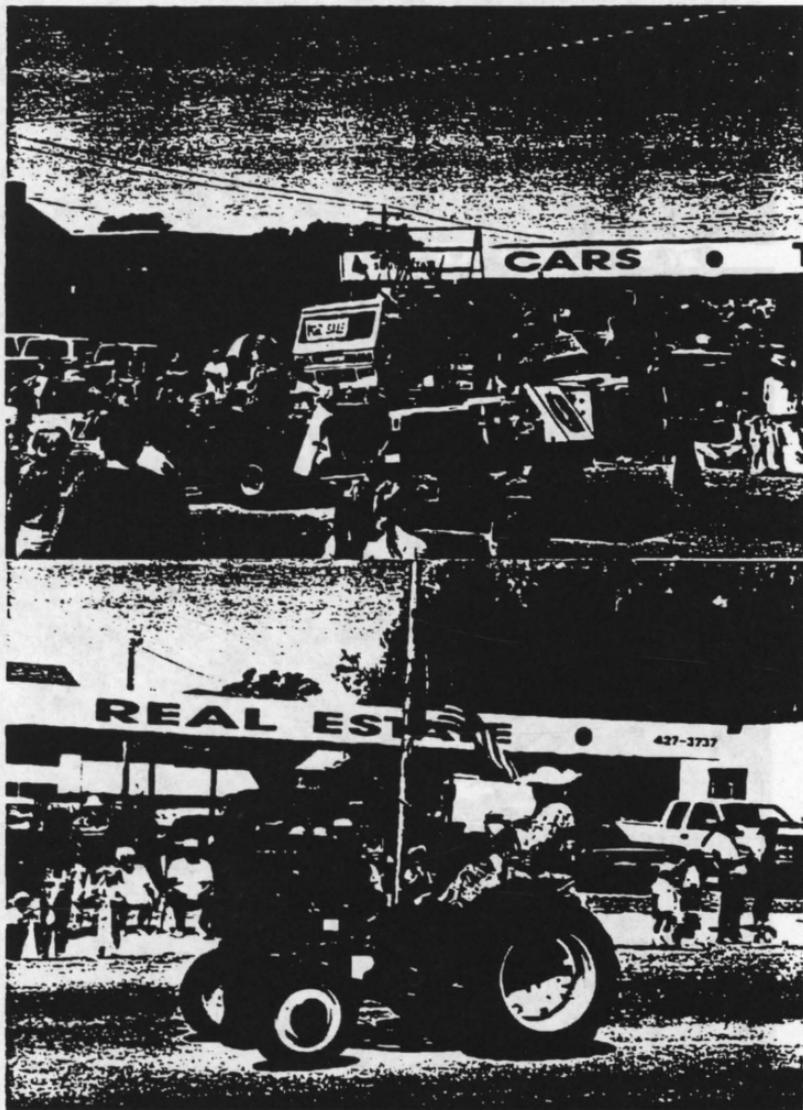


Figure 21. Fairview 3rd Ward's living pioneer diorama. A participant in the evening's demolition derby.

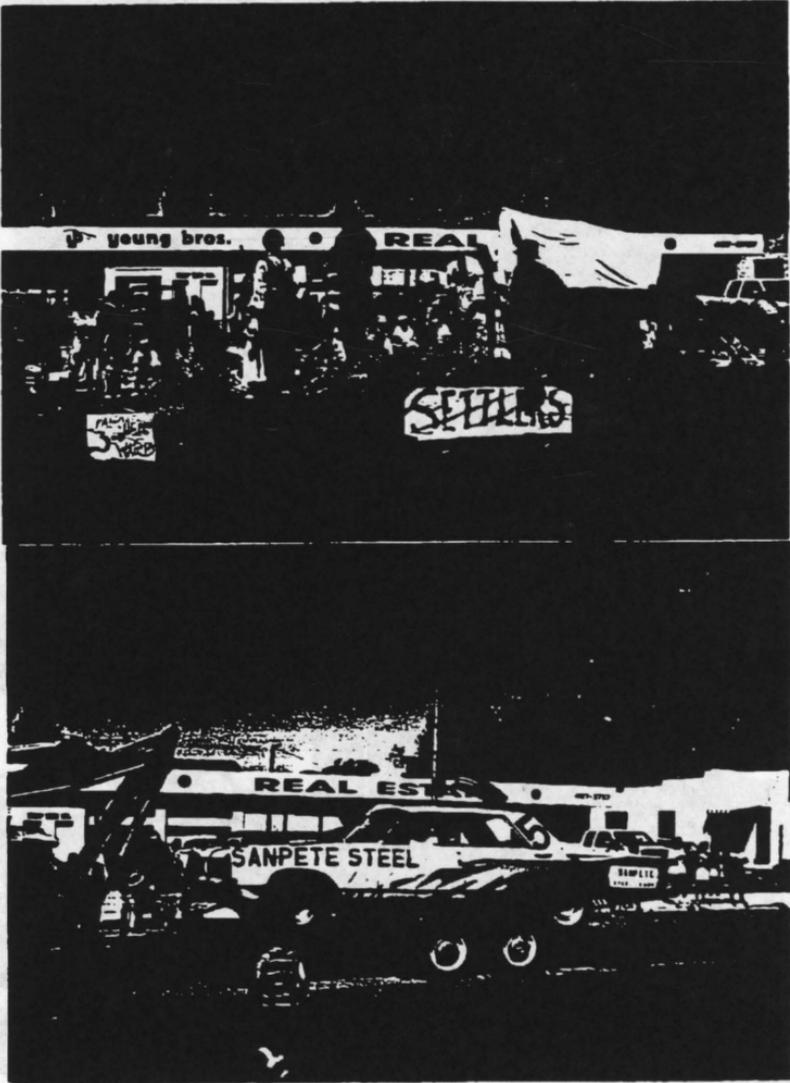


Figure 22. The end of the parade. An Outdoor fair near the parade route.



After parades, the second most common and near-universal feature of Pioneer Day celebrations are an organized contest or group of contests. These range from professional rodeos in larger towns to kids' balloon tosses and sack races in small hamlets. Rodeos and baseball tournaments are particularly common. With basketball courts in virtually every North American LDS chapel, it has come to be seen as the "Mormon sport." However, it is baseball with its association with summer, its history as the most nostalgia-riven American game, and its long tradition of being played on Pioneer Day that make it the most common tournament game of choice. In Afton, Wyoming the Pioneer Day baseball tournament is the central focus of the celebration eclipsing even the parade.²¹ In the tiny hamlet of Flowell, teenagers have kept alive a tradition of playing a dangerous kick-the-can game involving a large bonfire as their central celebratory contest. None of the parents feel like they can stop this traditional game since they participated themselves as teenagers, and so did their parents for as long as anyone can remember.²²

Another common Pioneer Day activity is a special program for entertainment involving professional music (often for a community dance), cowboy poetry, dancing or clogging performers, or as is often the case, local melodrama by community theater groups. Throughout the late twentieth-century rural West community theater melodramas are a little studied but very vibrant folk tradition. In Mormon country melodramas are often performed in conjunction

²¹Afton, Wyoming telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

²²Flowell, Utah telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

with Pioneer Day celebrations. Beaver, Utah's melodrama is one of, if not the, major event of that town's Pioneer Day week. Often, theatrical performances have little direct relation to pioneering except that they play on "old time country nostalgia." In 1995, Fairview actors performed "Hillbilly Wedding" and "Li'l Abner" in Spanish Fork.²³ In Spring City, clergy of several faiths cooperated to stage a respectful yet tongue-in-cheek "Old Time Camp Meeting."²⁴

Some towns stage more serious theater on religious themes. Snowflake, Arizona recently launched a new event for the week of Pioneer Day—the play "Plates of Prophecy" about Joseph Smith's discovery of the Golden Plates.²⁵ Nearby Joseph City, Arizona also produces a devotional play on the history of the LDS Church in their town.²⁶ In a more elaborate and more specifically Mormon dramatic tradition, some Mormon Country towns host sweeping historical pageants that in some cases displace Pioneer Day altogether.²⁷ Chapter Seven discusses historical pageants and their geographic distribution relative to Pioneer Day celebrations in more depth.

²³Beaver, Utah Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. Spanish Fork, Utah Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

²⁴Spring City, Utah Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

²⁵Snowflake, Arizona Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

²⁶Joseph City, Arizona Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

²⁷The most elaborate and well-attended pageant with over one hundred and fifty thousand spectators per season is held in Manti, Utah in San Pete County. Manti, Utah pageant organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

On any Pioneer Day in any town in the Mormon Culture region, one is likely to encounter car shows, crafts fairs, traveling vendors, reenacted demonstrations of Pioneer life, and occasionally carnival operations. At some point, usually near the end of Pioneer Day activities, a community dance, or several community dances are held. Often these will be "old tyme" in their affected style and employ professional musicians.

The most common way to close a Pioneer Day celebration is with a fireworks display that celebrates the Mormons' achievement of freedom through their arrival in Utah. Much like July 4th fireworks displays, Pioneer Day fireworks shows take place in stadiums or open fields. In a few towns, the fireworks display receives special emphasis to become not only the final but the crowning event of the celebration.²⁸

Ward Pioneer Day Celebrations Outside of the Mormon Culture Region

Non-civic Pioneer Day celebrations are not the focus of this chapter but their prevalence in the international Church and usefulness for comparison to the more elaborate whole-community civic celebrations of the Mormon Culture Region warrants at least a brief mention. I remember celebrating Pioneer Day in Church units large and small in Dayton, Ohio; Lexington Park, Maryland; Sleaford, England; Ft. Walton Beach, Florida; Mesa, Arizona; and Rotterdam, The Netherlands. My experiences matches observations made by Susan Tabor in

²⁸My informant in Weston, Idaho made a special effort to point out that while her town had a parade, the real show was the fireworks. Weston, Idaho telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

her ethnography and oral history of one year in the community life the Elkton, Maryland Ward.²⁹ LDS ward-sponsored Pioneer Day celebrations in America resemble church socials of any other denomination in that they are opened and closed with prayer, held in or near the Church building, and focus on the social relations and recreation of a community of believers rather than their joint religious worship as is the case on Sunday meetings.

As Mormons brought their religion outside of the Mountain West through emigration and proselytizing, they also brought aspects of their culture's harvest festival. Many wards hold special events such as camp outs, morning flag raising, barbecues, and/or pancake breakfasts. As in Utah, church services the week before Pioneer Day often focus on the heritage of faith bequeathed by the pioneers. In Elkton's celebration, a children's parade of junior pioneers with toy wagons made its way around the outside of the chapel. Signs on the side of church building marked the kids' arrival in such pioneer trek landmarks as Nauvoo, Mt. Pisgah, Winter Quarters, Chimney Rock, and the Salt Lake Valley. The official LDS children's hymnbook has no shortage of hymns for such occasions with songs such as "The Hand Cart Song," "The Ox-cart song," and "Pioneer Children Sang as the Walked."

Modern urban and suburban Pioneer Day celebrations outside Mormon Country might treat ward members to demonstrations of pioneer life such as whittling, butter churning, quilting, or Dutch oven cooking by Pioneer

²⁹Susan Buhler Taber, *Mormon Lives: A Year in the Elkton Ward* (Urbana And Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 284-286.

aficionados. "Pioneer games" such as sack races watermelon seed spitting contests are also common.

Some wards embrace "playing Pioneer" others have little use for it and do not see its relevance. In Holland in 1987. I observed a Pioneer Day celebration organized by the mostly American, and predominantly "Deseret Mormon." contingent of 19 to 23 year old missionaries. Native Dutch Mormons participated with a bemused detached sort of enthusiasm, having a good time humoring the Americans in "their thing." Were it not for American missionary initiative, it is likely that no Pioneer Day would have taken place at all.

In Siberia where pioneering resonates deeply in local history. Russian Mormons have taken Pioneer reenactment to the point of building an authentic replica handcart based on plans from the 1850s and trekking across Russia to catch a ship to link up with the 1997 sesquicentennial reenactors on July 24th in Salt Lake City.³⁰

Most wards in the United States have at least a few members whose genealogical roots extend through the Utah Pioneers and many "non-ethnic" Mormons enjoy traditional Pioneer Day activities. This helps ensure that at least pared-down traditional forms of Pioneer Day celebration continue among Mormons in Elkton. Maryland and elsewhere.

³⁰Michael S. von Rosen. "Russian Handcart Reaches New York." *Church News*, 28 June 1997, 3-7.

Chapter Six: Creative Meanings of Pioneer Day

If thou art merry, praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing, and with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

(Revelation of instruction given through Brigham Young to the Latter-day Saints preparing to cross the plains on January 14, 1847. Doctrine and Covenants 136:28)

We invited all the people up here and all our children. Our dinner was quite a success. All the women folks came and part of the men. Aunt Mary ... got disappointed and did not get her ticket to go to the great Jubilee. She was invited to Sister West's for dinner. It was a fine dinner gotten up by the Relief Society for the old people and the pioneers.

After dinner the menfolks hitched up their teams and all the people went like they did when they crossed the plains. James Flake was the captain of the company. They went part way to Taylor and corralled like they did on the plains (then drove up to Taylor in front of the meeting house where the people was running foot races and having other sports) The band we had with us ... played and the people got out in the corral and danced.

It seemed so lively. No shooting, nothing boisterous. It was all so nice and like days gone by.

(An excerpt from Lucy Hannah White Flake's 1897 journal account of what was likely the first Pioneer Day celebration in Snowflake, Arizona held during the Church's 50 year Pioneer Jubilee celebration. This account displays a celebratory pattern of events followed in similar forms in Snowflake and elsewhere to this day.)

Historians and anthropologists have learned to be careful in identifying cross-cultural similarities and even more careful in suggesting reasons and providing interpretations for such similarities.¹ However, an experiment in ethnographic data collection suggests a subsequent experiment in interpretation.

¹Richard Bushman discusses a Mormon example of the problematic nature of tracing the "origins" of ideas and doctrines in his *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 3.

For this chapter, a side branch of the study, I propose parallels more imaginative and metaphorical than causal or genetic. The causation and structural similarities I suggest are broad and general rather than specific.

The Secular and Religious Nature of Pioneer Day

To Mormons for whom “all spirit is matter” in a “more refined form”² and who believe God has given no temporal law that is not in essence spiritual,³ the famous sacred/profane dichotomy so often drawn by theologians and religious studies scholars is at best only crudely useful, and at worst seriously detrimental, toward understanding the Mormon experience.⁴ In the nineteenth century just being in Utah was itself evidence of devotion to God’s call to flee to Zion: Mormons regarded “mundane” acts such as irrigating and farming as fulfilling the biblical prophet Isaiah’s prophecy of making the desert “blossom as a rose.”⁵

Nevertheless, “religious” and “non-religious” as analytic concepts are somewhat useful in understanding Pioneer Day’s place in Mormon culture. Most of the things that Mormons do to mark their Mormonness are unequivocally religious—getting baptized, worshipping in the temple, wearing the temple

² Doctrine and Covenants 131:7.

³ Doctrine and Covenants 29:34.

⁴ Seminal works making use of this distinction include Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. (New York: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1915); Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959); Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1969); and Rollo May, *The Cry for Myth* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1991).

⁵ Isaiah 35:1. Doctrine and Covenants 117:7.

garment, serving as missionaries, reading the Book of Mormon. In this perspective, Pioneer Day celebrations constitute the most well-developed relatively non-religious aspect of Mormon culture. Even though Pioneer Day celebrations are, at certain times during their proceedings, infused with a sense of reverence and the Holy, they are for the most part revelry—a festival of Mormon regional identity and historic triumphs. While LDS theology embraces and encourages the kind of “wholesome” entertainment found in the parades, rodeos, barbecues, dances, and fireworks displays common in Pioneer Day celebrations, it does not require them for salvation, prescribe formalistic patterns of play, or consider them an essential part of Latter-day Saint practice. So in a limited sense, one can make a distinction between “sacred” things Mormons do out of doctrinal compunction and “secular” acts performed to celebrate their heritage.⁶

Pioneer Day is a cultural festival more than a religious holiday. None of its events or “rituals” are essential to Latter-day Saint theology or religious life. While Judaism without Passover is unthinkable, Mormonism without Pioneer Day is already common in many parts of the world. Pioneer Day’s secularity is underscored by the fact that if the 24th falls on a Sunday, Pioneer Day is

⁶The issue of how rightly to celebrate religious festivals, or whether to celebrate them at all, has plagued Christendom since its earliest days when the celebration of Christ’s birth conflated with the festive and ribald Roman Saturnalia. The winter celebration of Christmas is a legacy of this blending. Competing, overlapping, frequently changing calendars and the lack of reliable information regarding the date of Jesus’ birth has led to Christendom finding no fully satisfactory solution to the “problem” of the pagan origins of Christmas to this day. Puritans in England and America legally proscribed the celebration of Christmas both for reasons having to do with its origins in Roman religion and for the way it was celebrated in folkways with “drinking, fighting, revelry, and squandering money.” The Puritans reasoned that to indeed celebrate Christ’s birth, it should be with prayer and pious contemplation. The Mormon incorporation of re-creation into the holy has made the question of how to celebrate Pioneer Day less problematic. See Restad, *Christmas in America*, 1-19.

invariably held on the Saturday before or the Monday after due to Mormons' sabbatarian sentiments.

Since Pioneer Day celebrations bridge, mix, mingle, and confound the sacred and profane they serve as a prime site for examining the interface between Mormon Culture and broader Euro-American cultural practices. Indeed, Pioneer Day celebrations represent, to a certain extent, a continuation of long-established and deeply rooted traditions from European folk-culture.⁷ In a broad sense Pioneer Day Celebrations demonstrate cultural continuities from, and parallels with, the festival cultures of Puritan New England and Medieval Europe.

An Afterclap of Puritanism

In his book *Selling God*, a insightful treatment of the intimate interaction of commercialism and American religion, historian Laurence Moore observes that "America is not thought of as a festive country."⁸ This image, and the impulse which inspires it, dates back to the Puritan's suppression of "ungodly" pastimes, including European folk festival culture, in their attempts to establish a sober "City on a Hill" composed of "visible saints" that would stand as a witness that an uncorrupt Christian society could prosper and thrive.⁹ A popular view of the

⁷Restad, *Christmas in America*, 1-28. Restad's study examines the extent to which celebratory traditions survived and refashioned themselves in trans-Atlantic European migrations.

⁸Moore, R. Laurence, *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 46. This image can also be traced to American revolutionary leaders' abolishment of British national holidays and failure to institute American counterparts. Restad, *Christmas in America*, 20.

⁹The carefully reasoned place of recreation in Puritan New England life is discussed in David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 146-151.

Puritans holds them to be dour spoil-sports constantly on guard against their own and others' pleasurable sensations. In today's American English usage, the word "Puritan" has come to refer to exactly these qualities. The famous quip of 1920's iconoclast social critic H. L. Mencken that Puritan philosophy is essentially "the fear that someone somewhere might be having a good time"¹⁰ persists despite decades of revised history suggesting that early colonial New Englanders were not only much more intellectually sophisticated but also had positive attitudes about a variety of wholesome recreations including sports and sex within the covenant of marriage.¹¹ While Puritan's eschewed theater, their "Boston game" and "town ball" gave rise to today's American football and baseball. Puritans feared and suppressed folk festivals, not because of their entertainment value, but for their roots in pagan pre-Christian European seasonal rites celebrations.

After passing through Utah on his way to California Ralph Waldo Emerson, made an off-hand comment to a traveling companion that as far as he was concerned Mormonism was an "afterclap of Puritanism."¹² Historians have argued for years over how much to make of Emerson's analysis of Mormonism and the ostensible theological and cultural connections between Puritans and

¹⁰Thomas A. Underwood, "Mencken, H[enry] L[ouis]," in *A Companion to American Thought*, eds. Richard Wightman Fox and James T. Kloppenberg (Oxford, UK and Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1995), 447-448.

¹¹Beginning with Perry Miller in the 1950s, a renaissance of Puritan studies continues. See Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954) and T. Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

¹²James B. Thayer, *A Western Journey with Mr. Emerson* (1884) as excerpted in William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, eds., *Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), 382-384.

Latter-day Saints,¹³ but several facts suggesting a Puritan connection to Pioneer Day celebrations are clear:

The Mormon hierarchy that inaugurated Pioneer Day in 1849 and continues to fashion and interpret orthodox Mormon ideology has had deep genealogical roots in the people and places of America's Puritan experience from its genesis in the 1830s to the present.¹⁴ Few regional populations outside Utah can trace as large a percentage of their ancestry to New England colonists.

While Mormons' Arminian soteriology is conceptually very distant from that of the Calvinist Puritans, Latter-day Saints' self-conception of being a covenant and chosen people, a New Israel with a special mission of example to the world has strong Puritan reverberations. The Mormons too made an "errand into the wilderness" and fully expected the corrupt world to take notice. The nineteenth-century Mormon striving for an orderly community united under correct worship of the same God resembles Puritan's seventeenth century efforts in the same spirit.¹⁵

¹³David Brion Davis, "The New England Origins of Mormonism," *New England Quarterly* 26 (1953): 147-68. Davis argues for a strong recapitulative connection. Grant Underwood, "The New England Origins of Mormonism Revisited," *The Journal of Mormon History* 15 (1989): 15-25. Underwood argues that in the light of recent advances in Mormon historical scholarship, many of Davis's conclusions are untenable.

¹⁴D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: The Origins of Power* (Signature Books, 1994). D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997). Quinn's work clearly shows the New England ancestral makeup of the Mormon leadership from 1830 to the 1990s. For an alternate view see John Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-1844* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 3-59. Brooke shows that many Puritan-era Mormon ancestors were religious dissenters or otherwise on the fringes of society. But these discoveries do not change the fact that the stream of Mormon leadership genealogy runs squarely and almost exclusively through the heart of the New England Puritan cultural experience.

¹⁵For a detailed treatment to this argument see Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*.

The Puritans held anniversary celebrations of their own recapitulation of the Exodus, the Great Migration of the 1630s, with community events featuring processions, oratory, athletic games, and feasts of thanksgiving.

Even though Mormons rejected many Puritan theological ideas, intolerant attitudes, and negative notions about certain kinds of recreation, Mormons have recalled the Puritan experience with fondness as part of their own proto-history. Latter-day Saints recognize the Puritan endeavor as a precursor to the Latter-day Saint struggle to find religious freedom. In the war of words surrounding polygamy in Utah both its opponents and practitioners claimed legitimacy for their views in part from their genealogical roots in the Godly strivings of America's Puritan founding fathers.¹⁶

Mormons would agree with their Puritan spiritual and genealogical progenitor Increase Mather who said, "for a Christian to use recreation is very lawful, and in some cases a great duty."¹⁷ Mormons would expand "lawful recreation" beyond the Puritan's feasting and baseball playing to include music, theater, and dancing. Nineteenth-century Mormon enthusiasm for social dancing was so great that Brigham Young even found it necessary to explain that while Latter-day Saints recognize the benefits of dancing, Mormons are not Shakers and do not attach any special theological significance to the practice.

¹⁶Jana K. Riess, "A Battle to be Won with the Bible and the School Book: Presbyterian Women Missionary Teachers in Utah, 1870-1890," unpublished paper presented at the 1997 Mormon History Association meeting in Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁷Increase Mather, *A Testimony against Several Profane and Superstitious Customs* (Boston, 1688), 37.

Still, there is in Pioneer Day celebrations a tension between a drive toward pious nostalgic remembrance of the pioneer's faith, and an active embrace of wholesome popular entertainments to celebrate pioneer achievements. One informant in Spring City complained to me that he regarded nearby Fairview's Pioneer Day demolition derby as an inappropriate way of honoring the Pioneers, sarcastically remarking, "A demolition derby! Now, that's a sensible way to celebrate the pioneers."¹⁸ Others evidently felt that such a contest was not only wholly appropriate, but part of a tradition dating back to the first Pioneer Day celebration in 1849 of utilizing the popular entertainments of the time to rejoice.¹⁹

While Mormons have taken Pioneer Day celebratory activities beyond what Puritans would have allowed, there are limits to what Mormon Country villages accept as "lawful recreation" that are more "Puritan" than most contemporary American community festivals. The brewery sponsorship and widespread public alcohol consumption that characterize many American festivals are conspicuously absent from Pioneer Day celebrations due to Mormons' strict religious aversion to alcohol. However, even on their own holiday, Mormons have not always been totally successful in eliminating worldly traditions that link drinking with festive occasions. The Mormons in the town of Hagerman, Idaho put an end to their Pioneer Day celebration in the early 1990s rather than let it continue down its apparent path toward becoming a drunken revelry. "There was

¹⁸Spring City, Utah community leader and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

¹⁹Steven L. Olsen. "Celebrating Cultural Identity," 159-177.

too much drinking,” according to one former participant.²⁰ Similar concerns were one of the factors that induced the death of Moab, Utah’s civic Pioneer Day as well.²¹ Festive alcohol consumption on Pioneer Day has long bedeviled organizers and participants who wish a dry celebration. The July 24th 1899 diary entry of Orson Huntsman of St. George, Utah records “... some must get drunk before they can get the spirit of the day and have what they think is a good time, which is hell for the rest of us.”²²

As well as the incompatibility of alcohol with Pioneer Day, the lack of a well-developed regional food and non-devotional music traditions have helped keep Pioneer Days from having the potential to become a folk regional festival tourist draw like Mardi Gras in New Orleans or Cajun Country.

Medieval Carnavalesque

While July 24th is not quite “Mormon Mardi Gras,” cultural parallels exist between the Mormon Culture Region and Medieval Catholic Europe. Pioneer Day has historically displayed many features of the “carnavalesque” first identified by scholars in medieval and early modern European folk festivals. The work of

²⁰Hagerman, Idaho non-LDS telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. This informant suggested that some people were disappointed that the Mormons decided to stop putting on Pioneer Day since no other community celebration emerged to take its place. “I understand why the Mormons did what they did, and I don’t blame them,” she said.

²¹Moab, Utah former Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. This informant expressed her displeasure that people would be so insensitive to Mormon culture that “we just had to stop.”

²²Diary of Orson S. Huntsman as copied by Thressia C. Huntsman as quoted in Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West* vol. 7, 127.

Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin emerged belatedly after his death to exert profound influence on thinking in the fields of socio-linguistics, literary theory, and cultural studies.²³ The term "carnavalesque" in particular has come to be applied to any multi-vocalic cultural phenomena where the normal order of society is temporarily transmuted, playfully inverted, and/or parodied. In this vein, Pierre Bourdieu identifies popular forms of expressive culture that "satisfy the taste for and sense of revelry, free speaking and hearty laughter which liberate by setting the social world over heels, overturning conventions and proprieties."²⁴ Recent cultural critics have found the term carnivalesque particularly useful in understanding the creative expressions of marginalized groups within larger cultural contexts of domination and subordination.

Examples of Pioneer Day carnivalesque: A common expression of the carnivalesque is the temporary inversion of standard cultural dichotomies such as high/low, human/animal, man/woman, old/new, and civilized/savage. Occasionally, a local ward bishop will arrive at the parade, to the spectators' delight, dressed as a tramp or hobo.²⁵ Mormon Bishops are usually drawn from the ranks of "solid respectable citizenry" far from the likes of hobos. Bishops are

²³Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans., Helene Iswolsky, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968). Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogic Principal* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984). Susan Pendergast Shoelwer, "The Absent Other: Women in the Land and Art of the Mountain Men," in *Discovered Lands, Invented Places: Transforming Visions of the American West*, eds. Jules David Prown, et. al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 135-165.

²⁴Pierre Bourdieu, "The Aristocracy of Culture," *Media, Culture, and Society* 2 (1980): 237.

²⁵Snowflake, Arizona telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. Spring City, Utah telephone informant, interview by author, July 1995.

ideally stable, proven managers of time, money, and people in whom the ability to be humorous and playful are not required traits. In this topsy-turvy vein, another strange appearance at the parade might be donkeys and pigs dressed as people and children dressed in animal costumes.²⁶

As a spoof of its own Pioneer Day sporting events, and as an inversion of the traditional family roles of the day, mid-twentieth-century Snowflake held baby stroller races where men in drag would push dolls back and forth several times across a course.²⁷ At the end of each lap of the course they would be expected to change the doll's diaper before going on. During the 1860 Rockville, Utah Pioneer Day and the 1904 Pine Valley, Utah Pioneer Day, women drove nails and men sewed buttons in similar contests of inversion.²⁸

Such occurrences are uncommon ways in which the Pioneer Day carnivalesque impulse is expressed today. Other incongruities are more common. Modern people donning nineteenth-century garb and assuming a pioneer personae is, of course, the most pervasive anachronistic inversion encountered on Pioneer Day. In fact, it is so common and central to Pioneer Day celebrations that its carnivalesque nature is easily forgotten.

The central place of sporting contests and general festive revelry on a religious holiday, despite Mormonism's positive attitude toward such things in

²⁶Snowflake. Arizona telephone informant, interview by author. June 1995. Spring City, Utah telephone informant, interview by author. July 1995.

²⁷Several Snowflake. Arizona telephone informants, interviews by author. June 1995.

²⁸Edna Langston Pratt and Isabell Laub Curl as quoted in Carter. *Heart Throbs of the West* vol. 7, 127-128.

moderation, is a volatile mix that can potentially evolve into situations that serious Mormons cannot tolerate. Pioneer Day celebrations by their very nature as events of simultaneous, inter-linked religiosity and worldly fun open a Pandora's box of possibilities that Mormons are happy to open, but keep a close watch on lest they get out of hand and need to be closed in again. As in the case of Moab, Utah and Hagerman, Idaho, Mormons withdraw their support and organizational energies from Pioneer Day celebrations when they become events that fail to meet the needs of their community because they are out-of-sync with their religious standards. Lucy Flake's exclamation of relief that there was no wild firing of guns or boisterousness displays one nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint's recognition of the socially dangerous possibilities of Pioneer Day as well as shows her gratitude that her conception of appropriate Pioneer Day celebration was not violated.

"*Playing Indian*": A once-common feature of rural Mormon Pioneer celebrations was for groups of young Mormons to assume the personae of, and act out as, Native Americans.²⁹ For a frontier people, few dichotomies were more physically threatening and psychologically troubling and than that of "savage/civilized." Following white and red Americans' violent frontier struggle

²⁹Interviews with informants in several towns substantiate this as do the numerous newspaper accounts and journal entries from 1849 to the mid 1940s collected in Kate Carter's "Celebrating the 24th of July," *Heart Throbs of the West*, vol. 7, 89-136. Most picture and documentary evidence used here comes from Snowflake, Arizona and can be found in local historian Albert Levine's works. See Albert J. Levine, *From Indian Trails to Jet Trails: Snowflake's Centennial History* (Snowflake, Arizona: Snowflake Historical Society, 1977). Albert J. Levine, "Reminiscences of a Dude at the Snowflake Pioneer Celebration in the 1930s," in *Snowflake Historical Society Wagon Trails*, 17 December 1976. Albert J. Levine, ed., *Snowflake: A Pictorial Review 1878-1964* (no publication information).

for control of the West's resources. Mormons symbolically perpetuated this nineteenth-century tension into the first half of the twentieth century though their ritualistic reenactments dressed as Indians on Pioneer Day.

Bands of war-paint and loin-cloth clad tricksters galloped whooping and hollering through town on bareback horses terrorizing the citizenry, stealing food, and even "abducting" people on occasion. Sometimes such exploits were orchestrated to serve the purposes of official Pioneer Day activities. They woke up the town for community breakfasts as fire departments do today for example. On other occasions, Pioneer Day provided an excuse for unrehearsed tom-foolery by impromptu troops of mischief makers.³⁰

For the most part those who dressed as Indians were also cast members in the local historical pageant where the most serious and structured "playing Indian" took place.³¹ The pageants staged abductions, wagon train attacks, and settler versus Indian battles in the style of Buffalo Bill's famous wild west show. However, in Mormon pageants, it was common to portray Brigham Young as the great peacemaker and friend to the Indians who settled hostilities without violence. The time warp created by the pageant would close with a Brigham Young impersonator parlaying with the Indians and the smoking by all of a cedar bark peace pipe. Thus the savage/civilized dichotomy was resolved in favor of

³⁰The propriety of this sort of activity was questioned by some at the time, not so much because it might offend Native Americans to impersonate them (these concerns would come later and spell the end of most Mormon playings of "wild Indian"), but because some Mormons perceived a danger in letting young men run too free with their "savage" and disruptive impulses. Perhaps Lucy Flake's concern about shooting comes from her unpleasant experiences at other celebrations where revelry got out of hand.

³¹Levine, *From Indian Trails to Jet Trails: Snowflake's Centennial History*.

civilization in Mormon popular historical expression. Such activities celebrated and maintained Mormons' conception of themselves as less hostile to Native Americans than other whites—a conception backed up by the historical record.³²

Rural village Mormons actively welcomed actual Native Americans who came to Pioneer Day to participate in pageants, compete in rodeos, ride in parades, and perform traditional dances. Sometimes local Native Americans obliged Mormon requests that they come “dressed as Indians” to add to the historical flavor of their Pioneer Day spectacle. Some Native Americans who came were Latter-day Saints themselves.³³ Native Americans occasionally participated in Mormons' raucous “playing Indian” but usually did not. Apparently, some Apaches near Snowflake found white peoples' stereotypic interpretation of Indians' recently abandoned way of life to be uproariously funny buffoonery.³⁴ In 1910, a group of “highly decorated” Banock Indians from Idaho came as special invited guests to Salt Lake City's Pioneer Day celebration. Upon someone's suggestion, they took off after a Mr. Davis—who was dressed as a

³²See Dean L. May, *Utah a People's History* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987).

³³Native American converts with enduring commitments to the Church have not yet come in the numbers Mormons have hoped for due to their millennial expectations. Most Native Americans living near Mormons have largely not been LDS, but Native Americans have long been proportionately over-represented on LDS Church membership rolls. Tim B. Heaton, “Vital Statistics,” in *The Church and Society: Selections from the Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1995), 526-552.

³⁴Albert J. Levine, “Reminiscences of a Dude at the Snowflake Pioneer Celebration in the 1930s,” *Snowflake Historical Society Wagon Trails* 17 (December 1976): 3. Levine describes an Apache observer so overcome with laughter that he fell out of the tree from which he was watching the Mormons.

Chinaman for the festival—with the mock intention of scalping him. Mr. Davis, however, escaped.³⁵

Despite Pioneer Day's pageantry of violence, Latter-day Saints have felt a special affinity for Native Americans. This is in part because after Native Americans, Mormons have the longest history of inhabitation in many parts of the West, and Mormons recognize Native Americans as a people who have suffered persecution, brutality, and violence greater even than their own.

The greatest reason for Mormons' interest in Native Americans is theological. The Book of Mormon indicates that America's aboriginal inhabitants are descended from a lost branch of the house of Israel making them a chosen people like the Mormons. Joseph Smith's first major organized missionary effort was directed at Trail of Tears refugees camped on the Western bank of the Mississippi. Other revelations suggest to Latter-day Saints that Native Americans have a central role to play in preparing the Earth for the Second Coming of Christ.³⁶

³⁵H. B. Folsom as quoted in Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West* vol. 7, 100.

³⁶The following statement by Wilford Woodruff is often quoted as a clear summation of this idea: "I am looking for the fulfillment [sic] of all things that the Lord has spoken, and they will come to pass as the Lord God lives. Zion is bound to rise and flourish. The Lamanites will blossom as the rose on the mountains. I am willing to say here that, though I believe this, when I see the power of the nation destroying them from the face of the earth, the fulfillment [sic] of that prophecy is perhaps harder for me to believe than any revelation of God that I ever read. It looks as though there would not be enough left to receive the gospel; but notwithstanding this dark picture, every word that God has ever said of them will have its fulfillment, and they, by and by, will receive the gospel. It will be a day of God's power among them, and a nation will be born in a day. Their chiefs will be filled with the power of God and receive the gospel, and they will go forth and build the new Jerusalem, and we shall help them. They are branches of the house of Israel, and when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in and the work ceases among them, then it will go in power to the seed of Abraham. *JD* 15:272, January 12, 1873. See also D&C 49:24-25: "But before the great day of the Lord shall come, Jacob shall flourish in the wilderness, and the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose. Zion shall flourish upon the hills and

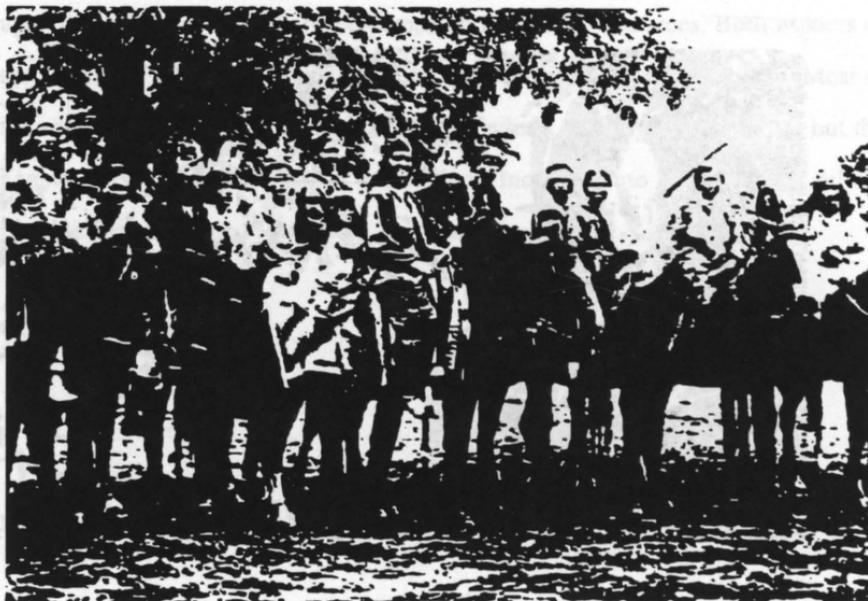
Frontier Mormons entertained a split consciousness about Native Americans. On one hand they were Lost Israel, allies, and spiritual brothers and sisters. On the other hand, Indians stole their horses, occasionally waged war against the Saints, and otherwise competed for scarce resources. Both aspects of the "Indian of the Mormon imagination" were on display on Pioneer Day. Most of the excitement came from depictions of the Indians as dangerous enemies but the pageants usually ritualistically reconciled "Indians" into their role as fellow Israelite friends of the Mormons.

rejoice upon the mountains, and shall be assembled together unto the place which I have appointed."

Figure 23. A Snowflake Pioneer Day Parade float representing the state of Arizona from 1909. (It is unclear whether the young women in Indian costume were Native Americans or whites.)



Figure 24. Cast members portraying Indians for Snowflake's 1927 or 1928 Pioneer Day celebration.



Why did we Indians? The grounds of why Mormons treated as Indians

Figure 25. Indians (with captives) at War. Indians (with Brigham Young) at Peace.

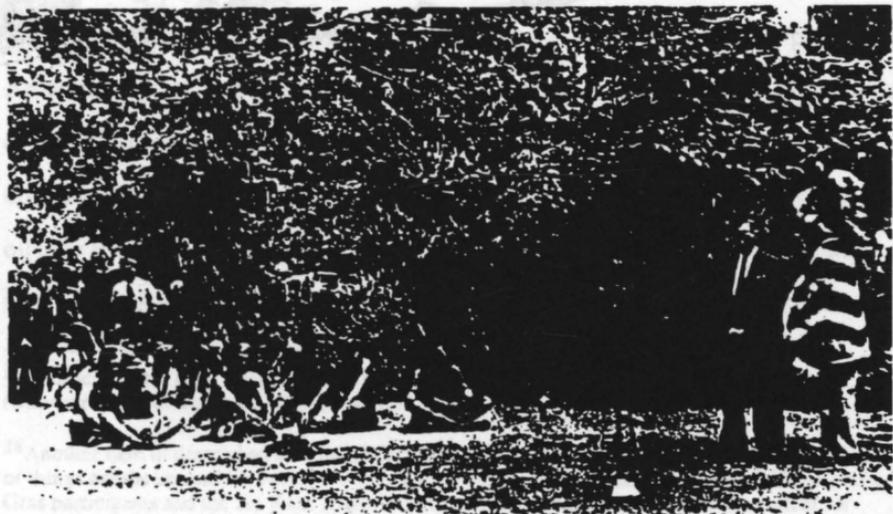
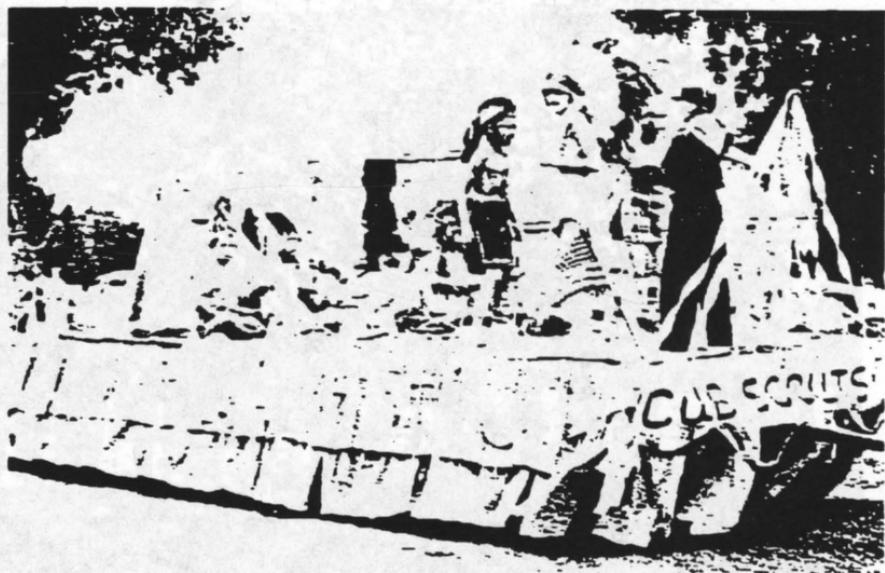


Figure 26. Snowflake Cub Scout Pioneer Day float in the 1940s.



Why dress as Indians?: The question of why Mormons dressed as Indians was partially addressed in the previous section. However, the dynamics of members of one group adopting the personae of another antagonistic group partakes of a historical and cultural stream that runs longer and deeper than simply through the immediate interaction of Mormons and Indians in the American West.

In an essay about African Americans donning stylized Indian garb during New Orleans' Mardi Gras, George Lipsitz suggests that the practice of non-Indians dressing as Native Americans to create festive public spectacle emerged from the immensely popular "Wild West" shows of Buffalo Bill Cody and others in the late nineteenth century.³⁷ There is perhaps some influence from this popular culture tradition on Mormons' dressing as Indians for Pioneer Day. However, Buffalo Bill for the most part employed real Native Americans in his shows, and the practice of "playing Indian" has deep roots and special symbolic potency in American culture that predates Buffalo Bill. Groups as diverse as the perpetrators of the Boston Tea Party, southern lynch mobs, and Joseph Smith's assassins donned Indian garb not only to disguise their identity but to symbolically step outside the law and normal society.³⁸ The ritual assumption of Indian identity by non-Native Americans had at least two major seemingly contradictory meanings

³⁷George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 237.

³⁸Another item of dress used to symbolize outsidership or the temporary revocation of usual order of things are the conical hats once worn by unruly schoolchildren, and still worn by Cajun Mardi Gras participants and the Ku Klux Klan. This kind of headwear seems to have antecedents in Medieval Europe in festival and court jester attire, both of which enjoyed a certain amount of special exemption from established norms of behavior and the reach of authority.

in American culture. Nothing better symbolized outsidership and antagonism to "normal" white society than ritualistically assuming a Native American persona. yet nothing was more "American" than acting out as original Americans. "the children of nature" the "noble savages." In so doing one entered a realm where real or mock violence was expected, but that violence was purifying and recalled visions of a mythical Edenic past. There is a magical, liberating, and dangerous power in becoming "the other."³⁹

The End of Pioneer Day carnivalesque?: Many of the carnivalesque aspects of mid-century Pioneer Days have disappeared today. Women hammering nails and men changing diapers do not invert social norms in the shocking ways they once did.⁴⁰ In the late twentieth century, "play Indians" have all but disappeared from Mormon Country Pioneer Day celebrations as well. The need of Mormons to reduce anxiety over the close historical memory of the real threat of Indians has evaporated with time. Also, developing sensitivities since the 1960s about co-opting stereotyped features of another culture's dress and customs for self-serving ends have contributed to the decline of Mormon impersonations of

³⁹During the Cold War, when Americans' chief antagonists had shifted to being the Soviet Empire, one of the most prestigious Air force Pilot assignments was to be in an "aggressor squadron" that for training purposes learned to think and fly like Soviet pilots. American aggressor pilots sang the Soviet Union's anthem, adorned their briefing rooms with Soviet flags and other paraphernalia, and "acted Russian" as much as they could. Despite their deep assumption of Russian pilots' personae they did not threaten the American institutions and culture they served, but validated it. Like Mormons dressing as Indians, Aggressor squadrons ritualistically resolved the dichotomy of friend/enemy in favor of friends by becoming the enemy in ways that served the purposes of friends.

⁴⁰Men in drag may have disappeared from Pioneer Days in part due to an increasing lack of tolerance in Mormon culture for practices that play with signifiers of traditional forms of gender-identity expression. See D. Michael Quinn, *Same Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example* (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1996).

Indians. After most others had disappeared, tiny isolated Flowell, Utah's mock Indian raid tradition continued into the late twentieth century. Teenagers loved the excitement of it but parents had become increasingly embarrassed about, and sensitive to, its negative racial stereotypes, so they put a stop to it.⁴¹ Chapter Seven looks in more detail at the effect changing ethnic sensitivities in the late twentieth century have had on individual towns' Pioneer Day celebrations.

Antecedents of Pioneer Day carnivalesque: In his book *Singing the Master*, an ethnographic reconstruction of corn-shucking harvest festivals in America's plantation South, folklorist Roger Abrahams traces the roots of this cultural form back to harvest festivals in England. In medieval and early modern British harvest festivals, people paraded through the streets, displayed and consumed the fruits of the harvest, built bonfires, let their children run amok, and donned costumes to impersonate cultural outsiders such as Gypsies, Moors, or Mongol raiders.⁴² In an American Mormon context much of this would be the same except medieval Moorish impersonators would be Indian impersonators. Mormons as an emergent American sub-culture with genealogical roots in England re-fashioned the venerable British harvest festival tradition to serve a new people in a new context in new ways.

In the larger context of the United States, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Independence Day are America's major holidays with harvest festival roots.⁴³

⁴¹Flowell, Utah Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

⁴²Roger D. Abrahams, *Singing the Master: The Emergence of African American Culture in the Plantation South* (New York: Penguin, 1992).

⁴³Restad, *Christmas in America*, 1-28.

With similar origins and having experienced convergent evolution, Pioneer Day and Independence Day are close cousins as will be seen more fully in the next Chapter. Pioneer Day, Independence Day, and Southern plantation harvest festivals (now extinct) are evolutionary branches from the same tree that still display some of the same cultural “genetic material” but have each adapted to the particular situations of their respective culture environments and ideological imperatives.

Regional Mormons and Catholicism: Civic Pioneer Day celebrations have displayed elements of the carnivalesque not so much because Mormon Country’s denizens are a post-colonial people upon whom the hegemony of the government, laws, and culture of the United States of America have been imposed—although this is certainly the case. Rather, Mormon like medieval Catholic carnivalesque expressions can be read as dual manifestations of the kind of activity that emerges from communities which conflate social, political, and religious meaning and powers. While some areas in the South have their “Baptist towns” and “Methodist towns” nowhere in America even approaches the religious homogeneity of the many contiguously-settled valleys of rural Mormon Country.

As one can draw useful interpretive parallels from the suggestion that Mormonism is an afterclap of Puritanism, one can do likewise with the suggestion that Mormonism, particularly in its regional homeland, is an afterclap of Medieval Christianity. The deep all pervasive Mormonness of the history, city planning, material landscape, religious climate, demographics, (and in the nineteenth century and to some extent still today the hierarchical political, and communitarian economic, influence of the Church) in rural Mormon areas in

some ways even exceeds the Catholicity of Medieval Europe. In Europe, cultural links to the land extended far back into the pagan era and maintained much of the meaning from those times, whereas Utah's dominant culture was already Mormon when it arrived to fashion connections to the land in Mormon ways from the start. Whatever residue of pagan culture Mormons brought with them to Utah had no pre-established connection with the physical environment and was just as imported as the people.

Mormons, Medieval Catholics, and Puritans shared the ideal of a religiously homogenous society. The Mormon Culture Region could make a case for being the most Medieval region in America. Pioneer Day is Mormondom's Feast of Fools, and its rodeos carry on what cowboy ballad collector John Lomax calls the knightly tournament spirit of the "last cavaliers."

Spanish Fork Pioneer Day: Pioneer Day in Spanish Fork, Utah presents a special case of Mormon/Catholic affinity as well as a special case of carnivalesque. Spanish Fork's town holiday is called "Fiesta Days" in honor of wandering Franciscan padres Fray Francisco Anastasio Domínguez and Fray Silvestre Vélez de Escalante—the first white explorers into the regions eventually settled by the Mormons.⁴⁴ According to local tradition, the town of Spanish Fork, named in honor of the Catholic fathers, is near the site of Domínguez and Escalante's northernmost penetration during their travels in Utah.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Domínguez and Escalante were the first white explorers of the regions eventually settled by the Mormons. During their 1776 expedition from Santa Fe, they were the first Europeans to see Utah lake and heard reports of the great Salt Lake. See Felipe Fernández-Armesto, ed., *The Times Atlas of World Exploration* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 90-93, 254.

⁴⁵Spanish Fork, Utah Fiesta Days festival organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June, 1995.

Even though Catholics never established a mission within the present boundaries of Mormon Country, Spanish Fork citizens honor their Spanish Catholic "heritage." Spanish Fork's overwhelmingly Anglo-Scandinavian Mormon citizens celebrate Pioneer Day in a stereotyped Spanish-themed manner with occasional Flamenco performances, and by naming their 10K run the "Speedy Spaniard" race. To celebrate their Catholic "heritage," each year a group of Spanish Fork Mormons make a procession to the site where Domínguez and Escalante became the first people of European descent to view Utah Lake. Their they erect a cross and hold a devotional program in honor of the exploring fathers.⁴⁶ This is an especially curious cultural expression since Latter-day Saints scrupulously avoid using crosses as symbols of their own religious devotion.⁴⁷

Actually, the fathers went further north to the latitude of present day Provo along the Wasatch front. Earlier in their expedition, they crossed the Green River even further north near present day Vernal.

Even though it was shown in 1940 that Coronado's lieutenant don García López de Cárdenas' 1540 expedition never entered the present day boundaries of Utah, Domínguez and Escalante were still apparently not the first Europeans to "discover" Utah. Donald C. Cutter shows that Juan María Antonio Rivera turned back to Santa Fe near present day Moab making him the first known European to enter the present day boundaries of Utah. See Donald C. Cutter, "Prelude to a Pageant in the Wilderness," *Western Historical Quarterly* 8 (January 1977): 5-14. See also Ted J. Warner, "The Domínguez-Escalante Expedition," in *Atlas of Utah*, project director, Deon C. Greer (Ogden and Provo: Weber State College and Brigham Young University, 1981), 78-79. Domínguez and Escalante themselves described seeing Utah Lake from the mouth of Spanish Fork Canyon as the emotional high point of their journey. See Dean L. May, *Utah: A People's History* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 28.

⁴⁶Spanish Fork, Utah Fiesta Days festival organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June, 1995.

⁴⁷Latter-day Saints avoid using the cross for two main reasons. 1) They prefer to remember Christ's resurrection as more significant than his death, and 2) they regard it as a material symbol introduced by Emperor Constantine for political reasons after the primitive Church had fallen into apostasy.

In its outward forms of creative cultural expression, Pioneer Day in Spanish Fork is multiply interpretable as signifying local historical consciousness, inter-religious respect, and boundary-switching inverted behavior of Anglo-Scandinavians “playing” Spaniards and Mormons “playing” Catholics. But in this case, unlike most mocking or irreverent carnivalesque, serious honor more than transgressive escape is enacted in a carnivalesque of respect.

Conclusion

People slip into carnivalesque modes of expression to let off steam, to loosen the tension inherent in any system of social organization, to experience history from the other side, and to escape the behavioral bounds cultures set for themselves. The idea of enactment and role-play enjoys a special place in Mormon culture and religion. In temple worship, Latter-day Saints participate in a sacred drama not only as observers of an enacted narrative of the Earth’s creative period, but also by symbolically playing the role of religious seekers with whom temple ceremony performers interact.⁴⁸

While temples are the pinnacle of Latter-day Saint *religious* experience and taboo for temple endowed Mormons to discuss in detail, Pioneer Day in the Mormon Country is the most developed means of Mormon *cultural* expression. Like temples, but without their seriousness or religious imperatives, Pioneer Day is characterized by role playing, personae adoption, and reliving earlier times.

⁴⁸For a treatment by LDS authorities on the meaning of the temple see Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980) and James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1971).

Unlike the temple ceremony which is the same in all the temples of the world. Pioneer Day, because it carries no theological significance, is highly adaptable to different local circumstances, as we will discover more fully in Chapter Seven.

In the light of Pioneer Day's Puritan and Catholic European antecedents, the 24th of July is what might be called a festival of "restrained carnivalesque." Community gatekeepers see that revelry is kept within bounds acceptable to the Lord. Pioneer Day, while honoring a sacred migration, is not in and of itself a religious event but a festive celebration. However, any distinction between the sacred and profane must be made carefully when describing Mormon cultural forms since Latter-day Saint cosmology does not acknowledge this distinction in the way other religions do, and Latter-day Saint religion emphatically encourages many festive activities other Christians only tolerate or even proscribe.

Chapter Seven: Civic Pioneer Day Variation and Inter-cultural Interaction

The presence or absence of a Pioneer Day celebration is not a straightforward indicator of a given community's self-awareness as part of Mormon Country. Several factors have influenced Pioneer Day's pattern of distribution across the Western landscape. This chapter examines those influences, and suggests ways of interpreting their significance in understanding the character and values of contemporary Mormonism in its homeland.

Patterns of Pioneer Day Presence and Absence: July 4th and July 24th

One of the main factors determining the presence or absence of Pioneer Day celebrations is whether or not a town celebrates Independence Day. Two major events in one month tax the energy of even the most festive citizens, so most towns usually celebrate only one or the other.¹ Only the town of Kanab in Southern Utah valiantly attempts to do both. Though one Kanab resident suggested, "We'll probably have to give up one or the other eventually. Its too hard to do both."² Many similar-sized municipalities have entered into non-competition arrangements.³ For example, Salt Lake City always celebrates July

¹Informants in several towns during the June, 1995 telephone interviews suggested this reasoning.

²Kanab, Utah Pioneer Day and Independence Day participant and telephone informant, interview by author, June, 1995.

³Many informants suggested that an "unspoken agreement" or "long tradition" determined that communities try not to out-compete one another by celebrating the same July Holiday. Telephone interviews by author, June 1995.

24th and never celebrates the 4th of July, while 50 miles away Mormondom's second major metropolitan area Provo/Orem always celebrates Independence Day but never Pioneer Day.⁴ People from neighboring towns often attend other towns' celebrations of the holiday's that their own town does not observe.

This 4th/24th pattern is recapitulated with Brigham City/Ogden as well as in many rural areas such as Blanding/Monticello; Parowan/Cedar City; Oakley/Kamas; Delta/Hinkley; Price/Wellington; Boulder/Escalante; Soda Springs, Idaho/Bancroft, Idaho; Alamo, Nevada/Panaca, Nevada; and Show Low, Arizona/Snowflake, Arizona. In Southern Alberta's Mormon region, the same pattern applies to Canada Day which also happens in July. Glenwood, Alberta celebrates the 24th of July while Hillspring, Alberta has its Canada Day festivities on July 1st.

This pattern of "divvying up" Independence Day and Pioneer Day does not necessarily mean the town with the 24th is more "truly Mormon" than the town with the 4th. For example, although Ogden has one of the oldest significant Gentile populations in Utah, it celebrates the 24th while nearby Brigham City, which is much more predominantly Mormon, celebrates the 4th. Likewise, while St. Anthony's population is more homogeneously Mormon than Idaho Falls, St. Anthony celebrates a civic Pioneer Day while Idaho Falls does not. Provo/Orem is

⁴Because of its second largest population, the railroad city of Ogden still has some claim to being Utah's second most important city, but Provo with Brigham Young University and the Church's Missionary Training Center and a 90% LDS population is certainly *Mormondom's* second city. During the 1857-58 Utah War, Mormons evacuated Salt Lake City and fled for Provo, giving a historical twist to the metaphor used by some that Provo is to Medina as Salt Lake City is to Mecca.

over 90% LDS while Salt Lake City is less than 50%. Of course Salt Lake City has a special historical position as the first Mormon settlement, world headquarters of the Church, and home of the oldest and biggest Pioneer Day celebration.

In a variant of the 4th/24th sharing model, Millard County's county seat of Fillmore hosts a significant Independence Day while the smaller surrounding villages of Kanosh, Meadow, Flowell, and Holden each have their own little Pioneer Day celebrations. In Sevier County, the county seat of Richfield takes on celebrations for the 4th while Monroe (designated among the villages of Austin, Central, Joseph, Elsinore, and Annabella) has one of the major Pioneer Day Celebrations in central Utah. This Millard County pattern is inverted on a larger scale in Idaho where St. Anthony celebrates a large Pioneer Day and nearby Idaho Falls, Rexburg, and Ashton all celebrate smaller Independence Day celebrations.

As was explored in Chapter Two, in a certain limited sense, July 4th and July 24th function as the same holiday in Mormon Country. They are celebrated in the same month in much the same way—with barbecues, parades, fireworks, morning breakfasts and flag raisings, dramatic presentations, choral performances, rodeos, arts and crafts fairs, sporting events, and family reunions. American flags are in abundant display on Pioneer Day and only a little more so on Independence Day. When asked about the major differences between how the two holidays are celebrated one Idaho informant replied, "You're a little more likely to see wagons, handcarts, and people dressed in pioneer costume on July 24th than on the 4th.

Other than that they are about the same."⁵ Speakers are more likely to discuss local settlement history on Pioneer Day and national history on Independence Day.⁶ Beyond this, there is little on the surface to distinguish the two celebrations as far as celebratory activities go.

There is more to these similarities than a homogenizing "de-sacralization" of both holidays into pleasure-seeking spectacles and community and family get-togethers that are little more than government-mandated recreational days having little to do with remembering the Pioneers' arrival in Utah or the Birth of America.⁷ Both holidays have always been put to use by revelers in ways that are unrelated to filial piety or gratitude for the founding fathers' or pioneers' achievements. However, a crucial reason for the two holidays' similarity lies in their similar cultural meaning.

Mormons always considered themselves true patriots and republicans before their Exodus.⁸ While dissatisfaction with the U.S. government was at an all time low after the Mormon expulsion from Nauvoo in 1846, and several Latter-day Saint leaders were vocal in bidding the United States good riddance for

⁵ St. Anthony, Idaho Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June, 1995.

⁶ Snowflake, Arizona Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. Show Low, Arizona Independence Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

⁷ William H. Cohen, "A National Celebration: The Fourth of July," *Cultures* 3, 2 (1976): 141-156. The first Independence Day celebration in 1777 included bells, bonfires, and fireworks. Conceptualizations of Independence Day as a victory celebration with an emphasis on revelry have had to compete ideas stressing pious grateful reflection as the more appropriate form of honoring.

⁸ See Kenneth H. Winn, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty: Mormons in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

Mexico, Mormons felt they had escaped a nation that had abandoned its own divinely inspired principles, and Mormons had spirited away those principles for safe keeping in the isolated valleys of the Rocky Mountains.⁹ As one might imagine, the First Amendment's protection of religious liberty stood foremost among those transgressed principles in the minds of Mormons at the time. Brigham Young saw to it that Salt Lake City laws provided for religious freedoms modeled after those of William Penn's Philadelphia. On several occasions, the Church donated land for other denominations to build churches. Mormons imagined their provisional state of Deseret as a refuge to which the oppressed might flee. It would perhaps become another American nation not unlike the sister republics built on Americanist principles but existing as politically independent nation-states that Thomas Jefferson envisioned, or more likely a state in the United States (back when statehood provided a great deal of autonomy). Either way, Latter-day Saints foresaw that their society would be ultimately independent and finally triumphant.¹⁰

The Mormon escape to the Rocky Mountains, with its self-conscious shucking off of tyranny and oppression, recapitulated the American revolution. Mormons saw their endeavor in the desert as a second try at what America had tried and, from the Mormon's point of view, failed to accomplish. Brigham Young's counselor, Daniel H. Wells, soon after the arrival of the Latter-day Saints

⁹This sentiment was common among LDS leadership in early Pioneer Utah as can be seen in conference addresses such as Daniel H. Wells' 1854 Pioneer Day Sermon mentioned earlier.

¹⁰Klaus Hansen, *Quest for Empire: the Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967).

in Utah proclaimed of July 24th, "This day, in reality, is the Anniversary of our Birth-day as a free people."¹¹ And one hundred years later Western writer Wallace Stegner called Pioneer Day the "Mormon Fourth of July."¹² American patriotism and Deseret patriotism were intermingled and not fully distinguishable in the nineteenth-century Mormon mind. This can be seen in Mormons' parading as relics the Church's prize copies of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States in prominent positions in early Pioneer Day processions.¹³ Mormons never saw this dual loyalty and dual consciousness as contradictory. They never even saw it as dual. Mormonism was Americanism in its truest expression. Today, when American Mormons have long enjoyed full civil rights everywhere in America, Pioneer Day as "Mormon Independence Day" has lost much of its salience, but not all.

Pioneer Day and Independence Day highlight the paradox of Mormonism being the religion to break most radically from American culture yet still be the most American of all religions. No other culture region in America has an annual civic celebration that competes with the fourth of July so strongly that many towns do not even celebrate Independence Day. But no other region has a regionally unique celebration so similar to the 4th of July in its forms and meanings either.

¹¹*JD* 2:25.

¹²Wallace Stegner, *Mormon Country* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1942), 234.

¹³Steven L. Olsen, "Celebrating Cultural Identity," 159-177.

Patterns of Pioneer Day Presence and Absence: Other variations

Activity sharing: In addition to dividing celebratory time and energy with Independence Day, other patterns of Pioneer Day spatial organization have emerged. Sometimes, the festivities of one celebration will be divided between two towns. Weston and Clifton, Idaho have entered into an arrangement where the parade takes place in Weston and everything else—the clogging show, live music, children’s games, and the patriotic narration that goes with the “best fireworks display around”—takes place in Clifton.¹⁴

Informants in Clifton and Weston suggested that this arrangement allowed both communities to participate in hosting and organizing the celebration. “We are both too small to each put on a big celebration so we do it together.”¹⁵

Repeated activity: Early mid-day on Pioneer Day, Spring City, Utah holds a 50 to 60 entrant Pioneer Day parade. Later in the afternoon the same floats and same participants repeat the parade up the road in Fairview. The parade draws participants and observers from all over Sanpete County. While Spring City and Fairview hold a twice-performed parade, each village has its own breakfast, reading in the church, and other events.¹⁶

¹⁴Clifton, Idaho City Hall employee and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. Weston, Idaho fireworks display organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

¹⁵Weston, Idaho fireworks display organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

¹⁶Spring City, Utah Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. Fairview, Utah Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

Rotation: In south eastern Arizona's island of Mormon Country, the nearly contiguous towns of Pima, Thatcher, and Safford rotate a yearly celebration of Pioneer Day. Each town's main street hosts the parade for the whole area once every three years.¹⁷

Designated town: In Sevier county, Monroe hosts an annual celebration. A Monroe Pioneer Day committee member explained, "It's a great big deal" that draws people from nearby Austin, Joseph, Sevier, Elsinore, Central, Richfield, Venice, Glenwood and Annabella which have no celebration of their own.¹⁸ In the predominantly Mormon Big Horn Basin of Wyoming, the small town of Cowley's Pioneer Day likewise serves the surrounding towns of Deaver, Lovell, Byron, and Garland.¹⁹ Also in the Big Horn Basin, Burlington's celebration serves Otto and Emblem.²⁰ Salt Lake City's celebration is not only the largest in Mormondom, but it has out-competed those of most other municipalities in the Salt Lake Valley.²¹

¹⁷Safford, Arizona chamber of commerce employee and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

¹⁸Monroe, Utah Pioneer Day celebration organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

¹⁹Cowley, Wyoming Pioneer Day organizers and telephone informants, interviews by author, June 1995.

²⁰Burlington, Wyoming City Hall employee and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

²¹Conversations with informants in the Greater Salt Lake communities of Draper, West Valley City, and Murray confirmed that the Salt Lake city celebration once had this effect. However, many towns have resurrecting abandoned Pioneer Day celebrations during the 1980s and 1990s. Draper, Utah Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. West Valley City, Utah Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. Murray, Utah Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

Many villages dot north eastern Utah's Uintah Basin, but Vernal, the largest town, dominates Pioneer Day festivities.²²

Isolated town: Ramah, New Mexico and Manassa, Colorado are lone Mormon-colonized towns isolated from the main body of the Mormon Culture Region. These towns' Pioneer Day celebrations have served as reminders of their Mormon identity.²³ According to one informant, besides Jack Dempsey's birth place museum, Pioneer Day is the "biggest deal in town."²⁴

A month of celebration: Four nearby towns in Alberta's Mormon Country, Hillspring, Stirling, Glenwood, and Cardston put on staggered celebrations that run through July and the first part of August. They are respectively: Canada Day on July 1st; Settler's Day on July 14th-18th; Mormon Pioneer Day on July 24th; and Heritage Day during the second week of August. Several informants in this areas report that these events blur together in a month and a half long celebration in which what is being celebrated on a given day diminishes in importance.²⁵ The Summer, the harvest, Canada, and Mormon Pioneers are themes in the back of peoples' minds that have called forth the celebrations. To fit better into this

²²Vernal. Utah Pioneer Day organizer, chamber of commerce employee, and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

²³Ramah, New Mexico town representative and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. Manassa, Colorado City Hall employee and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

²⁴Manassa, Colorado City Hall employee and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

²⁵Hillspring, Alberta community organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. Stirling, Alberta community organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. Glenwood, Alberta community organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. Cardston, Alberta community organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

pattern. Glenwood, Alberta abandoned its long-running July 24th celebration that competed with Stirling's and began celebrating the founding of Glenwood on the empty days in mid-July between Canada Day and Pioneer Day. A Glenwood community organizer explains, "We thought it was a great idea. The whole area was celebrating all month long and the focus shifted from one town to another: we take turns putting on and participating in celebrations and no town gets left out! We just had to come up with our own excuse for a celebration and everybody was happy."²⁶

Competing celebrations: Joseph City, Snowflake, and St. John's, Arizona, despite being only about 40 miles apart from each other, each put on their own full-fledged Pioneer Day celebrations.²⁷ It may be that they exceed critical distance from each other past which towns celebrate their own celebrations rather than enter into celebration trading or sharing arrangements.

No celebration: Many historically and predominantly Mormon towns do not have Pioneer Day celebrations for various reasons. As already discussed, some Pioneer Day celebrations disappeared through arrangements made with nearby settlements. In what is now essentially an autonomous Phoenix suburb, the Mormon-settled town of Mesa, Arizona and its "little sister" village of Lehi have no civic Pioneer Day celebration "if for no other reason than it tends to be over

²⁶Glenwood, Alberta Founder's Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

²⁷Joseph City, Arizona Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. Snowflake, Arizona Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. St. John's, Arizona Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

110 degrees outside in July.”²⁸ Littlefield, Arizona and Mesquite, Nevada may not celebrate for similar reasons.²⁹ However, Mesquite’s lack of a civic Pioneer Day celebration may have another reason. Mesquite’s main thoroughfares, as in most Nevada border towns, drips with big and bold advertisements for burlesques and casinos. The incongruity and potential for political tension of celebrating Mormonism along such thoroughfares is perhaps too much for local LDS and Gentile folks to stomach.

The presence of such advertising suggests another factor in the absence of Pioneer Day—“de-Mormonification.” Many settlements first settled by Mormons have become Mormon minority towns, including Las Vegas and Mesa. The isolated Mormon village of Moab in south eastern Utah was overrun by Gentiles during the 1950s Uranium Rush and again in the late twentieth century by mountain bike riding neo-hippies living out their Edward Abbey fantasies.³⁰ Today Moab is only about 30% LDS, which made celebrating Pioneer Day seem anachronistic. Indeed, Moab recently discontinued its Pioneer Day Celebration because the local Mormons felt that “the celebration was benefiting people who put little time or effort into its organization.”³¹ Similarly Hagerman, Idaho, a

²⁸Mesa, Arizona Sons of the Utah Pioneers chapter president and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. Lehi, Arizona Sons of the Utah Pioneers chapter president and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

²⁹Mesquite, Nevada chamber of commerce employee and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

³⁰Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968). Abbey’s environmentalist classic was written while he was a ranger at Arches National Park near Moab in the 1950s.

³¹LDS Moab, City Hall employee and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

historically Mormon, but increasingly non-Mormon, town in highly mobile and predominantly Gentile western Idaho discontinued Pioneer Day because the celebration had taken on a flavor not in harmony with Mormon values. “Too rowdy and too much drinking” were the reasons explained to me by the volunteer at Hagerman’s historical center.³²

The increasingly Gentile character of many Mormon towns such as Salt Lake City and Moab, Utah as well as Mesa, Arizona, and Hagerman, Idaho has been a marked trend over the last two decades as the Intermountain West has seen more growth from internal immigration than any other American region. While Mormons continue to make up an ever larger percentage of the national population and gained 15,000 new members in Arizona from year end 1993 to year end 1995—one of the highest gross rates of numerical growth of any state in the nation—the percentage of Mormons in Arizona slipped from 6.4% to 6.3%. Idaho similarly grew by 11,000 members but slipped from 28.5% to 27.8% LDS, and Utah grew by 59,000 members but slipped from 76.0% to 75.2% LDS over the same period of time.³³ The decline of Pioneer Day in some towns in these areas is in part evidence of the dramatic influx of Americans into the modern West.

Some towns abandoned Pioneer Day altogether when insurance liability concerns forced an end to such central Pioneer Day events as rodeos and sporting

³²Non-LDS Hagerman, Idaho historical center volunteer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

³³1995-96 *Deseret News Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1994), 110, 111, 128. 1997-98 *Deseret News Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1996), 190, 212.

events. My informant in Ramah, New Mexico lamented that they should have thought of replacement events but that it was "too late to revive it now."³⁴ Some Pioneer Day celebrations were simply out-competed by a nearby rival. Idaho Falls, a Mormon temple town, once put on a thriving Pioneer Day Celebration that is now defunct. Nearby St. Anthony's celebration now dominates Idaho's Snake River Valley. "We just put on a bigger, better show," is how one St. Anthony Pioneer Day organizer explained it.³⁵ Other towns' lack of a Pioneer Day were inexplicable to my informants. When I asked the mayor of Castle Valley's town of Ferron, Utah if they celebrated Pioneer Day he replied, "Gee, no we really should, but I don't know why we don't."³⁶

A few towns deep inside Mormon Country such as Price and Park City are historically mining towns whose histories have been relatively uninfluenced by Mormon settlement patterns. Price is the most religiously and ethnically diverse town off of the Wasatch Front. The LDS Church claims only about half of the town's inhabitants as members. In addition to the common nineteenth century Mormon ethnicities of English, Welsh, Scandinavians, Germans, and Swiss, Price is populated by descendants of the Italians, Serbs, and Greeks who came to the American West in the early twentieth century to mine. In late July, instead of

³⁴Ramah, New Mexico town representative and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

³⁵St. Anthony, Idaho Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

³⁶Ferron, Utah Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. Ferron's lack of a Pioneer Day celebration probably has to do with the organizationally taxing new Castle Valley Pageant that rotates from year to year among the several towns of Castle Valley.

Pioneer Day. Price celebrates International Days whose main events are an ethnic food festival and folk dancing program that draws top acts from Eastern Europe.³⁷

Revitalized celebrations: These disappearing celebrations do not necessarily represent a trend of overall decline in Pioneer Day. Several towns have recently added or successfully revived Pioneer Day celebrations. In Arizona, Thatcher, Pima, and Safford have revived and recently expanded their shared celebration due to the increased interest that has come with the area's population growth.³⁸

As transportation among the growing municipalities of the Salt Lake Valley improved, the flagship Pioneer Day celebration in Salt Lake City exerted an increasingly strong "sucking effect" that focused Pioneer Day attention and energies on the capital. This effect spelled the demise of many Pioneer Day celebrations in towns in the greater Salt Lake area. In all of Salt Lake Valley, only Draper and West Valley City also celebrate Pioneer Day. And both of these celebrations are revivals of defunct celebrations. Draper and West Valley City recently began celebrating Pioneer Day on the Saturday of the nearest weekend to the 24th rather than on the 24th itself.³⁹ This way, these cities do not compete with Salt Lake City's Pioneer Day celebration which is always on the 24th unless

³⁷Price, Utah International Days organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

³⁸Safford, Arizona chamber of commerce employees and telephone informants, interviews by author, June 1995.

³⁹Draper, Utah Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995. West Valley City, Utah Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

it falls on a Sunday. In this case Pioneer Day is celebrated on the 23rd or the 25th. Informants in both Draper and West Valley City report great success and attendance numbering in the thousands with this new arrangement. A Draper Pioneer Day organizer remarked, "It has really revitalized the sense of community in our town. It has helped us feel less a suburb of Salt Lake and more our own town—on Pioneer Day at least anyway."⁴⁰

Mormon Historical Pageants

Some communities lack a Pioneer Day celebration in part because their yearly celebratory energies focus on something arguably even more Mormon—historical pageants. While Mormon religious practice does not approach the confluence of the theatrical and the sacred that Clifford Geertz observes among Balinese Hindus, perhaps no art is more integral than drama to the Mormon experience.⁴¹ This is evident in many facets of Mormon living. The temple ceremonies that Latter-day Saint regard as essential for attaining the highest degree of salvation are presented as an interactive sacred drama involving characters from Old and New Testament history.⁴² The standard architectural plan for LDS chapels has long included a stage for youth musical theater

⁴⁰Draper, Utah Pioneer Day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

⁴¹Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

⁴²For information on the meaning and significance of temple worship to Latter-day Saints see James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord*, (Salt Lake City, 1971); Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple*, (Salt Lake City, 1980), John A. Widtsoe, *Temple Worship*, (Salt Lake City, 1986); and John A. Widtsoe, "Fundamentals of Temple Doctrine," in *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, 13, (July 1922): 129-35.

performances. Before leaving to their respective fields of service, LDS Missionaries practice teaching and using inter-personal skills through role playing exercises at the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah. Salt Lake City's theater gained national renown as one of the grandest buildings west of the Mississippi in the mid-nineteenth century. With so many other priorities in building a civilization in the wilderness, it is telling that Mormons would devote so much energy on their capital's theater so soon after arriving in the Great Salt Lake valley. Under Brigham Young's close direction, early Mormon dramatists saw their work as more than just a recreational diversion: they saw it as a social force for the refinement and betterment of a participatory communitarian society.⁴³

Mormon-themed historical pageants represent the fullest modern continuation of LDS Church patronage of, and popular Mormon enthusiasm for, dramatic endeavor. They draw hundreds of thousands of LDS and Gentiles alike to Hill Cumorah, New York; Nauvoo, Illinois; Independence, Missouri; and other places with historical significance for Mormons.⁴⁴ Pageants performed at these sites maps out a contemporary sacred space drawn from the outlines of Mormon historical experience as will be shown in Chapter Eight.

Pageants have emerged in places that have become important to historically-conscious Mormons since their arrival in Utah as well. For example,

⁴³Richard H. Cracroft and Neal E. Lambert, "Drama," in *A Believing People: Literature of the Latter-day Saints*, eds. Richard H. Cracroft and Neal E. Lambert (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1974), 403-488.

⁴⁴"Church Pageant Schedule," *The Deseret News*, 22 February 1997.

the temple grounds in Oakland, California, and the country music Mecca of Branson, Missouri host Mormon historical pageants, as do historically Mormon towns in the West such as St. George, Castle Valley, and Manti, Utah, and Mesa, Arizona. While the Manti, Mesa, and Hill Cumorah pageants have long histories, the LDS pageant production enterprise has exploded in recent years. The St. George, Branson, Nauvoo, and Castle Valley Pageants are among the many that have appeared since the late 1980s.

These extravagant spectacles employ hundreds of young Mormon volunteers as cast members and often utilize spectacular pyrotechnics and visual effects. They recreate and celebrate historical episodes from the Bible, the founding of the United States, the Book of Mormon, and especially in the case of the Manti, Castle Valley, St. George, Oakland, and Branson pageants, the trek of Utah's pioneers.⁴⁵ Plot setting and narrative content differs from pageant to pageant, but they are always historically based and always highlight God's hand at work in history.

"America's Witness for Christ" at the Hill Cumorah in western New York, written by Hugo and Nebula award-winning science fiction author Orson Scott Card, begins with a white-clad individual, representing the Savior, descending from the sky to visit the inhabitants of the Ancient Americas. It includes such dramatic effects as a 37 ft. high erupting volcano, fireballs, earthquakes, and

⁴⁵Interestingly, Mormon pageants thrive today despite David Glassberg's assertion in his seminal work on American historical pageantry that such events had disappeared by World War II. David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: the Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

lightning presented on a stage which is half the length of a football field.⁴⁶ Hill Cumorah, the site from which Joseph Smith retrieved the Golden Plates, hosts the flagship Mormon pageant.

The “Mormon Miracle” Pageant at Manti, Utah—a temple-town with no Pioneer Day celebration—is similarly spectacular as it recounts a family’s conversion to Mormonism, trek across the plains and eventual settlement in Manti. This family story is interspersed with scenes of Joseph Smith’s history and episodes from the Book of Mormon as the Manti-bound pioneer family members become aware of them.

Not to be outdone by the Manti Saints in Sanpete Valley to their east, Castle Valley residents now produce the “Castle Valley Pageant” that alternates among the major towns in Castle Valley. Following Manti’s lead of employing a cast of hundreds and spectacular effects and lighting, this pageant portrays the trials, triumphs and tragedies of some of the first settlers of Castle Valley as they were directed by Brigham Young to homestead the area.⁴⁷

Every Easter season, Mesa, Arizona Latter-day Saints produce “Jesus the Christ” at the Arizona Temple. This musical portrays events from Jesus’ life as recorded in the New Testament. Arizonans regard this pageant along with the Temple’s Christmas light display as among the top “things to do” during the Christmas season in the greater Phoenix area. Latter-day Saints in Calgary,

⁴⁶*Deseret News* (Salt Lake City), 15 July 1995.

⁴⁷Castle Dale, Utah pageant organizers and telephone informants, interviews by author, June 1995.

Alberta, a metropolitan area north of Alberta's rural Mormon cultural region, produce a nativity pageant similar to Mesa's Easter pageant.

The sprawling "And It Came to Pass" at the Oakland LDS Temple grounds follows a familiar historical line of events from Mormon popular historiographic understanding—Christ's teachings and crucifixion, Constantine's making Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire, debates about the nature of the Trinity, the early Protestant Reformers, migration to the Americas and American religious diversity, the restoration through Joseph Smith of the original Church and its subsequent persecution. These events culminate in the Saint's trek West to find refuge.

"UTAH! America's Most Spectacular Outdoor Musical" at the new multi-million dollar Tuacahn amphitheater near St. George, Utah seeks to attract tourists on their way into or out of Las Vegas. This private non-Church sponsored recounting of the adventures of Jacob Hamblin, the famous Mormon explorer and missionary to the Indians, downplays the religious aspects of his story and focus instead on his rugged pioneering.

"A Frontier Story: 1838" in Independence, Missouri recounts the Latter-day Saints' ill-fated attempt to settle Jackson County, Missouri. "Martin Harris, the Man Who Knew" at Clarkston, Utah tells the story of Martin Harris, one of the original Three Witnesses to the Golden Plates who left Mormonism for many years and returned later in life to live out his final years in Clarkston. The song and dance of the "City of Joseph" pageant complements the tourist offerings at Nauvoo, Illinois. The Church has reclaimed through re-purchase much of this historic Mormon town from which it was ejected over a hundred and fifty years

ago. Today Nauvoo is a kind of Mormon version of Colonial Williamsburg, "authentically" restored without the nineteenth century smells and deep mud streets, but with a full compliment of volunteers donned in historical re-creationist garb who are knowledgeable about life in "days of yore."

During the 1996 centennial of Utah statehood, other towns held pageants that may yet turn into yearly traditions: "Land of Our Destiny Pageant" in Orderville, July 25-27; "In Our Lovely Deseret Pageant," in Delta, July 18-20; "A Divine Gift Pageant," in Vernal, August 1-3, 6-10; and "Chief Kanosh Pageant," in Fillmore, Aug. 15-17.⁴⁸

Pageants and anti-Mormons: Mormon historical pageants dot the traditional Mormon culture region and urban areas with historically important and newly emerging significant Mormon minorities. Like Pioneer Day celebrations, pageants have become a focal point for inter-cultural and inter-religious contact. The Mesa, Arizona and Manti, Utah pageants in particular have become focal points for anti-Mormon activity.⁴⁹ While the virulent anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism of nineteenth-century Protestant reformers and Nativists has disappeared from all except the most disreputable fringes of contemporary

⁴⁸Thanks is due Benson Parkinson of Weber State University for information on contemporary Mormon historical pageants. The web page "Upcoming Utah Pageants" from the Centennial Calendar was also helpful. See <http://www.netpub.com/utah/cent/centcal.htm>.

⁴⁹I visited the Manti Miracle Pageant in July of 1994. I watched the pageant and spent the day interviewing and photographing spectators and protesters. Much of this section comes from my notes from personal experiences there.

evangelicalism, anti-Mormonism partaking of this same spirit continues among many conservative and fundamentalist Protestants.⁵⁰

For the most part, anti-Mormon demonstrations at LDS pageants have been restrained and have not unduly disrupted the efforts of Mormons and their friends to enjoy peaceful and inspirational experiences at Church pageants. However, some efforts to claim Latter-day Saint Christians for “orthodox” Christianity have been intentionally provocative. In Mesa the fundamentalist Alpha and Omega Ministries and others have picketed the LDS Easter pageant at the Mesa, Arizona temple for over ten years confronting Mormons and their friends on the way to the pageant. At one recent pageant, a 9mm slug from an unseen assailant wounded a Mormon woman near the temple grounds. Some Mesa police suspect the shooting indicates an escalation of anti-Mormon activity from aggressive and confrontational denunciations of Mormon theology into violent assaults.⁵¹

For decades, the central Utah town of Manti has produced a sprawling Mormon pioneer historical pageant that today draws over a hundred thousand people each summer. In recent years, evangelical anti-Mormons from far and wide have discovered the Manti Miracle pageant deep in the heart of Mormon country, and they have begun to provide their own spectacles to compete with the pageant. Among the anti-Mormon groups at Manti in 1994 were an evangelical

⁵⁰Eric A. Eliason, “Mormons” in *The Encyclopedia of Civil Rights in America*, eds. Shelley Fisher Fishkin and David Bradley (New York: Salem Press, 1997), 611-616.

⁵¹Mesa, Arizona temple pageant-goer and email informant, interview by author, April 1997. While this accusation may well prove to be unfounded, that it is widely accepted as plausible suggests an ongoing state of mistrust between Latter-day Saints and Evangelicals.

youth camp that came down from Canada to perform street theater; a minister from Ogden blaring his opinions with a bull horn and wearing a t-shirt on which was printed Joseph Smith's face encircled by and crossed through with a red line; and a Four-Square gospel Church congregation who came all the way from San Diego to hand out pamphlets. With no regard to the pageant organizers' constraints of time, budget, and artistic license, one pamphlet circulating at the pageant not only critiqued Mormon theology but decried the historical inaccuracy of the pageant's portrayal of Latter-day Saint refugees fleeing with handcarts to Illinois in 1839.⁵²

These kinds of demonstrations have turned many Mormon pageants into multi-vocalic spectacles offering diametrically opposed interpretations of the Mormon Experience. A little-studied phenomenon, anti-Mormonism has emerged as America's contribution to world-wide religious prejudices at the same time Mormonism has emerged as America's contribution to the "canon" of world religions.⁵³

⁵²Marshall Almarode. "Manti Pageant: Miracle or Myth." Self-published pamphlet, no publication information.

⁵³Eliason, "Mormons." 616.

Figure 27. Publicity Brochure for the 1994 "Mormon Miracle Pageant" (outside).

III: MORMON MIRACLE PAGEANT

1994 July 7 9 12 16

Miami, Utah
FIRST ADMISSIION

A Story That Cannot Be Told Dispassionately

The Mormon Miracle Pageant unfolds in sweeping splendor across Miami Temple Hill. An awesome and magnificent experience awaits you.

A recent and dazzling rendition of America's past and future, said another.

Unrepeatable! Stimulating! Resounding! or other frequent comments.

New Concept of the Americas

Asurcension of undimittible scenes establishes the historical context for the pageant. Three flashing minutes and great upheavals of nature depict the rise and fall of two ancient empires: Aztec and Mayan. These groups, who disappeared long before Columbus left their records, will be your responsible insights into the potential of the Americas and their peoples. (These writings were first published in 1830, as the Book of Mormon.)

When the scenes fade, etching in the mind are the words given in the pageant as the warning of Micah, the book's last prophet:

"Remember, O remember, for that possessors this land shall serve God or be swept off!"

Figure 28. Publicity Brochure for the 1994 "Mormon Miracle Pageant" (inside).

A Miracle in Its Own Right

The pageant shares how those who are excited by the message of the Book of Mormon, soon after its publication were driven from the settled parts of the United States.

One of America's revolutions left by those ministers of the new but rapidly growing Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is powerfully contrasted with some of the distresses they suffered in several states.

Many who bled through that era of persecution crossed the plains and hiked through the Rocky Mountains to build new lives in the harsh Grip of Utah country.

Along with axes, hammers, and food in their hand carts and covered wagons they brought their books, fire, chisels, even pianos! Through the dangers they faced were real, they found joys too, through their faith in God, their dedication to the best in this life, and their hope in a glorious hereafter.

These are the messages brought to life each year by a cast and production staff of over a thousand in the Mormon Miracle Pageant.

The pageant is free. Performances begin at 9 P.M. Wraps are available since the evenings are cool.

The pageant is performed in Mantle on the hillside below the Mormon temple, a landmark that can be seen for miles from Utah Highway 89 in its almost seclusion in Sargents Valley.

There is seating for 10,000, with lawns and open areas for overflow crowds.

Interpreters are available.

Please no pets, food, or drink on the temple grounds.

Plans are in the heart of scenic Panguitch, Utah, 2 1/2 hours from Salt Lake City and within a half day's drive of four national parks: Zion, Bryce Canyon, Capitol Reef, and Grand Canyon.

For information about local housing, camping, and other details, contact:

Mormon Miracle Pageant
Box 1, Mantle, Utah 84642
(801) 895-9081

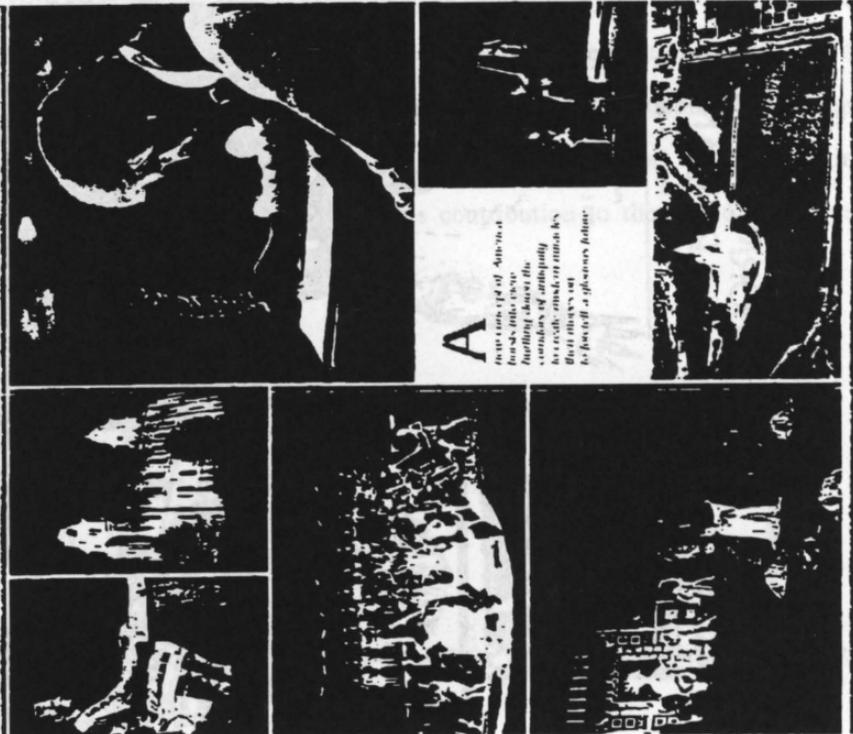


Figure 29. Protestant Evangelical youth perform street theater outside the Manti Miracle Pageant.

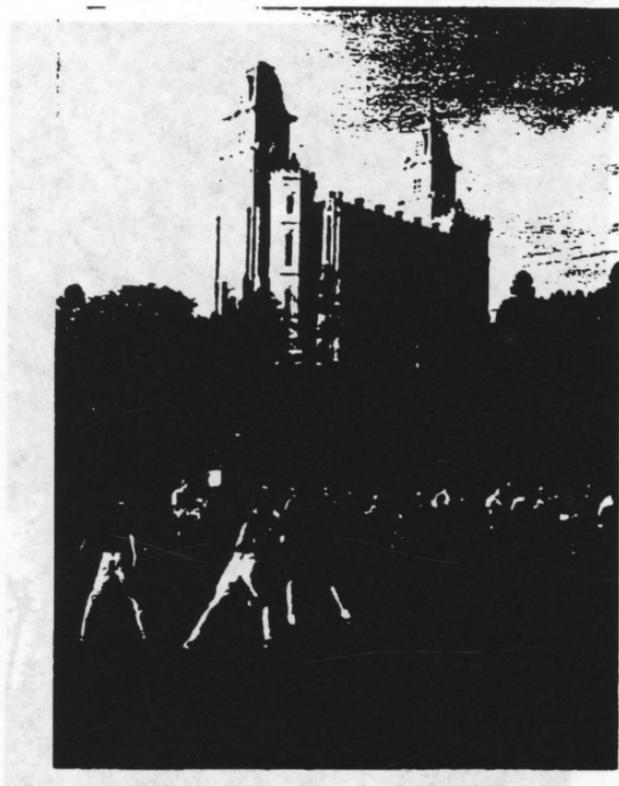


Figure 30. Anti-Mormon evangelist at Manti. (Note the "no-Joseph Smith" t-shirt and his pamphlet critiquing the historical accuracy of the pageant).

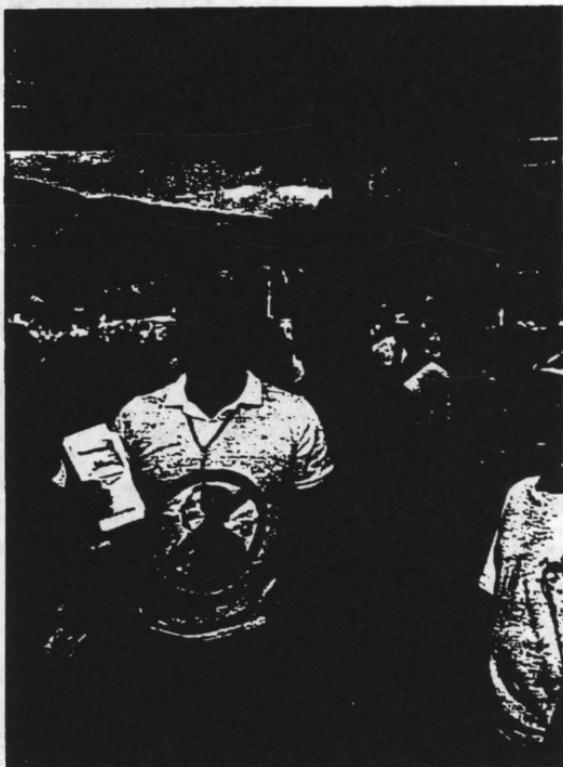


Figure 31. LDS youth and a Protestant evangelist engage in friendly discussion.



Pioneer Days with Special Meanings

Some Pioneer Day celebrations signify more than local Mormon community consciousness. Latter-day Saint Pioneers arrived in Snowflake, Arizona on July 24th, 1878.⁵⁴ So Pioneer Day in Snowflake commemorates the town's founding as well as Brigham Young's arrival in the Salt Lake Valley. Lava Hot Springs, Idaho's founder's day also occurred on Pioneer Day. Since about 50% of Lava Hot Springs' population is not LDS, Pioneer Day organizers there have focused on the founding of the town rather than Brigham Young's arrival in the Salt Lake Valley for the day's commemorative activities.⁵⁵

Other celebrations have changed in more dramatic syncretic ways. Kanosh, Utah holds its largest yearly community celebration on July 24th. Its organizers do not call it Pioneer Day anymore, but "community day" instead. The anglo-Mormon settled town of Kanosh is the nearest white settlement to the mostly non-LDS Kanosh Indian Village. To many in this predominantly Native American town, the arrival of the Mormon Pioneers does not signify the triumphant claiming of their ancestor's religious freedom and the founding of the Mormon homeland. Instead, as Kanosh's anglo-Mormon mayor explained, "it is the day the interlopers came, as far as the Indians are concerned." The July 24th "community celebration" draws participants from both Kanosh and the reservation as well as many Hispanics. The activities for this celebration are much the same as for any other community—a parade, market fair, music, family

⁵⁴Levine. *From Indian Trails to Jet Trails: Snowflake's Centennial History*.

⁵⁵Lava Hot Springs, Idaho founder's day organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

reunions, barbecues—but public references to LDS pioneer heritage are avoided.⁵⁶ In Canada, Magrath, Alberta has also become increasingly made up of a variety of religious and irreligious people.⁵⁷ Like Kanosh, it has kept its July 24th summer celebration but it has become less and less markedly Mormon.

Like Wyoming's Big Horn Basin and Arizona's Little Colorado River settlements, the villages of Sanford, Eastdale, and primarily Manassa in Colorado's San Luis Valley constitute an "ethnic island"⁵⁸ of Mormon culture well within the Hispano⁵⁹ culture region that—after the arrival of the Mormons—has extended up from New Mexico well into much of Southern Colorado.⁶⁰ Primarily Mormon when settled in the late 1870s-1890s, today the population of San Luis Valley is about 50% mostly LDS Anglo and about 50% mostly Catholic Hispano. Its full-blown Pioneer Day celebration draws about 10,000 people and enjoys such "big league" celebratory flourishes as F-16 fly-bys from a nearby Air Force base.⁶¹ Like all Pioneer Day parades, Manassa's is open to floats made by non-Mormons on non-LDS themes. San Luis Valley's Catholics take full

⁵⁶Kanosh, Utah mayor and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

⁵⁷Magrath, Alberta community organizer and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

⁵⁸On the venerable concept of ethnic islands see Ellen Churchill Semple, *Influences of Geographic Environment* (New York: Henry Holt, 1911), 210, 224.

⁵⁹Hispanos are descendants of the Spanish-speaking population of New Mexico that was established long before the United States took the territory in 1847 during the Mexican War.

⁶⁰Richard L. Nostrand, *The Hispano Homeland* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 114-115.

⁶¹Manassa, Colorado Pioneer Day celebration organizational committee member and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

advantage of this, making Pioneer Day a combination Mormon parade/Catholic procession. Both religions display their symbols publicly in the same joint event. The organizers with whom I spoke were pleased that their celebration had come to reflect the diversity of the area. "We're glad the Mormon origins of Pioneer Day don't keep people of other faiths away. In fact ... we're glad that the whole community sees it as a community day where we can express our unity and diversity."⁶²

The affinity here between Hispanos and Mormons in San Luis Valley, at least on this occasion, can be explained, perhaps in part, by Richard L. Nostrand's observation that unlike the geographically disassociated farmsteads and loose communities of other Anglos in the region, rural Mormons have traditionally been a communitarian "village people" like the Hispanos.⁶³ Both Hispanos and Mormons established a homeland and made their own distinctive cultural imprint on the American West. Except for Indian Nations, they are probably the two most distinctive regional cultures in the West if not the whole country. The San Luis Valley is both cultural zones at once—an outpost of the Mormon culture region in the expanded Hispano Culture Region.

The "multiculturalization" of Mormon Culture Region Pioneer Day celebrations seems likely to continue. Salt Lake City's parade has featured Catholic and Jewish floats for decades. In response to the questionnaire item, "Do

⁶²Manassa, Colorado Pioneer Day celebration organizational committee member and telephone informant, interview by author, June 1995.

⁶³Nostrand, *The Hispano Homeland*, 220.

non-LDS churches and organizations participate in your parade?" many replied "yes" and many others replied "no, but that sure is a good idea."

Unlike Mormon theology, whose content passes through strict hierarchical channels that maintain doctrinal uniformity even as Mormonism has spread across the globe. Pioneer Day celebrations, as an aspect of Mormon folk culture, are free to adapt and respond to local conditions. Popular stereotypes about rural whites might lead one to suspect that the Pioneer Day celebrations of traditional Mormon settlements might respond with "wagon circling" to increasing local cultural diversity. Instead, Pioneer Day organizers in Kanosh and Manassa have followed a kind of ground-up multiculturalism to make a historically Mormon celebration open and responsive to all cultural groups within a geographic locale. In Kanosh, celebration organizers have down-played the Mormon roots of the celebration while Manassa's Pioneer Day is a pastiche of religious and ethnic themes. In both communities, organizers seemed proud of their efforts at inclusiveness rather than disappointed at the lack of "pure Mormonness" in their celebrations. Of course, opinions in the community may vary, but the limitations of this study suggest interesting sites for further research into the contact zones between the Mormon Culture Region and Native American and Hispano cultural regions.

Conclusions

The stark contrast in the ways in which religious and cultural diversity manifest themselves at Pioneer Day events as opposed to pageant events is striking. No evidence surfaced of organized counter-events to Pioneer Day celebrations in any town during my telephone interviews or fieldwork. On the

other hand, critics of Latter-day Saint religion seek out LDS pageants as opportunities to stage counter-demonstrations promoting a different set of religious beliefs.

A key to understanding these differing outsider responses to two seemingly similar varieties of Mormon popular historical expression is in a fact that both Mormons and their fundamentalist Protestant detractors can agree on: pageants are a source for the official religious story of Mormonism as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would like it to be seen.

While the Church's ecclesiastical organization has, by and large, divorced itself from any official oversight responsibility for the numerous civic Pioneer Day celebrations which now operate as folk festivals, it has seen pageants as an opportunity for proselytizing and has, upon invitation, taken over the sponsorship, financial responsibility, and script control from the local communities in which they emerged.⁶⁴ LDS missionaries canvas the crowd at Church-sponsored pageants extending invitations to pageant attendees to learn more about the religion behind the dramatic events witnessed during the evening's entertainment. That they are successful with many non-LDS pageant-goers is evident in the anti-Mormon's presence and attempts at dissuasion. Pageants are a site of contested meaning not only between rival interpretations of the Mormon historical events portrayed in the pageants but in the meaning of pageant experience itself which becomes all at once for different attendees an opportunity to share religious

⁶⁴Robert Paxton, "LATTER-DAY STAGES: Why the Church does Pageants: One Man's Musings." unpublished manuscript in author's possession.

experiences, a pleasant evening with friends and family, and a contest arena for saving souls.

As a more secularized folk manifestation of local, cultural, and regional identity open to syncretism with other cultural and religious influences (Baptists even have floats in some Pioneer Day parades) Pioneer Day celebrations do not present as clear of a target for religious opposition as pageants do.

Patterns of Pioneer Day distribution and performance signify several facts about the nature of identity in the American West. As a living cultural practice, Pioneer Day indicates an on-going Mormon regional consciousness. In fact, through their yearly cycle of reverencing, remembering, and recapitulating past events, civic Pioneer Day celebrations help ensure that a religious regional sense of being stays manifest among the communities in which they occur.

However, the absence of Pioneer Day does not automatically mean that a community is less markedly Mormon. Independence Day and historical pageants occupy the community energies available for large public events in many Mormon towns. Friendly arrangements not to intrude on others' celebratory attempts foster a dividing of potential Summer celebrations among neighboring towns.

Neither does the presence of a Pioneer Day necessarily betoken a community's stronger sense of Mormon identity. Pioneer Day has proven adaptable as a community celebration to the diverse needs of various locales within the Mormon Culture Region. In Manassa, it recognizes the San Luis Valley's dual participation in two unique cultural regions. In Kanosh, it proved so

adaptable as to not even be called Pioneer Day anymore—raising the question if in this case the July 24th Holiday has evolved into an entirely different creature.

Civic Pioneer Days' form and presence is not determined "top down" to service the needs of church, state, or federal policies. Mormon Country's pageants, parades, and other Pioneer Day events do not represent a monolithic hegemony, but they invite pluralism when it presents itself, and they are culturally responsive and adaptive to the demands of the market of cultural capital.

The officially Church-sponsored Manti and Arizona Temple pageants illustrate the limits of this pluralism in Mormon public events. In the multi-voicedness of LDS-related public events in the West, only overtly hostile attacks on Latter-day Saint religion and culture are excluded by celebration organizers. Even so, in some notable events, anti-Mormons constitute an alternate sideshow that is part of the complex public spectacle of Mormon cultural pageantry. Meshing and intermingling the ethnic and religious minorities in their midst during their public celebrations, Mormonism serves as a main ingredient of the popular historical expression and civil religion of the North American West.

Chapter Eight: Pioneer Day, Temples, and Mormon Cultural Geography

As seen in the previous chapter, not even Pioneer Day celebrations are unambiguous markers of the “Mormonness” of a given community. This last chapter examines the usefulness of Pioneer Day, Mormon-related historical pageants, and LDS Temples in mapping the changes in Mormon human geography into the late twentieth century.

Local Knowledge and Traditional Mormon Regional Scholarship

Folklorist William A. Wilson tells a revealing story about a trip he took to Sanpete County, Utah to photograph buildings in Spring City. He went because many scholars and aficionados of Utah culture consider Sanpete County to be the idyllic heart of Mormon Country and consider Spring City to be the “best preserved” example of a nineteenth-century Mormon village¹ and archetypal of

¹Spring City has a special place in the popular imagination of nostalgic Utah Mormons. Since the time of Wilson’s visit, Spring City has become a bucolic “escape village” for Utah artists who form a large part of the village’s population and perpetuate the village’s mystique by enforcing strict building codes to maintain its nineteenth-century look. BYU English professor Edward Geary points out that the pioneer towns of Spring City and Scipio today have become, “self-conscious museum pieces” of the mythic past of pioneer heritage that are populated by artists, nostalgic retirees, and yuppies pining for a long-gone bucolic lifestyle. These “new rural Mormons” have created less of an authentic continuation of the pioneer lifestyle (less so than the actual, up-dated continuations of agricultural life lived by many contemporary rural Utahans) than they have made these towns pickled theme parks. Edward Geary, “For the Strength of the Hills: Imagining Mormon Country,” in *After 150 Years: The Latter-day Saints in Sesquicentennial Perspective*, eds. Thomas G. Alexander and Jessie L. Embry (Provo: Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, 1983), 89. *Spring City: A Guide to Homes and History* (Spring City: Friends of Historic Spring City, no publication date).

the patterns of settlement and material culture used to characterize the Mormon Culture Region. These patterns include such features as: the historic prevalence of Lombardy poplars² brought by pioneers to line their straight grid-patterned streets that are aligned to the four compass points, loosely following Joseph Smith's 1833 "Plat of the City of Zion;"³ a Cartesian-style numbering system for addresses;⁴ open irrigation ditches paralleling streets through town; few of the isolated homesteads common elsewhere in the rural West, but houses clustered in villages and set away from the street on individual large square lots that provide ample space for gardening;⁵ solid stone houses made from indigenous rock;⁶ improvisational "Mormon fences" made from barbed-wire strung across a piecemeal assemblage of boards, branches, and other found items;⁷ cemetery gravestones displaying symbols of Mormon afterlife beliefs such as temple

²Stegner, *Mormon Country*, 21-22.

³Stegner, *Mormon Country*, 26-27.

⁴The primary north/south street is typically State Street and the primary east/west street is typically Main Street. Other significant streets are numbered in accordance to their relationship to the primary north/south and east/west streets: 100 North, 200 North, etc., 100 East, 200 East, etc. (Streets are written as 100, 200, etc. but spoken as "first," "second," etc.) A typical building address might read 148 West 400 South (the building being on 400 South between 100 West and 200 West) or 667 East Main Street (the building being on Main Street between 600 East and 700 East) The presence of this system is a sure sign of a town's settlement by Mormons. Maps are rarely needed to find an address in areas of Mormon towns retaining this system.

⁵Richard Jackson and Robert L. Layton, "The Mormon Village: Analysis of a Settlement Type," *The Professional Geographer* 28 (1976): 136-41.

⁶Thomas Carter, "Traditional Design in an Industrial Age: Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Victorian Utah," *Journal of American Folklore* 104 (1991): 419-442.

⁷Mark P. Leone, "Archeology as the Science of Technology: Mormon Town Plans and Fences" in *Research and Theory in Current Archeology*, ed. Charles L. Redman (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973), 125-50.

likenesses and handclasp motifs;⁸ the presence of “hay derricks”—large wooden lever-like devices peculiar to Mormon Country and used to stack hay for long-term storage in large piles outside in the cold, thin, dry Rocky Mountain air that is inconducive to mold.⁹

While photographing one Spring City street, a cottage occupant emerged to meet Dr. Wilson and “friendly-like” asked he was up to. Wilson explained to the woman that he was taking photos to show his folklore class at Brigham Young University because her house was an excellent example of Utah’s vernacular architecture and an important part of the region’s distinctive cultural heritage. She replied aghast. “It is?, I thought it was just my house!”¹⁰

This story underscores an important point about American regional studies made by folklorist William E. Lightfoot.¹¹ Traditionally, regional studies practitioners often determine for themselves what will be considered the significant defining features of a region rather than questioning the “locals” about how they identify the cultural space in which they live, and what they regard as their own regional and sub-regional boundaries. Lightfoot’s argument is a permutation of the emic vs. etic debate about the validity of ethnographic data and

⁸George H. Shoemaker. “Symbolic Consideration in Nineteenth Century Tombstone Art in Utah.” *Material Culture* 20 (Summer/Fall 1988): 19-26.

⁹Austin E. Fife and James M. Fife. “Hay Derricks of the Great Basin and Upper Snake River Valley.” in *Exploring Western Americana*, Austin E. Fife, Alta M. Fife, ed. (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), 141-158.

¹⁰William A. Wilson, interview by author, November 1995.

¹¹William Lightfoot. “Regional Folkloristics.” in *Handbook of American Folklore*, ed. Richard M. Dorson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 183-193.

its interpretation. (Etic modes of analysis attempt to explain cultures using terms and concepts from outside that are developed to be universally applicable to many societies. Emic analysis attempt to utilize the terms and concepts available from within a specific culture itself to understand its workings.) Today, many fields with a foot in anthropological theory, including cultural geography, have come to regard both “local knowledge” as well as trained outsider interpretation as valuable and ultimately inseparable modes of analysis.¹²

The Mormon Culture Region—long understood to be one of the most distinctive in America—has been heretofore defined almost entirely in terms of material culture, human-shaped landscape features,¹³ and demographic concentration of Mormons.¹⁴ While these studies have been invaluable in an etic understanding of Mormon cultural geography, there are shortcomings to these criteria.

Material culture artifacts from the moment of their construction increasingly become less and less reflective of the central meaningful activities of a continually developing culture. This trend is countermanded by any reworking of the artifacts for on-going use, and by any self-reflexive cultural nostalgia that emerges to give selective attention to any particular indigenous material culture

¹²John D. Dorst, *The Written Suburb: An American Site, An Ethnographic Dilemma* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

¹³Wayne L. Wahlquist, “Review of Mormon Settlement Literature,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 45 (Winter 1977): 4-21. Lowell C. Bennion, “Meinig’s ‘Mormon Culture Region’ Revisited,” *Historical Geography* 24, no. 1 & 2. (1995): 22-33.

¹⁴Lowell C. Bennion, “Saints of the Western States (1990),” in *Historical Atlas of Mormonism*, eds. S. Kent Brown, Donald Q. Cannon, Richard H. Jackson (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 128-129.

artifacts. This is somewhat the case in the Mormon Culture Region where Mormon scholars and regional inhabitants like William A. Wilson “recognize” certain Mormon regional features but not all the “regionals” do.

Relying on hay derricks and Lombardy poplars to define the boundaries of today’s Mormon Culture Region tends toward an antiquarianism that could possibly obfuscate more than illuminate Mormon Country’s current boundaries. Using demographic data poses certain problems as well. The West’s tendency toward large counties and Mormons’ tendency to be distributed unevenly within county boundaries can lead to misleading depictions of the Mormon cultural region. For example, Apache and Navajo County in Eastern Arizona extend from the northernmost part of the state well into the south. North eastern Arizona is by no stretch of the imagination primarily part of the Mormon Culture Region. It belongs to two regional cultures who have made an even more unique and distinctive cultural impress onto the landscape—the Navajos and Hopis. Between the Navajo Nation of northeastern Arizona and the Apache reservations of central eastern Arizona lies the Mormon settlements along the Little Colorado River—the largest island of Mormon culture not contiguous with the main body of the Mormon Culture Region (MCR). Because Apache and Navajo counties cross-cut these Mormon and Native American regions, maps of Mormon Country that rely on county-based demographics imprecisely suggest that most of eastern Arizona is uniformly 10-50% Mormon, while in fact northeast Arizona is hardly Mormon at all and central east Arizona is very Mormon indeed.

A remedy to the problems inherent in defining regions through material culture or demographics is to investigate indicators of an emic regional awareness.

As of yet, no map of the Mormon Culture Region has been proposed that uses regional self-identification by actual inhabitants, or the presence of ongoing Mormon-marked cultural activity to help delineate its boundaries. This chapter attempts to remedy this situation.

The Maps

The following maps suggest several new views of the American West's Mormon Culture Region focusing on two overlooked criteria that indicate a local "regional consciousness:" 1) the extent of the presence in Western towns of civic Mormon Pioneer Day Celebrations that claim the public space of Main Street—as opposed to ones held in the private space of LDS-owned meeting houses or parks, which I did not count, and 2) the local conceptions of people throughout the West of whether or not they live in "Mormon Country." This information was gleaned during the telephone survey described in Chapter Five. The resultant map of the Mormon Culture Region shows general similarity, but also some interesting variations, to the outlines proposed by geographers such as D. W. Meinig, Ben Bennion, and others.

Map 1 shows the seminal Mormon Culture Region map first proposed by D. W. Meinig in 1965. The concentric lines display his proposed *core*, *domain*, and *sphere* of Mormon cultural influence in the West.

According to Meinig's definitions, the *core*, despite its significant Gentile minority, is the urban center of Utah Mormondom. Today most Utahans live in Meinig's *core* and Salt Lake City is the center of regional financial and governmental power as well as the LDS Church's ecclesiastical authority.

The *domain*, while rural and much less populous, is the Mormon “heartland” containing a much smaller Gentile minority both proportionally and in absolute numbers. The *domain* is characterized by the human landscape features described in the introduction to this chapter.

The *sphere* suggests an area of lesser LDS influence and includes concentrated outposts of Mormon culture as well as rural and urban areas where Mormons are a significant minority. The problems with relying on county-based demographics are most evident in the *sphere* as suggested by Meinig. Its chief drawback as a concept is its lack of discreteness; as is evident in Eastern Arizona.

Map 2 displays the location of all the communities that held a civic Pioneer Day celebration sometime between 1990 and 1995.

Map 3 shows the location of Mormon-related historical pageants in the West. Like Pioneer Day, historical pageants indicate a living sense of Mormon identity linked to a specific locale. Some pageants are annual and some emerge once and disappear. This map shows all of the pageants held in 1996, which was Utah’s centennial year. Therefore, this map may over-emphasize Utah by highlighting some one-time Utah centennial events.

Map 4 proposes a shape for the late 1990s Mormon culture region using a combination of 1) the presence of civic Pioneer Day celebrations and Mormon-related historical pageants, 2) telephone survey responses about local perceptions

of dwelling in "Mormon Country," and to a lesser extent, 3) demographic data.¹⁵ and 3) historical information about known areas of Mormon colonization.¹⁶

This map retains Meinig's terminology of *domain* and *sphere* but proposes the following alternate meanings. The *domain* includes areas of contiguous Mormon locales that entertain a consciousness of being "Mormon Country" and are predominantly Mormon demographically. (These areas turned out for the most part to be the legacy of nineteenth and early twentieth-century Mormon colonization projects.) I did not make the presence of relics of Mormon pioneer material culture and human-shaped landscape criteria for this evaluation, though my informants may have in their own determinations.

The *sphere* includes areas that are sparsely settled; are more culturally diverse but where LDS are still the largest, if not the majority, religion; are strongly influenced by another overlapping cultural region (the Hispanos in Colorado's San Luis Valley for example); and/or the area has somewhat of a Mormon identity for historical reasons, but the locals express uncertainty or difference of opinion as to whether their locale is Mormon or not.

Areas of minimal or no habitation, or distinctly of a different cultural region (Navajo country in north Eastern Arizona for example), or of a fully heterogeneous population were all excluded from the Mormon Culture Region that this map suggests.

¹⁵Lowell C. Bennion, "Meinig's 'Mormon Culture Region' Revisited," *Historical Geography* 24, no. 1 & 2. (1995): 22-33.

¹⁶Wayne L. Wahlquist, "Mormon Expansion," in *Atlas of Utah*, 90-93.

Some recent maps of Mormonism's North American cultural footprint stress the emergence of significant LDS urban and suburban minority populations particularly in the South and on the West Coast. They also point out the increasing but still minority presence of rural Mormons spreading outward from the traditional Mormon Cultural Region.¹⁷ Map 4 seeks to display the boundaries of "Mormon Country" as it is understood by those who live there. I discovered no evidence that people who actually live in recently-designated MCR sphere areas such as far western and southwestern Colorado and far eastern Oregon considered their locale to be part of the Mormon Cultural Region despite growing double digit percentages of LDS people in these areas.¹⁸

Some determinations in creating this map were easy. The boundary between Utah and Colorado clearly separates "Mormon Country" from an area with no Mormon consciousness. Some determinations were difficult. Much of eastern Idaho is over 90% Mormon while LDS are in the minority in western Idaho. The geographic transition from one side of the state to the other proved to be complex and difficult to determine.

Maps 5, 6, and 7: A full examination of the question of whether the growing metropolitan Mormon minorities in some cities consider themselves part of "emerging Mormon centers"¹⁹ goes beyond the scope of this study. However,

¹⁷See Klaus D. Gurgel, "Churches and Church Membership Patterns," in *Atlas of Utah*, 140-149. For a more recent treatment see Lowell C. Bennion, "Meinig's 'Mormon Culture Region' Revisited," 22-33.

¹⁸Lowell C. Bennion, "Saints of the Western Saints," 128-129.

¹⁹Klaus Gurgel, optimistically suggests "emerging Mormon centers" in all of the West Coast metropolitan areas as well as Reno, Spokane/Cour d'Alene, Denver, Dallas, Houston, Chicago.

the distribution of LDS temples world-wide suggests a growing LDS international geographic consciousness. Only Latter-day Saints in good standing may enter temples once dedicated. There they enter sacred time and spaces to receive ordinances to prepare them for the privileges and responsibilities of the most exalted realms of the afterlife. Mormons believe that only in temples can couples have their marriages sealed to last for eternity and only in temples can the vicarious salvific ordinances for the dead, such as baptism, be carried out. Through temple ceremonies Mormons believe that they will be bonded in a great chain of familial relationship with their ancestors. For "ethnic" Mormons these are the very pioneer ancestors they honor on Pioneer Day.

For Latter-day Saints, temple work is the most serious and holy form of worship. It is comparable in significance and symbolic potency to the Haj for Muslims. Mormons who live, or learn that they will soon live, within easy traveling distance of a temple feel as if they "have arrived" and regard a temple as an indicator of a healthy Church community that has achieved a "critical mass."²⁰

In their performances of religious identity and their connections to the broad historical flow of their faith, Latter-day Saints exist in creative tension

Detroit, New York City, Washington D.C., Columbia, and Atlanta. Klaus D. Gurgel, "Churches and Church Membership Patterns," in *Atlas of Utah*, 140-149.

²⁰As suggested by the maps shown here, even though Church growth began to skyrocket in the 1960s, the rate of temple building did not follow suit until the 1980s. This represents the results of an increased focus by Church leaders on temple attendance as a defining feature of Latter-day Saint religiosity. Before, Mormons regarded temple attendance primarily as a service to the dead. Recently the meaning of temple worship has shifted to include its spiritual benefits for living attenders as well. Latter-day Saints before the 1980s most likely referred to temple attendance as "temple work." Now, they are likely to refer to it as "temple worship" as well. This late twentieth-century shift from observer- (the dead) to participant- (the patrons) centered temple ceremonies is an inverse parallel to nineteenth-century Pioneer Day's participant- to observer-centered shift from procession to parade.

between a pole of romantic nostalgia for past pioneer times and a pole of enthusiasm for the Church's current growth, progress, and internationalization. As is the case in Pioneer Day celebrations, temple worship transports participants back to a sacred time and place in the Mormon conception of world history through recapitulative reenactment. Pioneer Day relives the nineteenth-century Exodus, while the temple relives the story of Adam and Eve and the creation of the world.

Even more than civic Pioneer Day celebrations, Temple worship is an ongoing symbolic activity that signifies being a Latter-day Saint. Most of the over eighty civic-Pioneer Day celebrations take place in rural communities in the Intermountain West, and their number has been relatively stable since the end of the Mormon colonization enterprise. Conversely, the overwhelming majority of LDS temples are *not* found in rural areas nor the Intermountain West and their numbers are exploding worldwide. Since the Church carefully selects temple sites to efficiently serve the most Latter-day Saints possible, temple distribution indicates a new non-regional, non-rural Mormon cultural footprint.²¹ Even in the international distribution of temples, one sees the lingering importance of the Mormon cultural region into the late twentieth century.

Map 5 displays the location of all of the LDS temples in the West in 1997—including those under construction and recently announced.

Map 6 displays the location of all of the LDS temples in North America in 1997—including those under construction and recently announced.

²¹Brad Westwood, "Houses of the Lord," in *The Ensign of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* vol. 27, no. 6 (June 1997): 9-17.

Maps 7 through 13 show the spread of LDS temples over the world representing the successes of the “modern pioneers” of the twentieth-century Church. In 1900, there were only four temples, none outside of Utah. In 1950, all of the Church’s eight temples were still located in historically “Mormon towns” in the West and Hawaii. By the end of 1980, the Church had built four temples in the Mormon “ethnic Diaspora” cities of Los Angeles (1956), Oakland (1964), Washington D.C. (1974)—the nation’s capital was chosen for symbolic reasons as well—and Seattle (1980). Also, signs of an international church were beginning to emerge with temples in Switzerland (1955), New Zealand (1958), London (1958), Brazil (1978), and Tokyo (1980).²²

In the 17 years between 1980 and 1997, the number of temples more than tripled from 19 to 66. In 1997, over half of the 66 completed or announced LDS temples were outside of the United States. While Utah’s number of temples has increased to ten, and the traditional Mormon Culture Region is still obviously the nexus of world-wide Mormondom, the international character of late twentieth-century Latter-day Saint religion is clear.

Map 7 displays the location of all of the LDS temples in the world in 1900.

Map 8 displays the location of all of the LDS temples in the world in 1950.

Map 9 displays the location of all of the LDS temples in the world in 1960.

²²1997-98 *Deseret News Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1996), 435.

Map 10 displays the location of all of the LDS temples in the world in 1980.

Map 11 displays the location of all of the LDS temples in the world in 1985.

Map 12 displays the location of all of the LDS temples in the world in 1990.

Map 13 displays the location of all of the LDS temples in the world in 1997—including those under construction and recently announced.

Map 1. The Mormon Culture Region map proposed in "The Mormon Culture Region: Strategies and Patterns in the Geography of the American West, 1847-1964," by D. W. Meinig in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 55 (June 1965), 191-220.

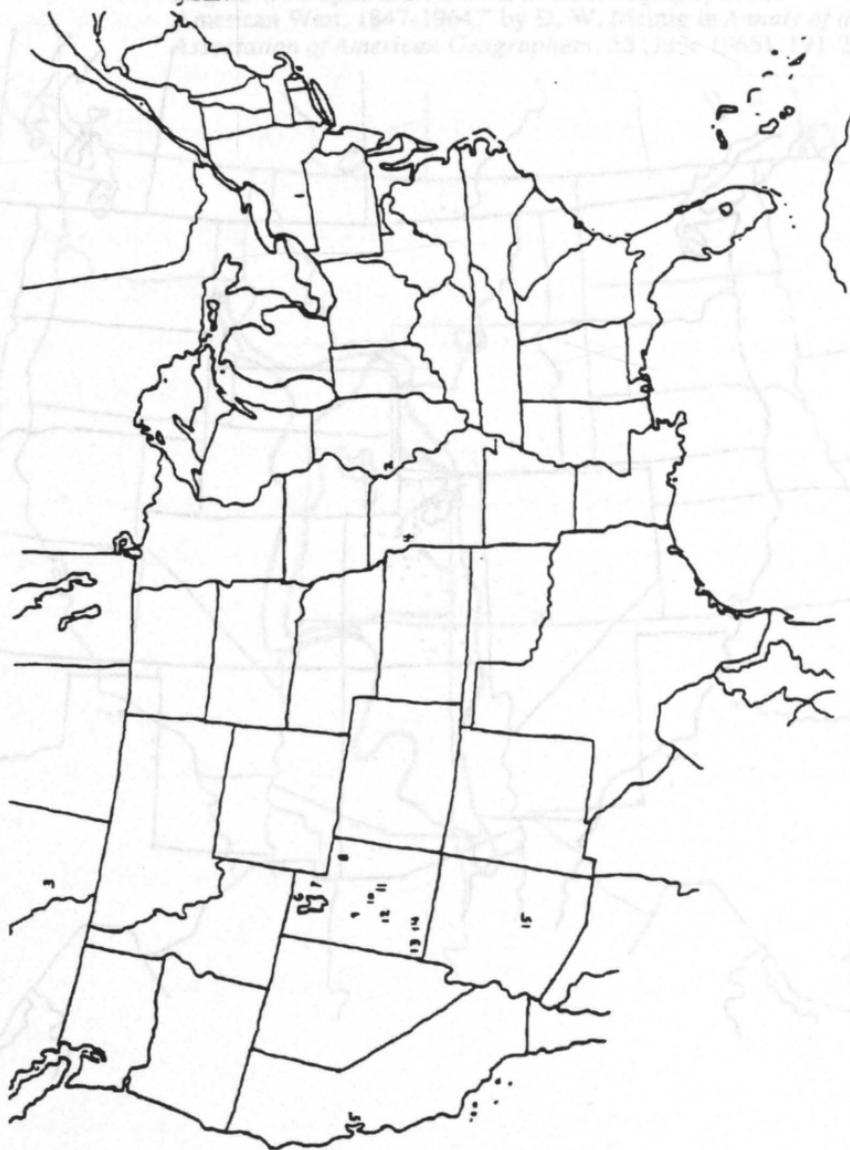


Key for Map 1 1995 Mammoth-related Historical Pages

Map 2. Communities that held July 24th Pioneer Day parades between 1990 and 1995.



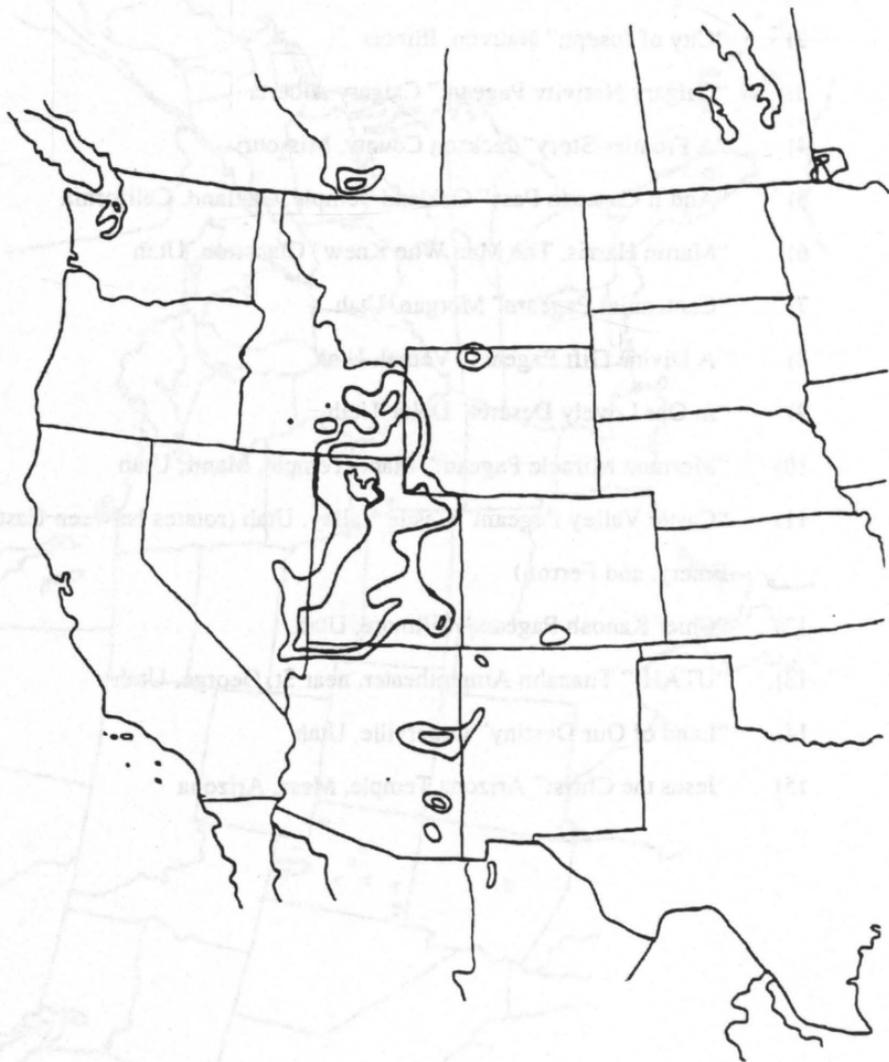
Map 3. Map of Mormon-related Historical Pageants in 1996—Utah's centennial year.



Key for Map 3. 1996 Mormon-related Historical Pageants.

- 1) "America's Witness for Christ" Hill Cumorah, New York
- 2) "City of Joseph" Nauvoo, Illinois
- 3) "Calgary Nativity Pageant" Calgary Alberta
- 4) "A Frontier Story" Jackson County, Missouri
- 5) "And It Came to Pass" Oakland Temple, Oakland, California
- 6) "Martin Harris, The Man Who Knew" Clarkston, Utah
- 7) "Centennial Pageant" Morgan, Utah
- 8) "A Divine Gift Pageant" Vernal, Utah
- 9) "In Our Lovely Deseret" Delta, Utah
- 10) "Mormon Miracle Pageant" Manti Temple, Manti, Utah
- 11) "Castle Valley Pageant" Castle Valley, Utah (rotates between Castle Dale, Emery, and Ferron)
- 12) "Chief Kanosh Pageant" Fillmore, Utah
- 13) "UTAH!" Tuacahn Amphitheater, near St. George, Utah
- 14) "Land of Our Destiny" Orderville, Utah
- 15) "Jesus the Christ" Arizona Temple, Mesa, Arizona

Map 4. Late 1990s Mormon Culture Region as defined by this dissertations 1995 survey results. (The inner lines indicate *domain* and outer or lines indicate the *sphere*.)



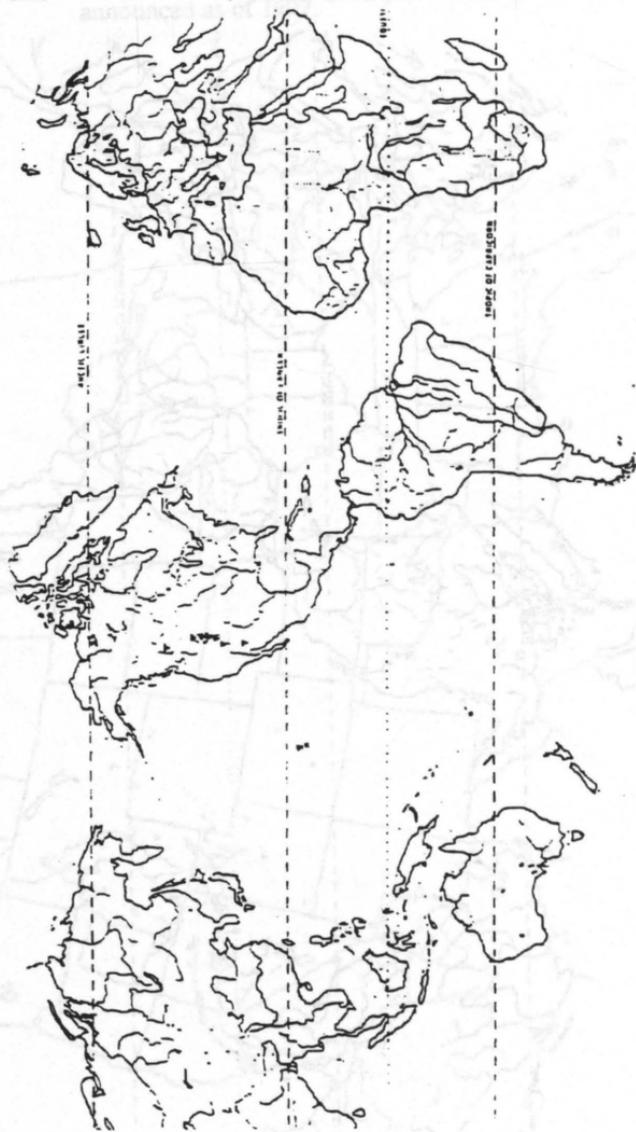
Map 5. Western LDS Temples completed, under construction, and announced as of 1997.



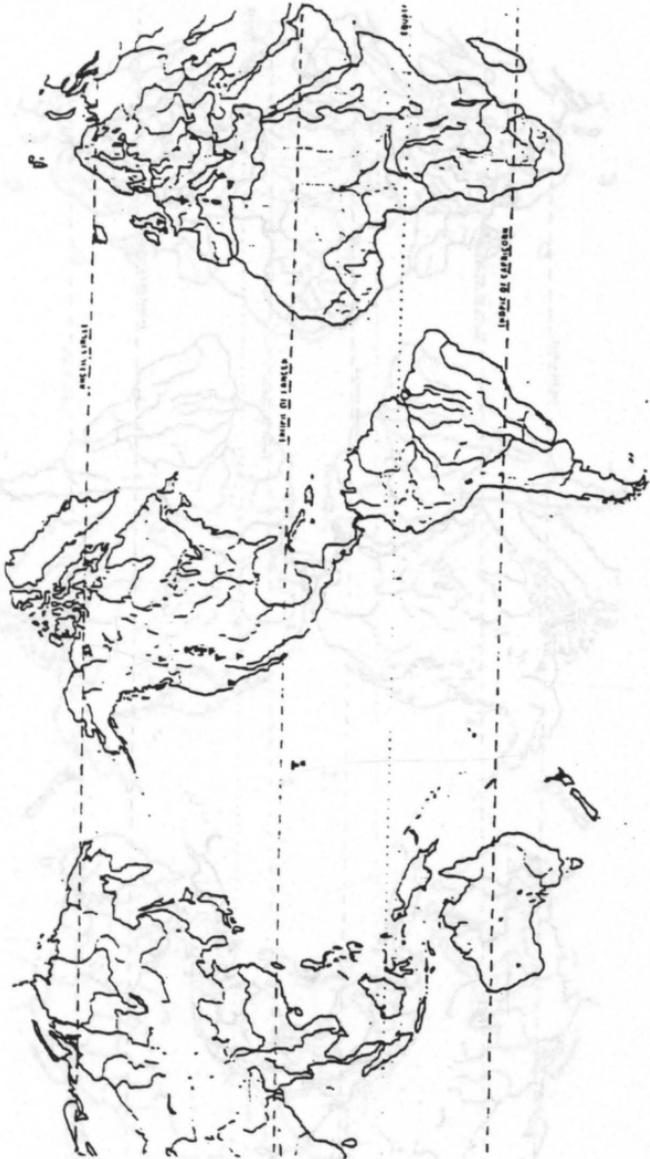
Map 6. North American LDS Temples completed, under construction, and announced as of 1997.



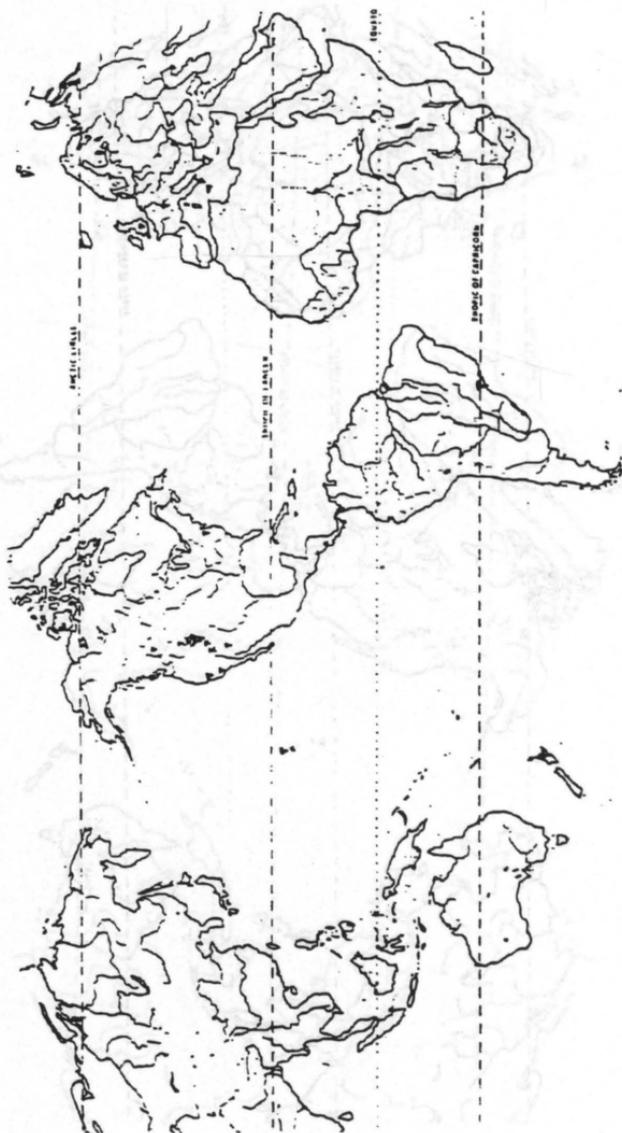
Map 8. World-wide LDS Temples in 1950



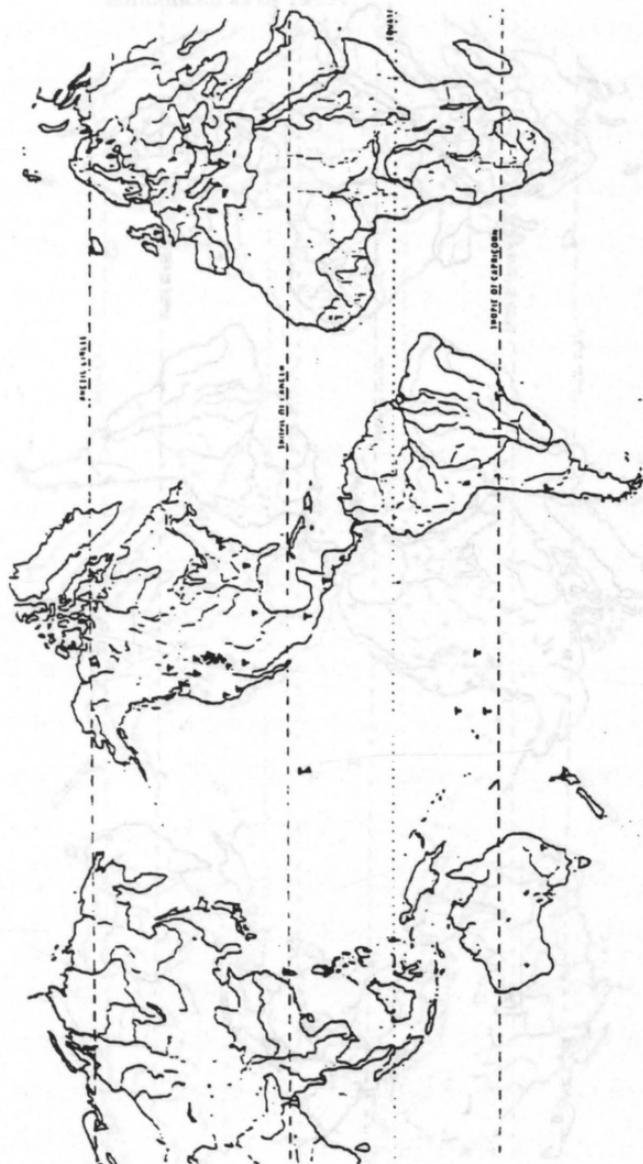
Map 9. World-wide LDS Temples in 1960



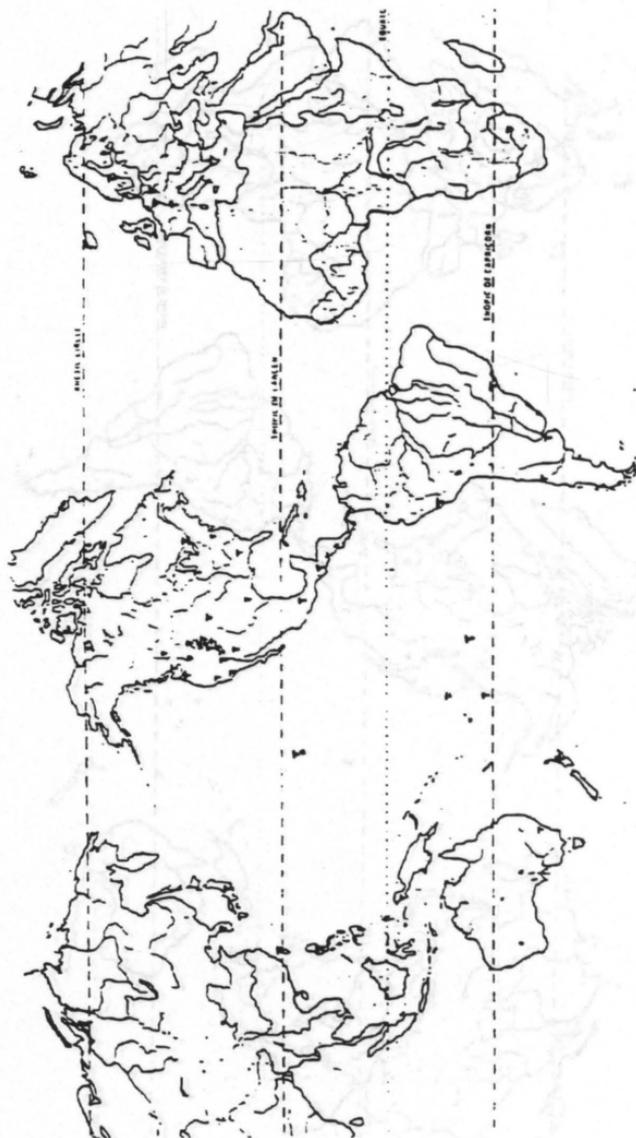
Map 10. World-wide LDS Temples in 1980



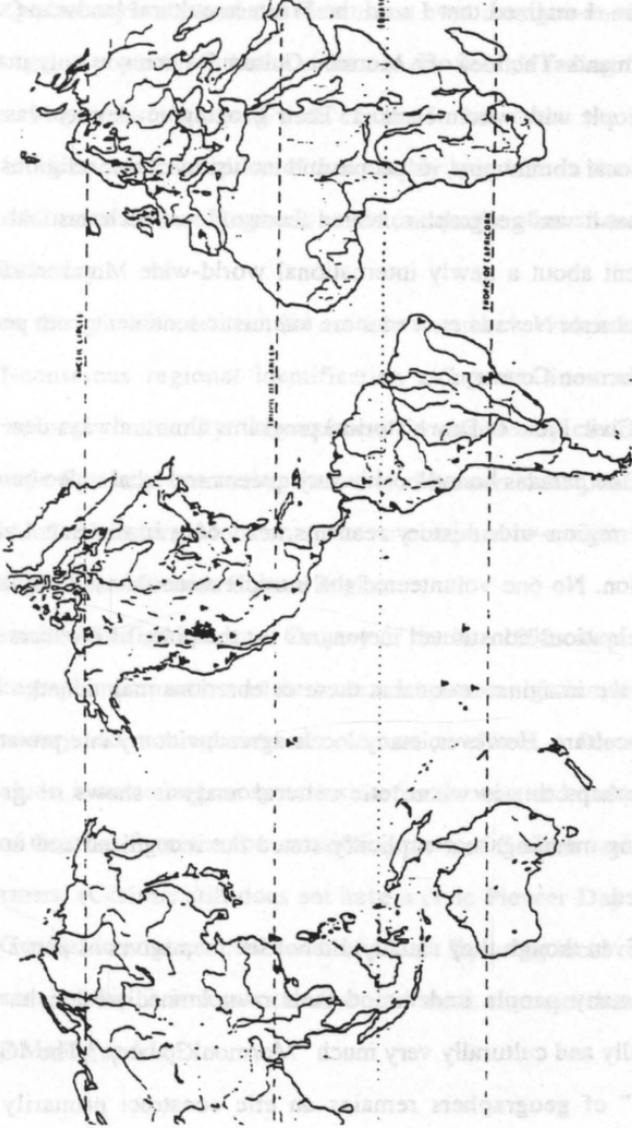
Map 11. World-wide LDS Temples in 1985



Map 12. World-wide LDS Temples in 1990



Map 13. World-wide LDS Temples completed, under construction, and announced as of 1997.



Conclusions and Further Directions

Early on in the telephone interviewing and fieldwork process, like William A. Wilson, I realized that I read the Western cultural landscape differently than my informants. The idea of a Mormon Culture Region was only marginally salient to the people with whom I talked. Their geographic identity was tied to a much smaller local community, its people and its history. Their religious identity, to the extent that it was geographic, bound them to local ecclesiastical units and to an excitement about a newly international world-wide Mormondom. Being from Utah, Idaho, or Nevada evoked more totemistic sentiment from people than being from “Mormon Country.”

Civic Pioneer Day historical programs almost always deal with very local history. The parades honor local beauty queens and local rodeo heroes. A focus on state- or region-wide history rears its head only in the Salt Lake City capital celebration. No one volunteered the interpretation that individual civic Pioneer Day celebrations constituted metonyms for the place of Pioneers in the Mormon West of the imagination or that these celebrations maintained a living Mormon regional culture. However, many locals agreed with my interpretation along these lines. Perhaps this is where etic cultural analysis shows its greatest value in unearthing meanings not explicitly stated but recognized and understood when uncovered.

Even though they usually did not see themselves as part a greater cultural region, many people understood their own immediate locale, at least, to be historically and culturally very much “Mormon Country.” The “Greater Mormon Country” of geographers remains an etic construct primarily of interest to

scholars. I uncovered little sense of regional identity let alone chauvinism among those who lived in it. The Mormon Culture Region does not seem to contain the seeds of a Quebec-style separatism. There is not even a tongue-in-cheek “Deseret shall Rise Again” popular sentiment similar to the South’s fading feelings along these lines. Mormonism’s world-wide expansion has taken the place of The Gathering in Mormons’ conception of their earthly kingdom. In the late twentieth century, the Mormon Culture Region is an historical relic of an abandoned Church policy of Gathering.

Even though this exercise did not uncover much evidence of a “grass-roots” self-conscious regional identification along the lines recognized by geographers, local community “Mormonness” emerged very clearly as a living salient concept. Spatially connecting these emic Mormon local identities provides an etic map of a Western Mormon space to compare to traditional scholarly understandings of the Mormon Culture Region.

The self-identified Mormon Country of the late 1990s displays generally the same geographic parameters as the settlement patterns of nineteenth and early twentieth-century Mormon agricultural colonization efforts. A few exceptions to this rule include 1) some migratory extension further west and north in Idaho; 2) the retreat of Gentiles from the former railroad town of Corinne and its take over by LDS farmers. (Corinne still does not have a civic Pioneer Day celebration); and 3) the Gentile demographic takeover of Moab. By using local responses, the MCR as seen in Map 3 is less extensive and more discrete than the outline proposed by Meinig in Map 1.

But what of the geographic consciousness of the international Church? Convert Mormon growth world-wide has taken place largely in suburban and urban environments. The majority of Mormons through conversion and migration have become “citified” following demographic shifts in America and much of the world. The traditional Mormon Culture Region has remained stable in shape and predominantly rural except for the geographically small Wasatch front area which still constitutes the only areas where Mormons are a non-rural majority. With few exceptions, Civic Pioneer days seem locked into the traditional Mormon Culture Region and have not tried to claim the public space of non-Mormon settled towns—however “Mormonized” they may have become in recent years.

On the other hand, the proliferation of temples signifies the emergence of an international LDS consciousness, and of important Mormon minorities in specific urban centers as seen in Maps 5, 6, and 7-13. While these maps reflect actual LDS geographic distribution, Map 2 of historical pageants also reflects the landscape of the Mormon historical imagination and shows the symbolic reclaiming by Mormons of locales they abandoned during nineteenth-century persecutions.

Unlike early Christianity in Europe and Islam in Arabia and Indonesia, Latter-day Saint Christianity has not grown in the United States through mass conversion of whole geographic areas. While the model of emergent urban minorities is the predominant mode for LDS growth world-wide,²³ a new kind of Mormon Culture Region is emerging in a few places.

²³This is not by accident, but the Church has focused its proselytizing efforts in larger cities because it has found more success there. Jan Shipps. interview by author, May 1997.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, mostly Pentecostal but also Jehovah's Witness and Latter-day Saint, American-fostered Christian groups have spread rapidly through Latin America. Charismatic Evangelicals have had the most success in some countries such as Guatemala, which may be, by some reckonings, no longer predominantly Catholic countries. Since the 1950s Mormonism has experienced its most phenomenal growth in Latin America. Spanish will soon be the mother tongue of most Mormons. As a result of this growth, there are a smattering of almost fully LDS towns in Latin America, particularly in the Yucatan and Chile.

Some of the emergent "islands" of this new variety of predominantly Mormon cultural area are quite literally islands. Several small islands in the South Pacific, where Mormons have been proselytizing since the 1850s, are inhabited exclusively by Mormons. The island nations of Western Samoa and Tonga are a still-growing 29% LDS and 38% LDS, respectively.²⁴ These islands' human geography feature contiguous, primarily LDS villages. Certain areas of the South Pacific are experiencing the first instance of total cultural conversion to Mormonism.

No research into the geography of emergent international Mormon cultural areas has yet appeared. Future maps of the Mormon Culture Region will have to include places in the Pacific and Latin America. The over 90% LDS town of Laie, Hawaii is the first of these "new Mormon cultural areas" outside of the North American Mountain West. Located on the northern shore of Oahu, Laie is unique

²⁴1997-98 *Deseret News Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1996), 395, 405.

in being a former official Gathering site for Pacific Mormons until the early 1900s. Laie is home to the first LDS Temple outside of Utah and Brigham Young University's only extension school. Its six thousand residents are virtually all LDS and display not only the extraordinary ethnic diversity of Hawaii, but Polynesian Mormons from all over the Pacific still gather in Laie to settle, go to BYU-Hawaii, and/or work at the Church's tourist-oriented Polynesian Cultural Center.

On July 24th, Laie celebrates Mormondom's most unique civic-sponsored Pioneer Day celebration. Called "Laie Day," it has little to do with covered wagons and sun bonnets but a lot to do with local Hawaiian and pan-Polynesian cultural identity and the faith that binds them together. While not a celebration of Utah Pioneers, Laie Day is a celebration of Mormon identity. LDS wards organize religiously-themed floats for the parade, and individuals dress up as famous figures in the LDS Church's history in the Pacific. As in the Mountain West, feasting forms a central aspect of Laie's Pioneer Day activity. Instead of the pot-lucks and barbecues of Western Pioneer Day celebrations, Laie residents of Tongan and Samoan decent head into the forest to hunt for wild pigs to bake underground in traditional "Imu" parties. Or the village might turn out for a "Hukilau"—a Hawaiian tradition where a boat lays out a net into the ocean extending as a half-circle from the beach. Everybody then takes hold of a spot along a section of the net and walks toward the beach scooping up fish that are then grilled for lunch.²⁵

²⁵Joni Spurrier, interview by author, December 1997. Mike Smith, interview by author, July 1997. Randall Allred, interview by author, December 1997.

Joni Spurrier is an ethnic Hawaiian student from Laie studying at Brigham Young University, Provo. Mike Smith is a "haole" Laie Hawaiian from birth in graduate school in linguistics at the University of Texas at Austin. Randall Allred is a BYU, Hawaii English professor on exchange at

This final chapter attempted to provide some new ways of looking at Mormon cultural geography using regional self awareness and the presence of identity-enacting rituals. Civic Pioneer Day celebrations suggest that the Mormon culture region suggested by American regional geographers endures, in essentially the same shape established by nineteenth-century colonizers, through on-going late-twentieth-century human activity. The explosion of Latter-day Saint temples worldwide indicates the shape of the emergent Mormon global geographic footprint with its deepest impression still in Mormon Country.

A full investigation of syncretic Pioneer Days and other LDS religiously-inspired public events in these new Mormon culture areas awaits a researcher. How the increasing numbers of Latter-day Saints in these areas respond to the celebratory potential of Pioneer Day will in large part determine the fate of the Pioneers of Mormon popular historical expression in the world-wide Mormondom of the future.

BYU. Provo during the 1997-98 school year. The reminiscences of these three informants helped flesh out this portrait of Laie's Pioneer Day celebration.

Appendix

List of Civic-sponsored Pioneer Day Celebrations Held in 1995 in North America

Key

- * = Especially big event; draws people from all around.
- ## = Town population as estimated by informant or gleaned from 1990 Census.
- (#) = Order of rotation in towns with a rotation agreement
- f# = Parade with large floats plus estimated number of floats if known.
- cp = Children's parade.
- r = Rodeo.
- pr = Professional rodeo.
- pm = Professional music.
- pe = Other professional entertainment.
- fw = Fireworks.
- p = Play or pageant.
- st = Sports tournaments.
- dm = An especially "de-Mormonized" celebration.

Utah

- *Enterprise, 1000, pr, f
- Washington, 5000, f60, st
- Cedar City, 15000, parade in park
- *Kanab, 3600, f50, fw, r
- Orderville, 500, cp
- Hatch, 100, cp, fw
- Escalante, 800, r, f
- Milford, 1300, f15, st
- *Beaver, 2500, f?, p, st
- *Panguitch, 1500, f15, r, dm (large Baptist minority)
- Maryvale, 350, f15, pr
- *Monticello, 2000, f30, st
- *Hinkley, 600, f40, pr
- Holden, 500, cp
- Kanosh, 450, f15-20, pm, dm (large non-LDS Native American minority)
- *Flowell, 250, cp, st
- Meadow, 300, cp
- *Scipio, 350, f20-25, pr, pm
- *Monroe, 2500, f75, pm, pe, (cowboy poetry) fw, st
- Orangeville, 1500, f30, st
- Spanish Fork, 17000, f?, p, pr
- Levan, 450, cp, st

Mona, 800, f10-20
*Spring City, 900, f50-60, p, pm, st (celebration shared with Fairview)
*Fairview, 1100, f50-60, p, pr, (demolition derby)
*Wellington, 3000, f50, p, pe (folk-dancers from post-Soviet Georgia), pr
Bountiful, 37000, f?
South Jordan, 25000, f80-100, fw
Draper, 7500, f75, pm, st
Kamas, 1100, f70, r, demolition derby
Walsburg, 150, cp
*Altamont, 150, f50+, pr, fw, pm
*Vernal, 7000, f50-80, pr (organized by Boy Scouts of America)
*Ogden, 65000, f180, pr, pm, fw, st, street festival
Tremonton, 5500, cp, fw, st
Mantua, 750, f20, fw, st
North Logan, 4000, f30-50, st, pe
Hyde Park, ???, f?

Idaho

Oakley, 650, f?, r, p, st
Bancroft, 400, f30, p, pm, r, dm
Lava Hot Springs, 400, f?
Clifton, 300, fw, pe, (parade in Weston)
Weston, 400, f?, (fireworks in Clifton)
Franklin, 500, f20, p, fw
Montpelier, 7000, p, dm
Carey, 600, f10-20, pm, r
Aberdeen, 1500, f30, st
*St. Anthony, 3000, f60+, r, p, st, dm

Arizona

Colorado City, 5000, f30, st
*Joseph City, 1100, f30, pr, p
*Snowflake, 3700, f60, st, p
St. Johns, 3400, f60, r
*(1)Safford, 7400, f50+, pe, st
(2) Thatcher, 3800
(3)Pima, 900
St. David, 2000, f?, r

Wyoming

Lyman, 4000, f30 r, p
Cokeville, 500, f30, r, st
Fairview, 400, f25, st
Burlington, 300, f20+
*Cowley, 400, f40

Alberta

Glenwood, 300. f20, st
*Magrath, 1800, f50. fw, st. dm
Sterling, 800, f?

Nevada

Panaca, 700, f20, r
*Lund, 500, f30, pr

New Mexico

Fruitland/Kirtland, 700/3600, (no information)
Ramah, 500, f20, r

Colorado

*Manassa, 1000. f70+. pr. st

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