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Mormon Colonization in Arizona

While Mormon colonization was planned and initiated under Brigham Young, he died before his planned settlements could be well established. Thus it remained for the Quorum of the Twelve and Brigham Young’s successor, John Taylor, to save the settlements already established and to expand the colonization of Arizona. Thus Brigham Young’s colonial plans and efforts should be discussed as a part of the story of Mormon colonization. In the last three years of his life the great Mormon leader planned a magnificent colonization.

As early as 1849 Brigham Young, receiving information about southern Arizona from the members of the Mormon Battalion, stated that a colony would be sent down to the Gila River in southern Arizona to raise cotton and sugar cane. [Brigham Young Journal 1849, p. 194.] However, the problems of settling the regions around Salt Lake City, the difficulties with the Indians delayed his dreams of southern settlement beyond Utah and delayed the fulfillment of his plans for almost thirty years. However, in the last years of his life (1875 to 1877) he renewed with incredible vigor his proposals on the southern settlement. Thus in 1875 there was great need for more land for settlement as the settlement by large families of small farms required the sons to move out to new frontiers. The immigrant converts who poured into Salt Lake overcrowded the small industries striving there, and many of the new converts had to be sent to distant areas. Some also who were fearful of prosecution for polygamy sought safety in lands distant from Utah.

Brigham Young gave the reasons for expansion of settlements in a letter to Albert Carrington on February 5, 1876, as follows:
The bringing, year after year, of thousands of saints to Salt Lake City has rather overcrowded this city, and it is more difficult for our new arrivals to progress in temporal things here than it is in other portions of these valleys where there is good land that can be taken up and where artisans are in demand. Besides there is much more glory in building up a city than in living in one already built up and the Kingdom of God must be spread and extend and it is the duty of all of us and to the utmost of our abilities in its upbuilding."

Letter Brigham Young, Salt Lake City February 5, 1876, to Albert Carrington, Liverpool, England," in Brigham Young Letter Book No. 13, p. 179. MSS.

First it was necessary to explore the country. The Mormon leaders knew little about the vacant areas of Arizona especially in the south. Thus in 1875 Brigham Young selected a group of very able missionaries to visit the Indians south down into Mexico to preach to the Indians and to explore the southwestern part of the United States and northern Mexico. These missionaries, led by Daniel W. Jones, were J. L. Stewart, Helaman Pratt, Wiley C. Jones, R. H. Smith, Ammon M. Tenney, and A. W. Ivins.

Daniel W. Jones, Forty Years Among the Indians, p. 233. They left Nephi September 10, 1875, bound for the south. From Kanab they traveled to Lee's Ferry where they crossed the Colorado River. Near Kanab a messenger brought word from President Young that they were to visit the Salt River Valley. This changed their plans and prevented the party from seeking and following the Rio Grande. As they were some fifty miles from the Little Colorado, they found Moquis Indians living in villages and farming land nearby. At Moa-aby near Moenkopi they met Indians who had been hostile. These Indians proved friendly. They traveled along the Little Colorado, crossed the Mogollon River, and reached the Salt River Valley. They preached to the Maricopa and Pima Indians in the Gila Valley. They found non-Mormon settlers at Phoenix and Tucson. They visited Apaches. In January 1876 the missionaries entered Mexico. As they entered Mexico Tenney and Smith remained behind to preach in New Mexico to the Pueblo and Zuni Indians. They traveled as far south in Mexico as the city of Chihuahua and the Casas Grandes area.
where the Mormons were later to settle. They returned to Utah by way of Arizona. When the missionaries reached Kanab they met President Young. Jones reached his home July 1, 1876, after reporting his mission to the Mormon leaders. Thus Brigham Young had information from these missionaries about New Mexico with its Rio Grande Valley, the Little Colorado, the Gila, the Salt River, the Tucson region of Arizona, and northern Mexico, and he was ready to begin the colonization southward.

Even before the return of the missionaries, Brigham Young visualized the future colonization. The breadth of his plan was vast. As he called men to settle Arizona, he outlined the vastness of his colonial aspirations. In February 1876 in a letter to Wm. C. Stevens in New York he wrote: "Last Sunday at meetings held throughout the wards in the city the Arizona Mission was presented to the people, it being decided to send two hundred men at once to settle in the valley of the Little Colorado River and adjacent country. The call, I am informed, has been promptly responded to, and we have every prospect of sending out a fine body of settlers to fill up the delightful valleys that are to be found in the region south of us. Nor do I expect that we shall stop at Arizona, but I look forward to the time when the settlements of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will extend right through to the city of Old Mexico and from thence on to Central America to the land where the Nephites flourished [northern So. America] in the golden era of their history, and this great backbone of the American continent be filled north and south with the cities and temples of the people of God. In this great work I anticipate the children of Nephi, of Laman and Lemuel [Indians] will take no small part." [Letter Brigham Young, Salt Lake City February 11, 1876, to William C. Stevens, N. Y." in Brigham Young Letter Book No. 13, MSS, pp. 125-126.]
This colossal plan of settlement was also advocated in at least two other sources. To George Lake, one of the leaders of the settlements on the Little Colorado, Brigham Young said: "We will form a line of settlements leading into South America but this [Little Colorado Settlements] shall be a stepping stone." [George Lake Diary, p. 26.] To Isaac Groo in January 1876 Brigham Young wrote: "... My mind is intent on the time when the children of the house of Nephi and Laman will aid us in the building of the Kingdom of God, and the settlements of the Saints will extend north and south along the backbone of the great continent, until it is filled with the people of the highest, and I think it is time that the borders of Israel were stretched out." [Letter Brigham Young, Salt Lake City, January 26, 1876," in Brigham Young Letter Book No. 13, pp. 161-162.]

These statements of Brigham Young illustrate the vastness of Brigham Young's colonial dreams. They also illustrate Brigham Young's determination to use converted Indians to colonize these expansive reaches. One of his foremost objectives was to convert the Indians. To that end he advised the leaders of settlements in frequent letters. In a letter to Lot Smith on the Little Colorado in 1876, just as the settlers were reaching the Little Colorado, Brigham Young wrote:

"In your instructions to the brethren be sure to impress upon their minds the necessity of being kind and straightforward in their dealings with the Lamanites [Indians]. Let none of the brethren have a hostile spirit toward them or talk to them with two tongues. The brethren engaged in this mission should be men of good feelings towards the Indians and should realize that one of the great objects in filling up that country with Latter-day Saints is to carry the blessings of the gospel to the outcasts of the house of Israel [Indians] in those regions." [Letter Brigham Young Salt Lake City, March 18, 1876, to Lot Smith and other Presidents of Fifties, Arizona," Brigham Young, Letter Book No. 13, p. 246.]

To Lorenzo Hatch, who was a missionary to the Indians of western New Mexico, Brigham Young wrote in June 1877 as follows:

"... So we must build our settlements in the midst of the Lamanites [Indians]. We must found them in faith; for we are doing God's work, we
must then in patience, knowing how darkened are the minds of those for whom we labor, we must adorn them with the example of our good works; for we are teaching a people who learn by imitation, and we must not weary in well doing lest they fall back to the ignorance of their former years. We must add to the teachings of the first principles of the Gospel practical lessons in cleanliness, thrift and economy." [Letter Brigham Young, Salt Lake City, June 7, 1877, to L. H. Hatch, Zuni," in Brigham Young Letter Book No. 13, p. 883.]

Brigham Young not only sent missionaries to the Indians but also established mission buildings in the Indian pueblos as in 1855 he had established Indian missions on the borders of Mormondom at that time. To convert the Indians of northern Arizona, Brigham Young sent missionaries to settle among the Hopis in Chief Tuba's settlement at Moenkopi. Though Jacob Hamblin and others had visited the Indians earlier, the Mormon party under James S. Brown in 1875 settled and built a fort for protection. In 1876 Apostle Erastus Snow located a townsite for Indians and missionaries. This mission group was to be the center to carry Mormonism to the Hopis and Navajos. These Mormon missionaries also explored the Little Colorado to find prospective lands for colonization. Several attempts of Brigham Young to form settlements on the Little Colorado failed. First in March 1873 a party of over one hundred settlers, instructed by Brigham Young and led by Horton D. Haight and consisting of 54 wagons, traveled southward to the Black Falls on the Little Colorado where their advances were stopped by sand. From here they sent an exploring party up river about 136 miles. The explorers brought back an adverse report that the country was barren, the river bottoms narrow, alkali soil, water scarce and Apaches menacing. Word was sent to Brigham Young suggesting abandonment of colonial attempts on Little Colorado. They returned to Utah within the year. [McClintock, J.H., Mormon Settlements in Arizona, p. 135.] A second party was sent in 1874 with John L. Blythe in charge of the eighteen members of the party. At Moenkopi they heard reports of a Navajo rising and abandoned their project
leaving Jacob Hamblin, Ira Hatch, and Ammon Tenney as Indian missionaries. The result of this exploration was establishment of Moenkopi. 

Brigham Young was not discouraged by the adverse reports of the possibilities of the Little Colorado as a region for Mormon settlement. He determined to settle the Little Colorado in strength. So in January 1876 some two hundred men, some with families, some unmarried, were called as missionaries to colonize the Little Colorado. Brigham Young met the northern missionaries and carefully instructed them, divided them into companies, and selected as leaders of the four companies (including those from south of Salt Lake—Lot Smith, George Lake, William C. Allen, and Jesse O. Ballenger. Their rendezvous was to be Kanab in southern Utah. Those from Salt Lake and north left that city February 3, 1876. The pioneers agreed to meet near the Sunset Crossing of the Little Colorado. The advance companies reached the Sunset Crossing March 23, 1876. The country nearby was explored and townsites selected. Brigham Young wrote:

"We deem it advisable as a rule, whenever the condition of the country will admit, for about fifty men to settle at one place. This number will form a good settlement. The settlements, wherever practical, should not be more than five miles apart, and under no circumstances should any one settlement be more than twenty five miles from some one of the others.

In selecting spots to farm your settlements look for places you can build on solid ground and where you will be secure from washes from ravines and gulches. Also be particular that you select places where you will be sure of good water, either good springs or wells.

After getting your crops in the ground the first thing to which you should turn your attention is to the building of corrals to house your cattle and the erection of a stockade inside of which you should build your cabins until you have time and opportunity to lay out and build up a town." 

The four companies formed four settlements. The country was soon explored farther and townsites were selected. The company under William C. Allen selected their site about twenty-five miles southeast of the Sunset Crossing and called their place Allen (later Joseph City). George Lake's
company settled across the river and two or three miles southwest of Allen and called their camp Obed. Lot Smith's company chose their site down river three miles northwest of the Sunset Crossing and called their location Sunset. The fourth company, under the leadership of Jesse O. Ballenger, located about four miles northwest of Sunset Crossing and named their settlement Ballenger [Brigham City].

The settlers of each town "pooled" their resources and farmed a United Order in each place—holding all things in common. The hard nature of the country, the insurmountable difficulties facing the settlers, made this unity of all property essential. The pioneers built dams near each settlement and constructed ditches to convey the water of the Little Colorado to their farms. They planted crops and awaited hopefully their first crops. But nature was against them. September 17, 1876, a great flood came down the river and swept away the crops of Allen and Obed and brought heavy losses to Sunset and Ballenger. In the following several years the continued floods upset the plans of the pioneers. The Mormon historian, Joseph Fish, reported that, "During the summer [1876] many of the settlers returned to Utah, some to bring their families to their new homes, and others to stay, abandoning the mission. After a lapse of five years scarcely one tenth of those called could be found at their posts of duty." [Joseph Fish, History of Eastern Arizona Stake, p. 5]. However, more missionaries were sent to replace those who returned to Utah or went to other parts of Arizona to settle.

The difficulties facing these pioneers called by Brigham Young to begin settlement in Arizona were most discouraging. They had to send teams four hundred miles for wheat for food and planting. The water of the Little Colorado was often unfit for culinary purposes, floods and drought added to
their troubles. The site of Obed was marshy and brought disease and had
to be abandoned in 1876.

By the fall of 1876 the situation of the destitute pioneers was
desperate and the settlements appeared headed for failure. The settlers
were facing serious odds. There was so much discontent that the apostles
sent a letter in July 1876 requiring the camps to purge themselves of "all
those whose mouths were full of murmurings lest their influence might
spread and thwart the design of the mission." [Joseph Fish, History of the
Eastern Arizona Stake of Zion, p. 5]

Though Brigham had planned carefully the sending of the four companies
to settle on the Little Colorado, and though he had convinced them that
they were called as missionaries to settle on the Little Colorado, by
July 1876 he realized that their mission was most difficult and that some
of them needed relief so he wrote to Lot Smith July 30, 1876, as follows:

"If you find the water in the Little Colorado continues to run short
you can have some of the brethren make explorations further up stream,
and if suitable places for settlements should be found either on the head-
waters of any of the tributaries of the Little Colorado, or on the Verde
or Salt River, it will be all right with us for some of the brethren who
feel discouraged with the present location of the settlements to go to
these new places. We do not wish your present camps abandoned, that is
the furthest from our thoughts, but we expect to fill the whole country south
with settlements of the Saints in time even to Old Mexico and if some of
the brethren with you feel as though they would like to settle further
south they have that privilege if it is done in order and under direction
of those appointed to preside in those regions." [Brigham Young, Salt
Lake City, July 30, 1876, to Lot Smith" in Brigham Young Letter Book
No. 13, p. 403.]

These four settlements were the only ones planned by Brigham Young.
Two other settlements were formed by the pioneers on the Little Colorado
before the passing of the great leader. To assist the colonists in their
struggle for existence, a dairy was erected on Mormon Lake called Mormon
Dairy. Here the herds on the Little Colorado fed on the plentiful grasses
and the settlers made cheese and butter for the pioneers on the Little
Colorado. When the settlements on the river declined or disappeared, Mormon
Dairy ceased to exist.
A second small settlement was also founded. In the fall of 1876 four pioneers from St. Joseph located the site for a dam near present Joseph City, surveyed a ditch, built a log house and returned to Joseph City. Early in 1877 other pioneers came to the site and Ammon Tenney was chosen as the leader of the infant settlement, called Woodruff in honor of Apostle Wilford Woodruff. Though the settlement grew slowly, it became permanent. The location was significant; it was at the junction of the Little Colorado and its principal tributary, Silver Creek. Thus Woodruff was the gateway to two promising areas of settlement where the main Mormon towns, north of the Magellon mountains, were soon founded. These first Mormon settlers at Woodruff faced dismaying problems of irrigation. The first dam was built down river and felt the full force of the river upon their dams which was too great in flood season for the dam to hold. In April 1878 when the men were working hard to complete their dam the spring flood washed their dam away. This discouragement almost overwhelmed the new settlement--at the beginning of 1878 there were fifty souls in Woodruff but by fall only three families remained. However, under able leadership the small settlement revived. L. H. Hatch, who had been released from his Indian mission in western New Mexico, became the leader. In October 1879 President Lot Smith of the Little Colorado Stake visited Woodruff, plotted a town site, and Lorenzo H. Hatch surveyed it and the people built their houses on their town lots. Ten times in the early years the flood washed their dams away but the people remained. As L. H. Hatch became a member of the Stake Presidency, a new bishop Owens was appointed and a new substantial dam was built above the forks, and it was permanent. The church assisted the settlers in building this new and permanent dam. In 1894 Andrew Jenson, the Mormon Church Historian, reported Woodruff as follows:
"Woodruff...is desirably located in a little valley about a mile square on the right bank of the Little Colorado River, at an altitude of 5000 feet. Twenty-six Mormon families numbering 133 souls...constitute the population...There is about 1000 acres of good land in the vicinity of Woodruff of which 600 acres are carefully cultivated and irrigated by ditches which head in a dam...The present dam bids fair to remain as it is built in a very substantial manner thirty-five feet high and two hundred and fifty feet long...the chief products of Woodruff...wheat, oats and corn are raised in small quantities, while vegetables sufficient for home consumption and considerable for exportation are raised." **Andrew Jenson letter to Deseret News,** Deseret News Vol. 48, p. 392, March 17, 1894.

When Brigham Young died in August 1877, much had been accomplished preparatory to the founding of numerous Mormon settlements on the waters of the Colorado and the nearby regions. But much remained to be done. The great leaders had outlined the occupation of a tremendous area down to South America. He had impressed upon the settlers of Utah and the newly arriving converts the necessity of occupying the country south. He also used the full force of his office and personality to convince his followers that the "call" to go and settle Arizona was not to be lightly taken. He had convinced his followers, at least most of them, that their efforts to colonize Arizona were of equal importance to a mission to convert others to Mormonism. But the areas where the four settlements were founded were not promising, and as he died three of his four settlements were declining and shortly would be evacuated. Only Joseph City was to remain the surviving settlement. Floods, malaria, small pox, poor soil and drought had been almost insurmountable barriers to colonial success.

**Settlement in Southeastern Arizona under John Taylor**

The choices before Brigham Young's successors, John Taylor and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, were two--either to abandon the settlements in Arizona or to strengthen the settlements where success was possible and to expand to other more desirable parts of Arizona. John Taylor and his associates chose the latter course--in fact, they could not do otherwise. The same causes for expansion that existed in Brigham Young's day still
existed—to find lands for the landless young men of the older settlements—to find homes for converts, and to find a haven of safety for those who were prosecuted for polygamy. The settlements founded by Brigham Young were only a year old when the great pioneer died, so the first task confronting the new leadership was the reorganization of Brigham Young's four settlements on the Little Colorado. Floods had prevented the settlers there from producing the necessary foods. Chills, fever, and small pox brought in 1878 by southern converts who added sickness to the hunger which beset the first pioneers. Thus the new leader John Taylor gave permission, as Brigham Young had done before him, for the dissatisfied settlers to seek new and "greener" pastures. He also used church funds to assist the new settlers in buying more desirable sites from their predecessors—sheepmen and cattlemen. This made it possible for the settlers to purchase more desirable lands. Though the valleys of Little Colorado more desirable were sparsely settled, the best lands had been taken by non-Mormons, and therefore it was necessary to buy out their squatters' claims. The failing settlements which gave no promise of improvement quickly died—the inhabitants either seeking more desirable lands or returning to Utah and the new Mormon authorities tried to keep the settlers in Arizona by assisting them. From the death of Brigham Young till 1880 the leadership of the church rested with the Twelve under the Presidency of John Taylor who was the President of the Quorum of the Twelve. From 1880 to 1887 John Taylor was president of the church. In general, President Taylor followed the policies of Brigham Young. To Lot Smith in September 8, 1877, just after Brigham Young's death, he wrote: "Trusting in Him, we are seeking to continue in the path that has been marked by Joseph and by Brigham Young during the days of their sojourn upon the earth." [Letter John Taylor to Lot Smith September 8, 1887," John Taylor Letter Book No. 15] [Check page]
As the Mormon colonies expanded from well into Mexico in the south and into southern Canada in the north, President Taylor had to rely more upon his lieutenants the apostles. In 1878 he wrote to the Mormons in Arizona and New Mexico that Erastus Snow was, "...to visit the Mormon settlements of the Saints in Arizona and New Mexico in his calling as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, with full power and authority to organize, regulate and set in order the churches of the saints in those territories, to appoint or change the presidents and officers therein, and to settle any difficulties or estrangements of feeling that may have arisen between members of the Church; in fact to do any and all things that he may deem desirable and wise for the building up and benefit of the Kingdom of God in those parts embraced in his calling and authority." [Letter John Taylor to Saints in Arizona and New Mexico August 31, 1878,] in John Taylor Letter Book No. 16.

This was a wise decision since Erastus Snow lived in St. George, a gateway to the southern mission, and he was a very able and industrious leader. Mormon success in Arizona in a large measure was due to the untiring efforts of Erastus Snow.

The letters between Erastus Snow and the Mormon President disclose, however, that John Taylor was fully informed about the condition of the Mormon settlements in Arizona. He wrote frequently to the Mormon pioneers giving them council on matters of colonization. The President was anxious especially that the rights of the individual colonist be protected adequately.

To Christopher Layton, in charge of the settlements on the San Pedro and Gila rivers, he wrote as follows:

"...In the formation of your cities...care should be had to place them in proper localities, so that they may be as convenient to land and water as circumstances will permit; and furthermore, it will be very necessary to examine carefully the sanitary condition of their locations."
It is the general opinion that it is more healthy and salubrious on the plateaus, or mesas, than on the low lands, the latter of which your district of country are more or less subject to malarial diseases which ought always, when practicable, to be avoided. It will be proper also in the laying out of town or city sites to have the streets wide and commodious, and proper reservations of squares should be made for public uses; for church, county school and ornamental purposes and in order to avoid difficulties, have the interest of your church and church affairs separate that confusion may be avoided hereafter in relation to the occupation of suitable places for these several objects. In all your operations associated with your new settlements, care should be had to have everything conducted on a fair and equitable principle, and that individual or favoritism of any kind should be avoided. It would be proper for you to operate in union and harmony, so far as practical, in all your temporal affairs, without adopting too strict a regime, or placing men in any degree of bondage or servility. We want to approach, as near as possible, to a United Order without placing ourselves particularly under any rigid rules; the Order of Zion when carried out, will be that all men shall act in the interest of and for the welfare of Zion; and individualism, private speculation and covetousness will be avoided and that all act in the interest of all and for the welfare of the whole community. We may not at present be able to carry out these ideas in full; but without any special formality or rule, we may be approaching these principles as fast as circumstances will admit of it. We profess to be acting and operating for God and for His Kingdom and we are desirous that our acts should be in consonance with our professions. To assist in the accomplishment of these objects, care should be taken to have proper selections made of Bishops in the several wards...and while prudent, active, energetic and intelligent men should be chosen; they should also be honorable men free from all the vices of drunkenness, dishonesty, profanity and covetousness."

The above letter indicates the careful planning of President Taylor, his sense of the artistic, his concern for the individuals of the various settlements, his consideration for the health of the people. He believed in the free agency of man, and he did not wish the leaders to crush the individuality of the members of his flock. He was tender hearted, he grieved over the suffering of his people, he saw the potential difficulties in union of church and state, and he wished to avoid conflict between the two. John Taylor was a gentleman and artist, tolerant and broad minded in his attitude, and anxious to avoid, without surrender of principles, good relations with the non-Mormons as well as with the Indians. He was a great colonizer but in a somewhat different way from Brigham Young.
John Taylor's attitude towards the Indian was also friendly. To Lot Smith he wrote in 1882 as follows:

"...The day has come when we must adopt a more advanced policy with regard to the Indians. The day has gone by when we can dip them in the water and let them run wild; but they must be taught, counselled, ministered to, and organized like the people of the white races. Why should we expect so much more from them than we allow for ourselves. They will have to become one with us and can do so by the same methods....Until now, so far as regards this people it seems to me that we have allowed the Lord to do almost everything whilst we have done comparatively nothing. The Lord has permitted their ancient Fathers to visit them; He has given them dreams and visions. He has directed them to visit us, and asked to be admitted into the Church. And what have we done? We have baptized them and sent them away again to their old houses and their old habits. This will have to be changed. Missions will have to be established and maintained in their midst; Seventies and Elders will be sent to labor amongst them, and High Priests appointed to preside over them when organized. They will have to be attached to our stakes of Zion, and in every way, as far as practicable, and as the spirit of the Lord shall inspire and prudence shall dictate, be treated as we treat our brethren gathered out of the lands of the Gentiles; for the day to favor Israel Indians has come...." ["Letter John Taylor October 31, 1882, to President Lot Smith," in John Taylor Letter Book No. 20.]

Though Brigham Young sent Lorenzo Hatch to establish the missionary settlement among the Navajos in western New Mexico, near St. John's Arizona in 1876 many difficulties were encountered and the mission settlement of Savoya was reinforced by President Taylor and in the Savoya Valley a site was selected for a Mormon settlement in the 1880's. Papago on the Salt River in Arizona was one of the most successful Indian settlements under John Taylor and will be discussed later in connection with the Mormon settlements on the Salt River. In general John Taylor followed the Indian policies of Brigham Young but hoped to make the Indian settlements into villages with white leaders, similar to the white settlements of the Mormons. Some progress was made in this respect.

In the years from 1878 to 1880, as three of the settlements founded by Brigham Young on the Little Colorado were vacated, new settlements were founded on the Silver Creek fork and the main Little Colorado upstream where more land and better irrigation facilities. Some of the founders
came from the deserted settlement on the Little Colorado and many who were called or volunteered came from Utah or the Southern States.

As the pioneers pushed up the Little Colorado and its tributary, Silver Creek, during the early years of President Taylor's leadership they found sites upon which small settlements could be found. The results varied. Some became small or medium sized settlements, others failed. An example of the latter was Old Taylor, not to be confused with the later and much more successful Taylor on Silver Creek. This settlement was founded January 22, 1878 by families mostly from Utah, who came to the older settlements on the Little Colorado and not being satisfied there moved three miles down river (north) from Joseph City and found a site on the south side of the Little Colorado River. They named their settlement Taylor—in honor of President John Taylor. The first settlers were the Flakes, Kartchmers, Palmers, Minnerlys, Millers, Claytons, Gales and Knights. In the spring they were joined by three convert families from Arkansas. □Sophronia Smith, Historical Survey of northeastern section of Arizona. Its Settlement and Development into Latter-day Saints Stakes, p. 16, Thesis 1937.□

They lived in their wagon boxes while they were erecting two log rooms for a United Order. They built five small dams in about as many months and all five were washed away. The difficulties were too great. Also there was some dissension. □O. D. Flake, William J. Flake, pp. 63-64.□

William J. Flake, one of the finest Mormon pioneers of Arizona was dissatisfied with conditions and explored the Arizona country north of the Mogollon River in hope of finding a better location. When he did, he left Old Taylor and soon most of the settlers left Taylor to join him, and in the summer of 1878 Taylor was abandoned.
As Mr. Flake and his friend Mr. Palmer explored the upper waters of the Little Colorado and Silver Fork they found a most desirable site for settlement—a ranch claimed by James Stenson who farmed about three hundred acres and in addition had cattle. This farmer-rancher combination was the non-Mormon way of settling Arizona. The Mormons depended mostly on agriculture, though in areas adapted to cattle raising they added cattle to their farming pursuits. Mr. Flake agreed to pay Mr. Stenson $11,000 in three years with 450 cattle and purchased the ranch, buildings and what was especially valuable, Mr. Stenson's claim to all the water of Silver Creek. [Ibid., p. 69]

The agreement was carried out in good faith, both Mr. Flake and Mr. Stenson keeping their oral contract perfectly. Mr. Flake met his obligation to Mr. Stenson faithfully, and the latter did everything possible to assure the success of Mr. Flake's settlement. The two men remained close friends. These two men represented the finest men on the Arizona frontier and both contributed to the success of Mormon settlements on Silver Creek. Could relations, in other parts of Arizona between Mormons and non-Mormons, have been as cordial much sorrow and tragedy could have been avoided.

Mr. Flake and four of his neighbors from Taylor moved to the Stenson ranch July 21, 1878, and that date marked the beginning of the Mormon settlement of Snowflake. Later that summer John Kartchner and others moved from Old Taylor and settled near the Flakes. Having settled his family on the ranch, Mr. Flake traveled to Utah to secure cattle to pay Mr. Stenson for the ranch. On his way he met Apostle Erastus Snow and they talked over the new settlement. Apostle Snow, on his way to organize a ward in the settlement, tried to persuade Mr. Flake to be the bishop. Mr. Flake was opposed on the ground that he was too busy in the settlement of the new country and suggested his friend John Hunt who was appointed the first bishop. [O.D. Flake, William J. Flake, pp. 79-80.]

After Apostle Snow parted from W. J. Flake, he traveled to the Stenson ranch which was organized as a ward September 24, 1878. The settlement was named Snowflake in honor of Apostle Snow and the founder, William J. Flake. September 24, 1878 Apostle Snow located the site for the town and September 30, 1878 he selected Jesse N. Smith as President of the newly created Eastern Arizona Stake.

In the Mormon settlement of Arizona two ecclesiastical units were extremely important. They were the ward and the stake and the leaders of the ward were called bishops and the leaders of the stake were called presidents. The Mormon bishop was the dominant leader of his ward, and in general provided adequate leadership in temporal as well as spiritual affairs, but as the number of settlements expanded additional authority was needed to unite these settlements. The formation of a stake composed of several contiguous wards and the selection of a president to oversee the affairs of the combined wards was a necessary and important step in the expansion of colonization. The Stake President called a conference of members and bishops of his stake every three months. These conferences were attended by apostles who brought instructions from the President of the Church and the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. In these conferences on Sunday doctrinal and temporal advice was given by the visiting authorities and often the apostles remained several days after the conference to discuss such mundane matters as selecting a site for a new settlement or advising on the construction of dams. The formation of stakes gave a unity to the Mormon colonization that was necessary to aid the smaller or weaker settlements in their struggle for existence. Thus the first settlements on the lower Little Colorado were organized by Apostle John W. Young in January 1878 in the Little Colorado Stake of Zion with Lot Smith as President and Jacob Hamblin and Lorenzo Hatch as his counselors. As settlements were
founded on the upper waters of the Little Colorado and Silver Creek the new settlements on these streams were too distant from the older colonies and a second stake—the Eastern Arizona Stake of Zion was organized in 1879 with Jesse N. Smith as President. The formation of these two stakes proved to be powerful influences in maintaining the settlements already founded in expanding into unsettled areas. The presidents of the stakes could write more objectively about the needs of the wards than the bishops whose knowledge and interest concerned their own particular ward. It is difficult to believe that the Mormon settlements would have continued without the supervision of the stake authorities and frequent assistance from the General Authorities of the Church.

With the visit of Apostle Snow in September 1878 Snowflake really began its existence as a settlement. After the townsite was chosen on Flake's purchase, Major Ladd of Joseph City surveyed the townsite in the fall of 1878. The town was laid out in 20 blocks, 24 rods square, each block containing 4 lots, 12 rods square, the streets were surveyed 6 rods wide. Two ditches were also surveyed, one of the west and one on the east side of the creek. [Snowflake Stake Records: Snowflake] Later the farming land was surveyed by Albert Minerly. Each man was to have one city lot and two parcels of farming land, one first class and the others second class with a total of twenty acres for each family. The city lot plus the two parcels of land cost two hundred dollars. [Snowflake Stake Records: Snowflake] The newly appointed church officials soon arrived, John Hunt, the new bishop reaching Snowflake November 8, 1878, from Savora, New Mexico, and the new President, Jesse N. Smith, bringing a company of ten families reached Snowflake in January 1879. As President Smith chose his lot and farmland in Snowflake, that settlement became the headquarters of the stake and helped assure Snowflake of primacy among the settlements on Silver
Creek. In the founding of the town the unselfishness of William J. Flake became apparent. He took only one lot and twenty acres of land, the same as the others, and he sold the land to the settlers for the same amount that he had paid Mr. Stenson. In the successful planting of Mormon colonies in Arizona Mr. Flake played a generous and important part. Not only did he purchase the land for the settlement of Snowflake but also assisted in acquiring land for other settlements in northeastern Arizona. With these three leaders, Jesse N. Smith, John Hunt, and William J. Flake to lead them, the settlers worked hard to transform the crude frontier of Silver Creek into a happy civilized region, and all within a decade. In 1879 during their June conference in Snowflake, Apostle Wilford Woodruff reminded the weary and homesick pioneers that they were on a mission and their calling was to "build up the Kingdom of God." [Joseph N. Smith, p. 231] This small valley formed by "an opening in the hills on Silver Creek," surrounded by bluffs about one hundred feet high, above junction of the forks of the Little Colorado and north of the Mogollon Rim became the headquarters of the Mormon settlements on the upper waters of the Little Colorado. [Sophronia Smith, Historical Survey of Northeastern Arizona.]

With the admonitions of Apostle Woodruff ringing in their ears and led by their three pioneer leaders the settlers made rapid progress in building their settlement. Ditches were repaired; houses were built, a cooperative field of their United Order was fenced, about four hundred acres of grain was planted and the young settlement soon assumed the appearance of a thrifty and prosperous village. They built crude log cabins, their President having the first log cabin with a shingle roof, the shingles being cut by Joseph Fish who used to knife to make shingles for the roof of the cabin of his beloved President. [Joseph Fish, History of East Arizona Stake, p. 40.]
When the Apache County was formed by the territorial legislature in 1879, Snowflake was made the county seat for one year only and the first county court was held in the home of William J. Flake. After the crops were planted and the cabins erected, the pioneers of Snowflake began educational, economic, and religious activities. School was started in 1879 with an enrollment of seventy-two pupils, and that winter a log school house was constructed. It was also used for religious purposes. The first store—the Snowflake Coop—was built in 1881. Two saw mills helped to transform Snowflake from a cluster of log cabins to more imposing lumber houses. In 1884 a brick yard produced brick to build a brick stake house.

Apostle Woodruff noted in his journal in 1879 the following: "We rode from Woodruff (25 miles) to Snowflake and stopped with Jesse N. Smith over night. Snowflake is a pleasant place and contains 62 families—43 men, 52 women and 159 children, 150 bushels of wheat, 150 acres of corn and other vegetables, 60 brood mares, 60 horses and 13 mules, 60 head of oxen, 138 cows and 60 head of young stock. The valley is 1 1/2 miles long and 1 1/2 miles wide." [Wilford Woodruff Journal.]

By the 1890's the frontier settlement of Snowflake had been transformed from a few crude log 'cabins with pole and dirt roofs to a striving and imposing town of brick residences and church spires. But more important than these developments of the material aspects of civilization, they developed a high morale. A St. Louis correspondent who traveled through these settlements on Silver Creek described Snowflake in 1890 as follows:

"From Holbrook to Fort Apache the distance is about one hundred miles, the road passing through a series of little Mormon settlements, each one of which seems a veritable oasis in the midst of a vast and barren waste. It is astonishing how these Mormon people, fleeing from contact with the Gentiles, erect comfortable homes for themselves and turn western deserts into garden spots. I found in every settlement through which I passed fine reservoirs and complete systems of irrigating ditches. Orchards and shade
trees had been planted, hundreds of acres of land brought under cultivation, and fine vegetable gardens laid out. The dwellings and outhouses were neat looking and comfortable and supplied with all the requisites of well regulated farms. I could not help noticing the marked difference in the appearance of the cattle and horses of the Mormons from those which I had been accustomed to seeing elsewhere in the southwest. They were fat and sleek looking, showing that they received good care. At every farm house there was an abundance of milk, butter, chickens and eggs, things almost unknown to the average Arizona ranches.

In stopping one night at a settlement [Snowflake] some forty miles from Holbrook, I was surprised to find pianos and organs in most of the houses, and was equally surprised at the hospitable manner in which I was treated. ... They [Mormons in Snowflake] claim that the strength of the Mormon church lies in the doctrines of temperance, patience and industry which it teaches, and the perfect system of cooperation among its followers which enables them to prosper in any part of the West. ... All of the freighting to and from Fort Apache is carried on by the Mormons, and the superiority of their teams and their own steady habits have enabled them to fill government contracts so satisfactorily that they have completely Mexican and Gentile freighters."


The Mormon Church Historian, Andrew Jenson, who visited Snowflake in 1894 added his description as follows:

"There are no mountains--such as we would call mountains in Utah--in sight of Snowflake, but that which surrounds the place and suggests the idea of a valley are cedar covered bluffs or rolling hills which perhaps nowhere in the immediate vicinity of the settlement exceeds one hundred feet in actual height. As the traveler approaches Snowflake on the Woodruff road from the north, he is apt to be impressed with the appearance of the settlement. Clustered around the stake house (the spire of which, though not very lofty, points gracefully toward heaven) the stranger at once notices a number of fine brick dwellings and business houses standing in the midst of young thrifty orchards, while the town itself is surrounded by well cultivated fields, properly fenced and systematically laid out by the respective owners for irrigation purposes... 81 families and 446 souls constitute the membership of the ward."


Then to complete the civilizing influences changing the frontier in 1888 the Snowflake Stake Academy began its high school courses of study that year in the old Relief Society Hall at Snowflake with a registration of fifty students with E. W. Webb in charge. Thus the final touches of civilization came to Snowflake.
While Snowflake was the center of the East Arizona Stake and the largest Mormon town along Silver Creek, it was only one of a number of towns on that stream and its tributaries upstream or south to the Mogollon Rim which separated the waters of the Little Colorado to the north from the waters of the Salt, the Gila, and the San Pedro and their tributaries to the south. Snowflake and several other settlements up Silver Creek were settled primarily as agricultural settlements. Wherever a thousand acres of land or more was found along Silver Creek, a Mormon rural settlement was founded. Some eighteen miles south of Snowflake the main forests began and the altitude brought early frosts. Thus the settlements colonized in that area, outside of a little grain and vegetables, depended largely upon lumbering, cattle raising and dairying for their economic existence.

William Flake was not the only man looking for more promising land than he had in his former habitat, nor was Snowflake the first Mormon settlement on Silver Creek, though it was the most promising one. In the late 1870's settlers on the Little Colorado and the new arrivals from Utah—and they were numerous—explored all parts of Arizona to find fertile valleys with adequate water for irrigation. The small valleys of Silver Creek, the larger upper valleys of the Little Colorado, the Tonto Basin, and the broad valleys of the Salt River, the attractive upper valleys of the Gila River, and the limited acres of tillable land along the San Pedro were all explored by Mormon pioneers with the hope of finding large farm lands and plentiful water supplies. In most cases, however, the Mormons found the best lands sparsely settled by non-Mormons who raised a little grain but used the land mostly for small ranches for sheep or cattle. It was often necessary for the Mormon pioneers to purchase the land claims of those non-Mormon predecessors. When this was done, the newcomers transformed the cattle and sheep ranches and ranges into small but prosperous agricultural settlements. In some cases the cattlemen and sheep men were
too well established and prosperous to wish to sell their lands and the
fact prevented the Mormons from purchasing large areas or securing sufficient
water. The exception was Mesa which will be discussed later. The Mormon
settlers were able to found small but self sufficient farms because they
united in their projects, whether that unity was indicated by organizing a
well knit social unit such as the United Order or whether they had individual
farms but united in building dams and irrigation ditches. Thus the Stenson
ranch, which its owner thought was large enough only for one farm, became
a prosperous Mormon settlement of almost a thousand inhabitants and producing
adequate crops to feed the people of its community. Most of the Mormon
pioneers in Arizona were poor, many in actual want for food and clothing.
The journey from Utah was over almost impassible roads and the loss of
horses and cattle in the journey were often ruinous. Then, too, the Navajo
and Apache Indians frequently raided the settlements stealing the horses
and cattle of the pioneers. It was therefore fortunate that in the early
colonization that the soldiers of the Federal forts in the territory,
needing supplies of clothing, food and munitions, gave employment to the
impoverished Mormons. Also the building of railroads gave work to the
needy settlers, thus aiding them and in some cases preventing starvation.
Prices for food were high and the work on the roads and railroads delayed
the planting of crops and bringing the prosperity that came with good crops.
Thus the Mormon leaders both in Salt Lake and Arizona discouraged their
members from seeking employment outside their farms. Then, too, in the
boom towns of the mining and cattle kingdoms life was too extravagant and
vicious for the Mormons and the leaders did not like the prospects of
life in the lawless towns of the Arizona frontier.

Even a few months before William Flake led the settlers to the newly
purchased Snowflake a settlement was founded some three miles south or
above Snowflake on Silver Creek. In honor of President John Taylor it was named Taylor. Since the valley was long and narrow and since part of it was claimed by Felix Scott, a non-Mormon, the valley in the vicinity of Taylor was settled as scattered farms at first, rather than as a compact settlement.

James Pearce, a Mormon missionary to the Indians, was the first Mormon settler on Silver Creek coming there January 23, 1878. He located a short distance upstream from the site of Taylor. He staked out a claim. He was followed by another Mormon, John H. Standifird. Mr. Standifird described his pioneer activities on Silver Creek as follows:

"On the 7th of March 1878, I and my daughter Ann passed through Stenson Valley, where the town of Snowflake is now located. Mr. Stenson and a Mexican were farming here. The same day we came to the ranch of James Pearce, which was located on the ground now occupied by part of the town of Taylor. On the 8th, we remained at James Pearce's ranch. On the 9th, we went to Lone Pine on Show Low Creek. On the 10th we went on to Silver Creek and took lunch at George Bucklers, on Richard J. Bailey's ranch, and bought the improvements which Mr. Felix Scott had made in the valley. On the 11th we moved into the valley. On the 13th we commenced work on a ditch, to convey water from Silver Creek to irrigate the tillable land, James Pearce assisting me. On the 16th I was engaged in plowing and sowing wheat.

Later John Kay, Jesse and William Walker settled on the west side of the creek where they took out water and planted garden truck. These are the first settlers who used the waters of Silver Creek, at what is now Taylor....Our little settlement on Silver Creek was first called Bagley, then Walker, and finally Taylor." [Letter John H. Standifird, Moab, Utah, September 9, 1912, quoted in Snowflake Stake Wards, Taylor.]

Other families from the Little Colorado, principally from Woodruff, came in the spring and summer of 1878 especially after the dam had been washed out in Woodruff. These included Edwin S. Dustin, Daniel Bagley, Noah Brimhall, Lewis P. Cordon and Lorenzo Hatch who took up a farm in Taylor. These men came with their families. With the coming of these new settlers the area began to develop. President Erastus Snow and his party
visited the embryo settlement September 27, 1873 and advised the settlers
to lay off a townsite and make a permanent settlement. In December 1873
a small townsite was surveyed by means of a chain and rope on both sides
of the narrow valley. Two tiers of blocks, 24 rods square and 36 rods
wide, the streets 6 rods wide, the streets to run north and south, were
surveyed. The narrow valley, with the good land nearest the stream, made
it difficult to settle on the townsite, and the settlers delayed moving to
their town lots. This fact, together with many of the settlers engaging
in freighting, delayed the rapid growth of the town. Nevertheless it was
organized as a ward in 1880 with J. H. Standifird as bishop. In 1881 when
a post office was located, it was named Taylor. By 1884 Taylor had grown
to such an extent that it was second only to Snowflake on Silver Creek
with a population of three hundred and eighty seven souls.

These two settlements of Snowflake and Taylor needed a grist mill,
and the small settlement of Shumway was the result. Eight miles upstream
or south of Snowflake the new settlement site was selected as a grist mill
site rather than principally for agricultural purposes. While the Wanslees
in 1879 located a mill site, they did little else, and in 1880 Charles
Shumway and Nelson T. Beebe secured the Wanslee claim and built a grist
mill, the machinery being brought from the East. In 1883 the small settle-
ment was organized as a branch of the Snowflake ward. It remained a small
settlement with fifteen families as its maximum. Nevertheless, the grist
mill provided flour for the settlers up and down Silver Creek.

South of Shumway the Mogollon Rim or mountains were close at hand and
only small "pockets" of land were available for agriculture purposes for
small parties of Mormons looking for more enticing lands. In fact, the
lands on the south slopes of the Mogollons around Apache Springs offered
the best possible areas for settlement. The best land north of the mountains was claimed by a non-Mormon, Mr. Cooley, who with his pardner claimed the best land on Show Low Creek. The question of ownership of the claim was settled in a card game. It was decided that the one displaying the lowest card should have the ranch. Mr. Cooley cut low and thus the creek on which the ranch was located was known as Show Low Creek. As early as 1876 Alfred Cluff and Daniel Adams left Allen's Camp [Joseph City] on the Little Colorado, looking for a more promising site for themselves. They came to Mr. Cooley's ranch and rented some land from him for farming. However, it was not till 1878 that the Mormon pioneers settled on Show Low Creek, either on or near the Cooley Ranch. In January 1878 two Mormons, Merrett Slattery and Joseph H. Frichy chose their location about a mile and a half above the Cooley Ranch, where Ellsworth later constructed the first cabins built by Mormons on Show Low Creek. They found the Cluffs and Adamses already on the Cooley Ranch. As new settlers were arriving Alfred Cluff was appointed presiding Elder in charge of the Mormon settlers in that area. Because of Mr. Cooley's claim of the best available land on the Show Low, the Mormon settlers were not entirely satisfied. Furthermore, they needed work. In February 1878 some of these first settlers on the Show Low crossed the Mogollon Rim and traveled south to Fort Apache to cut card wood for Fort Apache. On their way they were much impressed with the forest land lying on the south slope of the Mogollons. While at Fort Apache, several Mormons were sent to the San Carlos Indian agency on the Gila River to inquire whether the desired location was on the Indian reservation. They were told by the Indian agent that it was not. They were also promised military protection if they settled there. Then a company of troops was dispatched from Fort Apache, and they removed the Indians from the Apache Springs area. This done, the settlers temporarily
located on the Show Low moved over the mountain and settled in the valley south of the Mogollons which they named Forest Dale. They arrived at the Apache Springs in March 1873. Frichy built the first house and dug the first well on this new location. A fine crop of corn was harvested, and the future of the new settlement was promising. However, trouble threatened the new settlement. Two of the men—missionaries to the Indians—invited a dozen Indian families into the valley. Many other Indians moved to Forest Dale. In addition, rumors were circulated that the land of Forest Dale was on the Indian reservation and by 1880 the settlement was reluctantly evacuated on orders from the Army. However, in the spring of 1881 more rumors indicated the land was outside the boundaries of the reservation. Some four families resettled Forest Dale, and in June 1881 William Ellsworth was appointed by President Jesse N. Smith to preside over the settlement. In the fall of 1881 conflict took place between the Indians and the whites—the Indians attacking Fort Apache. The settlers of Forest Dale evacuated their settlement and moved across the "Rim" to the Show Low Creek where they built a fort. President Smith met the Show Low and Forest Dale settlers December 15, 1881 and formed a ward organization of the settlers on the Show Low and its tributaries and Forest Dale was to be known as the Forest Dale Ward. William Ellsworth was chosen to preside. In 1882 Forest Dale was resettled with some twenty families, most of them from Brigham City on the Little Colorado. The Indians continued to plant crops near Forest Dale, and in December 1882 Lieutenant Ealewood came from Fort Apache and informed the Mormons that they were on the Indian reservation and asked them to move and vacate their lands. This they did, and most of the settlers went to the Gila Valley to settle.

The failure at Forest Dale ended Mormon settlement in that area and led to occupying the small pockets of land on the tributaries and upper
waters of Silver Creek. Even before the evacuation, some of these "pockets" were occupied. One of these small settlements, Pine Dale, was settled from Snowflake in 1879 when Niels Mortensen and his sons and Niels Peterson took up a claim in the pine forests some twenty miles southwest from Snowflake, near the site where the Snowflake settlers cut their logs. These two families built homes, cleared some of the land, dug wells. They cultivated some of the land, brought some of the land under cultivation, and fenced a large pasture for their cattle. In 1880 a saw mill was transported to the timber from Fort Apache, and in 1882 the Mount Trumbull mill. A rough survey was made that year for a townsite, and in 1885 a log school house was built. By 1880 some twenty families had moved to settle in Pine Dale. Nearby a number of small settlements were founded: Lone Pine in 1878 as John Reidhead bought out Wolf and was joined by four other families; Linden Valley settled in 1878 by Penrod and some dozen other families; Joffa or Aripine settled in 1883-4 by Snowflake cattlemen who also raised crops there, and several other settlements. In 1883 two more clusters of settlers built their houses on the Chenelon Fork, and they were called Wilford and Heber. In 1880 Edson Whipple brought his family and bought out a non-Mormon and built his fort near Adair. In 1879 Thomas Adair brought his family and founded Adair. The Mormon historian, Andrew Jenson, who visited the Show Low settlements in 1894 wrote as follows:

"Show Low ward comprises all the scattered settlements on Show Low Creek, a tributary of Silver Creek. There are five villages within the limits of this ward, namely, Juniper, Adair, Ellsworth, Fairview or Woodland, and Pinetop. From Juniper the settlement farther west, to Pinetop eastward the distance is 22 miles. The Bishop resides at Woodland. Except at Ellsworth where the people irrigate their lands from the Show Low, dry farming in the heavy pine forests is the predominant feature in the Show Low ward, the strength of which is 34 families or 202 souls." ["Letter Andrew Jenson, Snowflake, Apache Co., Arizona, February 27, 1894 to Deseret News," Deseret News Weekly, Vol. 48, p. 392, March 17, 1894.]
The anti-polygamy prosecutions in 1885 caused some of the settlers to leave the upper Silver Creek headwaters area. Thus by the death of President John Taylor in July 1887 the Mormons had occupied most of the available areas along Silver Creek and its tributaries to the headwaters whose sources were in the Mogollon mountains which separated the waters of the Little Colorado from those of the south rivers.

Paralleling the Mormon movement up the Silver Fork of the Little Colorado was the movement up the upper waters of the main stream, the Little Colorado. Lower downstream Woodruff, as it was to the settlements up Silver Creek, was the gateway to the upper reaches of the Little Colorado. The choicest agricultural areas upstream were mostly taken up as claims by non-Mormon ranchers who also farmed some land. Though the washing out of dams on the Little Colorado discouraged briefly Mormon settlement up that stream, the migration of Mormon settlement to Arizona required more land for settlement. Thus the Mormon explorations up the Little Colorado brought additional land for settlement to the attention of the Mormon leaders and led to the advance of Mormon settlers up the main stream. One of the choice areas upstream was held by the Barth brothers who brought some Mexicans with them and located land on the Little Colorado near the place where the old Apache Fort Wingate road crosses the Little Colorado in 1873. The little cluster of cabins which housed the Barths and their Mexican laborers was given the Spanish name of San Juan or St. John. Some irrigation ditches brought water to the farm land.

After consulting with Apostles Erastus Snow and Wilford Woodruff on the 16th of November 1879, Ammon M. Tenney purchased the Barth brothers’ squatters rights to the land lying around St. Johns as well as all the water claims. He agreed to give 770 head of average American cows for the
In addition to the land around St. Johns, the ranches at the meadows, eight miles below St. Johns, was included. 

Subsequently the Mormon settlers found that the Barths had deceived them; they did not own all the land or water they claimed. 

In 1879 Joseph H. Watkins and William F. James were the first settlers on the new location, coming late in 1879. The settlers did not have cattle to pay for the land, but W. J. Flake lent them 100 head of cattle and church tithing cattle from Kanab were used to pay the remainder. From the very beginning the Mormon leaders were determined to make a strong settlement, and they carefully selected an able and experienced leader—David King Udall of Kanab in southern Utah. He was called to be bishop in June 1880 and left Kanab September 1880. It took him four weeks to travel from Kanab to St. Johns. He described his journey as follows: "Having traveled four hundred miles through a wilderness inhabited mostly by jack rabbits, prairie dogs and roaming Indians. The Indians were friendly due largely to the missionary work of Jacob Hamblin, Anthony W. Ivins, Ammon M. Tenney, Andrew S. Gibbons and his sons, Ira Hatch, Thales Haskell and others. Most of the country through which we passed was desolate beyond description." 

The new leader, Bishop Udall, was busy from the day he arrived. He secured the cattle to pay the Barths by using 450 church cattle from Kanab. Since the first location for the townsite was too low, Udall called the settlers together, and they selected a site on higher ground and closer to the Mexican town as advised by Apostle Erastus Snow. There were 1200 acres in the Barth claims in the meadows as well as the land around St. Johns. By 1880 there were 190 people in the new settlement. In October 1880 a new townsite was surveyed. Lots were laid off 12 rods
square, blocks 24 rods square and streets 6 rods wide. In the spring of 1881 the farming land of St. Johns was surveyed into 40 acre blocks with streets around each 40 acre block. These lots were divided into five, ten and twenty acre lots. In the winter of 1881-2 the first school and meeting house was built on the townsit of St. Johns, and Mrs. Annie Romney was the first school teacher.

Bishop Udall summarized the efforts of the pioneers from the beginning to 1887—the death of President Taylor—as follows:

"Summarizing briefly we find that two or three years after St. Johns ward was organized we had, through a church loan, met the purchase debt; we had surveyed and established our new town site on which many small homes had been built; we had surveyed and fenced a field of 820 acres and divided it into plots and provided water ditches for irrigating the land from the Little Colorado. We had fenced a cemetery lot and had provided ourselves with sand and gravel pits and an adobe yard. We had perfected and for some years, maintained a military organization as a precaution against Apache Indian troubles. We have established a school and store room as the Arizona Cooperative Mercantile Institution; we have built a saw mill and a grist mill and had erected the Assembly Hall used as a ward meeting house and as a schoolhouse and had begun the erection of a two story brick tithing office. During those seven years, the Saints laid the foundations of St. Johns....

We were often homesick for Utah's lovely valleys. Times were hard and we lived in a primitive way, but we were not long faced or sad about it for we found many blessings to appreciate and we were young, full of zeal, full of fun too." [David K. Udall, Arizona Pioneer, pp. 88-89.]

The Mormon leaders urged more settlers to go to St. Johns and by 1884 it was the largest settlement on the upper waters of the Little Colorado.

[ Sophronia Smith, Historical Survey of Northeastern Arizona, p. 49.]

However, difficulties soon arose because of difficulties with non-Mormon neighbors. The Mexicans resented the Mormons settling so near the Mexican town of San Juan. Furthermore, the Mormons soon found that Solomon Barth did not have a valid claim to all the water he sold them. Also, lands which the Mormons claimed and developed were declared to be railroad grant land, and the Mormons were not of this until non-Mormons had purchased the land. Also, cattlemen wanted the area where the Mormons
settle and sought to drive them out. Also, by 1884-85 prosecutions for
polygamy were another source of trouble for those Arizona settlers who
lived in polygamy. First there was a struggle for political control. The
Mormon historian, Joseph Fish, stated in 1879, in referring to the county
election that year, "it was discovered that there had been a great amount
of fraud used and that Solomon Barth and party had stuffed the ballot
boxes of several precincts." [Joseph Fish, History of East Arizona Stake,
p. 24.]

The same historian continued, "After the ring succeeded in the
election of 1882, they commenced to agitate the subject of prosecuting the
polygamists and trying to run the Mormons out of the country. [Ibid, p. 26.]

The "Ring", as Barth and his associates were called, carried a
vicious campaign against the Mormons. Its organ, the Apache Chief, carried
the announcement in its issue of May 30, 1884 as follows: "How did
Missouri and Illinois get rid of the Mormons? By the use of the shot gun
and rope. Apache country can rid herself of them also. In a year from
now the Mormons will have the power here and the Gentiles had better leave.
Don't let them get it. The Mormon disease is a desperate one and the rope
and shotgun is the only cure....Hang a few of their polygamons leaders,
such as Jesse N. Smith, Udall, Romney, Hunt and others of their nature and
a stop will be put to it....No Mormon should be allowed to cast a vote.
He has no rights and should be allowed none. [Ibid, p. 205.]

Historian Fish summarized Mormon accusations against the "Ring" as
follows:

"They have stuffed the ballot boxes. They have thrown out our votes
without counting them. They have deprived our people of holding offices,
when elected, and of voting at the polls. They have raised our taxes
higher than assessed without our knowledge. They have squandered the public
funds. They have instigated the Indians and Mexicans to prey upon our
stock. They have called our most respected sisters prostitutes and our
children bastards. They have advocated lynch law and the use of the rope
and shot gun upon our best and most worthy citizens for no other cause than they were Mormons. [Ibid, p. 29.]

However, the Mormon leaders were determined to support Mormon settlement especially St. Johns. Apostle Woodruff said, "We must hold St. Johns at all costs, or it will become a second Carthage to our people in northern Arizona." [D. K. Udall, Arizona Pioneer, p. 74.] However, with this contention between Mormons and non-Mormons, particularly around St. Johns, many Mormon pioneers to Arizona passed by St. Johns and traveled to the Gila or Salt where prospects appeared better. Nevertheless the "call" for the pioneers to go to St. Johns resulted in many going there, so by 1885 the Mormon population there approached a thousand. The struggle between the two groups was so acute by 1884 that Bishop Udall wrote in desperation to President John Taylor as follows:

"If they [non-Mormons] can thus trample all law underfoot, we have but three ways to act: to let them take our possessions one by one, fight for our rights, maintain them or perish in the attempt, or our brethren will have to give us support from Utah, men who will remain here and fill their mission...a great deal of the land we had at the Meadows has been jumped, and the prospect is that unless we have help we will lose nearly if not quite half of what is known as the St. John's Purchase for many of the people here are almost discouraged, who only remain in obedience to the call made of them by the servants of God but the sentiments of the entire people are that we need help or we cannot remain here and live...If brethren will come here and redeem the Purchase from debt and enough come, so that we will be in a majority and all the land used so that outsiders cannot constantly come in and take our possessions from us. In writing this letter we have spoken plainly but in calmness, soberness and trust, for we feel that the time has come that something must be done, or trouble will increase and it will not be long before the saints will have to abandon St. Johns entirely. And when we abandon St. Johns the other settlements in this county will have to suffer. The saints who have remained are about one-fourth of the number that were called to come here, they are a good worthy people and are doing the best they can, but St. Johns has such a bad name that the immigration from Utah goes on to the Gila and Salt Rivers and we continually grow weaker instead of stronger...We have never felt in the past to complain of our lot, but now we feel that an overt act on the part of our people, may lead to serious results, in fact our lives are in danger.

As far as the county and our surroundings are concerned, with the exception of the wicked people who live here, we are well satisfied and contented and will in time be able to make comfortable homes." [Letter D. K. Udall and Counselors, St. Johns, March 27, 1884, to President John Taylor.]
This struggle between Mormons and non-Mormons in St. Johns indicates the seemingly irreconcilable animosity between the two groups. Part of it was the western differences between cattlemen and farmers on a western frontier, and part of it was the Arizona reflection of the nation wide animosity in the practice of polygamy. The Mormons, with their orderly agricultural settlements represented a phase of civilization coming to an American frontier, the cattlemen with their Texas cowboys represented an industry that sought to hold the range lands against what they assumed to be invasions by Basters." However, the peaceful settlement and sale of his lands by cattlemen Stenson to William Flake, Mormon, suggested that when men of good will come together, though divided by economic life and religion, conflict is not necessary.

St. Johns, despite conflict, remained the center of Mormon settlement on the upper waters of the Little Colorado. The area was formed into the St. Johns Stake the same year that President Taylor died, and the bishop of St. Johns, David K. Udall, became the first President of St. Johns Stake in 1887. That year there were 579 Mormons in the settlement of St. Johns.

As was the case of Snowflake, St. Johns grew. The Saint Johns Stake Academy was founded in 1888 with J. W. Brown as its first head. [Andrew Jenson, *Encyclopedia History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, p. 731.]

A publishing company, with D. K. Udall as president, secured a printing press from a non-Mormon in 1883 and started the *Era* with Niels P. Romney as editor in 1883. A flour mill was constructed in 1884. [Ibid, p. 733.] With improvement of their homes the primitive St. Johns of 1880 was transformed into a happy and prosperous center of Mormon settlement on the Little Colorado by 1890.
At the same time Saint Johns was first settled, other Mormons settled nearby. In November 1879 a party of Mormons settled in the Colorado Meadows some eight miles below Saint Johns and formed the settlement of Meadow on the southern part of the Barth Purchase. In December of the same year Joseph Walker and William James settled a mile below Saint Johns site and called their settlement Salene. In 1879 and the 1880's Mormon settlements were founded near Saint Johns, on the upper Little Colorado and its tributaries and Alpine just south of the Mogollon Rim but attached to the other settlements near Saint Johns.

Alpine, the southernmost of these settlements was settled by the Mormons in 1879 when Mormon settler W. B. Maxwell, Fred Hamblin and Abraham Winsor bought the claim of Anderson Bush, a non-Mormon who settled there in 1878. They also bought out the claims of four other non-Mormons. Bush Valley, where Alpine was located, was on the headwaters of the San Francisco River, a tributary of the Gila. Later in 1879 James C. Owen, Joseph Cluff and Sidney Woraley came and built their houses near the first comers. James Owens was chosen as the religious leader of the settlement during 1879. [St. Johns Stake: Alpine Ward History.]

While Alpine was just over the "rim," south of the headwaters of the Little Colorado, and was on the San Francisco River, a tributary of the Gila, it was the southern settlement of the Saint Johns Stake and thus considered a part of the Little Colorado settlements. It was in a dangerous position, being on the pathway of the raids of chief Victoria and his band of warlike Apaches. Several times the Indians raided the settlement, stole horses and cattle, but did not kill any of the Mormon colonists. Apostle Lyman wrote in September 1880 about Alpine as follows:

"The valley is narrow, is on the frontier exposed to Indians and surrounded with extensive forests of pine timber. It is the finest grass country I have ever seen, almost. There are quite a number of
families living in this valley, generally living in a partially built fort. The valley is, I presume, about 8,000 feet above sea level.... They [Mormon settlers] to [build a] fort securely and a townsite was chosen for them about one mile above the fort where they can safely build upon it." [M. F. Lyman, Sunset, Arizona, September 29, 1880, to Editor Deseret News," Deseret News, Vol. 29, pp. 604-5, October 20, 1880.

As a protection against the Indians, shortly after the raid the Mormon settlers moved their log cabins into a square near the creek. They enclosed a place about 8 rods square. As Erastus Snow and Brigham Young Jr. passed through the valley in fall of 1880 they selected a townsite for the settlers. September 26, 1880, Edward A. Noble was called from Saint Johns to preside over the settlement of Alpine. The townsite was surveyed in the spring of 1881 into blocks 24 rods square the streets being 6 rods wide. During the year the settlers moved their houses to the newly selected townsite. They built a log cabin 20 feet by 20 feet in 1882 for a schoolhouse and church. Alpine did not grow materially having only 103 population in 1900. [Saint Johns Stake: Alpine Ward.]

Nutrioso, just a few miles northwest of Alpine, had been settled early by a non-Mormon, Mr. Coulter. In the fall of 1879 William J. Flake bought the Coulter place in Nutrioso Valley for 300 head of cattle. Also, Mr. Jones, a non-Mormon, had a ranch on Nutrioso Creek which was subsequently sold in 1880 to Mormon settlers Hyrum and John Clark. Most of the new settlers came from Washington, Utah. The settlers raised a little grain in 1880. They also built six houses that year and surveyed a townsite into blocks 26 rods square and six rods wide. They erected their houses in the form of a fort as protection against the Indians. They brought their stock in corrals each night. John David Lee opened a small store in 1881 and the Brown Brothers that year brought a saw mill into the valley. They built their first school house and church in 1882. It remained a small settlement having only 29 families in 1894. [Saint Johns Stake: Nutrioso Ward.]
Andrew Jenson, Mormon Church Historian, described Nutrioso in 1894 as follows:

"Nutrioso is a fine village situated on Nutrioso Creek, a tributary of the Little Colorado river, in the south end of a beautiful and fertile little valley near the mountains which form the watershed between the Little Colorado and the Gila rivers. Nutrioso attracts the attention of the visitor at once by its fine frame dwellings, its large and commodious school house, and its Relief Society Hall, etc., all built of good native lumber. This place is surrounded by pine forests which cover the mountain slopes as far as the eye can reach in all directions....The farming land is also good, and though the altitude (about 7,000 feet) is so high, good grain has been raised these past years." ["Letter Andrew Jenson, Luna Valley, New Mexico, March 16, 1894, Deseret Weekly News, Vol. 48, April 14, 1894, p. 522.]

Luna Valley is twelve miles southeast of Alpine on the San Francisco River. It was named for the Luna Brothers, Mexicans, who settled there before the Mormons came. The first Mormon settlers were the two Swapp Brothers, and their families, Lorenzo Watson and his family, and John and James Earl and their families. They entered the valley February 28, 1883. They consulted with the prospectors who surrendered their claim for $350, and after the purchase the two prospectors left the valley. Bishop Noble of Alpine visited the settlement and selected Lorenzo Watson to preside over the Luna settlement. March 3, 1883, a townsit site was selected and laid out into blocks. Migration from Utah and other parts of Arizona soon increased the size of the settlement and the settlers were soon busy building houses, clearing and fencing their lands, digging ditches for irrigation and planting crops. Though they built a number of log houses on the townsit site, the reports of Indian outbreaks in 1883 caused them to build a long fort 28 x 28 feet in April 1883. That fall there were thirteen Mormon families in the town. In 1884 the first school house was built and the same year 26 houses were built on the townsit site, and there were 45 families in the settlement and a cooperative store in the valley. Their local historian wrote in 1884: "Heber [Luna] is situated in New Mexico. George C. Williams was one of the first settlers here. He was appointed
Bishop of the place late in 1883. The place is made up mostly of dissatisfied persons who have gone from other places. This element does not make a good settlement, but when the floating population leaves and the better element settles down we trust it will be a fine place. Bishop Williams has taken in a saw mill which will do much good towards building up the place which now has a population of 134 souls. "Saint Johns Stake: Luna Ward."

Andrew Jenson who visited Luna in 1894 wrote:

"Luna Valley, which contains twenty three families of the Saints, or 150 souls...is situated about twelve miles southeast of Alpine, on the same stream. The valley is very irregular but may be said to extend for a distance of about four and a half miles, with an average width of two miles...The Luna Valley reservoir is situated in the lower end of Bush Valley (Alpine) about eight miles northwest of the settlement. Pine and cedar forests abound in Luna Valley and vicinity. There are plenty of oak, juniper, cotton-wood and other kinds of wood in the vicinity. In order to make farms the heavy growth of timber must in many instances be cut down in low canady style." [Letter Andrew Jenson Luna Valley, New Mexico, March 16, 1894, in Deseret Weekly News, Vol. 48, p. 533, April 14, 1897.]

Concho or Erastus was settled in Concho Valley some fifteen miles west of Saint Johns. It was originally a Mexican town called Concho and settled entirely by Mexicans. In March 1879 B. H. Wilhelm, a Mormon settled among the Mexicans and by the close of 1879 there were thirty other Mormons there. Among these were James J. Brady and William Flake who purchased the main part of the valley in the spring of 1879. Flake paid 8 cows, 1 mule, 1 set of harness and a set of blacksmith tools for his part of the purchase. Several settlers from Brigham City on the Little Colorado joined the first Mormons and moved into the empty houses in the Mexican town of Concho. In 1880 some 30 to 40 settlers came. In 1880 it was organized as a ward with Sixtus E. Johnson bishop, and the next year a small log meeting house was constructed. In 1884 the local historian described conditions as follows:
"The little ward of Erastus has labored under many difficulties. Their town is laid off on quite high land, the soil of which is almost like putty when wet. This with a small population scattered over a townsitie large enough for three times as many makes it quite disagreeable. The grasshoppers have damaged the crops considerably. The Mexicans have also crowded in around them and bought a few of the brethren out, and this appears to hedge up the way for the place to increase much. The bishop, Sextus E. Johnson, is doing all he can to hold the place, but the people are poor and should have more help....Their number in September 1884 was 82." [Saint Johns Stake: Erastus Ward]

In 1888 the settlers began to construct a reservoir. Concho Creek, which the settlers used for water, comes from the Concho Springs three miles south of the town. By 1894 Andrew Jensen reported only eighteen Mormon families of 138 souls there.

The settlement of Greer was founded on the Little Colorado River about twelve miles southwest of Eagle in an opening in the canyon of the river called Lee Valley. The houses spread out some two miles up the canyon nearly to the top of the White or Mogollon Mountains. They were above timber line. Previous to Mormon settlement, there had been several non-Mormons there. In 1879 the Mormons, Peter Jens Jensen, Lehi Smithson, James Hale and Heber Dalton with Richard Lee, his sons and families of the settlers took claims along the Little Colorado in Lee's Valley. They traveled to Round Valley for church services until 1896. By that date they had a saw mill and built a schoolhouse of sawed logs. Greer remained a small settlement. [St. Johns Stake: Greer]

Round Valley is near the mountains about 35 miles south of Saint Johns. The altitude is about 6500 feet. There were several clusters of cabins in 1879 in Round Valley. Much of the valley before 1879 had been claimed by several non-Mormon ranchers. The first of these, Mr. William Milligan of Tennessee, was the first known white settlers locating a little fort in the valley in 1871. From 1871 to 1878 a number of other non-Mormons located in the valley. In 1879 Jens N. Skousen, Peter J. Christofferson,
and James L. Robertson, all Mormons from St. Joseph on the lower Little Colorado, visited Round Valley and purchased the claim of Tobin, a non-Mormon in February 1879. The purchased was adjoining to Springerville. The Mormon settlers brought their families to their purchase in March 1879 and began to erect homes. In the meantime William J. Flake bought out Mr. York's claim for 40 cows. Later Mr. Lake sold his new claim to John B. Atchison, a fellow Mormon for the original price. Atchison sold the claim to other Mormons including Mr. Lesner, Jens Skousen, and his son built the first house in Round Valley erected by the Mormons in the spring of 1879. This house was in the lower part of the valley near present Springerville. Soon in 1879 other settlers came, including Jacob Hamblin, famous Mormon Indian missionary and scout. Hamblin settled in Milligan's Fort four miles south of present Springerville. He was appointed to preside over the valley in the spring of 1879. John L. Eager, a Mormon, joined the settlement in the lower part of the valley.

Meanwhile the Mormon pioneers began to settle in the upper part of the valley also in March 1879. The first of these settlers were Americus Vespuccius, Greer, and Harrison Phelps who came in March. They settled about three miles west of the settlement in the lower valley which was named Eager in honor of John L. Eager. Late in 1879 Jacob Hamblin left the settlement, and Peter Christofferson was chosen to preside. When the valley was divided into two wards in 1882, the ward in the lower part of the valley was known as Omen and Amity in the upper valley. In 1886 they were united as Unison Ward. In 1888 the people of the upper and lower valley decided to form one settlement—a townsitc where both could settle. The present townsitc of Eager was surveyed and named for the three Eager brothers who were some of the first settlers in Round Valley. The people began to settle on the townsitc and in 1890 a good saw mill was built and its population that year was 134.
Ramah in New Mexico, some eighty miles northeast of Saint Johns, had two existences, first as an Indian mission in 1876 when Lorenzo Hatch and others called as Indian missionaries among the Zunas built a house six miles southwest of Ramah and began farming, naming the place Savoya. In 1877 they were joined by a number of southern converts who brought smallpox with them, and the winter of 1878-1879 thirteen deaths resulted. The southerners moved to the Little Colorado settlements—principally to St. Joseph.

Some years later, 1882, when the settlements of Sunset and Brigham City on the Little Colorado were abandoned, the first permanent settlers came as result of call from church leaders to settle in New Mexico. They lived first at Savoya in the missionaries' houses. The prospective settlers chose a site nearby and in the fall of 1882 built a half dozen houses on the newly surveyed townsite. They called their new settlement Navajo. There was much activity in 1883. They worked on a reservoir, they built a chapel—a log cabin 28 x 18 feet which was used for religious meetings, socials, and school. The local historian wrote in the fall of 1884 as follows: "We can say but little of Navajo ward, except that the saints there are located among the Navajo Indians and are doing much good as Indian missionaries. Bishop Tietjen takes great delight in his labors. The membership of the ward was 104 souls in 1884."

By the time of the death of President John Taylor in 1878 the Mormon settlements north of the Mogollon River, along the upper reaches of Silver Creek and the upper waters of the main Little Colorado had been fairly well settled by the Mormon pioneers. The original settlements on the Little Colorado under Brigham Young had all been evacuated except Joseph City and
Woodruff, the latter being held despite ten great floods which "washed out" nine dams and was only successful after the tenth dam had been securely constructed. The two most significant Mormon centers were Snowflake on Silver Creek and Saint Johns on the upper Little Colorado. There had been much moving of settlers on these two streams, these towns being settled not only from the unsuccessful and abandoned settlements but from pioneers called from Utah. Some settlements were established to support the two dominant settlements on the two forks. Land for farming, forests and range lands attracted Mormon pioneers to leave the safer confines of Snowflake and Saint Johns and seek the forests and range lands which offered opportunities for the venturesome and the thrills which marauding Indians promised. The inhabitants of the towns of the forks of the Little Colorado faced great difficulties—diseases such as malaria and small pox made heavy inroads, and the cemeteries grew rapidly. Floods then growth discouraged the pioneers and often forced the ready pioneers to seek greener pastures. The journey from Utah over terrible roads added to the difficulties of pioneering and the coming of unprepared settlers from the southern states and from Utah taxed the resources of the first settlers virtually to exhaustion. Frequently, their crops washed away by floods or withered by growth as well as the newcomers without supplies brought dire poverty to the pioneers.

In February 1880 L. H. Hatch wrote to President J. N. Smith a letter which President Smith forwarded to President John Taylor and the Twelve. It reads as follows:

"My Dear Bro. [illegible] You will excuse me when I state to you the facts as they truly are. [illegible] My sympathies are drawn out in behalf of the many poor and destitute of this Stake of Zion. [illegible] Many have consumed the last of their scanty supplies and are in want. How and in what manner to get aid for the old and last years emigration are all destitute. [illegible] They reach Brigham City and supplies have to be sent to aid them to reach that point."
Could the tithing be had it would be but a tithing of what is wanted to supply the wants of the people..

...O may the wisdom of heaven be made manifest that the cries of the poor ascent not in vain that seed grain may be had for the coming year...the ink freezes as I write before a fire where my back is quite warm."

Mormon Settlement on the Salt River

As the colonizers on the Little Colorado in 1876 were starting the four settlements there, Brigham Young was studying the report of Daniel Jones and the missionary-explorers who traveled through Arizona, New Mexico and northern Mexico in 1875-1876. Daniel Jones reached his home July 1, 1876, and within a month was called by Brigham Young to the President's office and asked if he would choose a family to go to the far south to found a settlement. Daniel Jones agreed. [Daniel Jones, Forty Years Among the Indians, p. 304.]

Ten families, the P. C. Merrills, the Dudley Merrills, the Thomas Merrills, the Adelbert Merrills, the Henry Rogers, the George Steels, the Thomas Biggs, the Ross J. Rogers, the Joseph McRae's and the Isaac Turleys joined Daniel Jones and traveled to St. George. Brigham Young bade farewell to the settlers at Santa Clara where he gave his last instructions. He told them to settle where they were impressed to colonize but eventually they were to go to Mexico. [Ibid, p. 308.] However, they were to use their judgment as to the selection of a place to settle.

The company left St. George January 17, 1877. They followed the Virgin River to the Colorado, crossing that river at Stone's Ferry.

J. A. McRae, one of the settlers, described the journey as follows:

"...Leaving the Colorado, we traveled until we reached the People's Valley, situated in the northeastern part of Arizona. Here we made a short stay to rent the teams and buy some grain and provisions. After leaving here we made no more delay until we reached a point on the Salt River about 22 miles above Phoenix that city being where we had our first
view of the Salt River Valley. We pitched our tents on the 5th of March and began work on the water ditch on the 6th." 


The members of the Jones party were too exhausted to go farther when they reached the Salt River. As the country seemed inviting, the pioneers met and voted to settle on the Salt River. Daniel Jones Forty Years Among the Indians, p. 310. The whole small party remained. The first six months the affairs of the small colony were critical. First the summer heat in the "valley of the sun" took its toll on the men who came from the temperate climate of the north. Mr. McRae wrote: "As summer advanced the heat became intense. I have often saturated my clothing with water before starting to hoe a row of corn 40 rods long and before reaching the end my clothes would be entirely dry. In spite of this we raised that year an abundance of corn, sugar cane and melons and plenty of vegetables. Moonlight bathing parties could be seen nearly every night, yet in spite of the extreme heat the health of the people was excellent."

Statement J. A. McRae in St. David Ward.

During the first six months of the new settlement called Ft. Utah, Jonesville, and finally Lehi, a sharp difference of opinion divided the small group of settlers in two factions. The leader, Daniel Jones, was partly responsible for the friction. He loved to do missionary work among the Indians on the Salt River, and they were most responsive to his preaching. In fact they loved their Mormon brothers so much that they wanted to come to Lehi and live with the settlers and were encouraged by missionary Jones to come. He apparently was unaware of the fastidiousness of the Mormon settlers who objected their families being so closely associated with "dirty Indians." The result of this division was that over half of the small contingent of settlers left to found St. David in August 1877.
The remaining settlers at Lehi had their difficulties. In November 1877 Daniel Jones wrote: "We have planted quite a variety of stuff at various times. The season has been the dryest known since the settling of Arizona by the whites....This season the following crops have partially failed, owing to the lack of rain, as they will not do well in this climate by irrigation alone; corn, beans, peas, potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes."


Other settlers joined the small company at Lehi and David Kimball reported in 1880 that Jonesville had a population of 100 souls and 4000 acres of "good bottom land." Letter David Kimball to Editor Deseret News, Jonesville, Jan. 10, 1880, in Deseret News, Vol. 27, p. 826., Jan. 28, 1880.

As well as grain the settlers of Lehi raised fruit, particularly grapes. An Arizona newspaper, the Final Drill, in 1881 contained the following: "Deacon Daniel W. Jones of Jonesville, the first Mormon settlement of Salt River, has brought a wagon load of delicious grapes into Pinal. They were raised on his own ranch three miles from Mesa City.... There are now twenty families in Lehi or Jonesville all farming.... There are already over 200 acres of fine land under grape cultivation on the Mormon settlements on Salt River [Lehi and Mesa]. Pinal is now regularly supplied with vegetables, fruit and hay from these settlements."

Extract from paper Final Drill, published in Deseret News, August 15, 1881.

From its beginning Jonesville grew but slowly. School was started in 1878 by Mrs. Francelle E. Robson and in November 1880 Henry Rogers surveyed six blocks for a townsite. The blocks were 26 rods square and the streets four rods wide. [Maricopa Stake Wards: Lehi.]
The settlers of Lehi surveyed eight blocks of ten acres each, each family was allotted one hundred and sixty acres nearly for farming. They built an adobe wall fifty by seventy-five feet and seven feet high as a fort for protection against the Indians. They built their adobe houses within the fort walls. [Our Mesa, p. 12]

In 1831 H. C. Rogers succeeded Daniel Jones as the religious leader. Lehi was soon overshadowed by its neighbor, Mesa.

From before the beginning of Lehi the Pima and Maricopa Indians were known to the Mormons. The members of the Mormon Battalion visited them in 1846 and a considerable number were baptized by J. L. Stewart and other Mormon missionaries in 1877. There was a village of these Indians near Tempe when Jones settled Lehi in 1877. He was given a special appointment to preach to the Indians, and so many Indians were converted that they were organized into the Papago Ward in 1884. This ward grew under Mormon leadership so that in 1894 there were five hundred and ninety Indians and twenty-six whites there. [Maricopa Stake: Papago Ward]

The valley of the Salt River, broader and longer than any other valley in Arizona, was soon to attract more settlers. Here broad lands and more plentiful water attracted Mormons from the north. The Little Colorado had a cold climate, lands were too limited in amount, dams washed out with disheartening regularity so newcomers avoided the north and came over the Mogollon River to the more fertile areas of the south. To people from the cold north the warmer climate of the "Valley of the Sun" was particularly attractive. Lehi settlers wrote letters to the Deseret News and to friends, giving glamorous descriptions of their broad valley. The spirit of adventure and the "call" by Mormon leaders brought a number of new settlers to this Mormon southern frontier.
As early as March 1877 Henry Rogers wrote from Lehi to his mother in Provo as follows: "The weather is very warm...but the heat is relieved by a nice western breeze that comes up every morning about 8 o'clock. There is never any snow here nor even any frost that amounts to anything...The river is four times as large as the Provo River. This was written in March. Letter Henry Rogers, Salt River, March 26, 1877, to his mother in Provo. Printed in Millenial Star, Vol. 39., p. 303.

Mesa, the most populous Mormon settlement in Arizona was colonized in 1878 by Mormon pioneers who came from the Bear Lake area of Idaho and from around Salt Lake. The first man, apparently, who conceived the idea of the new settlement, was Francis M. Pomeray who lived in Paris, Idaho. One wet muddy day in April 1877 he received a letter from Henry C. Rogers describing the rich fertile soil and the abundant water of the Salt River Valley which Mr. Rogers called the Valley of the Sun. To Francis Pomeray, suffering with rheumatism, this pleasant picture of a warm and fertile land brought quick response. Our Mesa, p. 30. Also President Young wanted people to go and settle on the Salt. Pomeray sought his neighbors. Converting his son, John, one of his close friends, George W. Sirrine and Sirrine'S two sons who lived in nearby Dingle and Sirrine'S father-in-law, Charles Crisman. The small party left Bear Lake September 14, 1877 receiving other pioneers as they journeyed southward. The first families to leave Bear Lake were Francis M. Pomeray with sixteen children, John H. Pomeray with his children, George W. Sirrine with nine children and Warren Sirrine with two. In Utah Charles Crisman and his family of sixteen, William M. Newell and two, Theodore Sirrine and four children, Job Henry Smith and two, and William Schwaz with four. The unmarried members were Elijah Pomeray, Parley P. Sirrine, Harve Blair, Chris Nelson, and Heber Clifton. Jesse Hobson, leaving his family behind,
joined the party. Charles I. Robson joined the party in Panguitch. The Mesa company numbered eighty three including fifty six children. They traveled in twenty five wagons drawn by oxen, horses and mules. They brought two hundred and seventy cattle, mostly milk cows. They sold their homes and possessions to secure supplies, wagons, and cattle. This meant that the loss of their wagons and stock would bring disaster. But the call of the unknown, the promise of fertile farm lands, and promise of a fine climate—all this lured these pioneers to Arizona. [Ibid, p. 33.]

From Charles Crismon's account they left Salt Lake City in October 1877 and reached the Salt River Valley February 5, 1878, traveling by way of the Sevier Valley, Kanab, crossing the Colorado River at Lee's Ferry, past Moenkopi, to the Little Colorado over the Mogollon mountains up by Beaver Dams and over to Camp Verde, over to the Prescott Road, down Black Canyon to Ellett southeasterly across Cave Creek northeast of Phoenix crossing the Salt River at Hayden's Ferry to site of Tempe. [Maricopa Stake Ward: Mesa.]

At Lehi the newcomers were cordially received by Daniel Jones and his small settlement, and the pioneers were invited to become a part of the Lehi settlement. However, the leaders of the new settlement felt the small colony would be overcrowded. They looked further up the valley and were attracted by the mesas south of the Jones settlement where many thousands of acres of fertile land attracted them. Could they bring water up on the high mesas? Upstream from the Lehi or Utah ditch they found an old Indian canal which they named the Montezuma Canal and they went to work clearing the old canal, rebuilding where necessary. [Our Mesa, pp. 42-3.] Having selected their land and irrigation system, the leaders staked out their townsites and arranged for land and water near Lehi to plant their crops and live till their monumental Montezuma canal could be prepared to bring
water to the new townsite of Mesa. These four men, Charles I. Robson, Charles Crismon, George W. Sirrine, and Francis M. Pomeray, having made these explorations and choice of site for settlement, returned to the main party near Camp Verde. These four men led the main company to Hayden's Ferry to the newly selected site, the first comers reaching the townsite January 26, 1878. By October 1878 the new settlers brought water to the townsite and began building houses on their new location. By the end of November 1878 all the settlers had moved to the townsite. Temporarily first Jesse N. Perkins was appointed by the visiting Apostle Erastus Snow to take charge of the settlement. He remained briefly, and then Henry C. Rogers and George W. Sirrine were in charge. In 1879 another company of ten families with fourteen wagons came to the new settlement from Montpelier in the Bear Lake Valley. After the first settlers, new pioneers arrived later in groups as did the company of 1878 or singly. January 19, 1880, a large company arrived in Mesa from Lewiston and Richmond in Utah's Cache Valley. In 1882 Apostles Erastus Snow and Moses Thatcher visited Mesa and December 10, 1882, they organized the Maricopa Stake with Alexander F. Macdonald of St. George as president. Lehi and Mesa were organized as wards with Thomas E. Jones and Elijah Pomeray as bishops. 

Two years before he was chosen as president of the stake, A. F. Macdonald came to Mesa as a settler. To President Taylor from Mesa he wrote:

"The Saints at Mesa City and Jonesville have received us kindly and the locations appear to have been well made, having an ample supply of water for the families now located here, and an abundance of land and water for more. The people are busy putting in crops and a good season is anticipated though it keeps quite cold especially at night..."

The Arizona Gazette September 28, 1893 described Mesa as follows:

"Today Mesa is a neat little town of 1000 inhabitants in the midst of a thickly settled agricultural community. The townsit embraces a square mile. This area is a versatile garden. Nearly every home has about it a few hundred fruit trees and an acre or so of grape vines. Flowers and vines embower every cottage, while underfoot the evergreen alfalfa contributes a pleasing carpet.

The streets are laid off regularly. They are exceptionally wide, bordered by lines of mulberry and cottonwood trees. Small irrigation ditches fringe either side. On Main Street are several pretentious buildings, the Cooperative Store being the most important building. Business industries are fairly represented, there being half a dozen general merchandise stores and a sprinkling of stables, blacksmith shops, drug stores, butcher shops, millinery shops, restaurants, etc. There are two hotels to welcome the wayfarer.

Pride is being taken in the local schools. The main building has been but lately occupied. It is a brick structure set up well from the ground and presenting a very neat appearance. Its cost has been about $18,000.... There are five rooms, each well filled with the rising generation, the total enrollment being about 170. An Academy is also maintained by the Latter-day Saints with about 60 in attendance. On the western edge of the townsite is another excellent school building erected by the resident of the Alma district at a cost of $17,000. Here is an attendance of 100. Lehi district, a short distance to the north, has an enrollment of 100 also. Several other schools in the neighborhood have also good quotas of pupils and provide ample education facilities, conveniently located.... A newspaper has lately gotten underway, the Mesa Weekly Free Press, and well serves the interests of its constituency."

In 1895 the railroad came to Mesa.

The construction of the Mesa Canal proved to be a great undertaking. Though they utilized the old Indian Montezuma canal, much labor and expense tried the cooperative qualities of the settlers. The work started February 17, 1878. Nine months later the first water reached Mesa. But it took years before the canal was perfected and enlarged to carry the necessary water. The work force never exceeded eighteen. Small wooden scrapers were used. Through the sand they excavated rapidly, but the stoney areas were almost impossible. Then they followed the Montezuma canal. But the banks of the canal often slid away, and these frequent breaks in the canal were heart breaking. The cost of the canal in labor was $48,000. The canal lasted until 1891 when a large canal was constructed. [Our Mesa.]"
Representing the town Theodore Sirrine went to the land office in Korensee and filed on a section of land which he deeded as a townsite to the people of Mesa. As the settlers constructed their canal, they erected houses on their new townsite. The town lots were sold for fifty dollars each. William Newell was one of the first to move his family to the townsite. Charles Mallory built the first adobe house.

In the 1880's there was considerable economic activity in and around Mesa. In 1884 the Zenas Cooperative Mercantile and Manufacturing Institution was formed. This was a two-storied building; the upper floor used as a social hall. \[ibid, p. 63\]

In 1886 the Labaron store and the mets buildings were erected. Along Main Street was the Stage Building. Stagecoaches went from Mesa to Phoenix, to Ft. McDowell, to the Silver King Mine, to Goldfield and Florence. Concord Coaches were used. The George W. Sirrine House was the first hotel—a two story building, with thirty two rooms. It cost eleven thousand dollars to construct.

Thus within ten years from the founding of Mesa by hardy pioneers, the new town had passed from the frontier stages of adobe buildings to a cultural community with churches, schools, and an academy. They depended, however, upon agriculture and soon the fertile valley of the Salt provided broad lands for ready farmers.

While most of the Mormon settlers built their houses on such townsites as Lehi and Mesa, there were others who were scattered, building on their farms some distance from these settlements. Such was the case of Alma, west of Mesa. The first settlers in this area were four families from Lewiston, in Cache Valley. They were the families of Henry Standage, Hyrum Pugh, Chauncsey F. Rogers, and William Standage. They came to Mesa in December 1880, and the next month [January 1881] they moved to the
site of their homes [now Alma Ward]. They constructed a ditch from the Mesa Canal to water their townsite and farm lands. Soon other settlers joined them in 1831 and they all planted crops and trees. In the beginning they held religious services in Mesa. They were organized as a ward in 1835 with O. M. Stewart as bishop. [Mesa Stake Wards: Alma]. By 1835 there were 177 Mormons in Alma. [Maricopa Stake Quarterly Reports].

The bitter feelings between Daniel Jones and Phileman Merrill and the others over Jones' friendly and preferential treatment of the Indians in Lehi and the anxiety of Brigham Young to settle closer to Mexico, led to a division of the settlers in Lehi, part of them leaving the settlement to found St. David on the San Pedro River in southern Arizona. Brigham Young suggested the division of Lehi and the formation of a new settlement.


This was on August 27, 1877. This and settlement was incredible--it was a story of courage and endurance almost beyond description. The trail along the San Pedro was not new to Philemon Merrill--as a lieutenant in the Mormon Battalion, he had traveled that trail twenty nine years before. [Jack Carey, St. David on the San Pedro, Arizona Highways, August 1956, p. 10.]

Mr. McRae, one of the original settlers on the San Pedro, described the journey as follows:

"Early in August [27] 1877 the company divided, part remaining at the Salt River camp and part going farther south. By direction of the authorities of the Church those going south were to settle on the San Domingo (San Simon) the headwaters of the Gila or most likely the San Pedro. We left camp with enough provisions to last two days, to go to a wild country where nothing could be procured but what we raised. But God in His mercy raised up a friend in need. Bro. A. O. Williams, who had been in the employ of a Mr. Hayden at Tempe, loaned us his wages, which amounted to a considerable sum. With this money we procured provisions and were now ready to begin our journey southward. When we reached Tucson we first heard news of the death of our Prophet and Seer, President Brigham Young."
The whole company was thrown into consternation. We felt for a while that our leader was lost, but we knew that a mighty power was at the helm and felt to trust in the faith and arm of God. At Tucson we became acquainted with Mr. Thomas Gardener, who owned a saw mill in the Santa Rita mountains. He offered employment in his mill for men and teams. We seized this opportunity and worked long enough to get provisions sufficient to last us until we could raise a crop." [McRae Narrativé, Southern Arizona Stake; St. David.]

In a letter to the Deseret News [date] Vol. 26, p. 681, Mr. McRae wrote:

"From our camp in the mountains [Santa Rita] we started for the San Pedro Valley, distant about 45 miles reaching the San Pedro River November 29, 1877. We soon decided where to break ground on the west side of the river. A swamp nearby would by draining give sufficient water for our present needs. Axes, shovels, plows, etc., were brought out and soon we had enough ground cleared to plant a small acreage of grain and garden vegetables which were prolific in their yield. The same year [1877] we built a stone fort to protect us from any chance band of Indians and two of our company entered some land nearby."

They did not know, probably, that their new settlement was astride the Apache trail to Mexico. James H. Martineau, in the 1830's, wrote the early history of St. David--named for David Palton, killed by a non-Mormon mob in Missouri. Mr. Martineau wrote as follows:

"St. David, Cochise Co., Arizona, was the first settlement made in that part of Arizona which afterwards was organized into the St. Joseph Stake of Zion. . . . Philemon C. Merrill led off the colony which came on to the San Pedro. . . . Philemon C. Merrill [while party working in San Rita mountains] made several exploring trips in order to find a suitable location to build a settlement. These explorations led to the selection of the present St. David for a settlement and finally the company moved over from Santa Rita and located a stone fort which was built about two hundred yards east of the San Pedro River. This fort was built agreeable to instructions received from President Brigham Young, in order that the settlers might protect themselves against the Indians. . . . During the winter of 1877-78 they plowed and sowed 75 acres of land with wheat and barley on the west side of the San Pedro River, irrigating their land from springs on that side of the river. They raised a pretty good crop in 1878. . . . In 1878 we had one of the heaviest rainy seasons ever experienced. . . . Hay could be cut a stone's throw from our door. Our houses were built after the Mexican or Aztec fashion; flat roofs, low ceilings and mother earth for the floor. Such a mode of living could not prove healthful and as a consequence we all, without exception, were prostrated with ague and fever. At times there were not enough well ones to wait upon the sick. . . . It was while we were in this sad plight that Apostle Erastus Snow and company visited us. When he drove up, a sad sight met his eyes. None were able to greet him and when he held a meeting many had to be carried on their beds.
to hear him. Notwithstanding these conditions, he blessed the place and prophesied that the day would come when the San Pedro Valley would be settled from one end to another and that we had experienced the worst of our sickness. When he left all felt much better in body and spirit.

About three months after our arrival in the San Pedro Valley, Mr. Ed Shefflin came through the country and discovered one of the mines which afterwards made the town of Tombstone famous. Shortly after this discovery, capital was invested, and the flourishing town of Tombstone sprang up. The Tombstone Mill and Mining Company was organized and decided to build a stamp mill on the San Pedro River utilizing that stream for its motive power. A contract was made with the people of St. David to build the dam and ditch. After the completion of this work we again located at the stone fort.

Some time later John Campbell, who had joined the church in Texas, moved to the little settlement and proposed to build a saw mill in the Huachuca Mountains. The mill was purchased and much lumber was shipped to Tombstone, a distance of about 40 miles. After working there for some time we moved back to the settlement and began to cultivate our land again.

During the year 1879 the San Pedro Railroad reached Tucson and gave some employment to teams, freighting to several points. The road was soon pushed to completion and a lively trade was opened up with the surrounding country. Wagon trains were constantly traveling between Tombstone and the town of Benson. The latter was a town which sprang up along the line of the railway. Money became plentiful. High prices prevailing. Little attention was paid to the cultivation of the soil; wood hauling and freighting seemed to be the main employment.

At this time the school was being held in the old fort which was also used as a meeting house and place of entertainment. Fever and ague had become almost unknown. But the little fort was now too small for the people...and a small town soon sprang into existence...It became necessary for us to build a larger house for public use, and a large adobe structure was erected. Here it became necessary for us to employ two teachers and we maintained an excellent school.

In the year 1880 the railroad being built from Benson to Nogales on the Mexican line, much of the freighting by team was done away with and the people had to turn to the soil again. Alfalfa hay was the main crop. Grass grew in great abundance in the country and vast herds of cattle were driven in to pasture. The mesquite tree also afforded good feed during the spring and early summer, and the heavy rains during the months of July, August and September produced an abundance of grass." Martineau, J.H., Historical narrative in Phoenix Stake: St. David.

"We think from the report we received from Bro. Erastus Snow, that there need not be so much sickness in your settlement, if you take the advice given by him to settle on higher land; as we might infer from his statement that the disease was engendered through settling too near the marshy land, which of course, arose from young being unacquainted with the character of the locality in which you settled. There are numbers of our brethren who are intending to locate in Arizona, and we would much regret
to have your settlement broken up, and we hope some good saints will find it convenient to settle with you, to strengthen your hands in that portion of the territory; as we certainly, before long, expect to extend our settlements across the border into Old Mexico. And we presume that you can be made a very desirable location on the road where the saints can find friends and recuperate." [Letter John Taylor to P. C. Merrill, John Taylor Letter Book No. 16, January 9, 1879]

January 1, 1878, P. C. Merrill wrote to President John Taylor from St. David as follows: "...the weather is fine. Since our arrival there has been three gentle rains making the land in good condition for seeding. We shall sow about 20 acres of wheat and about 10 of barley....We located a dam for an irrigation ditch about 2 1/2 miles above our townsite, the ditch will water about a thousand acres of good tillable land. We shall build the dam 14 feet high to get a mill site. On the west side of the river where we are now camped, there are several large springs." [Letter P. C. Merrill, Tres Alamos, P. O. close to St. David January 1, 1878, to Pres. John Taylor.]

March 23, 1878 P. C. Merrill reported total number in St. David was 44. He continued..."If you should think it wisdom to call anymore to come to this country some good macaneaks such as a good shoe maker and a cabinet maker as there is none with us and we are in need of such men. All is quiet as far as the Lamanites are concerned."


"We feel impressed to remind you of the necessity of great caution in all your movements. Do not recklessly expose yourselves where you anticipate danger; keep the company well together when a location for settlement is chosen, and then if you apprehend danger keep a guard out day and night, endeavor to increase your numbers with good Latter-day Saints, and above all live near unto the Lord....Let the company be united together in heart, feeling and action and all will be well with you." [Letter John Taylor to P. C. Merrill, Tucson Arizona, John Taylor Letter Book No. 15, October 22, 1877.]

St. David grew slowly; only 13 families or 77 members were in that settlement in May 1880. The Deseret News listed fifty families in St. David in September 1885. The news continued: "The canal has now been finished to the town and the next, quite a transformation in the appearance
of the gardens is likely to be the result. Indeed since the visit of President Taylor to that part last winter, at which time he chided the people for not setting out more trees and striving harder to beautify their homes there has been a great improvement. Hundreds of shade and fruit trees have been planted and more attention paid to gardening, and the place begins to assume quite a different appearance." [Deseret News, September 25, 1880, p. 3]

Thus by 1885 the frontier colony of St. David began to assume condition of civilization. Even as early as 1883 David P. Kimball wrote from St. David: "St. David, the frontier settlement with its lingering for the past five years, will no doubt take the lead and be a place of prominence. We have already, with the assistance of Elder A. F. Macdonald, surveyed two quarter sections of land into lots, blocks, and streets, located on the east side of the San Pedro River, on an elevated piece of bench land that overlooks the surrounding country, also incorporated the St. David Irrigation Company with 400 shares, par value $50 each. This canal will be taken out six miles up the river, and south from our townsite and when completed will cover the best part of one township laying on the east side of the river." [Letter D. P. Kimball, St. David, March 3, 1883, in Deseret News, Vol. 32, p. 131]

St. David grew spiritually as well as materially. In 1883 the settlements on the San Pedro and the Gila were organized into the St. Joseph Stake—named for Joseph Smith. Christopher Layton was chosen President and David P. Kimball and James H. Martineau as counselors. [Letter John Taylor to George Q. Cannon February 9, 1883 in John Taylor Letter Book Vol. 20] Layton began at once to visit and organize the wards in the new stake. Furthermore, he was a man of financial standing and understanding. He not only fostered individual economic industry, but he promoted cooperation
and the economic life of the towns of southern Arizona improved considerably. In May 1883 D. P. Kimball wrote: "St. David is coming out. Pres. C. Layton has erected a commodious frame building finished in good style. Elder M. H. Merrill has a new adobe house, Calvin Bingham, Bros. Jones and others are gathering materials preparatory to constructing comfortable houses. The west field of 600 or 800 acres of land, fenced and partially under cultivation...Our plans are about ready to fence the north field of 2350 acres of choice land. Our canals, two in number, when completed will cover 7000 acres of land which is very new, all filed on, and held for the purpose of dividing into small farms of 40 acres each. ...Our school has an average attendance of 70 or 80 scholars...Dr. Grosbeek has a drug and mercantile house, also Mr. L. B. Campbell keeps assorted goods...We want a shoemaker and two good carpenters, who when not working at their trade can milk cows, plant and reap and make themselves generally useful."


Mother nature also came to the aid of the settlers on the San Pedro. An earthquake changed the surface around St. David. The swamp disappeared and the settlers found adequate artesian wells. After that they no longer suffered from diseases contacted in swamp lands. [John Carey, "St. David on the San Pedro," Arizona Highways, August 1956, p. 11.]

The Mormons founded another settlement, smaller than St. David, above St. David or south on the San Pedro River. Two non-Mormons, Cabell and Mason, occupied the site and constructed a ditch for irrigation. In 1882 they sold the site and water to Henry J. Horne and Jonathan Hill, Mormons. These two became the first permanent settlers. A small stockade house went with the purchase. Shortly they were joined by other Mormon families. By June 1883 they numbered about six families and were organized into a ward and the settlement called Macdonald after President A. F. Macdonald.
As the four settlements on the Little Colorado established by Brigham Young declined or disappeared and as difficulties with Indians and cattle thieves on the upper waters of Silver Creek and fear of prosecution for polygamy made these areas uninviting or untenable, these settlers, looking for "greener pastures", turned to the upper waters of the Gila. Exploring Mormons gave favorable reports of the new "Eldorado." Trying to attract new settlers, Mr. Teeples who had come to the Gila River Valley just a few months before wrote: "We are situated in the lower or big Gila Valley; the valley is from 50 to 60 miles in length and from six to ten miles in width. The river runs the whole length of the valley from the southeast to the northwest. There is plenty of good rich land and plenty of water for irrigation...This is a good country, but of course there are some drawbacks; timber and lumber are scarce, but firewood is plentiful. We can raise two crops per year of almost everything. The climate is pretty warm but we do not perceive that it is any warmer now than it was two months ago; we have a nice cool breeze every day." ["Letter W. R. Teeples, Smithville, Pima Co., Arizona, August 18, 1879, to Editor Deseret News." Deseret News, September 3, 1879, Vol. 27, p. 493.]

This attractive description lured Mormon settlers to the Gila River region, and they settled somewhat differently than they did in northern Arizona. Instead of settling compactly as they did in Snowflake where the land was most limited and thus the farms small; in the Gila region land seemed unlimited and so the settlers roamed through the valley selecting large farms which could be irrigated with plentiful water. Then too it was easy to purchase the farm lands for as Mr. Teeples wrote in November 1879 as follows: "This part of the country is about one hundred years behind the times. Some of the Mexicans plow with forked sticks and haul their grain on rawhides; cut their grain with sickles and thresh it by
tramping with horses or cattle, and cut their hay with hoes. The military
posts are now being supplied with from four to six hundred tons each,
and it is being cut with hoes. The white population is composed mostly
of men without families who are not content to stay anywhere, and they
are always ready to sell out, so there are plenty of chances to buy good
farms and ranches cheap that are already improved and plenty of chances
to take up new farms by taking water out of the river....All is peace and
quietness [this was not to last long]. There has been no trouble with the
Indians. There has not been an Indian at our camp since we came here."
WM. R. Teeple, Smithville, November 9, 1879, to Editor Deseret News,"
in Deseret News, Vol. 27, p. 699, December 3, 1879.]

To the Mormons in northern Arizona harassed by Indians, outlaws,
floods and limited farms, this optimistic description was most enticing.

The first party to explore the Gila with expectation of settling along
its banks had gathered at Cooley's Ranch on the Show Low Creek in 1878.
They traveled to the Gila but only W. R. Teeple of the group was favorably
impressed. That winter Hyrum Weech persuaded Teeple to go with him to
the Gila. This exploring expedition was more successful. Mesquite marshes
and swamp impeded their progress. They found some cleared land and a few
small ranches east from Fort Thomas. They found clearings where the
mesquite was replaced with grasses. They even found an irrigation ditch
and canal. The land north of the river was about a mile wide. On the
south the area was wide. [Williams, O. A., Settlement and Growth of the
Gila Valley in Graham County as a Mormon colony, pp. 6-10.]

Returning to Cooley's ranch and well pleased with prospects on the
Gila, the explorers made their report to President Jesse N. Smith who
organized the party, and March 20, 1879, twenty five people with wagons,
cattle and other stock left Show Low for their new homes. [Ibid, p. 11.]
Joseph K. Rogers was in charge of the expedition. On April 8, 1879, the settlers reached the site selected by the explorers. [St. Joseph Stake Wards: Pima.]

On April 9 the new settlers voted to lay off a city of 16 blocks with 4 lots in each block, each lot containing 1 3/4 acres with streets eight rods wide with side walks one rod wide. They then surveyed their city plot. One block was reserved for a city square or park. They drew lots for their building lots. April 27, 1879, they dedicated their "land to the Lord for the benefit of the Saints." These pioneers numbered twenty-eight persons made up of Joseph K. Rogers and family, William R. Teeples and family, James Easton Haws and family, William Thompson and family, John and Edgar Sessions (single), Henry D. Dall (whose family was in Utah), and Hyrum Weech (family in Utah), and Benjamin Pierce. [Ibid.] Several other families joined them during 1879. Some settlers built their homes on the townsite, some on their farms. In December 1879 the pioneers built a log school house, 20 x 16 feet. The first school was held in the home of William R. Teeples and Mrs. Harriet B. Teeples was the first teacher. [Ibid.]

In 1880 there were thirty-six families in the new settlement and in 1882 there were 72 families or 416 persons. [Ibid.] However, the increase in population does not indicate the people in the Gila Valley. Many came to Pina, looked over the valley and located elsewhere in the valley. They rented land outside their own to raise crops until their canal was constructed. In December 1879 they began to construct the Smithville or Pima canal. Wooden V shaped scrapers with iron points made large furrows which were widened into a canal. [Williams, op. cit. p. 12.] As the people worked on their canal they were unable to build houses but lived in wagon boxes, which were adequate for summer but in the fall of 1879 the pioneers erected log houses of cottonwood logs. [Ibid., p. 13.]
The settlers first named their town Smithville, in honor of President Jesse N. Smith, but later changed it to Pima. As the land around Pima was taken settlement spread and the early "30's" saw small settlements founded along the Gila. Northwest of Pima, on the south bank of the Gila, Joseph Mathews and his son David and Wm. R. Waddell came from Round Valley, Arizona, purchased one third interest in the Nevada ditch and claim to one hundred and sixty acres of land from Mrs. Patterson, and started a new settlement which was first called Mathewsville and later Glenbar. [St. Joseph Stake: Mathews.] This was early in December 1880. Several weeks later they were joined by John S. Waddell. These settlers lived in wagons during the winter of 1880-1881. In 1881 they were joined by several other Mathews families, the newcomers bought another third interest in the Nevada ditch; they raised some corn that year. In 1881 David Mathews built a stockade house and an adobe building. At first the Mormon settlers were troubled by cowboys, rustlers and Mexicans who stole their cattle. Fear of Indians led the settlers in 1881 to move to Pima for a short time. As the people of Pima bought the remaining third of the Nevada ditch, the Mormon settlers now controlled the entire ditch. The settlers of the two towns then enlarged the ditch from four to eight feet. The people spent almost the whole year working on the canal. By 1885, when Daniel W. Holliday was chosen leader of the settlement, the people were raising good crops. [Ibid.] The settlers of Mathewsville lived on their farms as the Homestead Act compelled them to live upon their land in order to secure title.

A second settlement was founded in 1880. It was known as Graham and was pioneered by settlers from Brigham City on the Little Colorado. The people of Brigham City were discouraged because of crop failures and they sent explorers northward to the San Juan country and sent George Lake,
Andrew Anderson and George Skinner to the Gila to seek more satisfactory lands. This party of three traveled by a wagon drawn by four horses and arrived in Pima by end of November 1880. They found a desirable region on the north bank of the Gila [Ibid.] These explorers purchased the Rustlers ranch of four quarter sections and a small canal for eighteen hundred dollars payable in cows at thirty five dollars each. [Williams, op. cit., p. 14.] The ditch was three miles long. George Lake remained on the purchase while Anderson and Skinner returned to Brigham City to report the purchase. The people of Brigham City accepted the purchase, and in January 1881 the prospective settlers including Anderson and Skinner and their families accompanied by Mose Curtis and William Hawkins and their families and a number of single men started for the new settlement. They took with them seed grain, farming implements, a number of cows, a flock of sheep. They carried their goods in wagons drawn by six ox teams. They left Brigham City the end of 1880 and reached the Gila and settled on the site selected by the explorers. The people located in a body using the houses left to them by the rustlers. They began to plow at once and raised a fine crop of wheat, barley and corn in 1881. They lived the first years as a United Order. They raised eleven hundred bushels of wheat the first year. They lived in sheds or in tents or wagons the first year except Andrew Anderson who built the first stockade house. The population increased slowly. In 1883 Jorgen Jorgensen was selected to preside over the Graham settlement which was a branch of the Smithville ward. [St. Joseph Stake: Graham.] In 1884 the people built a unique structure known as the Factory House since it was built of cloth stretched around mesquite poles and covered with a dirt roof. This building was used for school and church until a permanent building could be built. The townsite was surveyed into blocks 28 rods square with streets six rods wide. School began in the summer of
1884 with John Waddell as teacher. The session lasted only one month.

One settlement, Curtis or Eden, was founded on the Gila in 1881. Early that year Moses M. Curtis came to the Gila Valley with a group of settlers from Brigham City. He explored the area and determined to settle on the north side of the Gila downstream from Pima. He purchased a squatter's claim from cowboys for two hundred and fifty dollars. It was practically unimproved. In July 1881 he moved his family near the townsite. In March 1881 William R. Hawkins located about one half mile east of Curtis. Curtis grew very slowly. Moses Curtis and Hawkins rented a farm, called the Humphrey farm, eight miles above the site of Eden and Curtis and his boys worked the farm while the others dug a ditch to bring water to Eden. An old Indian brought word to Curtis of an impending Indian attack. This led the few settlers of Curtis to cross the river and seek safety in the large settlement of Pima. After this menace the Curtis settlers recrossed the river to their homes and built their log houses close to each other as a protection against the Indians. When A. T. Coons joined the settlement in 1882 he found eight families living in houses in a log stockade. In 1883 a townsite known as Curtis was surveyed but only part of the people moved to the townsite, the others remaining on their farms. [St. Joseph Stake: Eden.]

The new townsite was selected by the Christopher Layton and organized as a ward with Moses Curtis as Bishop. [Ibid.] The people suffered much at first chills and fever because of lack of good drinking water. This was later remedied by springs. By 1884 there were only twenty four families in Curtis ward. [Ibid.]

In 1881, 1882, and 1883 there were three Mormon settlements founded on the Gila river, namely, Thatcher, Bryce and Central. Thatcher, the farthest east of the Mormon settlements on the south bank of the Gila was settled
when John M. Moody and his family moved temporarily on the Williamson ranch, about four and a half miles up river or southeast of Pima. This was in the summer of 1881. Even before this, David Cluff, his son Orson and family, David Zufelt and family had located nearby. [St. Joseph Stake: Thatcher.] Mr. Moody purchased the Williamson ranch. In 1882 James Pace with his family and his son and family with his sons-in-law, Reuben K. Jolley and Frank N. Tyler and their families came to Thatcher. Mr. Pace built a stockade, the first dwelling in Thatcher. The real beginning of Thatcher was December 1882 when Apostles Erastus Snow and Moses Thatcher and others arrived and spent Christmas Day there. Here the people named their new settlement Thatcher in honor of the visiting Apostle. [Ibid.]

The first important development of Thatcher took place on May 12, 13, 1883 when the Stake President Christopher Layton organized the settlement as a ward with John M. Moody as Bishop. President Layton then selected a townsitie for the new settlement. In the fall of 1883 Samuel Claridge, Erastus Carpenter, and Hyrum Brinkerhoff came to the new settlement and when Bishop Moody died in 1884 Samuel Claridge was chosen Bishop. [Ibid.] In 1885 a townsitie was chosen by President and he moved to the new townsitie. The first school was held in 1885 in a private home. Thatcher was evolving from the log cabin stage in 1887 when Daniel Kemp built the first brick house on the new townsitie.

Bryce had its beginnings in 1882 when Ebenezer Bryce and his sons Ebenezer P., Alma M., and George A. arrived in Pima from Utah. Early in 1883 the Bryces purchased land from non-Mormons and the Bryces began the construction of a canal to bring water to the newly purchased lands. They completed the ditch in 1884. That year the Bryces brought their families. At first the settlers, joined by Joel Edgar and Rasmus Lind, lived in tents, but in 1884 Ebenezer P. Bryce built the first house in the new settlement—
a lumber building. His father, Ebenezer Bryce moved his family from Pina in 1885 and they settled near Ebenezer P. Bryce. The people of this new settlement attended religious services in Pima until 1890 when the settlement was organized as a ward. [Ibid.] It was not until 1891 that a meeting house was built—an adobe building 25 x 17 feet costing five hundred dollars.

Joseph Cluff was the first settler of Central and came to the site in 1881-82 and raised a crop there in 1882. He did not bring his family to make a home until the spring of 1883. [St. Joseph Stake: Central.] This site was on the south side of the Gila, between Thatcher and Pima. He was joined by five other families who came after the failure of the settlement of Forest Dale. These settlers were Joseph and Orson Cluff, George Clemens, John B. Young, Whitbeck and A. Lampson. [Williams, op. cit., p. 15.]

Layton, now a part of Safford, had its beginning on January 13, 1883, when Hyrum H. Tippetts from Brigham City, Utah, bought a claim within the later town of Layton. He moved in a Mexican house and started farming that year. In June 1883 Mr. Tippetts was joined by Charles A. Warner of St. Johns, Arizona, who purchased a small farm from Mr. Tippetts. Charles Olsen was the third settler. In the next few years the settlement increased. In November 1883 James, John and Adam Welkes and their families and Christian Madsen came to the new settlement buying their land from Edward Tuttle, a non-Mormon. Alma H. Bennett came in 1884 and built the first frame house in Layton that year. The first Mormon pioneers found some small ditches constructed by non-Mormons. The new settlers enlarged these ditches and they extended the Montezuma ditch. [Mount Graham Stake: Layton.] The organization took place in March 1884 when President Layton visited the new settlement. The settlers voted unanimously to name their new place Layton, in honor of the President, and they selected John Welker to preside
over the settlement. By October 1884 there were thirty families in Layton. They lived in a scattered condition. The town ditch, an extension of the Montezuma ditch, was started in 1884. The people built a chapel—a brick structure 45 x 30, in 1891. Ibid.

As the descriptions of the early years of the Gila settlements indicate, the people were living in a scattered condition over a considerable part of the Gila Valley. This was because they sought larger farms than was the case in Utah. Then, too, their poverty made it necessary for them to spend their time largely on their farms and in the construction or enlargement of canals and ditches. These scattered settlements on the Gila and San Pedro needed strong leadership to unite them and to bring material progress to the settlements. Their leadership was provided when these towns were organized into a stake February 26, 1883, with Christopher Layton of Kaysville, Utah, as President of the new stake. Jenson, Andrew, Encyclopedia History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, p. 734. While President Layton came first to St. David, he soon moved to Thatcher, which with his coming became the center or headquarters of the stake. He was a man of considerable ability and led the way in material enterprises as well as providing spiritual guidance. Thus 1883 or 1884 was a turning point in the history of the Gila settlements. President Layton visited the various settlements in his stake repeatedly and made many suggestions for improvement. He reported frequently to President John Taylor and often received instructions from the President on many important problems. As he became President of the stake, he received a letter from President Taylor dated February 8, 1883, giving broad instructions as to the settlements. President Taylor wrote as follows:

"...You will understand that one object of the organization of the Stake of St. Joseph is to introduce the gospel into the Mexican nation..."
and also when prudence shall dictate and proper arrangements be entered into, that a settlement may commence to be made in that country.

In the formation of your cities, whether in Arizona or Mexico, care should be had to place them in proper localities, so that they may be convenient to land and water as circumstances will permit; and furthermore it will be very necessary to examine carefully the sanitary condition of their locations. It is the general opinion that it is more healthy and salubrious on the plateaus or mesas than on the low lands, the latter of which in your district of country are more or less subject to malarial diseases... It will be proper also in the laying out of towns or city sites to have the streets wide and commodious, and proper reservations of squares should be made for public uses; for church, county, school and ornamental purposes and in order to avoid difficulties, having your school and church affairs separate that confusion may be avoided hereafter in relation to the occupation of suitable places for these several objects.... In all your operations associated with your new settlements, care should be had to have everything conducted on a fair and equitable principle, and that individual or favoritism of any kind should be avoided... care should be taken to have proper selections made of Bishops in the several wards... and while prudent, active, energetic men should be chosen they should also be honorable men free from the vices of drunkenness, dishonesty, profanity and covetousness." ["Letter John Taylor February 8, 1883, to Christopher Layton," John Taylor Letter Book No. 20, pp. 467-8.]

The carrying out of these instructions by President Layton prevented many difficulties and with these instructions at hand, President Layton was ready to act. It was his good fortune to lead the settlers of the Gila and San Pedro Valleys in a transformation from the crude frontier to orderly civilized communities. He fostered construction of lumber mills and flour mills, often using his own money to develop these enterprises.

Williams et al., p. 39 As he visited the wards or settlements, he selected townsites where healthy conditions would prevail, he suggested Bishops and he wrote in May 1883: "... Farming on the Gila is well advanced the people having constructed some 44 miles of canals carrying 12052 cubic inches of water at an expense of thirty six thousand dollars which is less per inch than any agricultural district we know of in Arizona. There are two log school houses, one in Fima the other in Curtis. We noticed children enrolling with average attendance of 110. Should the above wards be approved by you and councillors we see no impediment in the way of prosperity
of the Saints on the Gila." [Letter Christopher Layton May 16, 1883, to President John Taylor.]

Thus when President Taylor died in 1887 the settlements on the Gila, as in other parts of Arizona, were growing rapidly. The dreams of Brigham Young and of John Taylor had been realized. The Mormon pioneers had brought rural civilization to the cattle, sheep, and mining lands of Arizona.