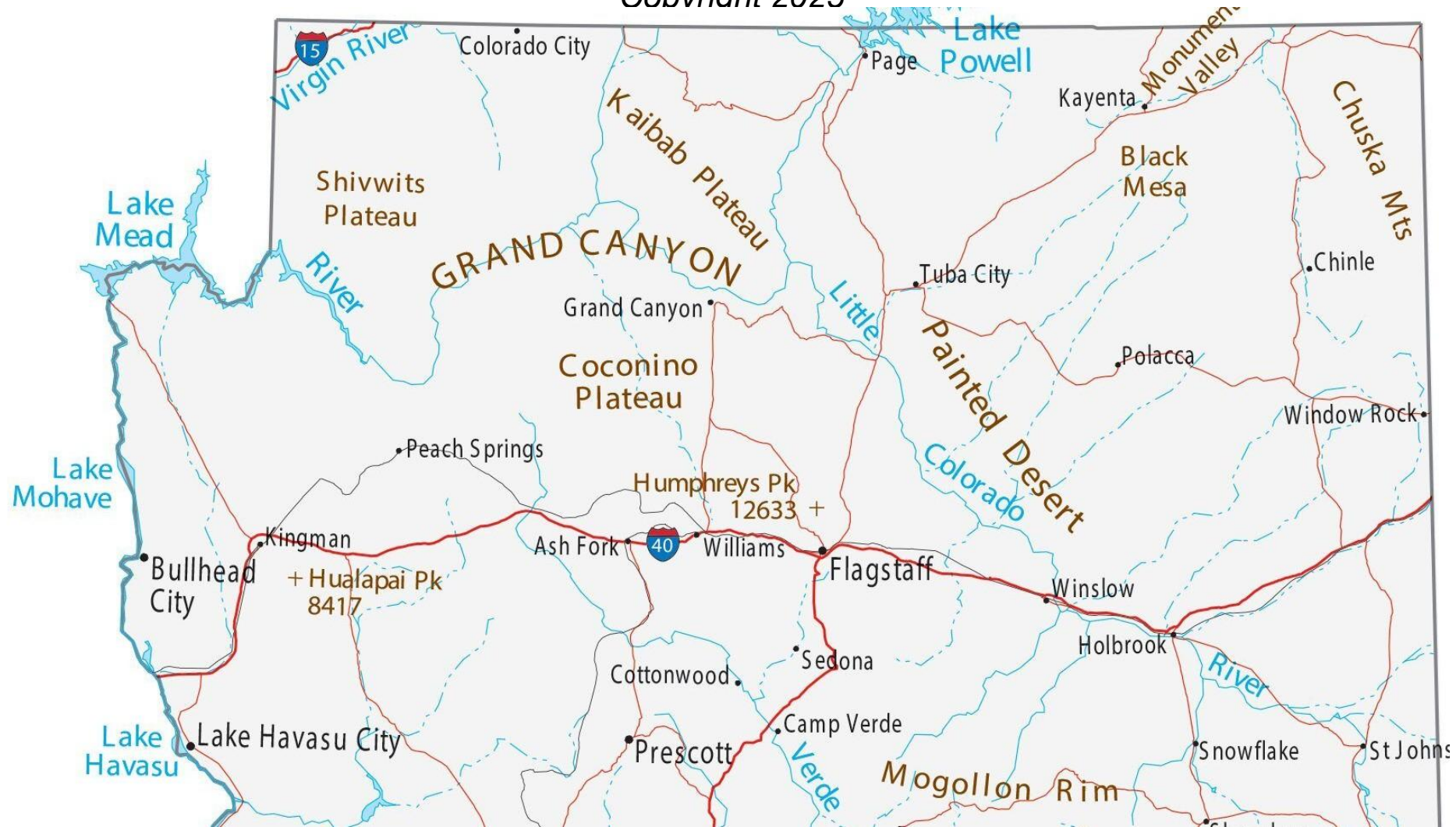
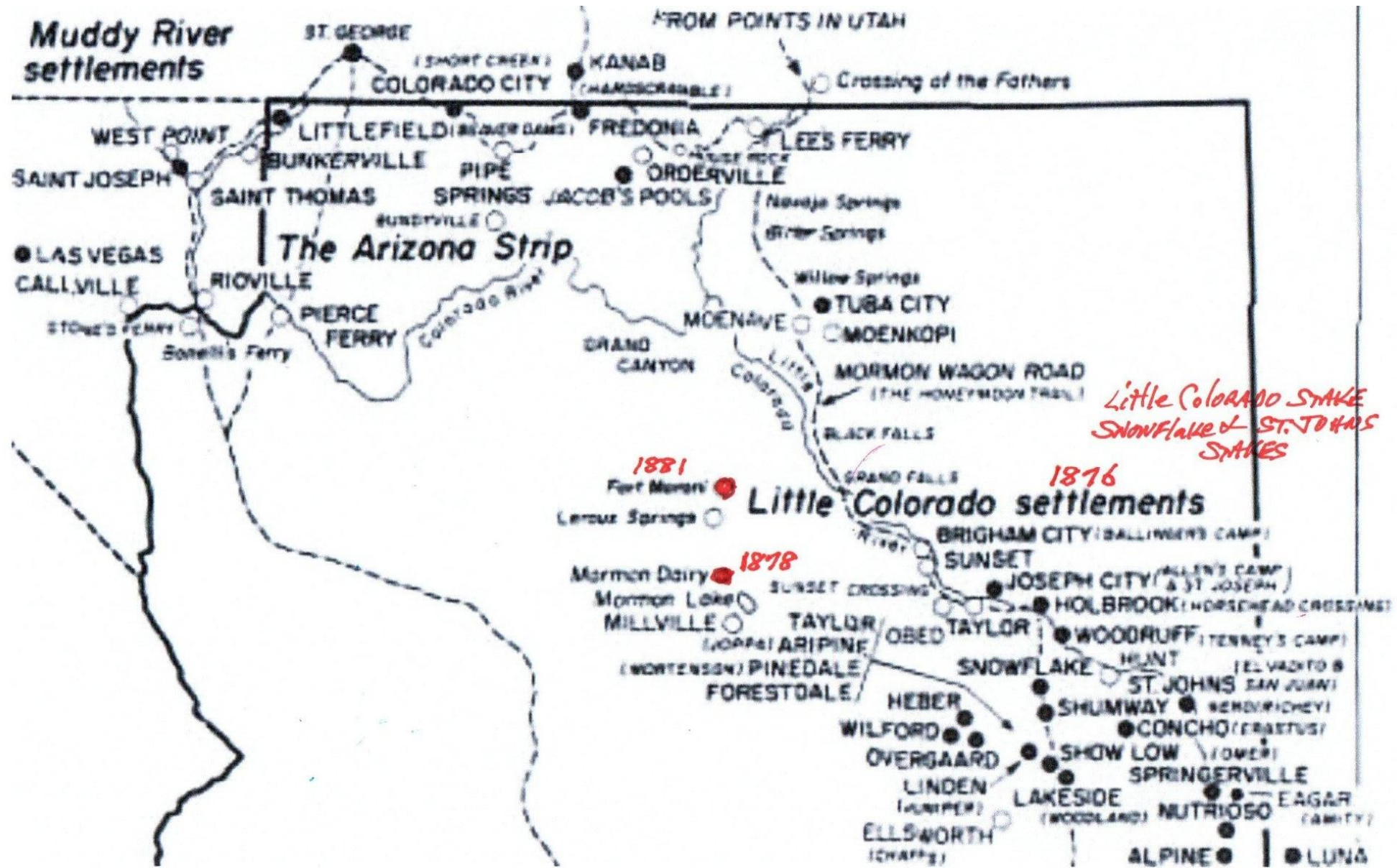


A Brief History of *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* in Flagstaff, Arizona

by Thomas Lee Palmer
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History of *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Arizona*



History of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Arizona

My great great grandfather, Andrew Smith Gibbons, came with Jacob Hamblin and others in 1858 to Oraibi to teach the Hopis – Andrew was one of four of the missionaries to remain for some time to teach them – they returned to St. George area in the winter of 1858. In 1863, Andrew and Jacob with others came across the Colorado River at Pierce’s Ferry and crossed Northern Arizona seeking a better route to Oraibi/Moenkopi – they passed through what is now Peach Springs, then Havasupai Canyon, then north of present-day Flagstaff and then on to Oraibi.

Four of my ancestral lines were called by President Brigham Young in 1876 to settle in Northern Arizona – John Bushman, Edwin L. Westover, Andrew Smith Gibbons, and Alma Z. Palmer

Bushmans and Westovers remained in Joseph City area

Gibbons settled in St. Johns

Palmers settled in Taylor

History of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Arizona

Early Stakes of Zion in Northern Arizona

Little Colorado Stake – 1878 (Lot Smith, president)

[Units - Moenkopi, Tonto Basin, Joseph City, Obed, Brigham City and Sunset]

[John Bushman was bishop of Joseph City ward and Andrew Gibbons was presiding elder in Moenkopi]

Eastern Arizona Stake - 1879 (Jesse N. Smith, president)

[Units – Snowflake, Forest Dale, Round Valley, Alpine, St. Johns, Ramah NM]

In 1882, two stakes were created in Southern Arizona – Maricopa and St. Joseph

1887 – Eastern Arizona Stake divided to make two stakes:

St. Johns Stake – 1887 (David K. Udall, president, William H. Gibbons, counselor)

[Units – St. Johns, Erastus, Union, Nutrioso, Alpine, Heber]

Snowflake Stake – 1887 (Jesse N. Smith, president)

[Units – Woodruff, Snowflake, Taylor, Show Low, Joseph City, Moenkopi, Tonto Basin wards]

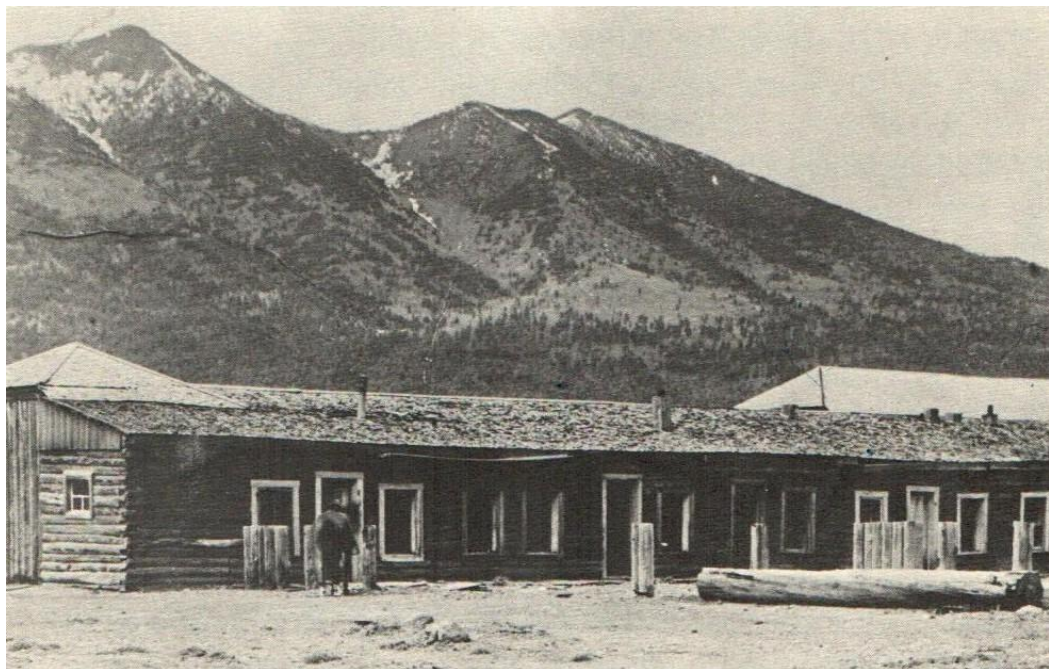
History of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
in Flagstaff, Arizona

In January **1876**, President Brigham Young sent 4 companies of Saints to Northern Arizona to settle the Little Colorado River territory – they settled in Winslow, Joseph City, and Saint Johns areas and spread to the Silver Creek area to settle Snowflake and Taylor area.

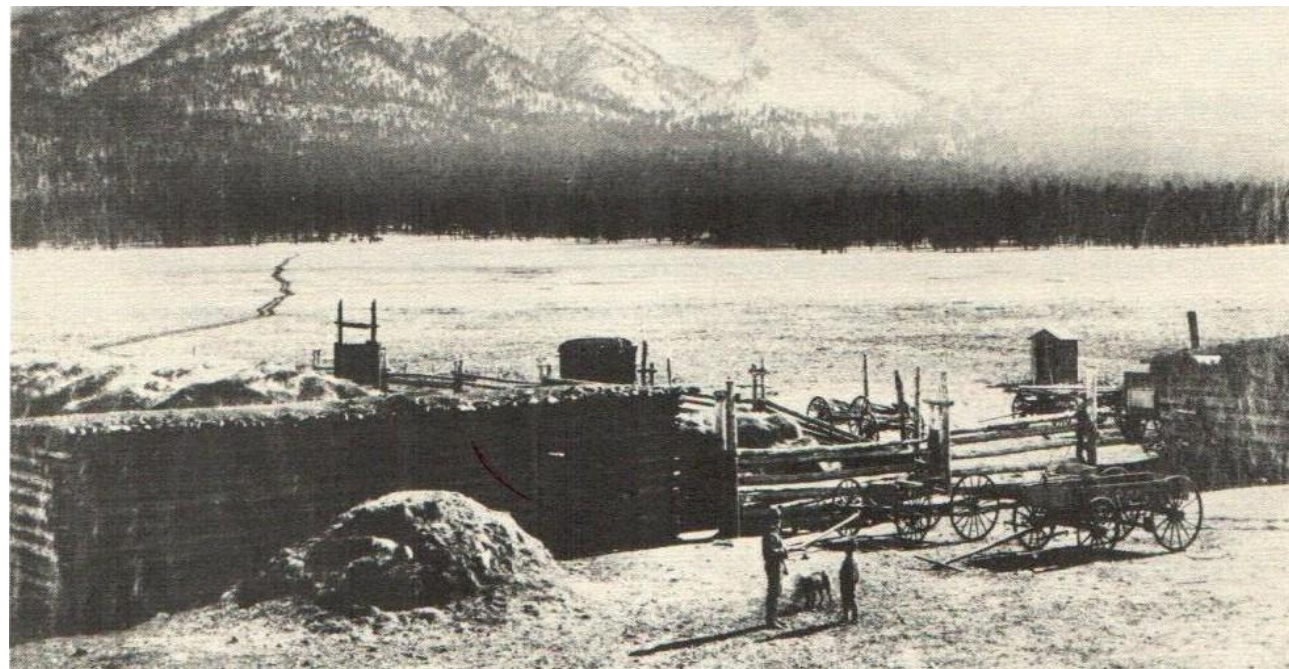
The first Saints to settle in the Flagstaff area came in **1881** when John W. Young (President Young's son) brought 60 men and their families to assist in the construction of railroads in Northern Arizona – with roadbed construction and 50,000 railroad ties. They established Fort Moroni – a community in the present-day Baderville area. After fulfilling the contract to assist with the railroad, they started the Moroni Cattle Company that eventually led to the Arizona Cattle Company – often called the A-1 Cattle Company - which was eventually sold to the Babbitt Brothers in **1899**.

Fort Moroni – 1881

Two views of the fort which gave Fort Valley its name. It was built in 1881 by John W. Young to shelter tie-cutters working under contract with the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad. The camp was originally a group of tents and cabins, but with reports that the Apaches were restless, Young built the stockade and named it Fort Moroni. It later became headquarters for the Moroni Cattle Company and later, the Arizona Cattle Company.



Fort Moroni looking East

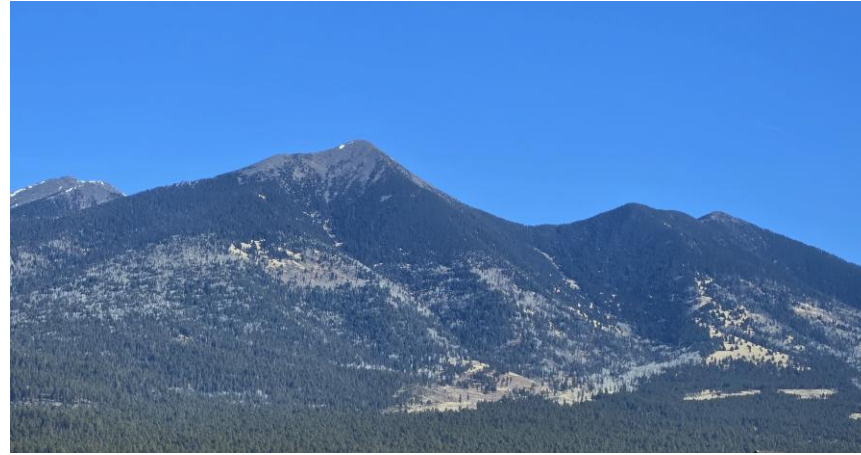


Fort Moroni looking West

“They Came to the Mountain” by Platt Cline

Fort Moroni Monument

Go north on 180 to Lake Trail in present-day Baderville area,
turn left and go west to Moroni Drive



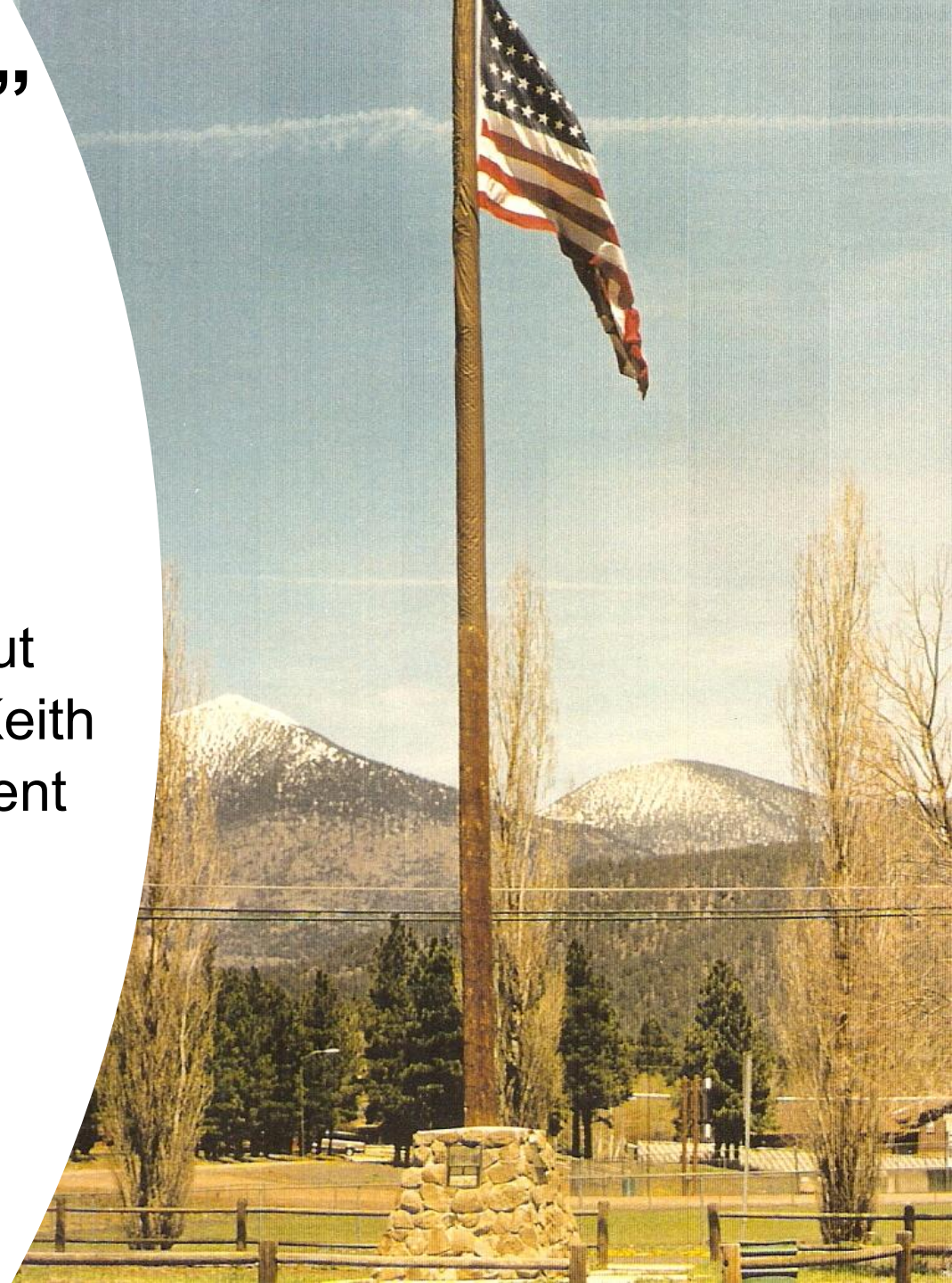
Fort Moroni Monument

FORT VALLEY

A 100' SQUARE, UPRIGHT LOG STOCKADE, ORIGINALLY NAMED FORT MORONI AFTER A MORMON ANGEL, WAS CONSTRUCTED NEAR HERE BY BRIGHAM YOUNG'S SON JOHN TO PROTECT MORMON PIONEERS DURING THE 1881 GENERAL APACHE UPRISING. IT WAS NEVER ATTACKED AND SERVED AS A RANCH BUILDING FROM 1882 UNTIL IT BURNED DOWN IN 1920. IN EARLIER TIMES FUR TRAPPERS, TRADERS AND GUIDES, INCLUDING KIT CARSON AND ANTOINE LEROUX, PASSED THROUGH THIS VALLEY, AS DID WAGON-ROAD AND RAILROAD SURVEYORS LT. AMIEL W. WHIPPLE, CAPT. LORENZO SITGREAVES AND LT. EDWARD F. BEALE WITH HIS EXPERIMENTAL CAMEL CARAVAN.

“Flagstaff”

Flagstaff derives its name from a flag ceremony held on July 4, 1876 celebrating the centennial of our Independence as a Nation. For their Eagle Scout project, Mike Palmer and Keith Anderson created a monument to that flag raising ceremony which was dedicated by Bruce Babbitt, Governor of Arizona on July 4, 1985.



Mormon Lake

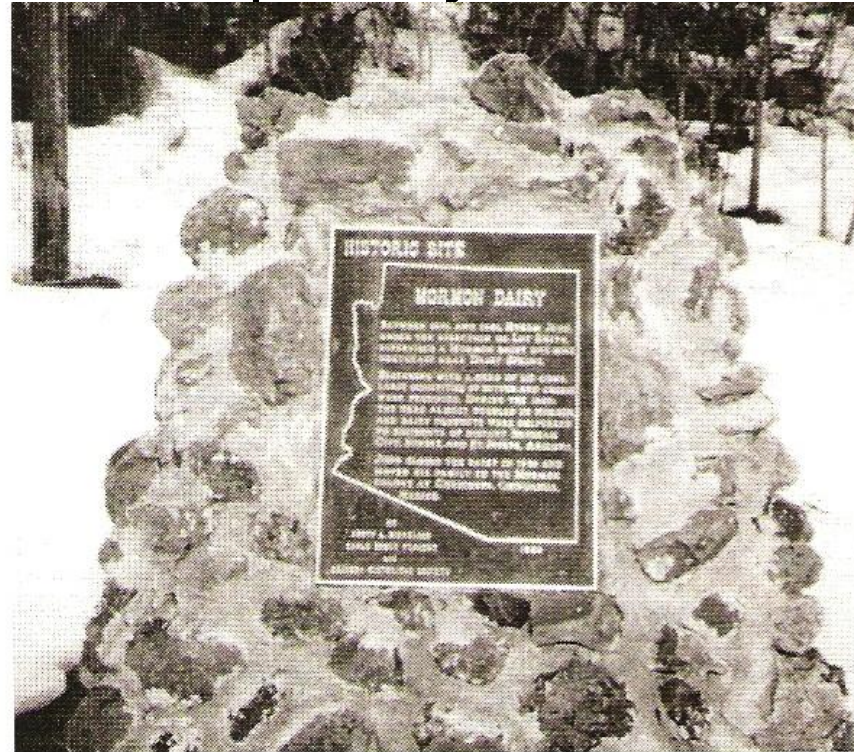
A Dairy and a Sawmill – 1878 - 1882



Mormon Dairy

Near Flagstaff, the Little Colorado Valley saints grazed their livestock in the summer months and had a dairy at Mormon Lake in the late **1870s and early 1880s** – it was later called the “Mormon Dairy”. The Church operated a sawmill in the Mormon Lake area for a couple of years.

For his Eagle Scout Project, Scott Mickelson erected a monument near Mormon Lake to help remember the early Mormon Dairy.



Monument at Mormon Dairy - Scott Mickelson Eagle Project

Early Church units in Flagstaff, Arizona

1915 – A Sunday School organized – William Smith as Presiding Elder

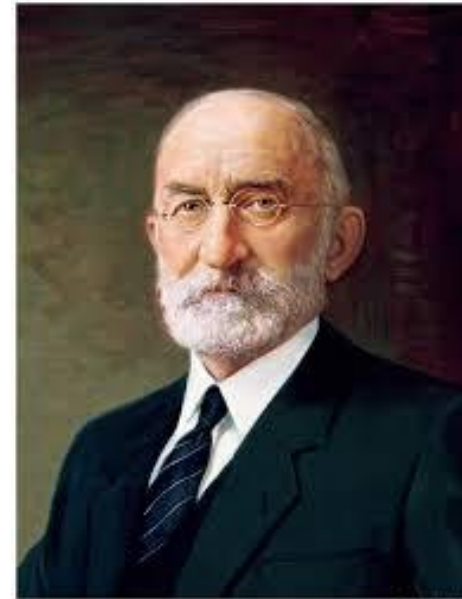
(Saints met in homes, then Emerson School and then a room at ASC – several ASC students in SS)

1929 – President Heber J. Grant and Elder David O. McKay visited Flagstaff and decided to establish an Institute of Religion (put on hold until 1936 due to depression)

1936 – Flagstaff became a dependent branch to the Joseph City Ward and in October 1936 a dependent branch to the Winslow Ward organized by Bishop Virgil Bushman.

1937 – The Flagstaff Institute of Religion building was completed and dedicated by President Heber J. Grant on November 5, 1937. Dr. Anthon Cannon was the first Institute Director and also the first branch president of the Flagstaff Independent Branch.

**Institute Building
at Arizona State College
Flagstaff**



**President
Heber J. Grant**

Early Church units in Flagstaff, Arizona

1939 – Robert Lee Kenner became the director of the Institute and was sustained as the Branch President of the Flagstaff Branch of the Snowflake Arizona Stake.

1941 – President Kenner was sustained as the first Bishop of the Flagstaff Ward of the Snowflake Arizona Stake by Elder Harold B. Lee – meetings continued to be held in the Institute building.

1944 – Bishop Kenner moved from Flagstaff and in July 1944 Frank J. Randall was sustained as the Bishop – he served until September 23, 1956 (counselors who served with him included Roger Holland, Delmar Layton, Ralph Harmon, Joseph L. Langston and Nelo E. Rhoton – Sylvan Harenberg served as Ward Clerk.

Until September **1956**, all of the foregoing organizations were under the direction of the Snowflake Arizona Stake.

(All stake conference and other stake meetings were held in Snowflake – a 250-mile roundtrip for Flagstaff saints. The road from Holbrook to Snowflake was a dirt road for much of that time.)

Snowflake Stake Center - 1943



Snowflake Stake Building 1943

Snowflake Stake



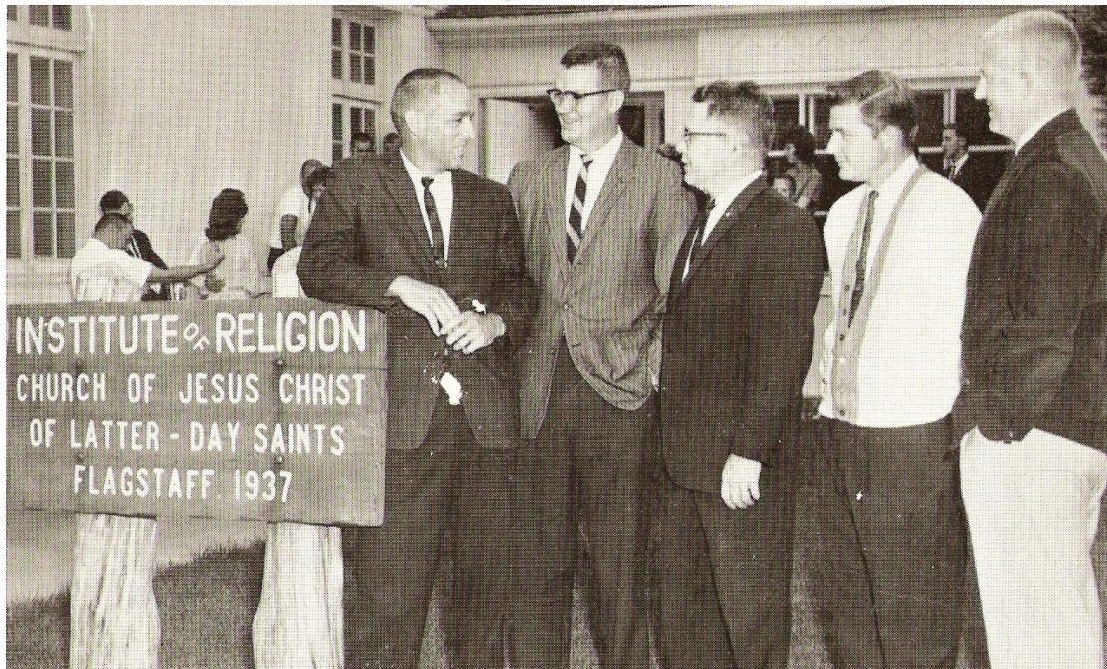
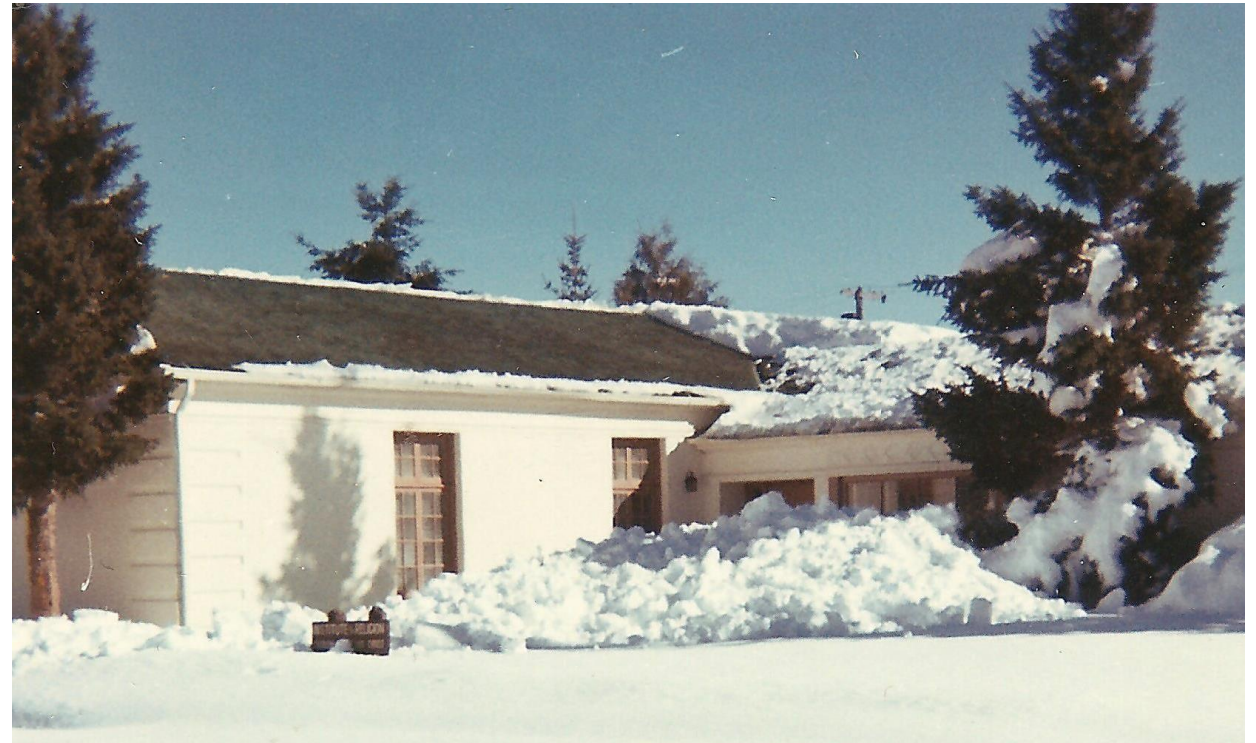
Flagstaff Branch/Ward was in the Snowflake Stake 1940 - 1956

Institute of Religion

Home of ALL Church units in Flagstaff until January 1960



L.D.S. Institute of Religion - 1937



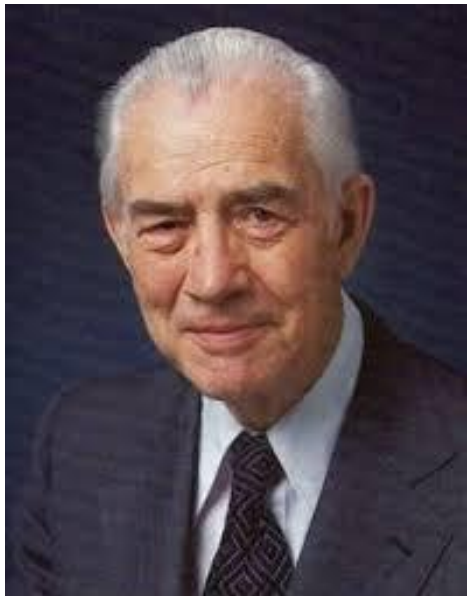
College Ward Bishopric in front of Institute about 1964: Stanley Beus, counselor, Max Spilsbury, counselor, Bishop Orvil Bushman, Frank Gordon, Jim Waters

For a while some meetings were held in a Railroad car



A Stake of Zion in Flagstaff

On September 23, 1956, the Flagstaff Arizona Stake was organized under the direction of Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles and Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve. The stake was organized at a meeting held in the Prochnow Auditorium at the Arizona State College.



Elder Mark E. Petersen



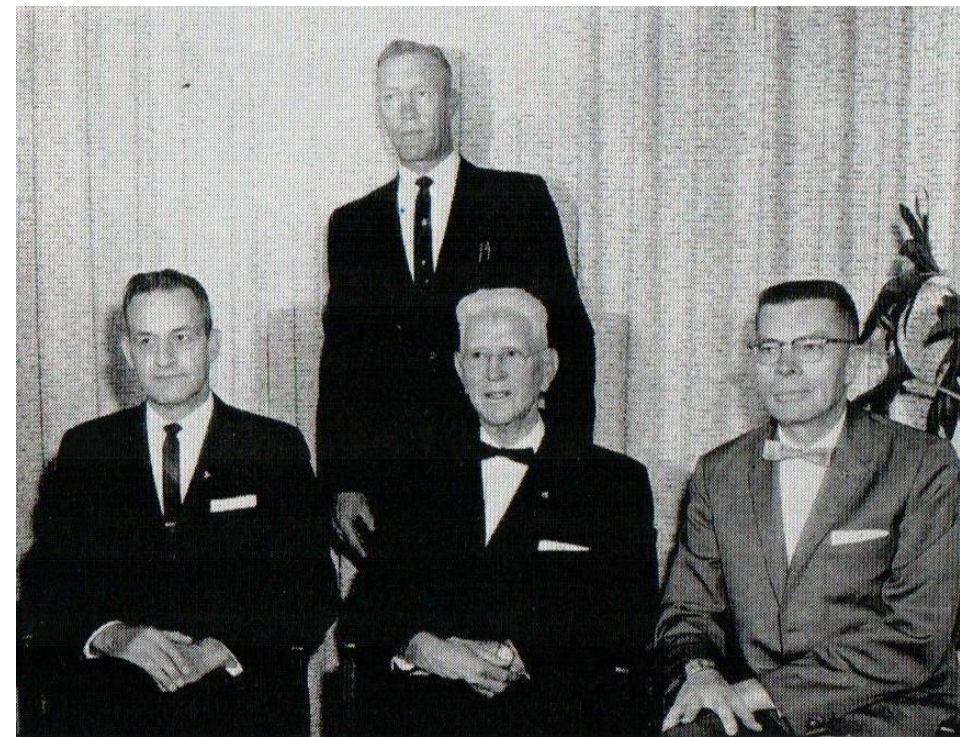
Prochnow Auditorium



Elder Alma Sonne

A Stake of Zion for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Flagstaff, Arizona

Leaders of the new Flagstaff Arizona Stake 1956



Flagstaff Stake Presidency 1956-1963: Frank J. Randall, Pres. Burton R. Smith, Richard Allen, Joe Langston



Verd A. Hanks, Patriarch 1956-68



Stake Relief Society Presidency - 1956: Mary H. Randall, Ruth B. McEuen, Pres. Ruth W. Palmer, Vazale Denning - 1956 - 1963

The Flagstaff Arizona Stake

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Organized on September 23, 1956 with 2,386 members

Units of the Stake when organized:

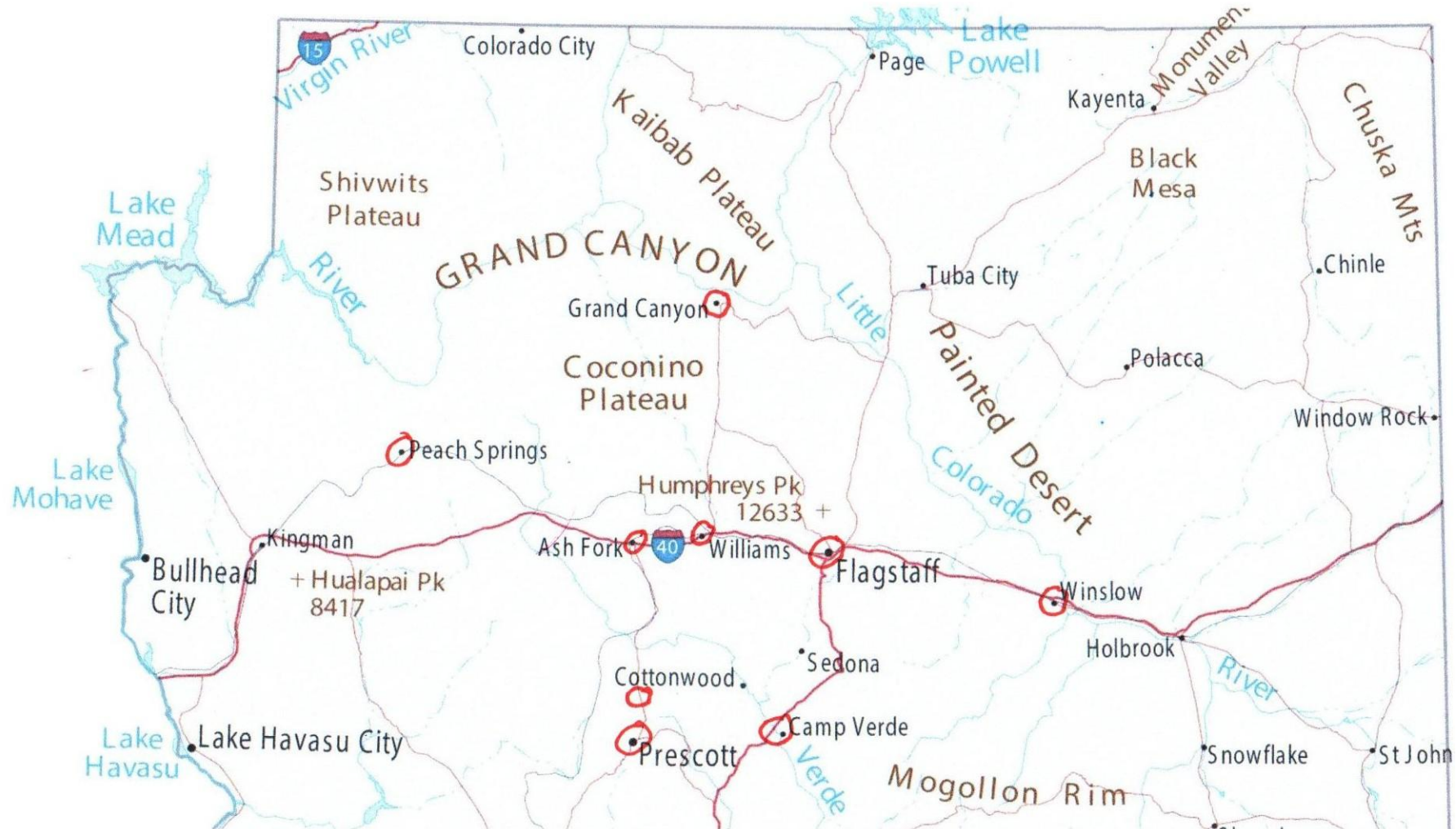
Flagstaff Ward, Winslow Ward, Prescott Ward, Verde Valley Ward, Chino Valley Branch, Bagdad Branch, and Williams Branch (Sunday Schools to be held in Grand Canyon and Yarnell and later in Ashfork, Mayer and Peach Springs – many later became Branches). In time additional units were created – College/University wards, Lamanite Branches in Flagstaff, Cameron and Leupp, and multiple wards in Flagstaff.

Prophecy of Elder Mark E. Petersen:

“if the members of the new Flagstaff Stake would live their religion, we would see the time that there would be a stake in the confines of Flagstaff”

The Flagstaff Arizona Stake

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



FLAGSTAFF ARIZONA STAKE
1956

The Flagstaff Arizona Stake
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Stake Presidents

Burton R. Smith 1956 – 1963

E. Jay Whiting 1963 – 1967

Nelo E. Rhoton 1967 – 1970

Elden S. Porter 1970 – 1972

Willis A. McEuen 1972 – 1980

Harold E. Greer 1980 – 1989

Thomas L. Palmer 1989 – 1998

K. Andrew Fox 1998 – 2007

K. Mark Frost 2007 – 2014

Kevin Tingey 2014 - 2017

Two Stakes of Zion in Flagstaff

7 May 2017

Flagstaff Arizona Stake was renamed "**Flagstaff Arizona West Stake**" with the following wards: Kelly Canyon, Lake Mary, Peakview, Williams, Woodlands, YSA 2nd, and Grand Canyon Branch.

Stake President: President Kevin Tingey

"**Flagstaff Arizona East Stake**" was created with the following wards: Doney Park, Linda Vista, Mount Elden, Switzer Canyon, Walnut Canyon, YSA 1st, and Sawmill Branch.

Stake President: President Les Seaman

The Flagstaff Arizona Stake
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Stake Patriarchs

Verd A. Hanks 1956 – 1968

Merle Allen 1968 – 1970

Frank J. Randall 1970 – 1996

Nelo E. Rhoton 1984

Willis A. McEuen 1987

Harold E. Greer 1995

John Smithson

Karl Webb (continued in East Stake)

Bruce Packard (West Stake)

Lorin Peterson (West Stake)

Don Cardon (East Stake)

The Flagstaff Arizona Stake
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Stake Relief Society Presidents

Ruth Palmer

Helen Adams

Colleen Pendleton

Arthur Cooper

Carma Beus

Lynette Johnson

Margaret Kitterman

Alice Brinkerhoff

Nancy Peterson

Rebecca Cardon

Kathy Kilgrow

The Flagstaff Arizona Stake

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Wards and Branches as of May 1997 (with names of all who served as Bishop or Branch President)

Flagstaff 1st Ward (Organized August 24, 1941).

Robert Lee Kenner, Frank J. Randall, Nelo E. Rhoton, John L. Smithson, Wayne M. Holden, Harold E. Greer, Elliot Morris, Melvin J. Palmer, Boyd K. Tobler, Ferrel Lewis Freer, and Ross Brown.

Flagstaff 2nd Ward (Organized April 20, 1958)

Leo Dean Gardner, C. Jenner Hatch, James L. Goodman, Willis A. McEuen, William T. Howells, Joseph L. Childers, Norman Johnson, LaVar D. Skousen, Steven Straw, Kent R. Garner, Dennis Atkin, Conrad Spencer and Curtis Crane.

Flagstaff 3rd Ward (Organized August 10, 1975)

Kenneth M. Frost, Terry G. Morris, Walter N. Rhoton, Gordon Ray McHood, and Mark Frost.

Flagstaff 4th Ward (Organized September 7,

1969) Scott M. Savage, James A. Pendleton, Velan D. Call, Thomas L. Palmer, Robert D. Watson, Clair S. Hill, Jeffrey Platt, and Norman Mayes.

Flagstaff 5th Ward (Organized December 31,

1978) Thomas L. Palmer, David Wayne Cutchen, Thomas E. Goodman, Jr., T. Richard Rice and Paul Wayne Sorenson, Jr. and Mark Poulton.

Flagstaff 6th Ward (Organized November 8,
1987) Karl Andrew Fox, Dean Lundell, and Wickliffe Lewis.

Flagstaff 7th Ward (Organized December 8,
1991) Donald Dean Hales and Robert H. Williams.

Doney Park Ward (Organized November 10,
1996) Paul Wayne Sorenson, Jr.

Flagstaff University Ward (Organized April 20,
1957) Orvil M. Bushman, Stanley S. Beus, Joseph L. Langston, Nello Scott, Frank G. Cosseboom, Seth Barney, Ralph E. Campbell, Reef Kelly, Jack Palmer, Grant Holdsworth, Roger Bacon, and Kenneth M. Frost.

Flagstaff University 2nd Ward (Organized Sep-
tember 11, 1966) DeForest Smouse, Keith Crockett, Kent R. Garner, Thomas Eugene Goodman, Paul Wayne Sorenson, Willard W. Harkey, Claude J. Jenkins, Howard Wren, Tony Christensen, Walter Hopkins III.

Flagstaff University 3rd Ward (Organized May
31, 1992) Karl Webb, Dennis Kelly

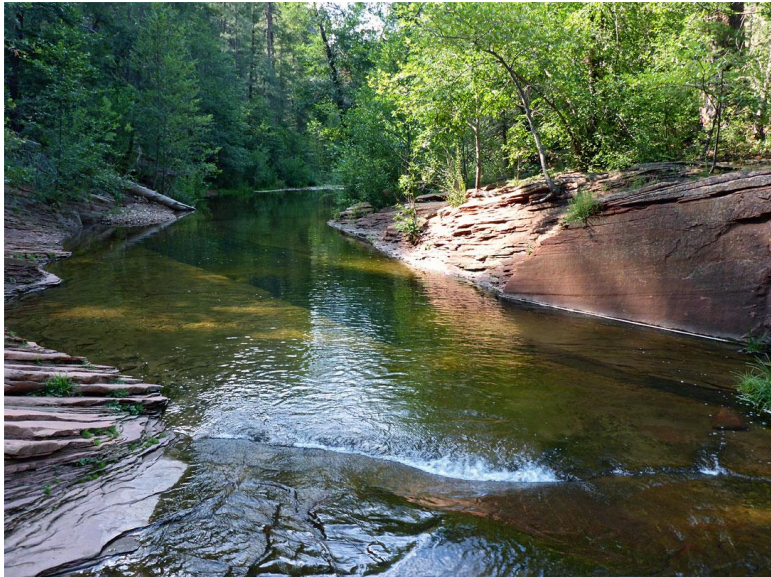
Flagstaff University 4th Ward (Organized May
14, 1995) Lorin Peterson.

Grand Canyon Branch (Organized March 3,
1957, Independent Branch, June 16, 1957) Kenneth V. Shurtz, Leonard H. Richards, Rex Wilhoit, Arthur Eastman, Ramon D. Ketring, Preston Shakespear, Robert Middleton, Dale Nichols, Arden Kessell, Allen Keske, Don E. Keil, Ted Meredith.

Williams Ward (Organized as Branch in 1951,
as a Ward January 24, 1982) Herschal Clark, James McGee, Bert P. Randall, Leonard D. Williams, Leonard W. Hatch, William L. Ritchey, Dean Jones, E. Jay Whiting, acting president, Preston Bushman, Lee Ritchey, Bob Roberts, Daniel P. Owens, Clinton C. Groll, Brother Naylor, Lonnie Bell, Jerry Johnson, Phil Cluff, Don Massey, Jim Pearson, Lamonte Hansen, Marvin L. Bates, and Mike Maloy.

Baptisms

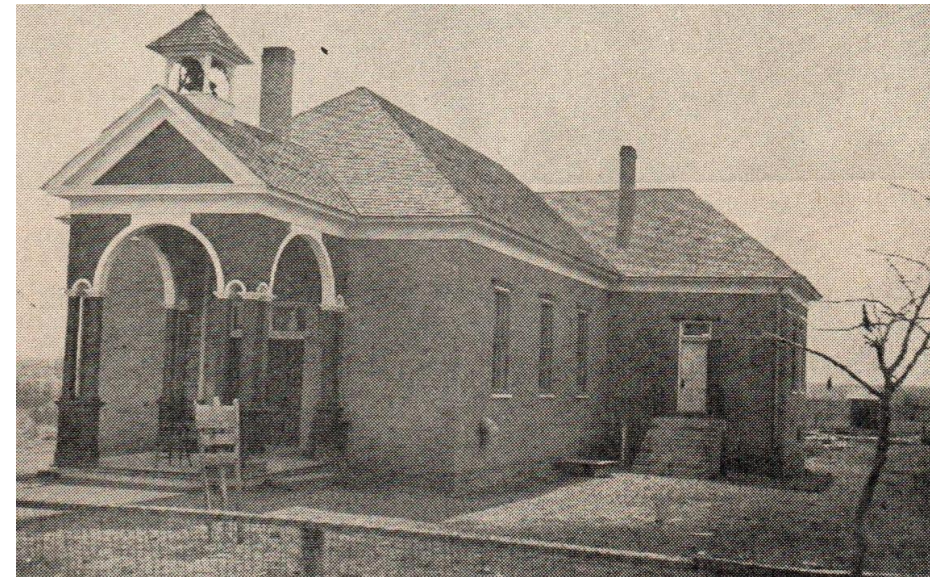
With no baptismal font in the Institute Building, where were baptisms performed in the early days of the Church in Flagstaff?



Oak Creek



Silver Creek

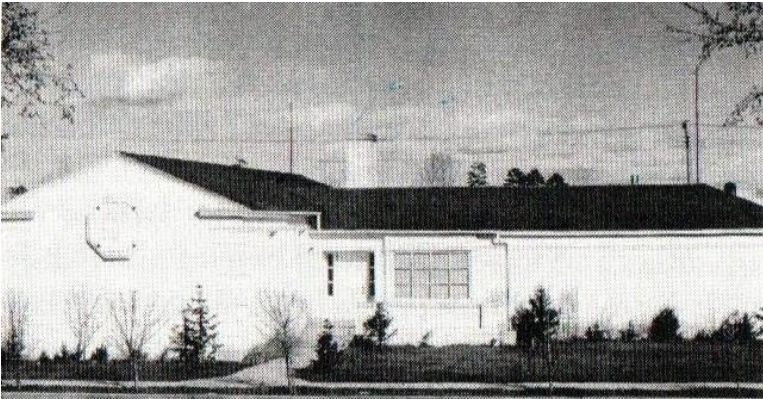


Joseph City

Mountain Dell Swimming pool



Meetinghouses in Flagstaff through the years



Institute Building 1937 – abt.1970



Stake Center 1960 – present



Linda Vista Building 1975 – present



New Institute Building - 1969



Lake Mary building – 1992- present



Newest Institute Building - 1997

History of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
in Flagstaff, Arizona

Some major historical events hosted by the Stake in Flagstaff:

High on a Mountain Top Jamboree – 1982

[7,000 scouts and leaders near Kendrick Park on the peaks]

Horizons '84 – Daughters of Zion – 1984

[nearly 10,000 young women and leaders on NAU campus]

Regional conferences in the Dome at NAU

[Church leaders included Elder Boyd K. Packer, Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, Elder M. Russell Ballard,
Elder L. Tom Perry]

History of *The Church* in Flagstaff, Arizona

High on a Mountain Top Jamboree – 1982

High on the Mountain Top Jamboree was a 5-day encampment near Kendrick Park on the San Francisco Peaks. Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone of the Seventy noted in a letter to me on August 27, 1982: "Never before have so many wonderful Aaronic Priesthood leaders and young men [a total of 7,230] come together in one great encampment. It was truly thrilling to be a part of it."



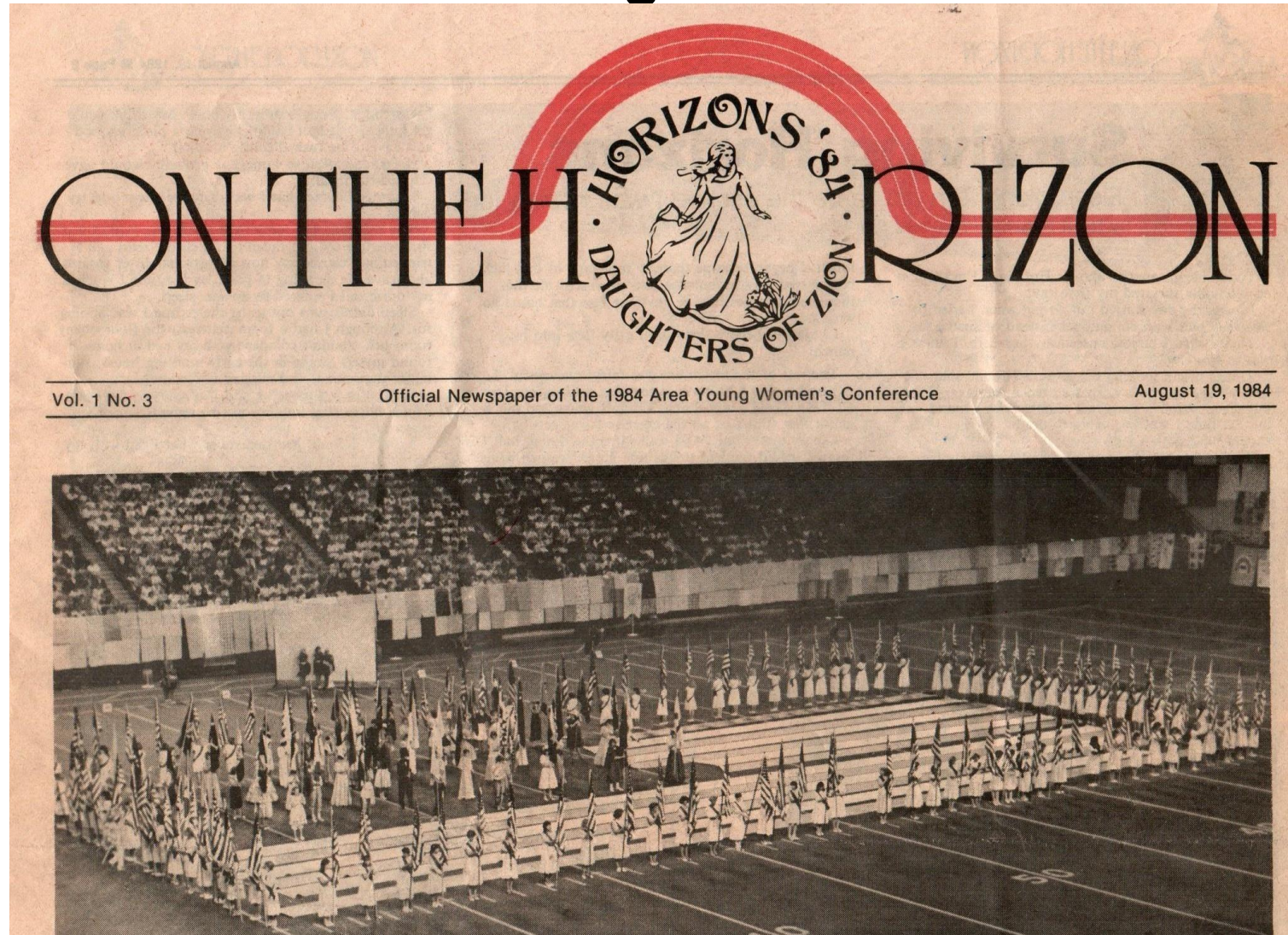
Latter-Day Sentinel photo—Kevin Jones

Bishop H. Burke Peterson gives his Sacrament Meeting address to the 7,200 assembled

'This is the finest army ever assembled of young men'

History of *The Church* in Flagstaff, Arizona

Horizons '84 – Daughters of Zion – 1984



Approximately 10,000 young women and leaders received the Sacrament in the Skydome

History of the Church in Flagstaff, Arizona

Regional conferences in the Dome at NAU

[Church leaders included Elder Boyd K. Packer, Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, Elder M. Russell Ballard, Elder L. Tom Perry]

Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ in Flagstaff, Arizona



History of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
in Flagstaff, Arizona

A prophet of God comes by train through Flagstaff in 1951 – President David O. McKay



**We shook hands with
President McKay
In Winslow, Arizona**

History of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
in Flagstaff, Arizona
Stake Welfare Farm

From 1979 – 1985, the Flagstaff Arizona Stake had a pinto bean farm north of Flagstaff – an 80 acre farm (with additional acres leased). The beans went into the welfare system of the Church and a senior missionary couple serving in Africa helped distribute beans to those in need and saw the Stake’s label on the beans – a far-reaching project. Beans were also donated to local food banks and kitchens that help those in need. The project blessed the membership of the Stake by providing many opportunities for service by individuals and families – hoeing weeds, bagging beans, rotating the beans in wet seasons – many fond memories!

History of the Church in Flagstaff, Arizona

Stake Welfare Farm

Full of beans

Flagstaff Stake has proven in welfare project that pintos & pines go together

by Franklin Tilley
Flagstaff Correspondent

Though many Valley residents think of Flagstaff as cold weather and pine trees, the Flagstaff Stake Welfare Farm is doing much to dispell those rumors.

The growing conditions are far from those in the fertile, irrigated fields of the lowlands, but they're just right for the cultivation of pinto beans.

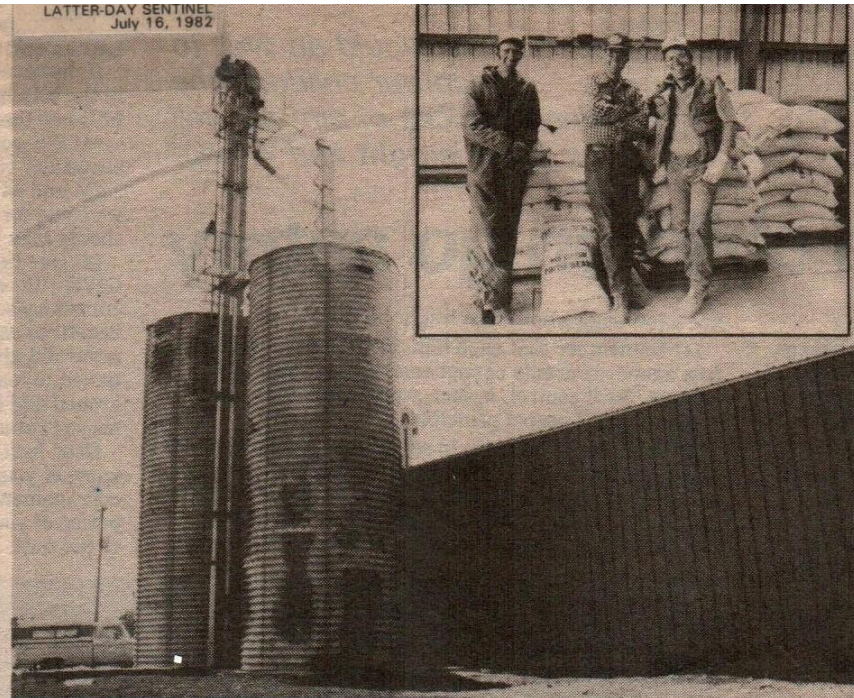
This last year has proven to be bountiful for the farm in Bean Flats.

Roger Esplin, production manager of the farm, spoke of the 1,260 100-pound sacks of beans the farm produced last year with pride in his voice.

"And all of this on 200 acres. Next year, we'll have 300 acres under cultivation, possibly 380 acres if we do the field across the highway," he said. "I think we can expect 1,800 bags in the fall."

Even with the rapid drop in the wholesale bean price, the farm managed to show a profit. The majority of the beans were sold locally at \$29 a bag. Two hundred sacks went to the regional warehouse in Mesa.

Part of the reason for the high yield is due to improvements made on the farm. About a year ago, the farm's new



Latter-Day Sentinel photos—Mark Newton

caretaker, Clarence Cunningham, upgraded the facilities with the installation of a pair of storage silos, bagging equipment and cleaning equipment.

The silos each can hold 160,000 pounds of pintos. One cleaner was donated to the Church farm because it had been setting unused in a barn since the 1940s. Another cleaner was purchased for the final cleaning stages. Also installed was a bagging unit and an automatic sewing machine for sealing the bags.

Recently the stake held a "spring cleaning day" at the welfare farm. Members helped rake weeds and burn them, remove boulders and rocks from the fields, and planted windbreaks by the

Welfare farm caretaker Clarence Cunningham, production manager Roger Esplin and farm manager Ken Frost are proud of the stake's new silos.

road leading to the farm.

Stake patriarch Frank J. Randall, who has been tending the grounds at the stake center for years, planted Russian olive trees along the road with the help of Mark Frost.

Farm manager Ken Frost has worked closely with local farmers and the county agricultural agent to reduce loss of topsoil on the farm. Much of the farm's success can be attributed to Brother Frost's ability to trade for needed equipment and obtain donated items from members of the community.

History of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
in Flagstaff, Arizona

What comes next?

Another Stake?

More meetinghouses?

Another Welfare Farm?

A Temple? Flagstaff (Arizona Temple announced April 6, 2025)

We are part of making the history of the Church in Flagstaff as we help in the Lord's gathering of Israel more is yet to come that will be memorable to all who follow us. The Lord is directing His work on earth and the future holds hope and promise for all!