

HISTORY OF THE SATILLA BRANCH NOW UTAH BRANCH

It was in the Spring of 1899 that the first Mormon Elders began to hold meeting in this community.

At that time it was Coffee County now Atkinson, nearest post office was then known as McDonald, now Axon. They held meetings in various communities of Coffee and adjoining counties.

The following are the names of the first missionaries who labored here during years of 1899 to 1904: Nephi Jensen, Adam R. Brewer, James Platt, J. A. Black, N. A. Décker, Leonard D. Cox, Thomas J. Johns, R. M. Robinson, Frank N. Tyler, William H. Staples, Leroy Nelson, W. J. Sutherland, Elder Neilson, B. J. Porter, W. E. Hamilton, Auther A. Wildes, R. S. Baxter, J. D. Stoddard and R. M. Broderick.

Some of the first meetings were held at a school house south of McDonald, others at homes of Little Jim White, Calvin W. Williams, Jesse M. Wall, William Herren, Irvin Spivey and at William Griffis near Millwood. Near Pearson they held meetings at the homes of Dan Lott and Joe Adams. Later both families joined the church and moved near Douglas, where later another branch was organized known as Cumorah.

Elder Jensen and companion held several meetings at Union Hill Church south of Pearson. A few meetings were held at Mt. Zion Church, but soon the Rev. John J. Smith who was then pastor became prejudiced and ask his members to have nothing to do with the Elders nor even to turn over a ho-cake of bread for them, and he was ready to hoist the flag to lead the mob to drive the Elders out of the country. As a result six of his members joined the Mormon Church the following week.

Meetings were also held at the homes of Babe Carver and Steve Murray. Some looked up to the Elders as servants of the Lord, while others sought to mob them.

It was in the Summer of the year 1902 during fodder-pulling time that the Elders Levi Nelson and Neilson, after having dinner at the home of Calvin W. Williams, started walking for the home of William Griffis who lived one mile north of Millwood and in whose home they were to spend the night and hold a meeting in the school house at Millwood the following day which was Sunday. On Saturday morning several men near Millwood gathered together, secured a rope and started looking on various roads for the Elders. Cliff Bennett and Tom Jordan driving a horse and buggy went to the home of Calvin W. Williams and asked if the Elders had been there. They drove by several times. The Elders finally came to Calvin W. Williams at dinner and started on their way, so after they left, Calvin W. Williams became suspicious of the above men's inquiries and actions, so he saddled his red mule "Bill" and followed the road the Elders took. James Higgs who lived near the creek bridge and road of the Elders was having a "fodder pulling." These men had also noticed the mobbers riding up and down the road. Calvin W. Williams continued his pursuit crossing the creek bridge and up the hill, seeing at a distance the Elders surrounded by the mob and a rope hung to tree. He immediately turned around and galloping his mule, went to summons assistance of the "fodder pullers." Hearing the mule's feet hit the bridge, the "fodder pullers" jumped over the fence and started to meet him. In the crowd was James Higgs, Walt White and John Arnold. They all rushed to the scene of the mob, and immediately upon arrival James Higgs opened a large knife and made a dash for one of the mobbers' guns. He told them he would give the best one of five mules for one of the guns. This dispursed the mob. When the missionaries



failed to reach the Griffis home at the expected time, Mrs. Griffis asked her son Bill to go and look for them, so taking his gun he started out. He too soon arrived on the scene. The Elders were rescued and they all (the Elders and Bill Griffis) returned to the home of his father. As a result, most of the mobbers met untimely deaths.

The names of the first six of those joining the Church were: Irvin Spivey and wife Laura, Manning Davis, Sarah A., wife of Allen Williams, Calvin W. Williams and wife Sarahan, Elder Nephi Jensen doing the baptizing and Elder Leonard Cox the confirming. On May 19th same year Amanda Wall wife of Jesse M. Wall and Emma Gillen, on Aug. 5th same year Elizabeth Nettles. On Sept 9th Millie Barren and Diana Shed, Oct. 21st John Bennett, Dec. 27th Olive Griffis, wife of William Griffis, and Ethie Williams were all baptized.

The first Sunday School was organized at the home of James White, with the following officers, Benjamin Irvin Spivey, Supt., Asst. Supt. Calvin W. Williams, Secty, Jesse M. Wall, Amanda M. Wall, Sarahan Williams, teachers. The first Sunday School held was on Nov. 18, 1900. Since there was no church at this time the Sunday School was held at different homes.

In 1901 Calvin W. Williams deeded to the church 2 acres of land, one to be used for a cemetery and one for the church. The same year a few of the members got together and built a church out of rough lumber. The first person to be buried in the cemetery was Allen R. Williams, father of Calvin W. Williams. The church was also used as a school building. They only had a summer term of 2 or 3 months at times the county board was very hard and did not want to furnish a teacher as it was a Mormon school. The non-Mormons soon nick-named the church "Little Utah." A large arbor was soon erected to be used when the church could not accommodate the crowd.

Supt. Benj. Irvin Spivey was faithful for a while but soon it was left to the families Calvin W. Williams and Jesse M. Wall and until 1915 Calvin W. Williams acted as Supt. and Jesse M. Wall, Secty. At this time Jesse M. Wall was made Supt. and Calvin W. Williams first counselor, second counselor J. G. White and Pearl Williams, Secty.

In 1918 the old church was sold to Calvin W. Williams who moved it away for a tenant house and in its stead a chapel costing \$1800 was erected. The members paying one-half and the mission the other, Pres. Chas. A. Callis then being Mission Pres. The Building and Finance Committee was composed of J. G. Williams, Chairman, and J. G. White and W. M. Bennett.

As soon as the building was completed the Sunday School was reorganized with following officers, J. G. Williams, Supt., J. G. White, first counselor, W. M. Bennett second counselor and Fannie B. Williams Secty.

On June 13th, 1917, Pres. Tolman and wife Estelle met with the ladies and organized the first Relief Society with the following officers: Anna Griffis, Pres., Sarahan Williams, first counselor, Laura Bennett second counselor, Fannie B. Williams Secty, Emma Williams choirster, Mattie Davis teacher, Ethel White organist.

