

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



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of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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Pioneering, wartime nationalism, and the passage of time all contributed to the growing identification of Latter-day Saints with Alberta and Canada. This identity was solidified with the dedication of the temple in Cardston in 1923 by President Heber J. GRANT. A new Alberta-born and educated LDS generation emerged in small towns full of vitality. Cars, roads, and the telephone broke down rural isolation. Amateur sports, music, drama, school fairs, picnics, and rodeos reached their zenith. Alberta Latter-day Saints came into increasing contact with a wide variety of other ethnic and religious groups, including the communal Hutterites and Japanese and eastern Europeans, brought in to labor in the sugar industry.

Intense sports rivalries between the neighboring towns cemented hometown loyalties. The small LDS communities in southern Alberta dominated men's basketball in the province for decades and served as training grounds for several provincial and national basketball championship teams.

While they had an active cultural life, LDS towns did not thrive financially in an era of agricultural boom and bust. Magrath and Raymond grew quickly after their founding: by 1906 Magrath had a population of 884 and Raymond a population of 1,568. But with limited agricultural hinterlands, their growth quickly leveled off, and they grew little after 1911. Both towns developed a small industrial base that lasted until the 1960s: Raymond with its sugar factory and Magrath with a woolen mill and canning factory. With a bigger agricultural hinterland and the temple, Cardston remained the largest predominantly LDS town. Its population grew gradually from 1,000 in 1906 to about 2,000 by the 1920s.

During the 1920s many of the Canadian-born generation began looking for other opportunities. Some left for urban areas in Alberta or elsewhere in Canada, or for the United States. Church growth in other parts of Canada has often depended on leadership provided by Latter-day Saints who had pioneer roots in southern Alberta but migrated elsewhere.

Hard hit by the Great Depression of the 1930s, many Latter-day Saints rallied to the Social Credit party, which swept into power in Alberta in 1935 and retained power until 1971. Several LDS community leaders supported the monetary-reform movement, including Cardston high school

principal N. Eldon Tanner, a cabinet minister from the late 1930s until the early 1950s, and schoolteachers John Blackmore and Solon Low, who both became national leaders of the party. Several other Church members were elected to the provincial legislature. The three largest cities in Alberta have each elected LDS mayors.

Since 1947 immense oil and gas discoveries have transformed Alberta. With oil-induced prosperity and farm mechanization, many Latter-day Saints moved to the cities, gradually making them the focal point of LDS life. Eventually Latter-day Saints in Calgary numbered more than in all the other Mormon towns of southern Alberta. From a tight-knit, rural, geographically compact group consisting mostly of farmers, Latter-day Saints in Canada have become increasingly urban, middle class, and geographically dispersed. Those in Alberta, however, retain their strong cultural, religious, and kinship links with American Latter-day Saints while serving as full-fledged members of Canadian society.

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HOWARD PALMER

CANON

[In one of its religious senses, the term "canon" refers to the literary works accepted by a religion as Scripture. The word derives from the Hebrew qaneh (reed), which came to mean "measuring rod" and then "rule." It thus indicates the norm or the standard by which all things are measured. Latter-day Saints accept a more extensive and more open canon of scripture than those accepted by other Christians and by Jews. Latter-day Saints accept, in addition to the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. These four scriptural collections are called the Standard Works. Related topics include Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (JST); Jesus Christ, Sources for Words of; New Testament; Old Testament; "Voice from the Dust"; and the articles assembled under the entry Jesus Christ in the Scriptures.]