The History of Kanarraville
by Marilyn Lovell

Acknowledgements

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gratitude to Marilyn Lovell for the donation of this script to us for publication and use for the
information and enjoyment of all interested parties. She, along with the aid of others as she has
acknowledged below, gathered, compiled and wrote the text as contained herein.

My sincere thanks goes to the following people, who so generously gave of their time and
information and by their doing so made this paper possible.

Dr. William R. Palmer; local historian, who gave me much information to do with the early
history.

Mrs. Mina Platt; oldest lady in town, who wrote some of this history for the Daughters of the
Utah Pioneers.

Mrs. Lorenzo J. Williams; lifetime resident, and wife of the Bishop when the new church was
finished.

Mr. and Mrs. Junias Williams; Kanarra Ward Clerks who gave me the material pertaining to the
Homecoming, and also the Bishops and Missionaries.

Mrs. Ervin Williams; head of the town genealogical society; and also wife of one of the
committee members of the dance hall.

Mrs. James A. Lovell; lifetime resident, and daughter of Bishop John and Susie Berry.

Additional thanks goes to Mrs. Jesse F. (Francis) Williams for the up to date list of the
Bishoprics.

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Beta Chi Chapter

of Beta Sigma Phi
1. John Willis
2. John Brimhall
When the Indians were raiding through the country the people of Fort Kanarra would drive their livestock inside the enclosure. The homes were built for protection and served as fort walls.
Sentence Outline

I. Details of the Early history of the town are quite limited, but there are some details.
   A. The name of the town may have come from either of two sources.
      1. It is popular belief that it was named after Chief Kararra.
      2. W.R. Palmer said the name comes from Kanarra Willows.
   B. There were several settlements before Kanarra.
      1. The first settlement was on Ash Creek.
      2. Brigham Young had the settlers move to Old Fort Harmony.
      3. The Great Rains caused Old Fort Harmony to collapse.
      4. When the fort collapsed some moved to New Harmony and others settled Kanarra.
         a. Others came from Toquerville to help settle Kanarra.
         b. Elisha Groves acted as the President.
   C. The President’s party visited the town and the Deseret News carried the article.
      1. It told the history of the town.
      2. It told of the President’s party and his speaking.
   D. A severe wind crippled and ended the town.
      1. It nearly buried the town and the home of Billy Thompson was completely covered.
      2. The graves were left open with the caskets sitting on top of the ground.
   E. Lorenzo W. Roundy came as a leader of the settlement.
      1. His first job was to survey for a new town site.
      2. The town was moved south under his direction.
      3. He was set apart as the first Bishop.
   F. The first meeting house was a log cabin built at the first site.
      1. The second year they moved it to their new location.
      2. It was later burned.
   C. The Navajo’s were the only Kanarra attackers.
      1. They came in the night and stole the horses.
      2. The Kanarra men and friendly Indians pursued them the next day.
      3. The Navajo’s were scattered and the horses recaptured.
      4. The lake was named from this incident.
   H. Brigham Young establish the United Order, but it failed.
   I. Kanarras’ first missionaries were killed.
      1. Lorenzo W. Roundy, first missionary was drowned.
      2. William Shanks Berry was martyred in Tennessee.
   J. The second church was burned and rebuilt.
      1. Ruffians came in after M.I.A. and set fire to it.
      2. Meetings were held in private homes.
      3. It was rebuilt shortly.
K. 1900 brought many good things about.

II. Many of the stories of the Olden Days are still vivid to many people.
A. With the installation of the telephone a whole new era began.
B. 1911 brought the installation of the water system.
C. In 1919 the people built a new school.
   1. Two men were buried when the basement caved in on them.
   2. The building still stands and is still used for school.
D. There were many traditions of the good old days.
   1. The people went to the mountains in the summer and came back during the fall.
   2. Two of the traditions are still held up today.
      a. The Marshall Band was started years ago and still is called out for
         special occasions.
      b. Independence and Pioneer Days are still celebrated as they were a
         hundred years ago.
E. The old tales of the town are numerous and some are still told today.
   1. The stories of Jones Williams are as numerous as his pranks.
   2. “Where to live was a by-word for many years.
   3. Aunt Susie Berry was famous for her
      cakes and pies.
F. Tragedy struck when the Castle Gate Mine exploded.
G. Johnny Coensler (Kinsley) left money for the town which bought the church farm.
H. The State Legislature passed the Ordinances and Kanarraville became a town.
I. Cobblecrest was built and given a name.
J. By order of William R. Palmer the old church was torn down.
K. The Kanarra Homecoming was more festive than any Pioneer Day and was a sight to
   behold.
      1. There were two days of festivity and gaiety for everyone.
      2. The object was to raise money.
      3. The town raised $1,600.00.

III. The present shall consist of the last fifteen years.
A. The new church was finally finished.
   1. Mrs. Ella Leigh gave $100.00 in memory of her mother.
   2. It was dedicated.
B. There was only one World War II victim.
C. The well was drilled at a cost of $6,300.00.
   1. It is run on an automatic pressure system.
   2. The well supplements the spring for culinary use.
D. The town as it stands today is strong and thriving, but still small.
   1. It is run by the town board.
   2. The town has some real estate and its value is estimated by taxes.

IV. The town’s future is as solid as the people who live there and love it.
A. The town’s park is a part of the present and the future.
   1. It has cost $2,000.00 so far.
   2. Work on the park is still in process and will be for some time.
B. There seems to be no change in the working situation for the town.
The History of Kanarraville Town

Thesis: The story of a town, the past, present and the future and what it means to the people there.

The history of a town is much like the weaving of a tapestry, if the threads are placed in the right place a beautiful design is woven, if they are jumbled there may be a knot which will take much time and sweat to undo. It is as though fate had a hand in it, to rourke or break it. The town of Kanarraville is such a place. The threads have been knotted and broken, and fate has taken such a hand that there is even dispute as to how the town got its name in the first place.

The town may have gotten its name from either of two sources. It is a popular belief that tide name came from Indian Chief Kanarra, who resided along his creek, and when the people came to live by the creek they named their town after Chief Kanarra and his creek. William R. Palmer said that this is not so. He said that the Creek was named from the kind of willows that grew along its banks, Kanarra Willows. The Indian’s name was not Kanarra, but Kuanar. He was the chief of the Tavahuich branch of the Piute tribe, who lived in the coves between the present sites of Kanarraville and New Harmony. These Indians were a group of sun worshipers, who believed that the sun had miraculous healing powers. When one of their own was ill, they would lay him out in the sun to get well. If it were winter and he froze to death, it was the Sun’s will and all right.

The threads of the tapestry became so knotted that the first settlers of Kanarra made four settlements before they finally founded the present town. John D. Lee made his first settlement along Ash Creek in 1851, but abandoned this settlement during the Walker Indian War in 1853. He again settled there in the fall of the same year. The next year they raised a crop, and spent the winter of 1854 and 1855 there. Brigham Young suggested that the settlement be moved north, and in the summer of 1854, buildings were commenced at Old Fort Harmony. It was located where the Kelsey Ranch presently stands.

The second Fort Harmony is presently situated about four miles north of the first location. In the spring of 1861, a few of the people moved up Kanarra Creek to build a town site there.

The Great Rain of the winter of 1861 and 1862 marked the beginning of the end of Fort Harmony. With their adobe fort literally dissolving away, the people began to move up Harmony and Kanarra creeks to higher, safer ground. John D. Lee is reputed to have spent eight days and nights without taking off his wet clothes. Despite his efforts, two of his children were killed when part of the fort collapsed. At this time the town split completely. John D. Lee took half the people and settled New Harmony and the others followed the first up Kanarra Creek and founded a settlement about one mile north of the present town of Kanarra; among these were Elisha Groves, John R. Davies and William R. Davies, with their families. Others came from Toquerville to help them settle, among these were Josiah Reeves, Willis Young, Samuel Pollock and John H. Willis and their families.

The threads were strong and straight, and as they wove themselves into the design there...
was content; from 1861 to 1865, the village thrived and grew and the people were happy.

Elisha Groves acted as president of the settlement. They held meetings in private homes (log cabins), and in 1862, they set to work and built a new log school and church. When finished, it served for several years for all the public meetings and get-togethers.

President Young visited Kanarra in September of 1862 on his way to St. George. (John V. Long, scribe for the president’s party wrote to the Deseret News.)

“After the meeting held at Cedar City, we traveled to Kanarra, a distance of twelve miles. This name was taken from a Piute Indian Chief, who is still about this part of the territory. There are 13 families at this settlement which geographically is a little north of the rim of the Great Basin. Kanarra was first settled in 1861. Here we met Dr. Whittnore on his way to Cedar City. A meeting was held and Bishop Lunt who came over from Cedar City with us opened the meeting with prayer. The President then preached one of his best and most heavenly discourses we heard on our journey. All felt happy and rejoiced together. A kind and liberal spirit prevailed in this little settlement.

Tragedy struck, the threads were so hopelessly twisted and broken, that there was nothing to do but take them all out and start over.

Three days it raged, and the people couldn’t even open their doors. The wind storm was so severe that the sand piled up around their window sashes, and when it was over the cemetery was left with the caskets sitting on top of the ground. When the wind subsided, the neighbors rushed to the home of Billy Thompson, who lived in a dugout. The ground over his home was level, and the only indication of his house at all was the stove pipe sticking up from the ground about eight inches high. They started digging and when they got to the family they found that as the sand rose higher, they had pushed the stove pipe up farther and the family had lived on that little bit of air the whole time of the storm. It was then that the people decided that the place that they had chosen for their home probably wasn’t such a good one and the next step would be to go someplace else. This was probably in 1865.

Lorenzo W. Roundy came to Kanarra in 1866 and took charge as Bishop. He and his friends came from Long Valley when the Indians drove them out. They were on their way to St. George, but met Erastus Snow who requested him to go to Kanarra and preside there. He was placed in charge of the settlement in July of 1866 and almost immediately took steps toward building a new town. A town site was surveyed and they moved their settlement about a mile south to the present site. The homes were built in a barricade style, by what is known as Public Square and the town lots were drawn for.

William Shanks and John Berry came to town in the fall of 1866. They and their two brothers had started a town of Berryville near Toquerville, but when Indians killed their two brothers, they were advised to move to a more populated area, and so made their home in Kanarra.

September 29, 1867, Apostle Erastus Snow ordained and set apart Lorenzo W. Roundy as the first Bishop of Kanarra Ward.

That same year, some of the people of the fort moved out to their town lots to build up the town. The settlers also moved their log meeting house down to the new town with them. This meeting house was finally destroyed by fire. It was supposedly the work of a child, who...
Davis_kanarraville_history.doc

reported that she didn’t care for school and thought this would be the easiest way to get out of it. The fire destroyed all of the ward records, which caused a great historical loss to the community. The history of the town was then told by the earlier settlers as authentic and fact.

The people of Kanarra had never had trouble with the local Indians, but October 31, 1869, a tribe of Navajo’s raided them. They took all their horses but a pair of hobbled mules and two or three horses. The men went to New Harmony the next morning and got horses to follow the Navajos, and they also got some friendly Indians to go with them. They followed them over Kanarra and Cedar Mountain, and finally from a ledge over the lake below, they saw the Indians and the horses. The Indians had their moccasins off to warm their feet; when the Kanarra men and Indians rushed them, they ran away leaving their moccasins and their horses. The victors took both the horses and the moccasins, leaving the Indians to freeze or starve. The Navajo’s made their way back to Arizona without shoes or horses through the snow. The people of Kanarra were never bothered by Indians again, and from their one experience with them came the name, “Navajo Lake.”

President Young made a visit to Kanarra, April 7, 1874, and established a branch of the United Order. As in many other places, it lasted only a very short time, because the people couldn’t live up to it. Some did all the work and they wanted the bounty from it, while others wanted the rewards with no work at all.

Lorenzo W. Roundy, first bishop, also first missionary of Kanarra, was drowned May 24th, 1876 when a boat that he was riding in capsized, while trying to cross the Colorado River.

The second missionary from Kanarra was William S. Berry, who left April 3, 1884 for the Southern States. He went back to his home state of Tennessee and with John H. Gibbs of Paradise, Utah and was martyred August 10 of the same year. Their bodies were brought back to Utah and William Berry was buried at Kanarra, August 26.

A brick church had been built in place of the log one that was burned, but it also burned February 7, 1891. Some ruffians went in after M.I.A. They were drinking and playing cards. They got cold and started a fire on the pulpit, which soon spread to all parts of the church. Campers who were staying in the Josiah Reeves camp house saw the flames coming from the windows and turned in the first alarm. John Platt was teaching school there and doing his own janitor work. He was going over to get things ready for school and saw that the house was on fire. The walls were left standing, but the interior was burned all out. The people rebuilt it in 1892 and 1893. School and meetings were held in private homes until the church was rebuilt.

From the time of 1900 the town has progressed. No serious troubles have presented themselves and the people have been well repaid for the struggles and hardships that they fought before that time. Before the town was completely settled, it was a member of Iron, Washington, Kane, and then Iron County.

With the installation of the telephone in 1904, a whole new era of experience came about. The phones were just in the town and the switch-board was run by Francis Williams. There is an old story about the invention of the telephone and John D. Williams. He lived in a tent and so had his telephone hooked up to a post outside. On every rainy night, the male population of the younger generation took turns calling him to see just how long they could keep him out in the storm.
The culinary water system was installed in 1911. Before this time, the people used rain water for drinking. The new system came from a spring on Kanarra Mountain. The people believed that the town would grow to the north instead of south as it did. They built the new school in 1918 and 1919 on the north east corner of town and there it still stands, alone. During the building of it, the basement caved in on Ervin and Jones Williams. Jones was buried to the shoulders and Ervin was completely covered over. It took about thirty minutes to get him out, when they did, he was standing up with his hat on. The brim of his hat had left an air pocket, so he could breathe and he still lives in the town today.

In the so-called “Olden Days” most of the people from Kanarra were farmers and ranchers. Many of the people took their dairy cattle on the mountain, spent the summer making cheese and butter and came back to town in time for school to start. Some of the people raised cattle and took them to Nevada to sell. Rustlers too, found Nevada good pickings and so to protect themselves, the ranchers formed the Kanarra Co-operation”, which was held in good stead for many years and made the business much more profitable for the people.

Two of the gayest traditions of the past still persists today. One is that of the Marshall Band, and the other is the celebration of Independence and Pioneer Days. Sometime during the first year of the town, a group got together to form a band that was supposed to have been a very gay group. The numbers have diminished but there is still such a group and it is almost mandatory that they be called out for a very important function.

July is a month of festivity. Independence and Pioneer Days are celebrated as they have been for a hundred years or more. The sunrise is brought forth with a cannon and a serenading from the Old Time Marshall Band. They get in back of a truck and serenade from house to house. The kids get in with them and ride and the adults follow along behind. Sometimes there is a parade and then the gayest programs of the year are held in the church. There are sports in the afternoon for kids and oldsters alike. In the evening there is a dance for kids and the celebration ends with the adults dancing until dawn.

The stories of Jones Williams are as numerous as his pranks; he used Halloween and other people’s mistakes for his numerous pranks. Halloween is a night of mystery and goblins for most people, but for Jones it was a time to make merry. One such night he made a dummy and put it in a tree over one of the most traveled corners in town. While everyone else went “ghosting” Jones sat in a tree and frightened everyone by letting the dummy down in front of anyone who came by. Another story came about because of the Groves brothers and sisters. They had threatened to rob the Rile William store, but when they failed to do so, Jones, Ervin and Will Williams proceeded to make up for their failure. On the appointed night, they dressed as the Groves’s and started out to prowl the town and especially around the store until the town was properly excited and stirred up.

Where to live was a by-word for many years. When Mike Davis was 14, and Mina Berry (Platt) was 13, he walked her from a party to her home. The next morning he told his mother that he hadn’t been able to sleep all night for worrying where they would live. For many years anytime that a young boy walked a gal home, he was talked about for many days afterward as to where they were going to live.
Aunt Susie Berry was famous for her cream pies and cakes. Ceylon Davis once bid $1.25 for one of her pies when the others were going for about $.50. Dr. Ship, a woman M.D., who came by the town to teach the women of exercise and better care of the body, stayed at Bishop Berry’s. After practically finishing one of Aunt Susie’s whipped cream layer cakes, she commented that it was the best Washington Pie that she had ever tasted. Aunt Susie had always thought it was a cake.

March 8, 1924, was a tragic day for the whole state of Utah. The Castle Gate Mine exploded and 171 men were killed. Several men from Kanarra had gone up there to work. It was a sad day for the whole town when they found that 8 of them would not be returning.

There are sad days in the town’s history, but the good has a way of trying to make up for it, people like Johnny Coonsler (Kinsley) do it. Johnny was a bachelor who was always looking for that one rich widow, but never quite found her. He traveled practically all of his life and during his travels he found Kanarra and stayed with Bishop Berry. He became fond of him and his people, and when he died, he left his money in a will to the Kanarra people in the care of their Bishop. He wanted it used for the good of the poor people of the town. When Wells Williams was Bishop, his father died and he bought his father’s farm for the church with the Coonsler money. The church farm has since been used for the ward budget and welfare.

It was a big day for the people of Kanarra, this August 11, 1934. The State Legislature passed the ordinances and Kanarraville was to become an incorporated town, with the ordinances to take effect in thirty days. Gustive H. Pingle was mayor, with Delbert J. Peterson, Lorenzo J. Williams, Jessie F. Williams and George B. Williams on the town board.

After the town ordinances were passed, a new dance hall had to be erected. It was stated that the old one was in bad disrepair and the state wouldn’t give the town a license to run it anymore. It had been built by Alton Ford, Delbert Peterson, Lex Shields and Ervin Williams. Emia Parker, Liza Ann Batty, and Louella Pingle were on the committee and they busily set to work. Hartly Woodbury laid the floor and Lex Shields built the dome. It was said that such a dome couldn’t possibly be built out of bricks, but Lex Shields did it. There had to be a dance hall, the people loved to dance. One man who led the band said, that the people were crazy for dancing. He said one night it started to rain so bad that he thought he would for sure get to go home early, but the “crazy fools” all took their shoes off and went right on dancing.

When the hall was finished, a big celebration was planned and all of the people in town sent in their choice for a name for it, the one with the best name for it won a free season ticket. George Berry won the ticket and the dance hall was named “Cobblecrest.”

William R. Palmer, Stake President, went to Kanarra to speak May 7, 1937. He was greatly surprised to find no one getting ready for church, for most of the time the people were quite diligent in their church duties. When he asked for a reason, they took him to tie door of their church and he looked in. He saw that the ceiling was sagging about two feet. He ordered the church torn down and the plans for a new one were started immediately.

The Kanarra Homecoming was gayer than any Pioneer Day before or since. The days were August 26 and 27, and the year was 1941. William Graff was Bishop and funds had to be raised for the new church. Invitations were sent to everyone who had ever lived in Kanarra, and also to all of the wards in the surrounding communities. Committees were set up for every
activity and plans for “Ye Old Home Town” were booming for weeks before the event. The activities were very much the same as Pioneer Day except that there were added ball games, horse races, melon busts and gaiety for two days. Miss Barbara Williams was crowned Homecoming Queen and Chief Kanarra’s last living daughter was also honored. The proceeds were counted and the ward had raised $1,600.00, which was quite an amount during the war.

The church was finally finished at a cost of $32,000.00 without any fixtures. Most of the money was raised by gifts, auctions and donations. Mrs. Ella Leigh donated $100.00 in memoriam of her mother. With more added, the church bought the electric range for the kitchen. The church had taken several years to build because of the war. It was finished when Bishop Lorenzo J. Williams was at the helm of the ward. LeGrande Richards dedicated the church on December 17, 1944, and the new church is still a great pride of the town.

Kanarraville has been very lucky in war, except for once. There were two veterans from the Black Hawk War, eighteen from World War I, sixty-three from World War II, and eighteen from peacetime. Elms Platt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lysle Platt is the only one who never returned home. He was killed at Iwo Jima during World War II serving with the Marines.

The town had seen a need for more culinary water for several years, and so started digging the well in February of 1952. The well was 195 feet deep and was finished in April. The well is connected to the spring and is run on an automatic pressure system, when the spring gets so low, the well starts pumping 120 gallons of water per minute. The well was started at a cost of $6,300.00.

The town as it stands is small, but still strong and thriving. It is fully incorporated. The town owns four pieces of real estate; the dance hall, cemetery, skating rink, and the water spring. In 1953, the assessed value of the town (being derived through applying the 8 mill levy to the assessed valuation) was $75,331.00.

The town is always trying to make improvements, such as street lights, paved sidewalks and some paved streets.

The town park is a part of both the present and the future. To date, there has been over $2,000.00 spent on it, but it will still need more for completion. The park is still in the planning and building stage and will be for some time to come.

A few years ago all of the people in Kanarra were farmers or ranchers. Today a very small percent work in town. Many go to places such as Nevada to work, some work in Cedar City, and some at the Iron Mines. It is the only alternative and probably always will be. There is nothing for the men to do in the way of employment unless they are farmers or own one of the small businesses.

Despite all of the failures and disappointments that have confronted the people, the threads are still strong and the people who live in Kanarra wouldn’t trade a block of it for the whole of New York City.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elisha H. Groves, appt. town leader</td>
<td>1861 - 1866</td>
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<td>Bishop borenzo Wesley Roundy</td>
<td>1866 - 1876</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Counselor Albert B. Griffin</td>
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<td>Ward Clerk Sarah E. Roundy</td>
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Ward Clerk Sarah E. Roundy Sylvester  1913 - 1914
Ward Clerk Reese J. Williams   1914 - 1915
Ward Clerk Noel B. Williams    1915 - 1920
Ward Clerk Jesse F. Williams  1920 - 1921

Bishop Reese James Williams  1921 - 1925
First Counselor William C. Reeves  1921 - 1923
Second Counselor William W. Pollock  1921 - 1922
First Counselor Albert Davies  1923 - 1925
Second Counselor Norman Barrick  1922 - 1923
Second Counselor Horace N. Roundy
Ward Clerk Jesse F. Williams

Bishop Riley Garner Williams  1925 - 1930
First Counselor Horace M. Roundy  1925 - 1930
Second Counselor Rulon Berry Flatt  1925 - 1930
Ward Clerk Jesse F. Williams  1925 - 1930

Bishop Wells Allison Williams  1930 - 1934
First Counselor Lorenzo J. Williams  1930 - 1934
Second Counselor Cloyd Beck Berry  1930 - 1931
Second Counselor Clair Platt  1931 - 1934
Ward Clerk Dee Evans Stapley  1930 - 1934

Bishop Horace N. Roundy  1934 - 1937
First Counselor Clair Platt  1934 - 1937
Second Counselor Lorenzo J. Williams  1934 - 1937
Ward Clerk George H. Wood  1934 - 1937

Bishop William H. Graff  1937 - 1943
First Counselor Walls Allison Williams  1937 - 1943
Second Counselor Clair Platt  1937 - 1941
Second Counselor Lorenzo J. Williams  1937 - 1943
Ward Clerk Lynn Reeves  1937 - 1943

Bishop Lorenzo J. Williams  1943 - 1949
First Counselor Lynn Reeves  1943 - 1949
Second Counselor Ivan J. Davies  1943 - 1948
Second Counselor Elton Fiske Stout  1948 - 1949
Ward Clerk Perry Ocal Williams  1943 - 1944
Ward Clerk Junis F. Williams  1944 - 1949
Bishop Elton Fiske Stout  1949 - 1954
First Counselor W. Ross Williams  1949 - 1953
Second Counselor Cloyd Beck Berry 1949 - 1950
Second Counselor Garth D. Pollock 1950 - 1953
First Counselor William Alton Ford 1953 - 1954
Second Counselor Harris H. Gubler 1953 - 1954
Ward Clerk Junis F. Williams 1949 - 1954

Bishop William Alton Ford 1954 - 1957
First Counselor Harris H. Gubler 1954 - 1957
Second Counselor James H. Cornelius 1954 - 1957
Ward Clerk Junis F. Williams 1954 - 1957

Bishop Joseph F. Williams 1958
First Counselor William H. Esplin 1958
Second Counselor Layron Christensen 1958
Ward Clerk Junis F. Williams 1958

WARD MISSIONARIES
(list incomplete)

Lorenzo W. Roundy  Rulon Platt
William S. Berry  Clair Platt
Rile Williams  Otto Reeves
John W. Berry  Lorenzo Roundy
Hiram Ford  John H. Williams
N.M. Stapley  Preston Williams
John Reeves  Kenneth Berry
John Platt  Cloyd Berry
Reese Jones  Barbara Williams
John Stapley  Kenneth Esplin
Wallace Williams  Devon Reeves