

# Introduction

The Utah diaries of Charles Ora Card document a unique period in the history of the United States. They provide insight into the national struggle relative to the enforcement of federal statutes on polygamy and the regional anguish these laws created. They reflect the growth of the American West—most particularly northern Utah, southern Idaho, and western Wyoming. The diaries also describe pivotal years in the history of the Cache Valley, Bear Lake, and Box Elder territories in Utah. They record the personal strength of a growing and devout people.

Card was a community and church leader at a pivotal time in the history of the West. He spent nearly two decades in city and county government offices from 1866 to 1885, serving as city councilman, road commissioner, coroner, justice of the peace, and selectman.

He was a strong proponent of education. During 1865–86, he taught and served on the examining board, the Logan School Board, and the Brigham Young College Board. He spent fifteen years, 1860–86, developing irrigation projects in Logan, Hyde Park, Richmond, and Smithfield. Between 1860 and 1864 he was a member of the militia. He was a farmer and a millman, operating the Card and Son Mill, Central Mills, United Order Mill, Temple Mills, and the mill for the Board of Trade.<sup>1</sup>

Two of Cache Valley's most conspicuous and historically significant buildings, the temple and the tabernacle, were constructed under the superintendency of one man: Charles Ora Card. The Logan Temple is one of the oldest temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The tabernacle, even today, dominates the landscape of Logan's Main Street and draws visitors from all over the world. If Card had accomplished nothing else in his life he would still be historically important for the role he played in constructing two of the Great Basin's most important buildings.

But Card's main focus was not building great structures. His focus was service to his community and his church, and he became one of Cache Valley's

most influential leaders. The diaries of Charles Ora Card record the words of every major church authority of the time. The volumes constitute a virtual who's who, detailing even census information and individual financial donations in Cache Valley, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and the Western States region.

A New York native, Card was the oldest son of Cyrus William and Sarah Ann Tuttle Card. His parents joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1843. On April 12, 1856, Charles, age sixteen, was baptized by his uncle Joseph France just prior to the family's departure for Iowa City to join a group of Latter-day Saints migrating to Utah. His baptism and move West altered not only the course of Card's life but eventually, as will be seen, the



*Cyrus William Card and Sarah Ann Tuttle Card*  
Courtesy: Donald G. Godfrey

<sup>1</sup> Godfrey and Card 1993, xxxvii.

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landscape of Logan, Utah, the place he came to call home.<sup>2</sup>

The Utah diaries begin on December 9, 1871, with Card, age thirty-two, preparing to depart on a mission to the eastern United States. For the next thirty-two years, with only a few exceptions, he faithfully recorded significant events in his life. Picking up his record, we find Card a mature family man anchored firmly to his faith and his community. He lives in a community that is not old in years but is rich in history. Perusing the diaries' pages, readers will find this volume somewhat like a book whose beginning pages have been removed. The editors' introduction is intended to provide background and the historical and religious context for Card's writings.

For centuries before the mountain men and the Latter-day Saints arrived in Cache Valley, Native Americans hunted, fished, and gathered seeds in the fall from the tall grass that grew abundantly on the valley floor, nourished by the fertile soil. Deer, elk, bear, and even buffalo pastured on the lush forage and drank from the rivers and streams that ran from the mountains into the Bear River. The Shoshones, historian F. Ross Peterson tells us in his book *A History of Cache County*, called themselves the Pang-Waduka, or fish eaters, because of the number of fish they were able to catch and consume. The region was sometimes designated "Chicken Valley" because of the numbers of wild chickens found in the hills bordering the approximately sixty-by-twenty-mile region. The Shoshones who claimed the area as their own, at first lived peacefully with the white settlers who came in the 1850s.

The earliest Europeans to visit Cache Valley were members of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. Jim Bridger, Peg Leg Smith, and Joseph P. Beckworth, among others, spent time on the Logan, Bear, Little Bear, and Cub rivers in 1824. John C. Fremont and Captain Howard Stansbury, government officials, traversed the valley and reported crossing both the Blacksmith Fork and the Logan rivers. But these men and the parties they led were travelers bent on exploring and mapping the region never intending to settle there. The Cache Valley area received its name because trappers would sometimes bury, or "*cache*," provisions and goods in the valley for safekeeping.

In 1841 members of the Bartleson-Bidwell wagon train traveled from Soda Springs along the Bear River and stopped near present-day Newton on Clarkston Creek, where they picked chokecherries. Leaving Clarkston Creek, they went along the west side of the valley and then passed through Cutler Canyon into Box Elder Valley, where they camped near what is today called Fielding.<sup>3</sup> These emigrants bound for Oregon were probably the first wagon trains to roll through the valley.

In 1847, the same year that the Latter-day Saints arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, a company of United States soldiers wintered in Cache Valley. These men constructed a log home to ward off the winter wind and cold close to where the community of Smithfield would later be established. When spring came they departed, leaving behind their home, some wagons, and a few tents. Indians burned the wagons, but settlers later found a cache of blacksmith tools near a stream, which led to that body of water being named Blacksmith Fork, a title that has persisted.

Many Latter-day Saint leaders believed Cache Valley was too cold for much of the year, so at first there was little or no talk of establishing permanent settlements. Mormon colonizers looked south first and founded communities in Davis, Weber, and Box Elder counties, where the climate was milder than was that of Cache Valley. Yet reports of the lush grass that carpeted the valley floor caused Church leaders to think it might be a good place to graze cattle. On July 17, 1855, a group of young Mormon men led by Briant Stringham left Salt Lake City with their wagons, carrying hay-harvesting equipment, provisions, and other necessary supplies to establish a ranch. Carrying orders from the territorial governor, Brigham Young, these Mormon cattlemen passed through Box Elder Canyon and set up camp near Haw Buck Springs while they explored the valley. On July 24 they established a permanent camp near a large spring just west of the Blacksmith Fork River and began building a house. They also harvested and stacked hay and fenced one hundred acres of land during the first few weeks they were in the valley. In August, cattle owned by prominent Church members in Salt Lake City were driven into the area, and preparations were made to winter the stock within the fenced section. Two women, Kezah Goodman-Warner and Matilda Jenkerson-

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<sup>2</sup> Godfrey and Card 1993, xxxv–xxxvii; and Hudson 1963, 10–11.

<sup>3</sup> Somers 1993, 15.

Stolworthy, who came with Stringham and his men, are believed to be the first white women to establish homes in Cache Valley.

During the winter of 1855–56, one hundred members of the Shoshone Indian tribe created a village a mile east of the Mormon ranch, and the two groups lived together peacefully. Within three years Church members' cattle grazed on more than nine thousand acres of land, and Brigham Young began considering the region as a future home for Latter-day Saints. Six men were sent to Cache Valley in August 1856 with instructions to seek out locations for permanent settlements. Led by Tooele resident Peter J. Maughan, these men returned to Salt Lake City the same month "with glowing accounts of the country."<sup>4</sup> Plans to settle Cache Valley were finalized, and in September seven families, all of whom had British roots, first saw the area in all of its splendor. The emigrants camped on Little Creek and established a community that was later named Wellsville in honor of Daniel H. Wells, who served in the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The 1857–58 Utah War caused these settlers to abandon their colony and move south to Provo with other Church members who lived in Weber, Davis, and Salt Lake counties. When peace was restored, they returned to Cache Valley. Other Latter-day Saints in search of homes and land came to the region the spring of 1859. A group known as the Reese Company forded the Logan River and made camp. On June 21, these settlers drew lots for land and then appointed a committee consisting of John P. Wright, John Nelson, and Israel J. Clark to make land allotments to new emigrants.<sup>5</sup> The community was named in honor of the mountain man Ephraim Logan. By the end of June more than thirty-eight families called Logan home.

In January 1858 the Hezekiah Thatcher family and a brother-in-law, recent Church convert William B. Preston, arrived in Payson, Utah, from the California gold fields, where they had acquired considerable wealth operating a mercantile establishment and a ranch. Learning about Cache Valley and the settlement opportunities there, they loaded their wagons and left California, arriving in Logan in August 1859. When Preston first saw Logan, he turned

to his brother-in-law John W. Thatcher and said, "This is good enough for me."<sup>6</sup>

On November 14, 1859, Apostles Orson Hyde and Ezra T. Benson visited the community and organized a ward. They extended only two callings before leaving Logan: William B. Preston was called to serve as bishop, and George L. Farrell was sustained as ward clerk. When the two Apostles returned to Salt Lake City, they reported to Brigham Young, "for beauty of landscape and richness of soil, Cache Valley can hardly be equaled."<sup>7</sup>

During winter of 1859 the community banded together to construct a schoolhouse for their children and to lay out the community in fort fashion for protection in case of an Indian attack. Under Peter Maughan's leadership, the Cache Military District was organized and a select company of fifty cavalrymen led by Thomas E. Ricks, called the Minute Men, was commissioned. Charles Ora Card and his friend Moses Thatcher, who was three years younger, were both members of this, the valley's first military unit.<sup>8</sup>

By spring 1860 more than one hundred families called Logan home, and Maughan, then the area's presiding bishop, had moved there as well. John R. Blanchard was the first of the settlers to die, and the community set aside land for a cemetery and appointed James Ellis as sexton.

In little more than a year's time, so many Latter-day Saints had chosen Logan as their home that Church leaders created three new wards. William Preston joined Maughan as a general bishop over the area, and Benjamin Lewis, Henry Ballard, John B. Thatcher, and Thomas X. Smith were called to preside over the individual wards. These four new bishops were Card's friends and are mentioned over and over again on the pages of his diary.<sup>9</sup> In addition to bishops, Church leaders also called a Cache Valley high council, which served under the direction of Bishop Maughan.

While Logan became the largest Cache Valley community, Latter-day Saints also founded six other towns in 1859–60, all but two located on the east side of the valley. Later small communities would join Wellsville and Mendon, snuggled against the west hills. In fall 1859 the area's first high priests quorum was formed, and David B. Dille was the

<sup>4</sup>K. Godfrey n.d.a, 6.

<sup>5</sup>W. C. Jenson 1927, 6.

<sup>6</sup>L. Thatcher n.d., 3.

<sup>7</sup>F. Peterson 1997, 36–37.

<sup>8</sup>Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association 1908–9, 1,007.

<sup>9</sup>W. C. Jenson 1927, 9.

initial president. Members of this quorum met in Dille's home. Seventies, elders, teachers, and deacons quorums followed, all of whose officers were grown men. In 1861 Brigham Young sent Apostle Ezra T. Benson to live in Logan, where he became the region's first stake president. Bishop Maughan worked with Elder Benson and devoted his time to temporal affairs, as bishops were supposed to do according to revelation.

After three years in Farmington, Utah, the Card family moved to Cache Valley. Nineteen-year-old Charles, who had been ordained a seventy in fall 1859, moved to Logan and constructed a log home for the family. The rest of the Cards arrived in March 1860. Cyrus, the father, and his industrious son Charles built a sawmill on the Logan River and also operated a small farm. Charles worked with his father in building roads and canals as well as grist- and sawmills.

For parts of two years Card attended business college in Ogden, residing with Francis A. Brown and his wife, Hattie. Returning to Logan he earned additional money teaching the First Ward school, an experience that instilled in him a love for education that continued throughout his life. Prominent teachers who were Card's contemporaries included Harriet Preston, Ida Ione Cook, Moses Thatcher, Charles W. Penrose, and Joseph E. Hyde.<sup>10</sup> Logan City received its charter in 1865, and officials made plans to construct three new schools. Made from adobe, these buildings were twenty-five by fifty feet and the windows were placed high in the walls so the children would not be distracted by outside activities. In 1872 a school district was created and Charles Card, Alvin Crockett, and Robert Davidson were elected trustees. These men supervised the Logan High School, called a seminary, which met in Lindquist Hall. Card, with his interest and activities in education, was later appointed to the first board of trustees of Brigham Young College.<sup>11</sup>

In 1866 William H. Shearman was asked by Elder Benson to organize Sunday Schools in each of the valley's settlements. Moses Thatcher, though just twenty-four years old, received the call to preside over all the Sunday Schools Shearman organized. Thatcher chose Card as his first assistant and O. C. Ormsby as his second. These three men visited Sunday Schools throughout the valley,

provided instruction to local leaders, and presided over a monthly union meeting where they gave further guidance to all Sunday School officers and teachers. For the next two decades, Thatcher, Card, and Ormsby traveled together and worked closely in a number of Church, business and civic activities.

In 1867 Mary Ann Weston Maughan, wife of Peter J. Maughan, was called as the first Relief Society president for Cache Valley. She assisted in organizing Relief Societies in the various towns and also provided council and advice to the women. The sisters of the valley made furnishings and provided libraries for each school. Those early members of the Relief Society were told by Elder Benson that they had the power to rebuke diseases, be physicians to their families, and administer to their children when there were no elders present.<sup>12</sup>

Only five years after the first settlers arrived in Logan, Elder Benson met with male Church members and discussed with them the building of a tabernacle. Everyone agreed that such a structure should be built and a number of men pledged money and materials for its construction. Work commenced almost immediately as men began cutting timber and quarrying rock for the sixty-foot-wide, one-hundred-six-foot-long building. Following the deaths of Elder Benson and Bishop Maughan and the mission call to Europe of William B. Preston, construction lagged for seven years. In 1873 Church President Brigham Young traveled to Logan, reviewed the building site, and suggested that the building be enlarged, so work began anew. Card received the assignment to serve as the building's superintendent, a position he held until he was called to oversee the building of the Logan Temple. By January 1877 the basement of the tabernacle had been dedicated by Franklin D. Richards and meetings were held in that part of the building. The tabernacle itself was not dedicated until November 1, 1891.

Logan City held its first election on March 5, 1866, and Alvin Crockett received the most votes for mayor. Aldermen were John B. Thatcher, C. B. Robbins, and Thomas X. Smith. Councilors elected were J. H. Martineau, Thomas E. Ricks, W. K. Robinson, P. Cranny, and Charles O. Card. As the newly elected officials gathered on March 14, 1866, at the request of Mayor Crockett, Elder Benson opened the meeting with prayer. The presence "of religious officials at meetings of the city council was

<sup>10</sup> W. C. Jensen 1927, 65.

<sup>11</sup> W. C. Jensen 1927, 65, 78.

<sup>12</sup> C. Madsen 1995, 132.

characteristic of the harmonious and close relations between the church and the state in early Cache Valley history.”<sup>13</sup> Card’s responsibilities on the council included serving as irrigation canal company director and road commissioner.

Card had four wives. In 1867, he married Sarah Jane (Sally) Birdneau, the daughter of Logan blacksmith Nehemiah Wood Birdneau and America Ann Steele. On October 17, 1876, he took a second wife, Sarah Jane Painter, daughter of George and Jane Herbert Painter. His third wife was the daughter of Brigham Young and Zina Diantha Huntington Young. Card married Zina Presindia Young-Williams-Card on June 17, 1884. His fourth wife was Lavinia Clark Rigby, daughter of William F. and Mary Clark Rigby. They were married December 2, 1885.<sup>14</sup>

The Utah diaries begin with Card’s mission, but when he returned to Utah in 1872, he apparently stopped keeping a diary until fall 1877. Knowing the record to be of historical significance, he began writing again six weeks after the cornerstone-laying ceremonies of the Logan Temple. His first entry was November 3, 1877.

Card’s Utah diaries are important for the insight they provide regarding the development of northern Utah and the construction of the area’s most important building, the temple, as well as for their reflection of just how the Church functioned in the 1870s and 1880s. The dedication of Church and stake leaders is reflected as they visited four times a year the thirty wards and branches that made up the Cache Valley Stake. In May 1883, for example, Card conducted meetings in Logan, Hyrum, Paradise, Ogden, Paris, Bear Lake, Meadowville, Bloomington, Montpelier, Soda Springs, Eagle Rock, Pocatello, Showshone, Mendon, Wellsville, Millsville, and Providence, and at the Temple Saw Mill and the Peterson Saw Mill.<sup>15</sup> Each meeting was carefully recorded. Card and his companions conducted meetings with Sunday School leaders and students, Mutual leaders and members, Relief Society presidencies and women, Primary officers and teachers and students, as

well as bishoprics and quorum presidencies. Traveling by rail, wagon, and buggy, on horseback, and in snowshoes, Card and other members of the stake presidency preached on a plethora of gospel subjects, including tithing, the Word of Wisdom, obedience to priesthood leaders, and the importance of practicing plural marriage.

Charles O. Card was intimately associated with the Church’s general leadership authorities, often entertaining them in his home and lodging with them when he was in the territory’s capital city. We learn from Card’s diaries that there were difficulties among Church members, transgressions of moral laws, violations of the Word of Wisdom, and some neglect of duties. But for the most part readers will be impressed with the faithfulness and dedication of the Latter-day Saints as they established strings of communities from Rexburg, Idaho, on the north to Avon, Utah, on the south.

While Card’s diary entries are seldom personally reflective, his faithfully recorded summaries of hundreds of sermons allows historians to re-create what Church leaders both believed and taught. Much of what he wrote is important in developing a theological history of the Church. His participation in important events, including Church courts, provides details that other record keepers have omitted. There is no “smoking gun” in what Card wrote, but his diaries rank along with those of John D. Lee, Hosea Stout, Patty Sessions, and Caroline Crosby in providing detail as historians attempt to reconstruct the Mormon past. There are few heretics among the company he kept, little false doctrine taught, and only a tidbit now and then that would draw the attention of anti-Mormons. Instead, readers discover a man firm in his faith, committed to responding to the counsel of general Church officials and willing to sacrifice his time, talent, and energy to the church and community he embraced in his youth. As Card wrote on December 15, 1880, “It is better to wear out than to rust out.”

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<sup>13</sup> Ricks and Cooley 1956, 103.

<sup>14</sup> Hudson 1963, 180–83.

<sup>15</sup> Hudson 1963, 51.