Dangerous Outpost: Thomas Corless and the Fort Limhi/Salmon River Mission

William G. Hartley

"When a man is appointed to take a mission," President Heber C. Kimball warned a Sunday afternoon audience in the Old Tabernacle, "unless he has a just and honorable reason for not going, if he does not go he will be severed from the church." With that as a preface, he then read off names of men the First Presidency was calling on missions. If Thomas Corless anticipated a mission, he probably expected to go to his homeland, England. But that Sunday, 24 February 1856, his name was announced as one called on a mission "to the north," meaning to the Salmon River Mission far up in Idaho at a place called Fort Limhi (now spelled Lemhi).[1]

In terms of diary or recollected accounts, the Salmon River Mission is well documented. And although nearly two dozen articles, book sections, chapters, and theses focus on the mission, almost all were produced more than thirty years ago. What follows is a new synthesis incorporating previous information along with new insights, packaged not as a general history of the mission, like most other accounts, but as a personalized history focusing on missionary Thomas Corless.[2]

From England to Nauvoo to Utah

Thomas Corless was born in Longton, Lancashire, England, on 6 November 1831, his parents' second child.[3] When he was about six, both parents converted to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1837. In 1841, the family immigrated to America on board the ship

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Rochester, with several of the Church's apostles who were returning from England. That May, the Corlesses joined the pool of Latter-day Saints then collecting in Nauvoo, Illinois. In 1848, the family trekked west to Utah and became long-time residents in Salt Lake City's Fourth Ward, where their ninth and last child was born that December. Thomas was ordained an elder in 1855, a year before his mission call. By then, he was taking up farming, the same livelihood as his father.

Thomas Corless
Photo courtesy of Richard A. Christenson

A Call to Convert Indians

Apparently, Thomas and the others were called to missionary service that February Sunday because they had too much free time on their hands. "There has been Courts in session here for weeks and weeks," First Presidency counselor Heber C. Kimball explained, "and I suppose that one hundred and fifty or two hundred of the brethren have been hanging round, with the Council House filled to the brim." Because "this scenery" continued for a long time, President Young sent his clerk, Thomas Bullock, to take their names "for the purpose of giving them missions, if they had not anything to do of any more importance." From these, President Young asked Kimball to decide who should go. Kimball chose about thirty to go south to grow cotton, four dozen to strengthen the Church's outpost on the Green River, and "some thirty-five or forty to go north to Salmon River, where Thomas J. Smith is, to strengthen up that post,"of which Thomas Corless was one. President Kimball picked another thirty to go to the Carson Valley, thirty to do lead mining near Las Vegas, and about three dozen to do proselytizing work abroad. "These are all good men," Elder Kimball added, "but they need to learn a lesson."[4]

When this surprise call came, Thomas, twenty-four, had more interest in an eighteen-year-old girl named Eliza Crowther than in Indians. She, too was British born, in Worcestershire six years after Thomas's birth. She had been in Utah less than two years when Thomas's mission call came, and she resided in the Corlesses' Fourth Ward.

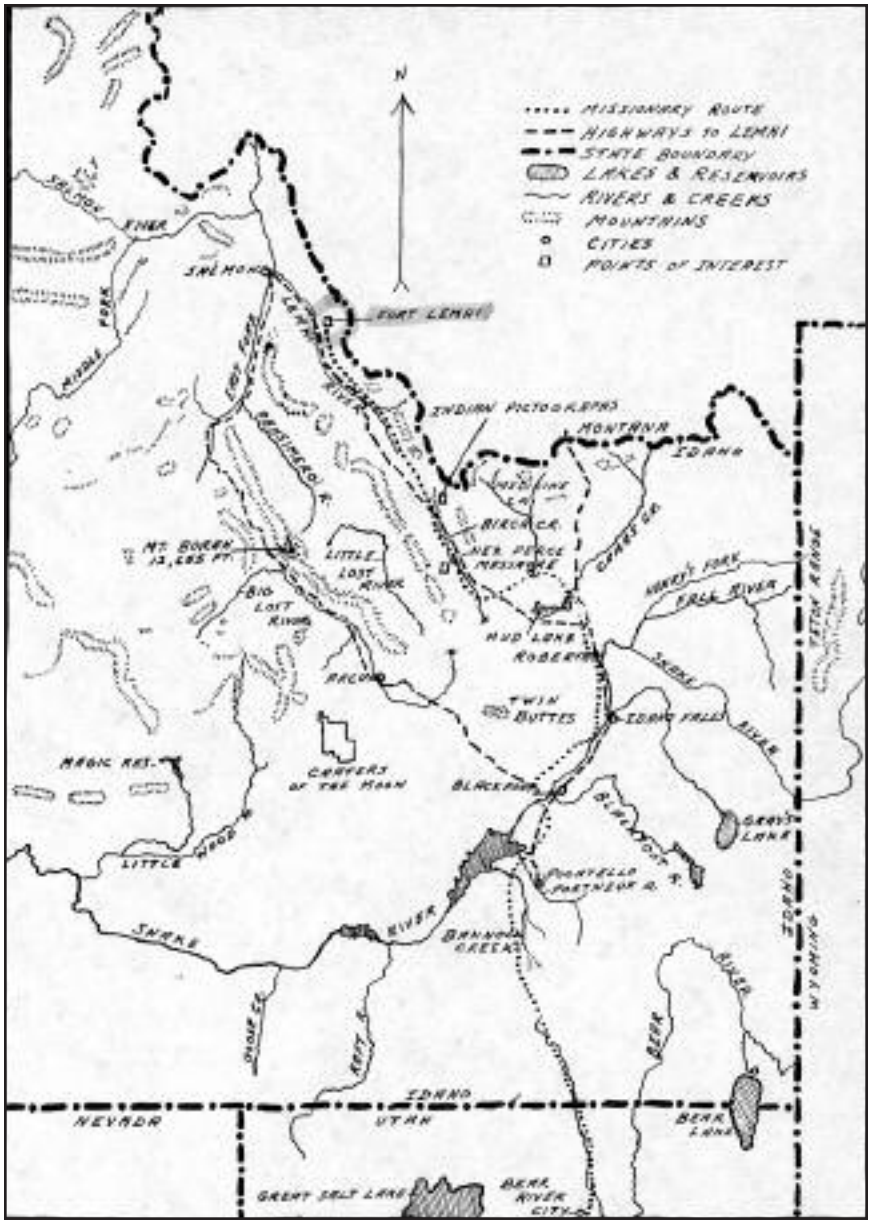
If Thomas had thought much about Indians before his name was called from the stand, he probably disliked or perhaps feared them, based on Utah Saints' experiences with them. His first home in Utah was the Old Fort—a fort to protect pioneers from Indians. Then, in 1853 and 1854, he heard, as all Utahns did, distressing stories about Saints being killed by Ute Indians during the Walker Indian War. Then, just days before his mission call, he could have heard about Indians near Utah Lake who killed three whites, forcing the governor to call out the Utah militia.

Despite almost unavoidable conflicts between Indians and settlers, Brigham Young's main position, and hence the Church's, was to push peaceful coexistence as well as proselyting. To implement that double approach, he had sent missionaries out among the native peoples to live with them, teach them farming, and preach the gospel to them. Now, Thomas Corless was called to reinforce one of those distant missions.

Thomas could not leave until winter eased off, so he had time to round up food and equipment for his mission. Outfitting, however, was a challenge for those called. Each man was supposed to take three bushels of wheat, three hundred pounds of flour, and various seeds, all this when the Saints were experiencing the "Famine of 1856" stemming from the drought of 1855 and the killer winter.[5] Some Limhi-bound elders were set apart for their duty during April general conference; perhaps Thomas was also.[6] On 15 April 1856, one Limhi-bound group, including Thomas, rolled north out of Salt Lake City.[7] At Brigham City, others joined the caravan, which then headed into the Malad Valley and present-day Idaho. Thomas took along two oxen, one cow, and a wagon loaded with flour, food, guns, and ammunition.[8]

Salmon River Mission Beginnings

The Salmon River Mission was a year old when Thomas set out to join it. The mission began in April 1855 when Church leaders called twenty-seven men to settle somewhere among Flathead, Bannock, or Shoshone Indians—which meant in present-day Idaho or Montana, then part of Oregon Territory—or anywhere the tribes would receive them. "Teach the Indians the principles of civilization," their first instructions said, and "teach them to cease their savage customs and to live in peace with each other and with the whites; to cease their roving habits and to settle down; also teach



Southeastern Idaho map shows Fort Lemhi highlighted on the upper part of the map, near the north directional arrow. Kate B. Carter, comp., Our Pioneer Heritage, *V. 7, (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1964) p. 145.*
Map courtesy of the International Daughters of Utah Pioneers

them how to build houses and homes; in fact to do all they could to better the conditions of these fallen people, and bring them to a better life."[9]

On 15 May, Thomas L. Smith of Farmington, Utah, led that first company—a train of thirteen wagons. Most of the men were from communities north of Salt Lake City. They traveled north toward the Snake River. Along the way, they encountered Neil McArthur, an ex-Hudson Bay Company man who had wintered on the Salmon River, and he recommended the site as a good one for white missionaries wanting to work with Indians.[10]

On 27 May, they reached the Portneuf River near where it flows into the Snake. There, two Bannock visited them and then traveled with them for three days. On the third day, another Bannock and his wife and child joined the group. George Washington Hill, who spoke their language, preached about the Book of Mormon to the guests, and the three men accepted baptism. The expedition followed the Snake River somewhat closely beyond where Idaho Falls now is. Soon after that, they bent westerly and northwesterly, paralleling some of the present Montana border, and moved into the Salmon Mountains. On 4 June, another group of five Bannock joined them for the next three days. On 12 June, the group camped near the Salmon River. There, the head chief of the Bannock tribe showed up, called "Sho-woo-koo." Because the chief had been told about the coming of the Saints, he had traveled seventy-five miles to see them and welcome these whites to Bannock country. Then, in a council meeting, the chief "expressed his pleasure at the intention of the Mormons to settle in the Salmon River region and assured them that they could have any land they wished for farming purposes." He said his people were in need, and he wanted the Saints to show them how to farm and to do it right there—not farther north in Nez Perce or Flathead country. He went with President Smith and three others and scouted out a place to settle, fifteen miles from their first camp. The missionaries' journey had taken thirty days, much of it across unmapped lava beds, barren stretches, and mountains.[11]

Located approximately 370 miles from Salt Lake City in what was then Oregon Territory, this was a good site in a narrow mountain valley. There, five thousand feet high and nearly four hundred miles from Great Salt Lake City, the men built Fort Limhi, named for a Nephite king in the Book of Mormon. Likewise, they named the valley's stream the Limhi River. They had located in an area the Bannock felt was theirs but where Bannock, Shoshoni, and Nez Perce tribes met yearly in early summer to fish for salmon, trade for horses, and gamble. During the missionaries' first week there, about twenty lodges of Nez Perce arrived from the east and camped about a half mile away. They traded three or four hundred horses to Chief Sho-woo-koo and some of the Bannock who were there with him. Camp

clerk David Moore recorded that both the Bannock and Nez Perce chiefs joined with the missionaries when they met for prayer and hymn singing—even keeping time with the tune during the singing.[12] The tribes permitted the missionaries to occupy the land and to fish, hunt, and cut timber—but not for profit-making purposes.

According to George Washington Hill, the company's interpreter, the chief told Hill that the Great Spirit had told him white men were coming and should be welcomed and learned from. He and Hill agreed that Indian and white leaders would arbitrate any difficulties that arose rather than fight each other. Based on the chief's instructions to Hill, the missionaries "got out large timbers" while the Indians made "wicket work," and soon large fish traps were erected on the swift-flowing river in which whites and Indians were catching salmon.[13]

The missionaries selected a fort site west of the mountain and east of the stream in a valley not more than a mile wide. Then, they built a strong corral and fences to hold their horses and cattle. Next, they dammed the stream about fifty rods above the fort, laid out an irrigation ditch, diverted water onto land below or north of the fort, and plowed and planted several acres of peas, potatoes, and turnips. There was no private ownership; the fort was a "community fort," and the land and crops were community property. Then, using timber cut on the well-wooded slopes east of them, the men constructed a fort—a palisade of cottonwood logs twelve feet above ground (three feet below) surrounding log cabins within. Between palisade and cabins was space for storing wood. In the fort's center was an open square, where the men dug a well and erected a tall flagpole. They built one house in the fort that had a large room, which was used for church services and other meetings. Their corral had mud walls seven feet high. In addition to their own projects, they helped the Indians catch salmon.[14]

Mormon rules required none could trade with Indians but those few given that responsibility by company leaders. Trading on Sundays was forbidden. By mid-July, the Bannock left for their annual buffalo hunt eastward into present-day Montana. Many Bannock and Shoshoni returned in October. Some attended the Latter-day Saint church meetings, and on 21 October, about fifty-five were baptized.[15]

Unfortunately, a short summer season prevented the missionaries from growing much, so President Smith sent about half the men back to Utah for supplies. Returning by 19 November, several brought wives and children with them. When winter set in, many Indians collected near the fort, expecting to receive food. Supplies drained, so in December 1855, President Smith sent nine men and three wagons back to Utah to collect emergency food. Then he and others took pack animals and likewise went home, arriv-

Fort Limhi
Photo courtesy of LDS Church Archives

ing in March. That winter of 1855–56 was a killing winter of bitter cold and heavy snows in Utah settlements, and the Saints' livestock died in droves.

In Utah, President Smith pleaded with President Young to send reinforcements to Fort Limhi. His request helped to trigger the mission calls in April that included Thomas Corless. The nine men from Limhi wintered in Utah and then headed back in April 1856, taking along Thomas Corless and about twenty-one other newly called reinforcements together with some spouses.[16]

Long Trip to Fort Limhi

On 21 April 1856, at Grover's Springs north of Brigham City, the merged groups organized themselves into one company. It then included twenty-six people, eleven wagons, twenty yoke of oxen, three horses, two mules, seventeen cows, one steer, and one calf. On 30 April, they camped by the Snake River at a ferry crossing. From one wagon, they unloaded a skiff and spent three days caulking it. They took their wagons apart and put the wheels and axles in the boat for the crossing. The boat towed a raft loaded with boxes. The men swam the stock over, except for a few that had to be

towed across. To get the boat back for another trip, through thick brush they had to pass a rope hand over hand for about a quarter mile. They reached Fort Limhi on 15 May, covering nearly four hundred miles in twenty-eight days—averaging 14.3 miles per day.[17]

Thomas's company of recruits became welcome additions to the Church's northernmost outpost. The veteran missionaries gladly offered them lodging in their houses and opened up cupboards for some of the new food Thomas's group brought them. During the next three days, the newcomers unpacked, received cabin assignments, inspected the fort, the canal, the farmlands, and the logging and fishing areas, and learned the rules and routines of the settlement. Then, on 18 May 1856, Thomas and the other newcomers submitted to rebaptisms to signify personal commitment to the mission.[18]

Friendly Indians

The fort, Thomas saw, was a neat stockade sixteen rods square that stood close to the Limhi River. It contained several log houses and a blacksmith shop. A farmer's son, Thomas found that the soil along the river was rich, the cattle pasturage good, and timber abundant. James T. Miller, who arrived there a year later, said of this site that the river bottom lands were for the most part narrow, affording farmers narrow strips of good, arable land. The location included "some few good meadows and a very extensive range for stock on both sides of the river" and "considerable timber and underbrush interspersed with patches of wild gooseberry [and] some currants."[19]

"None of us knew the language of the people we were sent to," noted Thomas's fellow worker George Washington Hill, their interpreter. (It is doubtful that Thomas, during his mission, learned much of the Indians' languages.) Thomas found that the Indians were friendly. Some attended Latter-day Saint services in the fort and seemed eager to learn the white man's ways of farming. Shortly after arriving, Thomas witnessed the baptism of Joseph Mo-pe-ah, Israel Yo-ko-ap, Alfred Tis-sea-da-Make, John Cots-Se-Qua-Mi-at, and others. Dozens of Indians were taught the gospel by the few missionaries who knew any Indian language. By the time Thomas arrived, more than a hundred had been baptized. Most were Shoshoni. The Nez Perce probably were never seriously proselyted because of language problems, Catholic influence on their chief, and their being in the vicinity only for short periods. Among the Bannocks, the more nomadic and warlike of the Indians, few were baptized.[20] It is not known if Thomas ever taught or baptized any Indians during his two-year mission there.[21]

Thomas arrived early enough in 1856 (15 May) to contribute needed

labor to various projects. (For example, Israel Clark spent 26 to 31 May plowing and planting a garden.[22]) Thomas helped break land, plant grain and corn, fence, set fish traps, and herd cattle. While not working, he and other missionaries studied Indian languages and the gospel. One diarist summed up their late May activities this way: "Pleasant and dry, grain watered, timber hauled & ploughing & various other work done. Natives moved nearby & camped."[23]

Grasshopper Damage

Ten days after Thomas arrived at the fort, grasshoppers appeared in the bottom lands, and soon, to the missionaries' dismay, clouds of the winged destroyers landed and feasted on the sprouting crops. Jacob Miller's journal gives some details: "Beginning with June 2nd commenced fighting grasshoppers, which continued to the 23rd. Grasshoppers were very thick. We tried to head them off the crops with water ditches. We caught them morning and evening with sacks. We dug holes in the ground 5 to 8 rods apart and drove them into the holes with brush, 5 to 10 men forming a circle to drive them in and then bury them, sometimes a peck of them in a hole—two such sets working part of the time. They destroyed most of the crop."[24]

When Benjamin F. Cummings and others arrived at Limhi on 5 July, the hoppers were gone, but so were the crops. Provisions were scarce.[25]

For Thomas and the others, life at Fort Limhi was a world of much physical work and modest diversions. Diarists record an array of tasks the men tackled that related to building cabins and fences, caring for livestock, farming, and doing personal chores. They cut a lot of logs and poles and then hauled them from the timber stands to the fort. Hauling was a constant task. They hewed logs, sawed some into planks, and trimmed tree trunks into poles for fences. For cabins, they made plank floors, doors, roofs, benches, tables, bed stands, and adobe for chimneys. They built and repaired the dam and water ditches and helped construct a grist mill and mill race. They plowed, planted, turned water onto crops, dug turnips, picked peas, harvested wheat and barley, thrashed and cleaned wheat, and cut and hauled hay. Constantly, they ax-cut and sawed firewood. At times, they had to repair wagons, wheels, and plows. Living two or three or more to a cabin, someone had to cook meals. All had to do laundry, which they hung on clotheslines to dry. For food and for pleasure, many of the men went hunting or fishing. They took turns herding cattle and doing guard duty. They participated in some military drilling, including "sword exercise," and some studied and tried to learn an Indian language. For diversion, besides hunting and fishing, they took horseback rides, attended Sunday and midweek church meetings,

read, wrote letters, at times had a choir, visited with each other, and just plain loafed.[26]

Salmon

Salmon River. *Salmon* Mountains. *Salmon* fish. Every summer, peaking in July, this was *salmon* country. (In addition, herring made upriver runs in September, and spotted trout abounded from August on through the winter.[27]) So when grasshoppers ruined the Limhi crops, Thomas and the others lived on milk and butter from their cows and on salmon. Thomas witnessed and perhaps participated in the incredible salmon catches the Indians conducted near the fort. In late June and early July each year, large salmon from the Pacific Ocean swam up the Columbia, Snake, and Salmon Rivers and tributaries, including the Limhi River, to spawn. Indians and Mormons hung fish traps from a large pole tripod spanning the river. Then, they made two dam-like structures out of willow nets. The salmon swam between the two nets, became trapped, fought to go upstream, and jumped—sometimes seven feet in the air—across the barrier, only to land in a willow basketwork that often became "alive with a struggling mass of salmon." Men then hand captured the twenty-to-sixty-pound salmon and threw them out on the ground by the hundreds where other men killed them. "Some of the fish were so large," Jacob Miller recorded, "that when tied together at the gills or neck, and thrown across the ponies, their tails would drag the ground." The catch was sliced, smoked, and dried over fires. Bales of dried salmon, belonging to Indians and to whites, then were stored in a room in the fort for later use.[28]

Trip Home and Marriage

In July 1856, Thomas watched the Indians leave the fort after the season's salmon catch and move off for a buffalo hunt. Otherwise, his first summer there was one of replanting, after the grasshoppers retreated, and a time of increasing hunger for garden products. Once again, President Smith had to send to Utah for more food and seed wheat. So, on 28 July, about half of the men—fourteen, including Thomas—headed their wagons for Utah. By mid-August, Thomas was back home with his parents in Salt Lake City.[29]

During his few weeks home, he had more interest in his and Eliza Crowther's wedding plans than in rounding up supplies. On 21 September 1856, the couple were married, but not in the Endowment House until the next year. Although some missionaries took their wives with them to Limhi, Thomas left his new bride in Salt Lake City.

Winter Survival

Early in October, Thomas and other Limhi men headed back to the outpost. Thomas, with a wagon and two oxen, hauled three hundred pounds of flour, three bushels of wheat, seventy-five pounds of salt, and a half bushel of onions.[30] On 4 November 1856, they rolled through Fort Limhi's gate, bringing relief to missionaries' hungry stomachs. The fort's cupboards were restocked with 11,770 pounds of flour, 127 bushels of wheat, and 1,445 pounds of salt.[31] Five days after the men arrived, President Smith, implementing the Mormon reformation then under way in Utah, ordered his flock to repent and be rebaptized. Thomas and the rest were baptized on 9 November 1856.[32]

Eliza Crowther Corless
Photo courtesy of Richard A. Christenson

Soon, the winter season, with shorter days, longer nights, and cold and snow, engulfed the little outpost. Fort dwellers celebrated Christmas by holding a dance and New Year's day with "a party in the evening."[33] On 1 January 1857, snow stood from five inches to one foot deep. Israel Clark noted, "A few Indians here at present begging every day from door to door and at night gambling away everything they have." Two days' ride away, he added, "most of the Indians of the country" were camped, along with some mountaineers.[34] Bad weather, tight quarters, and boredom made the colonists edgy, and after President Smith left for Utah on 22 January, again seeking supplies, bad feelings surfaced. Resentment was voiced about some men breaking company rules that forbade trading with Indians. There was discontent, too, about an uneven distribution of goods. Acting President B. F. Cummings, unable to control his men, boiled over when four men, including Thomas Corless, missed a fast meeting on 5 February 1857. Cummings recorded in his diary his version of the clash:

> Thursday—Fast meeting, I. J. Clark, G. Belnap, W. McIntyre and T. Corless absent. At a prayer meeting in the evening, I. J. Clark arose and T. Corless, being present, I enquired the cause of their being absent from the fast meeting. When Clark arose and said he was away because he wanted to be, giving no satisfaction but showed a spirit of defiance, giving me to understand that it was none of my business, nor anyone else. Brother Corless assumed a similar position at first, but soon got ashamed and made satisfactory acknowledgments. Bro. Clark persisted in his opposition and the meeting was dismissed.[35]

Three days later, at the fort's Sunday meetings, the four "fast-day delinquents" were present. Gilbert Belnap, one of the accused four, in later years ascribed the minor mutiny to a lack of evenhandedness in distributing foodstuffs.[36] Apparently, he, Thomas, and others had nearly starved during the 1856–57 winter. Friction arose too about the "all-things-in-common" system of property and farming, a system that discouraged the harder-working men when they had to support some lazy company members.[37]

Fort Owen and the Bitterroot Valley

Limhi Saints had dealings with two forts in the region, neither of which was close by. Nearly every month, someone from the mission was passing by Fort Hall, halfway between Fort Limhi and Salt Lake City. Fort Hall (near present Pocatello) was abandoned by the Hudson Bay Company during 1855–56. After that, Fort Owen, in the Bitterroot Valley far to the north and east, became of increasing importance to the Limhi missionaries. Most of the mountaineers who traded with Fort Limhi and with the Shoshoni made Fort Owen their general headquarters. The Mormons maintained a good relationship with Fort Owen until the fall of 1857 when the United States army marched against Mormon Utah.[38]

Seeking to establish a Latter-day Saint region in the West, Church leaders frequently sent men on exploring missions to scout out possible settlement areas or resource pockets.[39] In that regard, President Young sent three men from Fort Limhi to explore the Bitterroot Valley (in present southwestern Montana) and the area of the headwaters of the Missouri River. In November 1856, Benjamin F. Cummings, Pleasant Green Taylor, and Ebenezer Robinson wended their ways across the Continental Divide to near present-day Bannock, followed the Big Hole River northerly, crossed the divide again, and dropped down into the Bitterroot Valley from the south. Groves of pines, beautiful prairies, and pure water streams marked the beautiful landscape. They were in the Flathead tribe's homeland.

They rode to a post maintained by ex-Hudson's Bay agent Neil McArthur, whom Limhi leaders had met earlier. On Church orders, they

made inquiry about how to buy Fort Hall, in lower Idaho. He said he'd look into it and let them know by spring. The trio examined the region, which was their primary mission, noting a sheltered and defensible ten-mile by forty-mile valley (Missoula now sits at the northern end) that could sustain agriculture. The location, they noted, was within two hundred miles of Fort Benton, a post on the Missouri River reachable by steamboats from down river and accessible by wagons from Fort Limhi. "We could not help thinking that some day Bitter-root valley as well as other portions of the country over east of the mountains could become the abode of the saints," Cummings said. He drew a map of the region. When the trio of explorers returned to Fort Limhi, President Smith with three other men took their report and map to Salt Lake City, a perilous winter trek, and gave it to President Young.[40]

President Young's May 1857 Visit

Identifying from the men's report some major possibilities for the north country, President Young announced a week later, on 22 February, his intent to personally visit Fort Limhi. He called a large number of Utah's leaders to accompany him. In the group were the First Presidency, the commander of Utah's militia, three Apostles, seven of Utah's militia generals and other officers, and Church leaders from up and down Utah's line of settlements. In the group, too, were two surveyors who carefully mapped the route to Fort Limhi (and then from Limhi eastward across the continental divide) and published it that June as a guide for potential emigrants.[41]

For the Limhi outpost, including Thomas Corless, President Young's visit was a morale booster. His company of about 140 people, which arrived on 8 May 1857, included twenty-two ladies and five boys, traveling in twenty-eight carriages and twenty-six wagons. "The camp was called together for prayer, which was proceeded by a hymn," Jacob Miller said, "followed by some lively songs." Each member of the First Presidency counseled the colonists. President Young admired the cleanliness of the fort but wondered why the group had settled so far north, so distant from any Mormon settlement. He thought the Fort Hall region, near present Blackfoot, Idaho, might have been a better choice. President Kimball preached a strong reminder to the missionary men that they should become one people with the Indians by marrying them. "Go now and take their daughters to wife," he ordered. President Young urged caution in conduct so the missionaries would not give Indians cause to make trouble. Responding, nine men soon left the fort, proposed to Indian maidens, and were refused. General Daniel H. Wells spent his visiting time reorganizing and drilling the Fort Limhi militia. Many hun-

dreds of Indians came to the fort to see the "Big Chief" of the Mormons. Young and his entourage left for home on 13 May.[42]

There is no evidence that Thomas Corless married an Indian or desired to. Charles F. Middleton, a fall 1857 arrival, noted that the intermarriage idea was unpopular at the fort: "As far as marrying squaws is concerned I can say that if that is the only way of bringing them about to what the Lord wants of them I am afraid the thing will be prolonged some time yet from the fact that the Natives are not that way included at all, neither do I believe that there are but few of the Mormon boys in this place that want to perform that part of their religion."[43]

Latter-day Saint records name three men who did marry Indians, and it is worth noting that two were missionaries called when Thomas was: Thomas Day and Richard B. Margetts. The third was Ezra J. Bernard, one of the founding missionaries of Fort Limhi.[44]

From Mission to Colony

Historian John D. Nash shows rather conclusively that Brigham Young, during his visit, changed the Limhi mission's purpose from converting Indians to becoming a permanent Latter-day Saint colony. As evidence, he noted that President Young "promised to send more settlers, and preparations were immediately begun to receive them." While there, his party helped select a site for a second fort and settlement a few miles north and down river.[45] Based on President Young's counsel, the Limhi men started building a mud wall on one side of the fort.[46] President Young advised closer relationships with the Indians, and, as noted, advised the Limhi men to seek Indian wives. With settlement goals in mind, seventeen Limhi men left for Salt Lake City on 18 June "for the purpose of moving their families and effects to this place." When the lower fort settlement was surveyed for the newcomers, all the fields were divided into individual plots, and the missionaries drew lots for those fields. Before that time, they had cultivated the fields in common. Israel Justus Clark said he drew for thirty acres of land in late May. Men built the lower fort and corrals near it, opened up new land for farms, and dug more ditches for irrigation.[47] On 3 December, men drew lots for land at the lower fort.[48] Thus, by late 1857, Nash says, the Salmon River Mission was less a mission and more a colony, something Indians suspected and did not like.[49]

Fading of Peace

Soon after President Young's company headed back toward Utah,

Thomas drove a two-horse wagon in a train of thirteen wagons and fifteen men back home to help obtain supplies for the colony.[50] This errand made him miss another half season of farm labor and missionary work. However, it did permit him to spend time with wife Eliza and the Corlesses. On 7 August 1857, he and Eliza visited the Endowment House where they were sealed as man and wife for time and eternity. It was emotionally tough for men like Thomas, home briefly from Fort Limhi, to go back, as David Moore admitted under date of 24 March 1857: "The time had now come for me to return to my field of labour, and my feelings were much overcome with the thoughts of leaving my family and Friends and to go again amongst the dark and benighted Sons of Laman to endeavor to spread the Gospel of salvation among them which duty is a very trying one to all the Brethren which is on that mission, but it had to be done."[51]

Thomas was still in Salt Lake City in July 1857 when Utahns heard disheartening news that a large federal army was marching their way from the states to squelch a purported Latter-day Saint rebellion against federal authority. One of President Young's first responses was to shore up isolated Fort Limhi. Apparently, he saw that northern area as a possible refuge in case the army attacked Utah settlements.[52] That fall when Thomas headed north again, seventeen new missionaries journeyed with his returning group—numbering forty-three men and fifteen sisters, plus some children.[53] Upon reaching the fort on 27 October, after twenty-five travel days, they reinforced the fourteen or so men still there. But then eleven men were released to head home and left the next day with eight wagons.

During Thomas's absence, the Limhi farmers produced a decent harvest of potatoes, vegetables, and twenty-five hundred bushels of wheat.[54] This was the first grain grown in the Idaho-Montana region. Other firsts to the credit of the Limhi settlers are building the first houses and mill and digging the first irrigation ditches in that country. Also, Fort Limhi was Idaho's first Anglo-Saxon settlement.[55] Upon reaching the fort, one of the new men in Thomas's company, James T. Miller, described the Indians in the area:

> A band of Shoshones called Sheepeaters inhabit the nearer surrounding country, although it is claimed by the Bannocks, who with other Shoshones resort here in the summer for their supplies of fish and sometimes for gambling and other amusements, after their hunting seasons are over. To these amusements passing bands of Nez Perces Indians occasionally join. The surrounding country for hundreds of miles, is inhabited only by the different bands and tribes of the wild natives of the forest, with now and then a hardy mountaineer or trapper. . . . The mountaineers and traders have supplied the Indians to a considerable extent with guns and ammunition, which supersedes greatly the necessity of the bow and arrow. They generally dress well in their skins and robes and delight to view with the glass [mirror], their faces which they attempt to beautify with paints.[56]

Fort Limhi pasture and walls, c. 1918
Photo courtesy of LDS Church Archives

Returnees and recruits alike found the Limhi settlers in a tense situation. Indians in the vicinity there felt confused by the news of the federal army's approach. Whose side would the tribes be on? "Who is going to eat whom?" they wondered.[57] It appears that someone—federal agents, army men, or mountain men—were whispering promises to the Indians of generous government prices for any Mormon cattle they stole. While fall evolved into winter, Indians felt more and more temptation to turn against their Mormon friends.

Fort dwellers spent the fall of 1857 threshing their precious Limhi wheat, a project they finished in mid-December. They also worked on the second, smaller fort four or five miles downstream from Fort Limhi and laid out some new farm plots there. "Went to the north fort and inlarged it for the accomidation of the new comers," President Smith wrote on 2 November. Men living at the north or lower fort had Sunday meetings separate from those in the main fort.[58] Thomas stayed at the main fort, no doubt sharing one of its twenty-five cabins with one or more men. Charles F. Middleton noted on 15 December that "some hard words passed between Thos. Corless & R. Margetts about the fanning mill."[59]

By December, peace among Indians began unraveling, picked loose by intertribal bickering. On 21 December, forty lodges of Shoshoni arrived at the fort, received food and kind treatment, and then left. On 26 December, a party of angry Nez Perce showed up in pursuit of Shoshoni horse thieves who, they said, had just left Fort Limhi.[60] The Mormons let the Nez Perce

spend the night in the fort and secured the Indians' animals in the fort's corral. Unexpectedly, this corralling upset a band of Bannocks who had planned to steal Nez Perce animals that night. During the next night, some Nez Perce stole about fifty horses from the Bannocks and Shoshonis—at least so said some "painted up and much excited" Shoshonis. Thomas Corless and others feared that a shooting war might soon break out among the tribes.[61]

A Treacherous Winter Search

A six-inch snowfall occurred on 5 January 1858. The next day, Charles Middleton worked for Thomas Corless and another man thrashing wheat. Two days later, Charles worked for Thomas again, chopping wood, and on 12 January helped him clean wheat.[62] A January calm preceded a fatal February outbreak in 1858. Day after January day, the cold winter weather combined with dwindling food supplies to make Indians and whites high strung. Indians, encouraged by gentile whites, thought hard about how much easier life could be for them if they took the settlers' cattle.[63]

On 8 February, a Shoshoni, pretending to be friendly, stole one of President Smith's horses.[64] Responding, a six-man search party found that the Indian had headed east. On 10 February, President Smith added Thomas Corless and three other men to the search party and sent them after the thief. They left the next day, "a very cold day," covering thirty miles before dark and passing through very deep snows on the "main divide." On 12 February, they went thirty-five miles, passing over two mountains and up and down canyons. "None of us were ever in these parts before," David Moore noted. "We had no guide but to follow the trail made by the war party." The next day, through falling snow, they had "much difficulty" finding and following the trail. When they came to a level prairie, they could see no trail and were left to find their way as best they could to some timber barely visible ahead. Their search paid off, according to Moore:

> As we approached the creek (on which the trees stood) some of the company discovered a smoke in the distance & up the creek about half a mile above us. We all were soon on the spot & there found some four & five lodges of Shoshonie. Part of the company stoped at the lodges while the rest went in search of their horses, an Indian with them. The boys soon returned with Col Smith's horse. Then Commenced hunting for the Indian that stole it & found him covered up with a number of buffalo & other skins in the first lodge we had come to. Although the Indians denied his being anywhere abouts. B. H. Watts scolded him for being so mean, but he paid no attention to any thing that was said. Got up put on his war cap took his spear mounted a small poney & put off saying he was going to tell the soldiers.

Taking the retrieved horse, Thomas's party headed back to Fort Limhi. That night they tied up their horses close by their camp to prevent a stampede in case Indians should attack during the night. The next day, 14 February, they had wind in their faces, but the cold was not as bad as the day before. During the next day, they found their own trail as they approached the main divide. Deep snows made it hard for them to get over the mountain. They arrived at the fort late in the afternoon on 15 February and found all well.

Indian Raids and Warfare

Meanwhile, on 11 February 1858, the settlers living in the lower fort vacated it and moved into the main fort. On 23 and 24 February, more than two hundred Bannocks and Shoshoni warriors showed up, raising settlers' suspicions. The settlers then numbered fifty men plus some wives and children. On 24 February, a Wednesday, mountaineer John W. Powell told a settler near the lower fort that he, Powell, had been talking to Bannock Indians, trying to keep them from coming to burn the settlers' hay and straw. He warned the Limhi settlers to be careful of their horses and cattle because the Bannocks talked of leaving the next day and might take cattle with them. Thursday morning, 25 February, David Moore talked with President Smith about Powell's statement. Smith "said he thought it was some of Powel's lies," but he was wrong.

That day, the dreaded trouble came. Bannocks suddenly attacked, plundering and killing; and, as the fighting continued, they almost murdered Thomas Corless.[65] The bloody fight involved three theaters of action: the fort itself, the cattle herd about a mile away, and the new fort a few miles downstream. Israel Clark told how the fateful day started: "The sun rose brightly. The herd was taken out by Fountain Welch, Andrew Quigley and Orson H. Rose at seven o'clock in the morning nearly one mile from the fort. All in peace and no one near." About ten o'clock, Indians suddenly attacked and tried to run off the cattle. According to Clark, "the hill was covered with Indians on both sides of the Salmon (Limhi) River and a large body pushing hard for the herd."[66]

Indians caught the herdsmen by surprise. Fountain Welsh tried to keep the herd together and stop the thievery, but he did not expect violence. Suddenly, the Indians began shooting. Before Welsh could escape, he was shot in the back and fell. Indians dismounted and checked him, but he faked death so well, even when they stripped and whipped his body, that they rode off without scalping him. When herdsman Andrew Quigley saw Welsh fall, he ran up a little mountain and there Indians shot him through the shoul-

der. One Indian rode up and smashed in his skull with a gun barrel and left him for dead. Orson Rose, the third herdsman, raced into the sagebrush. Indians, unable to push their horses into the heavy brush, riddled the brush with shots, but somehow Rose escaped unhurt and stayed in hiding until evening.

Men in the fort heard the shooting. Thomas Corless and others grabbed their guns and ran "as fast as possible over the hills," Israel Clark said. Thomas said that "he and a number of other brethren were at the fort when the alarm was given that the Indians were in the act of stealing the herd of cows and oxen belonging to the settlers, which were grazing on the low hills a short distance east of the fort." They feared for the thirteen men absent from the fort, so he and nine others immediately started out to assist the herders. Nine were on foot, including Thomas. First-lieutenant David Moore ordered George McBride, who was on horseback, to ride to the top of a hill to see what was happening. If the Indians had the cattle, McBride was supposed to wave his hat so the others could hurry faster. He waved and then rode over the hill to try to turn the cattle back. Suddenly, he was shot from his horse and scalped, and his horse was taken.[67]

The footmen tried to reach McBride but found Fountain Welsh, badly wounded, and decided to assist him. They picked him up and began to retreat with him to the fort. Three men, including Thomas Corless, formed a rear guard. "The Indians, seeing them commence a retreat, followed up and kept firing at the company." "Some seventy-five (Indians) or more ran their horses to take us," said one of the retreaters, "they following us all the time, running their horses so as to shoot us." Terrified, the besieged footmen panicked momentarily, but William Taylor
managed to group them into a military block formation, a phalanx. Thomas Day described the retreat: "Rock-i-rae, the fine, commanding Chief who looked almost like a giant, was dashing here and there giving his commands in stentorian tones and discharging his gun in the direction of the men. . . . To the amazement of the men they found themselves surrounded by stationed companies of Indians on every hand."[68]

Indians blocked their way to the fort, but Thomas and the others "pressed forward solidly and bravely," according to Day. When Indians rode up close, the men leveled their guns at them, causing the raiders to "wheel away to avoid the threatened fire, and station themselves further, when the same tactic would be repeated." "We kept them off by raising our guns to our faces and shooting one horse in the side," Israel Clark said. "They shot several shots at us but none took effect."[69] When the settlers came to within a hundred yards of the fort, the Indians rode off to capture the cattle.

Thomas Corless, when talking to historian Andrew Jenson years later,

said that he and a number of others were at the fort when Indians began stealing cows and oxen grazing on the low hills a short distance east of the fort. He and the other eight men on foot and the rider went to assist herdsmen Quigley and Rose. The group was trying to head off the stock when 150 or more Indians surrounded them, shooting with guns and bows. When the group tried to retreat, Indians blocked them and fired at them. Thomas said one ball passed through his hat, another cut off the knot of his neck tie, and a third grazed his left ear. "Elder Corless has always ascribed it to the miraculous interposition of the Almighty," Jenson recorded, "that the brethren were not killed."[70]

The Indians stampeded the stolen cattle along the river toward the lower fort. Meeting two mounted settlers, they shot and wounded one. When they encountered four settlers driving two wagons loaded with hay and poles, the Indians opened fire. The settlers, two unarmed and two with unloaded guns, were defenseless. The Indians shot one through the body from side to side, and the bullet hit the second man in the arm and a third man in the hand and leg. The three wounded men ran for cover. The fourth stampeded his team and escaped. The attackers then unyoked the cattle, set fire to the wagons, and drove off the oxen.[71]

That ended the raid, but the settlers did not know it. At the fort, Thomas Corless and twenty-nine other men locked the gates and tried to prepare for an attack. They attached scythes to poles to slay any Indians who might try to climb over the fort walls.[72] They made port holes in the walls and poked ready rifles out. Tragically, as Pleasant Green Taylor noted, the men were "ready to cut down like new mown hay those to whom we had come to preach the Gospel." Indians stood off at a distance "with a scalp perched high on a pole, as if to say, 'you shall be served likewise.'"[73]

That afternoon and then after dark, missing and wounded men found their ways back to the fort or were located by search parties. Searchers found Quigley still alive, despite a bashed-in skull, but feeble and stiff. By nightfall, someone wrote in the official fort journal that "one of our Bro. dead, five more wounded, two severely another out supposed to be dead, but none certain of it & a large no of our cattle gone, & we left some over 300 miles from friends." The next morning they found the one missing missionary, dead.[74] In total, the Indians had killed two herdsmen, wounded five others, and stolen more than two hundred head of cattle and some thirty horses. Both of the dead settlers were dressed in temple clothes, put in separate coffins, and buried side by side by the northeast corner of the fort.[75]

Then followed three weeks of watching, waiting, and discouragement. President Smith organized the fort men, including Thomas, into companies for round-the-clock guard duty. Then, he sent two messengers on the only

two horses left in the fort, "fit for the journey," to ride to Brigham Young and obtain his instructions. The Limhi men drew up a list of the Indians they recognized in the attack and then excommunicated the baptized ones on the list.[76]

Causes of the Mission's Demise

During 1857, relations between Bannocks and the Nez Perce had become strained by horse stealing and raids against each other. Fort Limhi settlers, however, continued to have amicable relations with the Indians, particularly the Bannock; nevertheless, everyone knew that "the maintenance of their position in the heart of the Indian country was dependent solely upon the rather fickle nature of a people whose chief glory was war and conquest."[77] When the federal army approached Utah, Mormon-Indian relations at Limhi degenerated. The army camped at Camp Scott, near the ruins of Fort Bridger, which the Mormons owned but had torched to keep it out of army hands. From there, General Albert Sidney Johnston sent Benjamin Ficklin, an employee of Russell, Majors & Waddell—the private firm supplying the army—north to buy livestock from mountain men wintering in Montana, not far from Fort Limhi. Ficklin's ten-man party took pack animals, loaded with whiskey and other trading items. They passed near Fort Limhi.[78] Colonists said that mountaineer John Powell, whose wife was a Shoshoni, helped influence the Indians to raid the colonists' cattle. They felt he worked with a partner, Craven Jackson.[79] Both men showed up at Camp Scott about the same time as Benjamin Ficklin returned from his trading trip north.[80] Powell, however, claimed he tried to dissuade the Bannocks from attacking but failed, and so he warned the settlers to expect a raid.[81]

Historian Brigham Madsen's review of charges and countercharges by Mormons, mountaineers, and army representatives concluded that "the responsibility for the hostile action lay mainly with the Bannock. Above and beyond any influence exerted by trader, soldier, or missionary, a situation existed in February of 1858 which gave the Bannock an almost unrivaled opportunity to indulge in their age-old customs of horse stealing and war." The situation included Nez Perce thefts that called for retaliation, traders willing to pay high prices for cattle and horses, and the U.S. government's hostility toward Latter-day Saints that seemingly would earn applause for hostile actions against them. "Faced with this auspicious combination of circumstances, the Bannock followed their natural inclination and went on the warpath."[82]

Historian John Nash proffers a broader explanation. He grants that the

traditional explanations are valid—that mountaineers incited the Indians and that Johnston's army contributed to the fatal Indian attack. But blame also must go, he says, to the Mormons. From the Indian point of view, a mission was welcome, but not a permanent settlement. Likewise irritating were Mormon efforts to be fair and generous to all the tribes during a period of intertribal fighting. Bannocks considered Limhi Valley their territory; therefore, the Mormons should not give equal treatment to the Nez Perce. That Fort Limhi whites let the Nez Perce hold a war dance in the fort was inflammatory to the Bannock and Shoshoni. The 25 February attack, Nash points out, "was in fact a raid on their livestock and not the Mission itself," although the Mormons did not realize it. What ruined the Limhi venture was "the collision of three frontier cultures"—zealous but well-intentioned missionaries, jealous Indian tribes, and "dubious and fearful mountaineers." Mutual understanding was not there. With hindsight, Nash says, "One can see room to criticize missionary, mountaineer, and Indian." Within a few months, "The good intentions of the missionary toward the Indian and the good relations between Mormon and mountaineer became lost in the exigencies of a much larger conflict, the Utah War."[83]

Aborted Mission

After the 25 February attacks, the Limhi men passed the time by reinforcing the fort's walls, cleaning and burying wheat for storage, repairing wagons, and taking turns on guard duty. Guard duty was "hard duty" because the "dazzling snow" hurt the men's eyes.[84]

President Young, after reading President Smith's 28 February letter containing "disastrous intelligence from your fort," replied immediately to President Smith in an 8 March letter: "We think that you had better vacate the Fort and come home." He further instructed President Smith to give the Indians "such property as you cannot secure by safely cacheing or bring away" and added, "Do not destroy anything, leave your improvements, Fort &c with friendly Indians, get back your stock if you can without fighting the Indians for it, but I would not delay any more time than possible." Help was on the way, he promised: "We send Brother Andrew Cunningham with one hundred men to aid you, in getting away." Young then told Colonel Cunningham in a 10 March letter to avoid difficulties with the Indians, even letting them keep stolen livestock. "We would rather give them our cattle than to have them steal them," he said, but only after trying to trade wheat for the captive cattle. President Young wanted the Indians "conciliated and not molested in consequence of this late affair."[85]

On 12 March, an Indian returned a stolen horse to Thomas.[86] Early on

21 March, riders from Utah brought Brigham Young's instructions to evacuate the fort and close down the three-year-old mission.[87] Meanwhile, to aid the evacuation, on 4 March, President Young called out three companies of the Utah militia—one each from Davis, Weber, and Utah Counties—to go with Colonel Cunningham. These 150 militiamen, mounted and with extra wagons, reached the fort on 23 March and 25 March.[88] Three days later, on 28 March, the last men, cattle, and wagons passed through the gates, turning Fort Limhi into a ghost fort. Before leaving, they cached about two thousand bushels of wheat in different places. The Salmon River Indian Mission officially ended, and the thirty-seven men, thirteen women, and the children, with the large military escort, headed south into the deep snows separating them from Utah.[89] They hurried as fast as possible, providing vital manpower "should anything occur with Johnston's army in the valley."[90]

The Limhi tragedy's final act came when ten men in an advance company, hurrying to Utah, were ambushed. Missionary Bailey Lake was killed, scalped, and stripped. The main wagon company found his body, packed it in snow in a wagon, and carried it to Utah.[91]

Thomas Corless, mounted on his returned horse, felt lucky to be alive and glad to be heading home to his new wife. But he could have felt, like others of the missionaries, that the Fort Limhi mission was a failure because the high cost of time (three and a half years), money, livestock, and property (hundreds of thousands of dollars) and three lives produced neither the hoped-for permanent Indian converts nor a permanent Mormon settlement.[92]

Upon reaching Mormon settlements, the company was disappointed to find one after another deserted. They had not heard about Brigham Young's order that northern Mormons evacuate their towns and "move south" to stay clear of the invading federal army. On 10 April 1858, the Limhi colonists "found Malad Valley evacuated" and the next day "Brigham City & North Willow Creek almost vacated." Most of the returning Limhi missionaries separated after leaving Brigham City and headed for their homes.[93]

When Thomas Corless arrived home, no doubt he had a joyous reunion with Eliza, then eight months pregnant, and his Corless relatives. Immediately, the couple, with their family and neighbors, prepared to join the southbound group of Saints fleeing the approaching U.S. army. Fortunately, their exodus from Salt Lake was short lived, and within a few weeks, the family was able to return to their farm.

In time, Thomas and Eliza had eleven children together, born between 1858 and 1882. Son John Stevenson Corless, born in 1878, was Salt Lake County sheriff, winning elections in 1914, 1916, and 1918.[94] When Thomas was in his mid-sixties, he tried to pull a heavy horse from mud, heard some-

thing pop in his back, and became paralyzed from the waist down. He was a partial invalid from the mid-1890s until his death in 1903. Eliza survived him by twenty-four years, passing away in 1928.

And the forts and improvements? The region remained "in undisturbed possession" of Indians until 1866, when mining brought whites in again. Salmon City was founded early in 1867 some twenty miles northwest of where Fort Limhi stood. In 1869, Idaho Territory created a county for that area, naming it Lemhi County. The federal government created a reservation not far from the Mormon fort, naming it "Fort Lemhi" and the "Lemhi Valley Indian Reservation." For many decades, the ruins of the old main fort survived in good condition.[95] Today, Idaho maps show several locations in the Salmon River area named Lemhi—Lemhi County, Lemhi Pass, Lemhi Forest, Lemhi range of mountains, and Lemhi River, as well as a "Mormon Fort Monument" on highway 28 southeast of Salmon. That monument, erected by Idaho and the Church, was dedicated on 13 May 1950.[96]

Notes

1. Journal History, 24 February 1856, LDS Archives. This article is adapted from a history of the Edward Corless family in the author's *Kindred Saints: The Mormon Immigrant Heritage of Alvin and Kathryne Christenson* (Salt Lake City: Eden Hill, 1982).

2. *Studies in Mormon History* lists about three dozen articles, books, theses, and dissertations dealing with the Salmon River Mission. Three published accounts provide the chronology and much of the detail used here: John V. Bluth, "The Salmon River Mission," *Improvement Era* 3 (September 1900): 801–15, and (October 1900): 900–13; W. W. Henderson, ed., "The Salmon River Mission: Extract from the Journal of L. W. Shurtliff," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 5 (January 1932): 3–24; and Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, "The Salmon River Mission," *Our Pioneer Heritage* (November 1963): 141–200, which contains narration and excerpts from diaries and reminiscences by Israel Clark (164–69), George Washington Hill (169–74), Pleasant Green Taylor (174–77), Thomas Day (177–82), Joseph Harker (183–84), and Jacob Miller (185–92). The official "Salmon River Mission Journal" by David Moore and Jacob Miller and Andrew Jenson's Salmon River Mission Manuscript History are in the LDS Church Archives in Salt Lake City, Utah. See also John D. Nash, "Salmon River Mission of 1855: A Reappraisal," *Idaho Yesterdays* 11 (spring 1967): 22–31, and Brigham D. Madsen's chapter 4, "Mormon Mission at Lemhi," in his *The Bannock of Idaho* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1958), David L. Bigler, "The Crisis at Fort Limhi, 1858" *Utah Historical Quarterly* 35 (spring 1967): 121–36, and Bigler's recent *Forgotten Kingdom: The Mormon Theocracy in the American West, 1847–1896* (Spokane, Washington: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1998).

3. Corless genealogy records give his birth year as 1831, but his patriarchal blessing record and his genealogy record entered in the official Salmon River Mission Journal list it as 1832.

4. Heber C. Kimball to William Kimball, 29 February 1856; *Millennial Star,* 21 June 1856, 397.

5. Thomas Day account in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 177. George Washington Hill, sent out in 1855, said that "this took all I could do to raise an outfit for

myself . . . and a very poor outfit it was." See Hill account in same DUP source, 169.

6. Joseph Harker's Journal in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," entries for April 1856; Joseph R. and Elna Miller, *Journal of Jacob Miller* (N.p., 1967), 30.

7. Thomas Day's journal says that he and Thomas Corless and three others left Salt Lake City on 15 April 1856.

8. Moore, "Salmon River Mission Journal," April 1856 entries.

9. Bluth, "The Salmon River Mission," *Improvement Era* 3 (September 1900): 802.

10. Nash, "Salmon River Mission of 1855: A Reappraisal," 24.

11. Madsen, *The Bannock of Idaho,* 88–89, and Israel Justus Clark's Journal entries for 13 and 14 June 1855, in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 164.

12. Moore, "Salmon River Mission Journal," 22–24.

13. George Washington Hill account in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 172.

14. Henderson, "The Salmon River Mission," 9; William Burgess to George A. Smith, 9 October 1955, in Salmon River Mission Manuscript History, LDS Archives. William H. Dame Journal, in that same manuscript history, says the pickets were twelve feet above ground.

15. George Washington Hill account in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 173.

16. Besides Thomas Corless, the reinforcements were Alexander Hill, John Preece, Sylvanus Collet, Thomas Abbott, Wal McIntire, William Perkins, Thomas Day, Clifton S. Browning, Joseph Harker, Jacob Miller, George McBride, Henry A. Cleveland, Thomas Bingham, William Shaw, John Murdock, Pardon Webb, James Walker, R. B. Margetts, Henry Nebeker, William B. Lake, and Hathron C. Hadlock. Henderson, "The Salmon River Mission," 10.

17. *Journal of Jacob Miller,* 30.

18. Thomas's rebaptism is listed in Moore, "Salmon River Mission Journal."

19. "Private Journal of James T. Miller, Younger Brother of Jacob Miller," typescript included in *Journal of Jacob Miller,* 45–49. Information is cited from p. 46.

20. Nash, "Salmon River Mission of 1855: A Reappraisal," 27.

21. George Washington Hill account in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 169; the names of the Indians baptized are in Moore, "The Salmon River Mission Journal."

22. Israel Justus Clark Diary, in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 166.

23. *Journal of Jacob Miller* tells about the "pleasant and dry" May days in 1856.

24. *Journal of Jacob Miller,* 33–34.

25. "Biography and Journals of Benjamin Franklin Cummings," typescript by grandson Benjamin F. Cummings, BYU Library, 1933, 30–31.

26. These examples of work and leisure are based on Charles Dalton Journal, 1855–58, typescript, in microfilm of Rose Dalton Hardy Records, LDS Archives.

27. William Burgess to George A. Smith, 9 October 1855, in Salmon River Mission Manuscript History, by date.

28. How salmon were caught is described in *Journal of Jacob Miller,* 31, and in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 148–49.

29. *Heart Throbs of the West,* 3 (1941), 316 gives these dates.

30. Moore, "Salmon River Mission Journal," entries for November 1856.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid. states that all were rebaptized on this date, except the new arrivals.

33. Charles Dalton Journal, entries for 25 December 1856 and 1 January 1857.

34. Israel Justus Clark's journal, in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 166, entry dated 1 January 1857.

35. Benjamin F. Cummings, Biography and Journals, Brigham Young University Library Special Collections, contains his side of the February 1857 feud, 5 and 8 February

1857, 46–47.

36. Gilbert Belnap Journal, May 1855 to May 1857, LDS Church Archives.

37. Israel Justus Clark's journal, in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 167; Cummings Biography and Journals, 5 and 8 February 1857, 46–47.

38. Nash, "Salmon River Mission of 1855: A Reappraisal," 28–29.

39. My discussion here about this little-known mission is based on Cummings' diary account as summarized and explained in Bigler, *Forgotten Kingdom,* 138–39, 142–44.

40. Moore, "Salmon River Mission Journal."

41. Young's company consisted of 115 men, 22 women, 5 boys, 168 horses, 28 carriages and 26 wagons, according to Justus Israel Clark Journal entry for 8 May 1857, in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 168.

42. Miller, Taylor, and Clark accounts in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," provide accounts of Brigham Young's visit. The quote about songs is *Journal of Jacob Miller,* 36. Mention of Indians visiting the "Big Chief" is in Henderson, "The Salmon River Mission," 20. Taylor mentions the nine men who tried to marry Indians (p. 175).

43. C. Y. Middleton to M. C. Middleton, 27 November 1857, reprinted in "On the Salmon Mission," *Heart Throbs of the West,* 5:401.

44. DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 143, 151.

45. Bigler, *Forgotten Kingdom,* 144.

46. DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 142.

47. *Journal of Jacob Miller,* 37.

48. Israel Justus Clark Journal, 23 May 1857, in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 168; Bluth, "The Salmon River Mission," 902.

49. Nash, "Salmon River Mission of 1855: A Reappraisal," 26.

50. Moore, "Salmon River Mission Journal," entry for 18 June 1857.

51. David Moore Journal, 23 March 1857 to 6 May 1857, Book 1, D. Moore's Journal of Travel to Fort Limhi, holograph, LDS Archives, entry for 24 March 1857.

52. Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journals,* typescript (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1985), entry for 6 September 1857.

53. DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 154, gives several details about the newly called missionaries, including total numbers, names, and departure dates.

54. *Our Pioneer Heritage,* 153.

55. This information in one form or another is generally known and accepted. Religious and secular works alike, including encyclopedias of recent date convey such assertions. *The Encyclopedia Americana—International Edition,* 14:727 (Danbury, Connecticut: Grolier, 2001) calls the Mormon settlements "the first farming settlements in southern Idaho."

56. James T. Miller Journal, 47.

57. *Journal of Jacob Miller,* 38.

58. Thomas Sasson Smith Diaries, photocopy of typescript, LDS Historical Department Archives, entries for November 1857 through January 1858.

59. Charles Franklin Middleton, Journal 1855–57, in his papers, microfilm, LDS Archives. The count of twenty-five cabins is from "Dedication of LDS Pioneer Monument at Fort Lemhi," 13 May 1950, a printed program, copy in Salmon River Mission Manuscript History.

60. Thomas Sasson Smith Diary, 25 December 1857, records that the Nez Perces were actually looking for "some hors that the Bannocks had stollen from them they ware very friendly to us but ware very much inraged at the Bannocks." Tensions between the tribes appear to have been very high, so anyone's claim of theft or misdeed was in need of scrutiny.

61. Moore, "Salmon River Mission Journal."

62. Middleton Journal, 5, 6, 8, 12 January 1858.

63. Moore, "Salmon River Mission Journal," recounts a visit to the Indians by some mountaineers who were hostile to the mission (possibly Powell and John Jacobs). DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 157, discusses some intrigue that took place around the same time that included B. F. Fickland, a volunteer officer in Johnston's army.

64. This story of the hunt for the stolen horse is taken from Moore's "Salmon River Mission Journal."

65. Moore, "Salmon River Mission Journal." Accounts do not agree on the date of the Indians' attack, so in selecting 25 February, I rely here on Moore.

66. Israel Clark Journal, in DUP "The Salmon River Mission," 168–69.

67. Thomas Corless's comments are in "Salmon River Mission, Idaho," in *Heart Throbs of the West* 3 (1941): 317. Israel Clark and Thomas Day, in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," provide the best descriptions of the retreat to the fort.

68. Thomas Day account in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 180–81.

69. Israel Justus Clark Journal, in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 169.

70. Thomas's account is in Salmon River Mission Manuscript History, a section containing Andrew Jenson's "Supplement to the History of the Bannock Stake." It also appears in *Heart Throbs of the West* 3 (1941): 318. The Alice Corless Hardman sketch of Thomas Corless, in the Christenson Family Archives (CFA) in Salt Lake City, contains a questionable story about Thomas running from the Indians and being lifted by an unseen hand across a gully separating him from the fort. No contemporary documents record that Thomas told that miracle story to his fellow missionaries or that anyone witnessed it.

71. Bluth, "The Salmon River Mission," 907–8; *Journal of Jacob Miller,* 47–49.

72. Pleasant Green Taylor Journal, in DUP, "The Salmon River Mission," 177.

73. Ibid.

74. Moore, "Salmon River Mission Journal," 25 February 1858.

75. Regarding burials, see Milton Hammond and William Van Orden Carbine accounts in Salmon River Mission Manuscript History.

76. Moore, "Salmon River Mission Journal," 4 March 1858. A list of names is provided.

77. Madsen, *The Bannock of Idaho,* 96.

78. Bigler, *Forgotten Kingdom,* 157–58.

79. Peter Gottfredson, *History of Indian Depredations in Utah* (Salt Lake City: Peter Gottfredson, 1919), 99.

80. Bigler, *Forgotten Kingdom,* 186.

81. Madsen, *The Bannock of Idaho,* 99.

82. Madsen, *The Bannock of Idaho,* 107–8.

83. Nash, "Salmon River Mission of 1855: A Reappraisal," 30–31.

84. Thomas Day's account, DUP "The Salmon River Mission," 182, talks about the "dazzling snow" during guard duty.

85. Brigham Young to Colonel Thomas L. Smith, 8 March 1858, and Young to Colonel Andrew Cunningham, 10 March 1858, both in Brigham Young Letterbook 4, LDS Archives.

86. Charles Middleton Journal, 12 March 1858.

87. From Thomas Day's account, as published in the *Deseret News,* 14 April 1891.

88. L. W. Shurtliff's Journal, in Henderson, "The Salmon River Mission," 24 notes the arrival of eighty men on 1 March.

89. Moore, "Salmon River Mission Journal." March entries contain a number of

details about the departure and the preparations preceding it. Caching wheat is mentioned in Gottfredson, *Indian Depredations*, 97.

90. Salmon River Mission Manuscript History.

91. *Journal of Jacob Miller* records this grim event.

92. L. W. Shurtliff Journal in Henderson, "The Salmon River Mission," 24, captures much of the loss, material and other, experienced by those involved with the mission. It ends on this somber note: "Thus ended the first mission to colonize the great northwest, to establish new homes, to till the soil and introduce irrigation and endeavor to christianize the natives. . . . Three of the colonists were killed, five were wounded, and hundreds of thousands of dollars in time, expense, horses, cattle, and other property were lost. How shall it ever be repaid?"

93. Moore, "Salmon River Mission Journal" provided the quotations about Malad Valley (10 April) and Brigham City and North Willow Creek (11 April).

94. A biographical chapter about Sheriff John Corless is in *Kindred Saints*, 104–13.

95. "Salmon River Mission," in Jenson, *Encyclopedic History*, 740, and Bluth, "The Salmon River Mission," 913.

96. *Rand McNally: The Road Atlas, United States, Canada and Mexico*, updated 2001 edition for Wal-Mart Stores. Rand McNally & Company: 2001, Idaho map on p. 31. "Dedication of the LDS Pioneer Monument at Fort Lemhi, May 13, 1950," printed program.