

RAMAH, NEW MEXICO, 1876-1900
AN HISTORICAL EPISODE WITH SOME
VALUE ANALYSIS'

BY IRVING TELLING*

WHEN BRIGHAM YOUNG planted colonies throughout the semi-arid intermountain region, the conditions under which settlers were called to live equalled in hardship those met anywhere on the American frontier. Yet the number of communities which failed was amazingly small. The Latter-day Saints remained at their posts through the most trying times.² Why should these people leave their old homes to build anew, suffering again the trials of pioneering in an unfriendly country?

Ramah was such a Mormon colony. In west central New Mexico, surrounded by a few hundred Navaho Indians, and twenty miles east of the Indian pueblo of Zuni, the settlement was founded as a mission to the Indians. A contemporary of the first Mormon settlements on the Little Colorado River (Sunset, Obed, Brigham City, and Joseph City), Ramah has been the only one of these initial ventures besides Joseph City to survive the struggle against a hostile environment.³ A mountain ridge

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²Milton R. Hunter, *Brigham Young, the Colonizer* (Salt Lake City, 1940), *passim*; Leland H. Creer, *The Founding of an Empire* (Salt Lake City, 1947), 311-54.

³Andrew Jenson, *Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, 1941), 88, 377, 603, 848; James H. McClintock, *Mormon Settlement in Arizona* (Phoenix, 1921), 138-45; Adele B. Westover and J. Morris Richards, *A Brief History of Joseph City* (Winslow, 1951), *passim*.

sheltered the Ramahns from developments to the north. There the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad (built in 1881) brought so many settlers to open and work the coal mines around Gallup that neighboring Fort Wingate finally lost its function as a frontier post. The Saints, in their semi-isolation from gentile influences, were able to work out their destiny in accord with their own value system. Examination of some of these Ramahn values helps to explain the process of Mormon pioneering.⁴

Ammon Tenney and Robert H. Smith blazed the trail in 1876, when they labored among the Lamanites (Indians) at Zuni.⁵ To carry on the work that year, Brigham Young called Lorenzo H. Hatch and John Maughan, who settled with their families in the Spanish-American ranching center of San Lorenzo. Early in 1877 Hatch directed two recruits, Luther C. Burnham and Ernest A. Tietjen (the latter a Swedish immigrant from Santaquin, Utah), a few miles west to the Savoia (Cebolla, or Onion) Valley, where Jose Pino, a local Navaho leader, pointed out the most favorable location.⁶ With the addition of five more families in 1877, the Saints could look with pride on their achievements. Hatch reported in October: "The mission number 116 Zunis, who have been baptized, [and] 34 Navijos . . ." ⁷ Nor was this their only harvest. Blacksmithing had earned a thousand pounds of corn from the Zunis, while nearly forty acres under

⁴ Although a footnote is inadequate for a discussion of so complex and crucial a subject as values, at least a definition is needed. I am indebted to the ideas of Clyde Kluckhohn, "Values and Value-Orientations in the Theory of Action," in T. Parsons and E. A. Shils, eds., *Toward a General Theory of Action* (Cambridge, 1951), 388-433, and Charles Morris, "Axiology as the Science of Preferential Behavior," in Ray Lepley, ed., *Value; A Co-operative Inquiry* (New York, 1949), 211-22. My definition borrows something from both these men: Values are conceptions of the desirable used as guides for action in situations of preferential behavior. See also Thomas F. O'Dea, "A Study of Mormon Values," *Comparative Study of Values Working Papers*, No. 2 (unpub., 1949).

⁵ Anthony W. Ivins journal, typescript copy in possession of Stanley S. Ivins, Salt Lake City, 15, 25. A microfilm copy of the original Ivins journal, on which the elaborated typescript above referred to was based, is in the library of the Utah State Historical Society. See also Preston Nibley, comp., *Missionary Experiences* (Salt Lake City, 1943), 266.

⁶ Andrew Jenson, comp., *St. Johns Stake History, Ramah Ward*, [4] (hereafter referred to as *Ramah History*). A typescript copy of this history is in the L.D.S. Church Library, Salt Lake City. *Deseret News Weekly*, July 18, October 3, 31, 1877; interview with Bidaga, son of Jose Pino.

⁷ *Deseret News Weekly*, October 31, 1877.

cultivation yielded wheat, corn, beans, potatoes, beets, and other produce.⁸

These provident measures proved insufficient that autumn when nearly a hundred Arkansas converts drove up, straining the Mormon cupboards so severely that Lorenzo Hatch sent most of the newcomers on to Joseph City to avoid a famine. In addition, a smallpox epidemic, after forcing the San Lorenzo Saints to join their brethren at Savoia, broke out among the Arkansas band. The winter of 1877-78 was a time of hunger and death to which nearly a dozen settlers fell victim.⁹

Missionary work at Zuni made uneven progress. Llewellyn Harris, finding the Indians afflicted with smallpox in January, 1878, "administered," according to Mormon doctrine, to over four hundred with great success.¹⁰ Anthony W. Ivins and Erastus B. Snow stopped at the pueblo in February but, more cautious than Harris, did not enter "for the reason that the smallpox was raging among the Indians." Several Zunis came out to greet these two, however, "when they learned that we were Mormons."¹¹

The Presbyterian missionary doctors serving as government teachers at Zuni were upset by the appearance of these rivals. Dr. Henry K. Palmer checkmated Harris with the rumor that "those who were healed [by Harris] were healed by the power of the devil."¹² Nathan C. Tenney, having come with his sons from Woodruff, Arizona, to replace Lorenzo Hatch, tried teaching the Zunis that winter. He found Dr. Taylor F. Ealy, Dr. Palmer's successor, armed with hostile instructions from the Pueblo Indian Agent, who had written:

it is the determination of this office, not to allow any unauthorized person to sojourn . . . on the Zuni Reservation Mr. Tenney and son have not been, and will not be, so authorized

⁸ *Ibid.*, July 18, October 31, 1877.

⁹ Jenson, *Ramah History*, [4]-[5]; Westover and Richards, *op. cit.*, 4; Mrs. Clarence Mangrum and Leslie Clawson, "A Mormon Settlement" (typescript, Ramah); *Deseret News Weekly*, October 3, 1877.

¹⁰ Nibley, *op. cit.*, 265-68.

¹¹ Ivins, *op. cit.*, 25.

¹² Nibley, *loc. cit.*

If I believed that the Mormons desired to gain a footing upon the land of the Indian from entirely disinterest[ed] motives and only for the good of the Indians—which I do not in any wise believe—I still could not give them the authority, for the reason that the work of two teachers diametrically opposed to each other would not result in good to the Indians.¹³

Although Dr. Ealy enforced his authority with a mob of Zunis and Spanish-Americans, the Tenneys baptized some hundred and twenty natives that winter.

As its members were called to labor elsewhere, Savoia declined until only nine families remained in the valley in 1879. They continued the school begun the preceding year and started a reservoir which their limited manpower proved unable to finish. They had other means of support, however (Dr. Ealy wrote in 1879, "They hold stock, and freight for a living"), and reported that the site had "facilities for quite a settlement."¹⁴ But possibilities were not enough, and when Indian troubles became serious in 1880, President Jesse N. Smith, of the Little Colorado Stake, recalled them. Only Ernest A. Tietjen and John Hunt remained to carry on the religious work, supporting themselves by freighting and selling wool from the Navahos' sheep.¹⁵

Faced with incipient defeat along the Little Colorado, the Church authorities called several families from Sunset to revive the New Mexican outpost. Samuel Garn, James Knox Polk Pipkin, and Peter Nielson (the last a Danish immigrant to Salt Lake City in 1861, who had been called to Sunset in 1878 with his son Frihoff Godfred) made a preliminary trip in May, 1882, to reconnoiter, plant crops, work on the reservoir, and prepare their houses. Coming again from Sunset, in August, with James B. Ashcroft, Hyrum J. Judd, William H. Bond, James R. McNeil, and their families, they found Samuel E. Lewis already arrived

¹³ Pueblo Indian Agency, Letterbooks (United Pueblo Agency, Albuquerque, New Mexico), Benjamin M. Thomas to Taylor F. Ealy, December 17, 1878; Jenson, Ramah History, [6], [14], where the date appears erroneously as 1888.

¹⁴ Ivins, *loc. cit.*; Jenson, Ramah History, [7]; "Report of the Secretary of the Interior," *House Exec. Doc.* No. 1, 46 Cong. 2 sess., I, 228; *Deseret News Weekly*, August 13, 1879.

¹⁵ Jenson, Ramah History, [8], [10]; *Gallup Herald*, April 26, 1924; interview with Bidaga.

from Alpine, Arizona.¹⁶ Almost at once the new settlers chose Tietjen as presiding elder and selected teachers and a Sunday school superintendent. Then, moving a few miles south of Savoia, they laid out a townsite and irrigation ditches, fixed town blocks at thirty-six rods square with eight lots each, named the village Navaho, and formed the Savoia Irrigation Company. By winter more than half the families were living on the new location.¹⁷

The next two years completed the preparations. In 1883 a log building, twenty-eight by eighteen feet, rose on the south side of the public square to serve for many years as school, meeting-house, and social hall. Meanwhile the reservoir dam continued to grow, and the Saints planted several fields.¹⁸ They organized a school in 1884, Frihoff Nielson volunteering as teacher; later instructors were generally recruited from the Mormons of Ramah or St. Johns.¹⁹ When Nielson also tried to open a post office that year to supplement J. K. P. Pipkin's at Savoia (in operation since December, 1882), the postal authorities turned him down, having another "Navaho" listed in New Mexico. The name of Ramah, chosen from the *Book of Mormon*, proved acceptable, and in September, 1884, the village possessed its own post office as well as a new name.²⁰ At the same time the remaining Church groups were organized: Mutual Improvement Associations, Relief Society, and Primary Association.²¹ Ramah had become a fullfledged Mormon community, ready to fulfill the purpose for which it had been created.

¹⁶ *Deseret News*, June 6, 1882, quoted in L.D.S. Journal History (L.D.S. Church Library, Salt Lake City), May 28, 1882; Peter Neilson journal, type-script copy in possession of J. F. Nielson, Bluewater; Jenson, Ramah History, [9], [10]-[11].

¹⁷ Peter Nielson journal; Jenson, Ramah History, [11]; Mangrum and Clawson, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ Jenson, Ramah History, [12].

¹⁹ Historical Record, Ramah Ward, Eastern Arizona Stake, Book A (1883-85), 71 (hereafter called Book A). These manuscript records are in the L.D.S. Church Library, Salt Lake City. Also interviews with Mrs. Wayne Clawson, J. F. Nielson, and E. A. Bond.

²⁰ National Archives, Washington, D. C., Records of Post Office Department, Records of Appointments of Postmasters, XLVIII, 694; Andrew Jenson, "Origin of Western Geographic Names Associated with the History of the 'Mormon' People," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, XII (1921), 41; interview with J. F. Nielson. Joseph City nearly took the name of "Ramah" also. Westover and Richards, *op. cit.*, 11.

²¹ Jenson, Ramah History, [12].

The Saints had come to New Mexico to work as missionaries among the Lamanites, both Navahos and Zunis. Occasionally they thought that "We had not made much progress in our mission to the Lamanites" and urged, "The young men should be out among them and the sisters could assist by their encouragement." Generally, however, the people agreed they were "doing much good as Indian missionaries." Converts frequently attended Church meetings where Tietjen gladly spoke "a short time to the Navaho brethren and sisters who were present."²² But the presence of the Navahos created a serious problem—competition for the range. Bishop Tietjen thought a cooperative Mormon herd might prove less annoying to the Indians who are already upset at having been "forced far away from the water upon which we depended." In 1885 the problem remained unsolved, and Navaho sheep still cropped the grass needed for Mormon livestock.²³

Bishop Tietjen showed little awareness of another aspect of the land question. Although the village lay within the Atlantic and Pacific land grant, and Apostle F. M. Lyman "strongly urged the necessity of securing our land," Tietjen "did not feel frightened about the account of how the Railroad company sell their lands 100,000 acres to one person." To be sure, they could do little about this, for wresting a living from the semiarid land produced too small a cash surplus to pay the minimum price of \$5,760.00 for railroad land in township blocks.²⁴

A link with the beginnings at Savoia, Tietjen had successfully launched Ramah as a missionary outpost. Except for an attack of rust in 1883, crops had been uniformly good, and under his leadership the community began to grow. But administrative duties proved irksome, and in 1886 Tietjen resigned as bishop to devote more time to work with the Lamanites.²⁵

²² Book A, 2-4, 74, 90, 93.

²³ *Ibid.*, 37; Son of Former Many Beads [Bidaga], *The Ramah Navahos* (Robert W. Young, trans. and ed., "Navaho Historical Series," no. 1 [Phoenix, 1949]), 6; Historical Record, Ramah Ward, St. Johns Stake, Book B (1885-89), 3 (hereafter called Book B).

²⁴ Book A, 19-20, 52; Sanford A. Mosk, *Land Tenure Problems in Santa Fe Railroad Grant Area* (Berkeley, 1944), 11-13; William G. Ritch, *Illustrated New Mexico, Historical and Industrial* (5th ed., Santa Fe, 1885), 8.

²⁵ Jenson, *Ramah History*, [13]. Population figures given in Book A, 90;

James R. McNeil, a Scottish immigrant to Utah in 1856, began his term as bishop with an ambitious program of realigning streets with the cardinal directions, building better houses, establishing a cooperative store, and the like, but serious problems intervened. Drought in 1886 meant short rations and discouragement that winter, relieved by better crops in 1887.²⁶ In the latter year, inspectors found that Postmaster Pipkin had been defrauding the government, whereupon they closed down the Savoia post office. Two years later, the stake high council excommunicated the unlucky Postmaster.²⁷ While this excitement might cause tongues to wag, a three-year attack on the crops by grasshoppers (1888-90) proved far more serious.²⁸

In the midst of these difficulties, Ramah faced extinction when an eviction notice in January, 1889, arrived from a neighboring cattle company which had bought the townsite from the railroad. Urging their people to "exercise their faith and prayers that the hearts of these men, might be softened," the Mormon leaders conferred with the ranchers. The latter demanded \$6,400.00 for the Ramah section (\$10.00 an acre), but Bishop McNeil, deeming this exorbitant, told his flock to "build up and improve their surroundings" in defiance of the gentiles.²⁹

Ignoring the danger only brought another eviction notice in 1890. This time McNeil appealed to Salt Lake City, whence came funds with which the Ramah Land and Irrigation Company bought the land.³⁰ President Wilford Woodruff sent word that

Jenson, *Eastern Arizona Stake History*; and Jenson, *St. Johns Stake History* show Ramah's uneven growth:

December 1883	91	September 1890	134	December 1895	114
December 1884	118	September 1891	136	December 1896	128
September 1885	87	September 1892	129	December 1897	128
September 1886	109	December 1893	96	December 1899	120
December 1887	127	December 1894	122	December 1900	111
September 1889	118				

²⁶ Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (4 vols., Salt Lake City, 1901-36), IV, 597; Book B, 70, 76.

²⁷ Records of Postmasters, LVIII, 320; Book B, 67, 117; *Deseret News Weekly*, November 22, 1890. A "stake" is an administrative body operating between the "wards" and Salt Lake City.

²⁸ Jenson, *Ramah History*, [13], [14]; *Historical Record, Ramah Ward, St. Johns Stake, Book C* (1889-1903), 3 (hereafter called Book C).

²⁹ Jenson, *Ramah History*, [14], [15]; Book B, 108, 111.

³⁰ Jenson, *Ramah History*, [15].

the Ramahns "were all called to stay there and help make that purchase"—an indefinite sentence when they had barely been able to survive. Finally the Church authorities agreed to accept an equivalent amount of work on the dam as repayment.³¹

Domestic difficulties exploded hard on the heels of the land crisis, splitting the community in two. In October, 1890, Vira Lewis Pipkin, wife of the ex-postmaster and sister of Samuel E. Lewis, asked her mother and brother in Arizona to take her home. Pipkin and Joseph Hatch pursued the discontented wife, while S. E. Lewis, Tietjen, and Bond rode hard after the angry husband. The three parties converged near the Arizona line, and Joseph Lewis met his death in the ensuing gun battle. A few days later, the Arizona sheriff, mistaking Ira Starns Hatch for his brother Joe, shot him.³² These unhappy incidents left the settlement seething with ill will, Bishop McNeil urging them "to fast and pray that the afflictions that are upon us as a ward may be removed."³³ Finally Stake President David K. Udall came over from St. Johns in March, 1891, and, after hearing each faction, scolded them for invading the sanctity of the family on the one side and for taking the law into their own hands on the other. Thereafter, the whole affair subsided.³⁴

Conditions improved in 1891, and the following year saw the four hundred and fifty acres under cultivation yield the best harvest to date. The mining town of Gallup furnished a market for the Mormon farmers who had sold 40,000 pounds of potatoes there in October, 1889. Bountiful crops in 1893 and 1894 brought good times. Word of this prosperity spread, and some New Mexicans visualized the Saints as living "in more than ordinary comfort."³⁵ Having brought his charges through parlous times,

³¹ Book C, 6, 10; Mangrum and Clawson, *op. cit.*

³² *Deseret News Weekly*, November 22, 1890, quoted in Jenson, *St. Johns Stake History*, October 26, 1890; interview with J. F. Nielson. To cap this series of unfortunate mistakes, the deputy sheriff in Gallup took Joe Hatch into custody in December under the impression that he had "killed a man by the name of Pitkin" and was wanted by the Arizona sheriff. No word coming from Arizona, Joe went free two days later. *Elk* (Gallup), December 5, 1890.

³³ Book C, 10.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 13, 208.

³⁵ *Gallup Gleaner*, April 16, 1892; Jenson, *Ramah History*, [15]; Clark M.

Bishop McNeil moved away in December, 1894, leaving Samuel E. Lewis at the helm.³⁶

Good times continued in 1895, but that winter sickness struck the community, and only in April, 1896 could the Saints "be thankful that the Lord had spared our lives . . ."³⁷ Poor crops the next year left the people ill prepared for disaster in 1897, when the dam broke before the spring floods. Discouragement spread, attendance at Church fell off noticeably, and Bishop Lewis "encouraged all to Do all they Could on the Reservoir" again and again.³⁸ He reported to the stake in January, 1898 that "we was in a bad Condition," and Counselor Bond was so worried that he dreamed rain had filled the reservoir. The leaders, however, reminded the people that "we should not be discouraged because our reservoir was not fool but relie on the lord do our duties and leave the rest to the Lord . . ."³⁹ When Bishop Lewis appealed for help, the First Presidency sent five thousand pounds of seed wheat, a gift which Lewis cited to quiet the continued "uneasy feeling."⁴⁰

Although "very fare Crops" in 1898 offered brief respite, the authorities in Salt Lake City pondered the situation that December. Elder John Henry Smith remarked that Ramah was "the toughest proposition in the Church . . . tough on the people living there" and suggested release from their mission.⁴¹ Drought in 1899 brought further discouragement, and Bishop Lewis told President Udall that "on acount of no watter no crops had ben put in" and some people would leave if they could sell out.⁴² Despite their despair, the men worked stubbornly to repair the dam. But the authorities were now convinced that it was not right to require such hardships. At a stake conference on Jan-

Carr, "Irrigation by Flood Reservoirs," *Southwest Illustrated Magazine*, I (January, 1895), 31; *News-Register* (Gallup), October 18, 1889; Max Frost, ed., *New Mexico* (Santa Fe, 1894), 196.

³⁶ Jenson, *St. Johns Stake History*, December, 1894.

³⁷ Book C, 36, 37.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 39; L.D.S. *Journal History*, March 23, 1898; *Deseret News Weekly*, December 25, 1897, quoted in Jenson, *St. Johns Stake History*, November 21, 1897; Mangrum and Clawson, *op. cit.*; Book C, 66, 69.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 88, 98.

⁴⁰ L.D.S. *Journal History*, March 23, 1898; Book C, 98.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 151; L.D.S. *Journal History*, December 22, 1898.

⁴² Book C, 169, 180.

uary 28, 1900, "Apostle Grant read a release from the First Presidency of all who were called as missionaries to the St. Johns Stake, releasing them to go elsewhere if they so desired"43 The missionary effort had come to an end.

Daily life was hard in Ramah, even during the best years. Big families helped some, for the largely hand-operated economy provided chores for all. Plural families were especially fortunate in this respect; Frihoff Nielson's two wives, for example, presented him with fourteen children.⁴⁴ Nevertheless the women found time all too short for their many duties. Emma Nielson, mother of nine, wrote on June 13, 1890:

This life certainly is a busy one for me. I devote ten hours to the comfort of home and family and the remaining four I spend in literature, improving my own mind and that of my children. I am at present thirty-two and feel broken down with the hardships of frontier life in Arizona and New Mexico. I do not feel discouraged but desire to perservere in all that is noble and good.⁴⁵

This indomitable woman milked the cows, prepared meals, made butter for sale, washed, mended, and made clothes for her family, helped in her husband's post office-store, and still found time to keep a journal, write many letters, take a correspondence course, attend parties and dances, and lead a full church life.

Nature permitting, the people's toil supplied most of their dietary needs. Kitchen gardens furnished vegetables in season (some of which were kept in root cellars but rarely canned for the winter). Fresh fruit was scarce, although dried fruit came from St. George, Utah, and from California through the stores at Gallup and Fort Wingate. Meat formed a staple item. Chickens laid eggs, pigs provided salt pork and bacon, range cattle supplied jerked beef, and dairy cows gave milk from which came butter and cheese. The reservoir contained fish, while turkeys, rabbits, and deer frequently fell before

⁴³ *Deseret Evening News*, February 9, 1900, quoted in Jenson, *St. Johns Stake History*, January 28, 1900.

⁴⁴ Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, III, 472.

⁴⁵ Emma M. Nielson journal (typescript copy in possession of J. Frederick Nielson, Bluewater), 22.

hunters' guns. From merchants at Fort Wingate and Gallup the Saints obtained sugar, flour, rice, and beans in hundred-pound sacks, tomatoes in gallon cans, and coffee for those who "did not live their religion very well."⁴⁶

Montgomery Ward's mail-order house was the source of most of the men's work clothes, their "good" suit, and material from which the women made dresses. Furniture was mostly handmade, much of it brought from former homes in Arizona or elsewhere. Some households used coal oil lanterns, but others placed a knotted rag in a dish of kerosene for smoky illumination. Most families dipped their candles and made their soap. Houses were almost uniformly of wood; a few boasted lumber from nearby sawmills, but most were of logs and roofed with shakes or clapboards split four feet long and one foot wide. Glass windowpanes came from Gallup stores. Hand-labor did not permit many rooms; the Hatch family, for example, lived in a three-room house, the boys sleeping in one part while the girls had a trundle bed in their parents' bedroom. Fireplaces provided heat, and in the kitchen a small hearth and iron stove, surrounded by iron kettles, griddles, and tin pans, heated the room, the food, and water for Saturday baths.

Ramah's economic life centered around stock raising and farming. The Saints had brought cattle with them from Arizona. Farm produce found markets at Gallup and Fort Wingate.⁴⁷ Plows and harrows had come with the settlers from Sunset, and in 1884, Peter Nielson bought a reaper and thresher to replace the primitive scythes and flails. Tietjen soon acquired a gristmill, and in 1885, the community purchased a sawmill.⁴⁸ Though ownership shifted from cooperative to individual, one or more small stores in the village supplied some of the needs of whites and Indians. In hard times, men could find wage work at the sawmills, ranches, or in Gallup.

However hard their lot, the Ramahns did not always lead

⁴⁶ Mangrum and Clawson, *op. cit.*; interviews with Mrs. Wayne Clawson and J. F. Nielson.

⁴⁷ Peter Nielson journal; Carl Eickemeyer, *Over the Great Navajo Trail* (New York, 1900), 118.

⁴⁸ Jenson, *Ramah History*, [11], [13]; Peter Nielson journal; interviews with Mrs. W. Clawson and J. F. Nielson.

a life of gloom. Church organizations, meeting several times a week, provided social occasions. Despite long days of toil which began before dawn, the Saints always had surplus energy for frequent dances at which accordians, guitars, and piano-organs played merrily. Annual festivals like the Fourth and Twenty-fourth of July, observed with programs planned by the Church leaders, evoked such outbursts of celebration that the priesthood frequently felt compelled to speak sharply to the high-spirited young people.⁴⁹

Such gaiety was hardly enough to balance the staggering hardships in frontier Ramah. Of greater importance for this purpose were the values which sustained flagging determination and guided community and individual action. The evidence indicates that these people used a value system substantially different from those to which other settlers in this region subscribed. One would scarcely attribute to the Ramahns the same motives for living here as those for example of the men who came to Gallup to make their fortunes in the stores and coal mines. We must turn, then, to an examination of those Ramahn values which were important in the settlement and maintenance of the community.

A central focus for these values was the Ramahns' belief that they were chosen by the Lord—a people apart with all the discipline, duties, and peculiar benefits inherent in this condition. The Ramah Historical Records delineate a parallel between these people and the early New England Puritans. This "Puritan strain" bred a sense of close involvement with God, for obviously, He is interested in His chosen people's welfare. "The hand of the Lord was over us for good," and so "We were a blessed people here and we should acknowledge the hand of God for these blessings."⁵⁰

Whatever might happen was God's handiwork. Ira Hatch "felt that the Lord had blessed us by sending rain that we might raise what was necessary for our sustenance." On the other hand, when they "had to suffer in a measure," the Lord was trying "to

⁴⁹ Emma Nielson journal, 10; Book A, 71, 75; Book C, 44.

⁵⁰ Book A, 84, 85. Quotations are reproduced here with original spellings but without the distracting "sic."

prove them and see if they are true to the Lord sed when we was tried and proved Faithful we was laying up treasures in heaven."⁵¹ So hard times were but part of the divine scheme. In the dark days of 1899, for example, Elder Tenney could say:

on the feeling of discourageness in regards to the drouth sed the Lord was able to open the way for his people sed all we needed was to do our dutie the Lord would do the rest.⁵²

Only by fulfilling their obligations with a contrite heart could these people, chosen by the Lord for a difficult assignment, prove they were faithful. Consciousness of having been chosen sustained the Saints in days of sorrow; trying times were just that, and good times were a reaffirmation of their favored position.

This status entailed the duty of leading a moral life in accord with the revelations in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, both as an example to the Lamanites and to maintain order within the community. As Frihoff Nielson observed, "no one should be ashamed of being a latter day saint sed how the latter day saints was noted for their honesty and every thing that is good"—a reassuring thought in time of trouble.⁵³ In 1884 Apostle Lyman admonished: "You must be just in all your deal[ings] if you will have the Spirit of the Lord and without that Spirit you cannot be Latter-day Saints." Ira Hatch had noticed that "those who live honest and pure lives were apt to live longer upon the earth . . ."⁵⁴ Thus the leaders dealt severely with Pipkin for cheating as postmaster, and the congregation unanimously sustained their action.⁵⁵

The priesthood had the task of maintaining community morality and stability. One of the teachers' important duties was to discover, report, and, where possible, resolve ill-feelings which might rend the group. In extreme cases like Joe Lewis' death, stake officials assumed this job. Frihoff Nielson explained this concern:

if we could live united temporally and spiritually, dwell-

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 4, 57, 90; Book C, 70; Book B, 70.

⁵² Book C, 169.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁵⁴ Book A, 49, 84.

⁵⁵ Book B, 67.

ing in peace one with another, and we had no bickerings and strife, then so far as we were concerned Satan would be bound.⁵⁶

Less dangerous moral lapses also received attention. F. Nielson warned, "Those who feel at home with people who blaspheme are on dangerous ground."⁵⁷ At the same time S. E. Lewis "Condemned gambling in every form" with good reason:

We should set good examples. Denounced gambling with the Lamanites, and with each other, there is no good in this and it will do more harm and destroy the influence the Elder might gain faster than he can obtain it. It is not from the Lord . . . but from the other source. These things should not be tolerated among us⁵⁸

Horse racing came under this ban on a number of counts:

Counslor Bond spoke . . . to those that was in the habit of betting on horse races and all kinds of betting, sed it was rong and against the prisibles of the gosple encouraged all who had ben in this habit to try and quit it⁵⁹

In 1886 "Bishop E. A. Tietjen spoke against some of the evils that are in our midst. denounced horse-racing in the streets, it was not safe."⁶⁰

Dancing, an important aspect of recreation, raised several moral issues. Decorum at these affairs often proved unsuitable, and in 1884, Counselor Lewis spoke of "the necessity of having good order in our dances and suggested that we have a responsible man to take charge of them." Bishop McNeil wanted to institute a system of written invitations.⁶¹ Another evil was the thorny question of round dancing or waltzing. When the stake council agreed to allow this innovation, McNeil announced, "We will keep it down in this Ward as long as possible."⁶² The

⁵⁶ Book A, 80.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 71, 75. Professor Clyde Kluckhohn has suggested to the author that the comparative absence of gambling among the Ramah Navahos might be traced to Ernest Tietjen's influence on Jose Pino.

⁵⁹ Book C, 41.

⁶⁰ Book B, 25.

⁶¹ Book A, 71; Book B, 104.

⁶² Book C, 10.

Saints sternly opposed Satan in whatever guise he assumed, but however unremitting their efforts, they found it no easy thing to maintain an ambitiously high moral standard on the frontier.

Real and ever present was the danger of contamination by gentiles with different values and small respect for those of the Saints. Especially was this true when hard times forced young Ramahns to "work for the Gentiles to get the Almighty Dollar." S. E. Lewis advised: "Do not work for the Gentiles there is no good comes from it. The blessings of the Lord lay close at home, yes even at our doors."⁶³ He later spelled out his fears:

[He] felt thankful that we did not have no Saloons in our place and but very few that did not keep the word of wisdom and did not know of any that used bad language sed we was much better of in this place to what others was in these large places in the bad things Called Saloons.⁶⁴

Not all the brethren heeded this advice, however, when visiting Gallup:

On Wednesday evening a Mormon from the vicinity of Ramah was in Hinch's saloon, and when he went out took with him from the roulette table, a \$20 "shiner" and left town He [was] apprehended the next morning and gave up the money.⁶⁵

The possibility of contamination helps explain concern over attendance at dances. Bishop Lewis in 1898 "complained of . . . the marriage of their daughters with cowboys," and Stake President Gibbons confirmed this sorry state of things the next year:

sed he thought the Best thing was to apoint some good latterday saints to take charge of the dances and not let the rufe eliment run over and lead of our young ladies sed their had ben at least 20 young ladies run of and married vilens on acount of being to easey with such men.⁶⁶

⁶³ Book A, 75.

⁶⁴ Book C, 99.

⁶⁵ *Gallup Gleaner*, November 14, 1891.

⁶⁶ L.D.S. Journal History, December 22, 1898; Book C, 155.

It is to be hoped that he was describing affairs in the entire stake and that Ramah was not alone in suffering from this attack by the ungodly.

Hostility toward the gentiles was defense of the Mormon way of life. Self-improvement toward high moral standards brought a sense of moral superiority, re-enforcing the belief in a divinely chosen status. Both of these ideas gave an inner strength to carry out one's duties despite almost unbearable conditions. Any weakening of the system might bring failure. The obvious answer to this unthinkable possibility was a semi-military discipline, long characteristic of the Mormons.

The early leaders, well disciplined themselves, appealed to this sense of duty. They were "firm and determined in not abandoning our place in the time of trial and hardship."⁶⁷ In the dark days of Ramah's nadir in 1897-98, Bishop Lewis scolded:

when we mad up our mind to stay we would prosper . . . sed he would not feel rite to go of . . . in time of trials sed when we got dow[n] to the amount that we was united we would prosper . . .⁶⁸

There was no possibility of shirking in such remarks as, "We should labor with zeal whenever we are wanted to do anything by the Servants of the Lord."⁶⁹

An orientation toward Salt Lake City, whence came Church orders and leaders, was a significant aspect of maintaining discipline. Ramah's leaders furthered this when they encouraged reading Church publications and contributing to Church collections like the Defense Fund and the Salt Lake City temple-contributions which returned many-fold as cash or seed in times of distress.⁷⁰

The ideal of discipline contained a potential value conflict between strict obedience to authority and congregational independence of decision; the former took precedence in Ramah's elaboration of this paradox. When Bishop Tietjen organized the auxiliary Church associations in 1884, he "Wanted to hear

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁶⁹ Book A, 75.

⁷⁰ Book B, 40, 138; Book A, 120.

from the Sisters who they wanted" as Relief Society leader; they suggested Mary McNeil. "The Bishop said we must not treat this thing lightly Bp. said he and his counselors had nominated Sister Phebe A. McNeil Vote was unanimous."⁷¹

Insistence on discipline and morality served many ends, among them the maintenance of the community, as we have seen. The community itself was but the means to other ends. The most obvious of these to the New Mexican Saints was the mission to the Indians. They were, however, also aware of another goal expressed by a Mormon in Springerville, Arizona: "The Saints who live in this land have mostly been called as missionaries 'to make the desert blossom as the rose'. . . ."⁷² This second mission involved the values of industry, agricultural life, progress, and the like, deriving therefrom considerable strength.

The men of Savoia had had no doubt that they were called to convert the Lamanites, and the authorities recalled them when the mission no longer proved possible. The Ramahns in 1882 were equally certain "on the subject of us Coming hear . . . as Indian misinarys," but as the years passed, this objective became blurred in their minds—though not in those at Salt Lake City. Apostle Brigham Young, Jr., stated flatly in 1887, "We calculate on this Place more than any other as a nucleus for the Indian Mission."⁷³ This helps explain the assistance given when the colony faced failure. The First Presidency's committee, appointed in 1898 to consider the Ramahns' situation, was "to take into consideration the question of missionary work among the Zuni and Navajo Indians."⁷⁴

A certain success attended this work from the first. Navaho "brethren and Sisters" attended meetings, and most of the local Navahos joined the Church.⁷⁵ One old Indian still recalls that his father "used to go everywhere with this Mormon named Tiet-

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁷² *Deseret News Weekly*, February 9, 1889, quoted in Jenson, *St. Johns Stake History*, January 19, 1889.

⁷³ Book C, 253; Book B, 76.

⁷⁴ L.D.S. *Journal History*, December 22, 1898.

⁷⁵ Book A, 57; interview with E. Atheling Bond.

jen. They were constantly together."⁷⁶ In 1886 the people still recognized this mission:

If we neglect to make this settlement a success then we will be dilatory in our labors. We hardly realize the importance of this place as a center from which to send the Gospel to the Lamanites.⁷⁷

They included the Zunis in their labor, and in 1888 "A Zuni brother . . . stated that many of the Zunies desired to live and do as the Mormons did."⁷⁸

From 1888 to 1897 the community suffered from grasshoppers and draught, rose on a wave of prosperity, and sank under the disaster of the dam's destruction. Only in 1897 do the records again mention any reason for the settlement and then, apparently, in an effort to keep the group together:

Bishop Lewis . . . told of the promises that had ben [made] by by President Young and that promes was that we would be welthy and also sed another promis that had ben made that the lord wanted us to stay her more than we wanted to stay . . . quire sang by the strenght of the hils we blesse the.⁷⁹

No reference to the Lamanite mission here; the focus of purpose had changed. This new emphasis continued. Elder Davis in 1898 "sed the Duties of the Saints was to build up the wast places of Zion at least 6 days and on the Sabeth we should attend to our meeting. . . ."⁸⁰ E. J. Tenney found pleasure in 1899 in the thought that "the Lord was pleased with us when we built up his Kingdom," putting emphasis on "the Great amount of work that had ben done on the reservoir."⁸¹ Two years later John Bloomfield spoke of

the Counsel that Brother [Erastus] Snow gave him before he Come sed brother snow sed the intention

⁷⁶ Son of Former Many Beads, *op. cit.*, 6.

⁷⁷ Book B, 28.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁷⁹ Book C, 66. Young made these promises in 1887. Book B, 77.

⁸⁰ Book C, 91.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 189.

of us being Called hear was to build up a place hear and see that the Indians get their Just dues in the Traden Buissness⁸²

Protecting the Indians' economic welfare was a long way from improving their religious life. One can now more readily understand why the general authorities, who thought of Ramah as a proselyting outpost, decided to release these people from their mission.

Another mission remained to sustain the Ramahns—"to make the desert blossom as the rose." Until nearly the end of the century, this duty had served as a means to accomplish the religious end. Although they had taken pains in laying out the town in 1882, Samuel Lewis remembered that then

The mission was self-supporting; we would work for a time to get something to go on with, and then go out and labor [among the Indians] for a few weeks or months⁸³

Bishop McNeil showed the influence of this second mission when he opened his term of office with an elaborate plan for streets, buildings, stores, and reservoir improvements. By 1898, when zeal for the Lamanite mission had apparently been eclipsed, a change in the insistence on "improving the place" was more clearly evident. Then "the Duties of the Saints was to build up the wast places of Zion."⁸⁴ Elder Bloomfield "felt like building up Ramah while he lived her," and his quotation from Erastus Snow showed little relation between "build[ing] up a place hear" and protecting the Indians.⁸⁵ Elder Tenney's remark, "the Lord was pleased with us when we built up his Kingdom," indicates an acceptance of work on the settlement as an end in itself.⁸⁶ The transformation is comprehensible against the background of nearly twenty years of discouraging struggle for existence; making a living under more pleasant conditions had absorbed the people's attention and energies.

The foregoing discussion of a small segment of a value sys-

⁸² *Ibid.*, 253.

⁸³ Jenson, *Ramah History*, [9].

⁸⁴ Book B, 57; Book C, 91.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 127, 253.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 189.

tem illustrates not only the complexity of the subject of values in action but also the importance of such investigations for a better understanding of the dynamics of historical events and the theory of values. The ensuing recapitulation is necessarily a suggestive, rather than exhaustive, discussion.

The idea of being a chosen people served as the central force for the values studied and was, therefore, the underlying motivation for the Ramahns' actions. From it stemmed directly a hostility toward gentiles which served as a defense mechanism for the Mormons' values. The morality value also derived from this special status, and the resultant sense of moral superiority not only re-enforced the Mormon-gentile dichotomy but strengthened the sense of selectedness. The values of building (improvement) and conversion were clearly the Lord's work, fit for His Saints. Perhaps, less directly, the discipline value bore a relationship to this central idea.

The two "missions" of building and conversion were compulsive courses of action—values at work. Here these two values were combined with duty (discipline). It was the mission to the Lamanites that brought the Saints to New Mexico and served as a motive for their remaining there under trying conditions. Maintenance of the community served as a means for accomplishing this course of action and was made easier by the values of morality, discipline, and improvement, among others. That this machinery was not perfect became apparent when the hardships encountered in the struggle for survival of the community overshadowed the conversion mission. Gradually the mission of building up the waste places of Zion (hitherto subordinate to the first course of action) assumed primary importance until it became no longer a means but an end in itself, re-enforced in its turn by the various values. How these matters have operated over the last fifty years is another equally interesting story.