

HISTORY - BUNKERVILLE WARDS



BISHOPS' MESSAGE

As your servants in the Bunkerville wards and branch, may we join with you in expressing our great love and appreciation to our Heavenly Father for this lovely new addition to our community.

What a great blessing this beautiful place of worship can be in the life of every member of the Bunkerville First and Second Wards and the Virgin Valley Spanish Branch.

As we enter into a time of growth in numbers, may we experience a spiritual growth also, nourished by a renewed dedication to serve our Father in Heaven. Let us make a new commitment to extend a loving arm of fellowship to all, member and non-member alike, that we may continue on in the time-honored Bunkerville tradition of acceptance and concern for the temporal and spiritual welfare of all who might come within our sphere of influence.

May this lovely edifice become a sanctuary of worship, of peace and comfort, *"A house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God."* D&C 88:119

Sincerely, Your Brethren

Michael G. Waite
J. Clark Robinson
Roger M. Barker

Dedication Program Booklet
Committee Members:

Chairman
Photographers

Historian
Cover Artist
Consultants

Translator

Judith Laub
Jonathan Putnam
P.J. Waite
Kevin A. Mickelson
Vincent L. Leavitt
Jean Whipple
Dorothy Waite
Norman E. Waite
David A. Leavitt

HISTORY OF THE BUNKERVILLE CHAPELS

On Sunday, January 1, 1877 in Santa Clara, Utah Territory, Edward Bunker, Sr. called a meeting of those interested in settling a community following the United Order. That group of twenty-three persons organized themselves into a company for the purpose of settling a "United Order" Community along the Virgin River, south of Santa Clara. Edward Bunker, Sr. was elected president; Lemuel S. Leavitt and Dudley Leavitt, counselors; Mahonri Steele, secretary, and Edward Bunker Jr., treasurer.

On Monday, January 2, 1877, the company, with six wagons and seventy head of cattle, headed for the Mesquite Flat. They arrived on Thursday, January 5, 1877.

After further examination the company decided to locate on the south side of the river. They crossed the Virgin and pitched camp on a hill about two and one-half miles northeast of the present site of Bunkerville. On the very day of their arrival they put up a small lumber building on top of the hill and called the location Bunkerville, after Edward Bunker, Sr., the leader of the company.

On the 7th of January, Sunday, the first meeting was held in Bunkerville, then consisting of one house and six wagons. Though no record can be found stating exactly where the meeting was held, it would probably be accurate to say it was in the lumber building built on top of the hill.

On Sunday, January 14, 1877, a Sunday School was organized with Samuel O. Crosby as Superintendent. There were eighteen members present.

The sight of the first settlement of Bunkerville is described in the diary of Luella Abbott Leavitt, wife of Thomas D. Leavitt, Jr., as being on the hill now scraped away for the highway to make the turn to go onto the bridge between Bunkerville and Mesquite. In fact, if you look on the hill directly across the highway from the Jack and Katherine Faught home, you can see the sandstone foundation of one of the first homes.

By January, 1878, most of the settlers had moved about one and one-half miles below the original settlement to the old gin mill site. Some had also moved an additional mile to the present townsite of Bunkerville.

School and church were held in the lumber building on the original settlement site. However, since most people did not live on the hill, it was difficult to attend. So a bowery, a shed built of cottonwood poles and a roof of brush, was built where the Bunkerville Community Center now stands. Later, in 1879, the roof and sides were changed to a "flag" roof, one covered with brush and mud, which kept out the wind and most of the rain, if it didn't rain too hard or too long.

On Saturday, January 11, 1879, the Bunkerville Ward was organized with Edward Bunker, Sr. as Bishop. During that year, 1879, the company proceeded to organize more fully and to draw up written rules for their guidance in the United Order. These rules were signed by forty-four members. Also, most of the settlers moved to the present town site.

In 1880, an adobe public building was erected on the public square, or the area where the community center now stands. The building was used for church meetings, town meetings, dances and programs. It had two glass windows, a door, and a flag roof. It was large enough to permit five quadrille formations with just a little crowding. This "flag schoolhouse" served as the Bunkerville Church House for ten years.

Then, in 1890, a large rock church house was built. The work was initiated by a group of young men who had been refused the use of the dance hall. It was a rule of the town that dances should be held only on Friday night, but the young men were going on a freighting trip and wanted a dance before they left. Since the hall was refused, they determined to build one of their own, over which they would have authority.

They organized a company with Thomas D. Leavitt, Jr. as president, with William Abbott, George Lee, and George Bunker as committee members. They secured a site, put in a foundation, and had some of the rock hauled and the lumber bargained for. The bishop then persuaded them to let the whole ward assist and make the building a general ward house.

Completed, it was a substantial seventy-five by one hundred foot building, with a stage, high arched ceiling and a steeple belfry. It had been built by the people, with contributions of work and money: rock hauled from nearby hills, lime burned in a kiln of their own making, and lumber hauled from Mt. Trumbull, 100 miles distant.

The site of this rock church was on first south street, on the property now owned by Harry S. and Lois Cragun. This structure served as both a church and an elementary school until it burned down in 1921.

For the next 31 years meetings were held in the high school buildings, at first in the old "flag school," or what most of us remember as the "west building," then in the "middle building," or the auditorium.

Then, in early April of 1951 Bishop Vincen E. Leavitt, having served a number of years in his calling, asked Moapa Stake President, Bryan L. Bunker, when he would be released. President Bunker replied, "Not until you build a chapel." He informed Bishop Leavitt that the brethren had just instructed him that all wards were to have their own chapels. Besides, the school was soon coming under the control of Clark County School District and the school district would not let the ward continue to hold meetings in the school.

Bishop Leavitt consulted his counselors, Merrill Bunker and Ferlin Hunt. The next Sunday, the chapel was proposed to the priesthood leaders and the project was approved by the ward. That afternoon, the bishopric went to Logandale, Nevada and talked with Eddie Miller, who had just completed the Logandale Chapel. Mr. Miller agreed to be the construction foreman for the Bunkerville Chapel. He brought along his friend, Lynn Whitmore.

Bishop Leavitt went to the Glendale, Nevada state highway yard the next day and asked to use the highway department's brick-building machine. That afternoon he delivered the brick machine and a load of screened gravel to the chapel site which had been purchased from Roy Waite for \$700.

John Lundell, a rancher in Riverside, Nevada, brought up his small John Deere track loader, cleared off the building site and dug the basement. He also owned a lumber mill on Cedar Mountain and asked if the ward could use some lumber. Two days later two truck loads of form lumber appeared and the project began.

The only paid employees on the construction site were Eddie Miller, Lynn Whitmore, and Con Adams. Con agreed to work for half salary, a generous act that provided chapel money in the financial arrangement with Church headquarters. The Church had agreed to match the costs of the building with the Bunkerville Ward. Every hour spent in labor was sent into the Church in Salt Lake City, Utah for matching cash. Also, any donation of material or cash was matched in cash by the Church. This created a workable cycle. The people of Bunkerville would work and turn in their time. Cash would come from Salt Lake City and with that cash more supplies would be purchased and more labor performed, and the cycle continued.

With the exception of Sundays, every single day found groups of men working. During the day they built bricks with the brick machine and after school the Aaronic Priesthood boys would help stack them for drying. Then, each evening Bishop Leavitt would deliver another load of gravel to use the next day.

When enough blocks had been made the actual building was started. When the building was to the point windows were needed, Brother Hector Bunker came to Bishop Leavitt and said, "It looks like you are ready for the windows," and handed him a check to help purchase the windows. Nearly the same thing

happened with Uncle Harmon Wittwer. Both he and Hector were too old to really help with the work so they donated cash. Uncle Parley Hunt worked every single day the chapel was under construction.

Saturdays found the chapel yard crawling with Aaronic Priesthood boys. They hauled fill-gravel from the washes with tractor and wagons, then screened the gravel for cement work. They dug trenches, washed down walls, nailed on roof boards, and cleaned up debris.

The sisters of the ward helped paint, provided lunches for workers on Saturdays, and organized community fairs. Members of the ward would bring their unwanted or unused goods to the school and sell them to each other. Then the cash went to the chapel.

Bunkerville has never been a rich town in money. But it has always been an extravagant town in the spirit of helping others. It was so then and it is so today.

There were many happy hours spent at the chapel site and also, at times, anxious hours spent worrying about how to go on. There was the very sad day when, nearing the completion of the chapel, Eddie Miller died of a heart attack while at work. His body lay in the shade of the southwest corner of the chapel most of the day waiting for a coroner to come from Las Vegas. Work was slowed for the funeral and the chapel was finished under the hand of his friend, Lynn Whitmore. To my knowledge, Eddie was not a member of the church, but a more gracious and honest man would be hard to find.

In April of 1952, just a few days over a year from the time President Bunker asked for the chapel to be built, the chapel was dedicated.

It was remodeled in 1970-71 under Bishop Richard Reid and Bishop Vincent L. Leavitt. The library and what are currently Primary classrooms were added and the parking area east of the building, donated by Bruno and Elisa Biasi, was paved.

The building was enlarged again in 1983. The paper work was started by Bishop Larry Reber and the construction performed under Bishop Kirk Brotherson. The chapel area itself was extended to the west and the Relief Society room and three classrooms down the hall were added.

In the 114 year history of Bunkerville, with the exception of the lumber building at the original townsite, church meetings have always been held within a two block area of the chapel we are dedicating today.

V. L. Leavitt

1991 CHAPEL

Paper Work Begun	October 7, 1987
First Bid Opening	November 16, 1988
Second Bid Opening	November 17, 1989
Architect	Dennis B. Patten, P.C. Architects, Inc.
Contractor	Broderick & Howell
Church Authorization to Commence Work	January 8, 1990
County Authorization to Commence Work	April 6, 1990
Ground Breaking	April 9, 1990
Pre-Final Inspection	April 10, 1991
Final Inspection	April 19, 1991
First Sacrament Meeting Held	April 28, 1991
Dedication of Chapel	May 26, 1991

STAKE PRESIDENCIES 1877 - 1991

ST. GEORGE STAKE

Stake President Joseph W. Young
Counselors Robert Gardner
James G. Bleak
Alexander F. McDonald

January 12, 1879
1874 - 1877

Stake President John Daniel Thompson McAllister
Counselors Henry D. Eyring
Thomas J. Jones
Daniel D. McArthur
Anthony W. Ivins

1877 - 1888

Stake President Daniel D. McArthur
Counselors Anthony W. Ivins
Erastus B. Snow
David H. Cannon

December 17, 1888

Stake President Edward H. Snow
Counselors Thomas P. Cottom
George F. Whitehead

June 14, 1901

MOAPA STAKE FORMED

Stake President Willard L. Jones
Counselors John M. Bunker
Samuel H. Wells

January 9, 1912
January 9, 1912

Stake President Bryan L. Bunker
Counselors Robert O. Gibson
Harold B. Brinley
Edwin G. Wells

September 10, 1939

October 1, 1944

MOAPA STAKE DIVIDED -- UVADA STAKE FORMED

Stake President T. Gay Myers
Counselors R. Lynn Bunker
Thomas L. Adams

December 15, 1940
January 13, 1952

MOAPA STAKE DIVIDED -- LAS VEGAS STAKE FORMED

Stake President Grant M. Bowler
Counselors W. Mack Lyon
Aldon Stewart
Blaine W. Allen

October 8, 1954
October 8, 1954

March, 1961

Stake President Donald G. Whitney
Counselors Don Lee
G. Lynn Bowler

February 21, 1973

MOAPA STAKE RENAMED LOGANDALE NEVADA STAKE

Stake President Vee D. Wilson
Counselors Fred Carpenter
Bill O. Lee
Alma W. Whipple
Elwin J. Whipple

February 25, 1974
March 14, 1982

March 15, 1987
January 10, 1988

LOGANDALE NEVADA STAKE DIVIDED -- VIRGIN VALLEY AREA BECAME PART OF BLOOMINGTON UTAH STAKE

August 28, 1988

Stake President Steven H. Peterson
Counselors Patric R. Lewis
H. Clark Christensen

BUNKERVILLE BISHOPRICS 1877 - 1991

BUNKERVILLE BRANCH, SANTA CLARA WARD

Bishop Santa Clara Ward

Edward Bunker, Sr.
Marius Ensign

January 7, 1877

1862 - 1877
1877 - 1884

BUNKERVILLE WARD

Bishop Edward Bunker, Sr.
Counselors Edward Bunker, Jr.
Myron Abbott

January 12, 1979

January 11, 1879

Bishop Edward Bunker, Jr.
Counselors Myron Abbott
Samuel Crosby
Joseph I. Earl
Henry Dudley Leavitt

May 2, 1883

August 26, 1888
September 16, 1906

Bishop Joseph I. Earl
Counselors J. Nephi Hunt
Henry Dudley Leavitt

January 9, 1908

Bishop Edward I. Cox
Counselors Charles Albert Leavitt
Harmon Wittwer

June 9, 1912

Bishop William Wittwer
Counselors Parley Hunt
Thomas Dudley Leavitt, Jr.

September 7, 1919

Bishop Seymour P. Fish
Counselors Eldon Leavitt
Austin G. Hunt

January 20, 1933

Bishop Donald C. Tobler
Counselors George Nathan Abbott
Vincen E. Leavitt

March 8, 1936

Bishop Austin G. Hunt
Counselors Washington Leavitt
Dan L. Waite

January 10, 1943

Bishop Vincen E. Leavitt
Counselors Dan L. Waite
Ferlin Hunt
H. Merrill Bunker

October 14, 1945

January 9, 1949

Bishop Wendell G. Leavitt
Counselors Andrew J. Mitchell
Howard Christensen
Willard Kowallis
Evan Waite

November 8, 1953

October 7, 1954
June 6, 1955

Bishop Dan L. Waite
Counselors Walter Hardy
L. Kay Barney

June 23, 1957

BUNKERVILLE BISHOPRICS 1877 - 1991

Bishop Counselors	H. Merrill Bunker Bernard Prows Walter Hardy	February 26, 1961
Bishop Counselors	Richard A. Reid Evan Waite Vaughn Leavitt	May 23, 1965
Bishop Counselors	Vincent L. Leavitt Cecil R. Leavitt Larry Reber	May 24, 1970
Bishop Counselors	Glen R. Peterson Evan Waite H. Merrill Bunker Larry Reber Douglas Leavitt	November 12, 1972 April 21, 1974 April 21, 1974
Bishop Counselors	Larry Reber Kirk E. Brotherson Vincent L. Leavitt Kelly B. Jensen Elwin J. Whipple	March 16, 1975 November 20, 1977 November 20, 1977
Bishop Counselors	Kirk E. Brotherson Michael G. Waite Andrew R. Jensen	July 13, 1980
Bishop Counselors	Elwin J. Whipple Kelly B. Jensen Richard J. Biasi	October 21, 1984

BUNKERVILLE WARD DIVIDED -- FIRST AND SECOND WARD FORMED SEPTEMBER 15, 1985

First Ward Bishop Counselors	Elwin J. Whipple Erik L. Laub Orville Junior Dalton	September 15, 1985
Second Ward Bishop Counselors	Kelly B. Jensen Roger M. Bunker Richard J. Biasi	September 15, 1985
First Ward Bishop Counselors	Michael G. Waite Erik L. Laub Orville Junior Dalton	January 10, 1988
Second Ward Bishop Counselors	Roger M. Bunker Ned H. Mikkelsen Nicholas S. Bartlett II	July 2, 1989

VIRGIN VALLEY SPANISH BRANCH FORMED APRIL 23, 1989

Branch President Counselors	J. Clark Robison M. Derek Hafen Jose L. Macias	April 23, 1989
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NEW CHAPEL GROUNDBREAKING

April 9, 1990

Conducting
Opening Song
Opening Prayer
Speaker

Bishop Michael G. Waite
"How Firm A Foundation" Conducted by Cecil R. Leavitt
Bishop Larry Reber
Bishop Elwin J. Whipple

"The statement *"The Great and Dreadful Day"* takes a personal meaning as we break ground for a new building. This is a great day in the fact that the Church in Bunkerville has grown to the point of warranting a new building, but dreadful in the fact that we must leave the little building that has meant so much to us and been such a big part of our lives. The warmth of that little church building in the heart of town, built by the members' hands has a spirit we have grown to love. . . a place where we have laughed together and, at those sacred times of death, have cried together. These memories will always live, but it is still a time of sorrow as we let go.

New buildings always seem cold to me with their fresh paint and new carpet. But as the Lord's people enter with His spirit, I testify that the warmth and feelings of belonging will come. Paint will be scratched, carpets will be soiled. Laughter will ring, caskets will be rolled in and the Lord's people will become one with the beautiful building that will soon stand on this ground."

E.J. Whipple

First Ground Turned By

Bishop Roger M. Bunker
Bishop Larry Reber
Bishop Michael G. Waite

Bishop Kelly B. Jensen
President J. Clark Robison
Bishop Elwin J. Whipple



From left to right: Janet Mikkelsen, Carol Leavitt, Elisa Biasi, Marianne Leavitt, Krishelle Waite, Lynnette Waite, Maria Alejos, Judith Laub, Colleen Reber, Jean Whipple

DEDICATION PROGRAM

BUNKERVILLE CHAPEL

MAY 26, 1991

Presiding President Steven H. Peterson
Conducting Bishop Roger M. Bunker
Organ Prelude Colleen Reber
Prelude Music Choir

"Sweet Hour Of Prayer"

Choir Numbers conducted by Loye Houston and Regene Bunker

Accompanied by Sheila Hatridge and Jean Whipple

Spanish Interpreter Danny Allen
Welcome Bishop Roger M. Bunker
Opening Hymn Hymn No. 247 Congregation

"We Love Thy House, O God"

Invocation Bishop Vincent L. Leavitt
Sacrament Hymn Hymn No. 193 Congregation

"I Stand All Amazed"

Sacrament Aaronic Priesthood
Speaker Bishop Vincen E. Leavitt
Speaker Bishop Larry Reber
Musical Number Choir

"A Marvelous Work"

Speaker Bishop Kirk E. Brotherson
Speaker Bishop Elwin J. Whipple
Speaker Bishop Michael G. Waite
Hymn Hymn No. 5 Congregation

"High On The Mountain Top"

Speaker President J. Clark Robison
Speaker President Vee D. Wilson
Musical Number Cecil R. Leavitt

"Bless This House"

Accompanied by Jean Whipple and Sheila Hatridge

Dedicatory Prayer President Steven H. Peterson
Closing Song Choir

"If Ye Love Me"

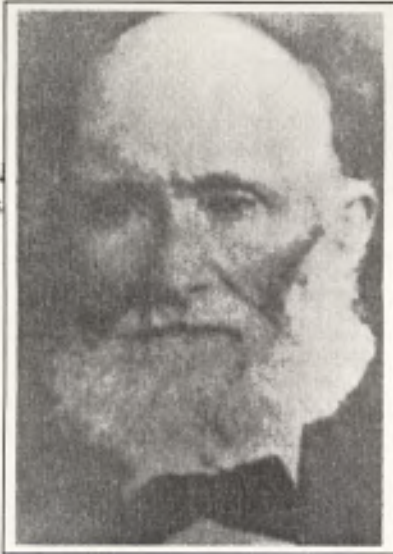
Benediction Bishop Kelly Jensen

HONORED GUESTS

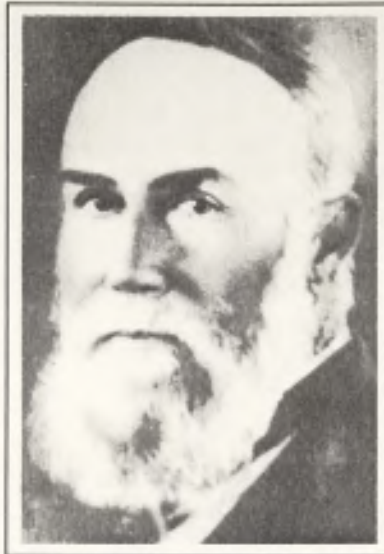
Bishop Donald C. Tobler
Bishop Vincen E. Leavitt
Bishop Dan L. Waite
Bishop Larry Reber
Bishop Elwin J. Whipple

Bishop Austin G. Hunt
Bishop Wendell G. Leavitt
Bishop Vincent L. Leavitt
Bishop Kirk E. Brotherson
Bishop Kelly B. Jensen

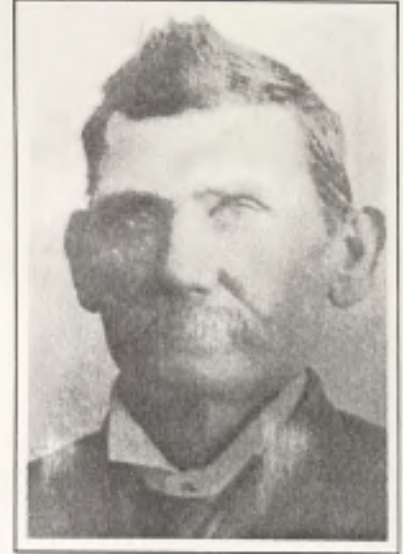
BISHOPS - BUNKERVILLE WARDS



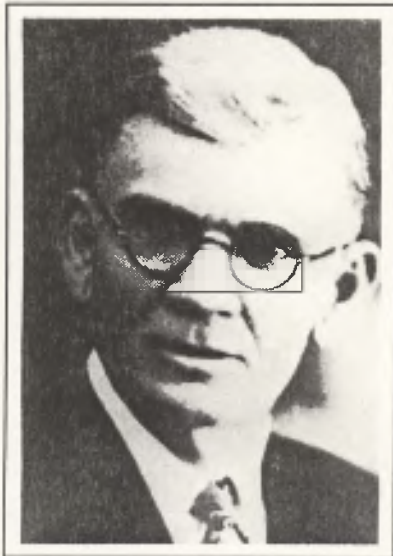
Edward Bunker, Sr.
January 11, 1879
May 2, 1883



Edward Bunker, Jr.
May 2, 1883
January 9, 1908



Joseph I. Earl
January 9, 1908
June 9, 1912



Edward I. Cox
June 9, 1912
July 27, 1919



William Wittwer
September 7, 1919
January 20, 1933



Seymour P. Fish
January 20, 1933
March 8, 1936

BISHOPS - BUNKERVILLE WARDS



Donald C. Tobler
March 8, 1936
January 10, 1943



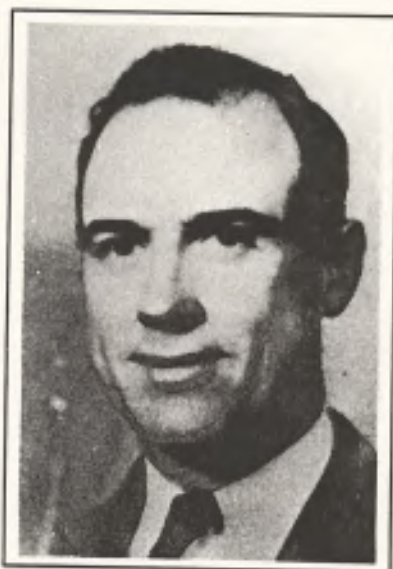
Austin G. Hunt
January 10, 1943
October 14, 1945



Vincen E. Leavitt
October 14, 1945
November 8, 1953



Wendell G. Leavitt
November 8, 1953
May 26, 1957



H. Merrill Bunker
February 26, 1961
May 23, 1965



Dan L. Waite
June 23, 1957
February 26, 1961

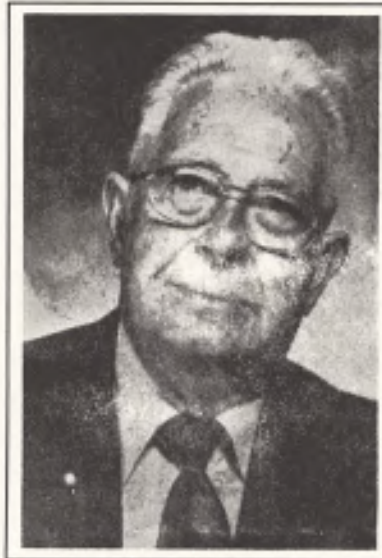
ISHOPS - BUNKERVILLE WARDS



Richard A. Reid
May 23, 1965
May 24, 1970



Vincent L. Leavitt
May 24, 1970
November 12, 1972



Glen R. Peterson
November 12, 1972
March 16, 1975

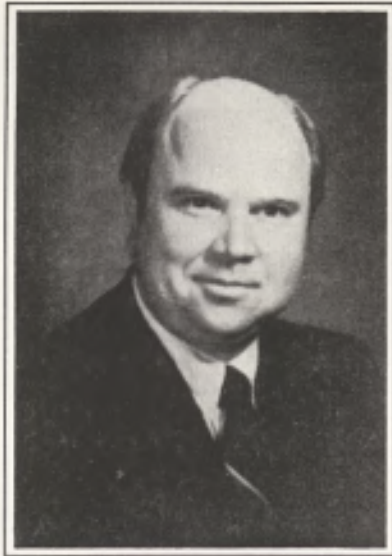


Larry Reber
March 16, 1975
July 13, 1980

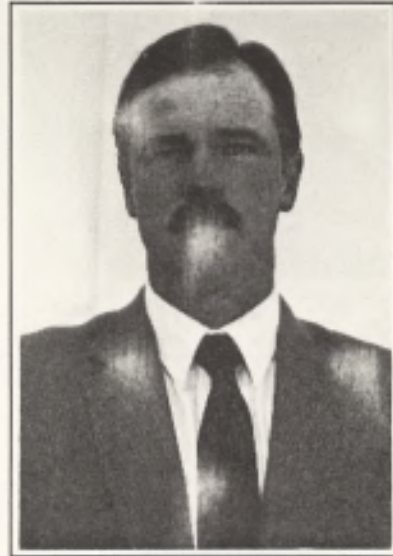


Kirk E. Brotherson
July 13, 1980
October 21, 1984

BISHOPS - BUNKERVILLE WARDS



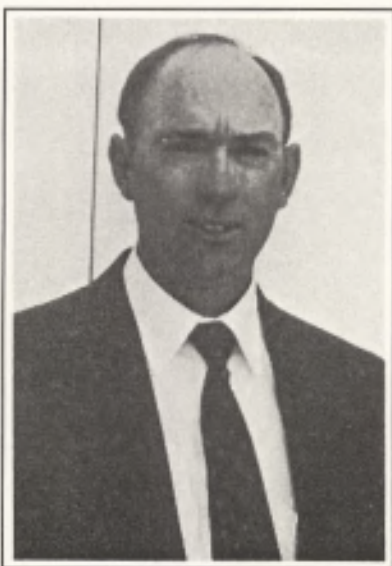
Elwin J. Whipple
October 21, 1984
January 10, 1988



Kelly B. Jensen
September 15, 1985
July 2, 1989



Michael G. Waite
January 10, 1988



Roger M. Bunker
July 2, 1989



J. Clark Robison
April 23, 1989



STAKE PRESIDENCY

Patric R. Lewis
First Counselor

Steven H. Peterson
President

H. Clark Christensen
Second Counselor

BUNKERVILLE 1ST WARD

Erik L. Laub
First Counselor

Michael G. Waite
Bishop

Orville Junior Dalton
Second Counselor





BUNKERVILLE 2ND WARD

Roger M. Bunker, *Bishop*

Ned H. Mikkelson, *First Counselor* Nicholas S. Bartlet, II., *Second Counselor*



VIRGIN VALLEY SPANISH BRANCH

J. Clark Robison, *Branch President*

M. Derek Hafen, *First Counselor* Jose L. Macias, *Second Counselor*