

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Branch for the Deaf **Ward**
Igden **Stake**

Historical Record

BOOK 4

1941

to 1945

Minutes of the Evening Session held
in the Chapel for the Deaf, at 7:00 P.M.

Pres. Woodbury presided and 2nd counselor
Ned C. Wheeler conducted.

Song - "Sowing".

Prayer - Irene Liddell.

Song - "O God, the Eternal Father".

Sacrament was administered by Bros.
Robert Welsh and Kirk Alfred assisted by
Thomas Cook, Walter Wilson, Frank Monk,
and Gerald Fisher.

Part of Report of Branch Activities and Brief
incident History of the Branch - Pres. Woodbury.

Brethren and Sisters:

The kinds of reports called for at
this conference are different from any
previous ones. We are to report on The
Growth of the Branch, its organization,
Doctrine and membership. On "The
Growth of the Branch" we shall also
include a brief history of the Branch.

Religious education for the Deaf of our
church was first begun in Salt Lake City
in the year 1892. Membership was
composed chiefly of L.D.S. students attending
the State School for the Deaf. When the
School for the Deaf was moved to Ogden
in 1896, the same Sunday School
organization continued to function and
it was held in the old Fourth Ward
Amusement Hall. I was invited to
teach in this Sunday School in September
1902. In 1907 I was made assistant
superintendent and Sister Elsie
Christiansen was chosen secretary. In
1911 I was made superintendent with
sister Elsie Christiansen as 1st Asst Superintendent.

During the years 1902-16 there were
many changes in the teachers and
secretaries. Most of these were the

older deaf who, one by one, left school for their homes and so we had to recruit new teachers occasionally.

But our quarters were unsatisfactory. On cold days we couldn't keep warm and one room was never a satisfactory place in which to hold five classes. (By 1912 we had about 80 members).

In October, 1912, Asst. Woodbury and Assistant Asst. Elsie M. Christiansen addressed a letter to Pres. Joseph F. Smith setting forth conditions and asking that a suitable place of worship be erected solely for the use of the deaf. Another letter followed containing the signatures of many of the older deaf. Two appointments were also held with the Presidency of the Church in which matters were discussed. The request was granted.

In November, 1916, the present chapel, known as the Chapel of the Branch for the Deaf, was completed. The total cost was \$15,000.00. Immediately our Sunday School moved into the new quarters. The building contains a very beautiful chapel and eight class rooms.

On January 14, 1917 a meeting was called by Stake President Thomas B. Evans of the Ogden Stake for the purpose of dedicating the chapel. President Joseph F. Smith gave an inspiring sermon and then offered the dedicatory prayer. The following brethren then made remarks: Pres. Thomas B. Evans, Dr. Joseph Morell, chairman of the building committee; Architect Leslie S. Hodgson, Apostle Hiram Smith, Bishop David A. Smith, and Pres. Arthur H. Lund of the First Presidency. Asst. Max W. Woodbury then gave a history of the Sunday School for the Deaf.

February 4th, 1917, the Branch for th
was organized and made an indep
ent Branch of Ogden Stake. The full
officers were sustained: Max W. Woodburn
President; David John Thurnan, 1st Coun
Elvie M. Christiansen, Secretary or Clerk. A
little later Otto P. Farley was chosen
2nd Counselor.

The only changes made in the Branch
Presidency from its organization to the present
1917 to 1943, have been to replace David J.
Thurnan who moved to Salt Lake City, L
Nephi Larson, and Otto P. Farley, who die
by Thomas Austin. Bro. Austin moved i
S. L. City and in Dec. 7th, 1920 was succeeded
by Elder Frank E. Call. Later Bro. Call retired
and was succeeded by Ralph Farrar who
later retired. For several years there was
but one counselor. Then Ned C. Wheeler
chosen 2nd counselor and after Bro. Larso
death Bro. Guy A. Curtis was chosen as
1st counselor. A few years later he retired
and Bro. Frank E. Call the present 1st
counselor replaced him.

At the time of the organization of
Branch, February 4th, 1917, the Sunday Sch
was reorganized and the following offi
were sustained: Elizabeth De Long, Supt.,
Nephi Larson, 1st Asst., Grant Morgan, 2nd
and Foran Savage, Secretary.

On February 4th, 1917, the Mutuals w
organized. There were 59 members. The
following officers were chosen:

Y. M. M. I. A.

Otto P. Farley, Supt.

Andrew Postma, 1st Asst. Supt.

Carlos Seegmiller, 2nd Asst. Supt.

Thomas Austin, Secretary.

Y. L. M. I. A.

Elvie M. Christiansen, Pres.

C. D. D. F. I. A.

Pearl Farley, 2nd Counselor
Lucille Crow, Secretary

Since its organization to the present time the Branch has had six Sunday School superintendents. Carlos W. Seegmiller is the superintendent at the present time, 1943, and has been superintendent since about 1925.

The Y.M.M.I.A. has had eight superintendents. The present superintendent is Kenneth C. Burdett, who has held this position 6 years.

The Y.L.M.I.A. made no changes in its president until 1930. Ebie M. Christiansen was president of this organization from 1917 to 1930. She was succeeded by Pearl Huntsman, the present president.

The following sisters have served as organists: Miriam Woodbury Cooper, Ruby Wheeler, Mabel Anderson, and Jessie Newton. (The last three are blind girls from the State School for the Blind.) Nellie Dziggs, Kathryn Ellsworth, Dolores Atkinson and Beverly Jurgens who was chosen in 1938.

The choisters have been: Elizabeth Egginton, Ebie Lamb, Gladys Burnham, Catherine Crawford, Violet Taylor, Christine Huntsman, Phyllis Meldrum Penman, Lorraine Whitesides and Elizabeth Harris Jensen. Rose Jensen, Patricia Jurgens and Lucy Greenwood have been vocal choisters.

Shortly after the organization of the Branch the Aaronic Priesthood Classes were formed and class work begun. Also ward teachers were sent to visit the homes of members residing in Ogden other than those attending the State School for the Deaf.

The work of the Branch has done a very great amount of good.

Opportunities have been given for the deaf to learn of the Gospel and to teach it to others. Many have become good at public speaking, many at teaching, and many as presiding officers. Practically all of the work has been carried on by means of the combined system; viz., signs, writing and manual spelling. Speech is used to some extent.

To give an idea of the condition and activities of the Branch after its first year of organization and at the present time, I will attach herewith the first and the last annual reports of the President of the Branch.

First annual report of the Presidency, 1917.

The Presidency of the Branch for the Deaf of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints submit the following report of the condition and progress of said Branch for the ten months from February to December 1917.

Our comfortable home was given to us by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints by and with the consent of the Presidency of the church. It was dedicated January 14th, 1917 by President Joseph F. Smith February 4th, 1917, Pres. Thomas B. Evans and Timothy C. Hoyt met with the members and organized the Branch for the Deaf. The Presidency and clerk of the Branch were chosen as were also the Superintendence and other officers of the Sunday School and of the Young Men's and Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Associations, and work was immediately begun. November 18, 1917 a Deacons Quorum was organized and a class for the Lesser Priesthood was begun. All members of the Priesthood attend this class.

We have 90 deaf people attending

our Branch. All of these, however, have not become actual members, we having received but 35 certificates of membership from the various wards to which the deaf belong.

The average attendance at Sacrament Meetings for the ten months has been 81 per cent. The interest manifest by our members has been very good. Our Preparation Meetings are held at 9:15 Sunday mornings. The per cent of attendance is 76. We have performed 3 baptisms and 17 ordinations.

We have attending the Branch 6 Elders, 4 Priests, and 14 Deacons, making a total of 24 members of the priesthood.

The enrollment in the auxiliary organizations and percent of attendance follows:

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Enrolled</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Sunday School	85	79.4
Y. M. M. I. A.	29	85
Y. L. M. I. A.	32	69
Deacons, Priests, Elders	18	83

These organizations follow the work prescribed by the Stake and the General Boards but proceed slowly. The work being accomplished is encouraging. The Presidency feel that the results obtained from the ten months of activity are very gratifying.

There are no indigent persons in the Branch.

We have collected no tithing. This is due to the fact that all wage earners of the Branch are members of other wards and have presumably paid tithing in those wards.

We have collected \$10.70 in Fast Offerings 12¢ per capita.

Max W Woodbury, Pres. of the Branch

You have been given a little idea of the organization of the Branch and of

its first year of activity. I shall now tell you something of the present condition and of intervening years.

About the same number of deaf people (90) attended our Branch in 1917 as do now, but in 1917 our Branch membership was only 35 while today it is 86. The Sunday School has increased slightly in membership and attendance. The Y. M. M. S. A. has increased in both membership and attendance. The Y. L. M. S. A. has decreased in membership but has increased in per cent of attendance.

The Priesthood has doubled its membership but the per cent of attendance of membership remains about the same. The attendance at Sacrament meetings now averages between 65% and 80%, and this high average has been maintained all through the 27 years. The same can be said of the attendance at auxiliary and at Priesthood meetings.

The growth of the Branch depends much upon the membership at the State School for the Deaf. There are fewer students there now than there were in 1917, though the difference is not great. We have had some increase in the number of deaf people living in Ogden. This increase has been quite noticeable during the past few years. We try to carry on all ward work except for Relief Society, Primary, and Genealogy. We teach all the principles and laws of the Gospel as best we know how and can. Sometimes we become discouraged and think that all our efforts are doing no good. Then, when our young folks are given opportunities as teachers and officers, and to take part in our various meetings, and we observe how well they do it, we forget our discouragement and are happy in the thought that we may

have helped those same young people to be what they are.

All of our auxiliary organizations are doing well, but I do not see that they are very much improved over past years. Neither can I say that the Priesthood work is much different than in former years. Sometimes I think that all of we officers and teachers could do much better. Some of us let little excuses keep us from attending our meetings. Sometimes we come unprepared to do our work. Sometimes we do not come and do not let our presiding officers know that we are not coming. Then the class work is poor and the children lose interest. Every officer and every teacher should feel that the success of each meeting and of each class depends very much upon they themselves. To have good meetings and good classes we must have officers and teachers with preparation and pep, and with the desire to do the very best that they can at all times. An officer or teacher who, without good excuse, stays away from his or her meetings or who neglects to do his ward teaching, is of little value as such and should resign.

We have had a harder time to get our ward teaching done this year than ever before. For years 100% visits have been made. Since last May we have not had 100% visits. During this time the Branch Presidency with the help of others, has tried to do the work but have missed some hours. The excuse for failure to do ward teaching and to attend meetings is generally "I had to work." One of the commandments given to Adam was and is: "Honor the Sabbath Day and keep it holy. Six

day shalt thou work, but the seventh is the Lord's day. On this day neither you nor your servant, nor your ox shall do anything." Sometimes one has a good excuse for working on Sunday but often the excuse is no good.

We first collected tithing in 1921. The average was about six dollars per capita. From 1921 to 1940 the average varied from six to ten dollars per capita. In 1941 the per capita jumped to \$14.00 per capita, in 1942 to \$16.50. This year the indications are that the per capita will be about \$19.00.

About the same story can be told of the Fast Offerings. In 1919 the collection was 12^c per capita. In 1943 it will probably be \$1.50 cash and besides .75^d Welfare, or a total of about \$2.25 per capita. This year 64% of our members are tithe payers and 77% have paid Fast Offerings. Few of these, however, have paid a full tithing or a full Fast Offering. Some have paid neither.

A number of our members have done temple work during the past few years and a large number of temple marriages have been performed. Previously, very little of such work was done. There have been two temple marriages this year and no civil marriages. There have been two births and no deaths.

All of our members (adults) are working. We have no members in need. We have bought several thousand dollars worth of war bonds. Most of our families are well supplied with food for the coming winter, and some have sufficient coal.

In athletics our M. I. A. boys have made a good record. For this we owe much to Bro. Kenneth Burdett, President.

and coach.

We have had a number of members during the years who have been outstanding in their work as leaders, teachers, or officers. A few of these are: Ebie M. Christiansen who served about 12 years as President of the Y. W. M. D. A. and as class teacher and who has been Branch Clerk from 1917 until now. Her records have been very carefully and neatly kept. Whenever information is desired Sister Christiansen is always able and willing to give it. She has lived the Gospel as well as having taught it.

Nephi Larson served long and well both as officer and janitor. As janitor he kept the building clean and in good repair. We never had to hire anyone to do repairs except occasionally a plumber. He also kept the lawns and shrubs in good condition.

Sister Pearl Husenman has been a valuable officer and teacher in the M. I. A. and in Sunday School and has been of inestimable value in helping children and others in the preparing of songs, stories, lessons, plays, parties, programs, and speeches and in teaching Mormonism by example and precept.

In the Y. L. M. D. A. we have had fine help and leadership from Elizabeth Buck, Violet Taylor Gobel, Emily Miller, Afton Burdett and others. And in the Y. W. M. D. A. have been Andrew Postma, Otto Farley, William Cole, Joseph Cameron, Ralph Farrar, Harold Green, Joseph Burnett and Kenneth Burdett and others. In the Sunday School have been Elizabeth De Long Savage, Lillian Cole, Starry Wells, Carlos Seegmiller, and many others.

Bethia Seegmiller has given the longest

and most faithful service, having served continuously as Superintendent more than 20 years. In our Welfare Project work Bro. Charles H. Buck has given fine service.

As members of the Branch Presidency we have had some fine men. These have been: David John Thurnman, Otto P. Farley, Thomas Austin, Ralph Farrar, Nephi Larson, Guy A. Curtis, Frank E. Call, and Ned C. Wheeler. Bro. Call has served twice as Counselor. His sincere faith gives me courage and his dislike of anything not uplifting makes us all watch our step. Bro. Ned C. Wheeler has the gift of leadership and has always something fine to say or advice to give.

Outstanding organists have been: Miriam Woodbury Cooper, Mabel Anderson, Jessie Newton, Nellie Driggs, Dolores Atkinson, Kathryn Ellsworth, and Beverly Jurgens. And as choristers there have been: Elizabeth Buck, Elsie Lamb, ^{Hertell} Orba Sanders, Seely, Gladys Burnham Winger, Catherine Crawford, Violet Taylor, Phyllis Meldrum Penman, Lorraine Whitecides, Norma Wright, Elizabeth Jensen, and others.

Also with voice in song; Rose Jensen, Lucy Greenwood and Patricia Jurgens.

For the service of all these good people, and for the service of others also whom I have forgotten to mention, such as secretaries, teachers, and other workers I am and my counselors have been thankful and appreciative. I know that they have always been blessed and made happier as they have done their work. My work with them has made me happier and better and I know that God has blessed me.

I pray that the Father's blessings will be upon us all and upon this Branch.

and I do it in the name of Jesus
Christ, amen.

Max W. Woodbury, President.
musical selection - Beverly Jurgens.

Remarks - Elder Frank E. Call.

Song - "I'll Go Where You Want Me To
Go Dear Lord"; by Patricia Jurgens,
Elizabeth Jensen and Kiniko Moriyama.

Remarks - Melvin L. Swenson.

Remarks - Wm Arthur Budge.

Closing song - "Lord, We Ask Thee; Ere We Part".

Benediction - Carlos W. Seegmiller.

Ebie Christiansen, Clerk.