TRIP TO SHORT CREEK
August 1952

Went out through Antimony and Black Canyon to the Old Mill, where polygamists were supposed to live. The Mill is a big affair characterized by concrete storage bins resembling silos. It is in Black Canyon, near the stream. On the hillslope across the road are some lumber shacks. We stopped at one, and met Winnie Jessup, wife of Lyman Jessup (she is first wife of three). Lyman one of 15 who went to prison in 1944 for u.c.

Winnie Jessup is about 55, and with nothing left but spirit, but it is a wonderful spirit. She bore 14 children and raised nine. "There are no bargain counters with the Lord. He has no fire sales. You have to pay the price." She knows that the price is stiff here, but that she is buying her place in heaven.

The house is a shack, and she was moving to Salt Lake. Lyman had been a carpenter all his life, but his right arm had become paralyzed and now he was selling insurance. Moving was not much of a chore, because there wasn't much to move.

Winnie walked hand in hand with the Lord, with perfect faith. All she ever asks is food and shelter, and that is always forthcoming. She does housework; she helps with harvest of fruit and vegetables, and gets hers for canning and storage that way. Gets beans and potatoes and peaches.

I asked if she wanted her children to go through what she had. She said, "I would have to, if I believed it, wouldn't I?"

She was married to Lyman Jessup seven years before he entered the Principle; she really converted him to it. He took 2 more wives. The 2nd wife developed arthritis.

Winnie Jessup lives by direct inspiration and revelation. When troubled about some happening, or even a passage of scripture, she goes to the Lord, and receives an answer through inspiration and voices.

In leaving, I felt I had met an indomitable spirit. There was no defeat whatsoever.

We went on, into John's Valley, a wide valley in the mountaintops with a few ranches spotted upon it. At random we turned east upon a dirt road and came to a weathered house of frame rustic. Turkeys were about. A young man answered the door. Raymond asked for Clarence Sandberg, and it seemed he lived straight along the road (which had turned back to the north along the east side of the valley). We went to his place, which was a house originally of
logs with a frame addition or two. There was a sidewalk of planking, and a plank bridge across a little creek before the house. Nobody answered the door.

We drove on to the Y, where the road branches to Bryce Canyon. Here Lily Steed runs a store, cafe, service station and motel. She also has a sawmill run by her sons. From her we learned about Newell Steed, who owns the mill, and also a ranch. Newell had a wife who just couldn't cook. They brought in a girl as housekeeper. Soon it became obvious that this girl was falling in love with Newell. But neither she, Newell, nor the wife wanted anything to do with the situation. So Newell took her for a second wife. He keeps his wives at the ranch and so far has been unmolested. Is an energetic and successful man.

Clarence Sandberg, Lily said, was bitter because life had passed him by. Envious of Newell's success. We'd gotten just a hint of this from Winnie Jessop, when she said, "I wouldn't want Newell's debts."

Later, we heard more about Newell. He was for a time at Short Creek, and poured money into housing. He gave it up as a bad job and went back to John's Valley.

Lily told about an English woman who was approached by Heber J in England to become a plural wife. She turned him down. She later came to Utah, married, and lived in Logan. She made no bones about talking of Heber J's proposal. One day she was summoned before a judge, and found herself in the insane asylum at Provo, legally committed as insane. It was only after considerable difficulty that her release was secured by friends. She learned her lesson.

Lily recommended that I see Arnold Boss of Salt Lake, who edits Truth, and Claude Barnes there, who was attorney for Fundamentalists during trial.

Found out from Lilly that one of Winnie & Jessop's daughters married Rulon Allred. He also married a Barlow.

We drove on, reaching Kanab after dark.

On the way, Raymond told of an interesting case: An old-maid schoolteacher of southern Utah wanted to go on a mission but didn't have the dough. So an old bachelor made proposition—he'd finance her on the mission if she'd marry him on return. She agreed. But once out in the world she changed her mind, and wrote him so. He cut off her income, and she was financed by relatives and friends. On returning, she went to Logan, and there a girl friend introduced her to a charming man. She fell in love with him. It was only then that she found out that the man was the husband of her girl friend. She married him as a plural wife.

This story, along with that of Winnie Jessop and others, establishes that (1) It very often is the woman who takes the man into the Principle; and that (2) unless it is the woman, the man has tough sledding.
Heard later in Short Creek of a man who was opposed by wife, so divorced her. Took another wife, then his divorced wife returned to him as a plural wife.

Gassed up at Kanab, then crossed to Fredonia. Entered cafe & motel, and asked for room for the night. "Sorry, sir, there's no water." A man at a table said, "They broke the hole in the mill pond at the Wright Brothers lumber mill, and they're taking the water." Did't the town have rights? "This is the Arizona strip. The Wright Brothers are Mormons, and we're not. The water comes from Utah." We ate, and then it was reported a little water was available. We took a cabin, and went for a walk. On returning found a jeep can at the door, full of water in case.

On walk found the Mormon churchhouse, with a Primary party in progress. The Bishop came out, by name of Judd, and we talked with him on the porch. He didn't know anything about the Fundamentalists, but admitted that once in his extreme youth he'd worked in Dream Mine (he was about 35). Later, at Short Creek, found why so reticent. His family is up to polygamy to its ears; several Judds in Short Creek.

Thunder storm woke me up during night, about 5 in morning; rained heavily. Bishop had warned against trying to go on dirt road if rained (raining that night lightly as we talked with him). But morning was bright, even cool, and we decided to go, on theory that road would dry off. Too, according to map best road was first part, out west through Kaibab reservation, by which time poorer road would be dry, we hoped. Road being graded, and no trouble. Beyond the reservation there was a mudhole in every depression, but nothing bad, and we arrived in Short Creek before noon.

SHORT CREEK lies at the foot of the brilliant cliffs to the north and east. The soil is bottomless red sand, poor and subject to erosion. Washes 35 feet deep are around, which were not there 20 years ago. The runoff water from the cliffs has eroded a big wash a hundred yards or more across, all in the past 20 years. Overgrazing has done it.

There is one building of concrete block. This is the store, brand new. Other building material is natural red sandstone, and lumber. A number of places are about the size of garages, with round roofs. There is a fine-looking structure of sandstone, 2 story; we never found out who lived in it. There is a grotesque house made entirely of plaster by an eccentric bachelor. Even the slope roof is plaster. He makes everything of cedar posts, burlap, tarpaper and plaster. Loves to have tourists snap pictures of house. Every time he gets a little ahead, puts on another addition. I met Fred Jessop at the store, he called over Dave Bateman, who was painting tar on a tank for a service station to be erected across the road, presently Louis Barlow the schoolteacher came, and soon we were sitting around with a dozen of them talking on the store steps.
Fundamentalist

Fred Jessop is the leader of the clan, which numbers about 300 in Short Creek. Fred wears a very short beard, which he clips with coarse clippers once a week, and a moustache slightly longer. He is lean, quiet and gentle, with a spiritual quality. He lives in a house that was supposed to be a chicken coop, but still is one of the best in town. It is on the higher land across the creek to the north (creek is Short Creek) near the cliffs. Lower story of sandstone, upper of wood covered with green roofing felt. Inside unfinished (waiting to see if he gets power) except for whitewash on stone. Ceiling joists 2 x 12, uncovered. Big living-diving room with bare concrete floor. Sink in this room, instead of kitchen. Leading off this main room is bathroom with sink and tub but no toilet; toilet outside 50 yards to east. Every evidence of grinding poverty; poor china, rusty silverware, broken furniture repaired badly; no meat.

Fred Jessop has three wives. And he is sterile. Thought it was his first wife. Took another and still no children. Took a third and decided it must be himself. This is a tragedy to Fred, because of his belief that he will gain the glory only by reason of his seed. As it looks to him, he will be a god of an unpopulated plantet.

Jonreed Laurentzen told about Ianthus W Barlow solving Fred's predicament. The Lord, according to Ianthus, told Ianthus to help Fred have children. Fred couldn't get the same message from the Lord, so Ianthus, though willing, didn't follow through.

Dave Bateman runs the store, which means the economy. At Short Creek they are living what they call the United Effort. They don't feel it's quite the United Order. They all put into the pot, and take out in credit at the store. According to size of family, number and age of children. Young men were off now, bulldozing with community-owned cats, lumbering, harvesting. Put wages into general fund. These wages are the liquid assets. Jonreed feels that when depression comes, plan will collapse, because it is erected on wages of young men. No assets in Short Creek. People own 15 out of 105 shares of water. Have no range, and can't get it because of Taylor Grazing Act, with priority given from father to son of people already using land for grazing. Poor land.

Louis Barlow is slender and dark, more forceful than the gentle Fred Jessop. We all got in his car and went to see the canning factory. Made of slab, open to flies (doorways but no doors). They were canning string beans. Had just finished canning peaches. As a group had bought a peach orchard, harvested it, peddled enough to pay for orchard and canned the rest.

Big old boiler out beside the factory, fired by old tires and cedar posts. Power from a portable plant mounted on a trailer. Old auto engine with double V-belt running from wobbly flywheel to generator, and extension cord in to plant for lights and power for canner. This generator used for lighting schoolhouse for shindigs.

After seeing cannery went to see garage. Community has 30 trucks, tractors, cars to keep going. A big International truck and semi were under overhaul. Engine
getting new sleeves, pistons, crankshaft, valves—overhaul costs $400 in parts. Trucking one of jobs done by the community. Also have a shingle mill in operation, and a lumber mill coming from Salt Lake. They will haul lumber 30 miles from mountain to the south. This is virgin timber, untouched because of inaccessibility.

In afternoon Louis Barlow took us to see some Indian carvings on cliffs. We went past old Cannan ranch, once used by Church for tithing herds, now owned by retired sea captain. Turned off to right on wagon path, stopped on valley and we had to climb into and out of tremendous wash to get to cliffs. This wash in last 20 years. Cliffs had a black glaze over red sandstone, and Indians scratched through it. Through years erosion of soft stone beneath had but made carvings more distinct. Painted Carvings of men, goats, deer. Also what seemed to be crab, though Louis thought it was double goat.

Ate lunch with Fred Jessop at his house. Could taste the rusty silverware. Served string beans, and summer squash, bread and butter; that was it. At his house was old Joseph Jessop, Fred's father, who used to grind magnets at Baldwin's when I filed them. "Sam Taylor? Used to know a Sam Taylor in magnet department at Baldwin Radio. Filed more magnets than any man I ever seen. Had 2 or 300 ahead all the time." Joseph Jessop now with a full white beard, but good skin tone, spry, sharp, and not as much to a bit caustic and tell a shady story (shady for Short Creek). His last wife had died, and there in the house was his youngest child, a frail-looking little girl of two—while the father is now 84 years old. Fred Jessop must eat his heart out, his virile father having children past 80, and himself sterile. Fred and his 3 wives queue up to pamper the baby, Fred feeding the little girl on his lap. The old man can't get near her, says, "She likes anybody in the house but me."

Louis Barlow took us to the big wash coming out of canyon. This is Jonreerd Laurentzen's private canyon, with magnificent cathedral cliffs. At mouth of canyon they plan to put a diversion dam, run water along canal on east wall (old canal can be seen; was never finished; tried to do with horse and scraper, ran out of money). Can now make canal in 2 weeks with dozers, take water to reservoir site lower down. I suggested that wide wash (which Louis said had water 10 inches below surface) could be used to grow crops in summer, if diversion kept away flash floods.

After water, want power. But all depends on money, on place to start. Figure sawmill will get them ahead.

Young men would return for weekend next day (Friday), and dance scheduled. Raymond and I went out that afternoon, and returned next afternoon for dance. Ate again at Fred Jessop's (this time noodles with the string beans and the squash), and went to shindig in schoolhouse.

Schoolhouse long and narrow, low ceiling, with raised platform (1 foot high) in south end. Music for
dance was piano, played by Fred's first wife. This occasionally alternated by another girl at piano and accordian accompanyment by girl.

Girls wore old-time dresses. Sinful to show arms or ankles or bosoms. Dresses to wrists, ankles, and neck. Hair crimped slightly, but parted in middle and drawn tightly to braids or curls at nape of neck. I thought this because of garments. Probably, but Jonreed's wife said only those who had gone through temple before being cut off wore garments. (Raymond and I told Louis that group should have own temple. Why fiddle over a building? Raymond said they had their temple ready-made in the cathedral cliffs of Jonreeds canyon).

Arrival of people odd. Instead of men bringing wives, there would be a procession of women march in, then after a few seconds a man would drift in.

Opened with prayer. Then a ladies' choice (this popular during the evening). Dance with two gals and one man. Raymond had sharp eyes to see who was choosing whom.

During night had 2 waltzes, the rest square dances. Mother tells me this is in accord with old-time practice.

Dance was partly in honor of a Carling boy just back from Holland from mission. Carling did not arrive however, until next morning. Fred told us young Carling had not embraced the fullness of the gospel, but they were hopeful he would. Carling's father was great Fundamentalist, but kids hadn't fallen into it.

Roy Johnson arrived. He is the spiritual head, a member of the Council, or Quorum. They now have 12 on this (for entire Fundamentalist clique all over) instead of original seven set apart by John Taylor. Roy Johnson is short, slightly burly, bald and gray, quiet, unprepossessing, with a left hand crippled by arthritis. Has a son, also bald, spry and with wide grin, too wide—beware a smiling man.

Fred got Raymond and I to sit up on stand. After a couple of hours Aunt somebody Barlow arrived, widow of John Y. This caused quite a stir. She was just in from Salt Lake.

Then Charles F Zitting arrived, and the hall burst into applause. Zitting revered because has 10 wives and because he sat it out in prison rather than sign the statement to get parole. Zitting talked, saying he wanted to be known as Daddy—wanted that on headstone. Had been in Principle 25 years. Is real estate man "We sell mountains and deserts"—dealing in rangelands. Short, getting heavy, blue chin, tight mouth. He pointed out one of his daughters in hall, married as plural wife.

In talking with Louis Barlow, Raymond asked about how many kids. Lou said five, then whispered he also had five by another wife, which kept him humping. Lou is 28.

Refreshments served—peach pie. Then testimony meeting, young men being called to talk. Each prayed that the Brethren Taylor would embrace the fullness of the gospel.

Raymond says it's taking your Church in your hands to mention the Fullness of the Gospel in church meeting. This means polygamy and United Order, both definitely declasse.
Fundamentalists already having their troubles with neighbors. Ranchers are paying $5 a $100 valuation school tax, and kicking about educating polygamist kids. Tax high because most ranchers don't own land, just lease. Also, few settlers. And the Mormons don't own anything much. Raymond and I advised them to have their own schools and stick to themselves, to avoid trouble.

In talking with them I was struck by the fact that they put trust in the Lord. Roy Johnson said, "Either we're right or we're wrong. If we're right, the Lord will take care of us." When called upon for remarks, I elaborated on this spot, and hoped the Lord would.

With the exception of Roy Johnson and Zitting, Louis Barlow was only man in hall wearing a suit. He also drove a good car. Raymond asked about car. R Lou said it was his stewardship, but anybody could drive; but he had to be responsible for abuse.

Young men will take coffee if out driving truck. (Found this out when in Salt Lake having lunch with Ellen and Roy). Feel Word of Wisdom is just that, not rigid dogma.

A few years ago there was a branch ward in Short Creek. Town was really settled by polygamists when law made in Utah (May 1935, I believe) making u.c. felony. The bishop of the branch was converted to the fullness, and the Church cut off some 21 people and closed the branch. People now hold meetings in schoolhouse, as well as dances.

In closing sang what they call the "Theme Song" (No. 276, Latter Day Saint Hymns, "Give Me a Home In the Heart of the Mountains"). Terrific spirit in the song.

In choosing a wife, a man goes first to the council, and gets permission. Also finds out if girl he wants is maybe already secret wife. Council also has list of available girls (man is sticking his neck on the block to ask some strange girl). With Council's permission, he goes to father of girl. If he passes here, he can begin courting, and see if she likes him.

Two men were sent to Arizona prison for Mann Act. Took wives of other men from Utah to Arizona, and clipped for that. Chilled them, and they never came back.

17 men from FBI made the raid. Had to be Federal, because Short Creek right on line; state line runs through town, and couldn't touch by state officials.

Slept at Fred Jessop's. Next morning found young Carling here from mission. We left and droppedin on Jonreed Laurentzen. Here was the real situation. Jonreed a Mormon. "I would join them, if this was an island." But the outside world is off 40 miles across the desert over a dirt road, he is a writer and doesn't want his name involved in polygamy. But he has daughter about 16, a little beauty, and 3 more daughters growing up. Also 3 sons. And all the young people his daughters know are of the Short Creek Fundamentalists. The real test of polygamy is whether you could give your daughter into it. Jonreed will soon face that test, even thought not member.

Jonreed's kids were waxing the floor with a homemade mixture of kerosene and paraffine when we arrived. Lives
in sandstone house with rather crummy roof of green roofing bent down over edges. Jonreed is farmer, with 3 books. Wife teaches in school there.

Jonreed says Short Creek people expect town to be taken to heaven. He thinks it will have hole in center where deputy sheriff lives, also ragged on edges where live the 3 bachelors. Says trouble in past came from spiritual ones without common sense, such as Israel, John Y and Ianthus Barlow, who were leaders by right of seniority and spirituality, but couldn't lead.

Present group has gotten rid of the screwballs, such as LeRoy Wilson and the guy who married a mother and daughter (daughter almost feeble-minded). Have shaken it down to a fairly good foundation, except there is no foundation for wealth there with poor land and no water.

Jonreed added a bit to the Mexico fiasco, which I'd been filling in. It seems that Lou LeBaron owned the land in Mexico. He wanted United Order, all sharing alike, but himself sharing everything. Also, his brother Ben LeBaron (not a polygamist, by the way) is the One Mighty and Strong, an ugly character, prone to violence. He was strutting about Short Creek awhile, and almost made trouble before they got rid of him. Also, Ruion Allred was supposed to go alone to Mexico, with families. Hadn't been there a week when truckloads of John Y Barlow's families arrived, "Following the groceries." When Allred came home, some of the Barlows and Jessops went to Garcia to live the Order, but now back at Short Creek.

Basic trouble of Fundamentalists is that they attract the screwball fringe, and have trouble keeping the thing under control. Are trying hard to avoid the abuses, but almost impossible.

Newall Steed and a man named Holmes poured money into Short Creek, into housing, which didn't create a basis for continuing wealth, and then moved away.

Solution for Short Creek is to keep on growing beards on men and making girls more old-fashioned, then becoming like Hutertites-looking funny, keeping strictly apart.

On the trip out from Short Creek we visited Leroy A Wilson of the Wilson Research, Engineering & Exploration Co, P.O.Box 14, Veyo, Utah. Veyo is just a crossroads. At the single store I asked for Wilson. "Follow this road over the hill to where it splits three ways. Take the road over the cattle guard and through the creek, and hang to it. He lives about 15 miles in the mountains." It was a one-way Forest Reserve road over the mountains to Enterprise, second-gear going all the way. And there, in the tops of the mountains, he has one of the biggest junk yards in the world. It is incredible. Here is a shack, and a big machine shop, probably 40 x 100. And around about are heaps of rusting junk. There are seven Bekins vans ---just bodies---used for living quarters. There are broken-down trucks and automobiles. There are boilers, rollers, generators, tractors---just a great and incredible assortment of anything and everything. In the machine shop
are machine tools, some of them tremendous and most of them obviously not working. The place inside is also a clutter of junk, and you can hardly pick your way through. In one end is Wilson's "Library"—books, papers, pamphlets in piles upon tables and the floor. There is a multigraph machine, a printing press—nothing that has been used in years. Wilson obviously is a pack rat.

We were met by a woman in her middle thirties who introduced herself as Hatch. She showed us through, to the corral and garden out back, to the spring in the little ravine where water was pumped up to the garden. To her, Mr Wilson was so wonderful. He was going to grow the vegetables inside, under cover, by something he had invented. He was expected momentarily, from Las Vegas with an investor for the steam engine he had invented.

The steam engine was running, out front of the machine shop, operated by one of the four men employed by Wilson. (It was my guess, after talking with Wilson, that these men were putting in their time in anticipation of having a cut of the millions, that he was simply milking them, having promoted their time and savings.) The engine, curiously enough, was the same one I had seen in Salt Lake when looking for Baldwin—the small circular engine reciprocal engine that young LeBaron had been working on in the little machine shop there. If it's any good, who really owns it? It did run smoothly, simply lying upon the wooden deck and spinning merrily with a great popping of exhaust. Motive power was a great boiler. This noise blended with that of the engine running the generator inside. The whole place had a constant throbbing.

We went inside with the Hatch gal (she's a relative to Cecile). The shack was like the machine shop, a clutter, books and papers scattered around. Hatch explained that she liked to work in the shop better than in the house.

A pretty girl of about 20 wandered in and out of the kitchen as we talked, and Hatch finally called her in and introduced her as a friend from Las Vegas, just up visiting for the summer. She evidently was one of Wilson's wives.

The great man arrived. Wilson came with one of his disciples, a lean man who admitted that he might become a Mormon, and if he did he would embrace the fullness of the gospel. This was strictly a "Me, too," character—though it is hard to be anything else around Wilson. With them was old Charlie, ancient, bald, fat, a retired railroad man with some money, brought up to invest in the steam engine. Charlie was the pigeon.

LeRoy A Wilson is a burly, loud-mouthed man with thinning sandy hair and half his teeth gone. He wears short socks with the old-time muslin garments showing above them. He just can't quit talking, and soon talks himself into a hole no amount of talking can get out of.

He invented the steam engine for a steam automobile.
He then bought a mountain of iron ore for steel to make the automobile. He acquired great coal deposits to smelt his steel. He invented a furnace for smelting steel without coke, which made all blast furnaces obsolete. There was nothing he couldn't do.

Ford Motor Co had offered him five million cash for his steam engine. General Motors had offered ten million. Then U S Steel had offered him—why, it was practically more money than there was.

Why didn't he take it, I asked?
Well, it was the Church, he said. He want into a long story about how the Church wanted it, then backed out of the deal.

Why didn't he take it, I persisted?
Oh, Wilson said, by this time they'd gone back home. By this time the deals had cooled.

He was obvious as phony as a three-dollar bill.

He was a rabid Jew-baiter. Raymond tried to argue a bit, but soon gave up. There was nothing to do but sit and endure. There were two kids of Jews, the good and the bad. You could tell which from which at a glance. The good ones were blonde with blue eyes. The bad ones were dark with black eyes. All the dark ones were bad, the blonde ones all good. Christ had blonde hair and blue eyes.

We had lunch in the kitchen. The bottom of the screen door was broken and flies were bad. Wilson was an organic gardener. Bread was made from flour ground in his own mill, which I'd seen in the machine shop. Wilson told how a big lump on his head was miraculously healed, after being there for years and after doctors had warned him to have it removed.

On the wall was a drawing of outlined feet, with arrows indicating "Heart, eyes, teeth, colon," & etc. Pads of toes, particular places of foot were to be massaged for specific complaints. Wilson's left eye was a bit beady, evidently with cataract, and he claimed that by massaging his feet he was curing it. He said that a man felt like hell all over if his feet hurt, which was true, and that by massaging the feet a man could be cured, which was at least logical. During the meal he talked constantly, and even Raymond, who can kick a conversation along, was reduced with the rest of us to suffering silence.

When we were leaving, the Hatch gal and Wilson came to the car and la Hatch poured on the fire about the fullness of the gospel. She really put the pressure upon me, with only an adopted daughter, to take another wife. I left feeling good to have encountered one of the screwball fringe.

We had been told at Short Creek that Wilson had been ousted from the settlement. He'd wanted to take another wife and was told he wasn't worthy.

He was excommunicated by the excommunicated.