Polygamist sect moving into north Idaho

A NewsChannel 7 Investigative Report

01:05 PM MDT on Tuesday, May 10, 2005

Andrea Dearden
Idaho's NewsChannel 7

Just steps from the Idaho-Canada border there is a sect of fundamentalist Mormons who have openly practiced polygamy for four generations.

The town of Bountiful is home to a sect of fundamentalist Mormons that openly practice polygamy.

Long considered a reclusive group, allegations of sexual abuse and forced marriage are causing members of the community to come forward.

To better understand the polygamists moving into Boundary County, you only have to go a few feet across Idaho's northern border into the Creston Valley of Canada.

It is there, NewsChannel 7 met the women of Bountiful.

Tucked away in the Creston Valley of British Columbia and nestled under the shadow of the Skimmerhorn Mountains, just yards from the U.S. border, sits 50 or so homes. Some are trailers and run-down cabins, while others are more like motels than houses.

They stand amid well-groomed gardens, pastures and ponds. All are brimming with children.

This is Bountiful. A closer look reveals it is a community unlike most others.

The families here are "living the principle" - the practice of polygamy.

"We are sisters and sister-wives. We have the same fathers but different mothers, and we both married the same man," said fundamentalist Leah Barlow.

For Leah and Edith Barlow and the 1,000 residents of Bountiful, the belief that men must accumulate "plural wives" to achieve salvation is a central doctrine of their faith.

"We draw, in large part, our scriptural beliefs and philosophies from the Mormon philosophy," said fundamentalist Mary Batchelor.

But the men and women here aren't members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. It banned the practice of polygamy more than a century ago.

They call themselves "fundamentalist Mormons" and fiercely defend their religion.

"We are what we are and nothing will ever change that," said fundamentalist Roger Palmer.

Long considered a reclusive group, some families in Bountiful have organized a bold public relations campaign to defend their lifestyle.

They invited the public and the media to a summit in the nearby community of Creston where they would answer decade-old allegations of abuse, such as claims that girls are brainwashed, married off as young as 13 and trafficked in and out of communes in the U.S.

"Yes, Canadian girls have married U.S. boys and vice versa, but only on rare occasions. According to my knowledge, in no situation have any girls younger than 15 been married," said Barlow.

"These girls are 16, 17-years-old with three and four children and another on the way. People go to jail for raping girls, and this is just like rape as far as we're concerned," said protester Kay Merritt.

Kay Merritt was among the protesters standing outside the Creston Community Hall holding signs and wearing t-shirts that warn of the dangers of polygamy. Opponents believe very few living "the principle" have any say it in.

"They're brainwashed. That's not really having a choice, is it?" Merritt asks.

"Since they were small children they were taught that is all there is," said Audrey Vance.

The fundamentalist men take one legal wife, and the rest are joined to him spiritually.

Only half of those living in Bountiful have been awarded multiple wives.

"It's not because they don't want, or they will not live the principle. It's just that is hasn't happened yet," said fundamentalist Nola Oler.

One of 47 siblings, Nola Oler grew up in a house with five mothers, but she is the only woman married to her husband. She finds herself, at times, wishing for sister-wives.
"There are times, yes, when I have envied them. The companionship with sister-wives, and the fact they have someone there to help them," said Oler.

"They are a super support to me and I can't even imagine my life without them," said Barlow.

"They see this all around them, and they accept that that's the only way they're going to get to heaven is to be the wife of a man who has his own kingdom," said author Dave Perrin.

Dave Perrin started studying the Bountiful fundamentalists two decades ago after discovering his wife, Ruth, had escaped the group years earlier.

"My wife was married to a man in his mid-50's while on her 15th birthday," said Perrin.

Perrin says the Bountiful summit was clearly orchestrated. He offers his mother-in-law, Aloha Boehmer as proof. Like her daughter, Boehmer left the sect some 35 years ago, but she was here to publicly support the group. She told us she doesn't believe the allegations.

"They're not pushed. They're not forced," said Boehmer. "They're people and they like the way they live."

Were her remarks sincere or an orchestrated show of support mandated by the church?

In an interview aired by the CBC in 1992, Boehmer told of the day her young daughter was taken away and forced into a church-assigned marriage.

"It was, to me, very unnatural," said Boehmer. "The man she was married to was 40-years older than she was. I was pretty hostile and that was the final break, when I went over and said I want that girl back, she was 15."

The story is one of several chronicled in a book published by Perrin to expose, what he calls, the hidden abuse and exploitation in polygamous communities. "Keep Sweet" is Bountiful's motto and is repeated like a mantra among its women.

"They are told to keep sweet and keep everything on a nice, mellow tone. No arguing or fighting," said Dave Perrin.

Perrin's co-author, Debbie Palmer, fled the fundamentalist community after 34 years.

Her family tree reveals twisted bloodlines found in polygamist families.

Her father had six wives and 47 children.

At the age of 15, Debbie was assigned the sixth wife of a church elder, a man 40 years her senior.

She has eight children and 86 stepchildren, one of whom is Winston Blackmore, the Bishop of Bountiful.

"My call to ministry came in 1980, and eventually in 1984 became the bishop of our community," said Winston Blackmore.

A man of considerable wealth and influence, Blackmore is in charge of the land and the homes, deciding who lives where. He has business interests in British Columbia, Alberta, and in Idaho with companies that employ most of the young men raised in Bountiful.

He won't give an exact number, but it is believed Winston Blackmore has fathered more than 80 children with 27 wives, but he claims to have very little control over that.

"This girl got with her parents and went to an authority over my head and they basically said, 'we want to get married' and by the way 'we want to marry that guy,'" said Blackmore. "I am telling you guys that is just, honestly, how it works and you can groan about that until the cows come home, but it is still the way that it happens."

When asked about the wives he has taken, Blackmore contradicted earlier statements and admitted some of them have been young girls.

"There was one, one day shy of her 14th birthday. I have married several very young wives in my life. That doesn't mean the day after the next that all the things you can imagine happened," he said.

Procreation is also part of the principle. The church encourages women to have as many children as possible, as they, too, ensure higher placement in the celestial kingdom. Girls as young as three are taught to, one day, become mothers.

"Three-, four-, five-years-old these girls are being given clothes for their first baby - what is that telling them?" asks Dave Perrin.

The children are educated in the church's school, but it only offers first through seventh grades.

After that, boys are sent to work for the Blackmore Company, usually
performing heavy manual labor.

"Those boys are hard workers and, you know, they're taught from the time they hit the ground that they're going to have to put out," said Perrin.

A few of the girls are home-schooled to become teachers or midwives, but they are the exceptions. The majority dedicate their lives to being wives and mothers.

Dating is prohibited; all marriages are decided by the church, so the girls bide their time, waiting for word from the prophet.

"Right now I'm doing exactly what I want to do with my life, and I chose it," said fundamentalist Nola Oler.

"It's my religion. It's not something that we live independent of that. It is all part of our religion, our beliefs and our lifestyle. It's not something we're going to throw away because someone doesn't agree with it. It's such a part of us. I wouldn't exist without it and I am so grateful for it in my life," said Leah and Edith Barlow.

Nearly every person living in Bountiful descended from one of four men, once a part of the fundamentalist sect in Utah and Arizona.

The group is in the midst of a major power struggle, and followers of Winston Blackmore are moving into north Idaho to be closer to him.

NewsChannel 7 found proof the fundamentalists are quietly buying up Boundary County land and building a community that your tax dollars may be going to support.
Andrea Dearden
Families openly practicing polygamy in Canada appear to be moving into north Idaho. Those who oppose the lifestyle are warning officials about its dangers.

Protesters gather to make their voices heard against polygamy.

This is part two of a NewsChannel 7 investigation into the price of polygamy.

The polygamous community of Bountiful, British Columbia sits just a few feet north of the Idaho-Canada border.

The controversial and illegal way of life has been practiced there for more than 60 years.

Now, the polygamists presence is growing in Idaho and officials are vowing to be vigilant.

No gates block the road that leads to Bountiful. No high fences hide its homes, but this is a closed community.

"We are sisters and sister-wives," said Leah Barlow.

They call themselves fundamentalist Mormons and believe plural marriage, or polygamy, is the only way to achieve salvation and earn a place in the celestial kingdom.

"Our mothers were sisters and sister-wives. We have the same father, different mothers, and we married the same man," said Barlow.

Fearing persecution and ridicule, the women of Bountiful say they rarely speak about their lifestyle. But allegations of abuse, brainwashing and forced marriage have prompted them to publicly defend "the principle."

"I am not ashamed to acknowledge my sister-wives in public. I'm not embarrassed by all of the children who call me mother," said Barlow.

Sisterhood was the focus of a summit hosted by the Bountiful women. More than a dozen detailed the benefits they find in plural marriage.

People from the neighboring town of Creston were enraged by the message and demanded authorities take action.

"I don't care if the men want to have all those wives. I object to them drawing young girls into this," said protestor Kay Merritt.

Long known as the "Bishop of Bountiful," Winston Blackmore is said to have taken 27 wives, some of them adolescents.

"There was one, one day shy of 15," said Blackmore.

The most influential man in Bountiful, Blackmore controls the community's land and homes. He dictates who lives where. He is also the spiritual leader, spreading the polygynist doctrine through his sermons and his writings.

In Blackmore's "North Star" publication NewsChannel 7 found several places where he refers to his following "south of the 49th" - the 49th parallel, the boundary that separates Canada and Idaho. It is the same imaginary line that divides Bountiful and Blackmore's newest settlement.

This group of polygamists is quick to defend their way of life. There is new evidence now they may be trying to move into Idaho.

"It's new to me even though I've lived here all my life," said Bonners Ferry Mayor Darrell Kerby.

Kerby is proud of the area's religious diversity, but says polygamy is not part of it.

"Polygamy is not protected under religious freedom in Idaho," he said.

Just last month, the mayor learned fundamentalists may be moving into his county, driven from their stronghold in Utah.

A group opposed to the lifestyle came down from Creston to warn Kerby of the polygamous presence.

"If you have the laws in place, enforce them. We have the laws in place in Canada, but no one enforces them," said Audrey Vance.

An outspoken advocate of education, Audrey Vance worries those grow up in polygamous families have few choices about their future.

"Since they were young children they were taught that's all there is. The prophet says this is what you do, and you do it. The only way the cycle will be broken is if those children have exposure to the outside world," she said.

Vance says polygamists have become a part of Creston's culture. She is warning folks in Boundary County that the same could happen here.

"In this case, I think Idaho is a little ahead of us because they've been forewarned," said Vance.

This is a new problem here that we'll be able to deal with on the front end, so that they understand they're not welcomed here, that it's illegal here; that this isn't something they'll be able to establish unfettered, like they did across the border in Canada," said Kerby.

Law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border insist they are looking into reports of child brides and the trafficking of young girls between countries.

"It's possible and conceivable and, yeah, we are watching. That's part of our job," said Border Patrol agent Glen Aubuchon.

"It's almost a cult-like activity, so it's really difficult to track," said Kerby.

A search through Boundary County records prove polygamists have been here for nearly a decade.

Land deeds bearing Winston Blackmore's name date back to 1997.

In one edition of "The North Star" he directs followers to pay their tithing to the bishop south of the 49th parallel - Shem Johnson.

Johnson's name appears on more than a dozen Boundary County building permits and land purchase agreements.

There is also evidence the group is expanding in Boundary County. Blackmore talks about the "souls south of the border, 100 and growing."

"We're in your movie theatres. We are in your stores. We are everywhere you don't know who we are," said fundamentalist Mary Batchelor.

In the last five years, Winston Blackmore and fellow fundamentalist have been buying acreage in north Idaho. The property they own sits just yards away from the U.S.-Canadian border. County property records show there are homes and a school there.

Opponents of the group worry fundamentalists are setting up a border community that will one day mirror the one they established decades ago at the Utah-Arizona line.

The twin cities of Hildale, Utah and Colorado City, Arizona were established at the turn of the century. Today, they are the focus of federal investigations that center on claims of child abuse, exploitation and welfare fraud.

Fundamentalist men take one legal wife and the rest are joined to him spiritually, and they are encouraged by the church to have as many children as possible. Because they aren't legally married, most mothers qualify for public assistance.

"That's evidently part of what their dogma is, to sign up for welfare," said Kerby.

According to the Arizona attorney general's office, the polygamist sect in Colorado City gets millions.

In 2003, 80 percent of the town's families received food stamps, costing taxpayers $2.3 million.

Five-million-dollars went to free healthcare and another $600,000 for other social services.

That's $8 million of taxpayer money going to support a community openly practicing polygamy, a crime in all 50 states.

"When you're taking on the benefits of a system, you should also obey the laws, and they're not," said Vance.

The State of Idaho is investigating but has, so far, no evidence of fraud. The Boundary County Sheriff's office is also looking at the lifestyle to determine if there are abuses being covered up by the community. If it can be proven they are practicing the principle, Kerby says polygamists will be prosecuted.

"Any person that is committing that crime needs to be held accountable," he said.

In the last three months, both the Idaho Attorney General and a special legislative committee have launched investigations into the polygamists and their movement in Idaho.

They've heard the allegations and believe many of them to be true, but the challenge is finding proof.

The girls and young women in these settlements fiercely defend their religion and say they are living the life they have chosen.
Idaho officials studying polygamists in Bonners Ferry

By Nicholas K. Geranios
ASSOCIATED PRESS

2:50 p.m. April 18, 2005

BONNERS FERRY, Idaho - Mayor Darrell Kerby never thought much about polygamy until he learned that a splinter faction of Mormon fundamentalists lived in Canada, just 30 miles north of this Idaho Panhandle town.

Then he was shocked to learn that polygamists were moving into his own community, driven north by a leadership rift from their stronghold in Utah.

For Kerby and other Idaho officials, the news was upsetting because it raised concerns about possible child abuse, welfare fraud, trafficking in child brides and other crimes.

"It's so convoluted in its potential for abuse," Kerby said last week. "It will not be allowed. We are not going to fall prey to what other communities have."

Idaho's Department of Health and Welfare is investigating possible welfare fraud and child brides in Boundary County, which has about 10,000 residents, but has found no evidence that is occurring, spokesman Tom Shanahan said.

Idaho law enforcement officers likewise say they have no reports of laws being broken, and are not even sure how many polygamists have moved into the county.

"There's lots of talk about underage brides, but no one seems to be able to produce one," said Boundary County Sheriff Greg Sprungl.

The root of the issue appears to be a split in the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, a polygamist group chronicled by Jon Krakauer in his 2003 book, "Under the Banner of Heaven."

The group has been centered for decades in the twin border cities of Hildale, Utah, and Colorado City, Ariz., and has maintained an affiliated group of about 1,000 people in a community called Bountiful, just outside the border town of Creston, British Columbia. Warren Jeffs is the overall leader.

The longtime leader of the Bountiful group, Winston Blackmore, has been deposed by Jeffs. Jeffs has since evicted men who were loyal to Blackmore and reassigned their wives and children to men who were loyal to him.

But Blackmore, long known as the Bishop of Bountiful, has refused to leave the community. It is his supporters from Hildale and Colorado City who Idaho officials believe are moving into Boundary County, to be closer to their spiritual leader.

Idaho legislators have formed a special committee to examine persistent claims that child brides are being transported through the state, as part of exchanges between Bountiful and Utah.

"We are just starting to look into it," said state Rep. Donna Boe, D-Pocatello, who co-sponsored the study proposal.

Dave Kramer, police chief for Bonners Ferry, has met with residents of the Creston area to collect information on the polygamists.

"We don't want to play catch up down the road," Kramer said. "We are trying to educate ourselves and be aware of what potential crimes might be committed."

The problem for Idaho officials is that polygamists keep a low profile and finding evidence of wrongdoing usually requires an inside informer.

Ezra Draper, an FLDS member who lives in Bonners Ferry, contends he is the only member of the group that he knows of living in the county. Blackmore has said that 40 to 50 FLDS members from Boundary County attend church services in Bountiful.

Debbie Palmer, a former polygamist wife in Bountiful who now is an advocate against the practice, estimated that 200 to 300 people involved in that lifestyle have moved into the Bonners Ferry area in the past seven years.

Palmer, who lives in Saskatchewan and writes and lectures extensively on polygamy, said Blackmore's supporters have moved to northern Idaho because they are not able to get permits to live in Canada because the jobs skills they have are not needed there.

The FLDS members in Idaho have bought big parcels of land that accommodate several large houses, and built a school for their children, Palmer said.

Palmer, who is Blackmore's stepmother, left the FLDS in 1988, but gathers information from people who leave the group.
Blackmore, reached on his cell phone, declined to speak to The Associated Press last week, and the Bountiful community is festooned with "No Trespassing" signs.

Located at the foot of dramatic Skimmerhorn Mountain, Bountiful has existed for more than 50 years. In recent months it has become the eye of a media storm. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police last year announced they would investigate allegations of abuse of women and children, including forced marriages of teenage girls to older men.

That brought so much attention that the women of Bountiful have scheduled a public "Summit on Polygamy" on Tuesday evening to give their side of the story.

The FLDS requires members to clothe themselves from wrists to ankles, even during summer's hottest days. FLDS girls wear long pioneer-style dresses, and style their long hair into elaborate braids.

Members contend they practice polygamy as Joseph Smith, founder of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commanded in order to achieving everlasting life.

The mainline Mormon church disavowed polygamy in 1890 as a condition for Utah's statehood and excommunicates members who practice or preach it. An estimated 30,000 polygamists whose beliefs are rooted in Mormonism live in Utah and parts of the southwest, Mexico and Canada. Hildale-Colorado City's estimated 10,000 members make it the largest polygamist group in the West.

That community was founded by Rulon Jeffs, considered a prophet by FLDS members. He died in 2002, and Warren Jeffs took over.
Warren Jeffs excommunicated Winston Blackmore over his refusal to stone an out of order wife that had moved from Utah to Bountiful. The Creston/Bountiful congregation is now split, part of them following Jeffs and part being loyal to Winston Blackmore. It is a mess and has happened not so long ago. dale

Pushing for Polygamy
Multiple marriage isn't such a distant step away from gay marriage as many pretend.

By Megan Basham

Los Angeles Daily News guest editorialist Jonathan Drober recently echoed the view popular among gay-marriage proponents that polygamy is a canard of anti-gay-marriage family groups and that legal recognition of same-sex unions in no way promotes acceptance of plural marriage. "No one is seriously posing simultaneous multiple marriages. We plan on keeping them traditionally serial - one spouse at a time," Drober wrote.

Perhaps he should have mentioned that to the Arizona and Utah residents who attended a town-hall meeting concerning two communities in those states a few days later.

On March 3, Utah attorney general Mark Shurtleff and Arizona attorney general Terry Goddard held a joint summit in St. George, Utah, to deal with allegations of abuse, molestation, incest, and fraud coming from within the twin border cities of Hildale and Colorado City. Approximately 10,000 members of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (FLDS) reside in the country's largest polygymist communities and for decades (thanks to a disastrous police raid in 1953) have remained largely beyond the short appendages of local law. The government offensive on the area that was then called Short Creek turned out to be a public-relations nightmare in which the press depicted the state as a malicious invader that ripped screaming children from the arms of their parents and separated loving husbands from their devoted wives. The event was defining enough that even 52 years later Goddard made a point of opening the conference by calling the Short Creek raid a "shameful mistake" and asking polygymists present to "let the past be the past." From that time on, both Utah and Arizona's tacit polygymy policy remained "don't ask, don't tell."

Recently though, reports of child brides giving birth in county hospitals, absconders seeking legal restitution, high rates of deformity resulting from incest, and rampant welfare and tax fraud have become too great for authorities to ignore. Now, as the attorneys general's offices seek to "build bridges" that will provide victims of the polygymist system the means to report abuse, they are making it clear they have no intention of indicting an "alternative lifestyle" choice even if it is the breeding ground for all manner of crime.

Of the more than 350 people who packed out the Holiday Inn ballroom for the two-hour public session, a large portion were practicing polygymists, and Shurtleff made it clear to them that while his office will investigate underage "spiritual marriages," as the FLDS calls them, it will not target their personal beliefs by prosecuting multiple unions involving persons over the age of 18. This assurance came in spite of the fact that under Utah law plural marriage between individuals of any age is a felony. For Arizona's part, Goddard echoed Shurtleff, stating, "We're here to address a very specific focus; we're not interested in condemning a lifestyle." Yet when both Shurtleff and Goddard pledged to those present that "they [would] not sit back and let people commit crimes," one polygymy opponent responded, "I'm confused, is polygamy not a crime?"

Perhaps it is a crime according to federal law, state law, and many states' constitutions - but not according to recent court decisions that necessitate endorsement of any kind of sexual arrangement. What this woman failed to take into account is that, crime or no, multiple marriage is now being characterized as a "life choice." And as Carol Smith of the Women's Religious Liberties Union, a pro-polygym group, explained, "You can't discriminate against us because of our life choices."

Carolyn Spinelli, who moved to the southwest from New Jersey six years ago, is not a polygymist herself, but feels that a polygymic lifestyle can be a positive option for some if fanatical FLDS leaders are taken out of the equation. "If you would just open your mind," she said to the crowd, "polygamy is a wonderful thing." "Believe it or not there's a lot of happy women, and there are a lot of them here today," said another who declined to reveal whether she was one wife in a group of many.

For the most part, these sentiments were applauded by most of the single-marriage practitioners in the room, with many claiming they showed up "to extend a hand of acceptance." Their beef, they said, was not with the polygymists' lifestyle, but with the strain their multiple offspring put on the public coffers. One woman offered that polygamy wouldn't be a problem at
all if the states would "cut back all this welfare and they [the polygamist parents] had to support all these children."

Other non-FLDS residents looked to pop-culture icons to support their polygamous neighbors. Drawing the precise correlation gay-marriage supporters claim is nothing but the hysteria of bigots, one woman cheerfully used her turn at the mike to assert this bit of common logic: "If Rosie O'Donnell can adopt children and that's legal, I mean c'mon. If two consenting adults want to have a family, three consenting adults, four...
That's fine." In fact, the heartiest approval of the session came when one individual suggested that the best way to deal with polygamy's legal problems would simply be to decriminalize polygamy.

On February 3, 2005, former Hildale police officer Rodney Holm argued to have his 2003 conviction for bigamy and sex with a minor overturned partly on the basis that it violated his privacy rights. Holm's attorney Rodney Parker argued that in light of the Supreme Court's decision striking down sodomy laws, the Utah court should find that 32-year-old Holms had a constitutional right to take his 16-year-old sister-in-law as his third "spiritual wife." To that effect, Parker's brief stated, "Current demographics, domestic relations law, and religious diversity all accommodate plural marriage. Popular departure from traditional marriage has made our domestic laws on cohabitation and fornication anachronistic." A decision in this case is expected shortly.

In another Utah case utilizing Lawrence v. Texas early last year, the ACLU filed suit on behalf of G. Lee Cook, a Salt Lake City polygamist who wanted his multiple marriages to be legally as well spiritually valid. Steven Clarke, the ACLU's Salt Lake City legal director, publicized his chapter's endorsement of this position by stating, "Talking to Utah's polygamists is like talking to gays and lesbians who really want the right to live their lives, and not live in fear because of whom they love. So certainly that kind of privacy expectation is something the ACLU is committed to protecting." Ultimately, the court rejected the reasoning in this case, but the citizens of Hildale and Colorado City have not. Nor have those on the cutting edge of family law who seek to undermine marriage by opening it up to same-sex couples.

David Chambers, a professor of law at the University of Michigan, wrote in The Michigan Law Review that those who support plural marriage ought to also support gay marriage. He argued that rather than reinforcing a two-person definition of marriage, gay marriage would make society more accepting of further legal changes: "By ceasing to conceive of marriage as a partnership composed of one person of each sex, the state may become more receptive to units of three or more." Similarly, Alternatives to Marriage Project activist and University of Utah law professor Martha Ertman noted in The Harvard Law Review that legal and social opposition to polygamy is decreasing and that increasing acceptance of homosexual partnerships is slowly (and, to her mind, rightly) resulting in the final destruction of the traditional marriage ideal.

The primary tactical difference between polygamy communities and gay-marriage activists is that the former have traditionally neither sought nor desired government recognition or even government involvement (with, of course, the exception of public assistance). But as the ideology of those on the frontlines of the gay-marriage debate trickles down to cloistered FLDS communities, they too are beginning to push for unqualified endorsement in the eyes of the law. And why shouldn't they, now that gay couples are starting to make great strides in the same direction? They may not be progressive lawyers authoring treaties in law reviews, but Hildale and Colorado City residents certainly understand the logic of their case.
Utah Based Polygamy Group Awaits the End of the World
Apr. 5, 2005

All seems quiet near a polygamist compound in Texas, where a Utah-based polygamy group awaits a self-proclaimed Doomsday.

Some followers have said their prophet has predicted the world will end tomorrow.

Just ahead, you'll hear Warren Jeff's own voice and words, to give you some insight into his teachings.

We first told you in February, about the Texas Prophecy of Warren Jeffs.

At that time, Jeffs' followers were working in a frenzy, to build this huge temple ... apparently hoping to complete it by tomorrow, April 6th.

In recent days, we've been told, a number of Jeffs followers have traveled to the Texas compound, from their homes on the Utah- Arizona border.

But who is Warren Jeffs? And what are his teachings?

John Hollenhorst joins us with secretly made recordings of his instructions to followers.

Jeffs took control of the Fundamentalist L.D.S. Church several years ago from his home in Hildale, Utah.

Since then he's dropped out of sight while starting new compounds in Colorado and Texas.

Critics say Jeffs has become increasingly fanatical, and tries more and more to control his followers' lives.

In the border community of Hildale Utah and Colorado City Arizona, Warren Jeffs' word is law, for those who choose to obey.

In secretly made tapes of his sermons obtained by KSL Newsradio, Jeffs makes it clear that righteous girls don't choose their husband. They're told to submissively accept the husband they're assigned to.

VOICE OF WARREN JEFFS, F.L.D.S. PROPHET: "YOU SHOULD BE PRAYING THAT YOU WILL BE PREPARED, THAT YOU WILL BE GIVEN A HUSBAND WHO WILL PROVE FAITHFUL TO THE END. ... IT IS TRUE YOU DON'T TAKE THESE THINGS INTO YOUR OWN HAND AND DATE, AND SEEK OUT A HUSBAND."

In the FLDS culture, all of a man's wives are expected to be obedient.

VOICE OF WARREN JEFFS, F.L.D.S. PROPHET: "MANY YOUNG MEN WHEN THEY RECEIVE THEIR FIRST WIFE ARE JUST SO UNTRAINED. THE WOMAN IF SHE'S NOT CAREFUL, WILL BE OVERBEARING AND ALWAYS ASK PERMISSION FOR WHAT SHE WANTS. AND, LADIES! BUILD UP YOUR HUSBAND BY BEING SUBMISSIVE."

Critics say Jeffs sermons are blatantly racist, portraying Blacks as stupid and evil.

WARREN JEFFS: "YOU SEE SOME CLASSES OF THE HUMAN FAMILY THAT ARE BLACK, UNCOUGH OR RUDE AND FILTHY. UNCOMELY, DISAGREEABLE, AND LOW IN THEIR HABITS. WILD."

Reportedly, Jeffs sends enforcers to his followers' homes to make sure they don't have outside influences like TV, newspapers and CD's.

WARREN JEFFS: "WHEN YOU ENJOY THE BEAT, THE ROCK MUSIC, MAYBE EVEN TONED DOWN WITH AN ORCHESTRA, YOU'RE ENJOYING THE SPIRIT OF THE BLACK RACE."

Those tapes obtained by KSL Radio were made a couple of years ago by a disgruntled member of Jeffs church.

In the last year or two, he's tightened his grip, kicking out disloyal members and reassigning their wives and kids to other husbands.
Talk of Racism Emerges From FLDS Texas Polygamist Compound

Apr 5, 2005 5:30 pm US/Mountain

The FLDS compound built by polygamist leader Warren Jeffs and his followers continues to grow in Eldorado, Texas. Now Jeffs reportedly plans to dedicate a huge temple on the site and is predicting the end of the world.

Meantime, evidence that Jeffs is preaching racism has surfaced in the Texas media as the people of Eldorado continue to wonder about their new polygymist neighbors.

An Eldorado, Texas newspaper has obtained an audio CD that it says shows FLDS leader Warren Jeffs preaching racism to his sect.

Jeffs and his followers are building a huge compound in Eldorado, including the first FLDS temple. Jeffs has selected certain followers from the Hildale and Colorado City polygamist community to join him at the Texas compound.

Many of his followers have been banished from the cult and remain in the southern Utah and Arizona community.

Jeffs reportedly plans to dedicate the temple in Texas on Wednesday and has also reportedly preached that end of the world would occur on April 6th.

The Eldorado Success says it was handed a CD that contains racist sermons and lessons from Warren Jeffs referring to African Americans.

Here's a portion of that CD.

Purported voice of Warren Jeffs:

"You see some classes of the human family that are black, uncouth or rude and filthy, uncomely, disagreeable and low in their habits, wild and seemingly deprived of nearly all the blessings of the intelligence that is generally bestowed upon mankind."

"So I give this lesson on the black race that you can understand its full effect as far as we are able to comprehend. And that we must beware, if we are for the prophet, for priesthood, we will come out of the world and leave off their dress, their music, their styles, their fashions, the way they think - what they do, because you can trace back and see a connection with immoral filthy people."

Jeffs also explains the black race which he calls the "Seed of Cain" survived the flood of Noah because Noah's son Ham was married to "a wife of that seed" which he identified as being black.

Purported voice of Warren Jeffs:

"And why did it pass through the flood? Because it was necessary that the devil should have a representation upon the earth as well as God."

Jeffs goes on to say that anyone who mingles with the seed of Cain...will lose all rights to priesthood blessings.

He also tells girls not to date or seek their own husband but pray they will be prepared to be given a faithful husband.

"And ladies, build up your husbands by being submissive. That's how you will give your children the success. You will want your children to be obedient and submissive to righteous living," Jeffs purportedly said.
Much to my amazement and delight, Arizona has finally delivered a powerful blow to the fundamentalist Mormon polygamist theocracy that controls all aspects of public and private life in Colorado City.

On May 9, Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano quietly signed into law a bill that will allow state education officials to take over the Colorado City Unified School District from religious leaders who control the school board and key administrative posts.

While Napolitano signed the bill into law, she did little to advance the legislation that almost died when state school superintendent Tom Horne backed a competing bill. But persistent lobbying by Democratic Attorney General Terry Goddard and strong support from Republican Senators Toni Hellon and Linda Gray led to passage of the bill just days before the Legislature adjourned on May 13.

The law marks a historic transition in the state's half-century of complacency toward the nation's largest polygamist society based in this isolated community abutting the Utah border, a few miles south of Zion National Park.

For the first time in Colorado City's turbulent 70-year history, the school district will be operated outside the complete control of members of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a breakaway sect from the Salt Lake City-based Mormon Church.

"I think this is great," says Benjamin Bistline, a former FLDS member who is an authority on the history of the polygamous community. "It's something that should have happened 20 years ago."

Enactment of the law is also testament to the importance of another statute, the Arizona Public Records Law. I relied heavily on the public records law to pry loose thousands of pages of Colorado City school district financial records that revealed in stark detail a well-entrenched pattern of corruption.

The public records showed that the FLDS leaders abused the school district to provide unneeded jobs, new vehicles, credit cards, school supplies and other perks to help church members support their huge polygamous families.

July 2003 request for a special investigation of the school district by the Arizona auditor general. The investigation is ongoing.

While the school receivership law is an important first step in stopping the flow of public money subsidizing the closed polygamist community, much more must be done. Despite the fact that polygamy violates the state's Constitution, Arizona taxpayers are spending more than $15 million a year on health-care benefits for Colorado City families.

Polygamist families in Colorado City receive more than $1.5 million a year in food stamp assistance and another $500,000 annually in day-care subsidies. The Colorado City town government also receives millions of dollars in state and federal grants for everything from building roads and installing water treatment plants to expanding the town's municipal airport.

The FLDS abuse of power extends beyond the school district. Polygamists control all government bodies in Colorado City, including the police department. There has never been free political debate. The FLDS religious leader determines who will serve on public bodies. The FLDS also owns nearly all of the property in the community. Anyone who dares to offend the religious leader, Warren Jeffs, risks being evicted from their home and their wives and children assigned to another man.

With huge families to support and jobs scarce, the Colorado City school district has focused far more on providing jobs for adults than a decent education for children. Few girls ever graduate from high school, with many coerced into "spiritual" marriages with much older men.

The tiny, one-school district with 350 students has more than 100 employees -- nearly five times the number of employees of comparable school districts. The featherbedding has wrecked the Colorado City school district's $6 million annual budget. The district is more than $1.2 million in debt.

The FLDS uses the school district to discriminate against members of a rival polygamist sect living in nearby Centennial Park. FLDS religious leader Jeffs issued a July 2000 proclamation declaring the Centennial Park polygamists to be among the most evil people on Earth.

Jeffs ordered FLDS members to avoid all contact with the rival sect, even if that meant severing ties with family. FLDS faithful immediately withdrew 800 children from the public schools and all FLDS teachers resigned. The FLDS

then set up private church schools in buildings that were once
controlled by
the public school district.

Nearly all the teachers and students remaining at the Colorado City
public
school are from Centennial Park.

Despite withdrawing their children from the school, FLDS members
continue to
control the school board, the school administration and, most
important, the
district budget.

In the past five years, the FLDS-dominated school board has kept
teachers' salaries at the lowest level in the state -- the starting wage is $18,500.
Only one teacher makes more than $40,000.

Meanwhile, the wages for FLDS members in non-teaching positions are
frequently much higher. Several FLDS bus drivers and other support staff are
making more than $30,000 a year. Top FLDS school administrators are paid
more than $50,000 annually, according to district records.

Earlier this school year, teachers' paychecks began bouncing while FLDS
school board members and administrators flew across the Southwest in a
district-owned, $220,000 Cessna to attend conferences and workshops. No
other school district in Arizona owns an airplane.

This stark dichotomy finally attracted the Legislature's attention.

Much of the credit for passage of the long-overdue law should go to
Terry Goddard. The law, Goddard says, "provides an effective tool to take over
school districts where public funds are being mismanaged."

In addition to the receivership bill, Goddard has worked closely with his
Utah counterpart, Mark Shurtleff, to create a joint task force to investigate child abuse allegations that swirl around the community.

Mohave County is also putting pressure on the FLDS by dispatching a special
investigator to the community to probe an assortment of alleged illegal
activities. Last year, the state and Mohave County opened a joint
government services center in Colorado City that includes space for law
enforcement and social service agencies.

Governor Napolitano, meanwhile, has steadfastly avoided this issue since her
2002 election, despite the fact that education and the protection of children are central planks of her administration.

Napolitano said during a May 11 press conference that she was
"pleased to
sign the bill" and hopes that "it has a significant impact." But it was clear the Democratic governor wanted to move quickly to any topic other than
Colorado City and polygamy.

It appears that Napolitano desperately wants to avoid getting into bedroom
issues, especially with Republicans planning to put a gay marriage ban on the 2006 general election ballot in hopes of triggering a big turnout of
"values" voters who will be inclined to pull the lever for anybody but the
Democratic incumbent.

Arizona Republicans are hoping to follow the successful strategy used by
President George W. Bush during the 2004 election where Bush defeated
Democrat John Kerry in Ohio and several other battleground states where gay
marriage propositions were on the ballot.

The school district legislation, which goes into effect on August 13, will
allow the state Board of Education to appoint a receiver to take over
day-to-day operations of any financially failing school district such as
Colorado City.

Horne says he expects a receiver to be appointed in August or September to
take over daily operations in Colorado City.

"It's clear to me they are dysfunctional," Horne tells me. "I think we have
gathered the evidence to get a receiver in there."

While Horne says he's now delighted with the law, the Republican almost
derailed the legislation in a heavy-handed attempt to expand his authority
over public school districts statewide.

Horne backed a bill that would have given him the power to appoint a
receiver to run any school district that the state Board of Education found
to be "grossly dysfunctional." The bill supported by Goddard only allowed
appointment of a receiver for financially failing districts.

Horne's power grab triggered a backlash from public education associations
that were opposed to the state's gaining too much control over local school
districts. By late April, legislation to address the serious problems in Colorado City appeared to be stalled.

But Horne finally agreed to limit the receivership bill to school
districts in financial trouble, clearing the way for the bill to pass the Legislature.
The Senate approved the measure by a 29-0 vote, and the House by
The new receivership law is a step in the right direction, but it isn't enough. One major problem is that it will automatically expire in two years. The Legislature must allow the state more time to clean up the Colorado City school district. Another key issue that must be addressed is the political reality that FLDS members far outnumber other voters in the Colorado City school district boundary.

The state would be wise to consider merging the Colorado City school district with the public school district in Fredonia, about 30 miles to the east. This would reduce the chance that the FLDS will once again assume control over the Colorado City public school.

The state is likely to appoint Mohave County school superintendent Mike File to serve as receiver. File says he's willing to accept the position and eager to make fundamental changes to allow the district to operate in the best interest of the teachers and students rather than the FLDS.

"The first thing we are going to do is remove all the administrators and hire new people," File says.

File is well equipped to handle the situation in Colorado City. He has experience running a small school district and is intimately familiar with the issues facing the Colorado City school district. My only question is whether he is willing to spend long periods of time in Colorado City, which is more than a four-hour drive from his home in Kingman.

Colorado City school superintendent Alvin Barlow -- the state's longest tenured school superintendent with more than 30 years' experience -- did not return my call seeking comment.

Longtime Colorado City high school teacher Deloy Bateman says he, along with the rest of the teachers, is pleasantly surprised that the state plans to take over the school district.

"We are still in a state of shock," Bateman says. "I don't think we really understand what this means."

Bateman left the FLDS five years ago over a child custody dispute with his then-second wife. Since then, Bateman has been the only teacher willing to publicly criticize the school district's policies.

Teachers, Bateman says, remain petrified of offending FLDS school administrators and board members.

Years of religious indoctrination have made the teachers -- especially the women -- incapable of challenging the authority of men.

"They have never thought for themselves in their lives," Bateman says. "Even when you get into a situation like this, they still don't know what to think."

What most teachers want, Bateman says, is more pay.

Bateman has taught science at the high school for 24 years. Last year his base salary was $27,000. He supports a large family on this meager salary, and when I spoke to him Saturday he had been working on scavenging car parts to fix his family van.

Few teachers in the country have done as much for students in the face of such hostile working conditions. Bateman voluntarily teaches more than a dozen classes every day. He begins before dawn and teaches into the evening. He's created a state-of-the-art science laboratory at his own expense. He drives students across the Arizona Strip on geology excursions in his personal vehicle.

"I've been here for 24 years, and it's literally been 18 hours a day," he says.

Bateman says he's cautiously optimistic that the day he has dreamed about for years -- a day when the FLDS no longer controls the school district -- is about to become reality.

"It's about time," he says. "We are ready for a change for sure."
Funeral for Former FLDS Leader Draws 3,000 Mourners
Mar. 21, 2005

ST. GEORGE, Utah (AP) -- Funeral services for Fred Jessop, a former leader of the polygamist Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, drew more than 3,000 mourners, some from as far away at British Columbia.

Jessop, 94, died Tuesday at a medical facility near Denver.

The services were held Sunday at Colorado City, Ariz., which with its twin city Hildale, Utah, the border, are dominated by the FLDS church. The church also has an enclave at Bountiful, British Columbia, and is believed to have at least 6,000 members, making it one of the largest polygamist sects in the region.

Jessop's whereabouts had been a mystery to some of his relatives for the last 15 months ago.

Jessop had been a member of the church's First Presidency when Rulon Jeffs was president, and had thought to be one of two candidates to succeed to the presidency when Jeffs died in 2002. The other man -- Jeffs' son Warren Jeffs, who also had been a member of the First Presidency, became president.

Some believed Warren Jeffs exiled Jessop as part of efforts to consolidate power, which included ousting 21 men from the church and the community last year.

The relatives reported Jessop missing, but church attorney Rod Parker denied he been kicked out of the church and denied Jessop was missing. He said Jessop did not want his whereabouts known.

The three-hour funeral service at a meetinghouse in Colorado City was closed to outsiders. It was not known whether Jeffs attended.

Parker said Jessop was loved and respected throughout the community.

Jessop reportedly had 20 or 30 or more wives and more than 100 children, but Parker said the children all were from his wives' previous marriages.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints abandoned polygamy a century ago, but tens of thousands of people in Utah and other western states are believed to continue the practice. The Mormon church excommunicates those who advocate it.

Polygamists have been prosecuted on and off over the last century. In recent years, there has been a renewed effort to prosecute polygamy cases involving welfare fraud, incest or underage marriage. FLDS officials deny allegations of underage marriages.
Derail Polygamy's Money Train
A bill before the Legislature would allow the state to begin reforming a society that steals public money and abuses underage girls

Commentary

BY JOHN DOUGHERTY

Colorado City, Arizona, and Hildale, Utah, are almost entirely populated by members of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Postcard from the edge: A tightly controlled theocracy lies nestled in the landscape of the Arizona-Utah border.

John Dougherty

Only public officials endorsed by the fundamentalist Mormon church can get elected in Colorado City.

John Dougherty

School district headquarters in Colorado City is controlled by polygamy's prophet.

Governor Janet Napolitano should use her influence to get legislation passed to seize the CCUSD.

State schools superintendent Tom Horne must back off his power grab and get a compromise bill passed.

Colorado City school board president F. Lee Bistline (top) and superintendent Alvin Barlow need to be removed from power.

The Arizona Legislature has the rare opportunity this session to strike a powerful blow to the heart of the fundamentalist Mormon polygamist cult that has dominated life in the isolated communities north of the Grand Canyon for more than 70 years.

Lawmakers are debating legislation that would allow the state to finally seize control of the corrupt Colorado City Unified School District from the nation's largest band of polygamists who claim to be following the teachings of Mormon Church founder Joseph Smith.

It's essential that the Republican-controlled Legislature and Democratic Governor Janet Napolitano reach agreement on such legislation during this session. There is too much at stake to let this opportunity slip away.

Napolitano needs to get off her throne and get down and dirty with legislators to make sure this bill passes. Her cowardly and aloof practice of not commenting on bills until they pass the Legislature is an abdication of the power that voters have given her -- which is to lead, not follow.

The governor is intimately familiar with the crisis gripping the Colorado City schools. As state attorney general, she initiated a grand jury investigation into abuses by the polygamists that went nowhere. In the last two years as governor, Napolitano has failed time and again to take direct action to help end the sexual slavery and taxpayer rip-offs that are Colorado City's hallmark.

Legislation that can begin the tedious process of reform is in danger of dying because of political infighting. Napolitano should use her bully pulpit to make sure this doesn't happen.

The tiny, one-school district has been systematically plundered by a cadre of religious fanatics to the point that teachers' paychecks are routinely bouncing and students and teachers fear the area's new $7 million K-12 public school will close.

The fate of the Colorado City school district has profound implications for all of us.

What's at stake is a fundamental question of governance.

Will lawmakers and the governor uphold the state's constitutional ban against polygamy and pass a law that will allow removal of the polygamists who control the school board and school administration?

Or will the Legislature continue to ignore the fact that Arizona taxpayers are shelling out more than $20 million a year to underwrite the expansion of a powerful theocracy that is based on coercing underage girls into polygamous cohabitations?

In other words, will the state uphold the law of the land, or will it succumb to what the polygamists believe is God's law?

Seizing control of the Colorado City school district provides the state with its single best opportunity to begin to dismantle the unconstitutional theocracy that now controls all social, political, economic and spiritual life in the twin towns of Colorado City, Arizona, and Hildale, Utah.

To understand the importance of the school district issue, it is first necessary to understand the basic principles of the religion that dominates life in these communities.

Nearly all of the approximately 10,000 inhabitants of these two dusty towns nestled beneath the starkly beautiful Vermillion Cliffs are members
of the Fundemental Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The FLDS believes it is following the mandates set down 175 years ago by Mormon patriarch Joseph Smith. In fact, the FLDS believes it is the true Mormon Church, and that the Salt Lake City-based Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), with more than 10 million members, is a fraud.

A central tenet of FLDS theology is polygamy, a practice first promoted and strongly encouraged by Joseph Smith and his successor, Brigham Young. (The LDS church officially abandoned polygamy in 1890.)

As incredible as this may seem to the uninitiated, the FLDS faithful believe a man must have at least three wives to ascend to the highest levels of the "celestial kingdom" in the afterlife, where he and his harem will rule for eternity over a multitude of planets that will be populated by their progeny.

FLDS women go along with this arrangement because they believe their eternal salvation depends on being married to a man worthy of reaching the celestial kingdom. (They also have little schooling, which I will discuss below, and almost no contact with the outside world.)

But a man can't simply find three willing females to agree to such an arrangement. The polygamous unions can only be performed by the FLDS prophet. Over the last 70 years, thousands of young women and underage girls have been sealed into polygamous unions by various FLDS prophets.

The FLDS prophet is considered by adherents to be God's only true spokesman on Earth. Strict obedience to the prophet is essential to remaining in good standing in the church. Thus, if a man wants to obtain the coveted three wives, he'd better do exactly what the prophet wants.

The prophet's power extends to the economic realm as well.

Nearly all the land in Colorado City and Hildale is owned by a trust called the United Effort Plan, which is under the complete control of the prophet.

The prophet doles out parcels of land to men considered worthy of the "priesthood." These men then pay for and construct homes for their rapidly expanding families. But the men never take title to the homes. The men can be evicted from their houses and forced to leave the community at the whim of the prophet.

Not only that, but any man's wife and children can be reassigned by the prophet to another man. The new "husband" frequently "marries" the daughters of his new "wives." (State law neither recognizes underage marriages without parental consent nor multiple marriages, so legally such men and their so-called spiritual spouses have not entered into wedlock.)

The church urges those involved in polygamous unions to produce as many children as possible. It's not unusual for women to have had a dozen children by the time they reach their early 40s.

This obviously creates tremendous economic pressure on the family patriarchs, who must provide for scores and scores of children.

This is where the state and federal governments come in handy.

The FLDS has created sham public entities whose primary purpose is to obtain state and federal funds to help finance the rapidly growing polygamous society.

The prophet determines who will be on the Colorado Town Council and the Colorado City school board. The town goes through the motions of holding elections, but the outcome is always fixed.

There has never been a contested election for a seat on the Colorado Town Council. I know. I have reviewed every election since the town was incorporated in 1985.

The Colorado City school board is also dominated by FLDS men who were ordered to become members of the board decades ago by religious leaders. School board President F. Lee Bistline has served since the 1960s. District Superintendent Alvin Barlow has held his post for more than 30 years.

The fundamentalist prophet keeps strict control over the Colorado City school board for one reason: money.

The school board is the community's most important counterfeit political entity because it receives more than $6 million a year in state and federal funds.

In the last two years, I have examined thousands of pages of school board minutes and financial records that reveal a massive and systematic scheme to divert taxpayer funds from public school assets to FLDS coffers.

The school board and its top administrators have transferred valuable
Second Ward, and that included even relatives.

FLDS faithful immediately withdrew about 600 students from the school, and all FLDS teachers quit their posts and were reassigned other, non-teaching jobs.

The only teachers and students who stayed at the public school were members of the Second Ward and a few non-polygamists.

Despite the fact that FLDS children no longer attended the public schools, the FLDS did not relinquish control of the school board -- or of the millions of dollars it receives each year.

And since FLDS membership greatly outnumbered the population of the Second Ward, there has been no way to change the makeup of the school board at the ballot box.

In the ensuing five years, the FLDS school board, FLDS administrators and FLDS support staff have assiduously avoided any contact with the teachers and students they are supposed to be helping.

At the same time, the FLDS school board began to transfer hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of public school assets to FLDS private schools.

The school district also hired dozens of unnecessary FLDS members to work as bus drivers, secretaries, janitors, groundskeepers and office personnel -- typically at much higher wages than the average $18,500-a-year starting salary of a Second Ward teacher.

The school board's featherbedding has reached absurd proportions.

The district has more than 100 employees for 350 students, a ratio far out of line with the typical one employee to 25 students in most Arizona school districts.

The school board's profligate spending -- including the purchase of a $220,000 airplane flown by the school board president's son -- finally exhausted the school district's $1 million operating line of credit with Wells Fargo Bank.

The bank canceled the credit line last fall, triggering a financial meltdown that led to the district's repeatedly issuing bogus payroll checks to teachers.

Second Ward teachers, parents and students are so angry over the degenerating situation at the school that they took the unprecedented step

Despite the firm grip of the FLDS on thousands of followers, it is not the only fundamentalist Mormon polygamist sect in the Colorado City area.

Twenty years ago, a group split from the dominant religion over leadership issues. Known as the Second Ward, the other polygamist sect set up operations a few miles southeast of Colorado City in the unincorporated community of Centennial Park.

As is often the case in the netherworld of fundamentalist Mormonism where violence, murder and hatred lurk in the shadows, the two sects despise each other.

The FLDS considers members of the Second Ward beneath contempt -- worse even than blacks, whom FLDS prophet Warren Jeffs has said in sermons are the devil's manifestation on Earth.

It is this irrational, religious-based hatred between the FLDS and the Second Ward that's propelling the Colorado City school district toward bankruptcy.

The hostilities began in earnest in July 2000, when Warren Jeffs ordered FLDS church members to sever all ties with all members of the

public school assets -- including school buildings, buses, communication equipment, underground high-speed internet connections, district credit cards, numerous sport utility vehicles (including gas and repair bills) and classroom supplies -- to FLDS private schools and for the private benefit of FLDS church members.

It is an astounding rip-off that would never occur in a normal school district where voters could replace corrupt and incompetent school board members at the ballot box. But FLDS members are not going to vote against anyone endorsed by their prophet. Anyone who goes against the prophet suffers dire consequences.

There's an intriguing and disturbing subtext to why the school board is systematically looting the school district to the point that it is more than $1.2 million in debt and payroll checks are bouncing left and right.

It is about church-inspired hatred. What has resulted from this hatred fuels a powerful argument for why the Legislature must act as soon as possible to seize control of the Colorado City school district.
of inviting me to meet them in Colorado City recently so they could publicize the outrages that have come their way.

Like FLDS members, the Second Ward polygamists are extremely wary of the media because they don't want to bring unnecessary attention to their lifestyle.

I accepted their invitation, and after a round of introductions followed by my pledge not to reveal their names, the teachers began to unload their frustrations of working at a school where administrators hate them and their paychecks are no good.

"We are hanging on because of the children," one female teacher said. "But we just can't keep doing this if we don't get paid."

A male teacher said he and his colleagues are on the verge of walking out.

"Either I'm going to get paid or I'm going to be working somewhere else," he said.

Teachers have been so distracted in recent weeks that they have sometimes not shown up for class.

A senior high school female told me she blames the FLDS-dominated school board for the crisis.

"The school board should be there to help the teachers, not cause all these problems," she said.

Students are very worried the school could close and they will not graduate.

It's rare when a girl graduates from the Colorado City high school -- many quit attending after 10th grade to assume roles as polygamous wives. Children soon follow, and they never resume their education.

"I just want to hurry and graduate before the school shuts down and completely fails," she said.

The students, teachers and parents truly believe their school is on the brink of closing. They are desperately seeking help, but they don't know what to do.

This is an intolerable situation that transcends the practice of polygamy.

There is a sizable segment in the polygamist community that truly wants to educate their children. They deserve the opportunity to go to a public school that is not tainted by religious dogma.

It's obvious that the FLDS-controlled school board is purposefully inflicting as much financial damage to the school district as possible. After all, it's the hated Second Ward teachers and students who rely on the school while FLDS children are home-schooled or attend FLDS religious schools.

Also, the FLDS puts very little value on education, believing that an ignorant public is a subservient public. It is especially beneficial to the church to keep women uneducated because it makes it extremely difficult for them to leave and survive in the outside world.

The fate of the Colorado City school district is now in the hands of the Arizona Legislature and subject to the ravages of politics.

The House last month passed a bill sponsored by Republican Representative Mark Anderson that would allow the state Board of Education to appoint a receiver to oversee operations of any "grossly dysfunctional" school district.

The bill, however, is attracting stiff opposition from lobbyists representing school board associations and school administrators who say the legislation transfers too much authority from local school boards to the state.

"This bill goes too far ... and we very strongly oppose it," Janice Palmer, a lobbyist for the Arizona School Boards Association, said during a March 30 hearing before the Senate K-12 Education Committee.

Palmer says her association supported an earlier draft of the bill that would have required a superior court to appoint a receiver to oversee school districts with substantial financial problems -- which would have included Colorado City.

But that language was broadened during the House debate to allow the state Board of Education to appoint a receiver to operate any "grossly dysfunctional" district. This was state Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne's idea.

Horne, a Republican, says the House bill would give the state the authority to appoint a receiver to oversee the operations of any school district that the state Board of Education determines to be operating improperly.

"My bill figures that today it could be financial problems, and tomorrow it might be something else. So it deals with any illegality at a school district," Horne tells me.

Horne says opposition to his bill is coming from Democrats and the
powerful education lobby -- both of which, he claims, "are soft on Colorado City."

"We are talking about a grossly dysfunctional situation [in Colorado City],
and you would have thought the Democrats would want to see that corrected."
Horne says.

But Democrats claim Horne is trying to expand his power at the Department of Education by taking advantage of the Colorado City school crisis.

If the Legislature passes Anderson's bill with the current language, the governor will probably veto it, one prominent Democratic lobbyist tells me.

"She certainly would have the pretext because every school board in the state will have a reason for her to veto this bill," he says. "It would allow Tom Horne to come into virtually any school district in the state and take over the school."

As I was preparing this article, there appeared to be a glimmer of hope that a compromise could be reached that would allow passage of a bill acceptable to the governor.

Representative Anderson told members of the Senate K-12 Committee he would be willing to narrow the Senate bill to focus on only financially failing school districts. Anderson's offer appeared to ease lobbyists' concerns, and the Senate K-12 committee passed the House bill by a 4-3 vote.

The full Senate is expected to take up the bill as this article goes to press.

It is imperative that Horne back off his power grab and that the Legislature passes a bill that will allow the state to finally seize control of the Colorado City school district.

"We have to do something, there is no doubt about it," says Republican Senator Toni Hellon, chairwoman of the Senate K-12 Committee. "We need to solve this before this session ends."

A school receivership law would mark a historic moment in the state's long and rocky history with the Colorado City polygamists.

It would for the first time in 70 years give the children of this isolated community dominated by a cruel theocracy the opportunity to receive a decent education.

This would have immense repercussions. It could mean the difference between a college degree and independence and a life as a polygamous wife shackled to raising dozens of children.

A receivership law would also send a powerful signal to FLDS leadership that the state of Arizona will no longer allow a religious dictator to reign over a community in violation of the state's constitutional prohibition against polygamy.

It's the crucial first step toward putting the law ahead of what the polygamists believe is the rule of God.
Polygamy in Arizona: The Wages of Sin
Arizona polygamist leaders are using public funds to support religious schools and line their own pockets. The state's done nothing to stop them.
By John Dougherty

Published: Thursday, April 10, 2003

Steve Grantz/Rogers & Cowan

John Dougherty

High school science teacher Delay Bateman starts teaching extra classes at 5 a.m.

John Dougherty

The old adobe-built Colorado City school now houses school district offices.

John Dougherty

A private business also utilizes the publicly owned Colorado City school.

John Dougherty

Assistant business manager Oliver Barlow reported in February the school district was $800,000 in the red.

John Dougherty

Ladell Bistline persuaded the school district board headed by his father to buy a plane that he will fly.

John Dougherty

School board president F.L. Bistline (top) has led the board for 43 years. School superintendent Alvin Barlow (bottom) is the state's longest-tenured district chief.

John Dougherty

This $38,000 Ford F-350 is one of the school district's 13 vehicles.

John Dougherty

The district has paid more than $400,000 in lease payments to an FLDS business for the bus-maintenance barn.

John Dougherty

District business manager Jeffrey Jessop let the district's unpaid credit card balance balloon to $23,000.

John Dougherty

The Colorado City school district rejected an offer by Washington County, Utah, public school officials to acquire the Phelps Elementary School. The building is now a private FLDS school.

Who / What: Polygamy in Arizona
Details:

Read more in this series

Printer friendly version of this story
Email John Dougherty
More stories by John Dougherty
Send a letter to the editor

Dougherty
Education Reclamation
A new state law wrests control of Colorado City schools away from polygamist zealots

News
For the Birds
Are 18 birds in the nest worth 21 billion gallons of water down the drain?

Inferno
Crown Room Kickin' It
Fire-breathing bartenders, hot bi-chicks, and talking socks? That's a Crown Room Thursday night, baby

Letters
Letters
Letters from the issue of Thursday, May 19, 2005

Delay Bateman begins each school day long before dawn.

He rousts five of his teenage children from bed at 2 a.m. An hour later, the clan arrives at the Colorado City public school. Soon, a few other kids join the group in Bateman's well-stocked science laboratory.

After two hours of preparation and studying, Bateman begins lectures on the first of a dozen classes he will conduct during the long day. They include pre-calculus, chemistry, earth science, electronics, plastics, physiology, physics and physical education.

Bateman doesn't work 16 hours a day for the money. After 20 years of teaching at the Colorado City Unified School District, his salary has risen to only $33,500 a year.

"We are dedicated to helping, plain and simple," he says. "That little statement pretty much explains my personality."

Ironically, as far as the fanatic polygamist Mormons who control this isolated northern Arizona community are concerned, Bateman may as well be teaching Satanism.

Colorado City, which hugs the Utah border north of the Grand Canyon, is a town where most of the residents don't believe in evolution, dinosaurs or that America sent men to the moon. It is a
place where education beyond the eighth grade is deemed unnecessary by many—particularly for teenage girls who frequently are coerced into polygamous marriages to older men by the time they reach 16.

Bateman and a handful of other dedicated educators fight an astounding array of obstacles to fulfill their duties as public school teachers—chief among them hostile religious discrimination.

Despite the fact that most of the people living in the area practice a fundamental brand of Mormonism and embrace polygamy, a chasm deeper than that giant hole in the ground 60 miles to the south divides the community.

The dominant religious faction is controlled by the Prophet of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (FLDS) based in Colorado City. Clusters in the unincorporated community of Centennial Park a few miles to the southeast is a smaller group of fundamentalists known as 2nd Warders.

The FLDS considers residents of the 2nd Ward traitors to God, derisively branding them "heathens" and "apostates." An uneasy tension has stalked the two sects for 20 years—often spilling over into acrimonious exchanges revolving around the operation of the Colorado City Unified School District.

In July 2000, FLDS leaders exacerbated tensions when they ordered their followers to sever all unnecessary contact with apostates.

The FLDS directive triggered a massive withdrawal of fundamentalist students and teachers from the school district, leaving it populated primarily with 2nd Ward teachers and students.

But the FLDS didn't relinquish control of the schools. The district board, administrators and principals all kept their positions, as did most of the support staff of janitors, bus drivers and secretaries. But the FLDS ordered these faithful officials and employees to have little, if any, contact with the apostate teachers and students.

Unlike most teachers who fear losing their jobs, Bateman has openly criticized the FLDS-controlled school board and administrators for remaining in control of millions of dollars of public school funds after withdrawing their own children from classes.

"There can't be any ethics in this," Bateman says.

The clash between the two fundamentalist Mormon factions in the area is only the most obvious scar on the Colorado City public school system. The Mormon polygamists—as they have done with other taxpayer-financed programs, including food stamps and subsidized health care—have tapped the public school system to help subsidize the cost of raising their very large families.

A six-month New Times investigation of polygamy in Arizona has uncovered an array of illegal and unethical actions by the FLDS-controlled school board, district administrators and school principals.

The investigation included an extensive review of thousands of pages of school district credit card records, travel vouchers, board minutes, district lease agreements and correspondence, all obtained under the Arizona Public Records Law.

New Times discovered that the Colorado City public school district—which receives more than $4 million a year in state and federal aid—is operated primarily for the financial benefit of the FLDS church and for the personal enrichment of FLDS school district leaders. At the same time, FLDS district leaders have taken actions that are detrimental to students and teachers who are not members of the dominant religious sect.

"Their priorities are not to go figure out how to best educate their students," says Kenneth Knudson, who ran for the school board last November as a non-FLDS member and was soundly defeated. "Their goal is to spend federal and state dollars locally."

Other findings include:

• The district maintains an illegal slush fund that allows FLDS board members, administrators and principals to charge personal expenses on district-issued credit cards. The unpaid credit card balance exceeded $23,000 on the November 2002 statement.

• Key FLDS personnel are issued expensive district-owned vehicles—including Ford Excursions, F-350 pickups and Chevy Suburbans—for personal use, a violation of state law.

• The district disposed of valuable assets, including supplies, phone systems and classroom buildings for the benefit of private, FLDS-operated schools.

• Religious discrimination has resulted in a serious breach in communication between 2nd Ward teachers and students and FLDS-controlled school board members and administrators.

• School board members steer district business to relatives.

• District administrators travel continually to often unnecessary meetings. They frequently take family members on business trips, charging meals, hotel and merchandise on district credit cards.

• The district has been unable to attract qualified teachers and has left high school classes unstaffed for months at a time.

• A state grand jury investigation of the school district initiated in December 2000 by former attorney general and now Governor Janet Napolitano has failed to lodge a single indictment.

Colorado City school district superintendent Alvin Barlow declined to comment on New Times' findings—as did members of the school board.

Local efforts to reform the district have failed not only because the school board is controlled by the FLDS but because the vast majority of voters are dominated by it. Parents', teachers' and students' concerns about issues ranging from course selection to tax rates are ignored.

"It's basically taxation without representation," says Mohave County School Superintendent Mike File. His office disburses public funds to school districts in the county, whose local boards decide how the money is spent. "This wouldn't go on in any other of the county's 12 school districts."

The district has more than 100 full- and part-time employees for 300 students, a 3-to-1 student-to-employee ratio grossly out of line with the county average of 26 students per full-time employee. There are about 30 full-time teachers.

The unusually high number of district employees has long alarmed
File, but he says there is little he can do to force the district to cut back on the number of workers.

The Colorado City school district is the community's largest employer and has long played a crucial role in providing goods and services to the remote town of about 4,000 people on the Arizona Strip.

Allegations of improper spending by the district led to the infamous 1953 state police raid on the community, then called Short Creek. The raid failed to end polygamy — which is unconstitutional in Arizona and a felony in Utah — and proved to be a political disaster for Governor Howard Pyle, who lost his reelection bid.

The Short Creek raid has taken on near mythical proportions among polygamists, who can point to Pyle's political demise as a warning to any politician who might seek to abolish their illegal lifestyle.

In the ensuing five decades, only New Times has closely examined the school district's financial operations, despite obvious signals that something was grossly amiss.

The serious religious discrimination and financial problems embedded in the school district are forcing fiercely independent and extremely wary 2nd Ward polygamist leaders to request what is generally considered unthinkable — state intervention.

"I can't see how there would be any opposition whatsoever to the state taking over the school district," says Knudson, the failed non-FLDS school board candidate. "Nobody believes that any decision the district makes will be made for the best interests of the students."

Shun the "Heathens"

On July 16, 2000, FLDS leader Warren Jeffs issued a bombastic order from the pulpit. Speaking on behalf of his elderly father, Rulon Jeffs, who was then Prophet of the FLDS, Warren ordered the faithful to stop all contact with apostates.

"If you are choosing to socialize with apostates, to join with them in any way, you are choosing to get on the devil's ground," Warren Jeffs stated in the sermon.

"Our Prophet will lose confidence in any person who continues to harbor apostates [or] join with them. And he means business," Warren Jeffs warned.

Such threats are not taken lightly in Colorado City.

Disobeying the supreme spiritual leader's commands can mean losing home, family and job.

The FLDS — through a trust called the United Effort Plan — owns nearly all the land in town and routinely evicts families from their homes if they fail to obey religious commands.

The Prophet's immense power is rooted in his authority to assign wives — who are frequently underage girls — and to perform polygamous marriages ("Fornicating for God," March 20). Church faithful believe that a man must have at least three wives to reach the highest levels of heaven, called the Celestial Kingdom. As for women, they cannot enter heaven unless they stay in the very good graces of their husbands.

The Prophet routinely reassigned entire families to more favored men if a husband falls into disfavor with the "priesthood." Marriages are often arranged between first and second cousins, and men occasionally marry the stepdaughters of newly assigned wives. In some cases, sons will marry their stepmothers ("Bound by Fear," March 13).

Followers believe the Prophet is God's manifestation on Earth and submit to his will with strict obedience.

Within days of Warren Jeffs' sermon, more than 20 FLDS teachers submitted their resignations from the then-950-student Colorado City public school system. Support personnel and administrators who had limited, if any, contact with apostates were allowed to keep their jobs.

About 650 FLDS children were withdrawn from the public schools and enrolled in home schools and private FLDS schools.

The mass withdrawal of students attracted international media attention, but the coverage was superficial and fleeting. No one designed to pry too deeply into the closed society that distracts outsiders and carefully monitors all movements of any press that comes to town.

As the furor died down, the Colorado City school district began to systematically dismantle its classroom infrastructure — paid for with taxpayer dollars — and turn over the assets to the FLDS-controlled private schools, district records show.

Despite the decline in students, the district maintained its unusually high payroll packed with FLDS janitors, bus drivers, mechanics and secretaries — nearly all of whom receive far higher pay than the mostly 2nd Ward teachers and teacher aides, district records reveal.

In the ensuing two years after the FLDS withdrawal, district administrators, led by superintendent Alvin Barlow (who is paid $50,000 a year), plundered the district's treasury by running up thousands of dollars in personal expenses on district credit cards, purchasing expensive vehicles for their personal use and engaging in extensive travel. The spending spree culminated in December, when the district purchased a $220,000 Cessna 210 airplane to facilitate trips by district personnel to cities across Arizona.

The district's spending binge was fueled in part by a provision in state law that provides a financial cushion to schools in the event of a sudden decline in enrollment. It is no surprise that the Colorado City district benefited immensely from the provision, since Alvin Barlow — who at 30 years on the job is the most tenured school superintendent in Arizona — was keenly aware of it.

The state's "rapid-decline provision" allowed the school district to receive state funding for 949 children in fiscal year 2001, 785 children in fiscal year 2002 and 688 children in the current fiscal year that ends June 30, even though actual student counts in each of these years was closer to 300.

State Department of Education officials say the Colorado City school district received more than $1.4 million in rapid-decline subsidies in fiscal year 2002, and again in 2003. State records show the district received an additional $1.5 million in state aid for phantom students in fiscal 2001.

At a time when school districts around the state are facing severe budget cutbacks, the state's rapid-decline subsidy is projected to continue pumping millions of dollars into the district for students.
who no longer attend there through fiscal 2006.

Even with this state subsidy – which so far exceeds $4.3 million for phantom students – the Colorado City school district is on the brink of financial disaster.

The combination of maintaining an unusually high number of employees on the district payroll combined with rampant spending by district and school administrators has decimated the tiny district's budget.

"Where we are only two-thirds of the way through the year, we have overexpended our entire annual budget," district assistant business manager Oliver Barlow said at a school board meeting February 25.

"We need to not only reduce our expenditures to zero but cover the necessary expenditures from February through June."

Oliver Barlow, who is paid $48,000 a year by the district, suggested tapping a $1 million bank line of credit to cover the shortfall.

Landlorded Over

Alvin Barlow greets a New Times reporter on a cold winter morning with a friendly handshake and a question.

"Did you happen to see the accident on the mountain last night?" he asks, referring to a pickup truck that skidded off an ice-packed highway and smashed into a tree on the Kaibab Plateau near Jacobs Lake.

One of Alvin's many sons was in the truck, but luckily he was not seriously injured.

Accidents, illnesses and injuries loom large in Alvin Barlow's life.

He is said to have more than 30 children and at least half a dozen wives. Over the next several months of New Times' plowing through district records, two more events nearly claimed the lives of his children, which forced him to spend a great deal of time at a hospital in St. George, Utah.

A former teacher, Barlow shakes the hand of each of his four secretaries and four administrative aides every morning. He and his brother Dan, who has served as Colorado City's first and only mayor for 18 years, are the primary spokesmen for the town's polygamous society (Prophet Warren Jeffs, who assumed the role of spiritual leader after his father's death last September, rarely speaks to the outside world). The brothers carefully cultivate the city's image as a place steeped in traditional family values – despite widespread accounts that fundamentalists are pushing underage girls into polygamous marriages.

Alvin Barlow takes great pride in his ability to find bargains at state surplus sales and has dispatched large teams of students, teachers and parents to retrieve desks, tables and chairs from state offices for later use in Colorado City. Many of the items are eventually resold by the school district at garage-sale prices to private and church-run schools, district records show.

Barlow's public frugality, however, cannot mask the deep financial problems facing the school district.

The district Barlow oversees covers an immense, unpopulated area that has a very low assessed property valuation. The district is 25 miles wide and extends from the Utah state line to the north rim of the Grand Canyon. Most of the land is controlled by the government, and no taxes are owed to the district for it. Thus, it has one of the highest tax rates in the state.

More than half of the taxable land in the school district is controlled by the FLDS' United Effort Plan. The UEP pays about $800,000 a year in property taxes to Mohave County for property it owns in Colorado City. The assessed valuation of UEP land is kept artificially low. Mohave County taxes many UEP properties at half the normal rate because occupied homes are rarely listed as fully completed, county records show.

Less than half of the $800,000 in UEP property taxes is redistributed to the school district. The district receives about $405,000 a year in local property taxes from Colorado City, Centennial Park and outlying areas. Local property taxes account for only one-tenth of the district's $4.2 million annual budget that comes primarily from state and federal sources.

For more than a decade, the UEP has recouped most – if not all – of its property taxes allocated to the school district through favorable leases with the district. The practice of funneling taxpayer money back to the UEP and other church entities permeates school district finances.

For decades, the depressed tax base prevented the district from raising enough money to build new school facilities. Instead, the district entered into leases for facilities that were built and owned by a UEP-controlled entity, the Colorado City Improvement Association.

By June 2000, the school district was leasing three association-owned buildings for the elementary and junior high schools, plus additional properties for storage facilities, a health-care building and a bus-maintenance barn.

The school district was paying more than $316,000 a year for the leases – which seemed outrageous even to members of the school board, who are ever mindful of offending UEP and church officials and running the risk of losing everything.

"These leases eat us up," said school board member Scott Jessop at a July 2000 board meeting.

The leases with the Colorado City Improvement Association cost the district at least $3.1 million between 1992 and June 2000, district records show.

But the lease deals – at least as far as students, teachers and taxpayers were concerned – were about to make a bad situation worse.

FLDS' Sweet Deal

The church leaders' demand that ties be severed with apostates came in July 2000, and it triggered a series of events resulting in the school district transferring property it had paid for to the Colorado City Improvement Association at a substantial loss.

The sudden withdrawal of 60 percent of its students left the district with more classroom space than it immediately needed.

But it was obvious that children from the large and ever-expanding polygamous families from the 2nd Ward, combined with others moving into nearby communities, would eventually fill up the
classroom space.

As unfavorable as the lease agreements were to the district, they were providing space for this future population.

The district had funds from the state's rapid-decline subsidy that could have covered the costs of holding the empty classrooms for future use. That is, if the money had not been spent on personal expenses, excessive travel, capital purchases and abnormally high staffing.

Even so, there was no pressing financial reason to get rid of the three classroom buildings, since the district had already prepaid the leases through June 2003.

The prudent decision would have been for the district to hold on to the classrooms for future use. But its allegiance wasn't toward students, teachers and taxpayers.

It was toward the FLDS.

The 650 FLDS students needed somewhere to go to school, and the classrooms the school district was leasing from the church-controlled Colorado City Improvement Association were the obvious solution.

A month after Warren Jeffs' decree in July 2000, the school district terminated its lease on the junior high school, which wasn't scheduled to expire until June 2003. The district had prepaid $270,000 for the final three years of the lease, district records show.

Terminating the lease early cost the school district dearly. The Improvement Association refunded only $150,000 of the prepaid lease, according to district records.

Not only did the district lose about $120,000 on the lease, it wasn't compensated for a remaining steel-roofed shelter over the outdoor basketball courts and fire-alarm, telephone and landscape-irrigation systems left in place.

Within weeks, the junior high school was converted into a private, FLDS school.

This scenario was repeated in November 2000, when the district decided to terminate its lease on the David J. Broadbent elementary building, which also was owned by the Improvement Association.

The school district had prepaid a $720,000, eight-year lease on the Broadbent building in July 1995. The lease payment came from proceeds generated by $1.8 million in bonds the district issued to fund school facilities and purchase equipment. State law requires that bond proceeds be spent for only the uses specified.

The school district, however, didn't ask the Improvement Association to refund the $232,500 in cash left over from the lease money it had prepaid.

Instead, it asked the association to credit the $232,500 toward lease payments for the Marvin L. Darger elementary building, another facility the district was leasing from the association. The association agreed, and extended the Darger building lease through January 31, 2006. As with the Broadbent building, the district had prepaid the original Darger lease in 1995, in this case using $600,000 in bond funds.

Once again, the district left expensive improvements (landscaping and telephone and computer systems) in the Broadbent building and sought no compensation. And like the junior high school, the Broadbent building was soon occupied by a private FLDS school.

Then, at the same time it was relinquishing classroom space, the district held a surplus property sale on August 11, 2000. Sold were classroom and teacher desks, office chairs, chalkboards, playground equipment, room dividers, four vehicles, file cabinets, shelving, a driver's education simulator, typewriters, copy machines and bleachers -- just about everything needed to set up a private school.

The result of all this was that by November 2000, the FLDS-controlled Improvement Association -- without spending a dime -- had obtained two former public school facilities for use as private church schools.

In addition, the Darger building, which had extended its prepaid lease to January 2006, would fall under the FLDS' control in the fall of 2002.

But capturing the Darger building for use as a private school would come only after the state School Facilities Board agreed to invest $6 million in taxpayer funds to build a replacement school for the Colorado City Unified School District.

State Ripped Off

In February 2001, the Colorado City school district reached a preliminary agreement with the state School Facilities Board to build a new school for kindergartners through 12th graders on 34 acres of state trust land east of town near an industrial park. The agreement came after a year of negotiations between the district and the state over acquiring a new school.

The state agreed to put $6 million into the project, with the district picking up any additional expenses. The district qualified for the state-financed project because the Colorado City high school was located in a dangerous, substandard adobe building on five acres of district-owned land in downtown Colorado City.

The state board was well aware that the mass withdrawal of students had cut the district's enrollment from 950 to 300. But given the substandard condition of the high school and the district's low tax base that prevented it from raising enough funds to pay for another school, it decided to build the new, 600-student school for the district.

The district, however, did not notify students, teachers and parents of the likelihood that a new school would be constructed -- which later triggered angry outbursts from 2nd Ward parents over the site selected.

Arizona's plans to build the new school shocked Washington County, Utah, public school officials, who were struggling to keep open Phelps Elementary School in Hildale, which is adjacent to Colorado City across the state line.

The Phelps school also had been hit hard by the mass withdrawal of FLDS students and would be forced to close unless more students were found. For years, some Colorado City children attended the Phelps school through a tuition agreement between Washington County and the Colorado City school district.

In February 2001, Washington County school officials offered to sell or lease the Phelps school, with a capacity of about 400 students from
kindergarten through eighth grade, to the Colorado City school district. That way, Arizona taxpayers wouldn't have to spend more than $6 million toward a new school.

"All you would have had to do is bus them across the state line," says Washington County School Superintendent Kolene Granger. "Why would you waste your money on a new building?"

Granger says the offer was rejected by the Colorado City school board, whose members even canceled the tuition agreement that allowed Arizona children to attend the Utah school.

Though County Superintendent File agrees with Granger that an arrangement to continue busing the Arizona kids across the state line could have been reached, the state left the decision to Colorado City officials.

With no other choice, Granger was forced to close the Phelps school in fall 2001. Last year, Washington County entered into a 10-year, $1 million lease/purchase agreement with the FLDS-affiliated Twin City Improvement Association to acquire Phelps.

Once again, a public school was acquired by an FLDS-controlled organization. But unlike the Colorado City school district that lost money on its transfer of public assets to church entities, Washington County is getting paid. Washington County can also terminate the lease/purchase agreement if the demand for a public school in Hildale reaches more than 100 students.

In December 2001, 2nd Ward parents finally learned of plans by the Colorado City school district to build the new school and were outraged that they had been kept in the dark.

The new school's location was more than three miles from Centennial Park, where most of the students and teachers live. No consideration was given to using land in that community for the school, parents complained at the December 2001 board meeting.

"This proposed location requires every single student to be bused," Kenneth Knudson complained to the board.

District records show that nearly all of the district's bus drivers are members of the FLDS, with most receiving overtime pay that increases their salaries to an average of about $30,000 a year -- much higher than the $20,000 annual salaries paid to most of the district's teachers (now predominantly from the 2nd Ward.).

Knudson notes that the district continued to employ about 100 people for a school district with only about 300 students.

"You are going to guarantee the financial doom of the district if you keep on doing what [they] are doing," Knudson warns.

Yet high school sophomore Anne Dockstader complained at the meeting that the high school had not hired a math teacher and that there were no substitute teachers when regular teachers were gone.

"There is no one in the classroom," she said. "Nothing gets done."

Earlier, Dockstader had sent a letter to state and county education officials complaining about the lack of qualified teachers in the Colorado City schools. The letter was signed by 41 other students.

Dockstader pointed out in her letter that the district had two certified math teachers on staff, but they had been reassigned to non-teaching jobs. Both teachers are members of the FLDS who had been ordered not to associate with 2nd Ward apostates.

At the December 2001 meeting, several parents demanded that school board members resign, noting that they have no children attending the public schools. Board members rejected the requests, and a special session was scheduled for the following week.

More than 140 people attended the special meeting. Typically, no more than a couple of citizens attend board sessions. Once again, resignation demands were rejected.

"If the people I represent don't like me, go to the polls and get someone else," board president F.L. Bistline, who has served on the board since 1960, told angry parents and teachers.

Bistline rejected claims that he and other board members were FLDS puppets.

"I know we have been accused of being governed by our church, which is not the case," he stated, before strongly hinting that board members seek advice from church officials.

"Now, as an individual, I think any one of us has the right and the opportunity to go and consult with any leading person we feel like can give us good advice. We don't have to take it."

Bistline told the crowd that he withdrew his kids from the public schools and put them in private schools because he doesn't "trust" state and federal mandates on how public schools should be run.

The following week, with no one from the public in attendance, the board agreed to construct the replacement school at a cost of $1 million to the district and $6 million to the state. It also approved construction of a $550,000 vocational-education building that would be paid for strictly out of district funds. Vocational education is valued highly by FLDS parents, whose children rarely finish high school.

The construction project was managed by Flagstaff Design & Construction, which issued subcontracts to FLDS-affiliated businesses, district records show. There is no indication that any 2nd Ward businesses received subcontracts. The 60,000-square-foot school and 5,000-square-foot vocational education building were built in record time and opened in August 2002.

But there were immediate problems. The school provided far more space for its few high school students than for its much larger elementary school population. Even before the first elementary students entered the classrooms of the new school, teachers warned Superintendent Alvin Barlow that there would be immediate overcrowding.

"We need to get additional classrooms, for there is absolutely no room for growth in the elementary, yet we are locked into that facility for however long before we can expand," teacher Carol Hammon warned the board at its August 26, 2002, meeting.

Alvin Barlow ignored the space complaints and proceeded with plans to terminate the lease on the Darger building, which of course could have been used for elementary pupils, particularly since its lease was paid for three and a half more years.

"We don't need the Darger building," Alvin Barlow told school board members on September 11, 2002.
Barlow then presented a plan to return the Darger building to the FLDS Colorado City Improvement Association on terms more favorable to the association than to the district.

A week later, Barlow signed an agreement to return Darger to the association and forfeit $198,700 in lease prepayments that had been made using bond proceeds.

In addition, the district agreed to transfer $108,800 in prepaid Darger lease funds to cover future payments on the bus-maintenance facility and on storage lockers -- also owned by the association.

Like the junior high school and the Broadbent buildings two years before, the Darger building would soon become a private FLDS school.

Two years after Warren Jeffs had issued his call to sever ties with apostates, the Colorado City school district had terminated prepaid leases on three well-equipped school buildings and had waived nearly $330,000 in lease payments.

The school district has one remaining classroom building that occupies Improvement Association property. The district pays a $1,200-a-year land lease for ground beneath the Title I building, which was constructed with federal money awarded to the district for special-education needs.

The district-owned Title I structure was designed to be movable. However, after nearly $500,000 in improvements, district officials say it would cost more to move it than to build a replacement. The building is adjacent to the Broadbent and Darger facilities.

If the district's previous pattern of transferring public school assets to the FLDS continues, it wouldn't be surprising to see the church-controlled Improvement Association obtain the Title I building when the land lease with the district expires on June 30 of this year.

Meanwhile, there are already 350 students at the new school, which opened eight months ago. With a capacity of 600, it won't be long until it's bulging at the seams.

"Our classrooms are [getting] physically maxed out," high school social sciences teacher Jonathon Hammon told the school board in February. "We are not in decline anymore."

Perks of Polygamy

Last August 17, Colorado City school district business manager Jeffrey Jessop loaded up the district's recently purchased $38,000 Ford F-350 pickup truck with another adult and four kids and set out on a cross-country trip to Georgia.

The odyssey was financed by the school district.

The travel was justified as a district expense because Jessop was driving to Georgia to pick up a piece of equipment needed for the school.

That the propane oxygenator seemingly could have been shipped by commercial freight in less time and at lower cost didn't stop Jessop and the gang from hitting the road at 5 p.m. on a Saturday and embarking on a circuitous cross-country route that took them first through Colorado, Kansas City and then northerly to Nauvoo, Illinois.

Once a stronghold of church founder Joseph Smith, Nauvoo looms large in Mormon history. Many Mormons make pilgrimages there at least once in their lives.

Jessop and his entourage rang up hotel bills of $144 in Pueblo, Colorado, $162 in Kansas City and $142 in Nauvoo. The group lingered in Illinois, spending $90 at a hotel at Fairview Heights, just outside of St. Louis. After four nights on the road, Jessop got serious and drove straight to Marietta, Georgia, where he picked up the propane equipment. The group spent another $90 for a hotel room for one night.

With the apparent religious pilgrimage accomplished and the machinery loaded on the truck, Jessop and his crew blasted across the southern United States for 44 hours to Carlsbad, New Mexico, where the group booked two rooms for $128. The trip ended two days later back in Colorado City. They got back just in time for the equipment to be installed for the first day of school.

Besides hotel bills totaling $803, the trip cost the school district $309 for gasoline and $299 for meals. The total outlay was $1,412, according to Jessop's travel voucher, which listed the expenses of the kids and the other adult.

Jeffrey Jessop's summer jaunt -- for personal and dubious business reasons -- is typical of the district's travel policy.

In some cases, there is no doubt that travel was personal, such as when high school principal Lawrence Steed charged $300 to his district-issued credit card during his vacation last July to Canada.

School district records document an amazing amount of travel conducted by district administrators and principals. There aren't many weeks of a given year when somebody working for the district isn't in Phoenix, Kingman, Flagstaff, Tucson or Las Vegas. In some instances, the same employee will make the 800-mile round-trip drive from Colorado City to Phoenix twice in one week, records show.

The relentless travel hasn't gone unnoticed by Arizona Department of Education and state School Facilities Board officials.

"I would say they travel more than almost any other school district in the state," Lyle Friesen, the Department of Education's finance director, says of Colorado City school officials.

Friesen adds that the travel by the Colorado City employees has often been unnecessary; the issues easily could have been resolved by telephone or through e-mail.

The situation got so ridiculous that secretaries at the School Facilities Board tended to laugh about how often the Colorado City district officials -- sometimes with multiple wives in tow -- would show up unexpectedly at state offices.

The expense of all this travel, however, is no joke for taxpayers.

The district refused to produce its line-item for travel expenses for this article, but credit card receipts and travel vouchers indicate they have exceeded $50,000 a year.

This is far more than the $8,000 annual travel budget for the superintendent of the Washington County, Utah, public schools -- who oversees 30 schools, 20,000 students and has a $100 million-a-year budget. Superintendent Granger says she has spent only $3,158 on travel this year.
Colorado City school district travel records show that employees frequently stay at $100-a-night-and-up hotels and that they ring up expensive meal tabs for themselves and their frequent guests (who usually are not identified by name on travel records).

Along with the F-350, four-wheel-drive pickup assigned to Jeffrey Jessop and a $32,000, 2000 Ford Excursion handed to Superintendent Alvin Barlow, the one-school Colorado City district owns an additional 13 vehicles, including five Chevy Suburbans.

Nearly all of the vehicles are handed out to administrators, principals and support personnel and are used for district as well as personal needs. Superintendent Alvin Barlow says the district does not require employees to keep track of personal miles driven and allows employees to take the vehicles home.

At the same time, the district does not list personal use of district vehicles in its employee contracts, thereby allowing workers to escape from paying state and federal taxes on the benefit.

State law mandates that school district vehicles are for official use only.

The large number of district vehicles issued to employees seemed to concern school board member W.H. Meldrum at a January 19, 2002, meeting.

"Let's figure out a way we can do it so it is legal and right," he said to fellow board members. "That's all I'm asking. I've brought this up two or three times before, yet we go right on doing the same thing."

Board president Bistline also expressed worry about vehicle use.

"I am real concerned about the appropriate use of vehicles," he told Superintendent Barlow.

But the two board members must not have been concerned enough, because a minute or two later they voted along with the rest of the board to purchase another vehicle -- the F-350 pickup truck now assigned to Jessop, who is paid $41,700 annually.

Free use of a large vehicle is a substantial benefit for the average polygamist, who has a very large family to transport.

Not only did select district employees receive free vehicles, they also got free gas, insurance and maintenance, courtesy of their public employer.

Superintendent Barlow charged more than $2,700 in gas on school district accounts in 2002 for his Ford Excursion. He also got at least $1,385 in repairs on the Excursion that were paid by the district. But because of the lax recordkeeping, it is impossible to tell how often Barlow used the vehicle for personal use.

Travel and credit card records show that Barlow typically made several trips a week to St. George, Utah, where he frequently charged up to $50 on his district credit card for food. (Barlow seems to particularly love pie; he has unpaid credit card charges to Frontier Pies for more than $230 dating back to September 2001.)

District credit cards carry a $60,000 limit, and the school board has been aware that holders are using the cards for personal expenses since at least 1999. The practice has led to the ballooning, unpaid credit card balance that topped $23,000 in late 2002.

Arizona school districts are prohibited from carrying unpaid credit card balances and incurring interest charges, says Laura Miller, accounting services manager with the state auditor general.

"They would actually need to pay off the full balance every month so they are not incurring interest and finance charges," she says.

Records show that the district's Wells Fargo credit card balance has not been paid off since March 2001, resulting in $2,800 in finance charges through November 2002.

Part of this interest expense resulted from potentially illegal personal credit card charges amassed by board president Bistline, Superintendent Alvin Barlow, business manager Jessop, assistant business manager Oliver Barlow, high school principal Lawrence Steed, school counselor Steven Barlow and elementary school principal Kimball Barlow.

Stresses Miller of the Auditor General's Office, "Personal use of district credit cards would not be an item that is allowable."

Superintendent Barlow leads the way with more than $5,000 in unpaid personal credit card expenses from May 2001 through November 2002, district records show. He tallied most of the expenses on meals and hotels. Many of the personal expenses were incurred at the Mark Twain Restaurant, in Hildale -- the only sit-down, formal dining establishment in the Colorado City area.

District business meetings are routinely conducted at the local restaurant. Credit card records show several thousand dollars in charges since March 2001, which could be a violation of state spending laws.

"That type of expenditure is something that would be a possible gift of public money," Miller says.

Before the district had the Wells Fargo account, it issued American Express credit cards that were apparently used illegally by district officials.

For example, school board president Bistline, in January 1999, put $160 in charges for a personal vacation to Caliente Hot Springs, Nevada, on his district American Express card, district officials admit. Principal Lawrence Steed charged another $176 in personal expenses on his district American Express card at the same resort a month later.

Credit card records also show school district officials purchasing tens of thousands of dollars' worth of office supplies and computer and electronic equipment in the last two years. They routinely bought hundreds of dollars of items at retail stores on single shopping trips, despite agreements with Mohave County to purchase most school supplies in bulk at a discounted rate.

Though a detailed audit beyond the scope of the Arizona Public Records Law would be required to make such a determination, several teachers have expressed concern that district materials are ending up in the FLDS' private schools. School district storage rooms are adjacent to the Darger and Broadbent buildings, the former public schools that were later turned over to the Improvement Association to become private schools.

One teacher said in a taped interview that a colleague was teaching mathematics in one of the private schools while on the public payroll.
In addition, the teacher from the 2nd Ward said, "[that FLDS teacher] was using the district's supplies and copiers to get ready for his math class."

Ironically, the district employee and FLDS member refused to fill the lingering math teacher vacancy at the public high school.

"He absolutely refused to teach any of our students because of his religious decree not to," the 2nd Ward teacher says.

There is no doubt that district employees occasionally spend time during the work day at the private schools. Superintendent Barlow was seen one afternoon driving his district vehicle to the old junior high school building to chat with private school students and play basketball during district business hours.

The school district also appears to be giving away space in its office buildings to private Colorado City businesses. New Times found at least two businesses operating in the school district building that do not have lease agreements with the district.

In fact, such private use of school district property has been going on for years, says Martin Black, a longtime district mechanic.

Black says several Colorado City residents, including the owner of an automotive-repair business, have been using school-bus-maintenance barn equipment to repair private vehicles on weekends and often during district business hours.

Though the repairs have "nothing to do with the schools," Black says, "they still do it."

None of the unscrupulous expenditures surprises Deloy Bateman.

"It's been going on forever," he says.

Most of the town's inadequately educated citizenry doesn't understand the proper use of public money. Plus, district officials are considered above reproach by most fundamentalist Mormons in the area.

"They have been driving the cars around for so long [that] nobody thinks twice about it," Bateman says.

Once a loyal FLDS foot soldier, Bateman broke away from the church a few years ago after religious leaders unsuccessfully tried to take away four of his children by his second wife. Bateman had grown up in the home of the late Prophet Leroy Johnson.

He was sent to college by Johnson, a rare opportunity for anyone from Colorado City. But Bateman dared to challenge Johnson's successor, Rulon Jeffs, over custody of the children and was branded an apostate.

While the district has issued vehicles to FLDS faithful willy-nilly, Bateman says it has turned down his requests to borrow a car or truck to take students on geology field trips. The result is that he has dipped into his meager teacher's pay to finance transportation for the frequent excursions.

Cessna for Sonny

The Colorado City school district ranks last in the state in teacher pay, with starting yearly salaries hovering at about $20,000.

Superintendent Barlow has long told teachers struggling to raise families on the pittances they are paid that the district is impoverished because of its limited tax base.

But in a school district where apostate students were forced to raise money for a day trip to see The Wizard of Oz, the FLDS-controlled school board manages to come up with money for some of the most extravagant expenses imaginable for its favorite sons.

In December, the school board voted to purchase something few, if any, other school districts in the country would even consider buying -- a $220,000 airplane, in this case a Cessna 210.

Board president Bistine's son, Ladell, discussed the possibility of the district's acquiring an aircraft during a meeting with assistant business manager Oliver Barlow in the spring of 2002, school board minutes show.

Ladell Bistine is a pilot and was already getting paid $50 an hour by the district to fly its personnel to and from alleged business meetings. The district was leasing a plane for $156 an hour for the trips.

F.L. Bistine at first expressed serious reservations about buying the plane from local businessman Con Holm. He noted that the district had just approved construction of the $7 million K-12 school, a $550,000 vocational-education building and purchased a couple of $80,000 school busses.

But other members of the board insisted that a plane could reduce overall travel costs because of the long distances traveled by district employees. Bistine's opposition was short-lived. Last June, the board president announced at a meeting that he had decided it was a good idea to purchase the aircraft that his son would be paid by the district to fly.

Soon, according to transcripts, Bistine became the strongest supporter of purchasing a plane, suggesting at a June 21 meeting that the board might purchase his son's smaller Cessna 172 aircraft for $60,000, if the larger Cessna 210 was deemed too expensive.

Other board members insisted that the larger aircraft made more economic sense, and Bistine pushed to close the deal on Holm's plane immediately.

"It will take us three or four weeks to orchestrate the process," assistant business manager Oliver Barlow cautioned the board, reminding Bistine that the law requires public bids to be taken.

Not surprisingly, only one bid came in -- from Con Holm.

Ladell Bistine then inspected the plane and discovered a few structural and cosmetic problems. At a September meeting, F.L. Bistine moved to buy it for $200,000, toss in an additional $20,000 for repairs and upgrades and sign a pilot contract with his son.

The school board voted in favor of its president's motion, and the deal was done -- in clear violation of state conflict-of-interest laws.

AG's Probe Lagging

The Arizona Attorney General's Office initiated a grand jury investigation into the Colorado City schools in December 2000. The investigation initially focused on allegations that district-paid teachers were working in the private schools.
The investigation broadened in July 2001, when the grand jury demanded the district's expenditure reports and all employee contracts dating back five years.

Superintendent Alvin Barlow retained Phoenix attorney Charles Ditisch to represent him personally in the case. Ditisch has defended Colorado City polygamists in cases involving religious and lifestyle issues.

The school district has retained Phoenix attorney Barry Mitchell to respond to several grand jury subpoenas.

The grand jury so far has done little more than subpoena records, and the AG's Office has conducted only a few telephone interviews, records show.

The AG's Office had not even sent an investigator to school district offices to review files by press time for this article.

Also, there is no indication that the grand jury has requested credit card records and travel vouchers, much less that it has reviewed the propriety of the district's transferring classroom facilities to the church-controlled Colorado City Improvement Association -- which turned them into private, religious schools.

The assistant AG leading the investigation, Leesa Morrison, left the Attorney General's Office earlier this year to become head of the state Department of Liquor Licenses and Control. Nevertheless, sources say the state grand jury is continuing to investigate the school district.

Mohave County School Superintendent File says credit card expense information obtained by New Times confirms suspicions many state educators had about the Colorado City school district. File says he is considering asking Mohave County Attorney William Eckstrom to initiate his own investigation into the Colorado City district for apparently abusing public funds.

Any investigation into the school district may present a conflict of interest for Eckstrom, who as county attorney has represented the Colorado City district for many years. Eckstrom told New Times that Superintendent Alvin Barlow is a longtime professional associate.

Eckstrom says he has informally met with school district officials, asking Alvin Barlow to submit in writing -- with supporting documentation -- details of district employees' use of school credit cards and vehicles for personal reasons.

After reviewing the district's response, Eckstrom says, he will determine whether the matter can be handled internally or if it warrants a criminal investigation.

Because of his relationship with Barlow, Eckstrom says he would recuse himself should criminal prosecution prove likely.

"If it comes back to me that these guys violated state law, I would refer it to another agency."

The information uncovered by New Times has been unsettling to the veteran prosecutor.

"I'm surprised and disappointed," Eckstrom says.
As you may have noticed, the world did not end today. Ordinarily that’s not news. But investigators have said a polygamist leader prophesied the world might come to an end, and that drew a crowd in Texas today. And of course, it’s a story with Utah roots. John Hollenhorst joins us with more.

Well, Salt Lake City is still here. And so is Eldorado, Texas. Not much happened there, actually. But concerns about an apparent prophecy did draw a crowd to the polygamist’s remote compound.

Followers of Utah polygamist leader Warren Jeffs have been building a temple near Eldorado, Texas. They’ve been working round the clock since January. First, with a reported target date for completion today, April 6th. Investigators have said Jeffs predicted the world would end today, and only the faithful would be saved.

News vehicles gathered at the locked gate. That’s partly because of law enforcement worries that the Jeffs group might do something violent. The local sheriff went inside the compound and was assured that nothing out of the ordinary would occur. Some of the worries started with law enforcement in Utah.

MARK SHURTLEFF, UTAH ATTORNEY GENERAL: "WE WERE CONCEREND ENOUGH THAT WE SENT MY INVESTIGATORS TO SHARE THEIR INFORMATION WITH TEXAS STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES, THAT WAS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO US. WE WERE CAUTIOSLY OPTIMISTIC THAT NOTHING WOULD HAPPEN."

In the aftermath, considering that nothing special did happen, there are inevitable questions about whether everybody over-reacted.

By Mike Weland

About 100 members of the Bountiful Women’s Society, both from the community of Bountiful and from Boundary County, are organizing a “Summit on Polygamy” April 19 in an attempt to explain their views and way of life and help ease fears and concerns that have risen over the Fundamental Latter Day Saints (FLDS).

The event was announced on Monday, and already the response they’ve received has been overwhelming.

“It’s only been a couple of days, and it’s already half full,” said Winston Blackmore, a life-long member of the FLDS and one of the speakers slated to appear. “We thought we’d get maybe 50 people, but over 200 have already signed up. What surprises me is why anyone would be interested in us … we’re just what we always have been.”

Blackmore said he has personally invited the attorneys general of four states and one province to attend, including Idaho Attorney General Lawrence Wasden, and said that Utah’s attorney general has already accepted the invitation. He also said he’s fielded numerous calls from the media, including a call from a German television station, interested in learning more about the group.

Attention to the group, both from the government and the media, has intensified since the ascension of Warren Jeffs to the status of “prophet” following his father Rulon Jeffs death a little over 2 ½ years ago. Since assuming the top spot in the church hierarchy, Jeffs has allegedly ex-communicated many of those who formerly held leadership positions in the church, including Blackmore.

Jeffs, now wanted in Utah on charges of sexually abusing an underage nephew, has been accused of adopting a much more radical form of church leadership than his predecessors, allegedly usurping control of not only the church, but the United Effort Plan, a church trust fund to which all members contribute and from which they are provided everything from housing to food.

According to those who’ve been cast out of the church, Jeffs has turned the fund into his own personal treasury, ignoring the most basic needs of his followers.

In addition, he’s accused of ripping apart the polygamous families of those who’ve been ousted, arbitrarily reassigning their wives to other men deemed “faithful,” often sending the women, allegedly as young as 13, between several FLDS communities in Mexico, Texas, Utah, Arizona and Bountiful. In addition, he is accused of excommunicating many of the young men of the FLDS on little or no grounds, casting them into surrounding communities with nothing but the teachings they’ve been born with and with their education provided solely by the church.

According to Blackmore, the stigma attracted by Jeffs has consistently wrought an undeserved connection to him and the group that chose to
follow him rather than continue under Jeffs leadership.

"Whenever people talk of Warren Jeffs, they always link it to Winston Blackmore and "The Bishop of Bountiful," he said. "It's been 2 1/2 years since they distanced ourselves from us, and there is no connection. We have friends, family and loved ones affiliated with Jeffs, who is getting more difficult to believe in with each passing day."

The summit takes place at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 9, at the Creston Rec Center, Creston, British Columbia. Cost is $20 Canadian. To register, call (250) 428-5789.

© Kootenai Valley Press

Curious Crowds Gather Outside Polygamist Compound In Texas Apr. 6, 2005

RESIDENT OF ELDORADO TEXAS: "WELL I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE WORLD WILL END TODAY."

That resident of Eldorado, Texas turned out to be right. The world did not end. But a crowd of reporters and law enforcement people gathered outside a polygamist compound in Texas, just in case something bad did happen.

The attention is focused on the nation's largest polygamist group, whose leader reportedly prophesied the world would end today. That group is based in Utah but is now developing a new compound in Texas. John Hollenhorst joins us to explain the latest developments.

It was a strange day. I'm sure there wasn't a single reporter that expected the world to end. But many felt the story warranted coverage anyway. That's because the group has become unpredictable under Warren Jeffs, who critics claim is a dictator to his followers.

The polygamist temple is still incomplete. And some Texans wish it would stay that way.

RESIDENT OF ELDORADO, TEXAS: "MAYBE THEY'LL GO AWAY."

The followers of Utah polygamist leader Warren Jeffs have been building the temple in a flurry of round-the-clock activity since January First. Today was the apparent target date for completion. Investigators say Jeffs predicted the world would end, and only the faithful would be saved. Rumors of a mass suicide or a violent siege drew a sizeable media contingent. Jeffs followers escorted the sheriff in, but he never saw the secretive Jeffs.

VOICE OF SHERIFF DAVID DORAN, SCHLEICHER COUNTY, TEXAS: "I CAN'T EVEN CONFIRM THAT HE'S ON THE RANCH."

The followers told the sheriff nothing unusual was planned.

SHERIFF DAVID DORAN, SCHLEICHER COUNTY, TEXAS: "THINGS WERE QUIET OUT THERE. THEY WERE VERY CALM. THEY WERE VERY ACCOMODATING. EVERYTHING WAS PEACEFUL."

SAM BROWER, PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR: "JUST AS THE PEOPLE IN JONESTOWN WERE AND JUST AS THE PEOPLE IN WACO WERE. BUT IT'S THE TYRANT THAT'S RUNNING THE SHOW THAT'S DANGEROUS."

But communication professor Bob Avery says the media is pandering to the public by intensively covering a pseudo-event.

PROF. BOB AVERY, UNIVERSITY OF UTAH COMMUNICATIONS DEPT.: "WELL A PSEUDO-EVENT IN THE SENSE THAT THERE'S NOT REALLY ANYTHING HERE. WHY THE MEDIA WANT TO MAKE THIS A SPECTACLE THAT UTILIZES NEWS RESOURCES, I DON'T THINK THAT'S SERVING THE PUBLIC INTEREST."

But it wasn't just the news media. Even Utah law enforcement was paying close attention.

MARK SHURTLEFF, UTAH ATTORNEY GENERAL: "WE WERE CONCERNED ENOUGH THAT WE SENT MY INVESTIGATORS TO SHARE THEIR INFORMATION WITH TEXAS STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES, THAT WAS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO US. WE WERE CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC THAT NOTHING WOULD HAPPEN."

Jeffs is facing civil suits and criminal investigations, which could lead to a dicier situation than what we saw today. If deputies show up at the compound armed with seizure orders and arrest warrants, one Jeffs critic said, "The fuse is lit."

May 26, 2005 9:26 am US/Mountain

Arizona authorities are putting pressure on leaders of a community of polygamists along the state's border with Utah.

Authorities seized boxes of financial records, other documents and computers Tuesday as part of a criminal investigation into alleged financial mismanagement of the Colorado City Unified School District.

Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard said the maneuver was part
of a strategy to apply pressure in any legitimate way possible to leaders of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

The sect and its estimated six thousand members control the school district, municipal government and most property in the isolated towns of Colorado City, Arizona, and Hildale, Utah.

Goddard said he and Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff agreed two years ago to try a coordinated crackdown on the sect's leaders after numerous complaints of sexual exploitation, welfare fraud and tax evasion.

Goddard said a new action is planned this week in Utah seeking to wrest control of the United Effort Plan, a church trust that controls FLDS property.

Arizona agents make raid on Colorado City school offices

* Officers seek to ensure preservation of records amid finance investigation

By PATRICE ST. GERMAIN
patrices@thespectrum.com

COLORADO CITY - During a nine-hour search at the Colorado City Unified School District administration office Tuesday, agents from the Arizona Attorney General's Office packed up computers, file boxes and even beer cans confiscated from the office and district vehicles.

Curious bystanders looked on as the agents carried items from the school and cars.

The community is dominated by the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which teaches polygamy as part of its doctrine.

Arizona Highway Patrol troopers and members of the Mohave County Sheriff's Office provided security while the confiscated materials were placed in a 28-foot U-Haul truck.

School superintendent Alvin Barlow, school district business manager Jeffrey Jessop and assistant business manager Oliver Barlow looked on while the activity took place.

According to a press release, Attorney General Terry Goddard said his office has been investigating reports of possible financial mismanagement at the school for the past two years.

"We executed the search warrant today in an effort to be sure the records are not at risk of being destroyed, removed or altered if the district is placed in receivership and to help determine if any wrongdoing has occurred," Goddard said.

The search warrant and its related documents have been sealed by the Superior Court and remain confidential. All the items seized during the execution of the search warrant were taken to Flagstaff for processing.

According to the press release, Goddard's office is preparing a petition to present to the State Board of Education to put the school district in receivership. The Arizona Legislature recently passed a law allowing the board to place school districts in receivership if they are being financially mismanaged. The new law will take effect Aug. 12.

Mohave County School District Superintendent Mike File said he actually met with teachers on the last day of school Thursday. File said the meeting, which included Alvin Barlow, Jessop and Oliver Barlow was tenuous at times.

"I purposely went up at the request of the teachers and wanted them to see the truth," File said. "What I was seeing was blatant disregard and their behavior (Alvin Barlow, Jeffrey Jessop and Oliver Barlow) and their demeanor to those people, the teachers and children was deplorable."

File said he left the meeting and contacted the Attorney General's Office on Friday. File was pleased that the criminal search warrant was served so quickly and hopes to be given receivership of the school.

"If I am, the plan I have is the immediate termination of the administration if they are not prosecuted by then," File said.

File said the district, which has a huge amount of staff-per-student ratio, has had problems with its budget for the past five years.

During the last school year, staff members were unable to cash paychecks for three pay periods until the steps were taken to cover those checks.

Attempts to reach school board chairman F. Lee Bistline, Alvin Barlow, Oliver Barlow and Jeffrey Jessop were unsuccessful Tuesday evening.

Originally published May 25, 2005
Jon Krakauer watches ceremony from overhead

Jon Krakauer came to Eldorado last weekend, not to celebrate the new year, but to be nearby the YFZ Ranch where Prophet Warren Jeffs and the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ are said to be building a temple. Of particular interest to Krakauer was a recent spate of rumors that Jeffs was predicting the end the world and that he had ordered his followers in Utah, Arizona and Canada to stay in their homes throughout the weekend.

Krakauer, who wrote the best-selling book Under the Banner of Heaven, a Story of Violent Faith, has long been a vocal critic of Warren Jeffs. He has followed developments at the YFZ Ranch since the story broke here last March, maintaining close contact with Sheriff David Doran and Success editor Randy Mankin.

Krakauer arrived in Eldorado last Friday evening and spent part of the evening monitoring traffic in and out of the YFZ Ranch gate. The following day, he flew over the YFZ where he managed to witness and photograph what he believes was a dedication ceremony at the temple site on New Year's Day. (See photos above)

Krakauer snapped a series of photos that clearly show a group of people gathered at the east end of the temple foundation. In the first photo the group is arrayed in a semi-circle, facing an individual who Krakauer believes to be Warren Jeffs. As the plane approached the site the people gathered around the individual in a tight huddle.

"I think they heard the plane and huddled around Warren to protect him," Krakauer said.

A magnified, but very grainy, version of the first photo (See photo above) seems to bear out Krakauer's theory. A lone figure, taller than the rest the group appears be facing a group of about fifty people, who quickly gather around in subsequent photos.

Krakauer says he was once skeptical that the YFZ Ranch would ever be home to more than a handful of the FLDS faithful. Now, he says he is convinced that Warren Jeffs is building a new town in Schleicher County and that he is planning to move many of his followers here.

"Schleicher County is clearly the new world headquarters of Warren Jeffs' enterprises," Krakauer told the Success. "After seeing Warren himself conducting what appeared to be a consecration of the temple foundation on January 1, and considering the incredible pace of new construction on the YFZ property, there can no longer be any doubt."

Other FLDS-watchers agree with Krakauer's assessment. Richard Holm, a Utah businessman and former member of the FLDS Church says he has no doubts that the first photo shows Warren Jeffs addressing his followers.

"It all matches up," Holm said. "His height -- the way he is dressed -- they way they all gather around him in order to shield him from the plane."

Interest in the temple site grew this week as word leaked out of Colorado City, AZ and Hildale, UT that Jeffs had prophesied the end of the world would coincide with the new year and with the laying of temple cornerstone. His followers in the twin-cities, as well as those in Bountiful, British Columbia, were reportedly told to stay in their homes and stay in prayer throughout the weekend.

Krakauer says he now believes Jeffs wanted his followers praying for the consecration of the Schleicher County temple.

Interestingly, on Thursday of last week, Schleicher County Appraisal District personnel visited the YFZ Ranch where they were allowed to measure several new buildings, but were denied access to the temple site. Chief Appraiser Scott Sutton, his secretary, Janie Mitchell and appraisal district President Phil McCormick were accompanied to the ranch by Sheriff David Doran. They were permitted to document a number of newly completed buildings, including a large meeting hall and a large apartment style building, each with more than 28,000 square feet.

"Those are rough numbers," Sutton told the Success. He said it will take several weeks to convert his measurements into drawings and noted that none of the new buildings will be taxed until the next tax year.

While the group was on the ranch, gates leading to the temple site were closed and pickup trucks containing two men each were backed up to the gates. "It was clear to me that they didn't want us in there," Sutton said. "We didn't push it."

While Sutton may not have been able to measure the temple foundation, Krakauer's photos give some insight into the size of the structure. Using a Ford Excursion SUV that was parked nearby as a reference, the width of the foundation very closely approximates the 88 ft. width of the Latter-Day Saint Temple at Nauvoo, IL. The Nauvoo temple is said to be a favorite of Warren Jeffs.

By comparison, the sanctuary of First Baptist Church in Eldorado is 52 feet wide, according to Rev. Andy Anderson who enlisted the help of FBI youth minister Silas Politte in measuring the building. Anderson noted that it is 125 ft. from the pillars in front of FBC to the back of the church's Fellowship Hall, some 3 feet shy of the length of the temple at Nauvoo.

If the building being planned at the YFZ follows the Nauvoo plans, its walls will stand 60 ft. high topped by a domed tower soaring 165 ft above the ground.

Stone blocks are being stored in this crescent-shaped area near the stone-cutting mill at the YFZ Ranch. The stone is being kept adjacent to a large foundation (upper left) where many believe FLDS Prophet Warren Jeffs intends to build the church's first-ever temple.

Other photos taken earlier in the week reveal a large number of stone blocks stored in a crescent-shaped area adjacent to the temple and nearby a large stone cutting mill. Many of the stones are covered with tarpaulins but several are visible. It is unclear if all the stone is being quarried on the YFZ Ranch. Jon Krakauer reports following a truck load of shaped stone on County Road 300. He said the truck entered the gate to the YFZ.

Krakauer says he expects there will be increased traffic through the YFZ gate. "More and more of Warren's most committed followers will certainly be moving to Texas in the months to come," Krakauer said. "From here on out, it also seems likely that Warren will be spending most -- maybe even all -- of his time on the YFZ ranch."

"For over a year now, law enforcement authorities in Utah, Arizona, and British Columbia have been slowly but surely been collecting criminal evidence against the prophet," Krakauer continued. "I don't know whether it will happen in a week or in a month or in six
months, but I am confident that a felony warrant will soon be issued for Warren's arrest, which is going to make him afraid to venture beyond the YFZ gates. It also means, for better or worse, that Eldorado is going to be ground zero in the effort to bring Warren to justice."

TCEQ update
Wendy Cooper, an attorney representing the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality told the Success this week that she is not yet prepared to file a motion with TCEQ Chief Clerk LaDonna Castanuela regarding environmental violations at the YFZ Ranch. Cooper said that she will be reviewing the case in the next few weeks and expects to be filing a complaint, along with recommended fines, in the next few weeks.

Locally, complaints from neighboring ranchers about dust and runoff from the YFZ have made it to the TCEQ offices in San Angelo. No word whether those complaints are being investigated.

Legal update
Residents in Colorado City, AZ and Hildale, UT (Short Creek) are reportedly concerned that their homes, built on land owned by the United Effort Plan Trust, are in jeopardy now that the UEP, the FLDS Church and Prophet Warren Jeffs have fired their attorneys and are no longer mounting a defense in lawsuits brought against them by Brent Jeffs and a group of young men known as the "Lost Boys."

A press release issued by the law firm of Hoole & King, which represents Brent Jeffs and the Lost Boys, states that their clients brought the lawsuits in order to preserve the UEP Trust and to "stop the improper sale of its assets."

The statement continues saying, "We want to ensure that families are secure in their own homes and can preserve their property interests. We also hope to make it possible for all people living on UEP Trust land to understand the choices becoming open to them so that they can freely make decisions regarding their futures, homes and families."

Hoole & King plan to hold a meeting in Short Creek or St. George, UT in February and meet with concerned residents of Short Creek.

New end-of-world date
If you are reading this, then the latest end-of-the-world prediction associated with FLDS Prophet Warren Jeffs has come and gone. Journalists in Canada contacted the Success on Tuesday to say that FLDS faithful in Bountiful, BC reported hearing from their leaders that the apocalyptic end of time previously expected on Jan. 1st was actually going to occur on Jan. 5th, a prediction confirmed by two contacts in Short Creek.

The Eldorado Success invites Warren Jeffs and/or other leaders of the FLDS church to comment on this or any other story surrounding the FLDS and the YFZ Ranch.
The biggest drain on the FLDS bank account in recent weeks is a seemingly frenzied construction project on a remote ranch in Texas. It's believed to be the first polygamous temple and it's setting off alarm bells. John Hollenhorst flew over the site in West Texas and brings us the exclusive story.

It's not just the spending that has people worried. It's the astounding speed of the project. Some believe Warren Jeffs has created a dangerous atmosphere by setting a deadline: his own "Texas Prophecy" of the end of the world.

The temple looms over Texas ranchland, as tall as a seven-story building and big enough to hold an enormous congregation.

Sam Brower, Private Detective: "It think that Warren Jeffs is thinking that this is the New Jerusalem. He's building the temple there."

FLDS The Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a sect of Mormonism. Mormonism in turn is a cult of Christianity.

The FLDS is also considered to be a cult of Christianity. Sociologically, the group is a high-control cult.

More news articles about the FLDS

Read up on Polygamy

When the secretive FLDS church bought the property and named it Yeomning For Zion, they said they were planning a hunting retreat.

Randy Mankin, Owner-Editor, "The Eldorado Success": "They lied to us about the purpose they were coming here for."

FLDS members are doing the construction. And they're quarrying huge blocks of limestone. The round-the-clock pace is startling.

On New Year's Day, when free-lance writer Jon Krakauer flew over and took two pictures, the temple was just a rectangular outline. His first photo shows some sort of ceremony, possibly led by Warren Jeffs. In the second photo the faithful had closed ranks to hide the leader. Just five weeks later, the temple looked much more complete.

Sam Brower: "They're driven. They're driven to get it done quick and they're doing it."

Private detective Sam Brower says Jeffs set an apocalyptic deadline, the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Mormon Church.

Sam Brower: "According to my sources, the end of the world is going to happen, once again, according to Warren, on April 6th. That's what they're shooting for."

Newspaper editor Randy Mankin has been monitoring progress and comparing it with the 1840's Mormon temple in Nauvoo, Illinois. It's a close match, right down to the plumbing for a baptismal font. He says local opinion in Eldorado runs the gamut.

Randy Mankin: "One extreme of 'leave them alone and let them do what they want; it's not affecting me,' to the other extreme of, 'Well let's go kick the doors in and drag them out and burn the buildings down.' And there's every shade of gray in the spectrum in between."

Anti-polygamy activists like Sam Brower have raised the specter of another Waco, or another Jonestown. But the local sheriff downplays the worry.

Sheriff David Doran, Schleicher County, Texas: "No, I don't expect trouble. We've got good lines of communication with them. We're talking to them on a regular basis."

But as the temple has been growing, storm clouds have been brewing--legal troubles that could someday bring law enforcement there, to the 'Gates of Zion."

Lawsuits are pending against Jeffs for child sexual abuse and racketeering. Lawyers and former members are closing in on his assets. Criminal charges are under investigation. Jeffs himself has fired his lawyers and stopped defending church interests in court.

Sam Brower: "And he feels that God is going to defend them. And that's his own words."

Sheriff David Doran: "With a good line of communication we can come to a peaceful resolution, no matter what. That's what we want to work towards anyway."

The sheriff says it appears the Texas ranch is now FLDS church headquarters. It's not clear what that means for followers left behind in Hildale, Utah and Colorado City Arizona. Just as the move to Texas got underway last year, Jeffs began thinning the flock, ousting unworthy members. Perhaps it's no coincidence.

Related:
Lawyer Petitions to Take Charge of Polygamist Leader's Financial Empire

A legal knot, is tightening...around the nation's most powerful polygamist leader.

In an unprecedented move, late today...a lawyer petitioned a judge, to take charge of the financial empire...controlled by Warren Jeffs.

Jeffs, is the secretive leader of the polygamy group...based in Hildale, Utah and Colorado City, Arizona.

Most of the community's homes, property and financial assets...are held in a trust, that Jeffs controls.

It's reportedly worth tens of millions of dollars.

7 young men, who were kicked out...are suing Jeffs, for racketeering and sexual abuse.

Their lawyers, have tentative backing...from Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff.

They want the court to appoint new managers...for the financial assets.

ROGER HOOLE, ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFFS: "AND SO INITIALLY WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THE TRUST IS UNDER GOOD MANAGEMENT AND THE TRUST IS NOT BEING USED AS A TOOL TO KICK YOUNG MEN OUT OF THEIR HOMES."

Jeffs, has apparently moved his headquarters to a remote area of Texas...where followers are building a large temple.
No mass exodus reported of FLDS members

* Mayor Zitting: It's business as usual in Hildale

By PATRICE ST. GERMAIN
patrices@thespectrum.com

HILDALE - The rumors of a mass exodus of people from Hildale and Colorado City to the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' compound in Eldorado, Texas, appear to be just that - rumors.

Hildale Mayor David Zitting said Monday that he hadn't noticed that anyone had left.

"I drove over here, and there are people around," Zitting said.

It was business as usual Monday. The city offices were open, as were local businesses. Some of the residents may have left for Texas, but apparently not in large numbers.

But some people have left the twin cities, and they left home without warning, as Colorado City resident Ross Chatwin found out.

Chatwin, who shared a house and was disputing the ownership of the home with his brother Steven, visited his father less than a mile away on March 27. Two hours later, when Chatwin and his family returned home, they found that Steven and his family had packed up and left without leaving word as to where they had gone.

"We came back and everything was gone - the washer, dryer, stove and refrigerator - everything," Chatwin said. "It was like he never lived here."

Although Chatwin has no proof his brother left for Eldorado, he believes that is where his brother went.

Wednesday marks the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by Joseph Smith. It also is Conference Day for those of the FLDS religion, which teaches polygamy as part of its doctrine.

While the FLDS church holds to its roots with the LDS church, FLDS members are banned from LDS temples. In fact, the LDS church excommunicates members who practice polygamy.

Wednesday is supposed to be set aside as a day for fasting and praying, and the new FLDS temple in Texas is expected to be dedicated that day. However, Chatwin said that Warren Jeffs, the self-proclaimed prophet of the FLDS faith, also has predicted Wednesday, April 6, to be the end of the world.

"Eldorado is a new beginning, and the rest of the world will be swept clean," Chatwin said. "During the destruction, Jeffs and the faithful will be lifted up into the clouds."

While Ross Chatwin isn't buying any of Jeffs' claims, Chatwin said Jeffs has predicted the end of the world several times in the past.

Chatwin said because his brother is still faithful to Jeffs, Chatwin is worried about what will happen if the apocalypse doesn't materialize.

"I'm just worried that Warren may do something radical," Chatwin said.

But after Wednesday, when the day has come and gone without any ending of the world, Chatwin said he is hopeful that his brother and others faithful to Jeffs will recognize Jeffs for what he is and isn't.

"I think a lot of people have had enough (of Warren), and once they realize this was a wild goose chase, I hope they will return home, and they will be welcomed back," Chatwin said.

Originally published April 5, 2005
The Eyes Of Texas

The Eyes of Texas are upon you. All the live long day...
The Eyes of Texas are upon you. You cannot get away.
Do not think you can escape them, At night, or early in the morn...
The Eyes of Texas are upon you. Till Gabriel blows his horn!

Eldorado Success

Latest Aerial Overview of the YFZ Ranch (November 11, 2004)

Thanks to the Eldorado Success Newspaper for many of these articles, and for keeping us up to date on what is happening at the YFZ Ranch. These articles are listed in chronological order.

Polygamist Compound Being Built in Texas?
John Hollenhorst Reporting
KSL TV
Original Broadcast March 24, 2004

Aerial photos have revealed a secret construction project in Texas that's apparently linked to a controversial polygamy sect based in Utah. Anti-polygamy crusaders say they're certain the large-scale project is being done at the behest of Warren Jeffs, the Utah man revered as a prophet by thousands of polygamy practitioners. A secret compound comes as no surprise; rumors have been circulating for two months. But the location is a big surprise and something of a mystery.

The polygamist sect in the twin towns of Colorado City, Arizona and Hildale, Utah has been under intense law enforcement scrutiny in recent months. And there have been well-publicized splits in the group. The legal and media attention has alarmed those faithful to prophet Warren Jeffs. He's been rumored for months to be planning an exodus to a secret compound in Mexico. Now attention is suddenly focused on the tiny remote town of Eldorado, Texas, nearly 200 miles northwest of San Antonio. Anti-polygamy crusaders obtained aerial photos that clearly show large residential structures under construction. There's even a concrete batch plant on site suggesting further construction. Women are visible in plowed fields wearing distinctive clothing and hairstyles of Jeffs' followers.

Alleged Jeffs compound found in Texas
FLDS church denies anti-polygamist claims of new community near Eldorado
By Jane Zhang
TheSpectrum.com
Originally published Thursday, March 25, 2004

ST. GEORGE -- The three-story houses with pitched roofs look every bit rustic, boxy and over-sized, much like many never-completed buildings in Colorado City. But these are under construction 1,200 miles away in the hilly country north of Eldorado, a Texas town of 2,000 people about 200 miles northwest of San Antonio. Surrounded by fences and shrubs, the compound is not accessible to the public, said John Nikolauk, Eldorado's mayor of 15 years. Several residents have seen cars with Utah and Arizona plates come and go, he said, but the builders remain a mystery to townsfolk.

"They are out in the country, not visible from any highways," Nikolauk said in a telephone interview Wednesday night. "I don't know who they are." But Flora Jessop, an anti-polygamy activist who has distributed to the media pictures of three completed houses in Eldorado, said she is sure the compound is built for Warren Jeffs, the reclusive prophet of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the largest polygamist group in America. With 1,371 acres, activists said, the property has at least three more houses under construction, which all stand at 40 to 50 feet wide and 60 to 80 feet long.

Texas town abuzz over FLDS rumor
By Brooke Adams
The Salt Lake Tribune
Originally published Thursday March 25, 2004

On a 1,300-acre ranch just outside the small West Texas town of Eldorado, there are three big new buildings, a concrete plant and a plowed field. Is this a hunting retreat, or the newest outpost of one of Utah's largest polygamous groups? That question has unsettled Eldorado, population 2,935, where word has spread rapidly that members of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints bought the ranch and are moving in. "There are rumors swirling everywhere," said Randy Mankin, editor of the Eldorado Success, a weekly newspaper. "Everything from whether this is another Waco to whether this is another Jonestown, or the FLDS, or a group of Mennonites. It's basically the fear of the unknown." One person seems to have no doubt who they are: Flora Mae Jessop, an advocate for children she believes are being mistreated in polygamous communities, is holding a news conference in Eldorado today to "call attention" to the ranch's new occupants. Jessop says she has no doubt the newcomers are from the twin cities of Hildale, Utah, and Colorado City, Ariz., in search of refuge from turmoil there.

Do polygamists own Texas site?
Activist says FLDS have purchased ranch
By Nancy Perkins
Deseret Morning News
Originally published Thursday, March 25, 2004

ST. GEORGE -- An anti-polygamy activist believes a large ranch compound in rural Schleicher County, Texas, has been purchased by those with links to the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, led by Warren Jeffs. On the other hand, those who recently sold the ranch and other parcels say they have been told the land is to be used as a "corporate hunting retreat." Former members and close observers also have been predicting that Jeffs has plans to order his followers to move to Mexico. Activist Flora Jessop says the ranch's new owners are polygamists and said she fears the property could be used for child trafficking, moving underage children, including potential brides, from region to region.

Corporate Retreat or Prophet's Refuge?
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published March 25, 2004

Even as construction proceeds on a complex of three-story buildings some four miles north of Eldorado, rumors about the facility and its possible ties, if any, to a polygamist group located in southern Utah and northern Arizona are swirling through the community. The
buildings are located on a 1371-acre parcel of land purchased last year by a company named YFZ L.L.C., a Texas limited liability corporation based in Washington, UT. Documents filed in the Schleicher County Courthouse reveal David S. Allred as the YFZ corporate official who handled the transaction for the land. Allred is the only company official named in the corporation's organizing papers filed with the Texas Secretary of State's office. Real estate closing documents associated with the property were signed by Mr. Allred here in Eldorado. At that time, Allred reportedly told several local citizens that he was planning to build a corporate retreat on the land. More than one local rancher has said that Allred told them he was the owner of Dave's Builders, a construction company in St. George, UT, and that his clients are located primarily in Las Vegas, NV. Those clients were the reason for the retreat, Allred reportedly said, so that he could have a place for them to hunt and be entertained. Read more

Who is Flora Jessop and Why is She Coming to Eldorado?
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published March 25, 2004

Flora Jessop was raised in the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints (FLDS), a group that long ago broke its ties with the Mormon Church, and under FLDS rules, she was forced to marry her older cousin when she was sixteen. The marriage proved to be the final straw. Jessop said she didn't run away from Colorado City, AZ because of religion, but because of abuse. She says that she was sexually abused in her home, beginning at age 13. But, she was strong-willed and wasn't about to submit. So, Flora took the unheard of action (at least at that time and in that place) of taking her alleged abuser to court. When a St. George, UT judge dismissed the charges, Flora says she was returned to Colorado City where she was kept a prisoner in her uncle's home for the next four years. Jessop's escape was made good at the age of 18, and she stayed on the run for several years, convinced that she was being pursued by church leaders. Finally, she was able to move on with her life, even marry and start a family, but she never forgot what happened to her in Colorado City and agonized over the thought of other young girls having to live as she did. Read more

Polygamy Cult Moving To Texas?
WOAI.com
Originally published March 26, 2004

A rural Texas sheriff cautioned people not to jump to conclusions about a compound under construction north of Eldorado, saying he has no proof that the structures are for the head of a polygamous church group. Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran was responding Thursday to concerns that Warren Jeffs, head of the polygamous Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, was building three three-story houses on a 1,300-acre site. Aerial photographs show the houses appear similar to some of the large homes in the twin FLDS communities of Colorado City, Ariz., and Hildale, Utah. "The sheriff's department is on top of this," Doran said. "In the future if there is a connection with FLDS, then we will continue to monitor it. When people purchase land the last thing you want is to have rumors following you. You don't want law enforcement creeping around your door accusing you of something you are not." Doran said it is his understanding that the property is a corporate hunting retreat. Jeffs, who is estimated to have 50 wives, has long been rumored to be building a compound in Mexico. The border is about 90 miles south of Eldorado in West Texas. Read more

Texans worried, curious about newcomers
By Brooke Adams
The Salt Lake Tribune
Originally published Friday, March 26, 2004

ELDORADO, Texas -- From the Texaco Star Stop to Amigo's Dream Restaurant and Gift Shop, speculation ran wild Thursday about the newest residents of Eldorado and their apparent ties to a polygamous group from the Utah-Arizona border. Would they snatch children? Overwhelm the local hospital, social service agencies and struggling county budget? Take over the town, population 2,000, in the next election? "I just think they're nervous about what's going to happen," said Shelly Phillips, one of about 100 people who came to a noon news conference Thursday in this small town in West Texas. "That's why we're here." The news conference was held by children's rights activist Flora Mae Jessop and Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran, who tried to answer questions and soothe a palpable unease among the townspeople who gathered with more than a dozen reporters from Texas and beyond on the lawn in front of the Eldorado Law Enforcement Center. Read more

Are FLDS now in Texas?
Sheriff urges caution, vows to watch situation
Associated Press
Originally published Friday, March 26, 2004

ELDORADO, Texas — A rural Texas sheriff cautioned people not to jump to conclusions about a compound under construction north of Eldorado, saying he has no proof that the structures are for the head of a polygamous church group. Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran was responding Thursday to concerns that Warren Jeffs, head of the polygamous Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, was building three three-story houses on a 1,300-acre site. Aerial photographs show the houses appear similar to some of the large homes in the twin FLDS communities of Colorado City, Ariz., and Hildale, Utah. "The sheriff's department is on top of this," Doran said. "In the future if there is a connection with FLDS, then we will continue to monitor it. When people purchase land the last thing you want is to have rumors following you. You don't want law enforcement creeping around your door accusing you of something you are not." Doran said it is his understanding that the property is a corporate hunting retreat. Jeffs, who is estimated to have 50 wives, has long been rumored to be building a compound in Mexico. The border is about 90 miles south of Eldorado in west Texas. Read more

New Concerns Raised About Eldorado Compound
WOAI.com
Originally published March 26, 2004

(ELDORADO TEXAS) -- A company called YFZ Land Company is purchasing property near this remote west Texas town, and many here are afraid a controversial polygamy sect plans to build a compound in rural Schleicher County. "We've been applying a lot of pressure in Utah and Arizona, and I think that they're looking to establish
somewhere where they're not known," Flora Jessop, who said she escaped from the sect when she was a teenager and has become a crusader against the sect, told a news conference at the Schleicher County Sheriff's office. The group, called the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, is headed by a charismatic and controversial rogue Mormon named Warren Jeffs. The religion website Wikipedia.org says Jeffs believes that in order to get to heaven, men must have at least three wives. He took over the sect from his father, Rulon Jeffs, who reportedly had 22 wives and fathered more than sixty children. The FLDS is the largest polygamist sect in America. Today Rowena Erickson, who described herself as a former 'wife' in the FLDS told 1200 WOAI news she thinks she knows why the group is building near the US/Mexico border. "If anything goes wrong, they can just skip over the border," she said, adding that the group could be planning to smuggle young girls in from Mexico to become 'wives' for male members. Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran says there is no evidence that YFZ is related to Jeffs, although Jessop says the letters stand for "Yeast For Zion" after a song recorded by Jeffs. Read more

Eldorado: Texas town ‘terrified’ that group moving in from Arizona
By Linda Stelp
Kingman Daily Miner
Originally published Friday, March 26, 2004

Mohave County Supervisor Buster Johnson and anti-polygamy activist Flora Jessop met with people of Eldorado, Texas, on Thursday after learning that members of the polygamous community of Colorado City may be building a compound in the small Texas town. Residents of Eldorado (pronounced with a long ‘a’) turned out en mass for a press conference in which Johnson, Jessop and Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran tried to calm residents’ fears. "They are terrified to have what they consider a ‘cult’ move into their town of just 3,000 residents," Jessop said. “A few townspersons carried signs, including one that read, ‘The devil is here.’” Jessop said citizens of Eldorado, located 90 miles north of the Mexican border, “are very sensitive in Texas because of what happened with Waco.” Waco, Texas, gained infamy in 1993 when a fiery showdown between cult leader David Koresh and FBI agents at the Mount Carmel compound ended a 51-day siege that began with an attempt to arrest Koresh on weapons charges. Koresh and other cult members, including 17 children and four government agents, were killed, and 16 agents were wounded when the compound caught on fire. Johnson said members of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (FLDS) in the Colorado City-Hildale, Utah, area have been building a compound about three miles from downtown Eldorado. Read more

Community Seeks Answers to Questions about New Neighbors
Authorities suspect local ranch tied to FLDS
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published April 1, 2004

As word filtered out of Eldorado last week that a three-building compound under construction north of Eldorado might be connected to a polygamist group known as the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints (FLDS), media outlets from across the state, as well as Arizona and Utah, flooded into town to hear what Flora Jessop, a children's rights activist, would have to say at a press conference last Thursday. The news that many of them sought, broke first on the front page of last week's Eldorado Success. The story, and its accompanying photo were picked up by a number of daily newspapers, including the Salt Lake City Tribune, which has closely followed the FLDS in the Arizona/Utah border towns of Colorado City, AZ and Hildale, UT. Jessop explained to reporters that she had grown up as a member of the FLDS and that she escaped from the group at age 16 after church leaders forced her to marry her cousin. She said that 28 of her brothers and sisters remain in the group. Forced underage marriage, sexual abuse of children, welfare fraud, tax evasion, tax fraud and child labor violations, were but a few, of the allegations that Jessop leveled against the FLDS. She explained that the registered owner of the ranch in question, David Steed Allred, is a member of the FLDS and has close ties to its prophet, Warren Jeffs. Read more

Still More Questions Than Answers About YFZ Ranch
Local Authorities Make Contact With YFZ Officials
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published April 15, 2004

David Allred, the Arizona man who represented a newly formed corporation, YFZ L.L.C., when it purchased 1,691 acres some four miles north-northwest of Eldorado last November, made the rounds in town last Thursday, meeting with local officials, and assuring them that he intends to use the property as a corporate hunting retreat. Three large buildings under construction on the ranch will be used to house guests, Allred told Sheriff David Doran, adding that some families may be living there full time. Doran said that he and Texas Ranger Sgt. Brooks Long met with Allred, and his construction foreman, Ernie Jessop, primarily to make contact with the men and open a dialogue. "They are aware of the rumors that are buzzing around town," Doran stated. "They told us that they just want to live their lives peacefully and to be left alone to raise their families according to their beliefs." "We made them aware that Texas has very strong laws regarding bigamy, as well as sexual abuse of minor children," Doran continued. "We also told them that while we have no evidence at this time of any wrongdoing we won't hesitate to act if we obtain such evidence." Read more
Duckwall’s Not Connected with Alco Company of Hildale, Utah
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published April 22, 2004

Duckwall’s/Alco officials announced this week that their company is not affiliated with any Alco businesses, located in Hildale, UT and Colorado City, AZ. Duckwall’s Variety Stores, including the one located here in Eldorado, and Alco Discount Stores, including the one in Sonora, are owned by Duckwall Alco Stores, Inc., a Kansas based corporation, named after its founder A.L. Duckwall. Shares in the company are publicly traded on the NASDAQ stock exchange. Confusion about the company’s ownership apparently resulted from a news article that appeared in the Salt Lake City Tribune, and on its website. The story, picked up by a number of other publications, linked David Allred, the Utah man who organized YFZ Land L.L.C., and bought 1,691 acres north of Eldorado, to an Alco Company in the twin cities. Read more

Attorney Believes YFZ Ranch Connected to FLDS
State Environmental Inspectors Visit YFZ
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published April 22, 2004

Salt Lake City attorney Rodney Parker told the Success on Tuesday that he believes the buildings going up on the YFZ Ranch are "clearly connected" to the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints. Parker, who has represented the FLDS on a number of occasions, said he was unsure why the group chose to build near Eldorado and that he has no idea what the FLDS has planned for the property. Parker said that he only knows what he has read about the YFZ Ranch but noted that photos of the buildings, plus information he has gleaned about individuals connected with the property convinced him of an FLDS connection. Parker represented Colorado City, AZ police officer Rodney Holm last year when the State of Utah brought charges of bigamy and unlawful sexual conduct with a 16- or 17-year old child. Holm, who is a was eventually convicted in the case, is an FLDS member who admits to practicing polygamy. Polygamy is the "bedrock of their faith," Parker said of the FLDS. "They are very committed to the practice." Read more

State Inspectors Make Return Visit as Construction Continues at YFZ Ranch
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
 Originally published April 29, 2004

Investigators for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality paid a return trip to the YFZ Ranch on Monday, April 26, 2004 to address a number of violations of the state's environmental code. Ricky Anderson, director of the TCEQ Region 8 office in San Angelo, told the Success Tuesday that a number of his personnel carried a series of inspections and verified some water and air quality violations. Anderson said that the cement plant operating just north of the construction site was in violation of the state's air quality standards and that it was ordered to be shut down until corrective measures could be taken. Also, violations of the on-site septic

system were identified as well as a failure to obtain a permit to for construction related to storm water discharge. Read more

Polygamist church-bought lot not for retreat, after all
The Associated Press
Originally published May 3, 2004

ST. GEORGE, Utah - Texas authorities have been disbursed of the notion that the 1,300-acre spread bought in Schleicher County by polygamists will be used as a corporate hunting retreat. "This is not going to be used as a hunting ranch," Washington County Sheriff Kirk Smith told the Desert Morning News Sunday after a short visit to the west Texas town of Eldorado, where the compound is located. The property was sold in November to YFZ Land LLC, which lists Colorado City, Ariz., resident David Allred as its agent. YFZ reportedly stands for "Yearn For Zion," a song written by Warren Jeffs, president and prophet of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Most of the church's followers live in Colorado City and the twin community of Hildale, Utah. Smith and Undersheriff Pete Kuhlmann visited Schleicher County at the invitation of that county's sheriff, David Doran. The two met with Doran and 22 community leaders in a two-hour, question-and-answer session geared toward learning more about the FLDS Church and its followers, Smith said. Residents of Eldorado learned in March that the FLDS Church had purchased the property and was constructing several large, three-story rectangular buildings on the site. Allred initially told Doran and others the compound would be used as a corporate hunting retreat. But that changed Wednesday at a meeting Doran held with Allred and others, Smith said. Read more

FLDS influx concerns small town in Texas
Washington County Sheriff travels to Texas to reassure law enforcement
By Jane Zhang
TheSpectrum.com
Originally published Tuesday, May 4, 2004

ST. GEORGE -- To residents of Eldorado, the small western Texas town where everybody knows everybody, the gated construction site with motel-like houses looks every bit foreign, mystic and alarming. As men from a polygamist group dined in town or stopped for gas, said Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran, some residents feared another Waco, where David Koresh and 85 of his Branch Davidians followers died in 1993. But the worry was not necessary, said Doran's counterpart here in Washington County, Sheriff Kirk Smith. "There is no indication that it will happen," said Sheriff Smith, who met with 22 local officials during a visit to Eldorado last week. "This group has never shown any propensity for violence." The group is the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the largest polygamist group in America based in Colorado City, Ariz., and Hildale, Utah. After the church's self-proclaimed prophet, Warren Jeffs, excommunicated at least 30 men earlier this year, some anti-polygamy activists forecasted a mass exodus and violence erupting in the community with 10,000 residents. But the men quietly went into hiding, and the reclusive Jeffs remained elusive to state investigators, his followers and even his attorney, Rodney Parker, who said he "assumes he's down there" in Texas. Read more

FLDS seem eager to fix violations at new site in Texas
ST. GEORGE — Environmental investigators have found several violations at a 1,300-acre retreat for polygamists under construction in Schleicher County, Texas, near San Angelo. David Allred, a member of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, is the sole registered agent for YFZ Land, owner of the property. "There are violations in their air and water programs and concerns about on-site septic systems and solid waste disposal," said Ricky Anderson, Region 8 director with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. "We visited with YFZ on the site and in our office about this, and I will say there is an eagerness on their part to come into compliance. We are still in the process of writing the report, but I think everything there can be remedied." Anderson said YFZ operators were told to stop using a cement batch plant on the site after investigators found it was exceeding state particulate emission standards. "The cement batch plant is specifically named as one that must have a permit prior to operation here in Texas," he said. "There was no authorization given for this plant." Read more

Shouldn't we expect just a bit more honesty from God's one true church?
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published May 6, 2004

Members of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints have been taught by their prophets for generations that they represent the one true church of God. The prophets knew this because that same God had told them so, personally. He, and that's a He with a capital "H," also told the prophets that the practice of plural marriage is not only approved, but required. The idea of plural marriage, or polygamy as it's better known here, seems a bit odd to many of us, but to the members of the FLDS it is a principal about which there is no room for compromise. In fact, when the leaders of the Mormon Church, the original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, bowed to pressure from Washington, D.C. and gave up the practice of plural marriage so that Utah could be admitted to the Union, the forefathers of the current FLDS turned their collective backs on their brethren, and their sistern, too. Please, if it seems as if I am demeaning the FLDS, or the LDS for that matter, over their religious beliefs, I hope you will understand that I mean no disrespect. I only inject a little humor here because some of these things are so serious that laughing is the only way to keep from crying. Read more

FLDS seek to allay Texas town's fears
By Brooke Adams
The Salt Lake Tribune
Originally published Thursday May 6, 2004

It is still under construction, but a rural west Texas refuge for a reclusive polygamist sect has already been visited by its most revered member: prophet Warren Jeffs. Jeffs was at the ranch in Eldorado, Texas, as of Tuesday, according to an attorney for the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Days earlier, he ordered four other church leaders to make an unprecedented visit to Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran. In the 2 1/2-hour meeting on April 28, the men apologized for initially describing their project as a "hunting retreat," saying they had done so to avoid negative news media and to not overburden local officials. "They know the community is upset and they are trying to fix things," Doran said.
"Of course, the deception is already here, and it is going to take time to mend any damage." Read more

Trouble for Texas
By John MacCormack
San Antonio Express-News
Originally published May 9, 2004
COLORADO CITY, Ariz. — But for the hugeness of the houses and the quaint hairstyles and ankle-length dresses of the women and girls, this isolated stop on the scenic Utah-Arizona border might not warrant a second glance. "Most of the people here hold to fundamentalist beliefs, old fashioned if you will. You might even call it Colonial America. Love and help your neighbor. Things you wouldn't find everywhere," he said. But even with all the blond kids bouncing merrily on backyard trampolines or riding donkey carts in the streets, this is one version of small town America that Norman Rockwell never put to canvas. For decades, Colorado City and the adjacent Hildale, Utah, have been the home base of the largest polygamist Mormon sect in North America, the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which broke from the main church decades ago. About 8,000 fundamentalists live here, including families with dozens of children. A church trust owns most of the land, and the church controls the municipal governments, Police Department and public school district. The sect leader, Warren Jeffs, 48, is an intense and reclusive self-described prophet who rules with Old Testament severity from behind the 8-foot walls of his family compound. And soon, the prophet may be coming to Texas. This spring, the polygamists quietly bought 1,600 acres just north of the small town of Eldorado, three hours west of San Antonio. Read more

Polygamy should concern residents of all states
By Pennie Petersen
TheSpectrum.com
Originally published Monday, May 10, 2004

I'm appalled to see that Washington County Sheriff Kirk Smith could brush off the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saint's move to Texas as if it were no big deal. If anyone should know how serious this matter is, he should. He has witnessed firsthand how chaotic it is getting in Colorado City, Ariz., and Hildale, Utah. Since Warren Jeffs has taken control, many members have lost wives, children, parents and homes, including Warren's own brothers and the town mayor of 20 years. The wives are being remarried and hundreds of children are being torn from their fathers, then receiving new ones within days. Underage girls are being married off in the name of God. Warren's home is being turned into a fortress. Orsen William Black fled to Mexico under Sheriff Smith's watch after being charged with five felonies for crimes against children, and yet he's going to bring this Texas sheriff up to Colorado City and Hildale and romance him on what a wonderful and peaceful little community it is. And why shouldn't he? I'm sure he's sick of this whole polygamy issue, too, as so many are. So why not let them all go to Texas? Out of sight, out of mind, right? Read more

Warren Jeffs Believed to be at YFZ Ranch
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published May 13, 2004

Published reports in the Salt Lake Tribune, as well as other Rocky Mountain area newspapers, indicate that Warren Jeffs, the Prophet of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has left his walled compound in Colorado City, AZ, and relocated to the YFZ Ranch, just north of Eldorado. A story appearing in the May 6, edition of the Salt Lake Tribune reports that Jeffs was at the YFZ Ranch as early as March 28, 2004 and that it was he who ordered four men, David Allred, Ernie Jessop, Roy Steed and Allan Steed, to meet with Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran and Justice of the Peace James C. Doyle. Details of that meeting, along with a photo of the four men were published in last week's edition of the Success. At that meeting, Allred admitted to Doran and Doyle that the YFZ Ranch was never intended to be a hunting retreat. Instead, the property was planned for a new FLDS community and would house no more than 200 people, David Allred said. That number conflicts with reports the Success has gotten from sources in the Colorado City/Hildale area. Benjamin G. Bistline, author of "The Polygamists, a History of Colorado City, Arizona" told the Success last week that there is much activity in the Colorado City area and that numbers of families are packing to move to Texas. He estimated that perhaps as many as 1,500 could be making the move in the coming weeks. Read more

Texan touring Colorado City
By Nancy Perkins
Deseret Morning News
Originally published Tuesday, May 18, 2004

COLORADO CITY, Ariz. — David Doran, the sheriff of Schleicher County, Texas, said his visit to the twin polygamist towns of Colorado City, Ariz., and Hildale, Utah, on Monday helped him gain a better understanding of his county's newest residents. "It helped separate the news hype from the reality of what's really going on," said the two-term sheriff, whose seat is up for re-election in November. "My intention in coming here is just to listen and learn." His county is getting a planned polygamous retreat called Yearn For Zion, or the YFZ Ranch. The 1,600 acres of scrub oak and rocky soil will eventually be home to about 200 of the most faithful members of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, according to a church spokesman. The FLDS Church teaches that plural marriage is a central doctrine essential to one's salvation, and its members adhere to a strict moral code. To date, construction at the YFZ Ranch includes several finished three-story buildings with two more large structures nearing completion. Doran and his chief deputy, George Arispe, admit they have a steep learning curve when it comes to understanding the FLDS plural lifestyle. "This is all new to us," the sheriff told Colorado City Marshal Sam Roundy during Monday's tour of the two towns. "We didn't know anything about polygamy until you guys showed up in Texas." Read more

Texas sheriff pays visit to Colorado City
Doran travels to Arizona, Utah on fact-finding trip
By Jane Zhang
TheSpectrum.com
Originally published Tuesday, May 18, 2004

ST. GEORGE -- A day's visit to Colorado City discounted "a lot of rumors" about polygamy, a Texas county sheriff said Monday evening. "There wasn't anything we didn't see -- very hospitable, very open," said Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran. "It was very eye-opening. I was humbled by what I've seen. I got to see a community that works." Along with his Chief Deputy George Arispe, Doran is on a fact-finding trip about the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the largest polygamist group in America. Based in Colorado City, Ariz., and Hildale, Utah, the church is building what members say is a retreat for the faithful near Eldorado in Schleicher County. With five buildings planned in the hilly county, the Eldorado site reportedly will house about 200 people at any given time. But in a town with 2,000 people, many
residents have worried about the impact of a potential block vote in local elections, an influx to the public school system, a possible strain on the local health care system and the impact on the welfare system. Read more

New Zion FLDS Leader Wants Fresh Start in Texas
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published May 27, 2004

The ongoing relocation of a major portion of Prophet Warren Jeffs' flock of fundamentalist Mormons from the Utah/Arizona border to Eldorado, Texas, represents the latest in a series of moves the church faithful have made in hopes of finding a refuge from man's law and a place where they can practice the teachings of church founder Joseph Smith. That, according to Jon Krakauer, author of Under the Banner of Heaven A Story of Violent Faith. "Since the day that Joseph Smith first communicated his revelation condoning plural marriage, his followers have been on the move, searching for a place where they can practice their brand of religion," Krakauer told the Success Monday. Read more

Success Seeks TCEQ Records of YFZ Ranch Environmental Inquiry
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published June 3, 2004

Wendy Cooper, an attorney in the Dallas office of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, confirmed this week that a field report filed by investigators from the agency's Region 8 field office in San Angelo, regarding environmental violations at the YFZ Ranch has been forwarded to TCEQ headquarters in Austin.
"Basically all I can tell you is that I am aware of the report and I know it has been sent to the enforcement division," Cooper said Tuesday. "I really won't deal with it until it gets into litigation." Other details regarding the report were not available to the Success on Tuesday and the newspaper filed an "open records" request that same day for the material, as provided for by Texas Open Records Act. TCEQ investigators paid a visit to YFZ Ranch on April 15 of this year, three weeks after news broke in Eldorado that the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS), a sect of the Mormon Church that encourages the practice of plural marriage, or polygamy, was erecting large buildings on a ranch four miles north of town. That inspection, and a subsequent follow-up investigation, revealed a number of violations of the state's environmental regulations. At that time, inspectors reported finding air quality violations at a cement bulk plant near the construction site. They also indicated that water and waste water rules had been broken. Read more

Polygamist sect's arrival alarms Texas town
By Jean Marbella
The Baltimore Sun
Originally published June 5, 2004

ELDORADO, Texas -- The jokes have already started, in the cafes and on Main Street, but they draw more nervous laughter than actual merriment. Some men ask where they can apply to be a husband; others say, no thanks, one wife is trouble enough. Polygamy is funnier from afar and less so with proximity. This west-central Texas town is about to become home to about 200 members of a renegade Mormon group that, in defiance of the law, practices polygamy, with the men taking multiple wives and raising dozens of children under a single roof. "Everybody's shocked," Jimmy Doyle, the justice of the peace, said with little exaggeration. They've talked of little else in this remote town since private pilots such as Doyle began noticing some odd construction sprouting up on a former ranch just north of town. The ranch had been sold some months back to a man from Utah who said he was going to turn it into a hunting retreat -- but instead of a lodge or cabins that might be expected to house sportsmen, five large dormitory-style buildings have been built. Read more

TCEQ Cites YFZ Ranch for Environmental Violations
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published June 10, 2004

State inspectors found a number of environmental concerns at the YFZ Ranch, including one that poses a threat to groundwater, according to documents released last week by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. TCEQ inspectors visited the ranch twice, first on April 16, 2004 with a follow up investigation ten days later, on April 26. Both times the investigators noted compliance violations. Among the violations is the alleged illegal use of a concrete batch plant without proper registration or permit. Documents acquired by The Eldorado Success under the Texas Open Records Act, indicate that on April 26 investigator Mark Newman ordered that a rock crushing and concrete plant be shutdown until appropriate authorization was obtained by the ranch. Interestingly, aerial photos taken by the Success that same day indicate that land was being cleared just north of three large 3-story buildings already constructed on the ranch. Subsequent photos reveal that extensive concrete work continued at the site, for several days following the shutdown order. A TCEQ spokesman told the Success on Tuesday that ranch officials have applied for some permits, but that there has been no authorization given to restart the concrete plant. Read more

YFZ Officials Ignore TCEQ Warnings
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published June 17, 2004

A cement bulk plant and a rock crusher appeared to be running full steam ahead last week, well after a shut down order issued by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Aerial photos taken on Wednesday, June 9, 2004, also revealed another large foundation being constructed adjacent to five other structures already built, or nearing completion. Additionally, a metal barn had been built nearby. Ricky Anderson, TCEQ Region 8 Director, told the Success on Tuesday that YFZ officials have applied for a permit to operate a rock crusher, but that no such permit has been issued. Additionally, the state’s order to halt operation of the rock crusher and cement bulk plant remains in place. Meanwhile, the TCEQ is pushing ahead with its investigation. Already, a series of alleged violations regarding the cement bulk plant and a non-permitted sewage treatment facility have been referred to the agency’s enforcement division. Read more
YFZ Ranch Officials Want to Drill for Water
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published June 24, 2004

YFZ Ranch officials are apparently interested in drilling at least one additional water well on ranch property, some four miles north of Eldorado. Cindy Cawley, General Manager of the Plateau Underground Water Conservation and Supply District says that she was contacted by Paul Allred regarding the need to drill for water on the ranch. Cawley, who was at a meeting in Austin when she received Allred's call, made arrangements for assistant manager Virgil Poloczek to visit the ranch. Cawley notes that while Poloczek was given access to a water well near the ranch entrance, he was denied access to a second well on the north side of the ranch property. Read more

Are Utah Problems Prompting FLDS to Build New Texas Town?
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published July 1, 2004

Construction continues apace at the YFZ Ranch, four miles north of Eldorado, even as the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS) finds itself under increasing pressure in the Arizona and Utah borderland. That pressure comes in the form of heightened scrutiny from the Utah Attorney General's office, and a series of setbacks in Utah courts. Add to the mix the fact that the region's only bank, the Bank of Ephraim, a strong supporter of the FLDS community in Colorado City, AZ and Hildale, UT, failed last week. But things aren't all rosy for the FLDS here in Texas. After the group's cover story was exposed in March, and Eldoradoans learned that their new neighbors were more interested in building a town than a corporate hunting retreat, the operation at the YFZ Ranch began attracting more than media attention --- it caught the eye of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. That isn't to say that any of the FLDS faithful have turned their backs on Prophet Warren Jeffs, or that any of the workers are giving up and leaving the YFZ Ranch. To the contrary, construction there seems to be accelerating, even to the point that a grid of roadways is starting to appear, making the whole thing look more and more like a new townsites. Meanwhile, former members of the FLDS, some of them recently excommunicated by Warren Jeffs, are adamant that the YFZ Ranch, is more than just a getaway retreat for church members. Read more

Texans are wary of FLDS neighbors
See if's settlement raises concerns about polygamy
By Howard Witt
Chicago Tribune
Originally published Saturday, July 3, 2004

ELDORADO, Texas — The population of this drowsy West Texas town hasn't done much but dwindle in recent years, so its residents grew pretty curious in March when a pilot shot some aerial photos showing construction of several huge dormitory-style buildings on a sprawling ranch just outside town. The curiosity soon changed to concern when anti-polygamy activists from Utah showed up for a news conference to reveal the identity of the group that had bought the 1,600-acre ranch: the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or FLDS, a secretive sect that practices polygamy and marriages involving underage teenage girls. Now, with construction on the buildings nearly complete and the first of an expected 200 church members about to take up residence, the 1,951 residents of Eldorado are trying to make their peace with new neighbors many regard as followers of a strange cult. "Our biggest concern was that we wouldn't be dealing with another Waco problem here," said Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran, referring to the Branch Davidian siege in Waco in 1993. Read more

Polygamist group ranch worries small town's residents
By Bill Hanna
star-telegram.com
Originally published Monday, July 5, 2004

ELDORADO -- First, it was going to be a hunting lodge. Then a retreat. But as each new dormitory-style building goes up, residents here become a little more apprehensive about a secretive polygamist sect's move onto a ranch four miles outside of Eldorado. Locals say they have good reasons for feeling uneasy about their new neighbors. The Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints, based in Arizona and Utah, is believed to be the largest polygamist group in the country. The 10,000-member church openly practices plural marriage and has generated more than a century's worth of controversy, including allegations of abuse of young girls, welfare fraud and wife swapping. If large numbers of the polygamist church do end up in Eldorado, residents fear the group could dominate the sleepy town of 1,955 about 45 miles south of San Angelo. Read more

YFZ Ranch Seeks Permit for Concrete Bulk Plant
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published July 8, 2004

Representatives of the YFZ Ranch have applied with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for an air quality permit for a concrete batch plant located on ranch property some four miles north of Eldorado on Schleicher County Road 300. A public notice, published in this edition of the Success (see Page 8) states that the plant will emit particulate matter, especially aggregate, cement and road dust. TCEQ rules allow for public comments and even a public meeting on the issue. The deadline for persons to submit comments or request a public meeting is 30 days from now, according to the notice posted by ranch officials. A TCEQ spokesman told the Success Tuesday that while public input is encouraged, strong evidence must be submitted before the agency will call a public hearing. The application is available for viewing at the Schleicher County Courthouse, as well as the TCEQ Region 8 office in San Angelo. The move to acquire an air quality permit is the first public display that YFZ Ranch officials are attempting to address a number of environmental concerns at the ranch, first uncovered by TCEQ investigators in April. Since that time, agency personnel have been trying to get TCEQ to comply with a number of environmental regulations. Read more

Peek at polygamists' haven
Joseph A. Reaves
The Arizona Republic
ELDORADO, Texas - Folks around here couldn't be more dumbfounded if a flying saucer buzzed the county courthouse and spooked all the sheep this side of Abilene. But polygamists? Being invaded by a colony of secretive Arizona and Utah men with two, three or more wives apiece wearing ankle-length, gingham pioneer dresses while working the fields under a scorching western Texas sun? Now that's a whole 'nother matter. "When I first heard they were out there, I thought, 'You've got to be kidding,' " said Randy Mankin, city administrator, hospital board member and editor of the local weekly newspaper. "It might as well be a UFO setting down. I mean, we're talking about polygamy and things that were supposed to be over and done a long time ago," Mankin said. Over and done in most places, but just coming to the rolling hills of Schleicher County. Read more

'El Dorado Success' has selling headlines now
Joseph A. Reaves
The Arizona Republic
Originally published July 11, 2004

ELDORADO, Texas - The prophet made a big mistake if he thought he was getting away from the meddling media by slipping into Schleicher County. Warren Jeffs never figured he'd run into the staff of the Eldorado Success. "They've been all over this story," said Brad Spradley, a bear of a man who sells some of the best brisket in Texas out of a 55-gallon oil drum-turned-barbecue pit hitched to the back of his pickup outside the county courthouse. "I can't wait to get the paper every week." Neither can just about anybody else in Eldorado, a community of 1,951 especially friendly souls in the outback of western Texas. Circulation of the weekly newspaper has soared 10 percent from 1,000 to 1,100 since editor Randy Mankin, his wife, Kathy, and their secretary-reporter-photographer Staci Key started writing in March about the arrival of a secretive polygamist sect on the outskirts of town. Read more

Polygamist sect's purchase of ranch worries neighbors
Bill Hanna
Knight Ridder Newspapers
Originally published Monday, July 12, 2004

ELDORADO, Texas -- First it was going to be a hunting lodge. Then a retreat. But as each new dormitory-style building goes up, residents here become a little more apprehensive as a secretive polygamist sect prepares to occupy a West Texas ranch four miles outside Eldorado. Locals say they have good reasons for feeling uneasy about their new neighbors. The Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, based in Arizona and Utah, is believed to be the largest polygamist group in the country. The 10,000-member church openly promotes plural marriage and has been subject to allegations of forced marriages, abusing the welfare system and wife swapping. If large numbers of the polygamist church's followers do end up in Eldorado, residents fear that the group could dominate the town of 1,955 about 45 miles south of San Angelo. "They could easily come in here, bring in several thousand followers and take over the hospital board and other elected positions if they wanted to," said Randy Matkin, editor of the Eldorado Success and head of the Schleicher County Hospital District board. "That is what concerns us." Read more

YFZ Ranch Asks for City's Help
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published July 15, 2004

Ernie Jessop and Lee Roy Steed, representing the YFZ Ranch, came before the Eldorado City Council Monday evening to ask that the city accept wastewater from the ranch on a temporary basis. Jessop noted that inspectors from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality had shut down the ranch's septic system and that plans were in the works to build a small wastewater treatment plant at the ranch. Jessop asked the city council if they would accept sewage from the ranch at the city's wastewater plant while a suitable plant could be built at the ranch. Most questions from the city council involved whether or not the city's facility could handle the additional wastewater and if safeguards could be put in place to avoid contaminating the city's plant with pesticides and/or petroleum products. City Administrator Randy Mankin explained that the city's wastewater plant could easily handle the additional volume and explained that samples of the wastewater from YFZ could be tested at a lab to protect against pesticides and petroleum. A crowd of about twenty city and county residents on hand for the meeting, had other questions, however. "I do not want to help them. They have not been heads up with us, so why help them?" asked Herman Walker, reference to the hunting retreat cover story ranch officials told when they purchased 1,600 acres north of Eldorado and began constructing several buildings that later proved to be owned by the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS), a polygamous sect from the Utah/Arizona borderland. Walker's sentiments were echoed by a number of the audience members. Read more

Prophet vs President
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published July 15, 2004

President George W. Bush renewed his efforts this week to pass a constitutional amendment that would define the institution of marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman, putting himself directly at odds with those in America's burgeoning homosexual community and his political adversaries in the Democratic Party. The President may have also unwittingly staked out a position in a battle that is brewing here in Schleicher County, a battle emerging not between gays and straights, but between local residents and a polygamous sect calling itself the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS). That sect, led by its Prophet Warren Jeffs, purchased some 1,600 acres a mere four miles north of Eldorado in November of 2003. Since that time, a massive building program has begun on the property. One of the primary tenets of the FLDS faith is that of multiple or "plural" marriages. For decades FLDS members have skirted bigamy laws in Utah and Arizona by claiming only one "legal marriage" while maintaining numerous "celestial" or "plural" marriages. Often times the marriages involved teen-aged girls, some as young as 14, being wed to men three and four times their age. Numerous published accounts claim Prophet Warren Jeffs has taken many celestial wives, with numbers ranging from 35 to 75. Read more

Water District Okays Water Well Permits for YFZ
The Plateau Underground Water Conservation & Supply District board of directors met Tuesday, July 20, and approved two permit applications submitted by the YFZ Ranch, allowing a re-entry of an old well and the drilling of a new one. Before voting on the matter, the directors heard from District Manager Cindy Cawley, who explained to the exact location of the wells and said that they met current regulations on spacing and depth. During the discussion it was noted that there are already two wells in use at the ranch, one of which is being used to irrigate a large garden. Cawley informed the board that YFZ representative Ernie Jessop had told her the garden is soon to be doubled in size. She added that although the well is currently exempt from district rules it would become subject to those rules if production exceeds 25,000 gallons per day. If and when that benchmark is reached, the an application for a permit for that well must be filed with the district, Cawley said. Discussion then turned to the issue of municipal water supply wells. It was explained that wells used to serve more than 25 people fall under TCEQ guidelines and must be monitored for bacteria and chemically treated, much the same as wells owned by the City of Eldorado.  

City Weighs YFZ Wastewater Request  
Council tables issue pending more information  
The Eldorado Success  
myeldorado.net  
Originally published July 22, 2004

A crowd of about 75 persons gathered Tuesday evening in the Schleicher County Memorial Building for a called meeting of the Eldorado City Council. While most were there to sit and listen, many took the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding a request by the YFZ Ranch that the City of Eldorado accept wastewater from the ranch at its sewer plant. After a lengthy question and answer session the council eventually decided to table the question until more information could be obtained, as well as a written request from the YFZ. The issue became a hot button item last week when YFZ representatives Ernie Jessop and Lee Roy Steed appeared before the council to ask that they consider accepting the wastewater until a new sewer plant could be built at the ranch. Most of those commenting Tuesday night were opposed to the idea of taking wastewater from the YFZ, even temporarily, with many of them basing their objections on moral grounds. More than one of the speakers made reference to the fact that the YFZ is actually owned by the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, a polygamous group from the Utah/Arizona border region, and that numbers of FLDS members are relocating to Schleicher County. Read more

Prophet's Wife Dies at YFZ Ranch  
The Eldorado Success  
myeldorado.net  
Originally published July 22, 2004

Barbara Ann Barlow, 39, wife of FLDS Prophet Warren Jeffs, died Saturday, July 10, 2004, at the YFZ Ranch in Eldorado. Justice of the Peace James C. Doyle of Eldorado ruled that Ms. Barlow died of natural causes after a battle with cancer. Sources in Colorado City, Arizona and Bountiful, Canada, tell the Eldorado Success that Ms. Barlow and her twin sister, Annette Barlow, were both married to Warren Jeffs in a joint ceremony, before he ascended to the office of prophet of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Authorities say that Annette Barlow still lives at the YFZ. Ms. Barlow had reportedly been under medical treatment and moved to Schleicher County to be with her family. She had been seeing a doctor in San Angelo prior to death. Ms. Barlow's body was taken to Johnson's Funeral Home in San Angelo. Burial service was conducted at a private cemetery on the YFZ Ranch.

Texas Turns Up the Heat on YFZ Ranch  
TCEQ cites YFZ for a total of 29 violations  
The Eldorado Success  
myeldorado.net  
Originally published July 29, 2004

Texas, the state that likes to brag that it's like a whole other country, probably seems more like a whole other universe to workers at the YFZ Ranch near Eldorado. With environmental regulators from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality already focusing their undivided attention on the ranch, now comes word that state legislators and the office of the Texas Attorney General are casting their gaze toward the property and the sect of Fundamentalist Mormons who call the place home. State Representative Harvey Hilderbrand was in town Monday where he met with city and county officials and discussed issues relating to the YFZ. Pam Dutton, an aide to State Senator Robert Duncan, also made the trip to Eldorado to gauge public opinion. "I've been following this issue and have been in close contact with Senator Duncan," Hilderbrand said. "I know that the Attorney General's office is also looking into the allegations of polygamy and they have been in contact with the Utah Attorney General." Read more

Prophet's Nephew Alleges Sexual Abuse  
FLDS & Jeffs brothers named Thursday in Utah lawsuit  
The Eldorado Success  
myeldorado.net  
Originally published August 5, 2004

Warren Jeffs, president and prophet of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the nation's largest polygamous community, was accused in a lawsuit last Thursday of repeatedly sodomizing his young nephew and covering it up for more than a decade. Jeffs is also accused of hiding wide-scale sexual abuse of other children by fellow members of the FLDS, including two of his brothers Blaine Balmforth Jeffs and Leslie Balmforth Jeffs. The allegations are the most serious to be brought against Warren Jeffs, 48. He, and his top FLDS lieutenants have been under intense scrutiny by the attorneys general of Utah and Arizona, however, no criminal charges have been filed against anyone in the church leadership. But, Thursday's civil suit is of great interest to investigators in both states, even if they aren't exactly sure where to find the prophet. A number of Hildale residents reportedly saw the prophet's motor home, and a caravan of automobiles, depart from his walled compound and drive toward St. George, Utah. One of the witnesses, who has asked to remain anonymous, told the Success this week that surveillance cameras which once stood sentinel on the estate walls, have been removed and that the prophet's home is "obviously empty."  "Some people are convinced he went to Texas, while others say he is hiding out in Canada," the source continued.
"No one knows for sure, he may even be in Mexico." Read more

Rumored Escape from YFZ has Internet Buzzing
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published August 5, 2004

So far, at least, the Success has found no evidence to support a series of rumors about a woman escaping from the YFZ Ranch, despite the fact that several versions of the rumor were posted last week on various Internet websites and even referred to in numerous published news stories. When the reports, which appear to have originated in Utah and Arizona, first reached Schleicher County last Thursday, Sheriff David Doran and Justice of the Peace James C. Doyle carried out an aerial search for the woman who, according to one version of the story, was accompanied by her two small children. While the men scanned the area from the air, other officers looked for the woman on the ground. The search was finally called off when nothing was found. A later version of the story claimed the woman was yet another of Prophet Warren Jeffs' wives while another claimed she had been wed to former Prophet Rulon Jeffs and was married by the new prophet following his father's death in 2002. On Tuesday, the Success was contacted by a man in Colorado City, AZ, who claimed hearing the story at least three weeks ago. In that version of the story, the woman managed to get away, not from the YFZ Ranch, but from a convoy of vehicles traveling from Utah to Texas. Read more

Is Jeffs at Texas compound?
By Bill Hanna
Fort Worth Star-Telegram
Originally published Tuesday, August 10, 2004

As a polygamist group transforms ranchland outside the West Texas town of Eldorado into a cloistered compound, local residents continue to wonder about the whereabouts of the sect's leader. Warren Jeffs, who is known as the prophet of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, is facing a lawsuit that alleges he and his two brothers sexually abused one of his nephews during the 1980s. The church's practice of excommunicating teen-age males from the sect as a way of eliminating competition for young brides is attracting more scrutiny in Utah, where the sect originated. As many as 400 males have been purged from the church since 1998, according to reports. Rod Parker, the attorney for the church and Jeffs, denied the lawsuit allegations and told the Associated Press they are being stirred up by the sect's critics. But the latest revelations continue to spur speculation that Jeffs has taken refuge at the sect's growing Texas compound about 45 miles south of San Angelo. Read more

YFZ is No Show at City Hall
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published August 12, 2004

The Eldorado City Council was prepared Monday night to receive further information from YFZ Ranch officials regarding their request that the city assist them with treating the ranch's wastewater, but no one from the ranch appeared. City Administrator Randy Mankin advised council members that he had met with Paul Allred from the YFZ following the council's July 19 meeting and had conveyed a list of requirements the city would need before it would move forward with the YFZ request. Mankin said Allred didn't seem happy with the list and suggested to him that some of the items weren't the city's prerogative. Mankin said he asked Allred for a written request from the YFZ outlining exactly what the ranch was requesting of the city. He also asked Allred to provide assurances concerning the quantity and quality of wastewater that ranch officials propose to haul to the city's wastewater plant, also the length of time the service would be needed. Other requirements included a monetary deposit or other assurances to guarantee payment as well as a bond to protect the city in case wastewater from the ranch is contaminated with pesticides, herbicides or other substances that might harm the city's sewer plant. Read more

Polygamist group irks W. Texas town
Mormon offshoot stirs suspicion and mistrust, but sheriff cites rights
By Karen Brooks
The Dallas Morning News
Originally published Saturday, August 14, 2004

ELDORADO, Texas – The narrow dirt road cuts away from a padlocked metal gate with a "No Trespassing" sign and an infrared security camera. The road drapes like a ribbon over rolling green hills and seems to go nowhere. But at the end the trail, hidden from the prying eyes of a judgmental world, immense log cabins and meeting halls rise above the West Texas brush. In their shadows, women in floor-length dresses till soil in a garden the size of a football field as their husbands build a retreat for church members who believe "plural marriage" is the only way to eternal salvation. This group of polygamists – self-described Mormon fundamentalists apparently seeking an escape from an unholy mess in their longtime homes on the Utah-Arizona border – has raised a big-time stir in tiny Eldorado, where fire-and-brimstone religion may be welcome but multiple wives tend to rankle. Read more

Prophet Hunt Begins at Eldorado
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published August 19, 2004

Sheriff David Doran and private investigator Sam Brower of Cedar City, Utah, served a summons Sunday afternoon to Merrill Jessop at the entrance to the YFZ Ranch on County Road 300. The summons directs FLDS Prophet Warren Jeffs to respond within 20 days to a lawsuit filed against him by his nephew, Brent Jeffs. The lawsuit alleges that Warren Jeffs, and two of his brothers, Blaine Jeffs and Leslie Jeffs, sexually abused their nephew when he was a young boy. Investigator Sam Brower, who works for the law firm that represents plaintiff Brent Jeffs, said he wanted to deliver the summons directly to Warren Jeffs but adds that he really didn't expect to see the prophet. Merrill Jessop, who met the men at the ranch gate, reportedly told Brower and Sheriff Doran that he wasn't aware if Warren Jeffs had ever been to the YFZ Ranch. "He added that if Warren had actually been here it was only occasionally," Brower said. Read more

Success Seeks Postal Records on YFZ Ranch
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published August 19, 2004

The Eldorado Success filed a request last week with the U.S. Postal Service asking for the public release of Postal Service records related to a Post Office box used by the YFZ Ranch. The issue came up when the Success learned that local citizens who renew their rental of a local P.O. Box are required to provide two forms of identification, including one photo ID, for each person receiving mail at the box. The new guidelines were adopted in order to comply with the U.S. Patriot Act, signed into law by President George W. Bush following the 9-11 terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C. While numbers of local postal patrons have already complied with the new rules, under threat of having their box taken out of service, the Success has learned that some residents at the YFZ Ranch have not complied and are still receiving mail. While looking into the issue, the Success was told that the decision to continue delivery of YFZ mail was made by a Postal Service District Supervisor. That prompted the newspaper to inquire further into Postal Service regulations. Harley Hitchcock, a retired Postal Service employee and postal consultant for the Texas Press Association pointed out that information about personal P.O. Boxes is kept private while information regarding commercial or business boxes is supposed to be open to the public. Read more

City council budget talks turn to role of administrator
The Eldorado Success
Originally published August 19, 2004

The Eldorado City Council met Thursday evening, August 19, 2004, ostensibly for a budget workshop, but before the meeting was over, council member Toni Sudduth would question whether City Administrator Randy Mankin's role as owner and publisher of The Eldorado Success is putting the city in jeopardy of a lawsuit because of the newspaper's coverage of the story surrounding the YFZ Ranch. Mayor John Nikolaou called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with council members Bill McCutcheon, Toni Sudduth, Dora Bosmans, Tommy Minor, Richard Mendez and Juquin Rojas in attendance. The group methodically went through budget discussions and the meeting was winding down when Ms. Sudduth challenged Mankin's part-time position as city administrator and questioned how much of Mankin's newspaper work was being done on city time. She also claimed that he took too much time away from work and was in arrears on his vacation time. Mankin disagreed with that and referred to records he keeps in his day planner. He noted that in addition to taking care of business at City Hall, he receives numerous calls at all hours of the night and day, even while he is at his newspaper office. Read more

Missing FLDS Leader has Local Cops Looking
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published August 19, 2004

"Uncle" Fred Jessop, 94, the man once thought to be the heir apparent to former Prophet Rulon Jeffs of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, was reported missing by family members last week. The concerned relatives filed the report in person at the Washington County Sheriff's Department in St. George, Utah. Rumors about Jessop's whereabouts, have run rampant among members of the FLDS twin cities of Colorado City/Hildale. With increasing numbers of former FLDS leaders being stripped of power and/or excommunicated from the church, many in the towns, as well as numbers of anti-polygamy activists, thought Jessop was either dead or being held hostage at the group's new Eldorado, Texas compound by New Prophet Warren Jeffs. Even then, it was nearly eight months before anyone came forward to file a formal missing persons report. Read more

Sheriff Questions Phone Call From Fred Jessop
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published August 26, 2004

Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran received a phone call this week from a man identifying himself as Fred Jessop, the 94-year-old patriarch of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Doran said that the man phoned him last Saturday at the urging of officials from the YFZ Ranch. "I can't say whether or not it was Fred Jessop. He provided me with the right pieces of information that would tend to identify him and he certainly sounded as if he could be 94, but I still have my doubts," Doran told the Success. Doran said the man told him he was fine and didn't need any help, adding that he was retired and staying out of church business. Jessop, known as "Uncle Fred" to the FLDS faithful, was slated to succeed former FLDS Prophet Rulon Jeffs. But, that office was claimed by the late prophet's son, Warren Jeffs, in 2002. Shortly thereafter, the new prophet excommunicated many in the church's hierarchy. Then, late in 2003, as construction was getting under way on the group's new compound near Eldorado, Fred Jessop went missing. Despite rampant rumors that Jessop had been kidnapped, and/or killed, no one in the closed communities of Hildale, Utah or Colorado City, Arizona, came forward to report Jessop until two weeks ago. That prompted a missing person report being filed in the national law enforcement data banks and led to inquiries here in Eldorado as to Jessop's whereabouts. Read more

YFZ Hauling Wastewater to San Angelo
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published August 26, 2004

TCEQ District 8 Director Ricky Anderson confirmed this week that wastewater is being transported from the YFZ Ranch near Eldorado to a wastewater treatment plant at the San Angelo landfill operated by Trashaway. Anderson said that his inspectors had visited the ranch on August 16th to confirm that an above ground storage tank had been installed. He said that since that time ranch officials have hired a licensed wastewater hauler to transport the waste to San Angelo. Anderson said that his inspectors have received trip tickets documenting the process and that they continue to closely monitor the situation at the YFZ, which he says will only last until a permanent wastewater treatment plant can be constructed at the ranch. Anderson went on to say that his employees are also working with YFZ officials on installing a public water system. That became necessary when state inspectors learned that more than 25 people would be residing permanently at the ranch. Read more

YFZ Resident Said Excommunicated by Prophet
The Eldorado Success
Sources in Colorado City, Arizona tell the Success this week that Alan Steed, a one-time resident of the YFZ Ranch near Eldorado, has been excommunicated by FLDS Prophet Warren Jeffs. It was Steed who, along with three other men, met with Sheriff David Doran on April 28th of this year to reveal that the construction at the YFZ Ranch was not actually intended as a hunting retreat. At that time Steed identified himself as holding the office of Patriarch in the FLDS church. According to others who have recently been barred from the church, Prophet Jeffs found Steed's family to be unworthy of him and booted them out earlier. The prophet reportedly assigned Steed a number of new wives when he was sent to Texas to work on the Eldorado compound. Now, Steed himself may be out of the group. That fits with what little can be seen here in Eldorado.

Another of men who was active in the early development of the YFZ, Ernie Jessop, is reportedly no longer working here in Schleicher County, either. Officials at the ranch have told local authorities that he merely has been assigned to work on another project. As always, the Success invites comment from YFZ Ranch and FLDS Church officials. So far, no such comment has been received.

The polygamists down the road
A controversial sect's arrival upsets neighbors in West Texas
By Mark Lisheron
Austin American-Statesman
Originally published August 29, 2004

ELDORADO -- A new community has been going up in the past six months just north of here, built by men who believe having at least three wives will lead to their highest salvation. The men are members of the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints, one of the largest religious sects adhering to polygamy in the country. They have come from Hildale, Utah, and Colorado City, Ariz., twin communities of about 6,000 people on the border of the two states. Their 1,691-acre ranch here in the center of Schleicher County, between San Angelo and Sonora, is called Yearning for Zion Ranch. The few men who have spoken to outsiders say they are building a religious retreat, a haven for as many as 200 of the most faithful selected by their leader, Warren Jeffs, a man they refer to as the prophet. Jeffs and two of his brothers have been accused in a Salt Lake City civil court of ritually sodomizing a male relative between the ages of 4 and 6 in the 1980s when he was a pupil at a Fundamentalist Church academy where Jeffs and his brothers taught. Jeffs is also the target of investigations by the attorneys general in Utah and Arizona. Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff said he is investigating Jeffs for allegations of sexual abuse within the sect. "I've said it before, and I'll continue to repeat it," Shurtleff said. "I am coming after Warren Jeffs." Read more

Prophet's Nemesis
Ross Chatwin Visits Eldorado
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published September 2, 2004

Ross Chatwin, the Arizona man who refused to move from his home after being excommunicated from the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints by its Prophet Warren Jeffs, was in Eldorado this week. Chatwin, his wife Lori and daughter Kimberlina arrived here Monday morning and spent the next day and a half visiting with Eldorado residents. Tuesday morning pilot Doug Garvin took the couple up in his plane for an aerial view of the YFZ Ranch, the property that is being developed by FLDS followers. Chatwin gained fame when he won a court decision blocking Jeffs, the FLDS Church, and its trust fund, the United Effort Plan, from evicting him from his home. Chatwin's home was built on UEP land and, according to the trust bylaws, is supposed to revert to UEP ownership when he vacates it. But, instead of following church orders and moving his wife and six children out of town, Chatwin did what no one before him had dared, he refused the Prophet's order.

Read more

Proving from the Prophet?
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published Thursday, September 2, 2004

I listened with interest this week as Ross Chatwin offered ideas for ways to make money off the ongoing saga at the YFZ Ranch. He is the man who defied FLDS Prophet Warren Jeffs and refused to leave his Colorado City, AZ home after being kicked out of the church. Chatwin, his wife Lori, and daughter Kimberlina, spent much of Monday and Tuesday in Eldorado, visiting with people, and seeing for themselves the progress at the YFZ Ranch. His thought of building an observation tower and charging admission to tourists was unique, but it wasn't the first idea I've heard that involved making money off the situation at the YFZ. The prospect of profiting off the Prophet's adventures seems to have struck a chord with several people here in town. Not that there's anything wrong with making money. It should be obvious to one and all that the size and scope of the building program at the YFZ Ranch translates into the sale of thousands, if not millions, of dollars worth of lumber and building material. Read more

Polygamous Sect Moves In, And Texas Town Asks 'Why?'
Mormon Offshoot Accused of Abuses in Arizona and Utah
By Sylvia Moreno
Washington Post
Originally published Tuesday, September 7, 2004

ELDORADO, Tex. -- By anyone's account, 2003 was a banner news year in this tiny town on the western edge of Texas's rolling hill country. A man killed his father in the first homicide here in two decades, an elderly man pushing brush with a bulldozer was stung to death by killer bees. A local businessman pleaded guilty to insurance fraud and was hauled off to federal prison, and nine residents, most of them members of the First Baptist Church, were killed in an accident in Louisiana on their way to visit historic sites in Pennsylvania. "I thought, we'll never have another year like that," said Randy Mankin, the part-time city administrator and full-time publisher and editor of the Eldorado Success, a weekly newspaper. "Then in mid-March this thing came along -- like a UFO landed north of town." The polygamists had arrived, and Eldorado (pronounced el-doh-ray-doh) -- population 1,951 -- hasn't been the same since. Read more

Computer Upgrade Slows TCEQ Action Against YFZ
The Eldorado Success
When investigators from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality office in San Angelo visited the YFZ Ranch in July, they didn't know that a computer system upgrade would delay their report from reaching TCEQ headquarters in Austin for more than two months. But that's exactly what happened. The delay is over now, according to Ricky Anderson, director of the TCEQ San Angelo office, who said that the report from his office will soon be in Austin and that officials in the agency's enforcement division would take over from there. Anderson noted the computer system upgrade will make it easier for his office to stay in touch with Austin. Anderson also confirmed for the Success that YFZ officials have filed an application for a wastewater permit with TCEQ officials in Austin. A check of the application status on the agency's website indicates that the application for a municipal wastewater discharge permit was received from YFZ Land L.L.C. on August 24, 2004 and that the permit is currently undergoing administrative review.

Nearly Six Months Later, What Have We Actually Learned About Warren Jeffs?
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published September 30, 2004

It's been nearly six months since Eldoradoans awoke to the news that a religious sect had acquired more than sixteen hundred acres of land just outside of town and that members of the group were already erecting large dormitory-style buildings on the property. Since that day the people of Eldorado and Schleicher County have found themselves living in the eye of a media hurricane as dozens, if not hundreds, of print and broadcast journalists have made their way town, each of them looking for a different angle on a story that seems to change on a daily basis. And, oh, what a story it has become, complete with religious devotion, official corruption, power grabs, political intrigue and, yes, even a little sex. Read more

FLDS Church Holds Fast to Doctrine of Blood Atonement
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published October 7, 2004

Editor's note: The Success this week begins a series of articles delving into the belief system of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS). The first installment focuses on the Doctrine of Blood Atonement.

To fully understand the teachings of Prophet Warren Jeffs and his Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS), one must first understand the teachings of the early Mormon Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS), as handed down by the group's first Prophet, Joseph Smith, and how those teachings were carried forward and expanded upon by his successors, including church pioneers like Brigham Young. First and foremost, FLDS devotees consider themselves to be true Mormons, meaning that it is they and not the mainline LDS Church who is the rightful heir of Joseph Smith's prophecy. By holding fast to traditional church doctrines like Plural Marriage and Blood Atonement, doctrines which were first promoted and then later forsaken by the...

LDS Church, FLDS faithful believe that they are Smith's living legacy and that it will be through them that God's earthly kingdom will be restored. Read more

An Arizona Import Rattles A Texas Town
By Randy Garsee
KOLD News 13 Anchor
Originally published October 13, 2004

Have you ever watched Mayberry, R.F.D. or The Andy Griffith Show? What would the sheriff have done if large buildings started going up on a secluded piece of land just outside of quiet little Mayberry? And then he couldn't find out why? Would he finally have to put on that gunbelt and give Barney Fife more than one bullet? Of course that plot was never part of a Mayberry episode but it has become a very real episode elsewhere. This is a News 13 Exclusive on a story with strong Arizona ties but first I had to travel more than 700 miles to a quiet little town in west Texas. Ten years ago, Randy Mankin went into the newspaper business. "I was looking for a way to stay in this town. We like this little town. It's like living in Mayberry." The Eldorado Success is a reflection of his Mayberry with its bad news. "Sometimes that means getting out of bed at three in the morning and going out and covering a car wreck." And its good news like, "Seeing someone getting a Lions Club recognition. That's just fantastic." A few months ago, however, Mankin's Mayberry began to whistle with questions, conspiracies and paranoia. "When this thing came to town, this story, it was so foreign to what everyone had seen it almost did seem like a UFO had landed." Read more

The "Hysterical" Case of Arizona's FLDS in El Dorado, Texas
By Randy Garsee
KOLD News 13 Anchor
Originally published October 13, 2004

The word "hysterical" is an unusual one. It can mean "extremely funny" or "excessive fear or panic." After learning an Arizona religious group was building a compound nearby, the residents of El Dorado, Texas found themselves swaying between both definitions. I traveled more than 700 miles to El Dorado to learn why polygamists from Arizona decided to build a home away from home in west Texas. One of the first things you notice, as you drive into El Dorado, Texas, is the small town's sense of humor. It's prevalent in the "hysterical district" where you'll discover "celibacy is not hereditary" and other hand-painted signs scrawled with gems of wisdom. But when residents learned a religious, polygamist group from Arizona was erecting massive buildings on a nearby ranch, their emotions did not include laughter. "Well, it ran the gamut. Shock, anger, fear, complacency, every shade of gray in the spectrum." El Dorado Success newspaper publisher Randy Mankin compares it to having a UFO land in your backyard. "In the beginning it did almost seem like an alien culture had landed here," said Mankin. Read more

Source: Jeffs building Temple at YFZ Ranch
FLDS has never before built a temple
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published November 11, 2004
Sources close to Prophet Warren Jeffs of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints tell the Success that the elusive leader is planning to build a temple here in Schleicher County similar in size and scope to the one originally built by Mormon founder Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, Illinois. Warren has gone too far," one Utah man said on condition of anonymity. "He thinks he is God, so he has to have a temple." Aerial photos of the YFZ Ranch show a massive foundation under construction just west of the already completed meeting hall. The footprint of the foundation roughly matches that of the original Nauvoo temple. Read more

Wary Texans Keep Their Eyes on the Compound of a Polygamous Sect
By Simon Romero
The New York Times
Originally published November 14, 2004

ELDORADO, Tex. - David Doran, the Schleicher County sheriff, drives his truck almost every week to the outskirts of town and gazes at the 1,700-acre compound through a pair of binoculars. On most of his stakeouts, Sheriff Doran receives a call on his cellphone from a guard in the compound's watchtower asking if anything is amiss. "I just tell him I'm on business, just checking things out," Sheriff Doran said recently. "I tell them they have a right to be here and that their rights will be respected, but that doesn't mean I won't be vigilant." Eldorado's vigilance regarding its new neighbors, however, is bordering on obsession these days. Nearly everyone in this town of 1,900 people on the arid West Texas plains 125 miles southeast of Odessa is wondering about the community that has been established by the members of an Arizona-based offshoot of the Mormon Church, the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Read more

Local Lawmen Join Search for Prophet's Child Bride
Girl Declines Help from Authorities
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published November 18, 2004

Sheriff David Doran and Chief Deputy George Arispe traveled to Colorado and Utah last week planning on meeting with law enforcement officials in the two Rocky Mountain states. Before the trip was over, however, they found themselves participating in a missing person investigation and searching for an alleged child bride of Prophet Warren Jeffs, self-appointed leader of the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints. As Doran and Arispe met with Montezuma County Sheriff Joey Chavez in Cortez Colorado word reached them that a missing person report had been filed in Utah and Arizona by Suzanne Jessop Johnson, a Colorado City, Arizona woman who told officials that her sister, 17-year-old Janetta Jessop, had telephoned her asking for help in escaping from the FLDS. Johnson said that before she could arrange to meet with her sister, the girl disappeared. Read more

Utah judge ratchets up pressure on Warren Jeffs
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published December 2, 2004

Utah District Judge Stephen L. Henroid wants to hear from Warren Jeffs, self-proclaimed prophet and leader of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. A civil lawsuit against Jeffs is pending in Judge Henroid's court and so far, attorneys for the plaintiff, Brent Jeffs, have been unable to serve the elusive Mr. Jeffs with a summons ordering his appearance. So, the judge has ordered the publication of notices in four newspapers, including The Eldorado Success (see notice on Page 6), instructing Warren Jeffs to respond to the lawsuit. On July 29 of this year, Jeffs' 21-year-old nephew, Brent Jeffs, filed a lawsuit in Judge Henroid's court in which he accused his uncle of repeatedly sodomizing him beginning when he was 5 years old. The lawsuit also alleges that the FLDS church and much of its leadership were complicit in covering up the sexual abuse. Listed as co-defendants in the case were Warren Jeffs' brothers Blaine Balmforth Jeffs and Leslie Balmforth Jeffs. Also, named in the lawsuit was the FLDS church and the United Effort Plan Trust, a trust fund originally intended to benefit FLDS church members, but which many observers now believe serves as little more than a slush fund for Warren Jeffs and his lieutenants. Read more

FLDS Church may be building first temple at its Texas enclave
By Brooke Adams and Peg McIntee
The Salt Lake Tribune
Originally published December 4, 2004

Even in the middle of the night, the lights and sounds of a limestone-mining operation emanate from a private, polygamous enclave near the West Texas town of Eldorado. At least a dozen buildings, one of them a cavernous meetinghouse, have been constructed on the YFZ Ranch by the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, says Randy Mankin, editor of the weekly Eldorado Success newspaper. There is speculation that the limestone would sheath a new church, possibly a temple, for the FLDS church, which adheres to tenets of 19th-century Mormonism that include polygamy. If so, it would be a first for the sect, which claims about 12,000 believers in communities on the Arizona Strip, British Columbia, Texas and, most recently, Colorado. "I drove out there the other night, at about three in the morning, and it was going strong," Mankin said Friday. "There are big light towers...you can see the glow over the horizon." Read more

Massive hoist going up at YFZ stone cutting area
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published December 9, 2004

Construction continued this week at the YFZ Ranch with the erection of a large hoist, believed to be standing over the rock cutting area near where many believe the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saint plans to build its first-ever temple. The hoist, clearly visible from County Road 300, consists of four large beam trusses, connected down the sides by more large beams that carry the hoist. While the massive structure is built in such a way as to make it easy to erect with metal or other siding, it is unclear if the workers at the ranch plan to do so. A new gate has also been erected at the entrance to the property, several feet down a fenced lane from where the original gate stood near the roadway. The first gate was damaged, reportedly by a truck delivering construction material to the ranch. In keeping with their policy of excluding outsiders from the property, YFZ officials have brought in their own propane truck from
Utah. It is used to meet a local delivery truck at the county road where propane is transferred to the YFZ truck for transport into the ranch. Read more

Trouble in Texas with the "Marrying People"
By Ken MacQueen
Macleans Magazine
Originally published December 13, 2004

Since the arrival late last winter of the "marrying people," as one of Eldorado's more eccentric citizens calls them, there's plenty to talk about in this tiny west Texas town, if not much to see. The polygamous enclave of the YFZ (Yearning for Zion) Ranch is marked by nothing more than a "No Trespassing" sign on a locked gate off a country road. A long lane undulates over rocky rangeland, past stunted mesquite and juniper trees and ubiquitous prickly pear cactus. There may be 50 fundamentalists in there, says the local sheriff; or 200, says the local newspaper editor. They were chosen by the prophet -- Jeffs -- from the enclave on the Arizona-Utah border and likely also from Bountiful, where believers have contributed truckloads of lumber and prefabricated buildings to the cause. Jeffs never gives interviews, leaving others to speculate. Is he building a refuge from legal troubles, or preparing the most faithful for the fiery apocolypse he has long predicted? The church's lawyer, Rod Parker of Salt Lake City, says the group hasn't offered a reason for moving into Texas (there is also a second new enclave near Mancos, Colo.). He speculates the leadership is seeking more freedom and privacy. "I think they were looking for a place where they had more control over the comings and goings of people, especially from the outside," Parker says. Read more

TCEQ not ready to act on violations at YFZ Ranch
Wastewater plant permit clears first hurdle
Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published December 16, 2004

Officials with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality say that the investigation into environmental violations at the YFZ Ranch near Eldorado is still moving forward, but the state agency is not yet prepared to levy a fine or other penalties against the ranch's owner, YFZ Land L.L.C. In October of 2003, a Utah man named David Allred formed YFZ Land, L.L.C. and began using the company to acquire property in Schleicher County. Eventually 1,691 acres were bought some four miles north-northeast of Eldorado and construction soon began on a series of three-story log cabins. Allred's claim that the land was intended as a hunting retreat where he could entertain his business clients didn't hold up under scrutiny and by mid-March of this year it was discovered that the man had fronted the purchase of the land for a reclusive sect of fundamentalist Mormons and that the group's prophet, Warren Jeffs was intent on building a new community on the property. By early summer, a number of environmental concerns came to light and TCEQ inspectors began visiting the property. Shortly thereafter the ranch was cited for 29 environmental violations ranging from the operation of an unlicensed bulk cement plant and the dumping of sewer water on ranch roads for dust control to the improper storage and disposal of used motor oil and filters. The ranch was also ticketed for operating an unlicensed public water supply system. Since that time, the violations have been reviewed by the TCEQ Enforcement Division, which is reportedly ready to send its recommendations to the agency's

Water plans at issue
Polygamist sect's plant would dump waste into Concho tributary
By Eric Finley and Matt Phinney
San Angelo Standard-Times
Originally published December 18, 2004

A plan by an area polygamist sect to build a wastewater treatment plant near the South Concho River is drawing fire from San Angelo's state representative. State Rep. Scott Campbell said he will call a public hearing to oppose the plant, which would dump treated wastewater into a tributary of the South Concho River near Eldorado in Schleicher County. The South Concho River flows north of Eldorado into Twin Buttes Reservoir, one of five reservoirs that form San Angelo's water supply. "We certainly don't want that coming into our water system," Campbell said. "We are going to do everything we can to keep that from happening." According to state law, a public hearing requested by a state official must be held. The law also calls for the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality to review the proposal several times and take public comment before a hearing. No action is imminent. A public hearing includes testimony from experts in front of an administrative judge. Read more

Salt Lake City law firm wants out of FLDS lawsuit
Lawyer cites fundamental disagreement with client
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published December 23, 2004

The Salt Lake City, Utah law firm of Snow, Christensen & Martineau is asking to withdraw as counsel for the Prophet Warren Jeffs and the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, according to a petition filed in Judge Stephen L. Henroid's 3rd District Court. The lawyers, specifically Rod Parker, who for years has represented the FLDS and its charitable trust, the United Effort Plan claims that they must withdraw because their clients "insist upon a course of action with which their lawyers have a fundamental disagreement." The firm has recently represented Jeffs, the FLDS and the UEP in two lawsuits, one brought by Jeffs' nephew, Brent Jeffs in which he alleges he was sexually abused by his uncle when he was a young boy, and another brought by a group of young men known as the "Lost Boys," in which they allege that the Jeffs and other leaders in the FLDS church routinely banished young men from the group in order to guarantee the availability of young brides. The FLDS Church views polygamy as bedrock principal of its faith. Parker also noted in his motion that his law firm's withdrawal from the case is mandatory because the lawyers have been discharged from representation of the defendants in the case, according to court documents. That appears to mean that Parker's firm was fired by its clients, but no one is sure and neither Parker nor anyone affiliated with his law firm is willing to comment. Read more

YFZ wastewater permit moves forward
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published December 30, 2004
YFZ Ranch officials moved another step closer this week to obtaining a state permit to operate a wastewater treatment plant on ranch property. A public notice, published in this edition of The Success, indicates that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality has determined that the YFZ application is administratively complete and will now begin a technical review of the application. The permit application has already caught the attention of the Upper Colorado River Authority which on December 17, 2004 notified TCEQ Chief Clerk LaDonna Castanucla of its desire for a public meeting to be held in Eldorado, or at another location nearby, for the discussion of the YFZ permit request. According to the public notice the proposed wastewater treatment plant will be located some six miles northeast of downtown Eldorado. If approved the plant will not exceed an average daily flow of 100,000 gallons and will discharge its treated effluent through a pipeline to an unnamed tributary of Milligan Draw. Read more

Source: Jeffs dedicates FLDS temple site at YFZ Ranch  
Jon Krakauer watches ceremony from overhead  
The Eldorado Success  
myeldorado.net  
Originally published January 6, 2005

Jon Krakauer came to Eldorado last weekend, not to celebrate the new year, but to be nearby the YFZ Ranch where Prophet Warren Jeffs and the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ are said to be building a temple. Of particular interest to Krakauer was a recent spate of rumors that Jeffs was predicting the end of the world and that he had ordered his followers in Utah, Arizona and Canada to stay in their homes throughout the weekend. Krakauer, who wrote the best-selling book Under the Banner of Heaven, a Story of Violent Faith, has long been a vocal critic of Warren Jeffs. He has followed developments at the YFZ Ranch since the story broke here last March, maintaining close contact with Sheriff David Doran and Success editor Randy Mankin.

Krakauer arrived in Eldorado last Friday evening and spent part of the evening monitoring traffic in and out of the YFZ Ranch gate. The following day, he flew over the YFZ where he managed to witness and photograph what he believes was a dedication ceremony at the temple site on New Year's Day.

Krakauer snapped a series of photos that clearly show a group of people gathered at the east end of the temple foundation. In the first photo the group is arrayed in a semi-circle, facing an individual who Krakauer believes to be Warren Jeffs. Read more

Eldorado OKs proposal to change election process  
Bill would keep religious sect from taking over  
By Paul A. Anthony  
San Angelo Standard-Times  
Originally published January 7, 2005

ELDORADO - With some still worried a nearby religious group could stage a political takeover, the Schleicher County Hospital District moved a step closer Thursday to approving a proposal that could all but eliminate such a possibility. By a unanimous vote, the district's board of directors authorized its attorneys to draft a bill that would change its election process from at-large seats to single-member districts. "It's been kind of a long, ongoing deal for several years now," said Randy Mankin, hospital administrator, adding that the arrival of the reclusive, fundamentalist Mormon sect in March added an incentive. "There's an impetus there; there's no denying that." The hospital district's rules were created by the State Legislature in the late 1960s. The hospital must use its state representatives to pass legislation to change those rules. In Thursday's special meeting, Mankin told the board he received positive responses from Schleicher County's legislators, Rep. Harvey Hilderbrand, R-Kerrville, and Sen. Robert Duncan, R-Lubbock. The five present members then voted to conduct another special meeting next week to vote on the legislation drafted by Kosub and Griffen, the board's law firm. The board also agreed to use the legislation to cap the district's per-patient liability at $30,000 and to allow it to make agreements with outside entities that would let the district run other area hospitals. "If we're gonna take a bite of the apple, we might as well put our wish list on there," Mankin said. Read more

Temple construction begins at YFZ Ranch  
The Eldorado Success  
myeldorado.net  
Originally published January 13, 2005

The already rapid pace of construction at the YFZ Ranch picked up sharply this week as walls began going up on a building many believe will be the first-ever temple built by the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Aerial photos obtained by the Success reveal that concrete forms have been erected around a large foundation just west of several log cabin-style buildings. Also noteworthy is a visible increase in the number of people at the YFZ, many of whom are believed by authorities to have been brought in to help with the new construction. The size of the new building has led many FLDS observers to speculate that the temple will be patterned after the current LDS temple in Nauvoo, Illinois, a building that FLDS Prophet Warren Jeffs is said to admire. Read more

Temple walls soar upward at YFZ  
The Eldorado Success  
myeldorado.net  
Originally published January 20, 2005

Less than a week after workers at the YFZ Ranch finished pouring concrete basement walls, structural steel was going up to support the ground floor and upper floors of a large building many believe will serve as the first-ever temple of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The FLDS Church existed for decades in relative obscurity in the tiny community of Short Creek, on the Utah/Arizona border where its members held firm to their fundamentalist Mormon belief in plural marriage, or polygamy. The community grew over time and evolved into the twin cities of Colorado City, AZ and Hildale, UT with a joint population of approximately 10,000 people, the vast majority of whom are FLDS members. In recent years, the group has come under increased scrutiny, both from the news media and anti-polygamy activists. Together the two groups have prodded the once reluctant governments of Utah and Arizona into action. Read more

Town springing up on compound  
By Bill Hanna  
Star-Telegram Staff Writer  
Originally published Monday, February 7, 2005

ELDORADO - Ten months after the first signs of a secretive polygamous sect's new outpost on the West Texas range, a
full-fledged town is springing up. The community doesn't have a name, isn't incorporated and isn't on any maps. The compound, about 45 miles south of San Angelo, sits behind a padlocked gate, a guard shack and 8-foot fences. Inside, crews work around the clock on construction of a multi-story temple that is expected to be the largest building in Schleicher County. The 1,491-acre YFZ Ranch -- short for Yearn for Zion -- is turning into far more than the hunting lodge or retreat that leaders of the Fundamentalist Church of Latter-day Saints originally told local officials that they were planning. A grid-like layout of a town has emerged on the rolling ranchland four miles east of Eldorado. It includes 13 wooden structures, some as large as college dormitories. There are also a half-dozen metal buildings, a concrete batch plant, a quarry, a dairy, well-tended gardens and a growing number of mobile homes. For nearly 70 years, the 10,000-member sect, believed to be the largest polygamous group in the country, has been based in the twin towns of Colorado City, Ariz., and Hildale, Utah. That appears to be changing. Read more

Workers maintain feverish pace on New Zion temple
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published February 10, 2005

Prophet Warren Jeffs reportedly wants his new temple completed in time to hold the annual conference of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on April 6, and construction crews at the YFZ Ranch are working around the clock to meet the looming deadline. Former FLDS members tell the Success that there is more to the April 6 date than just the church conference. The FLDS church, as well as many in the Mormon faith, believe that Jesus Christ was born on April 6 and that he was crucified thirty-three years later on the same date. Joseph Smith founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on April 6, 1830. Sources in Colorado City, AZ tell the Success that they believe Warren Jeffs wants to have his new temple, the first-ever built by the FLDS, complete in time to celebrate the 175th anniversary of that event. The building's shell already soars 90 ft. above the ground and workmen were busy this week applying a coat of primer paint to the structure. Eight-foot tall sheets of plywood, apparent in aerial photos taken before the paint went on, make it possible to gauge the building's height above the concrete basement walls. Read more

Prophet's dream of Zion is being rapidly fulfilled at YFZ Ranch
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published February 12, 2005

Less than a year after Eldoradoans first learned that a fundamentalist Mormon sect had purchased a ranch four miles north of town and had begun to build, a new town is springing life on the property. In the days before he became the prophet of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Warren Jeffs wrote and recorded a song titled, Yearn for Zion. Many of his former followers, including Richard Holm of St. George, UT, believes the song title was the inspiration for the name given to YFZ Land, LLC, the corporation formed by one of Jeffs' most ardent supporters, David Alfred of Hildale, UT. YFZ Land, LLC appears to have been created specifically to acquire 1,691 acres of land here in Schleicher County, and to mislead local residents as long as possible about Jeffs' real plans for the property. The smokescreen worked, at least for a little while. Read more

Rumor of mass voter registration by YFZ residents proves untrue
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published February 17, 2005

A rumor that 600 people residing at the YFZ Ranch registered to vote recently when they obtained Texas driver's licenses in San Angelo has turned out to be unfounded. The story swept through town late last week prompting numerous calls to the Success office. Schleicher County Tax Assessor/Collector Jeanne Snelson, who also serves as the county's voter registrar, refuted the story. She said that her office had received a number of calls last week asking about the story. Snelson's deputy Jennifer Henderson demonstrated how she closely monitors voter registration, including those who register when they obtain a driver's license. She noted that the information is transmitted to the Secretary of State's office in Austin and then back to Schleicher County via data link. "Believe me, if we had received 600 we would have known it," Henderson said. Read more
Breaking News

You are invited to the upcoming St. George Town Hall Meeting

Here's the latest on what's happening.
These news articles are listed in chronological order.

For up to date information on the new FLDS YFZ Ranch compound in Eldorado, Texas, visit our web page
The Eyes of Texas are Upon You

Eldorado Success

FLDS temple under construction on YFZ Ranch Feb. 3, 2005

'Independent' AG ready for 2nd term
Mark Shurtleff: He says polygamy-related crimes, domestic violence and identity theft are priorities
By Thomas Burr
The Salt Lake Tribune
Originally published January 3, 2005

Today, in a ceremony marked with tradition and pomp, the reins of the state will be passed to Utah's 16th governor, Jon Huntsman Jr. But after Huntsman takes the oath, the band plays "Ruffles and Flourishes," and soldiers fire a 19-gun salute, four other elected leaders will put their hands on the Bible to swear an oath of office.
Lt. Gov.-elect Gary Herbert, Attorney General Mark Shurtleff, Treasurer Ed Alter and Auditor Auston Johnson also have their moment in the spotlight. Most prominent among them is Shurtleff, who enters his second term as the state's top attorney. "I hope that by my re-election, people see me as independent, there to represent the state of Utah, to protect their interests." In an interview, Shurtleff outlined his priorities during his second term, most of which mirror and expand goals set in the first. He wants to tackle crimes related to polygamy, but not polygamy itself. He wants to boost help for victims of domestic violence. He wants to stem the trend of identity theft and will work to pass a hate-crimes law that has floundered in previous years. What he doesn't plan to do is fight with lawmakers, though he won't rule it out. Read more

A "Polygamy Primer"
A new guide out today from the Utah Attorney General's office to help state employees work with polygamists.
KSL NewsRadio 1160
radio.ksl.com
Originally aired January 6, 2005

(KSL News) -- The Utah Attorney General's Office is publishing a handbook to help state agencies deal with polygamists. Utah Attorney General's spokesman Paul Murphy says it explains beliefs, terms and the history of polygamous groups. "There's a glossary that has been eye opening for everyone who's had a chance to read it. It explains the difference between a "sister wife" and an "other mother." It explains why the term "clan" might be offensive or why the term "plogy" is considered offensive." Murphy says the handbook was created with the help of many polygamous groups in Utah who want to help stop abuse within their communities.

Manual to help polygamy victims

The Associated Press
harktheherald.com
Originally published January 7, 2005

SALT LAKE CITY -- A manual intended to help those helping people from polygamous backgrounds is now available, Utah and Arizona officials said Thursday. "The Primer -- Helping Victims of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse in Polygamous Communities" was created to instruct case workers, law enforcement officers and others about the unique beliefs, practices and terms used by various polygamous groups. It includes a brief history of polygamy, guidelines and training exercises, an extensive glossary, descriptions of fundamentalist groups, characteristics, practices and unique factors to consider when dealing with domestic violence and child abuse. It also has resource guides and law charts for both Utah and Arizona.
"We have learned that some victims are not getting help because they fear the people who are offering it don't understand them," Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff said. "The Primer is the beginning of what I hope will be many efforts to break down barriers." Read more

Polygamy guide aims to provide info to outsiders
"The Primer": The manual details history and customs to help law enforcement and social workers
By Pamela Manson
The Salt Lake Tribune
Originally published January 7, 2005

A girl who disappears from her polygamous community could be a "poof," slang for a new bride in an arranged marriage who has been hidden or moved to another state or country (as in, "poof, she's gone"). Wearing red clothing might offend members of a fundamentalist group who believe Satan wears that color to imitate Christ. Sister-wives are women married to the same man at the same time. Members of one polygamous group say a divorced person has been "released" from marriage. These factsoids are more than just interesting trivia. They are part of "The Primer," a new manual designed to help law enforcement and social services personnel assist victims of domestic violence and child abuse from polygamous communities. The Utah Attorney General's Office produced the manual with help from the Arizona Attorney General's Office, government agencies, nonprofit groups, fundamentalists who support plural marriage and people who have left the polygamous lifestyle.
"The Primer" - which was put online Thursday at http://attorneygeneral.utah.gov/polygamy.html - includes a history of polygamy, a glossary of terms, descriptions of fundamentalist groups and their practices, training exercises and a list of resources. Read more

Primer offers peek into polygamy's world
By Joseph M. Dougherty
Deseret Morning News
Originally published January 8, 2005

Carolyn said she was being watched at all times, so she fled at 4 a.m. in a minivan without insurance, without a license and with only enough gas to drive three miles out of town. She told her children they were going to get a family portrait. When her children finally figured out what was going on, one child said, "Mother is taking us to hell." That is the story of a seventh-generation polygamous wife
with eight children who fled the only life she had ever known — a
life of abuse, secrecy and the threat that her children could be given
away to another family. Her story is just one of many that prompted
the attorneys general of Utah and Arizona to create a manual to help
prepare authorities to help people such as Carolyn, who seem not to
fit in the system. Titled "The Primer — Helping Victims of
Domestic Violence and Child Abuse in Polygamous Communities," the
guide is intended to educate police officers, social workers and
others. "We have learned that some victims are not getting help
because they fear that the people who are offering it don't understand
tem," Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff said. "The primer is
the beginning of what I hope will be many efforts to break down
barriers." Read more

Polygamy victim’s handbook
e-Press
Tri-State News Network
Originally published January 10, 2005

PHOENIX, Ariz. — It’s called The Primer and the Arizona and Utah
Attorney General’s hope it is the next step in protecting victims of
polygamous abuse. The handbook, titled "The Primer — Helping
Victims of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse in Polygamous
Communities", is designed to help those charged assisting victims
understand the particular practices and terms used by members of
these communities. "This training manual will serve as a valuable
resource to law enforcement and human services personnel serving
these communities and charges with assisting victims of child abuse
and domestic violence," said Arizona Attorney General Terry
Goddard. A statement from the Arizona Attorney General’s office
said the Primer would be continuously updated to reflect changes in
laws and resources available. The handbook can be found at

FLDS action is everywhere but here
By Tom Vaughn
cortezjournal.com
Originally published January 11, 2005

Warren Jeffs can be excused if he feels he is beset on all sides by
critics - he is. The 49-year-old self-appointed prophet of perhaps
10,000 members of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter Day Saints is said to have total control over both the lives and
the assets of his flock. That includes resident communities in the
twin cities of Colorado City, Ariz., and Hildale, Utah; a community
in Bountiful, British Columbia, Canada; a fast-growing compound
outside Eldorado, Texas - and land in the Mancos Valley. Despite
the conjecture by some FLDS-watchers that the land north of Mancos
was purchased as a potential hideout for Jeffs, there is no evidence
that this has become a reality. In fact, there are few clues as to what
the plans are for the property. The Montezuma County Sheriff’s
Office has repeatedly stated that no allegations of law-breaking have
been made and no investigations are under way regarding the CR 39
properties. Read more

Utah legislators get some light reading - 'God's Brothel'
The Associated Press
azcentral.com
Originally published January 18, 2005

SALT LAKE CITY - Polygamy can bring snickers, but it's no
laughing matter, says a state senator who on Tuesday dropped copies
of the book "God's Brothel" on Utah legislators' desks. Sen. Ed
Allen, D-Stansbury Park, said he wants to dispel the notion that
polygamy in Utah is only "anecdotal - or even humorous."
Thousands in Utah, members of breakaway Mormon factions, quietly
practice polygamy, although it has been illegal for more than a
century. Allen suggested that "God's Brothel," and its personal
accounts of women who escaped from polygamous marriages or
families, would make good reading for legislators on Tuesday's long
bus ride to hear Gov. Jon Huntsman deliver his State of the State
address at the territorial statehouse in Fillmore, Utah. "I'm passing
this out with no grand agenda. I simply want legislators to have more
background on the problem," said Allen, who helped enact a child
bigamy law in 2003 that made forced marriages of minors a
second-degree felony punishable by one to 15 years in prison.
Before, the offense carried only 30 days in jail, and was rarely
enforced, said Allen. He said the marrying of teenage girls was a
common practice among some of Utah's isolated polygamist
communities, until the state served notice it was cracking down.
Read more

Senator: Polygamy no laughing matter
By Paul Foy
Associated Press writer
Originally published Wednesday, January 19, 2005

SALT LAKE CITY -- Polygamy can bring snickers, but it's no
laughing matter, says a state senator who on Tuesday dropped copies
of the book "God's Brothel" on Utah legislators' desks. Democratic
state Sen. Ron Allen said he wants to dispel the notion that polygamy
in Utah is only "anecdotal - or even humorous." Thousands in Utah,
members of breakaway Mormon factions, quietly practice polygamy,
although it has been illegal for more than a century. The book is an
indictment of polygamy written by Andrea Moore-Emmett, president
of the Utah chapter of the National Organization for Women. She
compiled stories from 18 women who escaped from polygamous
marriages or families and told of rape, incest, orgies and violence.
"I'm passing this out with no grand agenda. I simply want legislators
to have more background on the problem," said Allen. The books
were donated by the publisher, Pince-Nez Press of San Francisco, he
said. Allen, the Senate's Democratic whip, helped enact a child
bigamy law in 2003 that made forced marriages of minors a
second-degree felony punishable by one to 15 years in prison.
Read more

Senate leader passes out a polygamy primer
Allen wants to keep issue on the minds of senators
By Josh Loftin and Nancy Perkins
Deseret Morning News
Originally published Wednesday, January 19, 2005

Although polygamy is not the subject of any legislative bills, Senate
Minority Whip Ron Allen hopes to keep the issue on the minds of
fellow senators. Joking that he wanted to give senators "something
to read on the bus" during their afternoon ride to Fillmore for Gov.
Jon Huntsman Jr.'s State of the State speech, Allen, D-Tooele,
distributed copies of "God's Brothel." He also hopes the book,
written by Andrea Moore-Emmett, tells the stories of former
polygamy, provides a new
perspective on an old debate, even if it is not something being tackled during this session. "We're just trying to raise the consciousness level of policy makers about what happens in these communities," Allen, who was distributing in cooperation with the author and publisher, said. "There's no agenda." Sen. Parley Hellewell, R-Orem, said that he was a little bothered by the book's subtitle, which referenced "Mormon and Christian Fundamentalist Polygamy." Regardless, he doubted that the book would receive any of his attention during the coming weeks. "I couldn't even tell what the book was about, and whether it was saying that Mormons practice polygamy — which they don't," he said. Read more

Polygamy, the next debate
Government launches urgent study as same-sex unions open door to Charter challenges claiming plural marriages are a religious right
By Chris Cobb
The Ottawa Citizen
Originally published Thursday, January 20, 2005

Just weeks before it introduces divisive same-sex marriage legislation, the federal government has launched an urgent study into the legal and social ramifications of polygamy. Critics say the study underscores a deep concern in the Martin government that legalized homosexual marriage may lead to constitutional challenges from minority groups who claim polygamy as a religious right. It also suggests that the government is suspicious that multi-marriage is more commonplace in Canada than widely realized. Polygamy, outlawed in Canada but accepted and practised in many countries, typically means a man having several wives at the same time. "In order to best prepare for possible debate surrounding Canada's polygamy policy, critical research is needed," says a Status of Women Canada document. "It is vital that researchers explore the impacts of polygamy on women and children and gender equality as well as the challenges that polygamy presents to society."

Conservative party justice critic Vic Toews says there is a direct link between the Status of Women concern and the same-sex marriage legislation due to be introduced by the government in February. "This government understands it has a problem on its hands," said Mr. Toews, a former Manitoba constitutional lawyer. "What they are looking for is evidence to demonstrate that polygamy is inconsistent with Charter and Canadian values. If I was a lawyer prosecuting a polygamist that's the type of evidence I would be looking for." Read more

Polygamy study unrelated to gay-marriage bill
Cotler: Federal agency looking at constitutionality of criminal charges at request of B.C.
By Tim Naumetz and Chris Cobb
canada.com
Originally published January 21, 2005

Justice Minister Irwin Cotler denied yesterday the government has launched a study into polygamy vs. the Charter of Rights out of fear a new law legalizing same-sex marriage may also open the door to legalized plural marriage. Cotler disclosed his department asked Status of Women Canada, a federal government agency, to commission a research project on the subject, but he said it was at the request of the British Columbia government in the wake of complaints about polygamy at a religious commune near Creston, B.C. "We don't see any connection - I repeat, any connection - between the issue of polygamy and the issue of same-sex marriage," Cotler told reporters. His department asked Status of Women to investigate the constitutionality of Criminal Code prohibitions against polygamy in light of charter guarantees of religious freedom. "The attorney-general of British Columbia and the British Columbia deputy minister asked us to look into this issue because there have been investigations, as you know, in British Columbia," Cotler added. "We don't know whether charges will be laid, but there is a question of constitutionality." Read more

Utah state lawmaker defends polygamy
The Associated Press
seattlepi.com
Originally published Saturday, January 22, 2005

SALT LAKE CITY -- A Republican state lawmaker countered a Senate colleague's dispersal of an anti-polygamy book by passing out materials to fellow legislators defending the practice as natural and not necessarily harmful. State Sen. Carlene Walker said she was offended by the book, "God's Brothel," that Democratic Senate Minority Whip Ron Allen distributed to legislators Tuesday. Walker said she has known polygamists who are "fine, honest, educated, wonderful people." "To characterize the whole polygamy community as abusive to children and the welfare system is inaccurate," she said. The book distributed by Allen and written by Salt Lake City author Andrea Moore-Emmett tells the stories of 18 women who claim they suffered rape, incest and violence in polygamous communities. "It's not fair to say we should ignore it," he said. Allen helped enact a child bigamy law in 2003 that made forced marriages of minors a second-degree felony punishable by one to 15 years in prison. The offense previously carried only a maximum punishment of 30 days in jail, and was rarely enforced. It's believed that tens of thousands in Utah and more than 30,000 across the West continue to practice polygamy.

Utah senator passes out pro-polygamy material
The Associated Press
KOLD.com
Originally published January 23, 2005

SALT LAKE CITY A Republican state lawmaker in Utah countered a Senate colleague's dispersal of an anti-polygamy book by passing out folders defending the practice. Senator Carlene Walker, of Cottonwood Heights, Utah, says she was offended by the title of the book "God's Brothel" that Senate Minority Whip Ron Allen distributed. She says she wanted to balance its views. The information she passed out came from a group of women near the Utah-Arizona state line who say it's unfair to characterize polygamists as "oppressed," "abused" or "brainwashed." Walker says she has known polygamists who are "fine," "honest" and "educated." Allen says people are misunderstanding his point of demonstrating abuses in polygamous relationships. He says he and he passed out 104 copies of the book to legislators because he wanted them to understand polygamy isn't harmless.

Canadian polygamy laws need to be reviewed: activist
CTV.ca News Staff
CTV.ca
Originally published January 26, 2005
Polygamous groups will continue to function without fear of punishment if the federal government does not review current laws, a former polygamous community member says. In 1988, Debbie Palmer left such a religious sect that practised polygamy. She told CTV’s Canada AM polygamous groups continue to survive in a "vacuum" because they do not anticipate punishment for these unions, which federal laws deem illegal. Palmer is currently with the Committee Concerned with Child Abuse in Polygamy. Palmer herself was only 15 years old when her father "assigned" her to marry a 55-year-old man in Bountiful, British Columbia. Palmer says she didn’t question the union and believed it to be a "really great thing." She was her husband's sixth wife. Some men in Bountiful have 30 wives, and as many as 80 children each, she says. "We really did believe that that was the right thing to do, particularly the aspect of being married to an older man," she said. "(Marrying) someone considered to be the leader for the Canadian polygamist group was a really great thing to happen to any young person." When her first husband passed away, she was assigned to marry another older man. It was only after there was a split in the leadership of the group and after Palmer noticed children being abused that she realized, "God could have nothing to do with what was happening. So I needed to get out of there with my children because they were being abused as well." Read more

PUBLIC NOTICE
Legal Announcements
cortezjournal.com
Originally published January 29, 2005

Those are two of the sister wives.” I gave the two women the once-over, noting that they both wore long dresses that hung down to their toes. They looked very pale. They kept to themselves, communicated in hushed tones and spoke to no one. This image remains in my head to this day. And so it was that I stumbled upon a virtually unannounced TV documentary called “Inside Polygamy” that aired on the A & E network at noon last Saturday. I began watching it with an open mind, but the program was shocking. Last Tuesday on CJAD radio, Kim Fraser interviewed a former "sister wife" who had escaped a polygamous relationship after 15 years and now denounces it. She gave listeners an earful. Previously, it was thought that polygamy was largely confined to Utah and Arizona; some pockets of B.C., and foreign countries. But the practice has apparently spread. On CJAD, the reformed "sister wife" explained that polygamy is far from being the utopia its practitioners pretend it to be. Read more

PUBLIC NOTICE

James W. Stewart (#3959)
Boyd L. Rogers (#10095)
BALLARD SPAHR ANDREWS & INGERSOLL, LLP
One Utah Center, Suite 600
201 South Main Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111-2221
Telephone: (801) 531-3000
Facsimile: (801) 531-3001
Attorneys for Plaintiff, Shem Fischer

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF UTAH, CENTRAL DIVISION


ORDER ON EX PARTE MOTION FOR SERVICE BY PUBLICATION
Case No. 2-02-CV-210K
Honorable Dale A. Kimball

Based on the Motion of Plaintiff, Shem Fischer, for service by publication, the Affidavit of Sam E. Brower, and the Court’s determination that the whereabouts of Defendant, Warren Jeffs, cannot be ascertained through reasonable diligence, that good cause exists to believe that Defendant Warren Jeffs is avoiding service of process and that the means of service outlined in Plaintiff’s Motion is reasonable calculated under all the circumstances to apprise him of the pendency of this action to the extent reasonably possible or practicable: Read more

YFZ parents greet arrival of newborn baby
The Eldorado Success
myeldorado.net
Originally published January 27, 2005

The population of the YFZ Ranch, which fluctuates up and down along with the ebb and flow of construction activity, grew by one permanent resident this week, following the arrival of a newborn baby. Confential sources close to the family tell the Success that the child was delivered last Thursday evening in a San Angelo hospital emergency room. Neither of the two San Angelo hospitals would confirm the event due to federal privacy rules. The Success has learned, however, that the 18-year-old mother-to-be was accompanied to the hospital by family members, including the baby's father and paternal grandparents. Representatives of Child Protective Services were reportedly contacted by hospital personnel when the baby's parents would not provide the health care workers with adequate information. CPS spokesperson Marleigh Meisner said that she was aware of developments at the YFZ Ranch but would neither confirm nor deny her agency’s involvement in connection with the newborn infant. Read more

All for one
By Dan Rosenburg
Le Soleil de Châteauguay - Quebec, Canada
Originally published January 29, 2005

A few years ago, a friend of mine pointed out a house a stone's throw from Chateauguay City Hall. She confided to me that the inhabitants were practising polygamy. For the uninitiated, polygamy is when the family patriarch has two wives or more. They and their kids (all from the same father) live under one roof, supposedly as one big, happy family. Although polygamy is against the law, the practitioners are apparently immune from prosecution, under the guise that this behaviour is part of their religion. When I took my friend grocery shopping a few days later, she nudged me, indicated two women standing in line at the cash, and whispered into my ear,
Read this book
Opinion
The Salt Lake Tribune
Originally published January 30, 2005

I am a criminal investigator with the Utah Attorney General's Office. From July 2000 through July 2004 I was the person the media referred to as the "Polygamy Czar." During that time I learned a lot about polygamy. I strongly encourage each of our legislators to take the time to read the book, God's Brothel by Andrea Moore-Emmett. There are some really fine people in the polygamous culture. There are also some really evil people in it. God's Brothel provides a glimpse into the evil side of the culture. Admittedly it is a one-sided view, but one that must be seriously examined. The people who are hurt the most are, unfortunately, those within that very culture. Most of the victims are children and women. They frequently have nowhere to go when they are victimized. Because they are living in violation of the law they are afraid to seek protection and to report their victimization. They are, in effect, denied the equal protection of the law. I believe it is our duty to protect the most vulnerable members of our society, women and children. They deserve the protection of the law just as much as anyone else. I hope our legislators, religious leaders and other civic and governmental leaders take the time to read God's Brothel. It's too easy to say that polygamy is a lifestyle that doesn't hurt anybody.

Ronald C. Barton
Salt Lake City

Utah Supreme Court to hear Holm's appeal
By Rachel Olsen
The Spectrum
Originally published February 1, 2005

ST. GEORGE -- A year and a half after conviction, with his sentence served, Rodney Holm, a former Hildale police officer convicted of bigamy and two counts of unlawful sexual conduct with a minor 16 or 17 years old will have his case heard before the Utah Supreme Court on Thursday. Holm's case -- involving the 1998 marriage of Holm to his third wife, his then-16-year-old sister-in-law -- was heard in August 2003 in the 5th District Court in St. George. A jury convicted him, a judge sentenced him in October 2003 and Holm completed his time in June, receiving credit for good time. Holm, 38, is from the Hildale-Colorado City area, a polygamous community, and is a follower of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints faith, which teaches polygamy in its doctrine. Holm's attorney, Rod Parker, said he hopes the appeal will raise the important issues to help officials see polygamy as Parker does -- a constitutionally protected relationship. He is not asking the court to recognize the institution as a legal marriage, only that from the privacy standpoint it would be a secured relationship, Parker said. "There's a lot of people in Utah practicing polygamy and they need to come to terms with that," he said in June. Read more

Some fear polygamists' story will end in Eldorado
By John MacCormack
San Antonio Express-News
Originally published February 2, 2005

ELDORADO — In the 10 months since the news broke that a sect of polygamists had bought a large ranch outside of town, pilot James Doyle has flown over it about 50 times, often with an out-of-town reporter riding shotgun. "It's a strange situation. We don't know much about them," said Doyle, 68, Schleicher County's only justice of the peace. "They don't let us inside, and they don't come to town to trade." "I just wish the damned old guys weren't here. I don't think any good is gonna come of it, but they haven't violated any laws," he mused. With the Eldorado Success publishing polygamist updates and site photos almost weekly, many of the county's scattered 3,000 residents maintain a working knowledge of their new neighbors. But despite the polygamy jokes in the coffee shops, many share Doyle's deep sense of unease. Also mentioned over coffee are Branch Davidian leader David Koresh, whose 1993 standoff with federal officers outside Waco ended with more than 70 fiery deaths. Read more

Polygamy backer is wrong
Opinion
Deseret Morning News
Originally published Wednesday, February 2, 2005

I am writing regarding the article "Leader passes out a polygamy primer" (Jan. 9). While the coverage of Senator Ron Allen's distribution of the anti-polygamy book "God's Brothel" is informative, the most gripping parts of the article were the comments from Mary Batchelor, director of pro-polygamy Principle Voices of Harmony. Central to her opinion is the view that the book "is no different than collecting stories of abuse from monogamous marriages and claiming that they represent the entire institution."
Here I must strongly disagree with Ms. Batchelor. Unlike the general monogamous population, polygamists are part of a religious system that preaches subordination and dehumanization of women. A religious group with these kinds of extremely sexist teachings is bound to be abusive toward females, far more than the general population.

Kim Burgess
Salt Lake City

Town of Colorado City
Public Hearing Regarding Use of CDBG Funds
Public Notice
The Spectrum
Originally published Wednesday, February 2, 2005

The Town of Colorado City is expected to receive approximately $354,122 in federal CDBG funds and potentially up to $300,000 in State Special Project funds beginning July 1. CDBG funds must be used to benefit low-income persons and areas, alleviate slum and blight or address urgent need. A public hearing will be held at 7:15 p.m. on February 14, 2005 at the Colorado City Town Hall, 25 South Central Street, Colorado City Arizona, to gather citizen input on the use of the CDBG funds.

Examples of possible uses include the following:
Public Infrastructure such as street paving or improvements to the water or sewer system
Community Facilities such as a park, health clinic, library, or a senior or youth center
Public Services, for example, equipment or rent to provide job training or to purchase a van for transport of disabled persons
Economic Development, such as creating a loan fund for business and job creation
These are examples of activities for which the Town of Colorado City can use federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds if the project primarily benefits low and moderate income persons, reduces slums or blight, or meets an urgent need or health hazard. Read more

Panel backs new power for state
The Associated Press
KOLD.com
Originally aired February 2, 2005

PHOENIX A divided House committee has endorsed a bill proposed in response to recent financial troubles of a polygamist community's school district whose teachers went unpaid. The proposal by Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne is a response to troubles of the Colorado City Unified School District. The bill was endorsed by the House Committee on K-12 Education today. It would give the state Board of Education the power to appoint a receiver to run districts deemed to be insolvent or grossly mismanaged. The committee's vote was 7-to-3, though some members who voted for the bill did so after voicing strong concerns that it goes too far.
Read the above mentioned Arizona House of Representatives Bill - HB 2417

A warning from B.C.: Polygamy law is weak

Province sought legal opinion on Bountiful, was told rights challenge would likely succeed
By Peter O'Neil, with files from Cristin Schmitz
The Vancouver Sun
Originally published Thursday, February 3, 2005

Canada's law prohibiting polygamy is vulnerable to a legal challenge and could be struck down because of a conflict with religious freedom, says B.C. Attorney General Geoff Plant. Mr. Plant, whose view is based on confidential legal opinions provided to the B.C. government on two occasions, said he has failed to convince the federal government to amend the anti-polygamy law. He said the legal opinions have played a major role in the refusal by police over many years to lay charges against polygamists in the B.C. community of Bountiful, where girls as young as 13 have allegedly been forced to become "celestial wives" of much older men. "There might well be a case where the court would have to deal with religious freedoms arguments, and I think there is at least some risk that those arguments might succeed," Mr. Plant said. He added, however, that he supports the current RCMP investigation into alleged Criminal Code offences in Bountiful. Read more

Could Polygamy Be Decriminalized?
By Ben Winslow
KSL NewsRadio 1160
Originally aired February 3, 2005

(KSL News) -- Utah's highest court is considering decriminalizing polygamy. Today the State Supreme Court justices questioned the constitutionality of Utah's bigamy law. Assistant Attorney General Laura Dupax argued against decriminalizing polygamy. "The bigamy statute prohibits multiple marriages at the same time. Marriage is a public institution, it's not private sexual conduct." The court took up the case of Rodney Holm, the Southern Utah police officer who was convicted of bigamy for having three wives. Holm's lawyer Rod Parker says, "We're not seeking to reconfigure the institution of marriage. We're not seeking civil recognition for polygamous marriages. We're simply seeking to have the conduct of these people decriminalized." Parker also argues that polygamy is a religious freedom.

Supreme Court questions Utah bigamy law in case against officer
By Travis Reed
KUTV.com
Originally aired February 3, 2005

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) Utah Supreme Court justices pounded state attorneys with questions Thursday in a convicted polygamist's appeal, suggesting at least some doubt over the state's 100-year-plus ban on the practice of plural marriage. Rodney Holm, a former police officer in the polygamous community of Hildale, was convicted of bigamy and illegal sex with a teenage girl that he had taken as a third wife. His lawyer, Rodney Parker, argued Thursday that polygamy is essential to Holm's religion, and barring him from practicing it violates his First Amendment rights. Polygamy is among the teachings of Mormon church founder Joseph Smith. But the practice was abandoned by the mainstream Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1890 as the Utah territory sought statehood. Still, it remains a prickly issue. It's believed that tens of thousands in Utah and more than 30,000 across the West continue the practice,
which the religion canonizes as the highest form of religious exaltation. Many of them are members of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, who live in the isolated twin border towns of Hildale and Colorado City, Ariz. "It's a large group of people, and your decisions in this case should not be based on stereotypes and anecdotal evidence ... That's all the state has," Parker told the court. Read more

How many doomsday predictions does one prophet get?
By Randy Mankin
The Eldorado Success
Originally published February 3, 2005

Winston Blackmore, known by many in the FLDS church as the Bishop of Bountiful, British Columbia, at least until he was excommunicated in 2002 by Prophet Warren Jeffs, posed some interesting thoughts this week. In a newsletter he publishes on the Internet, Blackmore pointed out a number of predictions Jeffs has made, all of which have failed to come true. Writing directly to Jeffs, Blackmore says, "I was so impressed when you told us that your father would live 320 years into the future that I could have bet it would happen. I was so impressed when you told us that when the DOW hit 9000 that it would be the ultimate end of the economy that I traded off my investments and gave you the money. When you predicted the end of the world in 98, I bought a generator. When you changed the date twice in 99 I bought another generator. When you changed the date to 2000, I traded again on a new, bigger one. When you called for last minute donations, I sold my generators and donated my thousands." But wait, it gets better. Blackmore continues, "I knew that the Olympics would never happen because you said it wouldn’t. I traveled hundreds of miles around Salt Lake City, stayed away from California, sold my trucking company, and gave the money because I believed." "Why did Uncle Rulon not live 320 years into the future? Why is the economy prospering while the DOW is beyond 10,000? Why did the Olympics happen? Why did you ruin the Barlows? Why the sacking of the UEP?" But Blackmore did more than take Jeffs to task for his erroneous predictions, he challenged the prophet’s decision to claim his dead father’s wives as his own and chastised him for his treatment of the FLDS faithful. Read more

Bigamy law debated
Justices ask if statute should be used to prosecute polygamists
By Geoffrey Fattah
Deseret Morning News
Originally published Friday, February 4, 2005

Justices with the Utah Supreme Court questioned Thursday whether state prosecutors should use Utah's bigamy statute to go after polygamists — a key law used to go after those who practice the controversial way of life. Justices have also called into question whether the passage in Utah's constitution banning polygamy, should be revisited, given modern changes in attitudes toward various kinds of sexual relationships. In a lengthy hearing, the attorney for former Hildale police officer Rodney Holm, who was prosecuted for taking his 16-year-old sister-in-law as his third "spiritual" wife, argued before the state's high court that prosecutors are selectively targeting polygamists using the bigamy statute because of their religious beliefs. "Non-religious actors are not targeted by law enforcement by this law," said attorney Rodney Parker, pointing to the various residents who live in non-married relationships. "Holm is not seeking legal recognition of his relationship or change the institution of marriage." Parker said Holm, who is a member of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — a polygamist group lead by Warren Jeffs — believes it is his constitutional right to practice his religion, which includes plural marriage. Read more

Utah Supreme Court hears polygamy appeal
By Rachel Olsen
The Spectrum
Originally published Friday, February 4, 2005

SALT LAKE CITY -- The Utah Supreme Court on Thursday heard the appeal of former Hildale police officer Rodney Holm, who is challenging the state's 100-plus-year-old prohibition on polygamy. Holm, who is a follower of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which teaches polygamy as part of its doctrine. The court's decision in this case could eventually affect the many individuals in Utah who practice polygamy as part of their religion, said Rod Parker, Holm's attorney. Holm's case is involving the 1998 marriage of Holm to his third wife, his then-16-year-old sister-in-law, which was originally heard in August 2003 in 5th District Court in St. George. A jury convicted him of bigamy and two counts of unlawful sexual conduct with a minor 16 or 17 years of age. A judge sentenced him in October 2003, and Holm, now 38, completed his jail time in June after receiving credit for good behavior. At the Supreme Court on Thursday, Parker argued that state prosecutors focused only on those breaking the law while practicing their religion. Assistant Utah Attorney General Laura Dupax said Thursday that Parker's claim that the state's prosecution is religiously motivated was unfounded. Dupax said the state prosecutors were motivated by the principles of the law. Read more

Marriage by the numbers
Some Canadians fear legalizing same-sex marriage will lead to court challenges over polygamy. The practice of men taking multiple wives has ancient roots in several faiths.
By Ron Casillag
The Toronto Star
Originally published February 5, 2005

If the federal Liberals had wanted to avoid tumbling on the slippery slope they insist doesn't link same-sex marriage to polygamy, they would have done well to heed Pierre Trudeau's maxim that the essential ingredient of politics is timing. Coincidentally, it was also the late prime minister who said there's no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation. But in announcing an urgent study last month into the legal and social ramifications of polygamy, just as the same sex controversy continued to boil, the government could not but create the impression the two are related. "We don't see any connection, I repeat, any connection between the issue of polygamy and the issue of same-sex marriage," justice minister Irwin Cotler told reporters. Cotler also noted that several Canadian courts have ruled the traditional definition of marriage as between one man and one woman is unconstitutional, but that having more than one spouse is a crime. Still, critics noted that the so-called floodgates fear spooked Prime Minister Paul Martin into ordering the study, one they say reflects a deep-seated fear that legalized homosexual marriage could lead to court challenges from groups claiming polygamy (and other fringe practices) as a religious right. "If I was a lawyer defending polygamists, I'd say 'This is a constitutional right, a
freedom of religion," said Conservative party justice critic Vic Toews. The Liberals insisted the polygamy study was ordered at the request of British Columbia, which is probing complaints of the practice at the religious commune of Bountiful, near the B.C. interior town of Creston. Bountiful was quietly set up in 1947 after a few men excommunicated by the mainstream Mormon Church in Utah moved north. Today the 1,000-odd residents are said to be the offspring of six men.  

Read more

High court cases not about religion
By Todd Seifert
The Spectrum
Originally published Sunday, February 6, 2005

Two recent Utah Supreme Court cases have put polygamy back in the spotlight -- that is, if the controversial topic ever exited the stage. Early last week, the state's highest court upheld polygamist Tom Green's conviction on child-rape charges involving a 13-year-old girl. Later in the week, justices heard arguments in the Rodney Holm appeal. A jury convicted the former Hildale police officer of bigamy and of having sex with his then-16-year-old spiritual wife when Holm was 32 years old. The attorneys for Green and Holm did an admirable job of arguing their cases. They raised questions regarding jurisdiction and other factors in an attempt to clear their clients. But one of the most fascinating arguments is the issue of prosecuting people for practicing their religious beliefs. That rationale provokes some thought because all of us hold tight to the rights guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution. None of us wants the government telling us what to do, especially regarding faith and beliefs. It's true that the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints -- to which Holm belongs -- steps outside the norm with the tenet of polygamy.  

Read more

Supervisors OK bypass study
By Jim Seckler
Mohave Daily News
Originally published Monday, February 7, 2005

KINGMAN - The Mohave County Board of Supervisors approved Monday the state Route 95 realignment study finalized late last year. The county, along with the state Department of Transportation and the federal Bureau of Land Management, conducted a study on where to put a new highway that will connect Highway 68 with Interstate 40 at the Highway 95 exit. After several public hearings, ADOT recommended the best route for the highway in October. The limited-access highway will be built east of Bullhead City and Mohave Valley but avoiding the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge near Golden Shores. More than 30,000 cars a day travel on the existing highway. The development of Laughlin Ranch and other subdivisions are also destined to double or triple Bullhead City's population. ADOT will now create a design concept and an environmental impact statement, which should take several years. The highway is expected to take more than a decade to complete. In other action, the Board approved a request by Thunder Lanes bowling alley for an off-track betting license.  

Read more

Warren Jeffs 'notified by publication' in connection with federal civil suit
By Tom Vaughan
Mancos Times Editor

Warren Jeffs is back in newspapers again. This time the prophet of the Fundamentalist Church of Latter-day Saints is in the legal notices, instead of the front page. For the second time, Jeffs is being served notice by publication that he is being sued in a Utah court, and he needs to make his whereabouts known to defend himself. The first time this happened was in late November, when legal notices regarding the sexual molestation charges brought by Brent Jeffs in a civil suit in Utah state court were published in the Cortez Journal, as well as in newspapers in St. George, Utah; Creston, British Columbia; and Eldorado, Texas. In the current instance, the notice relates to a federal civil suit brought by Shem Fischer in Utah, alleging religious discrimination on the grounds that he was fired from his job because he became an apostate from the FLDS group. This notice was not run in British Columbia. No such notice has been seen yet for a third civil suit, the "Lost Boys" suit, brought in a Utah state court on behalf of six young men who allege Warren Jeffs and other defendants wrongly excommunicated them from the FLDS and damned them to perdition. The "lost boys" claim they were kicked out to reduce the competition for young FLDS women to be taken as plural wives for older men in the polygamous sect.  

Read more

FLDS Church Building a Temple in Texas
By Ben Winslow
KSL NewsRadio 1160
Originally broadcast February 8, 2005

(KSL News) -- Mysterious temple is appearing in rural Texas. It's being built by a Southern Utah polygamous church. Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran says residents in the area are growing concerned. "The community's concerned just by their mere presence being here and it appears to be growing quite large out there. So there's definitely concern as to what the future holds." Doran says the Fundamentalist LDS Church temple is four stories high, rectangular with turrets. He tells KSL Newsradio the group hasn't allowed them access to the temple site itself, saying it's "holy." FLDS church leader Warren Jeffs is the target of a criminal investigation by Utah's Attorney General.  

Read more

Residents of polygamous community thankful for investigator
The Associated Press
KOLD.com
Originally broadcast February 10, 2005

KINGMAN, Ariz. Four Colorado City residents wrote letters to the Mohave County attorney thanking him for having an investigator work in their polygamous community. One of the letters predicted "there will be bloodshed" unless there's outside intervention. But another notes many of the most devout members of a local cult are moving elsewhere. The Mohave County Supervisors hired an investigator last October. Much of the work has focused on the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its leader, Warren Jeffs. Jeffs presides over the border towns of Hildale, Utah, and Colorado City, where men have multiple wives and dozens of children. He's also accused of hiding wide-scale sexual abuse of children.  

Progress in troubled community
COLORADO CITY, Ariz. – The hard work, frustration and time are paying off in the troubled community of Colorado City. According to Mohave County Attorney Matt Smith, his office has received six or seven letters from residents of the town expressing their feeling of trust and confidence in special investigator Gary Engels. "They (residents) feel that Warren Jeffs is ruling by intimidation and it's nice to have Gary's presence up there," said Smith. Smith added he thinks the pressure being exerted both investigatively and privately through hot lines and tips is having an effect and cites Jeffs lack of visibility in the area and the movement of some church members to a compound in El Dorado, Texas.

Panel to probe polygamy
Former child bride a feature speaker
By Dean Pritchard
The Winnipeg Sun
Originally published February 15, 2005

When 15-year-old Debbie Palmer was told she was to become the sixth wife of a man 40 years her senior, it never occurred to her the union was anything but ordinary. Raised in Bountiful, B.C., since she was two, Palmer had been taught her role in life was to serve her husband and raise children. "It was not considered unusual at all," said Palmer, now 49. "We were just taught to believe we were in God's protected community." Seventeen years later Palmer would flee the fundamentalist Mormon community forever after several of her children complained of abuse at the hands of male elders. Palmer, co-author of the book Keep Sweet — Children of Polygamy, will be the featured speaker Friday at the Fort Garry Hotel for a presentation and roundtable discussion on the sexual exploitation of children in polygamy. The event, which is sold out and will include speakers on both sides of the polygamy debate, is organized by Beyond Borders, Child Find Manitoba, Soroptimist International, UNIFEM and the Council of Women. Read more

Judge dismisses challenge to Utah ban on polygamy
He says those who filed lawsuit face an insurmountable hurdle
By Angie Welling
Deseret Morning News
Originally published Thursday, February 17, 2005

With a handful of court rulings over the past century upholding the constitutionality of Utah's ban on polygamy, those who choose to contest the prohibition face "an insurmountable hurdle," a federal judge said Wednesday. With that, U.S. District Judge Ted Stewart dismissed a lawsuit brought last year by three Utahns — a married couple and the man's would-be second wife — challenging the state's bigamy law and seeking a court order directing the issuance of a marriage license for the man and second woman. The trio sued Salt Lake County Clerk Sherrie Swensen in January 2004, claiming their constitutional rights to free exercise of religion, of association and to privacy were violated by the Dec. 22, 2003, denial of a marriage license. Attorney Brian Barnard said he intends to appeal the decision — in which, he said, Stewart offers "little or no discussion or explanation" of his reasoning — to the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Noting that challenges to the constitutionality of Utah's bigamy laws are "not a new question before the courts," Stewart cited rulings that have repeatedly found the prohibition on polygamy to be in line with the U.S. Constitution. Read more

Federal judge upholds Utah's ban on polygamy
Associated Press
azzcentral.com
Originally published February 17, 2005

SALT LAKE CITY - A federal judge has upheld Utah's ban on polygamy as it applies to issuing marriage licenses. U.S. District Judge Ted Stewart emphasized his ruling was about marriage — not about personal sexual conduct. Stewart's ruling Wednesday upheld the decision of the Salt Lake County Clerk's Office to refuse a marriage license for a couple in which the man was seeking a second wife. Stewart rejected the argument that Utah's prohibition on polygamy was an unconstitutional violation of religious and privacy rights and he ruled that the state has an interest in protecting monogamous marriage. He cited rulings upholding Utah's polygamy laws stretching back to an 1878 U.S. Supreme Court ruling upholding the polygamy conviction of George Reynolds, personal secretary to Mormon pioneer leader Brigham Young. Stewart said the Lawrence v. Texas ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, which overturned an anti-sodomy law as a violation of the privacy of consenting adults, grants no right to plural marriage in Utah. Read more

Lawyer Petitions for Control of Financial Empire
KSL TV Channel 5
ksl.com
Originally broadcast February 17, 2005

(KSL News) -- A legal knot is tightening around the nation's most powerful polygamist leader. In an unprecedented move late Thursday a lawyer petitioned a judge to take charge of the financial empire controlled by Warren Jeffs. Jeffs is the secretive leader of the polygamy group based in Hildale, Utah and Colorado City, Arizona. Most of the community's homes, property and financial assets are held in a trust that Jeffs controls. It's reportedly worth tens of millions of dollars. Seven young men who were kicked out are suing Jeffs for racketeering and sexual abuse. Their lawyers have tentative backing from Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff. They want the court to appoint new managers for the financial assets. Roger Hoole, Attorney for Plaintiffs: "And so initially we want to make sure the trust is under good management and the trust is not being used as a tool to kick young men out of their homes." Jeffs has apparently moved his headquarters to a remote area of Texas where followers are building a large temple.

The Texas Prophecy - A Special Report
John Hollenhorst Reporting
KSL TV Channel 5
Originally broadcast February 17, 2005

The biggest drain on the FLDS bank account in recent weeks is a seemingly frenzied construction project on a remote ranch in Texas. It's believed to be the first polygamist temple and it's setting off alarm bells. John Hollenhorst flew over the site in West Texas and brings us the exclusive story. It's not just the spending that has people
worrying. It's the astounding speed of the project. Some believe Warren Jeffs has created a dangerous atmosphere by setting a deadline: his own "Texas Prophecy" of the end of the world. The temple looms over Texas ranchland, as tall as a seven-story building and big enough to hold an enormous congregation. Sam Brower, Private Detective: "I think that Warren Jeffs is thinking that this is the New Jerusalem. He's building the temple there." When the secretive FLDS church bought the property and named it Yearning For Zion, they said they were planning a hunting retreat. Randy Mankin, Owner-Editor, The Eldorado Success: "They lied to us about the purpose they were coming here for." Read more

B.C. polygamists support bid to raise age of consent for sex from 14 to 16
Broadcast News
The Vancouver Sun
Originally published Friday, February 18, 2005

WINNIPEG -- A proposal to raise the age of consent for sex got some enthusiastic support from an unexpected source Friday. Fifteen women from Bountiful, British Columbia, a fundamentalist Mormon community that practices polygamy, travelled to Winnipeg to defend their lifestyle at a conference on child brides. Marlene Palmer, who is her husband's third wife, said only a quarter of the men in the community have more than one wife, and very few of those women are young teenagers. But she says raising the age of consent to 16 from 14 would help stop girls from having sex too soon and marrying against their parents wishes. The federal government has introduced a bill that would let judges declare that a youth between the ages of 14 and 18 is being exploited. But organizers of the conference, including Child Find and Beyond Borders, want the age of consent raised to 16.

B.C. polygamists want age of consent raised
News Staff
CTV.ca
Originally published February 18, 2005

Fifteen women from a polygamous community in British Columbia made a rare public appearance Friday, to voice their support for a proposal to raise the age of consent in Canada. The woman travelled from Bountiful, B.C., to Winnipeg, Manitoba to speak out at a conference on sexual exploitation and child brides. "It will really help us a lot," one of the women told a roundtable that included police, teachers and child rights advocates. "Come on, children are children. I know as a mother with younger girls I encourage my girls not to get married too young." The women wanted their views heard because they knew Debbie Palmer would be attending. Palmer grew up in Bountiful. At the age of 15 she became the third wife of a man 40 years her senior. Seventeen years later she left the community, spurred by her childrens' complaints of abuse at the hands of male elders and her own suspicions that young girls were being sent as child brides to polygamous communities south of the border. Two decades on, Debbie Palmer is still concerned. Read more

Suit by dissidents seeks new trustees for assets of FLDS
Polygamous church: The plaintiffs claim the trust that controls the property of thousands is in "disarray"
By Pamela Manson
The Salt Lake Tribune

Originally published February 19, 2005

Contending a polygamous church trust that controls the property of thousands of its members is in "disarray," dissidents on Friday asked a Utah judge to appoint substitute trustees and a receiver to stop what they claim is a waste of assets. Without intervention, the homes and livelihoods of thousands of people in Utah, Arizona and Canada could be endangered, the former members of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints say in a motion filed in 3rd District Court. "The only real way to protect the trust for the benefit of the people is for the court to appoint substitute trustees who are able and willing to carry out its intended purposes," the motion says. "Basically the idea behind it is our clients want to go home to visit their parents without fear of being kicked out," said Sam Brower, a private investigator working with the plaintiffs' attorneys. The motion pertains to two pending suits that name as defendants the FLDS; its president, Warren Jeffs; and the United Effort Plan Trust (UEP) and seek monetary damages. One was filed in July 2004 by Brent Jeffs accusing three of his uncles, including Warren Jeffs, of sexually assaulting him when he was a child and calling it "God's work." A month later, a group of young men who call themselves the Lost Boys sued over what they allege was their banishment from the community as a way to perpetrate the practice of polygamy. Read more

Attorneys ask for trustees of FLDS finances
By Rachel Olsen
The Spectrum
Originally published Saturday, February 19, 2005

ST. GEORGE -- New trustees are being requested for the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' financial arm, United Effort Plan, by the same attorneys representing individuals bringing lawsuits against the church, its leaders and the UEP. The request comes because the trust is not defending itself in the lawsuits in which it is named as a defendant. In December, the longtime attorney for the FLDS church, Rod Parker, and the Snow, Christensen & Martineau law firm petitioned the court to be released from representing the FLDS church and the UEP in the two lawsuits recently filed against the entities and other individual parties, including FLDS prophet Warren Jeffs. One lawsuit was filed by a nephew of the FLDS prophet who alleged that FLDS leaders, including Jeffs, sexually abused him. Jeffs denied those claims in a written statement issued from his then-lawyer. The other case Parker asked to be removed from involves a group known as the "Lost Boys," male individuals who claim they were kicked out of their homes in the predominately FLDS area of Hildale and Colorado City. Sam Brower, a private investigator hired to find Jeffs, said the request of new trustees for the UEP would free people. Read more

Utah, Arizona target polygamist's finances
By Joseph A. Reaves
The Arizona Republic
Originally published February 19, 2005

The self-proclaimed prophet of the nation's largest polygamous community could lose his greatest powers under a motion filed in a Salt Lake City court. The motion seeks to remove Warren Jeffs as head of United Effort Plan, a private trust that controls virtually all land, housing and financial assets in the twin towns of Colorado City,
Ariz., and Hildale, Utah. The move is the latest and potentially most significant crackdown against the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, a breakaway sect, which, unlike the mainstream Mormon religion, practices polygamy. "What we've really done is start a process, but it's a big thing," said Roger Hoole, the attorney who filed the motion late Thursday in Utah's 3rd District Court. Hoole represents seven defendants from a previous lawsuit against the sect. Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard and his counterpart in Utah, Mark Shurtleff, are working closely with Hoole. Shurtleff's office filed papers in support of Hoole's motion this week. Goddard said his office planned to do the same early next week.

"The trust has been this apparently impenetrable insulation around the FLDS," Goddard said. "We have an opportunity now to get the court to do the right thing." Because the trust owns virtually all land and housing, Jeffs decides who lives in Colorado City and Hildale. He uses that power as one way to control his estimated 6,000 to 10,000 followers.

Polygamy is an 'insult' to populace
Letters
The Spectrum
Originally published Sunday, February 20, 2005

To the editor:

To the male leaders and those who follow polygamy as a religion or otherwise, I feel it is an insult to the general male population. The way the male leaders and their followers treat their wives, mothers, daughters and children, in dress and otherwise -- yet you see no alteration in the male ways or dress to distinguish them from the general public! Our wives, mothers, daughters and children are our most treasured and loved family members and should be treated as such! There have been several instances of mismanagement of their schools, so that only their way of life and teachings are permitted.

Should we stand for this? Several months ago, many young males (boys) were turned out of their homes -- was it so the young girls could be married to older males? Was it so that the general public had to take over their care and responsibilities, and save them these expenses and care? Are our elected officials, in their capacity as responsible members of their profession, neglecting to serve as elected? Can't more be done to correct these injustices and others, especially in Southern Utah and Northern Arizona, or is their lawyer too smart for those representing us?

Errol G. Brown
Kanab

Top of page

For more information email: ChildBrides.org
"Religion" is no excuse for committing child abuse
Copyright © 2004-2005 Hope for the Child Brides
Site Map
Barlows
Living locally - St. George. “Rolled over and played dead.” Left their families. Warren had something to blackmail them with. Dan is level headed - there’s no question about it. Old Short Creek school house where everyone was standing during the raid. UEP owned it (bid it out) public library for years and years. Dan made a little museum out of it commemorating the raid. No where near completed with dissertations on tape. On 26 July 2003 had a dedication of the museum (50 years after). St. George mortuary donated a little monument - 2 1/2 feet by 14 inches by 7 inches - looked like a headstone. Engraved commemorating the raid. One week later Warren Jeffs “gave them holy hell” - city council had not business doing that. Read a revelation. Alvin Barlow is going to resign as School Superintendent. Richard Allred is the new mayor. (Son of Rulon Allred and mother is Rulon Jeffs sister). First cousin to Warren Jeffs. Louis died recently. Louis Revelation - dream by a young man - no put out as a revelation. Came through an anonymous letter through the mail.

“Hundreds” have been kicked out to “repent from afar” and retain the expectation that they will be able to return. Taken kids and wives and given them to another.

Eldorado
Building like “great guns” - in contact with the Sheriff of the town. Name is David Doran Sheriff of Sliker County (sp). Weekly newspaper on the internet. “Eldorado Success” Randy Opinion “YFZ” plan to be “lifted up.”

Richard Allred lives in Warren’s compound in Colorado. One of Leroy’s sons lives in Warren’s house. “I think Warren’s in Mexico.” Compound in Mexico...

Rodney Holm
Uncertified as a Law Enforcement Officer.

Shem Fischer - kicked out of FLDS
Dan Fischer - Holladay - Dentist - former FLDS polygamist - now a monogamist. Guaranteed 2,000,000 to attorneys to push through law suit. Has a dental lab in Sandy.

Warren’s Sons of Helaman - search homes for literature and people get kicked out.

Banks to Foreclosures on Mortgages -
Fled Jessop - in Eldorado? Kidnapped by Warren before kicking out Barlows
Ever since Warren Jeffs' ascension to prophet, things had been difficult for the entire community. For starters, it had been dogma among the faithful that Uncle Rulon—though he was past 90 and in terrible health—would never die. Warren Jeffs, a pedantic, humorless, former religious schoolteacher, had been the leading proponent of this view, and, it was said, would have his father excommunicate anyone who suggested otherwise. Since being able to toss aside the veneer of acting in his father's name, Jeffs had grown increasingly unpredictable. He'd recently ordered a local historical monument destroyed. Then he'd canceled religious services indefinitely. And, in recent months, in addition to the 10 percent tithe, he'd been demanding monthly donations from families, ranging from $500 to $1,000. Most disconcerting, Jeffs was expelling increasing numbers of men from town without explanation.

Still, the January 10 gathering had been just a regular Saturday morning projects meeting—where the men in the sect came together to plan various improvements around town—before Jeffs, 48, arrived with his omnipresent entourage of toughs and called the men up.

"We wasn't exactly excommunicated," says one of the men exiled that day, who, like most people connected to FLDS, would only speak to me anonymously. "We was told to leave town, and they took our wives and children from us. We were told to leave town and not come back until we repented." Of course, there was a major caveat; God had secretly told Jeffs what each man's sins were, and they were to write letters of confession and repentance to Jeffs, which had to match what God had to say on the subject.

According to another FLDS member present, Jeffs, after making this announcement, turned to the other men at the gathering: "This is a benevolent dictatorship. But I would like anyway to see a show of hands of those who support me in cutting these men off." Only four men refused to back Jeffs, and the outraged prophet let them know: "God is taking this down."

But that was the only visible sign of dissent. Within hours, the men, though many of those expelled were senior citizens who had spent their entire adult lives in the community, mostly followed Jeffs orders by moving out of town—leaving behind their possessions, wives and children to be reassigned by the prophet to those men who were still in his good graces.

UNWANTED ATTENTION

Jeffs' actions did, however, have repercussions for this isolated community of his approximately 6,000 followers, which straddles the Utah/Arizona border: an anonymous letter appeared proclaiming that a brother of the deposed mayor was the true prophet, and, more disconcertingly, teenage girls—their male relatives expelled by Jeffs—began fleeing town, fearing abuse and forced plural marriages to older men. State authorities began to examine not only the claims made by the runaways, but also to look into other allegations, such as widespread welfare abuse among FLDS members, as well as massive misuse of public money, particularly funds for the public schools, to benefit FLDS causes and members. Such outside scrutiny was as unprecedented in Colorado City as it was unwelcome. Longtime critics and dissidents of the sect note that, even before incorporating in 1985, the leadership of the FLDS—affectively obliterating the Constitution's distinction between church and state—has been allowed to run the affairs of Colorado City with complete autonomy. From the police force to the school board to the mayor's office, almost everyone with public authority in Colorado City answers to Warren Jeffs. Or, as The National Enquirer put it with characteristic
subtletly: "A cult-run town where the incestuous rape of underage girls is not uncommon flourishes in the Southwest desert—and your tax dollars are helping pay for it!" Other media, too began to descend on Colorado City, including me.

YOUR VERSION AND MY VERSION WOULD BE TOTALLY DIFFERENT

Colorado City is not a city. Most of the roads are still unpaved. There is no bar, coffee shop, movie theatre, miniature golf, bowling alley or even a gym. The prophet does not approve of magazines, music compact discs, DVD movies, newspapers, condoms or alcohol, and the few shops in town don't sell them. There is a supermarket at the center of Colorado City, with posted instructions at the register telling the customers to have their welfare cards ready. The customers are all women, many pregnant, marshalling along their broods of children. As with most things here, there is a total conformity to the dress code among the women of Colorado City: homemade outfits—which looked cribbed from Little House on the Prairie—that cover head to toe, no makeup and long, mop-colored hair pulled tightly back.

Of course, the fact that the women all look the same is the result of more than just fashion. Decades of inbreeding are starting to show through, and many of the residents of Colorado City have high foreheads, ruddy cheeks and in various other ways bear an unhealthy resemblance to museum paintings of European nobility near the bitter end of empire. When one former sect member traced part of her family tree for me, it looked like a football play, with lines of relation running up and down and back and forth. Talk to natives of Colorado City about their family and you quickly learn terms like "double cousin," which refers to someone who is a cousin on both the maternal and paternal sides.

So it is no surprise to discover that the town clerk, Kevin Barlow, whose office is just around the corner from the supermarket, is the nephew of the deposed mayor. In fact, according to dissidents, Jeffs' excommunications have been directed at consolidating power away from the Barlow family. The Barlows have lived in this area since the polygamist activist John Y. Barlow, the town's first recognized leader, began settling his family here in 1940, back when it was still known as Short Creek and was populated by a handful of extended families that practiced plural marriage.

Until recently, a Barlow ran the local police, there was a Barlow on the Hildale City Council, and another Barlow was superintendent of the Colorado City Unified School District. But times have changed for the family dynasty. Three of the former mayor's brothers and one nephew were tossed out with him. Of course, that still leaves plenty of Barlows in Colorado City; and if Kevin Barlow was concerned about the way things are going for his clan, he didn't show it when we met.

In fact, Barlow, sorting mail at a long table, much of it addressed to his deposed uncle, not a computer or phone in sight, insisted with a constant smile and through gritted teeth that the real story is that there is no story in Colorado City. The only problem in Colorado City is that press people like me are stirring up trouble. "Right now, there's such a media hype and gossip and rumor mill that it is absolutely oppressive to a people who are trying to live their lives in a way that is between them and God," he says.

"Do you know anyone who is a local history buff," I ask, "who would know everything about the town's history?"

"Not that I would refer you to."

"So, do you know someone who you wouldn't refer me to?"

He laughs.

"Is there anyone you can refer me to who can talk about Colorado City."

"No."

"Do you think anyone will talk to me?"

"I doubt that."

"Is this the best interview I am going to get?"

"That's right, and it's going to be a very poor one at that."

I believed him, though, of course, I planned to try talking to FLDS members anyway. Only problem: To ask questions I first needed to find the people.

"What's there to do here in Colorado City?" I ask Barlow.

He laughs again. "Your version and my version of something to do would be totally different."

"That's fine, I want to do your version. So, what is there to do here?"

"As far as recreation, there is hiking."

"What about social recreation."

"No," Barlow says. "We're a very family-based community."

"So, most people leave work and then go directly to their families?"

"Yes."

"Are there any central gathering points where people just hang out?"

"Not really."

Oliver Barlow, a school district official, arrived at the town clerk's office as my colleague, Kate Silver, and I were leaving. Asked if he'd be willing to answer a few questions, he replied: "I'm sure Kevin's told you everything you need to know."

Except for church dissidents and anti-polygamy activists, the only person to talk to me during my first trip to Colorado City was a policeman who showed up within moments when Kate began taking photographs of the supermarket from the sidewalk. His name: Officer Barlow. He didn't stop Kate from taking pictures. But he didn't leave either, not until Kate finished.

LESSONS OF THE SHORT CREEK RAID

The most important event in the history of Colorado City (then called Short Creek) took place on July 26, 1953, when Arizona Gov. Howard Pyle ordered a raid on the town. One hundred twenty-two people were arrested; 263 of their children were placed in the foster-care system. Among the many accusations that triggered the raid were statutory rape, bigamy and misappropriating school funds.
In his self-published book The Polygamists: A History of Colorado City, local historian and former FLDS member Ben Bistline concludes: "The polygamists, in some degree, were guilty of almost all of these charges." Nonetheless, the raid was a public-relations disaster, as the incident was widely portrayed in the press as unwarranted religious persecution by the state. Gov. Pyle lost his reelection bid the next year, and within a few years everyone arrested was out of jail, and the children were all returned to their families.

The result of what became known as the Short Creek Raid was that Arizona and Utah authorities learned a lesson, and essentially developed a hands-off policy for the next 50 years. According to Jay Beswick of Help the Child Brides, an organization that aids children forced into plural marriages, until quite recently, authorities routinely ignored complaints of child abuse from Colorado City. Often, runaways who did escape FLDS and Colorado City would be taken back and turned over to the local police. Of course, that was the equivalent of returning them to the FLDS. This was a point that became painfully clear in August, when one former Colorado City police officer, Rodney Holm, was convicted of bigamy and unlawful sexual contact with one of his teenage plural wives. Holm's conviction and Jeffs' excommunications—and the media attention both have generated—helped make it so that the outside authorities could no longer ignore events in Colorado City. Last week, Mohave County and the State of Arizona approved $200,000 to place a police substation in Colorado City, which would include space for Arizona Child Protective Services and Arizona attorney general's office.

Even before these events, though, the FLDS was beginning to feel heat thanks to a serialized investigation that began appearing in the Phoenix New Times last March. Reporter John Dougherty laid out how the FLDS was, in essence, continuing all of the practices that had resulted in the original Short Creek Raid. Dougherty also documented how Jeffs—through the church trust, United Effort Plan, which owns almost all of the land in Colorado City—has been able not only to excommunicate people but also evict them from their homes at will. Dougherty also uncovered a birth certificate that suggested Warren Jeffs fathered a child with one of his spiritual wives before she had reached the age of consent.

One of the few subjects town clerk Kevin Barlow was willing to talk about at length was the Short Creek Raid and its relevance today. "It's like right here in America," Barlow said. "The state comes in and tries to annihilate a people for their beliefs. That doesn't go away very quickly." According to Barlow, the Short Creek Raid was not an isolated incident, either. "There's been a continuation, before and since," he says. He once again sees reporters as the primary instigator of the recent problems because of the "absolute lies" that get published. But it isn't the lies in the press that primarily concern him. "Where it has become oppressive is that the state officials suck up on it like it was truth, to the point where that's what they base their decisions on." Asked if he fears another raid like the one in 1953, Barlow replies, perhaps, referring to the runaway girls, "Well, you read the most recent newspapers as late as this morning. They're stealing our children." Asked to elaborate, he demurs.

A MONUMENTAL ERROR

In the face of increasing inspection from the outside world, the Colorado City civic leadership decided to once again call up a talisman of the Short Creek Raid to send a reminder to any government officials who may think to interfere in the affairs of the town. On July 26, the 50th anniversary of the raid, Mayor Dan Barlow—who as a 21 year-old had been one of the men arrested—presided over the dedication of a monument and museum to the event. Most of the town showed up and a press release even invited outsiders to come learn about the Short Creek Raid. "There was a slide show and music," says an FLDS member present at the dedication ceremony. "It was a nice show and good entertainment."

But Mayor Barlow and the others gathered for the ceremony had unknowingly made a serious mistake. Warren Jeffs had not been consulted. According to an FLDS member familiar with all sides, "They didn't communicate with him and allow him to have his say. It was more of a civic thing. They unintentionally offended Warren." Of course, a glance at the inscription on the monument should have reminded Mayor Barlow that nothing is just a civic thing in Colorado City:

"The Prophet Leroy S. Johnson stood on this site with the people and met the raiding police officers. He later declared the deliverance of the people in 1953 as one of the greatest miracles of all time."

Jeffs was furious. Maybe it also rubbed him that his immediate family had no connection to "one of the greatest miracles of all time." (Jeffs moved from his home near Salt Lake City to the Hildale/Colorado City area in the late '90s.) "Warren told them to grind the monument into powder and sprinkle it in the hills and turn all of the museum artifacts and the slide show to him." Jeffs then cancelled all religious ceremonies for FLDS members and went into seclusion until reemerging at the January 10 meeting.

THE SECRET OF HIS SUCCESSION

Warren Jeffs

During the many years that Leroy S. Johnson, Uncle Roy, had been the prophet, succession was not an issue, as it was a matter of dogma among FLDS members that Uncle Roy would never die. Though the FLDS has always had a leader, according to Ben Bistline's history, originally most decisions were made in consultation with a council of elders. But Bistline's book documents how, secure in the belief in Uncle Roy's immortality, two things slowly happened: the belief in absolute one-person rule—that person being Uncle Roy—began to take root as doctrine, and it was easy for FLDS members to turn their land over to UEP, which to them meant giving it to the stewardship of Uncle Roy. So Roy's death in 1986, at age 98, came as something of a shock to the devout. Soon, two factions formed; the larger one was lead by Rulon Jeffs, a retired CPA from near Salt Lake City. Jeffs excommunicated all the members of the opposing faction, damning them to hell and ordering them kicked off of FLDS property.

Soon Uncle Rulon was installed as the immortal prophet. But after the initial uproar, little changed, as for most of his tenure Uncle Rulon left the affairs of Colorado City to the Barlows while he remained up near Salt Lake City. But his pretense of eternal life did not stop Uncle Rulon from frequently seeing the world as about to end. According to one FLDS member: "Rulon Jeffs had prophesied that Salt Lake City was going to be destroyed and had moved everyone down to Colorado City before the Olympics, because the Olympics would never be happening." Another time, after a wind had damaged the roof of a mainstream LDS church in Salt Lake, Jeffs again predicted the end of the world. Finally, as the millennium rolled around, Uncle Rulon once again fled to Colorado City to escape the apocalypse. "The entire community was moved out of Salt
Lake City by the end of January 2000, and the final destruction was supposed to happen," says the FLDS member. The world didn't expire, but Uncle Rulon did. After years of poor health caused by a stroke, Rulon Jeffs died at age 92 in September 2002.

SECT EDUCATION

Before Rulon’s death made Warren Jeffs God’s sole prophet on Earth, he ran his father’s private school, Alta Academy in Sandy, Utah. Cassette tapes of classes taught by Jeffs to sixth- to eighth-graders are frightening. Among his most troubling views are that women and black people are cursed by God. Predictably, women must atone by serving their husbands, and blacks must atone by serving white people. In November 1995, Jeffs explained to students why only Uncle Rulon can decide wedding matches:

“If you young people were to marry a Negro, you could not be a priesthood person, even if you repented. You could not stay in this work. ... Today, you can see a black man with a white woman ... A great evil has happened on this land because the devil knows that if all the people have Negro blood, there will be nobody worthy to have the priesthood. The devil is trying to get people to go out and marry and mix with the world, even different colored people. That is why we marry only who the prophet says—because if you marry anybody out in the world, there's a chance they could have Negro blood in them.”

In July 2002, at the behest of Warren Jeffs, who claimed to be speaking for Rulon, all the FLDS parents pulled their children from the public schools (the FLDS retained control of the public school system, attended by a few non-sect members). Ever since, the children have either been home-schooled or gone to private FLDS schools. In both cases, according to former FLDS members, the cassettes of Warren Jeffs' old lectures at Alta Academy are still used as popular training tapes to help educate the young.

Former students describe Jeffs as fanatical and mean. He was also remarkably unforgiving of even the littlest things. One recalls, "Warren Jeffs was talking to the parents of some children who would talk in class or do other behavior that he considered inappropriate. He said that ‘Some children are black sheep; they are sent to test and try their parents and were never meant to enter the kingdom of God.’"

Ezra Draper, 31, is one of the few former students of Jeffs willing to speak on the record. "Little things is what got you in trouble, like poor penmanship," he recalls. "Not having your shirt done up properly or not having your sleeve buttoned under your long-sleeved shirt. Little things could get you in trouble, because they were a sign of a spiritual flaw or sin. If you have a dark spirit on the inside, you have sloppy writing on the outside." Jeffs also encouraged the students to tattle on each other and spy on their parents to uncover for him even the littlest sin. But Jeffs’ sense of sin was arbitrary, and Draper notes, "Warren ran that school a lot like he is doing with the church, in that there will be no tolerance for sin. But the catch is that Warren’s definition of sin keeps changing."

Draper was not only a student of Warren Jeffs', he was also a relative, as his father was married to two of Rulon Jeffs' daughters.

According to Draper, after Uncle Rulon's stroke, Warren Jeffs hid his father's infirmity while acting in his name and maneuvering to succeed him. Draper recalls how he finally grew disillusioned, after overhearing Jeffs dispatching a rival, Winston Blackmore, the Bishop of a Canadian FLDS group:

"Four months before Rulon Jeffs died, Warren used Rulon Jeffs to dismiss Winston from his responsibilities as Canadian Bishop. Here's something that Warren wasn't aware of. I was in Winston's truck the day Warren made that phone call, and I heard the whole conversation, which was very short. Rulon Jeffs didn't even know who he was talking to. Warren then told his father who he was talking to. And then Warren told him what to say, sentence by sentence. When I returned to Colorado City, I asked Warren how the dismissal came about. He said, 'Ezra, father handled that situation all by himself. I made the phone call, and he handled all the rest.' I found a way to excuse myself and end our conversation on a pleasant note. I decided, that's it. I don't know where I am going, but I am not following this guy."

MEN WITHOUT BADGES, DEEP THROAT'S DOCUMENT AND THE COWARDICE OF COLORADO CITY

Rulon Jeffs

The people of Colorado City, though, have yet to make that decision. On the night the FLDS Deep Throat directed me back to the Jeffs' compound, I called one of the excommunicated men. He dutifully wrote his letter of atonement and has been waiting to hear back from Jeffs. So far there has been no reply. I asked if he really believes Jeffs is a prophet speaking for God. There was silence for a moment as he hesitated. "This phone is bugged. There is somebody listening to us right now." He then quickly ended the conversation. I thought the man a bit paranoid until I arrived at the Jeffs compound the next day to seek my letter. On the way to Colorado City, I relaxed and entertain visions of earning a Pulitzer with what I am sure will be the crucial inside documents about the FLDS.

When I got to town, it was much busier than on my first trip. There were some news trucks around, since Ross Chatwin, an excommunicated FLDS member, was holding a press conference at his house to announce that he will publicly resist attempts to evict him. This is the most open sign of defiance yet. Otherwise, there are only rumors that the Barlows are meeting supporters in a nearby town.

But things were still quiet at the Jeffs compound. Some eggs and milk had been delivered and were sitting outside the gate, the only signs of life. I had just begun to look for the letter when an unmarked white SUV pulled up with men inside, like they'd been expecting me. One wagged his finger to bring me over, and pulled out his wallet. "I am a town marshal," he said. But all I saw was a driver's license that he put away before I could read it. There was no badge and none of the men were wearing police uniforms. "What are you doing?"

"Just looking," I said.

"I don't want you talking to people who don't want to be spoken to," he said.

"How do I know if they don't want to talk unless I ask?"

"I'll give you a clue," he said. He pointed to the Jeffs compound. "These people don't want to talk to you."

"That's fine. I'm just looking," I said, and tried to go back to searching for the letter as if I was unconcerned. The white SUV stayed and the men watched me search. But soon I realized there was
no letter and retreated to a nearby gas station.

Fortunately, my secret caller had left his number on my caller ID, and I called him. After being a bit surprised to hear from me, the man mentioned the location where he left my letter. Only it was the wrong location. Then he realized that I was a different reporter. He admitted that press from all over had been instructed to go pick up the same letter that day at different locations around the Jeffs compound. "You are supposed to have it before the press conference," he said. He told me to wait at the gas station and he'd bring by another copy. He turned out to be a local rancher carrying notes on behalf of an FLDS member who wanted—big surprise—to remain anonymous. So much for Woodward and Bernstein. The dissidents of Colorado City may not have been dealing with press for long, but the secret letter turned out to be a brilliant publicity stunt. It got the press all heated up with a scavenger hunt, and the contents, a screed against the dictatorship of Warren Jeffs, dovetailed nicely with the press conference.

Still, Jeffs remains the only person in town with any meaningful authority, and his expulsions have continued to this day—more than 100 FLDS members since his father's death. While many are willing to secretly complain to the press by phone or e-mail, none of the current members dare speak out publicly. And even dissidents admit that there is no mechanism to replace a prophet. For that reason, FLDS members secretly admit hoping that the outside world of state officials and press will protect them from their own leader or even remove him. Until then they intend to lay low.

It is the sort of cowardice that allows Jeffs to pick off his targets one by one, while everyone else in the church remains silent and compliant. The risk for men of losing their homes and having their families reassigned is too great. As for the wives, they, too, are mostly too scared to stand by their man in the face of an expulsion. After all, the marriages in Colorado City did not originate in love but were mostly arranged by the FLDS prophet.

"You've got to understand," one of the excommunicated men hoping to be reinstated by Jeffs tells me. "We've been taught our entire lives to obey and that this man speaks for God." How do you stand up to God's mouthpiece? The man admits that there is some irony to the answer that he and other FLDS members have come up with: anonymously help the evil, fallen, secular press people like me, hoping this will somehow fix the problem of Warren Jeffs for them. I point out to the man that if he really believed that Jeffs was representing God's will in any way, wouldn't that be the equivalent of aiding Satan against Him? "That's how Jeffs would see it. I don't know. I just don't know," he says with some emotion.

In his history of Colorado City, Ben Bistline quotes Uncle Roy making a prediction. "It is my opinion that our greatest persecution, our greatest test, rather, will not be from the outside people prosecuting or persecuting us, but our great test will come from within our own ranks." I can't say I believe old Uncle Roy was a prophet, but this prediction, at least, seems to be coming true.
Short Creek: "A Refuge for the Saints"\textsuperscript{1}

Marianne T. Watson

\textbf{Wallace Stegner} once observed, "a faith crushed by law or force will merely go underground...when outward resistance is impossible, the inward resistance remains."\textsuperscript{2} This description might well apply to this story of how Fundamentalist Mormons, before they were ever called by that name, chose a small, northern Arizona village, Short Creek, as a place of refuge to avoid legal prosecution over polygamy. Instead of disappearing from the political and legal landscape as they hoped, the refugees soon became the focus of national attention. The topic of polygamy drew the media to Short Creek just as it had drawn the media to Utah in the previous century. News writers, photographers, and even one film maker flocked to the remote town in the autumn of 1935. They came "from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts and north and south from Canada to the Mexican border" to report on the court trials of three men and three women for polygamy-related charges.\textsuperscript{3} Wallace Stegner described Short Creek during this extraordinary moment as "the capital of the world."\textsuperscript{4}

This story is largely drawn from the contemporary accounts of Joseph Lyman Jessop, a polygamist from Salt Lake City. Jessop was among a handful of men sent by priesthood leaders to Short Creek in May 1935 with the express

\textsuperscript{1} This paper was prepared in fulfillment of a 2001-2002 Floyd O'Neil Scholarship from the American West Center at the University of Utah. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Mormon History Association's Thirty-Seventh Annual Conference, Tucson, Arizona 16-19 May 2002 and at the Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, Utah, 7-10 August 2002.


\textsuperscript{3} Mohave County Miner, 6 Sep 1935. Martha Sonntag Bradley, *Kidnapped from That Land: The Government Raids on Short Creek Polygamists* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 56-63, 224-225. Bradley cites from more than three dozen magazine and newspaper articles reporting Short Creek's polygamy in 1935.

\textsuperscript{4} Stegner, 223.
purpose of building "a branch of the Kingdom of God." Through the medium of personal accounts, Jessop's diary provides a more intimate perspective on why he and his maverick Mormon brethren chose Short Creek as a place of refuge and why their activities quickly drew such dramatic attention.

BACKGROUND OF JOSEPH LYMAN JESSOP

Joseph Lyman Jessop was a third-generation Mormon, born 10 February 1892 in Millville, Cache Valley, Utah. Both his grandfathers were early Utah pioneers who became polygamists. Jessop's parents, however, were monogamists. They had been married only one year when Wilford Woodruff issued the 1890 Manifesto calling for an official end to plural marriage within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. After the Manifesto, the church moved ever more away from polygamy as well as from other distinctive Mormon practices and beliefs of the nineteenth century, such as the United Order, a belief in the imminent Millennial return of Christ, and a duty to build the Kingdom of God on earth. While this new Mormon world view was readily embraced by most LDS church members, the Jessops were among a small minority who resisted adaptation and who continued to believe these abandoned practices were requirements for the goal of Mormon exaltation.

Joseph Lyman Jessop married his first wife Winnie Porter in July 1917 in the Logan Temple. They had been married for five years when Jessop took a step which led to a life-altering decision. He left Millville and followed his father to

---

5. Diary of Joseph Lyman Jessop, vols. 1-3 (Privately Published, 2000). Joseph Lyman Jessop was born 10 February 1892 in Millville, Utah. He died 11 February 1936 in Murray, Utah. During the time he was in Short Creek in 1935, Jessop had three wives, Winnie Porter, Maleta Porter, and Beth Alfred, and he had 17 children. He eventually became the father of 35 children. Prior to his death, he married Beth's divorced sister, Olive Alfred, as a fourth wife. See also Lorraine A. Bronson, Winnie. (Privately published typescript book, 1989), a biography of Winnie Porter Jessop.

6. Joseph Lyman Jessop's father, Joseph Smith Jessop, was the son of Richard Jessop and Mary Ellen Shaffer. Richard Jessop was jailed in 1889 for unlawful cohabitation. Jessop's mother, Martha Moore Yeates, was the daughter of Frederick Yeates and Sarah Webb. Frederick Yeates served two six-month sentences for unlawful cohabitation, one conviction, presumably, for each of his two plural wives.

7. Bradley, 6. Driggs, "This Will Someday Be the Head And Not the Tail of the Church: A History of the Mormon Fundamentalists at Short Creek," Journal of Church and State 43 (Winter 2001): 201. Edward Leo Lyman, Political Deliverance (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986). Lyman argues that while Mormon leaders made concessions about polygamy in order to gain Utah statehood, it was probably not their original intent to end plural marriages permanently.

8. Driggs, 201-203.

Salt Lake City to work at the Baldwin Radio Plant. The factory's owner, Nathaniel Baldwin, was a prominent Utah inventor and industrialist. More importantly, Baldwin was a believer in continued plural marriage and felt it was his religious duty to help others who were also committed to "Old Fashioned Mormonism." His patronage drew polygamists and would-be polygamists from all across Mormon territory to work at his factory. As a result, as many as ten to twenty percent of Baldwin's employees were from families of post-manifesto plural marriages or had inclinations toward continued plural marriage.

For the Jessops and others like them, employment at the Baldwin factory facilitated their introduction to Lorin C. Woolley and his elderly father John W. Woolley. The elder Woolley was a former stake patriarch and temple worker. Earlier, he had been excommunicated for performing post-Manifesto plural marriages. The son, Lorin C. Woolley, was a former bodyguard of the third church president, John Taylor. Lorin now served on the Baldwin factory's board of directors. The Woolleys testified of President John Taylor's 1886 experiences and of apostolic authority given to them by Taylor to ensure the perpetuation of plural marriage. For the Jessops, legitimate priesthood authority to perform plural marriage was essential, and the Woolleys' testimony was reassurance to them that the Lord intended for and had prepared the way for plural marriage to continue, despite the Church's 1890 Manifesto declaring that polygamy could no longer be sanctioned.


12. Ibid., Also Nathaniel Baldwin Diaries, 1897-1961, Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah. Baldwin was excommunicated from the LDS Church in 1922 for "insubordination" related to his beliefs in plural marriage. His diaries reflect his close friendships with others who held similar beliefs and attending religious meetings with them as early as 1921. He also provided rooms in his "Omega" office building in East Mill Creek for study meetings.

13. Ibid., Also Nathaniel Baldwin Diaries, 1918-1925. Also Diary of Joseph Lyman Jessop, vols. 1-2 (1923 to 1924). At its peak, in the early 1920's, the Baldwin factory employed some 300 workers, the majority of whom were mainstream Mormons who were not interested nor involved in continued plural marriage. Since complete employee records have not been found, the figure of ten to twenty percent is based upon names of people found associated with Baldwin's factory who were later connected directly with the Fundamentalist movement, which total about 30. Baldwin also hired post-manifesto polygamists and members of their families, even some of the children and widows of John W. Taylor, who were not later connected with the Fundamentalist movement.


While working at the Baldwin Radio Plant, Jessop and his family participated in study meetings and firesides with other believers in continued plural marriage. This association, while casual in its nature, served as a catalyst which permanently welded the heretofore loosely connected believers in "the fulness of the gospel." Gradually, these individuals and their families would coalesce into what would later be called the Fundamentalist Mormon movement.

In 1924, Joseph Lyman Jessop's convictions regarding plural marriage were cemented when he married Maleta Porter, a cousin to his wife Winnie, as his first plural wife. They were sealed in a ceremony performed by John W. Woolley in Centerville. Within the year, Jessop, his two wives, and several others believing in continued plural marriage—and also connected with the Baldwin Radio factory—were excommunicated from the Church. At about the same time, the Baldwin Radio factory was threatened with insolvency and was placed into receivership. Jessop and others of similar conviction were among the first to lose their jobs. While some stayed in the Salt Lake Valley, others returned home. Jessop decided to stay. He found part-time work at the Woolley farm in Centerville. During this period he became more intimately acquainted with John and Lorin Woolley.

After John Woolley passed away in December 1926, Joseph Lyman Jessop was among those who were aware of Lorin Woolley's "calling" six men to assist him in perpetuating his apostolic mission from John Taylor. Woolley organized the men as a Priesthood Council. The men were Joseph Leslie Broadbent, John Yeates Barlow, Joseph White Musser, Louis Alma Kelsch, Charles Zitting, and Dr. LeGrande Woolley. The special mission of the Priesthood

---

16. The term "continued plural marriage" refers specifically to the continued practice of plural marriage as an ongoing institution rather than the belief in plural marriage as a doctrine of Mormonism which had been suspended with the 1890 Manifesto.

17. Plural marriage societies often refer to their beliefs as "the fulness," which is a shorthand term for "the fulness of the gospel as restored by Joseph Smith."


21. Diary of Joseph Lyman Jessop, vol. 2 (13 January 1934), 4-5. Jessop's diary on this date states, "now the Lord has again spoken from the heavens after a silence of many years .... The Lord had chosen men to act with these Prophets and hold the Priesthood like unto them before the death of John W. Woolley, but they were not notified of this choosing while he lived. In March 1929, these two men were notified and received their ordination according to direction of Almighty God. Joseph Leslie Broadbent and John Y. Barlow then began to function accordingly. A little later Joseph W. Musser was likewise called and appointed, then Charles F. Zitting, then LeGrand Woolley, then Louis Kelsch, until now this body of seven men form a nucleus of the Sanhedrin of God. Mortal men did not select them nor even suggest a name to the Lord, but they were called direct from heaven."

Council was to keep plural marriage alive. This was to be done alongside the church and not in competition with it. Historian Martha Sonntag Bradley described the path Fundamentalist Mormons aspired to travel as a "road often running parallel to the visible Mormon Church" in order to "maintain the pure and unadulterated church, the 'invisible church,' the church of the original teachings of Joseph Smith."24

**LDS Church Instigates Surveillance of Polygamists**

In 1930, the Church had been struggling for some forty years to convince a doubting nation it was sincere in ending polygamy.25 Seventh Church President Heber J. Grant especially resented reports of new polygamy sprouting up among church folds. He made concerted efforts to excommunicate known polygamists and any who might enter into or perform new plural marriages. With increasing determination, President Grant directed church leaders to shun any polygamy which could be in any way connected with the church.26 In the April 1931 General Conference of the church, President Grant promised that the church would "give such legal assistance as we legitimately can in the criminal prosecution of such [plural marriage] cases."27 Two years later, Grant presented an official 16-page statement, sometimes called the "Final Manifesto," that went far beyond previous church statements to deny the legitimacy of plural marriages after 1890.28

The 1933 "Final Manifesto" marked a change in the way church leaders dealt with polygamists. Under Grant, the church initiated cooperation with government for the surveillance and prosecution of polygamists.29 A compulsory loyalty oath was introduced for any church members whose actions or loyalties might be suspect.30 Anti-polygamy legislation was introduced in the mostly

---

27. Driggs; Heber J. Grant, *General Conference Reports, April 1931; Messages*, V: 292-303. Joseph W. Musser diaries, April 4, 1931. D. Michael Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Year* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1983), 183-186. President Heber J. Grant called J. Reuben Clark as second counselor in the First Presidency. Clark could not, according to biographer Michael Quinn, "look upon polygamy after the 1890 Manifesto with the least degree of allowance" and felt it was almost impossible for a Church member to be loyal after becoming involved in what he called the "web of renegade polygamy," which he regarded as tantamount to adultery. So, when Church President Grant "gave J. Reuben Clark a mandate to suppress the...practice of polygamy, President Clark went at it with a vengeance."
28. Quinn, 183-186.
30. Ibid., Bradley, 56-57.
"Mormon" Utah State Legislature which significantly increased the penalties for unlawful cohabitation when compared to what they had been during Utah's raid period in the 1880s. In 1935, all these measures created a political and social climate unfavorable for Fundamentalists. More than ever, they felt a need for a place of refuge.

**SHORT CREEK, A PLACE OF REFUGE TO BECOME A MILLENNIAL CITY**

In July 1926, Lorin C. Woolley prophesied to some of "perilous times to come in which... those who would live the law [of plural marriage] would be at the point of annihilation because the persecution would be so great." With such apocalyptic prospects in mind, Woolley sent Joseph Lyman Jessop and two of his brothers, Richard and Vergel, on a two-week trip to southern Utah and to the Arizona strip area. Their main destination was Lee's Ferry, Arizona, where polygamists Carling Spencer, Jerry Johnson, and Elmer Johnson lived. Their purpose was "to look over the place as a [possible] gathering place for the saints." Then they visited Isaac Carling in Short Creek for the same purpose. They had known Carling since 1924 when they had all worked at the Baldwin Radio Factory. After the men returned and reported their findings, no decision was made to take any action.

Eight years later, the two sites were again considered as possible places of refuge. In March 1934, not long after Joseph Lyman Jessop married his third wife, Beth Allred, he and four other men went to Lee's Ferry and Short Creek. After their return, Jessop made a report of the six-day mission to members of the Priesthood Council. Though Jessop didn't record in his diary his assessment of either place, he apparently did not think "the conditions" at Short Creek were conducive for a place of refuge since he privately discouraged his brother-in-law Axel Fors from moving there.

The idea of a place of safe retreat became even more important when it was rumored that, "The officers of the law are looking seriously into the family life of several of us, and it looks like persecution is nearing." Jessop expressed anxiety.

31. Ibid., 16-17.
33. Ibid., 7-8. The Arizona Strip area refers to the northern part of the state which is cut off from the main area by the Grand Canyon.
34. Ibid.
35. Driggs, 207; Bradley, 46.
36. Joseph Lyman Jessop and Beth Allred were married 7 January 1934. Beth was the daughter ofpost-manifesto polygamist B. Harvey Allred and his second wife Mary Evelyn Clark who were sealed 15 July 1903 in Mexico by Apostle Anthony W. Ivins.
37. Since Lorin C. Woolley was ill, J. Leslie Broadbent and John Y. Barlow, as the next senior members of the Priesthood Council, directed the mission.
39. Ibid., 27 March 1934–2 Apr 1934, 18. The four men who accompanied Joseph Lyman Jessop were Richard Jessop, John Y. Barlow, Morris Kuzy, and Arnold Bess.
after he heard several sermons preached against polygamy at the April 1934 LDS General Conference priesthood meeting. The last speaker was President Heber J. Grant. Jessop wrote that Grant "assailed vigorously and devilishly Israel Barlow, John W. Woolley and Lorin C. Woolley and all who have said and urged the practice of plural marriage... and called these polygamists 'the slickest bunch of liars in existence.'" During the talks, "...a packed house of men laughed at all these jests of ridicule and slander against the Lord's own." Jessop said he "sat and prayed in soberness, 'O God, let Thy will be done. Send fourth [sic] thy judgments in thine own due time and way, and I pray help me to be ready by keeping all the laws and commandments and put and keep my own house in order.'"

Only a few days later, Jessop recorded his awareness of the Church's involvement in legal prosecution:

> We have news from reliable sources that Officers of the Federal Government of the U.S. are here from Washington at the solicitation of Heber J. Grant and his helpers to persecute [sic] and imprison and penalize those who are trying to obey the fulness of the gospel. Heber J. Grant says to them, "Give them the limit and the Church will furnish the money to fight the case." A few days later one man and wife were arrested and briefly jailed on charges relating to polygamy. Quickly, some polygamists went into hiding.

Jessop's diaries reveal that the Priesthood group—those associated with the Priesthood Council—responded to threats of legal prosecution in the spring and summer of 1934 in five specific ways: (1) holding prayer circles; (2) conducting personal and communal fasts; (3) publishing a small religious book in defense of their beliefs; (4) writing an open letter of warning addressed to Heber J. Grant and "all those who are persecuting the saints," and (5) searching for a place of refuge.

Three events exacerbated the growing crisis. Lorin C. Woolley died on 20 September 1934. Just six months later, on 16 March 1935, Woolley's successor as the senior member of the Priesthood Council, J. Leslie Broadbent, also died. Broadbent's death at age 43 was a shock to the Fundamentalists. The same week, the Utah State Legislature passed House Bill No. 124, which elevated the punishment for unlawful cohabitation from a misdemeanor, punishable by up to

---

41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., 24 May 1934, 22. A few days, later Jessop wrote of hearing a similar report, "One proposition is to send us to Mexico."
43. Ibid., 21 Apr. 1934, 19. Polygamist Abe Teerlink and his wife Rosa were charged in relation to polygamy.
44. Ibid., 15 May 1934, 21.
45. Ibid., 24 June 1934, 25.
46. Ibid., 16 Mar. 1935, 53.
six months incarceration, to a felony, punishable up to five years. The new law was scheduled to go into effect two months later, on 15 May 1935. This legislation set in motion the events which produced the drama in Short Creek later that summer and fall.

When the brethren of the Priesthood Council learned about the "new anti-polygamy law," they studied it with an attorney and determined it was intended "to make trouble." The next day, the "largest assembly ever" gathered for a fast meeting. To reaffirm their resolve, several brethren met with the Priesthood Council and "covenanted to keep all the commandments of the Lord."49

In early May, with just two weeks before the new unlawful cohabitation statute was to take effect, Jessop told his family "... something is going to be done on account of persecution. I may be sent away from you. I don't know where."50 On 10 May, with only five days left of the countdown, Jessop and others met with brethren of the Priesthood Council to read and discuss a letter from Price Johnson of Short Creek in which he once again recommended the town as a place of refuge.51 Johnson's plan was accepted as a last-minute measure.

Joseph Lyman Jessop, his brother-in-law Ianthus W. Barlow (John Y. Barlow's brother), and another young polygamist, Carl E. Jentzch, were chosen as a vanguard to join the brethren at Short Creek and assist them in their land and sawmill affairs. Jessop and Jentzch were ordained high priests and set apart to "prepare a refuge for the saints who will come to this country."52 Joseph Musser promised them water would "break forth as it was needed."53 Musser wrote of the occasion:

We met with these brethren and set them apart for their labors. ... They were instructed to proceed to Short Creek, accept the leadership of Bro. Price. W. Johnson, and not to drive a nail or saw a board, or engage in any occupation except under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord. Not to have their minds on money, but upon the glory of God. The brethren felt splendid and covenanted to carry out instructions.54

Musser felt inspired that this action was the beginning of the re-establishing of the United Order. He predicted, "Though it has a very small beginning, it will grow to fill the whole earth."55

49. Ibid., 4 Apr. 1935, 55.
50. Ibid., 30 Apr. 1935, 57.
51. Ibid., 10 May 1935, 58.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Joseph W. Musser Diary, 10 May 1935.
55. Ibid.
Jessop felt his course was fixed. He penned in his diary, "...I pray, O my Father in Heaven, Help me to fill this great mission acceptably unto thee..." That evening he called his wives together and "prayed in tears...feeling keenly the thots [sic] of being separated for perhaps many months."56 Jessop decided it was best not to tell his younger children about the plan. The next morning, Jessop arose at 4:15 a.m. He gave his wives and three oldest children blessings and kissed them all goodbye. Then he with Carl Jentzch began a 350-mile journey toward Short Creek. They arrived the following evening, believing they were relatively safe from the reach of Utah law enforcement.57

BUILDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN SHORT CREEK

Jessop, Jentzch and Ianthus W. Barlow, who had arrived earlier, began their mission in earnest. They met with seven men from the Short Creek area in a priesthood meeting to discuss "means and plans of action." Each man "consecrated all to the building of the Kingdom of God." A week later, the presidency for "this branch of the Kingdom of God" was organized. Ianthus W. Barlow was set apart as President, Isaac Carling as First Counselor, and Elmer Johnson as Second Counselor.58 They and their brethren were instructed to prepare Short Creek "for the coming of the saints...to build a city of Zion and feed eventually millions of people."59

A little over a week later, Elders Price W. Johnson and Carl Jentzch returned to Salt Lake. They reported to the Priesthood Council that all the brethren involved were willing to put their land and assets into a common fund for the benefit of "our brethren" under the jurisdiction of the Priesthood Council. Like Joseph Musser, they felt that this was the beginning of living in a United Order.

A whirlwind of activity characterized the polygamists' presence in Short Creek. Hardly a day passed without arrivals or departures of those connected in some way with the movement. Family members of the men from Salt Lake began arriving. Jessop's third wife, Beth, came with their first child, four-month-old Winnie Faye.60 Before the end of the summer, the small flock comprised perhaps a hundred souls.61

56. Ibid.
58. Ibid., 23 May 1935, 60.
59. Ibid., 17 May 1935, 59.
60. Ibid., 22 May 1935, 60.
61. Ibid., 17 May 1935, 59. The size of this "flood" on Short Creek, in terms of new population, is estimated to have been some 50 to 60 people. Combined with the families of those already from the area, the entire movement was probably around 100. Of the 16 men identified by name in Jessop's journal who were bound by priesthood covenant to the movement, seven came from the Salt Lake area: Ianthus W. Barlow, Joseph L. Jessop, Carl Jentzch, John Y. Barlow, Harold Allred, and Joseph L. Jessop's two brothers, Richard and Fred. Ten were all from the Short Creek area or from Southern Utah. They were Price Johnson, Elmer Johnson, Isaac W. Carling, Leonard Black, Isaac Carling Spencer, Jerry Johnson, Henry Covington, LeRoy Johnson, Vergel Jessop, and Warren...
Building "the Kingdom" in the remote desert village of Short Creek during the summer of the 1935, in the midst of the Great Depression, was not an easy undertaking. A great deal of energy, time and attention was spent to obtain the basic needs of water, food and shelter. Daily or weekly chores included gardening, hauling wood for cooking and baking, grinding wheat for bread, and maintaining the few automobiles available. Almost immediately, the group of men began digging a well (though they never found water), drew up plans for a windmill, and began ploughing land and planting crops—beans, melons, corn, rye and other grains. They laid out streets for the city-to-be and began gathering machine parts to construct a power plant. Assignments were given to log trees and to work at the sawmill, and arrangements were made to obtain a planing machine for lumber. Time was taken to write letters to loved ones left behind in Salt Lake City.

As a skilled carpenter, Joseph Lyman Jessop kept especially busy although he often complained about the lack of materials and the difficulty of working with poor or green lumber. He helped to build a privy, enlarge a cabin, and construct a small shop to house power machinery. He built a few screen doors to keep out flies, a great necessity in the hot climate. In exchange for a six-dollar store credit, he built a door frame and drawers for a cabinet. When it was Jessop's turn to work at the sawmill in the canyon, he not only cut logs like everyone else, but made a table and a chair for the loggers' cabin. He was particularly in demand when a new home was started for Ianthus Barlow.

**MILLENNIAL FEVER SPARKED**

The movement in Short Creek quickly inspired a millennial zeal among Fundamentalists. To many, involvement in Short Creek, either directly or indirectly, symbolized their commitment to the fulness of the gospel. Some, however, were more reluctant. When Morris Kunz voiced his reticence in a Sunday meeting, Joseph Musser recommended that Bro. Kunz be excused, that his services could be used to good advantage in Salt Lake, rather than in Short Creek, and that he should not go "until he can feel satisfied it is the will of the Lord."  

On 20 June 1935, the Priesthood Council met in Salt Lake City and decided that any brethren sent down to Short Creek who became dissatisfied might be released and return home. More importantly, they decided Bro. John Y. Barlow was to move to Short Creek and take full charge of operations there, "using his

---

Black: Over the next three months, Jessop identified a total of 60 persons who were somehow connected with the effort in Short Creek. Of these, 54 individuals were members of the 16 families listed above, a number of whom were older unmarried sons whose labor contributed greatly to the movement. Six others were visiting relatives. Of the 60, 29 or about half, came from Salt Lake, and one of these was a baby born after their arrival—the son of I.W. and Violet Barlow. However, missing from this list are names of some wives and most younger children.

judgment and taking action as occasion requires."64 Bro. Musser, with the help of the other brethren of the Council, was to have similar jurisdiction in Utah in Barlow's absence.

Musser's teachings to Fundamentalist audiences in the summer of 1935 bore four main themes. First, he stressed individual responsibility, preaching that "it is up to all the brethren to know for themselves," and that every person "should place himself in a position to know for himself whether or not the Priesthood is right and then act accordingly."65 However, he qualified individual responsibility by saying that brethren who were "expressing the hope that [they] may soon get the 'word of the Lord,' should understand that they are getting this word every time the Priesthood [Council] takes official action...that is as much of the 'word of the Lord' they may ever expect to get until they accept it as such, when the Lord would give them further direction."66 He said those who were looking for angels to answer them would not get their anticipations satisfied, for "We are required to live by faith."67

Second, Musser emphasized the importance of working communally and preparing to live the United Order. He told the saints that from this time greater responsibility would rest upon them and that "no one present, working selfishly for himself, would succeed. Only community effort would be successful."68 He promised "they would never become rich in worldly things, except the Lord had something special for them to do, and that from now on none of them would 'make money' to any appreciable degree outside of the spirit of the United Order."69 He said none were prepared for United Order. "We must overcome selfishness, prejudice, envy and learn to love our neighbor as ourselves" and "quit gossipping and bearing false witness."70 "When this is achieved," he told them, "we will be able to live in accordance with God's plan and find it so much easier...we will wonder why we didn't adopt it before."71

Third, he expounded upon the order of priesthood leadership and explained that Bro. John Y. Barlow, by virtue of his seniority, was at the head of the Priesthood Council no matter where he was. Under Barlow's direction, men might be appointed to take charge of certain works, as had been done, and they would be respected in their positions, yet should always be subject to the head.

Fourth, Musser emphasized the importance of individual agency, saying, "individual responsibility must be recognized. Men cannot be saved if deprived of their agency."72 While Musser preached to the saints in Salt Lake, his admonitions may have been more relevant in Short Creek where unity was crumbling.

64. Ibid., 20 June 1935.
65. Ibid., 13 June 1935.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. Joseph W. Musser Diary, 10 May 1935. 27 May 1935.
69. Ibid., 3 June 1935.
70. Ibid., 23 June 1935.
71. Ibid.
CONTENTION AMONG THE BRETHREN

During the thirteen weeks that Joseph Lyman Jessop spent in Short Creek, one of his greater concerns was contention among his brethren. Manifested at first as discouragement, feelings gradually increased until they emerged as outright strife. Finally, the authority of those in charge was questioned. The source of the deepest division, however, was John Y. Barlow's plan to form a trust or holding company as the beginning of a United Order.

About two weeks after arriving, Jessop wrote of despondency among several: "All present feel gloom and under a heavy load until they could hardly smile. I tried to cheer them up."73 A few days later, several had complained that "the spirit of union is not as great as it should be among the men here."74 Disunity became even more evident when an "instructive" letter arrived from Joseph W. Musser, and some of the brethren responded with the spirit of faultfinding.75

On the first of July, Jessop made a trip to Salt Lake City, his only chance that summer to visit the two wives and the children he had left behind. His main purpose for the trip, however, was to consult with the brethren of the Priesthood Council. He met with John Y. Barlow, Joseph W. Musser, and Louis Kelsch. They warned him to be "very, very careful while in Salt Lake because 'the law authorities have a very clear case against you...and the officers are watching for you.'"76 These brethren then asked Jessop for a detailed report of affairs in Short Creek. He told them, "...it was a case of walking by faith and not by sight, for there is no sight in it—I mean no sight of sufficient crops, no water, no building material in sight at present, so we are walking by faith." When asked if he wanted to go back, Jessop replied, "For me there is nothing else to do because I have been called and set apart for this work, and I feel just like going back and doing all I can for the cause."77 When Jessop mentioned Bro. Musser's yet unfulfilled prophecy that water would come forth in Short Creek, Musser sat in silence a moment, then looked up and said, "It will come when you are united and not until then."78

Two days later, Jessop helped load vehicles with the household goods of John Y. Barlow's family for their move south. As previously decided by the Priesthood Council, Barlow was going to Short Creek to take charge of the whole project, temporally and spiritually.

At his departure, Jessop was clearly distressed by his two wives' "love and loneliness inexpressible" and the tears of his children, whom he had to leave.

73. Ibid., 30 May 1935, 60-61.
74. Ibid., 3 June 1935, 61.
76. Ibid., 2 July 1935, 63-64.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
once again. "I felt a vacancy that words cannot express. All I can do is Pray. I left them in the hands of the Lord."79

In Short Creek, the brethren made efforts to unite. After having prepared by fasting, they met in a special priesthood meeting on 7 July. Bro. John Y. Barlow presented the articles and laws of the United Trust that had been prepared by the Priesthood Council. All present voted to give their property.

Despite such an outward display of unity, controversy over the United Trust was hardly resolved. Jessop learned of the extreme dissatisfaction of Carl Jentzch, who was "much affected by and opposed to some clauses in the document of the United Trust."80 Jentzch said he could see "oceans of tears shed by this people because of it." He began preparations to "go back to the City and quit. . .on account of the clauses," which he said guaranteed nothing.81 Jessop agreed that the United Trust clauses in question appeared "harsh and unfair" and felt that they "were not meet for men."82 His journal records several prayers on the matter.83 He even personally approached Bro. Barlow, who told him, "I got this [the idea for the United Trust] in answer to my prayers and I know I am right."84

At a priesthood meeting held in Short Creek on 11 August, Jessop "tried to unite the spirit of those present." Despite his effort, the meeting erupted into a verbal tug-of-war over the matter of authority of the presiding brethren. Jessop felt he "could not agree in full with either side" and did not say anything during the debate. He confided to his journal, "I'm having plenty of fight with myself of late to try to feel good as I should."

On 15 August, in Salt Lake City, Joseph Musser received word of the "serious inharmony" at Short Creek.85 It was reported that two of the brethren, Harold Allred and Ianthus W. Barlow, objected to the Priesthood Council entering into temporal matters, claiming their calling to be exclusively to exercise the sealing powers. Musser observed, "They will trust their eternal salvation with us but fear our judgment in temporal matters."86

A few days later, at a Thursday evening priesthood meeting, John Y. Barlow called upon each one present to express himself. Each man "ask[ed] forgiveness of the others and all felt better."87 The sacrament was administered, and then all joined in prayer. That was Joseph Lyman Jessop's last meeting as a resident of Short Creek. The very next week, on 20 August, he received a letter from Joseph Musser urging his immediate return to Salt Lake City.

79. Ibid., 4 July 1935, 64.
80. Ibid., 16 July 1935, 65.
81. Ibid., 17 July 1935, 65.
84. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
CHALLENGING THE LDS CHURCH

The Fundamentalist movement in Short Creek had been created in the midst of a small but very mainstream L.D.S. community. In fact, LDS church authorities had been well aware that polygamists were living in Short Creek before the decision was ever made by Fundamentalist Mormons to make it a place of refuge. The previous year, on 30 August 1934, four Short Creek Church members had been excommunicated for preaching or practicing polygamy.88 So, in 1935, the growing numbers of polygamists in Short Creek and the discussions they generated in the Short Creek Ward drew more than casual attention.

At first, Jessop had refrained from attending the Short Creek Branch, feeling that it was "best not to crowd in upon them because they would think we are trying to run them out."89 But, after receiving a personal invitation, Jessop was glad to attend regularly. In spite of the fact that he had been excommunicated from the Church a decade earlier, he still considered himself in every way a Latter-day Saint.90 Almost immediately, he noted tensions over doctrine during class discussions between the regular church members and the Fundamentalists, some of whom were still members of the church in good standing. One Sunday meeting became especially tense when Jessop and others, "Took issue in favor of the laws of the Lord in preference to those of the land."91

The following Sunday, leaders from the Zions Park Stake came to set matters straight. Jessop's account of the meeting described the church leaders' remarks as demeaning to the Fundamentalists. He wrote:

Bro. Jeppson began defending the law of the land against polygamy, quoted scripture and spent much time belittling anyone who should oppose the Manifesto, calling them silly people. He shuddered at the thought of going against the Govt. of the U.S. [Then,] Bro. David Hersh did endorse Jeppson's remarks. . . . Another Councilman, a Bro. Sandberg, spoke along the same lines.92

As soon as the meeting was over, Jessop and Carl Jentzsch challenged the church leaders to allow open debate on the subjects they had discussed. Heated debates and discussions erupted both inside and outside the meeting house among men and women on both sides of the issue. Listening crowds looked on for the better part of an hour. Jessop described the commotion:

88. Driggs, 210; Bradley, 52. Isaac Carling was excommunicated for preaching polygamy. The other three, all found to have entered polygamous marriages, were Warren E. Johnson, Viola Spencer Johnson, and a plural wife of Price Johnson, Hellen Lucy Hull.
90. Ibid., 181. Jessop was excommunicated in December 1924 from the East Mill Creek Ward in Salt Lake City "for practicing and teaching principles contrary to the rulings of the church."
91. Ibid., 7 July 1935, 64.
92. Ibid.
I with Carl Jentzch walked to the front to Bro. Edwin Black who had charge of the meeting and we protested them, charging they had been teaching false doctrine and [asked him to] ask the house, that the people may hear the other side. I challenged Sandberg... to meet the issue point by point before the people. The other speakers left the building. Harold Allred and wives came up and introduced themselves to him [Sandberg], as also [my wife] Beth, showing up our baby, saying, "And here is one of those whom you said had no right to be born." Orlin Colvin and wife came up defending the side against plural marriage. I challenged him to meet me in open debate before the people. Then John T. Spencer came also on their side, and I said, "I challenge you too, John Spencer." He flew angry and bristled up like a banty rooster. We had a large crowd around us, and some cornered Jepson outside, so we went after them strong for about 45 minutes, and they refused to listen further and left us. Many of those present argued for the truth and others against it.93

That confrontation was the match that set Short Creek aflame in a blaze that all the world would see. It soon became clear that law enforcement and media had been contacted by high-level church leaders.94 Within the week a report came that complaints had been made to prosecute several men on polygamy charges.95 Eleven days later, the first photographer, a man from the International News Service, showed up in Short Creek. He wanted to see "the 400 people and 40 new homes under construction and...to get a photograph of at least one polygamous family where 3 babies were born to one man by three wives in one month." Jessop flatly stated, "He took a picture of I. W. Barlow's house (the only one under construction), also a picture or two of the village."96

By that time, articles about the polygamists in Short Creek had already been published in the Salt Lake Tribune. What bothered Jessop most was the report that leaders of the church were "urging the officers of Mohave County, Arizona, to arrest and embarass [sic]" them.97 Two days later on 9 August, the Mohave County Sheriff and the County Attorney came to Short Creek, looking to find someone to sign complaints, so they could make arrests.98 After finding a local

98. Ibid., 9 Aug 1935, 68. Also Bradley, 54. Bradley states, that on "16 August 1935, [County Attorney] Bollinger succeeded in surprising the fundamentalists with warrants. . . it is not likely the arrests were a total surprise, given the fact that the polygamists had been warned of the probability arrests some three weeks before, on 21 July 1935. Jessop's diary clearly identifies the day of the initial arrests as 9 August not 16 August; he states it was Jack Childers who finally signed the complaints. Wallace Stegner's account (Stegner, 220), as told to him by Short Creek resident [non-
homesteader to do the deed, six of Short Creek's "most solid citizens," including Bro. John Y. Barlow, were arrested.99 Barlow was charged with "Open and notorious cohabitation" with a woman other than his legal wife.100 It is no small irony that the very first prosecutions of polygamists following the passage of Utah's 1935 unlawful cohabitation law were not in Utah but in Short Creek, Arizona.

Jessop left Short Creek the morning of 21 August. When he asked John Y. Barlow whether or not to return, Barlow answered that he "thot it best [for Jessop] not [to] go."101 So Jessop was not an eye witness of Short Creek's extraordinary moment as the capital of the world that brought reporters, photographers, and film-makers "from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts and north and south from Canada to the Mexican border."102 He did not see the trial, described as "a comedy of errors," when the "schoolhouse filled to overflowing with visitors from all across the state" and reporters from a half dozen newspapers "noted every moment" with flashbulbs "exploding across the makeshift courtroom."103 Nor did he see "Paramount News set up a movie camera in the schoolhouse and [film] the entire proceedings."104 Neither was he a witness the very next day when the LDS church authorities presented its newly instituted loyalty oath to the members of the Short Creek Branch, requiring them, under threat of excommunication, to declare their support of the First Presidency of the church "without any mental reservation" and to "denounce the practice and advocacy of plural marriage."105

Jessop had been plucked out of the crisis in Short Creek only days before its culmination, a crisis he had helped foment. He could only track from afar the trials and the subsequent conviction of three Short Creek saints—two polygamists and one plural wife.106 Those who were imprisoned for polygamy were released within a year and returned to Short Creek.107 The LDS Church eventually withdrew its branch from the town, leaving it to those who had made it a polygamist community.

polygamist] Jon Reed Lauritzen, agrees in substance with Jessop's account, stating that Sheriff Graham and County Attorney Bollinger "had trouble getting complaints," but finally got "Jack Chil-'dress," a homesteader, to sign.

99. Ibid., Driggs, 213. Bradley, 55. Those arrested were Isaac Carling Spencer, Sylvia Allred Spencer, Price Johnson, Helen Hull, John Y. Barlow, and Mary "Roe" Barlow. Charges against all were dismissed in September 1935 by Short Creek Justice of the Peace J. M. Lauritzen based on "information and belief" amounting to rumor. Soon new complaints were drawn and warrants issued.
100. Joseph W. Musser Diary, 20 August 1935.
101. Ibid., 3 Sep 1935, 70.
102. Mohave County Miner, 6 Sep 1935. Bradley, 56-63. 224-225. Bradley cites from more than three dozen magazine and newspaper articles.
103. Ibid., 56.
104. Ibid.
105. Driggs, 211.
106. "Short Creek Embroglio," Truth, vol. 1 (October 1935), 51. Bradley, 54-55, 62. Driggs, 213-214. The two men, Price W. Johnson and Isaac Carling Spencer, spent not quite a year in prison and were let out early for good behavior. Sylvia Allred, plural wife of Isaac Carling Spencer, who was pregnant at the time of her arrest and trial, received a suspended sentence after the birth of her baby.
107. Ibid.
CONCLUSION

When legal efforts were made in the 1935 to stop polygamy, Fundamentalist Mormons designated Short Creek, Arizona, as a place of refuge. It was a last-minute decision, born of desperation, to go underground and avoid legal prosecution over plural marriage. In their zeal to build Zion, to do more than just an escape, the Fundamentalists inadvertently created a movement which drew inordinate and immediate attention, church excommunications, legal battles, and media scrutiny. Despite Short Creek's 1935 moment in the sun, the Fundamentalist Mormon movement at Short Creek did not wither away, and the opposition did not end polygamy as anticipated by some church and government officials. Large-scale government raids in 1944 and 1953 only strengthened individual and community resolve. Although residents eventually changed its name to Colorado City to avoid stigma from the raids, the town will soon celebrate seventy years since it was designated as a place of safety in 1935. 108 Short Creek's legacy as a "refuge for the saints" survives in a growing, thriving community for a segment of Fundamentalist Mormon polygamists and their families. 109

108. Short Creek's name was officially changed to Colorado City in 1962.
109. Driggs, 51. Driggs states: "Short Creek has today disappeared from maps but thrives as Hildale, Utah, and Colorado City, Arizona. . . . It is important to appreciate that Mormon Fundamentalism is not a monolithic group any more than the larger Christian or Islamic communities are homogenous. The Short Creek Community is but one part of a much larger and very diverse group. There are some sympathies but no formal ties between Short Creek and any of the other Fundamentalist communities."