

# **NORTH BRANCH MEETING HOUSE OLD THIRD WARD**

**Constructed: 1894**

**Address: 500 West 1200 North**

**Present owners: Ross and Jean Lamb**

In the early years of Lehi settlement the town was troubled by class distinction. For the most part, the original Mormon pioneers in our community settled in the area bounded by the old Lehi fort wall. In the early 1870s two railroads intersected in the northwest quadrant of town area, where General Refractories is presently. This area, known variously as “the New Survey,” “over the Creek,” and/or “Lehi Junction,” eventually became dominated by outsiders.

Lehi Junction became a relatively self-contained community with many homes, stores, railroad-related industries, and a school. The work force was dominated by laborers, miners, railroaders, and the occasional drifter who were often sniffed at by locals who considered themselves more genteel.

At the turn of the century, particularly after Lehi passed stringent prohibition laws, residents of the Junction threatened to secede and form their own community.

But cooler heads prevailed and such drastic action was never undertaken.

Much of the credit for social cohesiveness in the Junction area can be attributed to community and church leaders who continually worked to soothe ruffled feathers. The Northwest or Franklin school was built in the area in 1875. This building, like other schoolhouses in town, became the social, religious, and educational center of the neighborhood.

Living this far north of the Lehi Ward Meeting House meant church-goers had a considerable distance to travel to attend meetings. On 1 October 1893, Lehi’s North Branch was organized and church services were held in the Franklin School. This was under the direction of Thomas R. Jones, branch president.

A building committee was organized consisting of Thomas R. Jones, G.W. Brown, W.S. Evans, William W. Clark, George Beck, James P. Carter and

Hyrum Timothy. Within four months after the branch's organization, the Junction people had subscribed \$700 towards construction of a meeting house. Andrew Fjeld and Charles Ohran, local contractors drew up plans for the building which was to be constructed on the southeast corner of Fifth West and Twelfth North.

On Sunday, 14 October 1894, worship services were first held in the branch meeting house, though the building was not fully completed. During the meeting, the building committee noted that the structure cost \$1,656. Many of the old records refer to the North Branch building as Zion's hill Meeting House because rock for the limestone foundation was quarried from Zion's Hill on the Lake Mountains.

Statistical records of the North Branch at the end of 1894 list sixty-four families in the area. In 1896 W.W. Clark succeeded Thomas R. Jones as presiding elder. By the end of 1897 the branch membership had increased to 592 souls.

In addition to the usual funerals, weddings, socials, and church services, this Mormon meeting house was the scene of several unusual events. During the Christmas season of 1896 a Lehi correspondent wrote in the 26 December 1896 *Deseret News* that a group of tramps broke into the building one evening and "held high carnival, singing and playing upon the organ in tramp style before blowing out the lights and leaving."

The 31 May 1898 *Lehi Banner* noted that a "smart Aleck" Peter Smith, showing off for some girls, rode his horse into the building. Justice John Woodhouse gave him three days in jail to "think over his uncivilized conduct and make better resolves for the future."

When Lehi was divided into four wards in 1903, the North Branch became the home of the new Lehi Third Ward, under the direction of Bishop Henry Lewis. In 1955, upon completion of the Third/Seventh Ward building one block east, the old Third Ward Meeting House was sold for a private residence. Today it is the home of the Ross and Jean Lamb family.