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ABSTRACT

The Evolution of Dixie College As a Public Institution of Higher Education in Utah From 1871 to 1925

by

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This study has attempted to determine the forces which influenced the development of Dixie College from its inception as a church oriented Academy in 1871 to its becoming a state supported institution under the Utah Public School System in 1935. Included are a series, of events, crises, people, and historical forces which became a part of a neighborhood, of societal groups, of community development and led to the emergence of the institution and its growth in a small isolated Latter-Day Saint community.

Beginning with the organizing of the LDS Church in 1830, the educational endeavors of the Mormon people--dedicated to the belief that "the glory of God is intelligence"--is briefly traced in the mid-West, the Utah Territory, and later in the State of Utah.

The advent of the Civil War led to their establishing the Cotton Mission at St. George, Utah--a remote rural area in southwestern Utah. Here they struggled to provide cultural opportunities for their youth. Without the support of the LDS Church, however, their goals never would have been realized. Conducting their schools in tents, wagon boxes, a willow structure, and private homes, they finally used the old Social Hall, Tabernacle basement, and top floor of the Courthouse for classrooms. In desperation, they constructed their first multi-roomed building--the Woodward School--to provide education up to second year high school. Finally, in 1911, the St. George Stake Academy provided for four years of high school work.

Institutional changes to provide missionary training, normal school training and finally junior college training are also delineated. The school's operation under meager budgets, the impact of World War I and the ensuing depression, the crisis faced when the Church gave Dixie College to the State of Utah, and the "Orphan Years" without state support are likewise addressed.

Also addressed are curriculum changes, teacher certification, unique student government, financing, and religious teaching in American schools. Recognition is given numerous contributors to the school, especially to the Dixie Education Association and community members who enabled the school to prepare its students to enter the mainstream of American civilization and become worthy contributors to American culture.

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