

HISTORY - BUNKERVILLE WARDS



BISHOPS' MESSAGE

As your servants in the Bunkerville wards and branch, may we join with you in expressing our great love and appreciation to our Heavenly Father for this lovely new addition to our community.

What a great blessing this beautiful place of worship can be in the life of every member of the Bunkerville First and Second Wards and the Virgin Valley Spanish Branch.

As we enter into a time of growth in numbers, may we experience a spiritual growth also, nourished by a renewed dedication to serve our Father in Heaven. Let us make a new commitment to extend a loving arm of fellowship to all, member and non-member alike, that we may continue on in the time-honored Bunkerville tradition of acceptance and concern for the temporal and spiritual welfare of all who might come within our sphere of influence.

May this lovely edifice become a sanctuary of worship, of peace and comfort, "*A house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God.*" D&C 88:119

Sincerely, Your Brethren

Michael G. Waite
J. Clark Robinson
Roger M. Bender

Dedication Program Booklet
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HISTORY OF THE BUNKERVILLE CHAPELS

On Sunday, January 1, 1877 in Santa Clara, Utah Territory, Edward Bunker, Sr. called a meeting of those interested in settling a community following the United Order. That group of twenty-three persons organized themselves into a company for the purpose of settling a "United Order" Community along the Virgin River, south of Santa Clara. Edward Bunker, Sr. was elected president; Lemuel S. Leavitt and Dudley Leavitt, counselors; Mahonri Steele, secretary, and Edward Bunker Jr., treasurer.

On Monday, January 2, 1877, the company, with six wagons and seventy head of cattle, headed for the Mesquite Flat. They arrived on Thursday, January 5, 1877.

After further examination the company decided to locate on the south side of the river. They crossed the Virgin and pitched camp on a hill about two and one-half miles northeast of the present site of Bunkerville. On the very day of their arrival they put up a small lumber building on top of the hill and called the location Bunkerville, after Edward Bunker, Sr., the leader of the company.

On the 7th of January, Sunday, the first meeting was held in Bunkerville, then consisting of one house and six wagons. Though no record can be found stating exactly where the meeting was held, it would probably be accurate to say it was in the lumber building built on top of the hill.

On Sunday, January 14, 1877, a Sunday School was organized with Samuel O. Crosby as Superintendent. There were eighteen members present.

The sight of the first settlement of Bunkerville is described in the diary of Luella Abbott Leavitt, wife of Thomas D. Leavitt, Jr., as being on the hill now scraped away for the highway to make the turn to go onto the bridge between Bunkerville and Mesquite. In fact, if you look on the hill directly across the highway from the Jack and Katherine Faught home, you can see the sandstone foundation of one of the first homes.

By January, 1878, most of the settlers had moved about one and one-half miles below the original settlement to the old gin mill site. Some had also moved an additional mile to the present townsite of Bunkerville.

School and church were held in the lumber building on the original settlement site. However, since most people did not live on the hill, it was difficult to attend. So a bowery, a shed built of cottonwood poles and a roof of brush, was built where the Bunkerville Community Center now stands. Later, in 1879, the roof and sides were changed to a "flag" roof, one covered with brush and mud, which kept out the wind and most of the rain, if it didn't rain too hard or too long.

On Saturday, January 11, 1879, the Bunkerville Ward was organized with Edward Bunker, Sr. as Bishop. During that year, 1879, the company proceeded to organize more fully and to draw up written rules for their guidance in the United Order. These rules were signed by forty-four members. Also, most of the settlers moved to the present town site.

In 1880, an adobe public building was erected on the public square, or the area where the community center now stands. The building was used for church meetings, town meetings, dances and programs. It had two glass windows, a door, and a flag roof. It was large enough to permit five quadrille formations with just a little crowding. This "flag schoolhouse" served as the Bunkerville Church House for ten years.

Then, in 1890, a large rock church house was built. The work was initiated by a group of young men who had been refused the use of the dance hall. It was a rule of the town that dances should be held only on Friday night, but the young men were going on a freighting trip and wanted a dance before they left. Since the hall was refused, they determined to build one of their own, over which they would have authority.

They organized a company with Thomas D. Leavitt, Jr. as president, with William Abbott, George Lee, and George Bunker as committee members. They secured a site, put in a foundation, and had some of the rock hauled and the lumber bargained for. The bishop then persuaded them to let the whole ward assist and make the building a general ward house.

Completed, it was a substantial seventy-five by one hundred foot building, with a stage, high arched ceiling and a steeple belfry. It had been built by the people, with contributions of work and money: rock hauled from nearby hills, lime burned in a kiln of their own making, and lumber hauled from Mt. Trumbull, 100 miles distant.

The site of this rock church was on first south street, on the property now owned by Harry S. and Lois Cragun. This structure served as both a church and an elementary school until it burned down in 1921.

For the next 31 years meetings were held in the high school buildings, at first in the old "flag school," or what most of us remember as the "west building," then in the "middle building," or the auditorium.

Then, in early April of 1951 Bishop Vincen E. Leavitt, having served a number of years in his calling, asked Moapa Stake President, Bryan L. Bunker, when he would be released. President Bunker replied, "Not until you build a chapel." He informed Bishop Leavitt that the brethren had just instructed him that all wards were to have their own chapels. Besides, the school was soon coming under the control of Clark County School District and the school district would not let the ward continue to hold meetings in the school.

Bishop Leavitt consulted his counselors, Merrill Bunker and Ferlin Hunt. The next Sunday, the chapel was proposed to the priesthood leaders and the project was approved by the ward. That afternoon, the bishopric went to Logandale, Nevada and talked with Eddie Miller, who had just completed the Logandale Chapel. Mr. Miller agreed to be the construction foreman for the Bunkerville Chapel. He brought along his friend, Lynn Whitmore.

Bishop Leavitt went to the Glendale, Nevada state highway yard the next day and asked to use the highway department's brick-building machine. That afternoon he delivered the brick machine and a load of screened gravel to the chapel site which had been purchased from Roy Waite for \$700.

John Lundell, a rancher in Riverside, Nevada, brought up his small John Deere track loader, cleared off the building site and dug the basement. He also owned a lumber mill on Cedar Mountain and asked if the ward could use some lumber. Two days later two truck loads of form lumber appeared and the project began.

The only paid employees on the construction site were Eddie Miller, Lynn Whitmore, and Con Adams. Con agreed to work for half salary, a generous act that provided chapel money in the financial arrangement with Church headquarters. The Church had agreed to match the costs of the building with the Bunkerville Ward. Every hour spent in labor was sent into the Church in Salt Lake City, Utah for matching cash. Also, any donation of material or cash was matched in cash by the Church. This created a workable cycle. The people of Bunkerville would work and turn in their time. Cash would come from Salt Lake City and with that cash more supplies would be purchased and more labor performed, and the cycle continued.

With the exception of Sundays, every single day found groups of men working. During the day they built bricks with the brick machine and after school the Aaronic Priesthood boys would help stack them for drying. Then, each evening Bishop Leavitt would deliver another load of gravel to use the next day.

When enough blocks had been made the actual building was started. When the building was to the point windows were needed, Brother Hector Bunker came to Bishop Leavitt and said, "It looks like you are ready for the windows," and handed him a check to help purchase the windows. Nearly the same thing

happened with Uncle Harmon Wittwer. Both he and Hector were too old to really help with the work so they donated cash. Uncle Parley Hunt worked every single day the chapel was under construction.

Saturdays found the chapel yard crawling with Aaronic Priesthood boys. They hauled fill-gravel from the washes with tractor and wagons, then screened the gravel for cement work. They dug trenches, washed down walls, nailed on roof boards, and cleaned up debris.

The sisters of the ward helped paint, provided lunches for workers on Saturdays, and organized community fairs. Members of the ward would bring their unwanted or unused goods to the school and sell them to each other. Then the cash went to the chapel.

Bunkerville has never been a rich town in money. But it has always been an extravagant town in the spirit of helping others. It was so then and it is so today.

There were many happy hours spent at the chapel site and also, at times, anxious hours spent worrying about how to go on. There was the very sad day when, nearing the completion of the chapel, Eddie Miller died of a heart attack while at work. His body lay in the shade of the southwest corner of the chapel most of the day waiting for a coroner to come from Las Vegas. Work was slowed for the funeral and the chapel was finished under the hand of his friend, Lynn Whitmore. To my knowledge, Eddie was not a member of the church, but a more gracious and honest man would be hard to find.

In April of 1952, just a few days over a year from the time President Bunker asked for the chapel to be built, the chapel was dedicated.

It was remodeled in 1970-71 under Bishop Richard Reid and Bishop Vincent L. Leavitt. The library and what are currently Primary classrooms were added and the parking area east of the building, donated by Bruno and Elisa Biasi, was paved.

The building was enlarged again in 1983. The paper work was started by Bishop Larry Reber and the construction performed under Bishop Kirk Brotherson. The chapel area itself was extended to the west and the Relief Society room and three classrooms down the hall were added.

In the 114 year history of Bunkerville, with the exception of the lumber building at the original townsite, church meetings have always been held within a two block area of the chapel we are dedicating today.

V. L. Leavitt

1991 CHAPEL

Paper Work Begun	October 7, 1987
First Bid Opening	November 16, 1988
Second Bid Opening	November 17, 1989
Architect	Dennis B. Patten, P.C. Architects, Inc.
Contractor	Broderick & Howell
Church Authorization to Commence Work	January 8, 1990
County Authorization to Commence Work	April 6, 1990
Ground Breaking	April 9, 1990
Pre-Final Inspection	April 10, 1991
Final Inspection	April 19, 1991
First Sacrament Meeting Held	April 28, 1991
Dedication of Chapel	May 26, 1991

STAKE PRESIDENCIES 1877 - 1991

ST. GEORGE STAKE		January 12, 1879
Stake President	Joseph W. Young	1874 - 1877
Counselors	Robert Gardner James G. Bleak Alexander F. McDonald	
Stake President	John Daniel Thompson McAllister	1877 - 1888
Counselors	Henry D. Eyring Thomas J. Jones Daniel D. McArthur Anthony W. Ivins	
Stake President	Daniel D. McArthur	December 17, 1888
Counselors	Anthony W. Ivins Erastus B. Snow David H. Cannon	
Stake President	Edward H. Snow	June 14, 1901
Counselors	Thomas P. Cottom George F. Whitehead	
MOAPA STAKE FORMED		January 9, 1912
Stake President	Willard L. Jones	January 9, 1912
Counselors	John M. Bunker Samuel H. Wells	
Stake President	Bryan L. Bunker	September 10, 1939
Counselors	Robert O. Gibson Harold B. Brinley Edwin G. Wells	
MOAPA STAKE DIVIDED -- UVADA STAKE FORMED		December 15, 1940
Stake President	T. Gay Myers	January 13, 1952
Counselors	R. Lynn Bunker Thomas L. Adams	
MOAPA STAKE DIVIDED -- LAS VEGAS STAKE FORMED		October 8, 1954
Stake President	Grant M. Bowler	October 8, 1954
Counselors	W. Mack Lyon Aldon Stewart Blaine W. Allen	
		March, 1961
Stake President	Donald G. Whitney	February 21, 1973
Counselors	Don Lee G. Lynn Bowler	
MOAPA STAKE RENAMED LOGANDALE NEVADA STAKE		February 25, 1974
Stake President	Vec D. Wilson	March 14, 1982
Counselors	Fred Carpenter Bill O. Lee Alma W. Whipple Elwin J. Whipple	
		March 15, 1987
		January 10, 1988
LOGANDALE NEVADA STAKE DIVIDED -- VIRGIN VALLEY AREA BECAME PART OF BLOOMINGTON UTAH STAKE		August 28, 1988
Stake President	Steven H. Peterson	
Counselors	Patric R. Lewis H. Clark Christensen	

BUNKERVILLE BISHOPRICS 1877 - 1991

BUNKERVILLE BRANCH, SANTA CLARA WARD		January 7, 1877
Bishop	Edward Bunker, Sr.	1862 - 1877
Bishop Santa Clara Ward	Marius Ensign	1877 - 1884
BUNKERVILLE WARD		January 12, 1979
Bishop	Edward Bunker, Sr.	January 11, 1879
Counselors	Edward Bunker, Jr. Myron Abbott	
Bishop	Edward Bunker, Jr.	May 2, 1883
Counselors	Myron Abbott Samuel Crosby Joseph I. Earl Henry Dudley Leavitt	August 26, 1888 September 16, 1906
Bishop	Joseph I. Earl	January 9, 1908
Counselors	J. Nephi Hunt Henry Dudley Leavitt	
Bishop	Edward I. Cox	June 9, 1912
Counselors	Charles Albert Leavitt Harmon Wittwer	
Bishop	William Wittwer	September 7, 1919
Counselors	Parley Hunt Thomas Dudley Leavitt, Jr.	
Bishop	Seymour P. Fish	January 20, 1933
Counselors	Eldon Leavitt Austin G. Hunt	
Bishop	Donald C. Tobler	March 8, 1936
Counselors	George Nathan Abbott Vincen E. Leavitt	
Bishop	Austin G. Hunt	January 10, 1943
Counselors	Washington Leavitt Dan L. Waite	
Bishop	Vincen E. Leavitt	October 14, 1945
Counselors	Dan L. Waite Ferlin Hunt H. Merrill Bunker	January 9, 1949
Bishop	Wendell G. Leavitt	November 8, 1953
Counselors	Andrew J. Mitchell Howard Christensen Willard Kowallis Evan Waite	October 7, 1954 June 6, 1955
Bishop	Dan L. Waite	June 23, 1957
Counselors	Walter Hardy L. Kay Barney	

BUNKERVILLE BISHOPRICS 1877 - 1991

Bishop Counselors	H. Merrill Bunker Bernard Prows Walter Hardy	February 26, 1961
Bishop Counselors	Richard A. Reid Evan Waite Vaughn Leavitt	May 23, 1965
Bishop Counselors	Vincent L. Leavitt Cecil R. Leavitt Larry Reber	May 24, 1970
Bishop Counselors	Glen R. Peterson Evan Waite H. Merrill Bunker Larry Reber Douglas Leavitt	November 12, 1972 April 21, 1974 April 21, 1974
Bishop Counselors	Larry Reber Kirk E. Brotherson Vincent L. Leavitt Kelly B. Jensen Elwin J. Whipple	March 16, 1975 November 20, 1977 November 20, 1977
Bishop Counselors	Kirk E. Brotherson Michael G. Waite Andrew R. Jensen	July 13, 1980
Bishop Counselors	Elwin J. Whipple Kelly B. Jensen Richard J. Biasi	October 21, 1984

**BUNKERVILLE WARD DIVIDED -- FIRST AND SECOND WARD FORMED
SEPTEMBER 15, 1985**

First Ward Bishop Counselors	Elwin J. Whipple Erik L. Laub Orville Junior Dalton	September 15, 1985
Second Ward Bishop Counselors	Kelly B. Jensen Roger M. Bunker Richard J. Biasi	September 15, 1985
First Ward Bishop Counselors	Michael G. Waite Erik L. Laub Orville Junior Dalton	January 10, 1988
Second Ward Bishop Counselors	Roger M. Bunker Ned H. Mikkelsen Nicholas S. Bartlett II	July 2, 1989

VIRGIN VALLEY SPANISH BRANCH FORMED APRIL 23, 1989

Branch President Counselors	J. Clark Robison M. Derek Hafen Jose L. Macias	April 23, 1989
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NEW CHAPEL GROUNDBREAKING

April 9, 1990

Conducting	Bishop Michael G. Waite
Opening Song	"How Firm A Foundation" Conducted by Cecil R. Leavitt
Opening Prayer	Bishop Larry Reber
Speaker	Bishop Elwin J. Whipple

"The statement *"The Great and Dreadful Day"* takes a personal meaning as we break ground for a new building. This is a great day in the fact that the Church in Bunkerville has grown to the point of warranting a new building, but dreadful in the fact that we must leave the little building that has meant so much to us and been such a big part of our lives. The warmth of that little church building in the heart of town, built by the members' hands has a spirit we have grown to love. . . a place where we have laughed together and, at those sacred times of death, have cried together. These memories will always live, but it is still a time of sorrow as we let go.

New buildings always seem cold to me with their fresh paint and new carpet. But as the Lord's people enter with His spirit, I testify that the warmth and feelings of belonging will come. Paint will be scratched, carpets will be soiled. Laughter will ring, caskets will be rolled in and the Lord's people will become one with the beautiful building that will soon stand on this ground."

E.J. Whipple

First Ground Turned By	Bishop Roger M. Bunker	Bishop Kelly B. Jensen
	Bishop Larry Reber	President J. Clark Robison
	Bishop Michael G. Waite	Bishop Elwin J. Whipple



From left to right: Janet Mikkelsen, Carol Leavitt, Elisa Biasi, Marianne Leavitt, Krishelle Waite, Lynnette Waite, Maria Alejos, Judith Laub, Colleen Reber, Jean Whipple

DEDICATION PROGRAM

BUNKERVILLE CHAPEL

MAY 26, 1991

Presiding President Steven H. Peterson
 Conducting Bishop Roger M. Bunker
 Organ Prelude Colleen Reber
 Prelude Music Choir

"Sweet Hour Of Prayer"

Choir Numbers conducted by Loye Houston and Regene Bunker
 Accompanied by Sheila Hatridge and Jean Whipple

Spanish Interpreter Danny Allen
 Welcome Bishop Roger M. Bunker
 Opening Hymn Hymn No. 247 Congregation

"We Love Thy House, O God"

Invocation Bishop Vincent L. Leavitt
 Sacrament Hymn Hymn No. 193 Congregation

"I Stand All Amazed"

Sacrament Aaronic Priesthood
 Speaker Bishop Vincen E. Leavitt
 Speaker Bishop Larry Reber
 Musical Number Choir

"A Marvelous Work"

Speaker Bishop Kirk E. Brotherson
 Speaker Bishop Elwin J. Whipple
 Speaker Bishop Michael G. Waite
 Hymn Hymn No. 5 Congregation

"High On The Mountain Top"

Speaker President J. Clark Robison
 Speaker President Vee D. Wilson
 Musical Number Cecil R. Leavitt

"Bless This House"

Accompanied by Jean Whipple and Sheila Hatridge

Dedicatory Prayer President Steven H. Peterson
 Closing Song Choir

"If Ye Love Me"

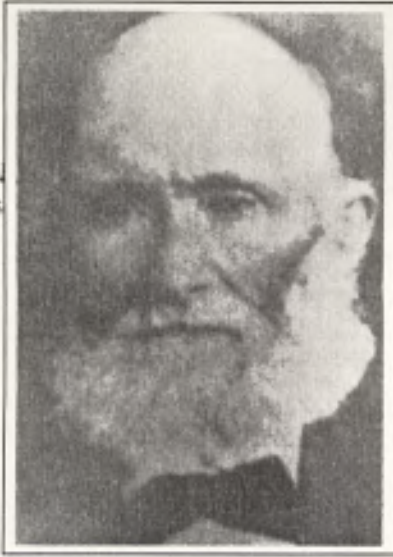
Benediction Bishop Kelly Jensen

HONORED GUESTS

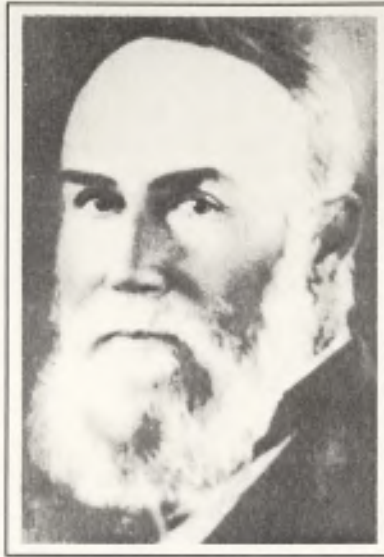
Bishop Donald C. Tobler
 Bishop Vincen E. Leavitt
 Bishop Dan L. Waite
 Bishop Larry Reber
 Bishop Elwin J. Whipple

Bishop Austin G. Hunt
 Bishop Wendell G. Leavitt
 Bishop Vincent L. Leavitt
 Bishop Kirk E. Brotherson
 Bishop Kelly B. Jensen

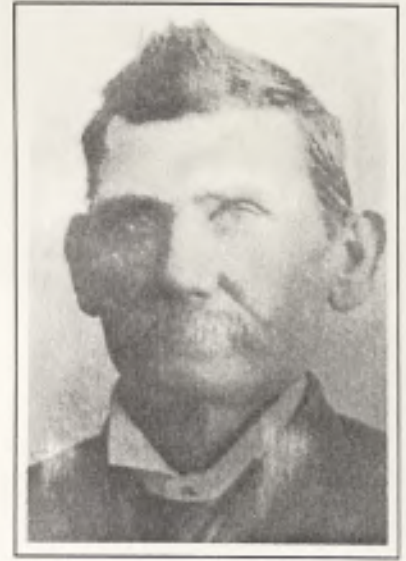
BISHOPS - BUNKERVILLE WARDS



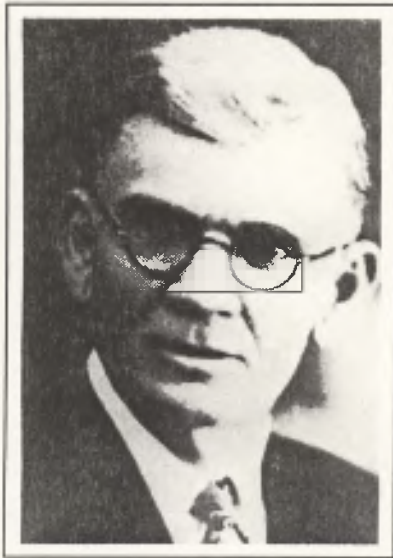
Edward Bunker, Sr.
January 11, 1879
May 2, 1883



Edward Bunker, Jr.
May 2, 1883
January 9, 1908



Joseph I. Earl
January 9, 1908
June 9, 1912



Edward I. Cox
June 9, 1912
July 27, 1919



William Wittwer
September 7, 1919
January 20, 1933



Seymour P. Fish
January 20, 1933
March 8, 1936