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

Dedication Program Booklet
Committee Members:

Chairman
Photographers

Historian
Cover Artist
Consultants
Translator

Judith Laub
Jonathan Putnam
P.J. Waite
Kevin A. Mickelson
Vincent L. Leavitt
Jean Whipple
Dorothy Waite
Norman E. Waite
David A. Leavitt
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 Katherene 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>Paper Work Begun</td>
<td>October 7, 1987</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Bid Opening</td>
<td>November 16, 1988</td>
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<td>Second Bid Opening</td>
<td>November 17, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Dennis B. Patten, P.C. Architects, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>Broderick &amp; Howell</td>
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<td>Church Authorization to Commence Work</td>
<td>January 8, 1990</td>
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<td>County Authorization to Commence Work</td>
<td>April 6, 1990</td>
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<td>Ground Breaking</td>
<td>April 9, 1990</td>
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<td>Pre-Final Inspection</td>
<td>April 10, 1991</td>
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<td>Final Inspection</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Sacrament Meeting Held</td>
<td>April 28, 1991</td>
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<td>Dedication of Chapel</td>
<td>May 26, 1991</td>
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</table>
STAKE PRESIDENCIES 1877 - 1991

ST. GEORGE STAKE

Stake President
Joseph W. Young
Robert Gardner
James G. Bleak
Alexander F. McDonald

Counselors

January 12, 1879
1874 - 1877

Stake President
John Daniel Thompson McAllister
Henry D. Eyring
Thomas J. Jones
Daniel D. McArthur
Anthony W. Ivins

Counselors

1877 - 1888

Stake President
Daniel D. McArthur
Anthony W. Ivins
Erastus B. Snow
David H. Cannon

Counselors

December 17, 1888

Stake President
Edward H. Snow
Thomas P. Cottom
George F. Whitehead

Counselors

June 14, 1901

MOAPA STAKE FORMED

Stake President
Willard L. Jones
John M. Bunker
Samuel H. Wells

Counselors

January 9, 1912

Stake President
Bryan L. Bunker
Robert O. Gibson
Harold B. Brinley
Edwin G. Wells

Counselors

September 10, 1939

October 1, 1944

MOAPA STAKE DIVIDED -- UVADA STAKE FORMED

Stake President
T. Gay Myers
R. Lynn Bunker
Thomas L. Adams

Counselors

January 9, 1912

December 15, 1940

MOAPA STAKE DIVIDED -- LAS VEGAS STAKE FORMED

Stake President
Grant M. Bowler
W. Mack Lyon
Aldon Stewart
Blaine W. Allen

Counselors

October 8, 1954

October 8, 1954

March, 1961

Stake President
Donald G. Whitney
Don Lee
G. Lynn Bowler

Counselors

February 21, 1973

MOAPA STAKE RENAMED LOGANDALE NEVADA STAKE

Stake President
Vee D. Wilson
Fred Carpenter
Bill O. Lee
Alma W. Whipple
Elwin J. Whipple

Counselors

February 25, 1974

March 14, 1982

March 15, 1987

January 10, 1988

LOGANDALE NEVADA STAKE DIVIDED -- VIRGIN VALLEY AREA BECAME PART OF
BLOOMINGTON UTAH STAKE

Stake President
Steven H. Peterson
Patric R. Lewis
H. Clark Christensen

Counselors

August 28, 1988
BUNKERVILLE BISHOPRICS 1877 - 1991

BUNKERVILLE BRANCH, SANTA CLARA WARD
Bishop Santa Clara Ward
Edward Bunker, Sr.
Marius Ensign
January 7, 1877
1862 - 1877
1877 - 1884

BUNKERVILLE WARD
Bishop
Edward Bunker, Sr.
June 9, 1912
Bishop
Edward Bunker, Jr.
May 2, 1883
Counselors
Myron Abbott
May 2, 1883

Bishop
Edward Bunker, Jr.
August 26, 1888
Counselors
Myron Abbott
September 16, 1906
Samuel Crosby
Joseph I. Earl
Henry Dudley Leavitt

Bishop
Joseph I. Earl
January 9, 1908
Counselors
J. Nephi Hunt
January 9, 1908
Henry Dudley Leavitt

Bishop
Edward I. Cox
June 9, 1912
Counselors
Charles Albert Leavitt
September 7, 1919
Harmon Wittwer

Bishop
William Wittwer
September 7, 1919
Counselors
Parley Hunt
September 7, 1919
Thomas Dudley Leavitt, Jr.

Bishop
Seymour P. Fish
January 20, 1933
Counselors
Eldon Leavitt
January 20, 1933
Austin G. Hunt

Bishop
Donald C. Tobler
March 8, 1936
Counselors
George Nathan Abbott
March 8, 1936
Vincen E. Leavitt

Bishop
Austin G. Hunt
January 10, 1943
Counselors
Washington Leavitt
January 10, 1943
Dan L. Waite

Bishop
Vincen E. Leavitt
October 14, 1945
Counselors
Dan L. Waite
January 9, 1949
Ferlin Hunt

Bishop
H. Merrill Bunker
January 9, 1949
Counselors
Wendell G. Leavitt
November 8, 1953
Andrew J. Mitchell
October 7, 1954
Howard Christensen
June 6, 1955
Willard Kowallis
Evan Waite

Bishop
Dan L. Waite
June 23, 1957
Counselors
Walter Hardy
June 23, 1957
L. Kay Barney

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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  
April 21, 1974  
April 21, 1974  
November 12, 1972

Bishop Counselors  
Larry Reber  
Kirk E. Brotherson  
Vincent L. Leavitt  
Kelly B. Jensen  
Elwin J. Whipple  
November 20, 1977  
November 20, 1977  
March 16, 1975

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 Larry Reber
Bishop Michael G. Waite

Bishop Kelly B. Jensen
President J. Clark Robison
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

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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 Austin G. Hunt
Bishop Vincen E. Leavitt .......................... Bishop Wendell G. Leavitt
Bishop Dan L. Waite ............................... Bishop Vincent L. Leavitt
Bishop Larry Reber ................................ Bishop Kirk E. Brotherson
Bishop Elwin J. Whipple .......................... Bishop Kelly B. Jensen
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
Donald C. Tobler  
March 8, 1936  
January 10, 1943

Austin G. Hunt  
January 10, 1943  
October 14, 1945

Vincen E. Leavitt  
October 14, 1945  
November 8, 1953

Wendell G. Leavitt  
November 8, 1953  
May 26, 1957

Dan L. Waite  
June 23, 1957  
February 26, 1961

H. Merrill Bunker  
February 26, 1961  
May 23, 1965
BISHOPS - BUNKERVILLE WARDS

Elwin J. Whipple  
October 21, 1984  
January 10, 1988

Kelly B. Jensen  
September 15, 1985  
July 2, 1989

Michael G. Waite  
January 10, 1988

Roger M. Bunker  
July 2, 1989

J. Clark Robison  
April 23, 1989

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STAKE PRESIDENCY

Patric R. Lewis
First Counselor

Steven H. Peterson
President

H. Clark Christensen
Second Counselor

BUNKERVILLE 1ST WARD

Erik L. Laub
First Counselor

Michael G. Waite
Bishop

Orville Junior Dalton
Second Counselor
BUNKERVILLE 2ND WARD
Roger M. Bunker, Bishop
Ned H. Mikkelson, First Counselor Nicholas S. Bartlet, II., Second Counselor

VIRGIN VALLEY SPANISH BRANCH
J. Clark Robison, Branch President
M. Derek Hafen, First Counselor Jose L. Macias, Second Counselor

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