

ward is ninety-eight families or 486 souls. Samuel Claridge presides as Bishop with Hans N. Carlson and Francis W. Moody as counselors. Thatcher was first settled in 1881 and organized as a ward in May 1883.

Layton ward, thus named in honor of President Christopher Layton, lies immediately east of Thatcher, between it and Solomonville. It includes also the old town of Safford, which is still the name of the postoffice. In Layton proper nearly all the inhabitants are Saints, while in Safford the population is half Mormon and half Gentile. With the exception of a small cluster of houses in the center of Safford, the people in the Layton ward live on their respective farms. Layton has a fine flouring mill, extensive orchards, good farming land, a commodious meeting house, a modern school house, a social hall and several other distinguishing features. The distance from the center of Layton to the center of Thatcher ward is about three miles. John Welker, Abraham Perkins and Austin Evans constitute the Bishopric. Layton was first settled by Latter-day Saints in 1883, and the ward organized November 4, 1884. Seventy-three families, or 372 souls constitute the present membership.

Central ward comprises the Saints living in a scattered condition on their farms between Thatcher and Pima; like Thatcher, it embraces a strip of country three miles wide extending from the Gila river on the north to the Graham mountain on the south. Thirty-five families, or 178 souls, constitute the Mormon population, and there are only two other families in the district. The Central meeting house is nearly three miles northwest of Thatcher. Joseph Cluff is Bishop, with Wm. George Clemens and Geo. Coombs as counselors. This place was first settled in 1883, and organized as a ward in the fall of the same year.

Pima, formerly called Smithville, in honor of President Jesse N. Smith, is the oldest Mormon settlement on the Gila river. It was settled in 1879 by an organized company from the Eastern Arizona Stake of Zion, Joseph K. Rogers being the first presiding Elder. For several years he presided over all the Saints in the valley, and it may be said consistently that all the other settlements on the Gila river are outgrowths of this first colony. Pima is five miles by nearest road northwest of Thatcher, fourteen miles northwest of Solomonville, twelve miles southeast of Thomas, a non-Mormon town on the Gila, about fifty-five miles by road or twenty-five miles by trail over the Graham mountain north of Fort Grant, and seventy miles south of Fort Apache. The townsite of Pima is regularly laid out into blocks thirty-two rods square, separated by streets eight rods wide. Nearly all the inhabitants live on the townsite. They are all members of the Church except four families. Pima has the best and most commodious meeting house in the St. Joseph Stake of Zion, two district school houses, two social halls, four stores, a roller flouring mill (in course of construction) two saw mills and a shingle mill (located about seventeen miles southwest of the town), fine brick residences, beautiful shade trees, fine orchards and flower gardens. It was formerly the head-

quarters of the Stake, and the quarterly conferences are still held here. It is yet the largest ward in the Stake, as it contains 561 Latter-day Saints, divided into eighty-eight families. John Taylor is Bishop, and his counselors are James Foster and James A. McBride. Among Pima's most enterprising citizens is John H. Nuttall, a member of the High Council.

Matthews ward embraces the Saints residing in a tract of country lying west of Pima on the same side of the Gila river. The settlement is a scattered one as most of the people live on their farms or homesteads and along their main irrigating ditch. Thus the place is a sort of a string-town extending east and west about two miles. The center of the ward, or the point where the meeting house stands, is about one-third of a mile from the river and four miles northwest of Pima. The settlement was first founded by Joseph Matthews (one of the Utah pioneers of 1847), and others in December, 1880, and organized into a ward April 28, 1888. The present Bishop is David H. Matthews, a son of the pioneer mentioned. His counselors are Lehi Larsen and Francis Kirby. The numerical strength of the ward is at present nineteen families, or 131 souls.

Curtis, thus named in honor of a family by that name, who were among its first settlers, is situated on the north side of the river, and nearly opposite Matthews. Nearly three-fourths of the inhabitants live on and near the townsite, which is about four miles northwest of Matthews and twelve miles from Thatcher. The people irrigate from two canals which tap the river several miles above the townsite, but splendid water—perhaps the best in the valley—is obtained from some beautiful springs located adjacent to the townsite. The natural advantages of Curtis are very similar to those on the other side of the river, and there is room here for many more settlers; hence invitations are extended to Latter-day Saints, who are looking for homes, to come here and see for themselves before settling elsewhere. The same invitation is extended by the Saints in all other settlements on the Gila. Hundreds, and I may say thousands of families, can still be accommodated with homes in this land.

Curtis was first settled in 1881, and organized into a ward May 10, 1883. It has quite a history; at present the ward is not fully organized, but Brother Lechonia Halvin has charge as presiding Elder. The inhabitants consist of 23 Mormon families, numbering 142 souls.

Bryce ward consists of 18 families (111 souls) of Saints residing on the north side of the Gila river and opposite from Thatcher. They all live on their respective homesteads and no townsite has yet been laid out; but the parcel of land on which the meeting house stands in the northwest quarter of section 7, township 6 south of range 25 east of the Gila and Salt River meridian, is considered the center of the ward. This point is two miles north of Pima, five miles southeast of Curtis, seven miles northwest of Graham and nine miles northwest of Thatcher. Most of the lands under cultivation are watered from the Bryce ditch, which taps the river about four miles above

the center of the ward. This place was first settled in 1884 by the Bryce family (after which the place was subsequently named) and others; it was organized as a ward March 19, 1890; and the present Bishop is Alma Nephi Bryce; his only counselor is Thomas B. Nelson.

Graham is a scattered settlement, situated on the north side of the Gila river, opposite Thatcher; it extends up and down the river about four miles; as the people nearly all live on their respective quarter sections. A townsite has been partly surveyed, but only five families live on it. The meeting house, which is built on the townsite, is two miles northeast of Thatcher by nearest road, and nine miles northwest of Solomonville. Graham, thus named after the county and the mountain of that name, was first settled in 1881 and organized as a ward in May, 1883. Its present numerical strength is fourteen families, or 80 souls, and George Skinner is the presiding Elder, Bishop Peter O. Peterson having resigned his position.

I am now bound for St. David, on the Sal Pedro river.

ANDREW JENSON.

### RETURNED ELDERS.

Elder John Q. Critchlow, of Ogden, made a call on the News. He returned home last week from a mission, on which he left May 7, 1892. His field was in the Northern States mission, where he was assigned to labor in the Pennsylvania conference. His time was about equally divided between the states of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. He had fair health and enjoyed himself in the performance of his missionary duties. The treatment he received from the people generally was very good. There were some threats on the part of persons inclined to be lawless, but nothing of a serious nature. The people do not show much interest in religious affairs, their attention being occupied chiefly by worldly matters, especially in the present very dull times.

Elder August Carlson also called today. He returned to his home in Ogden about three weeks since from a mission to Scandinavia. He left home Jan. 23, 1892, and on arriving at Copenhagen was assigned to the Stockholm conference. After a few weeks there, he was called into the Copenhagen office to labor on the *Swenska Stjernan*, where he remained several months. He was again called to the conference, over which he subsequently was made president.

Elder Carlson gives a most encouraging report of the work in the locality where he has labored. There is a great deal of interest manifested by the people, and many requests come for Elders to preach. Meetings are held without hindrance, and good halls can be obtained where formerly it was not possible to hire them. There has been no opposition to meetings since the efforts, some time since, of a minister to close up the Sunday school, Bible classes, Mutual Improvement Association and Relief Society meetings and gatherings of the Saints are held regularly now, and everything is in a most prosperous and encouraging disposition.