

Voices from the Past

“The Light Upon the Hill”
80th Anniversary Pageant of Ricks
College

October 1968

Tape #74

Taped at the instance of Harold Forbush

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Harold Forbush: The following presentation and data of the history of Ricks College first recorded on a reel to reel tape is now on this 26th day of April 1984 being transferred onto a c90 cassette through the facilities of the upper Snake River Valley Historical Society located on north center Rexburg, Idaho. Robert Archibald president of the Rick's College Alumni is the speaker.

Robert Archibald: We'd like to introduce this pageant as written by Sharon Haws Moser and directed by Lynn Benson with Bob Opholiant directing the dance and Dr. Lamar Barrus and Dr. Darwin Wolford in charge of the music. The narrators this evening are Lyle Watson and Kay Wilkins. The pageant today features two original musical compositions composed especially for this occasion. The theme song for the pageant is "The Light on the Hill" with lyrics by Iris Hathaway and music by Professor Jack Bowman. The concluding number of the presentation is entitled the "Canticle of Brotherhood" and features the poetry of one of our students Mark Fisher a freshmen from Portland, Oregon with music by Dr. Darwin Wolford.

The committee who planned this pageant has spent many, many hours in working on this with Sister Erma Magelby as our chairman; she has really done a marvelous job, Dr. Hess, Norman Ricks, Lynn Benson, LaVere Ricks, David Crowder, Melvin Luke, Annie Kerr, Del Klingler, Ruth Biddulph, Sharon Smith and Nelda Dalling. We have also announcement from the library that they have the Rixidas back to 1940 to the present time and these are new books and they will be sold for a dollar a piece and in the foyer we have a thirty two page brochure telling the history of Ricks College and it will be sold to each of us for a dollar. The script writer was Donna Jean Luke Kingheart and other members of this committee were Norman Ricks, Lynn Humphreys, Ruth Bidoff, Seth Bills, Gary Grimith, and Ned Brewerton and Ned has really been a great help to us on this homecoming program. We'd like to have you acquainted with our council members of the Ricks College Alumni: Robert Archibald as the president, Erma Magelby is Vice President, Grant Hilson, Evelyn Ricks, Bill Clinger, and Dr. Daniel Hess is our executive secretary and Robert Peterson, Sharon Smith, Nelda Dalling, Evelyn Clark and Dr. Arnold Hilum with Hal Barton as the assistant executive secretary. A painting of the first building which Ricks College used in 1988 is in the foyer. This was painted by Marion Cheney and I'm sure that you'll enjoy looking at this after the program. We'd surely like to express our deep appreciation for the alumni, for the students of Rick College; you've seen many of these wonderful students in this pageant tonight and those who have helped to present this program. We fail to note in the program that Seth Bills is in charge of the slides and the projection work and also especially to recognize Dr. Arnold Hilum and Bill Clinger of the alumni council who are in the pageant. Now as the program ends happy ties will be sung and I'm sure all of us will join in singing with this and they'll come down the aisle and we'll ask at the close that President Wendall Stucki would give our benediction and then there won't be any interruptions or anymore announcements. After

the prayer by Robert Peterson, a member of our alumni counsel, we'll go right into the pageant and again thank you so much for being here. We hope that tomorrow night at seven o'clock that you'll invite some of your other friends to be here to enjoy this great event. Thank you.

Invocation by Robert Peterson: Our father in heaven, we're grateful for this privilege we have for being here this evening. We're grateful for life, the joys and happiness that we have. We're grateful for this Ricks College and for the influence that it's had in our lives and the lives of the young people that are here, and the great influence upon the community. As we meet this evening Father to present this pageant "The Light on the Hill" we ask for thy choicest blessings upon those who participate in it, the things that they've planned will go well and that they will be pleased with their effort. Wilt thou bless us with the many endeavors we do here at Ricks College, the things that are planned for us might go forth and fulfill this great destiny in the future as has been in the past. Now father be with us. Help us always to do the things that thou would have us do. We pray for these blessings in the name of thy son Jesus Christ, amen.

Song:

Narration: The brilliant beacon that today shines forth as Ricks College did not start with such radiance, many little lights far ago to make this powerful beam. Yes, take me back to dear old Ricks, the college on the hill. And if we take you back far enough, you will find Ricks at its very beginning or first flicker in the year 1888.

Song:

Narration: The longed for dream of a school for the children of the saints in the upper Snake River valley became a reality on November 12, 1888. The Bannock Stake Academy today known as Ricks College was dedicated by Thomas E. Ricks, president of the Bannock Stake which comprised all the Latter-day Saints north of the Portneuf River near Pocatello. In those early days only five years after the original pioneers had come, Rexburg was still a most primitive settlement. Due to the pressures and the differences of opinions between the Mormons and the Gentiles about the principal of polygamy, the Mormons soon found they had a little voice therefore, church schools were established. As the people drove their horses and carriages and walked to the log cabin, the first ward meeting house in Rexburg on the corner of 2nd East and 1st South in Rexburg, which was to be dedicated as their school that day. Truly hearts must have been pounding with excitement and anticipation of the fulfillment of that dream. My dear brothers and sisters it's a great thrill to greet you here today on this very special occasion. The dedication of our new school and on this occasion we're pleased to have with us the superintendant of all church schools, Dr. Carl G. Measure. Dr. Measure will now speak to us.

Dr. Measure: Brothers and sisters I'm sure that you're happy this day to dedicate this school for your children, a school which will further the spiritual training of the members of the church under the sheltering wing of the church. This new academy should give spirituality precedence over worldliness. The principles of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ will be taught side by side with arithmetic, geography, reading, and the other mundane subjects. We are very happy with the people of Rexburg. You have contributed \$186.00 in cash, forty bushels of wheat, and two steers to make this school a reality. President Ricks informs us that desks can be purchased for forty dollars a dozen. A very fine man has been chosen as the principal of the academy. I would like to introduce to you Brother Jacob Spori. Brother Spori is a pioneer immigrant from Switzerland and comes to us from a long line of teachers. He has done post-graduate work at the same university I come from in Leipzig, Germany which shows his excellent taste. Brother Spori was instrumental in the opening of the Turkish mission for the LDS church and has translated the book *Voice of Warning* into the French language with the assistance of his youngest sister. Brother Spori will be the administrator of the academy and will have two teachers to assist him. The academy will be divided into three departments. Sister Sarah A. Barnes would you please stand up? This good lady will take care of the primary department of the academy. Brother Axel F. O. Nielson will teach in the preparatory department and Brother Spori will handle the intermediate department.

Narration: Jacob Spori brought his family from Switzerland with a company of immigrants bound for Zion. Leaving the main company at Cheyenne, the Sporis came directly to Rexburg by way of Market Lake, now Roberts, and by freight wagon over the lava rocks on June 20, 1888. They settled in the empty tithing granary where the Adams School now stands. Time was short to get ready for the opening of the academy that fall. Jacob Spori felt that it was his sacred duty to carry the school to success during the hardship of these early days. He didn't hesitate to do janitor work, repair the leaky roof, saw wood, and he even hauled timber for fuel from the canyons on Saturdays. A quotation for which Jacob Spori will always be remembered is this.

Quotation: "The seeds we plant here today will grow into mighty oaks and their branches will spread all over this earth."

Narration: The branches of these seeds surely are seen and felt as they add to the glow throughout the world.

(Music)

Narration: Payments of both tuition and salaries for many of those early years was often farm produce and store pay which was paper orders redeemable only on the church owned ZCMI co-op branch store.

(Music)

Narration: The tuition for the first term of ten weeks was two dollars to enter the primary department. Salaries for teachers were meek. Sarah A. Barnes received \$110, Axel F. O. Nielson \$161 and Jacob Spori \$312. Ninety students attended the first term of the Bannock State Academy.

(Music)

Narration: The Light on the Hill has not always shown under the same title, but no matter what the name, the same spirit has radiated. Dedicated as the Bannock State Academy, it continued under this title for ten years. In 1898 the school's name was changed to Freemont Stake Academy to be in keeping with the change in the stakes name. High school work was added that same year and it was the only school in the upper valley where this learning was offered. The year 1903 saw another change in the name of the school. In honor of its founder President Thomas E. Ricks the name was changed from Freemont Stake Academy to Rick's Academy. This same year the school moved to a new stone building known as the Spori Administration Building. At this time there were 310 students. The year 1917 held in store another name change, this time from Ricks Academy to Ricks Normal College. State certification was granted and 400 students were enrolled. The gym building was completed and dedicated in the next two years in 1919. The last name change of the school was in 1923 when Ricks Normal College was given the endeared title Ricks College. The first and second years of high school work were eliminated in this year and the annual leadership week instituted. Along with changes in the name of the school have come changes in school songs. In the year 1928 you might've heard the pretty coed singing this for the school song of dear old Rick's.

(Clapping, cheering, school song)

In its 80 our light on the hill has weathered many storms sometimes shining faintly and twice it even flickered out but always Ricks revived with a glowing fire of faith and devotion by those who loved her and knew what she stood for. Mirrored throughout the years, the history of Ricks College is a long story of sacrifice by many valiant people. Look in the magic mirror with me now and reflect back through the years. In the third winter the school came desperately close to failure financially. Rather than permit to close, even temporarily, principal Jacob Spori wrote to superintendant Karl G. Maeser asking for a vacation that he might earn money with which to pay expenses that the other two teachers might finish out the years work. This he was privileged to do. One evening Jacob Spori called his family together. His wife Magdalena, his son Jacob, his draughts Magdalena, Louise, Elizabeth, and baby Anne.

Skit: Jacob Spori: Mother, children, there's something that I must tell you. The academy is in desperate need of money, in order to meet expenses and to remain open.

Magdalena Spori: Could it be that the academy would have to close?

Jacob Spori: This is what I'm so strongly opposed to. We've worked so hard to get the academy where it is today and get it running. We're doing so much good. I would hate to see it all end now.

Children: What can be done father? Where can you get the money? The church members have already given all they can.

Jacob Spori: Yes I know this and this is why I feel so strongly that something must be done.

Children: Do you have an idea father?

Jacob Spori: Yes dear I do. I thought that possibly the other two teachers could remain teaching and keep the school open and then maybe I could go and get a job with the railroad and earn the money necessary to keep the school open and running.

Children: Do you not teach school daddy?

Magdalena Spori: That's very unselfish of you Jacob.

Jacob Spori: The school must remain open. I feel that Ricks Academy has a great future and destiny to fulfill.

(Music)

Narration: C. Anne Watkins was the principal who rang school bell at Ricks Academy for the next three years after Brother Spori. He was praised for efficient and faithful service. The townspeople of Rexburg did much to keep Ricks going in those days, including housing the students.

Skit: Woman 1: Well hello Sister Frost. How are you? How are things at your home?

Woman 2: Oh fine except it's a little crowded now because school down at the academy is beginning. We're taking in two students this year.

Woman1: Well we have one student in our home this term. It takes extra feeding and work but we're glad to have them.

Woman 2: One of our students brought some potatoes to help out for the winter.

Woman 1: Every bit helps doesn't it. Our student brought two dozen eggs. Too bad they weren't boiled because now they're scrambled after the bus ride.

Woman 2: Mr. Rigby I understand that nearly all the homes of Rexburg have students living with them. Well it's a fine thing we can do to help the youth of today get their education.

Mr. Rigby: To payback for the hospitality, Jack is taking a wagon up the canyon to cut wood for the cabin. Would you like to come along and help?

Student: I'll ask dad if we can. It's Saturday and the chores are about done so I think we'll be alright.

Student 2: I'll be glad to go. I'd rather cut wood today then get cold in history class Monday.

Narration: The first of two periods when the school was virtually closed and nothing left but locking the doors was in 1895 during the administration of George Cole. The following scene takes place at Christmas time in a faculty meeting. Principal Cole is speaking.

Principal Cole: Fellow teachers as you know finances are low and I'm afraid the board has decided to discontinue school at the academy after Christmas.

Man: That would be a shame

Woman: What about the children? They can't just leave the subjects they've been learning in mid-air. What can be done?

Cole: I'm sorry but there are just not funds enough to go on. Unless...

Man: Unless what?

Cole: Unless you'd be willing to continue to the end of the year without pay.

Woman: If it meant keeping the school open I'd be willing. Count me in.

Man: But we can't let the students of the school down my wife will have to learn some new ways to cook beans but I'm with you.

Cole: Good. The school will not close because of you. I'm sure you will be blessed for your efforts and unselfishness.

Narration: The faithful teachers revived the light by serving without pay from Christmas to the end of the school year. Thomas E. Ricks said of George Cole,

Thomas E. Ricks: Brother Cole has always had with him the spirit of the living God from the time he came to Ricks College until the moment of his departure.

Narration: Karl G. Maeser said of that statement,

Karl G. Maeser: Brother Cole, no greater statement can be made of any living man. You must be very happy.

Narration: The three years at the turn of the century saw D.M. Todd as principal of Freemont Stake Academy. The devotion and service of many local people were shown in the mirror of those years. Let's look in on a priesthood meeting of the first ward.

Priesthood Meeting President: Now brethren, there's a lot of rock to be cut and dropped in the quarry if we expect to get this new building for the academy.

Man 1: Well I've got a team of horses you can use either Wednesday or Thursday of this week.

Man 2: I will furnish the wagon.

Priesthood Meeting President: Well that's fine brethren, but who's going to produce the muscle power?

Man 3: I can go Wednesday.

Man 4: I can go Wednesday too.

Man 5: I can go Thursday and take all those boys

Priesthood Meeting President: Well that's wonderful brethren! With help like this we'll have that new building for the academy before we know it.

Narration: Through all these hardships and the troubled rough waters, the spirit of Ricks still burned brightly. This spirit is displayed in a special song that has become a trade mark of the school. In the fall of 1904 Oscar A. Kirkham, became a member of the faculty for Ricks Academy. More than fifty years later, as one of the general authorities while on a visit to the school, he composed and sang this song in a student assembly. To the honor of his great name goes the credit for one of the most beloved songs of the school, "College on the Hill."

Song: "College on the Hill"

Narration: The story of Ricks College is also one of service and foresight. Mirrored through these eighty years we see great examples of this. The years 1901 through 1914 were under the steady hand of Ezra C. Dalby as principal. He knew each youngster in the school by name and visited their homes up and down the valley to become acquainted with their families and background. Because the school was small the faculty helped by taking part in the extracurricular activities. Principal Dalby loved drama and long will be remembered his lead in the school play, "Pygmalion and Galatia." Still with his students are their treasured scrapbooks of memories gems. The first class each morning at the academy was Theology. Principal Dalby had sheets of paper with outstanding thoughts handed to each students and it was their task to memorize these words of wisdom. Here is one example. "Live for something. Have a purpose and that purpose keep in you."

(Music)

Narration: Under the administration of the A. B. Christensen in 1915, the first year of college work has begun. And in 1916 the following year the second year of college work was initiated. This indeed is a tribute to President Christensen who served for these three years. In the thirteen memorable years that George S. Romney was the administrator many advancements took place. The name of the light on the hill changed twice. New buildings were added to the campus, football was started, and the title of president replaced principal. George S. Romney had a dynamic personality and was in every sense a genuine gentleman. He pressed for high academic standards by the students but also believed in extracurricular activities. The school participated extensively in debate, music, drama, speech, and athletic competition. His son Marion G. Romney, our beloved apostle, was captain of the football and basketball teams. During President Romney's administration the annual leadership week, now education week, was started. This important event was held in February each year. In those days, people from all over the valley traveled by horse and sleigh to attend leadership which lasted for several days. One of the more humorous incidents that took place during his reign was at the time that there was a small pox epidemic. Paul Holm, one of the students at the time, got the germ and had to leave school. Before going, he'd left a note written in his courageous and witty way which President Romney read in a student assembly.

President Romney: Dear President Romney,

I have small pox and won't be able to be with you for a few days but you go right on with school anyway. I'll be back as soon as I can.

Yours truly,
Paul Holm

We all enjoyed his humor.

Narration: The great power that generates the light on the hill is spirituality of faith in the living God. One of the many examples of the spirituality at Ricks down through its eighty years was displayed in March of 1927. In that year the opera, "The Bohemian Girl" was presented under the direction of Harry A. Dean. There were about one hundred in the cast. An invitation was to take the production to Shelley was given to the college. On a cold snowy day a caravan of private cars took the performers south to the friendly little town of Shelley. In gratitude to the college for coming some of the ladies had prepared food for the hungry cast. What a treat and what effort for this small community to feed this crowd. However, at that time it was more difficult to keep certain types of food from spoilage. Apparently some of the meat became tainted and shortly before the performance many of the cast began to suffer from food poisoning. It appeared

questionable that that evening's presentation of the opera might be performed. A few moments however before curtain time the answer to that question came. The answer was not as the cast expected. The decision of those in charge was to give a blessing to the group. Hyrum Manwaring was chosen as the mouth piece. He stood on a bench and raised his arms above the group and gave them all a blessing. Reverence and humility filled the room. He blessed them that they would feel the power of healing so no one would be distressed and all would be able to do his part. He asked that fear would leave and confidence return. He said neither the audience nor the cast would detect weakness and no one would forget his lines and it would be a testimony to all there and truly it was a testimony to all there. Even the cast was amazed at how well they performed. What a blessing was witnessed. The greatest of all positions solved the problem and the opera went on as scheduled.

(Music)

END OF TAPE 1

START OF TAPE 2

Song: "I Need Thee Every Hour"

Narration: The second period when the school as virtually closed and nothing left but locking the doors was in 1934 and 1935 during the administration of Hyrum Manwaring. The church did not want it, the state would not have it, and the district board did not know what to do with it. Through all this, President Manwaring held the reins steady, bought more land for the expansion of the school, and made great strides. Truly he was a man of optimism and foresight. Through the faithful local support that the school has always had, and a token donation by the church, Rick's continued. The teachers were not paid regularly salaries but available funds were divided amongst them. In 1940 the Ricks choir furnished music one day for April General Conference in Salt Lake City. Two hundred thirty singers went in six school buses to conference. David O. Mckay was very impressed at this time and made the statement, "Don't ever offer Ricks College to the state of Idaho again." President Manwaring had a habit in the first student assemblies to give pertinent advice to the students. Here tonight is President Manwaring's son to speak the words of his father.

Manwaring's son: Now students in addition to learning the three R's, you should learn some of the more practical lessons in life. Be thrifty and control your budgets. To show you what I mean our family needs a new car and my wife Bessy keeps telling me how she has her heart sat upon a Cadillac. Well I had to let her know that that would be the only part of her anatomy that would sit upon a Cadillac.

Narration: During the years of the Second World War, life was very different at Ricks College. There were many more girls than boys. Football was discontinued because there were not enough men. Leadership week was temporally suspended because of gas rationing. There was no band and only a very small orchestra. In fact in 1945 Ricks College graduated it's only all girl class. In spite of the shortage of men however, you would've been amazed at the amount of school spirit displayed. The girls were in there pitching all the time, they even continued on with the Friday night dance in true Rick's fashion. What men there were, were available up and down the valley and were solicited to come and many little brothers in high school were escorts to girls at the dance.

(Music)

Narration: For almost a quarter of a century the light of Ricks College has shown under the able leadership of our beloved President John L. Clarke. It even reached the four year status in 1951. In the 1950's there was talk of Ricks College being moved to Idaho Falls. Many of the people said this would never happen because they couldn't get it through the under pass in Rigby. (Laughter) It proved to be another time in the turbulent history of the school when local people rallied and again showed their love and devotion to the college on the hill. Under the administration of President Clarke, one hundred sixty acres of land was acquired from the city of Rexburg for a nominal fee. All of the money for this was raised through local donations without any cost to the church. In the last few years tremendous strides have been made in the expansion of the college. The campus encompasses 255 acres of land, twenty permanent buildings, and a student body of four thousand, forty-nine out of the fifty states are represented and twelve foreign countries. The big white R on the hill top and the fountain with its sparkling colored water are other added features. Just three years ago the Ricks College stake was organized and today there are fifteen wards. Ricks College has always been known as the friendly school. The warmth from the light on the hill comes from that special spirit about Ricks which says that each person is important. A smile and a hi are the trademarks of the school among students and faculty alike. Almost every visitor to Ricks will say, "You know, there's something special here." Perhaps that something special is a brotherhood of souls well united.

(Song)

Narration: As Jacob Spori predicted, the seeds planted in 1888 and down through the mirror of years to 1968 surely are felt and known all over the earth. Many are the mighty oaks of towering characters. Men and women who have march in the stream of time to radiate the seeds that are planted, cultivated, and nourished at Ricks College.

Narration: Seeds of knowledge: knowledge of the sciences, knowledge of the world around us, and knowledge of how to live more fully in that world.

Narration: Seeds of spirituality that spark of testimony kindled to burn brightly and radiate the glow of truth that shall make man free. Spirituality gained from devotional assemblies once a week, from listening to general authorities, from the knowledge of the gospel received from a theology class, from kneeling in family prayer with roommates. Spirituality gained from services in the school organizations or college ward.

Narration: Seeds of friendship: Friendship of roommates as you share daily routine, friendship of teachers who care and are interested in you, friendship of that special someone who creates that inner glow in your heart, friendship of the whole student body with a smile and a hi. You receive the feeling that you belong to something good and wonderful.

Narration: Seeds of sacrifice: The sacrifice of administration and faculty down through the mirror of 80 years to keep the light on the hill, the sacrifice of working their way through school.

Narration: Yes, the seeds we are planting today at Ricks College will grow and become mighty oaks and their branches will run all over the earth.

Narration: No matter where one may go, the light on the hill is a beacon for good. Each person that has walked her halls, sung her songs, and cultivated her precious seeds shall always remember. Happy ties can never be broken, formed by you and me. Far surpassing well, unspoken they'll forever be.

(Song)

Benediction by Wendall Stucki: Our Father in Heaven, we're grateful unto thee for this opportunity and for those who have served us so well and we give unto thee, Heavenly Father, the honor and the glory and we praise thee for thy blessings and thy thoughtfulness in our behalf. We pray that we may be blessed with understanding and gratitude that we may be blessed with the spirit of knowledge and sacrifice. Bless us with the desire to keep thy commandments and forgive us of our weaknesses and help us that we might strengthen one another, that we might learn gratitude, that we might learn brotherhood, that we might be appreciative of one another, and be able to accept us as we are and work together for the building up of thy kingdom. And we pray Heavenly Father for all of those who serve in thy kingdom and we're grateful unto thee for our young people that serve in the armed forces and we pray that that thou will bless and sustain and protect them. We pray for the leaders of our nations that they may be instrumental in accomplishing that purposes. And so we present ourselves for thee again with thankfulness for the privilege of life and its happiness and this great land and for the gospel of Jesus Christ and thine appointed leaders and we do it in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Forbush: The following is copied onto this tape, In order to preserve and add to the dimension of the history of Ricks College.

The contribution in writing made by Professor Norman E. Ricks of Ricks College, dealing with the history of Ricks College from 1888 to 1972 which will be chapter seven in a book that Lou Clements and I are now are preparing entitled, Pioneering the Snake River Fork Country and we are delighted to have Professor Ricks make his contribution to our book. It will be read by my secretary Cathy White this Thursday the 15th of June 1972.

Cathy White: This College 1888-1972. In the 84 years covered in this chapter, Ricks College has experienced some unusual development. During this time span there have been five distinct periods of development with a sixth possibly taking place even as this is being written. Over this long period a spirit of this has developed which is distinctive. After attempting to uncover exactly what this spirit is we have come to the conclusion that it is the mixture of the gospel of Jesus Christ, academic revelation, hard work, personal achievement, and social awakening. Those who have partaken of the spirit come back years later filled with excitement as they recall their experiences as students. In many instances life continues to be filled with a love for the gospel, willingness to serve others, love of continual learning, appreciation to the finer things of life, and successful family relationships. The very name, Ricks College, elicits excitement in the eyes of alumni. In this chapter facts associated with this 84 year old institution will be presented in chronological order from November 12, 1888 to the summer of 1972. Of necessity many people and events will have to be omitted from the text and footnotes sources may be found to supplement the basic account given here. Information included has been authenticated as nearly as possible from the original Minutes of the Board of Education, Minutes of the Bannock State, a Manuscript History of Ricks College 1888-1944 written by President Emeritus Hyrum Manwaring, school publications, newspapers, and interviews with former teachers and alumni. The author's interest stems from his entrance as a freshmen student in 1939 and flows through graduations in both 1948 with an associate degree and in 1950 with a bachelor's degree and through fourteen years as a teacher. Over the years some misinformation has been printed at alumni celebrations, and pageants, etc. The truth is as valid a claim to greatness as this "dressed up" information. Hopefully this is how it happened.

The founding of Ricks College is intimately tied in with the pioneer settlement of the upper Snake River valley. As the previous chapters have outlined these events in some detail it only remains for us to recall the bitterness that has developed between the Mormons and non-Mormons to realize why the Saints were unwilling to send their children to "gentile" schools. As early as 1884, the LDS people organized a private school in Rexburg where their children could be taught by their own people. By 1888 the persecution had become so general in Utah and Idaho that the General Authorities of the

LDS church decided to establish a series of academies in those two states. By that time there were three major church academies in operation in Salt Lake City, Provo, and Logan. A Church Board of Education consisting of the general authorities of the church had been organized as Karl G. Maeser, principal of the Academy at Provo as superintendent of church schools. A letter addressed to the presidency of the Bannock Stake dated June 8, 1888 and signed by Wilford Woodruff, chairman of the Church Board of Education suggested that a local Board of Education be formed for the purpose of establishing a local academy, as soon as practicable.

We feel that the time has arrived when the proper education of our children should be taken in hand by us as a people. Religious training is practically excluded from our schools. The perusal of books that we value as divine records is forbidden. Our children, if left to the training they receive in these schools will grow up entirely ignorant of these principles of salvation for which the Latter-day Saints have made so many sacrifices. To permit this condition of things to exist among us would be criminal. The desire is universally expressed by all thinking people in the church that we should have schools where the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants can be used as textbooks; and where the principles of our religion may form a part of the teaching of the schools.

At the quarterly conference of Bannock Stake held at Louisville, August 18th and 19th, 1888 the following resolution was unanimously adopted.

Resolved that we sustain Thomas E. Ricks, James E. Fogg of Rexburg, Jacob Spori, Rexburg, Bishop John Donaldson of Teton, Bishop W. M. Park of Parker Ward, Bishop R. Jardine of Louisville, and Bishop James E. Steele of Iona as members of the Board of Education for this Stake to act in harmony with the Church Board of Education appointed at the general conference of the church last April; that said board be and hereby is authorized and empowered to solicit, receive, manage and disperse contributions, emoluments, and donations for the establishment and maintenance of an institution (not legible) in Bannock Stake- to (not legible) Bannock Stake Academy, management thereof to employ such teachers and make such rules and regulations as may be necessary or desirable; and to do all other things which they may find requisite to faithfully and efficiently perform their full duty as a Board of Education.

A board meeting was held at Louisville August 18th with all members of the board present plus Apostle Lorenzo Snow, also other brethren. At this meeting Thomas E. Ricks was appointed chairman with Jacob Spori as Secretary. The business transacted at

the first meeting included: 1. Remarks by Lorenzo Snow in which he urged the starting of an Academy and promised that the Principal's salary would be paid by the church. 2. Organization of an Executive Committee consisting of: Thomas E. Ricks as chairman and James E. Fogg and Jacob Spori as members. 3. The meeting house in Rexburg would be used as a schoolroom. 4. Authority was vested in the executive committee to take such steps in advancing the church school of Bannock Stake as it seemed necessary, and to call the board to meeting as often as it seemed necessary.

The next meeting of the Board is recorded on September 6, 1888 at which time a letter from Wilford Woodruff dated August 30, 1888 was read approving the local Board of Education, commending them for their willingness to use the church for a school, requesting to know what the local board members could do and promising to confer with Brother Maeser and learn from him who he has within reach that will answer as a principal. The board then wrote a letter to President Wilford Woodruff promising that if the church would pay the principal's salary they would do the rest and have a school.

September 15, 1888 at a board meeting Jacob Spori was elected treasurer of the board. Other business included a decision to canvass the stake for donations, a report on donations already received and a report of the Executive Committee concerning correspondence with big supply firms.

The next meeting recorded in the minutes was at the home of James E. Fogg with Jacob Spori being the only other member present. A letter from President Thomas E. Ricks dated Salt Lake City September 24, 1888 was read in which he reported that he expected to confer with President Woodruff that night and go to Provo the next day to see Brother Maeser to settle the matter of a principal for our school. "I am rather in favor of Brother Spori and let him pick up his English as he goes along." He also reported that desks were available at \$40.00 per dozen. At this same meeting a second letter dated Pleasant Grove September 25, 1888 addressed to J.E. Fogg and Jacob Spori reported the visit with Karl G. Maeser indicated in the previous letter. Important information stated that, "The decision is that Brother Spori take our school. I have ordered three dozen seats and desks."

During the month of September the local board had canvassed the area in an attempt to raise funds to fit out the meeting house for a school and to purchase the necessary supplies and equipment for the opening of the school. In this canvass they were very disappointed though they did receive some funds. Rexburg donated \$186.10 in cash, forty bushels of wheat, and two steers. What the other communities donated is not indicated at this time but later there are notations of eggs, potatoes, etc. being donated by various communities. Money was very scarce in those days as nearly ever board meeting is concerned with how to raise enough to keep the school open once it was started; when the canvass failed to satisfy the needs immediately the matter was turned to the bishops for their attention.

The lateness of the season caused concern about getting the school opened, however it was decided that while lumber and plaster was wanted that Brother Spori would go to Provo for first hand training by Karl G. Maeser. He attended October conference in Salt Lake City then spent a few days at the Brigham Young Academy in Provo studying the operation of the school. Local problems were solved during this period. The First Ward church was fitted up for three classes by fixing partitions in the main assembly hall. The board interviewed Axel Nielson, one of Karl G. Maeser's students and hired him at \$200.00 for the year plus board. Jacob Spori's salary was set at \$500.00 the first year. Sarah Ann Barnes was hired to teach the beginning children at a salary of \$1.00 per day. The first year the school had three teachers and departments, primary, preparatory, and intermediate with tuition being \$2, \$3, and \$4 respectively. The books used were those adopted by the District Schools of Idaho Territory. The practices of the school were patterned after the academy at Provo.

The school was formally dedicated and opened for the first term November 12, 1888. At the services William F. Rigby, Jacob Spori, and Arza E. Hinckley spoke after the dedicatory prayer had been given by President Thomas E. Ricks. School commenced with fifty-nine scholars but by November 19 there were eighty-two attending. The first term was just six weeks long, lasting only until Christmas.

The board was satisfied with the first term and set January 7, 1889 as the date to begin the second term. At the meeting of the board February 2, 1889 a report indicated enrollment of twenty-eight primary, thirty-eight preparatory, and twenty-four intermediate students at that time. Also the report that some people were not paying the tuition and some students were leaving was recorded at that time. This continued to be a problem for many years as people could not raise enough money to send their children to the academy even at the very nominal fees charged.

At the March meeting of the board it was decided to close the school at the end of March and send Brother Spori to Provo for the spring term. In the August 25, 1889 minutes, this report tells of Brother Spori attending the spring term at Provo then returning to Rexburg only to flee to Logan for the summer to escape being a witness against those who had voted in the 1888 election. President Ricks had to go to Logan to plan with Principal Spori for the opening of school in the fall of 1889. The board set Brother Spori's salary at \$600.00 for the next year. Axel Nielson's salary was set at \$40.00 per month and board and lodging not to exceed \$3.00 per week. Sarah Ann Barnes was to be employed as needed.

The first term in the fall of 1889 ended October 14 having served thirty-one primary, eleven preparatory, and twelve intermediate students. The second term picked up a few more showing forty-five primary, twelve preparatory, and thirteen intermediate students attending the academy by November eighteenth. However, after the fall work was

completed more students came making a closing count of fifty-two primary, fifteen preparatory, and twenty-four intermediate students. The seasons were a constant source of difficulty for the academy as though school was an afterthought. In reality, the young men were absolutely essential to perform the work on the farms. Their parents desired the best school education possible for them as their late appearance at the academy would indicate.

The remainder of the 1889-90 school year was very successful though the spring term had only forty-eight students compared to ninety in the winter term. The year ended with a deficit of \$177.00. The extreme weather of this year coupled with very low agricultural prices contributed to the financial difficulty of the school. Many people felt that after paying taxes to support the public schools they should be able to send their children there. It was a trying time for many. Some had to withdraw their membership in the church to be legally eligible to vote. In a few instances they never rejoined the church. As of March 28, 1890 meeting of the board Brother Spori suggested that he would gladly take a vacation without pay thus helping the school from creating a greater deficit. He would step down and go to work on his farm to fix it up. The board so moved and sent a letter of explanation to Provo to Karl G. Maeser. In the conference session the next following day, the board had Jacob Spori explain the action to the state members. The statistical report from 1889-90 is interesting as it lists the classes taught as follows: theology, grammar, reading, orthography, physiology, physical geography, geography, hygiene, history, vocal music, drawing, and penmanship. Six students had lessons in instrumental music. All of these scholars had exercises in calisthenics. Philosophical society was held on Friday evenings, yet not every Friday. The fortunes of the year were listed total as 141 male and 127 female students attending at least one term, or one part of a term. The total amount tuition and donations amounted to 591 dollars and 90 cents and the presiding bishop's office paid 500 dollars for a total income of 1,091 dollars and 90 cents. The expenses for that year included 1,170 for teacher's salaries and 43 dollars and 60 cents for various expenses for a total of 1,213 dollars and 60 cents. By excusing Brother Spori one time, the board saved 100 dollars which made the deficit smaller. Again this record indicates the scarcity of money during this time. With a financial report showing the deficit, the board called in William F. Rigby, first counselor in the stake presidency and A.E. Hinckley, stake patriarch to assist in formulating a policy for the next year. At this same July 26, 1890 meeting it was recorded that not all the tuition had been paid for the previous year which was part of the reason for the deficit. President Ricks reported that by the letter of President W. Woodruff a donation was given to this academy, a check for 500 dollars payable by the tithing office to be used for the next school year. Jacob Spori was the teacher for the following year with such other help in conformity with the executive committee. The teaching certificate for commending Axel Nielson for his fine work was signed by President Ricks and Jacob Spori and sent to him. The president's salary was raised to 700 dollars during the next year. The tuition was to remain the same

and the College was to pay at least half upon the beginning of the school year. The following existing note appears in this same board meeting: "If any students want to join outside dances they have to get permission by the principal." A few interesting events that took place at the academy include: Brother Spori teaching busy students with the assistance of Mrs. Louella Clay, and intermediate students; the addition of President William F. Rigby as an official member of the board; November, 17 1890 a visit by Karl G. Maeser to the November board meeting; a motion to select a building site and construct a stone building; the passing of Brother James E. Fogg and his replacement on the board as Brother John T. Smelley. Following the nomination of John T. Smelley to the board, Jacob Spori moved that Brother Smelley be elected secretary and treasurer, two positions which he had held since the early organization of the board. The motion passed unanimously after which Brother Smelley served in these positions for several years. Possibly Jacob Spori had a reason for making this nomination for in the July 23, 1891 meeting of the board he handed in his resignation as principal of the academy in the following letter:

To the honorable board of education of Bannock Stake Academy, Mr. President mentions its members. My own private affairs require that for at least a year my whole and undivided attention. And the Lord hath said, "Put your house in order and be in debt to nobody." I might have been insensitive to resign my position as principle of the Bannock Stake Academy which I hereby do.

Respectfully yours,

J. Spori

Except for the financial difficulties the academy ran smoothly for the next three years under the new principal Charles M. Watkins who was hired in August of 1891 at the salary 900 dollars per year. The record does not give the number of students in attendance but there was one other teacher, M. Lauche, who taught for 45 dollars per month for the 10 month school year. She resigned in 1893, but when waged upon by two brethren from the board, withdrew her resignation. In May 1893, Karl G. Maeser gave some definite instructions concerning the operation of the academy and the procedures of the local board. Adamantly the general church board of education was giving much particular attention to the schools of the church throughout these years of experimentation. By 1893 the great issue over polygamy was largely over and the church properties were restored making possible the open movement of church leaders and the financial re-emancipation of the church organization. However, the great debt incurred during the years of the financial bond, the church had to rent its own buildings and would not be liquidated for many years to come. The panic of 1893 was not as noticeable in Idaho as the industrial area of Idaho had already been depressed for a number of years. The increase in supervision did not bring with it any great financial support. Little information

is available concerning the information of the academy except the minutes of the board. An interesting motion was made during the meeting of October 27, 1893. J. E. Steele moves that the principal receive a salary of 600 dollars during the ensuing year and that the extra 300 dollars for any time that they are absent from duty, some be deducted from their wages. This was quite a reduction from their salaries two years before. This may have influenced Charles M. Watkins to hand in his resignation as principal during the July board meeting of 1894. Another factor also was the deficit of 886 dollars and 89 cents which the school owed by that time. However, C. M. Watkins continued to teach for another year under the new principal George Cole. The financial situation was so bad in 1895 that the board signed contracts with Elders Cole and Watkins to pay them 1/3 cash and 2/3 produce for their service. It has been written that financial conditions that the board decided to discontinue the academy at this present time. In the original minutes there was no record of this decision. This may have been used as a threat to get people to pay their accounts as most of the minutes during this period contain reports for committees to collect unpaid accounts. When Karl G. Maeser met with the board March 11, 1897 he noted, "The Bannock Stake Academy is one out of a few that have continued. For out of 40 committees, 26 have discontinued." George Cole resigned from the academy in 1898 ending the era of the grade school. By that time, public schools were available in all communities with teachers sympathetic to the needs of the children. The era of persecution was nearly forgotten. The academy assumed a new name, the Fremont Stake Academy in 1898 as an area in Gentile valley a dot with the name Bannock Stake. Much confusion had been caused by this change. Joseph Fielding Smith in his book essentials in church history felt that an oath has changed in the first edition. The name of the county in which Rexburg is located had been changed to Fremont in 1893 as the population of the upper Snake River valley continued to increase. Douglas M. Todd became principal for a three year period beginning in 1898. So he quickly sensed the desirability for having a secondary school, so that Southeastern Idaho's dream was not fully realized when he terminated his services in 1901. He did see much of the elementary work closed out however, and the beginning of secondary and normal course work. The principal's report of May 17, 1901 gives a concise history of the operation of the academy during principle Todd's final year of service. The principal's report of the Fremont Stake Academy for the 13th academic year, May 17, 1901 to the president and members of the Fremont State Board of Education:

Dear brethren,

Hereby we submit for your consideration of the report of the Fremont Stake Academy for the year just closed. There have been registered during this year 115 students 72 males and 43 females from the following places: Burton 4, Lymon 1, Rexburg 1st Ward 23, Rexburg 2nd Ward 18, Island Park 10, Salem 6, Plano 2, Egin 2, Parker 15, St. Anthony 1, Teton 4, Wilford 3, Ora 5, Marysville 1, Chester 0, Lay 1,

Vernon 1, Bingham Stake 4, Utah 1. 79 of these students have been registered in the preparatory course including work in the sixth, seventh, and eight grade. Five in the high school course, 11 in the normal course, and 20 in the missionary course. According to the budgets there have been enrolled in theology 114, rhetoric 8, classics 18, grammar 98, reading 63, orthography 87, algebra 4, bookkeeping 7, psychology 14, geography 49, physiology 19, civil government 25, U.S. history 19, vocal music 17, penmanship 89, theory of teaching 11, photography 1. The students from outside Rexburg have been located in 16 boarding places. Much of the difficulty in finding places for applicants has disappeared. There has been a high degree of faithfulness and a close unity on the part of the teachers and the work performed has been satisfactory. The almost necessary resignation of Brother Alva Porter to some extent was the efficiency of the work that increased the labor of those who worked. But through the willingness of the other teachers, they were able to complete the courses without incurring the expense of any extra help. We have employed the services of Mrs. Mary Curdure in the year teaching one class in geography, and she has performed her work to our entire satisfaction. She has displayed considerable skill and thoroughness in this thing. I can only speak in the highest terms of the character of the students. Recommendations for the future had better be made when plans more definitely mature.

Very respectfully,

Douglas M. Todd, Principal

During the Todd administration the board of education finally commenced construction of the campus that started so many years before. In 1899 the site had been selected and a canal surveyed, leading to the grounds that had an estimated cost of 5,000 dollars. The ground was broken and a contract led for the construction to begin. The following year rock was hauled. The deep saw and the cornerstone laid by President George Q. Cannon and the walls laid to a height of six feet. The financial situation was still such that the assessment did not come in on time and the building was completed three years before it was paid for and dedicated. During the waiting period, the academy moved into the ZCMI building at the corner of Main Street and 2nd East. With the increasing enrollment occasioned by secondary works, the classes were still held in the first ward church. President Thomas E. Ricks passed away September 28, 1901 ending 17 years of his administration as a stake president and 13 years as chairman of the board of education. About the time of his passing, a new principal, Ezra Christensen Dalby, came to direct the school. His administration lasted as long as the first for principals combined and was filled with many changes significant to the school. Training, enthusiasm, imagination, and hard work made these years among the most productive of the school as it immersed the early grade school to a full four year degree grand secondary school. These years were not without growing pains as finances were still as pressing problem. When the new stake president and chairman of the board of education, Thomas E. Bath, held the first

meeting of 1902 and a motion was passed to change the name from Fremont Stake Academy to Smith Academy. This was probably a result of a visit of John Henry Smith in stake conference just a week before at which time President Bath was installed as the head of the stake. However, the minutes of the board meeting held March 5th, 1902 contained the following: a letter from the first presidency suggesting that our school be named as Ricks Academy in honor of the late President Thomas E. Ricks was read. Moved by R. L. Bibey that the portion of the minutes of the meeting of January 26 regarding the name of this institution, be reconsidered. Carry, moved by C. H. Woodmansee seconded by J. W. Webster that our institution be named the Ricks Academy in honor of the late President T. E. Ricks, carry. Other changes to the name have changed as the nature of the school has changed until in 1923 the name was finally changed to Ricks...

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