

THE MORMON WALDENSIANS

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by

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This thesis, by Diane Stokoe, is accepted in its present form by the Department of History of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Science.

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ABSTRACT

The Waldensians are ancient Protestant Sectarians who have inhabited the Piedmont Region of the Cottian Alps for many centuries. They claim to be the oldest Protestant Church in the world. Having survived 700 years of persecution, the Waldensians finally achieved religious liberty in 1848.

Two years later, Mormon church leader Lorenzo Snow and some other Elders entered the Protestant valleys on a proselyting mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One hundred-eighty-seven Waldensians were converted to Mormonism. Twenty years later, one-third of these Mormon Waldensians had been excommunicated, one-third had emigrated to Utah and one-third became inactive or returned to their former faith.

This study focuses on seventy-two converts (primarily members of twelve families) who converted, immigrated and settled in the Mormon Colonies in Utah. Church and civil records, life sketches, diaries, journals and letters were used in this project. The study concludes with an analysis of the contributions of the Mormon Waldensians to the L.D.S. Church and the American West.