

Mapleton young people who hunted for them all over the Big Hollow area in later years.

Ducks frequented the region, living in the marshy areas of the lake or the ponded areas of the Big Hollow. Geese, swan, and other waterfowl also stopped in the area, and during their communal migration, were an important contribution to the diets of the dark-haired, bronzed-skinned people.

When winter approached and snow started to fall the small groups would leave the banks of the lake or the bench region and travel to Thistle Valley, up the large canyon to the south, where the deer herds wintered. One group traveled back to the Indianola region for the winter, but would return again the following spring.⁴

If the snows were deep and game sparse the winters were hard, and hunger would be an ever-present specter. But if the winter was not too long, the deer meat, dried fish, and corn would last until the early spring bulbs grew or the rabbits were plump and good to eat. When spring came, the returning bands would make their way back to the Big Hollow, or to the springs at the base of Sierra Bonita. Here they would drink deeply from the cool stream and make camp.

From time to time these small Indian bands were visited by other Indians from nearby areas. In this way the presence of other tribes, or of any visitors to the region, became known to all the groups in the surrounding area. The small bands were always afraid of Commanche war parties who occasionally raided the region.

The Indians around the lake called themselves Timpanogotzis. Some of the more daring members of the tribe would travel to surrounding areas in search of wives, horses, or adventure. In August of 1776 a young Timpanogotzi brave from Utah Valley met a strange group of men in the mountains of Colorado. This young man was induced to guide the party through the dreaded Commanche country to his home by Utah Lake.⁵

The spokesman for this group of explorers was Fray Francisco Atanasio Dominguez, and accompanying him was Fray Silvestre Velez de Escalante. Eight other Spaniards accompanied the Fathers on their journey to find a good route to Monterey, California.

The men named their new guide Silvestre and rewarded him with a woolen cloak, a hunting knife, and some glass beads. Perhaps that is the reason a second young Indian joined the expedition. Joaquin was also from the Utah Lake area so the Fathers took him along. He became so attached to the Catholic missionary-explorers that he not only traveled to the lake with them, but he went on to Santa Fe as well.⁶

It took the party from September 3, until Sep-

tember 23, 1776, to move from the Gunnison River area of Colorado through the Uinta Basin, across Strawberry Valley to Diamond Fork, and down Spanish Fork Canyon to the grassy area they named The Meadow of the Most Sweet Name of Jesus.

From the time the Fathers had left the Strawberry region of central Utah they had observed smoke signals. This worried them so they worked very hard to win the friendship of Silvestre and Joaquin. They would need someone to take their part when they met with the Indian bands that lived around the lake.

As the exploring party filed down the last few miles of Spanish Fork Canyon they were met by the acrid smell of burning grass.⁷ The Indians, not yet knowing the explorers' peaceful intentions, had fired the grass in the southern end of the valley. Then with weapons ready they awaited the advance of the exploring party.⁸

In the meantime, the party had traveled to a high point at the mouth of the canyon. This observation point was just south of the present city of Mapleton and along the route used by the lake Indians when they traveled up the canyon. From this point the explorers saw the small village of the Timpanogotzis. At this time Father Velez revealed the character of the leaders of the group. They were men of God on a special mission and they did not fear the Indians. In fact, Father Dominguez proceeded to the Provo River area and talked with the Timpanogotzis.

When the Indians saw Father Dominguez's group approaching, they prepared to meet them with knives and arrows. But Silvestre and Joaquin convinced the Indian camp that this group of men came to tell them about their God, not to fight. At once, the Indians' mood changed and the Good Father and his interpreters were received in the wick-i-ups of the Timpanogotzis with fond embraces.⁹ These new men were regarded as men of God for they had travelled through the dreaded Commanche lands with no trouble.

The Catholic Fathers were very impressed with the valley by the lake. They felt that the sedentary Indians would make good farmers if they were shown how to use the land. Even before the Fathers left, some of the Indians had asked for baptism into this new but powerful faith. Mindful of this reaction the missionary explorers promised to return to the Timpanogotzis and live among them. They even promised to return the pictured skin the Indians had given them as a token of their intention to live under the direction of the Fathers.¹⁰

If this promise had been carried out a far different settlement pattern than the one that came to the region would have been followed. However, the promise was not carried out. The Fathers' reports were dully filed, but the proposed mission to