

## **Detached from Their Homeland: The Latter-day Saints of Chihuahua, Mexico**

**Jeffrey S. Smith and Benjamin N. White**

**ABSTRACT.** Over the past few decades, the homeland concept has received an ever-increasing amount of attention by cultural geographers. While the debate surrounding the necessity and applicability of the concept continues, it is more than apparent that no other geographic term (including culture areas or culture regions) captures the essence of peoples' attachment to place better than homeland. The literature, however, provides few examples of the deep-seated loyalty people have for a homeland despite being physically detached from that space. Employing land use mapping and informal interviews, this paper seeks to help fill that gap by exemplifying how the daily lives of Mormons living in Chihuahua, Mexico reflect their connection to the United States and the Mormon homeland. Our research revealed that, among other things, the Anglo residents perpetuate their cultural identity through their unique self-reference, exhibit territoriality links reflected in their built environment, and demonstrate unconditional bonding to their homeland through certain holiday celebrations. It is clear to us, as the Anglo-Mormon experience illustrates, that the homeland concept deserves a place within the geographic lexicon.

### INTRODUCTION

Prior to the 1970s few cultural geographers had earnestly explored the emotional connection people have with particular places (Wright 1947; Tuan 1977; Sopher 1979). Helping break new ground, in 1976 Yi-Fu Tuan investigated the considerable devotion people have for their native land when he introduced the concept of *geopiety* (Tuan 1976). The following year, he added more substance to the discussion on place attachment by exploring the fond memories people have for particular places and how reassuring those places become to people (Tuan 1977). It was not until Richard

Nostrand (1980) delimited the areal extent of Hispanos for the year 1900, that geographers were introduced to the theoretical concept of a cultural/ethnic homeland.<sup>1</sup> Twelve years later, Nostrand's full-length monograph entitled *The Hispano Homeland* showcased the evolving nature of a homeland and identified three key ingredients needed for its development: *a people, a place, and an attachment or bonding with place* (Nostrand 1992). The following year, a special issue of this journal featured a collection of articles devoted to further advancing the homeland concept (Nostrand and Estaville 1993). Added to Nostrand's three original ingredients were *control of place* and the *passage of time*. Building upon these five essential themes, Nostrand and Estaville (2001) edited an anthology featuring 14 examples of perceived homelands in the United States including self-conscious, emerging, vital, and moribund varieties.

In the book's capstone chapter, however, Michael Conzen (2001) questions the necessity and applicability of the homeland concept, especially with regards to cultural or ethnic groups in the United States. While acknowledging that homelands within this country exist for indigenous populations, Conzen remains unconvinced that the homeland concept is distinctly different from classic culture areas or culture regions. He asks: "[w]hat are the necessary thresholds of self-consciousness that distinguish a homeland-qualifying group from one that merely inhabits a culture area?" (Conzen 2001, 249). Likewise, he finds the five requisite ingredients advanced by Nostrand and Estaville too simplistic and vague. In their place he proposes that homelands be identified under the rubrics of three dimensions (cultural identity, territoriality, and loyalty) and nine supporting criteria. Echoing Conzen's concerns over the homeland concept, Wilbur Zelinsky declares scathingly that he sees no real utility in "adding the notion of homelands to our existing repertoire of cultural-geographic concepts to be applied to the American scene" (Zelinsky 2002, 827).

The most recent work adding discourse to the homeland concept comes from Douglas Hurt (2003) who uses evidence from the Creek (Muscogee) Nation to advance a revised, less ambiguous conceptualization for homelands. In Hurt's estimation, homelands are comprised of a tightly knit, segregated community that occupies a defined territory where unique forms of cultural expression are inscribed upon the cultural landscape and the space is charged with deep emotional loyalty. Hurt's work dovetails nicely with the three dimensions of cultural identity, territoriality, and loyalty advanced by Conzen (2001).

As the trepidations of Conzen and Zelinsky attest, in the decades since the homeland concept was first introduced there has been ongoing debate about its suitability. However, as the ever-expanding body of research illustrates (Schnell 2000; Hurt 2001, 2003; Smith 2002), it is apparent that no term within the geographic lexicon captures the essence of peoples' deep-seated feelings of attachment to place better than the concept of homeland. As Steven Schnell aptly remarks: "[M]ore than simply a refinement of the culture-area concept, the growing focus on homelands is a recognition of the inadequacy of broad culture regions to describe emotional attachments to place" (Schnell 2000, 156).

If cultural geographers are to be persuaded of the value of the homeland concept, then more empirical work is needed to substantiate its theoretical underpinnings. Moreover, many unanswered questions require some fleshing out, including: Are there additional ingredients or defining elements required for the formation of a homeland? What factors cause people of a distinct cultural or ethnic group to bond with a particular place? What role does geographic proximity play in the formation of a homeland? Do homelands exist for people who live outside the homeland's recognized boundaries? In other words, does a cultural or ethnic group have to live within the limits of their homeland for them to be a part of it? The literature provides few examples of the deep-seated loyalty people have for a homeland despite the fact that they are physically detached from that place. This paper seeks to help fill that gap by illustrating that members of a culture group can exhibit a strong attachment to a homeland despite the fact that they reside outside that space. Specifically, our purpose is to exemplify how the daily lives of Latter-day Saints (LDS), commonly known as Mormons, living in Chihuahua, Mexico reflect their intense feelings of loyalty and connection to the United States and the Mormon homeland.

#### DEFINING THE DESERET HOMELAND

The Mormon diaspora is a well-researched and thoroughly documented part of United States history. After arriving on the Wasatch Front in 1847, early Mormon settlers quickly established a communal-based lifestyle with cultural traditions that have distinguished it from all other cultural and religious groups within the United States. Despite sound ecological planning, high rates of natural increase and ongoing immigration<sup>2</sup> soon taxed the local

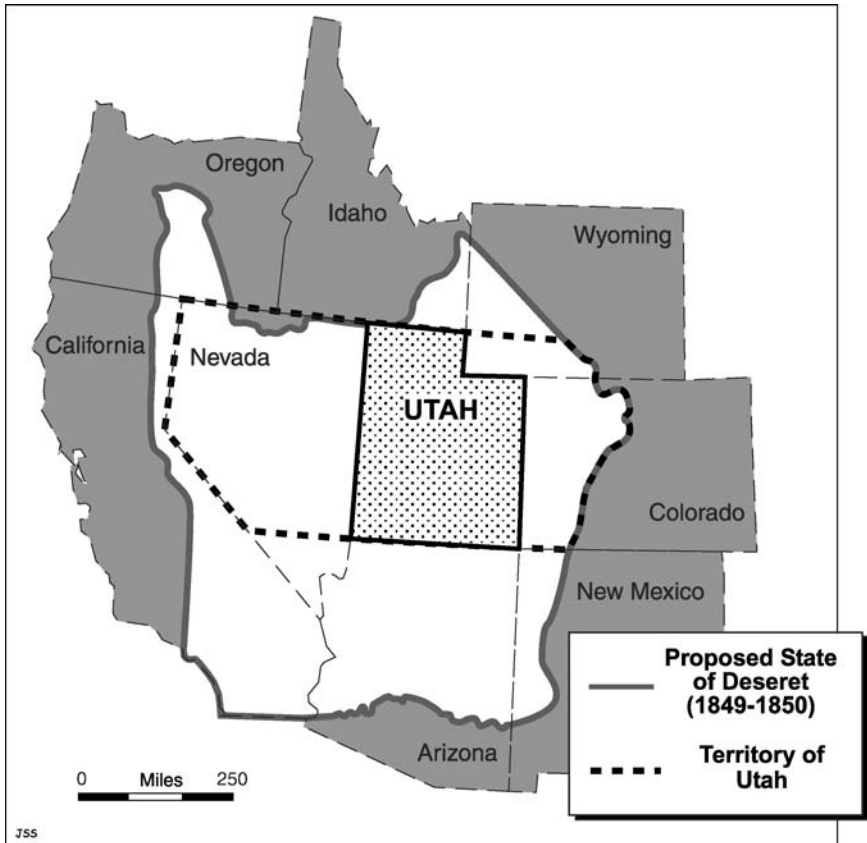


Fig. 1. The evolving political boundaries of the proposed State of Deseret, the Territory of Utah and the State of Utah. Adapted from Bennion (2001) and Jackson (2003). Cartography by Jeffrey Smith.

environment. In an effort to spread the faith and ease growing population pressure, LDS President Brigham Young called newly arriving immigrants to settle in the valleys south of Salt Lake City where abundant cotton and fruit could be grown (Meinig 1965; Jackson 1978). Over time the Mormon population expanded to cover present-day Utah and adjacent states—a region that Mormon officials in 1849 proposed to be the State of Deseret (Fig. 1). Failing to acquire governmental approval, a truncated expanse of land was awarded territorial status in 1850 and renamed Utah after the Ute Indians. Ongoing conflicts with the U.S. government over such things as endemic polygamy, the extent of local LDS political autonomy, and concerns over Mormons' loyalty to the federal government forced the church to recall settlers from its distant,

satellite communities as LDS officials prepared to defend Salt Lake City against military invasion (Meinig 1965; Jackson 2003; Yorgason 2003). By 1896 disputes between the LDS Church and the U.S. government were resolved and Utah was granted its statehood (Fig. 1). The price Mormons paid for joining the Union, however, is particularly relevant to the purpose of this article because many of those Mormons who refused to renounce polygamous practices were forced to seek refuge outside the United States.

Because of their unique religious practices, distinct landscape, and curious customs, the Mormon culture has been the focus of countless studies within and outside geography. The earliest geographical accounts recognize that the area dominated by Mormons is easily identifiable. Wilbur Zelinsky, for example, writes that "The Mormon region is the most easily mapped and described of all seven [religious regions in the United States], for within it only negligible numbers of Catholics, Jews, or other Protestant church members appear" (Zelinsky 1961, 164). In 1965 Donald Meinig finally brought the dimensions of the Mormon culture region to light when he delimited its areal extent. Through his masterful work the outer sphere of Mormon influence was made known (Fig. 2). Thirteen years later Richard Francaviglia validated Meinig's findings by mapping the outer fringes of the Mormon culture region based on the distribution of ten distinctive Mormon landscape features (Francaviglia 1978).

Meinig, Francaviglia, and numerous other cultural geographers affirm that few if any culture regions within the United States are so thoroughly dominated by one cultural or religious group. In the hearts and souls of LDS members living throughout the world, the region centered on the state of Utah with Salt Lake City as its cultural capital is unquestionably the Mormon homeland (Fig. 2). As Lowell Bennion (2001) points out, Mormondom (that part of the American West dominated by LDS) meets all the requisite criteria needed for the development of a homeland. The American Zion was settled by a distinct group of people who, despite an inhospitable environment, bonded with that place imprinting upon the land a distinctive cultural landscape. Moreover, as the political, economic, and social ledger indicates, Mormons have maintained clear and unconditional control over the region since the late-1800s (Kay 1995; Norton 1998; Jackson 2003). Even Michael Conzen, safeguarded by his nine criteria, would be hard pressed to question the existence of the Mormon homeland. The question addressed in this study is whether members of the LDS Church living outside

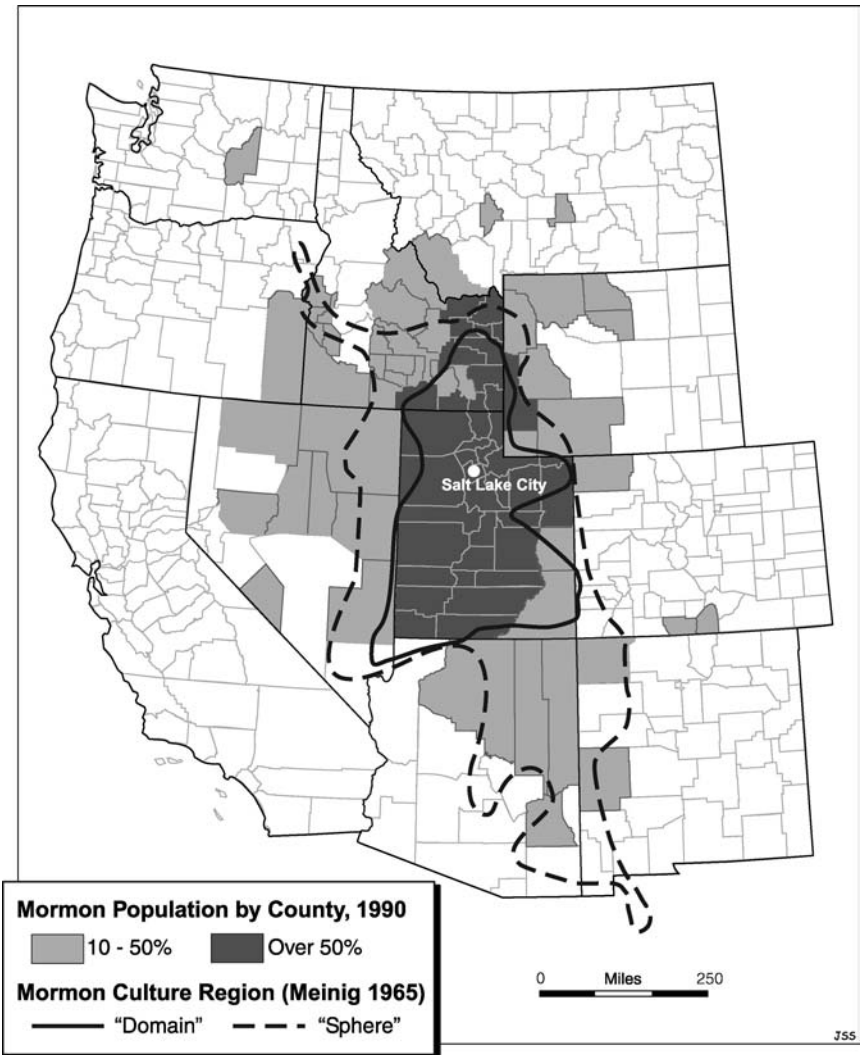


Fig. 2. The zone of Mormon concentration in the American West. Adapted from Meinig (1965), Bennion (2001), and Jackson (2003). Cartography by Jeffrey Smith.

Mormondom exhibit deep feelings of attachment for the Mormon homeland.

#### THE MORMON COLONIES OF CHIHUAHUA

For most U.S. citizens the passage of the Edmunds Act in 1882 went largely unnoticed. The new law forbidding polygamous

marriages had a profound impact, however, on many within the LDS church. As a result, those Mormons seeking to continue the practice of plural marriages were forced to live outside U.S. jurisdiction. Some disenfranchised members of the Church founded settlements in Alberta, Canada while others continued the Mormon diffusion south by establishing new communities in the states of Chihuahua and Sonora, Mexico (Nelson 1952; Arrington 1958; Shippo 1985; Alexander 1986; Jackson 2003). In 1885, after negotiations with the Mexican government, the LDS Church purchased 100,000 acres of Mexican land (Wright 2001). After five short years families from Arizona and southern Utah founded six settlements along the banks of the Río Casas Grandes and its tributaries (Tullis 1987) (Fig. 3). For the next 15 years the communities thrived and expanded around an economic base of farming and ranching, especially the raising of cattle, sheep, apples and peaches. Around the turn of the twentieth century, nearly 5,000 Mormon colonists, as well as six of the twelve highest ranking church officials, were living in the Mexican colonies (Tullis 1987; Cummings 1998). The settlements had become so successful that, on the eve of the Mexican Revolution, they were regarded as some of the most economically successful and productive lands in Mexico (Tullis 1987).

Between 1910 and 1917 Mexico became embroiled in a bloody revolution. During the first two years of fighting the Mormon colonists remained neutral (Tullis 1987). By the summer of 1912, however, regional bloodshed had become so widespread that the Mormon settlers were compelled to abandon their colonies and flee to El Paso, Texas (Turley and Turley 1996). Having left a majority of their possessions behind, most Mormon colonists hoped to return to their homes as soon as possible. Unfortunately, the only Mormon colonies left intact after the war were Colonia Juárez and Colonia Dublán. Following Pancho Villa's attack on Columbus, New Mexico tensions between the United States and Mexico escalated, and U.S. troops used the two communities as a staging area for deeper incursions into Mexico. By 1917, the majority of Mormon refugees had relocated in towns in Arizona and Utah, yet approximately one-quarter of the original Mormon colonists returned to their homes in Juárez and Dublán (Wright 2001). Descendants of these early pioneers have resided in the region ever since.

Today, approximately 55 Anglo-Mormon families live in Colonia Juárez and Colonia Dublán, whose total populations number about 2,800. Local population growth has rendered Colonia Dublán an appendage of Nuevo Casas Grandes, yet the

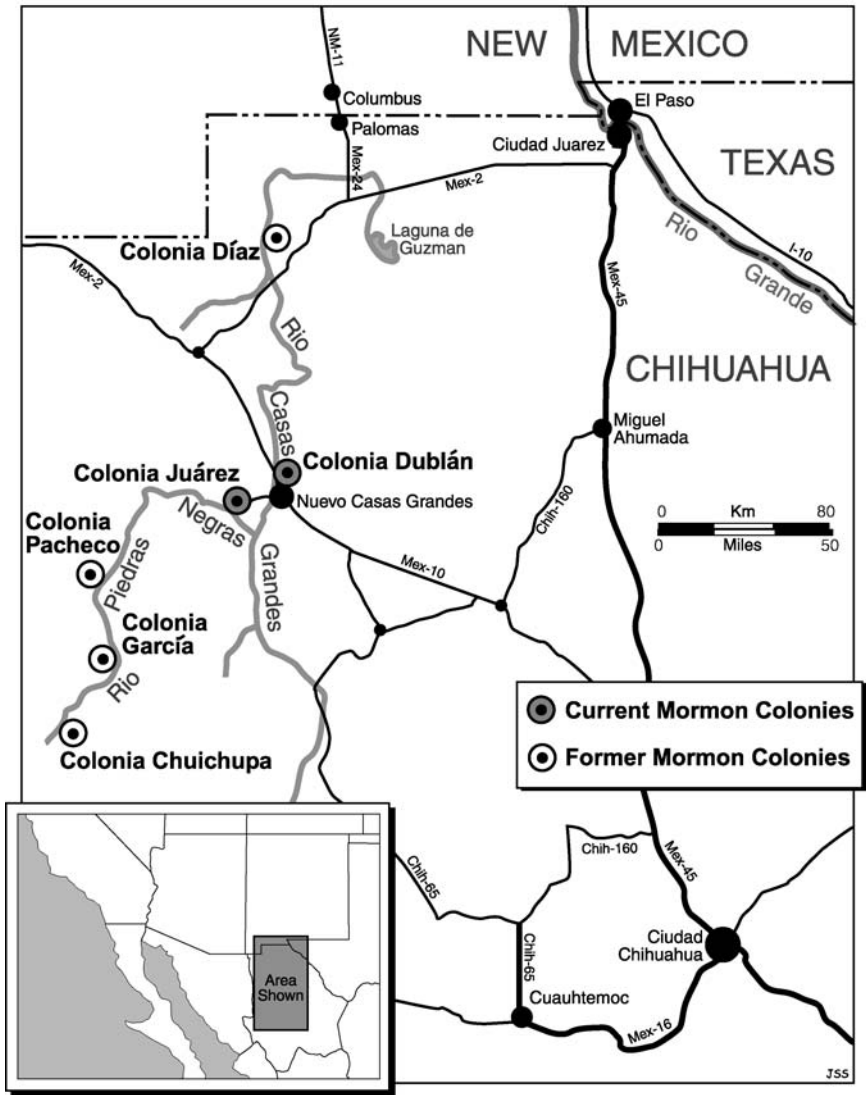


Fig. 3. The Mormon colonies of Chihuahua, Mexico. Cartography by Jeffrey Smith.

vast majority of the Anglo families in both communities live highly segregated lives. Nowhere is the segregation more evident than in the built environment. Both Colonia Juárez and Colonia Dublán exhibit numerous features typical of the Mormon Landscape as identified by Francaviglia (1978) including wide streets, roadside irrigation ditches, fields in town, columnar trees, and the classic

Mormon fence. In 1999 the LDS Church consecrated a temple in Colonia Juárez to serve the religious needs of Mormon residents in the general vicinity. What makes the Mormon residents in these two communities truly unique, however, is the strong attachment they have for the United States and the Mormon homeland.

#### ANGLO-MORMON RESIDENTS' ATTACHMENT TO THEIR HOMELAND

Data for this article were collected from multiple sources including a review of secondary literature and fieldwork conducted during the summer of 2003. The fieldwork component was part of a larger research project examining changes in the cultural landscape of Mormon communities throughout the Mountainous West. After mapping the land use patterns and settlement characteristics within the Mormon communities of Colonia Dublán and Colonia Juárez located in Chihuahua, we informally interviewed nearly two dozen local residents including Church officials, employees at the local LDS Family History Center, farmers and ranchers, fruit orchard owners, local housewives, mestizo hired workers, and the relatives of the original Mormon settlers. We talked at length with several key informants (especially Church officials and Family History Center employees) and then substantiated that information through shorter, more casual conversations with various other local residents. To document our findings we took an abundance of digital photographs, and made sketches and field notes.

Because all five of the ingredients advanced by Nostrand and Estaville (1993; 2001) are subsumed under the three dimensions and nine criteria proposed by Conzen (2001), we have organized our article around Conzen's three dimensions. The remainder of our paper examines the strong attachment Anglo-Mormons living in Chihuahua have for the Deseret homeland. We begin by looking at examples of the local population's unique cultural identity followed by an illustration of their impact on the local landscape (a key aspect of territoriality). Finally we provide evidence of their loyalty to the Mormon homeland and the United States.

#### CULTURAL IDENTITY

Beyond their obvious religious affiliation, the most easily recognized identity projected by the Anglo-Mormons of Chihuahua, Mexico is that of displaced Americans. In their historical account of the Mormon colonies in Mexico, Turley and Turley (1996) argue adamantly that the principal reason why the original LDS families

left American soil was in response to the U.S. government's uncompromising stance on the practice of polygamy. While no longer an issue today, had the U.S. government tolerated polygamy as a component of the LDS faith, the Anglo-Mormon families currently living in the region would most likely be residing in the United States. According to an emotional story passed down from the grandmother of Carol Hatch (2003), the U.S. legislation outlawing polygamy forbid husbands from loving some members of their family. Despite these obvious feelings of resentment, the Anglo-Mormons continue wholeheartedly to regard themselves as Americans.

Except for the LDS women who married into local families, the vast majority of the Anglo-Mormons living in both Colonia Dublán and Colonia Juárez are direct descendants of original Mormon pioneers. Regardless of their Mexican birth and the fact that the Mexican government officially recognizes them as Mexican citizens, the local Anglo-Mormons call themselves "Americans." By contrast, most of the same Anglo residents refer to their mestizo neighbors and employees as "Mexicans." When asked about the distinction, one Anglo-Mormon man remarked that "Americans" are the whites and Mexicans are the other ones (Jones 2003). The same sentiment is conveyed by Stacey Ford-Osborne (2003) when she describes her family's history. She reports that even though her mother is a descendent of the original Mormon settlers in Chihuahua, she is an "American." "No one would ever mistake [her] for a Mexican woman—she has blond hair, fair skin, and blue eyes, and all of her customs and mannerisms are unrelated to anything I know about Mexico" (Ford-Osborne 2003, 2).

Interestingly, while nearly all of the Anglo-Mormon men are officially Mexican citizens, many of the Anglo-Mormon women are U.S.-born and are citizens of the United States. As one man who wished to remain anonymous noted jokingly, "we import all of our wives from the U.S." On a more serious note the same man remarked that many of the Anglo-Mormon couples met and married while attending college in the U.S.

The citizenship of the offspring of these marriages reveals yet another example of the unique identity being projected by the Anglo-Mormon families in Chihuahua. Until 1998, children of mixed citizenship parents were forced to select their official allegiance when they reached the age of maturity. While the Mexican government now officially recognizes people with dual citizenship, most of the Anglo-Mormon young adults choose to become U.S. citizens.

The distinction between Mexican and “American” also falls along culture lines. Carol Hatch (2003) informed us that the “American” parents discourage, and at times even forbid their children from playing with or developing personal relationships with Mexican children. She explains that “*they* (the Mexicans) are culturally different from us. They have their various Mexican and *La Quinceanera*<sup>3</sup> celebrations where the drinking of alcohol is allowed and we don’t permit that.” Moreover, Marene Robinson (2003) told us that most of the Anglo-Mormon families are of the opinion that Mexican boys act more macho than the “American” (Anglo) boys. As both Hatch and Robinson indicate, there is a conscious effort to keep the “American” culture alive and not dilute it through assimilation with local Hispanic cultural traditions.

Finally, our research supports the work of John Wright (2001) who discovered that, despite being Mexican citizens and having lived in a Spanish-speaking country for many decades, English is the primary language spoken by the Anglo-Mormons. Moreover, those Anglo-Mormons who do not engage in business transactions with Spanish-speaking people speak very little, if any, Spanish. As Wright (2001, 590) explains, English is the predominant language spoken because “most colonists never adopted Spanish.” As noted below, the local Academy, while officially providing bilingual education, plays a prominent role in perpetuating the use of English among local Mormon residents.

#### TERRITORIALITY

Richard Francaviglia (1970, 59) found over 30 years ago that “There is something different about places settled by the Mormons.” Even first-time visitors immediately recognize that LDS communities have an appearance and ambient personality that distinguish them from other settlements. The distinct visual imprint found within Chihuahua’s Mormon communities has elicited the same response (Wright 2001; Harner 2003). Standing in stark contrast to the otherwise dusty land covered by dirt roads and flat-roofed huts made of adobe and stucco, the cultural landscape of Colonia Dublán and Colonia Juárez mimics the LDS inspired landscape of Utah and southern Idaho. It is a clear example of Mormon territoriality.

Bound by a street grid pattern identical to the Utah model (Wright 2001), the wide paved streets are lined with earthen irrigation ditches shaded under columnar-shaped poplar and cypress trees (Fig. 4). Large two-story homes of brick and stone



Fig. 4. A typical Mormon streetscape in Colonia Dublán, Chihuahua, Mexico. Photo by Benjamin White.

sit prominently behind well-manicured lawns decorated by bright flower gardens and crisp, neatly-trimmed hedges (Fig. 5). The pristine streetscape with shiny new Ford F-150 pickups (called “Ford Lobos” in Mexico) and Jeep Cherokees parked in driveways and garages, looks no different than any middle-class neighborhood found in suburban America. As a shocked John Wright (2001, 589) exclaims: “This had to be Utah!”

If the streets within both of Chihuahua’s Mormon colonies exhibit similarities to the cultural landscape found in typical Mormon settlements, so too does the newly dedicated Colonia Juárez LDS Temple (Fig. 6). Dedicated in 1999 by LDS President Gordon Hinckley, the flawless-looking white marble temple with its smooth, concrete paved parking lot, expansive manicured lawn, and decorative vegetation sits majestically on a hill overlooking the community. Inspired on his visit to the area by the local populations’ dedication and loyalty, the temple is a manifestation of Hinckley’s drive to meet the needs of isolated, rural congregations with smaller-scale temples (Fimbres 2003). With a few slight changes, the Colonia Juárez Temple has been used as a template for other LDS



Fig. 5. Large Anglo-Mormon house in Colonia Dublán, Chihuahua, Mexico. Photo by Jeffrey Smith.

Temples of similar size including its look-alike in Monticello, Utah—a community within the domain of the Mormon homeland.

The oldest Mormon-founded institution within the Chihuahua colonies is the *Academia Juárez* (Fig. 7). Founded in 1904, the K-12 school continues to educate local Anglo and Hispanic LDS children. While instruction at the school is officially bilingual, the school has earned the reputation of offering high quality instruction in English. The academy's curriculum fulfills the requirements for both U.S. and Mexican high school diplomas, and over 80% of the graduates go on to complete secondary education at some of the finest schools in the United States and Mexico (Cummings 1998). As Carol Hatch (2003) indicates, most of the Anglo-Mormon students go to colleges and universities in Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. Very few children who have attended the academy find it difficult to fit in with U.S. culture.

The three examples highlighted above all uphold the dimension of territoriality as advanced by Conzen (2001). The cultural landscape within these communities duplicates the built environment found within the Mormon homeland. Likewise, both the



Fig. 6. LDS Temple in Colonia Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Photo by Benjamin White.

Juárez Temple and Academy are institutions sanctioned by the Mormon church that help perpetuate cultural traditions. Clearly, the Anglo-Mormons in Chihuahua have attached an identity and created institutions that reflect the link they have to their Utah-centered homeland. We now look at examples of how the Anglo-Mormons of Chihuahua exhibit feelings of loyalty to the Mormon homeland.

#### LOYALTY TO PLACE

As recognized throughout the literature, the most important ingredient needed for the development of a homeland is a people's bonding with place (Roark 1993; Schnell 2000; Conzen 2001; Nostrand and Estaville 2001; Smith 2002). This loyalty to place is described by both Nostrand and Estaville (1993; 2001) as well as Conzen (2001) as a deep emotional attachment sometimes manifested as a compulsion to defend one's territory. Because of their location outside the United States, the LDS population of Chihuahua would not be expected to defend the Mormon homeland, but their emotional attachment to that land is unquestionable.



Fig. 7. Academia Juárez in Colonia Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Photo by Benjamin White.

One of the best examples of the Anglo-Mormons' strong ties to their homeland in the American West can be seen in their recognition of holidays and patriotism that are uniquely American and/or Mormon in origin. As Carol Hatch (2003) indicates, LDS Anglo children in Mexico learn and recite the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance, and every Fourth of July they celebrate American Independence Day with fireworks. During the fourth week of November, Anglo-Mormon families of Chihuahua celebrate Thanksgiving in the same manner as U.S. families do. Likewise, every July 24 the Anglo-Mormon families celebrate Pioneer Day—the day that the Mormon Pioneers led by Brigham Young first arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. While celebrated discretely so as to draw the least amount of attention from their Mexican neighbors, the events are an important part of the cultural traditions.

As a second aspect illustrating Anglo-Mormon continued loyalty to their cultural origins, at considerable financial burden the two Mormon colonies maintain a television and radio relay station that receives broadcasts from El Paso, Texas. Through the station, they can monitor what is happening in the United States and receive the broadcast of the annual LDS General Conference. Until

commercial satellite TV arrived in the 1990s, the combined TV/radio relay station was the most effective connection local Mormons had with the United States and Mormondom. The only other direct link has come from their once-a-month sojourn to El Paso, Texas to purchase essential staple items (including religious goods) and avail themselves of American goods and services (Hatch 2003).

Finally, as indicated above, the Anglo-Mormon young adults tend to enroll at colleges and universities in the United States, especially at Brigham Young University. More importantly, after completing their education, despite a desire to reside with their immediate family in the Chihuahuan colonies, most have chosen to live in the United States closer to their cultural roots (Hatch 2003).

#### CONCLUSION

Demographically and religiously, the Mormon homeland persists as an easily recognized region within the American West (Fig. 2). The LDS cultural influence is becoming diluted, however, as an ever-increasing number of non-Mormons migrate into Zion. According to Wright (1993; 2001), these outside influences, rooted in increasing urbanization and industrialization, are profoundly altering the Mormon culture region today, especially its core. Mormons, like all Americans, are far less rural than they once were; today, the majority of all LDS members live in urban and suburban settings where the landscape and cultural traditions are distinctly different (Jackson 2003). Perhaps the last remaining outposts for traditional rural Mormon cultural ideals are to be found in the isolated villages on the homeland's periphery. Our research has identified the Mormon villages of Chihuahua, Mexico as another outlier of the Mormon homeland.

Our research shows that the Anglo-Mormons of Chihuahua possess strong feelings of attachment to their homeland, despite being physically separated from that land. These non-Hispanic LDS refer to themselves as "Americans," use the English language in their daily lives, and live apart from their Mexican neighbors. Ties between the Mormon homeland and the Anglo-Mormon villages in Chihuahua are readily apparent in the classic cultural landscape and streetscape they have created, the temple they have built, and the educational facility they continue to operate. Most importantly, the Anglo-Mormons of Chihuahua demonstrate their deep and unconditional bonding with their cultural roots as demonstrated by the holidays they celebrate including Pioneer Day, their maintenance of the local TV/radio relay station, and the fact that the

young adults choose to live in the greater American West because it resonates with their cultural traditions and makes them feel at home. The lives and cultural patterns of the Anglo-Mormons in Chihuahua mesh nicely with the homeland concept.

Despite being physically separated from the Utah-based homeland, their feelings of attachment appear the same as residents of any Mormon-dominated community in the American West. By applying the tenets of the homeland concept as advanced by the work of Nostrand and Estaville (1993; 2001) and Conzen (2001), to a heretofore unexamined situation, we have found that the unique Anglo-Mormon experience in the villages of Chihuahua is further testament to the strength of the homeland concept in capturing the essence of a culture groups' strong attachment to a place. It is only through continued empirical research and lively theoretical debate that a more complete understanding of the homeland concept will be achieved.

Our research also suggests that two more elements merit consideration as ingredients needed for the development of a homeland. The first is a shared belief system. As history illustrates, many of the recognized homelands that exist throughout the world were developed by culture groups who possess a strong system of shared ideals. Having easily recognized central leadership, the commonly held belief system is usually, but not exclusively religiously based (e.g. Nazi Germany). Not only does this undergirding system give guidance and direction, and promote conformity in group behavior, but as found within the LDS colonies examined here, and the Hispano experience reported elsewhere (Nostrand 1992; Smith 1999), it provides a strong social network of support not typically found within other groups. The shared belief system serves as the glue that holds the culture group and its homeland together.

A second ingredient for the development of a homeland that has been largely overlooked is the role of physical separation from the land of your heart's desire for a period of time. Numerous examples exist of people who have been forced to live outside the boundaries of their homeland (e.g. Jews seeking to return to their promised land, or Navajos being tearfully marched from their sacred land in the American Southwest). As this paper and the examples above illustrate, when people are prevented from living in the land they love, the bond between them and that place tends to grow stronger; the people develop even deeper emotional ties to that place. As passion for that land grows, if the former residents are unable to return they try to incorporate aspects of that special

place into their daily lives. The deep emotional ties that transcend distance and link people to their homeland are what distinguishes the concept of a homeland from an ethnic enclave or culture region.

#### NOTES

1. Alvar Carlson is perhaps the first American geographer to use the term *homeland* in his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Minnesota (1971). Carlson's examination of the Spanish-Americans did not focus on advancing the concept of an ethnic or cultural homeland. The terms *Spanish-American* and *Hispano* have been used interchangeably throughout academia to refer to the long-term Hispanic residents of New Mexico and southern Colorado who trace their ancestry back to Spain. For a detailed discussion on this ethnic group of the American Southwest, see Campa 1979 or Nostrand 1992.

2. The "Doctrine of Gathering" called for all newly baptized members of the LDS Church to join the community of Saints on the Wasatch Front.

3. *La Quinceanera* celebration is a major event in the life of most Hispanic girls. A family party or "coming of age" celebration is held when they turn 15 years of age.

#### REFERENCES

- Alexander, Thomas G. 1986. *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Arrington, Leonard J. 1958. *Great Basin: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bennion, Lowell C. 2001. Mormondom's Deseret Homeland. In *Homelands: A Geography of Culture and Place across America*, edited by R. L. Nostrand and L. E. Estaville, 184–209. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Campa, Arthur L. 1979. *Hispanic Culture in the Southwest*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Carlson, Alvar W. 1971. The Rio Arriba: A Geographic Appraisal of the Spanish-American Homeland (Upper Rio Grande Valley, New Mexico). Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota.
- Conzen, Michael C. 2001. American Homelands: A Dissenting View. In *Homelands: A Geography of Culture and Place across America*, edited by R. L. Nostrand and L. E. Estaville, 238–271. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Cummings, Joe. 1998. *Northern Mexico Handbook*, 2d ed. Chico, CA: Moon Publications, Inc.
- Fimbres, L. Alberto. 2003. The Colonia Juarez Chihuahua Mexico Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Retrieved 30 July 2003 from <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Rhodes/5539/coljuare.html>.

- Ford-Osborne, Stacey. 2002. Mormons in Mexico: Writer Explores Her Roots by Interviewing Grandparents. Stantonstreet.com—El Paso's Online Magazine. Retrieved 30 July 2003 from <http://www.stantonstreet.com/citytalk/feature/794.phtml>.
- Francaviglia, Richard V. 1970. The Mormon Landscape: Definition of an Image of the American West. *Proceedings of the Association of American Geographers* 2: 59–61.
- . 1978. *The Mormon Landscape: Existence, Creation and Perception of a Unique Image in the American West*. New York: AMS Press, Inc.
- Harner, John P. 2003. Learning in Mexico, Learning From Mexico: A Field Class to Chihuahua. *Pacifica, Newsletter of the APCG* 1: 8–12.
- Hatch, Carol. 2003. Interview by Jeffrey S. Smith and Benjamin N. White. LDS Family History Center, Colonia Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. 10 July.
- Hurt, Douglas A. 2001. The Creek (Muscogee) Homeland since 1907. *Southwestern Geographer* 5(1): 1–30.
- . 2003. Defining American Homelands: A Creek Nation Example, 1828–1907. *Journal of Cultural Geography* 21(1): 19–43.
- Jackson, Richard H. 1978. Mormon Perception and Settlement. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 68(3): 317–334.
- . 2003. Mormon Wests: The Creation and Evolution of an American Region. In *Western Places, American Myths: How We Think About the West*, edited by G. J. Hausladen, 135–165. Reno: University of Nevada Press.
- Jones, Ron. 2003. Interview by Jeffrey S. Smith and Benjamin N. White. Colonia Dublán, Chihuahua, Mexico. 9 July.
- Kay, Jeanne. 1995. Mormons and Mountains. In *The Mountainous West: Explorations in Historical Geography*, edited by W. Wyckoff and L. M. Dilsaver, 368–395. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Meinig, Donald W. 1965. The Mormon Culture Region: Strategies and Patterns in the Geography of the American West, 1847–1964. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 55(2): 191–220.
- Nelson, Lowry. 1952. *The Mormon Village: A Pattern and Technique of Land Settlement*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- Norton, William. 1998. Mormon Identity and Landscape in the Rural Intermountain West. *Journal of the West* 37(3): 33–43.
- Nostrand, Richard L. 1980. The Hispano Homeland in 1900. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 70(3): 382–396.
- . 1992. *The Hispano Homeland*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Nostand, Richard L. and Lawrence E. Estaville. 1993. Introduction: The Homeland Concept. *Journal of Cultural Geography* 13(2): 1–4.
- Nostand, Richard L. and Lawrence E. Estaville, eds. 2001. *Homelands: A Geography of Culture and Place across America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Roark, Michael O. 1993. Homelands: A Conceptual Essay. *Journal of Cultural Geography* 13(2): 5–11.
- Robinson, Marene. 2003. Interview by Benjamin N. White and Jeffrey S. Smith. LDS Family History Center, Colonia Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. 10 July.
- Schnell, Steven M. 2000. The Kiowa Homeland in Oklahoma. *Geographical Review* 90(2): 155–176.
- Shippo, Jan. 1985. *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Smith, Jeffrey S. 1999. Anglo Intrusion on the Old Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. *Professional Geographer* 51(2): 170–183.
- . 2002. Rural Place Attachment in Hispano Urban Centers. *Geographical Review* 92(3): 432–451.
- Sopher, David E. 1979. The Landscape of Home: Myth, Experience, Social Meaning. In *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, edited by D. W. Meinig, 129–149. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1976. Geopietiy: A Theme in Man's Attachment to Nature and to Place. In *Geographies of the Mind: Essays in Historical Geosophy in Honor of John Kirtland Wright*, edited by D. Lowenthal and M. J. Bowden, 11–39. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 1977. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Tullis, LaMond F. 1987. *Mormons in Mexico: The Dynamics of Faith and Culture*. Logan: Utah State University Press.
- Turley, Clarence F., and Anna T. Turley, 1996. *History of the Mormon Colonies in Mexico: The Juarez Stake, 1885–1980*. n.p.: Publishers Press.
- Wright, John K. 1947. Terrae Incognitae: The Place of the Imagination in Geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 37(1): 1–15.
- Wright, John B. 1993. *Rocky Mountain Divide: Selling and Saving the West*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- . 2001. Mormon Colonias of Chihuahua. *Geographical Review* 91(3): 586–596.
- Yorgason, Ethan R. 2003. *Transformation of the Mormon Culture Region*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Zelinsky, Wilbur. 1961. An Approach to the Religious Geography of the United States: Patterns of Church Membership in 1952. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 51(2): 139–193.
- . 2002. Review of *Homelands: A Geography of Culture and Place across America*, by R. L. Nostrand and L. E. Estaville, eds. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90(4): 825–827.

**Jeffrey S. Smith** is Associate Professor of Geography at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66506 and **Benjamin N. White** is a graduate student in the same department.