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## CHAPTER I

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Mapleton, Utah is a small rural community located fifty miles south of Salt Lake City on a benchland southeast of Springville. Hobble Creek flows along its northern boundary and Spanish Fork River is a mile south of its southern boundary.

Geologists tell us that the surface pattern was probably reshaped by a combination of uplift and folding movements in the earth's crust, and wave action of Lake Bonneville, an ancient lake that once covered Utah Valley. As this huge lake receded it stopped periodically and leveled out a shelf or bench along the face of the mighty Wasatch Mountains.<sup>1</sup> On one such site, in relatively recent history a small group of men and women have been acting out their independent but meaningful roles.

The first people to use the area did so many years before Europeans landed on the coast of North America.<sup>2</sup> These small groups of Indians, with their close family ties, and limited food supplies, were quite mobile. Their movements corresponded to the availability of food in an area and the ease with which that food could be obtained. Still, compared to the Indians of the Great Plains, they did not traverse great distances. If food was available, they would camp for months at a time where they could take advantage of nature's supply.

One source of food supply was the lake that lies in the center of Utah Valley. Large lake trout were caught and dried by the Indian People to ease the pangs of hunger that came when snows deepened and hunting was difficult. Fish were also caught in the streams at either side of the small bench, or the even smaller stream coming out of the canyon at the head of the bench.<sup>3</sup>

Rabbits and other small game were common and easy to catch in the summer and fall. The hunters had to be a little careful of the large timberwolves that frequented the area, or a rather grumpy bear on occasion, but if the small, independent bands were careful, and watched their little ones, life was not too difficult.

Clear water supplies were available in limited amounts at several places on the bench, and good springs have always meant good hunting. One such hunting spot was a large cleft carved out of the west side of the bench. In this quiet spot covered with juniper, sagebrush, oak trees, and patches of grass, hunters could wait for game to come and drink from the small stream. Or they might sit in the sun on the nearby hills and make arrowheads to be fastened to the tips of their arrows. As they worked, some of the small pieces of flint were broken or lost. What great finds they were for the generations of