

Eight Latter-day Saints Who Made a Difference in Washington

Ralph W. Hardy Jr.

The 23 June 1940 formation of the Washington Stake (later the Washington D.C. Stake) by President Rudger Clawson and Elder Albert E. Bowen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles marked the beginning of a fifty-year era of substantial, sustained growth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the greater Washington-Baltimore-Richmond metropolitan areas. A prime catalyst of this growth was the in-migration of several thousand Latter-day Saints from the West who came to serve in the burgeoning federal government operations, the many government servicing businesses, and the uniformed military services in connection with the United States' entry into World War II and its continuing Cold War aftermath. Another important catalyst was the direction and foresight of stake presidencies, bishoprics, mission presidents, and men's and women's auxiliary leaders who were called to plan for this growth and to lead the people.

This essay focuses on eight exceptional, interconnected Latter-day Saint leaders—all residents of Washington, DC—who occupied some of the most critical roles in planning for and implementing the growth, success, and recognition of the Church in the greater national capital area.[1] These eight priesthood leaders are not the only Latter-day Saint leaders of undaunted faithfulness and distinction during that half century. They are, however, representative of the unusual quality and dedication of faithful Latter-day Saint leadership who made such a significant difference in the development and recognition of the Church during the fifty years between 1940 and 1990.

All of these eight men knew and respected each other; they worked together in many capacities; they learned from and supported each other; and each left an indelible mark on the rich history of what is today a significant concentration of Church membership in the eastern United States.

Snapshot of Eight Leaders in the Spring of 1944



Julian C. Lowe, Milan D. Smith, J. Willard Marriott, and Robert W. Barker, ca. 1970. Courtesy of Steven Lowe.

On 5 March 1944, **Ezra Taft Benson**, forty-five, raised in Whitney, Idaho, and having been ordained to the apostleship by President Heber J. Grant at the October 1943 general conference, was released as the first president of the Washington Stake of Zion, where he had served almost four years. That same day, **Edgar Bernard Brossard**, fifty-six, raised in Logan, Utah, was released as the first bishop of the landmark Washington Ward and set apart as second president of the Washington Stake. That year, **J. Willard Marriott**, forty-four, raised in Marriott-Slaterville, Utah, was serving as a member of the Washington Stake high council. Captain **Robert Whitney Barker**, twenty-five, from Ogden, Utah, of the U.S. Army's Second Armored Division and already a veteran of combat operations in North Africa and Sicily, waded ashore on Utah Beach through withering German fire on D-Day, 6 June 1944.[2] Two days later, first lieutenant **Julian Cassity Lowe**, twenty-six, from Orem, Utah, of the U.S. Army's 784th Automatic Weapons Battalion, waded chest deep through choppy waters in full battle gear toward Utah Beach on the Normandy Coast.[3] **Milan Dale Smith**, twenty-six, was a bishop in 1944, where he was supervising his family's significant canning and frozen vegetable operations in Pendleton, Oregon, packing harvested peas for the wartime American food supply and war effort. In March 1944, **J. W. Marriott Jr.**, twelve, was ordained a deacon in the Aaronic Priesthood in the Chevy Chase Ward of the Washington Stake. **William Donald Ladd**, eleven, although not a member of the Church because of his Baptist father's stricture against his being baptized a Latter-day Saint, was attending the Palatka Ward in Florida in 1944.

Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994)

When this great-grandson of Elder Ezra T. Benson (1811–69) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles arrived in Washington, DC, in 1939 to become executive secretary of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, an agricultural trade association, he brought with him his experience as the immediate former president of the Boise Stake in Idaho. When President Clawson and Elder Bowen formed the new Washington Stake out of the Eastern States Mission, they extended a call to Ezra Taft Benson to be its first stake president, with Federal Reserve Board secretary Samuel R. Carpenter as first counselor and Washington attorney and future Brigham Young University president Ernest L. Wilkinson as second counselor. The geographical boundaries of the new stake included not only the Washington and Baltimore metropolitan areas but also extended south to Richmond, Virginia, and north to Fairview, Pennsylvania (close to Gettysburg).

With the benefit of his experience as stake president in Idaho, Ezra Taft Benson organized two wards in the District of Columbia as well as new wards in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and Arlington, Virginia, and new branches in Greenbelt, Annapolis, and Baltimore, Maryland.[4] In this fashion, President Benson created a basic, wide-area template for this vibrant new stake of the Church. In the aftermath of the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor[5] and as the nation's capital commenced preparations for the onset of the hostilities of World War II that had already engulfed Europe and Asia, and President Benson also set into motion a regimen of spiritual and temporal preparedness for the growing number of Latter-day Saints. This number included young people from the military who came to train and government workers who came to reside in the greater Washington area.[6] In this President Benson was assisted not only by his able counselors but also by other priesthood leaders of great capacity such as future treasury secretary David Kennedy and restaurateur J. Willard Marriott. Benson's service as an energetic stake president was only his first act in building the Church in the nation's capital.



Ezra Taft Benson. U.S.
Department of Agriculture.

After Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected the thirty-fourth president of the United States in 1952, he brought Benson into his cabinet as the secretary of agriculture. This cabinet assignment required Elder Benson, now an apostle, to return to Washington on a full-time basis for the entire eight years of Eisenhower's presidency and led him to become—like Senator Reed Smoot before him—Washington's resident Apostle. In this capacity, Secretary Benson was an encouraging presence in sacrament, stake conference, and other meetings. Those of us who grew up in Washington remember Secretary Benson well because we saw him often at our Church activities. In my own case, at a Boy Scout court of honor held in the Chevy Chase Ward, Elder Benson was on the stand and presented me with my Star Scout rank. In a quarterly Washington Stake conference meeting, stake president J. Willard Marriott made a humorous comment to the congregation that, because Secretary Benson was sitting on the stand, a *Washington Post* reporter was probably in the congregation. In fact, on Monday morning, the *Washington Post* carried a brief report of Secretary Benson's attendance and his remarks to the stake conference.

At a large 2015 fireside commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the organization of the Washington D.C. Stake, Russell M. Nelson, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,

reminded:

President Ezra Taft Benson spoke at my farewell when I was released as a member of the bishopric [of the Washington Ward]. He was then in the Cabinet, as you know. And after the meeting was over, he said, "Brother Nelson, you're going to Boston, aren't you? Where are you going?" "To Massachusetts General Hospital to resume my surgical career and training." He said, "Well, when you go up there maybe you'll find a fine surgeon named Robert Walker. Look after him, would you?" So, I went up to Boston and looked after Robert Walker, who later married one of President Benson's daughters. So, there is a prophet, there is a seer![7]

Edgar Bernard Brossard (1889–1980)

Edgar B. Brossard succeeded Benson as the Washington Stake's president. Brossard was born in Oxford, Idaho, and grew up in Logan, Utah, where he graduated from Utah State University. He received his master's and PhD degrees from the University of Minnesota. Since the organization of the Washington Stake on 23 June 1940, Brossard had served as the first and much-loved bishop of the Washington Ward, located in the beautiful landmark chapel at Sixteenth Street and Columbia Road, N.W. In his professional career, President Brossard served as a member of the Federal Tariff Commission (now known as the International Trade Commission) since he was appointed by President Calvin Coolidge and subsequently reappointed by Herbert Hoover (who designated him as chairman), Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, and Dwight D. Eisenhower (who again designated Edgar Brossard as chairman). His thirty-eight years of continuous service made Edgar Brossard the longest-serving commissioner in the history of the Federal Tariff Commission.[8]

Edgar and Laura Cowley Brossard[9] lived in a comfortable apartment directly across Sixteenth Street from the Washington Ward Chapel. They opened their home—a “church crossroads”—as a gathering place for all, especially for the large number of young single adult members coming through Washington in connection with their service in the military, to work in the federal government, or to attend local universities. The Washington Ward was, to a large extent, what would today be referred to as the young single adult ward for the greater Washington area.

President Brossard was an affable, big bear of a man with a ready smile and a firm, friendly handshake. Both as bishop and then as stake president, President Brossard was very much a wise and loving pastoral leader in a stake with boundaries that stretched from Richmond, Virginia, on the south, to southern Pennsylvania on the north. During President Brossard’s tenure, the Richmond Virginia Branch grew to be a ward. In May 1945, the membership of the Washington Stake was 2,928,[10] and the Capitol Ward in northeast Washington was organized; the construction of the Arlington Virginia Ward commenced; and a new branch was created in Fredericksburg, Virginia.[11] Following President Brossard’s retirement from the Federal Trade Commission, he served as president of the New England Mission and the French Mission.[12]



Edgar Bernard Brossard, an economist, served as a member (and twice chairman) of the U.S. Tariff Commission. Public domain.

J. Willard Marriott (1900–1985)

John Willard “Bill” Marriott served in various Church roles, including full-time missionary in the Eastern States Mission, high councilor, counselor to stake president Edgar Brossard and, on 12 December 1948, third president of the Washington Stake. He served for nine years during a time of very substantial growth of the Church in Washington and its environs.

Marriott possessed enormous stature, was widely admired in the nation’s capital, and was recognized not only as the Latter-day Saints’ preeminent ecclesiastical leader but also as one of the region’s most successful business entrepreneurs and popular employers. As stake president, and with his easy, affable, and rancher-like delivery, President Marriott spoke the language of the common member. Like a favorite wise uncle, he was easy to listen to, easy to follow, and easy to emulate.

Lee Roderick, a former Latter-day Saint president of the White House Correspondents Association, probably described President Marriott best:

It would be difficult to overstate the contributions of J. Willard Marriott, Sr. to the growth of the Church. He and his young bride, the former Alice Sheets, came to Washington in 1927 to seek their fortune. Through hard work and adherence to high principles, they prospered and became a Washington legend. Today, the acorn of a root beer stand they planted over a half century ago has grown into the mighty oak of the Marriott Corporation, a multinational lodging and food service business that, in 1989, was one of the nation's top ten private employers. The Marriott family has contributed generously to the work of the Lord in Washington and throughout the Church, including their contribution to the building of the Washington Temple and the Visitors Center.[13]

During Marriott's tenure as stake president, the Washington Stake continued to grow within its unchanged, broad geographical boundaries. The venue for stake conferences outgrew the Washington Ward Chapel and was moved to George Washington University's Lisner Auditorium.

One of President Marriott's sustained efforts was to urge the First Presidency to consider the future construction of a temple in the Washington area. In his March 1954 letter to the First Presidency, he noted there were seventy thousand members east of the Mississippi who would be served by such a temple. President Marriott concluded, "A temple would be a real strength and a blessing to all of us who live in the East." [14]

At the seventy-fifth anniversary of the creation of the Washington Stake held on 20 November 2015, President Nelson reminisced about his former stake president:

Bill and Allie Marriott; what a surprise it was one day when I went to the stake president's office on the second floor of the Washington Ward (Sixteenth Street and Columbia Road) and there was President J. Willard Marriott who extended a call to me to be a counselor in the bishopric of that ward. How I love that man and his dear wife and their family! They're still very dear and close to me. President Marriott was ably assisted by two great counselors, Samuel Carpenter and Frank Kimball. We had such a wonderful experience in the bishopric.[15]

When President Marriott died in 1985, his funeral service was held in the Washington D.C. Stake Center, located next to the Washington D.C. Temple that he worked so hard to see come to fruition. Among the speakers at the funeral conducted by stake president J. W. Marriott Jr. were President Ezra Taft Benson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the Reverend Billy Graham, former president Richard M. Nixon,[16] and President Gordon B. Hinckley of the First Presidency.

Milan Dale Smith (1919–87)

On 30 November 1957, Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles called Milan D. Smith from the high council to succeed J. Willard Marriott as president of the Washington Stake, with Joseph Tippetts and Robert W. Barker as counselors. President Smith was working as executive assistant to Secretary Benson. Previously Smith had served as president of the Union Stake in Le Grande, Oregon, then had left his frozen-vegetable–packing company in the day-to-day care of a trusted assistant in order to commence his government service in Washington. He served a record thirteen years as stake president. When President Smith commenced his presidency, the Washington Stake still encompassed the same southern Pennsylvania to northern Virginia geography, with a growing number of wards and branches. Six new wards were created during the first five years of his presidency—the Fairfax, Mount Vernon, McLean, and Falls Church Wards in Virginia and the Baltimore Second and Rock Creek Wards in Maryland.

A historic change in the organization of the Church in the greater Washington metropolitan area occurred on 3 March 1963 when the Potomac Stake was created to include all of the wards and branches in Northern Virginia. This division, with its northern boundary along the Potomac River, launched a stake that would grow at a faster pace than the wards and branches on the Maryland and District of Columbia side of the Potomac River.

After concluding his duties as executive assistant to Secretary Benson, Milan Smith accepted several important leadership roles with the National Cannery Association in Washington, where he eventually became its chief executive officer.

Robert W. Barker, his former first counselor and a regional representative of the Twelve, noted Smith’s significant efforts to convince the First Presidency of the need to build a temple in the Washington area as soon as possible:

At the first official meeting of the Washington Presidency in December 1957, Milan made known his desire to do all possible to have the church establish a temple in the nation’s capital. There then was no temple in the United States or Canada east of Salt Lake. The Salt Lake Temple was almost two thousand miles away. After obtaining permission to write all stakes and missions east of the Mississippi, we did so asking how they felt about a Washington Temple. The responses were all favorable, but many said the next temple should be in their hometown. It was certainly due to Milan’s leadership and persistence that the First Presidency of the Church authorized us to acquire a site. Under Milan’s leadership, our committee and church officials considered thirty-one sites. When we purchased the 57.4 acres in 1962, we were instructed to call it only a lot for future church use. President McKay made it clear that he did not wish to bind his successor to any project not started in President McKay’s lifetime.[17]

After ground was broken for the Washington Temple on 7 December 1968, the First Presidency called President Smith to be chairman of the temple committee.

Additional wards and branches were created by President Smith in Aberdeen, Carrollton, Fort Meade-Laurel, Annapolis, Hagerstown, Frederick, Catonsville, Potomac, and Kensington, Maryland. In addition, the stake welfare farm holdings were changed in a significant way while President Smith presided over the Washington Stake. A dairy farm in suburban northern Virginia that was situated close to the planned Dulles International Airport was sold at an advantageous price, and a new dairy farm near Trappe, Maryland, on the Delmarva Peninsula was acquired. The farm was named Bountiful Farm and would become the largest dairy operation in the state of Maryland. Bountiful Farm was operating so successfully that it was later taken over directly and operated by the Church welfare system.

After Smith's release as stake president in September 1970, he was called by the First Presidency as president of the England London Mission.

When asked what he best remembers about his father's tenure as stake president of the Washington Stake, his eldest son, U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Milan D. Smith Jr., responded, "My father was a bishop at twenty-two in Oregon and then stake president twice. I remember that he was a builder—he loved finding suitable building sites and constructing new meetinghouses to address the Saints' needs." [18]

Robert Whitney Barker (1919–87)

Robert W. Barker came to Washington from Ogden, Utah. His father and grandfather were significant figures in the law, his grandfather being a judge. During World War II, Bob Barker became an officer in the U.S. Army's 6th Armored Field Artillery Battalion. He was in heavy combat in North Africa and then in Sicily before going to England to train for the invasion of Normandy. He continued in combat operations under the command of General George Patton until Germany surrendered in 1945. When the war concluded, Bob Barker, then a major, left the army and returned to Ogden.

When he graduated from the Georgetown Law School in Washington, Bob received the Lucey Medal in recognition for graduating first in his class—where he was also an editor of the *Law Review*. After a short time practicing law with his father in Utah, Bob returned to Washington, joining the law firm headed by renowned attorney Ernest L. Wilkinson, where he specialized in various matters before the government, including significant claims filed by Native American tribes. Following Senator Wallace F. Bennett's election to the U.S. Senate in 1950, Bob Barker became his administrative assistant (chief of staff) for one year and then rejoined the Wilkinson law firm, where he became a name partner.

Stake president J. Willard Marriott called Bob Barker to be bishop of the Chevy Chase Ward until its division, when he became the first bishop of the new Silver Spring Ward. When Milan D. Smith was called to succeed Marriott as stake president, Smith called Bob as his counselor, where he served ten years. In 1967 Barker was called by the First Presidency to be in the first group of sixty-seven regional

representatives of the Twelve, where he assumed oversight responsibilities with many of the stakes in the middle Atlantic area of the Church, which included the national capital area.

In connection with the efforts of Presidents Marriott and Smith to have the First Presidency approve the construction of a temple in Washington, Bob Barker assumed the principal role in the finding, due diligence, purchase negotiations, governmental approval process, and adjacent neighborhood acceptance of the placement of the proposed temple. The account of Barker's successful, herculean efforts to acquire this 57.4-acre wooded tract and secure all of the required governmental and neighborhood approvals was related by President Hinckley at Bob Barker's 6 January 1988 funeral service at the Washington D.C. Stake Center:

As I came here from the Marriott Dulles Hotel this morning, I drove and saw the spires of the temple as they came into view. I said to myself, "That temple stands where it does because of Robert W. Barker." He was the one who negotiated the purchase of this acreage here. He was the one who fought the fight with the zoning commission. He was the one who set up neighborhood meetings with the people of this community who had some strong feelings against the construction of the temple here. Bob ameliorated those feelings and overcame the opposition and won the concurrence of those who reside in this vicinity. The temple stands where it stands in this beautiful section predominant and magnificent because of the labors of the man we honor today. That may not be widely known. That is the fact and we are all blessed by reason of that. How fitting it is that he should serve as temple president and finish out his life in that capacity. I am so grateful that he had that privilege and opportunity.[19]

Barker was a highly competent and influential attorney. He was part of a class of practitioners in the Washington legal establishment who were often referred to as "super-lawyers." Not only was Barker the senior partner of a prestigious Washington law firm, but he also represented with great skill many clients involved in complex matters of considerable moment. During the Watergate proceedings, for example, Barker was retained to represent, successfully, one of the defendants, former Nixon secretary of commerce Maurice Stans. For many years Bob Barker was also general counsel and senior vice president of Bonneville International Corporation, the Church's for-profit corporate entity that owns and operates radio and television stations KSL AM-FM-TV as well as other broadcast stations throughout the United States. He also served as general counsel of the Nixon presidential inaugurations held in 1969 and 1973.

In addition to his efforts to secure the purchase and approvals for the temple, it was through Bob Barker's eleven years as a regional representative and in his membership on the Church's Special Affairs Committee that he had a significant impact on the growth and development of the Church in the eastern states, including the stakes proximate to the national capital area. His distinguished Church service concluded with his presidency of the Washington D.C. Temple.

Julian Cassity Lowe (1917–2002)

Although born in Idaho, Julian Lowe spent his formative years in Logan, Utah. After returning from the Western States Mission and with the onset of World War II, he was inducted into the U.S. Army in June 1942, planning to be part of the Medical Corps. Instead, Julian was assigned to an antiaircraft training unit. When the Army sensed his maturity and leadership qualities, Julian was offered an invitation to attend the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School where he graduated, became a second lieutenant, and was assigned to the 784th Automatic Weapons Battalion. Thereafter, Julian was sent to England and prepared to be part of the Allies' D-Day Normandy invasion of France. After wading ashore on Utah Beach just after D-Day, his antiaircraft battalion commenced combat operations and engaged Luftwaffe aircraft that were threatening the Allied advance. His battalion fought its way through France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany until the war ended in April 1945. His unit had advanced as far as Hanover by the time of the German surrender.

On returning to the United States after the war ended, Julian Lowe, now a U.S. Army captain, married Nola Kotter. After receiving his master's degree from Brigham Young University, Julian was recruited to join the Central Intelligence Agency and moved to the Washington area, where he spent most of his professional career with that agency. Although originally living in Washington's Maryland suburbs, the Lowes moved in 1958 to northern Virginia. After several Church assignments, President Milan D. Smith called Julian Lowe in November 1961 as bishop of the newly formed McLean Virginia Ward. He immediately began to make plans and raise funds for the construction of the ward's new chapel.

In connection with the reorganization of the Potomac Stake presidency in January 1967, Elder Harold B. Lee of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles called Julian Lowe to be the new stake president following the departure of President Miller Shurtleff to fulfill a National Science Foundation assignment in India. The Potomac Stake covered all of the wards and branches in northern Virginia.

This was an era of exceptionally rapid Church growth in northern Virginia—which was still growing disproportionately faster than the stakes on the Maryland–District of Columbia side of the Potomac River.[20] During his ten-year tenure as president of the Potomac Stake,[21] Julian Lowe was deeply involved in the planning for the development of the church in Northern Virginia as new wards and stakes were created. He was released in September 1975 when President Marion G. Romney of the First Presidency extended a call to President Lowe to serve as a regional representative and was assigned responsibility for the Toronto Canada and New York–New Jersey Regions. In 1977, however, Elder Lowe's regional representative assignment was changed so that he had responsibility for the Capitol and Potomac Regions, which included the greater Washington area.

In connection with the construction of the Washington Temple, Julian Lowe was assigned in the late 1960s to serve as one of the eleven members of the finance committee charged with raising funds for the new edifice. In 1970, following the release of President Smith, Julian Lowe became chairman of the Washington Temple Committee.[22] His responsibilities as chairman were specified by the First Presidency as follows:

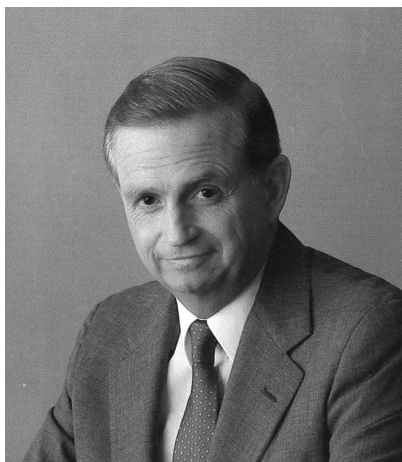
(1) working with the Church Building Department in the preparation of the building plans and specifications, construction, landscaping, decorating, furnishing and equipping [of] the building; (2) making arrangements for the cornerstone services and laying of the cornerstone; (3) planning and managing the public preview; (4) planning and executing the dedicatory services; and (5) providing for the arrangements for all General Authorities and official visitors coming to the area for the completion ceremonies, for press conferences, for the public preview, and for the dedicatory services.[23]

Once the Washington Temple was dedicated, however, Julian Lowe reminisced that his responsibilities were not at an end:

Although the opening of the Temple terminated the Washington Temple committee, I still had a role to play as chairman of the finance committee. By this time, we had raised all our monies for the construction of the Temple, but the Visitors' Center was yet to be built. The plans for the Center had already been completed, and the building was to cost \$1,500,000. The Church was to pay a third, and the rest was to be collected from within the Temple District. J. Willard Marriott, Sr., who had already contributed heavily towards the construction of the Temple, volunteered to contribute one-half of the local share. This reduced our local assessment to \$500,000. By the time the Visitors' Center was completed in June 1976, all our monies had been raised and the building was ready to be dedicated.[24]

J. W. (Bill) Marriott Jr. (1932–Present)

In December 1982, thirty-four years after his father, J. Willard Marriott, became the third president of the Washington D.C. Stake, J.W. “Bill” Marriot Jr. was called by President Ezra Taft Benson as eighth president of the Washington D.C. Stake of Zion—like father, like son. J. W. Marriott Jr. had been first counselor to the previous stake president, Leonidas Ralph Mecham.[25]



J. W. (Bill) Marriott Jr. Courtesy of the Marriott International

Already one of America's most accomplished, visionary, and highly recognized business leaders, Bill was president and chief executive officer of Marriott Corporation, a worldwide lodging enterprise founded by his legendary parents that operated hotels and restaurants and provided other commercial services such as airline food catering and industrial feeding facilities. In 1985, following his father's death at age eighty-five, Bill Marriott Jr. became chairman in addition to his position as president and chief executive officer of Marriott Corporation.[26]

Like his distinguished father, Bill has been equally yoked and committed to the fulfillment of his many assignments to lead in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Beginning in 1975 until 2011, he was successively involved in Church leadership as bishop of the Chevy Chase Ward, stake president's counselor, president of the Washington D.C. Stake, regional representative, and Area Seventy. As a regional representative and member of the Seventy, in particular, Elder Marriott fulfilled his assigned

Archives.

responsibilities with the stakes in the greater Washington, DC, and Richmond, Virginia, regions of the Church as well as throughout the eastern part of the United States and Canada. In addition, for the past forty-two years since its commencement, Elder Marriott has been chairman, host, and speaker at all the Festival of Lights opening ceremonies held at the Washington D.C. Temple Visitors' Center at the beginning of each Christmas season. This program has become a well-recognized, signature Christmas event in the Washington metropolitan area where ambassadors and staff from the resident diplomatic community as well as members of Congress are in attendance.

During his eight-year stake presidency and thereafter as a designated long-term regional leader of the Church from 1990 to 2011, Elder Marriott has been one of the most influential and admired Latter-day Saints in the Washington community and throughout the country. On many occasions of importance to the Church, Elder Marriott has appeared on national television and been featured in print, electronic, and social media not only professionally in connection with his worldwide lodging business but also in support and defense of the Church and its prophetic leadership.[27]

Elder Marriott is a gifted, always well-prepared speaker and teacher of the restored gospel. Many years ago, Stephen Garff Marriott, his late eldest son, told me that he was sure very few people knew how hard his father worked to craft the many Church addresses he gave as bishop, stake president, regional representative, and Area Seventy. Stephen added that with many of his father's talks Elder Marriott would—even on long trips aboard his corporate aircraft—research the scriptures and then go through repeated drafts for as long as twenty hours until he was satisfied that he was well enough prepared to deliver the message he felt inspired to give to the Latter-day Saints.

William Donald Ladd (1933–2009)

Don Ladd grew up in the rural Florida town of Palatka. His mother was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His father was Southern Baptist and, although Don was allowed to attend Latter-day Saint meetings in the Palatka Ward, his father forbade him from being baptized into the Church. When Don turned nineteen and prepared to enter college at the University of Florida to pursue a degree in chemical engineering, he informed his father that, as a responsible adult, he intended to join the Church and be baptized. To a significant extent, Don Ladd credited Woodrow W. Tilton, his wise Palatka Ward bishop, for his mentoring role and encouragement in the Church.[28]

After a European tour of duty with the U.S. Army, Don Ladd moved to Washington with a recommendation from Bishop Tilton and became a legislative assistant and then chief of staff to a Florida member of Congress. While in Washington, Don Ladd attended the Washington Ward, where he met and married Ruth Pearson, who was working for U.S. senator Wallace F. Bennett. After working on Capitol Hill, Don Ladd joined the U.S. Department of Agriculture, where he handled liaison with Congress and the White House.

In time, Don Ladd was called by President Milan D. Smith to serve on the Washington D.C. Stake high council. In June 1970 President Smith called Don Ladd as the first bishop of the new Potomac Ward in the Washington D.C. Stake; however, after less than a year, he was called as second counselor in the stake presidency to new stake president Wendell G. Eames.[29] When President Eames was released as stake president in 1974 to become first counselor in the first Washington Temple presidency, Don Ladd became the sixth president of the Washington D.C. Stake.

In 1973 Gordon B. Hinckley called President Don Ladd to serve as chairman of the newly organized Washington Special Affairs Committee. He was instructed to report directly to Elder Hinckley, who was chairman of the Special Affairs Committee at Church headquarters in Salt Lake City. This committee was renamed Washington Public Affairs Committee. Over the years it was staffed by Latter-day Saint men and women of stature with broad experience in and with government as well as in relationships with the resident diplomatic community of ambassadors and other international agencies in Washington. With the resources and experience of the Washington Public Affairs Committee, Don Ladd was able to convey information and advice to the Church's senior leadership with respect to matters in Washington that affected—or might affect—the vital interests of the Church. Elder Don Ladd chaired the Washington Public Affairs Committee for thirteen years, ending in 1994.

A significant task undertaken by Don Ladd was his due diligence and work with the Public Affairs Department and other senior General Authorities to expand the Public Affairs Office in Washington in order to address the opportunities to work more closely with the resident diplomatic community. In this connection, Elder Ladd worked closely with Beverly Campbell and others to acquire an office in the National Press Building as well as a full-time staff of capable people to handle liaison with congressional offices and Washington embassies.

As stake president, Don Ladd also took a leading role in planning for the Church's 1976 bicentennial celebration, which involved all of the stakes in the greater Washington area. These efforts resulted in a special gathering of twenty thousand Latter-day Saints in the Capital Center and a concert presented by the Osmond family. Following his release as stake president in 1977, Don Ladd was called as a regional representative, where he assumed a more significant role in the leadership of the Church in the greater Washington area.

On 2 April 1994, Elder Ladd was called as a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy in the April general conference.



William Donald Ladd as a stake president. Courtesy of Ralph W. Hardy Jr.

Conclusion

Within a half century (1940–89), each of these eight men became exceptional Latter-day Saint leaders who were essential to the success of the Church in the greater Washington area. All were visionary builders who possessed the foresight to anticipate what the Church would need and could become. Of the eight leaders, two became General Authorities, four became regional representatives or Area Seventies, two became mission presidents, and two—father and son—came to be numbered among America’s most successful entrepreneurial business leaders while, at the same time, generously contributing their time and means to the service, care, and leadership of the Church. Not one of the eight sought these responsibilities, because each knew he had been “called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.”[30]

Appendix

Nine Apostles Who Resided and Worked in Washington, DC

Since November 1839, many Latter-day Saint leaders of apostolic rank have journeyed to Washington, DC, to meet with presidents of the United States, members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, testify before congressional committees, attend receptions and presidential inaugurations, advocate on matters of vital interest to the Church, interact with foreign diplomats, and publish broadsheet tracts. These apostolic visitors included Joseph Smith Jr., Orson Pratt, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, Heber J. Grant, George Albert Smith, David O. McKay, Spencer W. Kimball, Gordon B. Hinckley, Dieter F. Uchtdorf, James E. Faust, M. Russell Ballard, and many others. Significantly, nine apostles, including two future Presidents of the Church, have worked and resided in Washington.

1. **Reed Smoot** was a U.S. senator from Utah for thirty years (1903–33). He was a towering figure in the Senate and a confidant of Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover. Among other legislative assignments, he chaired the powerful Senate Finance Committee. Senator Smoot was a catalytic force in the development and establishment of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. His personal residence provided the initial venue for Latter-day Saint sacrament meetings and Sunday Schools. In addition, Reed Smoot was the moving force in identifying, negotiating, and helping the Church to acquire and construct the historic Washington Chapel on Sixteenth Street and Columbia Road, N.W.
2. **J. Reuben Clark Jr.** moved to Washington in 1906 and served as assistant solicitor, solicitor (general counsel), and undersecretary of state before becoming U.S. ambassador to Mexico in 1930. For more than two decades he maintained a residence in the capital while splitting time in the employ of a law firm in Washington and New York City and with family in Utah. Due to his busy schedule and frequent relocations, President Clark did not hold formal Church positions while in Washington, though he and his family periodically attended the Sunday evening worship services held at the home of Elder Reed Smoot as circumstances allowed.

Ordained as a seventy, he seems to have taken to heart the counsel given in a 1903 setting apart by President Joseph F. Smith that he serve a “general” mission as “an exemplary Latter-day Saint among the gentiles of the world.”[31] While serving as undersecretary of state, Clark authored the seminal *Clark Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine*. He was called as second counselor to President Heber J. Grant in the First Presidency of the Church in 1933.

3. **Ezra Taft Benson** was executive secretary of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, a major Washington, DC-based farmers’ trade association. He was the first president of the Washington Stake, serving for almost four years until released to devote himself full-time to the apostleship to which he had been called and ordained by President Heber J. Grant. In January 1953, while a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Benson was summoned to Washington by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to serve for eight years as the secretary of agriculture.
4. **Neal A. Maxwell** came to Washington, DC, in 1952. His biographer, Elder Bruce C. Hafen, wrote that Neal Maxwell “wanted to find out for himself what it was like to be at the very center of political process, policy, and power.”[32] He worked first as an economic analyst with a government intelligence department. A little more than one year later, Neal Maxwell joined Senator Wallace F. Bennett’s small staff, where he became an effective legislative assistant and learned the arts of crafting legislation, forging compromise, and political advocacy. During four years in Washington, the involvement of Elder Maxwell and his wife, Colleen, in the Washington Stake “would turn out to be an important bonus, expanding their vision and attitudes about life among a community of Saints.”[33] Elder Maxwell served in the Washington Stake Young Men presidency and then in the stake mission presidency.
5. **Russell M. Nelson** became an officer in the U.S. Army during the Korean War because of the desperate need for physicians in the military. With the benefit and experience of his surgical training, President Nelson was stationed in Washington, DC, where he formed a surgical research unit at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.[34] During his tenure in the nation’s capital, President Nelson was called to serve as second counselor in the bishopric of the Washington Ward.[35] Of this experience, President Nelson reminisced, “Bill and Allie Marriott; what a surprise it was one day when I went to the stake president’s office on the second floor of the Washington Ward (16th Street and Columbia Road) and there was President J. Willard Marriott who extended a call to me to be a counselor in the bishopric of that ward.”[36]
6. Following his graduation from law school, **Dallin H. Oaks** was law clerk to Chief Justice Earl Warren of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, DC. President Rex E. Lee of Brigham Young University (and former solicitor general of the United States) described President Oaks’s twelve-month service at the U.S. Supreme Court: “Elder Dallin H. Oaks has had a brilliant professional career. He was the Editor-in-Chief of the *University of Chicago Law Review* and he served as a law clerk to Chief Justice [Earl] Warren on the United States Supreme Court—which is the equivalent of making All-American for a law student.”[37] During his work at the Supreme Court, President Oaks, his wife, June, lived in the Alexandria Ward. He served as chair of the ward’s genealogy committee, youth Sunday School teacher, elders quorum instructor, and ward teaching supervisor for a third of the ward.

7. **Richard G. Scott** moved to Washington with his parents from Idaho when he was four years old and spent his growing-up years in Washington attending public schools and then George Washington University. He left for his mission to Uruguay from the Chevy Chase Ward. Professionally, Elder Scott became a member of the elite engineering staff in Washington run by Admiral Hyman Rickover, where he worked on nuclear propulsion systems for the U.S. Navy. Following his service as president of the Argentina North Mission (where he was Elder D. Todd Christofferson's mission president), Elder Scott returned to Washington to join some of his former Rickover colleagues working in submarine nuclear propulsion. Elder Scott served as a stake missionary, stake clerk, and first counselor in the Washington D.C. Stake presidency before being called as a regional representative of the Twelve and then as a General Authority.
8. **D. Todd Christofferson** came to Washington, DC, following graduation from Duke University Law School (where he was editor of *The Duke Law Journal*) to serve as law clerk to Chief Judge John J. Sirica of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. His tenure with Judge Sirica was extended beyond the usual one year to two and one-half years because of the pendency of the epic Nixon Watergate case.[38] Elder Christofferson thereafter joined the Dow Lohnes & Albertson law firm in Washington, DC. After serving as a high councilor, Elder Christofferson became bishop of the Rockville (Maryland) Ward, Washington DC Stake.
9. **Gerrit W. Gong** is a *summa cum laude* graduate of Brigham Young University and an Oxford University Rhodes Scholar, receiving his PhD and master of philosophy degrees in international relations. With this sterling academic background, Elder Gong spent more than twenty years living in Washington, DC. He served at the internationally preeminent defense and national security think tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), where he became Asia director and China chair. In addition, Elder Gong served as special assistant to the undersecretary of state as well as special assistant to two U.S. ambassadors to China. While in Washington, Elder Gong also served and traveled with congressional delegations visiting Asia. In addition, he served as special adviser to the chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court during his official visit to Asia. During Elder Gong's long tenure in Washington, he served in the Church as an early-morning seminary instructor, high councilor in the McLean Virginia Stake, and bishop of the McLean First Ward.

Notes

[1] Of course, there are so many men and women who have contributed to the building of the kingdom in the Washington area over the decades. For this essay, I have chosen to discuss only eight of those notable individuals.

[2] W. Dee Halverson and Micah J. Halverson, *The Life and Times of Robert W. Barker* (Salt Lake City: Heritage Associates, n.d.), 135–36.

[3] Julian C. Lowe and Nola K. Lowe, *Our Lives and Family*, 2nd ed. (n.p.: self-pub., 1995), 169.

- [4] Julian C. Lowe and Florian H. Thayn, *History of the Mormons in the Greater Washington Area: Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Washington, D.C., Area, 1839–1991* (n.p.: Community Printing Service, 1991), 35–36.
- [5] U.S. Navy Captain Mervyn S. Bennion, the son-in-law of President J. Reuben Clark Jr., of the First Presidency, skipper of the battleship USS *West Virginia* and a counselor in the bishopric of the Washington Stake's Chevy Chase Ward, was killed in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor—for which he received posthumously the Congressional Medal of Honor from President Franklin D. Roosevelt.
- [6] Sheri L. Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 156, 162–63.
- [7] Transcribed text of remarks of President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles Russell M. Nelson to the Washington DC Stake 75th Anniversary Fireside, Kensington, MD, 20 November 2015 (quoted with permission).
- [8] John M. Dobson, *Two Centuries of Tariffs: The Background and Emergence of the U.S. International Trade Commission* (n.p., United States International Trade Commission, 1976), appendix A.
- [9] Laura Cowley Brossard was the sister of Elder Matthew Cowley of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.
- [10] In 2015, seventy-five years after the Washington Stake was organized, the aggregate membership of all twenty-four stakes whose boundaries, in whole or in part, were within the boundaries of the original Washington Stake in 1940, was ninety-three thousand.
- [11] See Lowe and Thayn, *Greater Washington Area*, 37–39.
- [12] See Eleanor Knowles, *Biography of Edgar B. Brossard: Government, Church & Civic Leader* (n.p., self-pub., 1979), 52–64.
- [13] Lowe and Thayn, *Greater Washington Area*, 39.
- [14] Lowe and Thayn, *Greater Washington Area*, 39.
- [15] Transcribed text of remarks of President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles Russell M. Nelson.
- [16] J. Willard Marriott was chairman of both Nixon inaugural celebrations in 1969 and 1973. When President Nixon stood up to speak at the Washington D.C. Stake Center, he did not carry a single sheet of paper or note to the podium. At the conclusion of the funeral service, however, he came to President Marriott, opened his valise, and handed him six long yellow legal-length sheets with the text of his remarks written with his own hand on the airplane. Ralph W. Hardy Jr. telephone interview with J.W. Marriott Jr., 13 July 2020.
- [17] Remarks of Elder Robert W. Barker at the funeral of Milan D. Smith (24 October 1987), 8 (courtesy of President Smith's youngest son, former U.S. senator (R-Oregon) and North America Northeast Area Seventy Elder Gordon Harold Smith).
- [18] Ralph W. Hardy Jr., interview with U.S Circuit Judge Milan D. Smith Jr. (Ninth Circuit), 18 June 2020.
- [19] W. Dee Halverson and Micah J. Halverson, *Life and Times of Robert W. Barker*, appendix A.

[20] At the end of 2019, there were nine stakes in northern Virginia and five stakes in the District of Columbia and suburban Maryland proximate to the I-495 Capital Beltway. Ralph W. Hardy Jr., interview with Area Seventy and former Oakton Virginia Stake president Kevin Calderwood, 21 June 2020.

[21] Name subsequently changed to the Oakton Virginia Stake following the creation of the Annandale Virginia Stake.

[22] Plans for the new Washington Temple evidenced that it would be among the three largest temples in the Church—after the Salt Lake and Los Angeles Temples.

[23] Lowe and Lowe, *Our Lives and Family*, 266.

[24] Lowe and Lowe, *Our Lives and Family*, 274–75.

[25] President Ralph Mecham served as the second bishop of the Potomac (Maryland) Ward and was a regional representative. For twenty years President Mecham served as director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts—effectively the general manager of the United States federal court system under the direction of the chief justice of the United States.

[26] In 1993 Marriott Corporation was split into two publicly traded companies: Marriott International, Inc. (NASDAQ:MAR) and Host Hotels and Resorts, Inc. (NYSE:HST). Today, J.W. Marriott Jr. is executive chairman and chairman of the board of MAR; and his brother, Richard E. Marriott, former bishop of the Potomac Ward, Washington D.C. Stake, is chairman of the board of HST.

[27] See, for example, Elder Marriott's rapid response to Hank Stuever's mocking, *Washington Post*–style section article and the offensive illustrations on Latter-day Saints' sacred temple garments, *Washington Post* editorial page, 6 March 2002. Elder Marriott's published response on the newspaper's editorial page followed two days after his meeting with the newspaper's publisher, the editor of the style section, and the article's writer. Another example is Bill Marriott's 7 April 1996 appearance on network television with President Hinckley and CBS *60 Minutes* investigative correspondent Mike Wallace.

[28] Ralph W. Hardy Jr., interview with Ruth Pearson Ladd (Elder Don Ladd's widow), 5 June 2020.

[29] The new first counselor in this stake presidency was recently returned Argentina mission president and Washington, DC, native Richard G. Scott—whom President Ezra Taft Benson, as President of the Church, would call in 1988 as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

[30] Articles of Faith 1:5.

[31] D. Michael Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1983), 13.

[32] Bruce C. Hafen, *A Disciple's Life: The Biography of Neal A. Maxwell* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 203.

[33] Hafen, *A Disciple's Life*, 205.

[34] Dallin H. Oaks, "President Russell M. Nelson: Guided, Prepared, Committed," supplement to the *Ensign*, May 2018, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2018/05-se/president-russell-m-nelson-guided-prepared-committed>.

[35] Washington attorney and former McLean Virginia Second Ward bishop and lifelong Washington resident William B. Ingersoll recalls his fascinating encounter with Elder Nelson that took place at a diplomatic reception at Beverly Campbell's home in the late 1990s: "Introducing myself, I said, 'Elder Nelson, I am William Ingersoll.' Elder Nelson exclaimed, 'You mean you are Billy Ingersoll!' I responded, 'Well, that's what my mother called me.' 'You mean Loraine was your mother and your dad was Brown?' 'Yes.' Elder Nelson then said, 'Billy, I was your deacons quorum adviser in the Washington Ward!' Then, to my amazement, Elder Nelson proceeded to name and inquire about all ten of the young men who were members of that deacons quorum—more than forty years earlier!" William B. Ingersoll to Ralph W. Hardy Jr., email, 1 August 2020.

[36] Transcribed text of remarks of President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles Russell M. Nelson to the Washington D.C. Stake 75th Anniversary Fireside, Kensington, MD, 20 November 2015, quoted with permission.

[37] Transcription of President Rex E. Lee's introduction of Elder Dallin H. Oaks (Brigham Young University devotional, 17 January 1995), www.speeches.byu.edu/talks/dallin_h_oaks/adversity.

[38] In my introduction of Elder Christofferson before his keynote address to the annual devotional of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society at the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, I provided the following background regarding his work as Chief Judge Sirica's law clerk: "During the long pendency of the *Watergate* case, the *Washington Post* described Elder Christofferson as 'a former Mormon missionary who serves as Judge Sirica's clerk and alter ego' and added that 'Todd, now a tall, soft-spoken, blond-headed young man,' had "served as a missionary in Argentina.' In its '1973 Person of the Year' cover story on Judge Sirica, *Time* magazine illustrated the exceptionally close relationship between this judge and his law clerk by observing that 'while the technicians continued their studies [for any evidence of tampering], [Judge Sirica] and his young law clerk, Todd Christofferson, listened to the [White House] tapes through headphones in a jury room.' Thirty years later I was privileged to be in the completely filled ceremonial courtroom of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit to attend a retrospective on the Watergate case that featured on the dais many of the still-living lawyers, television correspondents, and defendants in that national drama. What was most interesting was the attention and great respect that was accorded to Elder Christofferson, whom everyone remembered well. He was, as you would imagine, the recipient of many questions—which he fielded with his trademark grace, humor, and good judgment. When Judge Sirica died in 1992, the family asked Elder Christofferson to speak at his funeral in Washington. What counsel would you have expected Elder Christofferson, then of the Seventy, to have given on that occasion? Yes! It was the doctrine of the plan of salvation. . . . I have dwelled somewhat on the early judicial clerkship of a young Elder Christofferson because this unique experience—occurring at the very epicenter of perhaps the

greatest American political crisis since the Civil War—helped refine the key instincts, exceptional scholarship, sound judgment and advocacy skills that would enhance both his successful professional career and his ministry.” Ralph W. Hardy Jr., introduction of Elder D. Todd Christofferson, J. Reuben Clark Law Society, BYU Law School Alumni Association, *Clark Memorandum* (Spring 2011), 49.