

St. Paul's Community Methodist Church

400 Hillcrest Street

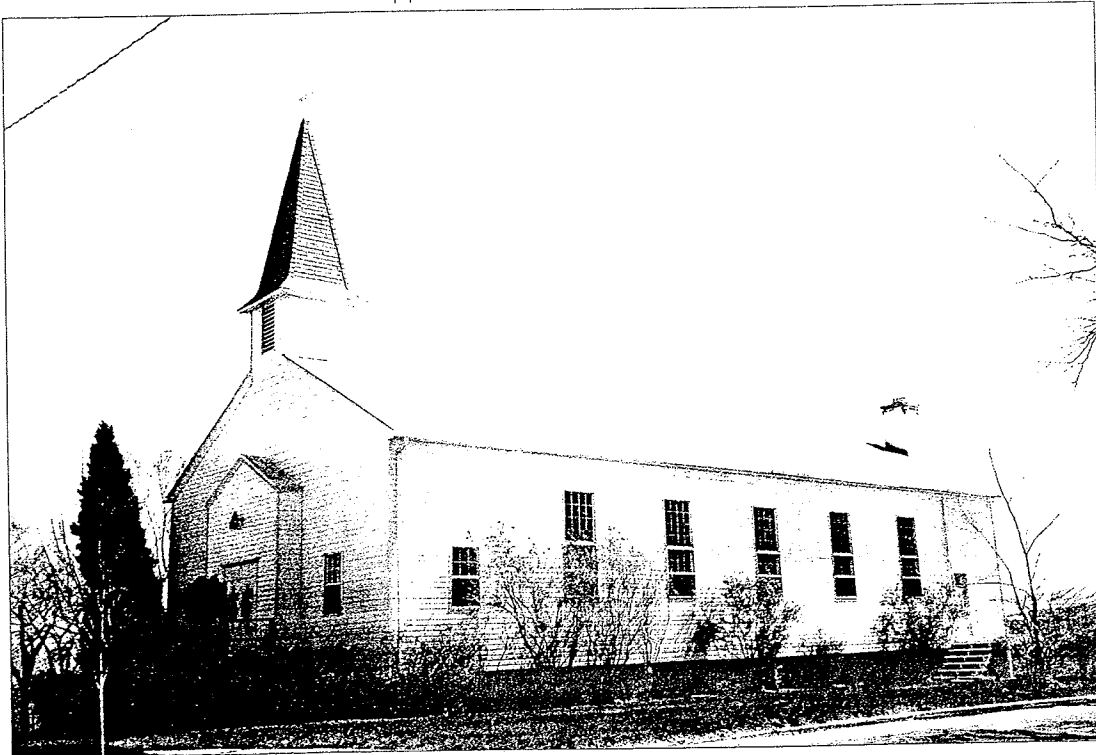
Like many of the town's citizens, Copperton's Methodist Church building served in the U.S. Army during World War II. The building was first erected as a chapel at Kearns Army Air Base located a few miles northeast of Copperton. The base was constructed hastily as a temporary training center in 1942. It housed up to 40,000 troops and was the third largest city in Utah during the war. As part of the demobilization which followed the war, in 1947 the War Assets Administration declared Kearns Army Air Base surplus and made many of its buildings available to people who wanted to relocate and reuse them. The Copperton Methodist community jumped at the chance of obtaining a building of

their own.

The history of the Methodist Church in Bingham dates back to at least 1874 when the first church building was constructed in the canyon. Methodist meetings in Copperton began in 1937. Like the services of the local LDS ward, Methodist meetings were held at Copperton Elementary School.

When it appeared that they might be able to obtain one of the four chapels from Kearns Army Air Base, members of the

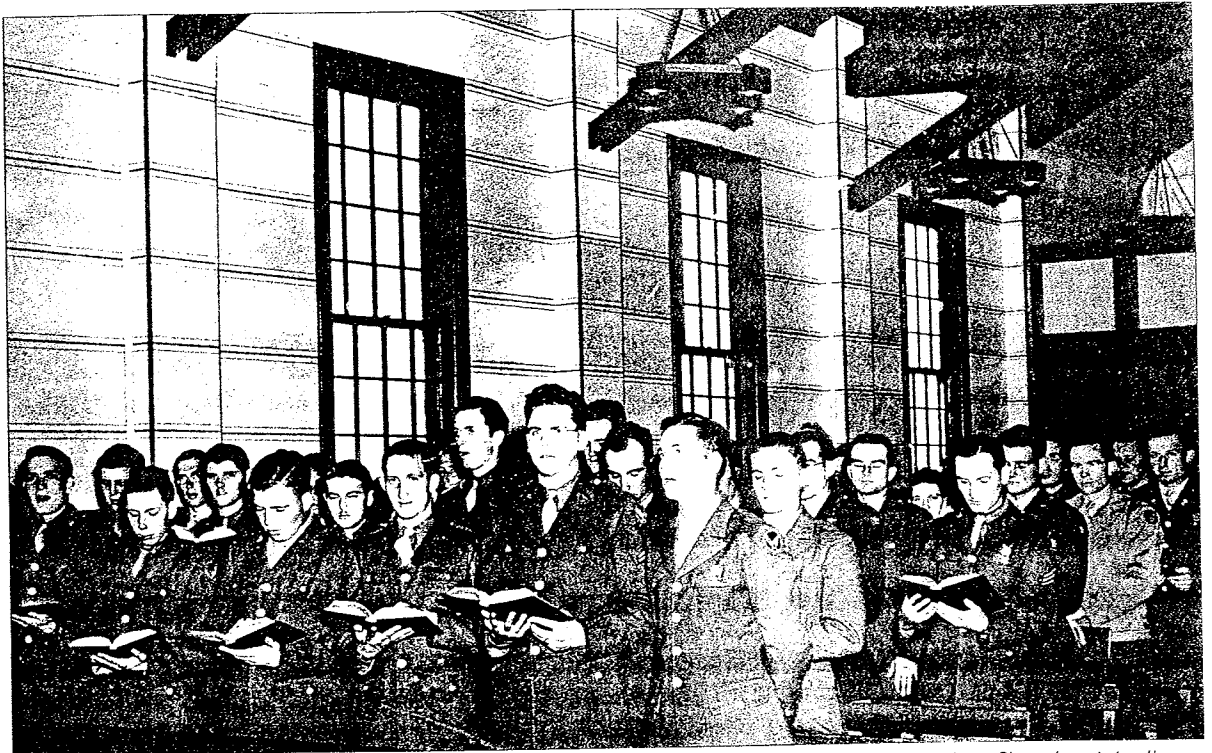
Methodist community began raising funds to construct a basement and move the building. By August 1948, all the preparations had been made to move the chapel to its new site. Moving the bulky building was no easy task since the only road that approaches Copperton from the east goes beneath a railroad underpass. In the first step of the moving process, the chapel was cut in half. To avoid the underpass, the halves were driven along a dirt road to the north of the main road. Kennecott Copper Company linemen took down some electrical lines and held others up to provide the necessary clearance for the building. After the chapel was put in place, some remodeling was done in the building. The first service in the



building at its new location was held in January 1951.

Copperton's Methodist Church is a good example of a type of building that is becoming increasingly rare - World War II mobilization buildings. Tens of thousands of these buildings were constructed at bases across the nation in the early 1940s. Almost all mobilization buildings were built according to standardized plans. Ease and speed of construction were the key design criteria for these buildings since bases which could house thousands of soldiers had to be built in the space of a few short months. Mobilization buildings were intended to be temporary. Designed to last five to seven years, some of them have survived over fifty.

World War II Army mobilization chapels served all congregations, but their design is that of a New England Protestant meetinghouse with a lightning rod rather than a cross affixed to the steeple. Like most mobilization buildings, their wood shiplap exteriors were originally painted ivory. The one-and-one-half story chapels are divided into seven bays. The first bay is occupied by the entryway and overhead choir



Soldiers gather for a service in a chapel at Kearns Army Air Base. Copperton's Methodist Church originally stood on this base. (Photo courtesy of the Utah State Historical Society.)

loft, the end bay contains the altar, and the central bays (nave) are open to the roof to expose the building's most attractive feature - a braced hammer beam truss. Some alterations have been made over the years to the chapel which serves Copperton's Methodists, including the replacement of the original five-panel front doors and the addition of aluminum siding to the exterior of the building.

Inside the church are copies of two drawings from the Army Quartermaster Corp Series 800 plans for chapels. It was from these plans, or ones very similar to them, that this building was constructed. Also note that the church building is dedicated to the men in the Bingham District who served in World War II.



ST. PAUL'S COMMUNITY CHURCH

Copperton, Utah

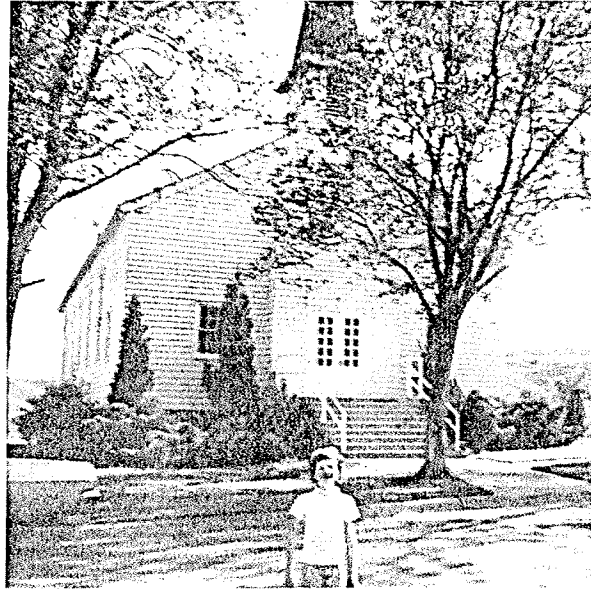
In 1874 the first Methodist church was built in Bingham Canyon. It continued there until it was combined with the present Copperton church. In March, 1899 a bell was purchased and installed in the belfrey where for years it rang every Sunday calling the people of the small mining community to worship.

On September 7, 1947 a group from Bingham Canyon, Copperton, and Lark; a nearby community, held services in a chapel at Kearns Army Camp, which had been assigned to Copperton by the War Department. The people of Copperton, with the help of the Church, were to pay for the moving of the chapel.

Kennecott Copper Corporation donated a site, and in May, 1948 ground was broken for the basement of the church. Two years later, after many delaying setbacks, services were finally held in the Copperton Community Methodist church to serve the people of Copperton and Lark.

In May, 1957 the Bingham Canyon Methodist church was combined with the Copperton Community Methodist church, and the furnishings, including the pipe organ, pews and pulpit, were moved to Copperton. Then the Highland Boy Community House, a Utah Mission project of the Woman's Society of Christian Service took possession of the Bingham Canyon church building.

The Highland Boy Community House had been located on one fork of the



canyon and for years had served all people regardless of color, race, or creed. Later, in 1957, Kennecott Copper Corporation bought all the church property of the Bingham Canyon Methodist Church; so the Highland Boy Community House also combined with the Copperton group, and the name of the church was changed to the present St. Paul's Community Methodist Church.

Sometime later the Woman's Society of Christian Service withdrew its support. As time went on, families have moved away until at present the total membership is only about twenty-five. However, as one drives toward Copperton from Salt Lake City, he can see for many miles the tall, wooden, white cross on the top of the church building. It proclaims to the world that in this small community there are still people who are working to further the Kingdom of God.