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The Story of Mesa

In 1877 the Mesa area was settled by some pioneers, with the intent to help expand the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints into Mexico. It has grown since then, to a population of over 515,000. But who were these pioneers and others who helped, and how are they significant in Mesa's history? Some important groups of people were the Hohokam, Utah Company, and First Mesa Company.

One of the first known groups to have lived in the Mesa area was Hohokam Native Americans. They lived in the valley for more than 1,500 years and they lived in large groups of around 500 people ("Mesa History"). Their importance remains in the structures they built, their canals. According to the Mesa Historical Museum, the Hohokams built many canals to transport water, creating the largest prehistoric system of these canals in their time. These canals are very important because of how they were used later. Future colonists later used these canals "as part of an irrigation project" ("A Brief History of Mesa"). Clearly, the Hohokams helped support Mesa's journey through the canals they built.

Another team of people important to the eventual founding of Mesa was the Utah Company. This was the first group of pioneers and they were sent from Utah, hence the name. They are important because of where they settled. They came to rest at what is now Lehi, in Northern Mesa ("Mesa History"). Had they picked a different spot, Mesa could be somewhere else, under a different name, or might just not exist. Another important thing about these pioneers was their connections with the Pima and Maricopa. According to the Mesa Historical

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Museum, the pioneers were assisted by the Pima and Maricopa. This is important because it is important to form relationships, and this shows how Mesa's founders were getting a start.

Working together is what made Mesa possible. Clearly, Mesa would not be where it is now without the important contributions of the Utah Company pioneers.

Another team of people that was important to the creation of Mesa was the Mesa Company, also called the First Mesa Company. These people were LDS pioneers who were sent towards the same area as the Utah Company and for the same reason. They were offered to stay in the same area as the Utah Company but they rejected the offer, and instead they decided to settle on a mesa nearby ("History of the City of Mesa - DOT Physical Phoenix"). This group's contributions were especially important. They started making use of the canals left by the Hohokam many years earlier. They used them as part of their Mesa Canal project ("About Mesa"). Even with the one square mile they had they succeeded in this project. Without it, obtaining water would have been much more difficult and Mesa may have been abandoned. They also had different ethnic groups and cultures ("Mesa History"). Having this diversity since the beginning helped ensure there would be support for everyone. This has helped shape Mesa and turned it into the diverse place it is now. According to DOT Physical Phoenix, Mesa bought power plants and did what was necessary for them to own their utilities. This became important when the Great Depression happened because Mesa was able to avoid some of the economic chaos. Had Mesa been a part of that chaos, Mesa may have lost funds necessary to sustain Mesa's growth, and Mesa may have been unable to grow. Based on these facts, it is clear these pioneers had a big impact on the success of Mesa.

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It is very important to remember these groups. Their hard work and dedication is a lesson that could help us all. We need to remember the stories of the Hohokam, Utah and First Mesa companies so we can continue to grow and excel.

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