

The Third Mission of John Francis Astle, Sr.

*As recorded in his journal
November 12, 1925 to May 27, 1926*

November 12 — Having been called to take a short-term mission to the Central States Mission by Heber J. Grant, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and as I will soon leave the Providence First Ward of the Logan Stake, there was a farewell party held in my honor the night of the 12th of this month. A large crowd and the spirit of the Lord prevailed. I surely had a pleasant time and feel that I am honored to be called the third time to go in the world to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

November 15 — This being Sunday, I was asked to speak in Sunday School, also in Sacrament meeting at 2 p.m., speaking on the principle of love.

At night, 8:00 p.m. being invited to the Providence Second Ward to speak and bare testimony of the work of the Lord, which I did.

At 4:00 p.m. all of my sons and daughters, some of my brothers and sisters met at my home, had dinner, a time of rejoicing prior to my leaving for the Central States.

November 16 — This day I took my Buick Sedan car, sold to the Blair Auto Co. for \$1,250.00 credit on a new Buick that I will get on my return from this mission.

I went to Salt Lake City, stayed with my brother, R.T.

November 17 — Went to the Church Office Building, arranged for ticket to Independence, Missouri, and was set apart for my mission by Apostle Orson F. Whitney.

He says, “Brother Astle, I bless you with the spirit of this mission from this very time. You shall go in peace and return in safety. You shall have, while traveling by rail, opportunity to bare your testimony and be asked many questions. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, you shall be able to answer them. I bless you with health, you shall be preserved from the powers of evil. You shall perform a labor that will renown for your good throughout eternity.”

Returned to R.T. Astle. My sister, Sarah and her husband, A. A. Call visited us.

November 18 — This morning talked to Lehi and Sylvia, my brother and sister by my father’s second wife. Encouraged them to be faithful.

Bought Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, combined, also briefcase.

At 4:30 p.m., D. and R. Railway Co. for Kansas City, Missouri, arriving there after two days and two nights. Took street car to Independence at 10:30 p.m., the 20th of November.

November 21 — The mission President Bennion was not there. Elder Lyman, mission secretary, appointed us to our conferences, seven of us, myself and Sunihal Hill of Idaho Falls was sent to Austin, Texas, the West Texas Conference.

We stopped in Fort Worth, Texas a few hours on Sunday the 21st, attended Sunday School and meeting.

At 8:40, we took train for Austin, arriving there early in the morning. After breakfast at restaurant, called at 311 1st East Street, found Elders and Afton W. Steiner.

November 24, 1925 — Went out two miles, took dinner with Mrs. Meller, a member of the church. Held cottage meeting at night with some of the Saints and investigators.

November 23, 1925 — Visited with Elders, went out at night, visited two families of Saints, stayed with Grandma Extrum.

Visited Saints with Elders, one meeting. Elders kept coming in for conference, four Elders from Mexican Mission.

Friday morning, 27th — Fifteen Elders met with President Bennion in Priesthood meeting.

Reports was given which was not very good. President Bennion asked Elders to do better. A public meeting at 7:30 p.m., not many present.

Received our appointments. I was appointed to labor in the city of Austin with Elder Christenson, a young man. It is said to be the worst place to labor in the West Texas Conference.

Saturday, 28th — Spent most of day cleaning up room. Sunday went to Sunday School and Sacrament meeting, took dinner with Goldstein, held meeting on street. Paid one months room rent.

November 30 — Monday, went to breakfast and out to work tracting. Went to and west of state capital. Met a minister that was not very good, in fact, very bitter. I bore my testimony in all soberness that we had a message for him. Loaned Book of Mormon, one little book, sold one, had four Gospel conversations.

Got a letter from Doretta, all well at home.

Tuesday we went to hold a funeral of a lady that was very friendly, Mrs. Boburge. On account of one brother of hers that could not get there till Wednesday, it was postponed till 11:30. We

then had a very nice meeting. Elder Ernal Christenson spoke on Salvation for the dead, and I spoke on the Resurrection of the dead.

Thursday we tracted. We had a new Elder from Salt Lake City, Livingston, three of us had a very good time and got in a number of homes, sold one book, had some good conversations.

Friday was very cold, a north-west wind. The day was not as good as the previous day, met some good people.

Saturday sent off reports. Got two letters from home, all well, had breakfast in room as we got some groceries yesterday. Went to Brother Bells and selected some broom straw for him to make us a Swiss broom. He is a blind man, makes brooms and baskets.

Sunday, held three meetings. I spoke in the street and in the hall, enjoyed the Spirit of the Lord. Two Elders came, Bert Linford of Afton, Wyoming and Talbert from Idaho. The rest of the week tracted, had a very pleasant time, invited into many homes, some good Gospel conversations, sold six Book of Mormon, 15 little books.

Friday, the first home I visited was invited in. The lady Miss Rosa Lee Owens, said she had been praying that a minister would come to her home, said she wanted to talk to me about marriage of one that had been divorced and said she was some worried. I told her I thought all right if she could get a good man. She then asked me to perform the ceremony. I tried to avoid it but she insisted, so on Saturday at 4:30, after talking to county clerk about what was required, I performed the ceremony. Elders Christenson and Talbert being present, there was about 20 others there. The parties names J. J. Thompson of Georgetown and Rosa Lee Owens of Austin, Texas. I signed up as an Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We held two meetings.

Sunday rained all day, held four meetings.

Monday was a cold day, a poor day for tracting, sold one little book. Bought another meal ticket, \$5.00. We got a 10% discount on them. Rained all night, had breakfast in room. I talked the old man here into put in a little cot as there was three of us sleeping in one bed. I had him put it in for the same price, \$20.00 per month. Two Elders were paying that. I put up a talk, got a little cot put in for the same money. We had a pleasant time tracting, sold a number of the Book of Mormon and little books. Bought a parasol, \$2.50.

Sent a few cards out for Christmas. Got three cakes for Christmas, one from Klea, Pearl, and Arstanie, a picture of David, some handkerchiefs from Doretta. Done some revisiting, ate supper December 24th with Grandma Eckstrom, dinner on Christmas with Fanney Eckstrom, a meeting at night at Sister Lundy's.

December 26 — Saturday morning clear, done some studying and cleaning.

Sunday, a very cold day, held Sunday School, no meeting at night as no one came out.

Monday, the ground was covered with snow stayed in room all day.

Tuesday, visited some, loaned 3 little books to a lady that had a Book of Mormon. I left some tracts with her a week ago, seemed to be very interested.

Wednesday, sold one Book of Mormon, two little books in Spanish. Held meeting at Goldstein's at night after had a long talk on the Gospel with his son-in-law, somewhat interested.

Thursday, wrote letter to Klea A. Baer. She had sent me a box of apples that I had received, went and see Mr. Frits near the capital, a Catholic, sold a Book of Mormon that I had loaned him and five other books, a very nice man. Then we baptized a young lady by name of Mildred Walmsley in Colorado River. Elder Ernal Christenson baptized her and John F. Astle confirmed her on this the 31st day of December 1925. After supper, held meeting at Grandma Eckstrom's home.

January 1, 1926 — Rained all day, went to Mr. Millen's on 600 West 13th, loaned two little books. Took dinner with Mrs. Walmsley, a very good dinner. Mr. Fritz was there. I had a long talk on the Gospel with him, sold him Pearl of Great Price and Practical Reference.

Saturday, revisited, cleaned up some in room.

Sunday went to Sunday School, took dinner with Brother Goldstein, and married a young man and lady by name of Bonnie Jachache and Minifred Bawling, Elder Talbert performing the ceremony. Meeting at night and tracked and revisited during the week, sold five Book of Mormon, loaned two, sold ten little books, had a talk Saturday evening with Mr. Fritz. He is coming along nicely, meeting Sunday.

January 16, 1926 — Weekending January 16th generally cold and clear until Saturday, rained all day. The week was spent in tracking and revisiting, sold three Book of Mormon, loaned one, sold five little books, seven meetings held. Things went on about the same with about the same success.

On the night of the 23rd it snowed six inches, the most snow for many years. President R. V. Beckstead came from San Antonio. We visited some of the Saints and arrangements made to release the present officers of the Austin Branch. H. J. Goldstein and I with Elder Arvel Talbert took charge of the branch.

January 26, 1926 — At the Hall meeting, January 26, 1926, at 7:30 p.m. Brother Goldstein was released, the day being fair we had a better attendance at Sunday School. I have put out to date 33 Book of Mormon and 78 little books, about 2 to 1 of any other Elder in the conference. Elder Christenson has the hitch, very bad and has had for two weeks and has gone to San Antonio.

Elder Talbert and myself moved from 311 East 1st on the 29th, to 206 West 7th St., a nice home costing us \$5.00 a week, \$2.50 each. Too much money, but seems the best we can do at present. Date January 31st.

The work is about the same, some new friends and some very good investigators, one man by name of Fritz, about 65, a Catholic. I think will soon come into the Church. He is very interested. Told me the other day that he wished I was going to stay here when I told him that I was going to San Antonio to attend Conference. Most of the Saints here are good, some poor in the Gospel and all in material things of life.

We have tracked all east of the Avenue, or nearly so. I haven't been well for two weeks, but not down but what I could work. I have sold up to date, February 20th, 42 Book of Mormon, 98 little books, 1 Pearl of Great Price, 1 Doctrine and Covenants, put out a great many tracks and pamphlets and other reading materials. Feel that I have done what I can reasonably in my work in this city.

February 21 — Visited some, put out 4 Book of Mormon, had dinner and took the Union Bus for San Antonio, arriving there at 5:30 p.m. Found the Elders well, after a little visit, we held meeting in the street. I spoke most of the time, then had supper and went to bed.

Next morning after class and breakfast Elder Talbert and I visited some in the city, the Alamo, a building where fierce battle was fought when the state of Texas was taken from Mexico. Also visited Buck Eye, a building where there is all kinds of animal heads mounted, quite a sight to

see many heads with so many kinds of horns. One long-horned Texas steer must have been four feet long and sixteen inches around close to the head. Went to a show in the afternoon. At night went almost out of the city and class meeting in the home of Brother and Sister (not given).

Wednesday morning went to Kelly Field, the government airplane department. Coming back got my shoe one-half soled, cost \$0.65.

Thursday attended conference, sixteen Elders and President O. S. Bennion in attendance. Reports good and the Spirit of the Lord prevailed. Before the day I came to San Antonio I got letters from Joseph Baer and my daughter Klea, all well. On the 16th and 17th they had a snowfall of one and one-half feet of snowfall, very good. Also got letter from Agnes and May, also Grace.

A much better conference than in November 27, 1925. I was appointed, with Elder Bert Linford of Afton, Wyoming, to labor in Austin, my old field. We took room Saturday on E 10 Street 304 at Mrs. Gathrights.

Held meeting in the hall as usual with the Saints. Monday started to tract the second time from E 6 Street, north between the Avenue and Redriver Street. A great many did not care to receive us. I sold a Book of Mormon and four little books, had some good talks on the Gospel.

March 4 — Rained all day so we stayed in our room and I wrote a letter to Bishop Hammond of Providence, Utah. It is costing me \$30.00 per month for room and board.

March 5 — We have fair success in tracting, quite a lot of rain, interfered some with our work. Received some letters from home, all well, but Francis's wife went somewhere on the fifth of February, knew nothing of her on the eighth of March. A very light winter in the west, flowers in bloom at home in front of the house on the fourth of March.

Yesterday, the 16th, I met some very nice people on E 3rd Street, that met the Elders some twenty years ago. A pleasant day, I came to my room at night rejoicing in the work of the Lord.

March 17 — It rained all night and still raining at twelve noon March 17, 1926.

It has been raining a big part of the time. The work going on about the same. Elder Linford and Talbert and Samuel Hill released, left here on the 24 of March. I was alone two days when Elder E. L. Erickson of Rexburg, Idaho, came in from the country came to labor with me.

The weather is very bad. Rain and wind from the north to cold to track. We have a very early spring at home. According to a letter from home, peach trees in bloom the 20th of March.

After meeting on street Saturday night I had a long talk with a man on the (not give). Said he enjoyed the talk and wanted a Book of Mormon, which I will take to him today, March 30.

Work went on about the same, although not received quite so well the second tracting. Some of what I thought good investigators went back, but we are picking up some new ones.

On April 10th President R. V. Beckstead came up from San Antonio, stayed with us two days. A. J. Goldstein was sustained as Superintendent of the Sunday School.

April 11, 1926 — There was lots of rain and cold up to date, not warm today, Monday 12th. From date the weather has been rainy, hindered us some in our work. We are making a second tracting, People very indifferent.

April 26 — Elder Erikson and Geo. V. Stewart went out in the country to visit some investigators and friends. Elder Reed Vance is with me in this city. We tracted today, people very cool.

On the 18th of this month someone came into our room and took from my jacket \$11.00 and \$9.00 from Erikson's. Think it was done while we was eating breakfast. Weather fine today, April 26th.

May 18 — During the past month the weather has been fair. I have been well. Had a pleasant time laboring with Elders Erikson, Vance and Stewart, one at a time, two of them in the country and changing off visiting Saints and investigators, making three trips, not meeting with much success.

I met a few very good people in my visits, Mr. H. Von Kalow in E 1st 1803, an engineer in the steamline, very interested in our message of the Gospel, a Mrs. Wheeler in 310 E 2nd St.. I met her March 19th, and have met her a number of times, very interested. Told me yesterday, May 17, 1926, that I had done her a world of good, and that she must talk with me again. About May 1st I met E. M. Sherrell, a street car driver, that was once a Josephite, now a Baptist. Told me some day he was going to be a Mormon.

C. H. Howard and I met on Mildred Street 93. He had been to Salt Lake City, alonging to go again. He and wife very nice, had met her before. Sold them Book of Mormon and Durant. On the 17th, yesterday, a Mrs. Jachache, on 1201 E 11 Street, said she was going to be baptized this summer. Her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Bonnie Jachache, also interested. The mother said she would not take anything for the Book of Mormon. There are others that are very interested. Have had lots to do the past three months. The last month lots of time spent revisiting, now preparing for conference to be held May 20. Meetings has been good the past month. Conference held 20th with ten Elders of the West Texas Conference, two Elders from Mexico and President S. O. Bennion in attendance. Priesthood meeting at 9:30 a.m., reports good. Three Elders released, Erikson, President Geo. V. Beskstead of the West Texas, and myself John F.

Astle. Meeting at 7:30 p.m., a goodly number there. Testimonies born by all Elders. President Bennion spoke for some time, a very good meeting.

May 21 — Friday I visited some of the Saints, had a pleasant visit with Sister Clara Steen. At night Saints and Elders met in the hall, which is the labor temple, in a farewell party for the Elders returning home, a very nice party, bidding Saints and friends good-by.

Took train at 10:00 p.m. for the west, passing through Dallas, Fort Worth, Pueblo, Colorado, arriving in Salt Lake City at noon the 24th, staying there one and one-half days. Reporting at the office the 25th.

May 27 — This is three missions that I have filled, getting home 27th at noon, finding the folks well and the place never looked better, beets thinned, strawberries getting ripe, alfalfa almost ready to cut, much earlier than common.

Attend meeting Sunday, not may there. Worked in beets Monday, Tuesday.

Bought a Chev coupe automobile car, \$750.00. I got the money of the bank.

John F. Astle was 56 years old at the time.

Written between November 12, 1925 and May 30, 1926.

Spelling corrected-language as written in journal

Transcribed by: Leon C. and Blanche L. Astle