

A History of Cache County

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Cache County, Utah, has a wonderful historical legacy. The high alpine county hosted Native Americans for generations prior to its exploration and settlement by Europeans and white Americans. Geographically isolated but abounding in water, game, and beaver, the area became a beloved respite for the early trappers. Other explorers and traders also found their way into the beautiful valley, but the cold winters discouraged any type of permanent settlement until the late 1850s.

Once opened, the county became a haven for thousands of settlers. Numerous Mormon converts from the British Isles and Scandinavia joined fellow believers in acquiring the necessary land for survival. Their rich historical heritage is apparent through their successful pioneering, farming, dairy industry, and creative marketing. Cache County also has had a lasting impact on education in the West in the form of Brigham Young College and Utah State University. These institutions provided opportunities for thousands of people to expand their knowledge and prepare for careers. The county has transformed itself into a manufacturing and educational center as the twentieth century closes. This volume surveys the individuals and institutions that have created the county.

F. Ross Peterson

F. Ross Peterson is a native of Montpelier, Idaho, and moved as a student to Cache County in 1959. He received a B.A. in History from Utah State University (1965) and Ph.D. from Washington State University (1968). After teaching at the University of Texas at Arlington, in 1971 he and his family returned to Cache County and Utah State University. He has taught at USU since that move and raised his family in Cache County.

Dr. Peterson has published a biography of Idaho Senator Glen Taylor, *Prophet Without Honor* (1974); *Idaho, a Bicentennial History* (1976); and the chapter on twentieth century politics in the *Oxford History of the American West* (1994). He and his wife, Kay, edited *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* from 1987 to 1992, and he served a six-year term on the Utah Humanities Council, the last two as chair. He also is founding director of USU's Mountain West Center (1986-1996).

Preface

The legislation that created this project gave a very specific charge to the authors selected to write each county's history. Although great creative freedom exists within the guidelines, the settlement, economic, educational, cultural, religious, and political history of each county was to constitute the book. Specifically, the authors focused on county activities, not just on communities within a county. The historical form of county government outlines certain activities that dominate a county's existence: law enforcement, physical maintenance, and the work of a county attorney, assessor, and other officers. Cache County has a unique form of council government that distinguishes

it from the state's other twenty-eight counties. Representing specific geographic districts, the seven council members effectively serve as a legislative branch of government. However, government is not the only aspect of Cache history that intrigues a student of history.

The county is politically interesting to students of economics and demography. Isolated geographically, Cache residents often reflect parochial views that reveal a genuine fear of the outside world and its [p.viii] influences. Predominantly members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, thousands of residents have served missions throughout the world and a knowledge of the languages and culture of other nations and peoples is apparent and appreciated. Utah State University's graduates also go into a larger world with language skills and experience. Despite this, many county residents remain suspicious and fearful. The area votes as consistently conservative as any in the very conservative state. Unfortunately, attitudes are often reflected in a polarized view of the world—they versus us, outside versus inside, Mormon versus non-Mormon. This historical reality fails to recognize differences and values among groups, interests, and individuals.

To a degree, Cache County is isolated, although the recent expansion to four lanes of U.S. Highway 89-91 and its connection to Interstate 15 may change that. Some Utahans' traditionally view Cache County as distant, cold, and parochial, and the evening television weather report often enhances the reputation for coldness, as temperatures are often ten degrees lower than in Wasatch Front communities. But Cache County is the economic, social, and cultural center of its own region, which also includes much of Rich County, southeastern Idaho, and, to a degree, Star Valley, Wyoming. This is in part due to settlement patterns and family connections, but it is also geographic in nature. U.S. Highway 89 is an important route that connects Cache Valley, Logan Canyon, Bear Lake, Montpelier Canyon, Salt River Canyon, Star Valley, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and eventually Yellowstone National Park. U.S. Highway 91 moves north through Franklin County, Idaho, and provides easy access for Idaho residents to shopping, cultural or athletic events, or Utah State University, which has played a major role in enhancing the county as a regional center since it was founded in 1888. The perception of isolation is certainly not the reality of county life; but most Cache County residents do enjoy the quiet solitude of small towns, open space, and close friends.

Cache County is in some degree of turmoil at the state's centennial. There are numerous unanswered questions about how to plan, control, and accommodate the inevitable growth. Will rich farmland continue to be traded for subdivisions, parking lots, and urban [p.ix] growth? Is there any master plan of development for the entire county? Will the citizen-directed 2010 Planning Project have any influence? What of U.S. Highway 89 through Logan Canyon? To what extent should the road be widened? and should all bridges be replaced? Can county communities remain as enclaves for traditional conservative values as the world changes and increasingly influences the county? Cache County and its valley have long been described as a place of beauty and serenity; how long can that remain so?

Ultimately, the primary resource of Cache County is its people. The mountains, lakes, streams, trees, and wetlands constitute a valuable resource; but, as I see it, people determine the worth of resources. As the county approaches the twenty-first century, there is a genuine need to evaluate the particular geographic entity that is Cache County,

Utah, and understand its past in order to chart the future. Cache County is people as well as a place. From the Native Americans to the trappers to the settlers and beyond, the human impact on place is the story of this volume. The goal is to create a sense of achievement by recognizing the difficulties and examples of cooperative solutions. That is one of the county legacies. This volume tries to describe how county people worked, played, worshiped, learned, and served. The limitations of space mean that all cannot be included and discussed. Each person has a story, and the whole is made from the combination of a variety of parts.

There are many aspects of Cache history that need to be written; for example, contemporary agribusiness firms and local companies that have become significant merit histories, as do many individuals. Numerous public servants deserve specific interviews in order to assist future historians. Reed Bullen, Charles Bullen, Evan Olsen, Lyle Hillyard, Ann Skanchy, Seth Allen, Sid Groll, and many other representatives of government deserve expanded examinations. The county's political history needs close attention as well. There is still much to do; however, for the purposes of Utah's statehood centennial, this study of Cache County's history fulfills an obligation and becomes a starting point. It has been a fantastic experience.

Writing a local history is both enjoyable and demanding. There are many aspects of the complete story that cannot be told because of space limitations. Cache County is rich in primary resources; [p.x] however, many of them remain in private hands and are unavailable to researchers. Sadly, many sets of letters, journals, and business records have been lost. The numerous surviving personal journals, photographic collections, business records, and letters (or copies of them) need to be gathered into Utah State University's Special Collections or other repository. After spending years working with such secondary works and primary sources, I make a plea for those who possess such records to so place them in safekeeping where they can be preserved for (and used by) future generations. I am grateful to those who have already done so.

I am grateful to the late A.J. Simmonds, who devoted three decades to researching, writing, archiving, and searching Cache County history. He taught me a great deal and his legacy of willingness to collect and use documents has not been forgotten. Robert Parson, a friend and colleague for life, helped me throughout the project. His history of Rich County provided significant guidelines. Craig Fuller and Kent Powell of the Utah State Division of History are close and patient friends who helped make this entire project a reality. The Utah State Legislature deserves considerable credit because it saw that a true centennial of statehood needed a tangible historical foundation. Cache County's state senator, Lyle Hillyard, remained a consistent and enthusiastic supporter, as did various state representatives. A Utah State University sabbatical and a sojourn at Deep Springs College in California gave me the time necessary to finish the book.

Joel Ricks and S. George Ellsworth, mentors and colleagues, paved the way for this book by collecting and writing history and encouraging students for a combined sixty years. All of those communities that formed committees to create a published history did a great service to the county. Dr. Doran Baker, an engineer and writer of history who adopted the valley and remains one of its most avid historical supporters, continues to explore local history. The Cache County Historical Society—in my view, the best county organization in the state—continues to provide avenues for the discussion of history. The

late Vera Christensen and her colleague Jean Pugmire deserve great praise for maintaining momentum in a purely volunteer organization. County executive Lynn Lemon and the Cache County Council, especially Ann Skanchy, provided leadership and [p.xi] cooperation. Under the legislation, they had a responsibility to gently remind me of my task and pending deadlines. Julie A. Anderson, who is the best secretary imaginable, Kami B. Peterson, and Natalie Rowe typed the manuscript and helped considerably with editing and clarity. The entire Special Collections Department at Utah State University, directed by Ann Buttars, are public servants in the truest sense of the term.

My Scandinavian progenitors came to Cache County in 1862, but Mormon church leaders sent them to Bear Lake the very next year. Their posterity subsequently continued to drift back to their first American homeland. Cache County is a special place, and my family is more than grateful that we call it home. Their continual love and support is a sustaining reality that allows me to push forward with my dreams. I love them deeply and thank them for a wonderful life together.

Chapter 1:

Before Settlement

You have an abundance of grass just springing up and buds beginning to shoot, while the higher parts of the mountains are covered with snow, all within twelve to fifteen miles of the valley.

—*Daniel Potts*

Each of Utah's twenty-nine counties has unique qualities of history and geography, although all share some definite similarities. Cache County is geographically unique because of its topography and physical characteristics. The county is also part of a self-contained valley; yet it is more than the valley because the high mountains that surround the valley on east and west are an integral part of the county. However, much of Cache Valley lies beyond the forty-second degree parallel, which is the boundary between the states of Utah and Idaho. Thus, although many Utahns think of the county and the valley as the same, they are not—a political, social boundary divides what is topographically one. Before extensive settlement the Cache Valley was viewed without any artificial boundaries, and this extended into the early years of the pioneer Mormon colonizing experience.

[p.2] The 4,500-foot elevation of the well-watered valley floor is low enough that Cache County can be considered an irrigated agricultural paradise. Although much of the quality farmland has fallen victim to asphalt and residential subdivisions, Cache County has long been (and still remains) Utah's agricultural breadbasket. Numerous streams find their way down the canyons on the east side of the valley and eventually merge with the Bear River. The Bear River, which drains over 6,000 square miles in the states of Wyoming, Idaho, and Utah, slices into the valley through Idaho's Oneida Narrows and meanders across the state line into the central valley of Cache County until it cuts through to the west and eventually makes its way to the Great Salt Lake. The Little Bear River comes out of the southeast corner of the county, as does Blacksmith's Fork River. The Logan River [p.3] cascades through Logan Canyon, merging with the Bear River in the middle of the valley. Most of the larger tributaries are now dammed and many of the

creeks have diversions that provide irrigation water for both agricultural fields and domestic garden plots during the summer months. The Wasatch Mountains to the east of the valley exceed 9,000 feet in elevation, and the Wellsville Mountains on the west climb to nearly 9,000 feet.¹

The entire valley was once covered by Lake Bonneville, an ancient lake that covered much of northern Utah. Rivers and canyon streams flowed into the valley as the lake was rising and then evaporating, and they left residue on a series of benches along the foothills to the east. For instance, Utah State University sits on a bench approximately 4,700 feet above sea level, or two hundred feet higher than the valley floor. When Lake Bonneville reached its highest altitude, the water level measured approximately 650 feet above Logan's Main Street. The alluvial fans or benches are generally comprised of gravel and other sedimentary materials, and are now covered with homes, a university campus, and orchards.²

The county is approximately forty miles long and averages twenty miles wide. Rich County is to the east, Box Elder County to the west, and Weber County directly south. Approximately 80,000 residents call this high alpine valley their home. Most of the county's inhabitants live along a twelve-mile strip nestled against the eastern foothills; nearly three-fourths of the residents live from Hyrum to Smithfield, with Logan, the county seat and largest community, near the center of the strip. Cache County can be seen as a microcosm of the Wasatch Front's relationship to Utah. Its densely populated strip in a generally rural region resembles the densely populated Wasatch Front's relation to the state. In both cases, nearly 80 percent of the residents live in the urban strip.

The beauty of Cache County can be seen through the course of a year. Indeed, spectacular Logan Canyon may illustrate the seasons as dramatically as any place in the West. The canyon and its river bearing the same name merge to create one of nature's showpieces. Winter is usually long, with abundant snow, important to county agricultural and recreational activities. The whiteness of the snow, the icy river splashing over rounded rocks, and richly dark evergreens [p.4] show the canyon at its best, as many enjoy winter skiing at Beaver Mountain, snowmobiling, sleighing, or fishing. Others relish the solitude of cross-country skiing or snowshoeing into nearby protected areas.

Spring is less certain in Cache Valley. It always comes and is beautiful, but the time of its arrival and duration varies. Thousands of calves are born, new green leaves appear, eventually the grass turns luxuriant green, and migratory fowl move north. The odors of the county's numerous dairies are a pleasant reminder of the nature of the valley. Cache County was called Willow Valley by early trappers, and it has long been noted for the green foliage on its abundant trees. Summer is characterized by luxurious alfalfa and corn fields creating a beautifully patterned valley floor. The area's reservoirs provide water for crops and domestic use and are also used for waterskiing; the streams are heavily fished. Cool nights and mornings help make the hot summer days bearable. The communities are alive with activity, and many are graced by lighted recreational areas and parks. Autumn is the favorite season of many. The changing colors of the canyon foliage of red mountain maple and yellow aspen precedes the changes in the valley's trees. Clear, cool days followed by frosty nights establish an aura of freshness. The diverse valley foliage gradually changes to hues of orange, red, and yellow and then drops to the ground. Winter follows, and the cycle begins again.

Cache Valley provides abundant varieties of fish, birds, game, water, and grasses. Surrounded by high mountain peaks, Cache Valley early on was a coveted area for numerous groups of people, from Native Americans to the Anglo trappers and explorers. It was not until the late 1850s that permanent settlers arrived.

It can be assumed that the Cache Valley was traversed and perhaps inhabited by ancient inhabitants of the continent as much as 10,000 or more years ago. Groups of these hunter-gatherers doubtless made use of the foodstuffs of the region. More recently, from some 700 to 2,000 years ago, members of what has come to be called the Fremont Culture perhaps made use of the region, as scholars have determined that the culture extended into southern Idaho along the eastern edge of the Great Basin. Artifacts from all these people are scanty in the region, and the material is of most interest [p.5] to specialized scholars; this very general history will only make note of the presence in the county of human beings from ancient times. By A.D. 1300 the Fremont Culture had essentially disappeared or been absorbed by more recent arrivals, Numic-language-speaking ancestors of the Native Americans who inhabited the region at the time of historical contact with Euro-American explorers and trappers.

Few Native Americans in historical times utilized the Cache region as a permanent home, probably because of the severity of the winters there. However, acknowledged winter camping grounds were near the confluence of the Bear and Little Bear rivers and at Battle Creek in Idaho. The Shoshoni Indians who lived along the Cache Valley rivers called themselves the Pangwaduka, or "fish-eaters." They called the Logan River, Guinavah, which translates as "bird water"; and that name has survived for a well-known campground in Logan Canyon. Many of the current wetlands of the central valley did not exist prior to the damming of the Bear River, when the stream flowed freely and did not have "trash fish," and so it is believed that trout became the principal part of the diet of the region's nomadic peoples. Many migratory fowl used the area. The numerous rivers provided easy hunting for bears (for whom one of the rivers is named) as well as for Native Americans.³

Many Native Americans passed through Cache Valley in search of food. Primarily, they moved into the valley from the north and gradually hunted and fished their way through the entire region. Most Native Americans in the valley were Shoshoni, whose extended family reached from northwestern Nevada throughout all of southern Idaho and northern Utah and into central Wyoming. Once they acquired horses, probably by 1750, the Shoshoni bands traveled through the Rocky Mountains on annual excursions. Horses provided a greater hunting ability and mobility that helped make the Shoshonis depend more on hunting than on gathering foodstuffs.⁴

Anthropologists have attempted to reconstruct Native American life and to teach contemporaries much about the early inhabitants of the West. According to some studies of the Shoshoni nation, a general profile emerges that may fit these people. Typically, a chief and a council governed a group, usually an extended family, which traveled [p.6] and lived together. The leadership exercised some degree of economic, political, and military control over their followers, most of whom consisted of relatives. They directed the trips to find food as well as the activities of war parties, if needed. Once contact was made with whites, the role of the chief and council became significantly more complex. The United States government always searched for leaders to negotiate treaties; it thus described groups of Indians in terms of the leaders it recognized. In reality, the Shoshoni

had a much more complicated system of leadership. According to historians and ethnologists, as many as five different bands lived in and around Cache Valley.

The Shoshoni who migrated into and through Cache Valley depended on the area to provide their necessities. The Shoshoni faced competition from their native neighbors to the south and east, the Utes, who also hunted along the Bear River and its tributaries. Consequently, the Cache Valley peoples rarely moved very far south. They were restricted by the Blackfeet and the Crow Indian tribes to the northeast and by the Nez Perce to the northwest. The high desert of Nevada proved inhospitable to the Shoshoni, so a corridor along the Bear River, the Portneuf River, and the Snake River system defined the patterns of their group movement. Although periodic confrontations arose between the Shoshoni and other groups, they proved able to survive harsh winters and other natural difficulties. They relied on the natural bounty of the mountain valleys—such as elk, deer, buffalo, fish, and fowl—to sustain themselves. Their lifeways changed considerably once trappers moved into the area.⁵

The fur trappers, whose primary objective was to trap beaver, also fished and hunted other animals. Their impact on buffalo is dramatically illustrated by an examination of three primary sources. Peter Skene Ogden, the leader of area trappers working for the British Hudson's Bay Company, recorded that he saw two large herds of buffalo in the valley in 1825. Five years later Warren Angus Ferris saw many buffalo on the valley floor. However, in 1843 U.S. government explorer John Charles Frémont noted that there were no buffalo in the valley. This valuable resource for Native Americans had disappeared from the region in a very short time.⁶ Partly as a result of this, [p.7] the Indians turned to cattle brought by overlanders and settlers as a promising source of food.

Bannock were frequent visitors to Cache Valley. (W. H. Jackson photograph, S. George Ellsworth Collection, Special Collections Merrill Library, USU)

Local Native Americans depended on elk, deer, and antelope as well as buffalo for food and clothing; and, in fact, their ability to survive depended in great part on the availability of these resources. As trappers and then settlers competed for the animals, hunger, poverty, and often starvation resulted for the native population. In addition, other tribes also felt the pressure and competed more fiercely for the available foodstuffs. Nathaniel Wyeth reported that he saw only Shoshonis in Cache Valley in 1833; but he saw Ute, Crow, and Blackfeet Indians in the valley in 1836. Although they continued to fish and seek smaller game, the result recorded by Frémont in 1843 was that the natives in Cache Valley had little game, few roots, and almost nothing stored for the potentially harsh winter. Within fifty years, the greater Shoshoni nation went from control of much of the [p.8] northern Rocky Mountains to being restricted to life on treaty-mandated reservations. From the Duck Valley Reservation in Nevada to Fort Hall in Idaho, Washakie in Wyoming, and even a small locale near Bishop, California, the Shoshoni people were dispersed throughout the western United States.

The interaction of Native Americans with trappers, explorers, and settlers gives only a glimpse of these early human inhabitants of Cache Valley. The invasion by whites was gradual, yet the cumulative result proved devastatingly destructive to a vibrant and intriguing culture. By the 1880s the Native Americans' collective presence in the area was no longer an issue or a threat to the new immigrants, the land had now been claimed by the United States government and the settlers. The transfer of power significantly

altered Indian traditions. A.J. Simmonds recorded that one older member of the Shoshoni tribe indicated that Temple Hill in Logan and some of the other area foothills were viewed as sacred healing places by the Native Americans.⁷ Few of the newcomers really cared about the consequences to the Indians of their annexation of the land.

The fur trade is a vital chapter in the history of North America. From the time of the earliest settlements in eastern Canada and New England, the fur trade was central to the economy of both French and British colonies. Trappers followed streams and rivers into the depths of the continent in their desire for more pelts. The trade ultimately proved quite destructive to lands and peoples as the game was depleted in regions, which meant that subsequent trappers must move farther upstream or into another valley or beyond yet another mountain range. The early wandering trappers were genuine pioneers in that they preceded settlement; but their rough maps, memories, and journals acted as guides for permanent settlers who followed them into the valleys of the continent. By the early 1800s, shortly after the famous Lewis and Clark expedition, British, French-Canadian, and American trappers made their way into the Rocky Mountains and eventually into Cache Valley.

The north end of Cache Valley may have been visited as early as 1818 by Canadian trappers under Michael Bourdon. Bourdon, a French-Canadian, named the Bear River and probably christened the three rivers in southern Cache County that he thought were forks of [p.9] the Bear. The Logan River he called the Little Bear; Blacksmith Fork, he named Middle Fork; and South Fork was the name bestowed on what is now the Little Bear. This group of adventurers also may have been the first to call the heavily wooded stream banks Willow Valley. Five years later Bourdon met death in Idaho at the hand of Blackfoot Indians; later, when some of his colleagues returned to Cache Valley, they renamed the Little Bear (Logan) the Bourdon River. That name lasted in popular usage for only about three years, at which time the river was renamed for another slain trapper, the American adventurer Ephraim Logan.⁸

By the mid-1820s, Cache Valley's rivers became the temporary home of numerous traps belonging to a variety of trappers and traders representing the Hudson's Bay Company, William H. Ashley's Rocky Mountain Fur Company, and John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company. The men of Ashley's company came into the valley in 1824 when a party led by John Weber followed the Bear River south into Utah in the fall of that year. Among Weber's men were Ephraim Logan and Jim Bridger, who took the assignment of finding out where the Bear River went. With colleagues he constructed a rawhide boat and then followed the stream to the Great Salt Lake near Corrine. Originally, because of its brackish water, Bridger thought the lake was part of the Pacific Ocean. Later explorations proved that the water not only was a lake but also that it did not empty into another stream leading eventually to the ocean. Weber and his men spent the winter of 1824–25 trapping most of the Cache Valley tributaries of the Bear River.⁹

The next spring, in 1825, Peter Skene Ogden led a large Hudson's Bay Company group of trappers into the valley. With fifty-eight men, sixty-one guns, 268 horses, and over 300 traps, Ogden's group arrived in Cache Valley in late April. By May they could see that Weber's efforts the previous year had depleted the number of beaver in the lower streams. Weber Canyon is as far south as the Hudson's Bay Company trapped in Utah, but its men did explore and examine Cache Valley. Some of Weber's men tried to winter in Cache Valley in 1825, but heavy snow drove them out by Christmas.

Ogden noted in his journal: "Our course this day was west over a fine plain covered with Buffaloes and thousands of small gulls the [p.10] latter was a strange sight to us I presume some large body of water near at hand at present unknown to us all."¹⁰ In all probability, Ogden was somewhere near present-day Lewiston in Cache County. Earlier he wrote that "we have so far not seen Birds or Fowls of any kind save and except Ravens and Crows in abundance and for insects we have no cause or complain, fleas, wood lice, spiders and crickets by millions."¹¹ Ogden also commented after leaving Cache Valley that "we [p.11] have seen no wood of any kind except Willows for these two months past."¹² It is hard to imagine that Peter Skene Ogden traveled from central Idaho to Ogden Valley without encountering large stands of evergreens, but the route he took was mostly through sagebrush country. After spending a few days trapping in the south end of Cache Valley, Ogden moved south into the Ogden Valley and reached the site of present-day Huntsville by 20 May. When some of Ogden's trappers found out there how much more the American companies paid for pelts, they deserted the Hudson's Bay Company. Faced with the problem of desertion plus the reality that many of the streams had been trapped, Ogden retraced his journey through Cache Valley and returned to the Snake River by late summer.¹³

This episode with Weber and Ogden highlights an international economic struggle over beaver pelts and geographic domination in North America during the 1820s. The British Hudson's Bay Company wanted to deplete the beaver in the Utah and Idaho mountains in order to help keep Americans on the eastern slope of the Rockies. By 1818 the British and Americans had agreed to joint occupation of the Pacific Northwest, which included Idaho. Utah in the 1820s belonged to Mexico. Fur trapping expeditions, including those of Alexander Ross from the British and Jedediah Smith for the Americans, probed the Utah and Idaho mountains to counter the other nation's trapping and trading activities. Great Britain definitely wanted to keep the Americans out of Idaho even though it had agreed to joint occupation. The trapping expeditions proved to be pawns on an international chessboard, and Cache Valley, because it straddled the international boundary, became a key location of great interest to diplomats. In spite of any international considerations, the trappers continued to search for beaver, whose pelts were in great demand for hats.

[p.12]

Many famous and well-known American trappers came through Cache Valley, and the 1826 trappers' rendezvous on the Blacksmith Fork River near Nibley attests to the valley's popularity. Besides Smith and Bridger, James Beckwourth, the great African-American trapper, James Clyman, and Thomas Fitzpatrick all came. William Ashley had concluded that in order to keep his men in the mountains trapping, he would bring the necessary supplies to a predetermined place in the [p.13] summer. He arranged to exchange the supplies for furs, and then Ashley took the furs back to St. Louis. In late May 1826 Ashley arrived in Cache Valley and made his way to the Blacksmith Fork River, which trappers had earlier renamed because they had cached a set of blacksmith's tools near the river along with many other supplies. The trappers, Americans and Canadians, began to gather along with Native Americans. James Beckwourth recalled the atmosphere of 1826.

Shortly after, General Ashley and Mr. Sublet came in, accompanied with 300 pack mules, well laden with goods and all things necessary for the mountaineers and the Indian trade.

It may well be supposed that the arrival of such a vast amount of luxuries from the East did not pass off without a general celebration. Mirth, songs, dancing, shouting, yarns, frolic, with all sorts of extravagances . . . were freely indulged in. The unpacking of the medicine water contributed not a little to the heightening of our festivities.¹⁴

After the exchanges and merrymaking, four trappers went to the Great Salt Lake and floated around the lake in bullboats. It took Jim Clyman, Louis Clyman, Black Harris, and Henry Fraeb twenty-four days to complete the trip, and their report stated that they did not "ascertain its outlet, but passed a place where they supposed it must have been."¹⁵

Although Jim Beckwourth is often credited with naming Cache Valley, Jedediah Smith used the name Cache for the location at the time of the 1826 rendezvous. The caching in the valley of surplus goods, tools, and equipment contributed to the name, and it is probable that some trappers wintered in the valley every year until the 1840s. However, some trappers continued to use the Willow Valley name for the area. Daniel Potts wrote a letter to his brother in which he described Willow Valley in 1826: Willow Valley is better supplied in this point [timber] this valley has been our chief place of rendezvous and wintering grounds. Numerous streams fall in through this valley, which, like the others, is surrounded by stupendous mountains, which are unrivaled for beauty and serenity of scenery.¹⁶

Potts then described one of the aspects that distinguishes Cache Valley in June: "You have . . . plenty of ripe fruit, an abundance of [p.14] grass just springing up, and buds beginning to shoot, while the higher parts of the mountains are covered with snow, all within twelve to fifteen miles of this valley."¹⁷

Before leaving to return to St. Louis with his \$60,000 worth of furs, Ashley sold his share of the company to Jedediah Smith, William Sublette, and David Jackson. Ashley left for Missouri after accomplishing his personal economic objective for the fur trade—he was now a man of independent means. The trappers that year sent back [p.15] the required government documentation that they were doing business at Fort Defence in Cache Valley. Whether or not a permanent structure existed at the Blacksmith Fork is a matter of conjecture, but it is likely that trappers who wintered in the valley constructed some type of shelter. The new partners subsequently split up and began to seek beaver in other areas; however, for the next few years, Cache Valley and Bear Lake remained the primary rendezvous sites.

After the gathering in 1827, the company sent four men to trap the lower reaches of the Snake River. The four were killed near Twin Falls by Shoshoni Indians. When the men did not return to Bear Lake in the summer of 1828, their colleagues realized they were not coming back. Among the missing was Ephraim Logan. For some unrecorded reason, the trappers thought enough of him to rename in his honor the Bourdon River and the canyon through which it flows. His fame spread quickly because an entry in George Yount's 1829 journal mentions that his group went into winter quarters at Logan's Hole.¹⁸ Yount's description leaves no doubt that the trappers wintered in Cache Valley. Ephraim Logan's name is well preserved in the valley and mountains.

One of the best-remembered trappers was Warren Angus Ferris. Originally employed by John Jacob Astor, Ferris worked for the American Fur Company and came to Cache Valley from Bear Lake through Logan Canyon. On the way into the valley, Ferris encountered grizzly bears, mountain sheep, elk, and a variety of other game. For

many of his six years in the mountains, Ferris spent time in Cache Valley. He wrote extensively about his years as a trapper in the Rockies, describing Cache Valley as one of the most extensive and beautiful valleys of the Rocky Mountains.

According to Hiram Chittenden, historian of the fur trade, the name Cache stemmed from a rumor that William Ashley recovered bear furs cached in the valley by Peter Skene Ogden. Warren A. Ferris, party to a tragic episode during the winter of 1832, gave another account. "A man in the employ of Smith, Sublette, and Jackson, was engaged . . . in constructing one of those subterranean vaults for the reception of furs . . . (and when) nearly completed . . . a large quantity of earth fell in upon the poor fellow . . . his companions believed him to have been instantly killed, knew him to be well buried, and the [p.16] cache destroyed, and therefore left him and accomplished their object elsewhere."19 James Beckwourth takes credit for first using the name of Cache to replace Willow Valley; and he also acknowledged the extensive use of caches in the valley.

In 1832 Captain Benjamin L.E. Bonneville, on leave from the U.S. Army, came into the Rocky Mountains to trap. Equipped with nearly one hundred men and twenty wagons drawn by mules and oxen, Bonneville established a base camp on the Green River in what is now Wyoming. One of his colleagues, known to history as Matthieu, was given the assignment to go west, north of the Uinta Mountains, and make trapping arrangements with the Native Americans there. According to Washington Irving's accounts, Matthieu decided to catch up with Bonneville, who had pressed on to the Salmon River country. Matthieu either was guided or perhaps tried a short cut that brought him into Cache Valley. He still had some wagons and equipment. As the snow piled about his small group of men, Matthieu dispatched five men to hunt for game near Sheep Rock on the Bear River, where the river turns south above Grace, Idaho. The men were attacked by hostile Indians; three were killed and the other two retreated to Cache Valley. Matthieu later abandoned his camp and connected with Bonneville near Fort Hall in early February 1833.20 Warren A. Ferris reported that "an express arrived, bringing information that four men belonging to a detachment from Bonneville's company, which separated from him on Green River were killed about a month previous near the Sheep Rock; and that the remainder of the party were in winter quarters in Cache Valley."21

It is possible that Matthieu left most of his supplies in Cache Valley. Historian A.J. Simmonds gave three plausible sources for a discovery of a cache of supplies near Smithfield. John Fish Wright, one of the pioneer settlers of Smithfield claimed that when he began plowing, "an old cache was dug up and a number of log chains and ox yokes were found. John Edwards also found the bones of a yoke of cattle still yoked together."22 Joel Ricks, Jr., claimed to meet an old French-Canadian trapper in 1870 who said that he came into Cache Valley about the year 1832, with a large Hudson's Bay Company group which was seeking locations for trading posts. Ricks said that he was told "they cached their extra supplies, two small cannons, a [p.17] lot of ox yokes, chains, etc. in the cottonwoods on Summit Creek, and returned for them the next year."23 The man trapped in the valley for years afterward. Even though Ricks postulated that these were the materials unearthed by Wright or Edwards, the trapper said the original party returned the next year for its goods. Since he was working for the Hudson's Bay Company and said nothing of Matthieu, it is unlikely there is a connection.

John Dowdle, one of the cowboys who came into Cache Valley in 1855 as a herdsman for LDS church cattle, also reported artifacts of some type of military

expedition. Since Bonneville was a military man and some think his trapping venture was actually a cover to disguise his true mission to ascertain British strength in the jointly occupied region, Matthieu's group could be viewed as military in nature. Dowdle claimed that "There was a small log pen made by a company of U.S. soldiers in a.d. 1833. . . . We find these soldiers wintered at this place. The title of this place is found on the maps, marked Sumit Creek now Smith Field, Cache County Utah Ter."²⁴ According to Dowdle, the soldiers lost most of their mules during the winter and had to cache their supplies. He wrote: "I met a German in Loss Angeous California in 1864, who claimed to be a member of that company. He gave me sufficient evidence to satisfy me that he was there, he gave me a full description of the place."²⁵ The German gentlemen claimed they made a covered box out of their wagon boxes and placed in it cannon, blacksmith tools, picks, shovels, "cro bars," plows, whiskey, muskets, powder, and lead. After burying it, they drove over it with their teams so that all signs of it being there would be erased. It is obvious that someone in Cache Valley had cached their belongings. There may have been two groups caching goods, one from the Hudson's Bay Company, the other a U.S. military expedition. It is apparent that Bonneville's men also were in the valley during that period, but it is less clear if they buried anything. One site is described as three miles west of Smithfield near the Bear River. Whether they built a shelter, corrals, or cabin is speculative because Wright and Edwards only reported that they dug up bones, yoke, and chains. Nevertheless, trappers, explorers, and emigrants continued to visit Cache Valley. [p.18]

Osborne Russell, one of the later trappers, whose journal has become a Western American literary classic, described the valley in 1840:

I followed Bear River down to Cache Valley where I found 20 lodges of Snake Indians and staid with them several days. They had [p.19] considerable number of Beaver Skins but I had nothing to trade for them. They told me I would go to the Fort and get some goods return and spend the winter with them they would trade their Furs with me.²⁶ Russell then went to Fort Hall and got the supplies requested. In late November he returned to Cache Valley. "On arriving at the Village I found several Frenchmen and half breed trappers encamped with the Snakes One Frenchman having an Indian wife and child invited me to pass the winter in his lodge and as he had a small family and large lodge I accepted the invitation."²⁷

A few years after Russell's departure, Major Moses "Black" Harris, another noted trapper, advised Brigham Young that Cache Valley was much more desirable than the Salt Lake Valley. Allegedly, Jim Bridger concurred. Cache Valley always remained a favorite of many trappers, and they left their imprint through various place-names and numerous journal descriptions.

While the last of the trappers continued to criss-cross the West, emigrants and exploring expeditions passed through Cache Valley. Many of the old trappers became guides for these parties and utilized their vast knowledge to lead a variety of expeditions throughout the West. One interesting group of pioneers made their way through western Cache Valley in 1841. John Bartleson and a group of Oregon-bound travelers, which included Father Peter John DeSmet, a Jesuit priest of fame in Idaho, left Missouri in June. They were guided by Thomas "Broken Hand" Fitzpatrick, a former trapper who knew Cache Valley well. In early August they arrived at Soda Springs in present-day Idaho, a noted resting place. Bartleson went to Fort Hall, built by Nathaniel Wyeth in 1834, to

find someone to guide him to California because Fitzpatrick knew little of the upcoming terrain, Indians, or other hazards of what is now Nevada.

Although he was unsuccessful in finding a guide, Bartleson remained determined to go to California, not Oregon. Fitzpatrick advised the group to go on to Oregon with the main party. Josiah Belden reported the resolve of the minority group: "Fitzpatrick advised us to give up our expedition and go with them to Fort Hall, . . . since there was no road for us to follow to California. As we had [p.20] planned to go to California, we decided that we would not give up but continue on and do the best we could to get through."²⁸ Thirty-two people and nine wagons, following Bartleson's lead, left the group near Alexander, Idaho, and followed the Bear River into Cache Valley. John Bidwell, only twenty years of age but determined to go to California, followed Bartleson and described their brief (five days) but difficult passage through Cache Valley on the west side of the Bear River, where these pioneers with their wagons created a new road. North of Preston, Idaho, they ate chokecherries and then continued south. Bidwell's journal of 15 and 16 August records:

We continued our journey along the western foothills, over hills and ravines, going to almost every point on the compass in order to pass them. The day was warm, the grass has been very good but now it is parched up. We had come about 15 miles and camped on a small stream coming from the mountains not far from us.²⁹

He reported the next day that they traveled another twelve miles and found chokecherries "very large and exquisitely delicious." On 17 August the small wagon train crossed from Cache Valley into the Great Salt Lake basin, turned west, went north of the lake, and eventually made their way to California. In retrospect, their journey was a miraculous success. Five years later the Donner party would not be as fortunate.³⁰

Two years after the Bartleson company traversed Cache Valley, in 1843 a party led by John Charles Frémont followed the path of the Bartleson train into the valley in late August. Frémont's sojourn in the valley was brief, but his description of 29 August 1843 is vivid: "The thermometer at sunrise was 54; with air from the N.W., and dark rainy clouds moving on the horizon; rain squalls and bright sunshine by intervals. I rode ahead with Basil to explore the country."³¹ Frémont and his companion traveled about three miles along the river and then turned off on a trail toward the west. They surprised a small party of Shoshoni Indians and apparently communicated by some type of sign language. The Indians told them the pass through to the next valley was a very good one. By noon they had reached Weston Canyon and explored it as a route into the Malad Valley and then into the greater Salt Lake basin. Frémont wrote, "We [p.21] halted at the gate of the pass, on either side of which stole a little pure water stream, with a margin just sufficiently large enough for our passage."³²

Frémont and his men moved southward, exploring the remainder of the west side of the valley throughout the day. He concluded his descriptions of the day by writing that they "set out to explore the country, and ascended different neighboring peaks, in the hope of seeing some indications of the lake, but though our elevation afforded magnificent views, the eye ranging over a long extent of Bear river, with the broad and fertile Cache Valley in the direction of our search, was only to be seen a bed of apparently impracticable mountains." It is obvious that Frémont saw the valley as broad and fertile. The next day his group moved out of the valley to the west and then south to the Great Salt Lake. In all probability, Frémont only visited the Idaho portion of Cache

Valley, as he cut through Weston Canyon toward present-day Malad. Frémont's U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers colleague Captain Howard Stansbury later stayed much longer in the valley and his record and observations are more complete.

Stansbury came into Cache Valley during the summer of 1849, the year after Utah and the remainder of the American southwest became part of the United States as part of the provisions of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ending the Mexican War, and two years after Mormon pioneers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. Stansbury's mission was to include a recommendation as to whether or not area's valleys could support a military post. Stansbury and his men ascertained that Cache Valley would be an ideal place to winter the army's stock but saw no need to construct a fort there.³³ By 1849 the United States had also acquired control of the Oregon Country, which included the Idaho portion of Cache Valley, and had established a military post at Fort Hall, north of present Pocatello. Stansbury convinced the command at the Fort Hall post to send their excess mules, cattle, and horses to Cache Valley for the winter. Unfortunately for the army, Cache Valley's heavy winter that year destroyed over half of the stock, so the experiment lasted but one year and Cache Valley was removed as a potential site for a military post. Stansbury also suggested that a military road might be constructed from the Blacksmith [p.22] Fork River to Fort Bridger, which connected to both the Oregon and Utah trails. On a positive note, Stansbury viewed the valley's future as promising because of the abundance of water, timber, grass, and the potential for agriculture.³⁴

By the end of the 1840s, Cache Valley was still part of the general nomadic home of many Native Americans. The region had been trapped extensively, had hosted numerous trappers' rendezvous, and had provided winter lodging. Government explorers and wagon trains had traversed the valley, reporting its virtues as well as its winter hazards. Eventual white settlement seemed inevitable in view of the mass migration of Mormon immigrants into other valleys of Utah. As increasing numbers of pioneers gathered, the need for new land compelled further expansion. Cache Valley hitherto had always been explored from the north and there was a possibility that westward-moving non-Mormon pioneers might settle there. Mormons did not want Oregon or California pioneers to detour into the mountain valley and then decide to stay. Both the 1849 gold rush to California as well as the Mormon need for more land contributed to the settlement of the valley. Mormons had gradually moved north into Weber County and then along the eastern foothills to present-day Box Elder County. As Native Americans gradually withdrew from the lower Bear River valley, they viewed Cache Valley as a haven that might perhaps avoid the white immigrant onslaught. They were wrong; but it took until 1855 for the Mormons to make their presence known.

Endnotes

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of Utah Press, 1986); *The Lemhi* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1979); *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985).

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7A.J. Simmonds, "Looking Back," *Herald Journal* (Logan), 7 November 1987.

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9Dale Morgan, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press) 1994, remains one of the best accounts of fur trapping in the West. Utilizing numerous trapper journals, especially James Clyman's, Morgan was able to reconstruct an accurate account of trapper activities.

10Miller, "Peter Skene Ogden's Journal," 172.

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12Ibid., 176.

13Morgan, *Jedediah Smith*, 151.

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17See Dale L. Morgan, *The West of William H. Ashley* (Denver: Old West Publishing Company, 1964).

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19Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains*, 47–48.

20Washington Irving, *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville in the Rocky Mountains and the Far West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 126.

[p.24] 21Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains*, 189.

22Simmonds, "Looking Back," *Herald Journal*, 8 January 1989.

23Joel Ricks, Jr., *Utah Since Statehood*, vol. 4 (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1920), 228, in *Utah State University Special Collections*, henceforth USUSC.

24John C. Dowdle, *Diary*, Merrill Library, USUSC.

25Ibid.

26Osborne Russell, *Journal of a Trapper* (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1955), 112–13.

27Ibid., 113.

28See John Bidwell, *A Journey to California* (Berkeley: Friends of the Bancroft Library, 1964).

29See Rockwell D. Hunt, *John Bidwell, Prince of California Pioneers* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1942).

30The Donner party broke a new path west of Fort Bridger by turning southwest at Echo Junction instead of following the Weber River. They went down Emigration Canyon into present-day Salt Lake Valley and then went south of the Great Salt Lake. The resultant delays later proved disastrous.

31John C. Frémont, *Narratives of Exploration and Adventure*, ed. Allan Nevins (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1956), 229.

32Ibid.

33Howard Stansbury, *Exploration and Survey of the Valley of the Great Salt Lake of Utah* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1852), 94.

34Ibid., 84, 94–95.

Chapter 2: Settlement

Samuel Roskelly mention page 1.

There was a large snow bank in the middle of our yard till summer . . . and the cattle went to the top of our hay stack to feed.

—*Mary Ann Weston Maughan*

Settling a high mountain valley is not an easy chore; however, Mormon pioneers prided themselves on doing the difficult. Although Cache Valley had plenty of water, good grass, and a beautiful setting, it also had very severe and often long winters. The location within mountain passes created isolation and also limited access, especially in the winter. However, once the rich topsoil in the valley floor felt the settler's plow and the mountain timber was sawn into logs, a flood of pioneers came into the region. The abundant water meant that the usual risk of farming in the arid West was reduced. Where no permanent settlers existed prior to 1850, by 1900 over 18,000 had settled in Cache Valley, and another 5,000 lived in Idaho's Franklin County to the north. Cache County became a promised land for thousands of European emigrants and a quiet, beautiful home for many American-born Mormon pioneers.

[p.26] Prior to considering Cache Valley as a place for settlement, Mormon leader Brigham Young examined another possible use for the region. Although he obviously realized that Utah Territory did not extend north beyond the forty-second parallel, Young hoped to establish some degree of control over the entire Cache Valley. After examining the Frémont and Stansbury documents, and influenced by the glowing report that his own exploring expedition gave him in August 1847, Young decided to pursue church control of Cache Valley. The church organization as well as Young and other private individuals had accumulated thousands of head of cattle. A large summer grazing area for the cattle was needed as well as a possible winter feeding ground. With its numerous streams and abundant grass, Cache Valley was depicted as a paradise for the herds. In 1855 the Utah territorial assembly passed the following piece of legislation which territorial governor Brigham Young quickly signed.

Be it enacted by the Governor and Legislative Assembly of the territory of Utah: That portion of country known as Cache Valley . . . is hereby granted to Brigham Young, Trustee in the Trust for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and those whom

he may associate with him; together with all the products and benefits arising therefrom, for a herd ground and other purposes.¹

Within a few days Brigham Young took advantage of the kind gift of Governor Brigham Young and the assembly. He organized a group of young men and sent them north into Cache Valley to establish a cattle ranch.

In July 1855 ten men arrived in Cache Valley to prepare the area for the herd and those who would manage it. Briant Stringham was chosen by Young to lead the group, which included Young's son, Brigham, Jr., **Samuel Roskelly**, and William Naylor, among many others. They scouted the valley for three days and selected a site south and west of present-day Logan as the ranch base. The ranch became known as the Elkhorn Ranch. One story is that the ranch received its name from a large elk head tied above the gate entrance to the ranch. However, the Garr brothers, all three experienced herdsmen who worked at the ranch, were raised on Elkhorn Creek in Indiana and they may have named the ranch.

[p.27] Although the men wished to explore the valley, Stringham initially kept them focused on the assigned task and they began to build cabins, corrals, and outbuildings. Two trained builders, Martin Ensign and John C. Dowdle, came from Box Elder County to supervise the construction. Utilizing the cottonwood trees that lined the Blacksmith Fork River, they built log houses, fences, and corrals. Even then, Cache Valley winters created some apprehension, and the knowledge that the herds of U.S. Army stock had perished made some of the hands quite skeptical of the enterprise. In preparation, the ranch hands cut and stacked over 200 tons of wild grass hay and stored it at the ranch. Of course, the hope existed that the cattle would forage among the tall grass and receive significant winter nourishment from it. It did not seem possible that snow would cover the entire valley for months.

While some of the men worked on construction and hay storage projects, others began driving the large herd of cattle into the valley. Soon there were over 3,000 head of livestock; the LDS church owned two-thirds of them. Three brothers—John, Abel, and Ben Garr—joined Franklin and Miles Weaver as herders. They had taken care of the church cattle along with their own herd at Promontory in Box Elder County during previous winters. It was not long before the experienced herdsmen realized that winters in Cache Valley could be significantly different than winters at Promontory. Snow remained on the ground much longer in Cache Valley and, once the ground froze, snow depths increased dramatically, consequently the cattle could not forage.²

Realizing that there was no way that 200 tons of hay could feed 3,000 animals for four to five months, the herders decided to round up the stock and drive them over Sardine Canyon back to the greater Salt Lake Valley. In terrible conditions day and night, the herders drove the remaining cattle through the canyon. The snow depth exceeded two feet and they slowly moved the surviving animals to rangeland near the mouth of the Weber River. Only 420 of the church's 2,000 cattle survived the winter. Those settlers who stayed in Cache Valley were completely snowbound. Two young couples, recently arrived converts from England, the Stolworthys and Warners, stayed at the ranch and shared a cabin for the entire winter.³

[p.28] Their isolation in a snowbound valley caused great concern for both those who stayed and those who sent them. Two veteran frontiersmen, John C. Dowdle, who had helped build Elkhorn, and William Garr, were instructed to return to assist those families

and herders left at Elkhorn. Suffering from extreme cold, exhaustion, and exposure, Garr and Dowdle returned by snowshoes to Elkhorn. Food supplies were exhausted, but all survived the harsh and difficult winter. It perhaps should be noted that both the Stolworthys and the Warners left Cache Valley as early as possible the next summer. Prior to departing, the Stolworthys experienced the birth of a daughter, named Eliza Cache.

Brigham Young was one who learned from experience. He quickly abandoned his plan to turn Cache Valley into a permanent herding ground for his or the church's cattle. However, he did not abandon ideas of the valley as a place for potential settlement. By 1856 Young had tried to establish settlements as far north as the Lemhi Valley in central Idaho; west to the Carson Valley in western Nevada; and southwest to San Bernardino, California. South from Salt Lake City to Utah Valley to Cedar City to St. George, there existed numerous church-sponsored settlements. They were necessary because the church's missionaries kept successfully converting new members. Church missions in the southern United States, Great Britain, and Scandinavia sent thousands of new Mormons into the Rocky Mountains. In contrast to their situations in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, previous areas of Mormon occupation, Brigham Young now enjoyed the luxury of access to thousands of unsettled acres in the high mountain valleys. So, despite the harsh winters, the killing frosts, the death of much of the church herd, and the earlier destruction of the army's livestock, Young turned to Cache Valley in 1856 as a new area for settlement. Most of Utah had suffered an extreme drought in the mid-1850s and the church leader needed new areas to explore, settle, and especially provide a haven for the new arrivals.

[p.29]

Peter Maughan along with wife Mary Ann Weston Maughan, earlier settlers in valley. Official of Logan Co-op, LDS church and civic leader of Cache Valley. (Special Collections Merrill Library, USU)

One answer to Young's dilemma came in the person of Peter Maughan. At the same time the Warners and Stolworthys abandoned Elkhorn Ranch, Maughan, who had been in Tooele County, asked Young for permission to go to Cache Valley and select a place for a settlement. Maughan's family and friends had suffered the effects of drought, grasshoppers, and Native American raids in the desert area south of the Great Salt Lake, and they felt a change of scenery might be very beneficial. By late August, Maughan led a small group of eight men and their families into Cache Valley. Mary Ann Weston Maughan recorded her thoughts about arriving in the valley in mid-September, perhaps the most beautiful time of the year: "When we got to the mouth of the Canyon we stopped to look at the Beautiful Valley before us my first words were O What a beautiful Valley. We drove in to the creek . . . here we camped on the 15th day of Sep. 1856."⁴

Cache Valley and Cache County now had permanent white [p.30] settlers. Native Americans still utilized the valley and continued their migratory patterns of hunting and fishing. The founders of Wellsville, or Maughan's Fort, built their homes in rows facing each other in a "fort" style. Cache Valley was now considered by whites open for settlement. With little regard for Indian patterns of travel, villages, or hunting grounds, the Mormon pioneers began spreading on to new land. Wherever a stream came into the valley, the Mormons contemplated a settlement. Exploring the entire valley, Peter

Maughan and his associates felt that many additional pioneers could survive in the isolated splendor of the Cache Valley.

In the late autumn of 1856, Maughan left to attend the territorial legislature sessions in Fillmore. As snows mounted at Maughan's Fort, a realization came that this was going to be a very difficult winter. The church herdsman warned the settlers of the severity of winter, but experience is a better teacher than words. Mary Ann Maughan recorded one of the first pioneer tragedies of Cache County's settlement history: *In the winter Bro. Gardners son John started from Box Elder on a Sunday morning on horseback for Maughan's Fort but his horse gave out in the canyon. He put his saddle and Blanket in a servicebery bush, and, leaving his horse, started out on foot. These were found by some Brethren going after the mail. On their return with this news, it was the first his father knew that John had left Box Elder. Immediately his father, brothers, and others started to look for him. . . . On the next Sunday morning after John Gardener left Box Elder William [Maughan] and [Zial] Riggs went to look south of the fort. They noticed a faint trail coming from the canyon. They followed it down to the bank of the creek . . . they looked across and there on the north bank of the creek lay John Gardiner. . . . In his pocket they found a letter from Mr. Maughan. . . .5*

While in Fillmore, Maughan, the Tooele County territorial legislator, received authority to organize a new county government and was appointed probate judge of the newly created Cache County. Meanwhile, his family and friends survived the difficult winter. After a wet spring, they tilled some acres; the reward was a bountiful harvest that fall—1857—and the settlers prepared for what they hoped would be a bright future. [p.31]

Mary Ann Weston Maughan, wife of Peter Maughan, first leader of LDS Relief Society in Cache Valley. (Special Collections Merrill Library, USU)

Unfortunately, intense difficulties awaited Mormon pioneers from a different source. The 1850s witnessed a nation in turmoil over slavery and expansion, and for a brief time the government focused [p.32] on Utah Territory. After years of sparring with federal judges and marshals, President James Buchanan removed Brigham Young as the appointed governor of Utah Territory. Buchanan was fearful that the Mormons would not submit peacefully to the proposed change, so he sent an army of 3,000 troops under Albert Sidney Johnston with the new governor, Alfred Cumming. Hearing of the imminent invasion, Young recalled Mormon settlers from colonies in California, Nevada, and Idaho, as well as the distant valleys of Utah. His purpose seems to have been not only to show a united front to the federal government but also to prevent isolated settlements from being cut off both from his control and from each other. Some have argued that Brigham Young also particularly feared the independence and prosperity of the outposts in southern California.

The Latter-day Saints had been driven from Missouri and Illinois, so they prepared for the worst. The call to abandon the settlement reached Cache Valley settlers in October 1857. Young advised Maughan: "We consider wisdom for you to come within our settlements." The Cache residents chose to obey, but they took their time in leaving. It was not until March 1858 that many left the valley, moved south, and scattered to various parts of central Utah. In the meantime, a few herdsmen, farmers, and cattle

remained at Elkhorn Ranch and "Daddy" Stump, a former trapper, remained at his ranch near Paradise. Planning to return, the settlers planted a number of crops in the spring of that year.

In the fall of 1857, prior to the settlers' departure, a detachment of Utah's militia, the Nauvoo Legion, came into the valley on their way to the Oregon Trail. In the event Albert Sidney Johnston's army moved to enter from the north instead of directly west into the Salt Lake Valley, this expeditionary force was to monitor the army's movements. Although they never encountered the U.S. Army, many of the 500 Legion volunteers viewed Cache Valley for the first time and were impressed by the beauty of the autumn. A number of these militiamen returned as settlers within the next few years. Joseph H. Campbell, who later settled in Providence, recorded that "the next day we came through Wellsville Canyon and camped on the Muddy River just below Maughan's fort." On 18 August 1857 Marcellus Moore wrote that they "traveled about 30 miles and camped near [p.33] Sampitch [chief of the Shoshonis], smoked with some of his men and sent him some tobacco." The valley's late summer beauty definitely appealed to many of the troops from Weber County.⁶

Eleanor "Lena" Coburn Jenkins, one of many courageous women who helped settle Cache Valley. (Special Collections Merrill Library, USU)
[p.34] Fears of armed conflict between Mormons and federal troops proved unfounded. A negotiated settlement allowed Cumming to assume the governor's post, and he agreed that the federal troops would pass through the Salt Lake Valley, establishing Camp Floyd about forty miles south. The Mormon people were not harmed and were guaranteed control of the property they had acquired as well as their basic constitutional rights as American citizens.

Most of the original Cache Valley pioneers remained out of the area from the spring of 1858 until some returned to harvest crops late in the fall. At Frances Gunnell's request, Brigham Young authorized a return to the valley; but his letter to Peter Maughan was filled with advice, counsel, and caution:

*You are perfectly aware Brother Maughan that you at that place are perfectly cut off from any assistance from any of our settlements during the winter. You will therefore have to rely entirely upon your own resources and should go strong enough and perfectly prepared to sustain yourselves and should moreover be very careful in traveling in cold weather. You must be very cautious about the hostile Indians from the north.*⁷

Young's experience with his own cattle herd probably contributed to his assessment of the valley; however, Salt Lake residents always seem to have believed that it is farther from Salt Lake City to Logan than it is from Logan to Salt Lake City. Once allowed to return to Cache Valley, the Wellsville pioneers were flooded by a new wave of migration.

Time and space do not allow a listing of all the pioneers who established the communities throughout the valley. Fortunately, most communities have published histories that describe in detail the people and processes that made each of the settlements prosper and develop. Each individual story is significant and illustrates the important role of each community and its founders. It is important to note that the women, men, and their children who settled the valley displayed tremendous courage and amazing tenacity.

Life was not easy on the frontier and many tragedies accompanied the pioneers. Regardless of the perceived and witnessed difficulties, Mormon pioneers viewed mountain valleys as having tremendous potential as [p.35] well as being their peaceful haven. Whether from the United States, Great Britain, Switzerland, Germany, or Scandinavia, the immigrants continued to come in droves. The fact that Mormon settlements in California, Nevada, and Idaho were abandoned during what became called the Utah War put pressure on existing communities, as many families were relocated. Cache County essentially grew because settlers wanted to go there; people did not have to be called and sent. Although Peter Maughan advised the colonists to stay in the south end of the valley, groups of land-hungry settlers continued to spread north along the numerous streams cascading from the eastern mountains.

Window from Providence LDS stone church erected 1870 at a cost of \$12,800.
(Special Collections Merrill Library, USU)

Mendon, Providence, and Logan were established in the spring of 1859; Smithfield and Richmond were established by autumn. The [p.36] crops that fall were not plentiful and, to make matters worse, the pioneers only received fifty cents a bushel for their wheat. According to the *Deseret News*, sugar cost seventy-five cents a pound, nails were the same, and a shovel cost five dollars. Calico sold for fifty cents a yard and coffee was nearly a dollar a pound. This price probably contributed to the church's reemphasis of its health code—the Word of Wisdom—counseling against drinking alcohol, coffee, or tea, and the willingness of many Latter-day Saints to obey it.

One of the best accounts of settlement in Cache Valley is Isaac Sorensen's detailed remembrance of the early days in Mendon. Sorensen described in a clear and graphic style how difficult it was to break up the previously untilled land, and he also outlined another significant feature of colonist survival, cooperation. Sorensen's description is a good example of the realities of pioneering.

[We] all set to work making beams for . . . ploughs, . . . Wooden Harrows with Wooden teeth and some of them whose teams were to [sic] poor to break land with two yokes put on four yokes of Oxen ploughing one day for one man and the next for the other, then each using their own teams for sowing the land.⁸

Although the Mendon settlers repeatedly retreated to Wellsville when Native Americans moved along the western foothills, Mendon, in the evening shadow of the Wellsville Mountains, became and remained their home.

Late in November 1859 Brigham Young sent two apostles, Orson Hyde and Ezra T. Benson, to observe and then organize the new communities. The two apostles not only performed ecclesiastical duties but assumed a rather interesting and, in a way, presumptuous role. After choosing Peter Maughan as local LDS stake president, bishops were appointed for six towns: William Maughan in Wellsville; William Preston, Logan; Robert Williams, Providence; James Glover Smith, Smithfield; Andrew Shumway, Mendon; and Thomas Tidwell in Richmond. Then Benson and Hyde visited each settlement and, using their ecclesiastical positions, renamed most of the new villages:

*We labored faithfully in every settlement. The place herefore known as Maughan's Fort we named Wellsville. Spring Creek settlement, being situated in an elbow of the mountain and [p.37] appearing to us somewhat of a providential place, we named Providence. The next settlement northward had been previously named Logan. The settlement on Summit creek, six miles north of Logan we named Smithfield, and told the people there to be spiritually what their location really was—a city on a hill. . . . Five miles northward from Smithfield is a settlement on Cub creek, which we named Richmond. The settlement five miles north of Wellsville . . . heretofore known as the north settlement we named Mendon.*⁹

Benson and Hyde returned to Salt Lake City and reported, "For beauty of landscape and richness of soil, Cache Valley can hardly be equaled." Then they gave the usual warning about harsh winters. The next year Benson returned to the valley as an apostle-in-residence with broad ecclesiastical powers.

Settlers on the eastern side of the valley had two advantages: abundant water and a timber supply nearby. Although Logan Canyon proved very difficult to enter, Green, Providence, Millville, and Smithfield canyons all provided relatively easy access to the available spruce, fir, pine, and aspen used for homes and public buildings. The numerous streams were diverted onto the rich farmland below the rocky benches. Spring Creek (or Providence), Logan, Smithfield, and Richmond all followed a similar settlement pattern as Wellsville and Mendon. Each community started out as a street fort like Wellsville, with rows of houses facing each other and extending along the street for as many as three blocks in the case of Logan, Richmond, and Hyrum. Only the village of Providence set out to build a fort in the classic manner. The early Providence pioneers constructed a stone wall all the way around the square block encompassing present-day Center, Main, First North, and First East streets. However, that fort caused county surveyor James Martineau some difficulty. Martineau decided that since the permanent fort wall could not be moved, fewer normal-sized lots existed inside; therefore, he surveyed six city lots instead of the normal eight on every Providence block, which meant the lots were 1.35 acres, the largest in the county.

[p.38]

Homes were built along a main street (in the case of Logan it was called West Center Street), facing each other, with gardens and corrals in the rear of the lot. The city blocks were eventually surveyed and divided in the typical Mormon settlement pattern. Square blocks, eight lots to the block, and wide streets typified the original communities. The block system with houses facing each other also provided an easily defended position in the event of attack. Martineau created ten lots to the block at Smithfield because there were more settlers in the Smithfield fort than there were townsite lots.

Charles Nibley arrived in the valley as a child during the fall of 1860. Nibley's description of his family's original dugout offers a clear view of living conditions in the early years:

We dug out a square hole in the ground three feet deep and then built logs around that hole three logs high. We built up to the gables with logs then put a center roof log and one on each side of that, halfway down the wall. On top of these logs we laid small

quaking aspen poles not larger than my wrist. On top of these we put straw and then covered that with a thick coat of dirt.

Once Nibley described the exterior, he turned his attention to the internal structure:

My father built a cobble stone chimney in the opposite end from the entrance on door. The chimney was simply built of cobble [p.39] stones and mud for plaster, as we had no lime or any other kind of plaster that would hold.

Then, in one of those delightful frontier statements, Nibley stated, "The chimney never knew enough to draw the smoke up but spewed it out and filled the room." He continued,

There was not window of any kind whatever in our house. Neither was there a door. My mother hung up a quilt or piece of an old quilt which served as a door for the first winter. This was our bedroom, our parlor, our sitting room, our kitchen, everything in the room of about 12 x 16.¹⁰

This description contrasts dramatically with the stately and elegant home on West Center Street that Charles Nibley built thirty years later. Much had transpired during the intervening three decades; but the promise was there early. By the end of 1859 Brigham Young stated that "no other valley in the territory is equal to this. This has been my opinion ever since I first saw this valley."

At the time Benson and Hyde established ecclesiastical organizations and named the towns, General Chauncey W. West of Ogden, commander of the Weber Military District, organized the militia in Cache Valley. A local militia is a long-held American and Mormon tradition, and safety from Indian attack was a top priority. The Deseret News reported that two battalions were organized, one in Wellsville and a second in Logan:

The next morning [14 November 1859] at 9 o'clock, according to previous notice, the Militia in that part of the County paraded on the public square in Wellsville, and were briefly addressed by Gen. West. . . . The election of commissioned officers took place, and the Battalion was dismissed into the hands of William Maughan.¹¹

After West left, Maughan and Israel J. Clark of Logan decided that infantry was not what they needed for quick response to Indian attacks. Maughan also served as bishop and he and his colleagues knew their situation much better than did an outsider. They informally organized a mounted response unit called the Minute Men under Thomas E. Ricks of Logan. As the valley grew, so did the militia, and by the summer of 1860 enough units existed to form a Cache [p.40] Valley regiment with Mormon apostle Ezra T. Benson as colonel; Ricks still commanded the Minute Men. In 1860 each major community had a battalion and officers from their own town.

In the year that Abraham Lincoln won the American presidency and the American nation faced Civil War, 1860, Cache Valley became the promised land for hundreds who knew little about Lincoln or southern leader Jefferson Davis. However, some converts came from the South and brought African-American slaves with them into Wellsville. Although they were freed within a few years, still, thirty years after free black trappers

James Beckwourth and Moses Harris roamed the valley, other blacks entered the valley in bondage. Although the Civil War resulted in the freeing of all slaves, slavery did exist for a brief period in Utah Territory, including Cache County. The slaves worked primarily as farm laborers, but most moved to Salt Lake City after gaining freedom.

Logan and Wellsville both claimed more than 100 families according to the 1860 census, and the county population stood at 2,605. Of the residents counted, 200 were born in the British Isles and 120 came from Scandinavia, mostly Denmark. Since more than 800 people in Cache County listed Utah as their birthplace and the Mormons had only been in the territory since 1847, the population of Cache County demonstrated a healthy youthfulness. Most people considered themselves farmers, and men barely outnumbered women—1,312 to 1,293. These statistics illustrate that Cache Valley experienced significant growth between its founding in 1856 and the census of 1860.¹² An anonymous correspondent with an eye toward the future wrote the *Deseret News* in April 1860 and described the advantages of Cache County: "The first . . . is the abundance of snow which ensures good skiing from four to six months each year. There is plenty of water . . . , timber in the mountains, an abundance of grass for hay, . . . and building stone abounds in all or most of the Canyons."¹³

Mormon pioneers, or any other settlers, no matter how numerous, had to be somewhat aware of the Native Americans whom they displaced. By plowing land, diverting water, building houses, bridges, and roads, as well as killing game, the newcomers altered Native American traditions, habits, and lifestyles. Denied their traditional [p.41] methods of life support, the Indians became acutely aware of the impact of the emigrants' intrusion. The land's original inhabitants were confronted with options that included fight, steal, beg, or leave. The Shoshonis complained to a U.S. government surveying crew that "they had nothing but fish to eat; that the Mormons had driven away all the deer and elk which they said formerly abound in these valleys."¹⁴ Long before reservations were established, many Native Americans developed an unfortunate dependancy on the numerous white intruders.

Peter Maughan followed the example preached by Brigham Young. The Mormon leader believed the natives to be children of God and descendants of people mentioned in the Book of Mormon, considered sacred scripture by Mormons. Although nineteenth-century Mormons also believed that the native inhabitants stood in the way of westward expansion and their own ownership of the land, Young encouraged his followers to try to convert the Indians. Brigham Young also developed an official policy of coexistence which taught that feeding was preferable to fighting, and Peter Maughan adopted Young's counsel. However, both groups did not succeed in avoiding all conflicts and disputes, and there also were many Mormons who ignored Young's counsel completely. Yet, a limited trust developed among leaders, even though it was not always adhered to by followers. James G. Willie of Mendon summed up the reality in March of 1860 when he wrote:

*The people of the valley have been greatly annoyed with the Indians during the winter, and they have had to feed about two hundred of them most of the time since last fall, which has been a heavy tax, but it had to be borne, as there was no alternative but to feed them or do worse.*¹⁵

Feeding alone could not and did not keep a total and complete peace. That was simply asking too much of the Native Americans, who saw their culture, environment, and very existence under siege.

In spite of the efforts of Young and Maughan, conflicts between settlers and natives proved inevitable. From the beginning each settlement prepared for possible attack by utilizing community militia as well as constructing fortifications within the towns. The militia [p.42] drilled frequently and took turns being on guard during times of unrest or perceived difficulty. Community herds were guarded against potential theft. By late 1860 a valleywide militia existed, with Ezra T. Benson as colonel and Thomas E. Ricks as major. Even with an organized militia, problems remained and conflicts arose.

Although numerous suspected cases of horse and cattle thievery existed, the first recorded tragic clash came at Smithfield during the summer of 1860 and the entire valley rapidly became engulfed in conflict. On 23 July 1860 a group of Smithfield men went to the foothills above the town where a small band of Shoshoni Indians were camped. The men, Thomas Winn, George Barber, and Sylvanus Collett, arrested the Shoshoni leader, Pagunap, and accused him of stealing a pony from the Richmond area. Pagunap, taken into town, protested and then later tried to escape, but he was shot and killed. The Indians returned fire and Samuel Cousins fell, wounded. While escaping, the Shoshoni came across three men camped on Summit Creek. They killed John Reed of Franklin and wounded James Cowan. Continuing up the canyon, they came across Ira and Solyman Merrill, and Ira Merrill was killed in an exchange of gunfire.

Panic swept through the valley and the settlers responded by tightening security around their communities and sending reinforcements to Smithfield. When Shoshoni chief Bear Hunter came back to Smithfield and threatened an attack, he found over a hundred armed men waiting. Henry Ballard, the bishop of Logan Second Ward, recorded in his journal that "they soon found we was to many for them they said they was not mad they wanted to be friendly Bro Maughan and them had A long talk and they Agreed to go And hunt up them Indians that Done the murder."16 Another diarist, eighteen-year-old Thomas Irvine, also recorded the confrontation between Bear Hunter's people and the militia:

The next day the Indians came down to Logan, and it looked like there would be trouble. Every man or boy that could handle a gun was called out. There was a party held in the old log house, and about 20 of us was lined up with our old Yeagers, Carbines, and Muskets, as a guard. It had a good affect on the Indians, and they [p.43] came to terms. We were all pretty badly scared and glad when it was over.17

Ezra Benson gave Bear Hunter 1,300 pounds of flour along with other items and the crisis temporarily passed. Later that week, however, Daddy Stump, the old mountain man, was murdered near his cabin in Paradise. Anticipating potential difficulties and the spread of hostilities, Brigham Young warned the settlers of Richmond that their farms and cabins needed to be closer to each other:

What would you do, provided the Indians became angry and suddenly attacked you? . . . I will give you my counsel; build good stockades. Move your families and wagons close

*together, then, if you are disturbed, you are like a hive of bees, and everyone is ready and knows at once what to do.*¹⁸

The threat of Indian attacks was the primary reason that settlers frequently moved temporarily into the forts.

Fearing a concerted attack, Benson alerted the militia and they prepared to defend the settlements. The Native Americans withdrew to the north; but the next year about 1,500 of them returned to Cache Valley. Since the Shoshoni appeared hungry but not hostile, Maughan, Benson, and I. J. Clark, an interpreter, went and held council at their camp. Clark, a veteran of the Mormon Lemhi Mission to Central Idaho, was fluent in the Shoshoni language. As late as 1870 Clark received government payment as the Cache County interpreter; he received nearly the same amount as the probate judge, slightly over \$300. The men were able to avoid full-scale conflict between the groups that year.

For the next few years potential trouble loomed and tension gripped the pioneers. Every summer the settlers prepared for additional difficulties. There may have been as many as five different groups of Shoshoni Indians in the valley; but, by 1863, Bear Hunter and Sagwitch were the primary leaders. They were in a struggle for survival, and they were losing as more and more settlers cultivated land; the Indians' traditional use of Cache Valley rapidly disappeared. They fought back as they were able. Margaret McNeil Ballard described how pioneer men would take their guns with them into the fields and, while one person guarded livestock, others would farm.

*[p.44] We had a great deal of trouble with the Indians. They were very hostile, and the people had to seek shelter in a cellar, I have seen the Indians ride their horses into the houses, and tramp the gardens all to pieces. This was the worst time we had with them. They did an enormous amount of damage in the fields.*¹⁹

During the winter there was usually little difficulty; but when the nomadic followers of Sagwitch, Bear Hunter, and others began their customary treks for game and sustenance, trouble began. In 1861, a group of an estimated 1,000 Shoshoni moved into the valley and camped west of Logan on the church's farmland. The entire militia was put on alert for nearly ten days. A band of accused horse thieves was chased by the local militia. Henry Ballard recorded their fate in a 21 July 1861 entry in his journal: "Bro. Benson Spoke very warm About the Horse thieves As the Minute Company had chased four of them and took one of them at Box Elder. And he broke loose from them and they shot him and stopped his thieving and the Ogden Boys took some more of them."²⁰ George Barber also recorded the event and gave a grimmer description of the Indians' fate. "Heard of the capture of all the horse thieves except one that our boys had routed and chased so hard and of their receiving their just reward in the shape of a blue pill or two each rightly administered."²¹

During these conflicts neither Ballard nor Barber demonstrated much desire to follow the counsel of Brigham Young or Peter Maughan. These were armed frontiersmen who obviously felt justice for Shoshonis did not include a hearing or a trial. Later full regiments of the Salt Lake-based Nauvoo Legion were established in Cache County as a powerful demonstration to the Indians of the whites' force. They seemed a bit more organized and pompous; but they were a source of security for the residents.

There are some reports of white children kidnapped and animals stolen, but the greatest conflict in Cache County history came in January 1863. During the Civil War, the United States Army ordered Colonel Patrick Edward Connor and the Third California Volunteers to Salt Lake City. The federal government, with some cause, doubted Mormon loyalty to the Union and wanted Connor to closely watch the Mormons as well as guard the overland route connecting [p.45] California and the east. Simultaneously, gold and silver discoveries in Montana and Idaho had led to a very lucrative freighting route through Cache Valley. Native Americans took advantage of the freight trains and attacked many as a way to obtain supplies. Fearing that northbound encroachment would further threaten their existence, the Bannock and Shoshoni Indians became quite aggressive in their efforts.

In order to protect the wagon freight trains, Connor decided to attack the Indians and secure peaceful passage for the freighters. With nearly 400 men, he marched into Cache Valley during January 1863. Obtaining information about the Indians from settlers, Connor made his way north to Franklin, the northernmost settlement. Although the temperature was well below zero, Connor moved his troops ten miles to the northwest during the night. Many soldiers suffered from frostbite; but, when the cold January dawn came, Connor's forces launched an assault on the unsuspecting Indian encampment. With cannon and small-arms fire, the troops wreaked devastation on the Native Americans in what came to be called by some the Battle of Bear River and by others the Bear River Massacre. Accounts vary, but in probability more than 300 Indians, mostly children and women, were killed in the massacre, which hardly reached the status of a battle. Connor and his troops had crossed the 42nd parallel and consequently fought in present-day Idaho. The location did not matter to them, because as federal troops they chose to simply remove the obstacle to northern trade.²²

After Connor's virtually complete victory, the shattered surviving Shoshoni retreated to the north and the pioneers believed that the entire valley was now theirs to secure. The next year, however, trouble once again occurred in Franklin. Settlers had sold a considerable amount of alcohol to the Indians and, in an ensuing confrontation, a Native American was shot off his horse as he rode wildly through town. After taking Robert Hull hostage, the Indians' leader, Washakie, negotiated with Peter Maughan. Maughan gave the Native Americans two yoke of oxen and secured Hull's release. This incident illustrates the fact that Maughan had to be available as a church and civic leader at all times, as he bore responsibility for the entire valley's welfare.

[p.46] After the Battle of Bear River and the hostage incident at Franklin, the Indian threat diminished considerably. However, the pattern of settlement established in part because of the threat of attack continued and only disappeared slowly. The pioneers lived in communities where there were adequate fortifications, a church in which to worship, and plenty of friends. Their homesites usually included a garden and areas for milk cows, chickens, and other farm animals. Irrigation water was brought into the villages through small canals. This brought a sense of unity and community to pioneer settlements. The town and church ward became almost synonymous. Cooperation was fostered by the community structure, and settlers shared the tasks of building small log schoolhouses, chapels, and bowerys. Larger farm plots outside the village site supplied grain, hay, and cash crops; but most people still lived in town. Church leaders often appropriated land, and even after the passage of the Homestead Act in 1862 most Mormon settlers still lived

in towns. Although they were required to show on-site improvements to their homesteads, a small cabin and shed usually sufficed.

Isaac Sorensen's History of Mendon provides a classic account of what life was like in the communities as the Indian threat disappeared:

*In 1864, after five years of life in a fort where a splendid lesson had been taught and learned, it being really necessary to love the neighbors, their doors being only half speaking distance apart, which . . . was quite convenient in one respect, as people had to borrow. . . . This spring it was considered safe to break up the long string of log fortifications and move them into their new lots.*²³

Sorensen added that the close proximity and the living conditions in the forts, dugouts, and early homes had a great positive impact on the inhabitants of the communities:

*The people danced together, prayed together, sang together, and worked together . . . and come together in meetings . . . with a new country to be subdued, their own clothing to manufacture, . . . and many other inconveniences and hard obstacles to contend against, they were in no wise discouraged but on the contrary encouraged although only 15 or 20 acres for their farms they felt well, it was [p.47] their own and they worked and looked forward in the future for many good things in their beautiful Valley, and they were not disappointed.*²⁴

Not everyone agreed with Sorensen's assessment of the virtues of compact community living. Richmond's Angus Taylor Wright had a different view when his family was allowed to move from the fort to a town lot:

*We received an acre lot down near town. It was a welcome change and relieved the crowded condition of the families huddled together at the "fort" where neighbors were living too close together to maintain peaceful and decent relationships. The move was therefore very desirable and resulted in promoting a better influence.*²⁵

Having space was nice for some people, but they still had to constantly deal with the environment, animals, and potential Indian difficulties. Grizzly bears often presented a problem because they endangered and frequently killed cattle, sheep, and other domestic livestock. Other predators like wolves, coyotes, and foxes also drew the wrath of the pioneers.

[p.48]

At one point, Providence's citizens got embroiled in a nasty week-long saga with a grizzly bear on the Blacksmith Fork River west of Providence. The settlers often combined forces for bear hunts, trapping expeditions, and general animal predator control. John Hill of Wellsville was killed accidentally during one of these nighttime hunts. Three days later a bear walked away with one of Ira Rice's large traps attached to its leg. Rice, William Dees, and others tracked the bear to its lair northwest of Providence. Rice took a shot at the grizzly at close range and, although wounded, the bear turned, cuffed Dees, and mauled him. Although lacerated and bleeding badly, Dees survived and he and his friends retreated to Providence. According to a letter from

Charles Wright to the Deseret News, the men reassembled the next morning with reinforcements and pursued the bear. There were as many as fifteen men and boys, some armed, some not, but all wanting a shot at the grizzly. Wright wrote:

*Not having learned the science of bear hunting, the amateur Nimrods soon found it necessary to act on the defensive, after arriving on the field, and some of them, to insure safety, took position in the tops of the tallest timber they could find.*²⁶

[p.49] Two men ran and were closely pursued by the bear, so they decided to split up, turn, and shoot at the bear. Alpheus Harmon's gun misfired and the bear turned on him; according to Wright, Harmon got "shockingly mauled." The others came to Harmon's rescue and once again a gun misfired at close range, so they started to beat the enraged animal with their guns. Henry Gates ran up and shot one barrel of his shotgun into the bear's mouth, which knocked out some teeth. Before Gates could reload, the bear attacked him and tore at his face, arms, and legs, inflicting frightful wounds. Three point-blank shots from a revolver did not deter the bear, so William Dees, the man mauled the previous day, jumped on the bear, put his gun's muzzle to the head, and finally killed the grizzly. Gates died a few days later, but Harmon survived.

In a partial response to the bear incidents, a hunt was organized in which the valley was divided into teams, north and south. Thomas Rick's northern team went to Preston and hunted southward, while Moses Thatcher's southern team moved north from Paradise. All bears, coyotes, wolves, and foxes were considered fair game with a bounty price established by the county for each pelt. Consequently, much of the predator wildlife was exterminated very early in the history of area settlement.

Less than a decade after first entering the valley, the pioneers felt they were home and that their future was tied to the beautiful valley that surrounded them. Still predominantly of one religion, the Mormon settlers looked to Salt Lake City and Brigham Young for guidance. Since a county government also existed, James H. Martineau, the county surveyor, and Jesse W. Fox, his territorial counterpart, completed surveys of the area's town plots by late 1864. Following the survey's completion, Brigham Young advised settlers to move west of the Bear River, and the communities of Clarkston and Newton resulted from that effort. The problem of western drainage and less available water deterred the growth of these communities, however. Later, in the 1870s, homesteaders filed on the grazing lands that became Trenton, Cornish, Lewiston, and Amalga. Dry farming and grazing became the early types of agricultural operation. There were many economic risks involved in dry farming, and bringing the sagebrush under control proved very difficult. However, [p.50] when Brigham Young toured the valley settlements in 1870, he saw a flourishing and rich agricultural valley that had doubled in population since the last census.

The primary question faced by these dedicated and adventurous pioneers was how to survive economically. Feeling somewhat blessed and guided, they still looked to a future filled with uncertainties. Religiously and economically, the settlers were part of the Intermountain West Mormon settlement system of Brigham Young. Many Cache Valley residents or their children subsequently moved or were sent to Bear Lake Valley; Idaho's Upper Snake River Valley; Star Valley, Wyoming; and Wyoming's Big Horn Basin. Some later moved to Alberta, Canada. Many individuals found themselves starting over time and time again. On the other hand, Cache County was considered the home base for

family, religion, education, and the economy. It was the home that people returned to from outlying areas. Life was difficult, but the residents soon found themselves part of a vital, changing America in the throes of an economic industrial revolution.

Endnotes

1Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah, Fillmore, Utah, 18 December 1855, Territorial Papers of Utah, Special Collections, Merrill Library, Utah State University, (hereafter USUSC).

2Doran J. Baker, "Investiture of Cache Valley to Herders and Settlers," unpublished article, 3–5, USUSC. See also M.R. Hovey, *An Early History of Cache County* (Logan: Chamber of Commerce, 1936).

3Baker, "Investiture of Cache Valley," 5.

4Journal of Mary Ann Weston Maughan, comp. Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1959), 383–84.

5Ibid., 242.

6See A.J. Simmonds, "Looking Back," *Herald Journal*, 30 June and 7 July 1991, and 8 October and 15 October 1993. See also Baker, "Investiture of Cache Valley," 8–9.

7Brigham Young to Peter Maughan, Brigham Young Cache Valley Letters, USUSC; see also Baker, "Investiture of Cache Valley."

8Issac Sorensen, *History of Mendon*, ed. Doran J. Baker, Charles S. Peterson, and Gene A. Ware (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1988), 330. Many of Cache County's communities have histories written by [p.51] individuals or committees. Utah State University's Special Collections includes histories of Wellsville, Hyrum, Providence, River Heights, Logan, Smithfield, Richmond, and Trenton.

9Deseret News, 3 December 1859.

10Charles Nibley, *Reminiscences* (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1934), 31–32.

11Deseret News, 3 December 1859.

12U.S. Census, 1860, U.S. Government Documents, USUSC.

13Deseret News, 4 April 1860.

14Stansbury, *Exploration and Survey of the Valley of the Great Salt Lake*, 74.

15James G. Willie, *Journal*, USUSC.

16Henry Ballard, *Diary*, USUSC.

17Thomas Irvine, *Journal*, USUSC.

18Brigham Young to Peter Maughan, Peter W. Maughan Papers, USUSC.

19Margaret McNeil Ballard, *Diary*, USUSC. Her biographical sketch is in the Joel E. Ricks Collection at the Cache Valley Historical Society.

20Henry Ballard, *Diary*, USUSC.

21George Barber, *Journal*, USUSC.

22See Brigham D. Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre*, and Newell Hart, *The Bear River Massacre* (Preston, ID: Cache Valley Newsletter Publishing Co., 1983).

23Isaac Sorensen, *History of Mendon* (Logan: Cache County Historical Commission and Utah State Historical Society, 1988).

24Ibid.

25Simmonds, "Looking Back," *Herald Journal*, 15 April 1986.

26Deseret News, 17 March 1877.