

A History of Cache Valley:

as printed in Logan Journal
beginning August 4th, 1923

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S. M I T H F I E L D .

Fall of 1859.

Summit Creek, where Smithfield is now situated, was rightly named because of it's slight elevation over other sections and creeks of the valley. For a number of reasons it was a place which at once attracted the Indians, the trappers and, finally, colonizers. It commanded a striking view of the valley and served in a number of ways as a good vantage ground. The creek, with its beautiful groves of cottonwood trees on both sides, was well filled with fine mountain trout, while the groves of cottonwood were thick with wild chickens and other game. With such good fishing and hunting and abundant fuel and good pasturage so near at hand, no wonder it became a summer camping ground for the Indians and later for the trappers.

The cottonwoods also served as a good protection against the cold storms and any attacks that might come, while at the same time the approach of an enemy from any direction could easily be seen. The Bear River basin so near by, with its rich grasses, furnished good pasturage for the horses and cattle. There is no question but that for many years before white men discovered Cache Valley, the Indians made Summit Creek one of their chief stopping places on their annual tours in and out of the valley.

As early as 1833, there is an account of where a company of soldiers of the Hudson Bay Fur Company camped during the winter of 1833 on Summit Creek. Mr. John C. Dowdle, who was one of the first to come to the valley during the Ranching Period in 1855, reports in his diary that he met a German in Los Angeles who camped on the Summit Creek during the winter of 1833 with the soldiers of the Hudson Bay Fur Company. According to Mr. Dowdle's report, the soldiers lost a good many of their mules during the winter and as a result had to cache much of their supplies.

During the summer of 1859, when the settlers at Logan had their gardens and small crops at Summit Creek, 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. These finds and other accounts all go to prove that Summit Creek was one of the chief camping places in the valley.

As Summit Creek had cut its channel very deep and its elevation was higher than in other places, naturally it was easy to take the water out for irrigation. The first settlers at Logan in the spring of 1859 were quick to see this advantage and therefore planted their garden and small crops at Summit and later decided to locate their settlement on the plateau where Logan is now situated. The land at Summit was very fertile and John F. Wright, one of the early pioneers of Logan and who was the first to hold the plow to plow a ditch from the Summit Creek, and is alive today, states that in his opinion his people made a mistake by not remaining at Summit, or Smithfield, where there were so many natural advantages.

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In the summer of 1859, Mr. Seth Langton was advised by Pres. Brigham Young of the L.D.S. Church, to settle in Cache Valley. Mr. Langton, in company with Mr. Robert Thornley, arrived in the valley about August 1859, to look over various locations and locate a land claim. The settlement of Wellsville, Providence, Logan and Mendon were farming, and a few had just located where Richmond is. Mr. Langton, being imbued with the real pioneer spirit and with a keen desire to be one of the pioneers of a settlement with a good sized farm therefor, decided to take a land claim on the Summit Creek. Mr. Langton was quick to see the natural advantages at Summit Creek and none of the settlers at Logan had built any houses there but merely had their gardens and small crops.

Mr. Langton and Mr. Thornley went to work at once to build a cabin for Mr. Langton. They got their logs from the cottonwood groves and built the first log house in Summit west of the present townsite on the south bank of the creek near the James Sheen farm, or a little southwest of the present condensed milk factory. They returned immediately to Salt Lake City to inform their families and friends and prepare for the move to Cache Valley. At the time, Mr. Thornley was unmarried, but he soon had this important ceremony performed; and the following also arrived at Summit Creek and were the founders of the settlement: Seth Langton and family; Robert Thornley and wife; John Thornley and wife; John G. Smith and wife; Dudley Merrill and wife; Virgil Merrill and family; Ezekiel Hopkins and wife; Thomas Mather; Marshall Hunt and wife; Ira Merrill and family; Robert Langton and Mrs. Wamsley, a widow with five sons and one daughter.

The settlers went to work immediately to build their log houses, cut wild hay and make preparations for the winter. As there was not sufficient time before the winter set in, a number lived in dugouts until the next spring when more log houses were built. In the spring of 1860, quite a large number of new settlers arrived. The little settlement centered pretty much around the home of Mr. Seth Langton, who as already stated built the first log house in the colony. At this time the first baby boy, Seth A. Langton, and a little later, Eliza Lemon, the first girl baby, were born in the settlement.

In March 1860, the town was laid out and surveyed by Jesse W. Fox, surveyor. Each block contained four lots each, and each lot was one acre of land. The townsite had the appearance of a prairie with shrubbery and cottonwood trees on both sides of the creek. To the southwest and northwest were the natural meadows and marshes where the settlers cut the wild hay for their stock.

As previously mentioned, Summit Creek was one of the chief camping places of the Indians on their annual tours in and out of the valley and, naturally they continued to make stops here although the settlement had been established. The settlers therefore had to exercise the greatest vigilance and tact, and even then they had considerable

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trouble with the Indians, which will all be described later in a general account of Indian Troubles of the Valley.

A terrible fight occurred with the Indians on July 23rd, 1860, and this forced the settlers to build a fort at once for protection. They occupied this fort for four years. After this engagement, the men went in companies to the canyons to get the logs to build their houses, and in the fields to plant and harvest their crops. For two or three years, it was unsafe for a person to be alone outside the fort.

The fort was similar to that of Richmond and other places in the valley. It extended east and west with the south line, about where the present homes of Samuel Roskelley and Freeborn Merrill are. The north line was where the present office of the Smithfield Sentinel is, the east line just east of the present Tabernacle building, and the west line in line with the home of Joseph Forester. Summit Creek flowed through the fort and was of great convenience to the settlers.

Following are the names of those who occupied places in the fort and considered the early settlers of Smithfield:

South side: Nels Nielson, James Downs, John Story, Henry Watts, Marshall Hunt, Lars Toolson, Andrew Toolson, Virgil Merrill, Dudley Merrill, Willis Lemons, Charles Williams, Daniel Collett, Sill Collett, Thomas Winn, Thomas Richardson, Peter Richardson, George Thompson, Mrs. Wamsley and sons, James Dimmock, George Summers, William Chambers, John Thornley, Robert Thornley, Seth Langton, Ezekiel Hopkins, Joseph Horton, Mr. Bowen, Austin Merrill, Jed Merrill, Samuel Merrill and John G. Smith.

North side: Lilly Cousins, Peter Bowen, John Earl, Mr. Brunsen, George Barber, William Smith, George Sant, Robert Nelson, Samuel Taylor, Robert Fishburn, Mickel Saunders, George Done, Widow White, Nathan Smith, Doctor Williams, P. T. Morehead, Harrison Thomas, E. R. Miles, William Ainscough, Robert Gibson, Lydia Hunt, F. Gibson, Robert Meikle, William Douglas, Oscar Rice, Jonathan Bowen, David Hess, John Boyce, Andrew Anderson, Robert Bain, William Garnet, David Bennett, Goodwin and Thomas Smith.

East side:
John Oley, Wahlen family, Martin Harris Jr., Dennison Harris, Benjamin Atkins, James Mack, Charles Gray, Father McCracken, Thomas Kellyhan.

West side: Andrew Hendrickson, Thomas Pilgrim, David Weeks, Benjamin Lloyd and Joseph Watts.

The ecclesiastical ward was organized in 1860 by Apostles E. T. Benson and Orson Hyde. Mr. John G. Smith was chosen as the first bishop but was soon succeeded by Samuel Roskelley, who acted in this position for a number of years and did much for the building up of the community. The name "Smithfield" was adopted as the name for the settlement in honor of Mr. John G. Smith, the first bishop. Before the meeting house was built, all the public meetings were held in the home of Mr. Austin Merrill.

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The first combination meeting and school house was built near the present school building, not far from Mr. John Thornley's gate. The building was commenced in 1861 and completed in 1862 and consisted of logs. Mr. James Cantwell Jr. was appointed as the first school teacher but he was soon followed by a Doctor Patten. Later, Mr. Charles Wright became the teacher and held the position for a number of years, to the entire satisfaction of the people.

Mr. Robert Fishburn took a very active part to help provide wholesome entertainment for the settlers. As early as June 1860, he organized the first choir with the following as some of its principal members: Samuel Taylor, Charles Fox, Alfred Chambers, William Ainscough, George Sant, George Done, Nathan Smith, Aquilla Noble, Priscilla Fishburn, Lavina Noble, Henrietta Noble and Alice Done. Mr. Fishburn also organized a dramatic company and presented some good plays, among which were "Rent Day", "Ben Bolt" and "Rough Diamond". Some of the performers were Robert Fishburn, Samuel Taylor, James Mack, Joseph Hill, Alfred Chambers, Thomas Smith, William Hill, James Cantwell, Aquilla Noble, James Louder, James Weikle, George Merrill, William Scrowthers, John Mack, Joseph Mack, Priscilla Fishburn, Lavina Akins, Nora Merrill, Mrs. Garnet, Mrs. Corbett, Zilphia Raymond, Annie Scrowthers and Ellen Langton. The orchestra consisted of Calvin Cragun, Preston T. Morehead, Thomas Lutz and Charles Wright. Mr. Fishburn organized the first Sunday School in 1863.

In many ways life in the fort was pleasant as the people lived closer together and there was a fine spirit of cooperation. Many evenings camp fires were built in different parts of the court and the settlers would gather around for entertainment where comic songs and speeches were given and numerous thrilling experiences related. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Fishburn, Mr. and Mrs. George Done and Nathan Smith were good entertainers.

For a brief period the settlers were fortunate in having the services of Dr. Ezra G. Williams. He helped much among the sick and especially in cases of accidents. After he moved away, Mr. John Bain and John Story rendered valuable assistance with simple remedies for sickness and where there were accidents. Mrs. Gray, Mrs. Scrowthers and Mary Ann Downs were a great blessing to the women and children when they were sick and suffering.

During the years when the Indians were troublesome, a constant guard was necessary and some means had to be provided so the men of the settlement could be called together for action on short notice. Mr. George Sant was appointed bugler and when there was danger or some important announcement had to be given, he would give the alarm by blowing his bugle and the settlers would gather almost instantly at the meeting house. One occasion the alarm was given and the men rushed to the meeting house. To their surprise and chagrin they learned it was April Fool Day and no cause for the alarm. The one who authorized the call was given a good ducking in Summit Creek.

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In 1864 the fort was dismantled and the settlers moved onto the city lots. The city was laid off again in blocks of ten lots each, with an acre of land to each lot, making ten acres to the block. One center block was reserved for public buildings to be erected later. The lands were divided and allotted to the settlers. The townsite was one mile square. Beyond this, to the southwest, was a tier of two and one-half acre lots, beyond these a tier of ten-acre plots, and beyond these a tier of 20-acre plots. Each settler received an allotment in each tier of plots of land.

Smithfield received it's charter February 6, 1868, and May 30th of the same year an election was held. The following were elected as the officers: George Barber, Mayor; Andrew A. Anderson, Preston T. Morehead, Alonzo P. Raymond, Edmund Homer and Robert Pope, Councilmen; Andrew McCombs and Jeremiah Hatch, Justices of the Peace. In June the next month, the following officers were appointed: Evan Greene, Recorder; Sylvester Low, Treasurer; Francis Sharp, Assessor and Collector; Thomas G. Winn, Marshall; Harrison A. Thomas, Street Supervisor; John Altham, Surveyor; Charles Jones, Sexton, and Jeremiah Hatch, Sealer of Weights and Measures.

Smithfield cooperated with the other towns of the valley in equipping and sending men and ox teams back to the Missouri River and other eastern points to help bring poor emigrants to Utah. Following are the names of those who made these journeys: Samuel Adam Merrill, Richard Bradshaw, Nathan Smith and Lacy Larmi, called in 1861; James Meikle, George G. Merrill, Heber Wamsley, Willis Lemon, Nathan Smith, Sidney Weeks and Peter Richardson called in 1863.

At an early date in the settlement investigations were made along Summit Creek to find water power sites to start new industries. A saw mill was built in 1860 by Ezra G. Williams and Mr. Brunson several miles up the main canyon. Later, Mr. Brunson sold his interests to Alonzo P. Raymond. Mr. Raymond was a pioneer grist mill builder, associated with Thomas Hillyard of Smithfield and Thomas Tarbet of Logan. They built the first flour mill in 1865 in the settlement on the present site of the Smithfield Roller Mills. These industries made it possible for the settlers to get their lumber and flour and were a great convenience. Mr. John Arens was the first miller.

James Meikle and his brother, Robert Meikle, built a tannery in 1860 near the reservoir site now owned by the Sege Milk Products Co. The next year Joseph Horton started a molasses mill and made two hundred gallons of molasses that fall. Here were four industries established within two years after the beginning of the settlement and this is only one, among other evidences, of the progressive spirit of the settlers and their determination to build up home industries and be self-supporting.

Bishop John G. Smith and James Hill owned and operated one of the first threshing machines. It was a horse-power affair known as a "Chaff Piler". It merely beat out the grain from the sheaves while the

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separation took place by men with rakes who followed and raked the straw away carefully and then piled the grain and chaff for the fanning mill crew which followed later and separated the grain from the chaff.

As more settlers arrived, it became necessary to secure additional irrigation water as there was not sufficient in Summit Creek. In 1865 the men at Smithfield co-operated with the people of Richmond and Logan and started the construction of the Logan-Richmond Canal from Logan River. As previously stated, in the early histories of Logan and Richmond, this was a tremendous undertaking for these days because of the lack of ditch building equipment. When the canal was completed many more acres of rich land in Smithfield were brought under irrigation.

One of the first stores established was by a Jew near the bank of the creek east of the bridge on Main Street on what is now the residence property of James Mack. The Jew did not remain long in business and his stock of goods were purchased by Bishop Samuel Roskelly in 1866 and this formed the beginning of the co-operative store which later occupied the corner where the E. R. Miles store now stands. This was one of the first and most successful co-operative stores of the valley. In 1866, William Douglas and Thomas Richardson formed a partnership and opened a general merchandise store where the McCracken Furniture Store now stands.

Much of the information for the history of the early settlement of Smithfield was given by Mrs. Margaret Sant, one of the very few now living who has vivid recollections of events in those early settlement days. The accounts of the Indian troubles in Smithfield and the description of the domestic and social conditions to be given later in general write-ups, will be based to a great extent on the information furnished by Mrs. Sant. There are few people the age of Mrs. Sant who have such a remarkable memory and can give so many details of events in those early days.
