

When Men and Mountains Meet: Pioneer Life in Utah's Ogden Valley

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Located about a dozen miles east of Ogden, Utah, Ogden Valley is considered by many to be one of the most picturesque places in Utah. Fifteen miles long and some five or six miles broad at its widest point, the valley's open, level fields and numerous, wooded waterways present a striking contrast to the mountains and hills surrounding it. Home to three ski resorts—one of which will host the downhill skiing events in the 2002 Olympics—and scenic Pineview Reservoir, Ogden Valley in recent years has become a vacationer's paradise, and real-estate developers are hard at work today transforming yesterday's alfalfa and grain fields into subdivisions and "ranchettes" for the increasingly few people who can afford to live there permanently.

With the speedboats, the Olympic venue, and the influx of escapees from California's urban sprawl, it is easy to forget the valley's remarkable history and the people who first braved its winters as permanent, year-round residents. These were neither Indians nor mountain men—both of whom retreated to more favorable climes during the winter months—but members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, whose pioneering efforts and accomplishments in the Intermountain West have received the attention of many scholars in recent years.¹

In many respects, pioneer life in Ogden Valley closely resembled that of other communities in early Utah. Everyday life revolved around the agricultural cycle and the Church, and a sense of community and cooperation pervaded most activities. Unforeseen hardships visited most families at one point or another, but so did a number of delights and amusements, and historians have recently shown that pioneer life for most was far from the grind

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many today might imagine it to have been. In other respects, however, living conditions in the valley were not typical of other Utah communities. Of all the areas the Saints settled in the West, for example, Ogden Valley was one of the most inaccessible. This was not because it was any great distance from other settlements—the city of Ogden, remember, lay just a few miles to the west—but because it was surrounded by high mountains and rugged hills, whose canyons and passes were either so narrow or so steep, or both, as to be almost impassable by wagon. The valley was also a thousand feet higher in elevation than Salt Lake City or Ogden, making it far more prone to killing frosts and paralyzing snowstorms than most other early settlements.

This paper details the special challenges of topography and climate that faced Ogden Valley's early settlers and examines how these factors affected pioneer life and culture there. I will conclude with some preliminary observations on two other factors that affected pioneer life in the valley—Native Americans and various forms of wildlife. My intent is not so much to show the effect the Saints had on their physical and cultural environments but rather to show the effects the environment had on the Saints. The records of those who pioneered the area make it clear that these factors manifested themselves through a variety of experiences and determined, to a large extent, the manner in which Ogden Valley's early Mormons lived and thought. My premise is that only after we understand the impact the valley had on these Saints can one truly appreciate the impact these people had on the land and on the Church.

Historical Background of Ogden Valley

On 16 May 1825, Peter Skene Ogden and his brigade of Hudson Bay Company trappers ascended a small stream that flowed from the rough hills lying at the south end of Cache Valley, Utah, having spent several days harvesting beaver along various tributaries to the Bear River. Reaching the head of the stream (today's Little Bear River), the group pressed on to the summit and descended into the next valley, thrilled to find its streams teeming with beaver and devoid of competing trappers. Ogden dubbed the valley "New Hole" and trapped almost six hundred beaver in its three large rivers and innumerable streams, and he then pushed over the divide to the south and descended into the valley of the Weber River.²

Ogden's subsequent and well-known encounter with American trappers and the international incident it touched off have largely eclipsed the significance his journey held for the history of the valley he named "New Hole." His was the first recorded entry of white men into that valley, a fact subsequent geographers noted in their renaming it "Ogden's Hole" and, later, "Ogden Valley."³ Noted for its excellent rangeland, the valley was used in

subsequent years as a hunting ground and rendezvous point for various trappers.⁴ The number of white men visiting the area dropped off precipitously following the decline in fur prices and the virtual end of the fur trade, although relics of the industry were still dropping by as late as 1841.⁵

Following the Mormons' arrival in Utah, Ogden Valley caught the eye of Captain Howard Stansbury of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who passed through it in August 1849 on his way to survey the Great Salt Lake. Hoping to facilitate immigration to the West Coast by finding a more northerly route between Fort Bridger and the Great Salt Lake, Stansbury spent several difficult days with Jim Bridger traversing the mountains of northeastern Utah. Emerging from the mouth of South Fork Canyon just east of present-day Huntsville, the famous surveyor found the "most lovely, broad, open valley" with its "numerous bright little streams of pure running water" to be a "scene . . . cheering in the highest degree."⁶ Noting the fertility, forage, and potential for irrigation in "this . . . most interesting and delightful spot,"⁷ Stansbury opined that the area would "furnish an excellent place for a military post," and he then crossed over the divide on the valley's northwest side and dropped into what is now North Ogden.⁸

In the end, neither the mountain men nor the military tamed "Ogden's Hole." The Mormons, whose presence in the Great Basin left an indelible stamp on the region's many isolated little valleys, accomplished that feat. Members of the Church first entered Ogden Valley in 1848, having been sent from Farmington, Utah, by Brigham Young on an exploring expedition.⁹ In June 1854, Brigham sent another expedition into the area to do what Stansbury had failed to do four years earlier: find a functional, northern route to Fort Bridger. Led by Charles F. Middleton, this party entered the valley through the North Ogden pass (the same route Stansbury used to exit it) and left it by ascending the hills to the south, having had no more success in finding a viable trail to Fort Bridger than Stansbury had. Two years later, Middleton and his father, William, in company with two other men, brought a herd of cattle over North Ogden divide into the valley. The area was used as a summer range until the fall of 1860 when seven families, led by Jefferson Hunt, built a small fort on the South Fork River bottoms at the valley's south end and stayed the winter. A town site was surveyed the following year on the raised ground to the north of the river bottoms, after which the low-lying fort was abandoned.¹⁰ About 1866, the town of Eden was surveyed and settled,¹¹ followed by Liberty in 1892.¹²

Topography

The biggest effect that the valley's unique topography had on its early settlers was in travel into and out of the area. The hills on the valley's north-

ern and southern ends presented the least impediment to travel, but crossing them took the traveler to Cache and Morgan valleys, respectively. This was of little help, as most of the settlers' business lay to the west or southwest, on the other side of the rugged mountains forming the Wasatch Front, in the valley of the Great Salt Lake. Two routes west through these mountains were available: Ogden Canyon, which was so narrow at its western end to be "almost impassable," and North Ogden Pass, whose summit lay some thousand feet above the valley floor.¹³ Despite the steep climb and dizzying



*Ogden Canyon Road looking west, c. 1870.
Photo courtesy of Utah State Historical Society*

heights, the second of these had been the preferred route prior to the Mormons' arrival,¹⁴ and it is little wonder that Charles Middleton's exploring party of 1854 took this route as well.¹⁵

Although the preferred route, the pass was hardly an easy one. Middleton's party, for example, was forced to lower its baggage wagon by ropes down the steep slope,¹⁶ and it was years later, after the road had been rerouted up a dugway on the mountain side, that wagons could be used with any ease and regularity on this trail.¹⁷ In the mean-

time, in 1858, work began on a road up Ogden Canyon. Opened as a toll road in November 1860, the canyon road functioned as the principal port of entry ever after.¹⁸ More wagon friendly than the pass by far, the canyon road nevertheless was at the mercy of the annual spring runoff, whose high waters could destroy in a few minutes what it had taken men and teams months to build. When high waters did destroy portions of the road, as they did in 1862 and 1866,¹⁹ people moving to the valley, like David Garner and Thomas Bingham, were forced to bring their families and possessions over the treacherous North Ogden Pass.²⁰ This scene would play itself out time and time

again, and as late as May 1884 the *Ogden Daily Herald* reported that “work is progressing on some of the rock points in Ogden Canyon, and some are hopeful that travel will soon be resumed on that road. . . . The prospect[s] for safe travel through the canyon, however, before the latter part of June, are not bright.”²¹

Travel through the canyon could be a challenge even in the best conditions. Karl Lind’s “long and dreary ride” from Grantsville to Huntsville in 1881, for example, was spiced up immeasurably when the rough canyon road bounced a box of chickens off his wagon. The box broke, and the liberated chickens lit out for the rocks. Lind managed to recover most of the birds but was forced to donate some few of them to the local coyotes so he could make it to Huntsville in a timely fashion.²² John Felt, another settler, had a similar but potentially more disastrous experience in 1871. While trying to negotiate the “rough and narrow road,” Felt tipped his wagon over into the river, sending his wife and two-month-old baby into the water. Placing one hand in the stream bed to hold her body and head out of the water, Felt’s wife held the baby aloft with the other hand until they both could be retrieved. Remarkably, no one was seriously injured.²³

For all the challenges, however, it would be wrong to conclude that travel into and out of the valley was an unmitigated hardship. Christiana Belnap, for example, recalled how as teenagers she and her sister snuggled up to two young men in the back of a bobsled as they made their way up the canyon in the winter of 1879. Obviously enjoying the ride and the close quarters, Christiana’s date asked the driver to slow down, suggesting that the pace was too much for the horses. Exposed to the wind and the cold, and deprived of any female company himself, the driver assured Christiana’s date that the horses were fine and maintained the pace. Further protestations about their speed went unheeded, and the trip ended with “the boys climb[ing] reluctantly out of the sleigh” when they reached Huntsville.²⁴

Even more importantly, it would be wrong to conclude that the mountains surrounding the valley shut off its early settlers to the rest of Utah and the Church. Diaries and reminiscences indicate that valley residents were very well informed about what was going on around them and had frequent contact with other settlements. Faithful Church members, for example, traveled to Salt Lake City to receive their endowments and be married in the Endowment House—a trip made all the easier after the Utah Central Railroad was completed in 1870.²⁵ At a round-trip ticket price of \$1.50 and a time investment of an hour from Ogden, the railroad also facilitated valley residents’ attendance at general conference in Salt Lake City and allowed others to attend the Salt Lake Temple dedication in 1893.²⁶ On a more secular note, Hyrum Allen remembered traveling to Salt Lake City in 1875 to see a collection of mummies that were being exhibited and visiting



*Wangsgard's Blacksmith shop, c. 1915.
Photo courtesy of Stanley F. Wangsgaard*

the Salt Lake Theater several times in later years.²⁷

Not surprisingly, settlers in Ogden Valley had even more contact with Ogden City than they did with Salt Lake. Valley farmers regularly bought supplies, sold surpluses, and ground grain there,²⁸ while young men and women from the valley took jobs in the Ogden area and spent several months out of each year boarding and attending school there.²⁹ The experiences of Heber McBride are a good example of the contact that existed between the Ogden area and the valley. Not much of a scholar by his own account, Heber never attended school in Ogden but did haul lumber to Plain City over North Ogden Pass.³⁰ The following year he took a job ferrying cedar wood from Promontory across the lake for delivery to Salt Lake City. After Heber completed a harrowing boat ride to Promontory during a storm, his boat left its moorings and washed ashore near Willard, bottom side up. When he accidentally ran into his brother-in-law a few days later and learned that he had been given up for dead, Heber took off for the valley, making it home from Promontory in a little over twenty-four hours. After reassuring his mother and sending his girlfriend into a dead faint, Heber returned to Promontory a few days later, only to learn that the boat they were to use to ferry the wood had been wrecked and that the job was off. Returning to the valley after having gotten no more reimbursement for his efforts than his “shoes and clothing all wore out,” Heber nevertheless

demonstrated for historians today the mobility enjoyed by valley residents and the facility with which they could, and did, traverse the mountains when they needed to.³¹

As members of the Ogden Stake, Saints in the valley also had ecclesiastic connections with the lower valley. Residents like Hans Peter Lund joined and attended the Ogden City School of the Prophets, for example, while Sunday School classes from the valley held a conference once a year in Ogden.³² Huntsville's Sunday School, complete with a Sunday School banner, also went to Ogden to see the first train arrive on the newly laid tracks in 1869—an experience that sent some of the children splashing through a nearby marsh in fright.³³ And in 1871, spurred on by the promise of seeing Brigham Young and other Church authorities, Huntsville residents piled into twenty wagons and traveled to Ogden to celebrate the 24th of July.³⁴

On a smaller scale, Saints in the valley also had ties with Cache Valley to the north. Some, like Albert Garner, found employment building the Utah Northern Railroad; others, like Thomas Bingham Jr., bought land there and farmed it, at the same time maintaining their connections with Ogden Valley.³⁵ Early on, most made the trip by way of the low divide north of Liberty, which separates the two valleys and which was navigable even in winter if snowfall was low.³⁶ Taking the railroad from Ogden became an option in the 1870s, and after 1884, valley residents regularly traveled to the Logan Temple, where families like that of James Ririe spent days on end doing genealogical research and baptisms for the dead before returning home.³⁷

The mountains not only failed to keep the valley residents in but also failed to keep visitors out. Henry Holmes of North Ogden, for example, made dozens of trips over the North Ogden Pass to the valley between 1862 and 1867 to herd cattle, gather wood, and visit his sister's family in Huntsville.³⁸ Stake leaders from Ogden frequently visited the valley as well, as did such notables over the years as Matthias Cowley, John Taylor (as an Apostle and, in 1883, as Church President), Wilford Woodruff, Brigham Young Jr., George Q. Cannon, Franklin D. Richards, and Daniel H. Wells.³⁹ Brigham Young himself visited the valley three times—14 November 1864, 15 September 1867, and 13 June 1869—choosing the last occasion to speak about the cooperative movement and to urge the settlers to find and plant trees that could endure the harsh climate.⁴⁰ Brigham also called upon men from the valley to bring emigrants from the Missouri River in 1864, 1866, 1867, and 1868⁴¹ and in October 1866 called on Heber McBride and others to rescue a party of immigrants stranded at the Platte River.⁴² Each of these missions was duly fulfilled, as were numerous individual proselyting missions over the years.⁴³

Climate

The valley's wintry climate was as much a factor in the pioneers' lives as its topography. Temperatures in the winter regularly hit twenty and thirty degrees below zero Fahrenheit and on occasion could plunge even lower. Bishop Francis Hammond, for example, a former whaler in the North Atlantic and no stranger to the cold, reported to the *Deseret Evening News* that the winter of 1882–83 in Huntsville had been more severe than any he had ever experienced. He estimated (frozen thermometers prevented a precise reading) that on 19 January 1883, the temperature fell to almost sixty degrees below zero Fahrenheit.⁴⁴ Early frosts in the fall and late ones in the



Townsfolk clearing snow from Jens Winter's mill pond, c. 1915. After clearing the snow, the men cut blocks of ice for use during the summer. The pond was located near the Jefferson Hunt campground today, in the river bottoms south of Huntsville.

Photo courtesy of Stanley F. Wangsgaard

spring added to the challenges, as did the amount of snow that could fall in the area. The winters of 1865–66 and 1874–75 saw five feet of snow accumulate in Huntsville, for example, and most years saw appreciable amounts of snow on the ground well into April.⁴⁵ Hans Lund reported three and a half feet of snow on the ground 1 April 1868, while Josiah Ferrin measured three feet four inches of snow on the Eden public square 1 April 1876. This had melted to two and a half feet by 15 April and to twenty-two inches by 20 April.⁴⁶ Even more impressively, Joseph Wheeler remembered there being two feet of snow on the level when he moved to Huntsville 2 May 1866.⁴⁷

Late springs, heavy winters, and early falls were the norm, but there were exceptions. The winter of 1866–67 was mild through February, for example,

but a succession of storms in March left two feet on the ground as of 4 April.⁴⁸ Josiah Ferrin described December 1892 and January 1893 as “very nice, only a little snow, moderately cold”—the lowest temperature having been only six degrees below zero Fahrenheit—but then left 2 April to attend the Salt Lake Temple dedication in two feet of snow.⁴⁹ A number of farmers were plowing by early April in 1877, and Ferrin reported that following the mild winter of 1878–79, several were plowing by 1 March. Things returned to normal the following year, with the temperature dropping to twenty-six degrees below zero Fahrenheit on 14 March 1880.⁵⁰

Such extremes could take a heavy toll on crops and stock. Until 1891, when a few apples and cherries were harvested in Huntsville, plums and a few native berries were the only fruits grown in the valley.⁵¹ Wheat did poorly as well, with Edward Tullidge reporting in 1882 that no more “than one tenth of what is needed for bread [is] raised annually.”⁵² Barley, oats, and garden vegetables did better, but yields fluctuated wildly from year to year under the marginal conditions. Early frosts in 1876 and 1899 reduced the grain crop to virtually nothing those years, for example, while settlers harvested sixty-three thousand bushels and fifty thousand bushels in 1887 and 1888, respectively.⁵³ Hans Lund, similarly, failed to harvest enough potatoes to cover the expense he incurred to plant them in 1867 but went on to dig fifty-five and sixty-eight bushels of them the following two years.⁵⁴ Ranchers like the Hall brothers, who lost half their milk cows one year and produced eight thousand pounds of cheese the next, endured and enjoyed similar cycles of failure and success.⁵⁵

Not surprisingly, the rigors of running a farm under such conditions proved too much for some. Heber McBride bought his first farm from John Garrett, who was so “tired of living in so much winter,” as he told Heber, that he sold his sixty acres, water rights, home, sheds, and stables for a paltry \$500.⁵⁶ Similarly, James Holt bought a farm in Eden in the early 1860s, cut some hay for winter, and then watched things quickly fall apart. “During the winter it rained very severely for several days and spoiled almost all the hay in the valley,” he recorded. “The snow also fell quite deep, and the cattle suffered greatly. This valley was very cold, and the grain all got frosted before it was ripe.” One winter was enough to convince him that “this [was] no place for me,” he wrote, and when the call went out in the fall of 1862 “for volunteers to go south about 350 miles where the climate was warm enough to raise cotton,” Holt left for Dixie.⁵⁷

The climate affected travel as well as agriculture. As noted, valley residents were generally able to maintain a healthy and frequent correspondence with settlements on the Wasatch Front and in Cache Valley, but it should be noted also that this interaction was most frequent, and easiest, between May and November. Travel into and out of the valley during the



Barley Field, c. 1900.
 Photo courtesy of Stanley F. Wangsgaard

winter months could be a harrowing experience, especially immediately following a heavy snowstorm. Williamena McKay, for example, recorded that when her husband, Angus McKay, and Frank Hammond were called from Huntsville in February 1876 to help settle Arizona, “the snow was so deep that it took the combined

assistance of all the men in town to get them to Ogden.”⁵⁸ Heber McBride, similarly, tried making such a journey alone in January 1865 and was lucky to survive the ordeal. Anxious about reaching his family after two months away, Heber disregarded warnings about attempting to cross North Ogden Pass and tried it anyway. Finding “no signs of any track” since the last snowstorm, Heber, on foot, broke a trail until he “gave out and could go no further” and was forced to turn back toward North Ogden. Stopping frequently to rest even going downhill, Heber ran into two ox teams coming up breaking trail for a flock of sheep. Here he hitched a ride with one of the teams and turned back up the mountain but had to leave the team and drive the sheep when the deep snow required the original drivers to tramp a trail in front of the oxen. So overdone and sick by the time they reached the summit that he couldn’t walk, Heber rode one of the sleds down into the valley to a neighbor’s house, where the only thing he could get down was some coffee. Rest and caffeine soon had him feeling better, but he still took a sled the remaining one and a half miles home.⁵⁹

Heavy snows could hamper travel even within the valley. After spending the winter of 1862–63 confined to his home on the North Fork River by five feet of snow, Heber McBride again moved into Huntsville, attended school the following winter, and made the six-mile trek home to his mother in North Fork each weekend on snowshoes.⁶⁰ Thomas Bingham employed snowshoes as well to visit his father’s sawmill on Monte Cristo in March 1876 but quickly traded them in for a pair of “Norwegian snowshoes”—cross-country skis—when he saw how much better they worked for his traveling companion.⁶¹

Springtime, with its mud and high runoffs, presented its own challenges to mobility and life within the valley. Henry Holmes from North Ogden visited the valley 27 May 1862 and found the streams and rivers “nearly impossible to cross,” even on horses.⁶² Heber McBride and some companions, bereft of horses, found North Fork “too high to wade across” in the spring of 1868 and were trying to decide what to do when an obliging horseman happened along and ferried them over.⁶³ With “water and slush all over the valley,” Josiah Ferrin of Eden had to carry his daughters to school on horseback in the spring of 1877, while Karl Lind’s daughters, who lived two miles from the Huntsville schoolhouse, attended their lessons most years only in the early fall and late spring on account of the mud and snow.⁶⁴

Thaws also wreaked havoc on the crude shelters many people lived in for a time. Arriving in the valley in April 1874, for example, Williamena McKay and her three children took refuge in a log cabin with a dirt floor and roof and then sat by to watch as the “melting of the winter’s snow on the roof percolated through and carried earth with it down the walls.” “The dirt floor was mud now,” she continued, “and the plaster had fallen from the chinks: a dismal home indeed.”⁶⁵ Leora Campbell, an early settler in the valley’s north end, went into labor while living in a similar cabin just as an unusually late rainstorm—this was December—came up. “The rain came down in torrents,” she recorded. “Our house leaked all over, not clear water but mud. There was a place from about the middle of the bed to the head that did not leak. My husband’s grandmother was living with us that winter. She put me crosswise of the bed, and put her featherbed over me



*Hydroelectric Power Plant in Ogden Canyon,
1883.*

Photo courtesy of Stanley F. Wangsgaard



*Blackman and Griffin Creamery, c. 1915.
This site is now covered by the waters of Pineview Reservoir.
Photo courtesy of Stanley F. Wangsgaard*

to keep me dry. Wet boards were laid down on my bed for me to lie on. A sheet was hung up to the head of the bed to keep out the wind and one across the foot of the bed. . . . Thus I gave birth to the first white child born in Ogden Valley.”⁶⁶

Both Leora and her baby survived the ordeal, but cold, wet weather and inadequate shelter took its toll on others over the years. Uhan Parson, for example, recalled how his father, mother, and four siblings, along with himself, spent their first year in Huntsville in a twelve-by-fourteen-foot dugout, during which time his mother gave birth to her sixth child. “This was a tragic event,” he recorded later, “as owing to the damp crowded condition of our dugout house mother never recovered and contracting pneumonia, without doctors or any medical care mother died.”⁶⁷ Existing diaries and reminiscences indicate that others endured similar bouts with illness in the valley’s early years, but most cases seem to have been relatively isolated outbreaks, confined to individuals or single families.⁶⁸ The exception to this rule occurred in the winter of 1877–78 when an epidemic of scarlet fever and diphtheria broke out in the valley. With no doctors living in the valley, most of the nursing and care were left to the women who had had some experience taking care of the sick.⁶⁹ Some twenty children had died by 7 March 1878 in spite of their efforts, and by the time the epidemic had run its course eighteen months later, sixty-four children under the age of nine had died—thirty-five of them, according to one account, within one week of each other.⁷⁰

Wildlife in Ogden Valley—Preliminary Findings

Preliminary research has shown that in their isolated, mountainous situation, the valley's settlers may have been more subject to the depredations of wild animals than many other communities. Most early settlers in Utah suffered losses from wolves, coyotes, and crickets, but sever-



James C. Wangsgaard's "White Store," 1887. The Wangsgaard family lived in the wing on the right. The lower level was the store, while the second story was used for dances and socials. The store was located where the Huntsville First and Second Ward meeting house is today. Photo courtesy of Stanley F. Wangsgaard

al existing accounts suggest that valley residents were contending with bears and grasshoppers—in addition to the wolves, coyotes, and crickets—with a frequency and in numbers others could only imagine. By the mid 1860s, for example, Thomas Bingham and his family had experienced three close encounters with bears—at least one of them a grizzly—near their shingle mill on Snow Basin.⁷¹ A black bear interrupted some children's efforts to pick chokecherries closer to Huntsville, and Mary Jessop recalled standing on a fencepost in the southwest part of Huntsville and having a black bear, with a good part of the town in hot pursuit, run between the post and her house.⁷² One settler reportedly killed a thousand-pound grizzly that had been killing his cattle, while several men from Huntsville, armed with muzzle-loaders, went after another grizzly that had been killing sheep just southeast of town.⁷³ This last expedition almost ended in grief when the wounded bear mauled two of the men before it was finally killed.⁷⁴

Perhaps not as exciting as the bears, but definitely more destructive, were the hordes of grasshoppers that plagued the settlers. Accounts vary as to how many successive years of crop failure were attributable to the hoppers—Caroline Ballantyne of Eden remembered one run of seven—but the *Deseret News* was reporting substantial losses as late as 1877.⁷⁵ On at least one occasion, according to Joseph Wheeler, the settlers applied for divine aid in the war against the insects, with reported results that would have done the original pioneers in Salt Lake City proud:

We were fighting grasshoppers every spring before they could fly [recorded

Wheeler]. People turned out in mass and dug trenches, and those that could not dig would drive the hoppers into those trenches until there was a perfect mass of hoppers, then we would turn water in and drown them by the bushels until the stench was terrible. We resorted to every means that we could think of to get rid of the pest, but finally there was a day set aside to fast and pray to sue Heavenly Father for a deliverance from the 4 years' pest, as we had done all we could ourselves and felt that the only relief now was from heaven, so I believe almost the entire settlement fasted upon that occasion. I remember I went with my father and mother without my breakfast and in going to meeting the air was so full of hoppers we could look at the sun with ease for they shaded the earth for they had raised from the fields as if they were going to immigrate but they seemed to remain in the air. This was the condition of things when we went to meeting.

We had an enjoyable time in meeting and when we came out at 12 o'clock the air was full of sea gulls. The hoppers were gone. Our prayers were answered and the multitude of wet faces turned to heaven with praises to the giver of all good for the deliverance of the many years of pest. The next day was set aside as a thanksgiving day and we spent some time in fishing but could scarcely find hoppers enough for fish bait.⁷⁶

Native Americans—Preliminary Findings

Special conditions regarding Native Americans also existed in the valley. Every community in early Utah had its ups and downs with Indians belonging to one tribe or another, but Ogden Valley was unique in that at least four different major Indian tribes—the Shoshoni, Ute, Cheyenne, and Blackfeet—used the area. Not only could the relationship between members of these tribes and the Saints sometimes be shaky but so could the relationships between members of the individual tribes themselves—a fact that had the potential of placing the valley's settlers in some difficult, even dangerous, situations.

Early on, relations between the Mormon settlers and the Indians appear to have been strained at best. When Jefferson Hunt and his party moved into the valley in 1860, the famous chief Little Soldier and his mixed band of Utes and Shoshonis claimed most of the area for their summer hunting grounds. In an attempt to smooth things over, Hunt and the others agreed to "pay" the Indians an annual "tax" for their land, a practice that continued for several years but with only moderate success.⁷⁷ Alice Wood, for example, one of the original Huntsville settlers of 1860, remembered the Indians appearing so threatening in the summer of 1861 that she and her husband removed temporarily to Ogden.⁷⁸ Mary Jessop, who moved to Huntsville about the same time, recalled a band of Blackfeet Indians stealing some cattle from the settlers and noted that "when the men left the town and went to the fields to work, they took their rifles with them" in case of attack.⁷⁹ Heber McBride, similarly, reported the Indians being "very trou-

blesome" in 1863, "running off our horses and cattle and at last took all the loose horses that were running on the range." The settlers followed the Indians up Middle Fork Canyon, Heber reported, and "overtook them just about dark and opened fire on them, killing one Indian and getting most of their horses back."⁸⁰

Relations deteriorated with the outbreak of the Black Hawk War in 1865. Often considered to have been a war between the Utes and Mormon settlers in the southern two-thirds of the state, the Black Hawk War sent waves of hostility between whites and Indians as far north as southern Idaho and involved a number of tribes besides the Utes.⁸¹ Tensions between the Shoshonis and settlers in the valley as a result of the conflict ran so high that those living in the valley's north end decided to move together for protection. The little town of Eden was the result. In addition, Heber McBride and others were called to act as scouts in the war—not in central Utah but in the mountains to the north and east of the valley. Their appointment was neither without cause nor effect; after being fired upon by a small band of Indians traveling south, McBride and his companions trailed their assailants, overtook them, and shot three in the mountains southeast of Huntsville.⁸²

In spite of these and similar acts of hostility from both sides, however, most Indians and settlers appear to have been more interested in trading with one another than in fighting. Even the earliest accounts mention the Indians asking the settlers for food and trade articles, and Hans Lund recorded the settlers giving "4 fat cattle, 4 sheep, flour, potatoes, etc. to the Indians" in 1867—the height of the Black Hawk War—and receiving "a great show, music, dance and a show of an encounter with another tribe" in return.⁸³ The same scene was acted out on a grander scale the year before in Huntsville, when Chief Washakie and some thousand Shoshoni Indians received four cows, nine sheep, several sacks of flour, and several bushels of garden vegetables after performing a dance and reenacting a battle with the Arapahoes for the townsfolk.⁸⁴ On a more personal, individual level, Karl Lind regularly traded sugar, biscuits, and coffee to the Indians living near him in return for deer meat, and both Marinda Ingles and Caroline Farr recalled fondly how as children they traded food to the Indians in return for beads following the Black Hawk War.⁸⁵ "I used to play and wrestle with [Shoshoni children] when I was a boy," Albert Garner similarly recalled. "The only trouble they ever gave me was a head of lice of which I would rid myself by digging a small hole in the ground and combing them out of my hair with a fine comb into the hole and then cover them up."⁸⁶

Relationships of trust, if not honest-to-goodness friendships, developed between some of the settlers and Indians. Lehi Hardman, for one, recalled warming and feeding an Indian he found nearly frozen just outside his home,

for which kindness he received little more than a grunt of thanks at the time. Later, however, during the Black Hawk War, Hardman was released unharmed from the hands of hostile Indians by the entreaties of this same individual, who recognized in his companions' captive the man who had saved his life years earlier.⁸⁷ Having earned the natives' respect and having taken the pains to learn their language, Hardman was also called upon at least once to settle a dispute between certain individuals.⁸⁸ Heber McBride, for another, developed a lasting friendship with an individual named Tope and wrote after stumbling across him following several years of separation, "It was like finding an old friend that I thought was dead." The two talked long into the night, and in the morning Tope introduced Heber—then serving as a scout during the Black Hawk War—to his family as "his heap big friend."⁸⁹ These and similar accounts make it clear that the relationships between the settlers and the Native Americans in the valley were complex ones and warrant a great deal more study before any general conclusions about the nature of those relationships are drawn.

Conclusion



Old Post Office, c. 1900
Photo courtesy of Stanley F. Wangsgaard

One can travel the length and breadth of Ogden Valley today in a matter of minutes, and a drive up Ogden Canyon is little more than a Sunday excursion. Insulated, well-heated homes and cars have taken the bite out of the area's winters, and greenhouses and pesticides assure that anyone whose thumb is even moder-

ately green can grow something edible. The valley today, in short, stands as a monument to mankind's ability to subdue the environment—to flatten the mountains, widen the canyons, channel the rivers, temper the climate, and kill the bugs. What I hope this paper has done, however, is remind us that this monument was a long time in building and that the environment we can so easily ignore today played crucial roles in the lives of those who pioneered this beautiful area.

Notes

1. See Ronald W. Walker and Doris R. Dant, ed., *Nearly Everything Imaginable: The Everyday Life of Utah's Mormon Pioneers* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1999). For an engaging, if not always accurate, overview of the valley's history, see LaVerna B. Newey, *Remember My Valley: A History of Ogden Canyon, Huntsville, Liberty, and Eden, Utah from 1825 to 1976* (Salt Lake City: Hawkes Publishing, 1977).

2. David E. Miller, ed., "Peter Skene Ogden's Journal of His Expedition to Utah, 1825," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (April 1952): 176–78; David E. Miller, ed., "William Kittson's Journal Covering Peter Skene Ogden's 1824–1825 Snake Country Expedition," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (April 1954): 135–37.

3. A few of Ogden's men had actually entered the valley on 13 May, three days prior to Ogden's entry. Miller, "Ogden's Journal," 175.

4. This information on the valley's subsequent popularity with various trappers apparently comes from Jim Bridger; see Brigham D. Madsen, ed., *Exploring the Great Salt Lake: The Stansbury Expedition of 1849–1850* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1989), 150.

5. Osborne Russell, *Journal of a Trapper*, ed. Aubrey L. Haines (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 116–17.

6. Howard Stansbury, *Exploration of the Valley of the Great Salt Lake* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), 81.

7. Stansbury, *Exploration of the Valley of the Great Salt Lake*, 82.

8. Madsen, *Exploring the Great Salt Lake*, 150.

9. Richard C. Roberts and Richard W. Sadler, *A History of Weber County* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, Weber County Commission, 1997), 81.

10. Andrew Jenson, "Huntsville Ward," *Souvenir Home-Coming Week: Huntsville, Utah, July 1, 2, 3 and 4, 1917* (Ogden: n.p., 1917), 7–9.

11. People may have been living in the Eden area as early as 1859, but the town was not surveyed and established until 1867. See Roberts and Sadler, *History of Weber County*, 83, and Heber R. McBride, "Personal History of Heber R. McBride," typescript, 23, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as Perry Special Collections).

12. Roberts and Sadler, *History of Weber County*, 81. Residents of the valley do not appear on the federal census until 1870, when 210 families, totaling 1,052 individuals, are listed for Huntsville. In 1880, 179 families are listed for Huntsville and 65 for Eden, totaling 820 and 344 individuals, respectively. See *Population Schedules of the Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Utah, Weber County, Ogden Valley, Huntsville* (Washington: The National Archives, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1965), and *Population Schedules of the Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Utah, Weber County, Huntsville and Eden* (Washington: The National Archives, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, n.d.).

13. These descriptions are from Stansbury, *Exploration of the Valley of the Great Salt Lake*, 81–82.

14. Stansbury reported that Ogden Canyon was "wild and almost impassable," which description he undoubtedly obtained from his guide, Jim Bridger. That Bridger would lead Stansbury out of the valley via North Ogden Pass suggests that this was the route he himself was accustomed to using. Stansbury, *Exploration of the Valley of the Great Salt Lake*, 81. See also Russell, *Journal of a Trapper*, 117, for an example of another mountain man using North Ogden Pass.

15. Jenson, *Souvenir Home-Coming Week*, 7.
16. *Ibid.*
17. The dugway was in use at least by 1867, when Heber McBride reported taking a load of lumber and two yoke of oxen over it. McBride, "Personal History," 22, Perry Special Collections.
18. Jenson, *Souvenir Home-Coming Week*, 8.
19. *Ibid.*, 9; Hans Peter Lund, Journal, microfilm of holograph, 5 May 1866, Church Archives, Family and Church History Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as Church Archives).
20. Albert Garner, "Pioneer Personal History Questionnaire," 3, Federal Writers' Project, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited Utah State Historical Society); Thomas Bingham Sr. and Thomas Bingham Jr., Biographies, 1824–1906, typescript, 10, Perry Special Collections.
21. *Ogden Daily Herald*, 20 May 1884. From a transcript held in the archives of the Utah State Historical Society.
22. Anna Melle Stoker, "History of Karl August Lind," typescript, 2, Utah State Historical Society.
23. Myrtle Stevens Hyde, "John (Johnson) Felt," typescript, 3, Utah State Historical Society.
24. Christiana Rasmussen Belnap, Autobiography, typescript, 16, Utah State Historical Society.
25. For examples, see Andrew Persson Lofgreen, "A Few Stories from the Life of Anders Persson Lofgreen," typescript, 34–35, Utah State Historical Society; Thomas Bingham Sr. and Thomas Bingham Jr., Biographies, 19, Perry Special Collections.
26. Hyrum Allen, "Pioneer Personal History," 2, Utah State Historical Society; Thomas Bingham Sr. and Thomas Bingham Jr., Biographies, 18, Perry Special Collections; Josiah Marsh Ferrin, Journal, microfilm of holograph, 2 April 1893, Church Archives.
27. Allen, "Pioneer Personal History," 2, Utah State Historical Society. Hans Lund, similarly, reported going by train to Salt Lake on 6 March 1872, where they "were given many councils, . . . donated something for the poor, . . . and had a nice time." Lund, Journal, 6 March 1872, Church Archives.
28. For examples, see Stoker, "History of Karl August Lind," 2, Utah State Historical Society; *Ogden Daily Herald*, 17 October 1884; McBride, "Personal History," 22, Perry Special Collections.
29. Thomas Bingham Sr. and Thomas Bingham Jr., Biographies, 18, Perry Special Collections; Caroline Josephine Ballantyne Farr, Autobiography, microfilm of typescript, Church Archives; Belnap, Autobiography, 17, Utah State Historical Society.
30. McBride, "Personal History," 22–23, Perry Special Collections.
31. *Ibid.*, 30–33, quote on p. 33.
32. Lund, Journal, 2 January 1869, Church Archives; Marinda Allen Ingles, "Pioneer Personal History," 5, Federal Writers' Project, Utah State Historical Society.
33. Ingles, "Pioneer Personal History," 7, Utah State Historical Society.
34. Lund, Journal, 24 July 1871, Church Archives.
35. Garner, "Pioneer Personal History Questionnaire," 5, Utah State Historical Society; Thomas Bingham Sr. and Thomas Bingham Jr., Biographies, 19–20, Perry Special Collections.
36. Albert Garner recalled coming home over the Liberty divide from Cache Valley for the Christmas holidays and finding the trail dusty. Garner, "Pioneer Personal History Questionnaire," 5, Utah State Historical Society.

37. Kate B. Carter, comp., "Journal of James Ririe," *Our Pioneer Heritage* 9 (1966): 370–71.
38. Henry Holmes, "A Record of President Henry Holmes," typescript, Huntsville Town Historical Department, Huntsville, Utah, 97–193 (hereafter cited as Huntsville Town Historical Department).
39. This list of Church officials visiting the valley was compiled from Jenson, *Souvenir Home-Coming Week*, 11–13, 15; *Ogden Daily Herald*, 22 September 1884; and Lund, Journal, entries for 18 June 1866, 5 February 1867, 24 February 1868, 6 June 1869, 13 June 1869, and 14 May 1871, Church Archives.
40. Jenson, *Souvenir Home-Coming Week*, 10, 12; Lund, Journal, entries for 16 September 1867 and 13 June 1869, Church Archives.
41. Jenson, *Souvenir Home-Coming Week*, 10. Thomas Bingham Jr. was one of the men called in 1868; for a description of the journey and their experiences, see Thomas Bingham Sr. and Thomas Bingham Jr., Biographies, 13–16, Perry Special Collections.
42. McBride, "Personal History," 13–21, Perry Special Collections.
43. Jenson, *Souvenir Home-Coming Week*, 13–23, gives the names and destinations of missionaries called from Huntsville each year between 1869 and 1900.
44. *Ibid.*, 18.
45. Lund, Journal, 1 May 1866, Church Archives; Jenson, *Souvenir Home-Coming Week*, 15. Heber McBride reported five feet of snow accumulating in Eden over the winter of 1862–63 as well. McBride, "Personal History," 9.
46. Lund, Journal, 1 April 1868, Church Archives; Ferrin, Journal, entries for 1 April, 15 April, and 20 April 1876, Church Archives.
47. Joseph Wheeler, "A Brief History of the Life of Joseph Edward Wheeler," microfilm of holograph, Church Archives.
48. Jenson, *Souvenir Home-Coming Week*, 12.
49. Ferrin, Journal, entries for December 1892, January 1893, and 2 April 1893, Church Archives.
50. Ferrin, Journal, entries for 4 March 1877, 1 March 1879, and 14 March 1880, Church Archives.
51. Jenson, *Souvenir Home-Coming*, 17, 21.
52. *Ibid.*, 18. Heber McBride said the wheat he tried to raise in 1866 was so poor that it "would barely make pig feed." McBride, "Personal History," 13, Perry Special Collections.
53. Jenson, *Souvenir Home-Coming*, 15, 20, 22.
54. Lund, journal entries for 11 October 1867, 29 August 1868, and 28 August 1869, Church Archives.
55. Jenson, *Souvenir Home-Coming*, 17.
56. McBride, "Personal History," 13.
57. James Holt, "Reminiscences of James Holt," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (January–April 1955): 171.
58. Williamena McKay, Autobiography, microfilm of holograph, Church Archives.
59. McBride, "Personal History," 11–12, Perry Special Collections.
60. McBride, "Personal History," 9, Perry Special Collections.
61. Thomas Bingham Sr. and Thomas Bingham Jr., Biographies, 19, Perry Special Collections.
62. Holmes, "A Record of President Henry Holmes," 97, Huntsville Town Historical Department.
63. McBride, "Personal History," 31.
64. Ferrin, journal entries for 2 and 3 March 1877, Church Archives; Stoker,

"History of Karl August Lind," 3, Utah State Historical Society.

65. McKay, Autobiography, Church Archives.

66. "Leora Margyann Talmadge Campbell," *Our Pioneer Heritage* 4 (1961): 54–55.

67. Uhan Parson, "Brief Sketch of the Life and Experiences of Uhan Parson," holograph, Utah State Historical Society.

68. For examples, see Fay Sadler Husberg, oral interview conducted by Paul Husberg, 25 February 1974, Salt Lake City, Utah. Typescript in possession of the Utah State Historical Society. Lund, Journal, entries for 8 December 1866, 1 April and 13 June 1867, 22 February 1871, Church Archives; Carter, comp., "Journal of James Ririe," 369–70.

69. Allen, "Pioneer Personal History," 4, Utah State Historical Society. Marinda Ingles, one of these *ad hoc* doctors, recalled being out with the sick "every night and day for a year and a half helping." Ingles, "Pioneer Personal History," 7, Utah State Historical Society.

70. Jenson, *Souvenir Home-Coming Week*, 16; Allen, "Pioneer Personal History," 4, Utah State Historical Society.

71. Thomas Bingham Sr. and Thomas Bingham Jr., Biographies, 10–12, Perry Special Collections.

72. Allen, "Pioneer Personal History," 5, Utah State Historical Society; Milton R. Hunter, comp. and ed., *Beneath Ben Lomond's Peak: A History of Weber County, 1824–1900* (Salt Lake City: Publisher's Press, 1966), 266–67.

73. Allen, "Pioneer Personal History," 5, Utah State Historical Society.

74. Garner, "Pioneer Personal History Questionnaire," 5, Utah State Historical Society.

75. Caroline Albertine Sanderson Ballantyne, Autobiography, microfilm of typescript, Church Archives; Jenson, *Souvenir Home-Coming Week*, 16.

76. Wheeler, "A Brief History of the life of Joseph Edward Wheeler," Church Archives. This would have been about 1870. I have taken the liberty of correcting the spelling, punctuation, and grammar in this account to make it more readable.

77. Jenson, *Souvenir Home-Coming Week*, 8.

78. Mary Comfort Carver Bartlett, "Biography of Alice Horrocks Wood," typescript, 2, Utah State Historical Society.

79. Hunter, *Beneath Ben Lomond's Peak*, 266.

80. McBride, "Personal History," 9, Perry Special Collections.

81. See John Alton Peterson, *Utah's Black Hawk War* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 1998).

82. McBride, "Personal History," 23–30, Perry Special Collections.

83. Hunter, *Beneath Ben Lomond's Peak*, 266; Lund, Journal, 20 August 1867, Church Archives.

84. Jenson, *Souvenir Home-Coming Week*, 11.

85. Stoker, "History of Karl August Lind, 2, Utah State Historical Society; Ingles, "Pioneer Personal History," 2, Utah State Historical Society; Farr, Autobiography, Church Archives.

86. Garner, "Pioneer Personal History Questionnaire," 3, Utah State Historical Society.

87. Husberg, oral interview, 4, Utah State Historical Society.

88. *Ibid.*, 6.

89. McBride, "Personal History," 27–28, Perry Special Collections.