

# PETEETNEET TOWN

A History of Payson, Utah

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[In the **David & Alvin Crockett** book - I have pp v,4-6, 8-11, 27, 56, 87-88, 94, 102, 118, 122, 127, 153, 172-3, 175, 183, 186-7, 191-2, 197, 222-3, 227, 232-3.]

## Preface page v

In 1860 a Mormon bishop, Franklin Wheeler Young, wrote a small book in longhand and called it A Record of the Early Settlement of Payson City, Utah, Utah County, Utah Territory, 1850-1860,

He drew largely from the private journal of Joseph Curtis, from which he said he "obtained information of a public nature nowhere else to be found,"

It was Bishop Young's intention that the record be "continued forever," The little look was passed from bishop to bishop until 1902, then lay long years in the trunk of Bishop Justin A. Loveless. His family made it available to historians just prior to Payson's Centennial year, 1950.

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## 1851 page 4 & 5

### More Settlers Arrive

Back in December Brigham Young had advised **David Crockett** and David Fairbanks to head for Peteetneet. They had delayed the trip until spring. On arrival at Peteetneet they were told they could have all the land they wanted, but there was not sufficient water to accommodate additional families. Consequently they turned east and became the first settlers of Pond Town. Among those who joined them were John B. Fairbanks, Henry Nebeker, Elizabeth Wilson and sons, Bradley, 23; and David, 21. After two years' time the settlers at Peteetneet reconsidered the water situation and the families were welcomed back.

### A Visit from Brigham Young

On Friday, March 21st, President Young and his party arrived about three o'clock in the afternoon and stopped overnight with James Pace. They were on a tour of the settlements of Utah County. Later that day, Parley P. Pratt and Charles C. Rich and company arrived and formed a corral on the west side of the fort. The next day they were joined by a large number of settlers bound for California. A day later, Sunday, March 23rd, a meeting was held in the fort and the congregation was addressed by Charles C. Rich, Heber C. Kimball and Amasa M. Lyman.

That evening another meeting was held at the home of James Pace. Benjamin Cross was ordained a high priest and set apart as Bishop.

### The Colony is Renamed Payson

## 1853 page 6

### The City Incorporated and a Mayor Elected

**David Crockett** was the first mayor of Payson. He was elected immediately after

the settlement was incorporated as a city and he served the term of 1853-1854. Later he was re-elected and served two additional terms, 1855-56 and 1857-58. After this he served a term as alderman in 1859-60 and then moved his family to northern Utah. His son, Alvin, became the first mayor of the City of Logan.

Payson was incorporated January 21, 1853, through action of the Territorial Legislature of Utah. The settlement then included Spring Lake Villa to the south and Summit (Santaquin) to the southwest.

1855 page 9-10

"The year 1855 was ushered in with all the peace and prospects of a good life that one could expect in a new country with the people surrounded with tribes of Indians, almost shut out from the knowledge of the world, subject to plagues of insects, droughts and so on," wrote Bishop Young in his ten-year history of Payson.

David Crockett was again elected mayor of the city and would serve the term of 1855-56 as well as the term that followed.

### The First Adobe House Built

1857 page 11

David Crockett was re-elected mayor and took office early in 1857 to serve the last of three consecutive terms.

### Effects of the Reformation

The "Reformation" was faithfully preached into the first part of 1857, and its constantly burning fire finally began to make havoc in the ranks of the unbelievers.

The work was so successful that on March 16th of that year some 228 persons went down to Peteetneet Creek and were re-baptized in the icy waters that flowed from the snow banks in the canyon. Public and private confessions of faults and sins were common and a very happy state of affairs existed. Every man was inspired with a desire to do right, make restitution for injuries to others, and accept peace offerings from his neighbor. Meetings were well attended and speakers spoke as men with authority.

Immense quantities of grain were sown that year and a large harvest was reaped. It is possible the Lord saw the humbleness of the people and rewarded them accordingly.

### The Nauvoo Legion Reactivated

Now word reached the settlers that James Buchanan, president of the United States, was sending an army to quell an uprising of the Mormons in Utah Territory.

1882 page 27

Because of the pressing need for doctors and midwives, a few Payson women went to Salt Lake City to take a course in obstetrics offered by the Relief Society. Romania Hyde was instructor. Those attending were Lucinda Patten, Mrs. John (Sarah) Koonz and Mary Oberhansli.

Lyman Curtis

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In 1850 Curtis returned to Utah, bringing his family with him. His ninth child was born en-route. After a year in Salt Lake City, Brigham Young sent him to the Santa Clara Mission. There he supervised construction of a canal from the **Little Muddy River**, now Moapa in Southern Nevada, and also helped build a canal out of the Santa Clara River to the vicinity below St. George.

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On June 12, 1847, the pioneers reached the Platte River, which was unusually high. After repeated attempts of conveying the company across the river, a boat was made for ferrying the wagons over. Some Missourians bound for Oregon offered to pay the Mormons for ferrying their wagons across. Numerous other companies would pass this way, so the Mormons left nine men at the river.

Benjamin F. Stewart was one of these. His wife and children joined him in a few weeks and they traveled to Utah together. They settled at Mill Creek, where he started a sawmill. Then he was named a member of the exploration expedition headed by Parley P. Pratt which investigated the prospect of extending settlements to southern Utah.

He moved his family to Payson March 21, 1852, and operated a sawmill here. He was also interested in the nail factory in Payson. On September 6, 1858, he married Elizabeth Davis as a plural wife.

B. F. Stewart was the first justice of the peace in Payson. He served as alderman under **Mayor David Crockett** the terms of 1853-54 and 1855-56, then as city councilman the terms of 1857-58 and 1859-60. He was mayor of Payson two two-year terms, 1863-64 and 1865-66.

**David Crockett**

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**David Crockett**, first mayor of Payson, arrived in Salt Lake Valley October 19, 1849, and in 1851 was sent by Brigham Young to help colonize the settlement at Peteetneet.

When they arrived they were told that all of the land had been taken up that could be watered by the creek. Disappointed, they and the David Fairbanks family turned eastward and became the **first settlers of Pond Town**.

Later the people at Fort Peteetneet reconsidered and the **Crocketts** returned when more land was opened for settlement. The city was incorporated January 1, 1853, and **David Crockett** was elected **first mayor of Payson**. He served the term of 1853-54, and was reelected for two additional terms, 1855-56 and 1857-58. He was **later elected alderman** and served the term of 1859-60.

He was **born December 30, 1806, in Vinal Haven, Maine**. He married **Lydia Ames December 20, 1830, in Knox County, Maine**. They heard the message of **missionaries** from the Mormon Church, accepted it and **joined others in Nauvoo**, Illinois. They remained there for **two years** and in 1846, with others, were driven out. They sustained themselves by farming on shares until the spring of 1849, when on July 4th they departed for the Valley of the Great Salt Lake. They arrived October 19th on the 18th birthday of his son, **Alvin**, and remained in Salt Lake City until moving to Payson in 1851.

**David's** wife, Lucinda Elizabeth, whom he married July 23, 1856, in the Salt Lake Endowment House, was one of Payson's first school teachers. His **wife, Lydia**, was a **midwife**. The family **moved to Logan about 1860**, where **Alvin Crockett** became the first mayor of that city. (Earl C. Crockett)

## **Irrigation**

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The colonists at Peteetneet (Payson) were among the first to use irrigation as a means of watering their crops.

Only three years earlier, Brigham Young's pioneers of 1847 had been some of the first Anglo Saxons to use irrigation in the North American continent.

So it was that when John C. Searle plowed the first irrigation ditch in Payson, he was among the first in the New World to try this method of turning water onto arid lands.

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Within a few months after their arrival, the first seventeen families believed the water supply too low to support additional settlers. Thus it was that they directed newcomers to the springs three miles east of Peteetneet.

The situation was serious, more settlers were coming into the colony almost every week, and the people began to look about for means of developing additional water.

**In 1854 Mayor David Crockett** (who had been sent to Salem on his arrival in 1851) and other city officials caused a dam to be built at the spring where Spring Lake Villa would be established three miles south of Payson. Water could be stored in this man-made lake and used as needed. It was channeled through what has always been known as Spring Creek and used to irrigate lands southwest of Payson.

By 1860 a watermaster had been appointed for the first time and irrigation ditches began to crisscross the town. Peter Winward was perhaps the first watermaster and served in this capacity for many years.

Chapter XIII

Electrical Power

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## **First Electrical Power**

Payson was the first community south of Salt Lake City to have electrically lighted homes. In 1890 four Payson men built one of Utah's first electrical systems.

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Electric lights were turned on for the first time December 24, 1890.

Power was available only during the evening hours, since the generator was in operation only from dusk until midnight. Water power from the creek was used for grinding grain in the daytime.

Chapter XIV

Industries

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## **Grist Mills**

Payson's first grist mill was built in 1854 by Charles B. Hancock, Breede Searle and others. It was located east of Peteetneet Creek in the center of the colony. The site can be pinpointed as the center of the block between Utah Avenue and First North Street, Main and First West Street.

The mill and machinery were built of mountain timber. Old wagon tires and iron scraps were used for gudgeons and other parts needing iron. Construction of the mill required much ingenuity.

The mill wheel, a wheel pit and two sets of burrs were installed. Each burr consisted of two large round stones that were corrugated with notched edges. They were placed in a frame, one above the other, and turned in opposite directions. As the grain was ground it

was shot through chutes into bins. The first set was used to chop corn or barley for feeding to livestock. It could produce a thousand pounds of chopped grain every half hour. The other set was used for grinding wheat into flour for table consumption.

### Midwives

**Midwives** assisted the mother at time of birth and then cared for mother and child through her ten-day period of confinement. The midwife would either sleep-in or make daily trips to the home. Often she did the cooking, washing and ironing and cared for other children in the family, all for the price of from \$3 to \$5. This was sometimes paid in trade for other services or in flour or produce.

EUNICE HAWS STEWART, wife of Andrew Jackson Stewart, was the first midwife in Payson. She arrived here in October, 1850, with her husband, one of the first small groups of Payson pioneers.

She was born in 1825 at Marietta, Ohio, and in due time became a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She studied obstetrics and made her services available to women in Ohio, Nauvoo, Illinois and other places along the way to Utah Territory. She died on pneumonia at age 43.

**LYDIA AMES CROCKETT**, wife of **David Crockett**, Payson's first mayor; **learned to talk to the Indians and did good wherever she could.** She became interested in helping the sick and assisted many mothers in giving birth to their babies. She was called out all hours of the day or night and nursed many people with various ailments. **The family moved to Logan in 1860, where she carried on her work as a nurse and midwife.**

### Theater

Said to be the finest theater south of Salt Lake City, the Opera House opened June 20, 1883, with the play, *The Green Bushes*. William Clayson Jr. wrote in 1952 for the benefit of this writer that this play was directed by John C. Graham of Provo. He said it was an Irish play dealing with the bad times between the English and Irish. Frank Huish played the male lead, Clayson wrote. John Done, as a village young man and himself (Clayson) as an English soldier were the only other characters he could recall.

Clayson said the next play the *The Octaroon*, was also directed by Mr. Graham. Local players were Mrs. Lottie Hancock, Mrs. Millie Stark, Jane Patten, John E. Betts, B. H. Crook, John Quigley, Joseph S. Douglass as an old slave, Solomon Hancock, George Wilde and Wm. Worsencroft as a young slave. This play was staged July 3 at night and July 4 in the afternoon and evening. Another play was put on July 23 and 24, and after that plays were quite often presented by local talent, traveling troupes or home companies from Spanish Fork or Springville.

During the winter of 1883-84 Acel Hancock put on *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Clayson said a few of the actors he could remember were Ted Reid as Harris; Mrs. George Wilde as Eliza; George Wilde as Haley; John Quigley as Simon Legree; and Mr. Hancock, himself, played the Old Quaker.

Mr. Hancock was a member of the Payson home dramatics organization both as player and promoter. Later he remodeled the top floor of the Hancock Mercantile Building, creating a dance hall with stage for plays which he managed for many years.

Minnie White Douglass, 90 years of age in 1972, said she played the title role in

*Belshazzar* in 1896. The play was directed by George A. Peery, grocer and musician. She said other actresses were Clara and Daisy Oberhansley, Agnes and Emma Worsencroft and other sisters, Chloe, Lizzie and Jane Loveless.

Many traveling troupes arrived by railroad train. Their trunks were hauled to the west side of the Opera House and taken through doors that are used to this day in 1972. Some of these plays came direct from the stage of the Salt Lake Theater.

### First Free Schools

Early in January, 1866, the Territorial Legislature passed a bill which allowed the cities and towns the right to levy an ad valorem tax (in proportion to value) for the upkeep of the public schools.

Immediately, Payson leaders set plans into action and a majority of the people on January 22nd voted a 3% tax against themselves.

Local pioneers believed Payson to be the first community in the territory to have free schools. Samuel Taylor, in 1950, said he had always understood that Payson had the first free schools in Utah.

The first funds from the tax were to build two schoolhouses at a cost of approximately \$2,000 each. One was to be located on each side of town.

Trustees charged with construction of these buildings were Anson Sheffield, James Finlayson and John Loveless. When they finished their assignment, not only two schools had been built, but three. They were named for members of the board of trustees, according to the original plan.

The Curtis School was named in honor of George Curtis. It was built at a location to be known later as 215 North Third East Street. The Taylor was named for Jesse Taylor, as school trustee for some 21 years. It was built at 40 South Fifth West Street. And the Done School, named for Abraham Done, was built at 310 East Fourth South. This was also known as the Swett School or the Mill School. All of these thick-walled adobe structures are in use a hundred years later. They make comfortable homes, warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

### Teachers Paid Salary

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Until 1877 a child could attend school only if a fee was paid to the teacher. The only sustenance the teacher received for services was that paid by the pupils. Often produce from the farm or garden was paid for tuition.

In 1877 the people were called to a mass meeting and voted to levy a property tax to pay the teachers a monthly salary. All children were now admitted to school, tuition free. Statewide free public schools were not started until 1890, after approved by the Territory Legislature.