



(This overview of the Oakley-Marion Settlement History is taken from *Cyrus Tolman: Father, Frontiersman, Pioneer* by Loraine Tolman Pace, Second Edition, 2006, pages 39-48.)

Move to Goose Creek, Idaho

In March of 1879, Thomas J. Dayley brought his family into the valley (Goose Creek) from Grantsville...Mrs. Thomas Dayley wrote a letter to her father, William C. Martindale, who then visited his daughter in the late spring of 1879. When W. C. Martindale returned to Grantsville he reported all he had seen and heard to Francis M. Lyman, then president of Tooele Stake. In November Francis M. Lyman came with W. C. Martindale to look over the valley. He was greatly impressed and made a favorable report to the headquarters of the church. Preparations were made to purchase water rights and prepare for general colonization. (History of the LDS Settlement, page 26.) (It should be noted that the move by Cyrus and his family to Idaho was in response to a call by Church leadership to colonize, not just Cyrus' "adventurous spirit." The opportunity for better land and water to raise food for his family and be able to provide for their needs surely appealed to him.)

Judson Isaac, son of Cyrus and Alice, said, "It was a time of pioneering, of settling the West wherever there seemed to be a desirable place, my father seemed always ready to go when asked or perhaps he just naturally had it in him to seek new experiences and help settle new places. Much had been said by the Church authorities regarding the desirability of some sections in southern Idaho, among which was the Goose Creek Valley. Father got permission and soon was off with his family to join the few who had already come, and commenced the settlement of what was to become known as Oakley, near the point where Goose Creek which ran near the house, but the next spring when the thaw came, it brought a large flow of water down the valley and there were dead cattle and other animals which had not survived the winter lodged here and there along the stream making the water undesirable for use. So my brothers and I set to work and soon had a well dug from which we were able to draw very pure and desirable water. We had only to dig sixteen feet and the water came in clear and cold. We used a chain over a pulley, with a bucket on either end so that when we would pull one bucket up, the other would go down-each empty bucket helping to pull the full one up."

"Our home was some distance down the valley so that we had some four miles to drive to attend Church services for a few years. Then there were sufficient numbers to make an attend Church services for a few years. Then there were sufficient numbers to make an organization so that we had a Ward of our won, known as the Marion Ward. My brother, Alex, and I were the only Deacons and we took care of the meeting house, keeping it clean and nice to meet in. We gathered flowers along the roadside and in the fields to make it attractive with large bouquets and we delighted in this assignment. The meeting house, for awhile, served both as a place of worship and for the holding of school during a few months of the year. Our school didn't amount to very much at first for we had no competent teacher neither funds to employ one. I can

remember going for awhile, but the teacher would lie down on a bench and go to sleep while the pupils did as they desired. The period was so very short each year, with no grades or grading and I, having had some schooling before leaving Tooele, decided to give it up and go to work, so I had in all about what children now get through the third grade. I learned to read, add, multiply, and divide and wasn't so different from most who attended who ranged in age from youngsters of early age to adults of twenty-five and even more."

The early church membership of the Goose Creek Valley was originally from the Tooele Stake area. In a booklet, *Honoring Cassia Stake Presidency* by Earl Whitely and published in 1926 is an article entitled, "The Spirit of Grantsville and Tooele Moves North." It lists the following pioneers who made the move: "Pioneer families found in the Goose Creek Valley as early as 1880/1881 or thereabouts. David Walker, Heber Dayley, Thomas Dayley, Enoch Dayley, Sr., Enoch R. Daley, Jr., Dames Dayley, Jacob Dayley, Thomas Dayley, Hyrum H. Severe, F.M. Cummins, John Anderson, Alfred Elison, Andrew Elison, Wm. C. Martindale, Swanty Nelson, Ether Durfee, Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, George Bunn, Hyrum L. Hunter, Wm. A. Critchfield, Oliver Weatherby, Claus Karlson, George Whittle, Charles Bailey, John LL, Fred Craner, John Craner, Robert Wilson, Moroni F. Fairchild, Hyrum W. Egan, Emanuel Sanford, Solomon P. McIntosh, Sam'IR. Worthington, Orson P. Bates, Samuel Lee, George S. Grant, William Moultry, Moroni Pickett, Robert G. Marin, John C. DeLaMare, George Craner, Adam G. Smith, Joseph R. Price, John N. Price, Rosel H. Hunter, Lorin J. Robinson, Sr., Cyrus Tolman, J. (Joshua) Alvin Tolman, Charles Jenkins, John Adams, Elam W. McBride, Aaron McBride, Orson McBride, Arlin Bates, Ormus Gates, Martin Okelberry, William Rowere (sic), James Whiteby, Henery (sic), Worthington, James Clark, Charles G. Elison, Daniel L. Gorringer, Charles Eklund." (History of the LDS Settlement, page 31.)

Mary Elizabeth Tolman Glenn, a granddaughter, recorded, "The houses in Oakley were generally built of logs very low and with a dirt roof. Most people built two rooms first, then would add a room at the side making it a "T" shape. The roof was made of poles laid close together, then a layer of straw, then dirt. No matter how close together the poles were laid, the dirt trickled through. The houses were lined with unbleached muslin. The dirt would trickle through onto the muslin ceiling and made it look baggy. Then when we got very heavy rains, the rain came through so each one of those baggy places were dripping water."

"It wasn't long until someone built a homemade loom to weave carpet. So as fast as people could save rags, they tore them into one inch strips and sewed them together and had them woven into carpet three feet wide, which had to be sewed together with carpet warp. By the time I was ten years old most people had carpet on at least one room. The kitchen was always pine boards, which called for a twice a week down-on-the-knees scrubbing."

"One of the spring jobs was to take everything out of one room at a time and whitewash the walls and ceiling. You really do not know what a real nasty job it is until you have whitewashed. In a room where there was carpet, it must come up, then clear out the dirty straw, put in a layer of clean straw, bring in the carpet after it had been well whipped to get the dust out, then came the tug-of-war to get the carpet stretched and tacked down again. When it was done it was really rewarding. The house was very clean and when we got the curtains up at the windows, pictures

on the wall and any other decoration available, the houses become more attractive than you might think.”

“We had one long building, not very large, with three windows on either side and a door in the end. It was the church, school house, and recreation hall. When they organized a ward they called it Marion, in honor of Francis Marion Lyman... I remember him being out to conference many times during my younger day. Our church was: Sunday School at 10:00 a.m.; Sacrament Meeting at 2:00 p.m.; Primary on Saturday afternoon...”

“Oakley was a small agricultural community of south-central Idaho... a part of Cassia County and located 20 miles southwest of Burley, the county seat. Oakley was situated in the Goose Creek Valley, and bordered by... Mount Harrison to the east and Mount Independence to the south. The state line dividing Utah and Idaho is 20 miles to the south of Oakley.”

“Situated some 16 miles southeast of Oakley is a 20 square-mile area of rock formations carved by erosions into many interesting shapes and sizes. This was a noted scenic area enjoyed by early emigrants on their way to Oregon and California and is also enjoyed by people today. It has been given the name of ‘City of Rocks.’” (History of the LDS Settlement, page 6.)

The City of Rocks... was once a terminal of the old Oregon and California trails. Wagon trains coming from the East camped here, and those going to California turned west; while those going to Oregon traveled down Birch Creek to Oakley Meadows and on to the Snake River to Oregon. One large rock in the City of Rocks was called Camp Rock and was used as a directory for the trains yet to come. The travelers would write on the granite face with wagon grease the dates of their arrival and departure and the direction they were going. “Emigrants coming through this area were subject to attack by unfriendly, irate Indians, who didn’t want the white men moving into their hunting area.” (History of the LDS Settlement, page 10.)

The Goose Creek Mountains were a favorite hunting area for deer, antelope, and pine nuts. The saints came there to get their meat and dry it for winter.

In 1870, William Oakley settled at the Pony Express and stage station in Goose Creek Valley. This station was located two miles west of the present town of Oakley and became known as Oakley Meadows. The town of Oakley was also named after this man. There were a few scattered settlers on the streams in the Oakley. They cultivated small patches of grain and made trips in the fall to the nearest grist mills, where they could get their wheat ground into flour. One of the first threshers was a post in the ground, having attached to it a pair of horses hitched to a sweep. The horses went around and around, tramping out the grist. (History of the LDS Settlement, page 22.)

“The settlers suffered much hardships and deprivation, but still lived in a rude comfort. They enjoyed the free-hearted companionship of their neighbors, who might live some miles away, and were happy in the knowledge that nature’s cupboard was always open, fish in the streams and deer in the hills and for diversion there was an occasional dance in the little school house or frontiersman’s cabins. There were log cabins, dirt floors, or maybe puncheon floors, cooking over the fireplace, dutch ovens and rude boxes or benches cut out with an axe for seats, and

many windows or openings covered with flour sacks to let in the light, or the primitive light made by lighting a strip of cloth lying in a lid or dish partially filled with grease. Still there was much enjoyment. Occasionally some settler had brought some comforts with him and the house or cabin would be a little better equipped. Roads were deep in mud in the wet season and deeper in dust in the dry season, especially on the state and freight roads, a condition not entirely remedied in the outlying districts.” (History of the LDS Settlement, page 23.)

The houses were built of logs, roofed with poles, shingles, straw, and dirt. Sometimes rats would cut through the roof, and straw and dirt would fall into the food on the dinner table.

Alice was fifty years old and Cyrus was sixty one when they decided to move the family to Goose Creek, Idaho, along with the other settlers from Tooele Stake. Cyrus wanted Margaret and her family to move to Idaho but the boys had good jobs and their horse business was going well, so they did not wish to leave. Margaret decided to stay with their children in Tooele.

The day Cyrus, Alice and some of their family arrived in the Goose Creek Valley, the weather was hot and dry and the dust was five or six inches deep. There were no trees or green shrubs. The town of Oakley consisted of a post office and a grocery store. Their home was a two-room log cabin near Goose Creek that ran through the Oakley Valley. It was a heartache and a disappointment for Alice, but she did all she could to make the home pleasant and livable.

A problem confronting the pioneers was finding a market for their produce. There was no railroad in the valley. The grain had to be hauled by team and wagon on mining roads that were just trails through the sagebrush. The road to market required crossing the great Snake River by ferry boat. One time that boat broke loose from the cable and drifted down the river. In some miraculous manner it reached the opposite shore without capsizing and everyone was safe.

Virginia Barrus Johnson said, “Another time when the boys reached the river the weather was very cold and the hour somewhat later than usual. They signaled and called, but Mr. Star would not bring the ferry boat over for them, so they had to camp at the river’s edge all night. The weather was so cold they were afraid they would freeze to death in their wagons, so they would get out and run up and down the roads until they warmed up, then cover up in their bed in the wagon. They would fall asleep for a while, only to wake before long, shaking with the cold and get out and run again. Next morning, the river was frozen over so they walked across on the ice and helped Mr. Star cut the ice in front of the ferry boat so he could ferry across and bring their teams and wagons to the other side of the river.”

“On some of the homes the doors would be nothing more than canvas covering the opening. Later, as time permitted, doors were made of poles split in two and nailed together with wooded pegs. Of necessity, the settlers first built very simple shelters, because there were so many other things to be done. They had to cut the timber and haul and haul, not only logs for homes and sheds, but also poles and posts for fences. They built the roads, cleared the sagebrush off the land, and fenced the farms.” (History of the LDS Settlement, page 30.)

Various groups of settlers would get together to hunt deer for winter meat. As they would approach a likely place for deer, they would disband and sneak up from all sides of the gulch in

order to get close. This was because they were hunting with muzzle-loading guns, and lead and powder were scarce...Whenever one of the group happened to make a kill, all the parties shared alike, with the exception that he who made the kill got the hide. (History of the LDS Settlement, page 34.)

“I well remember all plowing was done with hand plows. We would plow the land and sow the grain, broadcasting it by hand, then we would harrow over it. When grain was ready to harvest, Dan (Gorringer) had a buck-eye machine that cut it and left it in bunches which we would tie up by hand. A few years later came the diner. I believe Dan and the Tolman brothers brought the first header into the country.” (History of the Settlement, page 35.)

“We saw hard times in this valley and I’ve felt like if it hadn’t been for jack rabbits, deer and antelope, people would have starved. Rabbits got so thick they would destroy our crops. I’ve seen them tip hay stacks over by eating underneath. We had rabbit drives... (History of the Settlement, page 36.)

Ordination as Patriarch

Cyrus was ordained a Patriarch in the Cassia Idaho Stake, March 23, 1896 by Heber J. Grant. Because of the remoteness of the Cassia Idaho Stake, a record of the blessing that Cyrus gave did not end up in the archives at Church headquarters in Salt Lake City. He visited Star Valley several times before his death and gave some wonderful Patriarchal Blessings to his posterity living there. In various family records there are notations that he gave many blessings.

Life in Idaho

The people in the valley has been wondering how they could conserve the waters of Goose Creek and a dam was proposed. The Oakley Dam was started in 1909 and completed in 1913. Community growth throughout the years was due to the fact that Goose Creek bordered the community, and the farmers irrigated from it. Marion prospered as a small town for a few years. A general store and other houses of business functioned for a while, but when means of travel improved, the town proved inefficient and the business houses closed. (History of the Settlement, pages 45 and 52.)

On May 9, 1880, a branch of the Box Elder Stake was organized in Goose Creek Valley. On Sunday, September 24, 1882, Apostles Francis M. Lyman and John Henry Smith visited the Goose Creek branch and organized it as the Cassia Ward of the Box Elder Stake.

November 19, 1887, the saints residing in the Cassia Ward and vicinity were separated from the Box Elder Stake and organized as the Cassia Stake of Zion. The following is an account of the members of the The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who were residing in what was known as the Goose Creek Valley, now known as Oakley, and the adjacent towns located in Cassia County, Idaho, viz: Marion, Basin, Albion, Elba, and Almo. The Saints residing in these towns assembled at 10 a.m. in the Oakley ward meeting house and were called to order by Bishop Horton D. Haight Sr. who was then bishop of the Oakley ward. There were present with Bishop Haight, his counselors, and Apostle John W. Taylor, member of the Council of Twelve

Apostles, and Seymour B. Young, one of the council of Seventies of the Church. Bishop Haight stated that the Saints in these various settlements had come together, and that Apostle John W. Taylor and President Seymour B. Young were there for the purpose of organizing a stake of Zion in that part of Idaho. They hoped all present would be interested in what would follow, and gave the meeting into the hands of Apostle Taylor and Young, when the following business was transacted... Horton D. Haight Sr. was appointed Stake President; Moroni Pickett, father-in-law to Minnie Elizabeth Tolman, first counselor; William F. Brim, second counselor; Joseph Y. Haight, Stake Clerk. This presidency remained intact until the death of President Haight, January 19, 1900. (History of the LDS Settlement, page 58.)

Church Callings

Other officers that were sustained were Dor P. Curtis Sr., President of the High Priest Quorum; Cyrus Tolman, first counselor; William C. Martindale, second counselor.

As members of the High Council, Dor P. Curtis, Cyrus Tolman, William C. Martindale, Norton R. Tuttle, James S. Lewis, Charles Moir, George Whittle, Claus H. Karlson, Ether Durfee, George Bunn, Thomas Dunn, Edmund Homer. The Stake Elders Quorum was organized along with the various auxiliaries.

Immediately following the organization of Cassia Stake, with Oakley being the stake headquarters, the following wards were organized: Oakley, Marion, Basin, Albion, Elba and Almo. The Marion Ward was organized November 21, 1887, Apostles John W. Taylor and Seymour B. Young being present, Adam G. Smith was ordained a Bishop and set apart to preside over the Marion Ward by Apostle Taylor, who also ordained Joshua Alvin Tolman a High Priest and set him apart to act as first counselor to Bishop Smith. Arlin H. Bates was ordained a High Priest by Horton D. Haight and set apart to act as second counselor to Bishop Smith. Joseph H. Gold was set apart as clerk of the Ward. (History of the LDS Settlement, page 59.)

Oakley Newspapers

The first newspaper in Oakley, called *The Oakley Star*, was published for the first time on May 11, 1893. It was published weekly under this name until 1896, when the name was changed by the new owner to *The Oakley Sun*. This publication started on January 30, 1896.

The Oakley Sun was changed to *The Oakley Eagle* in 1901, and was known by this name until the fall of 1908, when it was changed to *The Oakley Herald*. The paper was published under this name under various owners during the ensuing years between 1908 and 1920. Mr. Charles Brown purchased the paper in 1920. He edited *The Oakley Herald* for 40 years. Publication stopped when he died in 1961 and has not been resumed since. (History of the LDS Settlement, pages 104-105.)

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