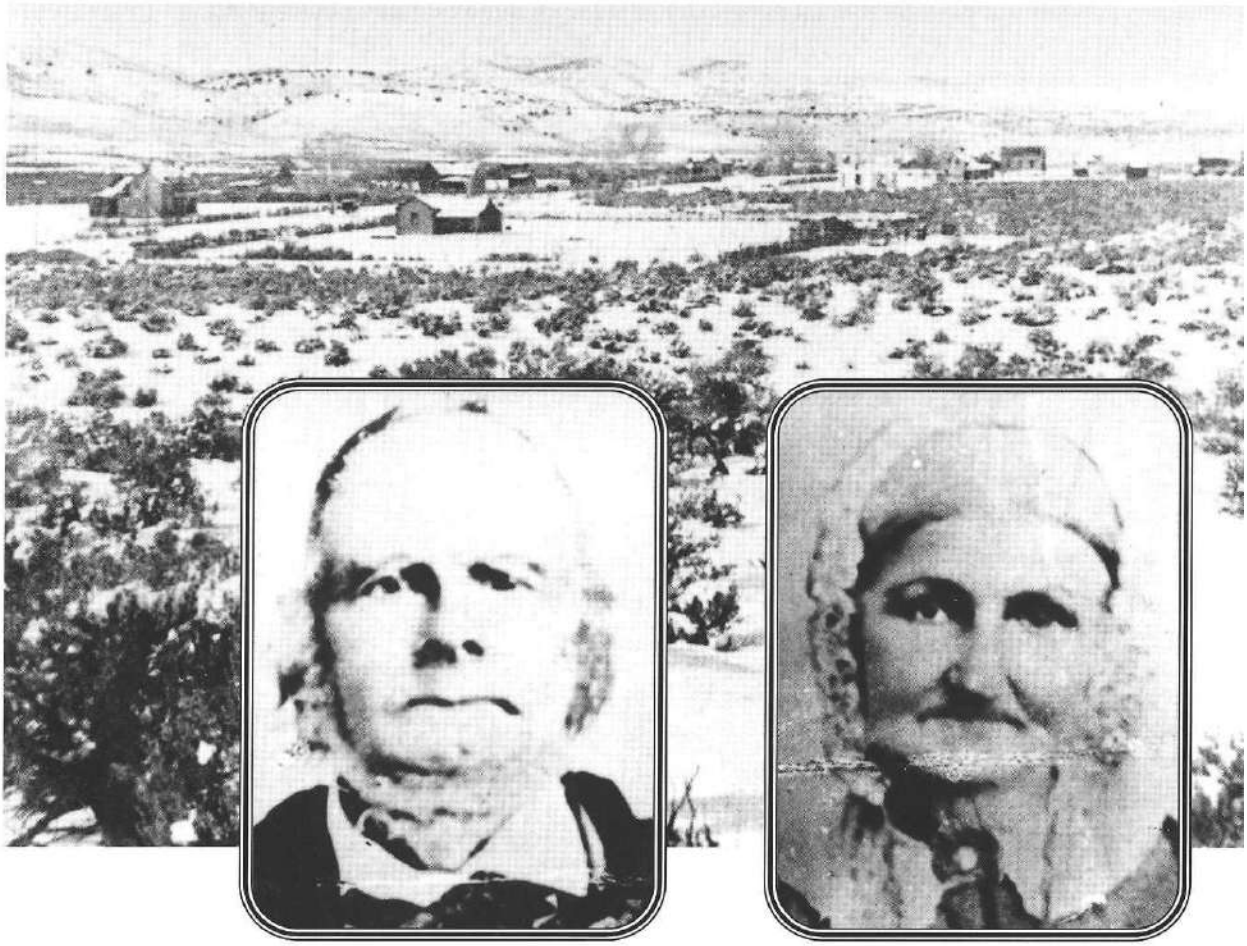


Cattle, Cotton, and Conflict: The Possession and Dispossession of Hebron, Utah

BY W. PAUL REEVE

As Mary Brown Pulsipher walked to Relief Society meeting on March 2, 1879, she was completely unaware of the pleasant surprise waiting for her behind the doors of the small Hebron, Utah, meeting-

Above: *Town of Hebron, spring 1903, courtesy of Doris Truman; Zera Pulsipher and Mary Brown Pulsipher, courtesy of Doris Truman and Kathy Simkins.*

Paul Reeve is a Ph.D. student at the University of Utah. He presented a version of this paper at the USHS annual meeting in 1998.

house. Mother Pulsipher, as Hebronites commonly called her, commanded great respect as the oldest resident of this tiny Mormon ranching community resting at the south end of the Escalante Desert in Washington County. When she opened the meetinghouse doors that day she found about ninety people—almost every person in town[1]—seated at long tables "loaded with pies, cakes, cheese, and the comforts of life." As she entered, the Mormon bishop stood and announced that the entire festive spread was in honor of her eightieth birthday; overwhelmed by the sight, Mary began to cry.[2]

It was truly a wonderful honor, and at the end of the joyful evening she stood and imparted a bit of weighty advice to those assembled: "I beg of you . . . to be faithful, do all the good you can, *be united,* put your trust in God, [and] you need not have any fears." Four years later Mary had similar thoughts as she prepared to leave Hebron for St. George. She wrote, "I pray my father in Heaven to bless Hebron. Bless the people, may they live humble, *be united* and keep all the commandments of God. Lord bless the land, the water, the cattle and all—may it be a healthy delightful place."[3]

Pulsipher's words are telling. They are not only representative of the key values of "unity and order" that Brigham Young sought to instill in the settlers of the communities whose founding he directed, but they also bear the weight of Pulsipher's years of watching over Hebron as it struggled, often unsuccessfully, to achieve those elusive goals.[4] She had witnessed battles over land, death by neglect, power conflicts, demonic possessions, and the enticements of non-Mormon mining towns, all of which exposed rifts that threatened to erode the unity for which she so fervently pled.

Prior to the founding of Hebron in 1868, records of the six years of settlement along Shoal Creek—located in northwestern Washington County—offer much evidence of the conflicts that later disrupted Hebron and culminated in its abandonment by around 1905. This

[1] Relief Society is the women's organization of the LDS church. The 1880 U.S. Population Census lists Hebron's population at 110, down one from 1870. By 1890 the total had dropped to 79; in 1900 (as part of the Enterprise precinct) it rebounded to 100. A comparison of these numbers to the manuscript census suggests that these population totals included people scattered on ranches in the vicinity who were not necessarily living in Hebron proper.

[2] Mary Brown Pulsipher, "Diary of Mary Brown Pulsipher" (typescript, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, hereafter cited as HBLL), 8–9.

[3] Ibid., 8–9, 10, emphasis added.

[4] For an insightful analysis of these ideals and how they fit into Mormon community building see Dean L. May, "The Making of Saints: The Mormon Town as a Setting for the Study of Cultural Change," *Utah Historical Quarterly,* 45 (Winter 1977): especially page 91. For a detailed treatment of unity and order as they played out in the United Order movement among the Mormons see Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons* (1976; reprint ed., Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

study focuses upon ten years surrounding the establishment of the town (1862–1872) as harbingers of future discord. These formative years speak loudly of uncharacteristic individualism among Mormon colonizers and tell intriguing tales of nineteenth-century rural Mormon culture.

Much has been written of unity and order among Mormon community builders of Utah. Even outside observers of Utah life have commented upon the success of Mormon settlement practices, and they generally attribute this success to cooperative efforts. William E. Smythe, for example, after visiting Salt Lake City to attend the first National Irrigation Congress in 1891, extolled the Mormon system. He recorded that the Mormon leadership guarded against land monopoly and did not permit any to hold land for speculation. The same was true for public utilities such as water. Mormons bought water rights with their labor, making aridity a compelling force in "the adoption of the principle of associative enterprise." Consequently, Smythe summarized, "Utah is the product of its environment."[5]

A turn-of-the-century government irrigation investigation headed by Elwood Mead of Lake Mead honor had similar conclusions. The report described irrigation in southern Utah as essentially cooperative: "If new lands must be brought under ditch to keep the young men at home on the farms, the usual procedure is a joining of forces until the result is accomplished. If water for irrigation is to be distributed, the only way the settlers know is to work together until each man has his rightful share. Thus it is that a forbidding country has been made fruitful where individual effort would have failed."[6]

The Mormon village pattern of settlement likewise played a vital role in colonizing the semiarid West. Sociologist Lowry Nelson contends that the Mormon village was a very effective pioneering device, especially when used by a homogeneous religious group responsive to ecclesiastical authority. The village provided protection, facilitated social interaction, mitigated the loneliness of the frontier, and encouraged a sense of obligation toward the broader society. As historian Dean May found in studying the Mormon farming colonizers of

[5] William E. Smythe, *The Conquest of Arid America* (1899; reprint ed., New York: The MacMillan Company, 1907), 52, 60. Smythe's conclusion reflects Turnerian environmental determinism and in retrospect is overly simplistic. His observations, for his day, were nonetheless astute.

[6] Elwood Mead, *Report of Irrigation Investigations in Utah* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1904), doc. 720, 58th Congress, 2d Session, 213, as cited in Douglas D. Alder and Karl F. Brooks, *A History of Washington County: From Isolation to Destination* (Salt Lake City and St. George: Utah State Historical Society and Washington County Commission, 1996), 198.

John Pulsipher, USHS collections.

Alpine, Utah, "neither land nor family, in the broadest sense, were as important to them as community."[7]

Certainly, then, as historian Charles Peterson asserts, an understanding of Mormon towns is key to understanding the Mormon experience in the West. This is so because, among other things, "the town represented the maximum practical expression of the Mormon withdrawal from the world." If that was true of the Mormon town in general, Peterson argues, then it was quintessentially true of the southern Utah town. While outside influences almost continuously bombarded Salt Lake City, the rural farm villages of southern Utah were "insulated from the world" and became "villages of withdrawal." They were not only geographically removed from the Mormon capital and the Americanization taking place there, but they also benefited from the buffer that the capital city created as it bore the brunt of the gentile impact.[8]

For more than 300 Mormon families, the October 1861 conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had far-reaching implications. At the conference, church president and prophet Brigham Young issued calls to colonizers who would relocate to southern Utah. There they were expected to grow cotton and other warm-climate crops in an effort to increase the economic self-sufficiency of the prophet's Great Basin kingdom. Young chose carefully the families for this mission. Most were farmers, but the list of occupations represented included everything from blacksmith and wheelwright to vintner, drum major, and hatter, reflecting Young's attempt to furnish a ready-made, well-rounded community that could take care of itself.[9]

John Pulsipher, a farmer then living in Salt Lake City, found him-

[7] See Lowry Nelson, *The Mormon Village: A Pattern and Technique of Land Settlement* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1952); Dean L. May, *Three Frontiers: Family, Land, and Society in the American West, 1850–1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 280.

[8] Charles S. Peterson, "A Mormon Town: One Man's West," *Journal of Mormon History* 3 (Fall 1976): 3, 9–11.

[9] Eugene E. Campbell, "Early Colonization Patterns," in Richard D. Poll, ed., *Utah's History* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1989), 135. For additional factors motivating Young to form the Cotton Mission, see Alder and Brooks, *A History of Washington County*, Chapter 2.

self among those chosen. He remembered, "Volunteers were called for at conference to go on this mission, but I did not think it meant me, for I had a good home, was well satisfied and had plenty to do." When Mormon apostle George A. Smith informed Pulsipher that he had been selected to go, the news came unexpectedly. Despite his initial surprise, Pulsipher reasoned, "I saw the importance of the mission to sustain Israel in the mountains. We had need of a possession in a warmer climate and I thought I might as well go as anybody." Pulsipher's change of mind was quickly followed by a change of heart. He recorded: "Then the Spirit came upon me so that I felt to thank the Lord that I was worthy to go. I went home, told my wife that I was selected for the Southern Mission and felt satisfied it was right to go. She said she wanted to go too. [She] would leave parents and friends and prefer to go and help me make a home in the far south. . . . We go with joy."[10]

Pulsipher's two brothers, Charles and William, also received calls to the Cotton Mission and joined John on the journey south. The three brothers were among the first to arrive at the future site of the city of St. George. They immediately set to work digging a ditch "to get a farm prepared against seed time." The brothers, however, did not stay in St. George long enough to enjoy the fruits of their labors. As settlers continued to accumulate in the south, their livestock did too. Feed to sustain the growing number of sheep and cattle was scarce, and apostle Erastus Snow, as president of the southern mission, recognized the need for good "herd-ground" to graze the livestock. He suggested that some of the saints should go in search of a location where the "spare stock" could feed. John Pulsipher described it this way: "It became necessary that somebody should go out some distance and make it their business to take care of stock outside of [the] cotton producing district to keep all parts of the great work in motion." The three Pulsipher brothers and David Chidester accepted that chal-

[10] John Pulsipher, "The Journal of John Pulsipher" (typescript, Special Collections, HBLL).

[11] Hebron Ward Historical Record, 1862–1867, vol. 1:4, 5 (microfilm, archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City). John Pulsipher was clerk of the Shoal Creek Branch at the time this record was made. A comparison of his journal with the ward record cited here indicates that Pulsipher used his recordings in the ward record as a basis for his journal. Some journal entries are identical to the ward record; others are summaries of several pages from the ward account. David Chidester, for example, is not mentioned in Pulsipher's journal but appears in the ward record. On occasion Pulsipher exercises broader hindsight in his journal to place events within context, but the ward record seems to be the most immediate source, and therefore I will rely most heavily on it. It should also be noted that "Hebron Ward Record" is a misnomer in that prior to 1868 Hebron did not exist and was not organized as a ward until 1869. Nonetheless, it is the title given Pulsipher's record book by the LDS Historical Department and will be cited here as such. I have added punctuation and corrected spelling for readability.

lenge, and on January 1, 1862, the group "started out for the mountains with a herd of cattle, sheep and horses."[11]

In taking charge of the Cotton Mission livestock, Chidester and the Pulsiphers distanced themselves from the shared Mormon experience in several ways. First, they separated themselves geographically from the core settlement at St. George and from a connection to the broader community of Saints available there. Second, they adopted occupations of independence. Ranching, unlike farming, required minimal reliance upon the community for survival.[12] Third, their early scattered spatial arrangement denied the ranching families the benefits of Mormon village life. They did not move closer together until 1866, and then they waited two more years to survey a formal townsite—long after they had developed patterns of independence. Finally, they faced enticements from non-Mormon mining towns at Pioche and Bullionville in present-day Nevada. These factors, taken collectively, fed confrontation and conflict amid the communal cotton production of the larger region.

For their first winter as stewards of the Cotton Mission livestock, the Pulsiphers and Chidester traveled about twenty miles north of St. George along Santa Clara Creek, built a log house and corral, and settled in for the season. The country they chose near the Santa Clara was blanketed with plenty of browse but had very little grass, and as the herds under their charge continued to swell they were soon in need of better grazing land.

Under advice from Snow, the men spent "considerable time" exploring that winter, and come springtime John and Charles had selected a new location further removed from St. George. John wrote, "When spring came we moved on north past the Mountain Meadows, over the rim of the Great Basin of desert, turned west 12 miles to Shoal Creek, a small stream fed by springs [which] runs a few miles and sinks again. This is about 45 miles from St. George—quite a distance—but the nearest suitable location for a large stock that we could find."[13] The group arrived at its new home with flocks and family in tow on April 27, 1862. The area they selected was by some springs near the mouth of Shoal Creek and was surrounded on all sides by a sea of green. The thick grass stretched four to eight feet

[12] Newell R. Frei, in his "History of Pioneering on Shoal Creek" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1932), described Hebron as "primarily a pastoral community" and noted the impact this occupation had upon the town's history. I am indebted to him for sparking ideas that led to this study.

[13] Hebron Ward Record, 1: 5–6; also see Orson Welcome Huntsman, *A Brief History of Shoal Creek, Hebron and Enterprise from 1862 to 1922* (St. George, Utah: Dixie College History Department, 1929), 2–3.

Paiute Indians, exact location and date unknown. USHS collections.

high and was tall enough in some spots to conceal a rider on horseback.

What the area tendered in abundance of feed it certainly lacked in Euro-American inhabitants. There was a small band of Indians who occupied the region and who "expressed themselves well pleased with our coming to live with them," John later recalled, but these were the only neighbors the locale had to offer. That fall, when Zera (sometimes Zerah) and Mary Pulsipher, the parents of John, William, and Charles, arrived at Shoal Creek after receiving a call to move south, Zera remembered his new home this way: "I found it to be a very healthy section and I enjoyed myself very well, considering the obscurity of the place. We were a great distance from the abode of the white men, in the very midst of the roving red men."[14]

Certainly, then, the remoteness of their location and the relatively few people forming their group set the Shoal Creek inhabitants apart from the cluster of colonies being carved from the desert by larger communal associations. The Pulsiphers and Chidester further stand out in the nature of their business. Stock raising did not demand the same type of community-building process required elsewhere within the Cotton Mission. In more typical towns, church leaders immediately surveyed a townsite using the Mormon village pattern and then distributed the land using an egalitarian lottery system. Settlers quickly

[14] Ibid., 1:6–7; Zera Pulsipher, "History of Zera Pulsipher as Written by Himself" (typescript, Special Collections, HBLL), 26.

went to work improving their new properties, building roads and dams, digging ditches and canals, and constructing churches and other public facilities on a communal basis.[15]

For the Shoal Creek ranchers, however, village life did not make sense. Their herding and dairy responsibilities dictated a different settlement pattern and lifestyle. "We were very busy all the season taking care of our flocks in a strange place," John Pulsipher recalled. "For the first year we could hardly get a chance to rest on Sunday. . . . We cut hay, built houses and prepared for winter. . . . Besides our herding and building we helped our women some in the dairy business. We made about 3,000 lbs. of butter and cheese which helped our friends in St. George to a better living than they would have had without it."[16] Rather than community-building, Pulsipher suggests, the Shoal Creek group perceived its role primarily as a business venture designed to assist the work at St. George.

These ranchers chose a site about two and a half miles east of the present town of Enterprise to construct their first dwellings. Once established, they "passed off the balance of the winter very agreeably," as did their cattle and sheep, which were all "fat in spring." In March 1863 Thomas S. Terry, son-in-law to Zera Pulsipher through marriage to two of his daughters, moved his family to Shoal Creek and joined what had become a family business (David Chidester had sold his share of the livestock business and moved to Washington City, just outside of St. George, in December 1862).[17]

This close-knit kinship group became the core of the Shoal Creek settlement and busied itself with the tremendous amount of work required to tend the sheep, horses, and beef and dairy cattle under its charge. It was the responsibility of the Shoal Creek bunch to take care of each animal entrusted to it and to divide equally any increase with the various owners of the animals throughout the Cotton Mission. Terry's daughter Alydia recalled, "We were to have half of the butter and cheese that was made from the cows that we took on share; the owner was to have the first calf and we were to have the second."[18]

Apparently, Erastus Snow sanctioned the efforts of the Pulsipher

[15] For a good description of the surveying process and the lottery system see Nellie McArthur Gubler, "History of Santa Clara, Washington County," in Hazel Bradshaw, ed., *Under the Dixie Sun* (Washington County Chapter Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1950), 162.

[16] Hebron Ward Record, 1: 7–9.

[17] Joseph Fish, *History of Enterprise, Utah, and Its Surroundings* (MS, Washington County Library, Enterprise Branch, 1967), 35; Hebron Ward Record, 1:7, 10, 11.

[18] Alydia T. Winsor, "Pioneer Ghost Town" (typescript photocopy in possession of Doris Truman, Enterprise, Utah), 1.

Erastus Snow, USHS collections.

clan. He visited the area on June 18, 1863, and pronounced divine approval of it. According to John Pulsipher, he blessed "our families, our flocks and herds, the hills, valleys, the air and waters, and all we have, he blessed in the name of the Lord and said it was our right and privilege to enjoy the blessings of the Kingdom of God." Snow also organized the group ecclesiastically—or, more precisely, he advised them to choose one of their number to preside and one to keep a record. He further admonished them to "hold meetings, bless children, baptize, partake of the sacrament and live the life of saints."[19]

According to these instructions, the settlers met on Sunday, June 28, and "organized by choosing Father Zera Pulsipher to preside over the branch of the church" and by selecting John Pulsipher as clerk. "Father Pulsipher," as he was commonly called, was a natural choice to head the branch organization. Not only was he the eldest male among the Shoal Creek families, but he had also long before proven his devotion to Mormonism, remaining faithful throughout the church's troubled days in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. He had known Joseph Smith and served under him as one of the first seven presidents of the Seventy, a church administrative body. His selection was natural, but it also solidified the Pulsipher family's dominance over the region, especially as 1863, 1864, and 1865 brought an influx of people looking to take advantage of the good herd grounds the Pulsiphers had found at Shoal Creek.[20]

In May 1863 Wilson Lund moved his wife Ellen and family into the area to dairy and take care of stock. Ellen, likely a polygamous wife, stayed two and a half years before Wilson moved her away

[19] Hebron Ward Record, 1: 1–2.

[20] Ibid.; see Zera Pulsipher, "History," and *The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), 124:138. According to James G. Bleak, "Annals of the Southern Utah Mission" (accn. #194, manuscripts division, University of Utah Marriott Library, Salt Lake City, 178, 188), Zera's official title was "Presiding Elder" at Shoal Creek. In 1865 St. George leaders created the Panaca Ward with John Nebeker as bishop and attached Shoal Creek, Clover Valley, and Eagle Valley to it. A reorganization occurred in 1866, this time bringing Shoal Creek, along with Pinto and Mountain Meadows, under the jurisdiction of the Pine Valley Ward headed by Bishop Robert Gardner; see Bleak, 197, 225. Even so, these ward organizations were loose because of the distance between communities and difficulty of travel, leaving Zera Pulsipher as the most immediate ecclesiastical head for the Shoal Creek Saints.

because he could not be with her very often. John Perkins and family along with John Ramsey brought "a herd of sheep and some cattle" to Shoal Creek in August 1863. The following spring a "Bro. Foy," John M. Chidester, Ezra N. Bullard, Hyrum Burgess, and William Cowley also herded livestock to the area and settled. The fall of 1864 brought James Russell and his wife from Washington City "to act in the office of shepherd." The ensuing year, Levi H. Callaway and his family moved to the region, hoping the cool climate might improve Levi's health.[21]

Despite the number of people who came to Shoal Creek, there seemed to be an equal number who left. John Pulsipher, for example, laments that "of all that have lived here there has been but few that we could depend upon regular to keep up the settlement." He then records a few examples: "Bro. Chidester came from Washington for health, found it and returned. Foy and others went north to the wheat district on account of the scarcity of bread and Hyrum Burgess . . . moves because he thinks there is more money somewhere else—(at the mines west)."[22] The Pulsipher kinship group weathered these comings and goings, however, and clearly became a stabilizing force in the region.

The broader terrain around Shoal Creek also began attracting settlers and brought an end to the extreme isolation the Pulsiphers had first experienced. In early 1864 a group of Mormons founded Clover Valley, approximately thirty miles west of Shoal Creek in present-day Nevada. Before long, other communities sprang to life at Meadow Valley and Eagle Valley, in proximity to the new town at Clover. It was not just Mormons who recognized the value of land in the region. Large numbers of what John Pulsipher described as "gentiles and apostates" came in search of mineral wealth and founded mining camps at Pioche and Bullionville, just across the Nevada border.[23]

As new ranchers arrived in the vicinity, William and Father Pulsipher had in the summer of 1863 already spread out to occupy more land. They moved about eight miles west of the original location to some "springs at the upper end of a grassy plain." There they were able to herd their sheep on "smoother ground," enlarge their farm-

[21] Hebron Ward Record, 1: 12, 16, 19, 22, 32, 61. Although in recording the Lunds' stay along Shoal Creek in the Ward Record Pulsipher does not describe Ellen as a polygamous wife, it seems a likely explanation to Lund's moving her to the region and then being absent most of the time, probably with other wives.

[22] Ibid., 1: 61–62.

[23] Ibid., 1: 18; *Deseret News*, February 27, 1867. For a good description of the region and the proximity of towns to each other see Bleak, "Annals," 164.

ing operations, and guard the west side of the cattle herd. William and Zera dubbed the new location "Pleasant Valley"; it was more commonly called the "upper place." Next, when "Edw. Westover" moved in and encroached upon ground traditionally occupied by the Pulsiphers, they responded by finding yet another site "a little further up the creek among the hills where" they could keep their stock.[24]

The spatial arrangements at Shoal Creek were scattered at best. An 1865 report of Erastus Snow's visit to the area gives a good indication of the ranchers' strewn condition: After breakfasting at Mountain Meadows, Snow and his entourage

> traveled 15 miles to John Pulsipher's on Shoal Creek. Finding that the men had gone to an estray sale at Westover's herd-ground, some 5 miles distant on Spring Creek the company followed and attended to some business matters, after which they returned to John Pulsipher's and stayed all night.
>
> 2d. August, The company traveled some 7 miles up Shoal Creek to Father [Zera] Pulsipher's and thence 25 miles to Clover Valley. Here the settler's [sic] were found dwelling in log houses so arranged as to make a very good fort. This was a pleasant contrast when compared with Shoal Creek improvements of two or three houses in a place and the locations from 2 1/2 to 7 miles apart.[25]

Clearly, Snow much preferred the unity and order of the Clover Valley settlement over the independence indicative of the Shoal Creek ranchers' dispersion.

More significantly, this scattering seemed to foster an abrogation of community responsibility that played out in one tragic incident. About a foot of snow fell at Shoal Creek in February 1865 and was followed by "the coldest weather ever known since the settlement of the country." The storm killed more of the Shoal Creek stock than had any from the three previous winters. In the middle of this bitter weather a man by the name of Thomas Fuller died while tending Westover's sheep herd. John Pulsipher and Thomas Terry attended to his burial. Fuller, a convert to Mormonism from Australia, apparently had no family, was around fifty years old, and was considered a "harmless, peaceable man."[26]

The incident, however, did not end with Fuller's interment. The following month, on April 16, 1865, Father Pulsipher conducted an investigation into the death of the shepherd and, in particular, into Westover's role in that death. Rumor had it that Fuller "came to his

[24] Hebron Ward Record, 1: 16–17, 22.
[25] Bleak, "Annals," 195.
[26] Hebron Ward Record, 1: 37–38.

Thomas S. Terry, Hannah Louisa Leavitt, and their children. The fourth wife of Thomas Terry, Louisa married him in 1878. USHS collections.

death for want of proper care" at the hands of Westover. As ecclesiastical head, Zera Pulsipher presided over the case with two visiting elders from St. George, "Bros. Lund and Moss," sitting with him as judges. Westover made opening remarks in which he described the usual amount of provisions used in his family and claimed that "the old man has had his share and more too, and these reports about the suffering of the late Thomas Fuller are false."

Thomas S. Terry testified next. Terry recalled being called to the Westover camp and arriving with John Pulsipher. They found Fuller dead, "lying in his brush wickiup in the sheep pen about ¼ of a mile from" the Westover place. The men had no provisions for his burial so they secured his body for the night and returned four miles to their homes.

The next day Terry and Pulsipher made a coffin, found a suit of clothing, and traveled through a foot of snow to bury Fuller. By the time they arrived, Westover was on the scene. He began digging a grave while Terry and Pulsipher washed and dressed the body. As they removed Fuller's clothing, which Terry described as "very scanty and ragged," they were met with what Terry recalled as "the most horrible sight my eyes ever beheld! The man was literally covered with lice. I am doubtful," Terry continued, "whether a quart cup would have held them—the largest lice I ever saw." He then recounted calling Westover to take a look: Westover declared that he "knew the old man was lousy, but didn't suppose he was so bad as that." Terry and Pulsipher proceeded to brush the lice from the body and then scrub Fuller clean. "So much scurf and dirt had accumulated on him that it was an awful job." His hair, too, provided a challenge, as it "had not been cut or combed for so long . . . that it was matted into wads and covered with

nits." Fuller's physical makeup was also poor. Terry described him as "very thin in flesh, but little more than skin and bones—a mere skeleton."

After hearing Terry's testimony, Westover scrambled to defend himself. He claimed that Fuller had been sent away from his previous job because "he was lousy." Westover took him in because "no one else would have him." He then claimed that Fuller had done quite well in his employ as a shepherd "till he froze his feet in the fore part of winter and now because he is dead," Westover continued, "you have got me up here to cat haul me, I believe, and I have a notion not to stay to hear it."

Zera Pulsipher next questioned Westover on a few items concerning Fuller's appetite and health. He also inquired how often Westover allowed Fuller a change of clothing, to which Westover responded, "Why, he could not change at all, unless I had given him mine and I went naked. He had a shirt washed last August and after that he washed some in the creek and my wife mended a pair of pants and got lice all over her apron. I told her not to wash or mend anymore for him—let him do it himself."

Pulsipher turned his line of questioning to spiritual matters and found justification for a decision against Westover. Pulsipher inquired if Westover had been attending to his prayers, to which Westover "finally confessed that he had not for considerable length of time." Pulsipher then blamed Westover for not reporting the situation to anyone and stated that he personally would have divided his own clothing with Fuller had he known the need existed. The visiting elders also took their turns at chastening Westover, telling him that he had "not done his duty as an Elder in Israel." "If he had attended to his prayers the spirit of the Lord would [have] opened his eyes so he could see what was around him." Why, they queried, "let that poor old man lie and perish with lice?"

After conferring for a few minutes the three judges handed down their decision. They instructed Westover that it was his duty "to make a confession before this meeting and at some convenient time be rebaptized to restore him to full fellowship with the saints and with the Lord." Westover claimed he could not comply with the request for rebaptism and appealed the case to Erastus Snow.[27]

Unfortunately, there is no further mention of the matter in the

[27] Ibid., 1: 39–53.

ward record, but other entries make it evident that this case created a rift between the Pulsipher clan and Westover. At the general election that year Westover "made a little opposition," but more telling was his refusal, in 1866, to join with the rest of the settlers in "forting up" during the Black Hawk War. The Pulsipher clan invited him to join them, but "he said he would not come this way, if he moved at all [he] said he would go the other way."[28] Clearly, Westover preferred his independence over community responsibility, an attitude that certainly played a role in Fuller's dreadful death.

The move from scattered conditions to a fort community occurred a year after the Fuller affair, at a time when new problems demanded a change. While Shoal Creek settlers had managed to maintain friendly relations with the Paiute Indians, the same was not true for the newer towns to the west or for the territory as a whole. The year 1865 marked the beginnings of what would come to be called the Black Hawk War, the worst Indian uprising in Utah history. Threatened by ever-encroaching Mormons, the generally friendly Paiutes of southern Utah joined with the more hostile Utes to raid Mormon towns, steal cattle, and kill settlers. In response to this general uprising, Brigham Young in May 1866 sent orders to Erastus Snow and other southern leaders instructing them to fort up: "To save the lives and property of people in your counties from the marauding and blood-thirsty bands which surround you," Young declared, "there must be thorough and energetic measures of protection taken immediately. . . . Small settlements should be abandoned, and the people who have formed them should, without loss of time, repair to places that can be easily defended."[29]

Prior to receiving such instructions, the Pulsiphers were already making preparations to move to a common spot at Shoal Creek. Their plans, however, were not motivated by Indian depredations. Rather, a particularly harsh winter in 1865–66 had convinced them of the undesirability of their dispersed circumstances. Nearly five feet of snow that winter made travel all but impossible for about a month, leaving John Pulsipher to lament, "Our meetings are few." When the weather cleared and road conditions improved, meetings resumed, and talk centered on "locating a town plot where we and many others can live and have more help, more neighbors and build up a larger place."

[28] Ibid., 1:57, 70–71.

[29] Brigham Young, Salt Lake City, to Erastus Snow and the bishops and saints of Washington and Kane counties, May 2, 1866, in Bleak, "Annals," 226–27.

This undoubtedly reflected a desire among the Shoal Creek saints to achieve the order and unity that the Mormon village offered. In consequence, they selected a site at the center of all the waters of Shoal Creek called the "big willow patch," laid off lots, built houses and corrals, and moved into "Shoal Creek Fort" in April 1866. The group consisted of only five families: Zera, John and William Pulsipher, Thomas Terry, and Levi Callaway; sheep herder Reuben James also joined them, but as noted earlier, Westover refused.[30]

It was not long before this newly banded bunch learned of Young's advice to abandon small and unprotected locations. Initially the Shoal Creek settlers thought the prophet's counsel included them, but in July Erastus Snow told them otherwise. He visited the ranching outpost and told the residents that "the protecting power of the almighty has been over you" and prophesied that "the time is near when there will be a flourishing settlement here." He complimented them on the good spot they had chosen for their fort and said he would instruct the Clover Valley residents to abandon their community and join those at Shoal Creek.[31]

By the end of 1866, ten families from Clover Valley—Amos, James, and Jonathan Hunt; James, Joseph and Hyrum Huntsman; Dudley and Jeremiah Leavitt; Zadock Parker; and Brown B. Crow—moved to combine with the Shoal Creek group.[32] With this merging, the old residents of Shoal Creek situated themselves in a semblance of a Mormon village for the first time since being sent off to tend the Cotton Mission livestock four years earlier.

It must have been somewhat of a pleasant change of pace as the small fort began to bustle with social activities typical of a Mormon town. The ward record describes such events as theatrical performances and dancing parties complete with songs and recitations. The families of the fort further arranged themselves in a variety of ways: they formed a weekly "Mutual Benefit Society" for "improvement of old and young in public speaking"; activated a military organization and conducted drills to guard against Indians; worked communally to build a $500, eighteen by twenty-five-foot schoolhouse and social hall; and joined forces to dig a town ditch to conduct water to the fort. They further organized wood-gathering excursions, began a Sunday

[30] Hebron Ward Record, 1:66–71.

[31] Ibid., 1: 78–81.

[32] See Orson Welcome Huntsman, "Diary of Orson W. Huntsman" (typescript, Special Collections, HBLL), 14–15, and Hebron Ward Record, 1:88.

School, and held regular afternoon and evening Sunday services, all of which left John Pulsipher to pen, "Our time is well occupied and we enjoy ourselves very much!"[33] Based upon such evidence, it seems that the Shoal Creek ranchers finally achieved a sense of community and benefited from the close associations the fort created.

Despite the protection and ease of social interaction this coming together offered, it also generated problems. The merging of two communities that had separately developed patterns of independence proved troublesome, and soon noticeable fissures appeared. Land issues, positions of power within the community, and non-Mormon influences at the nearby mines would beleaguer the tiny settlement and pull and tear at the seams of unity too feebly stitched by the village system.

Shortly after the establishment of the Shoal Creek Fort it became evident that the men from Clover Valley had different habits in regard to Sunday worship. On Sunday, December 9, 1866, John Pulsipher noted in the ward record, "Most of the Clover men were fixing to do a big week's work by commencing it on Sunday and saving a day. This seems to be a common practice, so the meetings are small, yet."[34]

The differences between the two groups became more pronounced as later that month the men gathered to divide the land. The assembled men chose Zera Pulsipher as chairman over the proceedings while the "Clover brethren" selected "Father Huntsman" to act as their spokesman. Huntsman began by expressing fear that there was not enough land available to accommodate all the families, especially because the Shoal Creek brethren "claimed the best." This was an understandable concern among those who had abandoned their lands at Clover Valley and now had nothing other than the protection the fort proffered. Orson Welcome Huntsman, Father Huntsman's son, articulated it best as he recalled the "very discouraging outlook" his family had for making a living at the new place. He wrote, "For more than the five [families] that were already located here there was nothing . . . to subsist on, only in raising stock; this was a good place for that but there was no market for stock, butter or cheese."[35]

[33] Hebron Ward Record, 1: 97, 98; Hebron Ward Record, 1867–1872, 2: 4, 5, 7, 8, 9. Prior to "forting up," the Shoal Creek settlers did get together on occasion to dance and had previously organized militarily, but the extent and frequency of such activities clearly increased after the settlers moved to the fort.

[34] Ibid., 1:94.

[35] Ibid., 1:95; Huntsman diary, 15.

Orson Welcome Huntsman as an older man. Courtesy of Charmaine Roper.

Fortunately for the Clover men, the Shoal Creek ranchers were sympathetic to their plight. The Pulsiphers responded quickly to solve the problem; they offered their land claims, including their enclosed and cultivated lands, "all to be used for the public good." In an additional effort to smooth over any division, those gathered agreed to drop the name of "Clover brethren" and "Shoal Creek brethren." As John Pulsipher put it, "we are all citizens of this place, so let us be united." At the conclusion of the meeting the people selected Thomas S. Terry, Father Huntsman, and John Pulsipher as a committee to divide the land.[36]

By May 1867 the committee had laid out one public field for gardens, one as a pasture or hay field, and a third for unspecified use. Each family received about half an acre of the garden spot, one acre of the hay field, and two or three acres of the last field, depending upon the size of the family. As was customary among Mormons, the settlers drew for the land by ballot "and the people were very well satisfied."[37]

The following spring, however, after high floods destroyed much of the farm land as well as roads and fencing, those feelings of satisfaction diminished greatly. In March 1868 the men of the fort were preoccupied with building and repairing roads, constructing a water ditch, and surveying and dividing new land. The men's independent attitudes as they completed these tasks are perhaps a good indication of the divisiveness that plagued this tiny community. According to the ward record, at least a "few" townsmen "expressed some stubbornness and a stiff will and [went about] doing things according to their narrow notions, or not at all." Ecclesiastical leaders condemned such attitudes and advised the offending parties to "humble themselves and get the spirit of the Lord." Only then,

[36] Hebron Ward Record, 1:96.
[37] Ibid., 1:110, 111.

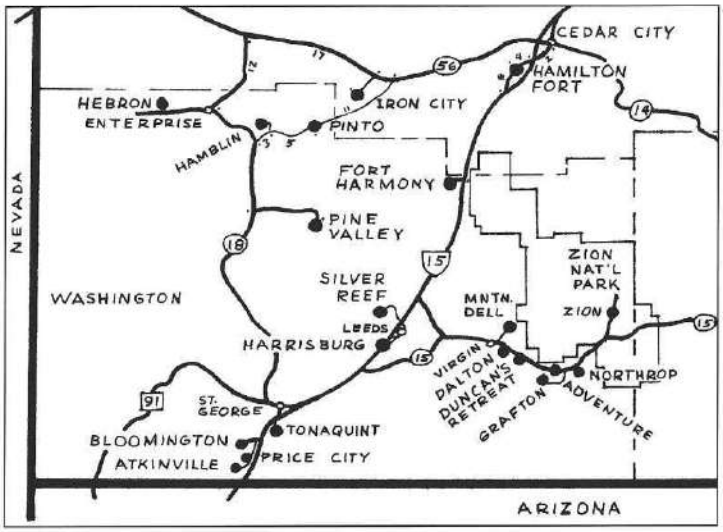
Pulsipher declared, "[can we] do business in union." Pulsipher continued with a prophetic warning to the settlers: "Without union we can't do business acceptable to the Lord and unless we are united the Devil will have power over us, we will be broken up and have to leave our homes."[38]

Such admonition notwithstanding, independent attitudes persisted at Shoal Creek. In August 1868, due to a general cessation of Indian depredations, Erastus Snow deemed it safe to abandon the fort at Shoal Creek and to found a proper Mormon village. Accompanied by G. A. Burgon, the county surveyor, Snow traveled to the area for that purpose. According to Orson Huntsman, when Snow arrived there was some disagreement over where the townsite should be: "Some wanted the town one place and some another, but the most of the brethren wanted it right where the fort was and immediately around the fort." Snow looked over the situation and counseled with the men as he inspected the land. Huntsman described the site chosen by the majority of the people as "a very nice location," but he also remembered that "it did not suit Brother Snow very well." Snow agreed that the spot was likable, but he felt it was just not practicable. He prophetically warned the people that the locale was too remote from their water source and it would be expensive to channel water to the town and keep it there. But the self-ruling settlers persisted, even against Snow's advice, and he gave in to their wishes.[39]

Before long, the Mormon grid system scarred the earth as the surveyor laid out three streets running east and west and five north and south. Burgon also surveyed four areas into fields for farming. In choosing a name for the new town, John Pulsipher borrowed from Old Testament scripture and suggested Hebron, after the site where the ancient prophet Abraham had tended his flocks and herds. The people voted to accept the name, and Snow then blessed and dedicated the locale for a new town.[40]

There was something more telling about the parallel to ancient Abraham that Pulsipher drew upon in selecting Hebron as the town name. Abraham settled at Biblical Hebron as a solution to the conflict that existed between him and his nephew Lot. According to Old Testament verses, "There was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's

[38] Ibid., 2:18–19.
[39] Huntsman diary, 29–31.
[40] Ibid.; Hebron Ward Record, 2:34–35.



Map by and courtesy of Stephen Carr, from Stephen L. Carr, Utah Ghost Towns *(Salt Lake City: Western Epics, 1972).*

cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle . . . and they separated themselves the one from the other."[41] A similar detachment, likely for the same reason, took place at Shoal Creek prior to the founding of Hebron.

Pulsipher, in early 1868, noted a dispersal from the fort as the Clover brethren returned to their former lands at Clover Valley. He wrote of the removal of Jeremiah Leavitt and Jonathan Hunt, for example, and then chided them: "The brethren have had no counsel to go—nor did they ask for any that I know of. They can't see inducements sufficient to stay here and work, although this is the place we are counseled to live by the presidency of the mission."[42]

Apparently, Snow felt similarly. After dedicating Hebron he expressed sorrow over the families that had gone to Clover Valley. He remarked that he "wished they had stayed here and tried to fulfill the counsel that he gave to build up this place. . . . [He] wished [the] saints to feel the spirit of gathering, build good houses . . . and make themselves comfortable homes, have good schools and meetings and educate the children and not scatter off and live like Paiutes." Some of those who left eventually returned to Hebron, but the trend seemed to be that the few who relied upon ranching (primarily the Pulsipher kinship group) stayed at Hebron, whereas the remaining

[41] Genesis 13:6–7, 11, 18.
[42] Hebron Ward Record, 2:21.

population became fluid, often moving in search of better conditions elsewhere.[43]

Even those who formed the Hebron core shortly returned to habits of independence. The tremendous amount of labor required in the ranching business constantly occupied most Hebronites, particularly during the summer months, making it difficult to attend community events and social gatherings. On April 5, 1868, ecclesiastical leaders responded to this situation in what would become a regular occurrence at Hebron each spring. They canceled all weeknight meetings "until winter comes again." Even the regular Sunday gatherings, although not abandoned, declined in participation during summer months. On Sunday, April 19, 1868, for example, Pulsipher recorded that Sunday school and sacrament meeting were "quite thinly attended" that day.[44]

Some residents began dispersing to their dairy ranches to be closer to their work. In January 1869 John and William Pulsipher moved south of town a few miles to Little Pine Valley, where they built a sawmill and dairy. Thomas Terry did likewise, moving to the old "upper" location and establishing what came to be called Terry's ranch. In April 1870 Huntsman recorded, "I moved in company with Father Terry to what was called the upper place. . . . We went there to spend the summer, milk cows, [and] make butter and cheese." In 1872 Pulsipher explained a similar model that he followed: "[We] spent the summer in Little Pine Valley at [our] dairy ranch—milked forty cows and attended to our little farming and herding. . . . [We] generally attend [church] meeting in town and [go] back at night to our work."[45] Although they gathered for worship services on Sunday, this dispersal of ranchers demonstrates a certain abrogation of community responsibility. The autonomy it spawned manifested itself in other areas of conflict at Hebron.

Leadership issues, for example, caused contention at the new community. For the most part, the Pulsipher family had maintained its dominance over political and religious affairs throughout the years spent at the fort, with Zera in charge and John generally serving in a support role. Less than a year after the settlers moved from the fort, a

[43] Ibid, 2:38. For a good example of the transient type of people who passed through Hebron see Juanita Brooks, *On the Ragged Edge: The Life and Times of Dudley Leavitt* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1973). Brooks chronicles Leavitt's experience in several southern Utah towns, including, in chapter ten, his stay at Hebron.

[44] Hebron Ward Record, 2:19–20.

[45] Huntsman diary, 204; John Pulsipher journal.

conflict arose among Hebron's school trustees that would end with Zera being stripped of his power and an outsider being brought in to preside over the infant town.

According to John Pulsipher's version of the incident, strife centered around the hiring of a schoolteacher for the 1869 winter term. The school trustees, Jonathan Hunt, Amos Hunt, and J. S. Huntsman (all Clover brethren), talked of employing a female teacher for the winter school. Father Pulsipher recommended waiting three days before signing a contract with the woman to see if the trained teacher sent for at Salt Lake City would arrive. If so, then the trustees could make an informed decision on whom to hire. Apparently the trustees believed Pulsipher was interfering in their business, and they fired off a dispatch to Erastus Snow at St. George charging Pulsipher with opposing winter school at Hebron altogether. Snow, without investigating Pulsipher's version of things, replied that he was "tired of hearing complaints." He advised Father Pulsipher to resign from the office of presidency at Hebron and scolded that if Hebronites could not agree on so small a matter as winter school, "there is need of repentance and reformation and confessing of sins to God and each other."

At the meeting called on January 2, 1869, to deal with this affair, Zera Pulsipher immediately "resigned gladly the responsibility that he has so long borne." The Hebron men accepted this surrender with "a unanimous vote of thanks" and then unitedly elected Dudley Leavitt to preside over them until Snow officially reorganized the town's religious leadership.

John Pulsipher, in his capacity as clerk, sent a record of these proceedings and an explanation of the subsequent school situation to Snow. As it turned out, the teacher from Salt Lake City had arrived, met approval of the trustees, and shortly thereafter began teaching the Hebron children. Pulsipher also informed Snow that the people of Hebron "are not so badly divided as might be supposed. Our meetings are well attended by nearly all the people, we have good times and the spirit of the Lord is with us." He then recorded in the ward record his take on where the blame for the discontent rightfully lay. Trustees Amos Hunt and J.S. Huntsman, he wrote, "are a little inclined to be passionate and stubborn and have not in all things tried to consult the interests of the people who elected them."[46]

Regardless of who was to blame, the contention overturned

[46] Hebron Ward Record, 2:49–53

Hebron's power structure and, more important, established a precedent: residents often appealed to St. George leaders when local conditions caused dissatisfaction. During the fall of 1869 Snow organized Hebron into a ward with Clover Valley attached to it. Instead of looking for a leader within either of those communities, he elected to bring someone in from the outside to preside, perhaps to avoid any potential conflict that might arise from selecting a member of one of the kinship groups at Hebron. George H. Crosby, a young resident of Washington City, which was about fifty-five miles southeast of Hebron, got the nod from Snow and arrived at Hebron in December 1869 to officiate as bishop of the new ward.[47]

During Crosby's tenure in office he organized ward teachers to visit all Hebron families each month and report on potential areas of conflict. This became an effective device in maintaining peace at Hebron, although divisions persisted. Even the teachers' visits, like other meetings, were suspended during the summer months as ranchers dispersed to their various locations. Bishop Crosby lasted at Hebron until 1877, when a fire destroyed his home and he gave up and moved away. Thomas S. Terry then became bishop. By 1894, however, townsfolk demanded a change and lobbied St. George leaders for a new ecclesiastical head who was not away from Hebron so much. St. George authorities granted the request and made George A. Holt bishop. When Holt selected his counselors, however, one refused to serve and the congregation voted not to sustain the other.[48] Clearly, Hebronites, beginning with the school issue, adopted democratic notions in regard to who would lead them.

At least some residents also developed self-governing attitudes regarding the mining camps located twenty to thirty miles west of town. In an effort to prevent non-Mormon control of the area's mineral wealth, Erastus Snow in 1864 founded the town of Panaca, in present-day Nevada, and instructed settlers to lay claim to the "principle lead" in the surrounding region. He exhorted them to "build up a clean thriving respectable town first, and then, if they mined, let it be secondary consideration in their feelings and works." Such tactics by no means kept non-Mormons away. In fact, it seems the region became a battleground in a broader conflict for political control of

[47] Ibid., 2:75, 77.

[48] Terry, a polygamist, spent a considerable amount of time hiding from federal marshals at his Beaver Dam Wash property south of Hebron. For additional narrative of these transfers of leadership see W. Paul Reeve, *A Century of Enterprise: The History of Enterprise Utah, 1896–1996* (Enterprise, Utah: The City of Enterprise, 1996), 18, 55.

the Great Basin kingdom. Patrick Connor, the U.S. military commander stationed at Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City, detested Mormon dominance of Utah Territory. He saw Utah's mineral wealth as a great way to attract a large non-Mormon population to the area and thereby vote the Mormons out of office. His tactic of encouraging his soldiers to prospect for minerals never worked the way he hoped, but it did earn him acclaim as the father of Utah mining. Connor and other territorial officials laid claim to some of the mines west of Hebron, and before long two thriving mining communities, Pioche and Bullionville, were in full swing.[49]

Due to the perceived evils and economic instability that mining and trading with the non-Mormons generated, Brigham Young felt strongly that his people should avoid such activities. Those at Hebron were certainly aware of such admonitions. In 1868 local leaders informed the people that trading with non-Mormons would be considered a "matter of fellowship." In March 1869 Hebronites were instructed "to cease trading with and sustaining gentiles—don't run after the mining or rail roads, but stick to the farms and business at home and you will be richer and have more of the spirit of the gospel." Likewise, at an 1872 conference at St. George, Young told the Saints that "those who will stay at home and mind their legitimate labors, will be better off, eventually, than those who will go to the mines and work for the gentiles."[50]

Despite such preaching, the mines apparently offered too much allure for some settlers along Shoal Creek to resist. In September 1871 Orson Huntsman described the economic enticements of the mining camps: "I made several trips to Pioche with lumber, in company with Father Terry and others from our place. Pioche proved to be a great camp . . . [and] made a good market for lumber and other products or produce, also a great amount of labor. Bullionville was also a place of great note."[51]

Apparently, trading and freighting at the mines did not merit excommunication, but moving there sometimes did. Hyrum Burgess left Shoal Creek for the mines in 1865 and three years later was "cut off" from the church "for unfaithful conduct." Brown B. Crow also learned the severe consequences of relocating to the mining camps. In August 1868 Hebron ward leaders "cut off" his wife, Lucinda Jane,

[49] Bleak, "Annals," 161–66.
[50] Hebron Ward Record, 2:42, 63; Bleak, "Annals," 168.
[51] Huntsman diary, 53–54.

from the church "for leaving her husband and the society of the Saints and choosing to live with the wicked at a gentile camp." Brown Crow not only lost his wife but was also "suspended from fellowship" with the Saints "until he makes satisfaction, for moving his family away from the gathering place and exposing them to be overcome in society of the wicked." Three months later, no doubt humbled by the loss of his wife and his fellowship in the church, Crow returned to Hebron and made public confession. He expressed his sorrow for the course he had taken and declared his determination to be a Saint. Hebronites restored him to full fellowship by a unanimous vote.[52] Certainly, then, proximity to the mines and the economic inducements they offered created yet another challenge to community cohesion at Hebron.

A final trial eventually provided Hebronites with an explanation for the divisiveness that gripped their town. During the fall of 1867 and winter of 1868, the town had what John Pulsipher described as a "school" that "tended to unite the people because they have seen the power of the Devil exerted to destroy an innocent brother." According to Pulsipher, the devil overcame Orson Welcome Huntsman "many times" and "would take full possession of him and cause his body to cramp and be in the greatest agitation sometimes so it would take several men to hold him on the bed." On occasion, the devil talked through Orson and told "all manner of lying deceit and considerable trick to deceive us and divide our faith." The leading devil in possession of Orson declared his name to be John but said that two others, Charles and Frank, assisted him.[53]

One Sunday evening in February 1868, following church meetings, an "uncommon-noisy-impudent-devil who talked in a strange tongue" took possession of Huntsman. The men gathered to exorcise the demon but found it very difficult to do so. The devil "mock[ed them] while [they] were administering and trying to cast him out." After about half an hour the noisy devil left, but the one named John entered. "This one stayed as long as he could, declared he would not go, [and] said his business was to destroy the Kingdom of God and his time was short." The men "prayed, anointed with oil, and administered one after another, some times for several hours, with all the faith and power [they] could command before the young man could be relieved."[54]

[52] Hebron Ward Record, 1:62; Bleak, "Annals," 282; Hebron Ward Record, 2:36, 44.
[53] Ibid., 2:12–13.
[54] Ibid.

Two other young people at Hebron experienced similar demons in early 1868. A devil named Cain took possession of James Wilkinson, and "when in the boy, had full control of his body and tried with great force to kill the boy or anyone that came to help him." The same evil spirits that possessed Wilkinson then afflicted Adelia Terry, and the men "had a hard struggle to drive and keep the devil from her."[55]

The devil and his cohorts returned to Hebron in 1874, this time afflicting young William McElprang. When the demons overpowered McElprang they caused "terrible pain most of the time" and occasionally "tried to run him wild into the mountains." John Pulsipher stood guard over the young man one night and described the "principal spirit" that possessed him as "a very stubborn dumb sort of a fellow." The night Pulsipher stayed with McElprang "a very raving noisy spirit got possession of him which when ordered to tell his name said it was 'Suzi Borem.'" Upon learning this, Pulsipher promptly rebuked Suzi and cast her out, and she apparently "returned no more"; but the "old stubborn fellow" continued to plague William until finally the townspeople gave up. They took him to Cedar City, more than forty-five miles northeast, to live with his father.[56]

While Pulsipher viewed these experiences as a unifying force, the town's interpretation of the demonic invasions is more significant. Apparently, the demons became a scapegoat of sorts, offering an otherworldly explanation for the town's failure to achieve the elusive goals of unity and order demanded of nineteenth-century Mormons. Although no contemporary explanation has been found, a story apparently grew with time that "Hebron was located over an old battleground and that many evil spirits were roaming around the valley."[57]

Perhaps townsfolk used a legend that began in Mill Creek Canyon in northern Utah to explain the strange events. As tradition had it, a man named Alexander owned a sawmill in that canyon that was plagued with curious occurrences. Every tool in the mill ended up missing, and all those borrowed from a neighboring mill became lost. Puzzled by these and other mystic happenings, Alexander appealed to Brigham Young for an explanation. The prophet, after visiting the mill, told Alexander he was trespassing on property that had belonged to the Gadianton Robbers, a nefarious band of thieves from Mormon

[55] Ibid., 2:27–29.

[56] Hebron Ward Record, 1872–1897, vol. 3 (holograph photocopy, Enterprise Branch, Washington County Library, Enterprise, Utah), 39–40.

[57] Nancy LaVerne Jones Hirschi, ed., "Nancy" (unpublished typescript in possession of Doris Truman, Enterprise, Utah).

scripture. Once Alexander moved his sawmill, the difficulties ended. An almost identical story was told about another mill in Big Cottonwood Canyon, and apparently the same thing happened at a sawmill at Pine Valley near Hebron.[58]

Plausibly, when residents along Shoal Creek began experiencing trouble with evil spirits, they associated the situation with the sawmill story and believed that they had founded their town on ancient Gadianton Robber territory. Carrie E. L. Hunt, who spent much of her youth in Hebron, stated, "As a child I remember of hearing the older folks talking about how evil spirits seem to hover about that part of the country. It was the people's belief that way back in history, that strip of country had once been the hideout of the notorious Gadianton Robbers that were so much talked about in history. They felt their spirits still haunted the country."[59]

In the end it was an earthquake, not evil spirits, that led to Hebron's ultimate demise. Many other divisive incidents preceded the quake, though. The town failed miserably in its United Order attempt in 1874. Family feuds erupted on occasion, such as when William Pulsipher struck Jefferson Hunt with a rock in 1879, causing "a gash one-and-a-half inches long on his head, besides some bruises"; the bishop eventually smoothed over the problem. The Huntsmans and Callaways had disputes, as did the Laubs and Barnums, but a more significant problem was the town's lack of water. By the mid-1880s Hebron's canal had dried up, and its flume had collapsed in disrepair. Townspeople began several abortive attempts to construct new flumes or canals, but disunity plagued their efforts—as did a perplexing degree of complacency.[60]

On November 17, 1902, an earthquake rattled Hebron and provided an excuse for the abandonment of the town. The quake damaged most homes and made the safety of their foundations questionable. According to one memory, "some of the older ladies

[58] James H. Gardner, "Incidents in Early Utah History: Some May Call it Folklore," in Kate B. Carter, ed., *Heart Throbs of the West*, vol. 5 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1944), 185–86. This story's link to southern Utah is made in Andrew Karl Larson's "Ithamar Sprague and His Big Shoes," in Thomas E. Cheney, ed., *Lore of Faith and Folly* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971), 31–35. I have written different versions of this tale and its connection to Hebron that have previously been published as "Evil Spirits Plagued the Residents of Hebron, Utah" as part of the Utah State Historical Society's and the Utah Statehood Centennial Commission's "History Blazer" project and in Reeve, *A Century of Enterprise*, 16–17.

[59] Carrie Elizabeth Laub Hunt, *Memories of the Past and Family History* (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Company, 1968), 33.

[60] Huntsman diary, 122; Hebron Ward Record, 3:151–52; ibid., 2:116–17; ibid., 3:184–85, 190. For a complete description of the dispute between Pulsipher and Hunt, see Reeve, *A Century of Enterprise*, 22–23. For more on the flumes and canals, see Reeve, *A Century of Enterprise*, 23–26.

thought the quake was an 'Act of God,' while others declared its cause was the evil spirits that hovered about the area."[61] No matter the reason, by December talk in town centered on moving elsewhere. Before long, Mormon ecclesiastical leaders approved the dispossession of the town, and by September 1905 it was largely abandoned.

Does Hebron, a Cotton Mission settlement, fit into the cooperative, "village of withdrawal" framework that characterized most nineteenth-century Mormon agricultural communities? Undoubtedly, Hebron pioneers held that model aloft as the ideal; however, other dynamics seem to have been at play, consistently keeping that goal beyond their reach. The independence of ranch life at Hebron gave rise to a bold type of Mormon democracy on the southern fringe of the Great Basin. Hebron was a ranching community, not an agricultural one, and therefore lacked the binding force of water that Smythe and Mead described as central to the cooperative agricultural communities they observed. Ranching is an occupation of independence carried out over great distances and requiring little reliance upon community for survival. Rather than a product of its environment, as Smythe suggested of Utah, Hebron seems more a product of its occupation.

Hebron differs too from the village of withdrawal pattern articulated by Charles Peterson. After arriving in southern Utah as part of the Cotton Mission, Hebron's founding families underwent an additional withdrawal. Charged with grazing, milking, and tending the cattle of the Cotton Mission, they removed themselves more than forty miles northwest of St. George. This removal, combined with ranching duties, demanded self-reliance simply because there was no one else to depend upon. It could mean, as well, the abrogation of community responsibility, which in one tragic case led to death.

Even when the ranchers coalesced at the Shoal Creek Fort, their four years of individualism dominated their attitudes and led to additional conflict. Land issues, stubbornness, and struggles over positions of power marked life at the fort and continued to surface as the settlers founded Hebron. Finally, instead of protecting Hebronites from worldly influences, their isolated location made them vulnerable to the enticements of the non-Mormon role models in the mining communities that emerged around them.

Mother Mary Pulsipher lived through most of these experiences

[61] Hirschi, "Nancy."

and in her final years pled with Hebron to "be united." When unity failed, it seems settlers turned to explanations suggesting that the situation was beyond their control; traditions regarding evil spirits developed that placed the blame for the conflict at the feet of the treacherous Gadianton Robbers. More probably, however, culture, environment, and occupation all blended together to form a curious mixture at Hebron that challenges the historical model of the cohesive Mormon community. Regardless, if the Gadianton legend is true, then when the last resident finally left Hebron the evil robbers regained their land, and Hebron became a *true* ghost town.