

HARMONY VALLEY & THE PIONEERS

In December, 1847, the Territorial General Assembly in Salt Lake commissioned Parley P. Pratt to gather a company of 50 men to explore the Southern part of what is now Utah. Some stayed in Parowan, Little Salt Lake Valley, and others explored as far South as what is known today as Santa Clara. Then, at General Conference, on October 6, 1851 it was announced that a new community was to be founded. Within a few days John D. Lee and a company of nineteen wagons were on the way towards this Valley. In the Deseret News dated December 8, 1852:

On the first water south of the rim of the great basin, in Washington County, John D. Lee, Elisha Groves and company are building a Fort on Ash Creek called Harmony. Fifteen men are capable of bearing arms. Fifty-one loads of lumber have been taken there from Parowan and six teams are constantly employed building the Fort. One of the first rooms erected was a school house. The point is well selected for military purposes and commands the spring and about 100 acres of farm land on the creek and about 20 miles of good grazing around. It is about 20 miles north of the Rio Virgin, which is inaccessible to teams until a road can be worked at considerable expense.

In April 1854, Brigham Young sent twenty-three young men to the area, with ten wagons, as missionaries to the Indians. May 19, 1854, Brigham Young, Orson Pratt and others visited the new settlement, but did not like the location as there wasn't enough land to sustain the colony. It would be considered an Outpost. The next day a new fort site was located, we now know as Fort Harmony. , Harmony and Kanarra creeks were inspected as to where canals would be dug for the flow of water.

In February 1855, it was ready for living, our Fort Harmony was 200 feet square. The houses on the East were one story and the walls ten feet high. On the West the houses were two story with walls sixteen feet high. In the center a well was dug, a 100 feet deep, which supplied the culinary water. On the North and South gates stood. Fort Harmony was the seat for Washington county from 1856 to 1859; with John D. Lee as judge. Elisha H. Groves, Henry Barney, Richard Robinson, Rufus C. Allen all held an office at the Fort. At the end of 1856 there were twenty-five families and two hundred twenty-five souls calling Fort Harmony their Home.

In January 1860, an earthquake cracked the Fort walls. As a result, some of the walls had to be torn down to keep the Fort safe for living in. The Winter of 1861-1862 was devastating for the Fort. Snow and Rain fell almost incessantly for twenty-eight days with the Sun never shining. Having been built of adobe Fort Harmony crumbled and melted in the constant moisture. The people moved to the Indian Mission Farm, today's Town of New Harmony. Other families moved to what is now known as Kanarraville and some went south.

HARMONY VALLEY & THE NATIVE AMERICANS

Harmony Valley and Fort Harmony's history is intricately intertwined with the Native American history. The Paiute Tribe occupied Harmony Valley long before the pioneers came. It was named "Somato" or the "Cove" and was a place for Native American gatherings, the logical spot just south of the Great Basin Divide. In the Fall of 1863 the Indian Mission was organized after the order of a military unit. The Mission was to teach, help and learn with the Native American groups living in the area. Native American artifacts have been found all over the Valley.