

PARADISE (SPRING OF 1860)

A small group of men from Draper consisting of J.G. Crapo, Alvin Montierth, William Smith and Barnard White decided to look for another home site where the opportunities were better. The possibilities of Cache Valley, in Northern Utah, were being talked of a good deal at this time and many settlers were planning to settle there. This group became interested and decided to come to Cache Valley and look it over. They arrived in the valley in April 1860 and went to the southern most part where no one had settled.

Irrigation water always being as essential as the land on which to put it, the little cove where Avon, Utah, is now situated appeared very attractive and had a number of natural advantages over other settlements. It was at the forks of East Creek and Little Bear River so plenty of water was available. The party was satisfied and immediately returned to Draper for their families. They interested David James at Salt Lake City, Utah, and other friends who came later.

The little colony returned soon to Cache Valley and located where Avon is now situated and commenced to build their log houses, break up the land and put in their crops. The utmost vigilance was necessary to protect themselves and their property from the Indians. The location for the settlement had its disadvantages as it was so far away from the larger settlements in the valley and was one of the chief camping grounds of the Indians on their way to the south and east. It was right at the forks of the Indian trail through East Canyon that connected with points in Wyoming and with trails to Ogden, Salt Lake City and other parts of Utah ... The site therefore served as a junction and was a suitable camping place for the Indians ...

The settlers built their log houses and some dugouts in the usual fort formation a short distance from the present meeting house in Avon. Every precaution was taken to protect themselves against the many Indians who camped in the river bottoms nearby and were on their tours in and out of the valley. Guards were stationed at all times just outside the fort to give warning when necessary. The regular public corral with its strong high pole fence was built and the cattle and horses were kept in it for protection.

An old trapper by the name of Post but more often called Stump had built a log cabin just south of the fort in the river bottoms before the first settlers arrived. He fished and trapped a good deal along the streams but was not a member of the colony. He lived by himself. The Indians attacked the trapper and killed him and burned his cabin. The settlers found his charred bones and buried them. This act naturally excited the people and caused them to be more cautious than ever. The guards were maintained night and day at the fort and the men always went in groups well armed to the field to put in and look after their crops ...

During the summer, several families arrived among whom was David James and family of Salt Lake City. The settlement at that time was in Box Elder County and was not settled under the Cache Valley organization. But as there was a natural barrier, being a range of mountains between the settlement and Brigham City, Utah, it was thought best to organize under the Cache Valley authorities. Apostle E.T. Benson and Bishop Peter Maughan were therefore asked to organize the settlement which they did in February, 1861. Mr. David James was chosen as bishop. Apostle Benson previously was so impressed with the beautiful little cove ... that he exclaimed, "this is like a paradise." He suggested the name for the settlement and it was unanimously adopted.

At the next session of the Territorial Legislature, the county lines were changed and Paradise, Utah, was brought into Cache County.

... Enoch Param Rollins was the first child born in the settlement. As usual the first meetings were held in the log houses of the settlers until a small combination meeting and schoolhouse built of logs was constructed. Being some distance from the other settlements, flour and other articles at times were difficult to obtain ...

In 1861, J.G. Crapo and H.C. Jackson built a small saw mill near the fort on the east creek and here the first timber was sawed with an upright saw. A little later this mill site was converted into a grist mill and the saw mill moved farther up the creek where a considerable logging business was done. The flour mill was finally moved to Hyrum by Samuel McMurdie.