

# THE TIME

1847-1860

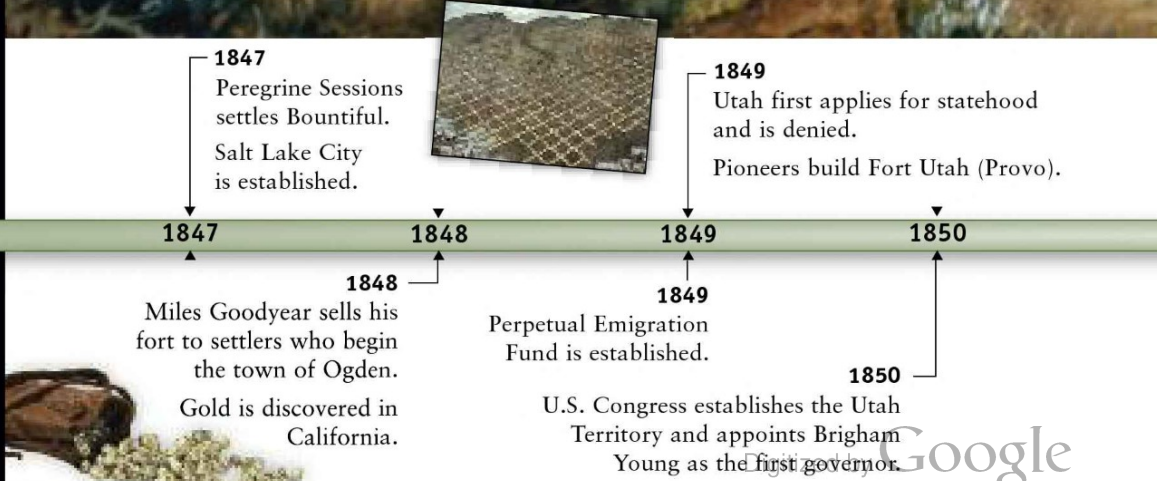
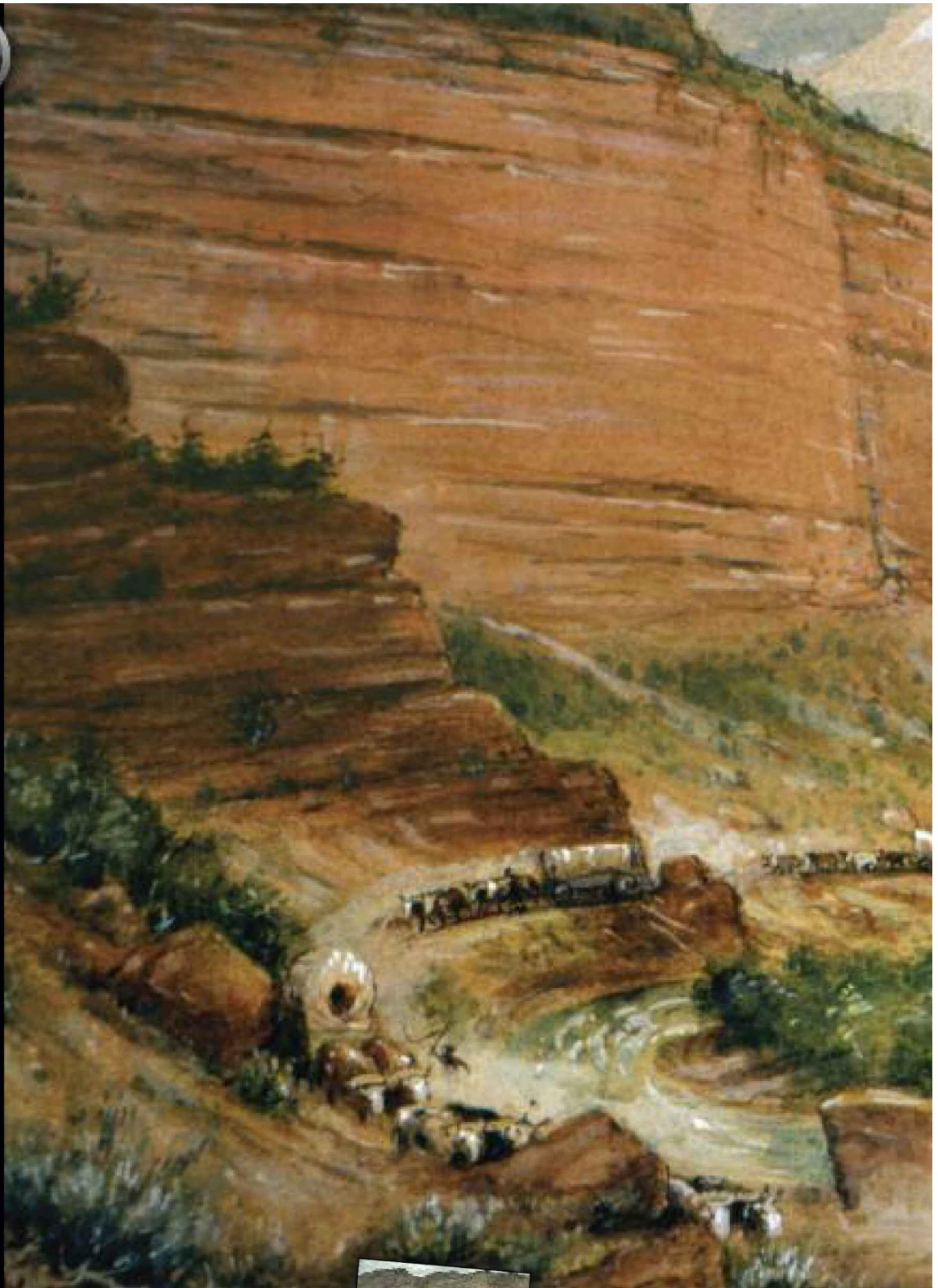
## PEOPLE TO KNOW

- James Brown
- William Davis
- Millard Fillmore
- Hector Haight
- Joseph Harker
- John S. Higbee
- Peter Maughan
- Isaac Morley
- Orson Pratt
- Peregrine Sessions
- H.G. Sherwood
- George A. Smith
- Lorenzo Snow
- Annie Clark Tanner
- Brigham Young
- Walkara

## WORDS TO UNDERSTAND

- bovery
- compromise
- emigrant
- immigrant
- isolated
- morality
- perpetuate
- petition
- proposed
- survey

Through this mountain gateway passed the Donner party, Mormon wagon trains, and later the Pony Express, telegraph lines, and stagecoach lines. Echo Canyon was painted by William Henry Jackson.



# Settling the Great Basin

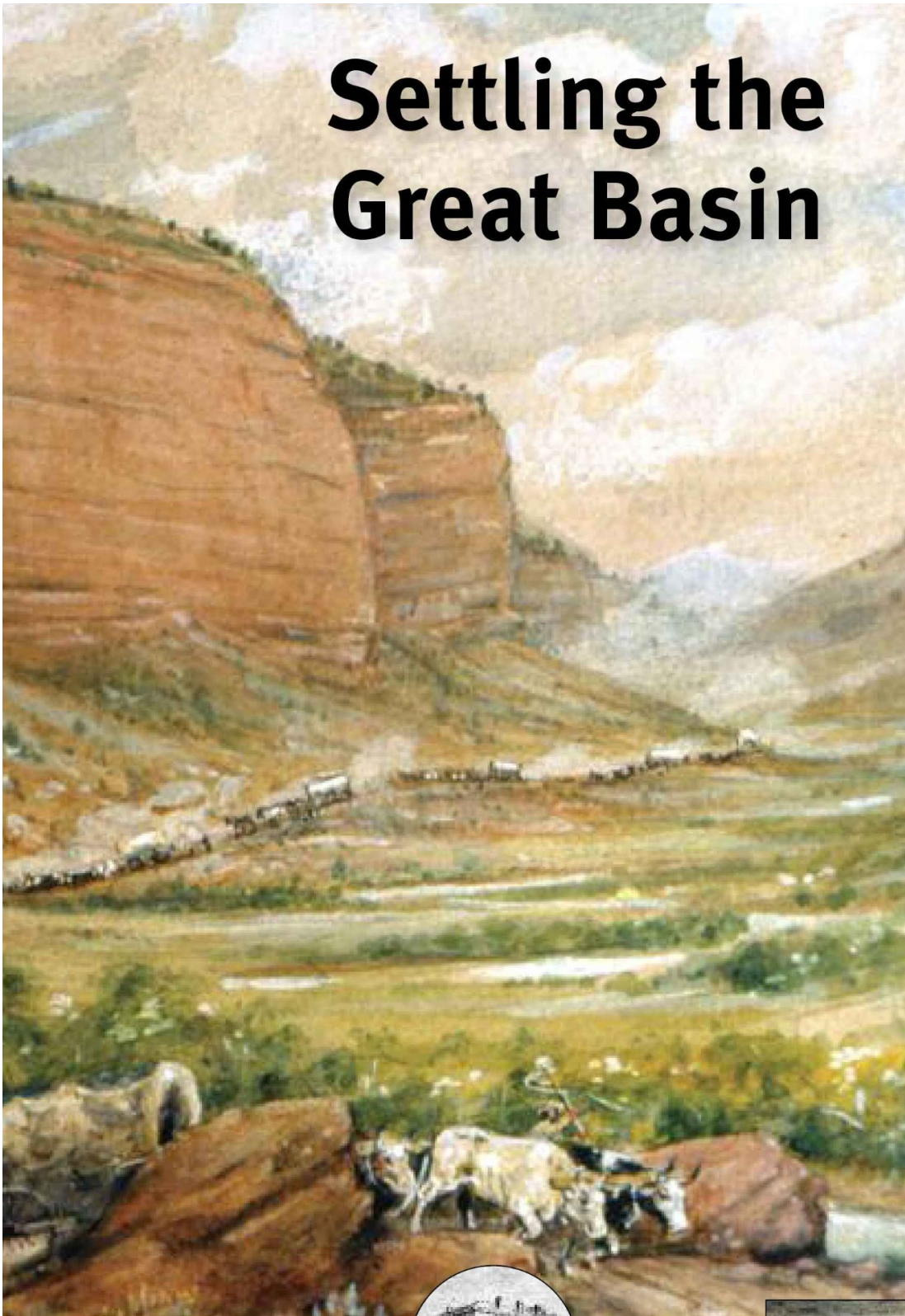
## Chapter

# 7

### SETTING THE STAGE

Once the Saints entered the Great Basin, they faced many problems. How would they get timber? Would there be enough rainfall? Was the soil fertile? Were there enough other natural resources to meet the needs of a very large settlement?

Brigham Young, leader of both the church and the government, became known as “the Great Colonizer” of the new Utah Territory. He sent people to start new towns based on self-sufficiency and religious ideals. Immigrants from many states and countries set out to build homes and communities. In the meantime, the lives of native Indian groups started changing drastically.



1851

Fillmore is chosen as the capital of the Utah Territory.



1851

1852

1853

1854



1852

The LDS Church officially announces plural marriage (polygamy).



1856-1860

Immigrants use handcarts to come west.

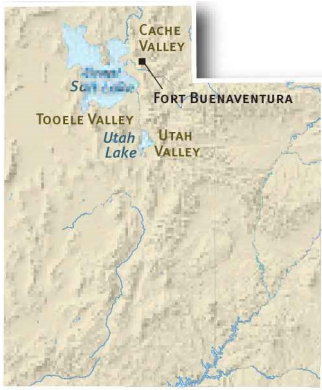


Artists in the East, who had never been to Utah, were eager to supply Eastern newspapers and magazines with illustrations of the Mormon story. What do you see in this illustration that might not be accurate?

## Exploring the Valley

On Tuesday, July 27, just a few days after the advanced pioneer company entered the valley, a group of sixteen men set out to explore their new home. They rode horses northwest to the Great Salt Lake and bathed in it. Some explored the entrance of Tooele Valley. Then they went on horseback to the Point of the Mountain, where they could see Utah Lake and Utah Valley. Today, the towns of Alpine, Pleasant Grove, American Fork, Orem, and Provo fill these valleys. The men described the Indians living around Utah Lake as “very peaceable and gentle.”

In early August, groups explored the valleys of Tooele, Utah, Bear River, and Cache. Cache Valley, where Logan is today, “looked beautiful from the summit of the mountain.”



At Miles Goodyear’s Fort Buena-ventura (near today’s Ogden), they found “some log buildings and corrals [fenced in] with pickets.” There were also a herd of cattle, horses, goats, and “some sheep that needed shearing.”

## Building a New Home in the West

The three most important tasks facing the Mormon pioneers were planting, building homes, and exploring the valley. Men went into the canyons for timber. They found “an abundance of good timber . . . but access to the same was very difficult.” They brought the logs to camp by dragging them with oxen or carrying them on wagons. The men dug a pit and used a long saw to make rough lumber.



*Pit saws were used to saw logs into boards. One person stood down in a pit and helped move the saw up and down.*

The men first built an adobe fort called the Old Fort. They thought the fort would help keep them safe from Indians. To make the walls of the fort, they made bricks with wet clay and straw or other plant fiber and dried them in the hot sun. The walls rose 8 or 9 feet high and were 27 inches thick. Then log cabins were built next to each other along the inside walls. Each log house was about 16 feet long and 14 feet wide. They were built with their backs along the adobe walls and their front doors opening onto an open space shared by everyone. Animals were kept in the open space.

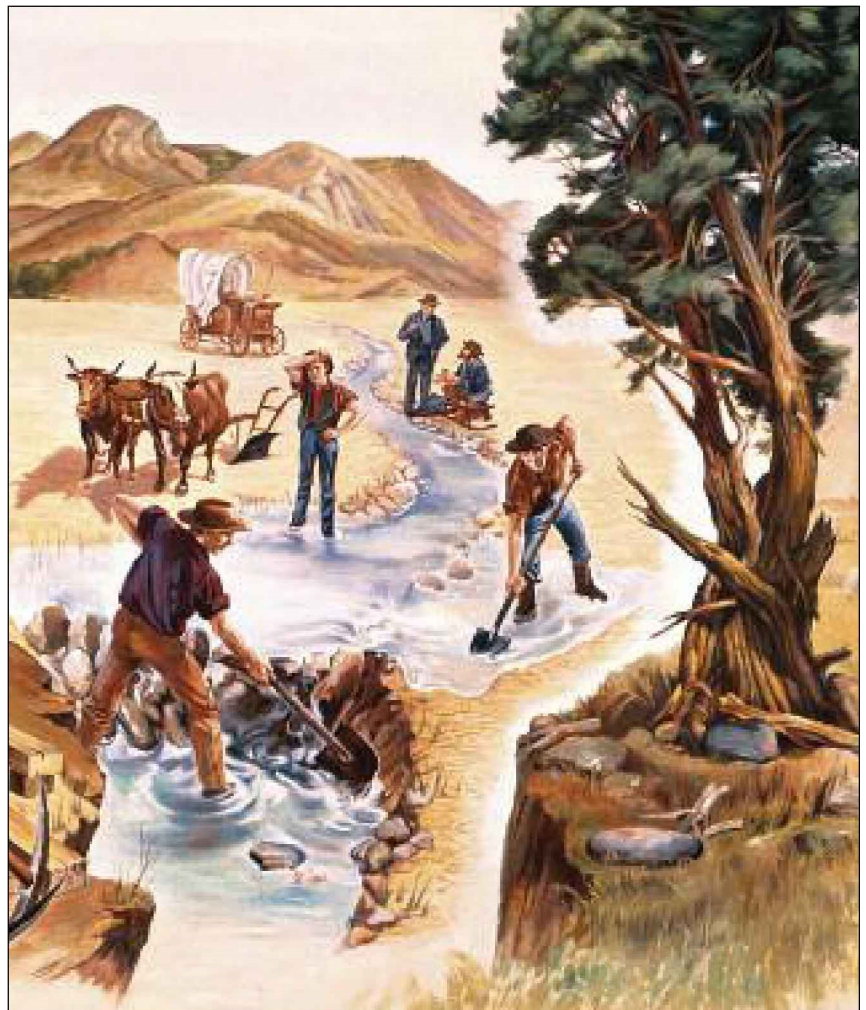


*The Old Fort was built at today's 300 South 300 West in Salt Lake City. Outside the walls of the fort, wolves kept settlers awake with their howling. Packs of mice tried to find shelter in the fort, to the irritation of everyone.*

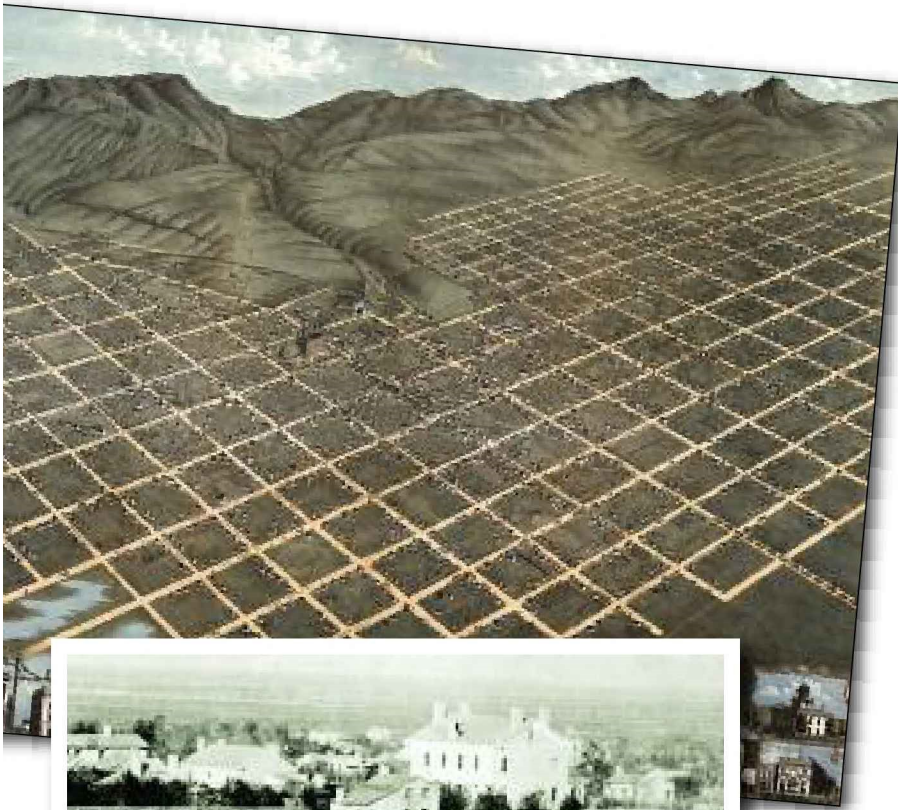
Anyone not cutting timber or making adobe bricks worked at digging irrigation ditches to bring water to crops. On July 25 men dammed up City Creek, flooded some ground at today's 4th South and East Temple Streets, and planted potatoes.

By July 31 corn was already up two inches. Soon all crops were up and doing well. By winter the potatoes were the size of silver dollars. By December the pioneers had planted 2,000 acres of winter wheat.

The work went on. The people hunted wild game, harvested salt from the lake, built a boat, cleared out a canyon road, and set up a blacksmith shop.



*Crops depended on irrigation water. Despite the July sun, the men dug ditches to bring water into the valley from mountain streams. How do Utahns water crops today?*



## Laying out Salt Lake City

Brigham Young assigned Orson Pratt and H.G. Sherwood to lay out a grid for a new city, using the plan they had developed for Nauvoo, Illinois. The *surveying* of the city's streets was finished by late August. There were 135 blocks, each having 10 acres divided into eight lots, where homes and gardens could be made. The streets were wide enough for a wagon and team to turn around if needed. Three public squares were placed in different parts of the city. These squares are now sites of the Salt Lake City and County Building, Liberty Park, and Pioneer Park.

## The First Winter

In September of 1847 the first large groups of pioneers reached Salt Lake Valley. In all, there were 1,540 people, with 580 wagons, 124 horses, 9 mules, 2,213 oxen, 887 cows, 358 sheep, 35 hogs, and 716 chickens. These people had come to stay.

Late in September, "Cattle and horses entirely destroyed the crops sown, except the potatoes, the tops of which they ate smooth with the ground." The winter weather was relatively mild, but food was scarce, with few vegetables and too little flour. Some cows were left to give milk and others were killed for food. Everyone was hungry. They ate crows, hawks, wolf meat, thistle tops and roots, and sego lily bulbs.



*The first building in the valley was a temporary **bowery** built by placing posts upright in the ground. Then timbers were laid across the tops of the posts and covered with brush. The bowery was a shaded place for holding meetings and religious services.*

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*The Indians taught the settlers to dig roots, especially the bulb of the sego lily. Today the sego lily is our state flower.*



*The streets were laid out with roads wide enough that a team pulling a wagon could turn around.*





*"The cricket plague . . . and the rescue of crops by swarms of seagulls . . . falls more within the realm of legend than . . . historical accuracy," wrote David B. Madsen, Utah State Archaeologist. This painting shows what came to be called "the miracle of the gulls."*

## Crickets and Seagulls

The next spring, clouds of black crickets started eating the crops. When the problem got worse, some people quit working in the fields and talked of going to California. Harriet Young, one of the first three women in the valley, wrote in her diary:

Today, to our utter astonishment, the crickets came by millions, sweeping everything before them. They first attacked a patch of beans for us and in twenty minutes there were no beans to be seen. They next swept over peas, then came into our garden; took everything clean.

People fought the crickets in many ways. They banged on tin pans to scare them away. They knocked them off the plants with branches and brooms. They gathered them up in large baskets and burned them or dumped them in the river.

For weeks the settlers fought crickets. Partial relief came when flocks of seagulls filled the sky and blocked out the sun. They gorged on crickets for weeks. For many years after that, seagulls returned to fields, eating crickets, grasshoppers, worms, and other insects. Problems with crickets lasted for years in many communities.

## Linking the Past to the Present

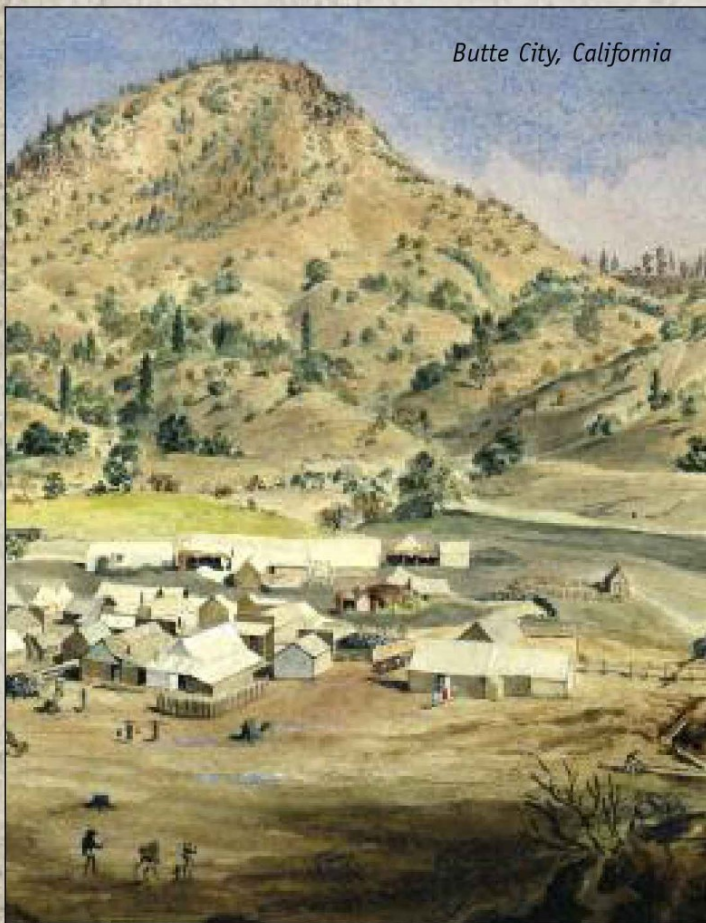
In 1955 the Utah State Legislature named the seagull the Utah state bird. Plagues of crickets still threaten crops in farming areas of Delta, Tooele, and other places.

*The Seagull Monument, located on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, was made by Mahonri Young, a grandson of Brigham Young.*



# GOLD Is Discovered in California

While pioneers in Utah were building cabins and trying to get enough food to survive, an event in California was to have tremendous impact on history. In 1848, six men from the Mormon Battalion were working at a sawmill in Sutter's Fort, California. One day gold was discovered in a stream, and the West changed dramatically. Thousands of people throughout the world rushed to California to "strike it rich."



News did not reach the East in time for people to make the trek that year, but many were ready in 1849. Over 25,000 swarmed to California that year, 50,000 the next year, and they kept coming. Tens of thousands of these "forty-niners" passed through Salt Lake City.

How did this rush help the economy of the Great Basin? Many forty-niners had brought too many supplies. They needed to lighten their wagons of food items, tools, equipment, clothing, and household goods. They also needed fresh supplies of other foods, oxen, and other animals. Some needed to have grain ground. They needed wagons repaired, or they wanted to buy new wagons and harnesses.

The people of the Salt Lake Valley provided these services and goods and, at the same time, got some of the items they badly needed. It was bartering at its best.

In 1850, about 1,000 future miners wintered in the valley before going on to California. They worked on farms and helped the community in other ways.

## Linking the Past to the Present

The thousands of miners traveling through Utah during the gold rush is a good example of the term "crossroads of the west." Today, major roads, rail lines, and air traffic going east and west, north and south, cross in Salt Lake City.



What methods of searching for gold are shown in this painting of Sutter's Mill, California?

Travelers going east from California to Utah gave exciting reports about the wealth waiting in the rivers and streams of the mining regions. One elderly man pulled off his battered hat, flung it to the ground, and exclaimed, "Glory Hallelujah! I'll die a rich man yet!"