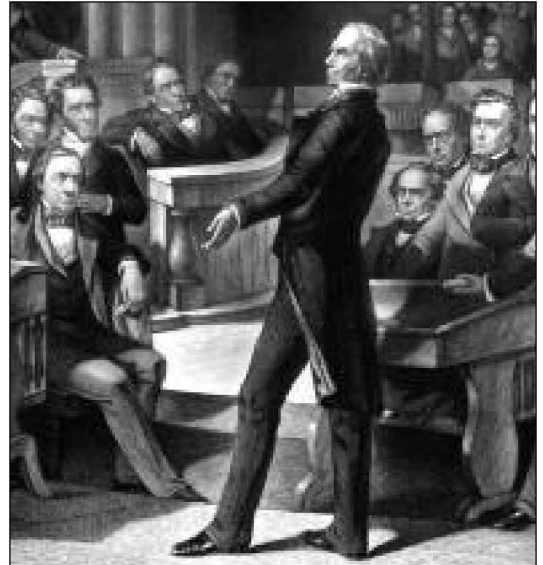


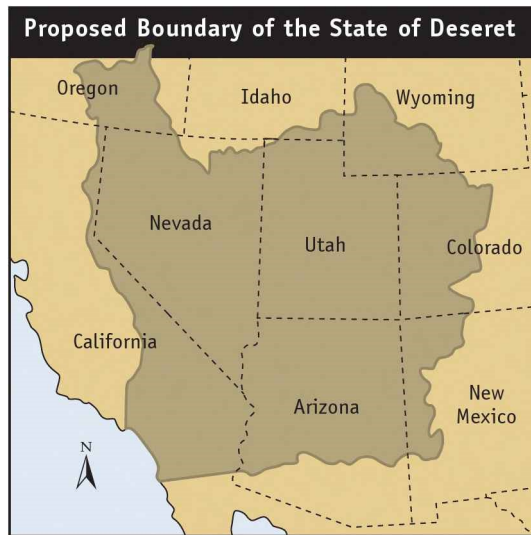
The Proposed State of Deseret

Within a few years of coming to Utah, LDS Church leaders held a convention and wrote a constitution to set up the State of Deseret. They chose the word “deseret” because in an ancient language it meant honeybee, which stood for industry. The boundaries of the *proposed* state were large, and even included San Diego, California, on the Pacific Coast. Church leaders appointed themselves to top government offices, with Brigham Young as governor. Men took their constitution and *petition* to Washington, D.C., to apply for statehood. The petition was turned down.



Henry Clay was known as the “Great Compromiser.” How did he help Utahns?

Why do you think Congress did not accept the boundaries of the proposed State of Deseret? What advantages would there have been to include a seaport city in Utah’s boundaries? Can you see the place where the state would have touched the Pacific Ocean? Which present-day states would have been part of Utah if the proposed boundaries had been accepted?

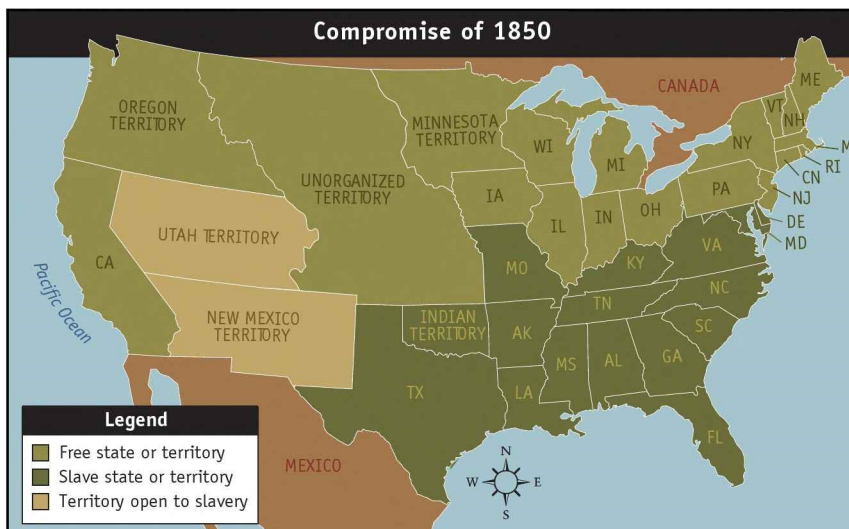


Utah Becomes a Territory

After the United States gained the western lands from Mexico at the end of the Mexican-American War, the question of slavery came up again. In the East, the question of slavery divided the Northern states and the Southern states. Neither side wanted the new land in the West to be all free or all slave because that would threaten the balance of votes in the U.S. Congress in Washington, D.C. After gold was discovered in California, the people there asked to be admitted into the Union as a free state.

In the midst of the crisis, Congress turned to Senator Henry Clay from Kentucky. Clay was known as the “Great Compromiser.” The senator was very ill. Still, he pleaded on the Senate floor for the North and South to *compromise*. Each side had to give up part of what they wanted in order to reach an agreement. Clay proposed admitting California as a free state and making other lands in the West into two large territories—Utah and New Mexico. He proposed that the people living in the two new territories vote on allowing slavery or not.

After much heated debate, Congress eventually passed the plan. Utah became a territory.



What do you think?

The Utah legislature voted to make slavery legal. Why do you think slavery was never widely practiced in Utah if it was legal?

A New Name

Congress named the new territory Utah after the Ute Indian tribe—the largest group of Indians in the region. Members of Congress did not like the name “Deseret,” which Brigham Young had wanted, because it sounded too much like a dry “desert” and might discourage people from going west.

Leaders of the Territory

U.S. President Fillmore appointed Brigham Young as the first governor and appointed a secretary and three judges. The judges were mostly inexperienced outsiders who moved to Utah from the East. This made many Utahns angry. They wanted to elect their own judges. The Utah people did get to vote for their own territorial legislature, which could make some local Utah laws. They could also send a delegate to Congress in Washington, but the delegate could not vote there. In other words, under the territorial government, Utah’s affairs were mostly run by the federal government. Other territories in the country were run the same way.

“ I was sent to Utah as one of the justices of the courts. I carried with me all the prejudices and hate that have been against Mormonism. . . . When I arrived in Ogden I was somewhat astonished to find that the people looked like other people; they lived in houses, and wore clothes, and went about their business, and appeared not differently from the people I had seen in the United States. ”

—Judge John W. Judd

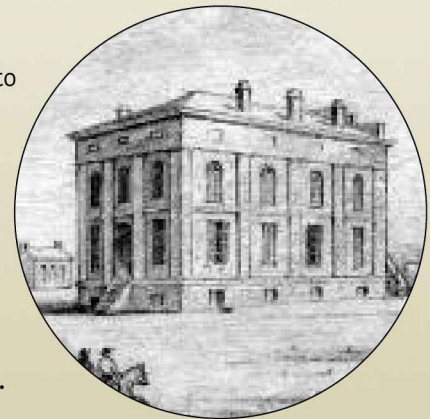
A State or a Territory?

Even though people in the territory had some new privileges, they still longed for the benefits of statehood.

| PRIVILEGES | TERRITORY | STATE |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| VOTE FOR PRESIDENT OF COUNTRY | NO | YES |
| CHOOSE LOCAL OFFICIALS | PART | YES |
| MAKE LOCAL LAWS | PART | YES |
| REPRESENTATIVES CAN VOTE IN CONGRESS | NO | YES |

Fillmore, Our First Capital City

Anson Call took thirty families from Salt Lake City to start a farming community near the center of today’s Utah. They built houses, a log schoolhouse, and a post office. Because of its central location, in 1851 Fillmore was chosen by the territorial legislature to be Utah’s first territorial capital. It was named for U.S. President Millard Fillmore, the president at the time. Millard county was also named after the president.




The legislature of the Utah Territory met in the Capitol Building for only one session. The next year they met in Salt Lake City, where it was more convenient for most of the men.

Governor Brigham Young

While he was governor of the Utah Territory, Brigham Young, often called “the Great Colonizer,” organized the territorial government, worked with the leaders of Indian groups, and established a working relationship with the federal government. He started over 300 new towns all over the territory, organized the immigration of thousands, and developed vast manufacturing and agriculture industries.

Young was governor of the Utah territory for almost two terms, from 1850 to 1857. However, he remained president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints until his death in 1877.

Handcarts to the West



While people in the Utah Territory were busy working to build a new life, more and more European immigrants moved into the valley. They traveled in covered wagons. Then Brigham Young tried an experiment to bring in more converts at a lower cost. These people had already used all of their money paying to come on a ship across the ocean, and they didn't have wagons, animals, or supplies for the next part of their journey.

A plan was made to use handcarts instead of wagons pulled by animal teams. The immigrants built strong wooden carts and loaded them with food, blankets, and clothing. Small children and babies rode in the carts, but everyone else used muscle power to push and pull the heavy carts across grassy plains and through rugged mountain canyons.

“... at noon we went to the Square to view the handcart company, it being the first that crossed the plains.”

—John Bennion,
Salt Lake City, 1856

Some painted their handcarts with such mottos as “Zion’s Express,” “Merry Mormons,” and “Truth will Prevail.” About 3,000 Latter-day Saints came to Utah this way in ten groups or “companies” over a period of about four years.

The first group to leave Iowa with handcarts was proud of what it called the Birmingham Band. As they moved westward, the band’s music lifted the spirits of the people. This folksong became very popular:

Handcart Song

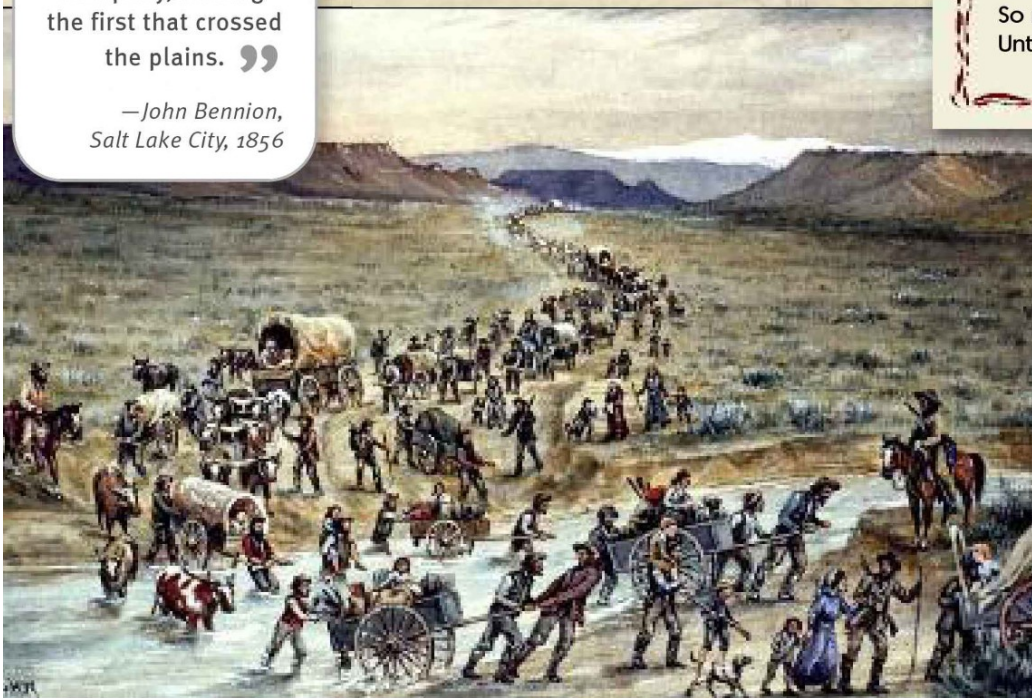
by J.D.T. McAllister

Ye saints who dwell on Europe’s shore,
Prepare yourselves for many more
To leave behind your native land,
For sure God’s judgments are at hand.

For some must push and some must pull
As we go marching up the hill;
So merrily on the way we go,
Until we reach the Valley O!

“On the 24th of September, 1860, we took up our handcarts for the last time; we pulled them 14 miles on to the camp-grounds in Salt Lake City. Here we set them down, never more to realize how heavy they had been, how hard to pull.”

—Carl Fjeld, Norwegian
immigrant, 1860





Peter Howard McBride was six years old when he traveled with the Martin Handcart Company. Peter's father died on the trip, but the rest of the family survived and settled in Ogden. This is part of his story:

Artist C.C.A. Christensen, born in Denmark, came into the valley with "the Danish flag flying from his cart, his trousers flapping in tatters about his legs." He painted many pioneer events, including this handcart river crossing.

In Wyoming we camped at the Sweetwater River. We could go no farther: the snow was so deep and there was no food. They gave me a bone of an ox that had died. I cut off the skin and boiled it, drank the soup and ate the skin, and it was a good supper.

The wind drifted so much I knew I would die. The wind blew the tent down. They all crawled out but me. I went to sleep and slept warm all night. In the morning I heard someone say, 'How many are dead in this tent?' My sister said, 'Well, my little brother must be frozen to death in that tent. So they jerked the tent loose from the snow that covered it. My hair was frozen to the tent. I picked myself up and came out quite alive, to their surprise.'

That day we got word that some teams were coming to meet us from the Valley. Three teams came that night bringing food and warm clothes. We all thanked God for our delivery from certain death.

—from the book *I Walked to Zion* by Susan Arrington Madsen



Memory Master

1. Summarize the first tasks of the pioneers after entering the Valley of the Great Salt Lake.
2. Why were the first cabins built close together in the Old Fort?
3. Evaluate the problems of the first year in the valley. What happened?
4. Why is the seagull Utah's state bird?
5. Explain how the California Gold Rush helped the economy of the Great Basin.
6. List three reasons for starting new settlements.
7. Analyze the problems of the early settlers as similar or different from problems facing today's immigrants in Utah.
8. How did the Great Compromise help Utah become a territory?
9. Utah's territorial government was mostly run by the _____ government.
10. Why did Congress name the new territory "Utah"?
11. Where was Utah Territory's first capital city?
12. Defend Brigham Young's title as "the Great Colonizer."



Activity | Learn More about Utah's Early Settlements

Immigrants from other states and foreign countries started an amazing number of settlements in Utah. They started towns and farms all up and down the mountain corridor, at first avoiding the plateau lands of eastern Utah.

Choose your town or city or another one on the list on page 135 and learn more about it. Who were the first settlers? Where did they come from? Why was the town started? What work did the people do? Evaluate the problems they faced, and how they solved these problems.

Report what you find with a poster, diorama, story, skit, poem, song, or PowerPoint presentation.

Ogden, 1889

