

Spanish Fork, 1856-1857

Indian Farm at Spanish Fork

“In the spring of 1856, the Spanish Fork Indian Farm, which figures so extensively in the Government documents sent to Congress by President Buchanan, relative to the "Utah War," was located, and one hundred men came from Salt Lake City to work on it. They broke the farm, constructed the irrigating canal, built the dam and a large farm house, where Indian Agent Dr. Hurt lived and kept store.

“This farm was situated on the south side of the river about two miles from Spanish Fork City. After the troubles with Hurt, which were assigned by the Government as among the causes for the sending of the Utah Expedition, Colonel Humphrey came as Indian Agent. He gathered the Spanish Fork Indians around him and worked some of them. The Indians were satisfied and under his agency; but after the close of Humphrey’s administration the reservation was of no benefit to them. It was finally abandoned and the land thrown into the market.”¹

“Quite a few people have wondered about the Indian Farm in Spanish Fork, how it started and how it ended. This area was the home of Peteetneet, chief of the Spanish Fork band when the settlers first came in. By the counsel of Brigham Young, the people of Palmyra built a house for Peteetneet and it was his band that was settled by the government on the Spanish Fork Indian Farm or Reservation.

“Governor Young was Superintendent of Indian Affairs at the time of the establishment of the farm. Joseph Elleson Beck was chosen to superintend the farm. After a year the government took over active management of the farm and although keeping Mr. Beck as Superintendent Dr. Garland Hurt was made Indian Agent in place of Brigham Young. He arrived in 1855 and lived with the Beck family while a two-story adobe house was built for him. He kept supplies here and used the building as a trading post.

“Provisions were hauled from Salt Lake City and were stored in the upstairs and were sold, traded for, and rationed out to the Indians.”²

¹ Edward W. Tullidge , *Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine*, Volume 3; Star Printing Company, 1883, p. 162.
https://books.google.com/books?id=IBXZAAAAMAAJ&dq=%22Spanish+Fork%22+%22Indian+Farm%22&source=gbs_navlinks_s

² “Site of Indian Farm3,” *Provo Daily Herald*, 19 Feb. 1953, p. 5.



The Farm House at the Spanish Fork Indian Farm near Utah Lake at the present location of Leland, Utah. In the fall of 1856 Phineas W. Cook was hired to build the house, and he in turn hired others to help him. (Courtesy, U of U Special Collections)

July, 1856

PWC Journal: 19th (July, 1856) I went in company with George (Hancock) to the Indian farm at Spanish Fork to see if I could get the job of building a farm house as there was talk of the agent building a station of considerable size and it would be a cash job. When we arrived there we found the principle agent Doct Hurt was gone to California but would be home in a month or so and no doubt I would get the job At any rate I was employed by the subagent to make a plan of the building and make out the bills of timber and lumber.”

Phineas was hired to build the farm house, pictured above, at the Spanish Fork Indian Farm in the LDS Church’s ongoing effort to provide for and help Native Americans. However, their efforts were not supported by government officials who maintained a hostile attitude against the LDS Church. Nine years later when the Indian Agent tried to make the Indian Farm an official Indian Reservation, the whole effort was defeated, although the Indians kept their end of the bargain and moved to the Uintah Reservation in 1867:

“From “Great Salt Lake City, U.T.” on June 24, 1865, O.H. Irish wrote a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C. He described his experiences negotiating a treaty with the Ute Indians living in Utah Territory.

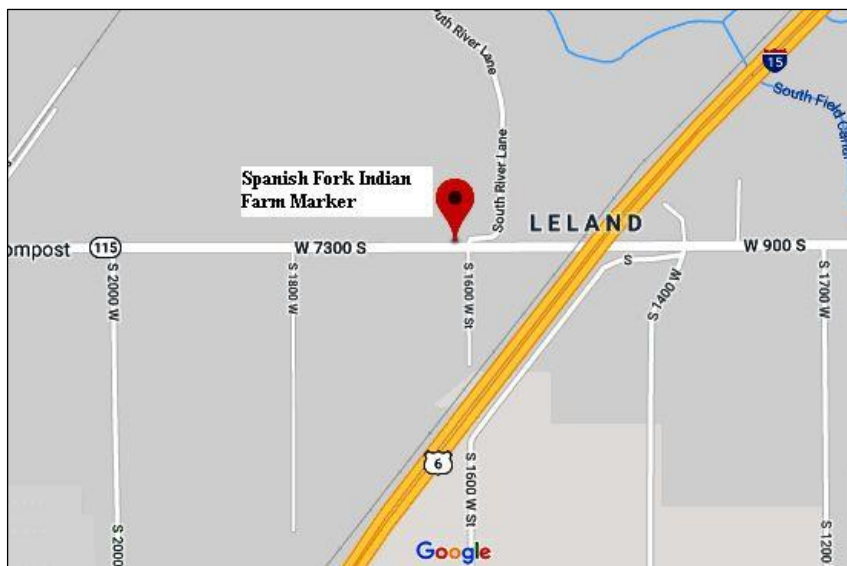
“He had asked several bands of Utes to meet him at Spanish Fork Indian Farm on the sixth of June. He also invited “the Federal Officers and the Military Commandant...and Ex-Gov Brigham Young to accompany me, to render such information and assistance as they could. All of the Federal and Military Officers declined going because Brigham Young was invited.” The Territorial Governor, the U.S. Marshall, the Collector and Assessor were the only officials who agreed to attend.

“Irish reported that Utah Territorial Governor James Doty had assisted in preparation for the meeting and approved the proposed treaty terms (which the Utes later accepted). Doty was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. He died ten days later. Irish noted that the Governor “advised me not to be discouraged by the opposition manifested by the other officers of the government who declared that rather than associate with Brigham Young on such an occasion, they would have the negotiation fail, that they would rather the Indians than the Mormons would have the land.”

“Brigham Young accepted my invitation...His name appears on the treaty as a witness only, and he acted only in advising the Indians to make the treaty. The fact exists however much some might prefer it should be otherwise, that he has pursued so kind and conciliatory a policy with the Indians that it has given him great influence over them. It was my duty and policy under your instructions to make use of his influence for the accomplishment of the purposes of Government.’

“By terms of the treaty, the Utes would give up their right to all lands in Utah Territory except the Uintah Valley, which would be their reservation. In return, the government would give the Utes \$1,000,000 paid over the next sixty years. Four existing reservations totaling more than 291,000 acres would be sold and the Utes would receive the proceeds. The government would build a mill and mechanic shop and provide a variety of support and training for ten years.

“The Utes agreed to move to the Uintah Valley and allow the government to build roads and telephone lines through the new reservation. They also agreed that “no liquor shall be used by any of them and no white person shall be allowed to bring any upon the reservation.”



“This treaty was never ratified by the U.S. Congress.”³

³ Chipeta: *Ute Peacemaker*: “Brigham Young and Indian Affairs,” Quoted text from the *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs 1865*, as reprinted on <https://chipeta.wordpress.com/tag/spanish-fork-indian-farm/>



The Spanish Fork Indian Farm Reservation
<http://www.waymarking.com/gallery/image.aspx?f=1&guid=a2bc5745-82be-4e04-94b4-37a0a39275e4&gid=3>

Brigham Young in 1855, and erected a trading post 60 rods north of this spot. Colonel O. H. Irish succeeded Dr. Hurt, and in 1865 made a treaty with 15 Indian chiefs, whereby the Indians surrendered their title and in 1867 moved to the Uintah Basin.”⁴

At 1600 West 7300 South River Road in the present town of Leland is this historical marker showing the purpose and location of the Indian Farm.

“SPANISH FORK INDIAN FARM The Spanish Fork Indian Farm Reservation comprising twenty square miles and extending from the state highway and the Spanish Fork River to Utah Lake, was set apart in 1854 by Brigham Young, Utah Superintendent of United States Indian Affairs. Joseph Ellison Beck was appointed farm superintendent. Dr. Garland Hurt succeeded



⁴ Utah State Markers and Monuments Database, https://heritage.utah.gov/apps/history/markers/detailed_results.php?markerid=1591. Also found on <https://jacobbarlow.com/2014/05/20/spanish-fork-indian-farm/>

September 10, 1856

PWC Journal: *“I concluded to go to the city on that and some other buisness, so I hired my passage with Samuel Adair I stopt at the Indian farm and took the job of building the house for 600 dollars I did not do anything at that time about the claims but returned home the 13th and made arrangements to go to the farm to fulfill my contract I took my 2nd wife Amanda and the tent and started. I hired from three to five hands at one dollar and a half a day and boarded them I had to push my labor as fast as possible for fear of cold weather as it was getting late in the season The agent let the job of laying the stone and adobies and the plastering...”*

17th (March, 1857, last entry in his journal)

PWC Journal: *“today I went to the (Indian) farm and took the claims to Dr Hurt and he signed them all, he promised me the use of a yoke of oxen to work...”* March 1857 marks the end of Phineas’ journal.

April, 1857

Phineas W. Cook went to Utah Valley for the express purpose of getting land to farm so his family wouldn’t go hungry, as they had in Salt Lake City. A year later he discovered the Goshen Valley and realized it would be an excellent place for a town.

PWC Goshen Journal: *“...I then left the creek (in Goshen Valley) and turned to the left and proceeded to the bench of high land and lookt (looked) over the country below which more and more convinced me that a good location existed thare (there). I had found a first rate place for farming but I should not probably kneed (need) it as I have a farm of twenty acres at Spanish Fork.”*⁵

Wednesday April 8, 1857

PWC Goshen Journal: *“Wednesday 8th I took my team and hired a man and plow and other tools. Went to Spanish Fork to put in my wheat and after working some three or four days I was informed that the title to my land was not good and I could not have it.”*⁶

This is when he began to think about Goshen Valley and went to Brigham Young for permission to begin a settlement there.

⁵ Phineas Wolcott Cook, Goshen Journal, Church History Library, General minutes, Goshen Ward, Santaquin-Tintic Stake, Manuscript LR 3259 11 (100001021440) Part 7, p. 2.

⁶ Phineas Wolcott Cook, Goshen Journal, p. 2.