

# HISTORY of PAYSON

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**PAYSON** was founded in the fall of 1850. A few other settlements already existed in Utah Valley. Fort Utah had been built in 1849 in the area where the Provo River empties into Utah Lake. It was built along the banks of the river, on low ground, and flooding occurred periodically. The next year a second fort was built farther east, where the ground was higher. (This was at about 500 West and 500 North, in the vicinity of present-day North Park in Provo.)

Then in 1850 pioneers were sent to establish several more settlements in Utah Valley -- every place where a stream flowed down from the Wasatch Mountains towards Utah Lake. Through the summer and fall of 1850 the following locations were settled: Alpine, Lehi (Dry Creek), American Fork, Pleasant Grove (Battle Creek), and Springville (Hobble Creek). Peteetneet Creek (named after the local Indian chief) was the location of the last settlement to be established in that year. The first group of settlers reached there on October 20, 1850, well into the fall season. Cabins were hurriedly built, to prepare for the coming winter.

"The first settlers of the new colony at Peteetneet were sixteen in number. They included James Pace, his wife, Lucinda Gibson, and their children: William Byron, who at age 15 had served with his father in the Mormon Battalion, Mary Ann, Warren Sidney, Martha Elmina, John E. and Amanda L. Pace. A second family was composed of Andrew Jackson Stewart, his wife, Eunice Haws, and their children, Sarah, Catherine and Andrew Jackson Jr. A young couple, John Courtland Searle and his wife, Jerusha Morrison Hill were there too. Their baby would be the first white child to be born in the new settlement (and also the first to die). Also in the group were two youths, Allison Hill (14), who was a brother-in-law of John C. Searle, and Nathaniel Haws (18), brother of Eunice Haws Stewart.

(From *PETEETNEET TOWN, A History of Payson, Utah*, by Madoline Cloward Dixon)

A couple of months later, in December 1850, a meeting was held in James Pace's cabin and a branch of the church was organized (the Pacen Branch), with James Pace as president. Later the spelling was changed to "Payson". By the time the settlement was a year old, about 400 people were living there.

More settlers came to the area during the next few years, including five men from the 143 who had accompanied Brigham Young and the [First Pioneer Company](#) into Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847.