

Castle Dale

Castle Dale was settled in the fall of 1877 and summer of 1878 by Mormon settlers from Sanpete Valley. These settlers came at the bequest of Brigham Young who issued a call to settle Castle Valley shortly before he died in 1877. Castle Dale was one of three settlements along Cottonwood Creek, Orangeville further up the creek to the west and Wilsonville to the east where Ferron, Huntington, and Cottonwood Creeks come together to form the San Rafael River. Wilsonville was a short-lived community which soon disappeared. The only edifice left marking its existence is the post office now on the Jorgensen ranch, which was built along the old Spanish Trail.

The Spanish Trail was an old route used by the Spaniards to travel from Santa Fe to Los Angeles. Spaniards would bring along this route, trading supplies consisting of furs, guns, intoxicating liquors, California horses, and Indian slaves. Raids for the specific purpose of taking young boys and girls were made upon the Indians. Slaves were also acquired by trading between the Indian tribes encountered along the trail.

Captain John W. Gunnison and John Charles Fremont were some of the first recorded United States explorers to travel the Spanish Trail and pass through Castle Valley. Captain Gunnison detoured from the Spanish Trail and followed the Price River until it reached the Wasatch Plateau, then headed south along the cliffs until he then connected again with the Spanish Trail near Huntington Canyon.

During the mid-1850s, and during the Black Hawk War, the nomadic Ute Indians, under Black Hawk, began taking and herding off stock from Mormon settlements west of the Wasatch Plateau (Sanpete, Sevier, and Millard County settlements) and grazing them along creek bottoms in Castle Valley.

During a very severe winter of 1879-1880, many of the colonists who had recently arrived were reduced to extreme hardship and suffering. Those who had been there longer evidently were not in as dire circumstances but the winter was hard enough that no one could be induced to bring supplies in through the Cottonwood Creek area for as much as ten cents a pound. So, J. K. Reid, Joseph R. Burnett, M. E. Johnson, and John Wakefield volunteered to cross the mountains to Manti for Christmas goods in order to bring Santa Claus and Christmas to the children in the communities.

It was necessary for these men to go through snow banks which were often eight feet deep. On the way back, one of the pack animals fell over a ledge scattering the things it was carrying in the snow. Fortunately, the deep snow acted as a cushion and both the animal and its pack were recovered. The only thing broken was a keg of whiskey that spilled in the snow. In order to prevent the loss of the whiskey, the men ate the saturated snow. The whiskey thus procured produced a sudden numbness, which made them all fear that the severe cold had brought them to approaching death. In fear of their lives, they tramped all night in the hope that they would arrive at their wagons that had been left on the east side of the mountains. After a very hazardous journey, which left the men

very much fatigued, they arrived in Castle Dale and the Christmas gifts were distributed to the children.



Castle Dale school house at 200E 100N - traded to the Relief Society and used for meetings until destroyed by fire in 1932.



Castle Dale's 2nd Emery Stake Academy from 1910-1922. In 1922 the L.D.S. Church sold it to the Emery School District. The name was changed to Central High School and was in operation until 1943 when it was condemned and closed.



Castle Dale's Public Square: (L to R) 1st Emery Stake Academy, Castle Dale Elementary, and Relief Society building.



Castle Dale's Eagle Flour Mill - the first roller mill in Emery County. Fire destroyed the mill in 1943.



Castle Dale's 1st Emery Stake Academy and Ward House built between 1892 and 1899.



Castle Dale's Hospital, 208 East Main Street, built around 1894.



Castle Dale - Re-enactment of covered wagon traveling along the Spanish Trail.



Castle Dale - the Castle Valley Pageant is a yearly extravaganza depicting the settlers' arrival to the Castle Valley region. The Pageant site is located in the hills 7 miles north of Castle Dale, and is reenacted by local citizens.



Castle Dale - Castle Valley Pageant depicting arrival of settlers to the area.



Castle Dale - Castle Valley Pageant depicting typical dugout home used by early settlers to the region. The man in the photo is Montell Seely who was instrumental in the production of the Pageant.



Castle Dale - Castle Valley Pageant depicting blacksmith at work.



Castle Dale - In the mid 1930's President Theodore Roosevelt created a program called the Civilian Conservation Corp which helped young men throughout the nation earn money for their families during the Depression years. These young men worked on construction of buildings and bridges, made or improved state and county roads, made improvements in the national parks, and worked in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service. One such camp was located in Castle Dale just south of Main Street near the fair grounds. These young men built the Swinging Bridge and improved the roads through the San Rafael Swell near Castle Dale during one of their projects. Many married local girls and raised their families here.