

History of Freedom, Utah

by
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Freedom Facts

<i>Location:</i>	<i>West bench of Sanpete Valley, about six miles northwest of Moroni at the foot of the West Mountains. Seven miles south of Fountain Green and four miles North of Wales. It is twenty two miles north of Manti.</i>
<i>Elevation:</i>	<i>5,760 feet</i>
<i>Year Freedom Began:</i>	<i>1870-1871 (sourced differ)</i>
<i>Year Freedom Became a County Precinct:</i>	<i>1875</i>
<i>Year Drapers filed on their homesteads:</i>	<i>1878</i>
<i>Founder of Freedom:</i>	<i>William Draper</i>
<i>Original name:</i>	<i>Draper, Utah, after its founder</i>
<i>L.D.S. Ward organized:</i>	<i>1877-1881</i>
<i>L.D.S. Ward reorganized:</i>	<i>1897-1926</i>
<i>First Bishop of L.D.S. Ward:</i>	<i>William Draper</i>
<i>First Child Born:</i>	<i>Lucy Christiansen, daughter of Henry Draper</i>
<i>Land donated for the Cemetery by:</i>	<i>William Draper</i>
<i>First persons buried in the cemetery:</i>	<i>William Draper's four month old son and his five year old daughter that died within a 48 hour period.</i>
<i>Indians buried in the Cemetery:</i>	<i>One named Indian Jim</i>
<i>Population at its maximum:</i>	<i>About 20 families, over 200 people</i>
<i>Why people moved away:</i>	<i>Hard to get to Moroni, bad roads, and they found more advantages in Moroni.</i>
<i>Electricity came to Freedom:</i>	<i>1935</i>

Freedom, Sanpete County, Utah is situated on Current Creek (a small mountain stream) at the foot of the West Mountain, about six miles west of Moroni. It is seven miles south of Fountain Green, and four miles north of Wales and twenty-two miles by the nearest road north of Manti. Freedom's Main Street is the gateway to Maple Canyon. The elevation of Freedom is 5,760. It was and still is strictly a farming district.

In the early days the people of Moroni claimed the land and the water, which was later owned by the people of Freedom. They had the idea of planting orchards there, because fruit trees did not do well in Moroni. A spring was located in Kern Canyon above Freedom and a ditch was made so it could be brought into town.

Freedom lies in a protected draw at the foot of the West Mountains making a later frost possible. It is said as people left Moroni on horse back, heading for Freedom, they could smell the fragrant blossoms of the fruit trees in Freedom. The fruit orchards in Freedom were known as the best in Sanpete County. They grew apples, peaches, apricots, cherries, pears and plums. At the top of the street at the foot of the mountain there was a large piece of ground planted in strawberries and raspberries. Sometimes the frost would take the blossoms of the apricots and cherries so they didn't get a crop every year.

William L. Draper, known as "Doc Draper", moved his family to Freedom in 1870 because it was a very lush, fertile valley where grain would grow very tall. William's brothers Henry, Grant, Parley and Albert followed him to homestead in Freedom. They originally called this place Draper. The postal authorities made them change the name because there was already a town called Draper, Utah, south of Salt Lake. They then renamed it Freedom because freedom was what they wanted and they felt free now to do anything they wanted. Freedom became a County Precinct in 1875. The Drapers filed on their homesteads in 1878. The town was never incorporated. William Draper died in Freedom.

Freedom grew as many people found it a desirable place to live. At one time there were as many as twenty families making a population of over 200 people residing in Freedom. There were approximately 30 houses in Freedom during the depression. Many of the families were polygamist families. There are those who say Freedom, in the springtime, looked like the Garden of Eden.

The railroad was run from Nephi through Freedom to the coal mines in Wales. Martin Van Buren Taylor had a contract to build some of the grade for the railroad. He took his boys and some other people and built the grade from Fountain Green to Wales. There was a little shack about a mile south of Freedom which was a depot where they could flag down the train so people could get on.

The town of Freedom had a school house, church, town hall, and a small store that was connected to Dorsey Draper's home. At first they had to go to town for their mail but eventually they had their own Post Office.

Those living in Freedom were farmers. Brigham Young sent three mulberry bushes to Freedom when he planned his state wide industry of silk worms. Edna Coates' father tried to start the industry but didn't have much success. Freedom was also the home of the Meadow View Creamery Dairy owned by Bishop Hon. M. V. Taylor.

When people first lived in Freedom there was just a stream running down the street for culinary purposes. They decided it wasn't very sanitary, so they built a culinary system that brought the water down to them in a half inch pipe. There are those who say this was the first culinary system in Sanpete County.

Those people who have lived in Freedom tell of the fun times they had at the dances. People would come from Manti, Ephraim and Moroni. They could ride the train to Freedom and when the dance was over they could ride the train back to their homes.

The Christmas Celebration in Freedom was a three day affair because it was also Martin Van Buren's birthday on December 26th. His family would cook for days to feed all who came for the celebration. The dance went on day and night the whole time; if someone went home to sleep someone would go wake them up again and bring them back. Freedom also had its own ball team and they would compete against the teams from Moroni, Wales and Fountain Green. They were a very good team.

After the depression people started to move away from Freedom because the roads were bad and it was hard to get to Moroni for things they needed and they found there were more advantages to living in town. There was no electricity in Freedom until about 1935. They also had no running water in their homes, so people had to have an "outhouse".

Most of the land in Freedom was eventually bought by the cattleman and turkey growers. Now Freedom is home to many turkey and cattle sheds.

At this time, in Freedom, there are only two of the original homes being lived in; one of which was built from used brick from an old school house in Fountain Green, and one that was built with railroad ties from the railroad. There are seven families living in Freedom, about 24 people. Most of the original homes have been torn down but there are a few that are partially standing. The people there now have Natural Gas to use for their homes. Those living in Freedom feel it is still a peaceful place to live. From the top of the street the view of the valley is beautiful.

Freedom Cemetery

After Doc Draper lost a four month old son and a five year old girl in 48 hours he buried them side by side on his farm. This was the beginning of the Freedom Cemetery in 1885. Doc Draper's father then came to live with them in Freedom, and he died one year later on May 28, 1886. He was the next person to be buried in the cemetery. The Doc, himself, died May 2, 1887 and was buried there too. There are many children buried in the cemetery because there was an epidemic of Diphtheria which took the lives of many of them.

There is one Indian buried in the cemetery and his name is "Indian Jim" or Jin Wanup. The Mt. Pleasant DUP put a beautiful marble headstone on his grave in 1975 but his name is misspelled on it. It is spelled James Onump on his headstone. He was a full blooded Ute Indian. Indian Jim was a good friend to the people of Freedom and he would spy for them and let them know when the Indians were going to attack. The people of Freedom built him a dugout to live in on the west side of Freedom.

The cemetery is still visited by many people each Memorial Day and other times during the year. It is still a very peaceful and quaint little cemetery where those that come can remember what Freedom used to be like.

Freedom Schoolhouse

Freedom had its own school house. In the front of a book that belonged to Glen Taylor's sister, in the possession of Margaret Taylor at this time, it states that school started October 6, 1902. Her husband Glen Taylor told her his memory of the school as it was when he attended in 1906. The school was built of lumber and was approximately 30 feet by 50 feet in size. It was built between the old home of Joseph Draper (Dorcey's Dad) and Frank Eliason's fence line.

The one room school house had two large windows on the west side and had two windows on the opposite side. There were also two smaller windows on the entrance side of the school. The heating stove was located in the center of the room. The school benches and the desks were lined up on each side of the

stove. There were two students to a desk and they were seated according to the grade they were in from beginner to sixth grade. Later on single desks were purchased. There was a blackboard at the front of the room and the teacher's desk. The children wrote on slates. There were between eight and sixteen children at various times in attendance depending on the number of eligible aged children. The children started school at the age of six and there were six grades taught in the Freedom School House.

The children of Freedom walked to school as well as the children from Jerusalem, which is a mile or more to the north of Freedom. They took their lunches with them. School started at 8:00 a.m. and let out at 4:00 p.m. They had a morning and afternoon recess at which time they played marbles, baseball, tag and other sports.

Some of the teachers were Mary D. Taylor, Hannah Hardy, Myrtle Thorpe, Sarah Sumsion, Delphia Rees and Marie Anderson. Most of them lived with families in Freedom during the school year.

After the sixth grade the children rode in a covered wagon to Moroni to school, but the children from Jerusalem still had to walk to Freedom to ride in the wagon to school. They had blankets and heated rocks to keep them warm on the trip during the winter. The trip took two hours with the horses at a fast trot. It was dark when they left Freedom and dark when they returned. The children did their studies at night by lamplight. Later on they got a school bus. The one room school house in Freedom was closed down in about 1918. The children were then bussed to Moroni and it was only a ten to fifteen minute ride.

Freedom's L.D.S. Church

When the Sanpete Stake of Zion was organized July 4, 1877, the saints of Draper were organized into a ward called Freedom, with Henry Draper as Bishop. He acted as Bishop until 1880, soon after this the ward organization was discontinued, and the members were transferred to Moroni.

When the polygamist family of Martin Van Buren Taylor moved to Freedom a new ward was organized on May 5, 1897, with Martin Van Buren Taylor as Bishop. The church house was on the north east corner where the road turns to go to Maple Canyon. It had a nice organ in it, which the people of Freedom purchased. The organ, pulpit and clock from the church are in the DUP room in Moroni. In 1926 the Freedom Ward was dissolved because so many families had moved away. The few remaining families were put in the Moroni West Ward.