

JUAB'S HISTORY TELLS OF PIONEERS, FREIGHT TEAMS, AND THE RAILROAD

Boom to Ghost Town

Printed in the "Provo Daily Herald"

June 16, 1959

By Mrs. Grace Judd

NEPHI - - "The word 'Juab' is of Ute origin and signifies flat or level. It was reported that it was originally spelled 'Yoab' and that the Indians probably appropriated it from Spaniards.

"As Juab County had been named two years before the arrival of the first settlers, it is improbable that it was named after a friendly Indian who lived on Salt Creek, as usually reported. It is more probable that the name was selected as descriptive of the flat terrain of most of the county.

"However, the first law providing for the organization of Juab County was passed on February 3, 1852, by the Legislature of the Territory of Utah, which had been created in place of the self-constituted State of Deseret, by an act of the United States Congress on September 7, 1850."

The foregoing was taken from the History of Juab County, written by Alice P. McCune and published by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1947.

Such was the beginning of Juab County.

BLUEGRASS At the time the first settlers came to the Juab Valley, the valleys were not sage brush, but covered with blue grass, and had springs of clear cold water coming from the canyon, necessary for feed and water for the stock and the people, and they felt a protection from towering Mt. Nebo. Indians roamed the country, sometimes hostile, sometimes friendly, and the pioneers had to be on the alert, not knowing which it would be, but there was one Indian named Juab who came into the Salt Creek camp (now Nephi) and said the Indians had been informing each other by smoke signals on the mountain (which the pioneers had seen), that white men were in the valley, but Juab was always true and kind to the white people and was also friendly with the Indians.

The first settlers came to these parts in September 1851, and during October 1851, 17 families of 75 persons were locating in Nephi. Shelters had to be built before winter set in, and by November 12 houses had been built, some of logs, plastered willows, and adobe. There was good clay for adobes found here.

This was but four years after the Mormon pioneers entered the Salt Lake valley, and all transportation was by ox team, mules or horses. All supplies from Salt Lake City were brought to Nephi this way, but it wasn't long until the Utah Southern Railway was extended to York in February 1875, which was about 15 miles north of Nephi, just south of Santaquin Hill.

Juab's History

TOWN SPRINGS UP Houses were built and a little town sprang up, the terminus of the railroad for two years, handling freight, mail and passengers from the area and the southern part of the state. A hack met the train every day carrying the mail and passengers to Nephi.

After about two years the train went through Nephi, and what a gala time it was. The band played, and people thronged the streets to see the first train come to their city.

The town grew, and all kinds of businesses came with the railroad, as it was the freight depot for all the freight shipped in and out of Nephi and surrounding country.

Sheep men shipped their wool and lambs, cattlemen shipped their cattle, and produce was shipped to other points. It was called "Little Chicago" on account of the business transacted here, but Nephi also lost its glamour when the terminus of the railroad was extended to Juab, a point about 12 miles south of Nephi.

A turntable was erected here and trains came to Juab once a day, turned around and went back to Salt Lake City.

PASSES INTO HISTORY As was the history of other railroad terminals, Juab has passed into history, leaving a story of western life where different people with different ideals come together

The railroad was being built from Juab south and teams were used for grading and men used picks and shovels to lay ties and rails.

A little town sprang up like a mushroom, as railroad men needed accommodations.

Juab, and the surrounding land, was owned by Elmer Taylor, Peter Tygerson and John Witbeck, and they built houses for the many people who came here from surrounding country for freight and who rented it to people for homes, as there were 14 families or more living on the Taylor land.

Juab boasted of a depot, telegraph operator and depot agent, and freight for Levan, Scipio and Fillmore came here.

On the east meadow across from Juab, log houses were built for the railroad men by Mr. Tygerson, and Mr. Taylor built lumber houses, and a hotel; Mr. Hartley ran a butcher shop and post office, and Albert Jackman had a saloon. It was said that at one time, there were 10 saloons in Juab, and dance halls.

A school house was built, and a Provo man, Will Boyle, was the first teacher, and stayed at the boarding house of Mrs. Taylor. A church was built of lumber, and later replaced with brick. Elmer Taylor was the bishop here. A coop store was opened in Juab and owned by the Taylors and Jackmans.

Juab's History

LOG STABLE The Taylors built a log stable where freighters came in wagons, and put up their teams for the night, and stayed at the hotel and boarding house. All water used in Juab came from the Mead spring, which the railroad piped to the round house. It originated on higher ground and flowed by gravity. The people carried water from the roundhouse for culinary purposes, and some carried it in milk cans.

Finally the Taylors piped the water into the kitchen of the hotel and to the corral.

It was said sheep were sheared in the meadow and Scipio brought wool to be shipped from Juab. Mail and passengers came on the train for Scipio and Fillmore, and with unimproved roads, at times it was almost impossible to drive through the deep mud from those towns.

Much money changed hands in this western outpost, as gamblers came to play cards and bet on race horses.

RACE HORSES The Taylors had race and trotting horses, which were purchased from Spaniards in San Bernardino, California, and trotting horses, to run with a sulky. Others were brought from Salt Lake City, Provo and Millard County.

An interesting story is told of an Indian who stayed in Juab for two years with a race horse belonging to a doctor in Payson. The horse was named "Dan" and the Indian slept in the log stable with the horse every night. He was a real Indian rider and won most of the races. The horse didn't seem to be a race horse as it nibbled grass at the Indian's feet, but when the Indian put the red blanket on it to ride the horse always got the start. He rode in races in Salt Lake and elsewhere. Much money changed hands at these races, and some railroad men lost their money and their jobs by their gambling.

There were many businesses here and many people came to the town on business. The dances were popular and people came from all the towns and ranches around and danced until the wee hours.

In 1898 Albert L. Jackman bought controlling interest in the Co-op store and operated it until 1905 when Juab, once a booming western town, passed into history. A railroad freight depot was maintained here for a little time after, then was finally discontinued and Juab was no more.

The present owner, Hoyt Moss, runs a cattle ranch there, and has a small herd of buffalo. Being on Highway 91 the buses often stop to let the passengers see the buffalo.

The western frontier is gone--nothing stays the same for long.