

## HISTORY QUESTION OF THE MONTH

On September 17, 1900, Gustave Anderson, William Rasmussen, Hyrum Covert, Andrew Hansen and Charles Colbrook, who were prominent Butlerville residents, were arraigned before Judge Sommer on a charge of destroying property. L. H. Gray alleged that the defendants had willfully destroyed a water gauge belonging to him located in Little Willow Creek. The defendants pleaded not guilty and a hearing was scheduled for September 28, 1900. The defendants were allowed to go free until the hearing. In the hearing on the 28<sup>th</sup>, evidence showed that the water gauge had been removed and replaced but no damage had been done. Charges against the defendants were dismissed. What events were taking place during this time that related to this situation?

## ANSWER TO HISTORY QUESTION OF THE MONTH

During the late 1890's these men, along with others, dug a ditch, to divert water from Little Willow Creek. The ditch took a northwesterly route to about 8400 South and Wasatch Boulevard where it divided into two ditches. The north branch continued in the northwesterly direction across Wasatch Boulevard to 7800 South where it continued through the area that is now the Cemetery and the subdivisions to the west, crossing the Brown and Sanford ditch and continuing north along the east side of 2700 East.

From the division point on Wasatch Boulevard, the second ditch went west to the east side of Danish Town Road , running parallel to the road until crossing the road at about 7900 South then going west until it reached Little Cottonwood Creek at the bottom of Peppers Hill.

In July of 1900, Andrew Hansen, Thomas Dyer, Gustave Andersen, August Stengruber, and Annie Taubman from the lower ditch and William Rasmussen, Alva Butler , Hyrum Covert, Charles Colbrook, F.D.Brinton and D.B. Brinton from the upper ditch, signed a petition claiming the rights to all the water from Little Willow Creek which was then recorded with the county.

On October 24, 1900, the afore named individuals along with H. S. Jensen and August Hauptfleisch filed for incorporation of the Big Willow Irrigation Company. This filing was accepted by the Salt Lake County Clerk's Office on November 17, 1900 and by the State of Utah on December 4, 1900.

Shares in the company were given to the shareholders based on the amount of time they had spent digging the ditches. The first president elected after incorporation was Alva Butler. Andrew Hansen was elected vice president and water master and Charles Colbrook, secretary treasurer.

The Big Willow Irrigation Company is still in operation today serving shareholders in Danish Road area, Wasatch Boulevard area and the Memorial Estates Cemetery.

*Published Jan 2013 – Gayle Conger*