

History Question of the Month

Who were the original homesteaders in the area of our city known as “Poverty Flats”?

Answer

The first person to homestead the land known as “Poverty Flats” was Daniel Freeman. Daniel was born to Nathan Bankhead and Rose Wales Crosby in Union, about 1854. It is said that he was the first baby born to the black slaves that came to Utah with the Mississippi Saints, after they received their freedom, thus, the name “Freeman”. He received the patent for his property on August 6, 1878.

Joseph S. Vance was the second person to receive a patent on September 30, 1882. His property was at the far west end of “Poverty Flats”. Joseph Stephen Vance was the son of Isaac Young Vance and Martha Eleonore Yeager, who were among the first settlers of our City, arriving in “Little Cottonwood” on March 17, 1849. Joseph was born in Union Fort, on August 16, 1854. His wife was Lydia Alice Van Valkenburg, daughter of Peter and Eliza Boggess Van Valkenburg. She was born in Union On December 25, 1857. They were married in June of 1875. They received a patent for their property in “Poverty Flats” on September 30, 1882. They moved to Idaho about 1890.

Harriet Brown’s homestead paralleled Daniel Freeman’s homestead on the south. She, her husband and children came to Utah in 1860, with only an ox team and two cows. They settled in Salt Lake, living there for two years before moving to Parleys Canyon for one year. Harriet’s husband left her with seven children to care for. She moved to Holladay, Provo, Payson and Bingham Canyon before settling on the 160 acre homestead, part of which was in Butler and part in “Poverty Flats”. She received the patent for her property on December 30, 1884.

Foster Greenwood was the other person who owned property in “Poverty Flats”. His homestead also included property in Butler and Union. Foster, came to Utah with his young son, Thomas, in 1851, settling just outside of the Union Fort. Later he moved farther “up the creek”. He received his patent on May 10, 1884. He died February 16, 1900.