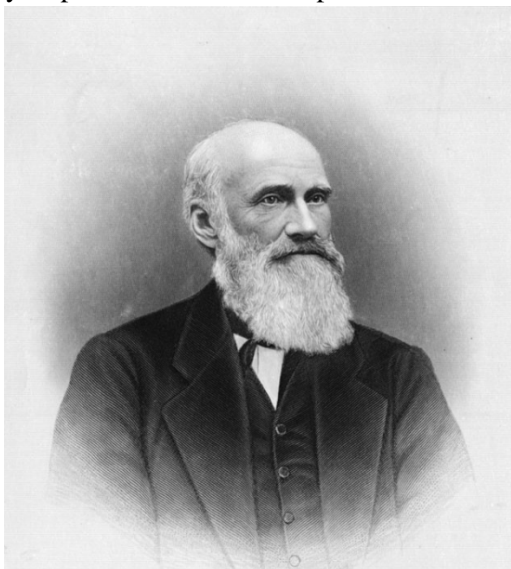


Early History of Hooper

Hooper is located on part of the Western slope of the Alluvial Fan which was formed by Ancient Lake Bonneville during an Ice Age. As the lake receded after the Ice Age, the early spring sunshine through Weber Canyon melted the ice and caused a water channel to be formed and to flow to the northwest, and finally it charted the present course of Weber River to meet Ogden River to the South of Ben Lomond Peak. These two rivers brought the soil down to make the delta where Hooper is now located. The Weber River flows through the northern part of town shortly before it pours its water into the Great Salt Lake.

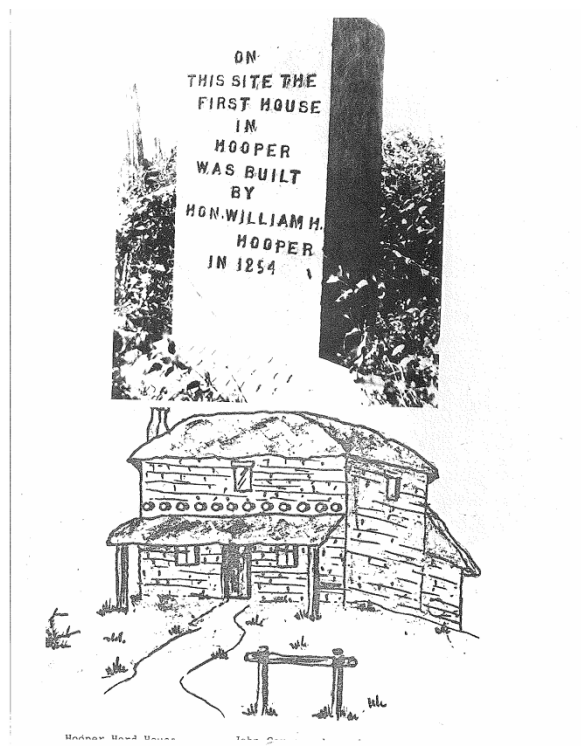
Hooper is also known as “Hooper, Land of Beautiful Sunsets.”

In the pioneer days of Utah the district now included in Hooper, was then known as “Muskrat Springs,” and was secured to be used as a herd ground by Captain William H. Hooper.



William H Hooper

He owned a large herd of cattle and built an adobe house as a shelter for his herdsmen about 1854. It consisted of four rooms on the ground floor and two rooms upstairs. It had a dirt floor, a porch on the south side, and a two-room lean on the north. This was the first building in Hooper.



It was well built and sturdy and stood for many years and was used by early settlers for many purposes. Sagebrush, salaratus, salt grass, rabbits, ducks, sage hens and salt at the lake were plentiful here at the time. When permanent residents began moving into the area the Hooper herd house was moved west to Skull Valley. Someone knowing of the greatness of William H. Hooper honored him by giving it his name.

The James Hale family was Hooper's first permanent family. With trouble brewing all around, in 1862, James took his two wives and children to Hooper. They were the first white families in Hooper. He made dugouts about 1 ½ miles from Captain Hooper's herd house. This settlement was known as Hale's Bend. Their beds consisted of sheep pelts spread on the floor of the dugouts. To keep warm in cold weather they filled large iron kettles with greasewood and placed the kettles in the dugouts. For light they used old rags for wicks, put them in dishes with grease and tallow, and lighted them. Their first dugouts were near the lake bank but a windstorm forced water into their dwelling and they then built on higher ground by a spring west of the herd house.

When settlers began moving into the area they were welcomed by the Hale family. When times were better James built an adobe house for his wives, provided kerosene lamps, and life was more healthful and pleasant.

Among the first settlers to Hooper were Thomas Hull and Mary Benson and their family. They came from Franklin, Idaho.

After the land had been used as a herd ground for several years, people wanted to build homes on it. Of greatest importance to the settlement of any area is water. Without it, nothing can survive. Several springs were located in the Hooper area. The one most widely known and most widely used was Muskrat Spring. It supplied drinking water for early Hooper families and for Roy residents who hauled water from there in barrels. There has even been a song written about it.

Hooper is situated "downstream" between the mountains on the east and the lake on the west. Underground water, in an attempt to reach the lake gives Hooper a high water table. Basements, as a rule, are not practical in Hooper. Two sloughs have created their own channels. One is in the south part of Hooper and is called the "Howard Slough" and the other, which runs through the center of Hooper, is the Hooper Slough. Man-made drain ditches were also very important. In 1866 a petition was granted to build a canal. The canal was dug by hand labor.



In 1869 was a petition for the creation of a School District and Precinct. This created motivation for people to locate in this section of the land and build homes.

Farming was the main industry in the beginning. Chief crops at first were hay, grain, and vegetables. Beef and dairy cows were raised for meat, butter, milk and cheese. Horses were raised for work animals and riding stock. Soon they began planting trees for fruit and shade. Some planted trees, black willows and white willows, for wind breaks, to stop drifting of sand, and to protect the crops such as wheat, oats, barley, rye, corn and sugar cane.

Many early settlers of Hooper purchased their section of ground from the railroad. A section of land is one square mile. A quarter section is 160 acres. The Weber County Recorder's Office records show that during the 1870's a quarter section of land was deeded to several of the earliest settlers. 10 Sep. 1880 deeded to William Hull 80.00 Acres. The William G. Hull (son of Thomas Hull) farm was on the north east end of Hooper. William and his boys planted a 40-acre pear orchard. This was on a sand ridge irrigated by water from the Wilson canal. North and west of this sand ridge, he planted a wind-break of shade trees to protect the land from drifting sand. This pear orchard was a beautiful orchard.

On the street side, south of the field, he had a row of 55 Catalpa trees whose foliage beautified the street area. The catalpa grows long, green, narrow fruit capsules eight to 20 inches long which resemble pea and bean pods. The trees have stout branches which are very durable. They are good shade trees and grow quite rapidly. They are beautiful in the early summer when their flowers are at their finest. They bear thick clusters of white-purple-tinged flowers, very fragrant. They have large broad heart-shaped leaves.

In about 1870 William Hull built his home.



At that time he planted a grove of trees, running in a north eastern direction from his home. It was several rods wide and a couple of blocks long on his property line. This involved several hundred trees, very carefully selected. Some were hardwood trees, others were softwood poplars. This grove served several purposes. It was a good windbreak for the blowing of sand that destroyed many of the crops. It supplied hardwood for building various things like double trees and furniture. It also furnished wood to burn as fuel in their stoves. Children and others enjoyed the coolness of the grove for it made an ideal shady place to picnic and play.

An artesian flowing well was driven in the grove which furnished water to drink or to wade in and cool off with. Also it was used to irrigate the trees. Crisp green watercress grew there in the water. Horseradish also grew in the grove. They made relish by grating this root. It had a sharp sensation of taste and smell, rather "biting." Part of that "windbreak" still remains there today.

In 1892 William set out an orchard of 7,500 fruit trees on his farm. He had 1,200 prune trees, 3,750 apple trees and a variety of pear trees among them were Bartletts and Beurre d'Anjou which are winter pears.

A large packinghouse was built where boxes were made and many people were involved. The packinghouse had a large storage room. The walls and ceilings were a foot thick, all filled in between with sawdust and straw for insulation. Ice was cut

in blocks from the ponds in the wintertime and stored all summer to keep things cool.

In 1906 pear blight struck their orchard. Even though they tried everything they could, the trees became stripped by the blight. By 1912 they were forced to remove all of their fruit trees and go out of the fruit raising business. The task of removing them was enormous. Hard work, sacrifice and disappointments were prevalent in those early days, but the Hulls remained busy and happy ever pushing forward.

Threshing grain was a big job every summer for the men on the farm. It required many hands (between 15 and 20 men) and several teams of horses and wagons, working together to get the job done. Some men hauled wagonloads of bundled grain from the fields to the thresher and pitched it in. The strongest men carried the grain in bags from the thresher to the granary or bins. They usually used seamless bags that held nearly 100 pounds of grain. The teenage boys were put on the strawstack. This was the dirtiest job of all because the fine straw would get in your hair, eyes and itch like the dickens.

The wives and girls started planning the big meals weeks ahead and prepare as much in advance as possible. They would be serving 20 to 30 men three meals a day sometimes for 3 to 5 days.

When the thresher finished for one farmer they moved on to the next place. If they were working in your yard at mealtime that is where they ate. Many times the thresher broke down. If this happened it delayed their time of arrival. Since you were never sure when or if they'd be coming at all that day, much of the food had to be prepared in advance. Pies, cakes or puddings had to be made, potatoes peeled, meat cooked, bread baked and vegetables prepared all on the old hot coal range. Tables had to be set, glasses filled and at noon time a large round washtub on a bench was placed for the men to wash their faces and hands in. Old towels were hung on the clothesline or bushes and their was a comb for them to use.

Stories were swapped as they ate and these fine meals took the edge off the hard work of threshing. Breakfast was also served, but usually just to the thrasher operator and helper.

Standing in almost every barnyard was a swill barrel. It was a large round wooden barrel that held about 50 gallons of liquid garbage to feed the hogs. All of the food scraps, old apples or any other fruit or garden stuff were added to it. Water, milk and chopped grains were put in and mixed up with it. Sometimes if you left the lid off, a chicken fell in and would drown.

There was a hay derrick in many farmyards. It was a tall wooden pole used for stacking hay. It had a long arm pole on it. A load of loose hay was brought from the field on a hay rack (wagon) pulled by a team of horses. A two-tined straight fork on a Jackson fork with a strong rope fastened to it was placed in the hay. It was pulled up by a rope to the top of the arm pole by a derrick horse. This pole was then swung around. The trip rope was pulled dumping the hay on the stack.

Every barnyard had a granary with several large bins. One for oats and barley. Two or three for wheat. When they threshed, the kids usually got in the wheat bin to push the wheat back as the farmer dumped it in. All gardens and fields had to be fenced in to keep stray animals out.

The old boiler was a must in every household for wash days, which was always on Monday. Often wash day was a full day's job. Water was heated in the boiler by taking the three lids off the coal stove and sitting it right over the fire. Bar soap was cut up into the boiler. Lye was added to whiten the clothes. After the white clothes were washed, they were put in the boiler to boil.

A few balls of bluing were tied in a rag and added to the last rinse water where the clothes were put next. They came out clean and sparkling white. Many made homemade starch out of flour and water. The good looking clothes, towels, pillowcases, etc. were hung on the clothesline. The rags were hung on the fences or spread on the

weeds to dry. Wash day was also floor scrubbing day. The good suds, drained from the washer, were used. Tuesday was spent ironing.

To aid the dairy industry, farmers built the Hooper Cheese Factory. The milk was gathered from the farms by team on specially constructed milk-wagons, using wide and long frames of two-inch lumber spaced two inches apart, which extended over the running gears for convenience of loading and unloading. The milk was gathered in ten-gallon cans and paid for on the basis of test and weight. It was dumped into a large metal vat then congealed. After the rennet was put in and the curd collected, the whey was put in the cans and returned next day to the farmers for hog feed, etc. Hooper cheese Factory produced a cheese that had the highest sale price in Utah. The cheese was packaged in five and ten pound cheeses. They were not sold until they were well cured.

Sugar beets were one of the main crops that the farmers raised. In 1848 the Amalgamated Co. took contracts for sugar beets. The seed for these beets was imported by a company from Germany. It was planted in rows and cultivated with a one-horse cultivation. To harvest them, the mold-board was taken off a hand plow, and a team pulled the plow close to a row to loosen the beets for topping. These were then put in a pile and topped, (cutting off the crown of leaves with knives without hooks), and placed in other piles. The beets were loaded into a wagon box called a beet rack. It had sides on it about 1-foot high and one side had hinges on it that would let it drop down. They were then hauled to the factory at Wilson Lane, on all-dirt roads.

At first the farmers had to shovel the beets off their wagon onto the pile by hand. Then later the wagon box had rings on the left side that were fastened to hooks on a big cable. The right side of the wagon box was dropped down. A crank was turned by hand and the left side of the wagon box hoisted up as the beets slid off into a big trough. Then a conveyer belt carried them up into the beet car. The dirt that came off the beets was dumped back

into your wagon, you weighed again and you were docked for the dirt you had.



Harvesting Sugar Cane for Molasses

Sugar cane was one of Hooper's crops for a time. The sugar cane they grew was processed to furnish sweetening for their food. When the cane was mature enough, it was stripped by taking a sharp edged stick and knocking off all the leaves and cutting off the seed top. Then it was cut and hauled to cane-squeezers to press out the juice. As the juice pressed out, it went through a metal pipe under the ground to a barrel by the cooking vat where it was boiled to lesson its moisture content. As it began to heat, it was turned or poured into the next vat compartment and continued on to the next until it was of proper consistency for syrup. Then it was put into vessels for storage and use.

In 1869 Charles Parker erected the first Molasses Mill in the settlement. The Mill fitted with galvanized iron around bottom with sides of wood and was run by horse power. A log was fastened to the rollers and a horse pulled the log around, thereby squeezing the juice from the cane. An evaporator was built with three compartments. While the Molasses was being cooked down, it was taken from one compartment to the other. William Hull also built a similar mill at his home. Hundreds of gallons of sorghum molasses were made at the Hull's mill. William was still making sorghum in his eighties. Sorghum was made at this mill until people quit raising cane.

Another product of the soil that gained favor was the tomato. The soil of Hooper section, being a little alkaline, counteracted some of the acid in the tomatoes, thus giving them a good flavor. There were three different tomato factories built. There were large acreages of tomatoes planted each year. Often teams and wagon loads of tomatoes would be lined up for a quarter of a mile to the west and another line the same distance to the east, waiting their turn to be unloaded. There was a high regard for Hooper tomatoes.

Although Hooper was founded as an agricultural community, it has had a variety of business and commerce. Hooper had a Brick Yard which many homes were built of bricks made in this yard. Hooper had two Grist Mills. The first one was a steam grist mill. Little grain was raised and the mill was operated only a portion of the time. It also housed a hardwood and semi-hardwood nursery. These mills operated for awhile, but did not succeed because the demand was far below the supply. There was a Co-op Store which in 1874 housed the Post Office, General Store, Blacksmith Shops, and many more.

The first one room schoolhouse was built in 1869-1870. It was an adobe structure, 26' by 36'. Lumber, shingles, and rock for the foundation were hauled by horse power to the building site. It was called the Pioneer School.

While the schoolhouse was being erected, the children were given instruction at some private homes. Boards or planks were placed on objects for seats. The children brought fruit, vegetables, molasses and the fathers furnished loads of sage brush to be burned in the pot-bellied stove for warmth, to pay for their instruction. Books were hardly known. Slates and slate pencils were the rule. The slate was a flat dark polished piece of rock-like roofing material, placed in a frame for writing. A pencil was made of similar material. The pencil made a light mark on the slate. These took the place of today's books and pencils. Writing and reading were learned and conducted

from these. In the daytime, a “sun dial” was their clock.

The West Schoolhouse was built around 1870 and another school was built in south Hooper in 1876. One of the girls who attended the south Hooper school told the story of the boys playing their mouth organs. In the spring of the year, snakes, charmed by the music, would come from under the floor and stick out their tongue. The girls would scream, and jump on the benches. This made the boys play louder and the snakes braver. The Hooper North school was built about 1879.

The school buildings were used for day and night schools, singing schools, Sunday Schools, other religious services, and general entertainment.

Students in the early days either walked, rode a horse, or rode the “kid wagon”. Those who rode horses could leave them at the stable located in the north east corner of the school yard. It had stalls where the horses could be tied. The “kid wagon” started in the west part of town and followed a 4 ½ mile route to school. It was pulled by a team of horses. It was closed in, with a roof, windows and a door. The driver sat on a stool in the wagon controlling the reins from inside. During the winter the “kid wagon” was very cold. If the snow was deep, a bob sleigh replaced the wagon. In the springtime the roads were wet and muddy, and it sometimes took four horses to pull the wagon. In good weather the windows could be open and the ride was fairly pleasant.



Kanesville school house

For eight years, Robert Hull’s children attended the Kanesville School which was just across the corner from their home in north east Hooper. They went home everyday for lunch. Their favorite lunch was homemade bread with molasses, or chili sauce sandwiches. They loved the raisin bread their mother made, too.

Once a month a kerosene stove was set up in the hallway at school where hot dogs were fried. The hallway was just blue with smoke. If they behaved well in school, once a month they had a peanut bust. The teacher threw out the peanuts, while the kids scrambled for them.

The Hulls living on the dividing line of Hooper and Kanesville, they attended church in Hooper and school in Kanesville. After completing the eight grade there, they went to Hooper School for the ninth grade.

The first religious meetings were held in the Herdhouse, then at the schools. Hooper’s first meetinghouse was built in 1888-1889.

It was a brick structure with pilasters on each side to reinforce the brick walls. It had a main room on

the east and a vestry at the west, and a prayer room upstairs above the vestry. The main room had a pulpit and organ and choir area on the west. It was heated by two large, iron, coal stoves to the east of the pulpit—one on each side. Lighting was provided by chandeliers hung from the high ceiling and fueled with gas.

It was not all work and no play for Hooper's early settlers. Socials were first held in the Hooper herd house. Later, a bowery was built for the 4th and 24th of July celebrations. At night they would have a fire-works display. As more homes were built they became centers for recreation. Friends and neighbors would gather for parties and dances. During 1870 a hall was built for social programs. There was a stage where dramas were presented. The hall was large enough for the popular dances of the time. Another hall was built in 1890 for dancing and theatricals. Many couples held their wedding dances there. There were other halls built through the years.



1st Hooper LDS Ward