



# Kamas

1911 ~ 2011  
CENTENNIAL



*A jewel nestled in a valley surrounded by the beautiful Uinta Mountains.*

*On Wednesday, July 5th 1911, the board of County Commissioners of Summit County, State of Utah voted unanimously in favor of a resolution approving the incorporation of the Town of Kamas. The following town board was appointed: J. Orland Pack, president; A.H. McCormick, R.L. King, M.N. Pack, Sr., Jesse R. Burbidge, members; until the first municipal election could be held.*



For many years, Kamas has been known as "The Gateway to the Uintas" because of its proximity to the mountains. Like a jewel nestled in the valley, Kamas is surrounded by the beautiful Uinta Mountains on the east and the Wasatch Mountains to the west. The Provo River borders the south end of the valley with the Weber River bordering the north. Beaver Creek, a tributary of the Weber, cuts through Kamas, as it winds its way through the valley on its way to meet the main branch of the river downstream.



It has been claimed Kamas derived its name from a Mootka Indian word, "chamas," which through a series of changes became "Camass," a word used to identify any of several plants, the bulbs of which formed a staple food of the Indians of Western America. In a broader sense the word is used to designate a small grassy plain among the hills, which is a good description of the topography of this locality. (*Heart Throbs of the West, Vol. 5*)

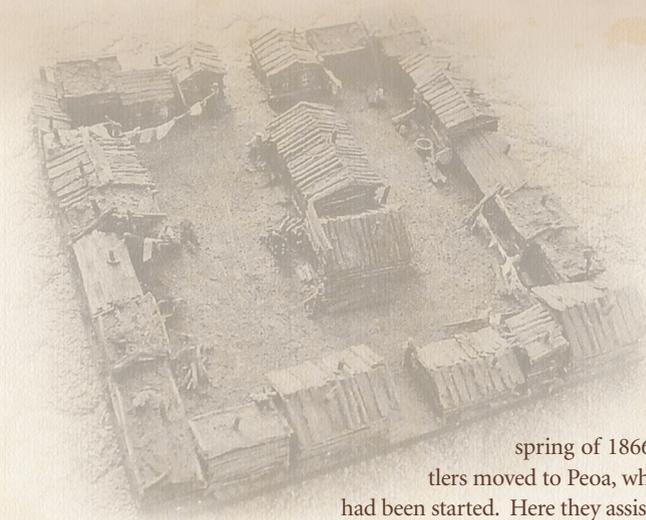
Thomas Rhoades was the first settler to come to the valley. He was sent in 1858 by Brigham Young. He came to build a home, raise livestock, hunt, trap, and look for gold. At first he brought 25 men with him.



They built a stockade to protect themselves from the Indians. The stockade stood empty for two years. Thomas Rhoades and George W. Brown returned in 1860. They were the first people to spend a whole winter in the valley and were followed in the spring of 1861 by more pioneers. The legacy of Thomas and the other early pioneers lives on today and fills the valley. It is known that Thomas Rhoades and his son Caleb obtained gold from somewhere in the Uinta Mountains, and more than 100 years later people are still searching for the Lost Rhoades Gold Mine.

Early years in the valley were very difficult. Crops were poor and the winters long and cold. During the winter of 1861-62, the entire community was dependent upon one coffee mill to grind wheat for bread.

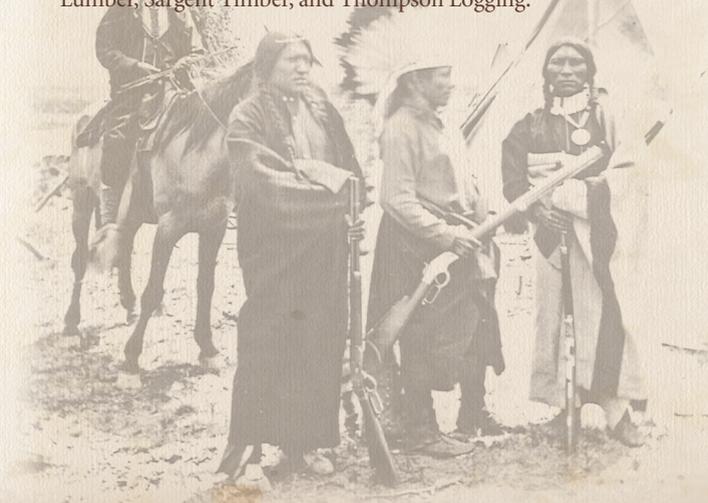
The Indians, who were in the habit of using the valley for their hunting ground and grazing land resented the invasion of the white settlers. In the



spring of 1866, the settlers moved to Peoa, where a fort had been started. Here they assisted in the completion of the fort, remaining there until fall. The settlers came back to their homes in the fall of 1866 and commenced to build a fort of their own, which was completed sometime in 1867. This fort was made of hewn logs, measuring 30 rods square with walls 16 feet high. The walls of the fort formed the back walls of the houses. There were gates in both the east and west walls of the fort. There were about 47 families who lived in the fort from the time of its erection until it was abandoned in about 1870. In the center of the fort were two log buildings. One building was moved into the fort where it served as a schoolhouse, church and amusement hall. A co-op store that provided the settlers with the basic necessities of life was operated in the second log building.

The timber industry started early in the history of Kamas. In 1861, John Pack and Charles Russell set a sawmill in Beaver Creek Canyon, three miles east of Kamas with James Woolstenhulme hauling the first logs.

Easy access to the nearby tree covered mountains made lumbering a natural local industry. Prominent operators in the early days were John Carpenter, Joseph Williams, Joseph Porter, the Pack brothers, and Lambert brothers. Other major operations in more recent years include Kamas Valley Lumber, Blazzard Lumber, Union Timber, Smith Lumber, Leavitt Lumber, Sargent Timber, and Thompson Logging.



Kamas has always been an ideal area for the grazing of cattle. The valley continues to serve as summer pasture to thousands of cattle to be shipped to markets each fall.

The first mercantile establishment was a co-op store in the old fort. Other early commercial business owners were E.J. White, Alma Warr, George Pack, Jack Guild, John Pack, Jr., John Carpenter, R.L. King, the Hoyt brothers, George B. Leonard, Sr. and others.

Ward E. Pack was the president of the first home dramatic company which was organized in 1887. Many fine traveling groups also visited Kamas in years past and these too, were well received.

The first dance hall was built in 1887 by Jedediah G. Lambert and Silas M. Pack. This building also served as the first silent movie theater. John Carpenter afterward built a dance hall which was later known as the Kamas Opera House. Motion pictures were shown in the Opera House. It burned down in 1943. In 1946, Doug Simpson and Glen Gibbons opened a new theater that is still in use today.

The first orchestra was organized by George B. Leonard. Jesse R. Burbidge, John Smithies, Mrs. Charlotte Pack, and Parley Neeley were members of this group. Many musical entertainments were presented.

At one time, the town of Kamas had its own local newspaper. It was called the Kamas Courant and was published by Mrs. R.B. Rand and her son, Julian. Lawrence E. Fitch built caskets in the rear of the newspaper office.

In 1913, George Butler came and established a small electric light plant in the old grist mill at the mouth of Beaver Creek Canyon, east of Kamas.

Kamas' earliest telephone service consisted of only one phone in the home J.G. Lambert. The Kamas Woodland Telephone Company was organized as a stock company by Bert Potts. It was purchased by John W. Blazzard and Moses W. Taylor in 1921.

*In June 1938, the citizens of Kamas Valley organized themselves for the purpose of promoting community welfare, renewing old acquaintances, and learning more about the valley. This tradition of Kamas Valley Fiesta Days continues today. Rodeo, bull wars, parades, entertainment, good food, car shows, and of course the Demolition Derby make the week of July 24th a great time to be in Kamas.*

# Historic Look at Kamas

**1** John Lambert home monument – In 1861, log cabins with dirt roofs were constructed hurriedly before winter set in. This monument now stands marking the proximity of the first cabin built by John Lambert. (165 East 100 South)

**2** The Rhoades Valley Camp of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers built the Relic Hall on the site of the Old Rhoades Valley Fort. Construction was completed and a marker erected on August 27, 1937. (100 West Center Street)

**3** In 1898, a home was built by Lucy Williams on the corner of 186 South 100 East. The home was used for many years as a hospital and an apartment building.

**4** The Alma Warr store building has been a landmark in Kamas for over 100 years. Mr. Warr worked as a clerk in the co-op store in Kamas in 1869. In 1892, he started his own store on the corner of 200 South and Main Street. Later it was moved to the southeast corner of the same block where it stands today (100 East 300 South). ‘With the clang of an iron weight against tin cans, the door to the store would open to a delightful, turn of the century display.’

**5** The Summit Inn, originally known as the Summit Hotel, was constructed in 1910. The hotel was erected as a means of income for the family of the widow Lucy Williams. It has served as a hotel, patient recovery area for one of Kamas’ doctors, a candy factory, cleaning service, and a home. Today it is a pizza parlor and ice cream shop. (80 South Main)



At one time, four hotels were operating in Kamas simultaneously. They included the Kamas Hotel, the Cottage Hotel and Livery Stable, and the Summit Hotel.



**6** At the time the Rhoades Valley Fort was constructed in 1866-67, a building was moved into the fort from the north side of Beaver Creek where it had served as a schoolhouse since 1863. In the fort, it served as a schoolhouse, as well as a church and amusement hall. Once the fort was torn down, the old schoolhouse was moved to 185 East 200 North. It has been fixed up and added onto, but still contains the original log frame construction.

**7** Laurence E. Fitch was a noted carpenter in Kamas in the early 1900’s. His home was constructed in 1905 and was located on the corner of 200 North Main. Many of the “gingerbread-type woodwork” on the older homes in town can be attributed to his talents. He also built caskets in his home.

**8** The Green Hall has been a popular feature in the community for many years. It was constructed in 1924 by the LDS church and known as the Kamas Amusement Hall. It was the site of many plays, programs, Halloween parties, dances, church bazaars, and wedding receptions. It was closed on January 24, 1984. It is now the home of the New West Country Store. The original curtain valance across the stage is still there. (95 South Main)

**9** Robert L. King was a prominent figure in the history of Kamas. His home was built in 1902. Located at 100 North 100 West, it was one of the many constructed by L. E. Fitch. Mr. King owned and operated King’s Store, was appointed to the first town council, and was on the board of directors of the Kamas State Bank.

**10** The Isaac (Dop) O’Driscoll home stands on the corner of 215 South and 300 East. It was built in 1883. A dairy and creamery belonging to Clarence and Walter Jones stood in the rear of that home at one time. The Jones’ bought the first milking machine in Kamas and used it at their creamery.

The second school house for Kamas was built on 100 North Main Street in 1874. This building was replaced by a larger brick building in 1905. The first South Summit High School building was erected in 1914 at 300 East Center Street.



The first and only flour mill in Kamas was erected by A.O. Johnson about 1890.



**Cover: Opera House 1898**  
 Front row left-right: Edith Lambert, Emma Lambert Pack, Mae Lambert, Martha Woolstenhulme Corbett, Celestia Young Pack, Catherina Woodard, Selena Carpenter Pack, Stella Corbett Jones, Sophie Corbett.  
 Second row left-right: Suzy Vaugham, Myrtle Ure, Jane Warr, Phoebe Seymour, Sadie Simpson Burbidge, Mae Burbidge, Angeline Simpson Turnbow, Lizzie Seymour Thomas, Ruth Burbidge King, Nancy Tolbert Pack, Retta Lemon Pack.  
 Back row left-right: Jamima Page, Emmeline Lambert Carpenter, Emma J. Mitchell, Edith Anderson Dahl, Sophie Osborn, Ellen Ure, Hephzibah Turnbow, Hannah Lewis, Mae Lewis.

The Kamas State Bank was organized in Nov 1909.

The first LDS chapel in Kamas was completed in 1901. On March 3, 1902 it burned to the ground. A second chapel was erected in 1904, renovated in 1939 and again in 1976. It was demolished in 1984 and the land purchased by Kamas City. The Beaver Creek Park now occupies this lot.

