

Phineas Wolcott Cook Locality Project  
Salt Lake City, 1853-1856

**Manti, Sanpete, Utah**

*“In the Spring of 1853 (Uncle John Young) said if I would come to the city and go to laying down pump logs to water the city I could do well and wisht me to go to Brigham and ask him what he thought about it, which I did. He answered me that he had wanted someone to go at it but he had never found anyone yet that was willing...”*

*“I hired Henry Higgins to go down to help me move my family and household goods to Salt Lake City we was to start the 4th day of May.”*

**Salt Lake City, May-July, 1853, Salt Lake City Water Works**

*“I arrived in the city the 12th day of May 1853 I rented a house of Van Vacanberg on 4th South temple street in the 8th ward and went to work on the water works building a machine for housing logs by water. I lived in the rented house about three months.”*

*“Complaints ware made to Mayor Jedediah M Grant as well as myself of nuicances on the stream which at that time passed down by his house. The Mayor ordered me to...put a stop to it.”*

(The Water Works are detailed on pp. 5-8.)

**July-October, 1853, Built a house for Zina Huntington Young**

*“I then went to Brigham and told him my time of rent was about out and I wished he would pay me so that I could buy me a small place as I knew of one for sale that I could buy for two hundred dollars, he said he would sell me one, I might move in to a house in the 18th ward whare one of his wives was living whose name was Zina Huntington he would hire me to build one for her and then he would sell it to me I accordingly went to work building a house according to his directions, a few days before I got done he told me I might move in with Zina as soon as I pleased.”*

*“The 3rd day of October I moved my family into his house and she moved out the 5th I was then ready to go to work again on the Water Works.”*

**1853-1856: The Cooks lived in Zina’s old house in the SLC 18<sup>th</sup> Ward**

Zina’s house was on the corner of State Street and 1st Avenue. According to her daughter the new house was built at the same location.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “A Biographical Sketch of the Life of Zina Young Williams Card. Salt Lake City, Utah, March 26, 1930. Written one year prior to her death and read at her last birthday party – her 80th, April 3, 1930 – Zina Card Brown.” Church History Library, Zina Card Brown collection, MS 4780, Box 5, Fd. 14, It. 1, p. 1.

1856 Census, Utah Territory (FHL 505,913): 18<sup>th</sup> Ward, Salt Lake City

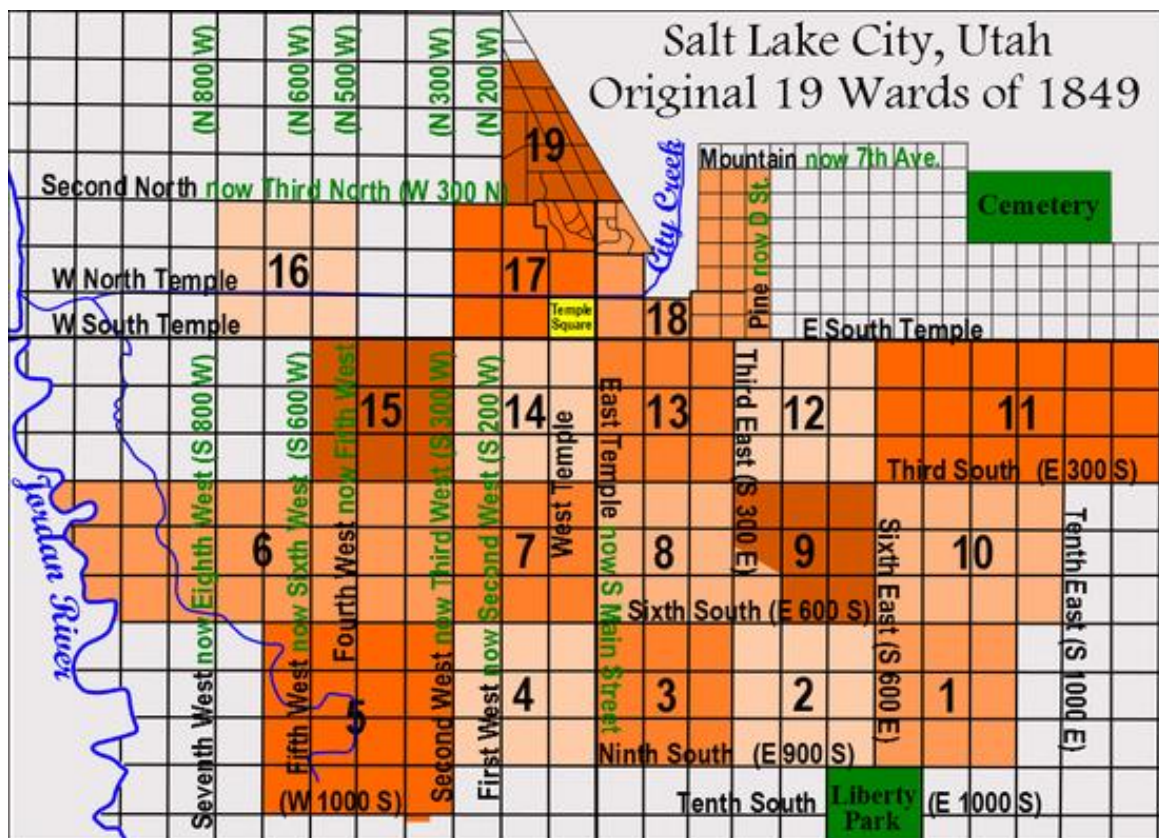
p. 4: Phineas Woolcot Cook. Ann Eliza Cook, Amanda P. Cook, Catherine M. Cook, Harriet B. Cook

p. 6: Amanda Savage

p. 8: Vulcan Cook, Woolcott Cook

Also in the 18<sup>th</sup> Ward: Brigham Young and his whole family which takes up almost two census pages, Joseph A. Young also there, Heber C. Kimball and family, Lorenzo Dow Young and family, Daniel H. Wells and Jedediah M. Grant.

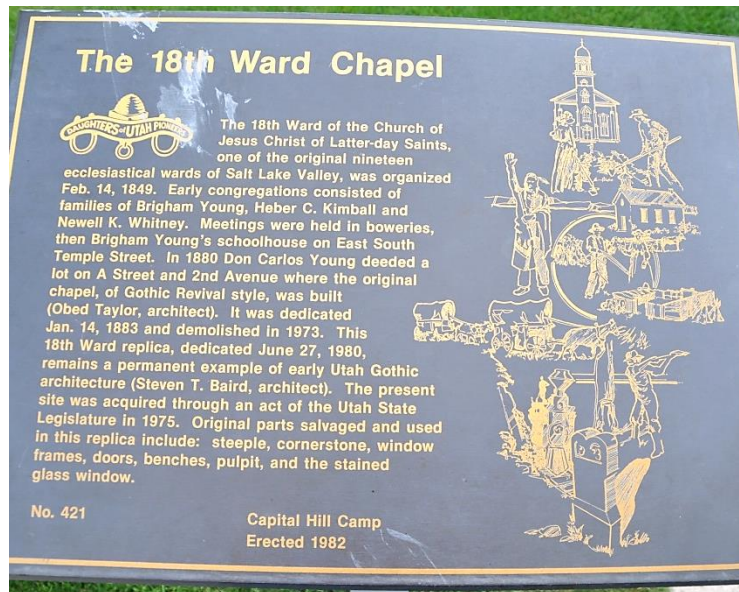
The 18<sup>th</sup> Ward was on both sides of City Creek. It included houses from South Temple to 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and from the present Main Street four blocks east to D Street.<sup>2</sup>



[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Template:Salt\\_Lake\\_City,\\_Utah\\_Original\\_19\\_Wards\\_of\\_1849](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Template:Salt_Lake_City,_Utah_Original_19_Wards_of_1849)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Template:Salt\\_Lake\\_City,\\_Utah\\_Original\\_19\\_Wards\\_of\\_1849](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Template:Salt_Lake_City,_Utah_Original_19_Wards_of_1849)

## The 18<sup>th</sup> Ward Historical Marker:



“The 18th Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, one of the original nineteen ecclesiastical wards of Salt Lake Valley, was organized Feb. 14, 1849. Early congregations consisted of families of Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Newell K. Whitney. Meetings were held in boweries, then Brigham Young's schoolhouse on East South Temple Street. In 1880 Don Carlos Young deeded a lot on A Street and 2nd Avenue where the original chapel, of Gothic Revival style, was built...in 1883...”<sup>3</sup>

## Work for Jedediah M. Grant

*“Before I commenced working on the Water Works I worked for J. M. Grant during which time I was appointed City Water Master which proved to be a vary responsible office.”*

Jedediah also lived in the 18<sup>th</sup> Ward, on Main Street where ZCMI was later located.<sup>4</sup> Since Grant was Mayor of Salt Lake City until his death in 1856, Phineas probably worked for him personally as he built a system to convey water to Salt Lake City residents.

## October, 1853-1855 – Brigham Young’s House and the Tithing Office

*“(Brigham Young) wanted me to work on his house as one of his foreman I then set in on his beehive house and kitchen on the hill I asked him how much he would ask of me for the house he said it cost him a thousand dollars I asked him if he considered it worth that now he said no. I told him I should leave it to him I was not afraid but what he would do right In the spring of 1854 I was called by him to superintend the building of his big house he gave me some directions and told me to go ahead and make the drawings and carry out the work I had no Joiners guide or instruments or drawing paper and I hardly knew what coarse to take finely I went to the Architects office to Truman C. Angel and asked him some council but I did not get any but found that he would perhaps like to do the drawing himself...”*

*“I kept on as I had been directed and made the most of the window frames, In the time the masons came on to lay the foundation I had them to instruct in all the cross walls and openings*

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.historicalmarkerproject.com/markers/HMNUA\\_the-18th-ward-chapel\\_Salt-Lake-City-UT.html](https://www.historicalmarkerproject.com/markers/HMNUA_the-18th-ward-chapel_Salt-Lake-City-UT.html)

<sup>4</sup> Walker, Ronald W., “Rachel R. Grant: The Continuing Legacy of the Feminine Ideal,” in *Supporting Saints: Life Stories of Nineteenth-Century Mormons* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1985), 17–42.

and timbers to prepare I tried to get more help but could not there was from 8 to 10 masons to superintend and I also had the superintendance of the city building (the tithing office).”

(In the Spring (1855) after organizing the city watering) “I got up the stone work or bacement story with window and door frames in, and finished off the tithing office...”

“This house was to be called his big house 45 feet wide and one hundred and 10 feet long, the basement story was now up and the timbers had been put on last fall this spring we commence laying adobies of which the rest of the walls of the house is to be made.”

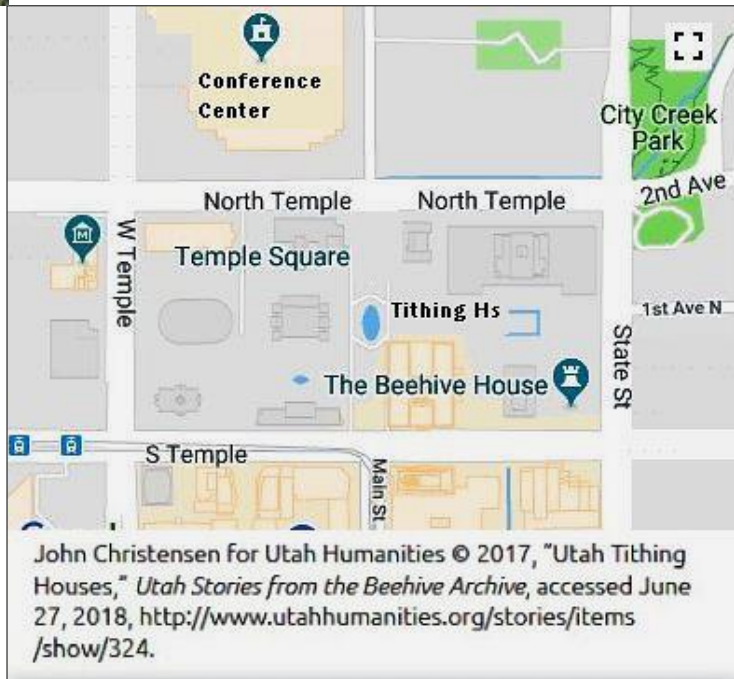


“I told (Brigham) if he would put Miles Romney in foreman over me he would probably feel better ..In 2 or 3 days he came over and told Miles Romney that he wanted him to take the charge of his house. During the winter I worked in the Carpenters Shop the most of the time under the directions of Miles Romney In the month of Febuary 1855 I commenced again on the house making window frames and door frames.”

- Phineas was responsible for all the window frames in the Beehive House
- He built the window and door frames in the basement of the Beehive House, where there is now a restaurant.

#### Brigham Young’s Beehive House

- He superintended the supports and walls and stone work for the basement
- He oversaw the laying of adobe bricks for the walls of the house.
- He was superintendent of the building of the Tithing House, which was located where the Joseph Smith Building now stands at Temple Square.<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-Day Saints, 1830-1900*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005; Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992; Leonard J. Arrington, “The Mormon Tithing House: A Frontier Business Institution,” *The Business History Review*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Mar., 1954), pp. 24-58, accessed on <http://www.utahhumanities.org/stories/items/show/324>.

## 1853 through 1855 – Water Master Duties

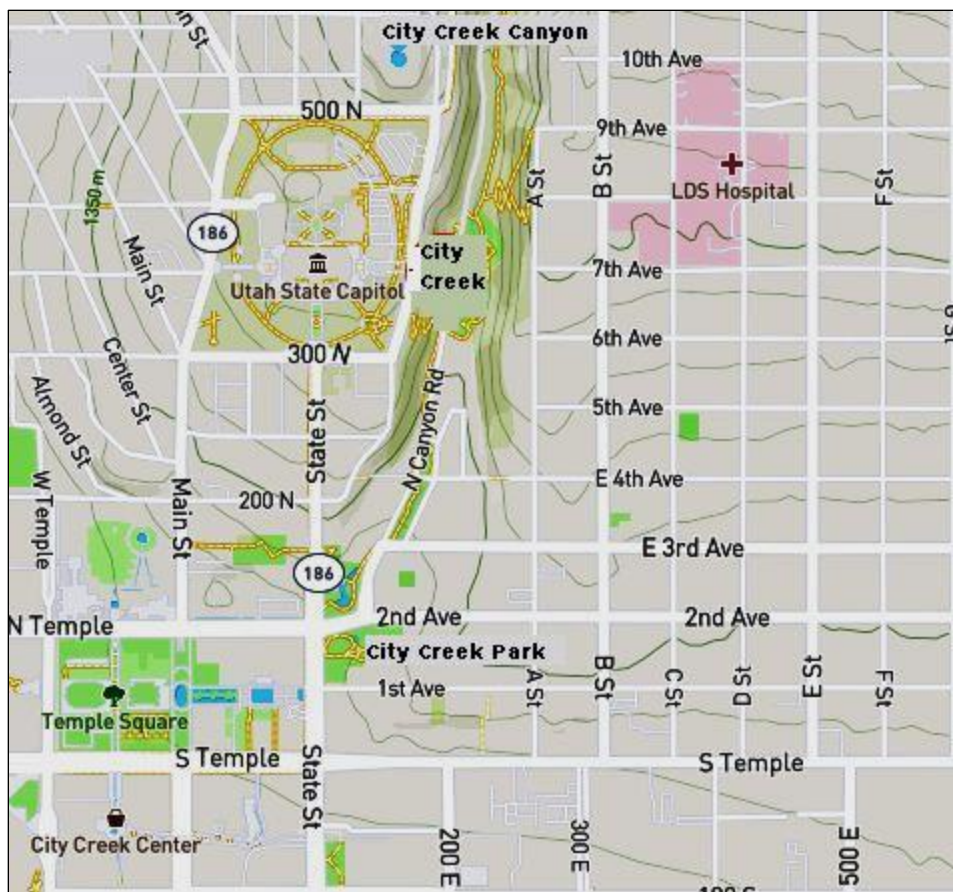
Phineas was asked to set up the Salt Lake City water works, including “building a machine.” He then managed the Water Works for the next three years.

*“I arrived in the city the 12th day of May 1853 I rented a house of Van Vacanberg on 4th South temple street in the 8th ward and went to work on the water works building a machine for housing logs by water. I lived in the rented house about three months.”*

*“Complaints ware made to Mayor Jedediah M Grant as well as myself of nuicances on the stream which at that time passed down by his house. The Mayor ordered me to...put a stop to it.”*

(While building the Beehive House) *“The season of watering came on and this still increased my labers I had much business to do in that time many difficulties to settle with the people I appointed assistant water masters in all the wards in the city and in the five acre lots doing the business night after the bell and in the morning before.”*

*“...in 1855 President Brigham Young had a hog pen at the side of the road (which polluted the city water.)... I was directed by the Mayor to take the City laws and go to the President and read the law...”*

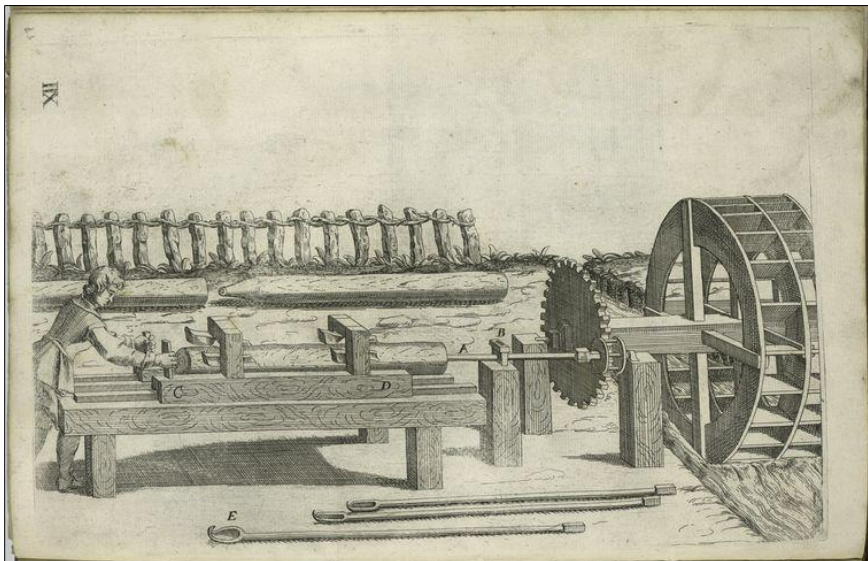


**City Creek (upper center of map) was the original source for water in Salt Lake City. It ran from City Creek Canyon into the city between State and A Streets.**

The Water Works began with a system of ditches for water in the beginning from City Creek to flow to gardens and trees, a pattern which continued in Salt Lake City for over 100 years. However, it also included a culinary delivery system which delivered clean water to houses and neighborhoods in bored log pipes. This system had been in place in other cities for almost two centuries, and was well-known to the settlers in Utah.

Except for his reference to “building a machine for housing logs by water,” Phineas seems to have spent much of his time making sure the free-flowing water in the ditches was clean and unpolluted. Obviously such ground water was easily polluted by hog pens too close to the ditch.

A more complicated issue, is the machine and the logs housing the water. In the mid-1600’s Boston, Massachusetts and Albany, New York had installed systems of water delivery by boring holes in logs, securing them end to end, and allowing water to flow to municipal locations. It would be another 200 years before they devised a pump to get water to higher elevations, but their Seventeenth Century technology, brought from London and Europe, wasn’t sophisticated enough to devise a pump.<sup>6</sup>



<http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47db-bed6-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99> | title= (still image) Plate XII. An engine of great service to bore elms or other trees to make pipes to convey water, and for other uses. (1701) }} |author=Digital Collections, The New York Public Library |accessdate=June 27, 2018 |publisher=The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundation}}</ref>

By 1854, when Salt Lake City’s log pipe system was completed, 300 cities in the United States had also installed bored log pipe systems. Within three decades iron pipes would be introduced, but in the mid-1850’s most cities had only log pipes. Salt Lake City was among the first cities in the Western United States to create its water delivery system, including bored logs for household use and ditches for gardens and farms. Phineas W. Cook’s efforts brought advancements few other cities in the west could produce as early as 1854.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Manual of American Water-works* edited by Moses Nelson Baker and published by *Engineering News* between 1888 and 1897. This invaluable work expanded on earlier work by John James Robertson Croes and contains an enormous amount of information about individual water-works systems that Baker, Croes, and others had collected. Accessed on <http://www.waterworkshistory.us/chron.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.waterworkshistory.us/chron.htm>



Log water main with a 4 inch hole bored in the center, courtesy cin-oh.gov

The machine referred to by Phineas in his journal could have been the log boring machine, powered like a sawmill by a water wheel. As a known mill expert, he would have been the perfect candidate for such a job. If so, he probably built the machine himself from descriptions given him by others. Because the system was in place by 1854, he obviously knew what he was doing.

### Early Water Rights

“Red Butte Canyon is located directly east of Salt Lake City and the University of Utah campus. Consisting of 7.25 square miles of watershed, it is the smallest canyon of the seven canyons in eastern Salt Lake County. Its elevation ranges from 5,000 to 8,000 feet about sea level. The pioneer settlers and later residents of Salt Lake City used water from Red Butte stream.

“Red Butte Creek was an early water supply for the Mormon Pioneers. On July 9, 1853, the City Council passed an ordinance creating the office of Water Master. The duties consisted of overseeing the construction and repair of gates, locks and sluices as necessary to admit into the City the water from City Creek, Red Butte and Emigration canyons (Kanyon Creek) and to divide the water throughout the City to best serve the public interest for irrigation, domestic and other purposes.

“City Council minutes indicated that Brigham Young was granted permission to use excess water from Red Butte. In 1858, the City Council and Mayor Smoot, granted use of excess water from both Red Butte and Emigration Canyons for his mill and instructed the watermaster to turn the surplus water down to the mill.”<sup>8</sup>

### **August, 1855**

Released by Brigham Young from his job working on the Beehive House. Brigham asked him to be an independent contractor.

*“(Brigham) continued I have been wondering why you are not out jobing among the brethren. I said you told me to work here and I have considered your council as law to me and I do not know that I ever allowed myself to disobey one word of it. I have no fault to find on that score he said but I now council you to go out and take jobs among the brethren You are a builder and you had better get you a good pardner some one that has some capital and go to furnishing and building and I think you will do well.”*

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.slcgov.com/utilities/NewsEvents/news1999/news080699.htm>

Phineas considered this the beginning of a new phase in his life, and asked Ann Eliza to help him keep a daily journal. He recorded most of his journal at that time, and after August of 1855 kept the journal current with daily or weekly entries. We have only the early pages and from 1855 to 1859.

He also worked for Jedediah M. Grant at a house in Bountiful, probably for one of his wives.

## **Fall of 1855**

There was no money from the public works, and he couldn't find work even to buy food for his family. Phineas had been City Water Master and Captain of the fire company in the 18th ward. In the Fall of 1855 he resigned both positions to spend his time trying to find jobs. There was a general famine in the Territory and he was unable to find suitable work.

### Captain of the fire company in the 18th ward

“For the first 36 years of its existence, Salt Lake City relied on the services of volunteer firefighters to protect lives and property. The volunteers strove to uphold their motto, "We Aim to Aid and Work to Save." By the 1880s this system was insufficient for the growing city, and a professional force was created.

“A number of volunteer brigades were created in the early years of the city, including several established by private commercial firms. In 1853 Mayor Jedediah M. Grant signed an ordinance creating a citywide volunteer fire brigade. Along with a reorganization of the department in 1856, engineer Jesse C. Little and others constructed a small, manually pumped engine christened the Volunteer. This sturdy little machine had to be hauled by hand to the fire site, sometimes a distance of a mile or more. With several strong men laboring on its levers in relay teams, a stream of ditch water four stories high could reportedly be maintained.”<sup>9</sup>

A water master was appointed in each ward as well as a Captain of the fire company, who oversaw issues in that ward area. Phineas appointed water masters in each of the wards and apparently Mayor Grant appointed him as ward representative for the fire company.

## **February 1856**

After being released from work at Brigham Young's house, Phineas became desperate to find work.

*“The next session of Congress it was published in the papers that about forty thousand dollars had been appropriated for the relief of the Indians in Utah territory, I made some inquiries from time to time but could not learn that those claims had been paid... About the 22nd*

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<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey D. Nichols, *History Blazer*, May 1995, [https://historytogo.utah.gov/utah\\_chapters/mining\\_and\\_railroads/1883blazespurredcreationoffiredepartment.html](https://historytogo.utah.gov/utah_chapters/mining_and_railroads/1883blazespurredcreationoffiredepartment.html)



*of February 1856 I became much impressed to go and talk with Br Brigham concerning loses to the people caused by the Indian disturbances in 1853.”*

*“I reccomended the appointment of an agent to go through the territory and collect those claims together and forward them to Washington and sue the government and if possible to obtain something...”*

### **April 1856**

Agreed to live in Thomas Thurston’s house and care for his farm in the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward (Between 2<sup>nd</sup> West and about 10<sup>th</sup> West at the Jordan River and from 300 to 600 South). He bought and planted potatoes but Thurston changed his mind and Phineas had to leave, losing his investment and all hope of food for his family.

We know he lived near 10<sup>th</sup> West at the Jordan River because his heifer kept crossing the river.

### **May, 1856**

Invited by Isaac Morley and Benjamin Johnson to move to the settlement of Summit Creek (Santaquin in Utah Valley). Johnson wanted him to work on a mill there, but would not promise land for a farm at Summit Creek, so Phineas talked to the bishop at Payson. He found he could get land at Payson and moved his family there with the promise of his own farm.

*“About this time I learned that a new settlement was to be made at Summit Creek Utah County under the direction of Isaac Morley senior and Benjamin F. Johnson And Father Morley as we always called him invited me to join in the enterprise.*

*“Bp Hancock offered me ...five acres of land and would plow it for me so as to raise a crop of corn (in Payson).”*