Cove Fort Historical Site | Near Marysvale Utah

The **Cove Fort Historical Site** is located immediately northeast of the junction of I-15 and I-70, in the southeast corner of Millard County, approximately 30 miles northwest of Marysvale, Utah.

In the fall of 1849, Brigham Young asked fifty men to explore the regions south of the Salt Lake Valley under the leadership of Parley P. Pratt. This Southern Exploring Company passed through the Cove Creek area before returning home to recommend the settling of locations north and south of here. Within a few years, many of the familiar towns traveled through the Cove Creek region, as did a growing number of travelers on Church and government business and immigrants traveling to further destinations such as California.

On April 12, 1867, Brigham Young wrote a letter to Ira Hinckley asking him to take charge of building a Fort on Cove Creek, located in central Utah, a day's journey from the town of Fillmore, on the north of the town of Beaver. This fort, built instead of a town because of the scarcity of water was to be a way station for travelers along the "Mormon
Corridor”—settlements stretching from Idaho to Nevada connected by a network of roads, telegraph lines, and postal routes. Ira left his home in Coalville, Utah, on April 17 for his new assignment, with his family to come later.

Between April and November 1867, quarrymen, stonemasons, and carpenter from central Utah settlements labored together to construct the fort. Built of black volcanic rock and dark limestone quarried nearby, the walls are on hundred feet long and eighteen feet high. Lumber, mostly cedar and pine, was used for the roof, twelve interior rooms, and the massive doors at the east and west ends of the fort.

For years the fort bustled with activity. "In those early days it was not isolation to be at the fort," said Ira's daughter, Luna. "The news of the great, growing West throbbed over the line into the telegraph office at the fort and through (the) post office passed the news of the new western empire" delivered by Pony Express riders. Children laughed as they played in the inner courtyard. Daily, two stage coaches with a variety of weary travelers rumbled up to the Fort. Mormon families, some of whom were moving to new communities, unhitched their teams from their heavy loaded wagons and led the horsed to the bard. Cowboys tended the tithing herds, and a blacksmith changed metal into horseshoes with his hammer. Evening conversation was lively around the long table where each night a new variety of visitors, including mail carriers, artist, miners, Indian or Spanish traders, or Mormon families, joined the Hinckley family for dinner. Afterward, everyone attended family prayer. At night the air might be filled with music as the cowboys sang around their campfire.

For more than twenty years Cove Fort served an important function, but as times changed so did the need for the fort. By 1890 the Church leased out the for and after the turn of the century, sold it to the Otto Kesler family. Nearly one hundred years later, in 1988 the Hinckley family purchased the fort from the Keslers and made a gift of it to the Church as a historic site. Shortly afterward, efforts to restore the fort to its original condition were begun, and on May 21, 1994, Gordon B. Hinckley, later president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, dedicated the Historic Cove Fort Complex.

"It is our hope that Cove Fort will serve as a modern way station—not as a shelter from physical fatigue or protection from the elements—" said Stephen D. Nadauld, speaking at the 1994 dedication, "rather, we hope it will serve as a spiritual way station where we can be reminded of the faith of our forefathers, where we can refresh our sense of sacrifice and obedience and our dedication to duty, where we can be reminded of the values of work, provident living, self-sufficiency, and family unity."

The fort contains 12 rooms, six on the north and six on the south, and each has been restored to its look and feel from the 1867-1877 period. The rooms contain authentic furnishings and
artifacts. Cove Fort is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to sunset except in bad weather. Free picnic areas and rest rooms are provided. More information is available by calling (435) 438-5547. Cove Fort is located near the intersection of I-70 and I-15-one mile north of exit 1 off I-70 and two miles south of Exit 135 off I-15.

Events at Cove Fort

Cove Fort Reunion - Last Wednesday in June each year.

Cove Fort Days - First Friday and Saturday of August each year

Information courtesy of the State of Utah and the Church of Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints and the Cove Fort Historical Site web site