# Beautiful Mosida-by-the-Lake


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According to the local newspaper announcement, the development "is ideal from a scenic point of view. The lake forms a beautiful and transparent foreground while at a distance arise in majesty the snow-tipped mountains. (Developers) are planning for the entertainment of those who care to enjoy trips across the lake."

This is not a contemporary advertisement for recreational timeshares. Nor is it a promotion for a strictly vacation development. The newspaper article, written in 1912, describes an abortive agricultural development in southern Utah Valley, "Mosida-by-the-Lake." The "beautiful and transparent foreground" is Utah Lake.

### Location

Utah Lake is one of the largest freshwater lakes west of the Mississippi. It dominates Utah Valley, covering approximately one quarter of the valley floor. Because of its size, the lake has always been a major barrier to east-west transportation. Roads and railroads have had to circumnavigate the lake, greatly increasing travel times. The only efficient way to get from the populated eastern side with its more developed transportation systems to the sparsely populated western shore in 1912 was by boat.

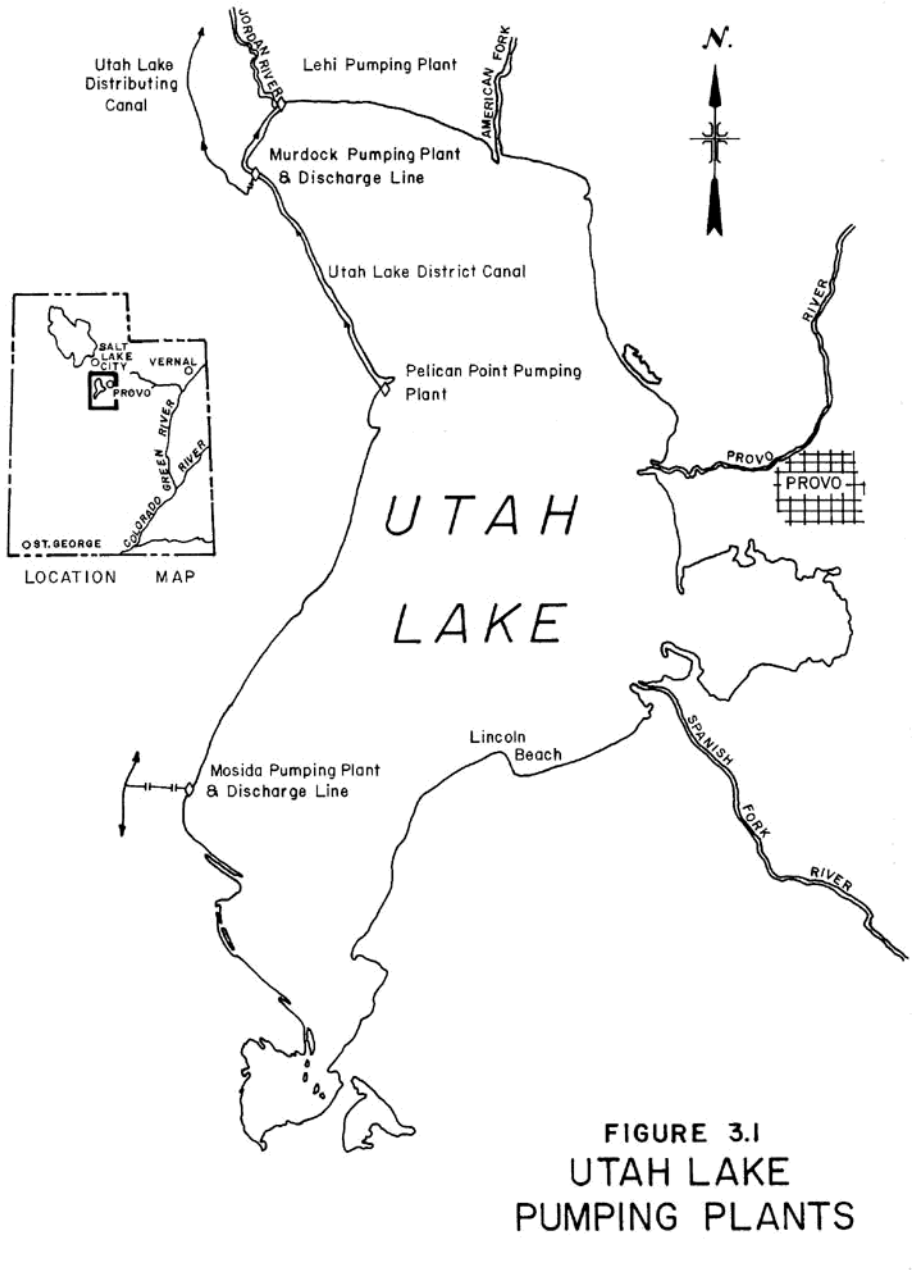
Studies conducted by the Bureau of Reclamation have found that much of the land on the western side of Utah Lake is very fertile. Yet these lands were not developed by the early Mormon settlers because there were no major streams to feed the irrigation ditches. The pioneers diverted water from the Provo River, the Spanish Fork River, and other tributaries on the eastern side of the lake because it was more convenient to use gravity fed systems, and because the technology was not available to pump water directly out of Utah Lake against gravity. As the eastern side developed, so did its transportation systems. The north-south roads and railroads all followed the eastern shore, leaving the west side comparatively isolated. The only transportation system which came close to the west side was the Denver Rio Grande and Western Railroad. This trunk line serviced the Tintic Mining District, in the mountains southwest of Mosida-by-the Lake. To this day there is no easy way to get from Provo, the largest and oldest city in Utah Valley, to Mosida, a distance ”as the crow flies" of 12 miles. The land route to Mosida is approximately 40 miles (see Drawing 1).

After the turn of the century, several factors combined to make the development of a farming community on the west shores of Utah Lake appear attractive to businessmen and potential buyers: there was a national interest in irrigated agriculture; fruit was being promoted as a viable, get-rich-quick crop; and improvements in technology made pumping from the lake appear feasible. A 1910 promotional brochure (Clawson Map Company) for Mosida-by-the-Lake asked the rhetorical question: ". ..why our lands were not long ago brought under irrigation?" The answer:

> There was, and is, no way to obtain water for them, direct from any mountain stream, delivered by the gravity system. Had there been, these land would have been developed a quarter of a century ago.
>
> The recent development of several large power enterprises along the rivers flowing into the valley, generating electric current by water power at a very low cost, now makes it practical to irrigate these lands.

Another reason for the interest in the west side of the lake was an awakening appreciation of Utah Lake’s potential value as an exploitable resource. One manifestation of this interest was the development between 1880 and 1930 of more than eleven resorts around the lake (Huber, 1972). In 1909, a local newspaper (*Provo Post*) tried to dispell the opinion that the land on the west side "is of but little value for farming" and promoted new dreams for the lake itself:

> Beside being good for some farming, it will make an excellent health resort (Saratoga Springs) and when the west banks of the lake are taken up there will no doubt, be hundreds of boats and launches on the lake. Eighteen new launches have been ordered for the lake this year. Utah County is presenting inducements of many kinds.




*Drawing 1. Utah Lake Pumping Plants.*

## Birth of the Project

It was during this period of heightened awareness of the potentials of Utah Lake that three men, Joseph Simpson, R. E. Morrison, and J. E. Davis purchased a 6,880-acre tract of school lien land from the Utah State Land Board for $2.50 per acre. The land was located approximately 12 miles north of the town of Elberta and lay on the southwestern shore of Utah Lake. Morrison and Simpson were from Denver, Colorado, and Davis was from Ames, Iowa. Their intentions were to subdivide the land into small tracts for use as orchards ( Provo Herald , 1909):

> The land will be cut up into five acre tracts and multiples of five, no one person, however, to hold more than forty acres, twenty is preferable, the lands to be planted as peaches. In other words to make practically 1400 peach farms or orchards.

The name of the proposed development, Mosida, is an acronym which combines the first two letters of the last names of the three founders, MOrrison, SImpson, and DAvis.

A few months after the Mosida land purchase, a group of promoters from Denver purchased the holdings of the three original owners. This group then purchased additional acreage, giving the Mosida project a total of approximately 9,500 acres.

The new promoters organized two Utah corporations, the Mosida Fruit Lands Company and the Mosida Irrigation Company. The fruit lands company was organized for the purpose of acquiring and selling land. The irrigation company was a subsidiary of the Mosida Fruit Land Company and its only function was to take water from Utah Lake and convey it to the lands of the parent company.

The initial incorporation of the Mosida Fruit Lands Company occurred in August of 1909. L.B. Curtis, C.A. Lawson, H.C. Allen, and F.D. Parker all of Denver and E.A. Wedgewood of Salt Lake City were listed as the incorporators. The company issued 30,000 shares of stock, valued at $10 per share. Lawson had subscribed for 14,999 shares and Allen for 14,998. The remaining three incorporators, Curtis, Parker, and Wedgewood were listed at one share each. Wedgewood, a principal in the Salt Lake law firm, that represented the Mosida companies, was probably included because he was a Utah resident.

Water rights in Utah Lake were purchased for the irrigation of the Mosida lands. These were purchased from James H. Gardner and A. J. Evans, who had filed an application to divert 40 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water from the north end of Utah Lake. The application was approved by the State Engineer in 1906. The approval was protested and was eventually litigated in both the State District and Supreme Courts, the plaintiffs being Salt Lake City and the irrigation canal companies that used Utah Lake as a storage reservoir. While the case was in District Court, Gardner and Evans were enjoined from diverting any water. In June 1909, The District Court upheld the State Engineer's decision. At this time the water right was assigned to Allen and Lawson, and an application was filed to change the place of use to the Mosida project.

In late 1909, Allen and Lawson assigned by "Quit Claim Deed" all interest in their water right to the Mosida Irrigation Company. In the meantime, the decision of the District Court was appealed to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court in due time upheld the District Court's decision and permitted applicants to proceed in putting the water to beneficial use provided that the use of the water did not interfere with prior rights. In March 1911, the State Engineer approved the change in the place of use from Lehi to the southwest side of Utah Lake. By this time diversion of irrigation water had already begun at Mosida.

## Construction

Workers had begun constructing the irrigation system for the Mosida project in the fall of 1909 and continued through the winter of 1910. The building of the irrigation facilities was carried out in stages, a lower canal system being completed by the spring of 1910. Water was delivered that year to 2,600 acres of land (The Arrowhead, 1911). Construction work at Mosida was intense during the summer of 1910, as over 80 men were involved in completion of the upper unit of the irrigation system. The work involved digging the upper canal and enlarging the pumping facilities. A new townsite was also surveyed that summer.

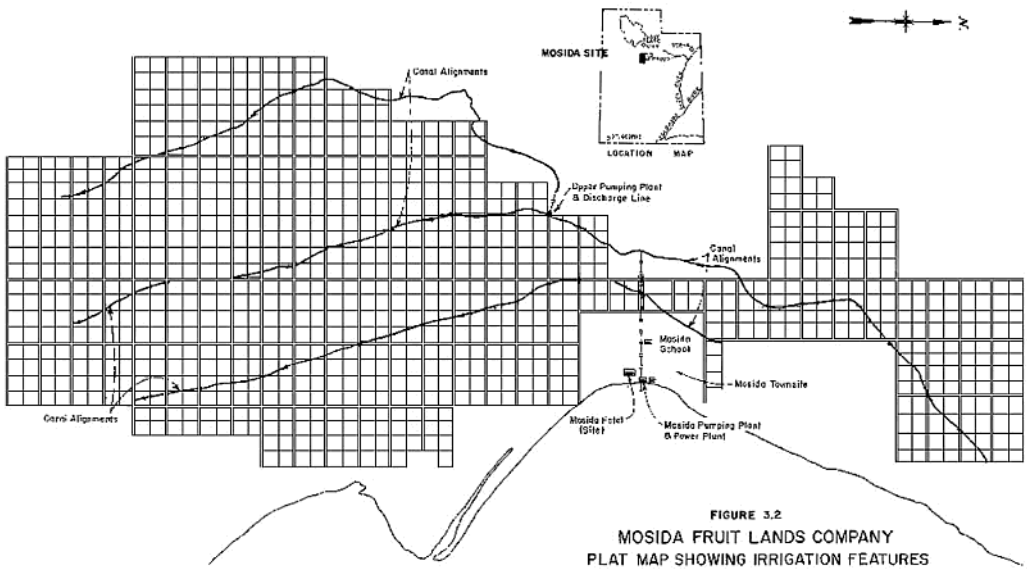
By the fall of 1911 a major part of the irrigation system had been completed (see Drawing 2). The company had constructed a large pumping facility and two pipelines (or discharge lines for the pumping plant). The pumping plant, reported to have cost approximately $100,000, was placed on the shore of Utah Lake and pumped water into two separate discharge lines (see Photograph 1). The first pipeline lifted 15 cfs of lake water 64 feet above lake level and emptied it into two canals, one running north and the other south. The second and larger of the two discharge lines lifted 42 cfs to an elevation of 120 feet above lake level. The water from this pipeline was divided between a canal which flowed south and a smaller lateral which flowed north. The bifurcation structure which divided the water is still very much in evidence (see Photograph 2). *The Arrowhead* (1911) gave some interesting statistics about the larger, 44-inch pipeline. It was a mile and a quarter long and "weighted 357,000 pounds. Over 200,000 rivets were used in building the pipeline and it required twelve tons of mineral rubber for dipping."

By October 1911, about 3000 acres were under cultivation. Approximately 400 acres of fruit trees had been planted, the majority of which were apple trees ( Provo Herald, 1911). In addition, a telephone line 22 miles long was installed by the company between Lehi and Mosida, and about 20 houses had been built in the project area.

Paramount to the success of the project was the delivery of water at a reasonable cost. Since the pumps were electrically driven, it was important that the developers negotiate a favorable contract for the purchase of electricity.

Power was initially obtained from the Knight Electric Power Company (Provo Herald, 1911). The five-year contract signed with the electric company specified that electricity would be provided at a cost of $2.50 for each acre irrigated. In 1912, the Utah Power and Light Company purchased the Knight Electric Power Company and the Mosida contract.

*Photograph 1. The empty concrete shells of the pumping plant and engine house are still standing on the Utah Lake shoreline. Circa 1984.*




*Drawing 2. Mosida Fruit Lands Company plat map showing irrigation features.*

*Photograph 2. Alva Moore Jr. inspects remains of bifurcation structure located a mile and a quarter west of the pumping*

*plant. Circa 1984.*

The majority of the planting was begun in the spring of 1911. In the book, Goshen Valley History, the author recounts the activity (Steele, 1968):

> Early in the spring of 1911 men and teams from the towns of Goshen, Santaquin, and Payson found work at Mosida clearing and plowing the new land and making it ready for planting of trees and grain. Some plowed, some harrowed the newly plowed ground, while still another outfit of so was engaged in leveling the land. Throughout the spring and summer Lyman waterbury was given the job of driving a six-horse team on a large leveler. During the tree-planting period one team did little else but list or make furrows for the tree planting, at which quite a good sized crew of men were engaged digging holes and setting out the young trees. Ed Grams with his steam tractor and gang plow was kept busy breaking up the virgin soil for planting. Another crew was kept busy railing brush. A few others burned the brush that had been railed off. This was the farm scene that year.
>
> Men with teams were paid $4.50 per a nine-hour day, and single-handed men accordingly. Practically all of the workers lived in tents and boarded at the company boarding house. At one time there were more than 250 men working at Mosida and being boarded there.

A succinct summary of the changes occurring at Mosida appeared in the *Provo Post* (1912a): "The great sagebrush place has been transformed into orchards and grain."

By the spring of 1912, it was reported that the company had planted 30,000 fruit trees with some of them being almost large enough to bear fruit ( *Provo Post*, 1912b). (This was most certainly an exaggeration, as most fruit trees require at least five years to get to bearing age.) Besides the big fruit farm, 1500 acres of grain and 250 acres of potatoes were planted (see Photograph 3).

During the winter of 1914, a second pumping plant was started at a site approximately one mile south of the point where the larger pipeline emptied into the upper canal. This plant lifted 20 cfs an additional 90 feet above the lake level for a total lift of 210 feet. The water from this pipeline fed a single canal which flowed south and serviced the higher-elevation lands (State Engineer, 1913). With this system in place, it was now possible to irrigate the vast majority of Mosida's 9,500 acres. The location of the upper pumping plant is shown in Drawing 2. The site of the pumping plant, discharge line, and afterbay were located by Bureau of Reclamation personnel during site investigations in 1984.

*Photograph 3. Grain grew tall in the fertile fields of Mosida.*

## Selling the Plots

The marketing of the Mosida lands was, of course, critical to the success of the project. Utah State Historical Society has a copy of one of the Mosida promotional brochures. The brochure is proof that some inflated claims were used to sell project land to prospective buyers. Buyers were invited "to the simple life, to bounding health, independence, wealth, and to all under ideal conditions in the most delightful place for a home in all the West." Mosida was described as a "wonderfully attractive place for a permanent home, a splendid opportunity for investment." Great future projects were also hinted at: "a complete modern canning establishment is to be built at Mosida." The brochure also mentions that the project's water right was acquired by legal appropriation of water from Utah Lake. In an attempt to explain the magnitude of the storage in Utah Lake, the brochure said: "Our entire appropriation would require, if used continuously throughout the irrigation season, less than two inches of water from the top of the lake." And goes on to state:

> Nowhere else does there exist in combination the same extraordinary quality and depth of soil, the perfect slope for irrigation, the sheltered location, the abundant and dependable water supply for irrigation.

The expression "abundant and dependable water supply" turned out to be one of the cruelest of exaggerations. Another empty pledge was the promise of inexpensive power.

Despite the promotional rhetoric dripping with optimism, at least one person felt that the project was not intentionally misrepresented. In the opinion of Goshen Valley historian and former construction employee on the project, Raymond Steele (1960), "their representations were fair and honorable as far as they were able to see at that time."

The early promotions by Lawson and Parker for the Mosida project were apparently directed at midwestern investors. The State Engineer in his *Eighth Biannual Report* singles out the state of Kansas as an area where the promotions were directed. Alva Moore Jr., a one-time resident of Mosida, remembers that his father managed a farm for an absentee owner from Kansas City, Missouri.

Because of the relative remoteness of Mosida, the developers decided to build an impressive hotel to entice potential buyers to the western shores of Utah Lake. In the summer of 1912, the $15,000 structure was complete (see Photograph 4). With the completion of the hotel, it was no longer necessary for potential buyers to "day-trip-it" to Mosida. Sales could be made at a leisurely pace from a beautiful location. The hotel was beautifully sited on the bench above Utah Lake (Provo Post, 1912):

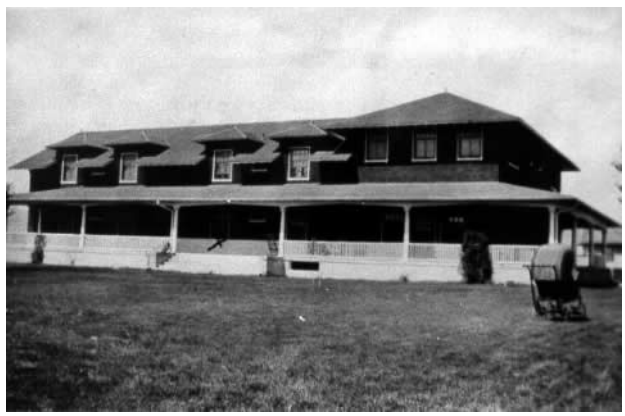
> It has been built with a view of giving the patrons a panoramic scene across the lake to the big range of mountains back of Provo and along the eastern side of the valley. It has a large veranda extending its full length on the east side of the building.

The hotel was steam-heated and modern in every regard. Between each of the sixteen bedrooms was a shared bathroom. The food in the dining room was excellent, and the pool table in the basement provided entertainment. The hotel was reputed to have been the best establishment of its kind between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles (Moore, 1984).

To get potential investors to the project and hotel, the Mosida Fruit Lands Company operated a motor launch, which connected Provo with Mosida (see Drawing 3). In the absence of a direct railroad connection, the project had to rely on boat transportation:

> from Provo passengers are transported by launches and freight by barges to our lands, at rates lower than rail transportation could be had the same distance. The navigability of the lake and the absence of sandbars and other obstruction make it a delightful trip and it will always be popular regardless of other means of transportation.

Keeping the project healthy was greatly dependent on the transportation systems serving the project. And the only system developed to any degree was the boat connection between Provo and Mosida.



*Photograph 4. The Mosida hotel was reported to have been one of the best establishments of its kind between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles. Circa 1912.*


*Drawing 3. A reproduction from a promotion brochure optimistically shows Mosida dominating the western shores of Utah Lake. Note the ferry service between Provo and Mosida.*

During the early years of the project, the number of investors and prospective buyers visiting Mosida was large. Visitors were given the grand tour of the area in a "farm wagon provided with spring seats" and were told of the virtues of the land which included "wondrous scenery, delightful climate for fruit raising" and other crops, and about "the decent prices for land and water."

The two railroads serving Utah Valley had a vested interest in the development of new farmland. In 1911, *The Arrowhead*, a promotional magazine published monthly by the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad, included a three-page article about Mosida. In a tone aptly described as optimistic, the article outlines the beginnings and scope of the project, and concludes, "The investor and the homeseeker will do well to visit Mosida-by-the-lake."

In January, 1913, the land sales promotions for the Mosida project were taken over by National Savings and Trust Company (National). This change in promoters prompted a significant change in the thrust of sales. Under the previous management 2,000 acres of land had been sold at prices ranging from $150 to $250 per acre. At least part of the promotions had been carried out in the Midwest. National, with close affiliations to the Mormon Church, was more interested in Utah sales. The company reduced the price of the land and increased the size of the plots. The land was sold in 40-acre increments for $100 per acre. National, for a short time, had a sales representative at Hotel Roberts in Provo. Despite changes in some sales tactics, the advertisements continued to be ridiculously optimistic: "It (Mosida) has been recognized as a veritable garden spot of 'THE PROMISED LAND."' One newspaper article promoted the National line:

> It has been the custom of a good many Utah people to take long journeys, as far north as Canada, and as far south as Mexico, looking for land. Many are now returning and declaring that nowhere do they find the equal of Utah Valley. They also find that during their absence land values have amazingly advanced and that they have lost rather than gained by going out of the state to seek new locations. The proper thing for people to do is to take advantage of the opportunities at home.

## Life in Mosida

The years 1912 and 1913 were the boom years of Mosida. During 1912, as already mentioned, the Mosida Fruit Lands Company erected the hotel and in the Fall of the same year built a school (located approximately one-mile west of the hotel), a post office, and a general store. The foundations of many of the structures built during this period were located by Reclamation personnel during field investigations in 1984.

By the concluding months of 1913, Mosida had a population of nearly 400 people, including 30 or 40 Eureka residents who had purchased tracts of land and built homes and concrete graneries and had brought in expensive farm machinery. Many families had moved out from the townsite and onto their 40-acre tracts. Homes and barns were constructed on the homesteads. Water for human and animal consumption was provided from wells. Alva Moore, Jr., remembers that early each morning he would be awaken by the sound of groundwater pumps operated by internal combustion engines. He recalls that by midmorning "everyone would have their pumps on and you would hear the 'put-put-put' of the water pumps all over the project."

Reclamation personnel located several of the homesteads. The Smith homestead, identified by the graffiti, has little remaining except for the watering trough, a covered well casing, and rubble indicating the foundations of

a house (see Photographs 5 and 6).

*Photograph 5. The watering trough at the Smith homestead in Mosida. Graffiti in the concrete aided in the identification.*

*Photograph 6. Culinary water for the Mosida project was provided from wells. Well-casing indicated the location of a homestead.*

Many of the investors in the Mosida project were from the Midwest ( State Engineer, 1912). Alva Moore, Sr., a Mormon from nearby Goshen, was first hired by the project as a laborer. He then worked a farm for an investor from Kansas City. Eventually Moore purchased his own ten-acre plot. His story is related in a short autobiography written by his wife:

> Here (Mosida) Alva went to work for the company breaking up land planting grain and alfalfa, and fruit trees. Canals were made, pumps were installed, to lift the water from Utah Lake up the slant, almost to the mountain, good houses were built--hotel, post office, school house, etc.
>
> A man from Kansas City said he would buy 80 acres, build a good house and barn on it if the company would put a good renter on it. So Alva went, took his family and there we lived for 6 years. We had sold what we had in Goshen and bought and paid for what we thought would be the beginning of a home, 10 acres of our own. Planted half to fruit trees and (half in) alfalfa.

The Moores lived on a homestead located away from the lake and the Mosida townsite. Photographs exist of their house and nearby barn (see Photograph 7). When the Mosida development failed, both structures were moved to Goshen (different locations) where they are still both standing. The house, however, has not been lived in for several years (see Photograph 8).

The crops of 1913 exceeded expectations, and a splendid harvest was reaped. A large compound threshing machine was kept busy for nearly a month, "threshing grain that had been raised that year on the project."

*Photograph 7. Well-constructed houses and barns at a Mosida homestead during the project's heyday. Circa 1914.*

*Photograph 8. The above home was moved to Goshen where it was lived in until about 1980. Alva Moore, Jr., stands in foreground. Circa 1984.*

During the prosperous years of Mosida, its people found that hard work and entertainment went hand in hand. According to Steele (1960, p. ):

> Occasionally some of the folks of Mosida would get together on a warm barge. Although it was not a very large place on which to hold a dance, yet when the barge was tightly anchored it served the purpose very well. It was more a novelty than anything else. The floor was never so crowded that one need worry about accidentally being crowded into the water. The pickup orchestra served the purpose very well. Even though the dance was free yet only a comparatively few participated. The rest of the population just sat around on the water's edge and looked on. Aside from the recreation one enjoyed, these little affairs enabled some of the folks to see what each other looked like after the dirt and whiskers had been removed.

James Moore, son of Alva Moore, Sr., stated to Brough (1973, p.23) :

> Between watching people dance on the Mosida barge after a hard day's work in the summer, and hunting coyotes on the ice covered Utah Lake during the winter, we kids never lacked for entertainment. I can recall that during one community dance held at Mosida there was close to 250 people present.

Transportation to and from the eastern side of the lake was provided by boat during most of the year and by wagon across the ice in the winter. The latter method was not always an easy trip. The trials of one individual were reported in the *Provo Post* (1915):

> Mr. Burst had gone to Mosida for a load of hay and placed 3800 pounds of baled hay on his wagon and started back toward Provo, driving a team of mules. When he was coming across the ice he became frightened with the cracking as the wagon proceeded, and headed the mules toward the landing place and got off the wagon.

> When they had proceeded a short distance there was a loud crack and he saw the hind wheels of the wagon sink in the ice. Be ran forward, but before he could reach the scene a large block of ice pushed forward and the mules, wagon and hay sank completely out of sight and have not been seen since.

On April 17, 1913, the Mosida boat (a gasoline launch) was completely destroyed by fire. Its destruction greatly impaired the transportation of materials and passengers across the lake. The boat had cost more than $3,500 and had been a critical part of the support systems for the project. Its loss was not only a real problem but it was also symbolic of the rough sailing ahead for the project.

At the end of 1913, Curtis reported that the project had 5,000 acres of land under cultivation with 11 miles of canal and 16 miles of distributing ditches. He also reported that the last (or third) lift was under construction and 50 percent complete. "The machinery and pumps are now on the ground so that all lands under the same can be irrigated in 1914." In 1914, 5,400 acres were under irrigation.

## The Last Window

The Mosida companies continued to function and do business until 1915. In January of that year, however, as the result of an action taken by the Mountain and Valley Exploitation Company, a Colorado corporation with which Allen (a principal in the Mosida development) was affiliated, a receiver was appointed for both companies. H.C. Allen was so appointed for what is known as "fostering the assets" of the Mosida companies. This action prevented the creditors from collecting on bills except through the receivership proceedings. The Mosida Fruit Lands Company was deep in debt, but Allen remained optimistic:

> Owing to the depressed condition of the money market the company was unable to realize on certain of its assets maturing January 1, 1915, and in order to protect the settlers on its lands, and its creditors and to enable certain betterments to be made, it was decided by the company and a majority of its creditors to place temporarily its affairs in the hands of a receiver. It is expected by the officers of the company that its affairs will be readjusted and that in a comparatively short period the receiver will be discharged and the company resume the management of its own property.

The expressed optimism of the receiver was ill-founded and the company was on a permanent skid downwards. In addition to money problems, the project lands were having ever increasing difficulties with grasshoppers. This headache, which occurred during the growing season of 1915, further added to the discontent of the residents. In an affidavit dated 1920, Allen alleged that 7,500 acre-feet of water were pumped in 1915, and that the water was used on 3100 acres of land, principally planted in alfalfa and grain. No mention was made of fruit.

In 1915 and 1916 the company went further into debt. During 1916, Mr. Allen, still the receiver for the project, was taken into court several times by Mosida residents because he was unable to supply adequate water for irrigation of crops. Also during that year the Mosida Company convinced Utah Power and Light Company to supply them with power. However, not enough land was cultivated that year, and the expense of running the pump exceeded the profits from crops, making the Mosida Company poorer than when it first applied for electrical power at the beginning of the year.

One proposal made in 1917 was "to engage in the raising of sugar beets on a grand scale." Again one of the principal obstacles to the sugar beet proposal was transportation. An earlier investigation had indicated that it was impractical to ship the beets across the lake by boat. In 1917, the water route was reevaluated and two other possibilities were assessed: (1) extending the railroad line north from Elberta and (2) constructing a better road to Mosida. It was rumored that a beet refining plant for Mosida was being considered. The Provo Herald (1917) reported that improvements estimated at more than $1,000,000 were being considered. The sugar beet project never materialized.

By 1917 most of the people who once lived at Mosida had left, and the town was dying. In one last great effort to revive the irrigation project the State of Utah (as part of the war effort) entered the scene and arranged with Utah Power and Light Company to again provide power. Unfortunately, the State's initiative in trying to revive the project failed. So soured were the residents with the unreliable water situation, that as each month of 1917 passed more people left Mosida. In addition to water problems, grasshopper continued to plague the project.

The Mosida dream stayed alive until 1919, and even then it died hard with some. Several attempts were made to pump life into the project. There was a meeting of the Mosida project creditors in August 1919. Records from the meeting are extant from both the Utah Power and Light Company and the Beneficial Life Insurance Company (a mortgage holder). It was the consensus of all present that the enterprise should cease to exist unless steps are

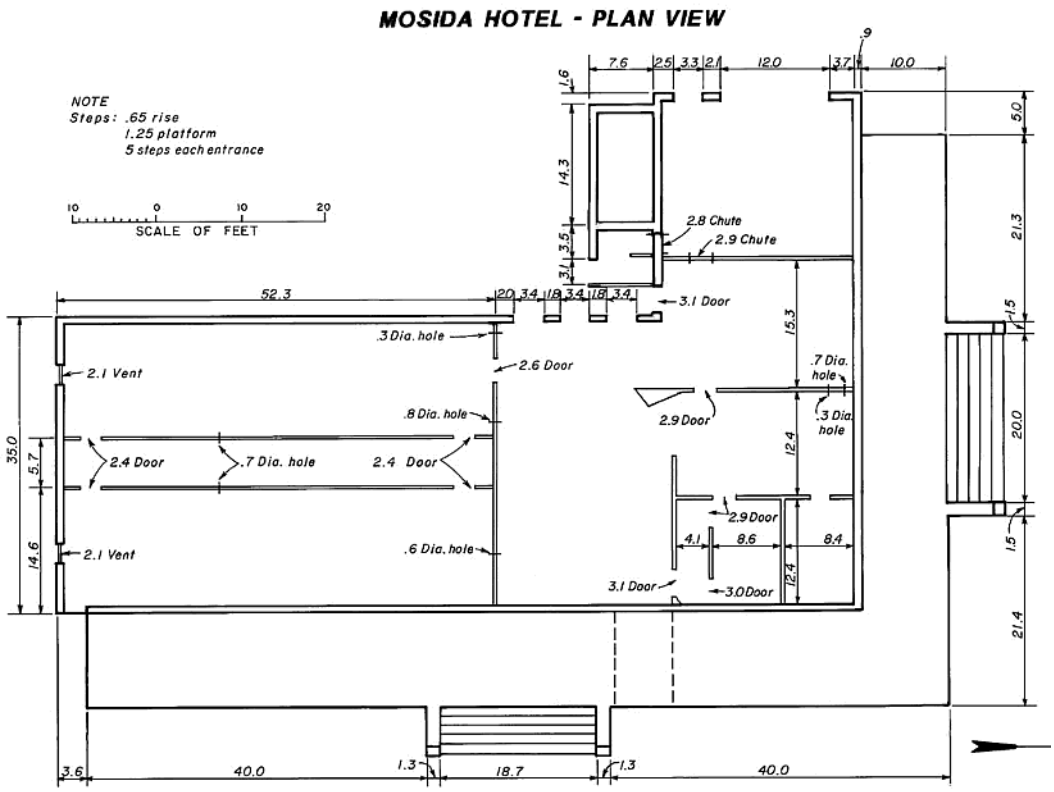
taken to rehabilitate the irrigation system. Mr Redman, who had been assigned the role of receiver, stated that the pumps and pipelines were in such a state of deterioration that it would require $150,000 to get the system operational again. But a plan to once again put the project on its feet was presented. According to the Beneficial Life representative:

> It was represented that there are about 5,000 acres of the land still unsold which ought to bring at present prices from $125 to $150 per acre with a water right, and that there are approximately 2,000 acres of land lying south of the project, now in private ownership, whose owners have expressed their desire to purchase water at $75 per acre, and that the water to supply these lands would be available with a new pumping plant. Under these figures, the project ought to sell for approximately $800,000 partly in cash and partly on deferred payments secured by mortgages upon the land.

This new proposal was still-born. Nobody asked the relevant question: Can farmers pay $150 per acre for land plus the annual pumping costs?

As a teenager (circa. 1920) Alva Moore, Jr., returned to Mosida to look around. The hotel was deserted and all but one its windows were broken. A friend, after picking a small stone, proceeded to break the last window. The hotel was eventually salvaged by a Lehi man (see Photograph 9 and Drawing 4).

*Photograph 9. Today all that remains of the once imposing Mosida Hotel are its crumbling foundations. Circa 1984.*




*Drawing 4. The Mosida hotel was reported to have been the best establishment of its kind between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles. An artist's concept of the east side of the hotel is shown above. The hotel, which had 16 sleeping rooms and 8 bathrooms, serves as a beacon to entice potential investors across Utah Lake to Mosida. Today all that remains of the once imposing structures are its crumbling foundations, the dimensions of which are shown above.*

## Analysis of the Failure

The reasons for the quick demise of the Mosida Fruit Lands Project can be summarized in two words: no money. The company did not not have enough money to survive over the short-term. The company had assumed that after its original investment, land sales would provide the capital necessary to complete the project and maintain the irrigation systems. This did not turn out to be the case. When the company started to have trouble with its pumping facility, there was not enough money to maintain it properly. As problems with irrigation system developed, this affected the company's ability to sell land and as the money income started to dry up, the infrastructure continued to deteriorated. People who had purchased land were unable to generate income because the irrigation system was becoming consistently unreliable, and they gave up. To make matters worse, in 1912 the cost of water pumped from the lake increased to $4.00 per acre.

The economics of the project were just not there for the investor-farmers. Mosida land was priced competitively with land on the eastern side of Utah Lake, but the lands on the eastern side had several distinct advantages: (1) reduced operation and maintenance costs because there was no pumping; (2) closer to reasonable transportation systems; and (3) the financial backing of the Federal government (as was the case with the Strawberry Valley Project). Because of locational disadvantages, Mosida had to find a reasonable cash crop to survive. Initially, it was hoped that fruit would provide enough income to defray the costs of pumping water from the lake. Unfortunately this hope was not realized. The initial interest of the project was to be peaches. This particular crop had a very interesting history in Utah Valley (Thomson and Dixon, 1914):

> In the vicinity of Provo several orchards were planted from six to eight years ago, or about the time that many of the large peach districts were beginning to develop in other Western States; but most of the peach orchards here are the result of an extensive boom started about five or six years ago. ..Since these orchards have been set out there has been no year in which the peach business has been a success financially, owing mainly to the low prices received. Many of

> these growers are discouraged, and some of them are pulling out first-class 5-year-old peach trees to make the land available for growing sugar beets and other general farm crops. (On one farm) the owner had a big crop in 1912. He incurred heavy expenses in picking, packing, and shipping, only to have the returns amount to practically nothing. In 1913 he also had a good crop, but was not willing to take the chances of picking, packing, and hauling the fruit, so a large number of hogs were purchased in the early summer and the entire crop was fed to them.

While peaches were the dream of Simpson (the 'si' in Mosida), they were never planted in large quantities in Mosida. That was obviously very fortunate. Apples were, however, planted. Unfortunately the apple market was not much better than the peach: "The local market for apples in this region is not sufficient to warrant an acreage of any considerable size."

In addition to money problems, Mosida had engineering problems. Brough, in his history of Mosida (Brough, 1973), incorrectly assumed that Utah Lake began to recede in 1914 and that this recession continued through 1920. To quote Brough:

> That year (1915) hardly any water reached the crops because the water level of Utah Lake was so low that pumping operations were nearly at a standstill.

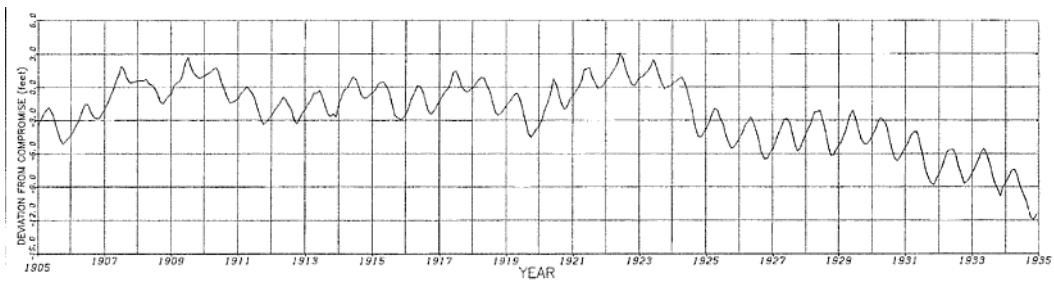
To back-up this assertion, Brough quotes the *Provo Daily Herald* of May 13, 1915:

> The water is lower at this season in the (Provo) river than it has been since Utah was settled. The canals are only about one-third full and the farmers can hardly get enough to irrigate their crops. The cause of this water being so low is largely on account of the cold spring and the lack of early rains.

While the flow in the Provo River was low, Utah Lake only took a minor drop. And Utah Lake was the source of the Mosida irrigation water. Brough was incorrect in assuming that just because things were bad on the east side of the lake they were necessarily bad on the west side. In fact his premise that "pumping operations were nearly at a standstill" is incorrect. Utah Power and Light -Company records indicate that the system pumped considerable amounts of water in 1915.

Brough further reports that during the beginning months of 1914 men were employed to dig a canal extension from the pump house sump out to the lake, "which by the summer of 1915 had receded 3/8 mile out from its previous 1913 shore level." Based on hydrographs of the lake level, any dip in 1915 was only a minor one. If the pumping plant was in fact having troubles, they were not because of dry conditions, it was because the pumping plant was poorly situated. Because of the gradual drop in the shoreline at the pumping plant site, any fluctuation had an impact on the plant. As long as the lake was at or near its ideal maximum elevation (commonly referred to as "compromise"), the pumping plant apparently functioned properly. But once the lake dropped below compromise, the trouble began. During a normal year, the lake can fluctuate as much as five feet and the plant was poorly designed to handle these annual fluctuations.

Brough is correct in noting the the years 1908 to 1913 was "a rather high peak cycle." But, in fact, the wet cycle extended until 1924 (see Drawing 5). Since the plant was unable to handle annual fluctuations, it was headed for real problems during the Depression when the lake was all but dried up.




*Drawing 5. Plot of Utah Lake changes in elevation.*

During the 1930s, Utah Lake was drawn down to 12 feet below compromise. This drawdown would have been disastrous for the pumping facility at Mosida. An inspection by the State Engineer of the abandoned Mosida site in 1930 explained the problem: "the present level of the lake is 7 feet below compromise so that the water surface is at least one-half mile from the plant."

But even if the project had survived the short-term problems, it must be pointed out that Mosida was still critically flawed. One flaw was the nature of its water right and another was the location of the project.

The Mosida water right as discussed in the next section of this chapter was a very junior right. It was simply a secondary water right. Water was available only when water was surplus to the primary right holders. During the Depression, between 1932 and 1935, water would not have been available for the project. For an orchard development, this would have been catastrophic for trees.

The possible success of planting orchards or other cash crops on the west side of Utah Lake was conditioned upon being able to transport the fruits of the project to market or to a cannery or refinery. In other words, Mosida needed the railroad; but the railroad never came. The railroad situation was a sort of "Catch-22." The railroad did not come north from Elberta because Mosida did not prosper and Mosida did not prosper because the railroad did not come. Without the railroad, Mosida was dependent on the road to Elberta, or the boat to Provo, or in winter the ice on Utah Lake. This was not enough of a support system to make the project a success.

## Water Opera

Long after the Mosida project was dead, the project's water right seemed to have a life of its own. In 1914, the project was required to show proof of appropriation. It requested and was granted a three year extension. In 1917, after being informed that the application was in jeopardy, Allen swore that he was not aware of the requirements and that he had been "embarrassed in the operation of said pumping plant, and in doing of things indicated thereto, including making proof of completion of application." He requested another two year extension.

Utah water law requires that "Proof of Appropriation" be made within five years of an application. Several extensions of the time for making proof were granted by the State Engineer; the last expired July 1, 1917 when the application lapsed because the proper paperwork had not been filed in time. The application was reinstated with its original priority date and another extension (this time for two years) was granted after the receiver explained he was unaware of the deadline. Another extension was granted until proof was filed June 15, 1920. Certificate No.1206, issued May, 1922, recited that the priority was September, 1905. Ironically, by the time the certificate was issued the irrigation project had been dead for several years.

No power had been delivered to the Mosida project by Utah Power and Light Company in years 1921, '22, and '23. In 1924, Redman, the new receiver, entered into a contract with Utah Power and Light Company for power for one month only. On July 15, 1924, the transformers burned out and the discharge line broke, causing a permanent shut-down of the plant.

There is no evidence that any water was used under the Mosida water right between July 15, 1924, and August 1, 1930. The August and September report of the Utah Lake water commissioner states that 2,459 and 2,380 acre-feet respectively of Mosida water were turned into the Utah and Salt Lake Canal. On June 14, 1931, the State Engineer directed the water commissioner to deliver to the Utah and Salt Lake Canal any water which might be available. During June 1931, the commissioner delivered 14,281 acre-feet. There is no evidence of further use of the Mosida right.

In 1937 the fun began. Redman, still receiver for the Mosida companies, proposed to lease water under the Mosida right to the Metropolitan Water District of Salt Lake City for use in Salt Lake County for irrigation, industrial, and miscellaneous purposes. Such proposals are specifically designed to keep lawyers in work for years. Thus, 18 years after the project was declared dead by its creditors, its spirit was still capable of sending shock waves throughout the water establishment.

The proposal was protested by all the primary water right's holders in Utah Lake. (This is the same group that protested the original water rights application.) They alleged, among other things, that the Mosida right had been lost due to forfeiture, because of nonuse beginning in July 1924 and extending though September 1937.

The Utah Statute in force between 1919 and 1933 states: "when an appropriator or his successor in interest abandons or ceases to use water for a period of five years, the right ceases." The courts have held that nonuse is not applicable when there is no water in the source available. Since, as already discussed, during the '30s there was no water available on the Mosida right, Redman in an attempt to maintain the companies only remaining asset--its water right--made an abortive attempt at proving use between 1924 and 1931, a period of more than five years. In a letter to the State Engineer he alleged:

> That in addition to the pumping of said water user said filing and certificate with the electric pumps of said project and as auxiliary thereto affiant caused to be installed a steam pumping plant at a point approximately one mile North of the main pumping station of said Companies and pumped and used water under said filing 510 and water certificated no.1206 with said project in the area in which aid stream pumping plant was located. That said auxiliary

> pumping plant was installed in the year 1922 or 1923 and was operated each year successively for three to four years, such operation extending to and including the year 1925 or 1926. To the best of affiants recollection and belief the last irrigation from said auxiliary plant was in 1926.

Redman was careful to cover all the bases. Water use in 1926 would insure there would be no five year period of nonuse; the steam plant was under the control of the receiver, it was used to irrigate project lands, and it was used under certificate No. 1206. An investigation by the State Engineer revealed that Redman was "0 for 4." The real story was:

> An investigation of the facts related in the affidavit, by engineers of this office, indicate that although several pumping plants have been installed and have operated on the west side of Utah Lake north of the Mosida plant, only one of these plants was ever installed in the vicinity of the Mosida Project. This plant was owned by G.E. Barth, and was located about two miles north of the Mosida pumping plant and operated by steam under application no.6077 and certificate no. 1073. This steam plant was operated several years prior to 1922, at which time it was discontinued, and in the spring of 1923 Mr. Barth sold the pipe line and pump house to Roger Cederstrom. No water was pumped at the Barth plant after 1922. An examination of the land in the vicinity of the Mosida plant indicates that water from the Barth plant had not been used for the irrigation of any of the land described in the proof of appropriation of the Mosida Irrigation Company. It is probable that the steam plant referred to in Mr. Redman's affidavit was the Barth plant. He is mistaken, as to the dates.

Redman should be given high marks for effort, but it is unlikely his integrity survived intact.

With the evidence gathered by the State Engineers office, the Metropolitan Water District was willing to stipulate nonuse between 1924 and 1931. They decided instead to contend that in passing upon an application for change of place of use, the State Engineer does not have the authority to consider the existence or nonexistence of the water right.

The State Engineer had already discussed this issue with the Attorney General, and it was the strong opinion of the latter that the State Engineer could consider the existence of the water right. The ruling went against the Metropolitan Water District and their request for a change of point of use and they then appealed to the District Court. The Court held in favor of State Engineer. The Mosida project thus lost its last item of value, its right to water in effect declared lost through nonuse.

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