

**Thomas G. Alexander, 1971: Utah Historical Quarterly, Vol. 39, “An Investment in Progress: Utah's First Federal Reclamation Project, The Strawberry Valley Project”**

*Thomas G. Alexander is a historian and professor emeritus at Brigham Young University.*

“One advantage of the Strawberry Valley Project has been economic help for struggling areas. Population has grown more in the project’s area than in other areas. For example, before the project, Payson was a dying town. When the project brought water to 25,000 new acres of farmland, Payson began to grow. Between 1905 and 1922, population increased by fifty percent and bank resources increased 1,000 percent. Payson also got a sugar factory, a railroad, paved streets, new schools, new homes, and new churches.

“Before the project, the area it covers produced only 1,900 acres of sugar beets, but after the project 12,000 more acres had been planted. By 1924, sugar companies were paying nearly \$400,000 annually to growers in the Strawberry area. In total, personal income from the project was about \$18 million per year in 1955. That income has had a great impact on farms and households. Sales related to the project brought in more money annually than the entire project cost.

“Part of the development also came through recreation facilities around the reservoir. The reservoir was stocked with fish from state hatcheries, there is hunting in the mountains near the reservoir, and land nearby harbors birds. By 1955 more than 300 private cabins had been built near the lake, along with four campsites.

“On the basis of the evidence, it is difficult to conclude that the Strawberry Valley Project has been anything but successful.”