

UV Faces In Places

— SALEM EDITION

With a name that means “city of peace,” Salem has a lot to live up to. But with its pastures and pristine pond, the name fits. The population hovers around 5,000, and just last year Salem got its first stoplight and grocery store (it was a big year). In Salem, even the traffic signs are polite. Coming into town on UT-198 near a bit of construction is a sign flashing “Please slow down. We’re almost finished.” Talk about peaceful.

GRASSROOTS LIBRARY

Karen Wilcox moved to Salem 17 years ago this Labor Day after her brother told her there was a pond-front property for sale. She’s been Salem’s PTA President and an active participant in the Salem Days pageant, but her most notable community contribution is to the Salem Public Library. She and a neighbor wanted to fill the void they felt without easy access to free books. They held planning meetings in their living rooms, pooled ideas and gathered resources until finally the mayor gave them a plot of land.

“We started in an extra portable from one of the schools, and eventually we got volunteers for plumbing, fixtures and brickwork,” Karen says. “We got the shelves from the Salt Lake Library when they were moving locations.”

Mel Hanks & Sons furnished the building, and local Boy Scouts cleaned and transported books and equipment.

Fourteen years later, the library has been remodeled and expanded again. The annual fundraiser, which Karen helped establish, keeps it operating.

“During Salem Days people donate services for an auction — breadmaking, quilts, getaways, hair services, canoe rides on the pond and more,” she says.

Karen works part time as a distance learning coordinator at Maple Mountain High School and makes baby shoes for an online company, but her favorite thing to do is sit in her back yard. Complete with picnic tables, three pet llamas — Lucille, Nanna and Princess — and a perfect view of the Salem Days fireworks from across the pond, her yard is her oasis.

“I can’t tell you how many times we’ve walked around this pond,” she says.



Karen Wilcox helped create Salem’s library and now works at Maple Mountain High School.

Spaces In Places



A LOCAL LEGEND

Among Salem’s most quirky attractions is the grave site of Abraham Powell, a young deer hunter who was killed by a grizzly bear east of Mount Nebo on Dec. 4, 1878. Abraham’s hunting trip and terrifying scuffle with the beast is now a tale Salem kids grow up hearing. The Deseret News article announcing his death described the 23-year-old as “daring and fearless,” making him a hero to future generations of Salem youth. As the story goes, his last words were “Take care of mother,” making him a hero to future generations of Salem moms, as well.

ON THE STREETS WHERE YOU LIVE

1851
Founded

4,372
Population in 2000

5,000
Estimated Population in 2010

Summer Spring, Pond Town
Nicknames

Miss Water
Original Title for Miss Salem

Wheat, Tomatoes, Peas, Sugar Beets
Crops Planted

1869
Salem Canal Completed

4.14
Average Family Size

99
Foreign Born Residents