Settlements

Early settlement history of the Bear Lake Valley is totally engulfed in the colonization efforts of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Although the settlers believed they were in Utah and hoped that they would always be, it really made little difference to their outlook on life when it was discovered they had settled in Idaho. Brigham Young was the power behind the colonization movement of the valley. He was the one who routed many of the early European converts into the Bear Lake Valley for settlement. The pattern was always much the same. A select group of settlers, chosen with the intent to make themselves as self-sufficient as possible, was given a "call" to move into an area and establish a Mormon community.

Early names in the Bear Lake Valley reflect the background of its people. Many were transferred from former locations. Others were developed in honor of prominent people. Some areas received their names because of incidents of significance that took place there. Brigham Young was insistent about not naming communities after geographical features.

Bear Lake County Communities

Community	Settlers Arrived	Other Names	Notes
Alton	Unknown	Sheep Creek	Named in honor of Orson F. Alton, the first schoolteacher.
Bennington	1864		Brigham Young named Bennington after the community in Vermont. .
Bern	1873		Named for Berne, Switzerland, by John Kunz.
Bloomington	1864		Charles C. Rich is credited with naming Bloomington because he felt the area would produce bountiful harvests.
Dingle	1871	Dingle Bell, Big Timber, Peg Leg Island, Cottonwood	Dingle's actual beginnings can be traced back to Peg Leg Smith. Exactly who named Dingle is not known.
Eight Mile/Bailey Creek Area	1868		So named because of the distance from there to Soda Springs.

Community	Settlers Arrived	Other Names	Notes
Fish Haven	1864	Rush Creek	Received its name from John A. Bagley and Joseph C. Rich after they netted 1885 pounds of fish and claimed they had discovered a real fish haven.
Geneva	1878		Believed named by Henry Teuscher as the official name of the post office established there. It was named after Geneva, Switzerland.
Georgetown	1870	Twin Creeks	Named in honor of George Q. Cannon, by Brigham Young.
Lanark	1877	South Liberty, Freedom	Named after Lanark, Scotland, by William Budge (his birth place).
Liberty	1864		Named because of the freedom and satisfaction that the settlers felt existed in the area for them.
Montpelier	1864	Clover Creek, Belmont	Named after Montpelier, Vermont, birthplace of Brigham Young.
Nounan	1873		Named after James Nounan, an early railroad tie cutter.
Ovid	1864	North Creek	Named by Joseph C. Rich after his favorite poet, Ovid, who lived in Rome in the years 43BC to 17AD.
Paris	1863	North Fork	Named after Frederick Perris, who surveyed the original town site.
Pegram	1883	Nuphur	Named for Phineas C. Pegram, a prominent railroad official.
Raymond	1877	Corinth, Thomas Fork	Named after Grandison Raymond, first settler in the lower Thomas Fork Valley.
Sharon	Unknown	North Liberty	Named after Sharon, Vermont, birthplace of Joseph Smith, founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by John T. Lyon.
St. Charles	1864		Named for Charles Coulson Rich.
Wardboro	1865	Preston	Named for Wardboro, New Jersey, which was the home of Oscar Doyrmple, a prominent citizen of the community.

Resource: Treasured Tidbits of Time by J. Patrick Wilde, pages 3-60, 325-338.

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