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A HISTORY OF PRESTON, IDAHO

A Thesis

Presented to the
Department of History
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Clarence G. Judy

May 1961

PREFACE

At the time Dr. Joel E. Ricks, Professor of History at Utah State University, was editing the centennial book, The History of a Valley, it was suggested by him that a history of Preston would be a worthwhile contribution. His notes were made available and his assistance proffered, for which I am grateful. The advice of Dr. Richard D. Poll and Dr. LeRoy R. Hafen was sought and encouragement was given, hence this modest project was undertaken.

Unlike most of the other communities of Cache Valley which were originally settled by immigrating groups of Mormon Pioneers, Preston developed first as an outlying farming area bordering more desirable lands and then arose in time as Cache Valley's second largest city due to its more natural location as a center for smaller communities. The problem of determining who the first settlers were and when they first came was therefore difficult. Original records for the early period are virtually unknown. Adding to the problem is the fact that the existence or whereabouts of newspapers printed previous to 1912 are lost. Those who have written accounts of Preston have given excerpts of the past which add much to the story told herein and yet leave much that is untold. Only part of that void has been filled in this work.

As a teacher at Preston for the past eight years it has been my privilege to take part in the life of the community and

to familiarize myself with those sources of information which constitute the body of this work. It has been interesting to note the early pattern of settlement and to evaluate the influence of the Montana trade and the Utah and Northern Railroad upon it. Of significance too is the arrival of those institutions which make a city possible and give it stability. Few factious interests within the city have ever divided the citizenry since the polygamy issue. Their local problems have concerned public welfare. The principle theme of this account has been to follow the evolution of the city from those early days to the present and lend some insight to the processes through which its development has taken place.

Appreciation that is heartfelt is expressed to the many persons living in Preston who gave willing assistance. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Johnson, pioneers, and Lorenzo E. Hansen, pioneer and mayor, have been particularly helpful.

Dr. Poll, chairman of the Advisory Committee, has been a constant source of inspiration since my first interest in history. His suggestions have helped in innumerable ways and are gratefully acknowledged. Ellis Rasmussen has given needed assistance.

The typists have been Sennette, my wife, who has taught her husband more about patience than Job, and Joy Moosman, my faithful secretary.

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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND¹

Geographical Description

Preston is a small agricultural community of Southeastern Idaho, numbering approximately four thousand people. It is the county seat of Franklin County, an area approximately 685 square miles. The city serves a total population, within the county, of nearly eight thousand.

Preston is a part of Cache Valley which lies in the northern reaches of the Wasatch Mountain Range. On the west are Oxford and Bear River peaks and to the north and east is the Bear River Range. The state line, dividing Utah and Idaho is seven miles to the south of Preston. This boundary line is an unnatural one, and until 1872, the first settlers of Cache Valley in the Idaho area thought themselves to be within the boundaries of Utah. Preston is the second city in importance in Cache Valley, a valley widely known for its agricultural products and highly developed irrigation system.

¹Three general sources are used to develop the background material in this chapter. They are: M. R. Hovey, An Early History of Cache Valley, (Logan, Utah: Utah State Agricultural College, 1936); Joel E. Ricks, (ed.), The History of a Valley, (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Co., 1956, for the Cache Valley Centennial Commission, Logan, Utah); and James Ira Young, "The History and Development of Franklin, Idaho, during the Period 1860-1900", (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Brigham Young Univ., 1949).

In geologic times the bench land on which Preston is located was formed by Lake Bonneville. When this prehistoric lake found an outlet to the Pacific by way of the Snake and Columbia River, large sedimentary deposits formed the rich lands surrounding the city.

Just northeast of Preston, Bear River, the principle drainage artery of Northern Utah, Western Wyoming, and Southern Idaho, enters Cache Valley. As the river turns south, its deep gorge leaves a high bench on the east side. To the east of this bench, the much smaller foothill drainage bed known as Worm Creek has cut its path deeply into the face of the earth. The area between these two water ways is high and until man came and developed a watering system, was comparatively dry.

Early Inhabitants in the Preston Area

The earliest records indicate that before white men came to the Preston area, bands of Indians foraged and hunted along Bear River and the neighboring mountain streams. These Indians were primarily Shoshone. The number present seems to have depended upon the amount of game that could be found. Severe winters frequently depleted the supply of game. For instance, Chief Sagwich, a Shoshone Chief, informs us that snows of over fourteen feet in the winter of 1784-1785 caused almost a total extinction of favorable wild life.¹ However, when Peter Skene Ogden led a trapping party into Cache Valley

¹Hovey, op. cit., p. 3.

near Preston in 1825, they lived well on a variety of game, and reported sighting two large bands of buffalo.¹ This abundance did not last long, for by 1843, John C. Fremont could report the miserably poor condition of those who were here, living on roots, rabbits, and fish, with little to spare. There were no buffalo, and few Indians were around.

Two favorite Indian camp sites close to Preston were Battle Creek, two miles to the northwest of Preston on Bear River, and a spot on Cub River where it enters Cache Valley from Mapleton. The Battle Creek site has a number of natural hot mineral springs and offered good protection from the elements. The Cub River site was closer to the mountains and from here the Indians could hunt and fish. The trail over the mountains to Bear Lake began at this site.

Most notable among the Indians who inhabited the area were such chiefs as Washakie, Arimo, Pocatello and Bear Hunter. Washakie and Arimo exerted much influence over their tribesmen to maintain peace when early settlers first came into Cache Valley. Pocatello and Bear Hunter with their bands were continually raiding the first settlements, demanding food, stealing horses and cattle and resisting any advance upon their territories.²

¹Peter Skene Ogden, Ogden's Snake Country Journals 1824-26 (London, Hudson Bay Record Society, 1950), p. 42.

²Young, op. cit., p. 88.

The First White Men

Trappers, Immigrants, and Explorers

One of the most interesting pages out of the lore of American history is that etched by the first white men entering the vast expanse of the challenging mountain west. They were its real pioneers.

The Preston area lies north of the 42° parallel and hence was in the Oregon Territory jointly claimed by Britain and the United States. Exact boundaries were not known at that time and Preston, being a part of Cache Valley, was considered to be in Spanish country. This did not inhibit its use and exploitation by British and Americans, however, who were quick to grasp the spoils of nature. Actually there are no known records of the Spanish ever setting foot in Cache Valley.

The first definite account of white men into the Preston area is that of members of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company which was organized in St. Louis in 1822 by William Henry Ashley and Andrew Henry. Trappers under the leadership of Captain John Weber crossed from Wyoming into Cache Valley in the fall of 1824 and camped for the winter, probably on the Cub River to the southeast of the Preston townsite. They named the valley "Willow Valley" for reasons which residents of the Valley today will find plausible owing to the many willows growing there. Weber's men took a rich harvest of furs from this area during the winter of 1824-25.¹

¹Young, op. cit., p. 24.

The earliest written account of anyone crossing the flat on which the city of Preston is located is that of Peter Skene Ogden, the first British contestant in this area. After leaving the Snake River country and the "Mystery Land" to the south in late December 1824, his party reached the Bear River near Grace, Idaho, on April 26, 1825, and moved south along its course. The party avoided the Narrows and were slowed by bad weather which hampered their movement from present Cleveland to their joining the Bear River again. A quotation from Ogden's journal offers an interesting picture of not only their movements but of existing conditions of the time.¹

Monday 2nd. Early this day we Started our route was over a hilly Country [probably from above Treasureton] & our progress very Slow for it was late ere we reached the river it certainly makes a great bend here for had the rocks permitted our following it we should have been two days in Coming round we Crossed over the River and encamped. Dis. 10 miles. Course South and South west. Our hunt this day amounts to 74 Beaver & a Pelican.....
 Tuesday 3d. As we were on the eve of Starting two of the Freeman who had been absent last night arrived & informed us they had Seen a war Party of Black Feet who called to them to Stop & Smoke a pipe a polite way of taking their Scalps but the former in lieu of advancing retreated & hid themselves for the night, they were on a Small River [Cub River] about ten Miles from this, as they left their traps obliged us to proceed there which we reached early our course this day East over a fine level plain covered with Buffalo & many were killed.

In order for Ogden to have gone ten miles from Bear River to the "Small River" he would have had to cross the level land of Preston and southeast to Cub River.

Ogden moved on south and reported "the whole country

¹Ogden, op. cit., p. 43.

overrun with Americans and Canadians."¹ After a threat of losing some of his men to the Americans for better pay, Ogden returned in haste through Cache Valley to the Snake River.

Cache Valley proved productive of furs to those who came early. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company men were ever present, as were those of the American Fur Company and sometimes the Hudson Bay men. "In all probability there was not a year between 1824 and 1855 when Cache Valley was not visited."² It was the fur men's practice of caching furs in Willow Valley that led to the name being changed to Cache Valley.

The first emigrant train into Cache Valley stopped at Battle Creek just northwest of Preston. In his journal John Bidwell describes how the Bartleson company left Independence, Missouri, in the spring of 1841 and with an old mountaineer and trapper, Thomas Fitzpatrick, as their guide followed William Sublette's route of 1830 over what later became the main highway to the West, the Oregon Trail. When the party reached Gentile Valley on the Bear River, they divided. Some continued on to Oregon, but Bartleson and a party of thirty others in nine wagons were determined to reach California. After camping at Battle Creek on August 13, 1841, they moved across the hills to the west "going to almost every point on the compass in order to pass them" and on to California.³

¹Ibid., p. 42.

²Ricks, op. cit., p. 25.

³Ibid., p. 27.

The West's most famous explorer, John C. Fremont, observed Cache Valley from a high peak to the north of Preston in 1843. On August 21st Fremont crossed the northern end of the Valley and went through Weston Canyon on his way to Malad Valley.

The early use of land in the Preston area was for the grazing of stock and the harvesting of grasses. Its use as such first began with a recommendation by Captain Howard Stansbury of the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, who was sent in 1849 to assess the possibilities of locating a post in Cache Valley. His report that it seemed an ideal place to winter cattle resulted in the government sending its stock from Fort Hall. This venture ended disastrously, when a severe winter depleted the stock by half. The army post was never established, though a site was considered in the southern end of the valley of Blacksmith Fork Canyon.¹

Early Settlements of Cache Valley

The venture that ultimately led to the settlement of Cache Valley was initiated in 1855, as a consequence of the Mormon migration to Great Salt Lake in 1847. Further colonization soon spread to several points in the Great Basin. Brigham Young, church leader, had sent a party under the direction of Jesse C. Little to investigate Cache Valley as early as August 1847. By 1855 the need for grazing land, due to drought conditions in Utah, was serious and Young directed the organization of a company to graze cattle in the Valley.

¹Young, op. cit., p. 43.

Elkhorn Ranch was located between the present site of Logan and Wellsville and by fall 3,000 head of cattle were pasturing. An early winter threatened the herd; an effort was made to drive the cattle out of the Valley, but the heavy snows weakened the animals so that only 420 survived.

These reverses did not long deter the settlement of Cache Valley however. Good land and plentiful water were very attractive to the settlers of areas to the south of Salt Lake who were suffering as a result of several seasons of dry weather and devastating grasshopper hordes. The winters could be faced if one were prepared for them.

Peter Maughan led the first permanent settlement of Cache Valley at Wellsville in September 1856. A pattern of building rows of houses in fort style was followed; this system prevailed throughout all of the first settlements. Substantial progress was made the following year in 1857, but was temporarily interrupted when sedition charges against the Mormons resulted in the "Utah War" and prompted Brigham Young to order a withdrawal from outlying Mormon settlements. In 1858 Cache Valley was once again abandoned.

Successful solution to the difficulties the Mormons were having with the National Government was followed by an increased interest in Cache Valley. Young and Maughan publicized the Valley widely. Wellsville, Providence, Mendon, Logan, Smithfield, and Richmond were founded in 1859 and finally brought the Mormon settlers to locate the village of Franklin, which has been called the "Mother of Settlements" in the northern part of the valley. The U.S. Census for the year 1860 reports

a total population of 2,605 persons in the valley.

The settlement of Franklin, Idaho's first permanent settlement, which occurred on April 14, 1860, brought settlers to the border of Preston. It was principally from here that the first homesteaders came to take up lands along Worm Creek, the name by which the greater Preston area was then known. It was to be six years before the first cabin beyond Franklin could be erected however. Settlement in Cache Valley had proceeded rapidly to Franklin, the lands already claimed being sufficient to meet the needs of new settlers for some time. In addition, there was a rising problem with the Indians that prevented further growth to the north until the region was made secure.

Securing the Land Against the Indians

As stated previously, Cache Valley was primarily a hunting and wintering ground for Indians. Annual journeys were made by Shoshone bands through the Upper Snake, Montana, and the Wyoming buffalo country. They were well aware of the settlers' threat to their lands, but had never united in their resistance.

Indian resentment against the settlements of the Whites was kept in check by the settler's twofold policies of "feeding rather than fighting," and maintaining a state of "preparedness." These sagacious policies fostered by Brigham Young among the Mormon pioneers saved many lives. The first policy provided "food bins" through the pooling of meager supplies for the purpose of meeting the demands of the Indians. Private food supplies were also used; many a mother thereby purchased her

own life and that of her family. The Indians soon learned to become beggars, and as time passed their demands increased. The second policy involved the maintenance of a militia of trained soldiers with headquarters in Logan. Monthly drills supported by each settlement served as a sobering deterrent to the Indians. In addition "minute men," composed of all the able bodied men, were ever ready when danger was apparent. The Franklin settlers used "Lookout Mountain," a small bald rise of five hundred feet near the village, to post guards and keep constant watch on Indian movements. Children often would be herded into the school for safety, and the minute men assembled at a moment's notice. Thus, for some time a jittery peace was maintained without any major outbreak between the Indians and the Whites.

But Indian resistance to the encroachments upon their hunting lands became progressively worse. The number of minor incidents increased, such as the death of John Reed and the Buttermilk War. Shoshone bands under the leadership of Chief Bear Hunter, Chief Sagwich, and Chief Pocatello frequently filled their camps with spoils from the Oregon Trail pioneers, and were more hostile than other Indians when in the Valley. In the wintertime it was their practice to camp just below the Preston Flat on Bear River. Extreme caution was necessary among the pioneers when they were present.

The climax that posed a real threat to life and at once brought a virtual end to the Indian problem occurred in January of 1863, at Battle Creek. It was precipitated by an attack upon a small party of men from the mining camp at

Leesburg who were seeking supplies and cattle at Franklin. One of the party was killed and several wounded while escaping in the willows and brush along Bear River. Later William Bevins, one of the leaders, reported the matter to authorities in Salt Lake, and as a consequence Colonel Patrick Edward Conner and three hundred soldiers were sent from Fort Douglas, Utah, to "clean up the entire band of offenders."¹ Arriving in Franklin on January 29th, they secured guides from the village and moved quickly against the Indian camp. The Indians were expecting a small contingent but were overwhelmed by the size of Conner's force. The fighting was intense, Indian women and children joining in when they were trapped. Few of the Indians escaped. Accounts vary as to the number killed--from 224 as stated in Conner's official report to 368 as counted on the fields of battle the next day. Of the soldiers, there were 14 killed and 53 wounded, 9 of whom died later.

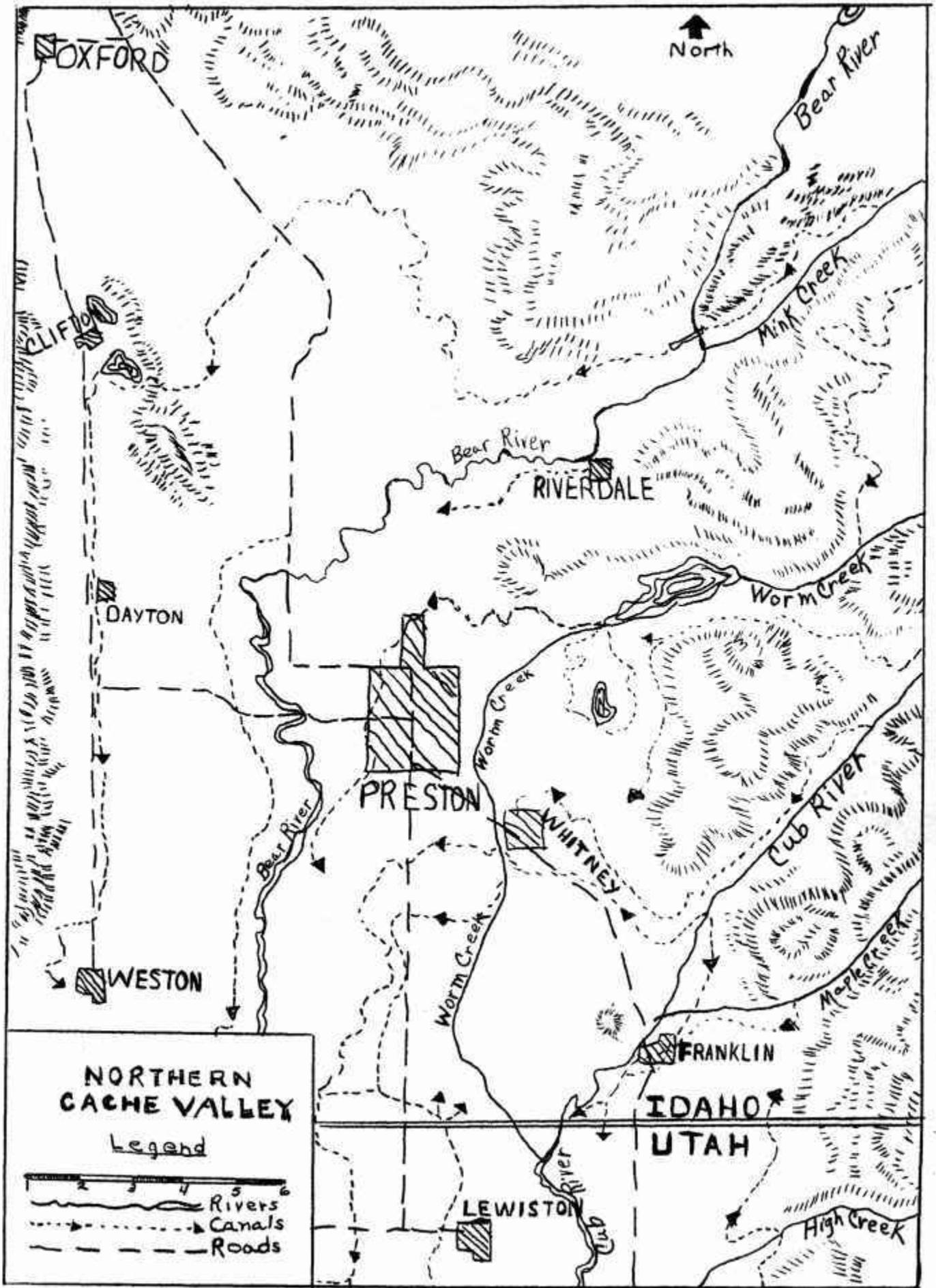
The Battle of Bear River practically freed Cache Valley "from serious Indian depredations"² and made secure the overland mail during the next decade. Casualties were the greatest of any engagement of Whites and Indians in the Washington Territory.

Although the northern area of Cache Valley experienced further outbreaks that caused excitement, none developed into real trouble. Other bands of Indians continued to beg and to forage, thus making caution necessary. But now, the settlers

¹Thomas Donaldson, Idaho of Yesterday, (Caldwell: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1941), p. 305.

²Fred B. Rogers, Soldiers of the Overland, (San Francisco: Grabhorn Press, 1938), p. 76.

could abandon their fort-style defenses and move out upon their farm lands with comparative safety. By 1866, the grasses of the Worm Creek, Whitney, and Preston areas beckoned and were soon claimed by the more daring pioneers.



CHAPTER II

THE PERIOD OF SETTLEMENT

The pattern of settlement which had characterized other major communities of Cache Valley did not prevail in the lands to the immediate north of Franklin. Whereas groups with ecclesiastical ties to the L.D.S. Church had migrated together for mutual protection and out of common needs, those that settled the Preston area were lured there through individual enterprise. For this reason it is difficult to trace in detail the initial settlers in each community. The name "Preston" predates the definition of the land area comprising the city to which it is attached. When first adopted, the term was used to designate a ward of the L.D.S. Church. This greater Preston area was called "Worm Creek" prior to 1881 and included the settlers of Worm Creek, Whitney, Glendale, and the Flat (or Preston now). Those that came to this area were predominantly Mormon, and not having local government, followed the pattern of the church. The ward or branch division of the Church was considered the geographical division as well.

Early Use of the Land

When the first settlers came to Franklin in the year 1860, they soon familiarized themselves with the areas to the north, east, and west of their newly founded community. Good grass lands existed along Worm Creek, along the foot hills to

the east of this stream and along the bottom lands of Bear River (as early as 1861 known as Franklin Meadows).¹

These areas surround the present city limits of Preston. As previously described, the Preston Flat is higher, and though largely covered by tall grass, is dryer in summer. In the beginning, it was also spoken of as the "Sandridge."² Small five acre allotments were given to settlers of Franklin for hay and grain lands five miles to the northwest of Franklin in the area of Worm Creek, now known as Whitney. This was the beginning of land ownership in this section of the country.³ Use of the plots was hazardous at first, owing to the Indian problem. Owners that sought to harvest the grasses would move out together, firearms at hand, and with scythes and home-made rakes harvest the precious wild hay.

The settlers of Franklin were not the only ones to take advantage of the forage of this north country. The use of Cache Valley by the L.D.S. Church continued and attracted other cattlemen and sheepmen to the area. Stoddard and Potter brought animals from Farmington and Weber in Utah. They established their headquarters in Glendale, northeast of Preston, and ranged their herds freely over the meadows from the east mountains to Bear River. These half-wild animals were a vexing problem to the settlers for several seasons until a

¹Marie Danielson, (ed.), History of the Development of Southeastern Idaho (Daughters of the Pioneers, 1930), p. 57.

²Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Henry Johnson, July 3, 1960.

³Danielson, op. cit., p. 58.

Church Ranch was established north of Bear River.¹

The Montana Trade and the First Settlers

In addition to the use of the "greater Preston area" for grazing and farming, there soon arose another motivation for its settlement. One of the chapters of western history that has received little attention is that of the flourishing trade between Utah and Northern Idaho-Montana in the years 1862 to 1881.

The great bond in their relationship came about as a result of the discovery of gold on Grasshopper Creek in 1862. It was then that thousands flocked into Montana looking for the yellow metal. They had to be fed, clothed and sheltered....Utah, with her strong agricultural and home-manufacture economy was in a position to enhance her position financially by entering the new market.²

Utah was the closest supply center to the new rush area. The Montana Trail followed, as one of its principal routes, a course through Cache Valley joining with the Oregon Trail at Soda Springs, thence to Fort Hall and on to its terminus in Montana. Movement of goods to Northern Idaho and Montana started quite gradually, but as gold seekers increased, needs increased. By 1863 there were an estimated 25,000 people in Idaho and possibly as many in Montana.³ The traffic hit its

¹Baltzar W. Peterson, "Historical Scrapbook of Preston and Vicinity" (Peterson was the son of one of Preston's first families. He has written some valuable first hand material and compiled notes from other sources. A typewritten copy of his notes is in the Carnegie Library, Preston, Idaho), p. 94.

²L. Kay Edrington, "A Study of Early Utah-Montana Trade, Transportation, and Communication 1847-1881," (Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1959), pp. 49-50. See also Leonard J. Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958).

³Ricks, op. cit., p. 171.

peak year of shipment from the Utah region in 1866,¹ and even with inflated prices the flow of goods reached a staggering one and one-half to two million dollars annually.² It is estimated that in 1873 "there were about 1,000 freighters hauling freight from Corrine (Utah) to Montana."³ In 1874 the Utah Northern Railroad reached Franklin, and the "thousand freighting wagons that hauled from Corrine now had their southern terminal at Franklin...."⁴

In the middle sixties a small community called Bridgeport sprang up at a point two and one-half miles northeast of Preston on the Bear River. The settlers saw the opportunity to meet the needs of the freighting business and to acquire new farming lands. The location was used as a ferrying point for Cache Valley settlers participating in the Montana trade. Nathan Packer was in charge of the ferry. In 1865 five families were living there. The next year they were joined by nine others. They lived in dugouts and log houses that were without floors and were dirt roofed. A temporary ward of the Latter-day Saint Church was organized with George Washburn acting as presiding elder. Passage through the community was numerous and led to the establishment of a station for the overland and mail route to Montana. Horses for the coaches were changed at the station.⁵ In 1869 the ferry was replaced by a

¹Edrington, op. cit., p. 115.

²Ibid. p. 83.

³Young, op. cit., p. 167.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Danielson, op. cit., p. 50.

toll bridge known as Packer's Bridge. Bridgeport followed the fortunes of the freighting business. As soon as freighting was replaced by the railroad, Bridgeport was replaced by a railroad station at Battle Creek.

William Head of Franklin was another of those to recognize opportunity to the north. Selecting a choice spring in the foothills to the east of Preston, he built a two roomed log house near what is now Blacker's Reservoir in 1866. There he ranged his growing herds and cut the native grasses. Henry Head, his son, later reported:

We raised 90 head of oxen at our new home on the North Meadows. We used these oxen to freight grain and merchandise to and from Corinne, Box Elder County, to Montana. Nine yoke of oxen and three wagons were considered as one team for one man to handle. We trailed the wagons. At our new home we planted small fruit trees in 1867 and shade trees in 1869. We milked a rather large number of cows, and made butter and cheese. We sold large, fat beef for six dollars.¹

Father would move mother and the smaller children to Franklin for the winter months in order that the children might attend school.²

The Head family engaged in freighting until 1879,³ hauling such items as brick, molasses, clothing, all kinds of hardware, and at one time sixty barrels of whiskey. The name Head Meadows was applied to the section he claimed by squatters' rights.

West of the site of Preston along Bear River, John Winn built a herd cabin in 1867. The area took his name and became

¹The Herald-Journal, Pioneer Progress Centennial Edition, 1951.

²Danielson, op. cit., p. 67.

³William H. Head, "A History of Myself Since 1856," (In possession of Dr. Joel E. Ricks, Logan, Utah.)

known as Winn Bottoms.

The first permanent residence within the present city limits of Preston was established by Dennis W. Winn in the year 1868. He built a frame home 32 by 16 feet. The house still stands today, and is located just over a mile southeast of the city center.¹ It is presently owned by William Beckstead.

Settlements neighboring the Winn Residence seem to have all been outside the present city limits of Preston. They were located on the east side of Worm Creek. David Jensen and Charles Spongberg, after scouting Bear Lake Valley in 1868, located the next year on claims in the area later referred to as "Egypt." They, like others, would return to Franklin in the wintertime. In 1871 they settled permanently, and were possibly joined at this time by Martin Lundgren, and a year later by Elisha Lawrence.² Their cattle would roam freely over the unfenced land. Milk would be made into butter and then taken to Salt Lake City in covered wagons and exchanged for food and clothing.³

Those Franklin settlers that wished to protect their hay and grain lands from the cattle and sheep moved onto their claims in 1869. In the spring Ephriam Ellsworth and William Handy built cabins. "That same summer, James Chadwick and R.M. Hull formed a partnership and bought out some of the above

¹Danielson, op. cit., p. 67.

²Progressive Men of Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Fremont and Oneida Counties, Idaho, (A.W. Bowen & Co., Chicago, 1904), p. 539.

³Graduates of 1930, Mormon Trail Blazers, (L.D.S. Seminary, Preston, Idaho), pp. 187-191, (typewritten.)

named hayland claims and built themselves each a home."¹

During the next few years the number of settlers increased along Worm Creek "...from the Spongberg and Jensen claims on the north, to the lower Spring Creek district, in what is now Whitney to the south..." and from Head Meadows to the Bear River.² The primary reason for settlement in this vicinity was to build homes based on an economy of agriculture. The tillable land had to be chosen by the streams as irrigation systems had not yet been devised. The crops consisted chiefly of dryland wheat and some vegetables.

The Coming of the Railroad

The spanning of the continent by rail was soon felt in the upper reaches of Cache Valley. As the transcontinental was making its way across the country into Utah in the year 1868, more than a thousand workers were recruited from Cache Valley. With the driving of the "golden spike" in 1869 there came the possibility of a line "stretching northward from Ogden, through Brigham City, into Cache Valley, and on farther through Southeastern Idaho to Montana."³ John W. Young, a son of Brigham Young, instigated a plan which brought eastern capital to finance rails and rolling equipment for a narrow guage road from Ogden to Soda Springs. Cache Valley citizens were to furnish all the labor and ties in exchange for railroad stock.

¹Danielson, op. cit., pp. 58, 59.

²Peterson, op. cit., p. 93.

³Ricks, op. cit., p. 174.

The L.D.S. Church joined, both financially and otherwise, the efforts to construct the new railroad. This is believed to be the only railroad constructed with an ecclesiastical organization in association.¹ With the backing of the Church, labor was recruited and construction started at Brigham City on August 26, 1871. Work progressed steadily, stopping only during the summer of 1872 while farmers tended their crops.

The Utah Northern was granted right-of-way to Garrison, Montana, by act of Congress while work was progressing to Logan. Plans were made and encouraged by Brigham Young in a Church Conference in Logan in June 1873. He urged "the working of a road through Bear River canyon beyond Franklin which would materially shorten and improve the road and lessen the grade to Soda Springs and Rich County." The priesthood backed their president, expressing "united determination to push to completion." By May 2, 1874, the "first railroad to be constructed" on Idaho soil reached Franklin.²

The proposed line was to extend from Franklin, through the Bear River Narrows and on to Soda Springs. The road was graded "during 1874 for a distance 14.5 miles,"³ from Franklin, but there it stopped and for a time remained. Financial problems growing out of the Panic of 1873, problems of management, and the realization that the Soda Springs route to Montana was impractical caused its abandonment. (Evidences of the old

¹Edrington, op. cit., p. 164.

²Ricks op. cit., pp. 174-178.

³Corporate History of Oregon Short Line Railroad Company As of June 30th, 1916, personal copy, p. 13.

grade can still be observed today along its course, from east of Whitney, then north across a big fill at the big bend of Worm Creek and up the hollow to the summit of the hills where it was intended to tunnel through, and on to Bear River.¹⁾

The grading of this section of the railroad proved a boon to the settlers. It brought employment as well as a market for trade with the workers. "Large Railroad Camps, consisting of grade workers with hundreds of horses and mules, were made wherever sufficient water was available." The commitments for wages made by the employers were fully received because of financial stress.²

With the terminus of the railroad at Franklin from 1874 to 1878, the effect upon life there and in the surrounding communities was dramatic. The connection between the railroad and Montana was shortened considerably. Much of the trade that had been moving to Montana over the alternate route through Malad shifted to Franklin. Large freighting companies, including one of the largest, Edward Creighton of Omaha, established their terminals at Franklin and built large warehouses. The center was a beehive of activity. Goods and services were much in demand. "Eggs, butter, flour, grain, or other supplies were badly needed in the mining areas."³ Prices were good. "The valley entered upon a new role which it has played ever since: i. e., serving large numbers of people outside the

¹Peterson, op. cit., p. 61.

²Ibid. pp. 61-62

³Young, op. cit., p. 171.

valley."¹ Probably three or four thousand tons of freight were shipped north each year. Many new business enterprises came into being. The Overland Stage dispatched two coaches a week over the Packer Bridge and on to Montana. Franklin's great boom days were in full swing.

Settling the Flat (Preston)

We have already noted how settlers were filling in along the east banks of Worm Creek, both to the north and south of the original homesteads; along the Bear River at Bridgeport; south of Bridgeport in the Winn Bottoms; and the location of Dennis Winn within the present city limits of Preston at the southeast corner in 1868. Because there was no water on the Sandridge or the Preston Flat, settlements had virtually surrounded it before the first homes were built upon it. Homesteads were especially moving closer from the southeast and east due to the filling up of available quarter sections along Worm Creek.

That Preston would arise on the Flat seems to be a matter of both logic and providence. Its present location in the center of approximately twenty surrounding farming communities suggests its naturalness as a place for business growth. Brigham Young recognized the appropriateness of the spot and foretold of its growth when returning from a conference in Bear Lake Valley in 1870, while the site was yet barren. He had his driver stop the light spring wagon, got out and concluded, "Some day there will be a city here."²

¹Ricks, op. cit., p. 183.

²Beal, op. cit., p. 170.

In 1876 settlers began to join Dennis Winn on the Preston Flat. Israel J. West, after taking his bride to the Endowment House in Salt Lake where their marriage was solemnized January 17th, sought to make his fortune in Idaho and homesteaded one hundred-sixty acres on the Preston Flat.¹ He was joined by his step-father, Isaac A. Canfield, who claimed an equal amount of land. West and Canfield were from Ogden, Utah. Their claim adjoined one another, and they farmed them together. Canfield was an elderly gentleman, and having no family of his own at this time, lived with his step-son. During the first short while Israel's bride stayed in Franklin until a home could be built.² The site of West's homestead began at the present intersection of State and Oneida Streets, running one mile south and one-fourth mile east.³ Canfield's land was to the immediate east.⁴

Others to follow West and Canfield were William Millard,⁵ Henry Meyer and William Geddes. Claims were filed in 1881 by

¹Franklin County Citizen, August 18, 1937.

²Interview with Amanda West Nash, June 29, 1960.

³On June 1, 1937, just shortly before the death of Israel J. West, his daughter Amanda wrote a brief biographical sketch of her father's life which is still in her possession and which states, "...he took up a homestead in what is now known as the town of Preston in the year 1876....building the first house on the present site of Preston." She was mistaken, however, in saying her father built the first house, as Dennis Winn's house was within city limits when Preston was incorporated. West's old log house can still be seen between First and Second East Streets on Fourth South. It stands in the shade of a big tree reputed to be the first tree planted in Preston.

⁴Franklin County Abstract Records, Book 2, p. 85.

⁵Preston Ward Historical Record A, Journal History, L.D.S. Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah, September 1876.

the latter two men.¹ At this time five years were needed to complete right of title to lands under the Homestead Act; therefore, they must have also come in 1876. Many claims to land were filed in the early 1880's, but squatters were not always prompt in filing on their lands so it is difficult to determine the exact year of settlement in many cases. Others could have come at this time without leaving records. Verifiable dates can be given for Nels and Soren Peterson from Richville, Utah, in the year 1877 and Nahum Porter from Ogden, Utah in 1878.²

The present central business section of Preston at the intersection of Oneida and State Streets was claimed by the following: the southeast corner by Israel J. West and Isaac A. Canfield (partners); the southwest corner by Nahum Porter, who took one hundred sixty acres to the square, and sold the north half to his son-in-law, Joseph G. Young, and the south half to Anna R. Pond, both of whom received the homestead title,³ the northwest corner by Thomas B. Heller, who took one hundred sixty acres to the square; and the northeast corner by George Sharp, who took one hundred sixty acres one-fourth mile east by one mile north. Sharp moved a two room log house on his claim and then sold to Heller, who held the property for just a short time and sold it to Lucy M. Sabins for three hundred dollars, a span of horses and a wagon. Lucy Sabins

¹Franklin County Abstract Records, Book 2, p. 68.

²Progressive Men. op. cit., p. 388, p. 540.

³Attested to by Nahum Porter's oldest son, Boyd, and his daughter Nellie Porter Head.

made the homestead entry.¹

Extension of the Utah and Northern Railroad
Brings Further Settlement

Since the completion of the Utah Northern Railroad to Franklin in 1874 company officials had been trying to make financial arrangements to further extend the railroad northward to Montana. Mormon leaders knew that the Cache Valley economy was not sufficiently advanced to support a railroad, and they were counting on capturing the Montana trade. Moses Thatcher, a railroad director and an Apostle of the Mormon Church from Cache Valley, wrote:

Finding then that our financial strength was too limited to continue their labors, I representing the interests of the road conferred with Sidney Dillon, explaining to him the facilities of the country. Mr. Dillon, however, scorned the idea of building railroads in the sagebrush. I then approached J. Gould on the subject, and that gentleman offered to pay the indebtedness of the road and give the promoters 7 8/10¢ on the dollar for the road thus far completed. This seemed but a small amount, but considering that the interests of Cache Valley and the North would be greatly enhanced by continuing the road, they accepted the offer, and the Utah Northern passed into the hands of J. Gould and others. I was employed to accompany Mr. Gould's engineer and explore the country north and report, which we did, and the present site of the road is near the route we located in our judgment which exploring the country.²

The property of the Utah Northern thus acquired, was then sold to the Gould-controlled Union Pacific, and the Utah and Northern Railroad Company was organized on October 4, 1877. Contracts were soon let for the road to Fort Hall, Idaho.

In the winter month of January, 1878, the new line passed

¹Franklin County Abstract Record, Book 2, p. 68.

²Deseret News, 41:143, as quoted by Beal, op. cit., p. 346.

over the almost barren flat that was soon to be Preston, and went on down a steep grade to the bottom land of Bear River. Here, on the site where the famous Indian battle had occurred, there arose as if by magic the town of Battle Creek.

Battle Creek was a boom town for a period of about eight years (1878-1886). It became a supply station for construction work in extending the line, and in 1880, some machine and repair equipment which was at Logan was moved to Battle Creek.

Shops, and a Round House with stalls for eight engines were installed. A Depot, two water tanks, R. R. Hotel, and R. R. tenant House were maintained. Water pipe lines were installed replacing the hand pump system. Large stocks of lumber were always in the yards, much of which came from the Cotton Wood Canyon north of the old Church Ranch; much of this timber was sawed with the old over-head hand saws and hauled from Cotton Wood Creek to Battle Creek by teams and wagons. The tie boom in the river was always full of ties which were floated down to Mink Creek and Bear River. Large coal bins (Company property) were to the east of the tracts and Indians, Chinese, and white transient labor was generally employed there in the yards.¹

Extra locomotives had to be kept on hand to pull the trains out of Battle Creek, both to the north and south. The station was a division point in 1881. By 1886 the Company began to move its facilities farther north -- to Pocatello and Eagle Rock (Idaho Falls). Battle Creek, as Bridgeport before it, soon became a ghost town.

Trains made no regular stops in the vicinity of Preston during the first two or three seasons, Franklin and Battle Creek being the nearest station, but train men would throw off mail destined for this locality, since there would always be someone waiting to pick it up. Out going letters were handed to the mail clerk on the moving train by the use of a split end stick. The first R. R. building in the vicinity of Preston was a small section house on the north side of the track, and about midway between what is now State St. and 1st East.

¹Peterson, op. cit., p. 64. Peterson's notes are an excellent source of information about the railroad during this period.)

Only a wood platform existed in 1879 according to Henry Johnson, who got off the train with his parents as a five year old boy to settle here.¹ Mr. Jimmy Young was the first section foreman (1878). It was not until about 1881, that the trains made regular stops at Preston, when Mr. Gus Towns was the first Station Agent, and Mr. William Chapman...was the first post master.¹

The coming of the railroad ushered in the new era. Many who were in the employ of the Company were required to work in the area for a period of time. Some homesteaded where they located their families and thus became permanent residents while they continued to work for the railroad. Others came seeking work and found employment in the yards at Battle Creek, and in maintaining the line. New residents were established to the north and west toward the high clay bluffs of Bear River.

Among those that came that can be identified with the railroad and who preferred to make permanent residence were: Nahum B. Porter, who became the first Bishop of Preston; Martin Johnson, carpenter for the railroad directing construction of all railroad buildings and later building many of the homes and buildings in Preston; Francis L. Wilcox, a section hand; John Stevens, a brakeman; John Martin a foreman and supervisor of the building of the bridge across Worm Creek; Charles R. Hobbs, a brakeman who became prominent in business; and many others such as the Taylors, the Carters, the Pauls, and the Bosworths. A complete list of those that thus came would indeed be a long one.

In addition to those individuals named, other settlers of

¹Ibid., pp. 65-66.

the greater Preston area during this early period were:

Alfred Alder	Claus Clausen	Andrew Garrison
David Boyce	James Chadwick	Proben A. Hansen
Thomas Bennett	Ephriam Elsworth	James R. Hebdon
William Bennett	Joseph Foster	G. Halverson
William Bell	George Foster	Jabez Harris
E. Brockway	William Gibbons	Martin Higley
Joseph Clayton	Joseph Golightly	Amelus Hansen
Edward Clayton	Willard Green	Elam Hollingsworth
Edward Jessop	Anders Mortensen	Emil Petterborg
M. Keplinger	J. O. Paton	Joseph S. Sharp
Alfred Kershaw	Hyrum Nielsen	George Shaffer
Hans M. Lund	Joseph Nielsen	Allen Tatum
Benjamin Lamont	Hans Nisson	Robert Wayman
Anna Lundgren	Hop Pender	Charles West
William D. Millar Jr.	Shem Purnell	Alfred Wilhelm
James Miller	Ernest Purnell	John Winn
Christen Mortensen	Ole Peterborg	James Winn ¹

The winters of 1876 to 1879 were unusually severe. It is related that David Jensen walked on crusted snow three feet deep to his home on the big bend of Worm Creek while returning from April conference in Salt Lake. Some feed for cattle was bought in Richmond, Utah, at the high price of fifteen dollars per load. Straw from the roofs of sheds were fed to the starving livestock. In the spring each year thousands of deer carcasses could be seen along the Worm Creek bottom lands.

In addition to the discouraging winters, settlers on the flat found it almost impossible to grow a garden or raise grain successfully. Some of them, near starvation, moved away.

In spite of the hardships, an air of expectancy might well have pervaded the atmosphere in these early days. Population pressure was beginning to mount in other communities in Cache Valley, and land here was available to relieve it. The economic strength that came through the railroad from employment,

¹Danielson, op. cit., p. 83.

from its providing ready access to other communities, and from the demand it brought for the products of the soil for the Montana trade all contributed to a favorable outlook for those that remained.

CHAPTER III

THE FORMATIVE YEARS FROM SETTLEMENT TO THE YEAR 1900

Heretofore we have dealt with those events which led to the initial settlements in and around the general vicinity of Preston. We shall now turn our attention to those incidents out of which the Village of Preston itself was shaped and which gave it status.

Community Activities and the Increasing Importance of the Flat

Early in the year 1879 the impending dominance of the Flat to the new area of settlement became apparent when the people on the west side of Worm Creek were able to bring about a relocation of the school and meeting house then under construction. Work on the building had started in 1878 when it was brought up to the square. Its location was two and one-half miles to the east of Preston. The people on the west side of Worm Creek soon realized this location was not in the center of the settlement and wanted it moved to the middle where it would be close enough for students to walk to school. "At that time this section of the country belonged to what was known as Cache Stake. William B. Preston of Logan, the presiding bishop, came up with a few others to look over the disputed locations

for the school and meeting house."¹ The decision was to move the building. A site was chosen on the south end of Soren Peterson's homestead. The logs were moved to that spot and under the direction of Nehum Porter the new building was erected. It was sixteen by eighteen feet with a pine floor and a dirt roof. Split logs on legs were used as benches.

Before the construction of the Worm Creek School, the homes or private facilities of the people had been used to educate their children. The first community school was conducted in Robert M. Hull's log granary in 1877. Varena Foster, a girl of sixteen, was the first teacher. As with all of the early schools, her subjects were the three R's and spelling. To the tune of "Yankee Doodle" Miss Foster's clear voice sang out the times tables until the students could duplicate her feat. Prayer and the scriptures were not neglected. Books had to be shared, they were so few. Pencil and slate were used to record the new learning. The old wood burning Franklin stove kept them warm. When winter snows piled too deep Miss Foster's place was taken for a short time by Ralph Johnson, an eastern man. He taught in James Chadwick's home while they were in Franklin for the winter. Pay was scant. There was no regular salary, but students were assessed one dollar per month. More often than not, this was paid in goods. One man gave a quarter of venison for his sons' tuition. Curious Indians bothered the school frequently, much to the delight of the children and the consternation of the teacher.

¹Danielson, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

About twenty had to keep busy at work, or the corner awaited as a discipline. In the fall of 1878 Maggie Porter taught in the home of Joseph Sharp. When Miss Porter could no longer teach, Sharp took her place and finished out the year. The new log school building was ready in 1879. Mary Heller was the first teacher. Others followed until 1884 when changing conditions brought about the moving of the school house once again, this time to the center of the emerging community.¹

The L.D.S. Church was the nucleus of community life during these early times. Its officers were not only the spiritual leaders but the temporal leaders as well. They directed civic and religious affairs, and in other settlements even distributed land, though this was not the case in Preston. Prior to 1877 the settlers would return to Franklin as their church headquarters. In the early spring of the year 1877, at a Seventies meeting held in Franklin, the Saints who were then living in the locality of Worm Creek were organized as an L.D.S. Branch with Elisha R. Lawrence as Presiding Elder and William Garrison as musical director. Elder Lawrence organized a Relief Society enrolling twenty-four ladies aged fourteen and older with Mary Ann Hull as President. Sunday School services were also held, and David Jensen was appointed to be Superintendent. As was the case with the early schools, church services and meetings of instruction were held at the homes of the Saints.

A branch organization was subsequently formed on the

¹Ibid.

west side of Worm Creek. Though contemporary records are absent as to the details, Nahum Porter was appointed Presiding Elder and the branch was a part of the Lewiston ward. Often the members of the two branches would meet together sometimes on the west side and sometimes on the east side of the Creek.¹

In the fall of 1879 the Cache Stake Presidency at Logan considered it expeditious to make an independent ward of the branches at Worm Creek. In a special meeting on October 21, the Worm Creek Ward was organized with boundaries "commencing at the South of Mink Creek, thence running in a southerly direction through the foot hills to the Lewiston Canal, thence westerly along the bank of said canal to Worm Creek, thence to Bear River to the Railroad bridge, thence north and northeasterly along Bear River to the place of beginning."² At a meeting a short time later, Nahum Porter was selected as the first Bishop. He chose as counselors David Jensen and Elam Hollingsworth, and as ward clerk Israel J. West.

With the organization of a ward a greater number of people were brought into church service. Young People's Mutual groups were formed with Joseph Nielson, Joseph Winn, and Lewis Lamont in charge. A Ward Relief Society included Rachel Porter, Serena Jensen, Anna Lundgren, Mary Heller, and Jennie Wilcox as officers. Two Primaries for children were staffed, one under the direction of Jennie Wilcox, Julie Jensen, Lizzie Shaffer, and Maggie Porter on the west side, and later, on the east side one under the direction of Betty Nission, Nancy

¹Preston Ward Historical Record A, op. cit., p. 4.

²Ibid., p. 5.

Lawrence and Ella Clayton. Wide participation served to bring the people of the community together, and to unite them for other community projects indispensable to growth.¹

Preston received its name at this time. Baltzar Peterson relates the incident in the following manner:

On May 14, 1881, a special meeting was held in the School House. Some of the Church Leaders at Salt Lake City objected to the name "Worm Creek" as pertaining to any Church Organization. They thought that a more appropriate name should be given the Ward for they were not in favor of the name "Worm" being used when it pertained to anything connected with the Church. Mrs. Rachel Porter, wife of Bishop Porter, had the privilege of suggesting the name "Preston" in honor of Bishop William E. Preston of Cache Stake, and who later became the Presiding Bishop of the Church. Thus Preston became the name of the Ward, and the Community.²

With limited resources at hand the early settlers had to use what few facilities they had for as many purposes as possible. The log school house on Worm Creek served for community activities such as socials, dances, weddings and so on. Most such activities were under the auspices of the Church. Edward Clayton would get the pitch with his tuning fork and lead community singing. For dances Nels and Baltzar Peterson would play their violins while Clayton, George and John Taylor played the accordion or mouth organ, and Soren Peterson did the calling. There were games, readings, and parties for many occasions. The old school house was the scene of many lively times. Homes were used as places of entertainment also. Grand suppers were sometimes served, and the chance to be host

¹Ibid.

²Peterson, op. cit., p. 109.

was passed around. It was always a special occasion when William Kirkup and James Challis would come from Franklin with their lantern slide machine.¹

Much could be said about the courage of the pioneer mothers who, when misfortune was about to claim a life or when life was born anew, would donate their nursing skill with willing hearts. Mrs. Martin Johnson and Mrs. Hans M. Lund served many years as midwife and practical nurse. An account of Mrs. Johnson's cleansing and sewing the opened abdomen of a neighbor youth gashed by a plow attests to her skill and fortitude.² Mr. H. B. Lamareaux possessed some dental and medical skill. The first physician was a Mr. Shipp who came from Salt Lake in the early 1880's.

Much was done for the morale of the settlers when Francis Wilcox brought one hundred tree starts and planted them on his land. He cared for them by tediously hauling water from his well. After irrigation water came many fruit trees and berry bushes flourished.

The problem of obtaining water on the Preston Flat had been the cause of retarding its settlement from the beginning. Those who inhabited the area had sunk wells from fifty to ninety feet deep to obtain water. Their cattle had to be driven to Worm Creek or Bear River to quench their thirst. The possibility of bringing water from nearby Cub River over the hill from the east was considered. David Jenkins, whom Israel West had

¹Danielson, op. cit., p. 70.

²Kate B. Carter, Treasures of Pioneer History, Vol. 1 (Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, 1952), p. 92.

hired to survey his homestead, was hired to map the course of the stream and see if such a ditch were possible.¹ His findings led to the formation of the Cub River and Worm Creek Canal Co. with David Jensen, William Head, Joseph Clayton and Thomas Heller as directors. After constant urging by Thomas Heller, the ditch was completed by July 4, 1881. The entire community turned out to celebrate. Heller led a parade of settlers as they followed the water along the ditch. As the water made its way along, the people removed weeds and debris from its path. Where needed, the weak banks were hurriedly reinforced. When they saw the first water move over the hill, they took off their hats and gave the "Hosannah Shout" three times.²

With water now available on the Flat, ditches could be made and additional acres cultivated. The hard work with hand tools and plow would now pay off in productivity as long as the water flowed. Despair was felt many times when the ditch would run dry and slides were discovered on the hill sides. Hasty repairs had to be made. Necessity made perseverance possible, and in time the big washes were made more secure. Due to the sandy condition of the soil the problem still persisted and remains even now. The development of this water project was a major accomplishment and a great step toward future community growth.³

¹Notes of Israel J. West in the possession of Amanda West Nash.

²Danielson, op. cit., p. 69.

³Peterson, op. cit., p. 111.

Continued Growth and Development

As a consequence of the successful Cub River and Worm Creek Canal project, land on the Preston Flat increased in value and became a more desired place for settlement. Such land as was still available was rapidly claimed. Those that had homesteaded found demand for extra acres held beyond their needs. Farmland that had been worth little, being there for the taking, could soon be sold for ten to twenty dollars an acre.¹ Land located in the more select spots became more valuable for business reasons.

Among those who came at this time were the "Hyde Park Outfit," Jim and Joe Johnson, Will Hawkes, and Joe Roper. These young men all married "Lambs from Hyde Park" (sisters of the same family whose last name was Lamb)² and bought land in one of Preston's central quarter sections. The report is made that these enterprising young men formed a partnership in 1883 "for the purpose of carrying on general farming industry and conducting other business extensively."³ Others who came at this time were Condie's, Palmers, Chapmans, Stokeses, McQueens, and Swanns from Morgan, Utah. Records of land sales indicate that large plots were divided and re-divided. Increasing numbers came from these and other areas causing Preston's population to grow considerable over the next few years.

The year 1884 brought basic organizational changes in the L.D.S. Church in Cache Valley. Such changes were of the most

¹Franklin County Abstract Record Book 2, p. 85.

²Interview with Henry Johnson, July 3, 1960.

³Progressive Men..., op. cit., p. 256.

important consequence because the Church provided community leadership. At a special meeting held at Franklin, on June 1, recognition came to the Southern Idaho area through the creation of the Oneida Stake of Zion. William C. Hendricks was selected as President with Solomon H. Hale and George C. Parkinson as counselors.¹ None of the above named individuals lived in Preston at this time; later the latter two became community leaders. With increased local autonomy, a closer bond was felt by the communities over which they presided. The day following (June 2) the officers of the Preston Ward were changed. William C. Parkinson was ordained as Bishop, succeeding Nahum Porter due to his confinement for polygamous practices. Soon afterwards John Larson was chosen to act as first counselor and George T. Benson as Second.²

Along with the growth of the Preston town site further changes were necessary in both school and church. Under the direction of the new Church leaders a small school was erected in Whitney to serve those living in that area, and the old school and meeting house was torn down to become part of a new and larger building at Preston. The new building was 26 by 40 feet and was located at approximately 60 South State. Donations paid for the structure. But even this enlargement was soon not enough. In 1887 a lumber addition was attached, forming a "T" shaped building. This structure was to serve for school, entertainment, public gatherings and church until about

¹Oneida Stake Record, Book B, Journal History, op. cit., p. 8.

²Preston Ward Historical Record B, op. cit., p. 6.

1894. At that date a separation occurred in the use of this facility for both church and school. The building on South State remained as property of the church, and a new school was erected adjacent to the site where the Central school now stands.¹

By petition to the County Commissioners at Malad, the county seat of Oneida County, the schools in these two areas were organized into separate districts in 1884 according to the provisions of the Common School Law of Idaho Territory. The district of Preston was known as District No. 18 and that at Whitney as No. 21. Teachers salaries and the maintenance of the school was paid by the county.²

Separate schools were later organized in Worm Creek and at a site one and three-fourths miles north of Preston known as the Yellow Jacket School because the building was painted yellow. The Worm Creek school was erected in 1890 and known as District 22. The Yellow Jacket school was erected in 1893 and was called District 36.³

It is interesting to note a graphic summary of conditions as they were in Preston in the year 1886. The following was recorded in the Logan paper:⁴

The people generally enjoy good health and are on the increase both by emigration from the other towns and from the spirit world. The babies newly born are mostly boys and bid fair to grow and develop successfully. So it may be. Preston supports two stores,

¹Peterson, op. cit., p. 79, 118.

²Ibid., p. 83.

³Ibid.

⁴Utah Journal, April 26, 1886.

a post office, and a harness shop, and all seems to be in fair condition. The farmers are busy at work....improvements are steadily going on. A good square of about ten acres is laid off...The meeting house is too small and it will not fully hold the people...All things considered Preston is likely to become one of the most flourishing towns in southern Idaho.

The "good square" spoken of in this sketch was donated by Isaac A. Canfield, Israel J. West and others who contributed ten dollars each for its purchase. It was to be made into a city park.

The vexing problem of polygamy necessitated the reorganization of the Oneida Stake in November of 1887.¹ President Hendricks had been imprisoned, as had others, and as a consequence of his long absence George C. Parkinson was appointed to take his place. Solomon Hale was again selected as first counselor and Mathias Cowley (who in 1897 became a Church Apostle) became second counselor.² Preston's ascendancy as the largest city in Oneida Stake and its more central location to other communities led to the shifting of the stake headquarters from Franklin to Preston in 1889.

As a result of continuing growth, a townsite was surveyed in 1888. Sixteen blocks of ten acres each, with streets six rods wide were marked off.³ The limits of what was to be Preston city were being separated from their environs.

Increased demand was placed upon the water supply for irrigation purposes. By the fall of 1888 another canal known

¹See pp. 47-52.

²Oneida Stake Record, Book B, op. cit., p. 9.

³Preston Ward Historical Record B, op. cit., p. 7.

as the Preston, Mink Creek and Riverdale Canal was surveyed, taking its water from the Mink Creek. David Jensen, David Eames, James Johnson, and John A. Woolf were the directors. This canal follows the hill to the east, and like its predecessor on the Flat, washes out in the sandy soil occasionally. It was constructed at a cost of about thirty thousand dollars and took several years to complete.¹

The first census of population in 1890 for the precinct of Preston, which included Mink Creek and part of Fairview, listed 1,504 persons. A reasonable estimate for the Preston area would be just less than 1,000.² When Andrew Jensen was collecting historical data for the Mormon Church in 1890 he wrote the following about Preston:³

Preston is the Second Ward in size in the Oneida Stake. It contains 106 families belonging to the church, most of whom live in a scattered condition on their farms and ranches within a scope of country, about four miles square...It contains sixteen ten acre blocks and is perhaps as beautiful a townsite as can be found in Southern Idaho. It is being build up quite fast, and fine thrifty shade trees are planted along the sidewalks of the principal streets. A Stake Academy building is also in course of erection, which when completed will add considerable importance to the town...There is room and land for a large number of Saints yet, and I have not for a long time seen a new settlement in the mountains that I would rather recommend to my friends who are seeking homes than Preston...

The favorable condition thus described was reflected in further steady growth.

¹Ibid.

²U.S. Census of Population, 1860-1950, as quoted in Ricks, op. cit., p. 446.

³Deseret News, May 9, 1890.

Early Business Development

In the early years the mother settlement of Franklin and the boom town of Battle Creek were the trading centers. Most everyone went to these two places for needed merchandise such as groceries, coal, lumber, implements, etc. When the terminus of the railroad was established in Franklin and the voluminous freight moved out from that point, Dennis Winn established Preston's first store. In a north "lean to" he constructed on the side of his home, he sought to take advantage of the traffic and to meet the needs of the other settlers. His merchandise consisted of groceries, some small farm implements, and supplies for freighters.

Mrs. Lucy Sabins also sought to take advantage of the freight route. She furnished her home and opened its doors in 1880 to the public as a boarding and rooming house. It was located on the south part of her property and became known as the Cottage Hotel.

Charles R. Hobbs began what later became a thriving business by hauling coal from the Battle Creek railroad station in the wintertime to those who could afford it. Coal was a luxury and used just on special occasions by many. The children would stand and watch it burn. Hobbs would measure it out in boxes holding one or two hundred pounds.

The principle early trading was through the tithing house of the L.D.S. Church. The practice of members paying ten per cent of their annual increase led to the establishing of such centers. Here the products of wheat, hay, potatoes, cattle, etc., and a little money were contributed. Money

was scarce and paper script bearing promise of goods or services was used instead. Bartering was practiced and helped to meet the needs of the people.

William Chapman operated Preston's second store and was the town's first postmaster. The store was owned in partnership with his brother-in-law, James Bosworth. About 1881 their business was temporarily located in a little shack behind the home of William Gibbon at the corner of Fourth South and State Streets. Later they built a small room in the two hundred block on South State. As postmaster Chapman handled mail in a section house near the tracks and later in connection with the store. Henry Meyer followed him as postmaster.

The ambitious investor and merchant William C. Parkinson came to Preston in 1884, buying out the merchandise of Chapman and Bosworth. Following his appointment as bishop on June 2nd, he operated his business in connection with managing the tithing house. Soon afterwards he erected the first business building at Preston's main intersection on the southwest corner of State and Oneida Streets. In those early days such stores handled "anything from calico to horse liniment."

Other businesses were soon established. Blacksmithing had been done by Alfred Alder, Shem Purnell, and Charles Spongberg on their farms. In 1885 Hugh S. Geddes and Peter E. Nielson opened a shop on the present site of the Central School. Andrew Nash was the blacksmith. A furniture store was opened the same year by J. S. Head. The next year Charles

Hobbs constructed a two story building; the lower floor was used for a confectionery and the upper floor for dancing and other amusements. Isaac Canfield and Israel West and others met the need for lumber by establishing a mill near Willow Flat in the hills to the east. There followed in 1887 the construction of the second building at the main intersection of Preston. William Head built a second general department store, managed by his son Samuel. It was located on the north-east corner of Oneida and State Streets.¹

By the year 1887 Preston had the appearance of a new and prospering community center. There was a doctor, a hostelry, two general stores, a furniture store, a blacksmith shop, an amusement hall, postal service, and a railroad section house used as a station at which trains stopped.

Preston's first newspapers struggled for their existence. The first was called The Republican and printed its first edition in 1890. It was started by Reese Davis from Malad, who convinced a group of business men of Preston to subscribe to stock costing from five to fifty dollars a share and form a publishing company. John C. Greaves was appointed to act as business manager, Nat Davis to be editor. The paper was illfated, however, and had to discontinue printing. No one has been able to locate any copies of the Republican. William Kenner brought a press from Paris, Idaho, and published The Era in 1892.² As Danielson observes, it was "an era of

¹Danielson, op. cit., pp. 76-80.

²Franklin County Citizen, Dec. 24, 1942.

disappointment to Kenner, so he moved to Soda Springs." Other publishers followed but had little financial success during those early years.¹

By the late 1890's the Preston business area had lost its scattered appearance. Ranchers flocked to the community especially on Saturdays and stores were doing a good trade. In 1898 the use of script was discontinued.

The merchants and business men last fall abandoned the script currency. It was a lithographed article, much resembling the greenback, and by it and through it all trading was done. The nurse at the birth was paid in scrip, and the minister took it at the marriage, as also did the doctor and sexton. It was everywhere present, and cash was invisible. This paper was discounted at all stages. Since it was all burned, money alone has been the currency both here and at Franklin. At first it was very awkward. There being no banks here, checks were paid and they must go to Logan to be cashed, but in a short time money was plentiful, and the change has been satisfactory both to the merchants and people.²

A "new impetus" was felt in business as a result of the change and growth continued before the turn of the century.

Problems Arising out of Mormon Polygamous Practices

The challenge of carving out a new settlement was not confined to a struggle with nature. The budding prosperity Preston was experiencing in the 1880's was beset with problems arising out of Mormon doctrine of plural marriage.

The question of Mormon polygamous practices was national in scope. It was regarded as being as reprehensible as slavery and entered public thought characterized as one of the "twin

¹Danielson, op. cit., p. 89.

²Oneida Stake History, Journal History, op. cit., June 7, 1898.

relics of barbarism." National legislation designed to restrict its practice followed ten years after its public announcement as a tenet by the L.D.S. Church in 1852. The Anti-Bigamy Law was passed but proved ineffective. The real campaign against polygamy, especially as far as Preston is concerned, started with the approval of the Edmunds Act of 1882. By its provisions polygamy was punishable by disfranchisement, a fine of not more than five hundred dollars, and imprisonment for not more than three years. Children of such unions were to be considered illegitimate. "Unlawful cohabitation" became the basis for indictment, and individuals so accused were almost certain of being convicted.¹

In Idaho there were religious and political problems which gave rise to intense feelings. The causes of these difficulties, besides the natural traditional aversion for such practices, were the almost total loyalty and organization of life by Mormons around their church, and the somewhat puritanical character of their faith.² Opposition thus manifested itself, and can here be typified in the efforts of Idaho's famous anti-Mormon crusader Fred T. Dubois. He recognized in the issue not only the aspect of a noble crusade but also an opportunity for personal aggrandizement. Others, too, sought to profit by this popular cause. The courts backed prosecution. Deputies and prosecution forces were well paid. As a consequence the anti-Mormons sought to first

¹Beal, op. cit., p. 310.

²Merle W. Wells, "Origins of Anti-Mormonism in Idaho, 1872-1880," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XLVII (Oct. 1956), p. 107.

enact restrictive territorial legislation, and second to destroy the church's political control in southeastern Idaho and seize control themselves.¹

Across from Preston in the northern fringes of the valley, the town of Oxford "with a large admixture of Gentile non-Mormon population...became the local battle field of the anti-Mormons of southern Idaho..." It was from there that Dubois, Oneida County Sheriff, launched the movement which "culminated in the Idaho test oaths."²

The movement thus begun carried itself relentlessly into the homes of every Mormon community wherever polygamy was suspected. Surprise attacks were organized that resulted in many arrests. Deputies would swarm into a community and catch the suspects unaware. The village of Franklin was especially a prime target, as were those people in the scattered community of Preston. "Deps" were seen often in Preston riding from place to place in their buggies.³

Church members unitedly were determined to resist their opponents. In their minds the religious liberty guaranteed by the constitution made such laws unconstitutional. They were further determined to keep their plural families together. Accordingly they sought to avoid arrest by "going underground," that is hiding anywhere "from the willow patch to the mountains" or "being called on a mission to preach the gospel abroad."⁴

¹Ibid., p. 302.

²French, op. cit., p. 571.

³Interview with John Morrison, July 4, 1960.

⁴Beal, op. cit., p. 309.

During those trying days, the Mormons' lives were beset with troubles. Added to the potential danger from government deputies at Oxford was the encouragement given local Gentile people to report on polygamists. Five dollars was paid for reports leading to arrest. John Frew, who had little sympathy for church practices, sought to profit by the opportunity when he reported Bishop Nahum Porter as a polygamist. Word preceded the deputies, and Porter fled to the home of Robert Waymen near the river. By the time the officers arrived on the scene, Porter had departed to an undetected haven among the willows far downstream.¹

Those who practiced polygamy among the Mormons were generally the leaders in the communities in which they resided. Critical research into the question has established that, with few exceptions, they were conscientious persons and good providers.² Among them, two businessmen, an educator, an artisans, and two farmers were all prominent people in civic and church affairs. Those who have remained in Preston are well established possessing considerable property and a numerous posterity.

The Idaho anti-polygamy campaign took on a new shape early in 1885. The fall election of 1884 had given the anti-Mormon members of the territorial legislative body the balance of power. They were determined to disfranchise all Mormons because they supported polygamy. A young lawyer from Elackfoot, H. W. (Kentucky) Smith, drafted Idaho's Election Test

¹Biographical notes of Lorenzo E. Hansen, Preston, Idaho.

²Interview with John Morrison, July 4, 1960.

Oath, and it passed the legislature. Though the Mormon Church was not mentioned specifically, its design was clear, and all Latter-day Saints were excluded from voting for a decade. The courts upheld the measure, and later it became a part of Idaho's constitution. The oath provided that, "No person is permitted to vote, serve as a juror, or hold any civil office..who is a bigamist, or polygamist...or who, in any manner, teaches, advises, counsels, aids, or encourages any person to enter into polygamy...or who is a member of, or contributes to the support, aid, or encouragement of any order...which teaches... polygamy...or which teaches or advises that the laws of this State, prescribing the rules of civil conduct are not the supreme law of the state."¹ The Idaho Daily Statesman reported that the governor was forced to sign the measure when Dubois, Smith, and George Gorton entered his office, and Smith, with gun in hand, said, "Governor, you will not leave this room alive unless you sign that bill and sign it at once."²

The members of the Mormon Church were indignant at such action. Some sought to circumvent the law by renouncing membership prior to elections, and then rejoining the church the following day. A special meeting in Oxford of the Independent (Mormon) Party, April 12, 1888 resolved that those not believing in polygamy could subscribe to the oath and vote. Richard Z. Johnson, Idaho's attorney general who was a Democrat, sustained the view that all Mormons who desired should be allowed to sign. Many were turned away, however, and in

¹Beal, op. cit., p. 305.

²Ibid.

Preston, no vote was thus permitted.¹ Many such persons were indicted for conspiracy to violate the laws. Others of the church accepted their fate rather than jeopardize their membership. There were those, too, of which Preston had its share who withdrew their names from the Church records never to place them on again.

The "Manifesto" which released the Church member from the practice of polygamy in 1890 did not end legislative action against Mormons in Idaho. In 1891 the Idaho Australian Ballot Law restricted past members of polygamous groups from voting. This was not long in effect, however. The next session of the legislature eliminated all of the unjust and retroactive provisions brought on by the oath.²

It was difficult for the members of the Mormon Church to discontinue the practice of polygamy. Rooted as it was in their concept of "exaltation" beyond death, the loss of polygamous privileges meant the loss of a "glory" they envisioned through a large and "God-fearing posterity." Some held resolutely to their determination to continue the practice. In the late 1890's and early 1900's an additional seven persons--two doctors, two educators, two businessmen and a farmer--who resided in Preston were polygamously married.³ In such cases tacit approval was given by the community and church. Action was taken against them. When the policy of the Church insisted upon compliance with the 1890

¹Ricks, op. cit., pp. 115, 116.

²French, op. cit., p. 577.

³Interviews with Lorenzo E. Hansen and John Morrison, July 4, 1960.

manifesto, polygamous marriages came to an end.

Oneida Stake Academy

The pressures brought to bear by the anti-polygamy campaign, which had disfranchised the church and excluded religious training in public schools, and the efforts of other churches to provide education for young Mormons furnished an urgent stimulus to the Mormon Church to establish academies where possible. In the spring of 1888 the First Presidency of the Church organized a General Board of Education, and on June 3rd, directed that "a board of education, consisting of not less than five and not to exceed eight members, should be selected in each stake to take charge of and promote the interest of education in the stake.¹ As a consequence the Oneida Stake Presidency, composed of George C. Parkinson, Solomon H. Hale and Matthias F. Cowley, selected five others to serve with them as a Board of Education. By October 1, 1888, plans had been formulated and the new academy temporarily began operating in two rooms on the ground floor of the Thomas Lowe dance hall in Franklin. Samuel Cornwall of Salt Lake City was its first principal and Mary A. Thomas of Smithfield, Utah, a teacher. Seventy two students were enrolled.²

Following the shift of the Oneida Stake headquarters from Franklin to Preston in 1889, agitation began to move the Academy also. After discussions by elected representatives of

¹Floyd W. Peterson, A History of Oneida Stake Academy, (Master's Thesis, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, 1957), p. 5.

²Ibid., p. 7.

the Stake, and finding opinion divided and agreement difficult, the matter was referred to the Presidency of the Church. President Lorenzo Snow investigated the most suitable location and advised that Preston be selected as the site; whereupon, the school was established in two rooms of the furniture store owned by J. A. Head. Joseph G. Nelson and his wife, Almeda, were the teachers.¹

Plans to construct a new and permanent structure to house the Academy were soon underway. Don Carlos Young, Church Architect, designed a three storied stone building to be 48 by 64 feet with a capacity for 300 students and costing approximately \$40,000.00. Solomon H. Hale of the Oneida Stake Presidency superintended the construction.²

The laying of the corner stone took place on July 2, 1891. President George C. Parkinson offered the dedicatory prayer. Rock for the structure was obtained from a quarry on the John Nuffer homestead on the divide between Cub River and Worm Creek northeast of Preston. Men from various wards of the stake were "called on mission" to cut the rock. Ward finance committees functioned in each ward to raise funds. The people contributed both labor and produce. The Deseret News reports on July 2:³

A generous feeling prevails in the hearts of the Saints toward the Academy, all feeling that such an institution is needed very much in which to educate the youth of the Stake in the principles of the Gospel and

¹Danielson, op. cit., p. 86.

²Floyd Peterson, op. cit., p. 8.

³Deseret News, July 2, 1890, as quoted by Floyd Peterson, op. cit., p. 8.

every branch of knowledge.

In the fall of 1891 school was held in the basement. The building has been used continuously since then. Construction of the Academy was completed in 1894. It was dedicated by Apostle Moses Thatcher on July 28, 1895.

The Board of Education appointed a principal and two counselors to administer the school and to teach. The faculty were to be members of the Church in good standing, pay their debts, and teach in harmony with Church doctrine. The principal must be certified to teach, and strong encouragement was given to all teachers to meet the principal's qualifications. The school became the first in the Church whose faculty members all possessed college degrees.

There was no definite salary schedule for teachers. The amount was generally determined by the Church's financial condition. At times during the early years teachers were called as missionaries to teach without pay. Sometimes student activities were used to raise funds to pay teachers. After 1901 the Church's improving financial condition helped improve matters.¹

Enrollment at the Academy increased in 1896 to 230 students. The curriculum included both primary and secondary grades. Due to the growing influence of free public schools in the primary grades, they were discontinued from the program in 1901.

Oneida Stake Academy soon became the pride of the area, a focal point of activity. The large assembly hall became a

¹Floyd Petersen, op. cit., p. 8.

"popular setting" for Church functions. The library started in 1891 by the students was made available to the public without cost. Weekly dances were held. Special school functions and programs were widely attended. As the years passed the academy increased its service to the community.

CHAPTER IV

THE RISE TO PROMINENCE

From Village to County Seat

To the end of the nineteenth century Preston was a struggling rural town. The people were mostly farmers depending upon what they could produce. There was only a little to distinguish the area of the town from the countryside which surrounded it.

Life gradually became more secure. After the decline of the polygamy controversy, there were few events to disturb the even tenor of the community. The population which had been less than 1,000 in 1890, had increased to 1,574 by 1900. Approximately ninety-five per cent of the inhabitants were of the same religious faith, a figure that remained almost constant. As a result of the homogeneity of the people, they kept together on most local issues. Such unity possibly delayed the formation of local government in Preston.

By 1900 the people of Preston were ready for local magistrates. During the early summer mass meetings were held to consider the advisability of having Preston incorporated as a village. Petitions signed by the people requested the County Commissioners to grant such organization with the following boundaries:

Commencing forty rods north and forty rods east of the corner of sections 22, 23, 26, 27 in T 15 S, R

39 E, Boise meridian in Oneida County and running thence two and one-fourth miles south, thence west two and one-fourth miles, thence north two and one-fourth miles, thence east two and one-fourth miles to the place of beginning.¹

These bounds, if granted, would for the first time, limit Preston to a defined area located almost entirely on the flat, and would exclude the Whitney and Egypt areas.

Much to the delight of the people, the following communication was received on July 25, 1900:

The petition of the People of Preston for Village incorporation has been granted as prayed for in said petition, and the following named parties selected as trustees: Joseph Johnson, H.S. Geddes, D. J. Hammon, John Larsen, and Benjamin Curtis. Please notify all parties (trustees).²

At a meeting called on the day the communication was received the above named trustees met with interested citizens and John Larsen was unanimously named as Chairman of the Board. They set to work almost immediately, appointing the following Village officers: Marshall, Hyrum Jensen; Treasurer, Wm. M. Daines; Justice of the Peace, Charles D. Goaslind; and Village Attorney, A. W. Hart.³

All ordinances passed were to be read "on three meeting days before being published and passed." The first ordinance thus enacted provided for "the punishment of offenses and malicious mischief," the "prohibition of gambling" and to provide for punishment, the "impounding and disposing of

¹Preston Village Minutes, 1900-1909, Book 1, p. 1.

²Letter from D. J. Reynolds, Clerk of District Court to the People of Preston, on file at Preston City Office, July 25, 1900.

³Preston Village Minutes, Book 1, p. 2.

trespassing animals," and an ordinance regulating "the riding, driving and racing of Horses in the streets of the Village of Preston."¹ Twelve miles per hour was proposed as a speed limit, but this being considered too fast, eight miles per hour was agreed upon.

Due to a serious epidemic of small pox in September, Drs. C. A. Canfield and A. R. Cutler Sr. met with the Village Board. They proposed an immediate quarantine. Both doctors were willing to serve on a Board of Health and were thus appointed with an additional member, Marshall Jensen.² Their service, and that of others to follow, helped to preserve the lives of hundreds of people during the early critical years when several serious epidemics threatened.

The creation of a village government made possible a more direct approach to the problems of community living, assuring further development. Preston gradually provided more services for the surrounding communities, the growth of Franklin virtually ceased, and Preston achieved dominance in the northern part of Cache Valley.

During the summer months of 1901 the possibility of constructing plank sidewalks abutting the business property was considered. It was decided a walk ten feet wide of lumber two inches thick would be laid in front of the central business houses leading to the depot.³ The streets, which were thick

¹Ibid., pp. 3-9.

²Ibid., p. 29.

³Ibid. p. 63.

with dust during the hot summers, were "tamed" with a sprinkler. Though the sprinkling wagon was in continual need of repair, it served for years.

An orderly pattern was begun in 1904 with the plotting of the main streets of Preston. New housing made necessary the work of a committee which submitted the following plan which was adopted:

That the main street running north and south thru the central business part of the village and along the west side of the public square be named "State Street." Also that the street in the central business part of the town and running east and west along the north side of the public square be named "Oneida Street." With these two main fairways designated the systematic, economical and symmetrical beautification was easy.¹

Better bridges and improvement to the streets were gradually made over the next few years.

The water supply for drinking and culinary purposes in Preston was obtained from deep wells. Many people had installed open tanks in their attics that would hold about two hundred gallons. When irrigation came to the Flat, the water table rose and brought increased pollution to the underground water supply. A terrible epidemic of typhoid broke out in 1909 which led to the laying of the first water system. "The Board of Health took the situation in hand, condemned the wells, and ordered a water system to be build for the village of Preston."²

Considerable time passed before a favorable source of water could be decided upon and bonds passed to finance the

¹Preston Village Minutes, 1900-1909, p. 138.

²Danielson, op. cit., p. 91.

project. Bishop G. H. Carver reports the "angel of death" visited many souls.¹ Numerous mass meetings were held. The village board had to postpone the bond elections of June "until an experimental well could be sunk."² When a source of water had been agreed upon and a plan for supplying the city developed, a large majority of the people voted in favor of authorizing the issuance of seventy-five thousand dollars of negotiable bonds in 1912. After publication in the Preston Booster the A. C. Bird Company of Salt Lake City contracted the job for \$57,827.00.³

The Preston Booster reports the circumstances as follows:

The stipulations written in the agreement say this water system was to be completed in 200 days. The water for the new system was being secured from Birch Springs, Oneida County. It will be brought from the springs practically paralleling the present Cub River Canal to a specially prepared cement reservoir to be built at Glendale on the east of Preston. From this reservoir the water was piped into the city through 12 inch mains. The fall from the reservoir to the city is nearly two hundred feet, this insuring sufficient force of gravity. The water system will cover practically the entire city and will give water to everyone.⁴

After much work and worry, water was turned into the mains Tuesday, September 26, and Preston now can be classed as a progressive city. We invite intending settlers to come to Preston and ask all those who are looking for homes to visit us and see what we have in the shape of residence property.⁵

¹Diary of G. H. Carver, 1908-1921, (In possession of Aerial G. Eames, Preston, Idaho), p. 12.

²Preston Village Minutes, 1909-1915, p. 46.

³Ibid., pp. 111-113.

⁴Preston Booster, February 29, 1912.

⁵Ibid., September 28, 1912.

The census of 1910, which now excluded other communities from the precinct, showed Preston to have a population of 2,110. Growth had been steady during the last decade, raising the population over five hundred persons. The increase of the next few years was even more substantial. Optimism was the keynote of the time. The editorials of the paper contained many such statements as this:

Now is the time when Preston should not only put on the garment of improvement, but she should let it be understood that those garments are here to stay.

When one looks around the different towns that radiate about us, when we see the rapid strides which we are making agriculturally, when we realize the vast amount of capital that is being poured into this section, we see the "handwriting" of greater things.¹

The citizens wanted the village government to be changed to that of the city. They also began serious efforts to change the county of Oneida by dividing it, thus making unnecessary commuting the long distance to Melad, the County seat, and effecting a more favorable geographical division.

The desire to be classed as a city was not difficult to achieve. Having more than the necessary one thousand inhabitants, and obtaining by petition the agreement of three-fifths of those voting in the last general election, the necessary action was taken by the village board. The minutes of the meeting dated February 6, 1912, read:

Now therefore, it is hereby resolved that the village of Preston is a city of the second class, and that the corporate name of said village is changed from the Village of Preston to "City of Preston".

The Preston Booster headlines could now read, "From now on you

¹Preston Booster, January 25, 1912.

must write it 'CITY OF PRESTON.'¹

In the first city election most of the former trustees were elected to office. J. N. Larsen, former chairman of the board, successfully sought the office of Mayor. Councilmen elected were Nephi Larsen, Joshua Rallison, J. S. Marrom, and J. C. Greaves Jr. Other offices and those first elected were: Clerk, W. Chatterton; Treasurer, Hyrum Tippetts; Police Judge, Thomas Jensen; City Engineer, G. H. Carver; and City Attorney, A. C. Smith.²

As if to test the new city "status" three or four of the "big men," on a bet, hired a rig from the livery stable, and early one morning went tearing through the town in wild west fashion shooting off guns and pistols, awakening the inhabitants and "otherwise disturbing the peace." The police met the challenge and arrested the culprits. One was fined \$12.50 and another, the ringleader, was fined \$50.00 plus costs. "Shooting up the Town" was now a relic of the days gone by.³

Efforts to achieve a realignment of Oneida County were much more difficult for the people than becoming a city had been. The people of Preston and its surrounding communities in Northern Cache Valley had felt for some time the need to sever their political ties with Oneida County. Malad, the county seat, lay on the west side of the Oxford Mountain Range some fifty miles by road from Preston. Several unsuccessful

¹Ibid., February 22, 1912.

²Preston City Minutes, 1909-1915, p. 190.

³Preston Booster, September 14, 1912.

attempts were made to create a new county on the east side, but all had failed. Early in 1912 the citizens took up the fight again, this time more determined than ever. Leading the push was the Commercial Club, a group of businessmen and artisans who had banded together to promote the community's growth and advancement. The Preston Booster, edited by W. L. Roe, became very active in demanding county division. Its headlines read, "County Division Must Succeed" and "County Divisionists Must Not Slumber." It warned of "adroit political candidates who favored its views."¹ In the Booster edition of March 8, 1912, the following reasons for county division were given by those conducting the campaign: (1) Geographically the east side is entitled to consideration; (2) Economically we claim the right to lessen our taxes; (3) In the matter of wealth we have much to spare; (4) In the matter of population we have a sufficient number.

The outcome of the issue seemed to depend upon the primary election. After a heated campaign, county division candidates, David W. Davis, James Johnson, and Adelbert Henderson were successful. Victory came easily in the November election. At the next session of the State Legislature a bill was presented to create "Franklin County" and passed by a large majority. Governor Haines's signature was attached to the bill on January 30, 1913.²

"HURRAH, IT IS FRANKLIN COUNTY NOW" were the headlines

¹Preston Booster, November and December 1912.

²Simmons, op. cit., p. 121.

of the local paper. Unbounded in his enthusiasm, Roe announced that from the moment the Governor had signed the bill the name of his paper had been changed to the Franklin County Citizen. The Opera House was the scene of a big celebration and ratification meeting the following Wednesday.

Preston was designated as the temporary county seat, and though other communities contested Preston's appointment as a permanent county seat, the issue was settled amicably. A special committee accepted property donated by the Mormon Church in Preston as a site for the new county's court house on October 17, 1914.¹ The first commissioners appointed were L. L. Hatch, first district; Clinton Mecham, second district; and Joseph P. Bishoff, third district.²

It is interesting to note the changes and improvement made in the City of Preston as she put on her new garments and accepted her new role. A convention was called in August of 1913 which was well attended by groups from the entire county, and a "Good Roads Day" was announced. On November 7th all business houses were to close. Mechanics, merchants, lawyers, dentists, bankers, farmers, academy students and school-boys were to turn out with pick and shovel and fill up chuck holes and smooth the rough places. Though rain dampened the affair when the day came, it proved to be a big, though temporary, success.³ The people soon realized nothing permanent

¹Franklin County Citizen, October 22, 1914.

²Simmons, op. cit., p. 121.

³Franklin County Citizen, October 24, November 14, 1913.

could be accomplished in this way. A year later the "Good Roads" association unanimously decided to bond for road improvement. All roads in the city were subsequently graded. Bids were accepted in 1914 for the construction of cement sidewalks to cover most of the city walkways. The Parrott Bros. did the work at a cost to the city of \$31,397.56.¹ During the same month, grounds were purchased for a city dump yard. A second expenditure was made of \$9,250.00 for the purchase of a fair grounds.

Preston achieved by 1915, what many of its leading citizens had long struggled to accomplish, the features of a progressive city with increased direction over its political affairs. Developments had also occurred in other fields of human endeavor which helped to promote a general feeling of optimism.

Business, Education, and Religion

The economic growth of Preston during the period 1900 to 1915 brought to the area such major improvements as a telephone system, electricity, a hotel, a milling elevator, banking services, and an electric street car line. And though the era was marked by a depression that slowed economic growth in the mid-year, it was a time of significant progress.

The modern convenience of the telephone was first proposed in 1902. Two companies vied for the utility service: the Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone Company and the Oneida Telephone Company. The latter was organized by a local group of businessmen. These companies sought and were granted leases of

¹Preston City Minutes, 1909-1915, p. 216.

twenty-five years each to build, equip and operate a telephone system through all streets. Work was to begin within a period of three months. There were disputes between the two companies as to rights of way. For a time most of the business houses and some homes had to have two phones installed to reach all patrons. After four years operation, the Independent Oneida Telephone Company gave way to the stronger Bell system.¹ In 1911 Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph purchased the interests of the Rocky Mountain Bell Company and has operated in the city since that time.

In that same year, 1902, Wilford Hobbs undertook the building of a fine new hotel on the main street. Known as the Wilford Hotel, it was erected at a cost of twenty five thousand dollars. Considered to be the most up-to-date design, the building had sixty-four rooms, a cafe, and all the latest improvements of the time.²

The year 1904 brought to Preston two business institutions basic to its economy. In the early days the farmers had to take their wheat to mills on High Creek or later to Franklin or Weston. But with the establishment of the Preston Milling and Elevator Company,³ all wheat grown in and around Preston could be marketed there. John C. Greaves and T. W. R. Nelson opened the doors to the first bank on February 8, 1904, on the corner of State and Oneida Streets. It was called

¹Interview with Karl Cutler, son of one of the founders, July 22, 1960.

²W. H. Simmons, History of Franklin County, Idaho, (Master's Thesis, Colorado State College of Education, Greeley, Colorado, 1926), p. 61.

³Danielson, op. cit., p. 79.

the Bank of Preston and had a capital stock of twenty-five thousand dollars. The first year of operation showed forty-five thousand dollars in deposits and thirty thousand dollars in loans. Its name was later changed to the First National Bank.¹ In 1906 a second bank, the Idaho State Savings Bank, was established. It also was capitalized at twenty-five thousand dollars and competed successfully with the First National.²

A second utility began operation in Preston in 1906. Charles E. Pinson, the town's first electrician (he did service work using a bicycle and later a wagon to transport his equipment) "turned on the power for the first lines to be placed in operation in Preston." This electricity came from the Cub River Power Plant which was then a part of the Richmond Power Company. This company had been invited to furnish power to the Village from their High Creek plant but the water supply was insufficient, so the plant was moved to Cub River where it was erected in 1906.³

Additional power facilities soon came to Preston which stimulated its growth. In the year 1908 the Telluride Power Company had built a plant near Grace, Idaho. Its transmission lines, the longest in the world at the time, passed by Preston. Power from these lines was rented by the H. C. Smoot Light Co. who had been granted the right to put light poles along the main streets. Utah Power and Light Company purchased the

¹Franklin County Citizen, May 18, 1914.

²The Preston Citizen, August 13, 1942.

³The Herald Journal, Centennial Edition, March 25, 1956.

interests of both of these companies operating in Preston in 1913. On February 17, 1915, a franchise was granted between the city and this company to furnish electric power.¹

The greatest stimulus to Preston from electric power was felt, however, from the construction of the Oneida Power Station located in the Bear River Narrows. This plant, one of the biggest in the Utah Power and Light system, has a capacity of forty thousand horsepower. Work was begun on a road along the narrow canyon to the station site in 1908. Construction of the dam began in the spring of 1912. Twenty six thousand pounds of transformers were taken over the perilous roads to their destination in March 1912. By 1915 two generators delivering 9,000 kilowatts each had been installed.² Preston was the beneficiary of the construction activity. Though we may not look upon it as a full fledged "boom" it did produce the greatest business and population surge to date.

The first financial crisis to seriously affect the economy of Preston came in 1907. Nationally known as the "bankers panic," it brought a forced reduction in loans and discounts. Farmers and business interests could not obtain their normal credit requirements, business activity slowed down, and a local depression was felt. Many people were unable to pay taxes on their lands. When those lands were put up for public auction, individual buyers were lacking.³ "Cache Valley

¹Preston City Minutes, 1909-1915, p. 270.

²Morris Gordon, "A History of Oneida Station" (type-written).

³Carver, op. cit., p. 94.

banks resorted to a bold and novel strategem" issuing a "home-made" currency, thus keeping their coin. "Merchants received the substitute currency at full value and redeposited it at the banks, which retired it when the emergency had passed."¹ As conditions improved those people who had lost title to their lands bought them back by paying their delinquent taxes.²

Incident to the establishment of Preston as a city and a county seat was the extension of an electric street-car line to Preston known as Ogden, Logan and Idaho Railway Company. This company was formerly organized by David Eccles, and was called the Logan Rapid Transit and Interurban Company. Upon the death of Eccles in 1912, his heirs consolidated with the Ogden Rapid Transit Company as the Ogden, Logan and Idaho Railway Company.³ They began in 1914 to extend their line from Smithfield northward to Lewiston. In December it was announced the line would continue on to Preston where a new brick depot, a freight house, and car shops would be erected, involving in all an expenditure of two hundred thousand dollars. The transit line arrived in Preston in March, 1915. A tremendous free barbecue feast was held in the city park to celebrate the event. A crowd of over seven thousand was in attendance. Two beeves baked Indian style, four fat sheep, one pig, more than a thousand loaves of bread, and extras were served. The new line had

¹Ricks, op. cit., p. 241.

²Carver, op. cit., p. 94.

³Ricks, op. cit., p. 262.

a difficult time handling all the crowd.¹ Everyone had a gala time as Preston celebrated its new link with the communities to the south. "Sixteen trains per day operated each way between Ogden and Preston - a run that required five hours."²

In the field of education, substantial strides had been made with the establishment of Oneida Stake Academy. The elementary program however, had been using a modest frame building since 1894 in which to hold school, and with a larger enrollment and increasing needs, newer and better facilities were necessary. Plans for a new school as well as a consolidation of school districts was made in 1902. The area north of Preston, know as the Yellowjacket School District 32, and District 18 of Preston were combined. A new brick building, known as Central School was completed in 1905, and in this same year Preston became an independent school district.³

Oneida Stake Academy completed the first of several additions to its facilities in January of 1907. At a cost of ten thousand dollars, a four room mechanical arts building was constructed. On the top floor of this building, a girls' dormitory was maintained for a few years. Tennis courts were added in 1910. Three years later an additional eleven and one-half acres was purchased one-half block south of the main building. The most ambitious additions, however, were the construction of a new gymnasium and a central heating plant, both

¹Franklin County Citizen, April 22, 1915.

²Ricks, op. cit., p. 263.

³Danielson, op. cit., p. 88.

of which were completed in 1914 at a cost of forty thousand dollars. The same cooperative effort characterized this latest addition as had once motivated that of the original building. Hyrum Nielson, as the highest donor, received the honor of having the modern gymnasium bear his name. It was equipped with a swimming pool, shower and locker rooms, a running track, a gallery, and a basketball court.¹

The role of the Mormon Church as the only religious organization in Preston lasted until 1901 when the Presbyterian Church, which had been establishing itself in Cache Valley since 1878, extended itself into Idaho. Though its history here was comparatively short, it played a vital role not only in serving its own adherents and other Protestants, but in serving the community as well through its school program.

Land was purchased on the southeast corner one block west of the Village center. James A. Towns, Margaret A. Lund and Henry A. Meyer were the trustees under who names the land was purchased.² A church school and home were financed by the Women's Board of Home Missions and the National Board of Missions.³

Under the direction of a Reverend Waller, and later Reverend Alva A. Herd, the Church met the needs of non-Mormon people seeking religious services. Its school helped

¹Floyd Peterson, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-12.

²Franklin County Idaho Records, Deeds, Book 4, p. 585.

³Ricks, *op. cit.*, p. 311

to meet a shortage of classrooms in the public school system. Many Mormon youngsters attended primary grades there until the Jefferson School was built in 1914.¹ Shortly afterwards the property was sold to Thomas Greaves to be used as a rooming house. Church services were conducted by Reverend Herd in rented quarters downtown for a time thereafter.²

By 1902 the Preston Ward of the Mormon Church, which had played such a dominant role during the years of early development, was unmanageably large. A meeting was called on February 3rd for the purpose of dividing the ward into four wards. Marriner W. Merrill and Rudger Clawson of the Council of the Twelve came from Salt Lake City to direct the division, a usual process of expansion of the Mormon Church. John Larson, who had been selected chairman of the Preston Village Board and had served as Bishop since 1898, was honorably released as Bishop. The division of the Ward was made by quartering the city at the main intersection of Oneida and State Streets. The southeast section was designated as the First Ward with Henry T. Rogers as Bishop; the southwest section was designated as the Second Ward with Bishop Hugh S. Geddes; the northeast section was designated as the Fourth Ward with Dr. Allen R. Cutler as Bishop.³

The Preston Ward building was located in the new Second Ward and therefore became their meeting house. The other wards

¹Interview with A. Earl Hollingsworth, a former student, July 27, 1960.

²Interview with Mrs. Thomas Greaves, July 21, 1960.

³Oneida Stake History, and Franklin Stake History.

had to find temporary meeting places until they could finance and build new ones. The First and Third Wards met in the Oneida Academy, and the Fourth Ward met in the abandoned grade school located near the present Central School.¹

Conclusion

By the close of the year of 1915, Preston had acquired almost all of its basic features. The last decade and a half had witnessed an expansion that has been unequalled since. Its population had swelled to nearly thirty five hundred and its paper was optimistically predicting. "Watch Us Grow! 5,000 People in Preston in Nineteen Sixteen!" Though this was never to be, the years had been good, growth had been steady, and the economy and community spirit were substantial enough that her citizens could look confidently to the future.

¹Interviews with Henry Johnson and J. Clifford Forsgren, July, 1960.

CHAPTER V

THE MODERN ERA

The enthusiasm that had typified 1910 to 1915 moderated during the next few years. The argument expressed in the plea for county division was true, the population was sufficient; it had nearly reached its peak. Available lands had been taken. Its people had tended the fertile soil and raised up a common center by their own "bone and sinew." The agricultural economy upon which Preston depended, however, could not produce enough to support a very large population. Only the stimulus of a new industry could change things but this did not come and Preston has remained relatively stable ever since.

The population figures reveal both a picture of economic absorption and the dependence of the city upon the trends of development in the farming industry. The estimated population was just over 3500 in 1913. In 1920 the official listing was 3,235 and 3,381 in 1930. Preston reached its highest population, 4,236 in 1940, and there has been a gradual decline in the last two decades. In 1950 there were 4,072 and in 1960, 3,609. The farming area of Franklin county has shown a similar drop recently. From a peak of over 10,000 there are presently less than 8,000 persons living in the county.

Before Preston was established as a county seat, problems incident to the development of the area had dominated

the life of the community. Since the establishment of the county, conditions have responded not so much to local changes as they have to the changing national picture. Events that have affected the nation have had their counterpart in Preston. The wars, the depressions, the changing economy and the marks of national progress have come, sometimes early and sometimes late to make life what it is.

Political Development

The municipal form of government first inaugurated by the City of Preston has prevailed throughout its history. A mayor and four councilmen comprise the city's ruling body. Two councilmen must be chosen from each of two districts separated by Oneida Street. The term of office for councilmen was changed by state law in 1939. Henceforth they have been elected for a term of four years rather than two years with one elected from each district on alternate election years.¹ Recently, 1951, the offices of City Clerk and Treasurer became appointive ones.²

Preston's first mayor, J. N. Larsen, had served for two years as Chairman of the Village Board when he was elected mayor. As described in the preceding chapter, he guided the city in the acquisition of its first water system, thus relieving the serious health hazard created by impure wells. Ten and one-half miles of concrete sidewalk was laid during his administration. Carnegie Library, today housing some 6,000

¹Idaho Code, Section 50-315, 1947.

²Idaho Session Laws, 1951, p. 154.

books, was started in 1914. It was financed through an Andrew Carnegie bequest of ten thousand dollars and erected on land donated by the Mormon Church. At a public meeting in the Isis Theater headed by Joseph S. Geddes, President of the Oneida Stake, Mayor Larsen and the Council gave assurance that the city would maintain the operation of the Library. When the building was completed in 1917, the city offices were established in its lower floor.¹

Nephi Larsen who had been a councilman under J. N. Larsen, was elected mayor on May 4, 1915, serving two terms. The Citizen reported the "city fathers are alive to the needs of the city" when they had the first sewer system laid. The work brought the main truck line through the city and down "Academy Hollow" to a septic tank. A sewer bond of \$30,000 carried seven to one in a campaign to say "farewell to open privies and overflowing cesspools."²

These were the years of World War I. Preston, not unlike other communities, was deeply engrossed in the problem of winning the war through service work, Liberty Loan Drives and meeting their draft quota. As the war ended the joy of welcoming the boys home was dampened by the tragedy of the influenza epidemic. George Carver reports "about half of the Third Ward down and death as a daily occurrence."³

Joseph Marrom was mayor for one term from 1919-1921. His campaign promises to "commence work on street paving as

¹Franklin County Citizen, March 8, 1917.

²Ibid., October 18, 1917.

³Diary of G. H. Carver, op. cit., p. 268.

soon as a competent engineer can be employed" and to "beautify the city square" were fulfilled.¹ He was able to complete paving in the two center streets of town. The unkept city square, which had been used as a ball park and tie yard for horses and wagons, was plowed and landscaping started. Piping water to the square and planting trees and shrubs was continued by the succeeding mayor.

George E. Crockett followed Marrom as mayor, serving two successive terms. During his administration farming was making a slow recovery as the nation adjusted to a peace time economy following the First World War. Local conditions were such that little of significance was done except to meet the city's daily needs. The Citizen reports Mayor Crockett and his workers to be a most "congenial city group" in guiding the affairs of the city. Insight is given into the "religious" influence on politics when, after two terms in office, the newspaper stated the administration should be "released with a vote of thanks"²-- typical Mormon fashion for replacing church officers.

Lorenzo E. Hansen became one of Preston's most popular mayors, in 1925. He was elected by a substantial majority and was unopposed in three successive elections. The fifth term Andrew Nash placed his name in the field, but was unsuccessful. Having won his fifth term by a slight majority, Mayor Hansen declined to seek office again.

Mayor Hansen states, "Our first business deal for Preston was placing twenty-five galvanized garbage cans in prominent

¹Franklin County Citizen, April 24, 1919.

²Ibid. April 22, 1925.

places along the street, and our last was the purchase of the land and building now occupied by the city for its offices and Fire Department."¹ This latter transaction cost the city little inasmuch as it was purchased for slightly more than the back taxes due the city. The building had been a garage, so underment needed remodeling before being put to use.

The only extension to the boundaries of the city was made while Mayor Hansen was in office. Residents to the north of the city desired to receive city water service when an extension was made in the water line to the cemetery near their property. A narrow strip, 1 mile by $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, north on State Street was added to include them within the city. The needed water service was then supplied.²

During Mayor Hansen's terms of office the greatest depression the United States has ever known brought on the critical problems of unemployment and finance. Special projects helped to provide work for the needy and thus to dispense aid. Pay was in the form of orders on the merchants which were picked up by the city with funds made available from federal and state sources. Strict controls were kept. Idaho's Governor Ross sent a representative to Preston to check up on these purchases and found a shirt had been purchased that cost \$1.29. Shirts were to cost no more than 69 cents from then on. Only ten pounds of sugar were allowed to the family. There were to be no purchases of gum, candy, cigarettes, beer or liquor, though a small quantity of sack tobacco could be bought. Works

¹Letter from Lorenzo E. Hansen, July 22, 1960.

²Preston City Minutes, 1915-1935, November 5, 1929, p. 471.

Progress Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps projects eased unemployment somewhat as time went on. A C.C.C. camp was located on Cub River until 1939.¹

Succeeding Mr. Hansen as mayor was T. R. Bowden, who served two terms from 1935-1939. Mr. Bowden was manager of the First Security Bank and was well qualified, therefore, to handle the problem of refinancing the city's indebtedness. The property evaluation of Preston was placed at \$1,350,000 in 1936. Its bonded indebtedness stood at \$331,000.² The depression had made payment difficult. Tax revenues were short of meeting the city's obligations and current needs. The debt was refinanced at more favorable terms through the First Security Bank and the city was able to meet its payments.

In addition to relieving the financial crisis, Mayor Bowden and the city council undertook the enlargement of the pipe line from the city reservoir to the spring. The old wooden line was replaced by a steel water system. Arrangements were also made to construct a new million and a half gallon reservoir with W.P.A. labor.

Constant extension of the sewer system had been taking place since its first construction in 1917. When J. Clifford Forsgren became mayor in 1939, he initiated arrangements with the W.P.A. to furnish labor for the erection of a modern disposal plant. The cost of materials was to be furnished by the city. A three unit system was constructed at a cost of \$85,000, \$52,000 of which was made available by the W.P.A.

¹Letter from Lorenzo E. Hansen, July 22, 1960.

²Franklin County Citizen, March 3, 1937.

and the balance being paid from city funds. This major improvement was paid from the city treasury without the necessity of bonding or additional tax levy.¹

The year 1939 may well be called the year Preston received its principle building landmarks. In this year construction was completed on a new high school and the stately county courthouse, and was begun on a new post office and the Franklin Stake House.²

Mayor Forsgren and his successor, E. A. Crockett, who took office in 1943, carried the responsibility of government during World War II. The war curtailed all local developments of any significance. The problems the administration faced were those of supporting the war effort and making the facilities and equipment on hand last for the duration.

Mayor Crockett continued in office until 1947, when Ernest Eberhard, Jr., was elected. These men were faced with the task of reconstruction after the war had ended. Roads were badly in need of repair, equipment needed replacing, and city services needed to be extended to new patrons.

The police force had been held in disrespect by some citizens. Under Mayor Eberhard the city bought new uniforms, installed radio car communication, lighted alley ways, and punished those who resisted the police with maximum penalties, restoring respect and order.³ Before Mayor Eberhard's second term had ended gambling in the city had been curtailed and the

¹Ibid., August 13, 1942.

²Ibid., December 27, 1939.

³Interview with Ernest Eberhard, Jr., August 4, 1960.

use of slot machines abolished. Those possessing these machines were forced by the administration to destroy them with their own hands.¹

Rulon Dunn was elected mayor while manager of radio station KPST. He was in office for two terms, 1951-1955. In addition to the usual duties of his office he gave special attention to the development of the recreation park. Working with the city councilmen, civic groups were contacted, and with their aid, on land previously purchased by the city, the park took shape. The grounds were planted to grass, a ball field lighted, tennis courts constructed, and a picnic shelter, a fireplace and a firepit were made. The park is in constant use in the summer season as a site for the city's recreational program.²

O. Sherwin Webb is the present mayor, as of 1960. First elected in 1955 he has been unopposed in the last two elections. Serving with him are Councilmen J. Reid Hoggan, Merk D. Hammond, Max L. Norton, and Harold R. Pinson, A. R. Swainston is City Clerk.

Mayor Webb's progressive administration is in the midst of bringing into fruition two major projects: (a) the complete renovation of the city's water system, (b) the widening and resurfacing of State Street. To accomplish the first project a bond of \$300,000 was passed in 1959. One thousand additional shares of water was then purchased which nearly doubled the city's supply. Further plans call for the installation of new

¹Interview with P. M. Condie, former City Attorney, August 2, 1960.

²Interview with Rulon Dunn, August 2, 1960.

and larger cast iron pipe throughout the city. When completed this will greatly improve water distribution. The second project will be financed by the State of Idaho inasmuch as State Street in Preston is the state highway. Commitments have been made and a contract will soon be set at an estimated expense of \$300,000. New storm sewers will be included in the construction which will be worth an estimated \$100,000 to the city.¹

Preston has recently organized a zoning commission. As a result a zoning ordinance had been adopted that will bring a more orderly growth to the city.

Preston's financial status is one of solvency. The city carries a bonded indebtedness of \$332,500. The recently passed water bond is included in this figure and runs for twenty years. Against this is a property evaluation of \$1,999,654 which carries a mill levy of 42 mills as of 1959. Preston's total receipts from all sources for 1959 were \$190,260.42. The expenditures during the same period were \$165,599.61. For the year May 1, 1960 to April 30, 1961 the budget is \$151,700.²

Local politics in Preston produces little controversy. Elections are seldom won on issues, but rather on "personality". For this reason little or no campaigning is done. Frequently those who have opposed each other have been prominent men of the Mormon Church versus those not so prominent, but who have generally been Mormon also. In state and national elections

¹Interview with Mayor O. Sherwin Webb, August 7, 1960.

²Preston City Minutes, Dec. 1959-May 1960.

the people of Preston have voted Republican most of the time. From 1884, when the people took part in their first county election, until 1932 the vote went Republican. Since 1932 the vote has been divided about evenly between Democrats and Republicans.¹

Preston's municipal government, we may conclude, seeks to provide today for a large part of the people's needs. The problems of roads, water, sanitation, police and fire protection, licensing of businesses, zoning, electricity, public welfare, recreation facilities and services, parks, and a library are all met by the elected officials to make community life pleasant and orderly.

Economic Development

The principle economic role of Preston today is to serve as a marketing and retail center for the northern area of Cache Valley. Just under eight thousand people live in this area, of which almost two thirds rely upon farming as their main source of income. Over half of the land area within the city limits of Preston is still used as farming land. The near total dependence of this community upon farming is shown from the fact that in 1959 there were 926 farms in Franklin County.²

Throughout the early history of Preston, the economy became progressively interwoven with the rest of Cache Valley

¹Ricks, op. cit., p. 135.

²Bureau of Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, 1959.

and the nation. Increasing settlement and production made it possible to send products over improving transportation lines to wherever they were in demand. In turn the nation's newly mass-produced products were needed here. Outside corporations began to invest locally by establishing processing plants, building trade houses, providing financing and supplying services. Also a few noteworthy enterprises have been developed by people within the community.

The main farming industries in Preston are a milk processing plant, a grain elevator, a meat packing plant, and an auction yard. In nearby Whitney is a sugar factory and in Franklin is a cannery. These latter two employ several Preston people during their operating season, and contribute considerably to the economy of the area.

The dairy industry has long been an important source of income. The first creamery was built near the city on Worm Creek in what was known as Creamery Hollow. In 1927 the Sego Milk Products Company built a plant just one block from the center of the city. It was originally a receiving and pasteurizing station but was converted to the production of butter and powdered milk. In 1936 the plant was receiving an average of 50,000 pounds of milk per day.¹ Today its daily average is 150,000 pounds. The company name was changed at the beginning of 1960 to its national brand name and is now known as the Pet Milk Company. Non-fat dry milk is packed in sealed glass jars and marketed throughout the nation. A typical example is the latest shipment of butter --- 23,527 pounds going to San

¹Franklin County Citizen, March 18, 1936.

Francisco. Over 5,000 pounds of butter are produced daily. The company employs twenty nine people.¹

Next in importance to dairy products during the last forty years has been the sugar beet industry. Before a plant was established in Whitney, one mile out of Preston, a few growers took beets to Lewiston in Utah. In 1914 an attempt was made to get a company here. Much difficulty was encountered before that could be accomplished, however. In 1919 a committee headed by John C. Greaves and J. N. Larsen influenced Ogden financier Frank Pingree to invest in machinery. Promotional efforts failed and the machinery passed into the hands of Nickerson, Gould and Grey Company, who completed the long awaited plant in 1922. Two years later the company was sold to the A. E. Carlton family of Preston and is now part of the Carlton Estate. Thomas Heath, a state senator for many years from Preston, has managed the plant since 1926.² During its first years the plant purchased from 75,000 to 100,000 tons of beets annually. Acresages went down in the 1930's and 1940's. Last year 92,677 tons were processed for which farmers were paid \$1,019,447. During the peak season approximately 250 local people are employed.³

Of less significance, though economically important, is vegetable canning. In 1929 the California Packing Company

¹Pet Milk Company Records, Preston, Idaho, August 1960. Figures were obtained from company's files.

²Franklin County Citizen, February 26, 1936.

³Franklin County Sugar Company Records, Whitney, Idaho, August 1960.

whose brand name is Del Monte, purchased the condensed milk factory at Franklin and began operation as a pea cannery. Vinery stations were established in Preston and other areas.¹ Since 1930 beans and cabbage have been introduced. Many small plots of beans are presently raised in the city to supplement incomes. During the canning season over 400 workers are hired at the plant.²

The Preston Milling Company, established in 1904, operated until 1929. A fire destroyed most of the building and the property was sold to the Franklin County Cooperative, which constructed a new mill and elevator. Flour milling was discontinued in 1942 because of changing technology and outside competition. The facilities are presently used for storage and feed mill operations. Business totals amount to one and a quarter million dollars annually.³ Three other feed and/or storage companies are located in Preston also.

Knudson Meat Packing Company began in 1938 when Virgil Knudson built a plant to process the numerous cattle being raised on the Valley farms. The company has grown until today it does an average of three-fourths of a million dollars' worth of business per year. Five counties in southeastern Idaho sell products under the Knudson brand name. Fifteen persons are

¹Franklin County Citizen, March 18, 1936.

²California Packing Corporation Records, Franklin, Idaho, August 1960.

³Interview with Wayne Evans, Manager, Franklin County Coop. August 8, 1960.

employed at the plant.¹

Next door to the Knudson Meat Packing Company on West Oneida Street is Preston's Cache Valley Livestock Auction Company. Merlin T. Whittle, Bert Winn and J. Green Wells began operation in 1952. Weekly auctions are held with buyers and sellers coming from most surrounding states, including California. Gross sales average around \$75,000 weekly.²

The financial hub of business activity in Preston today is the First Security Bank, whose investment began in 1920. At that time the Eccles-Browning interests of Ogden organized the Federal State Bank here. This gave the city three banks for a time (1920-1924). In 1924 the older First National Bank bought out the Idaho State Savings Bank. In 1928 the Federal State Bank changed its name to the First Security Bank of Preston. As the depression years were in progress, the First Security Bank of Preston purchased the interests of the First National Bank, thus consolidating the two banks.³ First Security was nationalized in 1940. As the sole bank in operation in Franklin County today, First Security now carries locally an asset and liability sheet of \$4,856,030.⁴

The Utah Power and Light Company supplies Preston with its electrical needs. This company came to Preston in 1913 and bought out the former suppliers, the Richmond Power Company and

¹Interview with Weldon Nash at Knudson Packing Company. August 8, 1960.

²Interview with Mrs. Bert Winn, Cache Valley Livestock Auction Company. August 9, 1960.

³Franklin County Citizen, January 28, 1931.

⁴The Preston Citizen, June 2, 1960.

the H. C. Smoot Company. Utah Power and Light has been in continuous operation as the sole producer in Preston. Constantly improving service at a decreasing rate has aided city growth. The Preston district employs over fifty people and has a payroll of nearly \$250,000.¹

The railroad which played such an important role in the settlement of Preston is today only a spur line from Cache Junction. The old Utah and Northern narrow-gauge line was converted to a broad-gauge track and the old line torn up beyond Preston in the early nineties when the Oregon Short Line built a line northward along the west side of the Valley. In 1898 the railroad line to Preston became part of the Union Pacific system. When the Ogden, Logan and Idaho Railway Company came to Preston in 1915, passenger service on the Union Pacific decreased sharply. Today the Union Pacific has a limited service of approximately fifty railroad cars per month except during harvest time when an additional twelve hundred cars carry freight.²

In 1919 the Ogden, Logan and Idaho Railway Company changed its name to the Utah-Idaho Central Railroad Company as a result of extending its lines from Preston to as far south as Payson, Utah. The company prospered during these first years, carrying almost 15,000,000 passengers on its line in the years 1917-1919. As the use of the automobile became more prevalent the

¹Interview with William Weber, Preston Division of Utah, Power and Light Company, August 5, 1960.

²Interview with H. C. Stone, Preston Depot, Union Pacific R.R., August 6, 1960.

company began to lose money. The I.C.C. granted permission for the line to close, and on "March 18, 1947, Car No. 51, carrying to silent motormen, traveled from Preston to Ogden. At each crossing it sounded the melancholy blast of its distinctive horn--a sound which, like so many memories of the past, would never be heard again."¹

There are two weekly newspapers being printed in Preston as of 1960: The Preston Citizen and the Intermountain Gazette. The Citizen is the oldest paper, dating back to 1890, though the whereabouts of files prior to 1912 is not known. Watkins Lewis Roe and his sons, Lewis and Lonsdale, have been publishers and editors throughout most of Preston's history. The elder Roe was editor from 1907 to 1909 and after working elsewhere for three years returned as editor and owner from 1912 until his death in 1922. The paper was known the first year as the Preston Booster but was changed to the Franklin County Citizen after Franklin County was created in 1913. The Citizen remained in the Roe family until 1943 when William F. MacKnight purchased both the Citizen and another paper of short existence, the Cache Valley Clarion, which began publication in 1938. He combined the two papers and called his weekly edition by its present name, the Preston Citizen. MacKnight has since traded his holdings to Don Smith, formerly of Jerome, Idaho in exchange for his news interests there. Smith is the present owner and editor.²

The Intermountain Gazette was started in October 1959 by

¹Ricks, op. cit., p. 264.

²Ricks, op. cit., pp. 411-413.

Ted B. Larsen and Quint A. Hart, both local business men. As yet there are few subscribers, but 3,000 copies are printed weekly and distributed principally as advertizing. Larsen and Hart are anticipating completing eighteen months of publication so their paper will be recognized legally for the printing of public notices, etc., thus making further expansion possible.¹

Preston has had the services of a radio station for twelve years. J. L. Peterson, President of Voice of the Rockies, was its first promotor, though before it was finished Al Biorge and others helped in the financing and engineering of the station.² After three years of development KPST made its first broadcast on Labor Day 1948.

Today Preston is the beneficiary of a stable economy rooted in America's first and biggest business, that of farming. This economy has supplied all of the conveniences of modern life. Many people are content in this knowledge. They consider the community ideal for family living. This very point presents an enigma, however. The lack of new land and new industry has placed a ceiling on employment. The young people, educated and trained, must donate their lives to other communities. For this reason there are those who look for the day when new industries can be found that will use the "human resources" that are available as well as those of the land.

Educational Growth

The Most phenomenal time of growth in the Preston school

¹Interview with Quint A. Hart, August 7, 1960.

²The Preston Citizen, September 9, 1948.

system was from 1906 to the school year 1913-14. After consolidation in 1905 the enrollment in Preston schools was 450. Population increase and higher attendance raised the total to 937 by 1914. The new Central School of 1904 was inadequate to hold those enrolled, and for a time some church buildings had to be used for school rooms.¹

To meet the demands for more space a new fifty thousand dollar school was completed in 1914, and the Central School was enlarged. The new school, known as the Jefferson School, was a modern, fireproof, brick building with sixteen classrooms and two playrooms. At this time John W. Condie was the superintendent of the Preston City Schools. He served for a period of about twenty five years then was elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1932.²

Oneida Stake Academy, which had begun operation at Franklin in 1888 and in Preston in 1890, was sold to the Independent School District No. 1 of Franklin County for \$50,000.00 in 1922. The L.D.S. Church found it expedient to "not duplicate the efforts of the public schools" so it initiated a seminary program in 1912 which operates successfully in conjunction with the public schools.³ The Church then erected a Seminary building on the same block as the Academy at a cost of \$10,000. (A \$38,000 addition was built in 1956.) The school district uses the Academy for its high school program.

¹Franklin County Citizen, May 28, 1914.

²Simmons, op. cit. , p. 80.

³Ricks, op. cit., p. 294.

The depression years made it difficult to carry on a full program in the schools. With an enrollment of 1400 and a faculty of thirty-five teachers, the budget was strained. In 1932 salaries had to be cut ten percent and the school term reduced to eight months. An effort was made to continue a full curriculum even though in 1933 bus service had to be discontinued. The budget for 1933-34 was only \$67,774. In the fall bus service resumed even though teachers were paid partly in tax anticipation warrants. By spring of 1934 the nine month school year was reinstated, salaries were increased, and a hot lunch program was begun with the cooperation of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. This same year Preston High School was approved by the Northwestern Accrediting Association.¹

For many years other communities sent their young people to Preston to attend high school on a tuition basis. Plans for the erection of a new building began in 1934 and bore fruit in 1939. The new school, built at a cost of \$180,000, greatly improved the existing facilities.² Many new classes were added by Superintendent R. F. Campbell as the war years came. There were courses in metal-work, wood-work, electrical equipment and the care of tractors. The high school facilities were available to the community for instruction in the evenings in home economics, physical education, agriculture and business. "Because of the war and the resultant shortage of teachers,"

¹Ricks, op. cit., p. 344.

²Franklin County Citizen, June 8, 1938.

other schools, such as the two-year high school at Whitney and the school at Franklin, and, for the 1944-45 year, the school at Clifton, closed their doors and sent their students to Preston on a tuition basis.¹

For reasons of finance and better educational opportunities for the people of Franklin County, a committee was chosen to investigate the possibility of effecting a reorganization. On July 7, 1948, their work led to the approval needed to create two districts in the county. Preston became a part of Eastside School District 201.² The other schools included in the Eastside District were Franklin, Whitney, East Side, Glendale, Mapleton, Fairview, Winder, Banida, Treasureton, Riverdale, Glencoe, and Mink Creek. At the present only four of these schools remain in operation outside of Preston: in Whitney and in Franklin, grades 1 to 8; in Mink Creek, grades 1 to 4; and in Banida, grades 1 to 6.

An improvement program was approved in 1954 and 1956 when bonds were passed totaling \$530,000. From these funds a new gymnasium, home economics department, acoustical music room, facilities for the hot lunch program, and additional classrooms were added to the high school building. Also, the industrial arts building was enlarged, considerable equipment was purchased, and improvements were made in other buildings in the district.

As a result of making these improvements the district has

¹Marian James Jensen, An Appraisal of School District Reorganization in Franklin County, Idaho, (Master's Thesis, University of Utah, 1949) p. 34.

²Ibid. pp. 42-44.

adopted the 6-3-3 plan of organization. Students attend Central School for grades 1 to 2 where Mrs. Sylvia A. Swann is principal. The Jefferson School is for grades 3 to 6; Wayne R. Brown is principal. The junior high, grades 7 to 9, and the senior high, grades 10 to 12, are both held in the Preston High School buildings. Elmo A. Keller is principal of the junior high and Reed Brenchley is principal of the senior high.

During recent years considerable emphasis has been placed upon higher certification standards for teachers. Since 1950, in-service training has been required every three years. More stress is being given bachelor's and master's degrees.

The changes in the school system in recent years have been achieved during the administration of W. H. Simons, Superintendent for 1944 to 1959. At the present time, Richard L. Harmon is Superintendent. The budget for the Eastside School District No. 201 for the school year 1960-61 is \$548,975. There are 75 teachers under contract for the coming year.¹

Religious Development

The religious history of Preston is almost entirely a story of the activities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly called Mormons. Approximately 96% of the city's population are adherents of this faith. Preston is the headquarters for two stakes of the Church. The Oneida Stake, serving the northern half of Preston plus all communities as far north as Oxford, and Franklin Stake, which serves the southern half of the city and the communities in

¹Records of the Eastside School District No. 201, Preston, Idaho, 1960.

Franklin County south of Preston. Each stake has within its bounds ten wards or meetinghouses in which Church activities are held.

Oneida is the oldest stake being originally formed on June 1, 1884. The boundaries included Ross Fork on the Snake River and Chesterfield on the Portneuf River, Gentile Valley on the north, Malad Valley on the west, and all of Cache Valley north of the Utah border. These boundaries were rather elastic for many years. An unusual note of interest is that the headquarters of the Northwestern States Mission was at Preston under the direction of the Oneida Stake President from 1894 to 1900. Though there was little activity in the mission, a branch was established in Baker, Oregon and attached to this stake for a time. This branch later formed the nucleus of the Northwestern States Mission. By 1900 all areas beyond northern Cache Valley, including Swan Lake in the extreme north, had been severed from Oneida Stake. The boundaries remained constant until 1920, when Franklin Stake was formed.¹ At the time of the division there were approximately 7900 people in Oneida Stake. During its seventy-eight years of existence the Oneida Stake has had seven presidents.²

The Oneida Stake Tabernacle, which serves also as the Seventh Ward meeting house, was erected in 1950-51, on North State Street at a cost of approximately \$325,000. Previous to

¹Franklin Stake Record, Journal History, op. cit., p. 1.

²See appendix, Table 1.

the erection of this edifice, stake meetings were held in the Opera House and the High School Auditorium.¹

The Franklin Stake came into being at a special meeting held June 5, 1920 under the direction of Apostle (President) David O. McKay. Sustained as the President of the new stake was Samuel W. Parkinson with Charles D. Goaslind as First Counselor and Walter K. Barton as Second Counselor. Jesse P. Rich was the Stake Clerk.² Three others have followed Parkinson as leaders of the stake since its formation.³

During the first years of Franklin Stake's existence space was rented in the Barton Building for its offices, and conferences were held in the Opera House. Plans had been underway for some time to erect a building before ground breaking services were held in 1939. The building, when constructed, cost \$91,000. It serves as both Stake House and meeting house for the Preston First Ward, and is located at the site of the old First Ward Church on the corner of Second South and Second East Streets.⁴

The wards of the L.D.S. Church were the main focal point of its activities. Under the direction of a bishop and two counselors, a broad program that reaches every phase of the adherent's life is provided. Spiritual direction in worship is supplemented by a number of auxiliary organizations that

¹Dedication Services, Seventh Ward and Oneida Stake, (a pamphlet containing a brief account of the Oneida Stake), 1951.

²Franklin Stake Record, op. cit., p. 1

³See appendix, Table 2.

⁴The Preston Citizen, December 24, 1942.

attempt to meet the needs of the individual.

The original Preston Ward was divided in 1902 into four wards. These were consecutively numbered, each comprising approximately one-fourth of the city.

The First Ward was located in the southeast quarter of the city. A small chapel was constructed in 1904 and used until 1942 when the aforementioned Franklin Stake and the First Ward building was completed.¹

Preston Second Ward was located in the southwest quarter of the city and acquired the original meeting house. The building was remodeled and used until 1927. At that time a new church house was constructed at a cost of fifty-six thousand dollars. The new building was located on the corner of First South and Second West Streets.²

Preston Third Ward was located in the northwest quarter of the city. The Oneida Stake Academy was the site of their meetings until a small building could be erected, which has been remodeled and improved over the years. It has cost approximately forty-five thousand dollars.

The Preston Fourth Ward comprised the northwest quarter of the city. On September 2, 1919, the ward chapel was completed and dedicatory services held under the direction of Apostle George F. Richards.³

Preston Sixth Ward was created out of part of Preston

¹Ibid.

²Franklin Stake Wards, Journal History, op. cit., 1927.

³Franklin County Citizen, June 2, 1930.

Second Ward and part of Fairview Ward to the south of Preston on November 28, 1920. A chapel costing twenty-nine thousand dollars was dedicated in June 1930 by President Heber J. Grant.¹ It is located on Eighth South and First West Streets.

The Preston Seventh Ward was created from portions of the Third and Fourth Wards of Preston, October 12, 1947. The boundaries of the ward are: one block east and one block west from the intersection of Oneida and State Streets, extending one mile north, thence one mile east and one mile west thence north to the divide between Preston and Riverdale.² On October 12, 1956, as a result of the dwindling population and not being able to provide a full program for its young people, Glendale Ward voted to combine with the Seventh Ward. Glendale, one of the oldest wards in the area being first organized in 1888, added 17 families to the Seventh Ward membership.³

The Preston wards have a combined membership of 3662. The Sixth and Seventh wards have members from outside the city limits. The First, Second and Sixth Wards are in Franklin Stake and the Third, Fourth and Seventh are a part of Oneida Stake.⁴

Few Catholic families reside in Preston. Not until 1941 was Mass held here. At this time visiting priests from Pocatello would take turns holding meetings in the home of

¹Baltzar Peterson, op. cit., p. 121.

²Dedication Services..., op. cit., 1951.

³Ibid.

⁴For a list of the Bishops of each ward see Tables 3 to Tables 8 in appendix.

Joseph Viola. This continued till 1945 when they arranged to hold Mass in the County Court House. Arrangements were not permanent, however, and they returned to holding meetings in the Viola home. In 1946 Father John J. Kunkel came to Preston and under his supervision St. Peter's Church and Rectory was built at 304 East Oneida. Money for the building was donated by the Chicago Expansion Society for the Propagation of Faith. By November 1947 the new Church was in use and Father Kunkel moved into the Rectory.¹

As time passed the Catholic population gradually decreased as did the population of the city and county. By 1958 Father Peterson, who was then serving as resident priest, moved to a more fruitful field in Ogden, and the Preston Church was no longer administered locally. Father Francis DeNardis of Montpelier visits Preston twice monthly to hold meetings for the few Catholic families residing in Preston and vicinity.²

Following the withdrawal of the Presbyterian Church from Preston in 1915, forty years elapsed before a Protestant Church was again established. Members of the various faiths often sent their children to L.D.S. Sunday Schools rather than travel to Logan for services.

In February 1953 a group of local Protestants, who had been driving to Logan for Sunday services, tried holding a meeting of their own in Preston. Several interested families attended. Plans were made for holding community church services

¹For those who have succeeded Father Kunkel as leaders of Catholicism in Preston, see Table 10.

²Interview with Mrs. Joe Viola, August 10, 1960.

regularly in the Franklin County Court House basement. In December 1953 the group officially became a branch of the Logan Presbyterian Church under Reverend Miner E. Bruner. It was known as the Preston Community Church and had thirty charter members. Meetings of Church and Sunday School have been held regularly since 1953.

On April 26, 1959, the Church was formally organized as an individual corporation, with a membership of 42 persons 12 years of age and older, and given the name it is now known by, The Presbyterian Community Church of Preston, Idaho.

While Glenn E. Selander served as Student Pastor from September 1959 to August 1960, the former L.D.S. Glendale Ward building was purchased and moved to a lot on 2nd East and 2nd North Streets, and dedicated at special services held on April 3, 1960.

Life Today and in Yester-years

The history of life in Preston is typical of many of the smaller communities of the intermountain west. Pioneering was undeniably hard and the first homes were necessarily simple. The crude one or two room log homes of those years with "chink and dobin" and "whitewash" form a startling contrast to the seven room houses with lights and telephone and radio that followed. Just as startling in this day is the contrast of what was new then with rambling or split-level homes and television and synthetic fabrics and automation now.

In the beginning the requirements of meeting the needs of life were such that little time could be spent with social and recreational activities, most of which were interwoven with

their religious life. As the community aged, however, it assumed an increasing role in providing such activities and their number and variety increased. Among the most popular were dancing, dramatic and operative productions, picnics, baseball, horse-racing, and rodeos.

Some of the institutions of the past which gave life its color still remain in Preston today to remind its people of yester-years.

The old "opera House" still stands as a monument to the plays, music concerts, vaudeville, wrestling matches, political rallies, and church meetings that were held within its walls. Few of the young people know that the Zeus Theater presenting "King Lear" (1917) or the local production of "Back to the Country Store" (1914) was as important then as a DeMille production at the Drive-In Theater is today. Presently the Opera House has been converted into a recreational center for basketball and roller-skating, and as temporary quarters for a battery of the National Guard.

When those in need of medical attention enter the Preston Clinic, only the "old timers" are haunted by the memory of the schottishes, the quadrilles, the varsouviennes, and the "spark-in" that used to be done when it was known as the "Persiana." The building dates from 1927 when Hansen and Peterson capitalizing on the interest in dancing that had existed since early days, opened the doors and advertized that "dancing promotes the welfare of body and spirit." This dancing center attracted many before "the social trend turned to smaller and cozier places."¹

¹The Preston Citizen, April 13, 1950.

Another institution of the past lives on annually in the summertime at the fairgrounds. "Preston, Home of that Famous Night Rodeo" is as commonly advertized in Cache Valley as is the Idaho potato. Inaugurated in 1936 by Preston businessmen that "wanted something different that would make Preston talked about," they conceived of a "night rodeo." Success of the venture was assured when they joined the Rodeo Cowboy Association of America and thus guaranteed the participation of notable talent. Such luminaries as Roy Rogers and Rex Allen have been featured.¹ Three performances are held on successive nights, preceeded by a parade. Many of the surrounding communities participate to make it an affair attended by crowds of twelve to fifteen thousand.

Conclusion

Preston today is a small community still dependent upon its agricultural foundation. Ethnologically they are mainly of northern European antecedents. Illiteracy is virtually unknown. Few of its people are unfamiliar with their neighbors. A large section of the weekly paper is devoted to personal items of social interest. The problems of the betterment of the town, providing adequate schools, and maintaining its government are ever present. Service clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and a variety of social clubs are active in the community.

In the total story of human existence Preston is scarcely

¹Franklin County Citizen, August 6, 1941, and the Preston Citizen August 3, 1959.

more than a name where the web of man's history has formed another pattern in relatively modern times. To its people, however, Preston looms large as the "hub" of their existence, and the story of life emanates from the Preston scene.

TABLE 1

PRESIDENTS AND ECCLESIASTICAL WARDS OF THE
ONEIDA STAKE OF THE L. D. S. CHURCH^a

Presidents	Term of Office
W. W. Hendricks	June 1884 to August 1887
George C. Parkinson	August 1887 to September 1910
Joseph S. Geddes	September 1910 to June 1920
Taylor Nelson	June 1920 to April 1939
George E. Burgi	April 1939 to November 1941
Paul R. Wynn	November 1941 to June 1949
Shirley M. Pelner	June 1949 to

Wards of the Oneida Stake

Preston Third	Dayton
Preston Fourth	Banida
Preston Seventh	Winder
Oxford-Clifton	Riverdale
Treasureton	Mink Creek

^aOneida Stake Record, Book B, Journal History, op. cit.,
p. 1.

TABLE 2

PRESIDENTS AND ECCLESIASTICAL WARDS OF THE
FRANKLIN STAKE OF THE L. D. S. CHURCH^a

Presidents	Term of Office
Samuel W. Parkinson	June 1920 to November 1927
Walter K. Barton	November 1927 to February 1937
Leslie B. Merrill	February 1937 to October 1944
Henry H. Rawlings	October 1944 to

Wards of the Franklin Stake

Weston	Whitney
Linrose	Preston First
Fairview	Preston Second
Franklin	Preston Fifth
Mapleton	Preston Sixth

^aFranklin Stake Record, Journal History, op. cit., p. 1.

TABLE 3

FIRST WARD BISHOPS OF THE L. D. S. CHURCH
OF PRESTON, IDAHO^a

Henry T. Rogers-----	1902-1913
John A. Morrison-----	1913-1914
Henry J. Bodily-----	1914-1918
Ossian L. Packer-----	1918-1923
Carl H. Carlson-----	1923-1927
Ernest A. Jensen-----	1927-1931
Leslie V. Merrill-----	1931-1934
C. Earl Goaslind-----	1934-1945
Ernest Eberhard, Jr.----	1945-1954
Dean Palmer-----	1954-

^aFranklin Stake Wards, Journal History, op. cit.,
First Ward, p. 1.

TABLE 4

SECOND WARD BISHOPS OF THE L. D. S. CHURCH
OF PRESTON, IDAHO^a

Hugh S. Geddes-----	1902-1910
Lorenzo Johnson-----	1910-1922
Lorenzo E. Hansen-----	1922-1930
Orion Jensen-----	1930-1935
Leo J. Peterson-----	1935-1938
Howard Hall-----	1938-1949
Parley Schaffer-----	1949-1956
Arlond E. Sharp-----	1956-

^aFranklin Stake Wards, Journal History, op. cit.,
Second Ward, p. 1.

TABLE 5

SIXTH WARD BISHOPS OF THE L. D. S. CHURCH
OF PRESTON, IDAHO^a

James H. Corbridge-----	1920-1924
Alma H. Monson-----	1924-1929
Walter Rawlings-----	1929-1933
Reed Hart-----	1933-1940
Ezra Corbridge-----	1940-1946
Lyman Purser-----	1946-1949
Clynord Lundgreen-----	1949-1954
Melvin Burrup-----	1954-1957
Hyde Purser-----	1957-

^aFranklin Stake Wards, Journal History, op. cit.,
Sixth Ward, p. 1.

TABLE 6

THIRD WARD BISHOPS OF THE L. D. S. CHURCH
OF PRESTON, IDAHO^a

George H. Carver-----	1902-1917
Harrison R. Merrill----	1917-1920
William Hawkes Jr.-----	1920-1935
Phenoi H. Edgley-----	1935-1939
Alfred Kern-----	1939-1947
A. Earl Hollingsworth--	1947-1954
Theford Roper-----	1954-

^aOneida Stake Wards, Journal History, op. cit.,
Third Ward, p. 1.

TABLE 7

FOURTH WARD BISHOPS OF THE L. D. S. CHURCH
OF PRESTON, IDAHO^a

Allen R. Cutler-----1902-1907
 John W. Condie-----1907-1916
 William A. Skidmore----1916-1919
 John W. Condie-----1919-1924
 Joseph A. Luthy-----1924-1929
 J. Clifford Forsgren---1929-1936
 J. N. Larsen-----1936-1941
 Horace S. Baugh-----1941-1946
 Asael E. Bell-----1946-1951
 O. Sherwin Webb-----1951-1954
 Ariel G. Neeley-----1954-1956
 Howard J. Auger-----1956-1960
 Webster C. Maughan-----1960-

^aOneida Stake Wards, Journal History, op. cit.,
 Fourth Ward, p. 1.

TABLE 8

SEVENTH WARD BISHOPS OF THE L. D. S. CHURCH
OF PRESTON, IDAHO^a

Rulon M. Keller-----1947-1951
 Heber C. Swainston-----1951-1957
 Elmo A. Keller-----1957-

^aOneida Stake Wards, Journal History, op. cit.,
 Seventh Ward, p. 1.

TABLE 9

PASTORS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
OF PRESTON, IDAHO^a

Reverend Miner E. Bruner-----	Dec. 1953--Jan. 1954
Ronald E. Kragthorpe, Student Pastor-----	Jan. 1954--Aug. 1954
Reverend Miner E. Bruner-----	Aug. 1954-Sept. 1956
Wilber L. Sloat & Craig Wesgand, Student Co-Pastors-----	Sept. 1956-Jan. 1957
David L. Crawford, Student Pastor-----	Jan. 1957--Aug. 1959
Glenn E. Selander, Student Pastor-----	Sept. 1959-Aug. 1960
Leland G. Cole, Student Pastor-----	Sept. 1960--

^aInterview with William L. Weber, Clerk of the Presbyterian Community Church of Preston, Idaho, August 8, 1960.

TABLE 10

LEADERS OF THE ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
OF PRESTON, IDAHO--1946-Present^a

Father John J. Kunkel	Father Martin Hughes
Father Patrick O'Sullivan	Father Francis Peterson
Reverend Nicolas Hughes	Father Francis DeNardis

^aInterview with Mrs. Joe Viola, August 10, 1960.

TABLE 11

VILLAGE BOARD CHAIRMEN, VILLAGE
OF PRESTON, IDAHO
1900-1913^a

John Larsen-----	1900-1903
Joseph S. Geddes-----	1903-1905
John Larsen-----	1905-1907
Soloman H. Hale-----	1907-1909
John W. Condie-----	1909-1911
J. N. Larsen-----	1911-1913

^aPreston Village Minutes, 1900-1913.

TABLE 12

MAYORS OF THE CITY OF PRESTON, IDAHO
1913-Present^a

J. N. Larsen-----	1913-1915
Nephi Larsen-----	1915-1919
Joseph Marrom-----	1919-1921
George E. Crockett-----	1921-1925
Lorenzo E. Hansen-----	1925-1935
T. R. Bowden-----	1935-1939
J. Clifford Forsgren-----	1939-1943
E. A. Crockett-----	1943-1947
Ernest Eberhard, Jr.-----	1947-1951
Rulon Dunn-----	1951-1955
O. Sherwin Webb-----	1955-

^aPreston City Minutes, 1913-1960.

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A HISTORY OF PRESTON, IDAHO

(115 pages)

An Abstract of the Thesis of

Clarence G. Judy

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

Department of History

Dr. Richard D. Poll

Chairman Advisory Committee

Mr. Ellis Rasmussen

Member Advisory Committee

Brigham Young University

ABSTRACT

Preston, Idaho, a small agricultural community in northern Cache Valley, in early times was a hunting ground for Indians who camped nearby. The first white men to visit the area were trappers, immigrants and explorers. Mormon settlers had pushed to its borders by 1860.

Unlike most communities of Cache Valley, the greater Preston area, known then as Worm Creek, was settled by individual enterprise. In 1868 Dennis W. Winn became the first settler in that part of Worm Creek known as the "Flat" or "Sandridge" which later became Preston. Other settlers located along Worm Creek to the east.

The Utah Northern Railroad reached Franklin in 1874, hoping to complete a line to Montana. Over 14 miles of bed were graded which passed through Worm Creek and thus provided employment and promoted interest in the area.

Because the Flat was higher and without water, its settlement was delayed until homesteads surrounded it. Starting in 1876 the original homesteads of the main sections of the Flat were taken. Israel J. West, Isaac Canfield, William Millard, Henry Meyer, and William Geddes were among the first to follow Winn. Settlers were not always prompt in filing claims.

The Utah and Northern extended its newly acquired railroad

line over the Flat in 1878. Battle Creek, a boom town, sprang up on Bear River as a supply center and repair yard. Many who worked on the railroad homesteaded in Preston and remained when it was abandoned in 1886.

The Flat increased in importance over the next few years due to its central location. Nearly all settlers were Mormons, thus the church was the center of activities. The name Preston was adopted in 1881. A canal bringing water to the Flat was constructed in 1881 and stimulated growth. By 1887 Preston had developed the appearance of a business and community center.

The Mormon problem of polygamy had its counterpart in Preston. Opposition was centered in Oxford and brought troublesome times. Cultural progress proceeded, however, with the establishment of Oneida Stake Academy beginning in 1889.

Preston was incorporated as a village in 1900 and as a city in 1912. The new city became the seat of Franklin County in 1913, culminating a long effort to divide Oneida County.

The era of 1900 to 1915 brought many business conveniences to Preston. In education, school enrollment showed its greatest growth, two districts were combined, a new school constructed and other facilities improved. The Presbyterian Church established itself from 1901 to 1914 and helped to provide schooling. Four wards were created from the original Preston Ward of the L.D.S. Church in 1902.

The municipal form of government has prevailed throughout Preston's history, providing ever increasing services. Local politics have produced little controversy, elections being won

more on personality than on issues.

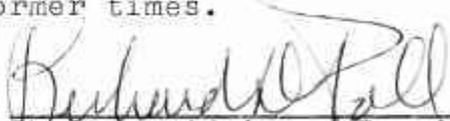
Preston is economically dependent upon farming and serves as a marketing and retailing center. Most local industries process farm products. Many of the young people have to go elsewhere because of the ceiling on employment imposed by farming.

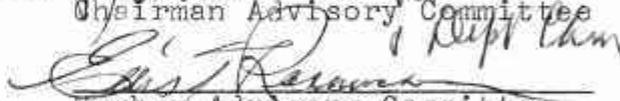
In 1948 a reorganization was completed in the school districts of Franklin County. Gradual consolidation with Preston has taken place since then and improvements effected.

Approximately 96% of the people of Preston belong to the L.D.S. Church. In 1920 Oneida Stake was divided and Franklin Stake created. Catholics began meetings in Preston in 1941, and in 1953 a group of Protestants organized and by 1959 had formed the Presbyterian Community Church.

Preston today is a modern city that presents a marked contrast with life and conditions of former times.

Signed:


Chairman Advisory Committee


Member Advisory Committee