“I AM”

See: Jesus Christ, Names and Titles of

IDAHO, PIONEER SETTLEMENTS IN

Although the main thrust of Latter-day Saint colonization was to the south of Salt Lake City, Church members also established numerous settlements in the rich farm valleys of southern Idaho.

The first LDS excursion into Idaho followed President Brigham Young’s call of twenty-seven families to labor among the Indians in the Oregon Territory in 1855. The result was the founding of Fort Limhi on a tributary of the Salmon River near present-day Salmon, Idaho. As the U.S. Army approached Utah in 1857 (see Utah Expedition), conflict with local Indians erupted, two missionaries were killed, and, in 1858, the fort lost most of its stock. The settlers were called back to Salt Lake City and the colony was never reopened.

In 1860 the community of Franklin, near the present Utah-Idaho border, became the first permanent Anglo-American settlement in the future territory of Idaho. Indian problems plagued the settlement until the Battle Creek massacre, in which federal soldiers from Salt Lake City’s Fort Douglas killed a large number of Indians in 1863.

Additional settlers went east from Cache Valley (Franklin was its northernmost town) over the mountains into the Bear Lake region in southeastern Idaho, opening the settlements of Paris, Bloomington, St. Charles, Ovid, Montpelier, Fish Haven, Liberty, and Bennington. Charles C. Rich, an apostle, oversaw these communities, which by 1864 included nearly seven hundred settlers. Latter-day Saints started additional settlements in the Idaho part of northern Cache Valley, Malad Valley, and Marsh Valley beginning in the 1860s, and in Gentile Valley in the 1870s.

Church members helped construct the railroad between Ogden, Utah, and Franklin, Idaho, in 1871–1874, and beginning in 1878, they helped extend the line farther into Idaho through Blackfoot and Idaho Falls (then called Eagle Rock) to Monida Pass, on the present-day Idaho-Montana border. Many Latter-day Saints homesteaded near the railroad and established such communities as Chesterfield, Egin Bench, and Rexburg. For the next two decades, Mormon settlements increasingly dotted the landscape for two hundred miles between Pocatello and Victor in the Teton Basin. By 1890, the Bannock Stake, centered in Rexburg, reported 3,861 members. Because the Snake River Valley was arid, LDS settlers devoted considerable energies to canal building. By 1910, more than one hundred canals operated in the Upper Snake River Valley, and LDS settlements were established
The first frame house north of Bear River (built in Marsh Valley, Idaho, 1873). William West Woodland (center) crossed the plains in 1847 and again as a guide in 1848; pictured here with his wife, some of his 14 children, two granddaughters, and a hired hand (c. 1897). Courtesy the Woodland family.

(Moreland, New Sweden, Thomas, Springfield, and Aberdeen) where there were canals.

Latter-day Saints also moved west from Pocatello. In 1879 William C. Martindale, from Tooele, Utah, explored the Goose Creek Valley and returned to Utah with a favorable report. Church families soon began homesteading areas that included Goose Creek and Raft River, Oakley, where the Oregon and California trails separated, became the central location of the colony.

LDS influence in Idaho in the nineteenth century was confined largely to the southeast, where the Saints were a majority in many settlements. In the twentieth century Latter-day Saints have become a significant minority in communities farther west, still primarily in the southern part of the state.


ROBERT D. MARCUM

ILLINOIS, LDS COMMUNITIES IN

[The Church was centered in western Illinois from 1839 to 1846. After their expulsion from Missouri in 1838–1839, Mormon refugees fled to Quincy, Springfield, and other locations in Illinois, where local residents gave them assistance. Church leaders purchased the village of Commerce and land in its vicinity, along with a large tract across the Mississippi River in Iowa. Commerce was renamed Nauvoo and became the principal LDS community of its time and one of the largest cities in Illinois.

Numerous small settlements in the vicinity of Nauvoo fell within the city’s sphere of influence (see Donald Q. Cannon, “Spokes on the Wheel: Early Latter-day Saints Settlements in Hancock County, Illinois,” Ensign 16 [Feb. 1986]:62–68). The LDS town of Ramus (later Macedon and now Webster), about twenty miles southeast of Nauvoo, became a Church stake, as did Lima, twenty-five miles south of Nauvoo. La Harpe, a few miles north of Ramus, also had a considerable LDS pop-

BIBLIOGRAPHY