

EARLIEST HIGHLAND

By Charles T Greenland

Highland is a small section of a much larger geomorphic feature created in Lake Bonneville near the close of the last ice age (approx 75,000 yrs ago). The feature extends both east and west of what is generally considered Highland: bordered on the East by American Fork Creek; on the West by Dry Creek, issuing from Alpine Canyon; on the North by the foothills and on the South by American Fork and Lehi. When Lake Bonneville reached its highest level (approx 8,000 years ago, about 5200' above sea level) it began to overflow at Portneuf, Idaho into the Snake River and the lake level lowered dramatically (to about 4800') and the streams from Alpine and American Fork canyons distributed materials into the delta which became the 'highland bench'. In early writings it was referred to as "the upper bench", "the upper lands", "the bench", "the highland bench" "the Lehi bench" or just "highland". The "lowlands" or "bottom lands" were the areas of American Fork and Lehi closer to the Utah Lake. The name "highland" was a natural outgrowth of the general area as it was perceived by the original settlers and predates those who later made their homes in Highland. There doesn't seem to be an official recognition of "Highland" until the 1900 census when it is referred to as the "Highland Precinct", although it was given a voting district in 1893.

(It has been stated in a number of different histories that Highland probably was named by Scottish immigrants [Alexander Adamson, George Cunningham, Peter Smith] who said it reminded them of their "Beloved Scottish Highlands". Highland natives who have visited the Scottish Highlands claim they found not the slightest resemblance to their flat, dry, sagebrush covered "Beloved Highland" in that region composed of low to medium mountain ranges interspersed with isolated narrow valleys, lakes and sea inlets which make up the Scottish Highlands-see Google images)

Highland was originally 4840 acres including sections 1, 2 & 3 of Township 5 S R 1 E, and sections 34, 35 & 36 plus the south half of sections 25, 26 & 27 plus 40 acres of the north half of section 27, of Township 4 S R 1 E, Salt Lake Base & Meridian. The street known as 9600 North was the south boundary, 7200 W (Lehi 1200 E) was the west boundary, the east boundary was at 4800 W and the north boundary at 11600 N. (at the incorporation in 1977 the City included 2142 acres; and in 2016 it includes approx 5500 acres)

The first homesteaders filed for patents beginning in 1869 and 35 were perfected by 1889, with only 8 more perfected in the next 15 years, so most of the settlers took more than the 5 years required to perfect their patents. Many of the early homesteaders didn't really live on their property but spent the minimum required time there to qualify for the homestead. (Maybe by camping on the property one night every 6 months or so).

Most Mormon settlements of that time were closely confined villages, carefully supervised as to structure, site and residents, with small building lots of close proximity within the town limits and farms and pastures located outside the town, sometimes miles away from the owner's homes. This pattern of occupancy was as old as agriculture (and used by the Roman Empire), but Highland was a free-lance settlement, not a result of a "central mind". No one was "called" to settle Highland-they just did. These were tough, self-sufficient farmers who had little sense of community because of their scattered residences. Highland farmsteads averaged 131 acres whereas in other nearby towns (Lehi, American Fork, Alpine) about 60% of the lots were 10 acres or less. It has been

suggested that some of those who moved to Highland were actually trying to hide from Brigham Young so he wouldn't send them on a mission to some god-forsaken place they didn't want to go. The first residents seemed to want to separate themselves from the towns that had been built.

The 1880 census for Highland showed eighty-eight residents with the following as heads of households: Edward Winn, Peter Beck, Jacob Beck, Stephen Moyle, John Whiting, George Myers, John Hegan, John Poole, Minnie Jenkins, Edwin Sawyer, Heber Preece, Ann Preece, Harry Savil, John Hart, Thomas Gray, James Pullen (Pulley) and William Householder. Most of these were born in England, with Scotland, Denmark, New York, Iowa and Utah being other birthplaces-with only three being native-born Utahans. Almost all were listed as farmers with Doctor, Miner, Teamster and Flour Miller as other occupations. Only the first 6 named were still living in Highland in the 1900 census (the 1890 census was destroyed by fire).

The sense of community among Highlanders began to build more after 1888 with the construction of a school house on John Hegan's property (6000 W 10400 N-where the "Strasburg Chapel" stands). This allowed for community and church gatherings and social interaction previously unknown to them. In most Utah communities a church was built first and school was held in it during the week but Highland was the opposite. The turn of the century brought a lot of new people to Highland and with increased population came a greater sense of community.