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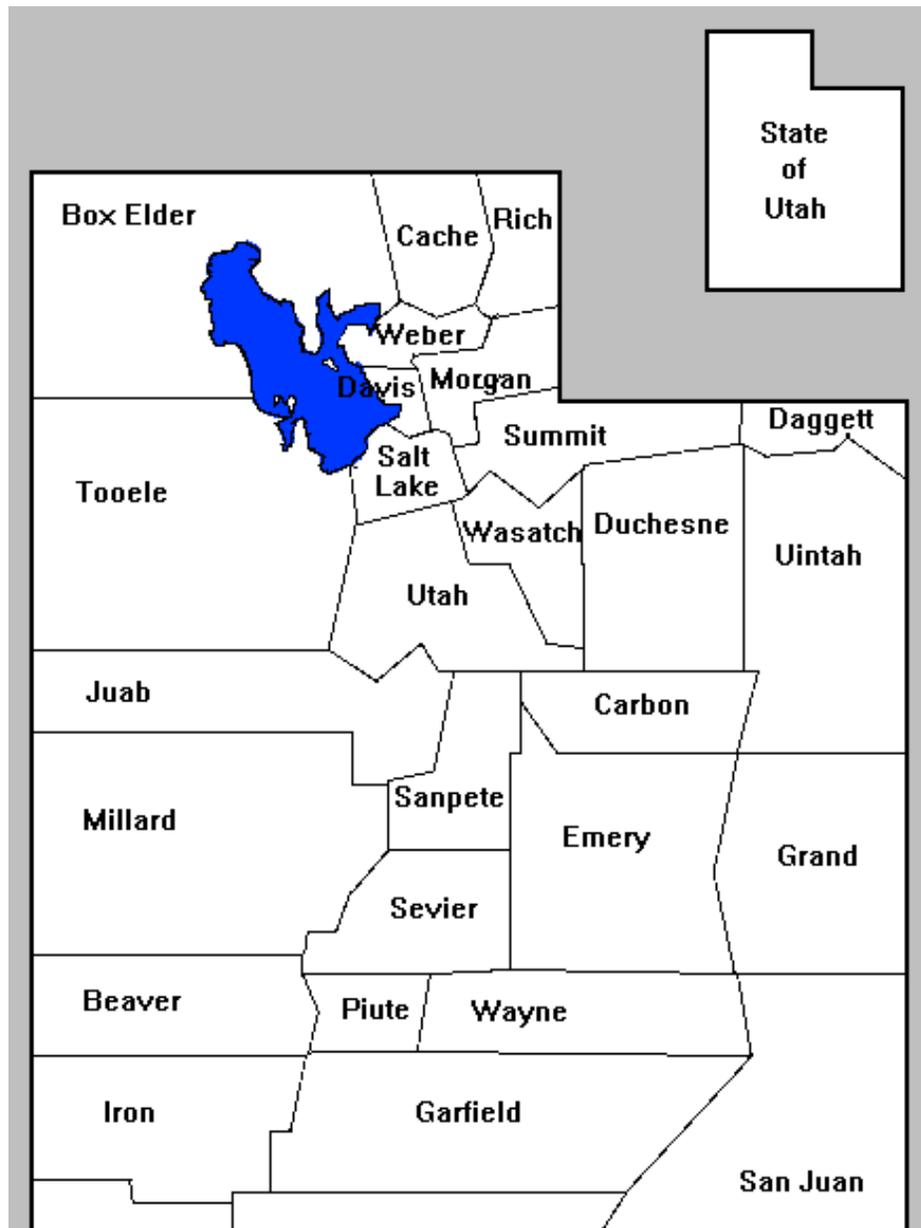
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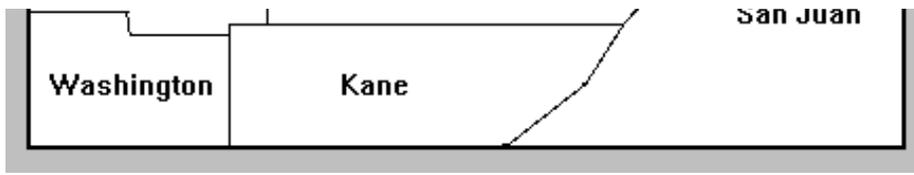
Histories* & Census Information

Utah´s County Histories, An Overview

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Utah's Counties: 29 Unique Parts of One State

In 1850 the Utah Territorial Legislature created six small counties. Each contained an area of early white settlement. County borders and names were changed about 100 times before the creation of Daggett County in 1917 gave Utah its present **29 counties**.

Counties are units of local government, but state laws define their form and powers. Three-member county commissions govern 28 of Utah's counties. In 1987 Cache County changed to another form of government allowed under state law and is now run by an executive officer and a seven-member council. The commission or council must hold regular meetings, open to the public, at the county seat. Other elected officials usually include county clerk, treasurer, attorney, recorder, assessor, auditor, surveyor, and sheriff. In the early settlement period, county and town officials were often LDS church leaders.

Counties may do many things. Like all units of government they raise money to operate by taxes, fees and licenses, fines, and when approved by the voters, bonds. Counties may license and regulate local businesses, zone property and plan development, build and maintain roads, and build and operate a variety of facilities including schools, libraries, jails, hospitals, fire departments, senior citizen centers, airports, golf courses, parks, zoos, and planetariums. Counties issue marriage licenses and record property ownership. They may also provide such services as water, waste disposal, electric power, flood control, welfare, and animal control.

Probate courts operated in each county until statehood and from 1852 to 1874, when federal law banned the practice, they often heard civil and criminal cases as well as probate matters (wills and estates).

In 1896 the new state constitution created seven multi-county judicial districts. A district court must meet at least three times a year in each county seat within the district. Counties also have justice-of-the-peace courts where cases involving violations of county ordinances are heard.

About three-fourths of Utah's land is owned by federal, state, or local government. This has profoundly affected the development of almost every county. Government is the leading employer in two-thirds of Utah's counties and number two or three in others.

In the early 1970s Utah's counties formed voluntary, multi-county associations of government. Seven such regional associations presently operate in Utah to deal with planning issues and problems that transcend county boundaries, especially in the areas of health, social services, and economic development.

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Beaver County

Beaver County Census | **Beaver County Web Site**

A Brief History of Beaver County*

The high peaks of the Tushar Range mark the eastern boundary of Beaver County. Delano Peak (12,173 feet) and Mount Belknap (12,139 feet) are among the highest mountains in the state. Most of the county, however, lies in the Basin and Range country typical of western Utah.

Archaic and Sevier Fremont cultural sites have been found here, and in historic times the area was part of the Southern Paiutes' territory. Obsidian from the Mineral Mountains was used by the prehistoric inhabitants of much of central Utah to make stone tools.

In 1776 the Dominguez-Escalante expedition crossed the county near present Milford. Jedediah S. Smith (1826-27) and John C. Fremont (1844) had also traveled in the Beaver area before Albert Carrington explored it for the Mormons. The county was created in 1856, the same year Beaver City was founded.

The U.S. Army built Fort Cameron in Beaver City in 1873, partly in response to Indian hostilities and partly to aid the 2nd District Court prosecute John D. Lee and others accused of participating in the Mountain Meadow Massacre. Lee's two trials were held in Beaver, and he was briefly imprisoned at the fort. The post, abandoned in 1883, became the site of Murdock Academy (1898-1922), a branch of Brigham Young Academy, forerunner of BYU.

Although the early settlers planted crops and grazed livestock, the county prospered in the 19th century because of a unique blend of mining, transportation, and trade in addition to farming. The Lincoln Mine northwest of Minersville may have been the first mine opened in Utah (1858). Lead was smelted and shipped to Salt Lake City to make ammunition. Many claims were staked and mining districts organized in the 1870s. The fabulous Horn Silver Mine was discovered in 1875 and the nearby town of Frisco, a wild boomtown, founded in 1876. The Horn attracted famous investors such as J. Pierpont Morgan.

The Frisco boom lasted only a decade. In the early 20th century the Cactus Mine, near the town of Newhouse, west of Frisco, produced gold, silver, copper, and other minerals.

Founded in 1870 by livestock growers, Milford became an important transportation center in May 1880 when the Utah Southern Railroad reached the town. A month later the line was extended to Frisco. Both ore and livestock were shipped to Salt Lake, and Milford was a forwarding point for freight. Horse and wagon teams carried freight from Milford to southern Utah, northern Arizona, and mining camps in Nevada.

In Beaver City, the Beaver Woolen Mills, which operated from the 1870s to the turn of the century, found Frisco an important market for its products, especially blankets. The Beaver Co-op store, once one of the the largest mercantile establishments south of Salt Lake, opened in 1872 and profited from mining and transportation activity.

In the 1980s the county's geothermal resources began to be tapped when an electric power generating plant using natural steam was built northeast of Milford. Recreation also adds to the economy.

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Box Elder County

Box Elder County Census

A Brief History of Box Elder County*

Located in the upper northwest corner of the state, Box Elder County is part of the Great Basin and embraces a large land area extending from the west spur of the Wasatch Mountains to the Idaho border and westward to Nevada. It includes portions of the Great Salt Lake and the Great Salt Lake Desert. On the east are the lower course and deltas of the Bear River, the Malad River Valley, and the Promontory Mountains. Diverse in topography, the county contains rich farmlands as well as extensive marshlands at the mouth of the Bear River.

Prehistoric hunters and gatherers roamed the area as early as 12,000 years ago, as did Indians of later periods. Danger, Promontory, and Hogup Caves, surrounding Great Salt Lake, and Shallow Shelter in the Grouse Creek Mountains are among the important excavated archaeological sites in Box Elder.

During the 1820s and '30s fur trappers, including Peter Skene Ogden and Joseph R. Walker, explored the eastern and northern parts of the county. Permanent white settlement began in 1851 when a group of Mormons took up land in North Willow Creek (Willard). Brigham City was settled that same year and under Lorenzo Snow's direction became a model of Mormon cooperative enterprise. Because the land was already inhabited by Shoshone Indians, livestock raids and violent clashes between Indians and settlers were common until territorial Governor James Duane Doty negotiated the Treaty of Box Elder on July 30, 1863, in Brigham City.

In 1856 the territorial legislature created Box Elder County from part of Weber County. Its boundaries were redefined in 1880 when the legislature divided the water and islands of the Great Salt Lake among Salt Lake, Davis, Weber, Tooele, and Box Elder counties.

The most significant event in Box Elder history took place on May 10, 1869, at Promontory when the driving of the Golden Spike joined Central Pacific and the Union Pacific railroads to complete the transcontinental line. Corinne, a feisty, non-Mormon boomtown, became the freight transfer point for goods shipped to Idaho and Montana. In July 1870 Corinne residents spurred the founding of the Liberal party to oppose the Mormon People's party.

Agriculture has always played an important role in the economy of Box Elder County. Some 43 percent of the county's land is used for agricultural purposes. Besides the standard crops of hay, grain, and alfalfa, sugar beets were also raised, starting in 1901, and kept two sugar factories, one in Garland and the other in Brigham City, operating for many years. Abundant fruit orchards and garden crops continue to contribute to the local economy. Since 1957, when Thiokol Chemical (now Morton-Thiokol) began its Brigham City operation, defense and aerospace have dominated the local economy and presently employ 5,000. Morton-Thiokol built the Minuteman missile and the space shuttle booster rockets.

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Cache County

Cache County Census

A Brief History of Cache County*

Cache County, located in the northern part of the state, is bordered by the Wasatch Mountains on the east and a spur of the Wasatch, the Wellsville Mountains, on the west. The Bear River flows through the northwestern corner of the county where the Little Bear, Blacksmith Fork, and Logan rivers add their waters to it. Cache County was formed in 1864 by the territorial legislature and its boundaries redefined in 1864 when part of Cache became Richland (Rich)County.

Cache Valley was occupied by prehistoric hunters and gatherers, perhaps as early as 10,000 years ago, and served much later as a rendezvous for Plains groups and the local Shoshone. Cache Valley was repeatedly visited by trappers and explorers such as John Weber and Jim Bridger in 1824 and Peter Skene Ogden and James Beckwourth in 1825.

Settlement of Cache Valley by the Mormons began in 1855 when a group organized by Bryant Stringham drove a herd of cattle into the valley on July 29 and camped at Haw Bush Spring, later known as Elkhorn Ranch. Because the winter of 1855-56 was so severe, the cattle were driven back to the Salt Lake Valley. Peter Maughan, sent to Cache Valley in 1856, founded a permanent settlement called Maughan's Fort, the present town of Wellsville. More settlers began to arrive, and five towns (Providence, Mendon, Logan, Richmond, and Smithfield) were settled in 1859.

The Utah Northern Railroad between Brigham City and Logan was completed in early 1873 and later extended into Idaho. Then, a branch line from Brigham City to Corinne tied Cache County to the transcontinental line. The railroad provided jobs for Cache residents and also opened new markets for their farm output, especially grain and dairy products. By 1880 national market trends had begun to affect the local farm economy. Advances in dry-farming techniques and canal and reservoir construction increased farm production, fruit and vegetables became cash crops, and the building of grain elevators in the 1890s allowed Cache farmers to store grain until prices improved. The county's sheep herds grew from 10,000 in 1880 to 300,000 by 1900, and dairy cows numbered 16,000 by 1910. Commercial creameries, flour mills, woolen mills, and knitting factories developed around Cache's booming turn-of-the-century farm production. Today, Cache continues as the state's leader in dairy products and as a major producer of hay, alfalfa, and grain.

The founding of Utah State University in Logan as a land-grant agricultural college in 1888 provided the key to the county's future. USU's scientific research, agricultural extension services, and experimental farms have benefited farmers locally and in every part of the state. With some 12,000 students currently enrolled, USU has grown to be the county's largest single employer. Course offerings now include almost all academic subjects, and the university has become a major cultural resource for the community. A variety of manufacturing firms, retail trade, and services (including government services) contribute to Cache County's diversified economy in the 20th century.

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Carbon County

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A Brief History of Carbon County*

Most of Carbon County's residents live in the Price River Valley and at the foot of the Book Cliffs. The western end of the county rises to the Wasatch Plateau and slopes down eastward to the Price River which cuts through Castle Valley. This valley stretches across the southern half of Carbon into Emery County, with the Wasatch Plateau on the north and west and the Book Cliffs all along the east. The Green River marks the eastern border of the county. Geographically, Carbon County is in the Colorado Plateau physiographic province.

Evidence of the Fremont Culture is extensive in the county. Figurines have been discovered as well as many rock art panels, such as the "Head Hunter" located in the Gordon Creek area. Evidence of prehistoric life includes many dinosaur footprints found in coal mines.

Mormon settlements were established all along the Price River in the late 1870s. The high barrier of the Wasatch Plateau had delayed settlement until that time. Routes into the region included offshoots of the Old Spanish Trail and a trail over Soldier Summit. Farming and ranching became early economic activities, giving Carbon County a tradition of cowboys and outlaws, with the likes of Butch Cassidy and Gunplay Maxwell roaming the area. The Nine Mile Canyon freight road from Price to the Uinta Basin became an important transportation link. In 1894 the territorial legislature separated Carbon County from Emery County.

During the early 1880s the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad, seeking a route from Denver to Salt Lake City, discovered and opened up the vast coal lands of Carbon County. Coal mining became the major catalyst for development. Coal companies often built and ran towns in Carbon and imported many southern and eastern European and Japanese laborers to work in the coal mines and on railroad gangs. Helper became known as the town of "57 Varieties" because of its ethnic diversity. Mine explosions near Scofield in 1900 (200 killed) and at Castle Gate in 1924 (172 killed) and major strikes in 1903-4, 1922, and 1933 brought tragedy, violence, and eventual unionization to the mines. Coal mining continues to play a vital role in economic and social development, with ups and downs in the industry creating periods of boom and relative bust. Utah Power and Light built a main electric generating plant near the former town of Castle Gate. In 1980 the Carbon Plant generated 171 megawatts of electricity. Ninety-eight percent of UP&L's power comes from thermal steam plants that burn coal.

The College of Eastern Utah, established in 1937 in Price, promises to become a more important facet of the county's economic and social development in the future.

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A Brief History of Daggett County*

Daggett County is located on the north slope of the Uinta Mountains, an east-west running range some 150 miles long and 30 miles wide that has been dramatically carved by glaciers. The Uintas contain the highest peaks in the state. Leidy Peak at 12,028 feet is the highest peak in the county. The Uintas are the source of much of the water for the Green River which cuts through them at the east end of the range. The county is bordered on the north by Wyoming, on the east by Colorado.

Rich with trees, water, and wildlife, Clay Basin and Brown's Hole along the Green River in northeast Daggett served as a winter refuge for both migratory animals and prehistoric Indian groups. The first known white men to visit the county were fur trappers who, in the 1820s, came to the mountains trapping for beaver. Perhaps the most famous of these was General William Henry Ashley. In 1825, after organizing a fur company in St. Louis, he traveled to the Green River country to see for himself the land of the beaver and other wildlife. That same year he floated down the Green into the Uinta Basin and then traveled by horse and foot through Summit County back to southern Wyoming where the first rendezvous was held.

Other trappers and traders soon followed in the footsteps of Ashley. In 1837 Fort Davey Crockett was built at Brown's Hole by Philip Thompson and William Craig. The fort supplied goods to the trappers of the area. A German traveler named Wislezenus described Fort Crockett as being "somewhat poverty-stricken for which reason it is also known to the trappers by the name of Fort Misery."

In 1869 and 1871 John Wesley Powell, a famous explorer, visited parts of Daggett County. Starting at Green River, Wyoming, Powell floated down the Green and Colorado rivers, studying the geology and geography, animal and plant life, and the Indians of the area.

About this same time it was rumored that the Uinta Mountains were full of diamonds. Important and wealthy people in America and Europe invested in the claims, hoping to make a lot of money. They soon found out that the discovery of diamonds in the Uintas was a hoax.

Daggett County was used for the summer grazing of sheep and cattle trailed in from parts of northern Utah and southwestern Wyoming until the introduction of irrigation in the l890s by Adolph Jessen, Ellsworth Daggett, R. C. Chambers, and others made it possible for farmers and their families to live there. The first permanent settlers included the James Warby and Franklin Twitchell families.

In 1917 the state legislature created Daggett County out of the northern part of Uintah County, and Manila was named the county seat. Daggett was the last of the state's counties to be organized.

Daggett County's economy is based primarily on the raising of livestock, hay, and alfalfa, but it is also an important producer of electric power for Utah and surrounding states. A new town, Dutch John, was built in 1957 near Flaming Gorge to provide a living place for people who work at the dam. Flaming Gorge Reservoir is a popular place for boating and fishing.

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Davis County

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A Brief History of Davis County*

The dominant geographical features of Davis County are the Wasatch Mountains on the east and the Great Salt lake on the west. The mountains provide a source of water and help ensure a remarkably uniform growing season. Not suprisingly, Davis County has always been a rich agricultural area. It was attractive to people even before the time of permanent white settlement. The resources of Davis County were likely used by prehistoric populations beginning as early as 11,000 years ago.

The county's great agricultural potential was recognized quickly by the Mormon pioneers, and during their first winter in Utah (1847-48) several of them moved livestock into that area for winter forage. By 1850 a number of farms dotted the south half of Davis County. By the 1870s the county was clearly the garden spot of Utah. In addition to producing bounteous harvests and prize-winning livestock, Davis County farmers led out boldly in experimenting with new crops, such as sorghum and alfalfa, new equipment, such as headers and threshers, and new methods, such as dry farming and irrigation management.

Economic prosperity, built on this farming base, followed Davis County into the 20th century. By 1910 the county sported two gristmills, two nurseries, eight irrigation companies, and six canning factories. Five years later it also had a sugar factory. A great variety of crops, fruit, and livestock was raised. New schoolhouses, chapels, stores, and other structures popped up on the landscape. Three railroads served the county's transportation needs.

During and immediately after World War II, significant changes began to appear in Davis County. Farming, while still important, began to lose its position as the economic leader. Defense installations it the Clearfield-Layton area, such as Hill Air Force Base and the Naval Supply Depot, began to employ large numbers of people. When the navy depot closed, industry and related enterprises purchased the buildings in 1963 and developed the site into the Freeport Center, a bustling manufacturing and distribution center. Suburbs to meet housing needs developed around the Freeport-Hill hub and also in the southern part of the county for people who commuted to Salt Lake City. Service industries, to support this growing population, started to become prominent in the county's economic make-up.

Although the state's smallest county in size, Davis is one of the fastest growing in population. The number of residents doubled between 1910 and 1950, doubled again by 1960, doubled again by 1975, and is expected to double again by 1996. It is presently Utah's third most populous county.

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Duchesne County

Duchesne County Census

A Brief History of Duchesne County*

Much of present-day Duchesne County was once part of the sprawling Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation. Today most of the county is owned or controlled by individual Indians or the Ute Indian Tribe.

The Uintah Reservation was created in 1861 by President Abraham Lincoln for the permanent home of the Uintah and White River Utes. Later the Uncompahgre Utes were moved to the Uintah and newly created Uncompahgre Indian reservations from western Colorado. At the turn of the century under the Dawes Act, both Indian reservations were thrown open to homesteaders. This was done after allotments of land were made to Indians of the three tribes. On August 27, 1905, homesteading began in earnest on the former Uintah Reservation.

The settlement of Duchesne County is unique in Utah history, for unlike much of the state, it did not occur under the direction of Brigham Young or the Mormon church. Rather, it was settled by individuals who obtained 160 acres under the federal Homestead Act. Homesteaders were required to prove that they intended to farm the land. After five years of living on the land, making improvements, and paying $1.25 per acre, homesteaders were given title to their homesteads.

As in other areas of the state, farmers of the county needed water. The Dry Gulch Irrigation Company was incorporated in 1905 by Wilham H. Smart and Reuben S. Collett to aid farmers in securing water rights from the state and to help them divert water onto their lands from the many streams flowing through the county. Other irrigation companies were also organized. Some were successful, some were not. Homesteaders on Blue Bench, located just north of the town of Duchesne, organized the Blue Bench Irrigation Company. With financial support from wealthy Jesse Knight of Provo, heroic efforts were made over several decades to divert water from the Duchesne River to farmsteads on Blue Bench. This gallant effort ended in failure for the farmers and financial disaster for Knight.

Duchesne County is bordered on the east and west by Uintah and Wasatch counties respectively, on the north by Summit County, and on the south by Carbon County. The legislature created Duchesne County in 1914 from part of Wasatch County. The state's highest mountain, King's Peak at 13,528 feet above sea level, is located in the county's Uinta Mountains. Major streams running through the county include the Strawberry, Duchesne, Lake Fork, and Yellowstone rivers.

The High Uintas Primitive Area, situated in the northern portion of the county, is dotted with some of the most beautiful alpine lakes anywhere in the West. The lakes are free of ice for only a few months of the year.

The county's economy is based primarily on the livestock industry, but the area is also rich in oil and natural gas. As in Uintah County to the east, Duchesne's oil and natural gas extraction industries fluctuate according to international oil and natural gas markets.

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Emery County

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A Brief History of Emery County*

Emery County in southeastern Utah is bordered on the north by Carbon County (which was created from Emery in 1894), on the west by the Wasatch Plateau and the original settlements in Sanpete and Sevier counties from which most Emery County settlers came, on the south by the remote artificial boundary with Wayne County, and on the east by the Green River--the natural boundary with Grand County (which was created from Emery County in 1890). Emery County includes three geographical areas: the mountains of the Wasatch Plateau; Castle Valley, where the major settlements are located; and the desert of the San Rafael Swell, the San Rafael Reef, Cedar Mountain, and the remote stretches of land west of the Green River. The San Rafael River, the lifeblood of the county, originates in the Wasatch Plateau where the headwaters are stored in several reservoirs for agricultural and industrial use. It flows into Castle Valley in three branches -- Huntington Creek, Cottonwood Creek, and Ferron Creek -- which unite to form the San Rafael River after they pass the communities and adjacent farm land. It then twists its way through the rock and desert to its junction with the Green River.

Occupation of the San Rafael region dates back thousands of years to include people of the Archaic Period who were followed by those of the Fremont Culture who inhabited present-day Emery County from about A.D. 500 to 1300 Evidence of these people can still be found in numerous pictograph and petroglyph panels, such as those in Temple Mountain Wash, Muddy Creek, Ferron Box, Black Dragon Canyon, and Buckhorn Wash, all sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In historic times Ute Indians occupied sites in Castle Valley, and travelers along the Old Spanish Trail also passed through the present county.

In 1875 livestock growers from Sanpete County, recognizing the settlement potential of the region, brought cattle and sheep into Castle Valley to graze. With a shortage of sufficient land and water in Sanpete County and a strong desire by Mormon church leaders to acquire unoccupied land in the region before non-Mormons did, young families began moving into Castle Valley in the fall of 1877 to take up homesteads in what would become the settlements of Huntington, Ferron, Castle Dale, and Orangeville.

Although livestock and farming remained the mainstay of the county's economy throughout most of its history, two related events affected the region's economic stability: the completion of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad through Emery in 1883 and the development of the coal mines at Scofield, Castle Gate, and Sunnyside in Carbon County by 1895. The railroad provided the transportation for produce and livestock, while the mines provided a nearby market for animals and vegetables and an opportunity for some Emery residents to work in the mines during winter and farm during summer. The D&RGW also led to the establishment of the town of Green River, although the site had been an important part of the Old Spanish Trail and a mail station had been established there before completion of the railroad. During the 1970s Emery County's population grew significantly because of the construction by Utah Power and Light Company of large power plants in Castle Dale and Huntington and the opening of large coal mines to fuel the power plants.

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Grand County

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A Brief History of Grand County*

Grand County is situated on the Colorado Plateau eastern Utah. The plateau includes two-thirds of the state of Utah and parts of Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. Composed mostly of sandstone and limestone, the plateau has been eroded by large rivers and other water sources into huge canyons and complex erosional forms that make it a rugged but scenically spectacular region.

Much of the Colorado Plateau in prehistoric times was inhabited by the Anasazi. First arriving perhaps as early as the time of Christ, the Anasazi had disappeared by A.D. 1300, probably due to years of drought. Today the remains of their cliff houses and rock art in the canyons delight explorers. A petroglyph of a mammoth or mastodon on a canyon wall west of Moab suggests occupation by Early Man.

The first white men to enter the present area of Grand County were Spanish explorers who discovered a crossing of the Colorado River at the site of the present highway bridge at Moab. Later Spanish traders and American fur trappers developed the route known as the Spanish Trail, using that crossing and one across the Green River above the present Emery County town of that name.

The first attempt by Mormon colonists to settle the Moab area was a failure. The Elk Mountain Mission reached Moab Valley in 1855 and established a small community, but the Indians who were already farming the fertile Colorado River bottoms regarded them as competition and drove them out after they had been there only a few weeks. Not until the very late 1870s and 1880s did a few Mormon families find it possible to build permanent homes.

Most of the history of Grand County has been the story of small family farms and orchards, mining for potash and uranium, and livestock. Large sheep and cattle companies have found abundant forage for their livestock in the canyons and the LaSal Mountains, and cowboys and outlaws figure prominently in the area's folklore. The uranium boom of the 1950s brought the first real population expansion to the area and saw the creation of a few large fortunes as well as many failures.

Most recently the income from tourism has been the county's major economic resource. Arches National Monument was established in 1929, and consistently increasing numbers of visitors led to its upgrading to National Park status in 1971. During the 1970s and 1980s Moab became perhaps the most important center for river running, mountain-bicycling, and four-wheel drive recreation in Utah.

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Garfield County

Garfield County Census

A Brief History of Garfield County*

The Colorado River and Lake Powell mark the eastern border of remote, sparsely populated Garfield County. Other geographical features include the Henry Mountains in the northeast and the forested, high plateaus in the western half of the county. The two areas have 11 peaks over 10,000 feet. The Sevier River system runs north through western Garfield, and the Escalante River empties into the Colorado.

Traces of the two major prehistoric formative Indian cultures -the Fremont and Anasazi-- have been found in the county. In historic times Southern Paiutes and Utes used the land.

The first white settlers made the difficult trip from Beaver and Parowan through the mountains to the Panguitch area in March 1864. The village, abandoned during the Black Hawk War (1865-68), was not resettled until 1871. The territorial legislature created the county in 1882 and, at the suggestion of Gov. Eli H. Murray, named it after assassinated President James A. Garfield. Boulder, settled in 1889, was the most isolated town in Utah until the mid-1930s when Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) workers constructed a road from Boulder to Escalante. The CCC also reseeded ranges and built telephone lines, ranger stations, and trails.

Vast rangelands and some of the state's largest forest reserves have made cattle ranching and lumber Garfield County's most important industries since pioneer times. The forests also provide many recreational sites, and Panguitch Lake is one of the state's prime fishing waters. The creation of Bryce Canyon National Park in 1928 increased the importance of tourism to the local economy. The large sections of Capitol Reef National Park and the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area that lie within the county remained largely inaccessible in the late 1980s. The proposed, controversial paving of the Burr Trail through the Waterpocket Fold area of Capitol Reef would, however, expand travel in eastern Garfield. The seasonal nature of lumbering and tourism often gives the county higher than average unemployment.

The Upper Valley oil field in central Garfield is a sizeable oil producing area. The county also has large coal fields as well as tar sands and uranium, but these energy-related resources have not been developed. Mining for other minerals has been very limited.

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Iron County

Iron County Census

A Brief History of Iron County*

Iron County is a study in contrast from its arid western reaches of Escalante Desert and Great Basin ranges to the meadows and forests of the High Plateau on the east. The Markagunt Plateau is creased by the colorful formations of Cedar Breaks National Monument, a kind of miniature Bryce Canyon. Brian Head (11,307 feet), named for a profile resembling William Jennings Bryan, rises abruptly behind Iron County's major string of settlements and extracts a toll of precipitation from passing westerlies to feed the headwaters of the Sevier River.

Parowan Valley was home to the Fremont people who constructed granaries and pit houses dating from about A.D. 750 to 1250. An unusual variety of petroglyphs of different periods were pecked into the stone of Parowan Gap about 12 miles northwest of Parowan. Cedar City is the tribal headquarters of the modern Southern Paiute Indian Reservation. Their ancestors used the plants and animals of the basin/plateau environment in a complex seasonal pattern. The Dominguez-Escalante expedition traveled through the area on October 12, 1776, on its unsuccessful search for a route to central California. Fur trapper Jedediah S. Smith was the first Anglo-American to visit present Iron County during his amazing journey of 1826. Mormon settlers dispatched by Brigham Young established Parowan in January 1851 as the mother colony of the southern frontier. Cedar City (originally Coal Creek) was founded the same year. Several pioneer log homes remain in the county as well as some English two-bay log barns now very rare in the state.

Coal in the canyons east of Cedar City and iron ore in the mountains west inspired the early Iron Mission that proved marginally successful as a pioneer attempt at self-sufficiency. Modern mining and transportation turned Iron toward a new era befitting the county name. Old Iron Town still has a fine beehive coking oven among its ruins. The west end of the county also has some historic and current precious metal mining. The Escalante Desert has changed its name to Escalante Valley, reflecting the rich irrigation agriculture of hay, small grains, and potatoes.

Iron County has a more balanced and broadly based economy than most of rural Utah. Located on Interstate 15, Cedar City is 500 miles from Los Angeles, 180 miles from Las Vegas, and 260 miles from Salt lake, and about midway between L.A. and Denver via I-70. Its location and size have made it a regional trade center and supplier of services. The concessionaire for nearby national parks (an edge of Zion is in the county) has offices here, as do regional offices of the Bureau of Land Management, Dixie National Forest, and Utah Wildlife Resources. A railroad spur and regional airline still serve the city. A rocket motor fuel plant is under construction. A very good four-year liberal arts college, Southern Utah State, combined with a peerless Shakespearean Festival in the summer make Cedar City an attractive stop for some of the more than one million people who annually pass through.

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Juab County

Juab County Census

A Brief History of Juab County*

Juab County is a part of the Basin and Range physiographic province. Most of the fertile farming land is located in the Juab Valley near Nephi at the base of Mount Nebo (11,877 feet). The western portion of the county consists of broad, semiarid valleys and low desert mountains. The Wasatch Mountains are located to the east, and moving west there are the East Tintic Range, West Tintic Range, Thomas Range (Topaz Mountain, 7,113 feet), Fish Springs Range, and the southern tip of the Deep Creek Range in the extreme northwest corner of the county.

Archaic Period and Fremont Culture sites have been found in Juab County. Nephi Mounds north of Nephi is one of the most important Fremont agricultural sites in the eastern Great Basin. A portion of the Goshute Indian Reservation is located in the northwest corner of the county.

In 1776 the Dominguez-Escalante expedition crossed the county at the eastern end, from north to south, passing near present Nephi. Jedediah S. Smith traversed the western end of the county in 1826 and via Fish Springs in 1827. In 1843-44 John C. Fremont journeyed through the county's eastern end on his way north. Government explorers John W. Gunnison and J. H. Simpson traveled in the area in 1853 and 1859 respectively. Gunnison visited the southeast portion of the county while Simpson located the route later used by the Pony Express and transcontinental telegraph.

During 1860-63 Goshutes attacked an overland mail station at Willow Creek. As a result, the U.S. Army set up a camp at Cedar Summit and a cantonment at Fish Springs in 1863.

In 1852 the legislative assembly created Juab County, which extended as a narrow strip to what was then the western boundary of Utah Territory (now the western boundary of Nevada). The western portion was reduced in 1854 and 1856 to form counties in Nevada, and several other changes in Juab's borders have been made over the years.

The first settlement in Juab Valley occurred in 1851 when a group of Mormon settlers arrived near Salt Creek at present day Nephi. Their economy was based primarily on agriculture, In 1869 precious metals were discovered in the Tintic region, changing the economic and industrial destiny of Juab County. The towns of Diamond, Silver City, Mammoth, and especially Eureka became the main areas of the Tintic Mining District, which by 1899 was labeled one of the foremost mining districts in the country. From 1870 to 1899 Tintic produced approximately $35,000,000 in mineral wealth. The metals in Tintic consisted of silver, gold, copper, lead, zinc, and some uranium at Topaz Mountain. Mining continued through the 1950s, and even today some mining operations continue on a small scale. In recent years several small manufacturing firms have helped to diversify Juab's economy.

Recreation at the White Sand Dunes, Little Sahara Recreation Area, remains very popular, attracting tourists and visitors to western Juab.

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Kane County

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A Brief History of Kane County*

The high desert landscape of Kane County belongs to the Colorado Plateau geographical province. The waters of man-made Lake Powell on the Colorado River form the county's eastern border, and most of the streams in Kane are part of the Colorado River system. The northwest corner of the county is forested.

The county's prehistoric Indian dwellers were part of the Anasazi Culture. Archaeologists have recorded hundreds of sites on Fifty Mile Mountain within the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, but few have been excavated because of their remoteness. The Southern Paiutes occupied the county in historic times.

Several towns, including Kanab, were first settled in the mid-1860s and then abandoned. Kanab was resettled in 1870 by Levi Stewart and others at the request of Brigham Young. In March 1874 Young encouraged the formation of a United Order at Orderville. Although United Orders were organized in many Utah towns, including Kanab, the Orderville experiment in communal living was more successful and longer-lived, making this town unique among Utah settlements. By the 1880s Mormon church support had become lukewarm, and the United Order of Orderville was dissolved.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries a majority of the county's residents were farmers or ranchers. In 1922 when Deadwood Coach with Tom Mix was filmed in Kane County, the Parry brothers of Kanab led in the development of lodging, food, and other services for film crews, and by the 1930s Kanab was called Little Hollywood because so many movies were made there. The 1920s and 1930s also saw Kanab become a tourist center for visitors to Bryce Canyon, Zion, and Grand Canyon National Parks. During the construction of Glen Canyon Dam near Page, Arizona, which began in 1956, Kanab's population doubled and the economy boomed. The creation of Lake Powell, one of Utah's major recreational sites, brought new service industries connected with boating and fishing to the area, especially the Bullfrog Basin Marina in the extreme northeast corner of the county.

Enormous coal reserves in the Kaiparowits Plateau and Alton fields are Kane County's most important natural resource and may, when environmental issues are resolved, dictate a new economic future based on mining.

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Millard County

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A Brief History of Millard County*

Millard County is bordered on the east by the Pahvant Range. West to the Nevada border lie the broad valleys and desert mountain ranges typical of the Great Basin. The Sevier River, which begins in mountains east of Cedar City, drains into the sometimes dry Sevier Lake in central Millard. A huge granitic upthrust in the House Range, volcanic cones, and numerous fossil beds provide clues to past geologic activity and prehistoric animal and plant life.

The county is known for a Folsom Early Man site in the Sevier Desert occupied 7,000 or 8,000 years ago. In addition, the Fremont Culture which disappeared ca. A.D. 1300 lived in small villages with semi-subterranean dwellings. Historic Indian groups include Southern Paiutes, Pahvant Utes, and Goshutes. A small Indian reservation is located at Kanosh.

In October 1851 two groups left Salt Lake City for east Millard County. Some 30 families led by Anson Call made the first permanent white settlement, while territorial officials, including Gov. Brigham Young and surveyor Jesse W. Fox, selected a site for the capital, Fillmore being near the geographical center of Utah Territory. The legislature met in Fillmore a few times, but in December 1856 it voted to move the capital to Salt Lake City because Fillmore was too far from major cities.

On October 26, 1853, seven members of a transcontinental railroad survey team led by Lt. John W. Gunnison of the Topographical Engineers were killed southwest of Delta by Indians, a tragic incident in the Walker War (1853-54) that was apparently triggered by the hostile actions of a group of emigrants against the Indians.

Ranching and farming developed slowly. In the early 20th century Millard was second to Tooele in the number of sheep on its ranges, but later cattle became the major livestock interest. The establishment of the Union Pacific line through west Millard County and the founding of Delta in 1907 led to the most important agricultural development -- large-scale alfalfa seed production amounting eventually to three-fourths of the state's crop. The Yuba Dam and other water projects made this venture possible.

During World War II the federal government forcibly relocated 110,000 Japanese-Americans from their West Coast homes to special camps. Topaz, a relocation center near Delta, housed some 8,700 internees, making it the largest "city" in Millard for a few years.

Mining and smelting have contributed to economic growth with Millard producing significant amounts of fluorspar, copper, manganese, sulphur, gypsum, beryllium, and salt. The most important industrial development, however, began in the 1970s when plans were made for the Intermountain Power Project's huge coal-burning plant near Delta. Southern California buys much of the electricity generated here.

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Morgan County

Morgan County Census

A Brief History of Morgan County*

Located in a high valley of the Wasatch Mountains, Morgan County is divided by the Weber River. The many streams that feed into the Weber made the valley attractive to fur trappers in the 1820s and to prehistoric Plains Indians and historic Shoshone and Ute Indians. In 1825, near present Mountain Green, trappers of the British Hudson's Bay Company under Peter Skene Ogden and competing American trappers came dangerously close to fighting, but Ogden kept the situation from becoming a major international incident.

The city of Morgan was settled in 1855, and the county was created in 1862. During the Utah War (1857-58), settlers in Milton supplied feed for the horses of Mormon troops stationed in canyon passes watching for Johnston's Army. Lot Smith of Stoddard blocked Echo Canyon, buried U.S. Army supply trains, and stampeded government horses and cattle. Despite such incidents, the "war" was settled peacefully.

Morgan has a larger percentage of privately owned land than any other county in Utah. Much of it is used for stock raising, especially beef and dairy cattle and sheep, and for hay and other field crops. Lumber was a major industry during 1860-75 in Hardscrabble Canyon. Thousands of railroad ties were furnished to build the Union Pacific Railroad line, and charcoal was shipped to Bingham for use in smelting. During the building of the UP Railroad in 1868, a number of businesses opened in Morgan City and it became the county's trade center. Some say it was the only incorporated city on the UP line between Ogden and Omaha, Nebraska.

In 1904 Morgan Canning Company was founded to can peas. The business grew and a second factory was built in Smithfield, Cache County. The company was sold to the California Packing Corporation in 1928. The manufacturing of Portland cement is a major local industry. This important industrial product has been produced at the Devil's Slide plant for more than 80 years. In addition to limestone -- the main ingredient in cement -- silver, lead, copper, coal, iron, sulphur, and mica have been found in Morgan, but most mining has been on a small scale. Agriculture, manufacturing, and trade do not provide enough jobs for residents, and in recent years more than half of those employed -- the largest percentage in any county -- have worked outside Morgan, mostly in the greater Ogden area.

The county has benefited from the Weber Basin Reclamation Project. Beginning in 1952, federal funds were used to construct dams and power plants. The Lost Creek and East Canyon reservoirs are popular recreation sites.

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Piute County

Piute County Census

A Brief History of Piute County*

Piute County was split off from Beaver County in 1865. Its western boundary approximates the crest of the Tushar Mountains with the highest peaks in the High Plateaus section of the Colorado Plateau. Most of the population is concentrated in the Sevier River Valley. Grass Valley (Otter Creek) lies between the Sevier Plateau in the center of the county and the Parker Range on the eastern border.

Evidence of prehistoric inhabitants has been found in the caves of Kingston Canyon (now an attractive local recreation area). The county has been occupied by both the Fremont and the later Paiute Indians who were mainly gatherers and hunters of food and who produced beautiful baskets for many uses and rabbit-skin clothing for winter protection.

Circleville and Junction were settled in 1864 by a group of Mormon pioneers from Ephraim. The Sevier Valley provided good grazing, and livestock remains important to the economy. Wild hay, alfalfa, grain, and pastures provide feed for the limited beef and dairy production. Earth-covered potato cellars remain as evidence of a successful crop in an earlier era.

The Piute School District employs 30 residents. Less obvious contributors to the local economy are a small group of retirees in the larger towns. As in most of Utah's rural counties, "home" has a strong pull on the natives while economic forces tend to push recent high school graduates toward the opportunities of urban areas. Piute residents depend on nearby Richfield north on Highway 89 for major services.

Earth's riches once played a dominant role in the economy. A gold and silver boom in the Tushars spawned such towns as Bullion, Kimberly, and Marysvale. The Ohio Mining District was organized in 1868, and by 1872 Bullion Canyon boasted 5O buildings and hundreds of eager miners. Kimberly, in the Gold Mountain District, developed around the rich Annie Laurie claim, located in 1891. The completion of a Denver and Rio Grande Railroad branch line to Marysvale in 1900 linked Piute's mines and farms to the marketplace. Later, lead, zinc, alunite, and uranium were significant products. Piute's huge reserves of high-grade alunite ores were especially important during World Wars I and II. Cyclical mining, now in a bust mode, could boom again.

Recreational activities also create some job opportunities. Piute and Otter Creek reservoirs provide good boating, water skiing, and fishing. The Parker ranch just south of Circleville has become a tourist attraction because of its association with outlaw Butch Cassidy.

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Rich County

Rich County Census | **Rich County Web Site**

A Brief History of Rich County*

Rich County in the northeast corner of Utah occupies a long, narrow area approximately 18 miles wide and 56 miles in length, extending north of Echo Canyon. It is bordered on the east by Wyoming and on the north by Idaho with the southern half of Bear Lake extending into the county. Rich is noted for a so-called buffalo jump kill site where game was slaughtered by Early Man.

Fur trappers visited the Bear River Valley as early as Donald Mackenzie's first Snake River expedition of 1818-19 when Michel Bourdon gave the Bear River its name. The area around the Bear River became a favorite spot for trappers, and trappers' rendezvous were held on the south shore of Bear Lake in 1827 and 1828. The Oregon Trail over which thousands of immigrants to the Northwest traveled cut through a corner of the county. Dr. Marcus Whitman and his wife, Narcissa Prentiss Whitman, the famous Oregon pioneers, traveled on this trail in 1836. The first white settler in the area, Thomas L. "Peg Leg" Smith, operated a cattle business, trading post, and horse exchange on the Bear River near present Dingle, Idaho. Brigham Young unsuccessfully attempted to purchase his business in 1848, but Smith remained in the area until 1863 then he became discouraged and left.

When Congress passed the Homestead Act of 1862, Brigham Young became anxious to obtain control of the land before non-Mormons did. In August 1863 he called Charles C. Rich to lead an exploring party into the Bear Lake Valley to select a site for settlement. The fist settlement, known as North Twin Creek and later Paris Creek, was made near present Paris, Idaho. Since Bannock and Shoshone Indians also used the valley, Rich obtained their permission to settle there in order to minimize conflicts. Other settlements were founded, including Round Valley in 1863; Kennedyville (Garden City) and Laketown, 1864; Woodruff, 1865; Randolph, 1870; and Argyle, 1875.

Originally part of Green River County, which was formed in 1852, it became Richland County in 1864; the name was shortened to Rich in 1868, and a final alteration occurred in 1872 when part of Cache County was added to it by the territorial legislature.

Harsh winters affected the settlement of the Bear Lake Valley. Woodruff averages only 57 frost-free days a year and holds the record for the coldest temperature ever recorded in the state (-50 F. degrees on February 6, 1899).

Even though much of Rich County is highland, it also has fertile lowlands that support productive farms and livestock, and three fourths of the county's land is used for agriculture, primarily grazing. livestock and livestock products account for the greater part of the county's income.

The development of Bear Lake as a popular recreation area with resorts, public beaches, and summer homes has helped to diversify Rich County's economy.

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Salt Lake County

Salt Lake County Census | Salt Lake County Web Site

A Brief History of Salt Lake County*

The fertile Salt Lake Valley lies between the Wasatch Mountains on the east and the Oquirrhs on the west. The active Wasatch Fault runs through the eastern part of the county. The Jordan River flows north through the valley to Great Salt Lake, and canyon streams provide culinary and agricultural water and in pioneer times powered mills.

Centuries before settlement prehistoric Indians and the historic Northern Shoshone and Ute Indians used the area for hunting, fishing, and gathering seasonal foods. The first white men to see the valley were trappers associated with William H. Ashley in 1524-25.

Permanent settlement began in 1847 with the arrival of the first Mormon wagon train, which included three women and three Blacks. The advance company planted the first crops on July 23, and the pioneers at Brigham Young's direction explored nearby areas, built a fort, and surveyed Salt Lake City. In October 1847 17-year old Mary Jane Dilworth opened the first school in her tent.

In the next two years a dozen towns were founded in the county. With self-sufficiency a major goal, the settlers established basic industries to supply everything from pottery to printing paper and experimented with mixed success in growing all kinds of plants. In 1862 U.S. troops established Fort Douglas to protect communications and transportation routes. Tens of thousands of Mormon immigrants funneled through Salt Lake City to outlying settlements, and, additionally, for thousands of California-bound travelers the city was the last major supply point. As the headquarters of the LDS church, and later the territorial and state capital, Salt Lake City and its county have always been the center of population, political power, and economic strength.

Political diversity came to the county in 1870 with the founding of the non-Mormon Liberal party, and until statehood in 1896 the Mormon-Gentile conflict was intense. Industrial development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries increased diversity with the arrival of many Greeks, Italians, Yugoslavs, Blacks, Japanese, and Mexicans. The migration of Native Americans to the larger cities and the immigration of southeast Asians and others continue the trend. Hispanics are the largest minority in the county.

Although cities and suburbs now cover much of the land, the county retains traces of its agricultural beginning as a producer of eggs, hogs, wheat, and garden vegetables. Mines in Alta and Bingham, smelters in Midvale and Murray, and the Salt Lake Mining and Stock Exchange made the county a regional mining hub.

Printing and publishing, which began in 1850, continue as major industries. Other important manufactured goods include pharmaceuticals, candy and other food products, computers, military guidance systems, and artificial organs. The county leads in trade, services, transportation, communications, finance, insurance, and construction. Salt Lake International Airport, major medical facilities, and television broadcasting serve all of Utah and parts of the Intermountain region. Government, including education, is the leading employer in the county.

The founding of the University of Deseret (Utah) in 1850 and the dedication of the Salt Lake Theatre in 1862 provide two examples of the early commitment of residents to education and culture. The county is home to several public and private colleges and dozens of theatrical, musical, and dance organizations.

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San Juan County

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A Brief History of San Juan County*

San Juan County is a part of the Colorado Plateau, a geologic region formed mostly of sandstone and limestone and including two-thirds of the state of Utah as well as parts of Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. Mighty rivers like the Colorado and the San Juan have carved deep canyons and unusual erosional forms through the colorful sedimentary rock, and many people find the area spectacularly beautiful on a grand scale.

In prehistoric times the San Juan country was the home of the Anasazi until about 1300 A.D. Their cliff houses, pictographs, and petroglyphs continue to baffle and fascinate visitors. The Basketmakers, the earliest phase of the Anasazi Culture, were first identified and studied in Grand Gulch. The Navajo Indians, who were latecomers to the area, now occupy a large part of San Juan County from the San Juan River to the Arizona border.

Although there were a few white residents along the San Juan River before 1879, the Mormon scouts who planned the famous Hole-in-the-Rock Trail that year began the full-scale settlement of San Juan County. The 180 pioneers who left Escalante in the fall of that year arrived at the present site of Bluff on April 6, 1880.

Farming along the San Juan River bottoms was a chancy proposition, for the treacherous river either flooded or went dry too often for dependable irrigation. Early cattlemen like the brothers Al and Jim Scorup did better in the rough canyon country than the farmers. After a decade of fighting the elements many settlers discovered that life was somewhat easier in the high country around the Abajo Mountains, and the towns of Blanding and Monticello replaced Bluff as San Juan's main focal points.

Mining has been an inconsistent but exciting part of the economy of the county. A gold rush on the San Juan River in the early l890s was short-lived, but miners in Glen Canyon of the Colorado eked a better living from deposits along the river bars. Oil and gas exploration around the turn of the century was productive, and one can still see wells operating along the San Juan River. The uranium boom of the early l950s brought large numbers of people into the area and created a few large fortunes.

At present most residents see tourism as their most promising economic resource, particularly since the creation of Lake Powell in the early 1960s. Rainbow Bridge is the most popular tourist attraction in the county, but the marinas at Hite, Hall's Crossing, and Piute Farms draw large numbers of visitors, and river trips through Cataract Canyon and on the San Juan are also popular.

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Sanpete County

Sanpete County Census

A Brief History of Sanpete County*

Set in the northwest corner of the High Plateaus, Sanpete Valley is tucked between the higher Wasatch Plateau to the east and the San Pitch or Gunnison Plateau to the west. The valley drains south to the Gunnison Valley section of the Sevier River which then drains northwest to the Great Basin. Mount Nebo, at the southern end of the Wasatch Mountains, across the border in Juab County, is prominently viewed in northwest Sanpete and its foothills divide Sanpete Valley into two northern prongs.

Sanpete's prehistoric inhabitants include the Fremont agriculturalists. Mounds have yielded small stone and mud-walled structures and pottery, points, and metates, but Sanpete has not been systematically studied like its neighbors south and east. Ute chief Wakara enslaved the San Pitch Indians who gathered and hunted in the local marshes and canyons. The Utes had adopted the horse and other elements of Plains Culture and ranged widely with an apparent winter base in Sanpete. Wakara invited Mormon settlement, perhaps for the resources it would bring, and then opposed it in a war of 1853-54 which caused a period of "forting up" and abandonment of towns. The Black Hawk War of 1863-68 brought a more serious and prolonged period of guerrilla raids.

The first Mormon settlers arrived in fall 1849. They chose the Manti site because of a nearby warm spring, the extensive limestone quarries (later exploited commercially) and the fine farming and grazing lands nearby. The larger towns were established in the first decade of settlement. Scandinavian immigrants soon made up a sizeable minority and elements of their culture and humor remain today. The towns peaked in population about 1900-1910 and declined until the 1970s. The county was created in 1830, enlarged, and later reduced in size.

Sanpete's location at Utah's geographical heart masks its isolation. Much interstate and recreational traffic bypass it. None of the small, scattered towns has developed as a center of economic development.

Since settlement, Sanpete's economy has been agriculturally based. In its first few decades it served as Utah's granary. Cattle have always been important but currently only a few large dairies survive. New beef breeds from Switzerland and France have joined the traditional Hereford and Angus to produce lower fat, faster-growing animals. Sheep dominated the local economy from the 1880s through the 1920s, and Sanpete played a prominent part in world markets for a time. Turkeys, grown casually as a farmyard fowl, became a cooperative, integrated industry in response to the 1930s depression. Today they rule the roost in Sanpete, which ranks among the top ten turkey-producing counties in the country. Snow College, a two-year institution in Ephraim, plays an important role in the local economy.

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Sevier County

Sevier County Census

A Brief History of Sevier County*

Sevier County is located in the High Plateau country of central Utah. Most of the towns lie near the Sevier River in a fertile valley bordered on the west by the Pahvant Range and on the east by the Wasatch and Fish Lake plateaus. National forests cover almost half of the land. The area is seismically active, and a number of earthquakes have centered in the southern part of the county on the Sevier Fault.

Many prehistoric Indian sites have been found. Sudden Shelter, an Archaic site on Ivie Creek, contains one of the longest cultural time records in Utah east of the Wasatch 7080 to 80 B.P. (before the present). Fremont Culture sites continue to be found, especially during construction projects. Fremont State Park preserves artifacts from a recently uncovered prehistoric village.

Travelers on the Old Spanish Trail and mountain man Jedediah S. Smith were among those who crossed the county before white settlement. The Southern Exploring Company under Mormon Apostle Parley P. Pratt visited the area during the winter of 1849-50, and George W. Bean explored the Sevier Valley in 1863. Early in 1864 ten men settled in the Richfield area. Several other towns were founded in the next few years. However, violent confrontations with the Ute Indians during the Black Hawk War (1865-68) forced abandonment of all the Sevier settlements in April 1867. Attempts to resettle did not succeed until 1870.

The area grew rapidly. Richfield, with 8 families and 12 men in 1871, had 753 people by 1874 and was on its way to becoming a major regional commercial center and, eventually, the provider of hospital, airport, and other services for a large area. Many of the county's early settlers were Scandinavians who brought distinctive building styles and cultural practices with them.

The Deseret Telegraph extended its line from Gunnison to Monroe in 1872, providing a vital communications link to the territory's larger cities. The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad reached Salina in 1891 and Richfield in 1896, improving the marketing of Sevier agricultural products. The building of Interstate 70 in the 1980s linked the county to the national freeway system.

Sheep and cattle remain important to the local economy as do dairy products, field crops, and, in recent years, turkey raising. Trade and manufacturing -- including food processing clothing and building products -- have contributed to the county's growth as well. Sevier is the state's leading producer of gypsum, a mineral used in building products such as plaster and plasterboard produced in Sigurd. The county has coal mines and natural gas reserves in the northeast and major geothermal resources that could be tapped for energy production.

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Summit County

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A Brief History of Summit County*

Summit County was created in 1854 from existing Green River and Great Salt Lake counties, and Coalville was chosen as the county seat. The Uinta Mountains dominate the eastern portion of the county, and the western section is a high back valley of the Wasatch Mountains.

The first white men to visit the area were fur trappers and traders of the 1820s and 1830s. Until the arrival of the Mormons in 1847 Summit County was hunting grounds for Northern Shoshone Indians. The Weber and Provo rivers, draining the western slope of the Uintas, provided them with fish.

In 1846 Lansford W. Hastings, a California promoter, announced a new cutoff on the California Trail that eliminated hundreds of miles and days of travel. The cutoff turned southwest from Fort Bridger, Wyoming, and entered Utah and the northeastern corner of Summit County through Echo Canyon. It followed the Weber River to Salt Lake Valley, went around the south shore of the Great Salt Lake, and then west into Nevada. The first group to take this new cutoff was the Donner-Reed party in 1846. Blazing a road through the Wasatch Mountains cost them many days, and when they reached the Sierra they ran into early snow. Many lost their lives. A year later the Mormons adopted part of the Hastings Cutoff, but when they reached the Weber River they turned southwest to Emigration Canyon. This became the main trail for the immigration of the Mormons to Utah. In 1869 the Union Pacific Railroad, builder of the eastern portion of the transcontinental railroad, followed a portion of the Hastings Cutoff, and today part of Interstate 80 follows the Hastings and Mormon trails and the UPRR route through northern Summit County.

The first settlers in Summit County arrived at Parley's Park in 1850. Wanship was settled in 1854, followed by Coalville, Hoytsville and Henefer in 1859. When coal was discovered near Coalville, the Mormons established a settlement there. During the 1860s wagons hauled tons of coal from Coalville to the Salt Lake Valley settlements. In 1873 the Utah Eastern Railroad built a line from Echo Junction to Coalville to haul coal. Eventually this line became part of the Union Pacific Railroad.

The discovery of silver, lead, and zinc in the Wasatch Mountains in the l870s soon overshadowed the settlement and economic activities of the rest of the county. Park City, a mining town founded in 1872, continued to expand into the 20th century. Many individuals made fortunes from the Park City mines. Mansions on South Temple in Salt Lake City reflect some of this wealth.

Mining continued until the l950s when it no longer was profitable. For several decades Park City was on the verge of becoming a ghost town, but the area's rugged terrain and deep snow led to its rebirth as a winter sports center. Today skiing is a major economic activity in western Summit County while the rest of the county is still noted for its farming and ranching. Other recreational opportunities including boating, fishing and tourism, add to the county's diversified economy.

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Tooele County

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A Brief History of Tooele County*

Tooele County is Basin and Range country. Most of its towns lie in a broad valley between the mineral rich Oquirrh Mountains on the eastern border and the Onaqui and Stansbury Mountains. The Great Salt Lake Desert covers most of western Tooele, except the southwest corner where the Deep Creek Mountains rise.

Prehistoric Indian sites have been discovered in the county, but the unique story is the survival of the Goshutes, a branch of the Western Shoshone, who claim this harsh environment as their ancestral homeland. Their ingenious use of the limited plant and animal resources of the area amazed the first white travelers. The Goshute Reservation is in Skull Valley.

Tuilla, as it was originally spelled, was one of six counties created in January 1850. Its boundaries were changed a number of times before it achieved its present size as the state's second largest county.

The Mormons herded livestock in Tooele Valley before permanent settlement began in 1849. The early settlers farmed; built gristmills and sawmills; and manufactured salt, charcoal, lime, adobes, and woolen products. Large sheep and cattle herds were developed, and hay and grain became important crops. But mining and smelting, not agriculture led the county's growth from the 1860s to World War II.

The Rush Valley Mining District, organized in 1864 by soldiers from Fort Douglas, included all of the western Oquirrhs. More than 500 mining claims were located during the first year. Of the mining towns founded in Tooele County, Ophir and Mercur became the most important. Ophir boomed in the l870s with an estimated population of 6,000 and mines that produced millions in silver, lead, zinc, and gold. Mercur endured several boom and bust cycles and two major fires. With a population estimated as high as 10,000 it flirted briefly with the idea of taking the county seat from Tooele City.

The International Smelting and Refining Company's smelter, built east of Tooele City in 1910, processed ore carried by aerial tramway from the Bingham mine for some 60 years. The plant attracted many immigrant workers, diversifying Tooele's ethnic and religious mix. The Tooele Valley Railroad, completed in 1909, served the smelter and created jobs.

Military installations built during World War II boosted the county's population and continue to pump millions of dollars into the local economy. Wendover Air Base (now closed) near the Nevada border became an important site for bomber training with almost 20,000 military and civilian personnel. Tooele Ordnance Depot (now Tooele Army Depot, TAD), built in 1942 on a huge tract of land south of Tooele City served as a major supply storage, and repair center employing almost 2,000 civilians in 1944. Activity at TAD peaked during the Korean War and again during the Vietnam conflict. Dugway Proving Grounds, a chemical and biological warfare test center built in the 1940s, became controversial in the 1970s when a large number of sheep in the area were killed, presumably a result of testing. Today most of western Tooele County is reserved for military use.

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Uintah County

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Uintah County Census

A Brief History of Uintah County*

Uintah County is located in the central portion of the Uinta Basin, part of which extends 60 miles into western Colorado. The northern rim of the Basin is formed by the Uinta Mountains, the western rim by the Wasatch Mountains, and the southern rim by the Roan and Book cliffs. The Basin is the geographical remains of prehistoric Uinta Lake, formed during the late Tertiary period, the same period when sediment was deposited in the lake bottom to form gilsonite, oil shale, tar sands, and oil. Ashley Creek and the White, Uinta, and Green rivers are the major streams in the county. The Green, the largest of the four, slices through the central portion of the county.

Prehistoric Indian sites suggest that the Uinta Basin was inhabited thousands of years ago by Archaic and the later Fremont peoples. In historic times it was part of the Utes' domain. The first white men in the area were Fathers Dominguez and Escalante who traveled through the Uinta Basin in 1776 searching for a land route to Monterey, California. In his diary, Escalante called the Basin ". . . a fine plain abounding in pasturage and fertile, arable land, provided it were irrigated . . ." Nearly 50 years later American and French trappers found the Basin rich in beaver and other wildlife. In 1831-32 Antoine Robidoux, a French trapper licensed by the Mexican government (Utah was part of Mexico until 1848), built a small trading post near present-day Whiterocks where trappers could trade beaver pelts for supplies. The post was abandoned in 1844 because of difficulties with the Indians.

In 1861 Brigham Young sent a small party to explore the Basin for possible settlement. They reported "that all that section of country lying between the Wasatch Mountains and the eastern boundary of the territory, and south of Green River country, was one vast contiguity of waste and measurably valueless. ..." So Young decided not to send settlers there.

That same year President Abraham Lincoln created the Uintah Indian Reservation, thus beginning the relocation of many Utah and Colorado Indians to the Uinta Basin. In the 1880s the Uncompahgre Reservation (now part of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation) was created in the southern portion of Uintah County. Ashley Valley was not part of either reservation, and by 1880 enough ranchers and farmers had settled there that the territorial legislature created Uintah County, taking most of the land from Wasatch County. The county seat, originally in Ashley, was later moved to the larger community of Vernal. With the building of irrigation canals other towns were founded, including Jensen, Maeser, and Tridell.

In about 1888 gilsonite was discovered in various parts of the county and on the eastern portion of the Uncompahgre and Uintah reservations. Miners quickly persuaded the federal government to withdraw 7,000 acres from the Uintah Reservation so that they could legally mine gilsonite. This area, called "The Strip," for a time lacked any law and order.

Uintah County's economy rests on farming, ranching, and extraction of oil and gas. It is increasingly influenced by world energy prices.

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Utah County

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A Brief History of Utah County*

The most striking geographical features of Utah County are the Wasatch Mountains along the eastern boundary and Utah Lake, the state's largest freshwater lake, to the west. The high mountains, rising over 11,000 feet, receive heavy snowfall which feeds the numerous rivers and creeks that flow into the lake. Though large in size, Utah Lake is very shallow 18 feet at its deepest point.

Before the valley was settled by Mormon pioneers in the 1840s and 50s, it was the home of the Ute Indians. They lived along the eastern shore of the lake and along the Jordan River and used fish as their main food. They were described as peaceful and kind by the Franciscan priests Dominguez and Escalante, who observed them in the summer of 1776. When the Dominguez-Escalante party came down Spanish Fork Canyon, they became the first non-Indians to enter Utah Valley.

Mormon pioneers began settling Utah Valley in 1849. Like the Indians before them, they chose to settle on the fertile, well-watered strip of land between the mountains and Utah Lake. Eventually, over a dozen towns were established between Lehi on the north and Santaquin on the south. Provo, named for the fur trapper Etienne Provost, has always been the largest town and the county seat.

Farming was the most important early activity in the county, with fruit growing and the processing of sugar beets being especially important. In recent years the center of the fruit industry in the county has shifted from Orem to the south end of the valley, where orchards are not threatened by housing developments.

Utah County holds an important place in the state's industrial history. The Provo Woolen Mill, which sold its first cloth in 1873, was the first large manufacturing plant in Utah. The first large-scale sugar beet factory in Utah was built in Lehi in 1890. The Olmstead power plant and the Telluride Institute at the mouth of Provo Canyon made many technological advances in electric power transmission in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Mining was also an important industry in Utah County. In the late 1800s and early 1900s there were many successful mines in American Fork Canyon and in the Tintic Mining District centered near Eureka, Juab County, and including part of western Utah County. Many of the fine homes and business buildings in Provo were constructed with mining money.

Today, Utah County is best known as the home of the Geneva steel plant and Brigham Young University. Geneva was constructed at this inland location during World War II in case the steel plants near the coast were destroyed in the war. BYU was established in 1875 as a small high-school level "academy," but it has grown to become a major university with 27,000 students. Both Geneva and BYU have contributed greatly to making the county what it is today.

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Wasatch County

Wasatch County Census

A Brief History of Wasatch County*

Heber Valley, one of several back valleys in the Wasatch Mountains, is often called Utah's Switzerland because of the rugged beauty of Mount Timpanogos located to the west, its climate, and a large population of Swiss that settled in Midway. Its highest peaks top 10,000 feet, and over half the land is 7,500 feet above sea level. The climate, classified as undifferentiated highlands, offers cool summers and very cold winters. The average annual precipitation is about 16 inches.

The county is divided into two watersheds--the Colorado and the Great Basin drainage systems. Because of its annual precipitation and its location between the Uinta and Wasatch mountains, Heber Valley is well endowed with water. Flowing from the East are Daniels, Lake Fork, and Center creeks. From the north and northeast is the Provo River. From the west Snake Creek drains a central portion of the Wasatch Mountains. Two additional sources of water are man-made; the Ontario Drain Tunnel west of Keetley drains many of the Park City mines, and the Weber/Provo diversion canal diverts water from the Weber across the Kamas prairie in Summit to the Provo River in Wasatch County.

Prior to the 1850s Heber Valley was an important summer hunting ground for the Timpanogos Utes living around Utah Lake. The first white men to visit the county were members of the Dominguez-Escalante expedition in 1776. They skirted Heber Valley, traveling down Diamond Fork to Spanish Fork Canyon and then into Utah Valley. Fifty years later fur trappers entered the county.

In 1824 and 1825 Etienne Provost from Taos, New Mexico, trapped beaver in the Uinta and Wasatch mountains. About that time William H. Ashley and members of his fur company from St. Louis also hunted and trapped for beaver in the county.

The first settlers came into Wasatch County from Utah Valley in the spring of 1859 and located a short distance north of present Heber City. That same year Midway and Charleston were also settled. In 1862 the territorial legislature created Wasatch County which then included all of the Uinta Basin. Wasatch in Ute means "mountain pass" or "low pass over high range." Heber City, named for Mormon Apostle Heber C. Kimball, was selected as the county seat. The last boundary change occurred in 1914 when Duchesne County was created out of the eastern half of Wasatch County. The county produces hay, dairy products, sheep, and cattle.

During the early 1900s, after the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad completed a line into the county from Provo, Heber City became an important shipping terminal for wool and sheep. In 1922 the Union Pacific Railroad constructed a spur from Park City to the mines west of Keetley and began shipping lead, zinc, and silver ore. Today neither railroad line is in full operation, and other economic activities are more important to the county than transportation and mining.

Strawberry Reservoir (completed in the 1910s), Deer Creek Reservoir (completed in the 1940s), and Jordanelle Reservoir (under construction in the 1980s), together with sparkling streams and beautiful mountain scenery, have made Wasatch a popular recreation area. The county provides excellent economic activities are more important to the county than transportation and mining.

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Washington County

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A Brief History of Washington County*

Washington County in the southwest corner of the state is nicknamed Dixie because it includes a large area around St. George, in the valley of the Virgin River and its tributaries, with the highest average temperatures in the state and very mild winters. The eastern third of the county, including spectacular Zion National Park, is part of the Colorado Plateau. The western two-thirds lies in the Basin and Range geographic province. The lowest point in the state, along Beaver Dam Wash (2,350 feet), is near the county's southwest corner, while the Pine Valley Mountains in the north top 10,000 feet.

Traces of the prehistoric Archaic and Anasazi cultures have been found in the area, and the Santa Clara and Virgin rivers provided an important base for the development of Southern Paiute life. The Dominguez-Escalante expedition in 1776 recorded the first description of the Indians in this area. In 1980 the federal government restored traditional tribal lands west of Santa Clara to the Shivwits branch of Southern Paiutes.

In an attempt to establish an overland route to the Pacific and southern California (the so-called Mormon Corridor) the Mormons founded a string of settlements running southwest from the Salt Lake Valley. Brigham Young sent small groups into southwestern Utah as early as 1852 to test the agricultural potential of the warm climate. Fort Harmony was established in 1852; Santa Clara, 1854; Washington, 1857; Toquerville, 1858; Grafton, 1859; and Adventure (Rockville), 1860. But until 1861--when several hundred families were called by church leaders to go to the area to raise cotton, figs, olives, grapes, sugar, almonds, and tobacco-colonization remained chiefly an experiment. St. George, settled in 1861, became the center of Dixie, and the colonists succeeded in producing sizable amounts of cotton, wine, and molasses. The demand for cotton lasted until after the Civil War. The wine industry also grew during this period, as did mining, but when mining decreased so did the demand for wine. During 1875-80 Silver Reef, northwest of Leeds, was a booming mining town, and Wells Fargo reportedly shipped more than $8,000,000 in bullion from the mines there.

The boundaries of Washington County, formed in 1852 by the legislature, stretched the entire width of the territory (then some 600 miles). After several changes the county achieved its present size and shape in 1892.

The economic base of the county has changed significantly over the years from its agricultural foundation to a much more diversified mix. Zion National Park (established in 1909 as Mukuntuweap National Monument) has always been one of the state's premier tourist attractions. The trade and service industries have grown steadily to accommodate not only increasing numbers of tourists but also the development of the area as a major retirement center. Communities such as Bloomington, south of St. George and numerous condominiums and trailer parks house thousands of winter residents. Two-year Dixie College with some 2,300 students is a major employer.

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Wayne County

Wayne County Census

A Brief History of Wayne County*

Wayne County lies entirely within the colorful Colorado Plateau geographical province and includes portions of Capitol Reef and Canyonlands National Parks. The Fremont River flows south into the county from Fish Lake and then east to join the Dirty Devil, a tributary of the Green River. The Green marks the county's eastern border.

Scientists have identified the remains of extinct Pleistocene species such as the sloth, horse, mammoth, bison, and camel in Wayne and dated Archaic and Fremont Indian sites (Cowboy Caves) to between 6300 B.C. and 450 A.D. Horseshoe (Barrier) Canyon and the Maze section of Canyonlands in eastern Wayne contain spectacular pictographs. In historic times the county was part of the Ute Indians' domain.

Wayne was created in May 1892 from Piute County. Most of its towns were settled after 1880 because of the remote location and limited resources. Raising livestock is the oldest and most important industry. Beef cattle produce the most income, but dairy cows, sheep, and poultry have all contributed to the local economy in the past. Getting cattle to market was difficult. Until good roads were built in the 1930s stock was driven some 100 miles north to the railroad at Nephi and later to a Denver & Rio Grande branch line in Sevier County. The creation of national forests in the early 20th century reduced the number of cattle that could be grazed in western Wayne County, and cattle rustling by the notorious Robbers Roost gang threatened ranchers until the late 1890s. The lumber industry and, in more recent years, tourism also provide income for some residents. Uranium has been mined, and tar sands, another energy-related resource, await development. The state operates two fish hatcheries in Wayne.

During the Great Depression the Works Progress Administration (WPA) provided funds to build a county courthouse in Loa. County officials originally met in private homes and rented quarters and later converted a store into office space. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), another federal program during the depression, operated three camps in the county. The CCC built roads, campgrounds, and small water projects. Road building has been a major concern of local government from the beginning. Modern highways now make it easy for tourists to drive to many scenic attractions and give residents easy access to the nearest commercial center and medical and other services in Richfield.

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Weber County

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A Brief History of Weber County*

Weber County has long been the crossroads of Utah and the Intermountain West. Its eastern boundary is the spine of the Wasatch Mountains with their towering peaks and sharp valleys. It extends to the west into Great Salt Lake. Both mountains and flatlands are laced by the Ogden and Weber rivers and their tributaries.

Nomadic Shoshone, Ute, and prehistoric Indians favored the area for centuries, hunting in the mountains and foothills and fishing in the streams. Mounds near the confluence of the Weber and Ogden rivers contain remains of their camps.

American and British mountain men entered the area in the early 1800's, trapping beaver and trading with the Indians. Famed Jim Bridger became in 1824 the first white man to report sighting Great Salt Lake. Peter Skene Ogden traversed the high valley just behind the Wasatch Front in 1825 and is remembered in the name of the area's largest city--although he never visited the actual site. The first accurate maps of the area were drawn by John C. Fremont after he visited the mouth of the Weber River in 1843.

Permanent settlement began in 1843 when horse trader/trapper Miles Goodyear built a fort and trading post on the banks of the Weber River, near where it meets the Ogden River. Late in 1847 he sold his claim to James Brown, a veteran of the Mormon Battalion, for $1,950 in gold coins, and the property became Brown's Fort, also known as Brownsville. Within three years the community had 1,141 residents and its name was changed permanently to Ogden and the surrounding area designated as Weber County.

Growth accelerated in 1869 when the nation's first transcontinental railroad was completed on May 10 at Promontory Summit, 60 miles northwest of Ogden, but the junction for transfer of rolling stock, passengers, and freight was quickly moved to more conveniently located Ogden, nicknamed "Junction City." Other industries established included woolen mills, canneries, livestock yards, flour mills, breweries, iron works, banks, hotels, and telephone, telegraph, and power companies. Ogden inventor John M. Browning patented in 1879 a new single-shot rifle -- the first of more than 100 firearms developed by the Brownings and sold all over the world.

Weber County's next sizeable population explosion came just before and during World War II when the military built Defense Depot Ogden in northern Weber County and Hill Air Force Base and the Naval Supply Depot in nearby Davis County. DDO and Hill continue to provide many jobs for Weber residents. The war also placed increased demands on the transportation network, and nearly 150 regular and special trains moved through Ogden's Union Station on many days in 1944.

Weber County has definitely entered the space age. A number of aerospace industries have offices and other facilities there, and manufacturing plants produce powerful, miniature jet engines for aircraft and missiles and Jetway loading bridges for airports worldwide. Weber State College with some 11,000 students, the U.S. Forest Service regional headquarters, the IRS Service Center, and the McKay-Dee and St. Benedict's hospitals are among the county's major employers in the 1980s.

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