In the 1930's a serious water drought hit the community and water was hauled to the homes by M.B. Crane. Through the PWA, Bennington established a more stable community water supply in 1935. Springs between the city and the mountains were developed for their use.

Bennington has a fine modern church building. Its schools are merged with those in Montpelier and there is no longer a store in the community but it is a growing part of the Bear Lake Valley.

History of Bern

According to the LDS Church records the community of Bern was officially settled, August, 1873, by John Kunz II. He came with an express purpose and in answer to a call from Brigham Young to go to the Bear Lake Valley and to make cheese there for the settlers and for export.

The family first settled in Ovid and Kunz began making cheese as he had been directed. It is said that because of inadequate equipment the first cheese was actually made in a soap kettle.

An arrangement was made with Bishop Niels C. Edlefson for the purchase of property north of Ovid and the first Kunz family moved on to that area where they built the first houses in Bern. For the next four years church allegiance continued to be with the Ovid Branch. In the meantime, in the spring of 1874, the first business was begun in Bern with the development of a small cheese factory.

The cheese business became a year-round profession but not always at Bern. During those first early summers cattle were trailed to and from the area north of Soda Springs which became known as Williamsburg. Cheese was made there each summer and the herds were moved back to Bern in the winter. Shares were given to the owners of the cattle. The surplus was sold. At first only Swiss cheese was made, butter was a by-product.

Bern was officially dedicated in 1875, the same year that Bear Lake became a county in Idaho. It was named after Berne,

Switzerland. Joseph C. Rich, then surveyor for the LDS Church laid out the mainstreet and advised the citizens to establish a town block for public buildings.

In 1878, John Kunz was set apart as a branch president of the community and for the first time meetings were held in the community. Kunz held that position until his death on February 16, 1890.

In 1876, the Kunz family hired Ephraim Jones, a native of Franklin to come into the valley and teach their children how to speak English. The community was formed primarily of Swiss speaking people and they realized that it would be necessary for the youth to grow up knowing the tongue of the country.

At first the school was held in the family homes. Gradually other families wanted their children taught also. School was for such a short period of time that the teacher needed other occupations to make a living. Ephraim Jones went to work, first for the Kunz family with their dairy herds. Later he went with the Alleman family to the area that now carried his name on Crow Creek—Ephraim Valley.

Not until 1884, was a building constructed to handle the school children. During that period, while school was in session, Jones boarded out with the families according to the number of children they had.

The first public building was constructed in the fall of 1884. Most of the material used came from North Canyon and Mill Canyon. It was designed to handle both church and school functions as well as any other public meetings such as marriages, funerals or town meetings.

Alvin Rich became the first teacher in the new building which was located on property owned by Anthony Kunz. In 1890, the church branch became a ward. John Kunz,III, served as the first Bishop. Christian Kunz and John Bischoff were the counselors.

In addition to the various Kunz families that settled in Bern, George Alleman, John and Christian Buhler, John and Rosina Bischoff, Rudolph Beinz and Gottlieb Dubach and family formed the nucleus of the village.

Dubach was the first person buried in the cemetery.

About 1900. it was decided to build a separate structure for the

church meetings. David Kunz was assigned as the chief carpenter and by 1901, a large one-room structure with high ceilings, huge windows and a large pot-bellied stove was ready for use.

A property ownership dispute had been developing in Bern for many years. Apparently John Kunz II, had purchased land from Bishop Neils C. Edlefson which was not his to sell. At any rate, in 1908, a dispute arose and the church elders petitioned Joseph R. Shepherd, county surveyor and president of the Bear Lake Stake at the time, to meditate the issue.

Shepherd's recommendation was to move the community of Bern to a different location to where it is now located. The church house was moved to its present location. A school house was built across the street and Bern developed its present site.

By 1900, Bern had 61 children and a flourishing school system. In 1907, they added a gymnasium. The last school in the community still stands across from the present church building. It was a fine, modern, four-room brick building and was well utilized until county-wide consolidation closed it in the 1950's. Last of many teachers in the Bern system was Mrs. Mary Barkdull. The building is now used as a scout house for the Bern youth.

Two points of domination exist in Bern, the Kunz family and the LDS church. One hundred years after the first founding of the community all but 46 members of the community were Kunz family members.

No other religion has ever held services in Bern. Today their LDS Ward is one the most active in the Bear Lake Valley. A new church building was constructed in 1940. First services were held in that building December 17, that year.

In 1957, additional classroom space was added as the community expanded. Again in 1964, another addition was completed.

Cheese-making has long since ceased to be a part of the Bern picture but dairying and cattle raising will undoubtedly continue as long as the community exists.

had been used.

In 1890, the Methodists constructed a church in Ovid but it failed because of lack of members.

Among the first commercial cheese made in the valley was that made by John Kunz. He started a dairy and cheese factory in Ovid in 1871. Later he moved on to Bern.

A grist mill was built by Jorgen Jorgenson. Erastus Peterson constructed a small furniture factory using native woods ranging from willows to aspen and pinewood. His furniture was used throughout the Bear Lake Valley. It remained, however, a family business. Others developed their crafts and skills. Nicholas Wilson became the village blacksmith and made wrought-iron trimmings for homes and businesses. Peter Jensen developed a crude, but comfortable shoe by shaping wood, brass caps for the toes and leather thongs. These were mostly worn in his family and he made no effort to sell them, but many of his friends received them as gifts and liked the shoe. The glue that he made from animal hoofs was much-sought after and this was a product that he did sell or trade for things his family needed.

Ovid opened its first store in 1872, when Fred Woods became the community's first storekeeper. He operated it successfully for about two years before selling and moving on to Canada. The new owner could not make a go of the business and it closed, leaving the community without a store for the next two years.

Robert H. Williams became the first Justice of the Peace. He performed the first marriage in the community. He was also the first person to plow farm land in the area.

It was during this time that Ovid established the first curfew law in all of Bear Lake Valley. It called for all young people to be off the streets by nine p.m., and all unescorted women of any age to be indoors by ten p.m. The curfew was first announced in a church meeting in 1872, and it was posted on the door of the public meeting house.

Lars Peter Jensen was the first child born in Ovid. This was early in the history of the community on November 24, 1864. At that time, and throughout the entire winter, the Jensen family lived in a tent and

dugout structure. The first death recorded in the community was the following year when Charles Ellis died of pneumonia. He was also the first person interred in the Ovid cemetery.

Ovid settlers began their school system early. In 1865, school of sorts was conducted in private homes. In 1867, after the completion of the first meeting house, formal classes were held. The first teacher in Ovid was Isaac Tunks who had the difficult task of handling 22 different students ranging in ages from seven to twenty-five and speaking three different languages. Tunks himself spoke only English.

A separate log building was constructed for the school house beside the present brick building. The first sessions were only six weeks in length; but when the new separate building was completed in 1875, classes extended to cover the months of August, September, October and November up to Thanksgiving time. Once the commissioners established school districts throughout the county, regular full-length sessions were held.

Ovid's second school was a two room log structure with a shingle roof and wooden floor. It was a good sturdy building; but lasted only five years, when one morning just before school, it burned to the ground.

Next, Ovid constructed the fine brick building which still stands, but since the 1950's when consolidation came to the county, the building was turned into a private-owned grainary.

From the very beginning of its existence, Ovid people have been religiously enclined. During the first few weeks they journeyed on Sundays back to Paris for services. Once homes were established they met in private homes until the first meeting house was completed in 1867.

During its beginning Ovid has four different presiding elders before a ward was established. They were Robert H Williams, Henry Gasman, Niels Christian Edlefson and Peter Jensen. Jensen also became the first Bishop.

The first official Ovid postoffice was established in 1873, with Neils Edlefsen as the postmaster. Ovid maintains its post office today and has one village store and service station.

Montpelier.

As early as June 1922, action was developing. Groups of Montpelier businessmen were moving about the county telling citizens of the values that would be incurred for them if the move was made. Sentiment seems to favor the program in all the eastside communities, so on August 10, 1922 a public notice was made that:

> . . . "Intentions to circulate a petition or petitions addressed to the district court of the 5th Judicial District of the State of Idaho, praying for the removal of the county seat of Bear Lake County from its present site at Paris, to Montpelier . . ."

would be done. The notices were signed by F. M. Williams, H. A. Robinson, and E. I. McClave, all of Montpelier.

It was not a difficult task to obtain the necessary signatures to bring the issue to a vote of the people. Finally on September 18, 1922, Judge John B. Lee of the District Court announced . . .

> "Be it remembered that upon this date, before this court, petitions, legally formed and properly signed, have been presented by the residents of Bear Lake County in sufficient numbers to merit the calling of an election on the question of removing the county seat from Paris, Idaho, Bear Lake County to Montpelier, Idaho, Bear Lake County.
>
> Therefore, it is the decree of this court that the issue shall be settled by a vote of the people on November 7, 1922. (5)

From that hour on, the county was one of immediate action by both sides of the issue. Those presenting the petition to the court were John A. Bagley, A. B. Gough and D. C. Kunz, three prominent lawyers of time in Montpelier. They were assigned as the petition advisers and they formed committees to go throughout the county advocating the change.

Paris, at the time was devoid of an adequate number of lawyers so they had the added expense of hiring outside legal advice. The people from the Montpelier side contended that county funds were being illegally used to fight the issue.

Lawyers representing the Paris side of the issue countered by charging that Montpelier could not legally do what it was promising to use its new city hall for the courthouse without a full vote of the people of the city.

Both newspapers of the valley jumped into the battle. The editors became extremely active in presenting the sides of the issue but not nearly as active as the people themselves. Paris argued that the city hall was not adequate for the courthouse since it did not have a fireproof vault for the protection of county records. Twelve Montpelier businessmen signed a statement and circulated it throughout the valley that if the people voted for the change they would personally guarantee installation of a fireproof vault and safe, free of cost to the county. Those 12 men were:

G. C. Gray, M. J. Davis, R. H. Ferguson, R. A. Sullivan, H. B. Whitman, Dr. George Ashley, Ed. C. Rich, J. R. Brennan, D. C. Kunz, Richard Groo, D. W. Garrett and A. E. Thiel. Cost of the installation at the time was estimated at $1500.00.

Paris papers contended that there was not proper facility for the holding of court. Montpelier papers drew diagrams showing the design of the building and contended that the balcony of the meeting center in the Montpelier City Hall was actually better than the courtroom in Paris.

And so the battle raged, but it was not all fought in the newspapers. Citizens groups sponsored dances in the surrounding communities. The outlying areas never had it so good. Nearly every night was filled with a dance, a program, musical entertainment and refreshments somewhere in the county. A popular orchestra of the time, "The Big Four" traveled with the Montpelier group. Paris countered with the Famed "b" Quartet.

Interaction between Montpelier and Paris came to a virtual standstill but the other communities of the valley were heavy-trodden with promoters.

Finally the big day arrived. A heavy turnout was expected and materialized. Because of accusations that had been circulated saying that the ballot boxes would be stuffed, a request from county officials brought special auditors to watch the balloting.

Three thousand five-hundred and fourteen people cast their ballots, only six were disqualified for improper qualifications. The ballots on the issue had been printed separately and were easily un-

point. Once discovered it became the shortest and most frequently used mail route between the two valleys. It became known as the first mail road in Idaho.

It had no definite name until 1940 when a tribute officially called it the Shoshone Trail, in honor of the early Indian tribes that used it.

During the winter of 1862-63 at the close of the Battle of Bear River near Franklin a few straggling Indians fled eastward over the route. Pursuing them were numerous soldiers and civilians among whom was Bishop Marriner W. Merrill of Richmond, Utah. Merrill reported later that he was surprised with the ease and quickness that he reached the summit.

The following year the trail was put into use by mail carriers between Bloomington and Franklin. Numerous landmarks are now recognized. Some bear the names of those early carriers such as Thomas Spring in Cub River Canyon. The spring got its name from two Thomas brothers who froze to death while carrying the mail from their side of the mountain to the top where it was exchanged with Bear Lake carriers.

Numerous areas along the way show signs of early Indian camps and many artifacts have been discovered along its route.

The trail starts near Thomas springs and climbs steeply up the mountain wall to a point near Bloomington lake. From there it forks, one section descending down the canyon to Bloomington and the other going slightly north along the right and dropping down into what later became known as Telephone Hollow into Paris. It was through that opening that the Deseret Telegraph Company, operating out of Salt Lake City extended its lines from Franklin City into Paris.

Since 1940, the trail has taken on new significance. It was then that the local names of "Thomas Gulch", "Old Indian Trail" and "Washakie's Way" were dropped and the title of the Shoshone Trail was officially given the area.

That year, Alvin H. and Afton Beckstead of Whitney and others re-traced the old route, clearing it of debris and marking it along the way. They were assisted by U. S. Forest Service personnel. The total

distance of the trail is about six miles up the Franklin side and a similar length down the Bloomington route.

Arthur W. Hart, dedicated the trail in 1940. A large group followed him to the top of the Cub River Canyon where a monument was placed commemorating the historic route. The Daughters of Utah Pioneers financed the project and arranged the program. Today the route is on the U. S. Forest Service trails system and will hopefully be maintained for future generations to enjoy and use.

The Political Runaway

Throughout the history of the United States there have been many polictical runaways but few have had the results of the one that occurred in Montpelier on October 8, 1904.

It seems that an active group of policians had decided to spend the day in stumping the countryside. By pre-arrangement they had agreed to meet at the corner of 4th and Washington at what was then known as the "Old Rock Store." Their plan was to take them to Ovid, across to Bern, down Pescadero to Nounan and on to Georgetown for an evening rally. They wanted to get off to a fast start but not quite as rapid as it turned out.

As they neared Eighth street, a prankster decided to liven things up a bit by popping a firecracker under the team driven by Dr. C.A. Hoover, at the exact moment Hoover had dropped the reins and was assisting Mrs. Helmoine Hart, candidate for County Superintendant of Schools into his new white-topped buggy. The explosion dumped the gallant doctor and his companion ungraciously to the street and the team bolted down the street in a frantic runaway.

Sheriff candidate John Olsen, seated in the back, attempted to climb over the seat and grab the reins which had dropped to the doubletree. In doing so he lost his balance and went rolling into the gutter as the team reached 9th and Washington.

Only judge candidate D. C. Kunz remained in the buggy as they