



## Face of Fillmore

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With Presidents' Day, just behind us, I got thinking a lot about place names in Utah, particularly those inspired by Presidents of the United States. A look at a variety of place names became an entertaining project for our household.

Today I share just a few in hopes you will continue this activity as we have and learn more about the history of our state.

Topping the list of places, we discovered that were named after Presidents were Fillmore City and Millard County, of course. This was done in hopes of impressing President Millard Fillmore and others to make the territory into a state.

Other presidential names include the city and county of Washington, Roosevelt named for Theodore Roosevelt, Monroe named after James Monroe, Cleveland for Grover Cleveland and Monticello, named for Thomas Jefferson's plantation.

It is interesting to note that name changes appear a common occurrence throughout Utah's history. For example: Monroe was first named South Bend and then Alma but later changed to Monroe.

LDS Church leaders have their share of place names including Joseph for Joseph Smith, Brigham City for Brigham Young and Cannonville for George Q. Cannon. Another one of interest is St. George, named for the apostle George A. Smith who was nicknamed "The Potato Saint" by the settlers there.

Local church leaders also had towns named after them. Towns named for the first stake presidents in the area were Hinckley for Ira Hinckley, Farr West for Lorin Farr and Henrieville for James Henrie. Others were named for bishops: William Kay (Kaysville) and Christopher Layton (Layton). That is just the tip of the iceberg for that list.

Book of Mormon names abound – Lehi, Nephi, Manti, Moroni, Bountiful. Bible names also are found like Moab, Enoch, and Ephraim.

Explorers get their share of honors. Provo was named for Etienne Provost, the French-Canadian explorers who visited there in 1825.

Ogden was named for the leader of the Hudson Bay Fur Company in that area in 1818, Peter Skene Ogden. It had originally been called Fort Buenaventura and was the first permanent settlement in Utah settled by people of European descent in 1846.

Escalante was named for an even earlier explorer – Father Escalante who traveled through the area in 1776. Interestingly, a marker near the base of Pahvant Butte (Sugarloaf) northwest of Flowell tells of his travels near here.

Several towns were named for their earliest residents. Orangeville was named for Orange Seeley who was the first man to settle in Castle Valley. It was first named Upper Castle Dale.

### 2 Names of Utah Places

Closer to home, Holden was named for one of its first settlers in 1855 – Elijah E. Holden – who was a member of the Mormon Battalion. It was first called Cedar Springs and then Buttermilk Fort, but after Holden's tragic death in a snowstorm in 1858, the name was changed to honor him.

Some Utah places were named for Indian Chiefs – Kanosh, Santaquin, San Pete (Pitch), Tooele (Goshute

Chief Tuilla), Tabiona (Ute Chief Tava) and Kannarville for Chief Cannarrah.

Other towns were named for military leaders: Myton was named after Army Major J. P. Myton, Torrey was named for Colonel Torrey of the Spanish/American War, and Grantsville for Colonel George D. Grant of the Nauvoo Legion.

A few Utah towns were named for places far from their location. Among these are Alton which was named for the Alton Fjord in Norway, Leamington which was named for Leamington Hastings, a town in England, and Callao (originally the Pony Express station of Willow Springs) which was named for its resemblance to Callao, Peru. It must be the proximity to the Deep Creek Mountains which must have looked like the Andes. Certainly, it isn't the size of the community with Callao, Utah whose population is so small that is it listed only as a "small farming community" with no number attached. Callao, Peru has well over a million people. A few towns were named for mythical characters. Aurora was named for the Roman goddess of dawn and Sigurd by its Danish settlers for a Norse mythical hero.

Some towns are named for what happens there like Helper which is named because this is the point where additional or "helper" engines are attached to trains to help them make the steep climb over Soldier Summit. A few towns were named for geographic features. Vernal was named for the Latin word "Vernalis" which means spring. This is because of the many springs in the vicinity.

Another foreign word to be used was Eureka, which is Greek for "I have found it", referring to the discovery of gold in the mountains there.

Some towns were named for people who just happened to be in the right place at the right time. Scipio was the name of Brigham Young's secretary and early resident of the community, Scipio Kenner, who happened to be with him on the day Scipio needed a name.

One town was named by mistake. The intent of the citizens was to name the town Castle Vale, but the postal department made a mistake and called it Castle Dale and it stuck. Another Emery County town was named after a novel, *St. Elmo*, written in 1866 by Augusta Jane Evans.

A few towns were named for women. Annabella was named for two of its earliest settlers: Ann S. Roberts and Isabella Dalton. Fielding was named after the mother of LDS President Joseph Fielding Smith.

Blanding was named for a woman because of a contest. Originally called Grayson, the leaders of the community entered the town in a contest in 1914 sponsored by a wealthy Easterner named Bicknell who wanted towns named after his family members. The winner of the contest received 1000 volumes for their local library. And the winner was, you guessed it, Bicknell. Second place went to Grayson whose library became 500 books larger and the town named changed to Blanding.

For more information, lots of it, check out [Wikipedia/list of cities and town in Utah](#).