

History Question of the Month

On December 15, 1877 the Butler and Union Precincts were established by Salt Lake County. What was a precinct?

Answer

On January 31, 1850, legislation was approved that created Salt Lake County and subdivided it into judicial units called Precincts. The precinct functioned as a basic governmental unit of the county. In 1852 when Salt Lake County was organized, they kept the precincts that were created and new precincts were established as different communities emerged. The boundaries of the precincts generally followed the boundaries of the community. The purpose of the precinct was to give local communities more control over local affairs. From these precincts individuals were chosen to fill the offices of Justices of the Peace, Constables, Estray Poundkeepers and Fenceviewers. The function of each office varied according to legislative enactment and county mandates.

At the height of the judicial precinct era in 1894, there were 32 distinct precincts in Salt Lake County. By 1904, the judicial precincts had come to an end and they were consolidated into eleven districts

The Union Precinct was originally established July 21, 1863 and then disorganized April 28, 1865. It was then reorganized December 15, 1877 and created from the southern part of the Cottonwood Precinct. The 1900 Census indicated the Precinct, had a population of 757 and covered 5 square miles.

The Butler Precinct was created from parts of the Big Cottonwood (Holladay) Murray and Granite precincts. In 1900, it had a population of 450 and covered 25 square miles.