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An industrial and transportation center, Nampa has southwestern Idaho's major railroad facilities. After plans finally were approved to give Boise an Idaho Central Railway connection at Alexander Duffes' Indian Creek ranch, Nampa's townsite company was incorporated on September 6, 1886. Precisely a year later, construction was completed, and Nampa suddenly grew from a small desert town of fifteen houses to fifty. Growth after that was slow for a while, because irrigation canals necessary to allow farming around Nampa were not extended that far for several more years. But in 1888, Daniel Bacon was persuaded to move his Boise City Republican to Nampa. Under a more appropriate name--Nampa Progress--Bacon's newspaper helped to develop a community of 347 by April 1890. In a few more months, irrigated farming became possible close to Nampa, and a year later a municipal government was organized.

By 1900, Nampa had a good representation of churches and an adequate school system. About 66,000 acres of irrigated farms were in production near there, and another branch railway--the Boise, Nampa, and Owyhee--had reached Murphy in 1899. This brought Nampa an important Silver City mining business as well as Owyhee sheep traffic. W. H. Dewey, who had made a mining fortune at Silver City, built an elegant Dewey Palace hotel in Nampa in 1902. A water system and a sewer system were also installed then, and an electric power plant followed somewhat belatedly a year later.

Nampa grew rapidly after obtaining those advantages. A sugar factory provided a source for local farm income in 1906, although a beet blight in 1909 set back sugar production severely. A 1907 brewery had a somewhat different kind of disaster, being largely shut down by a Canyon County prohibition of sale of beer in 1909. (Conversion to cider production was necessary until 1934, when repeal of prohibition allowed brewing to resume.) But a greatly expanded water supply for irrigation came with a large reservoir--Lake Lowell--at Deer Flat that year, and when Nampa's main business block was wiped out in a big fire, July 3, 1909, reconstruction came immediately. A Boise valley interurban electric railroad reached Nampa later in 1909, and was extended to Caldwell in 1912. Nampa's business streets were paved, and a city hall and fire station were built in 1910. Population growth from 799 in 1900 to 4,205 in 1910 supported

these improvements.

Not long after obtaining a Carnegie library in 1908, Nampa gained several other important institutions. Idaho's state sanitarium was located there in 1911. A hospital to serve Nampa's medical needs followed in 1912 and Northwest Nazarene College began in 1913. Progressing from an academy to Idaho's largest four-year private college, NNC has become an important element in Nampa's progress.

Nampa's industrial growth continued steadily even though its unsuccessful sugar factory was moved to Spanish Fork, Utah, in 1916. A Carnation Milk plant took its place in 1918, and development of a large Pacific Fruit Express ice plant led to construction of a major refrigeration car rehabilitation shop, Pacific Fruit Express, in Nampa in 1926. A variety of smaller industries--meat packing, grain elevators, flour mills, wood products, concrete products, and fruit drying, for example--also contributed to Nampa's economy during this time. By 1937, Nampa's annual Snake River Stampede--which emerged from a harvest home festival that traced back to 1908--became a summer event that attracted thousands of spectators. In spite of a lagging national farm economy after 1920, Nampa had continued to grow from 7,621 in 1920, reaching 8,206 in 1930, and 12,149 in 1940.

Agricultural industry gained increased importance in Nampa with construction of a large new sugar factory in 1942 that continued to expand until it became preeminent among western beet sugar plants. Frozen food plants, including a major General Mills operation in 1949, provided additional outlets for local farm products. Other industries also helped to expand Nampa's economic base. A 1944 concrete pipe plant and a brick yard preceded a series of mobile home and recreational vehicle factories that represented a new trend in Idaho's industrial development. Some older industries, including Carnation Milk and Pacific Fruit Express, shut down, but a large Boise Cascade container factory (1969) and a Zilog computer component manufacturing plant (1979) maintained Nampa's changing economy. Further diversification came with growth of regional construction firms and with a major Adventist publication plant in 1984. A large suburban Karcher Mall, opened in 1965 and expanded in 1968, served Nampa's growing population (16,185 in 1950; 18,013 in 1960; 20,768 in 1970) that increased to 25,211 in 1980.