

How Bangor Got Its Name, The First Bangor's, and Other Early History Notes



The City of Bangor was first a part of Bangor Township. Then it became the Village of Bangor and then later the City of Bangor.

Mr. Charles U. Cross first came to Bangor from Madison County, New York in 1834. Within a year, 1835, he built his Old Mill and Pond first home on the site that is now West Michigan Savings Bank. Others joined him as the lands offered good farming and the river made lumbering easy.

18 years later, 1853, the area still had less than 100 residents.

The Van Buren County Board of supervisors organized the area as the first township in the county. October 9, 1853, the Van Buren County Board of Supervisors voted to organize the township and give it the name of Marion.

The name was so unpopular with local residents that the board of supervisors voted 5 day later, October 14, 1853, to call the township Bangor. The name Bangor was chosen because a member of the board of supervisors had been a resident of Bangor, Maine. Residents liked the suggestion. A resolution authored by a Mr. Hurlbut was approved and the five-day existence of Marion ended as Bangor began its own history.

Joseph P. Nyman registered the first plat of the town area on November 12, 1860. In 1861 he built his residence on the north side of the Black River. It was the first residence on the north side of the river.

Charles U. Cross recorded the second plat on July 11, 1867.

A little less than ten years later, the area became incorporated as the Village of Bangor. The date was March 21, 1877. On April 16, 1877 the Village elected its first Village Council.

For the next 91 years Bangor remained a Village. Then on February 5, 1968 the Village officially became a City

The First Bangor

It appears the first Bangor was in either Ireland or Wales. Both claim long histories. Bangor, Wales has been a recorded settlement the last 15 centuries. Both claim historical sites that go back 3,000 years or more.

The Name Bangor

"Bangor" comes from a Gaelic word - Beannchor - that may be related to the physical landscape, something like "curved peaks", referring to the headlands by the water. The Bangor's in both Ireland and Wales have similar topography. Since Gaelic placenames may date to prehistoric times, it would be hard to know if Bangor, Ireland or Bangor, Wales is the "first" Bangor.



Downtown Bangor today
Monroe Street looking East



Bangor City Hall
SE Corner of Division and
West Monroe Street
257 West Monroe Street



Site of the first residence
Charles U. Cross's home 1835
Now West Michigan Savings
Bank

BANGOR, WALES (current population: 11,187) is an ancient cathedral city situated between Snowdonia and the sea in the country Gwynedd, Wales, United Kingdom. Bangor's heritage goes back 15 centuries! For hundreds of years, Bangor has been home to a great festival/fair hosted on and around the City's piers into the ocean bay.



Ancient Cathedral, Bangor Wales,
Approximately 1,000 years old



University of Wales in Bangor, Wales

BANGOR, N. IRELAND: MAIN DATES AND FACTS OF BANGOR'S HISTORY

- About 500 B.C. Bronze age settlers were living in the area. Three bronze swords were found near Ballycrochan Road in 1949.
- 555 or 558 A.D. A large monastery was founded where the Abbey now is, by St. Comgall. Two of Comgall's followers, Gall and Columbanus, carried the Christian religion to the continent of Europe.
- About 822 The Vikings burned Bangor and murdered hundreds of monks.
- 1124 Malachy was appointed Abbot and built a stone church on the Abbey site.
- 1539 King Henry VIII closed the monasteries.
- 1605 King James 1 gave Bangor and lands around it to a Scotsman, Sir James Hamilton. He rebuilt the Abbey, constructed the Custom House and Tower on the seafront (still there today) and was made the first Viscount Clancloyne.
- 1612 King James 1 made Bangor a borough, allowed to elect two M.P.'s to the Irish Parliament in Dublin.

- 1783 George Hannay began the manufacture of cotton. Other mills followed, the main site being near where the McKee Clock now is. This industry lasted till 1856.
- 1800 The Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland. Bangor ceased to be a Parliamentary Borough.
- 1852 Bangor Castle (now the Town Hall) was built for Robert Edward Ward, another descendant of James Hamilton.
- 1864 The first Town Commissioners were elected. They later became known as Bangor Urban District Council.
- 1865 The railway from Belfast was opened, and the growth of Bangor as a seaside resort began.
- 1927 Bangor was again granted Borough status.
- 1936 The Tonic Cinema, largest in Ireland with 2,001 seats, opened.
- 1944 Many ships of the invasion fleet bound for 'D-Day' in France assembled off Bangor Bay.
- 1952 Bangor Castle re-opened as the new Town Hall.
- 1973 North Down Borough Council replaced Bangor Borough Council.

Bangor, N. Ireland Population through the Years

1841 - 3,116; 1901 - 5,903; 1951 - 22,000; and, 2003 - about 45,000

Views of Bangor, N. Ireland

