Saddle Mountain
Picnic Celebration
September 23, 1967
Othello

Event Comemorates Famous 1927 Picnic

BY: IDA MALONE

If you should be vacationing in the North West or Eastern Washington, September 23, 1967, you are invited to stop at Othello, Washington, about forty miles east of the Columbia River, on highways 26 and 17 for a picnic. Othello is having a big celebration. The picnic is to celebrate a very important picnic held at this spot forty years ago, August 17, 1927. You will enjoy Western hospitality and be escorted to the top of Saddle Mountain where the surrounding area, Hanford, the Columbia River, and surrounding towns for many miles can be viewed. And Mount Rainier, two hundred

miles away, rears it's beautiful head above all, as if guarding the beautiful state of Washington; and then you know why the Indians worshiped it. When you have enjoyed the scenic beauty of the surrounding country, you can enjoy the barbecue, and other entertainment.

The picnic was held for the United States House and Senate and local citizens of the community, to view the area that would be irrigated by the Grand Coulee High Dam, if built.

The population of Othello was four hundred in 1927, but every citizen did their part in preparing for the picnic, but they had much help from other and larger cities. A large circus tent was sent and the local men ahuled it to the top of the mountain and erected it, tore down deserted homesteader's shacks to build the tables. A large display of fresh fruit and vegetables, raised at Hanford, White Bluffs and irrigated spots along the Columbia, Crab Creek, and Long Lake, covered a full length table in the tent, and watermelons were piled under the table, free for every one.

The Milwaukee Railroad ran a special train to bring the distinguished guests to Othello, where they were met by local citizens with automobiles to take them to the picnic grounds.

Plans were made to ascend the mountain on the south side, it being the easier climb, over an old trail made by pioneers, to carry the mail from White Bluffs to Corfu to be put on the Milwaukee train, and to descend on the north side to save returning over a cut up road.

The Milwaukee turned the train at Othello and backed it to Corfu where they would wait for the guests to descend.

As the volcanic ash soil of the Columbia Basin could not take much travel with the high pressure tires of that time, every precaution was made to get the cars over the road. Barrels of water were placed along the road to cool boiling radiators. But the caravan being much larger than expected, the road was soon hub deep with ruts. Even with all the planning and precautions radiators boiled, cars stalled in the sand and had flat tires, and Senators walked. But with all the difficulty in reaching the top it is evident they were impressed. The high Grand Coulee Dam became a reality and is one of the wonders of the world. But the Dam seems no more wonderful than the country it has brought to life. What the Senators saw from the top of Saddle Mountain in 1927 was hot arid sagebrush land. We hope many Senators of 1927 will return and view again the land which is now a land of God's plenty, with large fields of produce, such as beans, sugar beets, peas, corn, mint, potatoes and much else. They will also see large orchards bearing peaches, pears, apricots and apples.

Othello is located geographically in the very heart of the Columbia Basin and at present the fastest growing city of the Basin. The citizens of the community wish to salute the past workers for the project, so the Othello Chamber of Commerce feel it is time to celebrate the 1927 picnic and invite the United States House and Senate Committee on reclamation and irrigation along with other interested Senators, to be present. And they especially urge all members of the United States House and Senate of 1927 and all that worked for the high dam and helped arrange the 1927 picnic, to be present. The public is also extended a cordial invitation and we hope many will attend.

Othello recreation facilities are numerous which you are invited to enjoy while here. There are sixty lakes well stocked with trout. Hunting is good. If you like upland birds the chinese pheasants and quail are excellent. Also wild geese and a great variety of ducks to be taken in season. You will have a choice of two beautiful golf courses on which to play in an atmosphere that will cure all your ills.

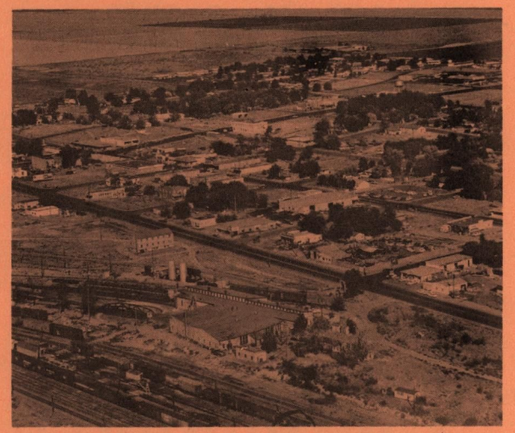
Come help us celebrate and you will want to linger a while.

Welcome To Othello Heart Of The Columbia Basin

Othello's geographical location puts it squarely in the center of the Columbia Basin Project and highway and railroad services leading to the community make it the "hub" of the Basin.

The community, which is ideally situated to become one of Washington's most important crossroads in both north-south and east-west trans-state travel, lies at the junction of five major highways.

The east-west route, Highway 26, which is already the direct motor-vehicle artery between populous Western



Washington and the wheat-rich Palouse area, Washington State University and Northern Idaho, passes through Othello and makes up two of the major roads into the community.

The rich, productive farmland receiving life-giving water from the Grand Coulee Dam is indeed impressive today, it was a far different scene which greeted local and national officials at the historic Saddle Mountain Picnic 40 years ago.

It was the vision and foresight of those leaders of four decades ago which made Othello and the entire Columbia Basin into the growing and economically sound areas they are today.

A Saddle Mountain Celebration and re-enactment of the picnic planned this year on the 40th anniversary

of the historic event by the Othello Chamber of Commerce, but this event, no matter how successful, can be little more than a token salute to those individuals who worked long and hard for the realization of the Project dream.

Probably no community in the Columbia Basin has benefited more from the Project and has any greater future than Othello. One needs only to look at the phenomenal progress this town has made in the last few years and the tremendous potential of its future to see just how important that picnic of 40 years ago really was.

The community was just a small railroad community in 1947 with a population of 465 persons. However, the Project soon changed all of that. During the early fifties farm land began to open the mushrooming growth was underway. The population of the community is expected to go over 4000 this year.

Still, indications are that this growth is only having its beginning. To date Othello's growth has been based upon healthy, steady progress coinciding with the development of new farmland in the region. Farmland now under irrigation is certain to mean more growth for Othello by itself, but new lands also fit into the picture.

The first lands in the fertile Wahluke Slope located from ten to 40 miles southwest of Othello will receive their first water this year. From then on the Slope will be developed on an orderly basis until nearly 100,000 acres are under cultivation in the next ten to 15 years. The area, which is located on the south exposure of the Saddle Mountains, is generally regarded by agriculturists as the best potential fruit land in the Columbia Basin.

A dramatic future addition to the Basin lies further east of Othello and is now assured of irrigation after landowners petitioned into the Project during 1966. This is the Michigan Prairie area of Adams county some 25 miles east of Othello. It is flat, well-drained, highly fertilized wheat ground now and runs from Othello some 25 miles east.

Both of these new areas virtually assure a remarkable future growth for Othello.

Sponsored By

The Othello Chamber Of Commerce

For Information
Write Don Lockwood

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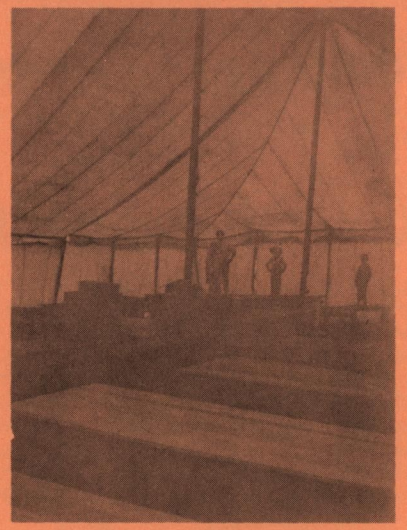
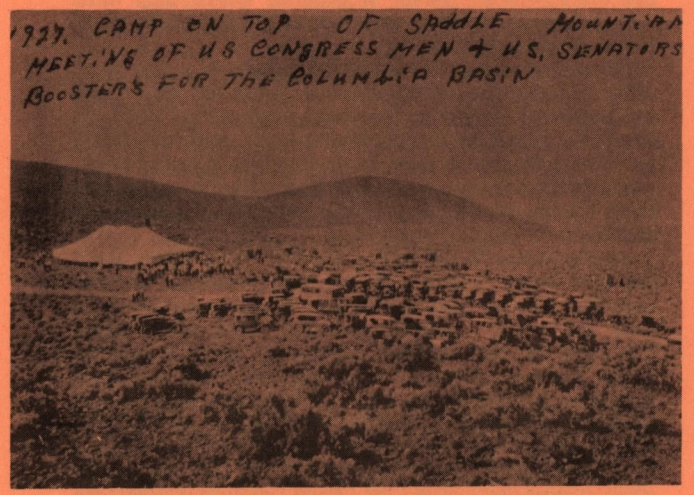


THE DATE REMEMBER

September 23 1967

Events Start At 10 a.m.

You Are Invited



Entertainment All Day

- Barbeque
- Indian Dances
- Famous Speakers
- View Of Entire Columbia Basin