

NUGGET: PILOT STORY ON CENTENNIAL

From: Department of Commerce and Development

Release: At Will

CENTENNIAL OF LARGEST
TERRITORY PLANNED
FOR '63 IN IDAHO

Idaho--the largest area of this earth ever created and named by our government as part of the United States is celebrating its hundredth birthyear in the true Western tradition in 1963. It was created a hundred years ago during the dark crisis days of the Civil War when the hand of President Abraham Lincoln signed the necessary act of Congress March 3, 1863. So a great group of rich western lands became Idaho; the Idaho Territory.

It was much bigger than the state of Texas: big enough to be comparable to the thirteen original states. It contained what is now Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and parts of North and South Dakota and Nebraska.

Populations Vanished

A geographical monstrosity, it was called. But it was a hopeful idea to help assure the best progress for a tide of revolution that was reshaping the lives of everyone in the far west. Whole populations were shifting suddenly from west coast areas to the gold-strike fields of Idaho. Populations vanished and reappeared in Idaho almost overnight. Idaho appeared ready for independence as a Territory with 33,000 or more inhabitants, whereas Oregon became a Territory with about 9,000 and Washington with something over 3,000. Many of the thousands who suddenly settled in Idaho rushed in from Oregon, Washington and surrounding state

Fabulous Gold Strikes

Gold was the magnet: more gold than in half a dozen Alaskas. The Great Idaho gold rush was on. Miners poured in from California and the west. Lewiston was founded by a tent-store owner and boomed into a flourishing distributing point. Many businesses and homes were set up hurriedly in tents which when lighted at night gave the city a picturesque Japanese-lantern glow. It was nicknamed Ragtown in the echoing tradition of such romance names as Baboon's Gulch, Hangtown,

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centennial of largest territory planned for '63 in idaho

Louseville, Bisuka (Bazooka), a town named Zaza, and a lady named Molly b'Damn. Idaho had more than it's share in the wealth of real western color and visitors still find it there today. But in the old days the prospectors found gold. The news of this gold swept many men from well established positions into the pursuit of wealth.

No One to Govern?

Oregon then was a sovereign state with permanent boundaries, but Washington was a Territory and subject to changes at the will of the federal government 3,000 miles away. Governing bodies feared the loss of their capitals, authority, and their jobs as gold miners rushed to the promising Idaho fields and even capital cities took on a ghost-town look. Gold centers were larger than cities: Idaho City (first called Bannock) became the biggest city in the Northwest. Back in Washington, D. C., Republican Senators were favorable to establishing sympathetic states in the West so as to strengthen their majority against the return of Southern Democratic states at the end of the Civil War.

"The Biggest Territory"

A leader in maneuvering the bill through the Congress was William Wallace, who became Idaho's first territorial governor, and the fact that he was a great personal friend of Lincoln's was considerable help. The bill started through the House with the new Territory's name as Montana, but the name on the printed document was changed, in pen and ink, to Idaho and won full approval. Lincoln signed the bill on March 3, 1863. On March 17, Wallace was sworn in as governor by Lincoln.

Calls for Celebration

On March 6, before they knew they lived in a Territory or had a governor, the Idaho City Volunteers left their diggings to fight and defeat the Snake Indians who resented mining in southwestern Idaho. More gold and silver discoveries followed. Events poured into the reservoir of past time, as fast as

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centennial of largest territory planned for '63 in idaho

Idaho's flashing rapids and waterfalls. For Idaho's wild frontier sprang to life in a time when the tempo of human action was only a life-span away from us and things happened many times faster than had ever before occurred on a wild frontier.

Site of the United States military post was chosen as Fort Boise, where Idaho's capital spreads its tree-shaded beauty today. This was July 4, the day of Vicksburg and Gettysburg (though the news didn't reach Idaho till weeks later). On July 7, Boise City was founded near the fort. On July 10th, Governor Wallace organized the Territory at Lewiston, his temporary capital, which then actually didn't even belong to the United States, much less Idaho.

In the tradition of western individualism and tradition of the President who officially named the area, Idaho's Centennial celebration will be 'for the people and by the people.' In addition to renewed and expanded activities in Idaho's four-season world of sports and events--boating, hunting, fishing, everything the outdoors can offer, and rodeos that stir memories of sunny days and thundering hoofs and set starry nights ablaze with color. There will be national events in every field from the National Old Time Fiddlers Contest, National Appaloosa Horse Show, to the opening of museums, square-dance festivals, pioneer festivals, old-time costume celebrations, and others. The wild west is only a yesterday away in Idaho and some of the best of the west is still here to celebrate this special and happy birthyear.

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These dates will all have centennials this year

A CONCISE CHRONOLOGY OF IDAHO'S BIRTHYEAR, 1863

PRELUDE. A thumbnail picture of Idaho on the eve of its birth as a Territory. Only one permanent settlement had been established in Idaho by 1860. The great waves of migration had passed Idaho by. It was the "unsettled" part of the Washington Territory. But Pierce discovered gold at Orofino, and the first gold rush started. Gold discoveries at Elk City and Florence (still in Washington Territory) started one of the wildest stampedes in history. Lewiston was founded and became the most important supply point of the whole area. Idaho City (first named Bannock) bloomed overnight into the Northwest's biggest city. These cities and centers were all practically without government, or government assistance. Olympia was as far from the Boise Basin as Portland, Oregon is from San Francisco. The entire theater of the Civil War where Lincoln's generals fought Lee from Gettysburg to seacoast Virginia would have rattled around, small compared to the big size of Idaho gold fields.

There was urgent need and demand for local government for Idaho and as 1863 dawned, men from the area were working in Washington, D. C., to bring local government into being.

1863

Boise County was created in Washington Territory. It included most of now southern Idaho and a fourth of Wyoming as well.

The Lewiston Vigilance Committee was formed and dealt out justice to pack-train robbers. On January 29, Col. Connor and his California Volunteers crushed the Shoshoni Indians of the Cache Valley in the Battle of Bear River (Battle Creek). In March, Capt. Jeff Standifer and his Idaho City Volunteers launched a campaign
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a concise chronology of idaho's birthyear, 1863

which knocked out the Snake Indians who had been harassing the miners and prospectors.

March 3, Name on the Bill to create the big new gold mining territory in the Mountain Northwest was changed from Montana to Idaho.

March 3-4, Idaho Territory was organized by Congress. Bill signed by Abraham Lincoln

March 10, William A. Wallace was appointed Governor by Abraham Lincoln.

May 7, South Boise quartz discoveries near Rocky Bar, expanded southwestern Idaho mining beyond the Boise Basin.

May 18, Michael Jordan's party discovered the Owyhee mines on Jordan Creek.

May 20, Camp Connor (Connor's Fort) was founded at Soda Springs. A permanent settlement was made at the location by a colony of dissenters from the Mormon Church under the protection of the government troops. Connor's Fort long remained an outpost against the Indians.

May 24, first important election. East Bannock miners chose Henry Plummer as sheriff, pending introduction of Territorial administration.

May 26, Virginia City gold discoveries occurred in Eastern Idaho. This area was later lost to Idaho in the Congressional action which created Montana.

June 9, a new treaty was negotiated with the Nez Perce Indians to try to get the North Idaho mines into U. S. territory. They were in lands which by solemn treaty belonged to the Indians.

June 20, William A. Hickman and Harry Richards commenced operations of the Eagle Rock Ferry across Snake River on the Salt Lake--Virginia City road. Thus Idaho Falls was founded. This Spring, I. N. Coston built a cabin of drift logs on the Boise River. It became a rendezvous for miners, packers, and Indians. It is now

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a concise chronology of idaho's birthyear, 1863

in Julia Davis Park, Boise. First Territorial Supreme Court had as members Sidney Edgerton, A. C. Smith, and Samuel C. Parks, all appointed by Abraham Lincoln.

July 4, (the day of Vicksburg and Gettysburg) Major Lugenbeel chose the sight of the U. S. military post of Fort Boise (Boise Barracks). The battle news arrived weeks later.

July 7, Boise was founded and the townsite located adjacent to Fort Boise.

July 10, Governor William H. Wallace organized Idaho Territory, establishing Lewiston as his capital.

July 30, Northwestern Shoshoni and Bannock Indians made peace as a result of Connor's victory at Bear River. In what has been said to be the first big wedding in the new Territory Mary Christofferson and Niels Anderson were married by Lieutenant Shoemaker, of Connor's soldiery, in the Soda Spring area. Merry-making was enjoyed by townsfolk and military alike. They danced on canvas stretched over the grass and to the music of accordions and fiddles.

August 15, marked the beginning of important silver discoveries in the Owyhees.

September 22, Idaho's first census showed a population of 32,342. Over 16,000 were in Boise County. Many thousands were in the area later to become Montana.

September 29, The Boise News at West Bannock, the town later renamed Idaho City. Paris was founded by C. C. Rich's party.

October 31, in Idaho's first official territory-wide election Governor William

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a concise chronology of idaho's birthyear, 1863

H. Wallace was elected Idaho's Delegate for Congress.

December 1, William B. Daniels became acting governor of Idaho and Silas D. Cochran took over Daniels' duties as secretary.

December 7, Idaho's Territorial Legislature met for its first session. Governor Daniels prophesied a great future for Idaho. The Legislature licensed a ferry 10 miles below the present site of Weiser. This ferry was an important unit in the trail leading from California and Oregon into the Idaho gold fields.

December 30, the Idaho Legislature unanimously approved and acting Governor Daniels endorsed, the creation of Jefferson Territory. This became the present state of Montana, as we know it.

Banking began in Idaho as Christopher Moore and other mining-town merchants, plus a few saloonkeepers furnished safekeeping for gold dust and valuables: mutual trust was the only security.

Urquides Little Village, back of Main and First Streets in Boise, was established by Jesus Urquides, a pioneer packer from San Francisco. Its 30 cabins are still occupied.

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FIRST HOUSE IN IDAHO APPROACHING OWN CENTENNIAL

The L. H. Hatch house in Franklin, the oldest town in Idaho, was built in the days when Indians were a menace and the stage-coaches labored over tortuous roads and trails through the Mountain West. But even in those dangerous days, the people built for permanence. The spell of the Greek-revival lines of this solid three-story mansion made from the native stone, now after nearly a century shows a charm and substance comparable to the impressive "town houses" built in the well-established cities of the east and west coasts.

Here, in a wild land, in 1860 before even the arm of the United States Government could reach protection over its distances, 13 Mormon families located on the present site of Franklin, Idaho. Said William E. Corbridge, one of the settlers, in a deposition now historical, "It was the understanding and belief of all those who settled at Franklin at this time that they had come to build permanent homes and cultivate the soil.

"...a school house was built during the first summer and fall months of the year 1860 and school was taught there during the winter. There's a plaque in Franklin, erected in 1946, by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers which reads: "Franklin, the first permanent Anglo-Saxon settlement in Idaho."

"On account of the hostility of the Indians the citizens were obliged to perform all their labors, such as the making of canals, hauling timber, farming, etc., in companies so that they could protect themselves in case of attack. Besides this, we found it necessary to stand guard night and day for the first three years.

"Brigham Young visited the village and approved the work. Young later bought a steam engine in the East and had it shipped up the Missouri River to Fort Benton and then overland by wagon and ox team to Franklin, where it powered a sawmill.

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first house in idaho approaching own centennial

It was an epic itself, bringing that 10,000 pound machine across the continent to Franklin." At the time Corbridge made the foregoing statement the remains of the old sturdy engine had been placed in the Franklin Pioneer Relic Hall, bearing mute evidence to the fact that when Idaho became a Territory of the United States, Franklin had already been a law-abiding, prosperous town for several years, in its own historical right.

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THE MOST EASILY OBTAINABLE BIBLIOGRAPHY
FOR USE IN PREPARING CENTENNIAL STORIES AND FEATURES

- (1) The Idaho Almanac, published by the State Department of Commerce and Development.
- (2) History of Idaho, Beal and Wells. Available at leading book stores. Can be had in reference departments of good libraries. This is a two-volume work, comprehensive, understanding, accurate, and interesting to read. Well indexed and annotated. Merle Wells, co-author is State Historian.
- (3) History of Idaho, by C. J. Brosnan. A school text, but an excellent work, especially on early and middle periods of Idaho history. At most libraries and schools.
- (4) Idaho Encyclopedia, a WPA project, headed by Vardis Fisher. Has excellent material on county histories as well as general information.
- (5) Idaho in the Pacific Northwest, by Barber-Martin. Comprehensive one-volume school text. Valuable maps and illustrations. Highly informative.
- (6) Idaho Historical Series # 2, "From Discovery to Statehood." A compact history of the period mentioned, prepared by the State Historical Society. Available from the Society in convenient reprint form.
- (7) Idaho Yesterdays. The quarterly of the Idaho Historical Society. Available in good libraries. Consult reference service for articles on periods, incidents, and personalities as suits your requirement.

Other books are available at libraries. Your Department of Commerce and Development, however, suggests the above as being the most conveniently available and comprehensive enough for all general working purposes in the field of Idaho history.

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THE HOURS WHEN IDAHO BECAME A UNITED STATES TERRITORY

"It was the best of times and the worst of times..."

...Dickens

In not merely a time of crisis: Idaho was born in days when the United States was whirled in a vortex of crises. Around March 3rd, 1862 when Lincoln signed the bill making Idaho a Territory and the time in July when first Governor William Wallace proclaimed Lewiston the capital, events tore the normal life of the world, the Union, and the states and territories apart. President Lincoln had opened the year with the Emancipation Proclamation, but the Union defeat at Chancellorsville opened the way for Confederate invasion of the North -- though Stonewall Jackson was killed. Mexico to the south was ruled by an Austrian Emperor kept in power by French arms, while North and South battled to death in the States. The first draft (conscription) went into effect in the northern United States. Vicksburg and Gettysburg turned the tide for the North but draft riots in New York City, Troy, and Boston saw four days of rioting, pillaging, massive resistance, lynching of numerous Negroes, and the killing of the Union General in command of the New York City area.

The very night Lincoln signed the Idaho bill, Idaho volunteers were readying for a campaign to crush Indian resistance in southern Idaho. Vigilante committees were formed in Lewiston, Payette, Boise, Salmon, and other Idaho centers. The public debt of the United States exceeded a half a billion dollars for the first time. (It's now 600 times that large.)

On the happier side, balls and strikes had to be called in baseball for the first time. Burnside suppressed the Chicago Times for publishing articles

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the hours when idaho became a united states territory

unfavorable to the Union cause but Lincoln restored it to publication three days later. Ada Menken, was wildy received in The Wild Horse, a play which toured the nation and stirred masculine hearts as she was tied to the wild horse and made the ride wearing about as little as the law of those days would allow. In the world of clothes, Eben Butterick invented the paper dress pattern and revolutionized women's wearing apparel in America.

Henry Ford was born at this moment when people were looking to centuries of railroad expansion and the day of the individual vehicle for travel was considered lost.

Turbulent times with an obscured future, yet the news that came to the Union cause from Idaho was all good. Idaho gold flowed into the east and was important in paying for a good deal of the war materials the Union needed to win. The railroads had yet to reach the gold-producing areas but the Mullan Road crossing north Idaho -- called the greatest engineering and construction project ever completed by a nation engaged in a major war -- was serving its purpose in expediting the flow of gold to the federal treasury.

It was indeed a stormy birthyear for the biggest territory of them all, but this prodigious infant was already paying for its keep.

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TERRITORIAL SEAL OF IDAHO SURVIVED MANY BATTLES

Displeasure with the design of the original Idaho Territorial seal or perhaps dislike of a man who redesigned it, led the Idaho Territory to have three versions of its great seal and at one time boast a Secretary of State who used two versions-- it was said, "to please everybody." The original Territorial seal was a virtual imitation of the Seal of the State of Oregon and it is that design which is being used on one side of the Idaho Centennial Medal, as prepared by the Idaho Historical Society.

When Caleb Lyon of Lyonsdale, New York became governor, he reported that Gilson historically known as the Secretary of State who absconded to Hong Kong with Idaho funds, had probably taken the seal with him. Proofs of a new seal approved by the Third Legislature, Lyons claimed were incorrect. It has been debated that these incidents gave him an opportunity he wanted, which was to design the seal himself, as he claimed quite proudly that he had designed the Seal of the State of California. The seal he put forward had some highly interesting characteristics, including what his critics called "the moon shining by day and a horses head with antlers, supposed to be an elk". Its motto was "Salve" meaning welcome: welcome to the miner, welcome to the farmer, etc. The older seal had used the motto, "Union." Another well-noted element in Lyons' seal was a steamboat on a river.

Was the Seal Stolen?

Former Secretary of State G. H. Curtis gives a colorful report of the battle of the seals in his interesting treatise on the subject.

"It would seem that little, if any, change was made when Secretary Howlett returned the seal to San Francisco for correction. Edward J. Curtis, Secretary from 1869 to 1878, used the seal for the laws of four sessions and then, in 1877, reverted to the 1863 seal. One wonders if this could have been the result of the political disorder of the time. Governor Brayman and Curtis did not get along well

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territorial seal of idaho survived many battles

together. The latter finally lost his job through the stubborn efforts of the old governor. May it not have happened that in the struggle the governor aided and abetted a raid to steal the seal in order to discommode his hated neighbor by depriving him of the chief symbol of his office? However this may be, a seal does not appear to have been lying around the Secretary's office, for Sidebotham, who succeeded Curtis, did not use any seal to attest the laws of 1879.

"When the next legislative assembly met Idaho had another secretary, T. F. Singiser, who either could not locate or did not like the seal with the horse's head adorned with antlers and the moon shining by day. On the 1881 laws he used a seal, which we shall call the "new" seal, exhibiting many modifications of the seal from 1869 to 1875.

Battle of the Seals

"Even here at last, however, the seal could not rest secure. Singiser himself in 1883 employed the bald-faced-horse-with-antlers seal. Secretary "Alphabetical" Pride in 1885 preferred the new seal, while E. J. Curtis, who was again Secretary for the remainder of the territorial period, played fair with everybody by using the earlier version in 1887 and the new one in 1889.

"Further research is needed to disclose the reason for the unending battle of the seals. But may it not be symbolic of the contrariness which has characterized so much of Idaho's political history? We have a tradition of independence and our representatives have often been among the insurgents of Washington. In the territorial period our delegates were on the minority side in the House of Representatives during sixteen out of twenty-seven years. They were of the same political party as the Presidents only three years and four months of that time. Throughout statehood our senators and representatives have often opposed the policies of the Presidents. Idaho presents a good claim to be the original range of the "Sons of the Wild Jackass".