

History of Old Fort Boise



By Norma Nelson

The history of Old Fort Boise is apt to be somewhat confusing as there were actually two old forts called Fort Boise. In 1863, some time after the old forts had been abandoned, a company of soldiers camped on what is now Government Island in the Boise River (near Boise) to protect miners and settlers from Indian attack. A permanent barracks was established called Boise Barracks, but known to some as "Fort Boise". Old Fort Boise Days is concerned with the earlier forts and the inestimable value of the role they played in the development of what was then the "Oregon Country".

Prior to construction of the first fort near the mouth of the Boise River, an attempt was made by Donald McKenzie, an official of the Hudson's Bay Company, to establish a post at the mouth of the Boise River. Want of food and hostility of the natives forced it to be abandoned. The presence of American and British fur trappers in the fur-rich valley brought about an agreement between the United States and Great Britain for joint occupation of the territories west of the Rocky Mountains. There was much rivalry between these American fur traders and the Hudson's Bay Company. At this time an American trapper traveled to Boston for merchandise to be delivered to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company at an agreed rendezvous (Pierre's Hole, now Teton Basin). When this man, Nathaniel Wyeth, reached the rendezvous he found the company dissolving and his goods refused. Thus, out of necessity, Wyeth built the first fort on the Snake River to take care of his goods. This fort came to be called Fort Hall, named after the oldest man in the party. This fort was begun on July 15, 1834 and was finished August 6, 1834.

A certain Thomas McKay, an official of Hudson's Bay Company, observed the construction of Fort Hall from a nearby encampment and subsequently established a fort for the Hudson's Bay Company at the mouth of the Big Wood

River (Boise River) during 1834-1835. This fort was built in direct competition to Wyeth's post to keep Indians from giving their fur trade to Fort Hall. Although the exact location of this early fort is not known, there is some evidence it was built on the site of McKinzie's early post, near the present town of Notus.

Members of Marcus Whitman's missionary party describe the fort as "a miserable pen of a place . . . in fact, the whole concern could hardly be called a passable corral". The Whitman party stopped at this first fort in August, 1836, and shortly after a second fort was built on the Snake River at a point known as Three Islands. This second fort (actually constructed in 1838 by Francois Payette) was a more permanent structure of logs, stone, and adobe; a pole stockade (later replaced by an adobe wall), a building containing a dining room, sleeping quarters, and a kitchen; a store; servant's quarters; and an outdoor oven. The proprietor, Francois Payette, a French-Canadian in the service of Hudson's Bay Company for over twenty years, welcomed travelers with gracious kindness. Visitors described their reception in glowing terms: "We were kindly received and entertained by the gentleman in charge, who kindly proffered to let us have such provisions as we needed and to render us any additional service in his power".

With the wane of fur trade in the valley the fort was maintained as a trading post and comfort station for weary travelers. In 1853 a rise in the Snake River washed away most of the fort. It was partially rebuilt and maintained until Indian hostilities (the Ward massacre, 1854) caused it to be abandoned in 1855. Our government later paid the Hudson's Bay Company \$650,000 in settlement for all British claims. These claims included Fort Hall which Wyeth had been forced to sell to his rivals in 1836, at a loss, he claimed, of \$30,000.

The fur traders, actually the first white settlers in the Ore-

gon Country, explored and opened the way for missionaries and later pioneers. Many of those who came for furs and the lure of gold stayed to develop the agricultural possibilities of the country. Names of these early settlers are still familiar to valley residents, through personal acquaintance and in the person of their descendants. Records kept by the fur gatherers are almost the only history we have of that period of time . . . historical events which played a vital part in America's early expansion and winning of the Oregon Country. The Old Fort Boise Days celebration serves to remind us of the founding and expansion of the civilization of the "Oregon Country" which is now the states of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

Information and documentation: "Boise, The Peace Valley", by Annie Laurie Bird (Parma High School Library) "Idaho in The Pacific Northwest", Barber and Martin (Nyssa Library)

STATE DISTRIBUTES HIGHWAY FUNDS

The semiannual apportioning of the State Highway Fund to the incorporated cities of Oregon was made today by the State Highway Commission.

Funds to be released by the Commission total \$6,038,070.06, which will be distributed to 226 incorporated cities in Oregon whose population now totals 1,178,527. The allocation is based on the statutory 12 percent for the period January 1 through June 20, 1970.

The funds come from the following sources; motor vehicle registration and operators' license fees, gasoline tax, use fuel tax, motor carrier fees, and fines and penalties collected for violations of the size and weight statutes where complaints are made by Highway Division weighmasters.

The city of Nyssa will receive \$12,936.60, and Ontario's share is \$33,061.33.



Salem Scene

by Jack Zimmerman

It used to be that if you dared say economize to a politician he'd scoff and brand you politically naive.

But "economy" in government is no longer a dirty word. This is especially true in Oregon. The cost of doing governmental business has been going up right along with everything else. This fact has placed a severe strain on state government's pocketbook -- and likewise has stretched taxpayers' purse strings near the breaking point.

Consequently, government's search for additional funds and taxpayers who have balked at providing new revenue sources have combined to put economy high on the accomplishments list of even the most politically astute.

Gov. Tom McCall was quick to recognize this change of events. Voter rejections of a plan to boost income tax revenue -- plus historical aversion toward a state sales tax, must have played a part in the McCall Administration's early determination to reorganize and economize.

A logical first step was Gov. McCall's creation of the Project 70s Task Force on June 28, 1968. Composed of faculty members from Oregon's state universities, the Project 70s Task Force made recommendations for sweeping state government reorganization.

With few exceptions, this reorganization plan was adopted by the 55th session of the State Legislature in 1969.

The logical next step was creation of the Management 70s Task Force on July 11, 1969.

Hailed as a bold, new plan to borrow top-level Oregon corporate executives to study and recommend more economically efficient methods of operating the newly reorganized state government, the Management 70s Task Force is nearing completion of its assignment.

Charged with "capturing" savings resulting from reorganization, the Management Task Force consists of some 20 loaned executives headed by a steering committee chaired by Ralph Voss, president of the First National Bank of Oregon.

Operationally the Task Force was divided into teams consisting of a project leader, three additional loaned executives and two state analysts, one from the executive department and another from the particular agency studied by the team.

For the last year these teams have been probing and poking into every recess of each of Oregon's state agencies. Not content to simply study agency operations, the Management Task Force is empowered to recommend and even implement economy oriented efficiencies. Described as a \$600,000 pro-

ject -- financed wholly by private businesses and industries lending Task Force members, it was hoped to produce results that would combine to create biennial savings of as much as \$25 million.

Actual investigative work of the Task Force has been completed. Some 27 major state agencies have been examined. Results of some individual projects already have been released but the final report is not expected before Oct. 15, according to Kenneth T. Underdahl, assistant to the director of the Executive Department.

Gov. McCall, on the strength of preliminary findings alone, expects the "savings" to exceed the initial \$25 million estimate.

"The Task Force project will have tremendous impact on reorganized state government," he said, "and actual results will continue to be measured over the decade ahead."

Some notable results of both reorganization and Task Force activity are significant examples of the effectiveness of both.

The State Highway Division, for instance, eliminated 447 positions from its budget request for the second half of the current biennium. No one was actually fired. That many unfilled and vacant positions were simply omitted from the new budget.

Legislative reorganization created the Department of Revenue, combining the old Tax Commission with the Inheritance and Gift Tax people show a 40% revenue increase this year over last with a 6.4% work load increase accomplished with 27% fewer personnel and an 11% operating budget reduction! All results of the Management 70s Task Force will not be measured strictly in dollar savings, however. Many are program efficiency oriented -- making state agencies more customer conscious and aware of the need to satisfy citizen service requirements.

One such example is an experiment by the Motor Vehicles Division involving keeping offices open evenings and Saturdays for customer convenience.

No one particularly enjoys having an outsider tell him how he can do his job better. And Management 70s Task Force people probably wouldn't

"LANDMARK OF QUALITY" WEEK

Governor Tom McCall has proclaimed August 23-29 as "Landmark of Quality" Week in Oregon.

The Governor said, "In Oregon we grow nearly every crop indigenous to this temperate zone. Because of our mild climate, cool nights, abundant rainfall, fertile soils, and skilled growers and processors, we produce a variety of food and fiber products that are unsurpassed in quality anywhere in the world."

"Oregon is synonymous with the word quality. Our manufactured products, too, are sought throughout the nation and the world because of this distinction of prime quality."

"In recognition of this achievement of man and fortune of nature, the Agri-Business Council has created an Oregon symbol of excellence called the "Landmark of Quality," and an annual week-long observance of Oregon's quality products called Landmark of Quality Week.

"I do hereby designate the week of August 23-29 as Landmark of Quality Week, and call upon all citizens of the State of Oregon to participate in this tribute to Oregon products of consistent and established quality."

OREGON BOND SALES REMAIN HIGH

A report received here today by County Chairman Jim Leslie shows that sales of Series E and H Savings Bonds in Oregon stayed on a high plane during the month of July. "Savings Bonds sales last month in this state were \$2,434,244, within about \$17,000 of our sales in July a year ago. It was a very good month, bringing our total sales for 1970 to \$19,257,505, about \$1,400,000 more than they were a year ago at this same time.

"Sales in our own county amounted to \$105,978, compared to \$131,007 in July of 1969. National sales were \$2,916,000 for January through July, slightly above those of 1969 to the same date."

win a popularity poll in some state agencies. But if the findings turn out as significant as they appear, Task Force workers will be popular with a large segment of the Oregon public for a long time to come -- the taxpayer.

Packwood Wants To Abolish Seniority For Committee Chairmen

Senator Bob Packwood (R-Ore.) Monday called for abolishment of a 125-year-old Senate practice which gives the Senator with the greatest length of service automatic chairmanship of a committee.

Packwood said chairmen of the Senate's 16 standing committees should be selected by the membership of the individual committees and that ability -- not seniority -- should be the key consideration.

Packwood made the comments in a Senate speech as he outlined plans to circulate for co-sponsorship a legislative reorganization amendment.

Packwood, the youngest member of the Senate at age 37, said the seniority system would probably work to his advantage because most committee chairmen are elected to the Senate at an early age. The average committee chairman in the Senate today has served 20.9 years and his average age is 65.4 years, Packwood said.

Packwood said the usual age for retirement in private industry is 65 and if that rule were followed by the Senate, "all but four of the 16 Senate committee chairmen would be forced to retire."

"It is illogical to assume that the man with the longest service on a committee is therefore automatically the most qualified to be chairman," Packwood said. "Long service does not necessarily produce expertise. Natural ability, devoted interest and detailed study do."

"Some of the ablest committee chairmen in the history of the Republic serve in this body today. But under the seniority system, their qualifications are secondary to their seniority."

Packwood said the system has a host of "crippling flaws" including:

1. Being undemocratic;
2. Having no relation to competency.
3. Sometimes producing chairmen unrepresentative of the times;
4. Rewarding states with one-party systems and penali-

zing states with more dynamic two-party structures.

Packwood documented various forms of governments -- free-world parliaments, communist and dictatorial, state legislatures and city councils -- showing that none of them used the seniority system.

Malheur County 4-H Members At State Fair

Forty-four Malheur County 4-H members will compete in the 1970 Oregon State Fair in Salem August 29 through September 7.

Several of the girls are participating in contests. Beverly Schaffel will compete in cake baking while her sister Vicki Schaffel will be in the roll baking contest. Rita Farley and Marcella Guerrant form the Malheur team for the senior dinner food preparation contest. The intermediate luncheon will be prepared by Kay Roy.

Nine Gun Safety Club members will be shooting for the gun safety marksmanship title. Senior team members include Tom Mendiguren, Bob Toombs, David Smith, Lynda Towner, Teresa Schmit, and Shelly Abbe. Debra Smith, Dick Palmer and David Knapp form the intermediate team.

Clothing Style Revue participants are Lori Lewis, Barbara Anthony, and Marcella Guerrant. Those 4-Hers competing in the Knitting Style Revue are Kathryn Anthony and Beverly Schaffel.

Cindy and Sue Hiatt will exhibit their demonstration on "Honey". Malheur County will not only be represented by these contestants but by exhibits too. Twelve clothing exhibits, 12 food exhibits, and 5 knitting exhibits will be shown at the State Fair.

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