

Exact copy of the hand-written address of Loyal P. Brown, President of the Idaho County Pioneer Association, given at the Court House, Mount Idaho, Idaho Territory, June 13, A.D. 1888

* * * * *

"Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, Pioneers of Idaho County. We are here today for the purpose of celebrating the first reunion of Idaho County Pioneers. The foundation of this association was laid by a few of the old settlers less than one year ago. An organization was perfected and finally By-laws and a Constitution were adopted. By these rules, the 13th day of June of each year has been chosen as the day for us to meet and renew and cement the ties of old time friendship, and to recount the days of trials and dangers that surrounded the early settlers on Camas Prairies.

It seems well and I think a pleasure for people at times to assemble together, exchange thoughts and recount the bright hopes and anticipations of the early pioneers in making homes in a new and unsettled country. We are here to speak of pioneers life on the Pacific Coast and more particularly of the last twenty-five years in Idaho.

Forty years ago there came across the sea from the Pacific by every white winged ship that reached the Atlantic, news of the rich discovery of gold in California; in a short time the news was wafted from state to state, from city to town, from town to country; as well may be supposed, great excitement was created all through the Atlantic States and by spring of 1849, saw a large emigration from all sections of the country, hurrying forward to the gold fields of California. The merchant packed his goods, ready for shipment, and left his shop closed; the clerk laid aside the yard stick and donned the garb of a miner; the lawyer took down his sign and with a copy of Blackstone in his haversack was ready for the Pacific; the Doctor with a full supply of pills and powders was prepared to sail; the mechanics with

hammer, saw and hatchet, considered a fine set of tools, was off toward the setting sun; the farmer left the plow standing in the field, --and all eager to reach the gold mines first; they came by sea; they came by land, in fact it matters not much how they came, all intent on one purpose.

Such another gathering as was witnessed in California in the year of 1849, our country had never seen; men from every state and town of our Union, and a good representation from foreign lands. It is true that a few emigrants at an early day settled in California and Oregon prior to the discovery of gold, many of the Oregon pioneers found their way and joined the miners of California. Little did those early emigrants at this time dream that they were paving the way or laying the foundation for almost an empire on the Pacific coast. No, they came to dig gold, and with the intention of returning home to friends in a few years- - - but some of us are here yet.

The pioneer miner in those days tramped through the mountains of California prospecting for the precious metals - - - They made the trails, built the bridges, that others might follow. On nearly every river and creek could be found the miner, searching for the shining dust, and it can be truthfully said that the mines of California well responded to the labors of these hardy pioneers.

The gold thus obtained aided in building the towns and cities on the Pacific coast. It stimulated trade and commerce and helped to swell the circulating medium of the world; yes, these were exciting times,

but with willing hands, work seemed a pleasure. Many dangers had to be encountered and many fell in the struggle and their graves are unmarked and unknown.

Now let us follow a little further the pioneer miner; they prospected the streams and mountains from Southern California to Oregon and it was not long before they crossed the Siskyou mountains and made the discovery of gold in Royal River Valley near the town of Jacksonville, that was in the year of 1851 or 1852. It was here that a halt was had, and for several years but little prospecting was done toward the north. In 1860 Captain Pierce from Yreka, California with a few companions fitted out and came to Washington Territory; they made their way to what is known as Pierce City, Shoshone County; there they made the first discovery of gold in Idaho. This led other prospectors to follow and the camp of Elk City was found in the spring of 1861. In the fall of the same year, Florence camp was discovered and during the spring and summer the camp of Warrens was struck. In the years of 1861 and 1862 it was estimated that fifteen thousand men were mining and prospecting in these camps. Soon after discoveries were made in the Boise Basin--and following in the wake of these miners came the settlement of our country. At this time there was no Idaho--the whole country was known as Washington Territory and extended East including all of Montana. Following the miner came the packers and traders, with others to engage in whatever occupation opportunity might afford.

The first trading town in north Idaho was established at Lewiston, the junction of the Snake and Clearwater rivers. Small steamers brought goods from Portland, Oregon and the supplies for our mining camps were

packed from there. It was along the trails leading to the mines that the settlement of the country commenced.

The first house ever inhabited by white man on this Prarie (Camas Prairie) was that of Capt. Francois, near the White Bird Divide. That was built in the fall or winter of 1861. Captain Francois resided in this county several years and then moved to Lewiston where they kept the Hotel De France for some years before his death.

The spring of 1862 saw several way stations along the trails: one at Sweet Water kept by James Donnelley, one built by Durkee and Crampton at what is known as the "Mason Place", one at Cottonwood by Mr. Allen, and one here at the foot of the mountain, erected by Moses Milner and his partner, Francis. It was them that cut the pack trail from this point to the mining camp of Florence in the spring of 1862. In the summer and fall of 1862 Mr. Hiram Lusk (or Lask) built the first house on Three Mile Creek - the old log house - and sold it to Crooks and Shumway in 1863. Around these stations the commencement was made for farming, which demonstrated that something could be produced, and soon after other settlers made locations, farms were opened and crops proved a success.

The year of 1862 were fearfull times full of dangers for life and property. The trails were waylaid by highwaymen. These men were not eager to work and sought only to plunder the innocent and inoffensive - the most atrocious crimes were committed and no person felt secure day or night.

Robbery and murder often occurred, until finally in the fall of 1862 Judge John Berry and brother were on their way from Florence to Lewiston with a pack train--they were robbed on Salmon River by English, Peeples and Scott. They escaped from the country but were pursued by Berry to Walla Walla and arrested. They were brought back to Lewiston. The people finding no security for life or property, and having no regular established courts, concluded something must be done to suppress crime and they took the matter of meting out justice into their own hands and Scott, English and Peeples were hung.

In the fall of 1863 Mr. Lloyd Mc Gruder went from here to Montana with a packtrain loaded with merchandise. On his return several men came with him, one night in camp east from Elk City, McGruder, Allen Phillips and two Chalneer brothers were murdered. The thieves, after killing nearly all of the mules, came on to Lewiston, took the stage for the lower country. They were suspected and Hill Beachey followed them to San Francisco where he secured their capture. They were tried and sentenced to be hung. The Execution was carried into effect and they were hanged at Lewiston, March 4, 1864. Capt. J.H. Fisk was sheriff of the county at that time and master of the neck-tie party. Thus ended the lives of three of the most cruel and fiendish murders ever known in Idaho--Lowery, Howard and Romain. Page, the fourth one, turned states evidence and was not tried. He remained in Lewiston but was killed in a few Years by Al Igo.

The hanging of Scott, Peeples and English and the Mc Gruder murderers seems to have had a salutary effect in suppressing crime--parties who were suspected soon took their departure for newer and fresher fields

where they could with more safety pursue their nefarious calling. North Idaho gave them a glad goodbye. From that time to this we have had a peaceable law-abiding community and the settlement in this county will well compare with others in this great Northwest.

In the spring of 1863 a commencement was made for farming; grain was sowed and I think the first timothy ever grown in Idaho was planted. Gardens were planted and it became a settled fact that this fair land would produce far better than had been anticipated. Settlers continued to come and we find today nearly all the public lands taken up and occupied for homes. The first fruit trees were brought from Walla Walla in the spring of 1864 and set out here at Mt. Idaho. Small fruits were also cultivated which have done exceedingly well. This beginning soon extended and we now find good orchards all over the Prarie; we can boast of good apples, pears and plums and cherries and the smaller fruits in abundance; we can also boast of well cultivated farms, producing grain and vegetables, all that the country requires.. It is generally conceded that no section of the Northwest produces better than our Camas Prarie--oats and barley often exceed one hundred bushels per acre, with wheat from thirty to sixty bushels . Truly this is the land for homes; a good climate, rich and productive soil, fine pasturage for the stock grower -- what more should we seek . I can see no reason why the settlers should not be successful in making happy homes here for themselves and children. Certainly industry and economy will surely succeed .

Durkee and George Crampton placed a line on the same route which was continued until late in the fall of 1863. They then sold out on Craig's Mountain--Crampton in a few years returned home and now lives in Boston. Mr. Durkee went to Burnt River, Oregon and for many years kept the station known as Express Ranch; the railroad passed the place and there is a station called "Durkees" in honor of this old pioneer of Idaho--he died last year at his home.

The Territory of Idaho was organized by Congress by taking territory from Washington, session of 1862 and 1863. Delegate Wallace was then member of Congress from Washington Territory; he was appointed first Governor of Idaho; he came to Lewiston, established seat of government and under his proclamation, the Territory held its first election in the fall of 1863.

The first convention held was by the Democrats in southern Idaho and John M. Kenady was nominated for delegate to Congress. In September, 1863, the Republicans held their first convention in Idaho, it was held in the old Pioneer Log House at Mt. Idaho. Gov. Wallace was placed in nomination for Congress and elected. So he was our first delegate in Congress from the Territory of Idaho, during his term, if I mistake not, the Territory of Montana was organized by taking territory from Idaho. They designated the summit of the Bitter Root mountains as the western boundary of Montana, leaving North Idaho but a narrow strip to British Columbia.

At the convention mentioned, Alonzo Leland was chairman and of those

who took part as delegates from the mining camps at the time, I can only call to mind four that are now living, they are A. Leland of Lewiston, Mr. Krebs, North of Lewiston, E. Sterling, San Francisco and John Wood of Salmon River this county. Alvord, Major Sanderson, Pomroy, Slater, Craig, Dr. Newell, all are dead, others may have been among the number, if so I do not recollect who they were.

The first legislature was holden at Lewiston, winter of 1863 and 1864. A. Leland and John Wood were members from Idaho county. This was the legislature which mapped out our counties and placed them in operation. The county had but little territory outside of the mining camps of Florence and Warrens and in the year of 1874 and 1875 by an act of the Legislature, Camas Prairie and the Elk City Country was attached to Idaho county. The measure seems to have given general satisfaction and great convenience to the people of this county.

Among the friends who took an active part in securing the passage of this act, I may mention Hon. S. S. Fenn, delegate in Congress, Hons. Phil Cleary and Howard, members of the Legislature at that time, also B. F. Morris, C. W. Case, N. B. Willey, B. Chamberlain of Warrens Camp, Jef Rhodes and Shearer of Florence, (Messrs) D. H. Howser, Ogle, Judge Bower, James Witt, J. N. Derman, M. H. and C. L. Rice, Crooks and Shurway, Robinson, Girton, Telcher and Pearson of Camas Prairie-- the aid given by these old pioneers secured the accomplishment of the measure.

In the spring of 1875 a special election was held and a Board of County Commissioners were elected and by a vote of the people the County Seat was located at Mt. Idaho. The court house and jail were built in a few years and let me here say that I am certain that we of this county have had less use for either than any county of the Territory; our jail has no boarders and one short term of court each year, is all that is required to settle what little litigation we have in Idaho county. The officials of the county are nearly all pioneers and in the discharge of their duties and the administration of Public Affairs give general satisfaction. The condition of our county is healthy and prosperous and rapidly increasing in wealth. The assessment roll for 1887 amounts to seven hundred fifty three thousand, five hundred and thirty four dollars (\$753, 534.00). (But I must hasten or will be behind schedule time.)

The first school ever taught in Idaho county was by Miss Bianca(?) Reed who came from Wilbur, Douglas County, Oregon in the spring of 1867. She remained here for two years and then returned home. The school was opened in the old log building at Mt. Idaho and of the children who attended were the Odles, Arams, Browns, Kings and Jones. The first school house built in the county was by a few pioneers and located near F. B. King's house in the year 1868. Soon after another school building was constructed near Mr. Arams place on Three Mile creek. Thus my friends was the commencement begun for schools in Idaho county, weak I must confess for at that time we had no public school fund and teachers and buildings had to be provided by the few families who had made settlement on the Prairie. Let us note the progress made from that time to this, we find today

that the country has become pretty well settled and we have 18 regular organized school districts in the county and we also find them well supplied with home talent for teachers. The public money for school purposes amounted to (\$2070.78) Two thousand and seventy dollars and seventy-eight cents in the year 1887, and we have 660, six hundred and sixty school children on the rolls of school districts in the county.

The first mill was erected by Peter Walters at the foot of the mountain on Three Mile creek, (a saw mill) in the year 1869 and 1870. It was this man Walters (? Watters) who without cause murdered Joseph Yates at Mt. Idaho in September 1870. He was arrested, taken to Lewiston, twice tried and convicted of murder. The delay in seeing out justice to the criminal was somewhat aided by some ten men, friends of Yates, making a visit to Lewiston. They called at the Jail and requested his attendance at a necktie party--and he was taken from jail and hung. The first flour mill was built by Dr. M. A. Kelly of Lewiston and H. H. Wheeler, C. B. Toothaker and Wm. Coram, (a steam mill) at Mt. Idaho in the year 1873. In 1875 and 1876 another flour mill was built by the Grange Society at Grangeville.

Of societies established in the county, the Masonic came first. A lodge was established at Mt. Idaho in the year 1873 and placed in running order by Major Truax of Walla Walla, acting for the Grand Master. The lodge has had a good membership and is in a prosperous condition. The order will this year erect a suitable hall for meetings. Then came the Red Cross a temperance organization, by Rev. McDougal of

California. It had a very successful career for several years and from my observation, am satisfied accomplished much good; it was neglected and abandoned.

In 1874 the Grange was organized by Spaulding, son of the old Lapwai missionary who was among the Nez Perce Indians many years before any settlement in this country. This pioneer missionary as I understand, came across the plains with Dr. Whitman and party. Dr. Whitman located on the Walla Walla river near the present city, where he with his family and companions were massacred by Indians. It was they who led in advance the commencement of civilization in the far west, and his untimely death was a serious check to further settlement East of the Cascade mountains for several years. I understand a school has been established at Walla Walla, bearing the name of "Whitman College" and a monument in memory of this good and early pioneer, has been erected. One should also be erected at Lapwai in honor of Rev. Spaulding. But I was speaking of the Grange Society; they built the hall in 1875; it was known as the Grange Hall and gave the name Grangeville to the town. The society has continued to prosper and they now have granges at Fairview precinct, one at Cottonwood and one at the Lake.

The Odd Fellows organized a lodge in 1880; continue to prosper and have a good membership. The Ancient O. of U. Workmen was placed in working order in 1885; being too old to become a member, I cannot speak of its success.

The first regular established church in this county was the Pioneer

Methodists, Rev. Strong, Presiding Elder, in the year 1877. Bro. Flenner, now of Boise City was our first resident preacher. To Bro. Strong and Flenner is due the honor of founding the school at Grangoville, which continues in successful operation; the church and school is now in charge of Rev. W. A. Hall.

Mr. President--We will now pass to the most distressing, the most painful period in the history of our settlement in this county.-- When gold was discovered in the mountains, the country was claimed by the Nez Perce Indians. In the spring of 1863 a Council was held at Lapwai by -- Halo, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Territory of Washington; a treaty was made with the Indians whereby they ceded to the United States all the territory outside of the present boundaries of the Nez Perce Reservation, and under that treaty our people claimed the right of settlement on the public lands. From that time until the spring of 1877, the whites and Indians were neighbors and had no serious trouble. Early in the spring of 1877, Genl. Howard in command of the Department of the Columbia was instructed to hold a council with the tribe at Lapwai for the purpose of inducing them to go upon the reservation and make homes. At that council the renegades known as Joseph and Band from the Wallowa Valley with followers from Salmon river were present. Genl. Howard gave them to understand the wishes of the Government and that they must comply. The Indians consented and agreed to move onto the reservation within thirty days, and that time was granted them by Genl. Howard.

But instead of preparing to comply, they prepared for war. You can well imagine our surprise when news reached the settlement of the outbreaks and murders on Salmon river. The settlers on the Prairie sought safety and security as best they could by abandoning their

homos and collecting together at Mt. Idaho. This was the 13th day of June 1877--All was alarm--all was confusion. Confronted by an Indian war without warning, without any preparation and without any provocation on the part of the whites, found us ill. prepared to defend ourselves--innocent and inoffensive people were killed wherever found, property burnt and destroyed--a general reign of terror prevailed.

I shall not dwell on those fearful and unhappy days only to say that nearly one hundred citizens and soldiers were killed by the Indians before they were driven across the Bitter Root mountains. All of the old pioneers know the condition of the settlers at that time and the danger that surrounded them. To those noble men who went forth to battle that others might not perish, and fell in the fight, let us ever hold in grateful remembrance--and draw the veil of sadness over those perilous and fearful days.

From that time to this our relations with the Indians have been exceedingly friendly, particularly those residing on the Clearwater and known as the Kamaies. Nothing has occurred to mar that good feeling and we trust will not. They have made rapid strides toward civilization. Miss Susan L. McBeth has for twelve or fourteen years been the missionary school teacher among them; by her kind and firm control they have become quiet, industrious and peaceable people and are fast preparing themselves for citizenship; they are making comfortable homes and we may say the Nez Perces are the model tribe in the great North West.

Miss McBoth has for the last two years kept her school at Mt. Idaho, she has a class who are progressing exceedingly well, some of her pupils are preachers on the Reservation and neighboring tribes. Miss McBoth has, it must be truthfully said accomplished great good, more than all others on the Nez Perce reservation and is entitled to the thanks of our people.

Mr. President--We have now in a brief manner as possible presented to you what has been accomplished by the early pioneers in settling, building and developing the great resources of Idaho County. The change that we have witnessed in the last twenty-five years, looking back from this day seems to be wonderful, but these notes are written for the Young Pioneers that in the future--say twenty-five years hence, they may compare notes and see if they the descendants of the pioneers have built more secure, on a more solid and permanent foundation, or have accomplished more or better in making homes for themselves and children, than did the early pioneers. They must take into consideration the isolation and condition of our county and the dangers we had to contend with, then I am sure they will do full and ample justice to the old pioneers, whose days of usefulness are fast passing away. To them I commit the task of upholding and sustaining this young Pioneer Association of Idaho County.

It is well that you preserve all that is worthy of preservation for the future history of Idaho, which will I presume contain much valuable information in time to come. Today what has been said may not seem of much importance, but in after years the young will begin to inquire who were the first settlers on Camas Prairie

and where did they come from? The answers will be found in our records when the members prepare a sketch of their lives. We have now about one hundred and fifty names enrolled as members of the association and let me impress upon your minds the importance of furnishing a memorandum to the secretary for record of your lives to date. Do not delay it until it is too late.

Among the early pioneers of the county came J. M. Crooks and family. He settled on Three Mile creek; he was a sterling and active man foremost in all enterprises tending to advance the interests of the community and was held in high esteem by his neighbors. He died at Grangeville about four years ago. He was a pioneer of Oregon and Idaho. Messrs. Caleb Witt and James Witt (who were here in 1861), Shurway, Odle, Jones, Aram, Robinson, Goo (?) Ward Girton, McDermont, Watson, Fern, King, Hughes, Talcher, Pearson, M. H. Rice and Rankin were among the early settlers on the prairie and all have contributed their share and their aid in making Idaho County what it is. To them in after years others will do ample justice.

We have spoken of the past--let us turn to the future. I predict that in twenty-five years from now you will behold a vast change on Camas Prairie. You will hear the whistle of the locomotives approaching from different directions; you will hear the rambling of the cars, day and night, bringing you what may be needed in exchange for your surplus; the farmers will be encouraged and the Prairie will become one vast field of grain and the golden harvest will be millions of bushels for export; you will find all the avenues of trade, stimulated and increased; you will find new towns built;

you will see settlement improved, good buildings will be constructed, churches and schools will be established sufficient for the wants of the people.

You will find the farmers with good homes surrounded with all the comforts of life, contented and happy; you will hear the steam whistles from the various points of the Prairie, engaged in the manufacture of the productions of the country; you will find that mills have been erected, at Clearwater, White Bird, Cottonwood and Craig's Mountain producing lumber, flour and perhaps a little of that, that excites the brain and spoils the man; you will find quartz mills in successful operation, working the gold and silver rock from our mountains.

You will find that wagon roads have been constructed to all of our mining camps and thousands of men employed in quartz mining, which will afford a greater market for the products of the country. You will produce a fine grade of horses and cattle which will be shipped from the Prairie to the East for a market; you will extend the boundary of the county and a part of the Indian reservation will be included; the Indians will become citizens and voters; their children will mingle with yours and they will pay taxes and attend the public schools; they will be land-holders and as I believe, good and thrifty people. It is possible that in the time mentioned, we may become the "State" of Idaho, (but doubtful) if so we must increase in population much faster than we have in the last quarter of a

century, should my predictions be fulfilled, you will find a happy, rich and prosperous community.

But Mr. President -- for a moment let us look and note briefly what wonderfull strides have been made on the Pacific Coast in settling the country since 1849; from San Diego to British Columbia is the paradise of the world and all the valleys have been settled and under high state of cultivation, producing almost everything necessary for the support of man. Fine farms have been made and the productions of the Pacific Coast are the admiration of the world. Happy should they be, man, woman or child who have found homes in this magnificent country.

The settlement on the coast has been very rapid and is permanent and in no other part of the world will you find such people, such a climate, with such productive soil. A few years ago it took the emigrant five or six months to reach the Pacific from the Missouri River. Now there are five or six railroads from the Atlantic to the Pacific and we can reach New York or Boston in four or five days; we are supplied with roads through almost all sections of the country.

We have steamers plying the rivers; we have steamships and sailing vessels, all engaged in carrying the surplus of the Pacific Coast to supply the demand of the world. The old pioneers have witnessed all this, but I will leave to the boys and girls to read and write about this land in after times.

My friends, I see before me today the aged pioneer whose hair is silvered by the frost of many winters. Some of them to my knowledge have been pioneers in California, pioneers in Oregon and pioneers in Idaho. Their race is nearly run and others must in a few years fill the places they will leave vacant.

Mr. President -- I also see before me the middle aged pioneer. They too have contributed the best part of their lives in aiding and developing the resources of Idaho.

I also see before me the young man and maiden with sparkling eyes and rosey cheeks, happy in the bright future; life is opening for them in all its beauty, like the blooming of the rose in the summer morning; they are full of hopes and bright anticipations for the happy days to come. May their cup of bliss never be broken. And here are the little ones, sweet little ones, the pride and pets of the home fire-side, loved adored by father and mother. They ought to and must be protected and educated, for they will in a few years be called to assume all the duties and responsibilities devolving on citizens of our country.

The thought occurs to me -- what will be the condition of all these people we see here today, a hundred years from now. If the historian who will search our records in the future, should pause and inquire, where are all those people who attended the first re-union of Idaho County Pioneers at Mt. Idaho, June 13th, 1888? What will the answer be? Only one can be given - gone - gone to rest, waiting -waiting the final summons from the great Jehovah, ruler of Heaven and Earth."

Mount Idaho, Idaho Territory, June 13, 1888-(Sig) Loyal P. Brown