

# IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## REFERENCE SERIES

### RATTLESNAKE STATION

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Rattlesnake Station was founded in August 1864, when Ben Holladay inaugurated his Overland Stage Line between Salt Lake City, Utah, and Walla Walla, Washington. During the earlier part of the summer, he had filed on 320 acres along Rattlesnake Creek for the site of this home station. Commodore William Jackson, an early employee of the Holladay line, acquired the property in 1872 and ran the station for three years.

In 1870, Wesley C. Tatro initiated a weekly stage line from Boise to the South Boise mines and made stops at Rattlesnake to accommodate overland travelers. In 1875, Tatro made the station an overnight stop and Jackson quit as manager. The Northwestern Stage Company, which had acquired the Overland line in 1870, hired Mr. and Mrs. Marion Daniels to replace Jackson.

In October 1875, a correspondent for the Owyhee Avalanche spent the night at Rattlesnake Station on his way to South Boise and found the facilities less than charming.

I leave this morning by buckboard train for Rocky Bar. I have changed the name of this station, where I have been sojourning since noon yesterday, from "Rattlesnake Station" to "Bedbug Station." There are no rattlesnakes here, but an abundance of the other animals, and hence the necessity for the change, which will be appreciated and understood by all who have occasion to sojourn here one night . . . Besides the man who keeps the "Bedbug" inn is totally unfitted for his business and deserving the contempt of all decent men. Mr. Morris or Mr. Boomer (Northwest Stage Company) would do well to make inquiry about this establishment and see if they cannot find a man to take charge of it who is destitute of hoggish propensities and will treat travelers with some degree of courtesy. (October 16, 1875, p. 4, c. 2)

The Statesman, on October 21, 1875, refuted the attack on the station and its proprietor and reported,

The article of the Owyhee Daily Avalanche of last week in regard to "Rattlesnake Station," on the Overland road and the point of departure Rocky Bar, Alturas

county, and which is now kept by Mr. Daniels, is pronounced a gross misstatement by all parties

coming from Rocky Bar and who visit or call upon Mr. Daniels and receive the courtesies of himself and his most amiable lady. The name or designation of "Bedbug Station" given to it by the Avalanche, we are authorized to say by numerous gentlemen who have put at this house is a fabrication out of whole cloth, and that no house in the Territory is furnished with better beds or is more neatly kept than this station by its present proprietors, Mr. and Mrs. Daniels. (p. 2, c. 2)

On a trip from Rocky Bar to Boise in September 1876, William A. Goulder, traveling correspondent for the Statesman, reported,

"The station has been changed from Jackson's place, and new buildings erected at a point about one-half mile distant from the old road. The house was not yet completed, the carpenters were busy at work, and there was the unavoidable confusion of moving into an unfinished house, but Mrs. Lemon gave us a pleasant welcome and an excellent dinner. The house, when finished, will be commodious and comfortable; and with Mr. and Mrs. Lemon as host and hostess, travelers will forget all the fatigue of their long stage ride from Kelton or Boise City. (Statesman, September 26, 1876, p. 2, c. 2-4)

In 1877, Goulder noted upon reaching Rattlesnake,

The Station formerly kept at this point, was called Rattle Snake and was and is yet, the property of Mr. Wm. Jackson, who owns a beautiful home and a fertile farm near the road, but a difference of opinion arose between Mr. Jackson and the stage company, with regard to duties, prerogatives, etc., which resulted in the removal of the stage station, to a point higher up the creek to the left of the old road. Comfortable and commodious buildings have been erected at the new station where the accommodations are first class--the very best of everything attainable in the interior; indeed, this is the character of all the houses on the road, as the Northwestern Stage Company, of which Mr. Lemons forms a part, would not tolerate any half way performance on the part of any connected with it. A post office has been established here with the name of "Mountain Home," but as yet there is not service, as no one is willing to serve the county in the capacity of postmaster. (Statesman, February 13, 1877, p. 2, c. 2-5.

In September 1878, while on a trip to Rocky Bar, Goulder remarked,

"The 'Mountain Home' is really a very pleasant home near the mountains. A few years more when the trees have had time to attain a fuller growth it will be one of the coziest little spots on the road." (Statesman, September 12, 1878, p. 3, c. 4)

The station received a setback on October 12, 1878, when a fire destroyed the stable, barn, and coach house. In addition to the loss of the structures, one coach, ten horses, twenty-five tons of hay, seventeen hundred pounds of grain, other

miscellaneous items, and the western bound mail were also lost. The cause of the fire was unknown, and John Hailey, Superintendent of the stage line, placed the loss at \$6,000. (Statesman, October 15, 1878, p. 3, c. 4)

When the Oregon Short Line Railway was completed in 1883, the post office was removed to a new townsite by the rails and kept the name of Mountain Home. Rattlesnake Station, however, continued to service stages running between the new railroad town of Mountain Home and Rocky Bar until August 1914, when the stage route to South Boise was abandoned.

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