

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY REFERENCE SERIES

HEYBURN STATE PARK

Number 291

January 1993

Heyburn State Park has unusual historic interest. After six years of United States Senate service, Weldon B. Heyburn had gained considerable notoriety in fighting President Theodore Roosevelt's Forest Service. But like his conservative Republican predecessor, George L. Shoup, he wanted to make sure Idaho had at least one national park. His choice in 1908 was a Chatcolet Lake site that had been preserved intact as part of Idaho's Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation. When that area was about to be opened for allotment and settlement, he worked quickly, but unsuccessfully, to secure a protective national park designation. As time went on and his opportunities became more limited, and in a confusing negotiation, he wound up with a temporary compromise that provided for sale of that potential parkland to Idaho state authorities for a state park at a modest appraised price. Heyburn did not want a state park at all, because he felt positive that such a designation would not lead to adequate development funding. (At that time, no Pacific Northwest state had tried to set up a park.) But Idaho's legislature responded in 1909 with an appropriation less than large enough to cover its purchase price. Two year later, enough funds were added to complete that transaction, and Idaho was left with a state park when Heyburn's later efforts failed to get it redesignated as a national park. Originally served by Coeur d'Alene Lake steamers and a recently abandoned railroad, Heyburn State Park has become a resort accessible by highway.

(This information has not been edited.)

Publications--450 N. 4th Street, Boise, ID 83702--208-334-3428