

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

DRAGGETT CREEK FIRE, JULY 21, 1960
(Advertiser Column by Nancy DeHamer)

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Ten years ago this week [July 1970] thousands of acres of Idaho timberland in flame. Hundred-degree temperatures and lack of June rain set the stage for the conflagration. Boiseans were most aware of the forest which sprang up between Boise and Idaho City in the Boise National Forest. A set of graphic views of the More's Creek fire are in the photo file of the Idaho State Historical Society.

One picture shows a fire crew standing on Highway 21, watching the fire and smoke. For part of the time the highway was closed, as fire raged on both sides of it. Forest Service officials were convinced that the fire was man-caused, and they suspected arson. The heroes of the battle against the flames were the firefighting crews. These crews were composed of air force men from Mountain Home, National Guardsmen and Forest Service employees.

The fires did great damage not only to the forests, but also to private homes and cabins in the area. A home owned by Louis Rowell, located off More's Creek, was destroyed by flames on Thursday, July 21. Fortunately, the Rowells had removed all furniture and personal belongings the night before.

The Daggett Creek School was saved even though the land all around it was burned over, as can be seen in another ISHS Collection photograph. The heat from the fire was so intense that rocks along the edge of Highway 21 exploded.

The fires left in their wake a large area of burned-over land--land that would lose much of its topsoil and pollute the streams when the winter rains came; and land that would have to wait many years before it would support a mature forest. Scenes such as these should remind us that our forests are too valuable to be carelessly wasted.