

# IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY REFERENCE SERIES

## MONAHAN'S FERRY

T1S, R2W, Sections 26 and 35

Number 754

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The third session of the Idaho Territorial Legislature on January 2, 1866, passed the following act:

That M[artin]. Monahan and his associates, their heirs, successors and assigns, are hereby granted the exclusive right and privilege to construct and maintain a ferry on Snake River, at or near the mouth to Rabbit Creek, and about three miles above Fruit & Co.'s Ferry, which ferry is on the main road between Boise City and Ruby City, for the term of ten years, and that said parties have exclusive right of ferriage on Snake River, from Fruit & Co.'s upper line, about one fourth of a mile below the mouth of Rabbit Creek, up to the rapids, about three miles above the mouth of said Rabbit Creek. The said parties, their heirs, successors and assigns, are further granted the exclusive right to construct and maintain a toll road from said ferry, by way of Diamond Springs and the junction of the north and main branches of Rabbit Creek, to a point on the summit of the mountain between the head waters of Rabbit Creek and those of Reynolds' Creek, there forming a junction with the old county road leading from Reynolds' Creek to Ruby City, and that they have the exclusive right of a toll road for one mile on each side of the line of said road, but shall never be allowed to obstruct travel on the old road above mentioned, nor to prevent other parties from building toll roads across the said Monahan and Company's road, or forming a junction with it; the said parties shall be allowed one year from the passage of this Act in which to construct said road, after which they shall be allowed to collect such rates of toll as the County Commissioners of Owyhee County may from time to time allow: Provided, they shall be allowed to collect toll only for the number of miles actually traveled on said road. Toll rates for Ferry:

For each footman, .50¢  
For each horse and rider, \$1.00  
For each pack animal, .50¢  
For each unpacked or loose animal, other than sheep or hogs, .25¢

For each sheep or hog, .15¢  
 For each wagon with two animals and 2,000 pounds of  
 freight or less, \$3.00  
 For each additional span of animals, \$1.00  
 For each additional 1,000 pounds of freight, .50¢  
 Unloaded wagons shall only be half the above rates.  
 (Idaho Session Laws, 1865-66, p. 263-264.)

Monahan spent the remainder of the year preparing his ferry and new route for business. The following notice appeared in the Owyhee Avalanche on February 2, 1867:

New Ferry on Snake river.- Mr. Monahan informs us that his ferry on Snake will be completed and running by the 10th of this month. It is located about five miles above the present ferry on the road to Boise, and can be reached by a much superior route for water and grass. The distance from where the road leaves Reynolds' Creek to the present ferry is over a Sage Brush waste - without grass or water; excepting a brackish spring a couple of miles from Carson's Ranch; whereas we are assured that by the road to Mr. M's ferry plenty of grass and excellent water is found every few miles. At present, we are told that the best way to this ferry is to leave Reynolds' Creek at Ray's Ranch, bearing to the east over a low divide and follow down a branch of Rabbit Creek. Mr. M. will at once proceed to open a road to the main Overland one leading from Boise City to Salt Lake, which is to pass over a better route for grass and water for camping purposes, and as near to Boise as by the old road. He will at all times be prepared to furnish meals at the ferry. Any travel to Lemhi, Montana or the States will find the way by Monahan's ferry the nearest. (P. 3, c. 1.)

By April 1867, Monahan reported

. . . that travel has set in over the new route crossing the Snake by his ferry, and the enterprise prospers as satisfactorily as could have been expected. Leaving Jordan Creek the road leaves over the mountain to Snake River Valley from the N. Y. & O. Mill. The Road Company have been granted (by the County Commissioners) to collect toll on this road for five years, which is an inducement to go in and make a good thoroughfare. (Ibid., April 6, 1867, p. 3, c. 1.)

During the summer of 1867, the Owyhee County Commissioners granted Robert Davidson, John Hunter, William Fields, and John Austin the authority to construct and maintain a toll road from Ruby City to Monahan's ferry and authorized the following tolls:

One span of horses or mules and wagon, \$2.50  
 Each additional yoke, .75¢  
 Man and horse, .75¢  
 Horse, mule or other animal, packed, .50¢  
 Loose horses or other animals, .25¢  
 Loose sheep or hogs, per head, .12 1/2¢  
 Return teams, half price.  
 (*Ibid.*, July 6, 1867, p. 3, c. 3.)

In May 1871, the Commissioners ordered the following rate changes:

One span of horses or mules and wagon, \$2.00  
 Each additional yoke, .50¢  
 Man and horse, .25¢  
 Horse, mule or other animal, packed, .25¢  
 Loose Horses or other animals, .12¢  
 Loose sheep or hogs, per head, .05¢  
 (*Ibid.*, May 27, 1871, p. 3, c. 3.)

During 1870, the mail and stage route between Silver City and Winnemucca was changed to the Idaho Central's Elko road. In conjunction with this change, the stages were pulled off the Reynolds Creek route between Silver City and Boise and began running down Scotch Bob's hill and Sinker Creek to Monahan's ferry. Augustus Blanche, writing from his ranch on Catherine Creek, reported:

Colonel Davis and party are working on the new Elko and Boise road, and expect to complete it before very long. Monahan's Snake River Ferry has been moved to where the new road crosses the river about six miles below the mouth of main Catherine Creek. Of course if this road is adopted as the stage road, Fuqua's ferry [Walters] will be superceded [sic]. The new road will pass within about four miles of this place, which will of course make things a little more lively. (*Ibid.*, July 30, 1870, p. 2, c. 3.)

Monahan's new ferry was located in T3S, R1E, Section 16. In 1871, the stages reverted to the Winnemucca and Reynolds Creek routes and Monahan and the road company went out of business.

About 1897, Frederick Perry and Fred Brunzell began operating a ferry near the site of Monahan's original location, close to the mouth of Rabbit Creek. At this time the ferry became known as the Guffey ferry. Fred Perry and his wife ran the ferry until the completion of the Walters Ferry bridge in 1921. (Huntley, pp. 123-126.)

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