

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

WALTERS FERRY T1S, R2W, N ½ Section 17

Number 755

1982

Although owned and operated by many individuals and partnerships throughout its time of service, this Snake River ferry is best known as Walters Ferry. The ferry was established in the summer of 1863 by John Fruit. By December, George W. Blankenbecker had become a partner with Fruit in the enterprise.

On December 4, 1863, the Boise County Commissioners granted the latter a one-year license to operate the ferry. The license cost \$100.00 and he was authorized to charge the following toll rates:

Loaded wagon and one span, \$4.00
Each additional span, horses or oxen, \$1.50
Empty wagon and team, \$3.00
Man and horse, each \$1.00
Pack animals, .50¢
Pack animals, empty, .25¢
Loose horses and cattle, each, .25¢
Sheep and hogs, each, .12¢
(Boise News, April 2, 1864, p. 1, c. 3.)

Within the following two years, Blankenbecker left the partnership and was replaced by John Morgan. The territorial legislature on January 2, 1866, granted John Fruit and John Morgan a five-year franchise for their ferry operations and authorized them to charge the following tolls:

Wagon with two horses, mules or yoke of oxen, \$3.00
Each additional span of horses, mules or oxen, .50¢
Loose horses, mules or cattle, .25¢
Man and horse, \$1.00
Pack animal, .50¢
Unpacked animal, .25¢
Loose hogs or sheep, .12¢
Foot passenger, .50¢
(Idaho Session Laws, 1865-66, p. 262. See also Ada County Commissioners' Minutes, 1865-1868, pp. 126-127.)

In May 1868, Leonard Fuqua purchased the property from Fruit and Morgan for the sum of \$8,000. It seems apparent from a subsequent newspaper advertisement, that Fuqua also had a

partner.

"Fuqua and Boon, Free Ferry; Successors to Morgan and Fruit. Crossing at all times - Day or Night. A good Boarding house and free ferriage."

(Boise Democrat, May 6, 1868, p. 2, c. 2.)

In addition to purchasing the Fruit and Morgan ferry, the partners also bought the William Litell ferry, which was located about a mile downstream.

By 1869, Fuqua was the sole owner of the ferry, and on February 15, 1869, he sold an undivided one-half interest to James H. McCarty for \$5,000. The following February, McCarty became sole proprietor when he purchased Fuqua's one-half interest for \$3,000.00. (Huntley, p. 133.)

The Ada County Commissioners fixed the following tolls for McCarty on April 8, 1872:

One wagon, span or mules, horses or oxen, \$1.50
 Each additional pair, .75¢
 Man and horse, .75¢
 Pack animal, each .50¢
 Loose horses, mules or cattle, .25¢
 Sheep or hogs, .10¢
 (Ada County Commissioners' Records, 1868-1877, p. 416.)

Samuel Neeley became the owner of the ferry on January 4, 1874, but by June he had relinquished the property to Perry Munday.

"P. Munday, has become the proprietor of the Owyhee Ferry on Snake River. He keeps a public house where the weary traveler can find rest and plenty of refreshments."

(Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman, June 18, 1874, p. 3, c. 1.)

Neeley received \$6,500.00 for his six-month investment, and for many years the ferry was known as Munday's Ferry.

The Ada County Commissioners on January 10, 1878, granted Munday the following rates of toll:

One wagon and span of horses or oxen, \$1.50
 Each additional span or wagon, .75¢
 Man and horse, .75¢
 Footman, .50¢
 Loaded pack animal, .25¢
 Empty pack animal, .12 1/2¢
 Loose animals, .10¢
 Loose sheep or hogs, .05¢
 (Ada County Commissioners' Records, Book A, p. 24.)

In the summer of 1878, Munday became concerned with the increased activities of the Indians in his vicinity and offered his ferry for sale.

Mundays Ferry on Snake River is still offered for sale. Having had so much trouble about the Indians within the last three months, I am now determined to sell out here - fearing a repetition of the same next year - to any party or parties who wish to buy ferry property. I do not wish to rent nor sell on time; but will sell at low figures for cash: including a few head of cattle.

(Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman, September 28, 1878, p. 3, c. 3.)

It was reported in the same issue of the Statesman:

One of the best properties now offered for sale, is the Snake river ferry on the Silver City road, by Perry Munday. This ferry has made large money for all its owners. Mr. J. H. McCarty, now President of the First National Bank of this city made a big stake during the few years he owned the Snake river ferry. Mr. Neeley, the next owner, also made a handsome stake.

Mr. Munday, who now offers it for sale . . ., has made good money at this ferry. He is desirous of going away and offers this property at a bargain.

(p. 3, c. 2.)

Munday was finally able to dispose of his property on March 3, 1879, when Robert C. Duncan and Reese S. Miles purchased the ferry for \$4,750. Shortly after the purchase, Miles became ill at the ferry and he died on March 30, 1879. Duncan consequently became sole owner by purchasing his former partner's interest from his estate for \$1,500 on September 30, 1879. (Ibid., April 1, 1879, p. 3, c. 2; Huntley, p. 133.)

The Ada County Commissioners granted Duncan a one-year license for \$30.00 and allowed the following rates of toll on April 8, 1881:

Wagon and single span, \$1.00
 Additional span, .50¢
 Horse and rider, .50¢
 Footman, .25¢
 Pack animal, .25¢
 Loose animal, .12 1/2¢
 Sheep, .05¢
 Hog, .08¢

(Ada County Commissioners' Records, Book A, pp. 134-135.)

Duncan died at the ferry and on October 2, 1882, his widow, Sarah, sold the property to Lewellyn R. Walter and James McQuat for \$4,000. On March 29, 1886, Walter purchased the one-half interest of McQuat for \$4,000 and became the sole owner. (Ibid., October 7, 1882, p. 5, c. 1; Huntley, p. 134.)

During the latter part of the next year, Walter began a program to improve his facilities and attract more business.

"Mr. Walters of Walter's ferry is building and has almost has completed the 'Great Eastern,' - a ferry boat, 70 feet long and 16 feet wide on the bottom. It is large enough to drive 2 teams abreast. As soon as it is completed, it will take the place of the one now in use." (Idaho Avalanche, December 10, 1887, p. 3, c. 1.)

In January 1893, Walters leased the ferry to Israel Cannon. (Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman, January 3, 1893, p. 1, c. 1.)

On April 8, 1901, Walter sold his holdings to Madison C. Smith for \$2,500. Smith in turn proceeded to divide the property up and sold Lot 4, containing 37 ½ acres, the ferry boat, buildings, and equipment connected with the ferry, to Edwin Meek for \$500 on November 29, 1908. (Huntley, p. 137.)

Meek continued to run the ferry until 1921, when a bridge was constructed across the river near the ferry site.

By Larry R. Jones