

# IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## REFERENCE SERIES

OLDS FERRY  
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Reuben P. Olds and associates established the ferry in 1863. On January 22, 1864, the first session of the Idaho territorial legislature granted Reuben Olds, Rideout and Company a six-year charter for their already established ferry. They also authorized the following toll rates:

One team with wagon, \$3.00  
Each extra team, \$1.00  
Each pack animal, loaded, .75¢  
Pack animals returning, each, .50¢  
Horse and rider, .75¢  
Footman, .25¢  
Loose animals, each, .25¢  
(Idaho Session Laws, 1863-64, pp. 669-670.)

In the spring of 1864, David Rideout placed his 1/3 interest up for sale. He asked \$8,000 for his share in the ferry and claimed the purchaser could recover the investment in six months. (Boise News, May 7, 1864, p. 4, c. 3.)

In 1865, Olds joined forces with William Packwood and John Parton to form the Oregon Road, Bridge and Ferry Company. Between August 1865 and April 1866, the company reported gross ferry receipts of \$25,411.11. (IRAL, Microcopy 763.)

When the company dissolved its holdings in 1868, William Green became the proprietor of Olds ferry. On April 2, 1878, the Ada County Commissioners granted T. J. Carter a one-year license to run the ferry. (Ada County Commissioners' Records, Book A, p. 32.)

In 1889, J. A. Harris reported,

Notice to the Traveling Public. This is to inform all travelers and the public in general that I still own and conduct the original Old's Ferry, crossing Snake river at Farewell Bend at a point about six miles east of Huntington.

That my ferry boat is large enough for all uses and demands, and is at all times perfectly safe, and good accommodations are always ready for travelers, and the ferry boat can be easily operated at any time. Come right along with your saddle horses, loose stock and teams, and I guarantee perfect satisfaction. (Weiser Leader, October 4, 1889, p. 1, c. 3.)

On August 5, 1864, Mrs. W. A. Loughary, an Oregon-bound emigrant,

reported:

After passing one day at Poindexter's we again move, going seven miles we reach the ferry. It took all the forenoon to get our party across, only one wagon at a time with one span of horses or one yoke of oxen, for which we paid \$2.00 in gold dust or \$4.00 in green backs but, with plenty of patience and still plenty of money we finally crossed when the ferryman told "now you are in a land of rain, grain and big red apples," yet neither was realized, only in anticipation. (Loughary diary, MS 1147.)

Soon after his notice was published, Harris evidently sold the operation. The Weiser Leader on November 1, 1889, noted:

Chas. Green is conducting the Old's Ferry in good shape, and has only first-class accommodations for travelers. The public should remember that this ferry is at the old stage crossing of Snake river, or at the Old's ferry. The boat and wire are new and perfectly safe. It is on the direct route, gives the lowest rates, and can always be found ready to cross teams or any kind of loose stock. (p. 1, c. 2.)

The same month Green was granted a five-year license by the Malheur County Court to run the ferry. (Ibid., November 15, 1889, p. 1, c. 1.)

By June 1892, J. A. Harris and I. A. Herron owned the ferry. They moved operations 3.4 of a mile upstream to a new site. (Weiser Signal, June 16, 1892, p. 3, co. 5.)

In the spring of 1902, the Signal noted,

"One half interest in the Old's Ferry Board. Property consists of ferry boat and other machinery, fishing nets and appliances. Price \$400. Inquire at the Signal office." (Ibid., May 17, 1902, p. 5, c. 4.)

In June, 1903, Charles Baalman purchased the interest of his partner, Gilbert Tracy, and became the sole proprietor. The Signal reported, "Mr. Baalman has brought the ferry up to the highest standard of any on the river, having just put in a second cable, making it the only double cable ferry on the river, which with the new wheel put on the boat, makes it as absolutely safe as a ferry can be made." (Ibid., June 17, 1903, p. 4, c. 5.)

The construction of the Weiser bridge the following year effectively reduced the business of the ferry, but it continued in use until 1920 when it was purchased by some sheepmen and taken down the river to Brownlee.

By Larry R. Jones