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BOISE-KELTON STAGE SERVICE PAST CITY OF ROCKS, 1869-1883

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John Hailey had more than one passenger line, culminating in his Utah, Idaho, and Oregon Stage Company, that continued to offer service between Boise and Kelton for fourteen years after transcontinental railroad operations made Kelton a primary center for eastbound traffic in May, 1869. His 240 mile trips required about 40 hours, and featured a stop near City of Rocks.¹ Freighters as well as stage passengers bound for Boise also continued to come that way when winter snow did not force them to follow an early Salt Lake-Oregon Trail alternate through Albion instead of their superior City of Rocks option. Both routes had an approximately equal length, and many freighters preferred to travel by way of Marsh Valley and Albion.² John Hailey's stage line, in contrast, went to a great deal of effort to operate via Boise's Kelton Road past City of Rocks.

Deep snow drifts generally blocked Kelton Road access via City of Rocks and its stage station by November, and service that way could not resume until May or June. John Hailey's stage operations were equipped in parts of Idaho and Oregon, for example, to utilize sleighs to travel over deep snow: in December 1879 and January 1880, at least (in contrast with 1878-1879, when a winter shift from City of Rocks to Albion occurred in November), Hailey's Kelton stage had a twenty mile sleigh segment to retain its City of Rocks-Goose Creek route.³ But in April 1882, his Boise-Kelton stages were back on their winter detour through Albion. Even that way, rough winter road stretches required extra horses to keep his stages running on time.⁴ By 1882, though, Oregon Short Line Railway construction was getting far enough west that Kelton Road traffic was about to undergo a major change. In 1883, after rail transportation was available in Shoshone (much closer than Kelton), arrangements were made later in February, for regular stage service from Boise to Shoshone. Local mail and stage operations still continued on a modest scale to City of Rocks and Kelton.⁵ Stage passengers still were going that way late in June, but others preferred to ride toward Kelton.⁶ Later that year, when Boise got a new Union Pacific Railway station in Kuna--only 15 as compared with 240 miles to Kelton--John Hailey's Utah, Idaho, and Oregon Stage Line station at City of Rocks became obsolete. Although Albion retained stage service to Kelton, Oakley depended upon a local line to Minidoka, so even that source for stage station traffic

disappeared. By October 6, all Boise-Kelton stage service terminated when all horses and coaches from that operation reached Boise to embark upon other assignments.⁷ In 1884, John Hailey resigned entirely from his Utah, Idaho, and Oregon Stage Company⁸ and resumed his political career in Congress.

ENDNOTES

¹*Idaho Statesman* (Boise), June 5, 1869, p. 2, c. 2; June 24, 1869, p. 3, c. 1; *Idaho World* (Idaho City), September 2, 1869, p. 2, c. 4. Hailey took time out to get elected to a congressional term in 1872.

²*Idaho Statesman*, October 26, 1875, p. 3, c. 2.

³*Ibid.*, January 1, 1880, p. 3, c. 3, January 15, 1881, p. 2, c. 3; *Idaho Avalanche* (Silver City), March 16, 1878. Sleights had been used for Oregon stage service for many years.

⁴*Ibid.*, April 29, 1882, p. 3, c. 2.

⁵*Wood River Times* (Hailey), February 28, 1883, p. 3, c. 2.

⁶*Ibid.*, July 27, 1882, p. 3, c. 2; October 10, 1882, p. 3, c. 2; March 3, 1883, p. 2, c. 2; June 30, 1883, p. 3, c. 2.

⁷*Ibid.*, October 13, 1883, p. 3, c. 1.

⁸*Ibid.*, March 11, 1884, p. 3, c. 4; *Idaho World*, March 14, 1884, p. 4, c. 4.

Information provided by Larry Jones.

(This information has not been edited.)

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