



**IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
REFERENCE SERIES**

KELTON ROAD

Number 74

January 1972

After the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific were open for transcontinental railroad traffic, May 10, 1869, new stage and freight routes were established to connect southwestern Idaho with the Central Pacific. East to west there were Kelton in Utah and Toano, Elko, and Winnemucca in Nevada. Each of these communities were the terminus of a different road to Idaho.

Kelton was destined to become the main shipping point on the Central Pacific for southwestern Idaho after John Hailey chose a stage route from Boise City to Kelton. He connected Kelton with a route that had been opened from Salt Lake to Boise by freighters sent out in 1863 by William Purvine, John T. Heard, and Charles N. Teeter. Kelton thus received all the passenger and express business conducted by Hailey's stage line. By the summer of 1869, Hailey had 42 hour stage service between Kelton and Boise. Many freighters followed Hailey's route.

Hailey had nineteen stage stations on the 232 mile road between Boise and Kelton:

Black's Creek (15 miles from Boise)
Baylock (13 miles)
Canyon Creek (12 miles)
Rattlesnake (8 miles)
Cold Springs (12 miles)
King Hill (10 miles)
Clover Creek (11 miles)
Malad (11 miles)
Sand Springs (11 miles)
Snake River at Clark's Ferry (10 miles)
Desert (12 miles)
Rock Creek (13 miles)

Mountain Meadows (14 miles)
Oakley Meadows (12 miles)
Goose Creek Summit (11 miles)
City of Rocks (11 miles)
Raft River (12 miles)
Clear Creek (12 miles)
Crystal Springs (10 miles)
Kelton (12 miles)

Two major improvements came in 1871. A new grade down Raft River saved 18 miles before joining the old road at Rock Creek Station. Completion of Glenn's Ferry eliminated King Hill, Clear Creek Hill, and a bad section of the road between Canyon Creek and Rattlesnake. Freighters could make the trip over the new road easily in nineteen days. One freighter noted that there was not a grade on the new route where a wagon could not stand without blocking. These changes helped the Kelton route maintain a superiority over the other roads leading into southwestern Idaho. In the fall of 1879, John Hailey moved his Utah, Idaho, and Oregon stage line to the Glenn's Ferry route. A new stage station at Salmon Falls replaced Malad Station as a result of this change. With the completion of the Oregon Short Line to Shoshone in February 1883, Kelton soon was replaced as the major supply distribution point for the southern portion of Idaho. By March 1, 1883, all stage, express, mail, and freight traffic from Kelton had been transferred to the advancing Oregon Short Line terminal. By July 1884, a traveler on the old route noticed that "grass now grows over the defunct overland Kelton stage road where the weary traveler once traveled in clouds of dust. . ."

Prepared by Larry Jones