

A COMPANY TOWN?

1905

Reaction to the announced company town plan for Potlatch presented diverse points of view. As usual, those inclined to criticize and condemn by reason of grievances and personal axes to grind, were most outspoken. Employees accepted the plan as something better--a new experiment in community living. They looked forward to new low rental homes with electricity, water and sewers--good schools and churches--and better family living conditions than were available for workmen in most industrial towns of the time.

Most of the criticism came from without. The company town plan was openly criticised by many, including W. M. Morgan, Mayor of Moscow, as being "un-American" in that it denied the rights of people to own property--and follow lines of enterprise of their own choosing, characteristic of the boom-towns of the West.

As company plans unfolded, towns like Spokane, Moscow and Troy felt they were being by-passed in developments. Local papers had been predicting great things for their home-towns--based perhaps upon the prior acquisition of about 25 retail yard sites from Spokane to Walla Walla. The establishment of planing mills and wood working plants had been predicted in the papers at several points. Troy had anticipated, at least, a railroad branch from Avon to Troy, connecting with the Northern Pacific, by reason of the company purchase of timber claims between the towns--and was being boomed as "The Biggest Little Town on Earth". Bad guesses had been made--they had not been fooled. With company planning being openly staked out on the grounds, it was now evident that all operations were being integrated with "the largest pine mill in the country"; and, Potlatch--a company town, "promises to be the greatest manufacturing center in Idaho."

The company policy of handing out no information as to plans in advance of construction had given reporters no opportunities for scoops, and

resulted in rather cool relationships with the editors. The new company--the big corporation, was presented, as the new dog to be booted around by some editors and politicians; they were inclined to publicize any adverse comments and reports. Politically, of course, an industrial town without corporate entity, appearing only as improved lands on the county records, wholly owned and managed by the company, was something new. It presented new problems for the state and county in liquor licensing, law enforcement, and school and road administration. Insofar as the company controlled town was concerned, it was not policy for management to formally announce that they did not like the pattern set by organized labor, or the type of western boom-towns in timber and mining regions of North Idaho--and they were building their own. Such statements could invite troubles--rail spikes in logs and poisoned horse barns.

The liquor interests were rather powerful politically at the time--they were spenders and carried political weight. Saloons were being barred in Potlatch and fought along the railroad construction line--they were unfriendly and on the defensive.

Eventually, with operations getting under way it became possible for the company to do some "apple polishing". Editorially, the placing of job-printing orders with the papers made more friendly editors. Politically, the creating of a new Potlatch Voting Precinct in July 1906 by "slicing off a big chunk of the Palouse precinct and adding to it a part of the Gold Creek precinct, commonly called Princeton precinct, embracing all the new town of Potlatch" had a tempering influence. This lined Potlatch up politically with the conservative neighboring farm vote to be served by the town, and who were the suppliers of hay, oats and produce for the operations.

Typical news items, headlines, and comments characterize the times:

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In 1905: lumbermen realized they had "logged h...out of Minnesota"-- that saw-milling was on its downward trend in the Lake States; and in retreat westward. However, public opinion showed no active interest in natural resource conservation, either as to forests or soil. They were in a period of abundance, with frontiers ahead. Reforestation and conservation proposals were made by leaders in industry, to which the public was indifferent--and suspicious. No long-time conservation policies could develop when promoted by business interests only. Immediate benefits to be extracted from the profits of forest industry were foremost in the public mind. Unsound systems of taxations on timber and forest lands--along with forest fires, hastened the cut, tax delinquencies, and land abandonment.

A recent study of what took place in Minnesota forest history describes the situation: "The state itself was indifferent to the need for conservation, and we have seen how cities and towns located in the pine area bitterly fought conservation; they wanted the pine area settled, for then there would be markets for their produce and labor for their people as long as logging continued. The lumberman got profits, but there were profits for others as well.

"So the resources of the Upper Mississippi suffered in the same way that resources had suffered elsewhere. This was the price we paid for the rapid expansion of settlement, the rapid accumulation of wealth, and the rapid rise of the American standard of living."

Within the United States in 1905, no sizeable forest acreages were under sustained yield management, as we view it today. Schools of Forestry, National Forests, and the Forest Service were being established; and best education was in process.

Commercial forest land management for future cuttings came in later years, along with public interest evidenced in Boy Scouts, C. C. C., L-H and Tree Farm forestry work-- and foreman, with a changed economy

giving stumpage monetary values sufficient to support required investments and carrying charges.

We were in an agricultural development period. Company developments in the timber country on the Palouse and Potlatch were viewed by the public in terms of future payrolls, cut-over land conversion, farms and big red barns, markets for hay and oats for logging horses, new towns tributary to potential farm areas, and strawberries and cream. Trees were obstacles that had to be cut, and stumps blasted, in adding to tillable acreage. Forested slopes were given "light burning" to improve grazing lands and expose mineral outcrops. But little consideration was given toward a perpetuating forest industry. Company land policies were pointed toward forest fire prevention and disposition of cut-over lands suitable for stump-ranch development.

The local thinking of the time is keynoted in an editorial in the February 23, 1906, Palouse Republic "The WI&M railway is well named. The road starts at Palouse, traverses Idaho and will soon cross the dreaded Bitter Route Mountains into Montana; throughout all its length except the first few miles, it stretches over an undeveloped country.----It is a rich country; it is rich in possibilities after the natural wealth of the timber is taken from it. And that will take many years and the expenditure of many millions. These millions must flow through the natural channels just as water runs down hill. There is more than gold in the pine timber. When the timber is gone the hitherto despised mountains of Idaho will make many hundreds, even many thousands, of happy and productive homes. The cows will come at night with bursting udders and the finest strawberries in the world will grow."

As WI&M railroad location and construction extended eastward, promoters were figuring out possible townsites to serve farm communities yet to come. Company

TOWNS -- Names and Places
management was engaged in laying out future logging plans, spurs, sidings, camps, depots, water-tanks and flag-stops. All had to be named in advance of operations and the issuance of rail schedules and tariffs.

Legendary versions of the naming of the points on the WI&M have appeared at times, and mostly in error: With the making of final locations, names appeared upon the maps:

LAIRDS: The point of beginning of the WI&M and tie-in with the Northern Pacific--one mile West of Palouse, and switch point to the Company mill at Palouse, was named after Allison W. Laird, Assistant General Manager; later, General Manager.

PALOUSE: In 1905, Palouse was a prosperous city, having grown to an important trading center--originally Palouse City, during the development of the Palouse Country in the farm homesteading days prior to the nineties. It was advantageously located on the Palouse for log driving to the sawmill; it had a flour mill on the river, a pottery works, and a local light and power plant furnishing both night and day service. With the building of the Northern Pacific branch in the late eighties, Palouse had been established as a rail station, and was a production shipping point.

The name Palouse originated from the Indian word applying to the bunch-grass region--the Palouse Country, meaning "grassy plains". Historically, the word is reported to be of French origin: Pelouse--pronounced "plouz'", meaning "grass plot".

KENNEDY FORD: This point, seven miles East of Palouse, was a stage road junction; had a repair shop with blacksmith and horseshoer--originally, a fording point on the Indian Trail and wagon road across the Palouse. Later it was made a bridge point. It was within and tributary to productive farm areas, and a recreation spot on the river. The local name was adopted in naming the station.

POTLATCH: The Potlatch River, emptying into the Clearwater at Arrow--near the old Indian settlements at Spalding and Lapwai, contained in its upper basins and watersheds one of the finest stands of White Pine timber known. Potlatch was an Indian name given to the river and tributary area because of the abundance of fish, game, camas, and berries; and therefore a natural meeting place of the Indian tribes for the holding of a big "potlatch". The name means: "a great feast, a good time, and a general distribution of good things."

The Company had acquired sizeable holding on the Potlatch and its tributaries; and at the time of incorporation the name Potlatch Lumber Company was a natural selection. As stated at the time, "the name means to buyers of its product, a good quality of the best lumber manufactured in the West".

With final location of the mill-site and townsite, the rail point and town was named Potlatch, after the parent company. The lands had been purchased from Andrew Linn for \$16,000. Linn had acquired this land by purchase from J. K. McCornack and O. B. Sanborn, a few years prior, for \$3500. Real estate values were on the up.

O. B. Sanborn had also sold, at about the time he sold to Linn, 87 acres to William Butcher for \$400--taking \$200 in cordwood, the remainder in cash installments. This eighty was later sold by Butcher to John Henry Bull.

The land acquired by the Company for townsite purposes adjoined Bull's property, which was "on a ways" just over the hill. In December 1905, John Henry Bull filed in the County Recorder's office a townsite plat for ONAWAY, intended as an opposition town to the proposed company town of Potlatch, and lots were for sale. Charles Crumley made application about this time for license to establish a saloon in Onaway. In

ONAWAY (Naming of Continued)

October 1905, Oscar Engstrom of Spokane had filed an application for license for a saloon "within half a mile of Potlatch".

PRINCETON: At the time of railroad construction, Princeton was a town and post office on the stage road from Palouse to the Hoodoos--with a hotel, store, livery stable, blacksmith shop, and a couple of saloons. It had started as a convenient stopping and trading point during the booming days of mining, and placering by the Chinese, in the Hoodoos in the middle seventies. It later benefitted by logging on the river and farm development of the natural meadows. Originally, the trading center was known as Hampton--located on the small hill adjoining the present town on the west, on farm lands owned by M. A. Ives and N. E. Ives, his wife. In 1895, Hampton had been surveyed, dedicated and promoted as a townsite by the Ives. The store at Hampton was operated by Judge J. A. Starner, Justice of the Peace.

In 1885, David M. Clough and Gilbert L. Clough, prominent lumbermen of Minneapolis operating as Clough Brothers, acquired from Asa Robbins 240 acres on which the present town of Princeton is now located. Orville Clough, a brother, came to Idaho and lived on these farm and timber lands. With the dedication of the townsite of Hampton adjoining Clough's property, considerable rivalry developed between Clough and Ives in promotional efforts. On May 26, 1896, the Original Town of Princeton was dedicated by Mary P. Clough--in opposition to their neighbors at Hampton. Clough had come from Princeton, Minnesota, a lumbering town on the Rum River. He named the new town PRINCETON, after his home town in Minnesota. Later, the Cloughs were well known lumber operators in the Puget Sound area of Washington.

In early day White Pine history in Minnesota, it is interesting to observe the parallel comparisons with developments on the Upper Palouse, as recorded: In 1847--

David Stanchfield, a timber cruiser, with two companions in canoes, paddled from the Mississippi up the Rum River as "land-lookers for White Pine". "The third night they camped three miles northwest of what is now CAMBRIDGE, Minnesota--at first they found only deciduous trees, but at the place on the Rum where PRINCETON stands today they came upon the white pine they were seeking." Stanchfield followed the Rum to its source and his estimate reported: "Seventy mills in seventy years couldn't exhaust the white pine I have seen on the Rum River."

HARVARD: Homer W. Canfield owned lands about six miles East of Princeton, along WI&M location, and had an attractive home at a picturesque bend in the Palouse where it turns to the North. Near this point the railroad leaves the Palouse and begins developing up Flat Creek and across the divide between the Palouse and the Potlatch drainages. This point of departure from the Palouse would serve as rail-head and headquarters for logging on the Upper Palouse; and a station, water-tank, and sidings were provided for.

Mr. Canfield was a public spirited, highly respected and influential man in the community, county and state. His public interest was centered in the development of Northern Latah County. To Company development efforts he was friendly and cooperative--to the extent of voluntary of right-of-way. In later years, Homer Canfield was very helpful and influential in having Laird Park set up as a permanent recreation area within the St. Joe National Forest--thereby insuring perpetual care and supervision of the timber tract granted to the Government by the Company, including Grizzly Camp, for a park in memory of Allison Laird. This tract of virgin timber contained all our native timber species and had been enjoyed by both Laird and Canfield as a favorite picnic spot--both wished to perpetuate the stand.

Incidentally, this site had been used for years as a camping spot on the trail to the Hoodoos. In early days, the site was occupied

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by a Grizzle, giving origin to the name Grizzly Camp--no grizzlies were heard of in the area until the spinning of yarn around Boy Scout camp fires.

During construction, Allison Laird told Homer Canfield that the Company wished to name the station on his place "Canfield", in his honor--but, with his consent. Canfield countered that he assumed that if he did not consent, he should have the privilege of name selection. To this Laird agreed--Mr. Canfield said, "we will call it HARVARD."

This set the pattern for college names to follow along the line. In March 1906, Mr. Canfield announced that he had plotted a new town on the WI&M, named HARVARD. The surveying was done by Dan Hannah and Howard Kirkwood, County Surveyors. Lots were for sale. (---this contributed by an "old timer"--and will be continued in next issues--)

FIGURES & HOW!! Notice all the "extra" pretty faces dodging in and around the sales counters at the Merc? It's INVENTORY time again.

SPEAKS AT SUN VALLEY

Tom Youmans, Jr. and family went to Sun Valley recently, where Tom was one of the principal speakers at the Idaho Bankers Association Convention.

"THANK YOU"

FLOYD VOWELL wishes to thank all those who sent cards to him while off on an Industrial Accident. They have been very much appreciated.

F O R S A L E

1 5-room Modern House, located at 425 Larch Street in Potlatch, 3/4 basement.

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EDITOR.....Tom Youmans, Jr.
ASSOC.EDITOR...Miss Louise Nygaard

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS ITEMS

Nice to have Miss Alice Bacca back to work at the Bank after an absence following a car accident.

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Our sympathy to the Leonard Doty family in the loss of their son, who died as a result of injuries following a car accident.

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George Hudson is at home recuperating from surgery, and is doing well. We are all happy that he is recovering so fast, and hope he will soon be up and around among us.

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We certainly appreciate the fine job done by Charlie Ogan on the Main Office lawn. It has been a long while since it has looked so trim and nice.

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Paul Welo is the new plant gardener, and he, too, is doing a splendid job there.

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Looks wonderful to see our flag flying proudly above the City Hall, or the old gym.

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NEW BABIES:

Mr. & Mrs. Fred Lange....DAUGHTER (former Peggy Muck)

Mr. & Mrs. Ed TietzDAUGHTER

Mr. & Mrs. Larry Poston...DAUGHTER

OLD TIMERS DIE

J. Henry Bull, mentioned in our Potlatch story, passed away at his home on Fiddler's Ridge. He farmed for many years on Crane Creek; the family is well known in this area. Jim Poston passed away recently. He and his family lived here a number of years before they moved to Sandpoint. Our sympathy to all relatives and friends in their loss.

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News has been received of the death of Mr. VanWert, who passed away last month in California. VanWerts lived here for many years, having owned the house now owned by Marvin McManama.

COMMUNITY DAYS: July 30 & 31st