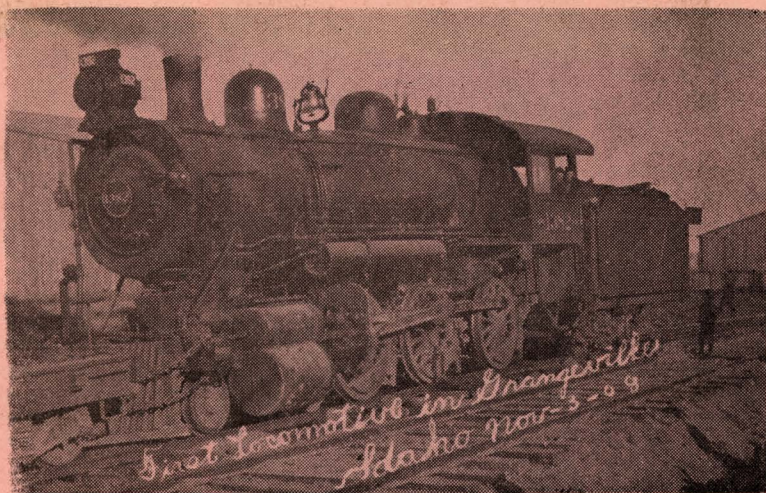

HISTORICAL SOUVENIR

Camas Prairie
RAILROAD EXCURSION

Lewiston - Grangeville

Two Round Trips

Sunday, May 15, 1960



First Locomotive to arrive in Grangeville from Lewiston,
Nov. 8, 1908. First passenger train arrived Dec. 9, 1908.

Excursion Sponsored by

Grangeville

LIONS



Lewiston

CLUBS

Price: 25c

Historical Background of Scenic Camas Prairie Railroad

By ANN ADAMS

Pictures courtesy Mrs. Hartzell Schmadeka, from a collection by her father, the late Wm. M. Webb.

Gleefully Commercial club members ordered 1,000 souvenir badges heralding the "First train into Grangeville, Dec. 9, 1908." On the reverse side a stagecoach was pictured with "Past" significantly placed underneath it.

The organization was planning to celebrate the coming of the iron horse to Camas Prairie. An event, the visionaries believed, was the key to surging northcentral Idaho's economy. A genie that could uncork the way to vast mineral and timber resources for outside markets; bring industry to the prairie and boost Grangeville's population to 10,000 persons.

Not unmindful of other advantages townsmen claimed "Business, professional men, investors and capitalists have been awakened to the great betterment forthcoming in trade and commercial life. To the fair sex occurs the happy thought—hereafter social relations between Grangeville residents and outside cities will be more pleasant, and a visit to loved ones in other places made more frequent. Young men and boys anticipate more high grade athletic contests and touch with all conditions of everyday life."

Stites Railroad 1907

The Northern Pacific and Union railroad companies had a few years previously established a route along the Clearwater river to Stites. From this point passengers and freight were transported to Camas Prairie points via horsedrawn stagecoach and team.

Rejoicing Grangeville residents believed the open sesame to the community's prosperity was the spectacular frontier railroad.

After years of effort a tenacle of the nations railroad network was to reach into Grangeville.

An early writing of the project across the big Lawyer's canyon bridge," newspapers screamed on Sept. 2, 1908.

says, April 19, 1906: Yesterday 48 Italians shipped out from St. Paul to work on the Culdesac-Grangeville railroad. They were taken on a special train from Lewiston by Conductor Bates, and will be placed on heavy tunnel work.

By May 3 the contractors, Porter Bros. and Welch, had 500 men on the job, the right-of-way all paid for and Fenn townsite plotted. Fenn was named in honor of the late S. S. Fenn, one of the earliest forest supervisors in the region.



On Aug. 21 E. Ennerson arrived near Grangeville with a grading crew, 20 teams, four big wagon loads of tools and camping outfits to begin breaking ground for this section of the railroad. He promised, "As soon as harvest is over several farmers will hire out with their teams."

"We can see it coming! Two miles of track are being laid every day. The line is now five miles this side of Ferdinand. Engineer Byland with engine No. 1374 on August 19 pulled the first train, a work train,

across the big Lawyer's canyon bridge," newspapers screamed on Sept. 2, 1908.

Celebration Planned

A few weeks later the enthusiastic commercial club announced it had decided to dispense with the usual fair in Grangeville and would instead hold a rousing five-day jollification when the railroad was completed and accepted.

The celebration called for dances, barbecue and special excursion to Spokane.

"The huge machine and construction train laying steel to connect Grangeville with commercial centers of the country crossed the western boundary line of the city limits at 2:15 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 3, 1908. At 4:30 p.m. the track was laid to the end of the grade and the work of the track laying crew was finished. Whistles of two engines announced completion of tracklaying by prolonged blasts.

A massive mogul type engine No. 1382 was the first to enter Grangeville. It was used to draw the construction train with Messrs. Huntly and Simpson, fireman and engineer, respectively, and conductor Michael Till in charge.

"The last spike was driven by A. H. McGrew, a farmer living just north of town. As Mr. McGrew dropped the sledge, Mrs. J. A. Hanson, a pioneer lady of Idaho county and resident of this city, grasped the implement and directed several quick blows on the head of the spike."

The track was in, but ballasting, surfacing, and construction of the depot remained to be completed.

Children were dismissed from school to watch progress on the railway. A story dated November 14 declares, "Dobe flat, in early days the terror of all stage drivers and freighters from Lewiston over which many wagons have been dragged through mud hub-deep—and where nothing but dobeweeds

and rocks have grown and blossomed—was visited by 6 or 700 Grangeville citizens Sunday. The local folks went out to see the railroad from the outside world to the county seat town."

Officials Welcomed

Mayor Leonard headed the welcoming crowd greeting the first train to enter Grangeville Dec. 3, 1908. The first passenger train consisted of several private pullman cars. The occupants were railway officials accompanied by their ladies. They expressed themselves highly pleased with the journey.

The committee planning the train celebration said, "The town will rise from the unprivileged condition of a backwoods hamlet to that of a city of rank. You who have known nothing but the hurricane deck of a cayuse, the freight wagon, the carriage or the stage coach do not hesitate to spend a small portion of your time and money in making a pilgrimage journey of pleasure and profit by joining in unison with your fellow citizens. Come. Remember you are assisting to make history!"

Nevertheless, most of the huge plans for celebrating the event were called off because: "Businessmen regard the present season as a time too busy in holiday trading circles to go on such a trip. The uncertainty of the weather and hesi-

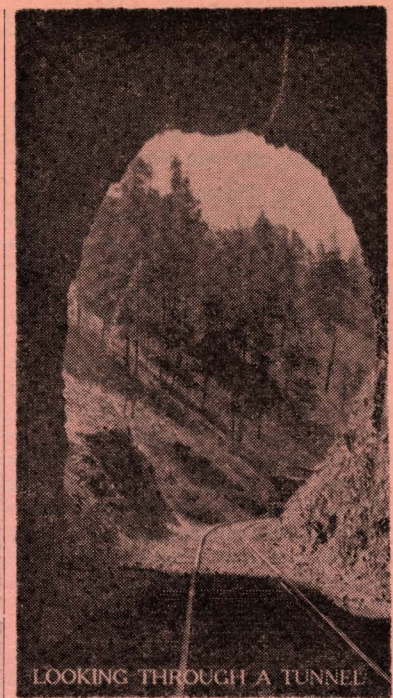
tancy on part of some citizens to wholly favor the idea are reasons for discarding the barbecue."

The glorious day Dec. 9, 1908 arrived. "Wednesday will be chronicled the most important in the city and county's development and achievement. Last night about 12 o'clock the passenger train arrived. This morning, 7 a.m., it started upon the first trip to Lewiston. Several hundred persons were at the depot. One hundred and twenty-five purchased tickets (150 left—some couldn't get tickets in the rush). The first ticket No. 3548 was purchased by Evan Evans, well known property owner of Grangeville. The first coupon tickets were bought by J. and P. Ewan, who have been mining near the Snake river and left for Kingman, Ariz."

This memorable train was made up of a baggage car, smoker, two passenger coaches drawn by engine No. 92 with W. G. Houghton, engineer; W. A. Wright, fireman; H. H. Morris and W. F. Pentz, conductor and brakeman.

The daily schedule called for leaving Grangeville 7 a.m.; arriving at Lewiston 11:25 a.m.; returning from Lewiston at 2 p.m. and arriving in Grangeville 6:45 p.m.

It was arranged to have a freight train depart from each end of the line—one at Lewiston, the other at Grangeville—at 8 a.m., daily. The freight rates were 65 cents per hun-



LOOKING THROUGH A TUNNEL

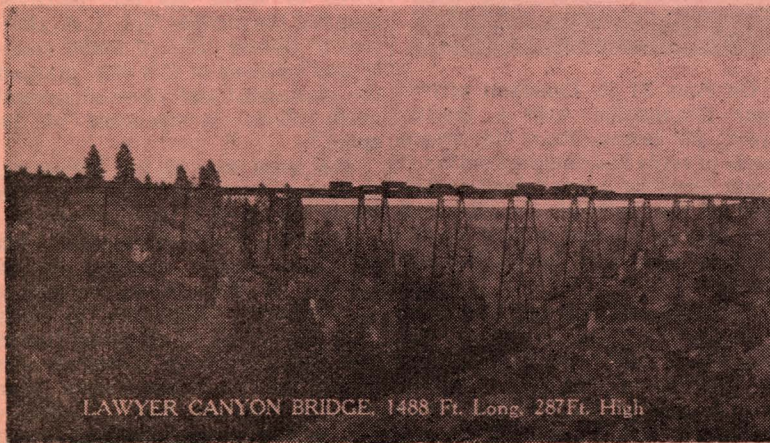
dred for first class baggage; 55 cents for second class; 46 cents for third and 39 cents for fourth class freight.

R. C. Bell, formerly of Cudlesac, was the first Northern Pacific station agent here while R. T. McLaughlin was the Lewiston operator.

Box car offices were used until the depot was completed.

Railroad Summary

In a summary of the 55 mile project a railroad employee wrote: "The prairie work is very heavy, more especially in the Cottonwood vicinity where the country is deeply cut with draws and ravines. Between that city and Grangeville, 16 miles, the work is comparatively light, the grade following the ground a trifle close. This makes heavier grades to travel but the nature of the country demands it.



LAWYER CANYON BRIDGE, 1488 Ft. Long, 287 Ft. High

"Between Cottonwood and Lawyer's canyon, 13 miles, we meet the heaviest prairie work; one cut contains 45,500 yards of rock. This section has 10 bridges, in height from 30 to 100 feet and in length from 100 to 600 feet.

Lawyer's Canyon bridge is a steel structure trestle containing 13 spans, five of them 100 feet long and the rest varying in length making a total length of 1,300 feet. It is 280 odd feet above the bottom of the canyon which is crossed at an angle on tangent and at level grade 3,555 feet sea level.

On Nezperce prairie the track is cut by 10 bridges before the track drops off at mile post 13, nearly two miles beyond Reubens. From there to the loop,

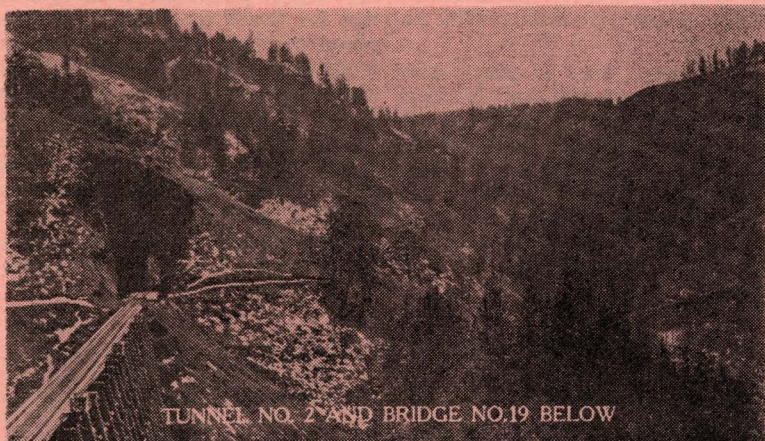
desac to mile post 14 the grade is practically all three per cent and has little or no tangent track.

The route is rich in natural scenery, especially through Lapwai canyon; and the prairie line passes through a country of unexcelled agricultural wealth.

The construction of the branch has taken 2½ years of hard work and has cost almost four million dollars, the tunnel work alone cost \$200,000 a mile."

Interesting Events

Like any great factor concerned with community life the railroad was closely associated with human interest events, some tragic, some comic, but all revelatory of mankind's many facets.



a little over four miles, the track passes through seven tunnels varying in length from 100 to 800 feet; and some 50 bridges, all wooden structures from 200 to 500 feet long.

The loop is a 14-degree curve containing 280 degrees of curvature. From there to Culasac the line follows the crooked bottom paths of Lapwai canyon, passing over 11 bridges on the way. From Cul-

On Jan. 15, 1920 newspapers carried the shocking story of a 32-year-old bridegroom who leaped from a coach window as the train sped across Lawyer's canyon. He had been married at 6 a.m. in Grangeville and the couple was on their way to Winchester to establish their home. Shortly before the bridegroom leaped into the chasm at 9 a.m., he handed his bride a sum of money with the remark, "Take this money, I'll not be with you much

longer." No one witnessed him jump.

The railroad was responsible for uniting two fighting factions into a unified, prosperous community. April 29, 1920—"For north is north and south is south and never the twain shall meet." So much could have been said of the towns of Ilo and Vollmer, each striving for the supremacy, the one over the other, until a few months ago when the futility of the strife which has existed since building the Camas Prairie railroad was recognized by businessmen. They decided to incorporate the towns under one name—that of Craigmont, taken from Craig mountain, which stands majestically nearby the heretofore rival towns which had been built on opposite sides of the railway track.

Again, the Lewiston terminal had its trouble with a dread smallpox case!

March 3, 1910—Harry Richards who freights from Stites to Elk City has been feeling incapacitated of late and last week decided to go to Lewiston for medical aid. On his way he complained to the conductor of not feeling well. Dr. J. N. Alley, the physician of Ft. Lapwai, being on the train, was informed of the matter. He pronounced Richards a well developed case of smallpox and placed the car in quarantine.

Nez Perce county refused to have anything to do with the case and ordered the railway company to return the patient to Idaho county. About this time Attorney Gilmore got in touch with Lewiston and forbade Superintendent Finch of the Camas Prairie road from sending smallpox patients into Idaho county. Finch was in a peculiar position. Lewiston would not allow him to unload the party in Nez Perce county and Idaho county was as equally determined not to be used as a dumping ground for smallpox patients.

Idaho county authorities wired the state health board and laid the matter before them. The board wired

Finch to have Nez Perce county authorities put the patient in the pest house and there he would remain until he had recovered.

Chronicle of the railroad's construction records the tale of the "Murderous Swede." That unfortunate immigrant courted a girl in the Craigmont area. He gave her a few presents and considered himself betrothed. Upon finding other swains were calling on the same lady, the "Murderous Swede" flew into a rage and shot the girl. After her recovery he was given a trial and sentenced to 10 years in the Idaho state penitentiary.

The railroad was comparatively free of havoc but memorable disaster struck the line twice. On Aug. 2, 1906 three Scandinavians blasting were blown to bits near Culdesac.

Blizzards Strike

According to a January 17, 1952, Free Press story: "The worst train wreck in the history of the Camas Prairie railroad operated jointly by the Union Pacific and Northern Pacific railways occurred Friday one mile west of the Grangeville depot. A wedge snowplow was demolished, two locomotives turned over on their sides with severe damaging effects and the other locomotives were derailed, leaving the caboose upended. One man's life was taken and three others hospitalized.

"The four engines were battling snowdrifts between Fenn and Grangeville since noon Thursday and had just opened the snow filled Yates cut when the mishap occurred. Engineer B. F. Trail, 56, lost his life.

"It was necessary to build temporary trackage around the wreckage to keep other trains moving. This task was completed by Sunday.

"The train composed of snowplow, two engines, mail and express car and passenger car arrived at Fenn on January 10. The entire outfit lodged in a snow drift there.

"Two more engines with crews were dispatched from Reubens.

Time after time the four hooked together engines hit drifts, dug out, lodged, dug out again before the terrific force slammed through the drifts as it neared the Grangeville depot.

"Train service was interrupted a week because of the storm, but only two days because of the pile of wreckage.

"Stagecoach" Returns

Railroad promoters were wrong when they reckoned without the stagecoach and its modern counterpart. The automobile was already in existence and bidding for its place in the nation's economy when the railroad branch into Grangeville was inaugurated.

Gradually highways improved, automobiles increased and passenger train trade fell off. On August 24, 1955, the last passenger train left Grangeville, a few months short of the passenger train's 47th anniversary.

Now more than 50 years since "last" was predicted for the stage when "the Lewiston-Grangeville line was laboriously punched through the circuitous Lapwai Canyon from Culdesac to the Camas Prairie, highway builders with lumbering mammoth equipment are pushing a road through the same canyon.

That highway will be part of the U. S. Highway stem linking north and south Idaho and will eliminate the terpid Winchester grade."

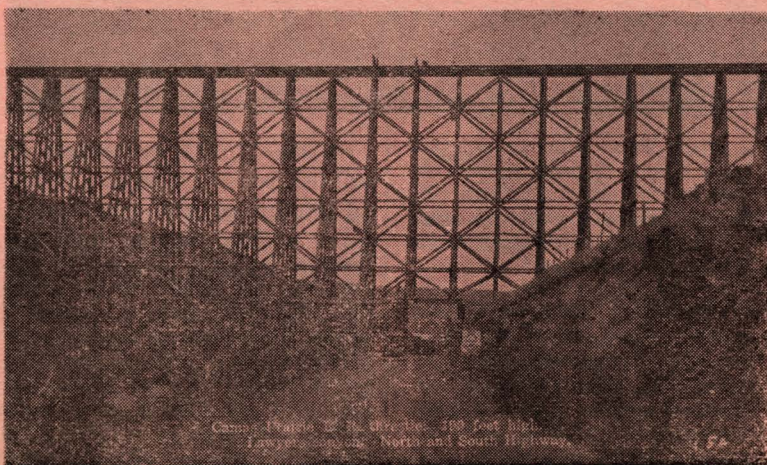
Excursion

At 10:45 a.m. Sunday, May 15 crowds will again stand at the railroad tracks. This time with \$5 tickets clutched in the hands of adult passengers and \$3.50 ones in the hands of children 12 and younger. They will be waiting to board the excursion train jointly sponsored by Lewiston and Grangeville Lion club members.

The excursion is the culmination of a plan long in the mind of M. E. Johnston because he "believes the route scenery is equal to that of any in the world, let alone the nation; and to give youngsters an opportunity to have a train ride."

Curiously the excursion train is the largest passenger train ever to run the "track on stilts." It is composed of eight passenger coaches, baggage coach from which refreshments may be obtained, and will be drawn by two diesel engines. The train will be made up at Seattle, speed deadhead to Lewiston where it will pick up the Grangeville bound passengers.

Story compiled from The Globe, Idaho County Free Press and Lewiston Tribune.

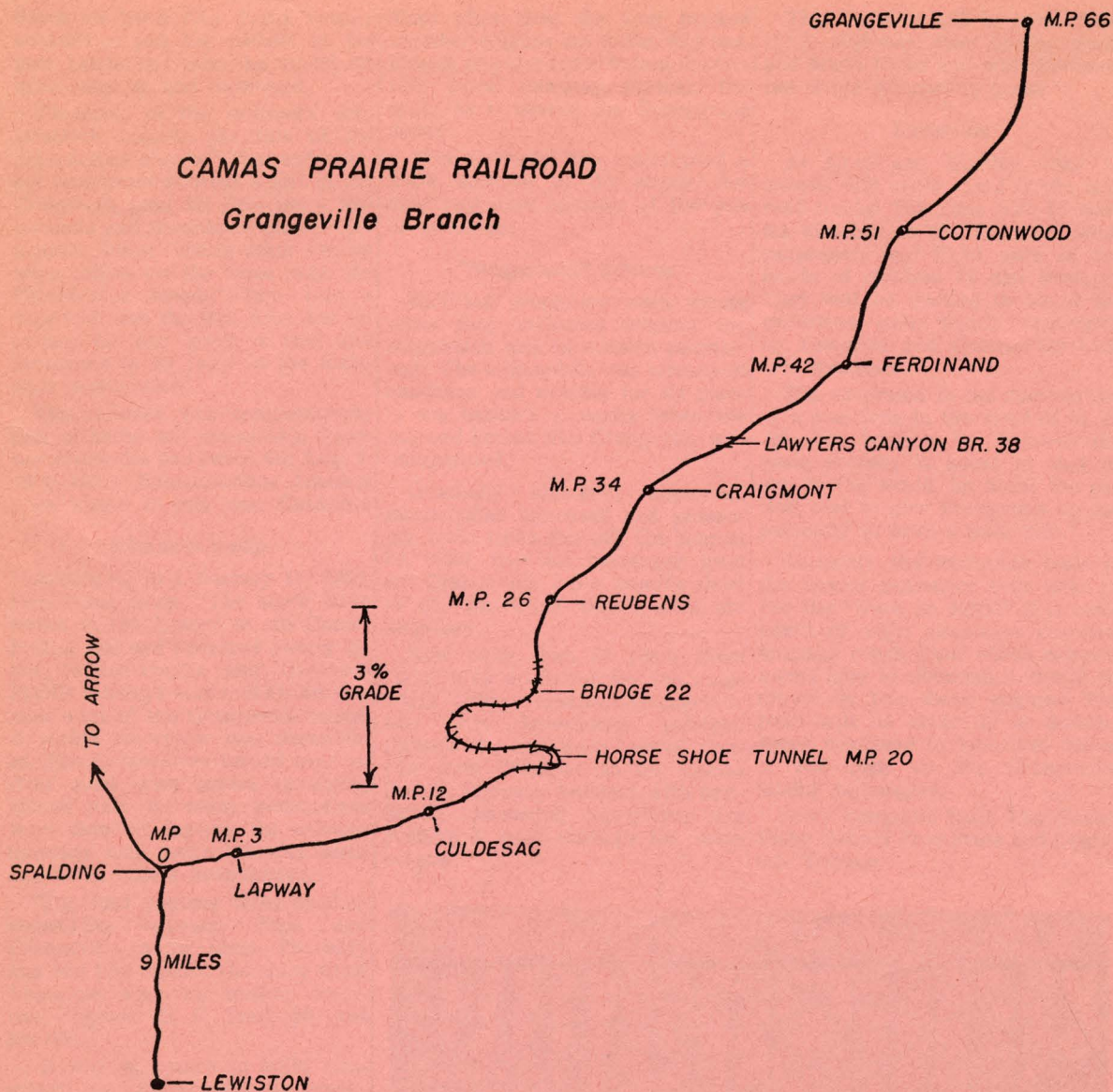


Camas Prairie bridge, 400 feet high.
Lower canyon, North and South Highway.

Al Butler

CAMAS PRAIRIE RAILROAD

Grangeville Branch



BETWEEN CULDESAC & REUBENS = 7 TUNNELS &
27 BRIDGES - 3% GRADE

LAWYERS CANYON BRIDGE — 280 FEET HIGH
1523.4 FEET LONG

BETWEEN SPALDING & GRANGEVILLE = 61 BRIDGES - TOTAL LENGTH 15,556 FEET
7 TUNNELS - " " 3,002 "

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