

## Calendar

### Today ...

Bookmobile schedule — 1:30 to 7:30 p.m., Westgate Shopping Center, Fairview Avenue.

"Are you buying too much insurance?" — 7 p.m., YWCA, 720 W. Washington St. Dot Taffin, C.P.I.W., will present insurance information. Free. 343-3688.

Idaho State University Concert Choir — 8 p.m., Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, 2981 E. Boise Ave. 236-3620.

Women's Aglow Fellowship — 9:30 a.m., Sweetheart Manor, 10205 McMillan Road. Speaker: Alison Page, Miss Boise. \$2. 922-5555.

"Black Country Flying" video — 5:30 and 7 p.m., Boise Public Library auditorium, 715 S. Capitol Blvd. Part of library's "Aviation Month" celebration. Presented by Ponderosa Flying Club.

### Friday ...

Boise Philharmonic Guest Artist Luncheon — 11:30 a.m., Red Lion Motor Inn, Riverside. \$9. Reservations: 344-7849.

Actor's Nightmares and Second Prize — 8:15 p.m. today, Saturday and March 27-29, Stage Coach Theater, Chapin's, Overland and Federal Way. Two one-act comedies. \$5. Tickets available at Ballou Latimer (downtown and Westgate), The Book Shop, Mother Hubbard's, Holsinger Music, The Brown Wrapper and at the door. 344-4474.

In Our Name: The Bombing of El Salvador and If We Could Only Stop the Bombing — 7:30 p.m., YWCA, 720 W. Washington St. Sponsored by the Ecumenical Association of Churches. Free.

"Living Again" program — 7 to 9:30 p.m., St. Alphonsus McCleary Auditorium. Pastor Gene Greaves, of Mountain View Baptist Church, will speak on "Emerging from grief." Program for those adjusting to the loss of a spouse.

# Thunder City, Idaho — another gateway to nowhere

Thunder City, like many another Idaho town built during a gold rush, had its moment in history, then faded until it was only a memory. The Thunder Mountain gold excitement that spawned it drew thousands of prospectors and miners into the remote mountains of central Idaho in the early years of this century.

Although the Thunder Mountain district was 150 miles from any railroad and 80 miles from any wagon road, the multitudes came anyway. Thunder City, about 6 miles east of the present Cascade, sprang up in a few months in 1904, styling itself "The Gateway to Thunder Mountain." A new state wagon road off the old stage road to Payette Lakes made the junction on Big Creek a choice location for a town.

Both The Statesman and the Weiser Signal took notice of this "newest town in Idaho" in the first week of March 1904. U.B. Warner, owner of the townsite, had set up a sawmill and was sawing lumber for a hotel he would build. John Conyers had a saloon and a dwelling house, and Dan Wooton (or Newton), had built a blacksmith shop. "Numerous other buildings are under construction," noted the Signal.



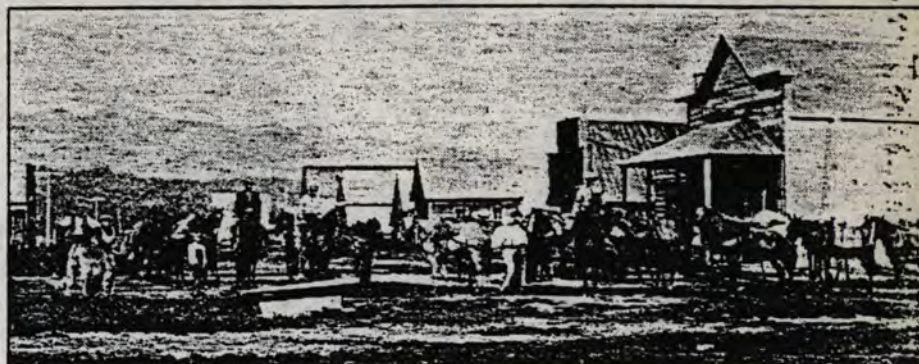
Arthur Hart

Idaho history

Meanwhile, the Payette Lumber Co. was building a wagon road up Payette River by way of Horse-shoe Bend and Smiths Ferry.

By June, Warner's three-story hotel was nearly finished and a post office had been established. The Signal reported that Thunder City was "making splendid progress." A town spokesman about this time characterized the boundless optimism and ambition of such new towns, along with their limitations. He said that Thunder City was "bounded on the north by the Aurora Borealis, on the east by the rising sun, on the south by the vernal equinox, and on the west by the day of judgment."

The day of judgment was coming a lot sooner than anyone could know at the time. First, the Thunder Mountain gold discoveries just didn't pan out, despite enor-



Idaho Historical Society

Thunder City sprang up to trade on a gold rush that was very short-lived.

mous investments of capital and effort. There were immense bodies of low-grade ore, but the cost of extracting the gold in such a remote area made it unprofitable. One historian characterizes the entire Thunder Mountain boom as "ill-advised and short-lived."

Thunder City, soon to be a gateway to nowhere, might possibly have endured as a supply center for ranching interests in the neighborhood had not the Idaho

Northern Railroad been built to Payette Lakes in 1913, through the new town of Cascade. The freight wagons that had delivered goods to Thunder City were now replaced by freight trains bringing supplies at lower cost to Cascade.

On Dec. 30, 1916, the Thunder City post office was closed, business dwindled to a shadow of what it had been a few years earlier, and Cascade became the commercial center of the area

and county seat when Valley County was formed in 1917.

Crawford and Van Wyck were other towns in the neighborhood that disappeared with the rise of Cascade. Crawford was 3 miles to the east; Van Wyck's site is now under the waters of Cascade Reservoir.

Arthur Hart is director emeritus of the Idaho Historical Society. His column appears Thursdays.

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