

William Henry Bassett and Murette Cook

Third Generation

William Henry, known as Will, was the son of Mary Knight, second wife to Charles Henry. He was born in Salt Lake City on Mar. 14, 1858. At age eighteen he was sent to Cedar Fort, Ut. to manage the Z.C.M.I. store. It was there that he met the twin daughters of Bishop Cook (Henry Freeman Cook) and married one of them, Murette, on Oct. 2, 1876. They remained in Cedar Fort for the next four years, giving birth to three children, Lutie Murette, William Grantly, and Harry Freeman.



William Henry Bassett



Murette Cook

Somewhere in that time period Will spent time as a mail carrier in the Virginia City Yellowstone area. He wrote a letter to his father that was published in either the Salt Lake Tribune or the Deseret News in January 1881. It reads:

THRILLING EXPERIENCES

“Alone on a Montana Prairie three days and two nights”
 “without food or water – snow three feet on the level”
 “The life of a mail carrier in a houseless country”

The following is the greater part of a letter received by Mr. Charles H. Bassett from his son William H., who is in the mail service in Northern [actually southern], Montana. The young man is but 22 years of age, and the simple non-effected manner in which he relates his thrilling experiences shows that he not only possesses a great deal of courage, but also a great deal of genuine manliness:

“Virginia City, Mont., Jan 22nd, 1881.

Dear Father:

In answer to your questions, I will endeavor to give you some particulars. At the time I wrote to Mother (December 1st) I was snowed in at Fire Hole Basin and was there about ten or twelve days. Two of us succeeded in getting over the mountain with three horses and snowshoes, and we arrived at River Side Station that day. On the day following, Marshall, the boss, came in from Henry Lake with two men and fifteen horses. They had been six days on the road, a distance of thirty miles. He then ordered me to start out the following morning on horseback for the lake. I objected and told him I thought it impossible for a horse to get through, and asked for a pair of snowshoes. He then became very angry and said he would not send me if he did not know I could get to the lake safely. I started out on the morning of the 16th with the best horse but I had traveled not ten miles before the animal was unable to carry me, and I had five miles further to go before I could reach some haystacks on the prairie. By considerable hard work I led the horse to the haystacks after dark. I was entirely worn out, so I took my saddle blankets and crawled into one of the haystacks for warmth and to rest, but fell asleep and did not awaken until daylight. I started again, but only succeeded in traveling one mile that day, as the snow was so deep (about three feet on the level) that it was impossible for the horse to travel. I was then in a canyon and found wood, so I built a fire, and was so tired that I slept all night again and froze my feet still more (but I forgot to say that I froze my feet the first night at the haystacks). I dare not take off my boots to inspect my feet, for fear that I could not get them on again. I had discovered by this time that my horse was good for nothing, so I started him back to the hay, and started out on foot, calculating to make the lake by night, which was fifteen miles further on. The lake was frozen so I started across it to shorten the distance, but I soon found my mistake, for when I started on it I broke through, and I got out only by hard scrambling, and was then on the ice wet and freezing. There was about two feet of soft snow and I could hardly walk. The station was on the other side of the lake, and by swinging my hat I attracted the stock tender's attention, but not too soon for I fell down exhausted, unable to take another step. He dragged and pushed me on my snowshoes, and took good care of me.

I had spent all this time, three days and nights without a mouthful of food or water. I had eaten snow until my throat was so raw I was unable to eat a full meal for a number of days. I used arnica on my feet but the boys thought I would lose my toes, if not my whole feet, if I did not get down here (Virginia City) to get medical advice. Hearing that the company team was eighteen miles this side of there with supplies for here, I concluded to start for it in company with two mail carriers. This eighteen miles to be made on snowshoes, but I mustered up courage enough to start out. No one can imagine what I endured on that trip. My feet were so raw that I . . . (the rest is lost). (From Bill Bassett, grandson)

Another letter from Will's brother Ernest to his father Charles Henry at about this same time has survived. It reads:

Virginia City, Montana
February 22, 1881

Dear Father,

The first letter I received from you was dated Dec. 9 and I received it Feb 3rd, and then wrote you a card but was not able to get it mailed until I got here, and then I did not post it but write you this. I have not been able to answer Mother's written so long ago. I [had] not even a card or a stamp. Your second letter written or dated 19th I received last night, and I was very glad to hear from you and home again and thank you much for the card you sent me.

Will says he received another letter from you to me, which he sent to Fire Hole, which I missed, and will probably get in a few days. How many letters did you write me?

Your health worries me very much as it has done for a long time before I came here. As I wrote you, I was going to the Springs, a distance of 55 miles. We started – me and Mr. Furgenson – with 3 horses, one pace horse and 2 saddle horses in about 2 ½ ft of snow. By night after a hard struggle we made Gibbon Station, a distance of 25 miles. When we got there it snowed 1 ½ feet more, and we realized in a moment that we could never get the horses out of there in winter. So, as our stock of provisions were low, we had to get out of there or starve. Frank, the man that was with me, had a pair of web shoes, very good ones which I was not able to get at the time. So we took two pine saplings and bent them around and tied them with string and so I got me a heavy and clumsy pair of web shoes. We started with the mail sack and a sack of biscuits, which was all we had to eat. The snow was so soft that we sank to our knees with our shoes on. I forgot to say that we started to the Springs again a distance of 80 miles with no station or place to sleep on the road. After working all day and nearly killing ourselves we got a distance of 8 miles when we dropped down with fatigue. The wind was blowing a perfect hurricane and we would freeze to death if did not do something.

(pages 4 and 5 of the original letter are missing).

. . . unable to speak above a whisper, as soon as my feet got warm, they began to pain me, so taking off my boots my feet were frozen badly. I suffered terribly that night with them several days and they came back [?], where I suffered a good deal. I have got here at last and am not well yet. My neck is swelled some on the outside. Rheumatism bothers so that I cannot walk very well sometimes. The mail company owes about \$200.00 at present. I have worked for them nearly 8 months. There is some trouble with the government – Not with the government but with Mr. Z_____, and do not know when I can collect my money. I shall take a station near the road as soon as I get well so as not to remain idle while I am waiting for my pay. I must close for this time. Love to Mother, Ruby and Lois and the rest of the folks.

Your Aff. Son,

Ernest

(From Leah Bassett, wife of Gerald Goodwin Basset, grandson of Ernest Bassett)

Five of Charles Henry Bassett's sons obtained a contract from the Union Pacific railroad for a stage line from the railhead at Beaver Canyon (Just above the present Spencer on I15), near the Idaho-Montana line, to Yellowstone Park, a round trip of 350 miles. The town was later moved from Beaver Canyon to Spencer. The bothers were William Henry (From Mary Elizabeth), and Charles Henry II, Julius, Francis (Frank) and Fred (From Permilía Dayton).

The stage line had offices at Monida, Spencer and a route from Camas to the Kilgore region. They ran 25 Concord coaches and a herd of about 60 horses. They also owned a large hotel and saloon at Beaver.

Yellowstone had become popular both in the eastern United States and in Europe. Those who could afford it came. They included dignitaries and royalty at every level. The road was primitive and the terrain was rough but spectacular, as it is today. A stage, driven by John Tanner of the Gentile Valley area is shown in the picture at right. In those times it was popular to "rough it" and travelers stayed in tents and cooked by open fire. An oral story passed down is that a coach was stopped by robbers who asked the passengers to get down and give them their money and valuables. The travelers thought it was part of the entertainment and happily "ponied up" thinking they would get it all back later. It was a real robbery.



Stage Coach Driver John A. Tanner
Drove for Bassett Bros. at Beaver
Favorite Stage was "Old Artemesia"

There is another story, told, not written. It pertains to horses, Chinese poachers, and the law of the west. It happened near one of the way stations where a number of company horses had disappeared, one by one. An investigation revealed that, in a canyon not far away, an encampment of Chinese immigrants, recently laid off from the copper mines near Butte, were keeping themselves alive on horses from the Bassett herd. The brothers rounded up the "boys", road into the canyon and administered "The Law of the West." One can only imagine.

The first winters were spent in Cedar Fort in Utah, driving their horse herds that distance for winter range. The first Bassett Bear River water rights were filed in 1878. The stage line operated from 1880 to 1889, when the railroad finished a route into Yellowstone. Charles Henry II homesteaded in the Trout Creek, Idaho area (Lago) first and then persuaded William Henry to file. William Henry filed grudgingly site unseen. Julius and Frank also filed but appeared not to have proven up.

Charles Julius was elected Justice of the Peace in 1883. He served on the Territorial Grand Jury and in 1898, became the chairman of the Silver Party, and then Idaho Secretary of State in 1900.

Francis (Frank) Augustus was the first Beaver Canyon postmaster from 1880-81. Frank and his wife, Ruth, were fine musicians.

Fred Clayton was a Brigham Young University graduate. He served as county treasurer and deputy county clerk.

Charles Henry II wed Mary (Mollie) Lee of Tooele, Utah. She served as postmaster of their stage office at Henry's Lake from 1885-88. Evidently they spent some time at Beaver because their son, Harold, the only Bassett child to do so, was born there. There are stories about the house being so close to the railroad tracks that it shook when the train went by. CHII was chosen as the first Bannock County Assessor in 1893. Later he served six terms as Country Commissioner and as County Treasurer.

There is some written history of Alice Lee, the sister of Mary (Mollie) Lee who married C. H. Bassett II. The following extract tells what life was like in Beaver during the time the Bassett stage company was there. The following is extracted from her own life story.

"When I was eleven my Mother went to Beaver Canyon with my sister, Mollie Bassett, when her (Mollie's) third child was born. Mother was induced to open a restaurant for the accommodation of the businessmen in the town, some eight in number. That was the beginning of the end. She died with a skillet in her hand. So long as she was in the business of feeding the multitude, I was with her. When she went to Beaver she left me at home (in Tooele) with a housekeeper to look after me, then sent for me. At eleven, mind you, I took the trip from Tooele to Beaver Canyon alone: made a change in Salt Lake for Ogden, Ogden for Pocatello, Pocatello for Beaver Canyon, getting in at 2 o'clock in the morning."

"Beaver Canyon at that time was known far and wide as "The Dives". It is so marked on the face of a huge rock leading into town, and believe me, it deserved the name. For nine years my Mother ran the section house. Then she bought her own place of business. Say! Listen! This sounds like the history of my Mother, but I can't tell you anything about myself without including her, as we were never separated until I went to Logan to school for the one winter. In the meantime, I

met the redoubtable Calamity Jane. She took her meals with us while in town. Also, Rocky Mountain Mary. She had no legs, only one eye, and parts of her fingers were missing. She had been in an Indian massacre when a baby and left for dead along with her family but someone passing picked her up and raised what was left of the torso. But they had best let her die as she was a notorious horse thief and had a gang of cut throats with her. She made the trip to Beaver to try to get H. H. Spencer to pay her \$500 at the time to get her gang to lay off the cattle he was raising at what he called Dairy Canyon. Of course, Spencer told her to get out of that neck of the woods or she and her gang would get hurt. So we heard no more of her."

The William Henry and Mett family spent their summers in the park in Fire Hole Basin, and their winters in Cedar Fort, Utah until they homesteaded in the Trout Creek area. My stepmother, Lutie, who was my mother's oldest sister, would tell me about the summers spent in Yellowstone. She would curl her hair with a curling iron heated in the chimney of a coal oil lamp sitting on the kitchen table in front of the window and tell stories of that time. They lived in a cabin in Fire Hole Basin. They washed clothes and bathed in the hot springs. Indians would come and press their faces against the window to peer inside. The children would be frightened. But their mother, Mett, would just sit in her chair, rocking and sewing and paying no attention. (See "Life of Lutie Marette Basssett Swensen Hansen" for more about this time)

Newspaper articles and extractions from history books at the end of this history tell more of the story.

William Henry Bassett and his half brother Charles Henry Bassett II filed land claims on the Trout Creek area. WH and Met had four more children there: James Clarence, Sophronia, Roscoe (Ross), and Adelia Dubois. William Henry succeeded a Mr. Lusher as postmaster. He built the general merchandise store shown in the picture below. It was located on the old Pioneer Road that went from Thatcher to Bench. CH built his large house on the other side of the road and offered it as a hotel for travelers. There were a lot of Sego Lilies growing on the surrounding hills and Sego was the name applied for as the post office. But the government officials misread the handwriting and the name became Lago instead. It is located about 12 miles south of Grace, Id. The granaries are shown behind the truck shown above. Adelia is the passenger. She never learned to drive. I played in all of these buildings as a child. [See "History – Trout Creek (Lago)"]



The following is from Clarence (Bud) Hansen's memories January 2008: The WH Bassett store sold farm implements and parts, leather, yard goods, shoes, socks, Levis, coveralls, jackets, shirts and gloves. He also sold canned goods and candies, but nothing fresh. He sold garden supplies, gasoline, coal oil and bullets, no guns, but he would order them for you. Bud got his 22 from the store. Dallas already had one and the two boys would shoot squirrels and collect a penny for each tail. Bud and Dallas used to gather and take in eggs to sell. They bought groceries and sometimes a candy. People would bring in wheat and oats and grandpa would weigh them and give store credit. In the winter he sold the oats for the



horses. Mostly Bud remembers the top shelves held rows of hats, straw and Stetson's. Grandpa would use a hook to pull the boxes down. The old gas pump sat to the side of the store and they would hand pump gas to the cars from a buried tank. The lights in the old store were gas. Grandpa would light the end of a long stick and reach up to light them.

The first, or oldest store was used until Grandpa built the new one. It sat south across the road from the new store. It was wood construction and had a canvas ceiling. WH ran this one until the new one was built. The new one was about 25 by 60 and sat on a rock basement that had a dirt floor. Bud says Alfred traded the old building to Don Clegg in return for Don (who had a new caterpillar tractor and plow) to break up and plow a piece in the north end. Don moved the building to his place upon the Bench.

WH never did farm. Charlie's boys did or the Sorenson's and later Alfred. WH was a champion pool player and won the finals held in McGammon Idaho. He was also a champion marble player and took part in the competition in SLC when he

was a boy. WH, Charlie and Julius were the Bassett Brothers that ran the stagecoach company in Yellowstone. To get there from Lago they would need to travel thru Grey's Lake. The Snake River was too difficult to cross and there were Indians to worry about. For a while WH and Charlie had shares in the Gem Valley Cattle Assoc. and sent their cattle north of Soda to summer, but they sold their shares.

Will and Mett would go riding, her in sidesaddle, loping across the fields of their homestead in Lago. The house that Will and Mett built is shown in about 1950. It was constructed of logs in the one story part on the right with lapboard on the outside and lath and plaster on the inside. The two story on the left and some rooms in the back were added. Electricity came to the valley in 1929. Pumped water, sink, hot water heater, bathtub and a toilet were installed in the house in about 1934-5. The house burned in the 1960's. CH II built a large home across the road. It still stands today.



WH Bassett and CH Bassett II were the only two of the half brothers that lived out their lives in Lago, farming and ranching. My father, Alfred, rented then bought the WH farm. WH passed away before I was born. But I can remember peeking through the window and seeing CH sitting in his old chair in the house across the street. Sometimes he would call me in and give me a stick of chewing gum. WH Bassett passed away on Dec. 29, 1929 following an automobile accident on the way to Pocatello, Id. to dictate his memoirs.

The Pocatello Tribune published a tribute to his life entitled "BASSETT – Lived Long in Idaho – a Tribute to Memory of Widely Known Citizen". The last paragraph reads"

"The Bassett Brothers are well known to all old timers of Southern and Eastern Idaho because of their business and political activities. William H. (Will to his friends) was always counted on and never failed to sit in councils, take part in deliberations and influence the policies of his party and community. They will long remember and honor "Will Bassett". His kind heart, his cheery, friendly disposition, neighborliness, and brotherly kindness to his friends and his community at large were such that no tablet will be required to keep fresh his memory in the minds of all who knew him."

Hyrum and Lutie Swensen purchased the store and became the postmasters. Marette was very active in church and community affairs. She was an accomplished seamstress. She passed away on May 10, 1931. Hyrum died a short while later and Lutie, Adelia's older sister continued to operate the post office and a small store at the Swenson farm, about a mile away. The November after Adelia died, Alfred married Lutie and the post office was moved to a back room in our house. I remember going with Dad to deliver mail down the valley in the winter as far as Treasurton. The old store sat empty for decades, lived in occasionally, used occasionally for storage, used for a carpentry shop, and was finally torn down for lumber. The house, abandoned, burned down. The Bassett's were gone.

This history has been compiled from the following:

1. "Gems" of Our Valley
2. A history of William Henry Bassett by Bill Bassett, a grandson
3. Various history extractions and newspaper articles shown at the end of this history. Sources not always known.
4. Life of Lutie Marette Bassett Swensen Hansen
5. History – Trout Creek (Lago)
6. Memories of family members

Compiled January 2008 by Stanley D. Hansen, grandson

Chapter XX SIDE ROADS

Speaking of the Gold Road, what happened to it since the railroad took over most of the freight and all of the passengers a decade ago? The freight and stage lines from Blackfoot, Eagle Rock, Market Lake, and Camas were necessary to the Birch, Lemhi, and the Lost River areas for some years to come. However, there were two side roads on the extreme northern end of the Gold Road which still had the magic touch of stages with a new purpose. Regardless of the necessary tie-in to the original Gold Road, its ultimate purpose was to serve the public better. To people engaged in mining in the Salmon River mountains, ranching or farming in the valleys, or to tourists traveling to Yellowstone Park, the Gold Road was the vital vein from which radiated interlacing thoroughfares of eastern Idaho.

In the *Daily Salt Lake Tribune* of April 23, 1882, appeared a large advertisement from the Bassett Brothers of Beaver Canyon, Idaho. In this advertisement, they offered the shortest and best route from the railroad (the Utah and Northern) to the "Eden of America." This service was to begin June 1, 1882, at which time they would be prepared to carry all persons from Beaver Canyon to Yellowstone National Park. Light spring wagons with good teams were to furnish the transportation over a smooth road. Good hunting and fishing were available anywhere along the road. Wagons were to leave Beaver Canyon every day for Fire Hole Basin of Yellowstone Park. Experienced drivers, acquainted with the park were employed. The round-trip fare to Fire Hole was twenty-five dollars and passengers could return at their own leisure. The Bassett Brothers pointed out that their route to Fire Hole Basin was 150 miles shorter than by way of Virginia City and the fare twenty-five dollars less. Private conveyances for any period of time were available upon due notice.

You will recall the importance of Beaver Canyon with its toll gate to the Harkness interests. You will recall that at this spot Matt Taylor secured the tall trees necessary for his famous bridge over the Snake River at Eagle Rock. The town of Beaver in the 1880s and 1890s was an up-and-coming place; its economy was based primarily on the abundant surrounding timber growth. Several sawmills, shingle, and planing mills were operated in that area. The total lumber footage shipped out in 1884 was twelve million feet and fifteen million feet in 1884.¹ The town contained all the essential services needed in pioneer days such as stores, butcher shops, cafes, saloons, a post office, and a school with even a debating society.

Add to all this activity the famous Bassett Brothers'

Stage Line to Yellowstone and you have a bustling little town. Jules and C. H. Bassett were the active partners of the stage line. Frank, a third brother, was the Utah and Northern agent and also the postmaster at Beaver. Jules was a political associate of Fred Dubois and later a partner with Martin Patrie of Market Lake in the Idaho Sheep and Land Company. C. H. (Charles) Bassett was later a Bannock County Assessor and still later a Bannock County Commissioner.²

The Bassett Brothers' Stage Company had a contract with the Union Pacific Railroad (Utah and Northern) to operate twenty-five coaches and surreys. The coaches were Concords, the same famous make of main line conveyances and carried as many as eleven passengers. Two, four and six horses were used — depending on the load and the type of stage. Surreys were sometimes used for private parties. The Bassetts also operated a branch line to Camas. A hotel was operated at Beaver for the convenience of passengers. The road's first route was to the northeast, around Signal Peak and over a gentle pass southeast to Kilgore; from there, northeast to Hotel Creek where passengers could rest overnight. The second day completed the approximately 100-mile trip to Yellowstone. Many of the drivers were knowledgeable about points of interest in the Park. Such a person was John A. Tanner, a veteran driver for the Bassett line. The majority of these drivers continued on through the park with their passengers. The leisurely five-day trip around the 150-mile park loop was tremendously exciting to the visitors in this new spectacular wonderland. The trip included stops at Fountain Geyser Basin, Old Faithful, West Thumb, Yellowstone Lake, Grand Canyon, and Mammoth Hot Springs. The entire nine-day excursion cost about \$150 with meals, lodging and stage fare. The price of the round trip as previously advertised from Beaver to the Fire Hole Basin was later raised. The early offer according to C. H. Bassett, was a special,³ undoubtedly designed to attract trade and get the company off to a good start.

Many famous people made this strenuous trip via the Bassett Stage to Yellowstone. In 1885 Arthur Knowles, owner of the Knowles Printing Works of England, accompanied by his doctor and aides made the long journey from England to see with his own eyes these unbelievable wonders of Yellowstone.⁴ Among noted people who made the trip were Madame von Fickenstein, Mounteford, a famed lecturer, at the very time the stage was held up and robbed by two bandits between Grand Canyon and Norris Geyser Basin.⁵ Other noteworthy people using the line included Euro-

BASSETT FAMILY



W.H. Bassett

C.H. Bassett

F.A. Bassett

Bassett Brothers are closely identified with the early history of the Canyon as they began a stage and freight line in 1881. Old Beaver was the center for this large family run organization for many years, with the system having stops at various sites enroute to Yellowstone. Later, the firm had offices at Mosida, Spencer and a route from Camas to the Kilgore region.

The brothers and their families first spent their winters at Cedar Fort, Ut., later taking homesteads at Lago, near Thatcher. Their Bear River water rights dated to 1878. Humphrey was named for one of their stage superintendents.

Chas. Henry Bassett I, the father of the Bassett Brothers, was an early LDS member and was married to Permelia Dayton and Mary Knight. Four of the brothers, Chas. J., Chas. H., Frank and Fred were sons of Permelia and Wm. H., the fifth brother, was Mary's son. All were born in Salt Lake City, except for Chas. J.

Chas. Julius (1851-1918), the oldest, was born in Kanawville, Iowa. After his election as Beaver Canyon Justice of the Peace in 1883, he served on the Territorial Grand Jury and in 1898 became chairman of the Idaho Silver Party. A partner with Martin Patrie in the Idaho Sheep and Land Co., he defeated his partner Patrie, the incumbent, for secretary of state in 1900. Their holdings included 1,240 acres seven miles S of Roberts, later called Bassett Siding. He was associated with the Fred Dubois political organization.

Jules, as he was called, wed Christina Rasmussen (1854-1927) in 1876 at Salt Lake City. She was a native of Copenhagen, Denmark. They later lived in Blackfoot and Boise. Both rest in the Pioneer Cemetery at the latter city.

Chas. Henry II (1854-1940), wed Mary (Mollie) Lee (1861-1929), member of another pioneer Canyon family in 1877. She served as postmaster of their stage office at Henry's Lake from 1885-88 and later became a noted lecturer on such subjects as practical psychology, bio-

chemistry and character analysis. She also served as Stake leader for the Relief Society. A Tooele native, she passed away in Salt Lake City.

Charley was chosen the first Bannock County Assessor in 1893. Later, he served six terms as County Commissioner and as County Treasurer. He had also been a Territorial Grand Jury member and in 1890 built a bridge across the Bear River at Gentile Valley. He and wife Mary are buried at Lago.

Francis Augustus (1857-1919) was the first Beaver Canyon postmaster from 1880-81. Better known as Frank, he was also associated with the railroad, serving at Butte and in Cache Valley and Ogden, Utah. He wed Ruth E. Sagers (1860-1911) in Salt Lake City. Ruth, a native of Tooele, died at Roosevelt and was buried in Ogden. Frank and Ruth were fine musicians and performed at the Salt Lake Opera. Frank also composed and arranged music. He died at Lago and is buried there.

Wm. Henry (1858-1929) wed Maret Cook (1856-1931) in 1876. She was a Cedar Fort, Ut. native.

Wm. managed the ZCMI store there before moving to Idaho. In later years he ran a merc at Trout Creek, which he re-named Sego, due to the many sego lilies nearby. However, due to bureaucratic bumbling, federal officials mistook Sego for Lago and the post office, with Wm., as postmaster, has been known as Lago ever since. They are also buried at Lago.

Fred Clayton (1865-1946) was a Brigham Young University graduate. He was also active in politics serving as County Treasurer and 16 years as deputy County Clerk. He wed Ida A. Harris (1867-1947) in 1886. She was a Salt Lake City native and died in Los Angeles. Fred and Ida are both buried in Salt Lake City. Fred drove the first stagecoach to Yellowstone Park.

Harold L., (1883-1969) a son of C.H. and Mary, was the only child of any of the Bassett Bros. to be born at Beaver Canyon. A cattle rancher near Grace, he served 36 years as president of the Federal Land Bank at Preston.

Beaver Was Once A Lively Center

By Wm. Stibal Pettite
(Part of a series on Eastern Idaho by Mr. Pettite, a former county probate judge and author of *Memories of Market Lake*, who lives in Fair Oaks, Calif.)

Except for a forgotten cemetery, a once prominent community of 100 years ago, has disappeared from Idaho maps. Though it not only furnished most of the lumber for construction of offices and homes in the early days of Eagle Rock, as well as producing a number of political leaders who helped to make Idaho history, it lies unnoticed. Its significance does not even qualify it for a plaque from the powers that be.

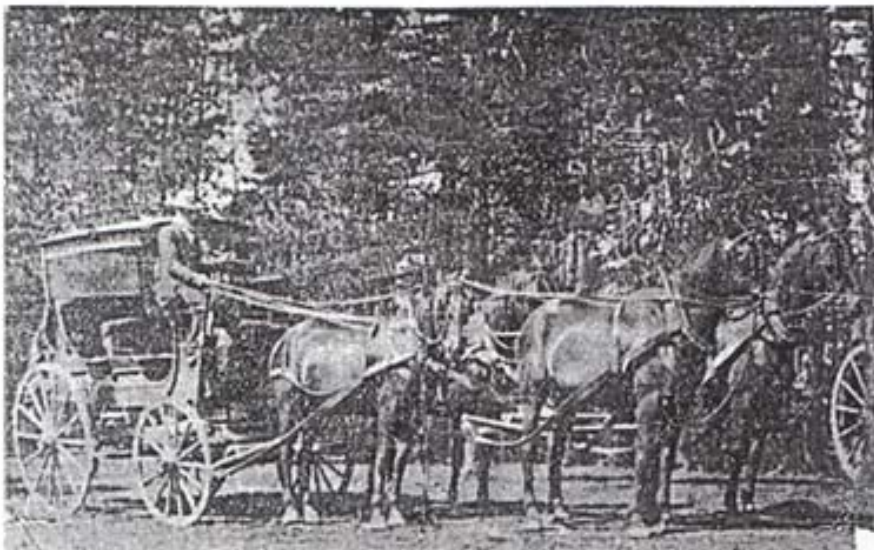
The historic settlement of Beaver deserved a better reward for its labors. Back in the 1870s a book published in San Francisco listed Beaver Canon as a place to expect a big boom due to its large supply of timber. Later called Beaver Canyon, then Beaver, and finally when the town was shifted to Spencer, "Old Beaver", it did indeed become big and booming.

At first only a stage and trading post operated by H. O. and Lauen A. Harkness, who also ran a like operation at Pleasant Valley, five miles further north, its importance grew as the result of the railroad coming through. The Harkness boys noted that their stop was "only 185 miles north of Malad and equal to the stations at Market Lake (Roberts) and Corbett's (near Firth)." After the railroad selected Beaver as a major station, H. O. Harkness disposed of his holdings there for a solid figure and moved to Blackfoot. He sent relative Lauen Harkness to replace employe Lee Mantle at Pleasant Valley, where a postoffice was maintained until 1880, when it was closed and served by Beaver's. (Mantle left a career as telegraph operator and agent for the Overland Stage Co. to become a noted U.S. Senator from Montana as well as mayor of Butte).

Bassett Family

Beaver was next dominated in a business sense by the Bassett family. The Bassett Brothers operated a noted stage line, being headquarters for trips to Yellowstone and Fire Hole Basin, plus a branch line to Camas. They had a large hotel and saloon as well. Even the Eastern press recorded some of the more famous travelers who departed from the Bassett lines for a trip to Yellowstone.

Back in 1885 one Arthur Knowles, owner of the Knowles Printing Works of England, accompanied by his doctor and other aides, made the trip. Frank Bassett, agent for the Utah and Northern Railroad, had the post office. Jules Bassett, a political associate of Senator Dubois, later formed the Idaho Sheep and Land Co. with Martin Patrie at Market Lake. In the 1880's he served in the legislature from what was then Oneida County and later replaced partner Patrie as Idaho's Secretary of State. Brother C. H. Bassett noted that in 1889 a special — for a limited time only — offer could be had from Bassett Brothers Stage. This special was a round trip ticket to Yellowstone for only \$25.00 in gold. C. H. later lived in Pocatello and served as the first Bannock County Assessor.



Stagecoach Driver in 1890 Era Recalls Yellowstone Park Tours

By ROSE CORDON
News Correspondent

GRACE, IDAHO — "I was driving Madame von Fickenstein Mounteford when our tourist stagecoach train was help up and robbed by two bandits between the Grand Canyon and Norris Geyser Basin . . ."

John A. Tanner, retired Grace farmer, visualized the famed Jewish lecturer and other celebrated passengers he hauled 60 years ago as stagecoach driver in Yellowstone National Park.

The young farm boy from Gentile Valley, Idaho, hired on as driver for Bassett Brothers of Lago, Idaho, one of two operators who hauled tourists 350 miles from the railroad terminal through the park and back.

25 Coaches

The old transportation company had a contract with Union Pacific Railroad and operated 25 coaches and surreys from Beaver Canyon, Idaho, near Dubois. The trip took nine days.

Mr. Tanner drove summers from 1892-1900. He was also guide and escort.

They were Concord coaches, Cadillacs of the Old West, loaded with as high as 11 passengers. They were drawn by two, four and six horse teams in fancy harnesses. The horses were changed three times for the arduous journey 100 miles to and from the park. This took four days. A leisurely five days were spent on the 150-mile park loop.

The young muleskinner knew every twist in the road as well as the palm of his hand.

Titled, Wealthy

Most of the passengers were of the European aristocracy or wealthy Americans. They knew more about the park than Westerners living within a 100-mile radius, he mused, a situation not unlike today.

Madame Mounteford told him the necklace she wore was handed down through her family from the days of Melchizedek, the great king of the Salmen to whom Abraham paid tithes. In those days she was billed as the greatest living lecturer on the Holy Land and the life of Christ. She was a typical passenger.

Williams Jennings Bryan and his family were others on a side-trip from his presidential campaign. Others were Idaho's Sen. Fred T. Dubois, Consul Nicholas N. Ifft II and the Walker Brothers, Salt Lake City bankers.

He recounted details. The trip cost about \$130 with meals. Stops were made at Fountain

Geyser Basin, the site of Old Faithful, a noon station at West Thumb, Yellowstone Lake, the Grand Canyon and Mammoth Hot Springs.

Mr. Tanner left the work when he married and had to farm in the summer. He has only been back a few times since. A great change has come over the park, he said.

There were no cabins then, he lamented. In the old days the titled and wealthy had no use for them. The few others owned their own rigs.