

Origins of the Name "Idaho" and How Idaho Became a Territory in 1863

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One of the most intriguing mysteries of Idaho history is the origin and meaning of the name "Idaho." The name is generally assumed to be an adaptation of an Indian word from one of the northwest tongues signifying either "gem of the mountains" or "sunrise." Studies by competent linguists reveal, however, that "Idaho" is one of many Indian "words" supplied by the white man. Research shows that "Idaho" was first considered as the name for the growing Pike's Peak mining area but that "Colorado" was finally chosen by Congress. It is not definitely known how "Idaho" originated or how it reached the northwest, but it eventually replaced "Montana" for the new mining territory in the Pacific North-west when the Idaho bill was passed by Congress on March 3, 1863.

Professor Wells ably discusses "Idaho's" interesting background and lays to rest some of the legends surrounding it.

Students will find an example of "legend-making" in John E. Rees, "Idaho-Meaning and Origin," Oregon Historical Quarterly, XVIII (June, 1917), 83-92.

The creation of territories began in America following the achievement of national independence. The creation of a territory is the first step in the state-making process and is accomplished by an act of Congress. The organization of Idaho Territory followed much of the established general pattern but it differed considerably from the usual procedure of following natural boundaries or the continuation of already established lines. Idaho's northern, southern and southwestern boundaries were previously defined but the steps taken in forming the northwestern and eastern boundaries were complex and interesting.

In the companion article to "Origins of the Name 'Idaho'" Professor Wells relates the step-by-step procedure that eventuated in the establishment of the Territory of Idaho.

Additional information can be found in "Location of the Idaho-Montana Boundary' The Idaho-Montana Boundary Legend," Idaho Historical Society Reference Series Number 156; Merle W. Wells, "Idaho-Montana Boundary," Idaho Yesterdays, IX (Winter), 6-9; and Herman J. Deutsche, "The Evolution of State Boundaries in the Inland Empire of the Pacific Northwest," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, LI (July, 1960), 115-131. Problems encountered in running the survey lines are discussed in Benjamin E. Thomas, "Demarcation of the Boundaries of Idaho," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XL (January, 1949), 24-34; and Rollin J. Reeves, "Marking the Washington-Idaho Boundary," Washington Historical Quarterly, II (July, 1908), 285-289. The political geography of Idaho boundaries is treated in Benjamin E. Thomas, "Boundaries and Internal Problems of Idaho," Geographical Review, XXXIX (1949), 99-109.

Sources: Idaho Historical Series Numbers 10 and 13, Idaho Historical Society.

"Origins of the Name 'Idaho'"

More than a century ago, the origin and meaning of the word "Idaho" was described as "wrapped in mystery." Suggested early in 1860 as an alternative name for the territory that finally became Colorado, "Idaho" was represented as being an Indian word meaning "gem of the mountains." Some years passed by, though, before anyone seems to have thought to inquire just which Indian language was supposed to contain that particular word. By then, "Idaho" was the name of another mining territory quite separate and remote from Colorado. The Colorado origin of the name, therefore, had been largely forgotten. Most of the search for an Indian language derivation was concentrated in the Pacific Northwest. Yet the answer to the "Idaho" question was to be found in the story of the attempt to apply the name "Idaho" to Colorado.

Gold miners -- mostly from the Mid-West -- came to Colorado only two years before another group of gold miners -- mostly from the Pacific Coast -- tried their luck in Idaho. Congress, as a result, created a new mining territory of Idaho only two years after it had established yet another mining territory of Colorado. According to the original plans formulated in 1859, Colorado would have been known as Jefferson territory. When the Pike's Peak gold rush of that year promised to bring in population enough to justify admission of a new state (omitting the territorial stage) right away, a constitutional convention assembled, June 6. As a result of this action, a constitution was adopted August 6, and an election of a delegate to Congress was scheduled, along with a referendum on the constitution, for October 3. The constitution was rejected, but as the story unfolded, the election of a delegate to Congress had more than a little to do with the origin of the word "Idaho."

For a time, it appeared that George M. Willing had been chosen delegate, and he went to Washington, D. C. Because the constitution had been rejected, he lobbied for the creation of Jefferson territory. Gross frauds in the election were disclosed, though. Eventually B. D. Williams was certified the winner in place of Willing. Williams also went to Washington, and when "Jefferson," the name of a hero of the Democrats, proved unacceptable to the Republican House of Representatives, Williams insisted upon substituting "Idaho" as the name for the new mining territory. Where he got the name is unclear. Contemporary evidence to identify its source is lacking. Twenty years later, however, a fairly plausible account credited George M. Willing, the deposed delegate, with supplying the name.

In any event, the Rocky Mountain News reported in Denver, April 18, 1860, that "Idaho" was a likely name for the projected Pike's Peak territory. An Idaho act came up for House debate May 12 of that year. Problems over expansion of slavery in the territories divided the nation ruinously at that time, and a motion to table the bill prevailed by a vote of 91 to 82. Further consideration of the measure was deferred pending resolution, in the election of 1860, of the sectional clash which interfered with the progress of the Idaho bill. An incidental and unintended result of all of that delay, though, was an unexpected change in the name of the proposed territory.

Partisan dissension in the Pike's Peak mines complicated the operation of a provisional territorial government therein 1860. Jefferson territory had Democratic sponsorship. Dissatisfied Republicans failed to gain control over a convention in Golden, October 8-9, 1860, that endorsed B. D. Williams' efforts in Washington, D. C., and expanded the authority of the Jefferson territorial legislature. So they organized another territorial convention in Central City, October 24-26. There they provided for a revised judicial code for still another provisional territorial government in place of Jefferson territory. This new Republican provisional government was called Idaho territory, rather than Jefferson. In a mining region referendum, November 11, 1860, the established (but faltering) Democratic Jefferson territory held a substantial voting majority over the new Republican Idaho territory. Encouraged by this success, the Jefferson territorial legislature assembled in a second session, November 13. Nationally, though, the Republicans emerged in control after the 1860 election. So B. D. Williams (who had dealt with both political groups in the mining camps) naturally decided to go along with Idaho, the Republican suggestion, rather than with Jefferson and its nationally less fortunate Democratic antecedents.

Once the 1860 election was out of the way, and Lincoln chosen president, the blockade against creating new territories began to clear. While the southern states were talking secession (which would get their obstructionist votes out of Congress), an Idaho bill for the Pike's Peak mines was ordered printed by the House, December 18, 1860. Then at the insistence of H. D. Williams, the Senate altered a Colorado territorial bill (which it had received months before, April 3, 1860) changing the name from "Colorado" to "Idaho." But when Williams' request for this new name came up in the Senate, January 30, 1861, Senator Joseph Lane of Oregon objected firmly. Senator James S. Green had noted that "Idaho is a very good name. In the Indian language it signifies 'Gem of the mountains.'" Lane had dissented: "I do not believe it is an Indian word. It is a corruption. No Indian tribe in this nation has that word, in my opinion." Then he reemphasized his point: "It is a corruption certainly, a counterfeit, and ought not to be adopted." Lane's views,

though, had not prevailed—possibly because he was the defeated southern Democratic vice-presidential candidate (on the Breckenridge ticket opposing both Lincoln and Douglas) in the 1860 election. But after the Senate approved the change, Williams became suspicious enough to look into the matter.

To his horror, he found that he had been the victim of a practical joke. Williams learned, to his (and to the Senate's) surprise, that the name "Idaho" did not mean, "gem of the mountains" after all. In fact, it did not mean anything at all. George M. Willing—or someone in the circle of Pike's Peak territorial supporters—simply had invented the word, along with the notion of "gem of the mountains," the year before. So Williams hunted up Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts to request that the name be changed back to Colorado after all. On February 4, 1861, an obliging Senate quickly agreed to restore the name "Colorado." Before the House did anything about its Idaho bill, the Colorado bill passed the Senate. The House of Representatives then passed the Senate-approved Colorado bill. Consequently, the House bill was never acted on, and the name "Idaho" received no further consideration for Colorado, which became a territory February 28, 1861.

Even though it had been rejected for Colorado, the name "Idaho" had great vitality. Whoever had coined the word had hit upon a remarkably acceptable name. By the summer of 1860, "Idaho" had already gained popularity both in the Colorado Rockies and in the Pacific Northwest. It had the merit of sounding so much like an Indian name that, before long, scarcely anyone would believe that it wasn't one. Actually it was just as good an Indian name as a great many of those supplied by such eminent originators of Indian names as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. ("Idaho" is far from being the only Indian name which no Indian ever heard of until he got it from a white man!) In any case, by the time that bills to establish a new mining territory in the Pacific Northwest were introduced in 1862, "Idaho" again was a leading contender as a name. Furthermore, the people most closely associated with the earlier Idaho-Colorado name mix-up were not involved once Colorado was out of the way. An Idaho bill, introduced December 22, 1862, somehow got renamed "Montana" prior to House passage, February 12, 1863. But in a showdown the last night of the session, Senator Wilson went to considerable effort to restore the name "Idaho" to the proposed territory. He succeeded: although only two years had gone by since the "Idaho" to "Colorado" switch (which Senator Wilson had sponsored himself!), no one now challenged the explanation that "Idaho" was an Indian word meaning "gem of the mountains." Concerns of the Civil War had dominated congressional attention during those two years, and it hardly is strange that Wilson and those of his colleagues who still were in the Senate had forgotten all about the Colorado repudiation of the "gem of the mountains" meaning of the name "Idaho." When the Idaho bill was up for consideration in 1862 and 1863, the name was being suggested by people from the Pacific Northwest who mostly had forgotten that they had obtained it from a Colorado origin. With no occasion to doubt the Indian "gem of the mountains" explanation, they knew they had a good name for their new territory. They saw to it that "Idaho" was the name which prevailed.

Numerous and varying interpretations of the word "Idaho"—each of them assuming it to have been an Indian word—were offered in an extensive literature which grew up after Idaho became a territory. In June 1864 the *Pacific Monthly* laid the foundation for one feature of the most widely adopted later interpretation: the meaning stayed the same, but the alleged Indian spelling was rendered "E Dah Ho"—with an accent on the second rather than the first syllable. As yet, no particular language was identified for a source. But as the years went by, no one seemed to dispute the possibility for an Indian language derivation, except William O. Stoddard. In a letter, December 8, 1875, to the *New York Daily Tribune*, he explained in detail how his "eccentric friend," the late George M. Willing, had coined the name early in 1860. Willing (said Stoddard) often had told the story "with the most gleeful appreciation of the humor of the thing." More likely than not, Willing's claim to be the originator is well founded. This much is clear: Willing knew that someone in the small group of Colorado backers had invented the name "Idaho" when it was needed early in 1860, and that Williams had found out about the fabrication in time to get the name changed back to Colorado, February 4, 1861. More than that, Willing is a most likely

candidate for making up such a name. Although his involvement in a number of frauds—the most notorious being the celebrated Arizona Peralta land grant fraud which he concocted—naturally casts some doubt upon his veracity, this particular accomplishment is a plausible one for a man of Willing's special talents. In any case, Willing either thought up the name or, knowing that someone had thought it up, was—true to his name—entirely willing to take credit for the invention.

Stoddard's version of Willing's contribution to the naming of Idaho stirred up a lot of comment. But with a well-established conviction throughout the country that "Idaho" was an Indian word, the general reaction was to scoff at Stoddard's strange explanation. Yet if Stoddard's critics only had thought to examine the Colorado antecedents of "Idaho," they might not have dismissed the entire Willing tale so arbitrarily.

A serious problem generally unrealized in the earlier years confronted those who accepted the "gem of the mountains" interpretation of the name "Idaho." Reference to mountains in the definition posed no particular difficulty, assuming that the Indian language sought for belonged to a tribe of mountain dwellers. But the concept of gem is a white man's notion, quite foreign to the thought of ordinary American Indian peoples. As early as 1880, an Idaho World correspondent -- possibly Frederick Campbell -- was aware that the "gem" translation was highly dubious. He had been on hand when the Jefferson territory constitutional convention was searching for a name for their proposed commonwealth in 1859; if his memory of a time 20 years earlier did not betray him, the name "Idaho" with its "gem of the mountains" connotation was suggested then. (This much of a modification of the Willing story is by no means impossible to reconcile with the rest of the known facts: someone around the convention could have invented the ~e; the someone may have been Willing himself or Willing may have taken credit for it; and delegate Williams might still not have found out about it until February 4, 1861.) The Idaho World correspondent, who wrote November 30, 1880, explained that even in 1859 he had realized that the Arapaho Indians certainly were unlikely to have thought about, or to have been able to talk about, anything as sophisticated as a gem. He had another good point, too: If "Idaho" indeed were of Colorado Indian derivation, Arapaho was a decidedly appropriate choice for a language to have it come from, rather than a Northwestern Indian tongue. This possibility eventually was looked into. Ellsworth Bethel, curator of natural history of the Colorado Historical Society, consulted people familiar with Arapaho -- and with Ute as well, for that matter -- only to report in 1924 that "Idaho" was not a word in either language. Even if were of Arapaho origin, identification of such a source would have been difficult at best. Dr. Zdenek, a competent modern linguist who specializes in Arapaho, notes that "The problem is chiefly the fact that English transcriptions of Indian words are so unsystematic and misleading that to match the sounds of 'Idaho' with anything resembling it in Arapaho would be quite irresponsible." Considering that the name was the product of a white man rather than an Arapaho, the finding that "Idaho" is not an Arapaho word hardly is to be wondered at.

Alternative interpretations of "Idaho" tried to get around the difficulty of having an unlikely concept such as "gem" inherent in the meaning of the word. Any number of variant meanings have been offered. But the one which generally supplanted "gem of the mountains" was advanced by Joaquin Miller as early as 1880. Writing on July 30, he suggested "morning light" or "sunrise" as an appropriate possibility. Miller had been an expressman, a partner in the agency of Mossman and Miller, which had served the Nez Perce and Salmon River mines in 1861 and 1862. In spite of the fact that the word actually had come from Washington, D.C., to the Northwest, as the name for the Columbia River steamer, Miller converted it into a Nez Perce name. He adopted the old Pacific Monthly 1864 form of "E Dah Hoe," claiming further that he had been familiar with it as early as 1861 and 1862. Gilbert Butler, to whom Miller imparted this contribution, added another language to the mixture by attributing the same new meaning to the same word, only in Yakima. Eventually John Rees tried yet another language. He assembled the same syllables from Shoshoni stems, keeping the "sunrise" meaning. These achievements preceded the application of methods by which modern scholars have found that these interpretations were entirely in error. But the result of these efforts has been to provide an additional popular etymology of "Idaho" which is no less legendary than the original "gem of the mountains" version.

Dr. Sven Liljeblad's recent investigation of the legendary Shoshoni derivation proves that "Idaho" has no origin as a Shoshoni word. So after a century of search of Indian languages, both in Colorado and in the Pacific Northwest, no defensible Indian derivation for the name "Idaho" has been turned up. As a result of confusion arising from the invention of the name "Idaho" for Colorado in 1860, the word has gained two widely accepted but legendary etymologies ("gem of the mountains" and "sunrise") and a dozen or more other Indian explanations, all of them equally unfounded. Had it not been for William O. Stoddard's preservation of George M. Willing's story, and for some revealing passages in the record of the early debates of the name in Congress, the origin of "Idaho" would remain as clouded in mystery today as it was to the people of Idaho Springs, Colorado, when it first came into use in 1860.

"How Idaho Became a Territory in 1863"

Statemaking in the United States during the nineteenth century involved two major steps: first, creation of a new territory in a newly-populated area (or in lands left over when a state was made out of part of an existing territory); and second, admission of a territory to the union as a state.' Both of these steps required the action of Congress. As soon as settlement advanced into an area which was not yet organized as a state or territory -- or into a region far enough away from the center of a territorial government to justify formation of another potential state -- Congress generally heard pleas for the creation of another territory. Some territories were created which took in vast tracts of unoccupied lands -- lands which were from the beginning expected to make up more than one new state when they were finally settled. As vacant lands were occupied, territories were divided to meet the needs of their increasing population. Although there were no hard and fast limits, Congress ordinarily hesitated to create a new territory with fewer than one or two thousand inhabitants, or to admit a state with a population a great deal under that which would entitle it to one congressman.

Territorial government usually was not very popular, but it was something that had to be put up with on the frontier where settlement was sparse. Each of the territories wanted to get through the territorial stage just as quickly as possible, although in a few instances, territories turned down offers for admission that seemed premature. A deciding factor was the cost of territorial (as contrasted with state) government. Congress supplied most of the essential expenses of running a territory. Governors, secretaries, supreme court justices and most of the other territorial officials were appointed by the president of the United States, confirmed by the Senate, and paid by the federal government. Even the legislatures, though elected by the voters of the territories, were paid from federal funds. With most of the costs of government given them by Congress, territories might have been expected to have wanted to stay that way indefinitely. But there were drawbacks. Voters in the territories had no voice in choosing the president of the United States, and no representation in Congress--save that of a non-voting delegate. Somehow a non-voting delegate could not help but represent his constituents quite inadequately. Territorial residents, though, could always look forward to the happy day when they could assume the privileges, along with the burdens, that went with statehood. In the meantime, they laid the groundwork for the future states which they aspired to found.

Territories, then, went through several essential steps as they progressed toward statehood. To begin with, they were given temporary constitutions -- called organic acts" -- by Congress when they were created as new political units. Under temporary territorial governments, foundations were provided for the operation of eventual state governments, republican in form as required by the United States constitution. (This never was much of a problem.) While institutions of government were being perfected, the territories also were in the process of establishing stable communities with economies permanent enough to assure that the prospective state somehow would survive after admission. (This was a problem only in Nevada, which declined embarrassingly some two decades after its premature admission as a state during the Civil War in 1864. About that time, the discouraged citizens of Nevada noticed that the United States constitution fails to provide any clearly discernable procedure for disposing of an unsuccessful

state!) Moreover, territories were given temporary boundaries, which could be adjusted by an act of Congress as the needs of expanding settlement demanded. By the time they were ready for statehood, though, territories practically always had developed to a point where their final state boundaries already were fixed-or were ready to be fixed. (This was often a problem-in the West especially. Many states never did succeed in obtaining thoroughly desirable boundaries. For example, none of the states in the Pacific Northwest was able to avoid dissatisfaction, with its final boundaries, and California and Nevada had the same trouble.) In the case of Idaho, more than of many others, the choice of boundaries did much to decide what the future state would be like. With a different interior boundary arrangement in the Pacific Northwest, the state of Idaho might have been very different, if it were to exist at all. The story of how Idaho came to be, then, must be in large part the story of how the states of the Pacific Northwest got their boundaries.

Boundary making in the Pacific Northwest would have been difficult even if the boundary makers had had much of an idea of what they were doing before they acted. Had they been trying primarily to choose lines suitable to the geography of the region, great masses of mountains and deserts would have made their tasks difficult indeed. Moreover, they always had to take into account the sequence in which settlement developed. If large-scale mining had come first, for example, state boundaries in the Northwest almost certainly would have differed greatly from what they are today. And since the early settlers had to have territorial government, political boundaries had to be defined for the territories they inhabited long before anyone could be sure what the eventual pattern of settlement would be. Worse still, such territories had to be established before the boundary makers themselves had too clear a notion of the geography of the region anyway. Decisions, therefore, had to be made that created serious problems by the time that miners were rushing to Pierce and Elk City at the beginning of the Civil War.

Even the earliest settlers in the Pacific Northwest had recognized that the Cascades range provided the major natural internal division of the region. A well-watered strip along the coast was separated from the interior mountains and deserts; even though the mighty Columbia flowed through a gorge that penetrated the Cascades, communication between the two sections was difficult. Little in the way of road building was practical in the Cascades in those days. And on top of that, serious obstructions to navigation blocked continuous travel by steamboat along the lower Columbia. By the time of the gold rush, the Oregon Steam Navigation Company had put a connecting series of steamers on the river. Thus, by traveling on three different boats, passengers and freight could be transported through the Cascades barrier. But even though the Cascades were not quite in-penetrable, no one could doubt that they divided the major natural regions in the Pacific Northwest.

When those who had settled in Oregon Territory west of the Cascades and north of the Columbia got to thinking about the matter of asking Congress for a new territorial government late in 1852, they were aware of some important boundary alternatives. One of the boundary possibilities was a north-south line along the Cascades; the other was an east-west line along the lower Columbia. The immediate concern of settlers north of the Columbia, though, was what to them seemed to be their remoteness from the Willamette valley, where most of the early residents of Oregon lived. (Oregon north of the Columbia then had a population of a few less than 4,000, more than half of whom resided along Puget Sound.) But practically no one lived in Oregon east of the Cascades, outside of a small settlement at The Dalles. So there was no point in establishing a new territory there. Congress therefore, was asked to divide Oregon along the lower Columbia, and did so. To accomplish this, Washington territory was formed in 1853 out of the northern part of the original territory of Oregon. From then on, the only way that Oregon or Washington could retain a respectable size was to expand eastward right across the great natural boundary of the Cascades range. And that is what each proceeded to do. When the time came to select an eastern state boundary, both territories disregarded the Cascades. (Prior to settlement of the interior Northwest, both Oregon and Washington stretched all the way east of the Continental Divide, but everyone knew that their eastern boundaries were strictly temporary, settlement of the interior.) As a result, both Oregon and Washington ended up with two decidedly sections, east and west of the Cascades, having which often conflicted.

Serious objections to leaving the country east of the Cascades in Oregon at all were voiced well in advance of the 1860 gold discoveries that led to the creation of Idaho. A movement in The Dalles to set up a new large interior Pacific Northwest territory commenced in 1855 after the Colville gold excitement brought some miners to eastern Washington. But the Colville miners ignored the invitation, and the project collapsed. When Oregon's constitutional convention considered the eastern state boundary that Congress was willing to offer Oregon, the delegate from The Dalles still disapproved of letting the state of Oregon include any of the territory east of the Cascades. But the protests of The Dalles got no- where. When Oregon became a state in 1859, its eastern boundary still was the one that Congress and the state constitutional convention had wanted. That decision, incidentally, fixed the western boundary of future southern Idaho; although there were a number of later times when responsible leaders in western Oregon thought that the state boundaries ought to be revised to leave all of Oregon and Washington west of the Cascades in Oregon, and to put all the rest into other territories, no serious effort ever went into the project. After all, states rarely agreed to a major reduction in size, and boundaries of a state may not be altered without the state's consent. When Washington was established north of the Columbia, and when Oregon was given its state boundaries, no real chance remained for any kind of state boundary to be run along the great natural barrier of the Cascades. Nevertheless, the matter continued to be discussed for years-especially in Washington territory, whose boundaries Congress could change without bothering to get the approval of the territorial legislature.

When the settling of Pierce and Franklin brought white miners and farmers in 1860 to what now is Idaho, the region was part of Washington. Furthermore, when Congress had decided what state boundary would be appropriate for Oregon, it had seemed to responsible senators that the settlement of the forests and deserts which now are in Idaho would proceed so slowly that no more new territories would be needed in the Pacific Northwest until sometime in the next century. The gold rush to the Idaho mines changed all of that. By the time of the Washington congressional election of 1861-held July 8, when the new mines around Pierce were only a few months old-Shoshone county recorded the largest total vote cast in Washington. The election in the mining region, therefore, proved to be of special importance, and its result affected the future of Idaho.

Three candidates were seeking to represent Washington in Congress. Important national and local issues faced them. In national affairs they held to three rather different points of view: all of them advocated preservation of the Union, yet they disagreed greatly as to the method. But differ as they did upon national affairs, the three candidates got together upon the major local is-sue-as yet scarcely discussed-of what to do with the new mining region. Concluding their campaign tour of Pierce and Orofino City, they met with a few other leaders who had come to the mines from the Puget Sound area. At that meeting, the candidates decided that regardless of whoever might win the election, the victor would do all that he could to see that the new mining country became a separate territory.' Nationally, all three of the candidates spoke, at least, for preservation of the Union; locally, all of them endorsed in secret, the division of Washington so that the eastern miners might have a territory of their own.

At the time that the three Washington congressional candidates decided in their quiet meeting at Orofino City to seek a new territory for the Idaho miners (who then were in Eastern Washington, of course) the future pattern of settlement in those parts was far from clear. Lands in Eastern Washington which were adaptable to farming certainly would be settled eventually, and development of the mines could be expected to hasten the day. (As a matter of fact, markets furnished by the sudden growth of the mines led almost immediately to irrigated farming in lands where scarcely anyone would have anticipated such a development even one year before.) What could not be foreseen, except in the most general way, was the course that mining occupation of the mountainous interior might take. Startling gold discoveries might populate the most remote and unlikely places with thousands of inhabitants in almost no time at all. But if new mines should be worked out quickly, the flourishing city of one season might be a ghost town the next. In the

case of the Clearwater gold rush, it looked as if miners would be busy in the area for years, and by the time of the Orofino conference early in July, new discoveries around Elk City provided definite assurance that the mines were going to keep growing. No one, though, could be sure where the next rich strike might come.

Creation of new mining territories might have seemed a little bit risky. But Congress suddenly had become entirely willing to take such chances. Before the Civil War, the national sectional conflict over the issue of expansion had delayed provision of a territorial government for California until after the gold rush forced Congress to admit that mining community directly as a state in the compromise of 1850. But with southern obstructionists out of Congress with the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, two new mining territories of Nevada and Colorado had been created. That action, showing as it did that Congress now took an entirely changed attitude toward establishment of new territories, happened to be timed just as the Clearwater gold rush was gaining momentum in the spring. By July, when the three Washington congressional candidates agreed to ask for similar action for the Pacific Northwest, they could expect a favorable response. Their main problem was to figure out a boundary which would be appropriate for the projected new territory.

Division of Washington on the line of the Cascades offered a possible if somewhat unlikely solution to the miners' boundary problem. The Washington legislature, in fact, had considered making such a recommendation to Congress, just before the gold rush had got underway. John M. Cannady-- then of Walla Walla, but soon to be numbered among the most prominent of Idaho pioneers--had proposed a new Walla Walla territory that would have included all of Washington east of the Cascades line. Olympia, already the territorial capital of Washington, was just then engaged in trying to beat down an attempt to move Washington's territorial seat of government to Vancouver. (Vancouver's aspiration to become capital had just gained legislative approval. December 11, 1860; the only snag was that the Vancouver interests had forgotten to put an enacting clause on their proposed legislation, and the defective statute naturally failed a test in court.) Territorial reorganization that would have confined Washington to the strip of country west of the Cascades definitely would have demolished any claims Vancouver might have advanced in the future for removal of the capital: Olympia therefore favored such a boundary plan. In the legislative showdown, January 29, 1861, Vancouver had won. Even so, talk of dividing Washington on the Cascades continued in Olympia after the Clearwater gold rush had changed the situation entirely. And, even after Olympia came up with an alternative to a Cascade boundary, other communities still continued to advance the notion.

Fabulous new gold discoveries brought a stampede to Florence in the fall of 1861, and by the time the Washington legislature had another chance to review the closely-related issues of location of the capital and of territorial division, no one could doubt that by 1862, the main concentration of population in Washington would be found in the new eastern mines. Olympia's danger of losing the territorial capital to Vancouver--or perhaps to Walla Walla, since the majority of Washington's population would be east even of Walla Walla increased directly with the rapid growth of the mines. Influence of the mining counties in the legislature might be held down for a time by refusal of the Puget Sound delegations to allow a fair reapportionment bill to go through. (The legislature was supposed to be apportioned in both houses according to population, but with the sudden, spectacular shifts characteristic of gold rushes, territorial legislatures found all kinds of excuses for failing to keep their apportionment up to date. The older and overrepresented areas usually hoped that if they only waited long enough, the miners would work out their claims and go away. In any event, the evil day of reapportionment generally was put off just as long as possible.) But should the mining counties ever succeed in getting the majority in the legislature that their population entitled them to, then relocation of the capital was just about sure to follow. And loss of the capital would be only one consequence of the decline of Olympia and Puget Sound influence in the Washington territorial legislature.

Legislative attention to the problem of territorial reorganization showed that at the end of the first big mining season, the various sections of Washington had not yet decided upon a proper course

of action. Representatives of the Puget Sound counties put a request through the House, January 27, 1862, asking Congress to divide Washington on the Cascades. Members from Walla Walla and the mining region dissented: situated near the prospective geographic center of Washington (assuming that the part of Washington adjacent to Nebraska and Colorado would disappear whenever population should reach it), and hopeful that the gold rush had only begun, the eastern representatives believed that if Washington only were to remain intact for two or three more years, statehood would be achieved. (That was not an unreasonable expectation, and was exactly what happened to the new territory of Nevada by 1864.) But the Council - that is, the upper house of the territorial legislature - reacted differently. J. Marion More - who was interested in the new mines, and who soon became just about the leading citizen of Idaho City - endorsed the proposed Cascade boundary line. But the Puget Sound delegation rejected the suggestion for a new territory east of the Cascades, January 29. Thus the Sound counties passed the memorial in the House, only to defeat it in the Council.¹¹ Another mining season had to go by before their real preference could be ascertained for certain.

Thousands of gold-seekers rushed to the Salmon River mines as soon as travel became practical in the spring of 1862. At the height of the excitement, a new boundary suggestion came from Olympia. There, on April 5, 1862, the *Washington Standard* indicated that Washington territory should be divided, but not on the Cascades. In order to keep Washington as big as possible and yet get rid of the mining area with its controlling majority of Washington's population, a new territory was advocated for the miners only. After all, there was no need to cut off anything more: if just the mines were detached, the danger that political control of Washington would shift east across the Cascades would end suddenly. Walla Walla and the potential farming section of the Palouse, therefore, might stay in Washington without endangering Olympia's future. A boundary much farther east than the Cascades would leave Olympia with a Washington territory of respectable size to preside over. To accomplish this, Washington's eastern boundary might properly be made a northern extension of Oregon's eastern boundary. Dr. A. G. Henry - surveyor general of Washington, and an exceedingly able and influential agent for Olympia - selected the exact line that would meet these new Olympia requirements. His choice was a meridian running due north from the new town of Lewiston, which had been established the season before at the mouth of the Clearwater. From that time on, that was the line that Olympia partisans worked for.

An early test of the attractiveness of the Olympia plan came in Washington's 1862 election. Gilmore Hays, who had attended the Orofino conference at which the Washington congressional candidates had agreed to territorial division the year before, represented the interests of Olympia in the mining counties.¹² But his advocacy of giving the miners a territory of their own met a poor response. Union party conventions held June 21, 1862, at Pierce (for Shoshone County) and at Florence (for Idaho County)¹³ showed no great enthusiasm for setting their area up as a new territory. Worse still, their candidates met defeat, July 14 - a misfortune attributed to Hays' identification with the agitation for Washington territorial division. Gilmore Hays, in fact, headed the Union legislative ticket as a candidate for joint councilman in Nez Perce and Idaho Counties, and his loss to Ralf Bledsoe of the Union Democratic ticket (which actually ought to have been merged with the Union [Lincoln Republican] ticket anyway) could not be blamed on national issues. In the legislature, Bledsoe was pledged to "oppose division of the territory...favor a removal of the capital [from Olympia] to a point east of the Cascades, and . . . vote for measures to emancipate the Columbia River from the trammels of monopolies."¹⁴ The latter point had special importance in the view of those who fought against Washington territorial division: in less than two years, the Oregon Steam Navigation Company, benefiting from its control of river traffic on the Columbia during the Idaho gold rush, had grown in the estimation of its enemies into an evil monstrosity. An undivided Washington territory, freed from control of Olympia and Puget Sound, would be able, they hoped, to bring the OSN to terms and end the monopoly. A Washington legislature meeting in Walla Walla and controlled by the mining counties would present a spectacle quite different from the scene in Olympia: aside from attending to the transportation difficulties of the Columbia above the Cascades, such a legislature might be expected to take care of the other problems of the mining and agricultural interior as well.

No fewer than four Washington cities aspired to be capital, either of Washington or of a new mining territory, by the summer of 1862. Their attitudes toward the issue of territorial boundary revision naturally were affected in large measure by their hopes to be capital of one territory or another. Olympia desired to oust the eastern mining counties from Washington, but to retain Walla Walla and the future interior farm lands. (This had become clear by the time that the east attained its new status as majority section of the territory, leaving Puget Sound a minority for a change.) Vancouver, to become capital, had to rely upon its position on the lower Columbia: accessible to Puget Sound, Vancouver had an advantageous location as the transportation outlet for Walla Walla and for the mines as well. Vancouver would have to oppose division of Washington on the Cascades, but otherwise could make whatever deal might serve its interest - either for division of Washington farther east, or for keeping Washington intact. Walla Walla - particularly through its organ, the *Washington Statesman* - was voicing the view that Washington should remain intact in anticipation of early admission as a state. Keeping the mines in Washington would help to preserve eastern Washington as the majority section. Once the eastern majority gained control of the legislature, Walla Walla could expect to become capital. If the mines continued to grow, Walla Walla might be capital of a new state before long. Finally, Lewiston - which had surpassed Walla Walla in population during the 1862 rush to Florence - could expect with confidence that Congress would establish a new eastern territory if a strong demand should be voiced for any such action. A division of Washington, either on the Cascades or along the Columbia, would work to Lewiston's advantage, and the geography of the Pacific Northwest clearly favored the Lewiston proposal. The Portland *Oregonian* had endorsed a Cascade boundary for Washington, predicting with great confidence, June 9, 1862, that the gold rush would give the Idaho mines¹⁵ a population large enough so that Congress soon would admit a new interior state of Idaho without bothering to put the region through a separate territorial stage at all.

Even though all such projects had suffered an adverse reaction at the polls in the mining counties, July 14, talk of the *Oregonian's* new state of Idaho continued throughout the summer of 1862. Shortly after the *Golden Age* commenced publication in Lewiston, August 2, suggestions of the propriety of statehood for the land east of the Cascades were appearing in its columns. The *Oregonian* continued to predict that a Cascade boundary soon would divide the lumbering, fishing, and industrial interests of Puget Sound from the agricultural and mining communities to the east. But in Olympia, the *Washington Standard* continued to demand a boundary separating Walla Walla from the mines, rather than division of the territory on the Cascades which would separate Olympia from Walla Walla.¹⁶ And in Florence, September 8, 1862, Henry Miller - a former editor of the *Oregonian* - blamed the new *Oregonian* proposal entirely on the Oregon Steam Navigation Company, arguing that the detested steamboat company wished to inspire division of Washington in order to prevent eastern Washington legislators from combating the Columbia river transportation monopoly.¹⁷ But contrary views expressed in Olympia, Walla Walla, and Florence did not discourage Lewiston and the *Golden Age* in the least. Upon becoming editor of the *Golden Age*, John H. Scranton took up the cause of the new state of Idaho with vigor. By October, 1862, a Lewiston committee organized to circulate petitions asking Congress for a new territory with a Columbia river boundary, and by December, Scranton was complaining that Olympia was useless to the interior as territorial capital. "Of what use to us is a capital of Washington Territory located at Olympia?" he asked. "During four months of the last year no communication could be had with the place at all. Its distance is between seven and eight hundred miles, interspersed with huge forests, roaring rivers, and rocky bound shores of ice, with impassable barriers of snow."¹⁸ Needless to say, Lewiston would have been perfectly happy to become capital of the eastern area.

Debate of the issue of creating Idaho continued in Olympia after the legislature assembled there again. After waiting a week or two for members from the mining counties to make the long trip to Olympia, the legislature chose presiding officers from the suddenly important eastern counties. T. M. Reed of Florence, one of the Union Democrats elected from Idaho county, became speaker of the house, December 6, 1862, and on December 13, J., M. Simms of Walla Walla was finally chosen president of the council. Both opposed territorial division, as did all the rest of the Walla

Walla and mining county members except J. Marion More.¹⁹ (He had just lead the expedition from Walla Walla which had founded Idaho City, October 7, 1862.) But while the eastern delegation tried to get control of the next Washington legislature through reapportionment, and, when that failed, tried to arrange for a constitution under which the entire territory of Washington would be admitted as the state of Idaho, the matter of territorial reorganization was referred to Congress. Since Congress, not the Washington legislature, had sole authority in the matter, the decisive battle took place in the national capital, not in Olympia.

Expansion of the Idaho mining country eastward and southward in the summer and fall of 1862 had created an entirely new situation for Congress to consider when the matter of territorial reorganization at last came up. Prospectors from the east, attempting to reach Florence and the Salmon River mines, had found gold east of the continental divide on the upper Missouri in newly established Dakota territory, July 28, 1862. And a week later, another group of energetic miners had found excellent gold prospects in Boise Basin, August 2, 1862. By the time Congress got around to considering the situation, it was plain that something would have to be done. A great rush to Boise Basin was building up late in the fall of 1862, and it was clear that by the next spring the majority of population in rapidly-growing Washington territory would be found in the new Boise mines. And to the east, the majority of population in Dakota territory - where 1,776 residents had been counted in the eastern plains at the time when gold was discovered in the Rockies in July, 1862 definitely would be in the new mining country.

This posed a new problem. Even if the Washington legislature had assented to speaker T. M. Reed's proposal to apportion the next legislative session on the basis of votes cast in 1862, the arrangement would have been entirely out of date before the annual elections could be held. Within a month or two of the time his plan was considered - and rejected - the majority of people in Washington territory would already be living in an area which had been entirely uninhabited (except possibly by a few wandering Indians) on election day in 1862. And since the transformation was taking place almost overnight, the Washington legislature could not possibly have kept up with the reapportionment problem even if it had desired to.

In Dakota, the situation was still worse. Meeting in its first session at the end of 1862, the Dakota legislature had heard of the Idaho mines if for no other reason than because the gold rush across the plains had created something of a problem in relations with Indians of Dakota territory. But the Dakota legislature seems to have been blissfully ignorant that the mining country extended into Dakota, and that the section of Dakota that its membership represented already was a minority. But in Congress the Dakota delegate somehow got the news that the population of eastern Dakota (for whom the territory had been so recently established) had been surpassed by the rush of miners to the western fringe. Any action that Congress might be inclined to take for the benefit of the Idaho miners, therefore, naturally would have to provide for the Dakota miners as well.

Four possible boundaries were eligible for consideration in Congress when the problem of dividing Washington had to be faced at the end of 1862. Farthest west was the line running along the Cascades, favored a year earlier by Olympia and subsequently advocated by the *Oregonian*. Somewhat to the east of this was the line of the Columbia (or, as often was suggested, on the Columbia and Okanagan) which the citizens of Lewiston proposed in a meeting to put their community formally on record, December 28, 1862.²⁰ Still farther east was Olympia's final preference: the line running due north from Lewiston and the line which eventually was adopted. Finally, there was an east-west line (forty-sixth parallel) which would have kept Washington intact - at least in its original form. This last suggestion simply brought Walla Walla's preference up to date; when Walla Walla leaders had voiced their opposition to Washington territorial division in the summer of 1862, they had not meant to argue that Washington should never be divided; rather they wanted to keep the mines that then existed in Washington. When, at the end of 1862, the Boise mines suddenly brought a large concentration of population to the country left over after Oregon admission and attached temporarily to Washington in 1859 - Walla Walla was perfectly willing to see *that* area become a new territory. Once settled, the Boise region had no place in

Washington. So Walla Walla's plan to retain Washington intact now would be served - or at least almost served - by restoring Washington's original boundaries.

Congress, after an involved and confusing bit of lobbying on the part of the partisans of Olympia and Walla Walla, finally chose between the latter two plans. Little attention seems to have been paid to Lewiston's Columbia River suggestion, or to the still earlier proposal to use the natural boundary of the Cascades, with its geographic superiority. Olympia's plan called for a territory - or territories, since Olympia did not care how many were created just so long as the mines were removed from Washington - reaching north and south all the way from Nevada and Utah to British Columbia. James M. Ashley, chairman of the House committee on territories, had strong views on the matter; while he may not have fought the Olympia plan directly, he laid down conditions which made it impossible to attain. Ashley's two major conditions seemed to have been (1) that the new mining territory should run east and west, modeled after the shape of Kansas or Nebraska, rather than after Illinois or Indiana, which ran north and south; and (2) that not more than one new northern miners' territory be established at that time. (A new southern miners' territory of Arizona was formed from western New Mexico in that same session of Congress, and possibly Ashley felt that two new territories were enough just then.) Introduction of a measure, December 22, 1862, to establish Idaho territory had paved the way for action, and on February 12, 1863, the House of Representatives had a chance to pass on Ashley's proposal.

Apparently relying on information provided by John Mullan (who had returned to the national capital to report on the construction of his Mullan Road from Walla Walla across the mountains to Fort Benton on the upper Missouri) Ashley decided that the new territory should include the Boise and Salmon river mines from Washington and the upper Missouri mines from Dakota. Pierce and Elk City, under his plan, would remain in Washington, along with Lewiston, which wanted to be in the center of the new territory. Under Ashley's bill, both Washington and Dakota would have been divided, but Washington would have been restored to its original 1853 boundaries. Before he left Walla Walla for the east, September 7, 1862, Mullan had gone over the entire matter with the leaders there who opposed the Olympia and Lewiston plans to divide Washington. More than that, he definitely agreed with them in their position. Mullan had had to make some last minute adjustments in the Walla Walla plan to allow for the rush to Boise, which had commenced after he left the Pacific Northwest. But the proposal which Ashley's committee got the House to accept, February 12, was essentially the Walla Walla scheme brought up to date.²¹

Neither Lewiston nor Olympia had much reason to be satisfied with the territorial bill which Ashley had steered through the House. Even the name of the proposed territory had been changed from Idaho to Montana before action had been taken on the measure. Washington's congressional delegate, William H. Wallace, not only preferred to name the new commonwealth Idaho instead of Montana. More important, he presented the Olympia view that the new territory should include all of Washington from Lewiston east. Wallace had been the one elected immediately after the Orofino conference in which all three candidates had agreed to put the mining country into a new territory; now he wanted to make sure that none of the mining districts were omitted from the bill. But he was unable to get anywhere with Ashley and the House committee. So he chose not to object to the bill when it came up in the House. Once the measure had reached the Senate committee, however, Wallace went to work with other Olympia agents, primarily Oregon's Republican Congressman, John R. McBride, and Washington's surveyor general, A.G. Henry. They got the Senate to amend the measure so that the new territory would include all the country east of the line which Olympia favored. This vastly increased Ashley's proposal in size. Ashley's suggested territory, which the House had approved, already seemed large enough. Colorado, Nevada, and Nebraska were being considered for statehood by that same session of Congress, and Nebraska territory had to be reduced in size to its present state boundaries, so all of what then was Western Nebraska territory had already been put into the new territorial proposal. Southwestern Dakota was also added because of the gold rush there. Now at the instigation of the Olympia group, the boundaries adopted by the House were extended to take in all the land to the north as far as the Canadian line. The result was an area substantially larger than Texas.²²

Action on the bill for the new territory was deferred until the final evening of the final session of the Congress which had had to meet the problems of the beginning of the Civil War. Getting the attention of the Senate away from the issues raised by the war called for some adroit maneuvering. But Wallace, Henry, and McBride had done their work well. After a brief explanation, the drastic boundary amendment was approved, and then the name "Idaho" was restored to the territory. In this form the bill was passed. Senate passage of this revised act cleared the way for House concurrence in the Senate amendments. When the amended bill returned to the House, James M. Ashley objected with vigor to what the Senate had done to his proposal. But again the careful preparation of the Olympia group paid dividends. Ashley asked for a conference committee, but there was no time for such things so late on the last night of the session. The House had to pass the bill or refuse it as it now stood. Ashley's request was voted down and the House passed the bill in the form approved by the Senate. The next morning - March 4, 1863 - President Abraham Lincoln signed the Idaho Organic Act into law, and the fight was over.²³ Idaho thus became a territory, with boundaries satisfactory to Olympia.

"It would appear that the redoubtable Captain Mullan has beat the bush and somebody else has caught the bird." So wrote Noah Brooks, the Washington correspondent to the *Sacramento Daily Union*,²⁴ upon hearing that Abraham Lincoln had appointed William H. Wallace to be governor of the enormous new territory of Idaho, March 10, 1863. Both Wallace and A. G. Henry were personal friends of President Lincoln, and together with John R. McBride, they chose practically the entire slate of officers which Lincoln appointed to organize the new territory of Idaho.²⁵ Since they were the ones who laid the foundations for Idaho territory with boundaries that led to the establishment of the present State of Idaho - instead of to something that would have looked entirely different as would have been the case if the Senate had not changed the boundary provisions - it is appropriate that they were the ones charged with arrangements for putting the new commonwealth into operation. It was the boundaries which they obtained that led to the present outline of Idaho. If the wishes of John Mullan and James M. Ashley had prevailed the shape and even the name of Idaho would have been very different - as would its history

News that Congress had established Idaho reached the interior northwest some two weeks after Lincoln signed the act. But for another month or more, Idaho's boundaries remained unknown to Northwesterners. The latest definite word available was that the boundaries which Ashley had proposed and the House had approved February 12, left Lewiston and Walla Walla in Washington. Lewiston decided, somewhat lamely under the circumstances, to celebrate the event anyway, March 22. Alonzo Leland reported that "one hundred guns were fired and other demonstrations made, indicative that somebody rejoiced over the issue of events connected with the division question. No particular enthusiasm was manifested on the occasion, but many were present to witness the firing of the one hundred guns."²⁶ Any absence of enthusiasm arose from the fear that Lewiston was not in Idaho. On the other hand, those who believed that Ashley's boundaries had been changed in the final bill thought that Idaho included *both* Lewiston and Walla Walla, and steps were taken to get the two cities to set up territorial political party organizations in preparation for Idaho's first election.²⁷ Of course Walla Walla continued to hope that the boundaries had not been changed, so the organization of Idaho political parties was deferred. When it finally became clear that neither Lewiston's nor Walla Walla's preference had been respected, and that the Olympia plan to separate Lewiston from Walla Walla had prevailed, the outraged Walla Walla Democratic organization resolved to punish Olympia just as severely as was possible under the circumstances. In the Washington election that summer, that was exactly what happened. George E. Cole of Walla Walla won election as delegate from Washington to Congress, and for what it was worth, the Olympia boundary makers were thus rebuked.²⁸

When Governor W. H. Wallace at last reached Idaho's western boundary - which he had been so instrumental in determining - at Lewiston, he proceeded to organize the territory there, July 10, 1863. That summer he arranged to get Idaho's government under way, and when the first election day finally came, October 31, 1863, he was chosen for another term in Congress - this time as delegate from Idaho. By then it had become clear that it had been a mistake to combine mining regions from both sides of the Rockies into one territory. The Idaho legislature, in its first

session, suggested to Congress that another mining territory ought to be created for the region east of the Rockies. If no other reason were apparent, the legislative delegation from the eastern mines found good cause in their long and toilsome winter journey home after adjournment in February, 1864. From Lewiston they went west to Portland, continued on south to San Francisco, and then turned east to Salt Lake City, from which they were finally able to return to Idaho at a point accessible to Virginia City and East Bannock - from which they had started the previous fall. By the time they had reached Salt Lake, they figured that they had demonstrated the need for another territory with complete adequacy.²⁹

Any inconvenience that the eastern members of the Idaho legislature encountered on their way home from Lewiston, however, did not begin to compare with the troubles that their upper Missouri constituents had faced during the legislative session. Neither territorial nor county administration had commenced to function in the Virginia City region. And crime had abounded. Finally a number of the more aroused residents there had organized themselves into a vigilance committee in order to get rid of a band of unusually skillful and enterprising stage robbers. Eventually that self-appointed committee became known as the vigilantes of Montana, although the members never had heard of Montana as yet, since they were active before Montana was formed out of a part of the original territory of Idaho. The fact that Idaho had been unable to offer law enforcement to thousands of its eastern residents,³⁰ though, emphasized the evils of having the territory contain regions separated by geographic barriers of the kind that divided Idaho internally.

When the time came to rectify the Idaho boundary error, James M. Ashley had a perfectly simple - if quite unreasonable - solution. He still wanted to get Congress to accept his Montana proposal that the House had approved February 12, 1863. So on December 14 he reintroduced his Montana bill, with precisely the same boundaries, as well as the same name, that had been provided for before.³¹ This was possible because the Olympia agents had changed both the name and the boundaries of the old Montana bill.

The effect of creating Ashley's Montana in 1864, however, would have been quite different from establishing exactly the same territory the year before. To get exactly the same Montana in 1864 that he had wanted in 1863, he had to rescind his objections to having *two* new territories in the northern mining region. Ashley's 1864 Montana would have been detached from Idaho rather than from Washington, Dakota, and Nebraska; Idaho, therefore, would remain a territory directly north of Montana, bordering on Canada; Montana would have bordered on Colorado, Utah, and Nevada. His renewal of the Montana suggestion would have left Idaho with only a few small settlements - primarily Lewiston, Pierce, and Missoula - along with the great tract of unsettled mountains and plains to the east. Idaho would have retained only several hundred inhabitants. Practically all of the territory's 1863 population of 32,000 would have gone to Montana. Helena, about to be discovered in 1864, and some other mines later to be found north of Virginia City would have remained with Lewiston in Idaho. But the arrangement would have been terribly awkward. The East Bannack and Virginia City mines of the upper Missouri still would have been in Ashley's Montana, along with Boise and Owyhee and the unsettled tracts of later Wyoming. This plan would have made almost no improvement over the existing, highly unsatisfactory, situation.

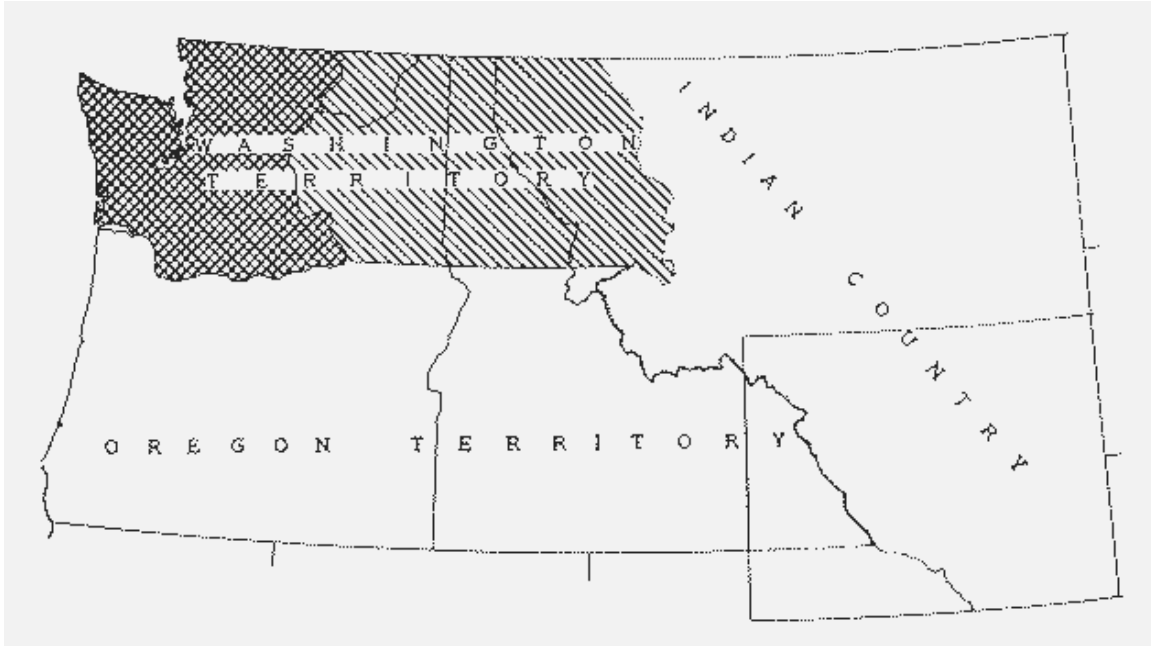
While Ashley was getting ready to make another try to get Congress to approve his old Montana proposal, the miners of East Bannack and Virginia City prepared to lobby for a very different new territory. They certainly would have been in Ashley's Montana, thus getting themselves incorporated into a new territory even by the old proposal. The trouble was that they would have been in Montana which would have included the remote and more populous Boise mining region. That was most of what was wrong with their being in Idaho. Instead joining in what now is southern Idaho and Wyoming - and leaving most of present Montana in Idaho, the way Ashley wanted - they preferred to have what is now Montana. A group of influential leaders (all of them of the Union party, which supported Lincoln and the United States during the Civil War and therefore was the minority party in the pro-Southern Virginia City region) raised \$2,000 in newly mined gold

to send a delegation back to Washington, D. C., to attend to the matter.³² Sidney Edgerton, who had come to that part of Idaho as chief justice of the territory in 1863, and who had important financial interests there, headed the group seeking a new territory. The Union leaders also arranged to have William H. Wallace, who represented them in Congress as Idaho's delegate, work for the proposal. Wallace also was to endorse Edgerton's appointment as governor of Montana as soon as the new territory might be created.³³ Wallace already had a great deal of experience in connection with Ashley's Montana proposal. Representing Washington in the previous Congress, he had led the fight to establish Idaho with boundaries acceptable to Olympia; now, representing Idaho, he could try to rectify some of the boundary errors that could not be avoided when Idaho statute was adopted. During the original Idaho boundary fight, Wallace had built up enough strength to override Ashley's Montana suggestion. Now that same Montana proposition would have to be beaten down again. This time, though, the pioneers of Idaho could point to a year's unsatisfactory experience trying to operate a territorial government with three sections that had so little contact with each other. Since Ashley's Montana bill would have kept two of the disconnected mining sections (Boise-Owyhee and Virginia City-East Bannack) plus part of the third one (Florence-Warren's) in the same territory, it offered almost no improvement over the existing situation. When he learned of this terrible problem, Ashley agreed that something better would have to be done. Some thought was given to shifting his proposed Montana southward. The Virginia City-East Bannack region would be taken out of Montana in order to become the population center of Idaho. Montana, in turn, would be pushed down into Utah to include some of the Mormon communities north of Salt Lake, along with Boise. Mormons from Utah thus would compensate Montana for the loss of Virginia City and East Bannack.³⁴ Arrangements were made, February 23, 1864, to consult the governor of Utah, who happened to be in the national capital just then.³⁵ Within a week, this anti-Mormon suggestion was dropped, and Ashley decided to try something entirely different.

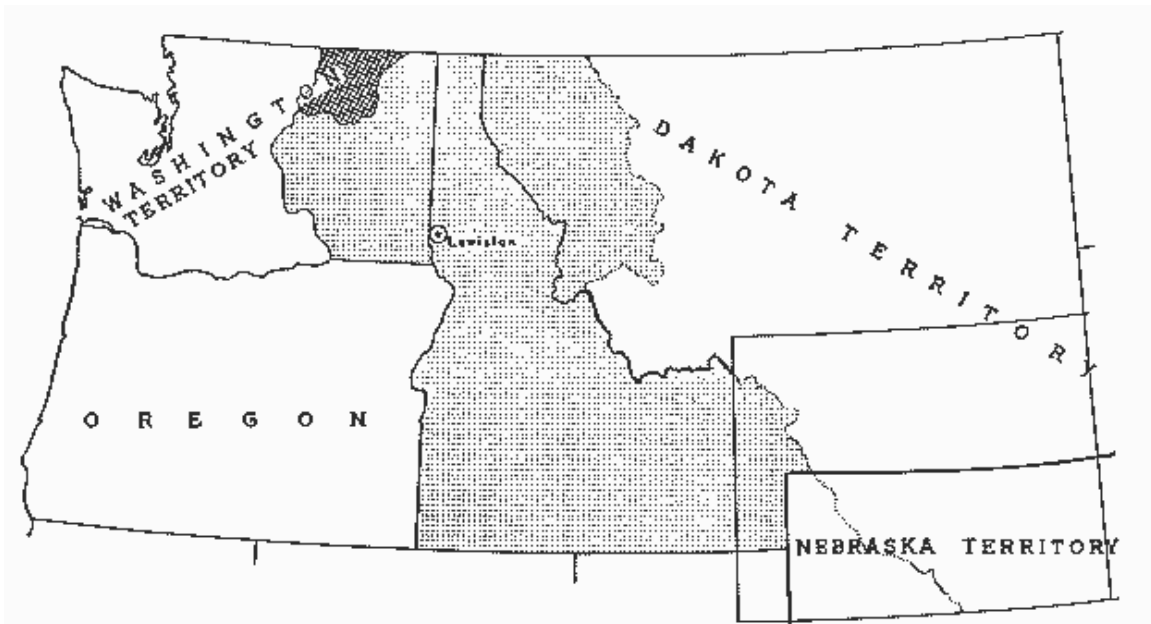
Of the various Idaho sections, leaders in the Boise region generally favored a north-south division of the territory along the continental divide. This would have set aside the growing Virginia City region as a new territory, but would have retained the Lewiston and Boise regions in Idaho.³⁶ Recognition of the difficulty of communication between Lewiston and Boise already created serious suspicion of the desirability of such an arrangement.³⁷ Ashley cheerfully disregarded this Idaho recommendation and went along with the proposal of the Edgerton delegation, backed by W. H. Wallace. This plan moved the Idaho-Montana boundary to the Bitterroot range. By adopting Ashley's new Montana boundary, March 1, the committee changed the location of Montana drastically.³⁸ Except for the East Bannack-Virginia City mines, which remained in Montana, and for Lewiston and Pierce, which remained in Idaho, Idaho and Montana were switched.³⁹ This still allowed Edgerton to be Governor of Montana, where he had extensive financial interests, but cleared the Boise region (and later Wyoming) out of his domain.⁴⁰ Montana thus emerged with boundaries that suited leaders promoting the new territory, and Idaho was left with two of the three mining sections. But the resulting north Idaho was reduced in size so it could not form a territory by itself unless enlarged by a major acquisition from eastern Washington. Out of this unfortunate boundary solution came a quarter century of sectional strife between North Idaho and the larger southern section of the territory. Montana's advocates in Congress managed to find suitable boundaries for their new territory, but only at the expense of the sections remaining in Idaho.

While Congress was at work on the Montana legislature, politicians in the Boise region wondered just what was going to materialize out of the diverse possibilities for revision of Idaho's boundaries.⁴¹ News of Ashley's original Montana proposal, with an east-west boundary substituted for the continental divide, was disturbing. An east-west line simply was not acceptable there.⁴² The final Montana boundary compromise, using the Bitterroot range in place of the continental divide, was a north-south line all right, but one that brought a strongly negative reaction outside of Montana.⁴³ Both sections remaining in Idaho felt defrauded. North Idaho wanted another Idaho boundary revision before the end of 1864, and by 1866 the southern members of the Idaho legislature went along with the idea. Congress was asked to abandon the Bitterroot boundary in order to enlarge North Idaho into a new territory of Columbia, which would

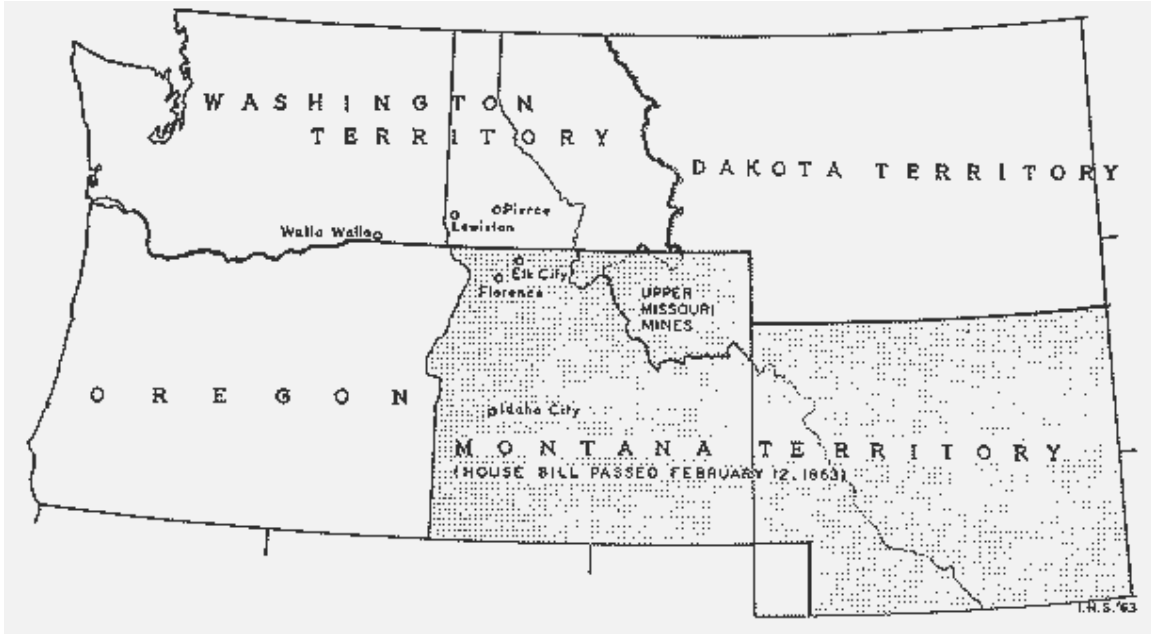
have included eastern Washington also.⁴⁴ But Montana objected violently, and the Idaho-Montana line never was changed.



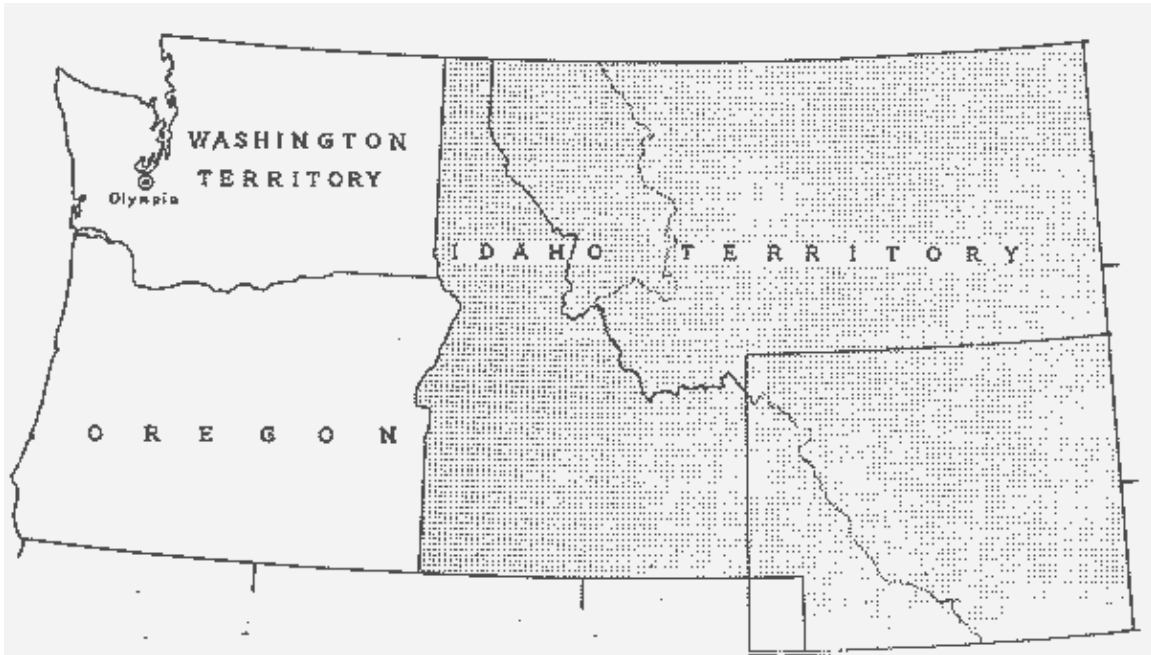
Residents of the country west of the Cascades and north of the Columbia asked in 1852 for a new territory including only the dark area above. But the next year they were given Washington territory, with more than twice as much land as they wanted.

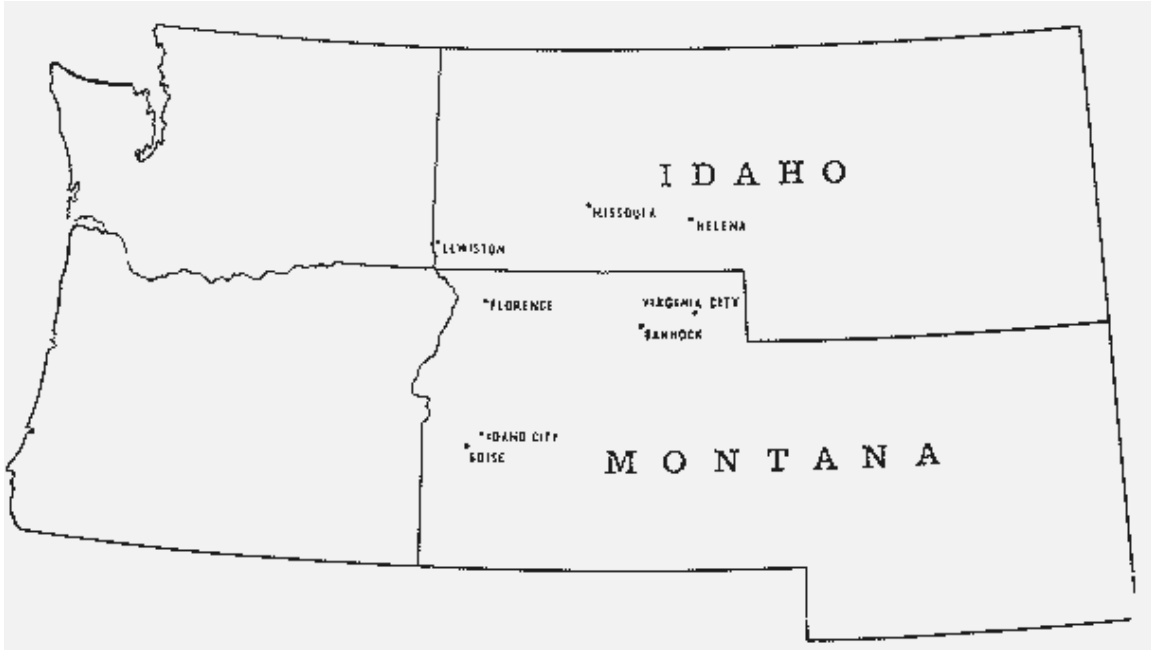


The citizens of Lewiston asked Congress, December 28, 1862, for a new territory as shown above. The dark area, although not included in this particular request, often was regarded as suitable land for the new territory too. If Congress had agreed to this plan, Washington would have been given the boundaries that the citizens there had wanted ten years before.

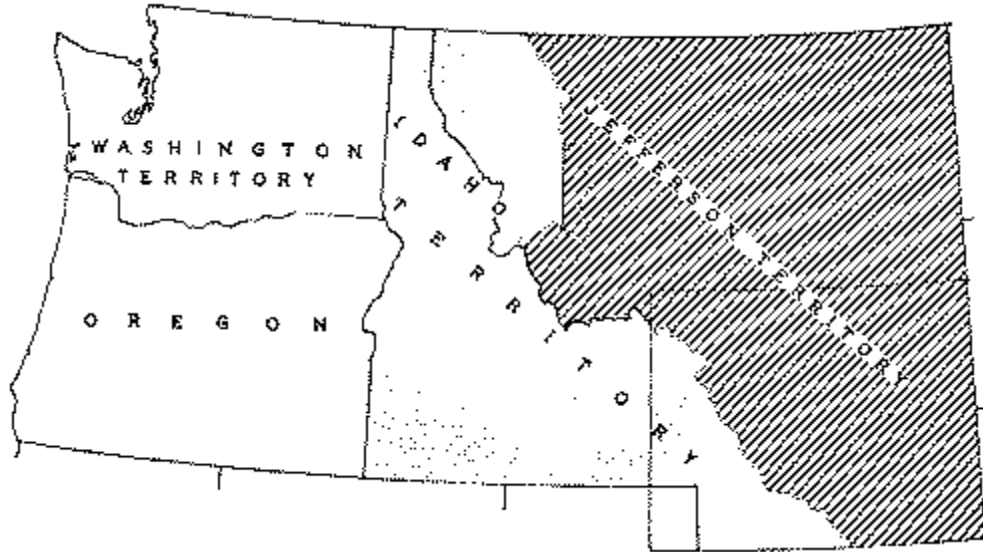


These maps show the territorial proposal approved by the House of Representatives, February 12, 1862, and the changes made by the Senate at the end of the session. The arrangement desired by Ashley (above), was satisfactory to Walla Walla, but not to Lewiston and Olympia. As revised by the Senate (below), the Idaho line was the one suggested by Olympia. The Senate also restored the name "Idaho" in place of "Montana." Thus the conflict between Walla Walla and Olympia was resolved in favor of Olympia.

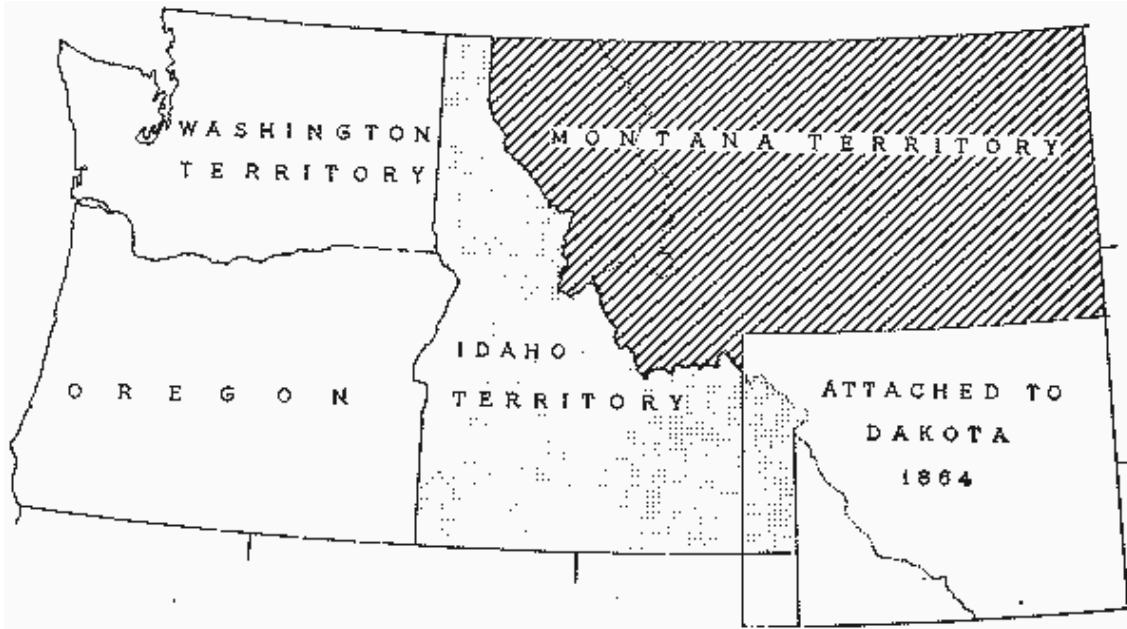


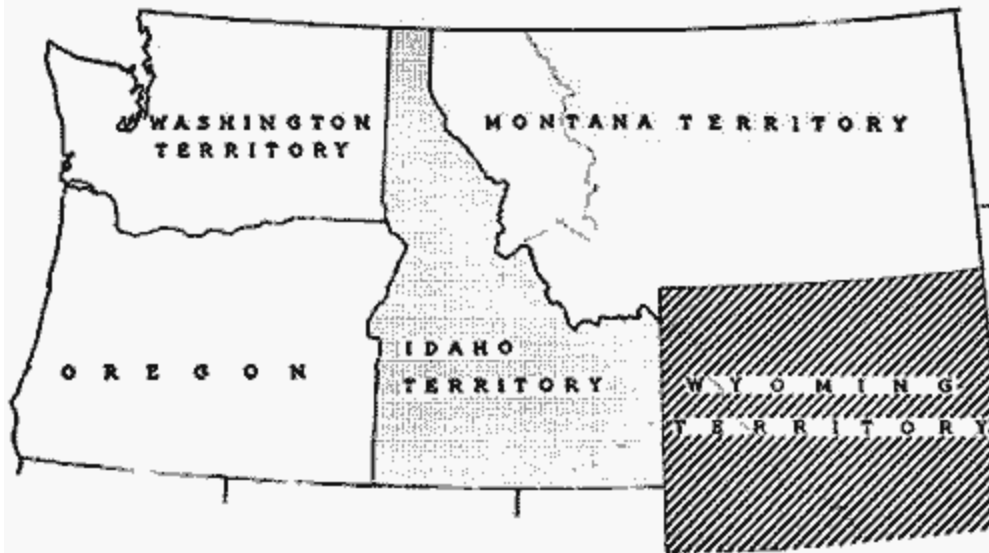


The original Ashley proposal for Idaho and Montana, December 14, 1864.



If Congress had paid attention to the wishes of the Idaho legislature, North Idaho would have been substantially larger than it is. Even the legislative representatives from the Montana mines approved of the map above. But Montana was established May 26, 1864, with its present boundaries. (map below)





Idaho received the boundaries which are still in use when Wyoming was established by Congress, July 26, 1868.

NOTES Origins of the Name "Idaho"

¹ An Idaho Springs, Kansas (later Colorado) newspaper correspondent, quoted in Erl H. Ellis, *That Word "Idaho"* (Denver, 1951), 16, reported the early obscurity of the origin of his town's name, October 14, 1860. Considering that the word had not been in use anywhere before 1860, uncertainty over the source of the name was expressed early indeed. Erl Ellis' thorough investigation of the Colorado antecedents of the name "Idaho" is of great value in bringing together the material necessary to explain the origin of "Idaho" as a geographic name: much of the explanation which follows here is based upon his useful compilation.

² When a skeptical senator enquired why Williams should have asked to have the name "Colorado" restored in place of "Idaho" -when less than a week before, he had prevailed upon the Senate to change the name from "Colorado" to "Idaho"-Wilson explained that Williams now was of "a different opinion." Senator Wilson reported that Williams now informed him that "-I his word 'Idaho' meant nothing. There is nothing in it at all." Williams must have been greatly, embarrassed to have to change his preference so abruptly. *Congressional Globe*, 36th Cong., 2 sess., January 30, 1861, p. 638, February 4, 1861 @ p. 729.

³ *Idaho World* (Idaho City), December 3, 1880, p. 3. c. 2-3. John Hailey, *History of Idaho* (Boise, 1910), 45, attributes the Arapaho suggestion to Frederick Campbell in such a way as to suggest that Campbell was the *World's* correspondent of November 30, 1880.

⁴ Ellis, 18.

⁵ In reply to an inquiry from the Idaho Historical Society, Dr. Salzmann responded with the quoted statement, September 24, 1963.

⁶ Writing from Idaho City, November 25, 1880, to the *Idaho Avalanche*, November 27, 1880, p. 2, c. 3-4, Gilbert Butter published the text of the letter from C. H. Miller, July 30, 1880, and added his own comments concerning the Yakima derivation. Butter went into the matter with the old-timers around Idaho City in connection with a visit by Robert E. Strahorn, who was in Idaho City collecting material for a promotional publication about Idaho. Strahorn had collected a number of amusing versions of the origin of the name "Idaho," and Butter, who had been investigating the subject for the Royal Geographic Society, was in a position to expose some of the wilder ones. Butler's Idaho City search for explanations of the name prompted the article which was prepared November 30, 1880, for the *Idaho World*, cited above. Butler's activity attracted wide attention,

and led John W. Nesmith, a former United States senator from Oregon, to comment April 20, 1881, that pursuit of the "inquiry among those familiar with the Nez Perce, Shoshone, and Flat-Head tribes" would lead to the origin of the name. But when Strahorn's *New, West* (an Omaha publication) presented the Miller-Butler version, the *Ogden Pilot* suggested that "most likely the whole story grows out of the fertile imagination of the poet." As evidence for that assertion, the Ogden paper noted the earlier Colorado antecedents for the name. H. N. Elliott, ed.. *History of Idaho Territory* (San Francisco, 1884), 80-81.

NOTES How Idaho Became a 'Territory in 1863

¹ Four exceptions, in which new states skipped the territorial stage, occurred in the nineteenth century: Maine was taken from the jurisdiction of Massachusetts-, Texas joined the United States as an independent republic-, California gained so much population during the gold rush that it was admitted as a state before Congress got around to establishing a territory, and West - Virginia separated from Virginia during the Civil War.

² Herman J. Deutsch, "The Evolution of territorial and State Boundaries in the Inland Empire of the Pacific Northwest," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, (July 1960), 53:1 23. -This thorough survey is a very adequate and satisfactory treatment of an important subject.

³ Keith A. Murray, "The Movement for Statehood in Washington," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (October 1941), 32349-35 1.

⁴ Deutsch, 124,

⁵ Actually, the voters who conducted the Shoshone county election, July 8, 1861, all were in Spokane county: a defective boundary definition (corrected by the next Washington legislature) left the county seat and population in the wrong county, but the error did not seem to bother anyone at the time.

⁶ On national issues, William H. Wallace, the Republican candidate, naturally supported President Lincoln's cause in the Civil War without reservation. One of his opponents, a Breckenridge Democrat favoring the South, felt that by far the least costly and troublesome way to preserve the Union would be to follow a strictly peaceful program of not coercing the South, if, as he wished, the southern Democracy, were restored to control over the nation, there scarcely would have been much point for the South to fight the Civil War to break away from the North. The other Democratic candidate - more of a Northern Democrat-advocated compromise between the North and South, but conceded that the United States in might have to use military force in order to maintain jurisdiction over the slave states. R. W. Johanson, *Frontier Politics and Sectional Conflict: the Pacific Northwest on the Eve of Civil War* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1955), 212-216

⁷ Thomas Donaldson. *Idaho of Yesterday*, (Caldwell: Caxton, 1941), 372-378, is the most extensive treatment of the Orofino conference. There are a number of brief accounts.

⁸ Following the withdrawal of Southern senators and the consequent breakup of the Southern blockade in the Senate which had delayed California admission until 1850 and had held back creation of new mining territories until 1861. The number of eventual states which originated as mining commonwealths rose to six. Arizona and Idaho came only two years after Nevada and Colorado, and Montana followed in 1864. Thus *all* of the mining territories were created during the Civil War.

⁹ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Territory of Washington* (Olympia. 1861), 367-369, 410-411.

¹⁰ *Overland Press* (Olympia). 'November 21, 1861, p. 2, c. 1.

¹¹ *Journal of the Council of the Territory of 'Washington* (Olympia, 1862), 292-293, 312-314: *Journal of the House of Representatives* (Olympia, 1862), 174, 187.

¹² Gilmore Hays had upheld Olympia's interest in the Washington legislature, but after coming to Lewiston, he became a leading Idaho pioneer, eventually settling in Silver City where he had important mining property.

¹³ *Washington Statesman* (Walla Walla), July 5, 1862, p. 2, c. 3-4; *Oregonian* (Portland), July 15, 1862, p.2, c.2. A Spokane county Union convention at Pinkney City, June 14, resolved for

removal of the capital to Walla Walla and for legislation to promote mining. Like Nez Perce, Idaho, and Shoshone counties, Spokane county was a mining county at that time.

¹⁴ Henry Miller, Florence, July 20, to the *Washington Statesman*, August 2, 1862, p. 2, c. 3.

¹⁵ *The Oregonian's* suggestion (June 7, 1862, p. 2, c. 1) for a state of *Idaho* appeared in an article about the future of the Idaho mines, and the name, at least, was finally adopted-although statehood did not come until 1890. The name "Idaho," which then was being applied to the new mines, had come from the Pike's Peak mines of Colorado, where the word was reputed to be an Arapaho term. That possibility is being investigated by competent linguists.

¹⁶ *Washington Standard* (Olympia), August 23, 1862, p. 2, c. 1-3.

¹⁷ Henry Miller, Florence, September 8, to the *Washington Statesman*, September 13, 1862, p. 2, c. 4.

¹⁸ *Golden Age* (Lewiston), as quoted in the *Oregonian*, December 10, 1862, p. 2, c. 2.

¹⁹ News that William Kellogg of Illinois had introduced a resolution in Congress for a new Salmon river mining territory reached Olympia, December 24, 1862. The mining county members, along with the others from eastern Washington except for J. M. More, immediately telegraphed a legislative protest. Nehemish Northrop, Olympia, December 24, to the *Washington Statesman*, January 10, 1863, p. 2, c. 1-2.

²⁰ *Sacramento Daily Union*, January 22, 1863, P. 1, c. 3.

²¹ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States, Third Session of the Thirty-seventh Congress* (Washington 1863), 379-38 1; Washington correspondence, January 9. February 14, to the *Sacramento Daily Union*,. February 4, 1863, p. 1, c. 3, March 16, 1863, p. 1, c. 3.

²² As approved by the House, February 12, the boundaries of the new mining territory encompassed 179,770 square miles. Idaho's area was increased to 326,373 square miles by the Senate boundary amendment. *Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco), March 16, 1863, p. 3. c. 4: *Washington Statesman*, July 1, 1864, p. 1, c. 5.

²³ *Congressional Globe*, Thirty-seventh Congress, Third Session, 1507-1509@ Donaldson. 397. Prior to the change in name to Montana, February 12, this territory had been designated as Idaho, December 22, 1862 and as Shoshone, January 20. These had been changes in name only.

²⁴ Washington correspondence, March 5, to the *Sacramento Daily Union*, April 4. 1863, p. 1, c. 4-5, John Mullan to Abraham Lincoln, March 4, and F. B. Washburne to Abraham Lincoln, March 5 ' 1863, State Department Applications and Recommendations for Office, Mullan file, 1863, National Archives.

²⁵ Wallace's slate of appointments, signed by B. F. Harding and A. A. Sargent as well as by J. R. McBride and A. G. Henry, is preserved in the Wallace file, 1865-1866, State Department Applications and Recommendations for Office in the National Archives.

²⁶ Alonzo Leland, Lewiston, March 22, 1863, to the *Daily, Portland Times*, as quoted in Sister Alfreda Elsonsohn, *Pioneer Days in Idaho County* (Caldwell: Caxton, 1947), 1:23.

²⁷ *Washington Statesman*, March 28, 1863, p. 2. c. 2, Apr] 4, 1863, p. 2. c. 1, *Daily Evening Bulletin*, May 5, 1863, p. 3, c. 4-5.

²⁸ Walla Walla spent the next ten or twenty years-when not trying to join up with Oregon instead-in attempting to recover North Idaho for Washington. Early admission of the combination, with Walla Walla as capital, was still hoped for in spite of the Olympia success in 1863. Lewiston was suspicious of this at first, preferring its 1862 design for an interior Columbia territory instead. But after 1872, Lewiston took up the movement to return North Idaho to Washington with great enthusiasm. Eventually even Olympia was agreeable to the Lewiston-Walla Walla demand for North Idaho annexation.

²⁹ Salt Lake correspondence, March 24, to the *Sacramento Daily Union*, April 1, 1864, p. 3, c. 2. An official copy of the Idaho memorial for Jefferson territory) is preserved in the Idaho State Archives.

³⁰ No regular government of any kind was provided for the East Bannack-Virginia City mining country prior to Edgerton's departure for the national capital to induce Congress to form a new territory, and as chief justice of the Idaho supreme court, Edgerton was an interested observer of the activities of the committee later known as the Montana vigilantes against Henry Plummer and the stage robbers. The vigilante executions were the subject of comment in the Montana

debate in Congress, where they were regarded as evidence of need for government that could not be provided with any efficiency by the territory of Idaho.

³¹ The original copy of this bill, also preserved in the National Archives, shows that Ashley simply used the printed Montana bill from the previous Congress, with corrections to indicate the new Congress, date of introduction, and bill number. The minutes of the House committee, preserved in Record Group 233 of the National Archives, indicate that the Montana bill was assigned to Fernando C. Beaman of Michigan, December 18, who was instructed, January 26, to get it printed with amendments. The printed bill of January 26 contained the old Montana boundaries of 1862-1863, which had been approved by the House of Representatives, February 12.

³² W. Turrentine Jackson, "The Appointment and Removal of Sidney Edgerton, the First Governor of Montana Territory," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, (July 1943), 34:293-294. Because Edgerton was an influential retired Congressman, and the only Idaho territorial official stationed east of the continental divide, he made a natural choice to head the delegation seeking to establish a new territory. The suggestion (cf. James M. Hamilton, *From Wilderness to Statehood - a History, of Montana* [Portland. 1957], 274) that Governor William H. Wallace frowned upon the appointment of eastern judges to western territorial courts and, because he objected to Edgerton as an eastern appointee, banished him to the district east of the Rockies when assigning judges--allegedly an insulting arrangement for a chief justice--has little merit. As a lame duck Congressman from Ohio when Wallace had to override the chairman of the committee on territories in the Idaho boundary matter, Edgerton seems to have been important enough to rate a supreme court position on the slate of Idaho officials that Wallace assembled: rather than complain about eastern judicial appointments, Wallace endorsed two eastern candidates and only one Idaho aspirant for the court. The Idaho candidate was the one he assigned to the least important district. Edgerton's district had far greater importance than the one containing the temporary capital, and because of his financial interests in the district, to which he was assigned, Edgerton had no great desire to make the long, hard trip to Lewiston. Edgerton's expectation of Wallace's support for governor of the new territory indicates anything but dissatisfaction between them over the court assignment.

³³ W. C. Rheem to William H. Wallace, December 3, 1863, Wallace Papers. Idaho State Historical Society.

³⁴ A. G. Turner to W. H. Wallace, May 19, 1864, IS H S. Ashley assured the House of Representatives that Montana was not getting any territory from Utah when the matter came up during the House debate. *Congressional Globe*, 38 Congress, 1 session, p. 1168.

³⁵ Minutes of the House Committee on territories, February 23, 1864.

³⁶ A. G. Turner to W. H. Wallace, March 21, 1864, Wallace Papers, University of Washington.

³⁷ Milton Kelly to W. H. Wallace, February 23, March 13, 1864. ISHS.

³⁸ Minutes of the House Committee on Territories, March 1, 1864.

³⁹ No doubt Ashley switched the territories to be known as Idaho and Montana in order to keep the name, along with the existing government, with the older settlements where Idaho's government already was functioning. The alternative, which would have required a much smaller adjustment of the Montana proposal, would have been absurd because Idaho's government was organized for the Lewiston and Boise areas, but not for East Bannack and Virginia City. Idaho's new governor, though, felt that Idaho and Montana should have been reversed from what they are, if that had been done, Caleb Lyon of Lyonsdale would have wound up governor of what now is Montana (but what would be known as Idaho), and the commonwealth that remained Idaho territory would have been fortunate enough to have been spared the ordeal of having him as governor. Edgerton, though, wanted to be governor in the East Bannack-Virginia City area, and his desire also fitted in with the Idaho-Montana switch that was adopted. For Lyon's attitude, consult the *Congressional Globe*, p. 1189.

⁴⁰ Aside from getting endorsements for governor of the new territory, Edgerton also tried to get an amendment to the Montana bill to make it easier for him to transfer from chief justice of Idaho to chief justice of Montana. But after Montana was created, May 26, 1864, he realized his ambition to be governor, and the unsuccessful effort for the amendment was unnecessary.

⁴¹ W. B. Daniels to W. H. Wallace, May 10, 1864, UW.

⁴² George C. Hough, December 3, 1863, May 28, 1864, and W. B. Daniels. May 8, 1864, and S. D. Cochran, January 13, 1864, to W. H. Wallace, UW. The notion of immediate Idaho admission

went back to the time that Idaho became a territory (*Washington Standard* [Olympia]. March 14, 1863, p. 2, c. 4) and still seemed reasonable in 1864, especially in light of exaggerated population estimates for Idaho at the time Montana was being considered, Fernando C. Beaman of Michigan, in presenting the Montana bill (*Congressional Globe*. p. 1168), asserted that Idaho had forty, to fifty thousand inhabitants then, with one hundred thousand expected by summer. Seventeen thousand of these were in the Montana part. Idaho did have a large population even after Montana was set aside, but not quite on the scale of- these estimates.

⁴³ Aside from the issue of what sections should be in which territory, *the Idaho Statesman*, August 4, 1864, p. 4. criticized the Montana boundary on the crest of the Rockies and the Bitterroots as being described too vaguely.

⁴⁴ *Idaho Session Laws, 1865-1866*, 293, 298-299. *Montana Post* (Virginia City), March 10, 1866.

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