

Kuna Kompass



Kuna Historical Society

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Kuna History Center
329 Main Street

Center Hours

11 AM to 2 PM
Tues, Thurs, Sat

or by appointment
Call Dave Lyon at 861-9131

Officers

President:
Dave Lyon

Vice President:
Barbara Charles

Secretary:
Christine Cole

Treasurer:
Skip Critell

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Society Spotlight

**Article for the Idaho Genealogical Society
Quarterly Magazine Winter 2015 by Dave Lyon**

Kuna Historical Society and a Brief History of Kuna

Articles of Incorporation for the Kuna Historical Society were filed with the Idaho Secretary of State effective July 27, 2000¹. With the cooperation of Kuna Futures, Kuna Seniors, Kuna Historical Society, and the City of Kuna, a history center was established in a manufactured home owned by the City. This center was located on 2nd Street near the green belt along Indian Creek. As an Eagle Scout project, Blair A. Johnson, with the help of several Kuna businesses, outfitted the building to display items of Kuna's history that were being collected by the Historical Society. The History Center was dedicated August 5, 2000.

Due to a lack of support by the members, the Kuna Historical Society became inactive in 2005. The History Center remained essentially closed to the public until, with the help of Western Heritage Foundation, the Historical Society re-organized and filed for reinstatement with the Secretary of State on April 5, 2012. In order to qualify as an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, articles of amendment to the articles of incorporation were filed February 8, 2013.

With the tax status in hand, we applied for a grant from the Idaho State Historical Society Community Grant Program 2012-2013. We received a grant of \$2,100, which required in-kind matching funds of the same amount. The in-kind matching funds were provided by Kuna Historical Society volunteering hours for various qualifying projects. The \$2,100 allowed us to purchase a laptop computer, an all-in-one printer and PastPerfect software to account for our artifacts and new donations.

Since our History Center was in a manufactured home with inadequate heating, we were unable to hold it open during the winter. We discussed our need for a better facility with the City. The City, with the help of a grant, remodeled a City owned building at 329 Main Street, which had previously been City Hall. The City put in new windows, lighting, and flooring. This building provides us with three times the space of the previous facility. With the Kuna Chamber of Commerce, we had a grand opening, ribbon-cutting ceremony for the 'new' History Center on March 27, 2015. Since then we have held the History Center open from 11 AM to 2 PM, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday of each week. We plan to keep it open with this schedule through the winter.

A Brief History of Kuna

Exploring Kuna's history has become quite an adventure. We seem to learn something new every day about Kuna's past. This is especially true because of our new location on Main Street and our ability to hold the History Center open more often. We held the Center open on Kuna Days and had many people visit – some even offering to donate artifacts and pictures related to Kuna's past. Last year the City had its Sesquicentennial Celebration of the first settlement in the Kuna area. This settlement was usually referred to as Fifteen Mile House,

being fifteen miles from Boise on the wagon trail between Boise City and Silver City. It was also known by the name of the current owner. The first owner was Nelson Record so it was called Record Station. Other owners included J. T. Ford, J. H. Blewett, and Oliver Bomar. An 1883 article in the Idaho Statesman said, "Travelers by stage from this city (Boise) to Winnemucca, Nevada, by way of Silver City, will always remember the little station on Indian Creek, fifteen miles out from Boise, where the welcome early breakfast awaited them. Coming to Boise, it is the last place for changing horses, and the last opportunity for a meal in the "desert" before driving over the intervening sage land to the green paradise on the Boise. The house has been generally well-kept and as good accommodations given as could be expected at a point thus situated. The point is surrounded on all sides by a broad expanse of sage land equal in fertility to any in the Territory . . . The railroad has made the Fifteen-mile house the nearest point on its line for Boise City and the upper Boise valley, for the Boise Basin on the north, and for Silver City and Owyhee mines on the south and for the rich and growing agricultural and pastoral districts on both sides of Snake river . . . It will soon be the terminus of all the passenger, mail and freight business for the districts named, which cannot be forced to any other. In spite of all that can be done, attempted, feared or conjectured, Boise City continues to be the center of attraction for travelers. The majority of visitors will leave the railroad at the nearest point to this city and so must all the freight and business destined in this direction. Now why not call the Fifteen-mile House Boise Station, or simply Boise, since short names are the rage, or if there be an unconquerable prejudice and an impotent hatred against the Capital then call the place Owyhee. Let us have a good name for a point that certainly deserves at least this much²."

As the railroad stop at Fifteen Mile House developed, it is interesting that the first post office was called Owyhee with the certificate of appointment as Postmaster issued to Frank Nourse on October 17, 1883. After an Oregon Short Line employee, E. P. Vining, who was responsible for naming railroad stations, named the stop Kuna, the post office was renamed Kuna on April 2, 1884, with Frank Nourse the Postmaster³.

The name of Kuna has had many attempts at definition. Supposedly, Vining had an Indian dictionary that he used to name the railroad stations. An article in the Idaho Press-Tribune by Kelcie Mosley, July 7, 2013, said Kuna may have meant end of the trail or wood. I have also heard it means green or good to smoke. At the Kuna site there was a sign, KUNA, which may have been a reminder to train engineers to Keep Up Natural Aspiration meaning be aware of steam pressure and temperature. I looked on line at a Shoshoni Talking Dictionary, which said Kuna meant firewood and Kunawopin meant train or railroad. So take your choice, it is still Kuna.

Frank Nourse established a freight forwarding service with offices in both Kuna and Boise City. Kuna, at that time had three warehouses a saloon, a coral, possibly a barn, and a train depot, probably in one of the warehouses. We have a picture of his store in Boise but haven't been able to find one of the facility in Kuna. There was also telegraph service at the train depot⁴.

An 1883 article in the Statesman said, "John Hailey, Superintendent of the U. I. & O. (probably Utah, Idaho, and Oregon) Stage Company, says he was out at Fifteen Mile House, on the railroad day before yesterday. The track was laid one mile beyond that place and they are going ahead rapidly, nearly two miles a day. Mr. Hailey informed us that a side track was laid

Upcoming Events:

Ideas or Suggestions for Field Trips or Presentations?

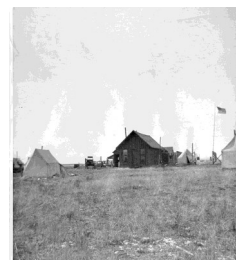
We have nothing scheduled as yet for the Spring. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact any Officer.

about half a mile below the Fifteen Mile House, on the crossing of the Owyhee road, and the company will build a depot there. He says the stages will be changed to that point as soon as they have the track surfaced so that it can be accepted by the superintendent⁵.”

Crossing Indian Creek to get to the train depot was not always safe and easy. As reported in a 1884 Statesman Article: “ACCIDENT, - On Tuesday last, as Charley Bishop was crossing Indian Creek at Kuna, with a buggy, in which there was a sick lady on her way to the railroad depot on the other side of the stream, the team got into unexpected deep water and was swept down by the current, some 50 yards below the crossing. The horses gave Charley a task which only a cool head and a skillful and experienced hand could do to prevent them from being drowned. By good management the buggy was kept right side up, and all got ashore without serious result. Who would ever have thought this of Indian Creek⁶?”

In September of 1887, the Idaho Central Railroad began service from Nampa to Boise City connecting with the Oregon Short Line at Nampa. Now people and freight no longer had to use Kuna for their train and stage connections. Kuna disappeared leaving only that sign by the railroad called KUNA.

Not until early 1900's with the prospect of irrigation water in the Kuna area, did settlers begin to arrive in force. The story of 'modern' Kuna begins with the filing for 200 acres under the Desert Lands Acts of March 3, 1877, and March 3, 1891, by Fremont H. Teed. The initial filing was made on November 4, 1903, with a payment of \$50.00. These 200 acres became the Village of Kuna. With the payment of an additional \$200.00, and proof of specified improvements to the land, Fremont Teed was issued the Patent of ownership of the 200 acres on October 26, 1907⁷. Because a large number of homesteaders were coming to the Kuna area a Post Office was established July 21, 1905 in Teed's home, with him as the Postmaster⁸.



The Plat of the Townsite of Kuna was filed September 23, 1907, and the amended Plat was filed November 16, 1909⁹. In the Idaho Daily Statesman, beginning in January of 1909, D. R. Hubbard and Company advertised, “We will sell 200 lots at \$100 each. These lots may be sold at Auction to the profit of the Buyers¹⁰.” The auction was originally scheduled for March 4 but was delayed until May 4, 1909, with a special excursion train to bring people from Boise, Nampa, Caldwell and other locations¹¹. Before the auction, 144 lots were sold¹². “The auction sale of town lots at Kuna proved a greater drawing card than had been expected. More than 300 people made the trip yesterday to the new town from Boise, Caldwell and Nampa and fully 30 per cent of them invested in lots, some purchasing several¹³.”

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The much anticipated irrigation water began flowing February 22, 1909. “The Nampa merchants will close their stores Monday at an earlier hour than had been arranged for Washington's birthday celebration in order to catch the Weiser-Boise special train for the celebration festivities at the government dam for the opening of the New York Canal¹⁴.”

The wife of the Rev. J. H. Ross, Kuna Methodist Minister, wanted some educational advantages for what was then a frontier town. The state school superintendent said that she needed to have at least nine children to have a school and asked Mrs. Ross if she could find that many. Mrs. Ross knew that was not a problem and told the superintendent that she had most of them herself¹⁵. Kuna's first school opened in a tent in September, 1908, with 14 students and 18 year old Gaylord Green as teacher¹⁶. When winter arrived, the school was allowed to move into what had been Fremont Teed's house and post office since the Teeds moved into a new home north of town. The post office was moved to a new building on the west side of town¹⁷. With Kuna's rapid growth, a school building, sometimes called the 'white brick school', was built in 1910 on the west side of town where

Do YOU Have a Story?

I often wonder what life would have been like 50, 70, 100 years ago. As the joke goes, “When I was your age, I had to walk a mile to school in the snow, uphill both ways” There aren't many hills around here, so lets not try that one, but really I want to know! What was it like in Kuna's past? What did people do for fun? How did one spend a lazy Saturday afternoon, if such a thing existed? Did people only take trips to Boise once a month? What were holidays like? What was something everyone in town looked forward to each year? My questions are endless! If you or someone close to you lived in Kuna in the early-mid 1900's? We would love to record your early Kuna stories as part of Kuna's history and share them with all those interested in learning the history of Kuna and it's people. We will connect you with an oral history taker who will work with you to record your story, and your memories will then be preserved as part of Kuna's history! Please contact Dave Lyon at (208) 861-9131 if you're interested in sharing. We look forward to hearing from you!



Indian Creek School is today.

Churches followed a pattern of growth similar to that of the schools. The first Sunday school was also held in the tent school. "Everyone in the vicinity of Kuna is invited to meet at the school house next Sunday at 2 p. m. for the purpose of organizing a Sunday school¹⁸." Construction of the Baptist Church was completed in 1915 and the Methodist Church in 1916. Services were previously held in the Fiss building.

With the rapid growth of the Kuna area, the Oregon Short Line Railroad decided to build a depot in Kuna. Building materials were dropped off at the site late in 1911 and construction began in January, 1912¹⁹. For some reason the Oregon Short Line delayed opening the depot. The Statesman reported that "As Kuna contributes about \$25,000 a year in freight and passenger business, the citizens are naturally indignant that the Short Line, after building a depot, should allow it to remain vacant. The depot was completed six months ago, but has never been opened to the public²⁰." The depot finally opened and served the community for over 50 years until the Union Pacific Railroad complained that it was losing money and requested that the Public Utilities Commission allow them to close the depot²¹. My research has not discovered the results of the Commission hearing nor when the depot closed. Best I can tell at this time is that it ceased operation in 1953 and was torn down in about 1957. It had been used as a reference in directions to auctions in the area as late as 1957.



By 1915, it became apparent that there was a need for a domestic water supply to the community. Previously water was provided by individual wells or other means. The residents of Kuna decided that in order to construct a water system they needed to incorporate to be able to sell bonds. As reported in a legal notice in the Statesman, "In the matter of the petition for the incorporation of the village of Kuna. In this matter the board considered the petition of the residents and taxpayers of the unincorporated village of Kuna for the incorporation of said village under the name of 'The Village of Kuna' and it appearing to the board that a majority of the taxpayers, residents of the district proposed to be incorporated, had signed the petition and that said village now contained more than 200 inhabitants, and came within all the statutory provisions for incorporated villages, granted said petition²²." The bonds provided money to drill a 440 foot well, construct a 40,000-gallon storage tank on a 100-foot tower for \$4,264, and a distribution system²³.

Kuna has evolved from a stage stop in 1864, to a railroad hub in 1883, and a farming community in 1909. Because of low cost housing, Kuna had become a bedroom community for residents commuting to jobs in Boise, Meridian, and other locations. More recently, due to its growth and City efforts, Kuna is attracting more businesses and industry, making it more self-sustaining, a place to live and work. Census reports show Kuna's growing population: 1920 – 366, 1930 – 398, 1940 – 443, 1950 – 534, 1960 – 516, 1970 – 593, 1980 – 1,767, 1990 – 1,955, 2000 – 5,382, 2010 – 15,210, and over 17,000 today²⁴. Kuna's history is still being written.

FOOTNOTES

1. www.sos.idaho.gov
2. Idaho Statesman published as Idaho Tri-weekly Statesman 09-13-1883
3. Certificates of Appointment of Postmaster, copies obtained from Richard Nourse, grandson of Frank Nourse, on display at the Kuna History Center
4. Oregon Short Line schedule for 1884, on display at the Kuna History Center.
5. Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman August 5, 1883.
6. Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman February 23, 1884.
7. Records of the Desert Land Entry by Fremont H. Teed on file at the Kuna History Center.
8. Copy of the Certificate of Appointment of Postmaster on display at Kuna History Center.
9. Copies of these Plats are on file at the Kuna History Center.
10. Idaho Daily Statesman January 10, 1909.
11. Idaho Daily Statesman May 1, 1909.
12. Sharon Fisher, Kuna, Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina, 2012, pg. 60.
14. Idaho Daily Statesman May 5, 1909.
15. Idaho Daily Statesman February 20, 1909.
16. Idaho Daily Statesman October 15, 1952.
17. Sharon Fisher, Kuna, Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina, 2012, pg. 88.
18. Idaho Daily Statesman December 27, 1908.
19. Idaho Daily Statesman November 7, 1908.

20. Idaho Daily Statesman November 25, 1912.
21. Idaho Daily Statesman May 16, 1952.
22. Idaho Daily Statesman January 18, 1916.
23. Record of Meeting, Board of Trustees, Village of Kuna, April 10, 1916.
24. Census records reported on the Wikipedia site Kuna, Idaho.

130 Years Ago in Kuna

The Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman

March 23, 1886

Local Brevities

Wm. B. Kurtz and Nelson F. Kimball, have formed a new partnership under the firm name of Kurtz & Kimball to conduct a forwarding and commission business at Kuna. They are now erecting a large warehouse and as soon a completed will be prepared to forward all goods marked in the care of Diamond K. One of the firm will remain at Kuna constantly and give personal attention to shipping and forwarding goods. We wish the boys success.

The Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman

April 1, 1886

Local Brevities

Messrs. Kurtz and Kimball have built a commodious warehouse at Kuna and are ready to receive consignment of goods in their care, and will promptly forward them to destination.

The Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman

April 10, 1886

Local Brevities

No Eastern mail was received in Boise yesterday morning. It is said the postol clerk was asleep in the mail car and the mail was not put off at Kuna. If this be so he should be fired out of the service on short notice.

Kuna Historical Society
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Kuna, Idaho 83634

address

The Kuna Historical Society
Is Dedicated to Discovering and
Preserving Kuna's History and
Making it Accessible to the
Public

YOUR AD HERE!!!
SPONER KUNA'S HISTORY!



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