

The Beginning

The origin and development of Boise's East End neighborhood closely parallels the beginnings of Boise City. In the north- west corner of the neighborhood lies Fort Boise and Military Reserve Park. At this site the military installation known as Fort Boise was established in 1863 to protect miners and Eastern emigrants from Indian attack. Fur trappers had frequented Boise Valley prior to 1863 and emigrants had traveled through the area on the Oregon Trail since 1842, but with the discovery of gold in the Boise Basin in 1862 a rush of people entered the valley. For the first time, many remained to provide goods and services to the military and the mines.

On July 7, 1863 eight men met along the Boise River at the ranch of Tom Davis and William Ritchley and laid out a town- site between the new fort and the river. The original plat consisted of ten blocks on each side of Main Street between Fifth and Tenth Streets. Tents, adobe and board and batten structures soon rose on this site and housed a good portion of Boise's population of 725. Among those structures was the general store of Cyrus Jacobs, one of the town fathers with a career that included merchandising, milling and meat packing. Some say, however, that he is best known as the rye whiskey distiller who produced "Jacob's Best".

Before the military arrived, homes were built within the townsite by families with names now better recognized as streets: O'Farrell, Logan and Pierce. The O'Farrell cabin, built in 1862, now stands on Fort Street near Lincoln School. The Coston cabin, originally located east of town; and the Pierce cabin now stand with the Mayor Thomas E. Logan house next to the Idaho State Historical Museum in Julia Davis Park. The cabins, like most early Boise homes, were made from logs cut from the nearby cottonwood trees which line the river. Cottonwood logs, while not as sturdy as the pine found over the ridge, required only a short haul to the townsite. Although not originally thought of as Boise's East End, Fort Boise, the easternmost portion of the original townsite and scattered homesites east of town were the beginning of the East End neighborhood.

Early Development

Flat ground, rich soil and the proximity to water brought homesteaders and ranchers to the area along Warm Springs Avenue, east of Boise City. In 1869, George Whitfield Russell, one of the earliest settlers, hauled pine lumber over Bogus Mountain by ox team to build the family home, which still stands, at 1035 Warm Springs Avenue. His wife and their five children raised cattle, horses and fruit on their land. Aging apple trees scattered throughout the neighborhood remind us of the orchards of the Russell family and others.

Water was supplied to early settlers by the Boise River diverted at Warm Springs Mesa to the Walling irrigation ditch. Others called this ditch the Cruzen Perrant canal. The ditch paralleled what is now Bacon Drive, ran along the base of Foothills East and continued past the armory over the cottonwood flume toward the North End. The ditch has been filled in, but remnants can be seen along Fort Street near

the Elks Rehabilitation Hospital and Lincoln School, where the rails of small bridges remain and at the corner of Walnut and Franklin Streets, where a row of trees parallel what remains of the old ditch.

Closer to town, early East-Enders provided valuable services to miners and the military. In 1864, Jesus Urquide established a base camp for his packing company behind his home at 115 Main Street. The camp, known as Urquide's Village, included dozens of pack animals and 30 small cabins to house employees. Jesus was one of the first successful packers in the entire Northwest. He packed for the army during the Indian wars and ran people and supplies into Idaho's most remote mining camps. His cabins remained standing until 1972, when they were demolished. His house was torn down in 1981.

Travelers to Idaho City and beyond often rode on a dusty, rutted road past the Russell, Urquide and other homesteads east of town. The road has since been paved and named Warm Springs Avenue. In the 1860's it served as an important alternative route to the mining camps when portions of the Boise-Idaho City toll road between Fort Boise and Robie Creek were impassable. It also carried visitors to Kelly Hot Springs, an Indian gathering place and later a resort, just east of Warm Springs Mesa that included hot pools and buildings for overnight lodging. The resort was one of the first places State Senate and House pages would look for their missing employers when the Idaho Legislature was in session. It has been rumored that the resort was burnt to the ground by vigilantes concerned about its "red-light" reputation. Development and production of hot water wells nearby, later reduced the springs to a trickle.

Public use, private enterprise and residences have a long history of coexistence in the East End. Some of the earliest public buildings in Boise were constructed in the East End. They include the Quartermaster building in Fort Boise, built in 1864; the United States Assay Office, located at 210 Main Street and built in 1872; and the Idaho State Penitentiary, built in 1870. All were constructed with locally quarried sandstone, some from Table Rock. One of the first factories in the East End was John Brown's and Charles May's brick kiln at Main Street between Third and Fourth Streets. These entrepreneurs supplied materials, beginning in September of 1864, for Boise's growing number of "fire-proof" buildings. Four blocks to the east, White's sash and door factory supplied other essential building components.

Growth

By 1885, concentrated development of Boise's East End extended as far south as Front Street and as far east as First Street. Beyond First Street lay the rural homesteads of John Krall, G. W. Lewis and Thomas Davis, who later donated a portion of his ranch to the city for the park named in honor of his wife, Julia. By this time, Cottonwood flume was helping to confine the flood- waters of Cottonwood Creek and Boise City's population was less than 4000.

In 1890, Boise's East End was poised for an explosion of change in land use, population and public perception. C. W. Moore, a local banker, and a group of other prominent Boise businessmen joined in a venture to drill for and develop hot water adjacent to the Penitentiary. On Christmas Eve, 1890 The Idaho Statesman reported the group had struck 92-degree Fahrenheit water at a depth of eighty feet, BY May, 1891 the group had sunk two wells to a depth of four hundred feet and were drawing water at one- hundred eighty degrees Farenheit, suitable for space heating and other uses. C. W. Moore promptly built the mansion located at the corner of Warm Springs Avenue and Walnut Street, moved his family and gained distinction as having the first house in the United States heated with geothermal water.

Geothermal water was the catalyst for a number of other significant events that followed in quick succession. In 1891, the Boise Rapid Transit Company was founded by Moore's neighbor, George Whitfield Russell, In addition to cattle and fruit ranching, Russell gained experience in moving people and goods as manager of the Idaho City stage route. The trolley system included two and one half miles of track, running from the Natatorium to Fourteenth Street on Warm Springs Avenue and Main Street; two 24 horsepower cars, each with a motorman and a conductor; a trolley barn near the Penitentiary and a power house at Fourteenth and Idaho Streets which generated hydro- power from Boise River water carried to the site by flume. The trolley provided convenient, if not rapid transit through downtown to the newly, opened Natatorium. The trolley stopped, by request, at any house along its route. The Natatorium was built in 1892 by the Geothermal Water Company to promote the use of the system and to provide Boiseans with a social and recreational center. In its time it was the largest indoor swimming pool in the country and included rooms for billiards, card playing, sitting and dining, Turkish baths and a bar. It's six story Moorish towers and four floors of galleries overlooking the geothermal pool made it Boise's most exotic building. A ride on the trolley and a day at the "Nat" was looked upon by most Boiseans as great fun. The structure was damaged in July, 1934 by a violent wind and later demolished. The pool remains in use behind Adams School and has regained some of its previous excitement with the recent addition of a waterslide.

Recreational opportunities reached their height in Boise with the addition of White City park, Boise's first public park, next to the Natatorium in 1910. The park had a "scenic railway (roller coaster), a joy wheel, a fun factory, pavilion and skating rink, a miniature railway, a lake for boating in the summer and skating in the winter, an ostrich farm and other attractions." Traveling shows often made stops at White City park and balloon ascensions were popular.

With the attraction of geothermal space heating, rapid transit and recreational and social gatherings, C.W. Moore's move to the East End led to a stampede of prominent Boiseans. The East End's first subdivision was established when George Ainslie conveyed property between Walnut and Locust Streets on the north side of Warm Springs Avenue to the East Side Company Ltd. in 1890. These parcels form the original Eastside Addition to Boise City. A close look at our property titles will show

that many of us live within the Eastside Addition. Wealthy Boiseans involved in banking, mining, manufacturing and raising cattle and sheep built homes along the entire length of Warm Springs Avenue and relocated Boise's most prestigious residential street from Grove to Warm Springs Avenue. Shortly thereafter, Walter E. Pierce, Boise's first real estate man, laid out Harrison Boulevard and established a second residential addition to Boise City, later to be known as the North End. With Warm Springs Avenue as its spine, the East End developed as two residential districts; both above the first Boise River bench. Although not as prominent as South Boise's benches, the East End does have a single river terrace which runs parallel to and below Warm Springs Avenue. The first district is a concentration of homes around the Pioneer Cemetery, where many of Boise's first residents are buried not far from their earlier homes. The names of Julia and Thomas Davis, the Falk family (of Falk's ID stores), the Hailey family, the Coston family and others can be seen during a brief stroll through the green grounds.

Boise's other historic cemetery is also located in the East End in the dry grasses of Cottonwood Gulch. Its straight and regular rows of tombstones are chiseled with the names of soldiers from Fort Boise - many of the soldiers far from their homes in the Midwest and East.

The second residential district stretched along both sides of Warm Springs Avenue and extended north, one block, to East Bannock Street. The area beyond - north to Reserve Street and east to Coston Street was platted by 1907 but not developed. At the fringes of the East End, the Krall family ranch occupied much of the open space at the base of the foothills near present day Krall Street. Although the ranch was later subdivided, the barn and horse stables continue to function. The other ranch in the East End was that of Philippi Adalpe who ran sheep along the hills surrounding Cottonwood Creek, all the way to Aldape Summit on the Boise Ridge.

Closer to town, commerce flourished. In 1907 Ridenbaugh's Lumber Yard stood on Main Street where the Idaho Department of Employment building now stands. An historic fire insurance map identifies the business as dealing in lumber, doors and sashes; and says that no watchman was present. Across the street was the Boise Brewery, owned by the Lemp family and one of two breweries in town. The same fire insurance map states boldly, "building old and dilapidated"; which may partially explain why the site was later cleared and then occupied by the First Ward of the LDS Church. The church has since been remodeled and is now the Club for Women. For those who preferred soft drinks, the Soda Water Works - a bottling company - was located down the street at 249 Warm Springs Avenue.

From its beginning, the East End has hosted numerous public buildings. Among those present in 1907 was the Lincoln School. The original school, located at Fourth and Idaho streets behind the brewery, had no lights. The structure no longer exists, but the name has been given to the school which presently stands at Fort Street. Also present was the Hawthorne School located across the street from the Natatorium. Many families growing up in the East End have sent their children to the Hawthorne

School. Like Lincoln School, the structure no longer exists, but the name has traveled to an elementary school on the Bench. Many children of the East End now attend Roosevelt School, in the heart of the old neighborhood. Because it contains a gymnasium, auditorium and electric lights, Roosevelt School was considered in 1919, when it was built, to be thoroughly modern and innovative.

By 1922 residential development was scattered throughout the previously platted area north of Warm Springs to the foothills. Often, only one or two lots of each block were occupied by a house. Perhaps this could be considered Boise's first experience with "suburban sprawl". Those raised in Boise during this time can probably remember when East Junior High School was a baseball ground and when the Church of Religious Science - where Ruth Buzzy of "Laugh-in" fame filmed a Hollywood movie - was Grace Episcopal Church.

From 1922 to the 1960's, homes were built on almost all of the lots on partially developed blocks of the East End. This old section of the neighborhood is proud of the bungalows and stick style homes built by working class people during the 20's, 30's and 40's and the more contemporary structures built during the 50's and 60's.

Present Time

With infill of the old section of the neighborhood now complete, residential development sprang into the foothills and south toward the river. In the early 60's, the Square at Strawberry Lane was built with contemporary, California style homes and common grounds. The spectacular, old age trees at Strawberry Lane are a remnant of the trailer park community which once occupied the site.

The success of the Square was soon followed by higher density development along Lewis and Holly streets, and the Dorchester and Cambridge Arms Apartments - all within a short walk to Municipal Park and the Greenbelt.

Also in the early 60's plans were being made by a Seattle developer, Danmore Company, to build homes in the east foothills in an area that formerly included a small structure used to house quarantined patients. Much of the foothills was held by the Conner family, which during the 1920's also owned the geothermal greenhouse of the Boise Floral Company, located just east of- the Natatorium. Prior to planned foothills development the only permanent resident in the hills was Arthur Troutner, who developed the method of laminated wood beams now used by the Trus Joint Company. The work of Arthur Troutner can be seen at the Boise Little Theater, which is supported by beams donated by the inventor and in the foothills at his home, which includes a hanger for a home-built dirigible.

Foothills development has continued and is likely to proceed beyond the 1980's. With almost complete infill of the old neighborhood, the building of homes near the river in Warm Springs Hollow and Kimberly One, and the squeeze of the mesa to the east; development can only occur to the north in the East End. This is the last area of vacant land on which to build.

But just as vacant land is built upon, developed land is redeveloped and neighborhoods change once again. This is what is happening in the oldest section of the East End that was part of the original plat of the Boise townsite. Downtown has moved into the near East End and with it have come plans for office conversions, government office towers and high rise residences. The changes of the future promise to be as exciting, and sometimes as difficult to grow comfortable with, as the changes of the past. This plan contains the neighborhood's ideas for change and preservation, and our vision of the neighborhood of the future.