The Story of Gooding

The station of Toponis on the Oregon Short Line was established in 1883. The station was first named by Chief Engineer Blickensdorfer of the Oregon Shortline Railroad. He called it "Toponis," the Shoshone Indian word meaning "Black Cherries." When the railroad was built through in 1883 it was the coldest winter ever known here. The snow was so deep that work had to be stopped on the railroad. Trains began to run in July of that year.

The first actual settler was Samuel F. P. Briggs with his family, but they left duing the Indian war of 1897 and never returned here to live. His house was about one-fourth of a mile west of the state school. Mr. Briggs and family afterwards settled at Clear Lake. About 1870 Russell & Brady, a large cattle company, built the first house, a small stone structure.

The first man to settle here was Nathan R. Woodworth, who camped in the fall of 1876 with his family on Little Wood river east of the city. He homesteaded there, built a house, put in the first dam and dug the first ditch ever taken out of Little Wood River in 1877.

Woodworth's son, E.L. Woodworth, established the Woodworth homestead that later became the southeast one-fourth of Gooding townsite. He held the position of postmaster for 14 years.

The first settlers on the original townsite of Gooding were James Otterson and family. He built the first home on the townsite, on the north bank of Little Wood river, where Wyoming Street is now. This small box house was built in September of 1882, and somewhat enlarged by a small addition of stone in 1883. James Otterson, Jr. Was the first white child born on the townsite. Nora Jones was the first white girl. Some years later Mr. Otterson sold his ranch to Ex-Governor F. R. Gooding, for the sum of $3500. After this transaction the name of the station was changed to Gooding, but it was not until some years later that the name of the post office was changed.

The second house built was the Oregon Shortline section house, first occupied by Martin Johnson and family. He was the first section foreman and the first postmaster of Toponis. The job of postmaster was not an easy task, for every night at 2 o'clock the postmaster had to flag the west bound train, the only train that carried mail sacks on board. The first post office was established at Toponis in 1887 and was located at 210 Main Street.

The Gooding Mercantile company was the first business of any kind to be opened in the city of Gooding where it now stands. It was located in the grove west of the Townsite orchard and was established in 1886 by John Pointer who ran the business for several years and sold out to E.L. Woodworth of Gooding. Mr. Woodworth later moved the business to the small building just to the east of the depot. This building was originally a saloon, but when Frank Gooding obtained possession of the building in 1897 he closed it. In 1899 Mr. Woodworth sold the business to Orlando Emmons who continued the business until the year 1905 when he sold it to the Stock Growers mercantile company of Shoshone and went to California. In 1907 Governor Gooding obtained controlling interest in the business and in June of 1908 M. Mattson obtained a half interest in the business.

The first school was a tent which also served as a dwelling place for the teacher. The pupils from Toponis were Willie, Jennie, Alice and Ella Otterson; also Katie, Maggie and Johnnie Johnston; Estly, David and Fred Bliss; Willie, Fletch and Fount Frost came from the Frost ranch which is better known as the Woody ranch; Lizzie and Lina Lewis also came from Lewis Ferry on the Snake River. Mrs. Lydia H. Bliss of Bliss, Idaho was the first teacher. Each pupil paid two dollars a month tuition. The school district extended over all of what is now Gooding county, and a small portion of Lincoln county. Later, the tent school was replaced by a new school house, built about one and a half miles west of Toponis by the railroad bridge which crossed the Little Wood River. The first teacher in that new building was R.J. McMahon of Shoshone, who trapped wild cats and taught school. Afterwards the school house was moved back to Toponis and located at the north end of what is now Oregon Street. This school was used as a dance hall, church, opera house, and election hall. During vacations the school house was used as a store house, and a hobo jungle. The school building remained until the districts Nos. 1, 6, and 10 were consolidated.

Toponis was located in Alturas County with Rocky Bar as the county seat. The legislature in 1889 divided Alturas county into three counties, creating Alturas, Logan and Elmore counties. Toponis was in Logan county. Later Logan and Alturas counties were abolished and Alta and Blaine counties were created. The lines were changed at this time, so that Toponis was left in Blaine county. The Supreme court then ruled that the bill which created Alta and Blaine counties was illegally passed changing them back to Alturas and Logan counties. The next legislature abolished Alturas and Logan counties, creating the counties of Lincoln and Blaine. This time Toponis was in Lincoln county.

The birthday of the city of Gooding was November 14, 1907. The first Gooding lot sale was started on that date. The townsite was laid out on the home ranch of Frank R. Gooding. It was 450 acres of level, well drained soil, surrounded by a beautiful border of giant trees planed by Mr. Gooding.

After Gooding completed the 1906-1908 term as governor he personally directed the development of the townsite of the city which bears his name. Gooding village was incorporated April 25, 1908.

The first minutes of the trustees of the village of Gooding April 25, 1908, show that those present were E.C. Egelus, W. J. Gooding, F. T. Furcht, E. W. Gardner and R. H. Pruitt. These men organied with W. J. Gooding to act as chairman pro tem and A. J. Schubert was made permanent clerk. R. H. Pruitt was elected village treasurer.

The clerk was instructed to write the following ordinances: A seal ordinance, No 1; place of meeting ordinance, No. 2; stock ordinance, No. 3; marshal ordinance, No. 4. Copies of warrants and other printed supplies were ordered from E.T. Barber of the Idaho Leader. At the May 11, 1908, meeting the clerk was ordered to procure tags for dogs. At the June 1, 1908 meeting the village trustees ordered a bridge built across the Oregon street ditch on fourth street.

At these early meetings many petitions for new buildings were approved. .M. Leeper received

approval for an addition to the pool hall. A.E. Thompson requested a permit for a fireproof building on Lot 7, block 29, Chas B. Hess applied for approval of a fireproof building on Lot 21, block 28. Many residents asked for walks. One request was for a "walk between Kellys lot and the footbridge."

On October 5, 1908, A.E. Thompson was employed as village clerk and ex-officio police judge. The same week, Oct. 8, C.D. Stanley was employed as city engineer.

The first fire equipment for the village was ordered from Portland Nov. 2, 1908, a fire engine costing $750.00. The first fire house was located on Fourth and Washington. The village trustees met I a room over the firehouse.

The first jail was adjacent to the fire station. Among the first ordinances prepared were those regulating railroad crossings, gambling, selling liquor and public nuisances.

At the Nov. 27, 1908, meeting, A.C. Thompson was sworn in as city clerk to act during an absence of A.E. Thompson. On Dec. 7, A.C. Thompson was hired as village clerk. Gooding city was incorporated November 21, 1910. The official census figures for Gooding are:

1910 - 1,100
1920 - 1,843
1930 - 1,592
1940 - 2,568
1950 - 3,099

Gooding County was officially created January 28, 1913. Official census figures for the county are:

1920 - 7,548
1830 - 7,580
1940 - 9,257
1950 - 11,101

On September 19, 1914, Frank R. Gooding deeded to the city a wing of the historic Lincoln Inn. The deed listed the "consideration as $30,000." The property included the east 91 feet of block 13-14-15, which embraced at that time 28 rooms. The city of Gooding approved a "City Hall bond" dated July 2, 1915, for $9,500 to pay for the building. H.J. Leyson was mayor; A.C. Thompson, treasurer; J.E. Henkle city clerk.

The city of Gooding on July 2, 1915, leased the wing of the building to the county of Gooding for 99 years from the sum of $1 payable on the first of each year. The county improved the property by building a three story addition which contained the assessor's office, sheriff's office and jail quarters. In the early years the city used two rooms in the county building.

The Citizen's State bank building at Third and Main street was purchased for a city office in 1926. The headquarters was relocated between Fourth and Fifth Avenues on Idaho Street

April 16, 1957.

The first airplane to land in Gooding was piloted by Hugh Barker, a Gooding man, who served in the Air Force in World War I. The plane belonged to Barker and the Gooding county fairgrounds were used for the landing strip in 1920 when Goodingites got their first view of an airplane. Practically everyone in the Gooding area was on hand and many of them took rides including Mrs. Julia Levy, Frank Gooding, John Gooding, Fred Tyler and many others.

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