

History of Blanchard, Idaho



By Charles S. Cook
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Blanchard is located about 30 air-miles northeast of Spokane, Washington, and about one and one-half miles east of the Washington-Idaho state line.

In 1883 Louis Poirier, a French Canadian, homesteaded a piece of land in the valley where Blanchard, Idaho, is now located. Shortly after Mr. Poirier's arrival other homesteaders and squatters arrived. As more people settled in this little valley the community became known as White, Idaho. A United States Post Office was established here in 1900.

In 1908 a railroad was built through this valley, extending from Spokane north, and eventually terminating at Metaline Falls, Washington. At that time the Post Office name of White, Idaho, was changed to Blanchard, Idaho.

The name Blanchard was chosen in honor of a pioneer named Blanchard who had homesteaded on a near-by creek, which became known as Blanchard Creek. Due to the fact that this creek ran through the little settlement and paralleled the new railroad, White, Idaho, Post Office, became Blanchard, Idaho, Post Office.

In 1912 the first store was established in Blanchard: the Blanchard Trading Company. Louis Poirier and several other men established this store, but later it became the property of Fielden L. Poirier, a son of Louis Poirier. Fielden L. Poirier conducted the business until a few years ago when he retired. The business was then taken over by Claude B. Blanchard, a grandson of the old pioneer for whom Blanchard, Idaho, was named.

Mt. Spokane, in Washington, (elevation 5808 feet) is about ten air-miles southwest of Blanchard. Mt. Spokane is a Washington State Park and claims one of the major ski "slopes" in the Northwest. A very efficient Columbia Broadcasting Company radio and television-sending station occupies the top of Mt. Spokane.

Blanchard is in Bonner County, about 30 miles southwest of Sandpoint, the County Seat. We are about 20 miles due west of Lake Pend Oreille (pronounced Pond o ray'), one of the largest freshwater lakes west of the Rocky Mountains. This lake has produced the largest rainbow trout caught in the United States. The record weight was 37 pounds plus.

Blanchard is located in the heart of big game country where you can hunt black and brown bear, white-tail, black-tail and mule deer, elk, cougar, bobcats, coyotes, and many kinds of smaller game and upland game birds. We are located on the north-south flyway for wild ducks, honker geese, swans, and cranes, many of which make stop-overs on our little lake during their spring and fall migrations.

Blanchard is situated in a beautiful little valley surrounded on three sides by mountains ranging up to 5,000 feet. We are thus protected from most of the rough weather experienced by other sections of the Northwest. We have authoritatively been credited with having an ideal year-'round climate.

In the early days this valley was occupied by a magnificent stand of mixed timber, dominated by very excellent yellow pine. Naturally the chief industry for many years was logging and sawmill operation. In the past 50 years much land has been cleared and converted into modern farming, dairying and cattle and sheep-raising land. There are still thousands of acres of growing timber and many hundreds of acres are being maintained as privately owned Tree Farms, mostly located on hilly and mountain land.

The little valley, as a whole, has made vast improvements since 1900, when it was still a happy hunting ground for two friendly tribes of Indians. Today the homes and ranches are all electrically modern with an abundance of the best mountain water.

Blanchard proper is an unincorporated town of about 150 people. It is located on a branch line of the Milwaukee Railroad and on State Highway 41. Most people own their own homes. Some men still follow work in the woods, and some work in nearby saw mills and lumber mills. A few own timber and farm land.

We have our own local fire department, which was acquired after our schoolhouse burned down about one year ago. Our Children travel 12 miles by bus to a school at Newport, Idaho. We have a very active chapter of Farmers' Grange, which owns a Grange Hall. We have a non-denominational church with an average attendance of 65 in Sunday school, 85 in church and 25 in youth fellowship. We are holding services in the Grange Hall at present; however, on Easter Sunday we held groundbreaking ceremonies for our new church building.

In 1912 the original Blanchard Trading Company store was 30 by 60 feet in size. Today it can boast a floor capacity of 12,000 square feet. From its pioneer stock of the necessary commodities it has advanced to a complete line of everything needed in the home and on the ranch.

We are very proud of our little community!

Idaho Vacation Wonderland

By Charles S. Cook, Blanchard

Did you ever have a feelin' that you owed yourself a debt? And you'd like to know the answer as to
just what you should get.

You worked and fought to win the war, and saved and did without. The dreams you dreamed, of
things you'd get, and how you'd gad about.

So now the war is over and you're wondering where to go. Let me suggest to you, my friend, that you
visit IDAHO!

No difference where you live, my friend, your time will be well spent. For the grandeur you will see
there will make your heart content.

Where the unspoiled work of nature bids you welcome to this land. And wildlife is abundant and the
climate simply grand.

It's the place you've heard so much about, where the best potatoes grow. Yes, the Indians loved the
place so well, they called it IDAHO!

How often have you wished that you could catch the biggest trout? And tell Bing Crosby fish tales that
you need not lie about.

Well "Der Bingle" caught some dandies in the grand lake Pend Oreille (Ponderay)

But the one he likes to tell of is the one that got away. Yes, there's deer and bear and moose and elk
and lovely winter snow in the evergreen-clad mountains of dear old IDAHO!

There's a land of milk and honey, which you've no doubt heard about. And the state that is all
sunshine, where it rains like all get out.
And the place where lovely palm trees grow and hurricanes trespass. And that famed old Bourbon
country where fast horses feed on blue grass.
Since you seem so undecided, here's a fact that you should know. To enjoy a real vacation, you
should visit IDAHO!

Oh! The beauty of this scenic "wonderland"
Where mother nature calls you and takes you by the hand.
And you see the magic grandeur, with which nothing can compare,
The gorgeous mountain scenery and the lakes that nestle there.
All your troubles are forgotten by you lucky folks who go, to this grand vacation wonderland
in scenic IDAHO!

THE GALLOPIN' GOOSE

By Charles Cook, Blanchard

The gallopin' goose came over the hill
full of mash from the moonshiner's still.
His pace unsteady, his course not true
and where he was headed, not even he knew.
He wondered down to the hillside spring
and tried to quench that fiery sting;
But the water was cold and his gullet was hot
and steam came out, believe it or not.
He rested awhile in the cooling shade
and when the light began to fade
he tried to rise and be on his way;
But couldn't make it and had to stay.
There by the spring through the chilly night
the miserable goose waged his fight.
At the break of dawn, he, like some human geese
stuck his head in the cold water and made his peace;
But there is a moral to this tale:
If you stick to the straight and narrow trail;
and don't indulge in that fiery stuff;
you will always know when you've had enough.