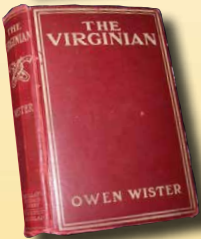
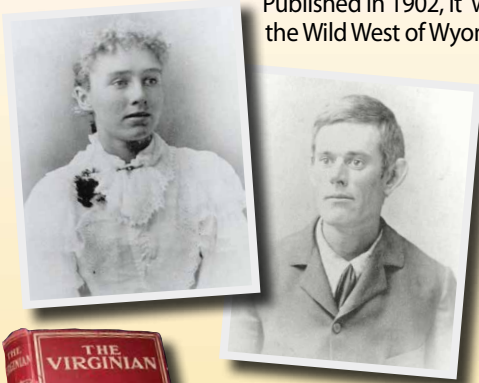


Charlie and Nellie Ball became immortalized by Owen Wister, author of "The Virginian - A Horseman of the Plains". This novel is considered to be the first "American Western Novel".

Published in 1902, it was about life in the Wild West of Wyoming between the years of 1874-1890. It was so successful it was made into a theater play, movie, and eventually a television series!



Charlie, originally from Virginia, and Nellie Ball, who grew up in Wyoming, knew the stories in the novel well because they were about their lives. The couple shared them with author, Owen Wister, during his Wyoming ranch visit. Wister was so

impressed with their humor and colorful stories, he wrote about the Ball's life in his novel.

Around the mid-1920's, the Balls moved from Wyoming to Lava Hot Springs, Idaho on doctor's recommendations for Nellie's health. Charlie and Nellie loved Lava! They stayed, operated businesses, and while on business trips, promoted Lava Hot Springs. The couple is remembered with love and respect in the community. There are many great "Charlie and Nellie" stories still shared by folks. Their children treasured their parents stories and passed them along to their children and grandchildren. Today, South Bannock County Historical Center features an exhibit on the illustrious family of Charlie and Nellie Ball.



Wedding of Carrie Ball, Charlie and Nellie's daughter, in 1921. Nellie is 7th from the left. Photo taken by Charlie Ball.

South Bannock County Historical Center (SOBANCO), was founded in 1979 by Ruth Ann Olson, and incorporated in 1980.

For years the museum was housed in various donated spaces throughout town until many patrons purchased this building as a permanent home for area history.



South Bannock County Historical Center
 110 E. Main Street, Box 387, Lava Hot Springs, ID 83246
 Phone: (208) 776-5254 Chamber info: (208) 776-5500

Membership Information

- Individual\$15
- Family\$20
- Business.....\$30
- Corporation.....\$100

Donations

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 12-V-1 25M

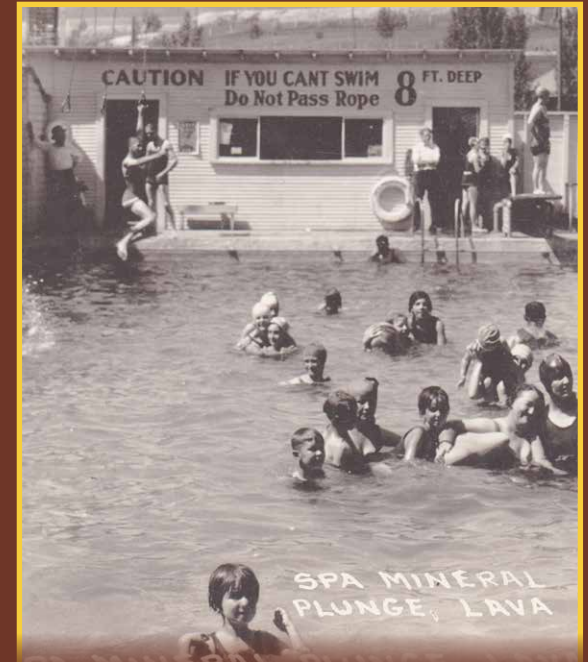
SOBANCO is a Non-Profit Museum.
 Your Memberships & Donations are Appreciated!



LAVA HOT SPRINGS, IDAHO

South Bannock County Historical Center

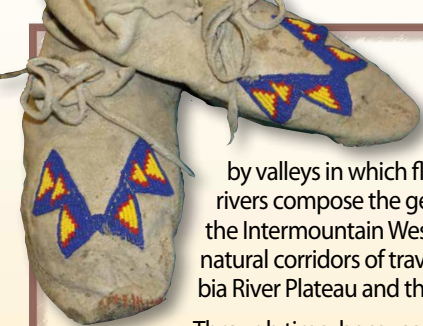
A "Jewel" of a Museum



From Ancient Times to the Oregon Trail, Settlers, & Ligertown, this area has been a well-traveled resource for wildlife and humans throughout the ages.

South Bannock County Historical Center tells their stories - those of Trails, Trappers, Trains, & Travelers.





Numerous north/south running mountain ranges, separated by valleys in which flow creeks, streams, and rivers compose the geography of much of the Intermountain West. These valleys provide natural corridors of travel between the Columbia River Plateau and the Great Basin.

Through time, because of this geography and historical circumstance, the valleys of the Portneuf River and Marsh Creek have proved to be perhaps the most important corridor of travel in the Intermountain West. These valleys, which include south Bannock County, have been accorded the title "Gateway to the Northwest."

South Bannock County was and is the site of important Indians trails, trapper trails, overland trails, stage line routes, railroads and interstate highways. Thus, south Bannock County history and economy has been closely tied to travel and transportation.



Furs and Farms, Fire and Flood... the Rise of Lava Hot Springs

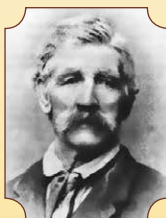
The community of Lava Hot Springs is located at a strategic crossroads between the Rockies, the Great Basin, and the rest of the West. The year-round availability of natural hot and cold running water is an irresistible draw to the area.

The quest for beaver pelts drew trappers and traders to the region in the early 1800's. A few mountain men settled in, trading their traps for the tools of farmers, miners, and merchants. By the late 1800's, they were joined by homesteaders who were enticed by the government's offer of free land.



This charming view of Main Street, about 1930, shows a quaint but thriving community. Photo: Idaho State Historical Society #77-139

The railroad's arrival in 1882 provided farm-to-market transportation. It also brought tourists anxious to soak in the hot springs. The community first called Dempsey, then Hall City, was renamed Lava Hot Springs in 1915 and a resort town was born.



Fur Traders and Trail Travelers

Bob Dempsey, an Irish trapper, and his Lemhi Indian wife Margaret set up camp on a creek about 1.5 miles west of Lava Hot Springs in 1851. In addition to trapping, Dempsey traded horses to Oregon and California bound pioneers in need of fresh stock.

Farms and Families

By 1896 there were businesses, farms and families in Hall City. A little log schoolhouse built that year was replaced with a fine brick one in 1905.

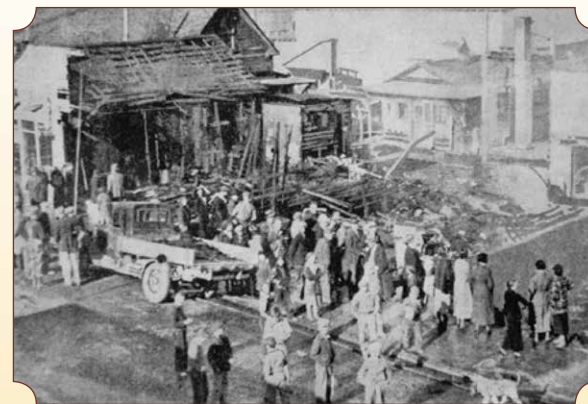
Trains and Tourists

Passengers and products of all kinds rolled in and out of town on the Oregon Shortline Railroad. By 1905, Lava Hot Springs was a popular destination for train-traveling tourists.



Fire in Lava Hot Springs

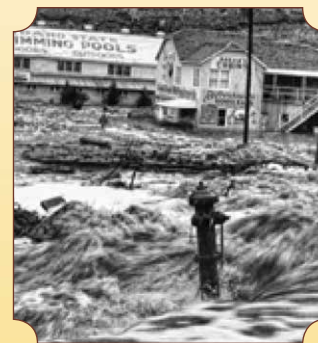
In the early hours of November 20, 1936 a devastating fire destroyed half of a city block leaving six businesses in ashes. The fire engine, parked in a local garage, was blocked by 20 automobiles, delaying critical fire-fighting efforts. Pocatello's fire department dispatched a crew but their engine broke down on the road. After a four-hour fight, the flames were brought under control. Nye Drug Store, the local state liquor dispensary, was damaged by the fire. During the blaze, the store was reportedly "relieved" of 20-30 cases of liquor.



Townsppeople survey damage after the 1936 fire.

Flooding on the Portneuf

On the night of February 9, 1962, most of Lava Hot Springs residents were attending a fund-raiser when someone ran in yelling that the Portneuf River was flooding. Rain and unseasonably warm temperatures melted snow, saturating the ground and sending more water into the river than its banks could contain. For three days, citizens and the National Guard frantically filled sandbags in an attempt to save lives and property. Despite their efforts, the worst flood in Lava Hot Springs' 100-year history caused millions of dollars of damage.



The wild Portneuf River rushed through the heart of town in 1962, leaving devastation in its wake.

*Photos: Portneuf River flood photo: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
All other photos: South Bannock County Historical Center Museum*