



Rathdrum Jail Museum

PO Box 227, Rathdrum, Idaho 83858 208-625-0014

Financial contributions in the form of donation and membership are tax deductible

Member of the Rathdrum Chamber of Commerce

September, 2019 Newsletter

September is a wonderful midpoint and we get the best of both worlds - the end of summer and the start of autumn easing us into the colder months. The zodiac signs are Virgo (8/24–9/23) and Libra (9/24–10/23). The Aster is the birth flower and are known to symbolize wisdom, valor, and faith. The Sapphire is the official birthstone named for its rich blue color that symbolizes trust and honesty, making it one of the most popular engagement gemstones — second only to diamonds.

HISTORY: DID YOU KNOW

RATHDRUM: EARLY DAYS UPS AND DOWNS

The first known settler in the Rathdrum area was a trapper named Connors, who built a cabin and established squatter's rights in 1861.

In the late 1860s, a Pony Express was established between Walla Walla and Missoula and one of the 21 relay stations was located near Rathdrum. In 1871, Frederick Post acquired Connors' original squatter's rights and later transferred the land to his son-in-law Charles Wesley Wood, who established a small ranch.

When the Northern Pacific Railroad began laying tracks in 1881, a station was established near Wood's ranch. Settlement around the station was first called Westwood, in honor of Wood, but post office authorities rejected the name because several other towns in the territory requested the same name. The postmaster, Zach Lewis, began searching for another name. His friend M.M. Crowley, suggested several names, including Rathdrum, the town of his birth in Ireland. Lewis submitted the name Rathdrum to postal authorities and Westwood officially became Rathdrum.

News of the new railroad and establishment of a station in Rathdrum brought settlers to the area. In July 1881, Wood and M.D. Wright platted a townsite. By the end of the year Rathdrum had a post office, livery stable and general store.

In October 1881, meetings were held in Rathdrum to create a county government and Rathdrum became the Kootenai County Seat.

When gold was discovered in the Coeur d'Alene Mountains in 1882-1883, Rathdrum became the primary outfitting point for the mines. By 1884, the population had grown to more than 1,000.

On October 27, 1884, 55 buildings and six city blocks were destroyed by fire. Rathdrum's recovery was spurred by the discovery of silver on the South Fork of the Coeur d'Alene. The first ore shipments from the silver mines were transported by wagon to Rathdrum, loaded on railcars and shipped to a smelter in Wicks, Montana. By 1886, Rathdrum was again becoming the major commercial center in North Idaho until a railroad was constructed for Hauser Junction, a few miles west of the town, into Coeur d'Alene. The new railroad caused Rathdrum to lose its preeminence as a supply station for the mining industry in the Silver Valley. Within a few months, the population dropped from more than 1,000 to a few hundred.



RAT-5-14 Rathdrum Business; Grocery Window of Reiniger Bros. (Ernest and Paul) Fancy Groceries and Bakery located at 1st and McCartney. circa 1915 print; neg



RAT-3-3 Rathdrum Hotels People standing on the porch of the Mountain View Hotel, north side of 1st St. between Coeur d'Alene Ave and Mill St. 1890 print; neg; slide

Farming development in the area eventually rejuvenated Rathdrum and the town continued to develop for the next 20 years. By 1908, Rathdrum's population had grown to 800 and the town consisted of three hotels, five churches, a brick grade school and high school, two parks, a fraternal hall, a courthouse, jail and a variety of stores.

In 1908, Rathdrum received another setback — the county seat was moved to Coeur d'Alene. Rathdrum lost its political importance in the county and, within years, the population diminished to about 500. A further blow came in 1924 when a second major fire destroyed more than 30 buildings.

Rathdrum began growing again and the population has far surpassed what it was during the early 1880s - 1900s.

Information From: The Press, North Idaho Milestones, Special Feature, November 21,1999

A big THANKS to our visitors, donors, members, and volunteers. It's with your presence, help, and support that the Rathdrum Historical Society is able to keep the Jail Museum open and available to the community. Join us in OCTOBER for another Family Halloween and tours of the haunted jail. We are now closed on weekends until spring; however, for questions or if you want to schedule a group tour, please contact us:

Call 208-625-0014 or visit our website:

www.rathdrumhistory.com or Facebook: "Old Kootenai County Jail Museum"

for additional information and questions.

MISSION STATEMENT:

To Maintain and Protect Rathdrum's Historic and Cultural Resources for Future Generations

RATHDRUM JAIL MUSEUM

Rathdrum / Westwood Historical Society, PO Box 227, Rathdrum, Idaho 83858

MEMBERSHIP/DONATION: Individual - \$20.00 Family - \$30.00 Business - \$50.00

Contributor / Donation - \$ _____

Note: All donations of \$250 or above (in cash or in kind) will be acknowledged on our Donor Wall of Fame in the Community Room as well as on our website.

NAME _____ Date _____

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