

Memorial to 18-Massacred WARD PIONEERS in 1854.
Boise River, IDAHO, on the Oregon Trail.



**To the Memory of THE PIONEERS WHO WERE
MASSACRED BY INDIANS
NEAR THIS SPOT
AUGUST 20, 1854.**

**THIS MONUMENT IS DEDICATED
BY THE PIONEER CHAPTER of
DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
Boise, Idaho**

William Ward	Age 44
Margaret Ward	" 37
Mary Ward	" 18
Robert Ward	" 16
Edward Ward	" 9
Francis Ward	" 7
Flora Ward	" 5
Susan Ward	" 3
Eliza White	" 30
George White	" 4
Samuel Mallagan	
Charles Adams	
William Babcock	
Dr. Adams	
— Amen	
Adolph Schultz	
John Frederick	
French Canadian	

Erected by PIONEER CHAPTER, Daughters of the American Revolution.

The DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION (DAR) is a lineage-based membership service organization for women who are directly descended from a person involved in the United States' struggle for independence. A non-profit group, they promote education and patriotism. The organization's membership is limited to direct lineal descendants of soldiers or others of the Revolutionary period who aided the cause of independence; applicants must have reached 18-years of age and are reviewed at the Chapter level for admission. The DAR has over 185,000 current members in the United States and other Countries.

The **WARD MEMORIAL PARK**, Lincoln Road, Boise, Idaho is dedicated to the victims of the massacre, and the monuments and informational markers in this Park serve to pay tribute to the dangers emigrants faced while travelling the Oregon Trail.

The Oregon Trail Before the Massacre

Over 12,000 years ago, Idaho's first people survived by following herds of big game. About 7,000 years ago, Native Americans in this area followed the earth's natural cycles - camping together for protection in the winter and breaking into small family bands to forage in the summer. This pattern began changing in the early 18th Century, when local tribes obtained their first horses from other tribes. Horses brought new wealth and power, increased interaction with other tribes and allowed hunting and gathering over a wider area.

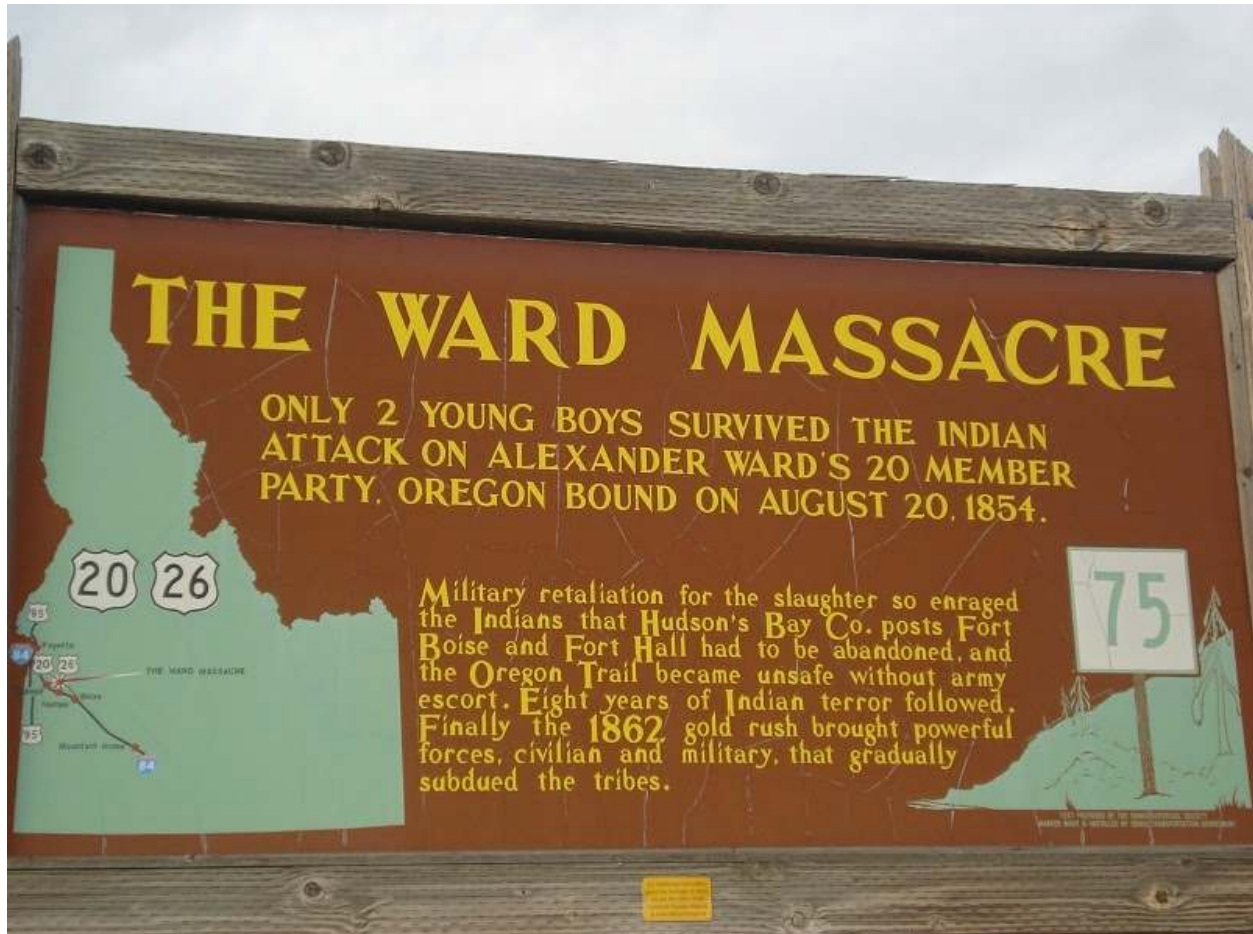
White Settlers and Native Americans had curtailed their previous antagonistic relationship as European settlement expanded in the New World, and one of the dangers of travel on the Oregon Trail in the 19th Century was the possibility of renewed attack from Native American war parties.

Before the Oregon Trail brought thousands of travellers westwards, trade with Euro-American fur trappers and missionaries in southern Idaho was a lucrative business for the Shoshone, Paiute, and Bannock tribes. Beginning in 1811, the Oregon Trail was essentially a footpath and a mule pack train trail, used mostly by fur traders. Peaceful trading widely expanded in Southern Idaho starting in 1842, when pioneer wagon trains began passing through the Boise Valley, obtaining food, stock, and services from Native groups in exchange for a variety of goods and animals.

Unfortunately, peaceful trading became more tedious by 1853, as there were as many as 8,000 Pioneer Wagon Trains passing through the area, overgrazing the land along the trail and burning sagebrush and trees. Resources stretched thin, and as a result, criminal activity as well as insult and injury occurred between the two cultures. Native bands blamed the White Pioneers for the increases in disease and the loss of game.

Toward the middle of the 1854 Migration, these tensions turned to violence.

Hostility Erupts Into Violence - WARD PARTY Massacre



On August 20, 1854, the **WILLIAM WARD PARTY** of 20 men, women, and children were traveling on the OREGON TRAIL near Middleton, Canyon County, Idaho with 5-wagons, a day behind a larger party led by **ALEXANDER YANTIS**.

The 6-wagon train WARD PARTY was a typical group of emigrants passing through the Boise Valley on the Oregon Trail in 1854. The Party consisted of about 20 members, and on August 20, 1854, the group was traveling along the southern bank of the Boise River. Like other emigrants on this stretch of the Oregon Trail, the Ward Party's immediate destination was Fort Boise.

About 20 miles from the Fort, the Ward Party took a short noon break to eat and rest. The **WARDS** pulled their wagons off the Trail for lunch and to water their stock when two White Men and three Native Americans approached the Party to trade for a horse. When the trade failed, one of the Indians attempted to ride off with the horse and was killed.

Being on the Oregon Trail, having a horse stolen was a very grave circumstance, and a white man shot the thief down, initiating the slaughter.

Fearing retribution, the **WARDS** hurried back to the Trail and corralled their wagons to defend themselves from about 60-Indians, who had raced from their encampment across the river to give battle. For nearly 2-hours, 6-men defended the wagons. When the last defender fell, the wagons were rushed and 2-boys and 2-non-combatant men were killed. The women and children were gathered in a wagon and driven toward the river.

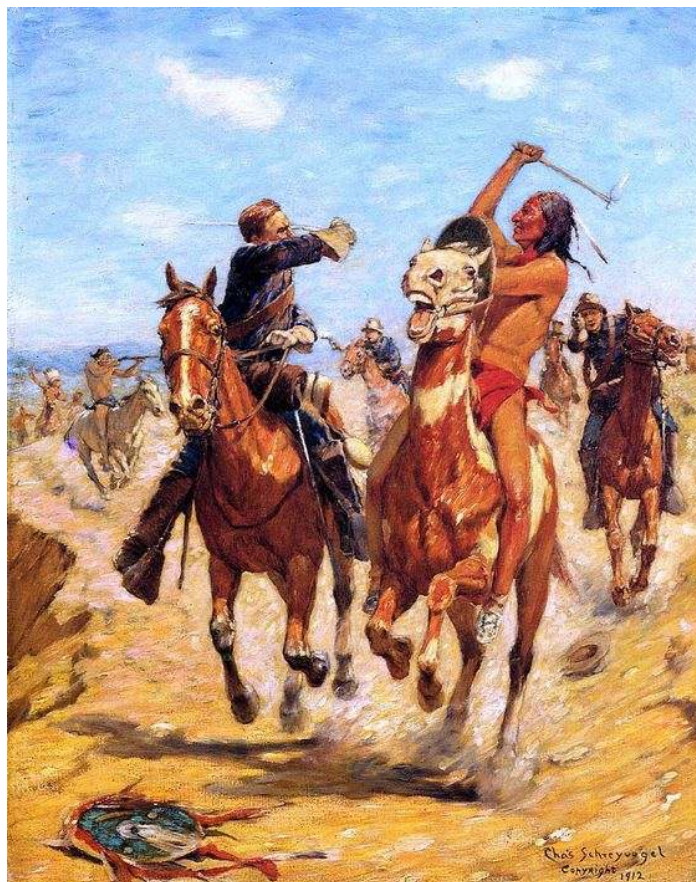
Soon after, the entire Party was ambushed by **SNAKE** and **SHOSHONE** Native Americans. The Wagon Train Leader, **WILLIAM WARD**, fell mortally wounded in the first few minutes, and with careful speed and defence tactics, the men of the Ward Party reached out to protect the women and children and hold off the ambushers. Their defence turned out to be quite futile, as most were killed before sundown while the women were sexually tortured and killed.

Children were held over a large, blazing fire and were burned to death. 13-year-old **NEWTON WARD** was shot with an arrow and left for dead; his 15-year-old brother **WILLIAM WARD** was shot with an arrow through his lung. By feigning death, the brothers would ultimately survive the attack. William crawled for several days with the arrow still protruding through his chest until he reached **FORT HALL**. They were the only two who survived the attack.

Their Uncle **JAMES MASTERSON**, his young bride and his younger brother **ROBERT MASTERSON** were approximately 4-miles ahead of the the rest of the small Wagon Train, driving the livestock ahead of the rest of the Party when the attack took place and also survived. Two of James's sisters died in the attack, **MARGARET MASTERSON WARD** and **ELIZABETH MASTERSON WHITE**

The attack did not go unnoticed. Seven men from the **YANTIS PARTY** heard gunfire and women's screams and hurried to the rescue. They were forced to retreat when one of their own men was killed. That evening, they returned, finding dead and dying from both sides. Injured 13-year old **NEWTON WARD**, was carried back to the rebuilt **FORT BOISE** Trading Post (near present-day Parma). In all, 19-immigrants were killed, but both **NEWTON WARD** and 44-year old **WILLIAM WARD** survived. The number of Native American dead from the battle was never tallied.

Two days after the attack, a rescue party from **FORT BOISE** found the 4-burned wagons and the bodies of the Ward Party men. The body of 18-year old **MARY WARD** was found in a draw by a burned wagon. 30-year old **Mrs. WHITE'S** battered body was found in a Pond by the Boise River. The mutilated bodies of 37-year old **Mrs. MARGARET WARD** and three young Children were located across the River in the abandoned Indian encampment. Two younger children could not be located but **WILLIAM WARD**, with an arrow in his side, later walked into **FORT BOISE**.



Toward the end of the 1854 migration, the hostility boiled over into more violence. A local Indian Band began outright attacks on isolated trains. Mounted on horses and armed with rifles, they proved a deadly threat to the last few emigrants hurrying toward Oregon.

Violence is Avenged - Ward Party Massacre

In early September, 1854, **MAJOR GRANVILLE HALLER** set out with a US Military Force from their post in Oregon to avenge the WARD PARTY deaths. Upon arrival at the rebuilt Hudson Bay's FORT BOISE near the mouth of the Boise River, the Indians they encountered were arrested, but released after proving their innocence. The next day, four Indians were arrested - three were killed and one was wounded, but escaped.



MAJOR GRANVILLE HALLER

The expedition next advanced up the PAYETTE RIVER tracking a suspect Indian band to a 15-lodge encampment. The soldiers charged the hastily-abandoned camp where they found a saddlebag inscribed with one of the victims names, a silver

goblet from Germany, \$50 in a silk purse, and other WARD PARTY items. Two men from the tribe were discovered nearby and were killed. The military then went to the site of the massacre and reburied the Ward Party.

The following year, 1855, Major Hallar set out again. While camping near Fort Boise, four Indians entered the camp and were arrested. One confessed, implicating his companions, and was shot while attempting to escape. The three remaining men were tried, found guilty, and hanged on gallows erected over the mass grave of the Ward Party.

The **WARD MASSACRE** changed the course of Western U.S. history. Following the attack, HUDSON'S BAY abandoned their Trading Posts at FORT HALL and FORT BOISE. With no permanent Forts for protection in Southern Idaho, the US adopted a policy of providing horse soldiers, who were often local volunteers, to escort travellers braving the trail. When the Civil War erupted in 1861, troops were pulled.

In the following years, use of the Oregon Trail plummeted. It took a giant gold strike to bring travellers back to southern Idaho. Travel resumed mid-way in the Civil War when large gold deposits were discovered in the Boise Basin.

Mindful of the Ward Massacre, PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S ADMINISTRATION established a Military Fort Boise in 1863. The Fort, located at the upper end of the Boise Valley, protected miners and other travellers in Southern Idaho and assured that Idaho gold was directed into the Union Treasury.