

# WAGON DAYS

KETCHUM, IDAHO



Driver Sam Sanders  
on near wheeler

# PROGRAM

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 15th

- 7:00 P.M.—Barber Shop Quartet Contest**  
Trail Creek Cabin amphitheatre  
*Admission: \$1.50; children under 14, free*

## SATURDAY, AUGUST 16th

- 11:00 A.M.—Parade**  
With "Aunt Kate," Mrs. Katherine A. Lewis  
(wife of H. C. Lewis) Wagon Days Queen
- 2:00 P.M.—Races**  
Warm Springs Ranch Inn Track  
Chariot teams, Pony Express, Jockey Races  
*Admission: \$1.25; children under 14, 25c;  
children under 6, free*
- 4:00 P.M.—Barber Shop Quartet Contest**  
Trail Creek Cabin amphitheatre  
*Admission: \$1.50; children under 14, free*
- 6:00 P.M.—Chuck Wagon Supper**  
Legion Park (in the circle of wagons)  
*Admission: \$1.50*
- 9:00 P.M.—Wagon Train Dance**  
Legion Park  
*Admission: Your "Big Wheel" Badge*
- 9:30 P.M.—Ice Show**  
Sun Valley Ice Rink

## SUNDAY, AUGUST 17th

- 9 - 11:00 A.M.—Trail Ride Breakfast**  
Trail Creek Barbecue Grounds  
*Admission: \$1.50*
- 1:00 P.M.—Arabian Horse Show**  
Warm Springs Ranch Inn Arena  
*Admission: \$1.00; Children under 14, 25c*
- 4:00 P.M.—Barber Shop Quartet Championship Finals**  
Trail Creek Cabin amphitheatre  
*Admission: \$1.50; children under 14, free*

# Wagon Days

## Historical Information

*Compiled and Edited*  
by  
**Agnes Barry and Margaret Doyle**  
**1958**

**KATHERINE A. LEWIS**

*Katherine A. Lewis, widow of the late Horace C. Lewis, in whose honor the first Wagon Days was enacted in 1958 on her 85th birthday, and in whose memory they will be perpetuated.*

**Ketchum . . .**

ON APRIL 3, 1880, the I. I. Lewis party consisting of John H. Lewis, Charles Swan and Isaac Ives Lewis, left Helena, Montana, headed for the Wood River Country in Idaho. They were joined at Horse Prairie by Al Griffith and his two horses which were added to the Lewis wagon, making a four horse team with Al Griffith as driver. At the Lava Beds they were joined by Jim Kellogg and A. R. French. William H. Greenhow, who was also at the Lava Beds followed a day or so later. On the evening of April 29th, this group camped below where Bellevue now stands, where James Hart had a covered wagon and tent, some merchandise and a barrel of whiskey with a tin cup and a sign which read "Only 25¢ a drink; draw and drink all you want." Hart wanted the group to locate there and help him lay out a town but the group wanted to go on to the headwaters. Later, Hart moved farther north and started the town of Bellevue. On the night of April 30th the group camped in the snow at the foot of Quigsley's Gulch opposite where Hailey now stands. Here was a newly built cabin but no people around and this was the first house seen on the river. Later they learned that C. P. Croy and his family were living about 1½ miles up Croy's Gulch. The night of May 1st they camped where the hamlet of Gimlet was afterwards built, and the next morning they "wallowed through belly deep snow" towards the valley where Trail Creek, Warm Springs Creek and Wood River came together. I. I. Lewis and Al Griffith having both been through the country before, knew where they wanted to settle. At various places along the river they found other men camped, some as far up as Warm Springs Creek. Some of these were William Erwin, Jim Fort, E. H. Moffat and William Thompson. Fort, Moffat and Thompson were given the choice of picking the townsite and on the morning of May 3rd, 1880, the first tent was pitched on the present townsite by Isaac Ives Lewis.

A town plat was immediately drawn up and the settlement was named "Leadville." The first lots in "Lead-

ville" were sold on May 3rd for \$2.00 a lot and the persons camped on the townsite that day were E. H. Moffat, William Erwin, William Thompson, James Fort, Sterling (appointed Secretary and Town Recorder), John F. Boyle, Isaac I. Lewis, Albert Griffith, John H. Lewis, Charles Swan, A. R. French, B. X. Boone, Corbet, and Milt Mourning. William H. Greenhow, who arrived on the 4th, started the first building a day or so later. I. I. Lewis started the second building and Jim Fort the third. Jim Kellogg occupied the Fort building and set up a saloon.

Due to all the silver and lead mines then opening up, people began flocking in by the hundreds. In the summer of 1881 Hodson and I. I. Lewis surveyed the townsite and plats were recorded in the government Land Office in Boise. As there were other numerous "Leadvilles" in the territory, the name was changed at this time to "Ketchum" after David Ketchum, a trapper who had for a number of years camped seven miles up Wood River. This was the first town laid out and the first town to obtain government title on Wood River. Idaho at this time was part of the Idaho-Montana-Wyoming Territory and became a state in April 1890. Stores, saloons, restaurants, hotels, business houses, a brickyard, did a booming business. The newspaper "The Ketchum Keystone" went into print; the Philadelphia Mining and Smelting Company went into operation in 1881; The Ketchum Fast Freight Line opened roads over the mountains to serve the mines; the Oregon Short Line (now the Union Pacific) reached Ketchum in the fall of 1884, with 1959 being its 75th anniversary.

The first ore was shipped out of Ketchum from the famous Elkhorn Mine on August 2nd, 1880, via wagon freight to Kelton, Utah, then by rail to Salt Lake City.

Ketchum had its "boom" days; it had its catastrophes (burned down twice); it had its decline. It became one of the largest sheep shipping centers in the world and survived with some few sturdy pioneers and their families.

Ketchum, from the beginning, has evinced an open hospitality for all (see excerpt from the Idaho Statesman dated August 26, 1893), and even now seeks to draw the

stranger into its fold and the stranger, inevitably, like the old pioneers, wants to stay and pitch his tent by the river or build his cabin on a nearby hill.

## Excerpts From An Editorial In The Idaho Daily Statesman August 26, 1893

Wm. Balderston, Editor  
THE PEOPLE OF KETCHUM

"Those who were at Ketchum during the past week are unanimously of the opinion that the people of that place constitute the most hospitable community on the face of the earth. This may sound like an extravagant statement, but it is extremely doubtful if there is another town anywhere that could match the record made by the people of Ketchum on the occasion of the recent Silver and State Press Convention.

Visitors were not only formally welcomed, they were made to feel that the welcome came from the heart and that the hospitality extended gave those who dispensed it as much pleasure as those upon whom it was bestowed.

When Mr. George J. Lewis, on behalf of the people of Ketchum, invited the Press Association to hold its annual meeting in their town, he stated that the members of the Press would be entertained to the extent of the ability of those whom he represented; but none realized what such an assurance meant coming from the citizens of that place. It is not necessary, nor would it, perhaps, be appropriate to enumerate the manifold forms in which Ketchum hospitality displayed itself. Suffice it to say that an impression was made upon those who shared it, that can never be effaced. It was overflowing and unbounded; it was not confined to material things, but was enriched with all that is transmitted from face to face, as the outpouring of noble, generous hearts.

The character of the reception and entertainment extended to their visitors by the people of Ketchum cannot be described in print; the pen cannot outline it; words cannot be found in which to paint it. It was one of those things that can only be felt, language being inadequate to convey any idea of it."

## Ketchum Fast Freight Line

The Ketchum Fast Freight Line was established in 1884 by Horace C. Lewis, born September 14, 1858, the eldest son of Isaac I. Lewis. At the age of 14, Horace formed a rewarding dream about mules. A couple of big mule teams were passing through Montana headed for Corinne and Horace begged his father to let him go with the wagons and mules. Having been forbidden this, he fell in love with a "bull whip" and spent hours on the hill by the Legal Tender Mine near Helena, popping the big whip. When he joined his father in Ketchum, he started a small freight line of his own and then purchased the Diamond R. Freight line from Berryman and Roger, a Montana outfit who operated out of Blackfoot. From them he bought two dozen of the largest wagons that could be bought in Nevada and Arizona, and in 1884 established the Ketchum Fast Freight Line. It consisted of large warehouses and shops situated near the present Union Pacific depot and had a rolling stock of monstrous wagons drawn by mules and horses. He located regular camps for his teams for night stop-overs as it took two weeks to make a round trip of 160 miles, the wagons averaging 12 to 16 miles per day. The first of these camps was at Trail Creek Summit at the Ketchum-Challis Toll Gate. By the time the Ketchum Fast Freight Line was in full operation, he had thirty outfits of teams and wagons on the road at all times between Ketchum, Clayton, Bayhorse, Challis, Custer and Bonanza. The Line consisted of approximately 200 mules, numerous other small teams, and several ox teams. Due to the thoroughness of H. C. Lewis, this was the most perfectly equipped freight outfit operated on the Pacific Coast.

The cargo carried by the freight line to the mines was made up of all types of freight, merchandise and coke; returning, they hauled tons of ore and silver bullion. In one season, 700,000 pounds of bullion was brought out in the wagons and shipped by rail. All freight was billed through the Oregon Short Line to any destination in the United States.

In order to serve the mines, H. C. Lewis built the first

wagon road over Trail Creek Summit, known as the Ketchum-Challis Toll Road. The long, steep grade over which the teams had to be driven, had many hairpin turns and dangerous curves. It was a 12% grade at that time and has since been lowered and straightened twice and is now a 7% grade.



Teams and Wagons on Lower Main St., Ketchum

## Freight Wagons . . .

Each freight line string usually had five wagons drawn by 14 to 20 mules and horses. Each wagon and each mule and horse had its own name. The wagons were unusually large in size and the lead wagon of the Ketchum Fast Freight Line was called the "Lewis Lead." This wagon was built entirely of hardwood in the shop in Ketchum in 1889 by Don MacLaren, Edward Rummel and Hughie McDonald, who worked for Horace Lewis.

The "Lewis Lead" is the largest freight wagon now in existence. The wagon box is 16 ft. long, 6½ ft. high and 4 ft. wide. The back wheels are 7 ft. high. It has a carrying capacity of 250 cu. ft. or over 18,000 lbs. In one emergency when an accident occurred, this big wag-

on came down Trail Creek grade loaded with 24,000 lbs. of bullion and five wagons drawn by 24 mules.

Because of the steep grades and dangerous hairpin turns on the narrow roads over the mountains, ordinary brakes were not sufficient to hold back the heavy wagons and large iron shoes, called "roughlocks" were necessary. The roughlock fitted over the tire of the lower edge of the back wheel and acted as a runner that slid or dragged and retarded the turning of the wheels. A "chock-block" was also used; it was attached by a chain to the back of the wagon and automatically fell under the wheel to hold the wagon from backing down hill. These brakes were controlled by the driver with a rope or strap held in his left hand.

## **SAM SANDERS**

*(see cover picture)*

The last and most faithful of Horace Lewis' drivers was Sam Sanders, born in Spokane, Washington, in 1875. He started freighting for Horace when he was 15 years old and remained with him steadily until 1900. At one time when Sam was 16 years old, he drove the largest string ever driven to Clayton. It consisted of 22 mules, 5 wagons, and was loaded with 44,000 lbs. of coke for the mines at Clayton.

When the freight line closed down, Sam brought in the last wagons to put them away. These last five wagons remained in their shed where Sam had put them until 1925 when they were brought out and he drove them in a 4th of July Ketchum parade. They were again returned to the sheds where they remained until 1938 when they were driven by Sam in the Sun Valley Rodeo.

When Sam passed away at Gooding in 1956, the world lost an artist, for jerk-line driving is indeed an art and to most of the world a lost art.

## **THE FIRST NEWSPAPER . . .**

The first newspaper was established by F. O. Harding in 1881. The type was set up at Ketchum and run off in his press at Hailey. H. E. Cook was editor with I. I. Lewis in charge of the local news. Thus originated the

"Ketchum Keystone." In 1882, Mr. Lewis bought half the business for his son George Jay, who went into business with the son of Foster who was the toll road keeper between Ketchum and Hailey. George J. Lewis sold out later to L. Tucker. Part of the old files are now at the University of Idaho and the remaining files are in Ketchum.

## **THE FIRST DRUG STORE . . .**

The first drug store was built on Lot 2 of Block 20 in Ketchum during the summer of 1881 and was stocked with a choice lot of drugs and medicines and a few articles of other merchandise. It was built, stocked and operated by I. I. Lewis.

## **THE FIRST CHURCH . . .**

In the summer of 1883 the Rev. George Ritchie built the Union Congregational Church and maintained it until he retired in 1893 when it was sold to Thomas K. Conrad, D.D., and became the St. Thomas Episcopal church.

## **ST. MARY'S CHURCH . . .**

Tis church was built by Father Nattini in 1884 and he did most of the work himself. The tall candlesticks and three benches are the original ones made by him. The altar cloth of white lace was crocheted by Frances Venable in 1889. The vestment is 150 years old and the Missal on the altar is dated 1722; both were brought from Italy by Father Nattini. The small organ was brought by him on a mule to Bellevue in 1881.

## **ODD FELLOWS & REBEKAHS . . .**

This lodge was established in Ketchum in 1884 with the Rebekahs a year later. The original altar; the Bible which bears the date 1879; and the organ which was purchased in 1889 and has been in continuous service ever since, are still in their possession.



## Ketchum Stage Line . . .

The Ketchum and Salmon River Stage Line was operated by Horace C. Lewis in conjunction with the Ketchum Fast Freight Line and covered the same area as well as extending as far as Red Rock, Montana, carrying express, mail and passengers. It was comprised of Concord coaches drawn by teams of six horses and made through trips, changing horses at the different camp sites. Each coach could carry seven passengers, the express, the mail and feed for the horses. Most of the coaches had outside drivers' seats and a rail around the top of the coach to hold the baggage and express. When the coaches went through on their trips with no passengers, they could carry three tons of freight delivered 80 miles in one day. This was really the "Fast Freight" of those days.

The coach in Ketchum today is known as a "jerky,"

having an inside driver's seat instead of the usual top-side driver. It was used mostly for official trips or for special or distinguished passengers. At one time this coach experienced the traditional stagecoach holdup when it was carrying the strong boxes of the Wells Fargo Company. It could carry five passengers and enough hay and grain for four horses.

## THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK . . .

The First National Bank of Ketchum opened the first of April 1884 with the following subscribers as Directors: George B. Moulton, E. C. Coffin, Thomas Lavell, H. C. Lewis and I. I. Lewis, with I. I. Lewis as President and E. C. Coffin as Vice President. The bank was built of brick on a portion of Lot 3, Block 2 (next to Baxter's Hotel), and is the site of the present Post Office.

## The Jerk Line . . .

Who of you in this day of jet propulsion, knows the full meaning and the amazing intelligence and patience of the driver and of each horse and mule in the 12, 14 and sometimes as many as 24 spans which made up a string pulling the freight wagons over the hazardous mountain roads to the mines in the early days?

The driver (sometimes called a "mule skinner") rode the left hand (or "near") Wheeler, and controlled and directed this long string over the narrow roads and up the steep grades by means of a jerk line which he held in his right hand. In his left hand he held the rope or strap which controlled the brakes on the wagons. He had to know the name of each horse or mule, which always responded immediately when his name was called and he was given a direction to "Haw!" which meant to step over the haul chain to the left—or "Gee!" to the right.

The jerk line is a single line or rein about 100 ft. long, fastened to the near side bit of the leader and running through rings on the near side harness of all teams except the Pointers, back to the driver. The lead mule, especially trained to all different jerks on this line, turned right when given one steady pull and to the left when given several short jerks—hence the name.

The team which worked next to the wagon, with the wagon tongue between them, were known as Wheelers and were so trained that they felt the responsibility of the wagons was theirs, sometimes working on their own in an effort to pull the wagons out of bogs or up steep inclines, and were also intelligent enough to shift the responsibility when the going was easy. These were the strongest and gentlest of all the teams. Next were the Pointers, hitched to a stretcher bar about 18 inches from the end of the wagon tongue and not connected to the jerk line. Horses were trained first as Pointers and were an assisting team to the Wheelers in guiding the wagons. They were trained to step back and forth over their chain when going around

sharp turns and had no fear of going off the road in bad places. The Pointers were later advanced to Swing position, just behind the Leaders. Between the Pointers and the Swing teams, the other teams were known as Sixes, Eights, Tens, etc. The Swing team worked much on their own, knowin<sup>g</sup> without signals when to cross over their haul chain for turns and in which direction to pull. The Leaders were the guide team, always alert and responding quickly to all jerk line signals.

The Leaders were also especially trained in regard to the hames chimes which were not only colorful and ornamental but served a two-fold purpose. Arranged on a semi-circle bracket and consisting of five graduated bells, they gave a tinkling chime tone which was a warning to approaching teams coming around dangerous curves. Also, after the teams were allowed a break and had rested, at a signal of the jerk line the Lead mule shook his bells violently, which was a sign for all teams to tighten the rigging and prepare to start pulling.

With each string, usually amblin<sup>g</sup> behind the wagons, was a pinto mare, known as the "Belle Mare," and her colt. She, also, had a designated purpose which was to keep the teams from straying at night when they camped.

The art of getting a string of from 12 to 24 mules and from three to five wagons, heavily loaded with ore, around one of the old hairpin turns on a steep grade, cannot be described in this article. If you, in one of your modern cars, have strayed from the main highways and wandered up one of the old abandoned mine roads and have had to back your car a couple times in an effort to make the turns, you can partially understand the fantastic patience, courage, and the responsibility entailed in getting the wagons over the mountains.





## FIRE DEPT. ORGANIZED IN 1883 . . .

The Ketchum Fire Department was composed entirely of volunteers and was formed in 1883. In 1885 the hose cart was purchased to serve the town. The problem of water was solved by digging a hole for a large wooden water storage tank on the busiest corner of Main Street. The water was pumped from this tank by hand through the hoses and would reach most of the buildings in this section, some of them being The First National Bank, Baxter's Hotel, Lewis' brick store and the Palace Hotel and the Metropolitan Hall. The original uniforms for the Fire Department were duplicated in 1958 and worn in the first Wagon Days Parade with the fire cart.

## CHINESE

In the 1880's there were many Chinese in this area and their Wash Houses were much in evidence. They were also the principal providers of fresh vegetables which were carried from door to door in baskets hung from a bar on their shoulders.

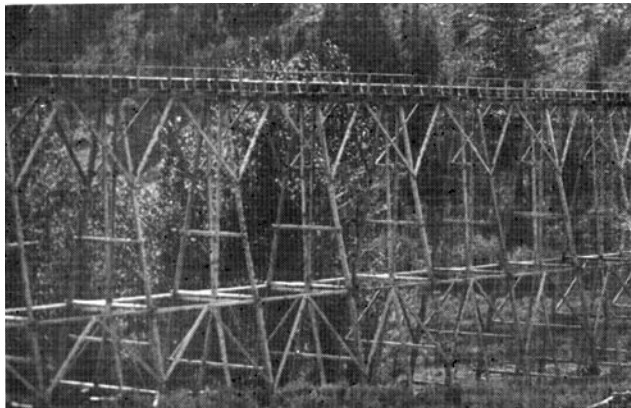


*The first smelter in the Pacific Northwest was built at Ketchum in the fall of 1881. This picture of smelter and bullion shed was taken in 1883.*

## THE PHILADELPHIA MINING & SMELTING CO. . . .

The Philadelphia Mining & Smelting works was established by Col. E. Green in the fall of 1881 at which time one stack was built. The second stack was erected in 1882 and two more were added in 1883. This was the most complete smelting works in the West and the first one in the Pacific Northwest. It was located on the Warm Springs Creek Road, just across the Wood River bridge. The capacity of the four furnaces was forty to fifty tons of bullion per day from ore taken from 52 different mines in the surrounding territory. Charcoal was burned in the coke kilns from wood which was cut on the side of the mountain and run down to the smelter by water in a V-flume on a tall trestle that extended up the river five miles. The tall stacks, the kilns and part of the trestle, stood for many years after the smelter buildings had been dismantled.

This smelter also had the honor of burning one of the first three incandescent globes invented by Edison. Two of these globes were presented to friends of his, one to a sea-Captain and one to Col. Green at the smelter in Ketchum.



*This flume over Warm Springs Creek was part of the five-mile system which floated wood to the smelter.*

## THE FIRST BATH HOUSE . . .

The first bath house was erected at the Guyer Hot Springs (now Brandt's) in 1882. This property was originally owned by Captain Harry Guyer, S. T. Hauser and I. I. Lewis. In the spring of 1882, Mr. Lewis erected a bar and a restaurant house, a bath house and a 20 x 40 ft. dancing floor and the place opened for business on July 4th with the town people holding their celebration there. The bar receipts that day were \$253.00. Later the same year, he added a two story building of ten or eleven hotel rooms, including a ladies parlor all furnished and carpeted, a plunge bath and a large story and a half stable and an underground cellar.

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## Culture Was Important . . .

The boom days of Ketchum brought in not only the prospector, the miner, the mule skinner, the saloon keeper, the banker, etc., but the get-rich-quick, the upper crust, the musicians, the artists and the dramatists. The many and varied personalities each turned to his own natural bent. Professor Delius, a famous Austrian Violinist, formed an orchestra which not only gave concerts at the Metropolitan Hall but played for the dances and provided background music for the plays which were presented by the local Dramatic Club and for the stock companies which came to Ketchum.

Ketchum also had its "brass band" consisting of 13 musicians and was lead by Joe Montgomery who played

the cornet. This band gave concerts and, of course, played and marched in the Ketchum parades.

The Dramatic Club met and rehearsed diligently to put on at least two plays yearly for the public. Some of these which may be remembered are "Charley's Aunt," "Down the Black Canyon," "Lost in London" and "The Mountain Waif."

The Shakespearean Club was formed by a few of the townsmen, not to put on plays but to study and read them.

## KETCHUM SPRING WATER CO. . . .

The Ketchum Spring Water Company was formed just nine years after the first tent was pitched on the present site of Ketchum. A civic minded group of the town's business men formed the water company in 1889 for the purpose of supplying the residents of the town with water. A reservoir was built, being filled with water from the springs along Trail Creek, and wood stave pipe was shipped from Seattle and layed from the source of supply, two miles into Ketchum.

The original stockholders were W. H. Greenhow, A. Adams, George Metzler, H. C. Lewis, J. F. Jacobs, E. J. Cowley, G. D. Worswick, Thomas Tague, I. I. Lewis, T. W. Gillette, William Hyndman, F. R. Gooding, C. E. Griswold, P. P. Baxter, George M. Snow, Walter Clark, G. S. Callihan, George Steward, L. D. Newman, Patrick McMahon, E. B. Williams, I. H. Bowman, James Judge and George E. Mills.

## SUN VALLEY . . .

The ranch, which later became Sun Valley, was first staked out by Charley Swan, who had come from Montana with I. I. Lewis. He built a very snug good log house just outside the townsite line but spent most of his time hanging about the saloons. In the fall of 1880 he decided to leave the Wood River country and sold his ranch claim to I. I. Lewis. In April 1881, I. I. Lewis located a water right up Trail Creek for irrigating and a little later, secured the claim by taking out a ditch and putting in a head gate, and at the same time laid claim to the land under

the Desert Land Law. In 1881 he had holes dug and posts set to fence in about 700 acres. The hay crops raised on this land in 1884 brought from \$30 to \$40 per ton. The first grain crops allowed to mature for grain, were raised in 1891 from which were threshed 850 bushels.

When I. I. Lewis passed away the ranch became the property of his eldest son, Horace C. Lewis and upon Horace's death in 1911, was sold to Ernest Brass who maintained it as a ranch until it was sold to the Union Pacific Railroad in early 1936 when it became the famous Sun Valley resort.

## "OLD KENTUCK"

*"Old Kentuck" was one of the many town characters. He lived for many years in a cave up Warm Springs Creek, which he had dug out of the side of the mountain on the other side of the creek. The only access to this cave was across a fallen tree which, even in a man's sober moments, looked treacherous. Old Kentuck, however, never failed to get across it even though he may have spent most of the night too heavily imbibing at Ketchum's saloons.*



## WHEN KETCHUM WAS YOUNG

Author Unknown

*How many in Ketchum still remain  
Who remember the characters of this refrain?*

*In early days when Ketchum was young  
The gamblers and miners made things hum.  
Queer were their names and queer were their ways  
These pioneers of early days.  
A few of the names that I recall  
Might be of interest to one and all:*

*Lousey Johnny and Johnny the Cinch;  
Banjo Nell — a desolate wench;  
Three Fingered Jack and Deep Water Jack;  
Good men these with respect not a lack.  
There was Blue Dick and Grumbling Dick,  
They earned their bread with shovel and pick.  
Jimmy the Harp and Nicky his friend —  
Nicky the Fid of musical trend.  
Long Haired George who swore by his lock  
Never to shave til silver came back.  
Box-Car Kelly and Kelly de Box  
A friend of Johnny Behind the Rocks.  
Coal-oil George — always out with the law,  
And last but not least, our friend "Arkansaw"  
And his friend Russian John from a far away nation  
Whose home now is enshrined as a Ranger Station.*

# Thank You!

We wish to express our gratitude to all those who so graciously loaned their horses, teams, wagons and other equipment, as well as to those who so generously gave their time, to help make our Wagon Days a success.

The People of Ketchum



**1958 PROGRAM REPRINTED FOR  
WAGON DAYS 50TH ANNIVERSARY**