

# Assassination: Idaho's Trial of the Century

<http://idahoptv.org/productions/specials/trial/>

Trip to Boise for the Premier showing at the Egyptian Theater - November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007

For those inclined to avoid what will most likely be a lengthy account of our trip and another chapter for a future book, at least click on the above link and check out the new **Assassination: Idaho's Trial of the Century** website. Tony Lukas wrote *Big Trouble* and maybe somewhere down the road I will do a "Littler Trouble" although Tony's epic has and will always be of the utmost importance in the telling of this story and serves as the consummate research tool.

I will give a few links and scatter some small pictures about as we go along but will avoid attaching much in the way of larger photos, sound or video files. I know some of the family has older computers and/or slow dialup without a lot of capacity for such things. In that case you may not be able to view some items on the various websites without streaming video, audio or flash capability. Let me know if you encounter problems opening this document and need a copy of it snail mailed.

These are just my notes so don't pick on me too much in regards to spelling and grammar as I am not doing a lot of proofing. I spell checked it but technology cannot make up for my dyslexic tendencies.

## Idaho November 2007

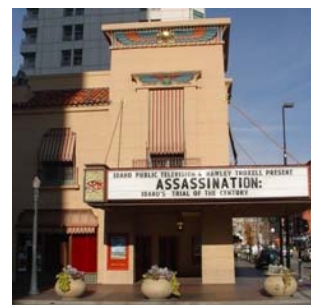


### November 6, 2007 - Arrived in Boise

My daughter Caley (kay-lee) and I flew into Boise from San Luis Obispo, CA via Salt Lake City, UT and headed for our hotel. We took a drive around the city, mostly because I got lost and as the result of an inaccurate Yahoo map but finally found our way. We located some good Mediterranean food just across the street from the hotel and then settled in to relax before the big day ahead.

### November 7, 2007 - "Oh, What A Night"

I am going to get right to the evenings program and will cover later what we did earlier on this day. Ok, so it was not the night The Four Season's were singing about in December 1963 but November 2007 was still pretty good. This was premier day for the special presentation of **Assassination: Idaho's Trial of the Century** at the vintage and wonderfully restored Egyptian Theatre. See some pics and info on the theater at: <http://www.egyptiantheatre.net/>



The premier was just the hypothetical end of a long journey by Idaho Public Television (IPTV), Retired Idaho Supreme Court Justice Byron Johnson, Director Pat Metzler, Producer Bruce Reichert and a small army of volunteers, actors, historians and others with an interest in telling this compelling story. Although November 7<sup>th</sup> will be the only premier, the story will live on through future broadcasts on IPTV, hopefully other PBS stations and the soon to be available DVD. The assassination and trial will undoubtedly continue to be studied and perhaps our great and great great grandchildren will see fit to do a sequel in the year 3007. By then maybe a bit more light will have been shed on my friend Byron's conspiracy theory, new books written and additional discoveries and documents found (maybe even Jack Simpkins).

Back when the production was not much more than a thought in the minds of Byron and IPTV, I had no concept of how (or if) it would come to fruition and certainly never dreamed of being a part of it since I live in California. I have always felt that in many respects Frank Steunenberg and our family were relegated to a small footnote in Idaho history in comparison to the considerable attention given Orchard, Haywood and all the great legal minds and orators in this saga. Certainly all of that attention was and is appropriate. However, Frank Steunenberg served his state with honor and dedication and was a loving and caring father to his family until that cruel night of December 30<sup>th</sup> 1905. Thank you to Senator William Borah over a century ago on January 2, 1906 and to Justice Byron Johnson now 100 years later on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007 for remembering that “he was of the granite hewn.”



I have to personally thank Byron not only for his perseverance, dedication and scholarly interest in the events surrounding the assassination and trial, but for his acknowledgment of Frank Steunenberg the man and the Steunenberg family. The “granite hewn” verse referenced above, inscribed on the base of the Steunenberg statue and a part of Senator Borah’s oration at the governor’s funeral is of personal significance to both of us. The full text can be viewed at: <http://www.idahohistory.net/Reference%20Series/0136.pdf>.

I was pleased to have Byron share the verse as part of his introduction before the start of the program. It took on even greater importance once the show ended and I realized that my own reading of it had either been a poor one or just could not make it past the constraints of time and thus ended up on the editing room floor. A little disappointing yes...but Pat, you are forgiven ☺ as the editing to get all the material and footage down into a one hour show with all the necessary elements was masterful! We all know that a lot of good stuff had to be left out. To have my few seconds here and there in the program is not something I would have even dreamed of when I first heard about the project. Well done!

As opening night neared, hundreds of miles away and I could feel Bruce Reichert’s energy (or maybe it was panic!) emanating all the way from Boise, Idaho to Los Osos, CA. It became particularly intense during those final couple of weeks with the flurry of emails as the premier date rapidly approached. However, his otherwise more relaxing style and knowledge of the topic made my interview back in March as comfortable as it could possibly be. The willingness and invitation to involve me in the project was much appreciated. Bruce...I was taken aback by your kind comments and introduction of me and my daughter to the Egyptian Theatre crowd. I will not forget it.

The premier went beyond all expectations. I was pleased with my brief but I hope helpful appearances. For a non-attorney, non-actor and non-professor—appearing among this elite crowd in high definition on the tall screen in the Egyptian theatre raised certain fears. Those fears were totally unfounded (another good job on the editing Pat!) and I am proud to have been a part of this historic event.



Although there is never enough time, I was pleased to meet a few more of the participants and supporters before and after the show and during the few days Caley and I were in Idaho. Certainly a highlight was to chat with David Grover, author of *Debaters and Dynamiters* and an expert commentator in the program. “A night of triumph in Boise” David wrote in my now cherished copy of *Debaters and Dynamiters* (Notable Trials Version). Thank you David for helping make it so. Forty years later *D&D* still stands as the most objective and authoritative assessment of the Haywood trial...bar none. Although bits and pieces of additional information may have become available in those ensuing years, your book has withstood the test of time quite well. It was a real treat to have an opportunity to meet and talk with you. Thank you so much for coming.

The one expert commentator that I regret we missed was Katherine Aiken. Katherine may have been there somewhere in the crowd and became first known to me several years ago through her work in the PBS production of *Fire in the Hole*. You can get more information at: <http://www.kued.org/productions/fire/index.html>. Perhaps one day I can tote along by *D&D*, get a signature and have an opportunity to further benefit from your expertise in labor and political history.



### Post Premier Party



After the premier some of the audience and participants gathered at the studio of Echo Film Productions. It was a nice chance for some congratulations, backslapping and final goodbyes. Although everyone's company was enjoyed, the one character I went away remembering was Al Kiler, who played the part of a member of the jury. The room was small and noisy, Al hard of hearing but the conversation fascinating. I was honored to have him sign by *D&D Notable Trial's* book. It looked to me like Al might have another role to play during the upcoming holiday season.

### Earlier on Premier Day-Darrow (AKA Gary) meets Steunenberg (AKA John)

I saw Gary Anderson (AKA Darrow) perform back in March at the Boise Little Theatre in the production of **The Gate on 16 Avenue**. See: <http://www.id.uscourts.gov/ilhs/GateOn16thAve.htm>



Unfortunately we did not get to meet at that time but later connected by email and phone and have had that cup of coffee waiting ever since. That finally ended when Gary and I, along with Victoria Graham (Nevada Jane Haywood) and their friend Eric Wallace met on the morning of 11/7 at the Frank Steunenberg statue in front of the Capital building. The trek to the statue is of course a must for any family visit and this was a particularly pleasant time with the opportunity to finally meet Gary and to share our mutual interests in history, Darrow and other historical figures and social causes.

Short story...I remember a few months back at my office when I had stepped away from my phone and an office assistant came searching for me. "You have a call. It's that man Clarence Darrow"! It was the first call anyone had received from Darrow in a long time.

From the statue we all walked to the historic Idanha Hotel where we went searching for the memories and ghosts of Darrow, McParland, Gooding, Steunenberg, Orchard and many others through the long hallways and the twists and turns of this still stately building. Our efforts to get within the famous spires of the Idanha were thwarted until we came across "Josh" on his way into the elevator to leave the building. We asked how to get into the spires and Josh mentioned that one runs up through his room. "Do you think we could take a look, could you show it to us?" But Josh was busy, on his way out and did not have time. He probably sensed that this group before him asking to invade his apartment might be a bunch of California crazies. A couple of minutes later he came back out of the hotel elevator as he had forgotten something. Fate had intervened. Once again the persuasive rhetoric of the Steunenberg's (John and Caley), Darrow, Nevada Jane and friend Eric descended upon him. He relinquished and allowed our entry into his abode...asking our indulgence of his lack of housekeeping. In we went to check out his view through the curved widow from the circular room comprising his portion of an Idanha Hotel spire. Josh was very hospitable and we exchanged stories about the Idanha and asked that be on the lookout for the likes of Steunenberg, Orchard and Darrow prowling about this great old building.



Reflection of the Idanha and those spires. Josh's on the left!

On our way out, Gary placed a \$10 bill under the door as we rushed off for the elevator to make our escape. We were unable to get away before Josh opened his door and hollered down to us “did someone drop a \$10 bill?” His honesty was refreshing. No we said. That was just payment for our invasion and use of his apartment...then again perhaps this was Darrow paying off a witness to our crime? Josh responded with something like “you don’t know what this means to me right now.” Alright, I’ll give this one to Gary/Darrow for once again helping the poor and downtrodden.

Our hallway jaunt complete, we settled in for pastry and drink at the **La Vie En Rose** in the Idanha Hotel. This spot had been on my itinerary for a stop and I am glad it turned out to be with good company. Steunenberg and Darrow had finally met and sat down for that cup of coffee. And thanks Caley, Victoria and Eric for joining us in this historical setting where many of the participants in our drama of 100+ years ago stayed and sat about in the same lobby area having similar conversations that we can only imagine and speculate about. Be sure to visit Gary and Victoria at the **American Legends Theatre Works**: [http://www.clarencedarrowgaryanderson.com/Clarence\\_Darrow.html](http://www.clarencedarrowgaryanderson.com/Clarence_Darrow.html)

Later that day we headed for the ISHS History Museum. Darrow and Nevada Jane (I love calling Gary and Victoria by their stage names) had to change plans in favor of heading back to their temporary quarters to let in the furnace repair person and hopefully get some relief from the chilly Boise nights. We would join up again the following day for a special visit to the Idaho Pen. Eric, Caley and I went on to the ISHS museum and had a nice walk through Idaho history. As always, a point of interest is the exhibit of the Haywood trial evidence. Much of it happened to be off exhibit on this particular day. Perhaps that was just as well as I have seen it before and I always get an eerie sense...a bit of the chills as I stare down at the twisted pieces and fragments of metal, knowing that they tore through the flesh of my great grandfather as his children and wife looked on. Thank you Eric for your good company.

### **Morris Hill Cemetery - In search of Harry Orchard**

I had never been to Morris Hill before but it was time to go see Harry’s gravesite (where he went from here we can continue to debate) as well as pay respects to William Borah and James Hawley. So here I was as close to Harry as I was ever going to get...at least for now. Like Clarence Darrow, I am pretty much an agnostic in belief but have always pursued a spiritual side to life. I was reminded of Darrow saying something along the line that if there is a heaven or hell, he will have plenty of friends no matter where he ends up going. I am not sure where Darrow will meet up with Orchard as it is not my call. My only message to Orchard was “what the hell were you thinking Harry!” It was another stop along the road in this story that I had to make and had finally completed.



As evident by the contingent at both Morris Hill and the premier, I noticed there are a lot of Hawley’s in Idaho. Caley spoke with a few of the Hawley kids at the premier. In stark contrast at Morris Hill was the Borah monument marking only the two gravesites of William and Mary Borah. Both Borah and Hawley beat Orchard to the graveyard as did all of the figures involved in this story. That was one race that I guess Harry lost but still came out the winner.

### **Dinner with Cousin Judy**

After exchanging emails for the past couple of years, Caley and I were finally able to meet for the first time our Cousin Judy Krueger. We met at Gino’s Ristorante before the premier just up the street from the Egyptian Theater. Although a little rushed because of the approaching premier start time, the food was great and the company and conversation even better. Let’s do it again.



Bill (left) and Judy (right) with COI Pres. Bob Hoover

Cousins Judy and Bill established the George L. Crookham Jr collection at the College of Idaho comprising the papers of Frank Steunenberg. The collection has become a significant resource for researchers, historians and students under the able management of archivist Jan Boles.

<http://www.albertson.edu/aboutaci/archives/GLC/default.asp?ID=about>

I was sorry that Bill and Berit Crookham could not join us that evening but Bill had just undergone knee replacement surgery and was still in the hospital. I hope you are on the road to recovery Cousin Bill and up and running soon. We will get back to Gino's again someday when we can all be together and have plenty of time to linger over a good Chianti.

**November 8, 2007 - Tour of the Idaho Pen, ISHS and lunch with Beth**



Gary & John home at last



Rachelle & John



John & Gary...loafing

The morning following the production, I called Rachelle Littau, Education Director at the old Pen. Rachelle and I had been in contact by email and she offered a private tour of the pen plus had an unknown "surprise" to show us. Along with Caley and me, we once again had the good company of Gary, and Victoria and the addition of Keith Couch; known in the production as Judge Fremont Wood. So Steunenberg, Darrow, Nevada Jane Haywood and Judge Wood all strutted up to the front door at the pen and rang the door bell (really!) in search of one Harry Orchard.



Thank you Rachelle for the tour (accompanied by Erika) and the special showing of an inlaid game board made by Orchard and the wooden shoe molds and leather that he may have used while making shoes at the pen. Very special. I always find it fascinating to tour the pen, imagine life for the prisoners and to walk in Harry's steps. By the way Rachelle, I donated that copy of *The Clock* to the ISHS and left it with Carolyn. I saw that the archives already had that particular edition in the collection so maybe you can use it up at the pen to show as an example of a prisoner produced magazine.



John & Keith Couch AKA Judge Fremont Wood...but judge, why did you have to keep telling the jury that independent corroboration was needed of Orchard's testimony!

After the pen, we headed our own ways, with Caley and I going just down the street to the ISHS Public Archives and Library. I will have to plan a day or two sometime just to spend at the archives as a couple of hours doesn't allow one to even scratch the surface. Maybe a guided tour with Judy Austin though the volumes of available material would be in order. I am sure Judy knows it quite well by now. She and I have barely met but everything I know and have read tells me she is a treasure trove of historical information. We all know how valuable she was to the IPTV project. Like Byron, Jan, Gary and others, perhaps Judy can be on the agenda for that next cup of coffee.

It was a big treat to finally get a look at the original confession of Orchard that was donated by the Gooding family descendants. I will always remember crossing paths with Cindy Jones, a great granddaughter of Governor Gooding. It was very gratifying to have played a small part in helping the Gooding descendants realize what they had in their possession and to help with some contact information to start the appraisal process. The irony of 100 years later having the Steunenberg and Gooding names cross again and to find what was thought to be a forever lost document was rather extraordinary. Thank you again to Cindy and the other Gooding descendents.

I want to mention Josh Bernard as he happened to be at the archives at the same time we were there. Josh is a graduate student under the tutelage of Amber Beierle at the Boise Office of the City Historian and Professor Todd Shallot at BSU. We can confirm that on a nice sunny day in Boise, when I am sure Josh could have found many other pleasant activities, he was diligently doing his research and we think he deserves a few extra credits for it. Please tell him hello, thank him for his interest in our family history and pass on this email as I did not get his address. We certainly appreciated the help of the reference librarians and Linda Morton-Keithley and Carolyn Bowler at the ISHS. Linda and I had come in contact previously in regards to the Orchard confession document and it is always nice to finally meet face to face. The Public Archives and Library is quite a nice facility with a dedicated staff and we shall return again when more time allows. Now that I have met Linda and Carolyn they can expect a few more inquires to be coming their way from time to time.

[http://www.idahohistory.net/library\\_archives.html](http://www.idahohistory.net/library_archives.html)

### **Lunch with Beth**

Caley and I enjoyed a very nice late lunch with Beth Steunenberg Allen. Beth is the daughter of Frank Steunenberg Jr. and hence the grand daughter of Governor Frank Steunenberg. Beth keeps pretty much out of the limelight but is a great source of information about her father and his feelings about the assassination (he was only 5 at the time) and Harry Orchard. My Uncle Frank (as I knew him) had several contacts with Orchard in later years. As always, we enjoyed our time together and I am happy that I can serve as a link between Beth and my mother Brenda. They may not be able to travel and see each other anymore but remain closely tied through the memories of the past and the everlasting bonds of family. Thank you Beth.



### **November 9, 2007 - College of Idaho Archives with Jan and Deanna**

Today we headed over to the COI archives for a visit with Jan and I wanted to get a look at that wonderful old court docket from 1906 that had been rescued from the dumpster. Quite a find with the names we all know (Haywood, Petitioner, Moyer, Orchard, Simpkins, etc) but including the quiet presence of a young Julian Steunenberg as a witness to Orchard's presence in Caldwell. Thank you Cousin Bill and Jan for seeing that the item found its way safely into the hands of the archives. Our friend Jan has of course been of great importance to the Steunenberg family with the establishment of the George L. Crookham Jr. collection. He served as a consultant to the IPTV production and his white beard and hair served him well as a member of the Haywood trial jury. He is not really as old as any of those Haywood trial jurors but he played the part well! Thank you for all your work and for keeping me in touch with happenings in Idaho. You are an invaluable resource.



Jan, John & Deanna

We also had the pleasure of meeting with Deanna Davis from Pacific Press in Nampa < <http://www.pacificpress.com/> >. Deanna and I had corresponded briefly and we arranged to meet and discuss the SDA Church's desire to have her write a new book on Harry Orchard. I was happy to hear Dianna say that she wanted to do more than just a rehash of *The Man God Made Again*, and plans to update and include other elements from the story on which we have been focusing so much recent interest. Perhaps it is Belle Steunenberg and later Frank Steunenberg Jr. who played significant

roles in Orchard's alleged salvation that deserves more prominent recognition. Regardless of one's personal view of Orchard's real or faked conversion, as someone opposed to capital punishment I cannot apply that view only to modern times and ignore the past. I am at peace with Orchard's life sentence, supportive of my ancestors that made sure it stayed that way but find regrettable some of the unusual freedom's that Orchard enjoyed during his life at the Idaho pen.

Deanna also spent a considerable amount of time looking over my mother Brenda's treasured copy of *60 Years of Progress-Walla Walla College*. The book has many notations and markings made by my Grandmother Frances Beardsley Wood Steunenberg. Some of our ancestors on my grandmother's side were pioneers in the early days of the college and the Walla Walla Valley. That is another story to be told but suffice to say that Julian Steunenberg was smitten by the young Frances while attending college and we know the story went on happily for a lifetime thereafter.

### **Caldwell Bank and Trust, Railroad Depot, Steunenberg Block, Canyon Hill Cemetery**

For dinner Caley and I headed for the Caldwell Bank and Trust. Well not a bank anymore and the arches and nice brick work were long ago covered and it is now home to the Acapulco restaurant. The bank makes up part of the Steunenberg Block. We wanted Mexican food and this proved to be a good stop to feed both the historical and hunger needs. The downstairs where the bank was located remains vacant, hopefully the future home of a thriving business as efforts to revitalize old Caldwell and complete the Indian Creek project continues. I have an old cabinet photo of the inside of the bank with AK Steunenberg standing at the cashier's window. It is hard to picture it now but it looks like the original ceiling remains in tact. Upstairs in the restaurant is where Frank Steunenberg had his office and would have sat surveying the then major intersection of activity in a growing Caldwell. As we sat in the window booth staring out, I imagined the Saratoga Hotel still across the street (regrettably burned down in 1990) and Harry Orchard watching out the window from room #19 in December of 1905 with a clear view of the Governor's office.



Of course we had to walk across the street and take a look at the old train depot and the AK and Frank Steunenberg commemorative monument. It was placed there through the efforts of Cousin Bill and was dedicated by the family and City of Caldwell in September of 2005. Al Steunenberg and John McClain spoke on behalf of the AK and Frank Steunenberg lines of the family and I had the good fortune to meet them not long thereafter. I was unable to attend that dedication but am pleased to have visited shortly before in June 2005 and now twice since.

Caley and I ventured off to make a couple more stops, heading for Canyon Hill Cemetery. I am sure she was thrilled at the prospect! We stopped on the way to take another look at what was perhaps the first home of Julian and Francis Steunenberg. The doors and windows have long ago been sealed and it now serves as a pump house in Luby Park. If you know anything about that house then please let me know.



The cemetery had closed at 5:00pm but we went up the perimeter road, stopped along the street and crawled through the chain barrier walking in to the clearly in view Steunenberg plot. Not going to let a small thing like being closed get in the way. I had been here in March with Cousin Bill and during our earlier trip in 2005 so it was nothing new. Canyon Hill was quiet, no other visitors in site (since it was after closing time) and the late evening sun nearing its decent made for a peaceful scene.

Going in to Canyon Hill brought forward no particular emotions as this was just a quick stop so we could say we did our duty. I wanted to refresh the memory of a reticent daughter who I am sure had better ideas of what we could be doing. I of course never met my great grandparents Frank and Belle Steunenberg and I wandered about examining the grave markers once again out of historical and genealogical interest. I was standing before the graves of my beloved grandparents, Julian and Frances Steunenberg when the memories and emotions of the past suddenly snuck up from behind the silent grave stone sentinels and the eyes welled with irrepressible tears. Julian and Frances possessed very little but they gave us everything with their caring, kindness and love. They are our link to the generations that came before and we are blessed by the times we shared together.



Grandpa Julian & John c 1954

### **November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007 - Departure Day/A Few last Stops**

I had forgotten to take some photos of a nice display about the Pen, Harry Orchard and the events of that time that is set-up in the Public Archives and Library lobby. Very nice and worth the return visit. Caley and I walked a bit around old town Boise, found Tully's coffee house for a break and enjoyed the change in weather that brought about a light rain. It had been clear and moderate all week to accommodate us CA coastal folks but the rain was a pleasant and welcomed change. The Idanha got a deserved last look and a couple of pictures. A final drive by and so long to "The Governor."



Before our drive to the airport I had to try and contact a Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Clausen in Boise. Unfortunately I only got their voice mail. I had previously been in touch with the Clausen's by mail in regards to an old clock in their possession that reportedly at one time belonged to Governor Steunenberg. Mr. Clausen had purchased it years ago (maybe 25 years) from a John Dunn of Dunn's Clock Repair in Caldwell. The repair shop is long gone and Mr. Dunn is deceased. Reportedly Dunn had purchased it from a Steunenberg

relative. If anyone remembers seeing it before then please let me know. If you are in and around Boise and would like to follow-up with the Clausen's, take a look and check the provenance more closely then let me know that too.

### **Heading Home**

We then caught our plane to Salt Lake City, had a longer stopover so found some almost acceptable airport food and Caley did a little homework while I scratched out a few notes about the trip. It had been a great few days but we were glad to find our way back home at about 10:30pm Saturday night.

### **After the Trip**

Having run a little late from dinner with Cousin Judy and with the subsequent introductions and chatting in the lobby before the show (like with Bruce, Pat, Gary, Joan, others), we had regrettably missed most of the music provided by **Bona Fide**. The group had assembled a special music introduction including "Farewell Steunenberg" and "Dynamite Harry Orchard." I hope Bona Fide will do a studio recording sometime of all the tracks from the show. In the meantime, I purchased a couple of CD's with the help of Gary Eller and he graciously has provided other information and extras for which I am most appreciative. I was initially interested because of Bona Fide's connection to the premier but after speaking with Gary and hearing a couple of tracks I knew this was my kind of music anyway. Thanks Gary and Bona Fide!

You can find the Dynamite Harry track on the IPTV website and others at:

<http://www.bonafidaho.com/recordings.htm>



The first public showing of Assassination: Idaho's Trial of the Century has now taken place on IPTV. I hope the response has been favorable and I know it has already spawned new contacts and requests for information. I am always happy to hear from anyone interested in these events. Please feel free to share this letter, forward it on to family and friends that are not on my email list and/or provide my email address to any interested parties.

There have been many others folks that we have not been able to meet or may have forgotten to thank but that have played a role in the special events during the period encompassing the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of Frank Steunenberg's assassination and the "Trial of the Century." Thank you all for your interest, support and work on the various projects.

I wasn't sure at first if we could take the days off or afford at holiday time another Idaho trip to attend the premier but I am sure glad we did. Waiting another 100 years would have just been too long.

Until next time, I wish you a happy and safe holiday season from our family to yours.

With pleasant memories,

John, my wife Cindy and our daughter Caley