

Governor Marion E. Hay signs a bill creating Pend Oreille County on March 1, 1911.

By Paula Becker
Posted 3/11/2011
HistoryLink.org Essay 9771

On March 1, 1911, Washington governor Marion E. Hay (1865-1933) signs legislation creating Pend Oreille County. The new county is comprised of land formerly designated as part of Stevens County, and is bordered by Stevens County to the west, the Canadian border to the north, the Idaho border to the east, and Spokane County to the south. The county's name is that used by French-Canadian fur traders to designate some of the future county's original Indian inhabitants.

The state house had approved the bill establishing Pend Oreille County on February 10, 1911. Only six representatives voted against the bill. On February 20, 1911, the bill passed the state senate. Representative Simeon J. Appleman (b. 1877), of Newport, and State Senator Albert W. Anderson (b. 1871), of Addy, had sponsored the legislation. The new county measured 67 miles north to south, and an average 22 miles west to east.

In the decade prior to Pend Oreille County's formation, population in that part of what was still Stevens County had increased five-fold, from roughly 1,200 to 5,900. Newport was the largest town, with rail service via the Great Northern Railroad and a port on the Pend Oreille River. Area residents, led by *Newport Miner* publisher Fred L. Wolf (1877-1957) and Ione attorney Fred Trumbull (1880-1955), petitioned the state legislature for county designation.

The Olympia Record described Wolf and Trumbull's arrival in Olympia on January 15, 1911, to lobby for the bill:

"Fred Wolf, editor of the *Newport Miner*, and Fred Trumbull of Ione, arrived in the city yesterday to work for the passage of a bill which will divide Stevens into two parts, the line running along the summit of the Kalispel mounts, which form a natural barrier between the Pend Oreille and the Columbia [sic] valleys.

"Mr. Wolf, who is chairman of an executive committee composed of members of commercial clubs in the towns of the Pend Oreille valley, has with him a petition signed by 1,500 voters of his district asking for county division. ... The chief reason for county division ... is that it takes three days to

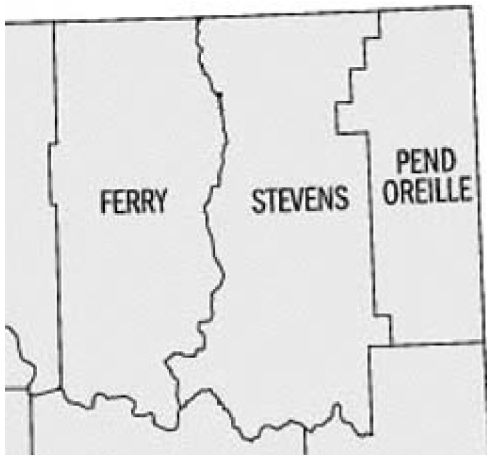
reach Colville, the county seat, to transact a days' business and return to the towns in the lower Pend Oreille country and four days to make the trip from the upper towns of the valley" (January 16, 1911, p. 6).

Three months after signing into law the bill establishing Pend Oreille County, Governor Hay visited the county and was feted at every stop. The law creating Pend Oreille County became effective on June 8, 1911.



Metaline Falls with the town of Metaline Falls in background, ca. 1912

Courtesy Tornado Creek Publications



Northeast Washington counties

Sources: Tony Bamonte and Suzanne Schaeffer Bamonte, *History of Pend Oreille County* (Spokane: Tornado Creek Publications, 1996); *HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History*, "Pend Oreille County -- Thumbnail History" (by Laura Arksey) <http://www.historylink.org/> (accessed February 25, 2011); *The Colville Examiner*, March 18, 1911, p.3; *Ibid.*, February 25, 1911, p.4; "Pend Oreille County Measure Passes House," *Morning Olympian*, February 11, 1911, p.1; *Ibid.*, January 16, 1911, p. 6.

Related Topics

COUNTIES

Licensing: This essay is licensed under a Creative Commons license that encourages reproduction with attribution. Credit should be given to both HistoryLink.org and to the author, and sources must be included with any reproduction. Click the icon for more info. Please note that this Creative Commons license applies to text only, and not to images. For more information regarding individual photos or images, please contact the source noted in the image credit.

Major Support for HistoryLink.org Provided By: The State of Washington | Patsy Bullitt Collins | Paul G. Allen Family Foundation | Museum Of History & Industry | 4Culture (King County Lodging Tax Revenue) | City of Seattle | City of Bellevue | City of Tacoma | King County | The Peach Foundation | Microsoft Corporation, Other Public and Private Sponsors and Visitors Like You