

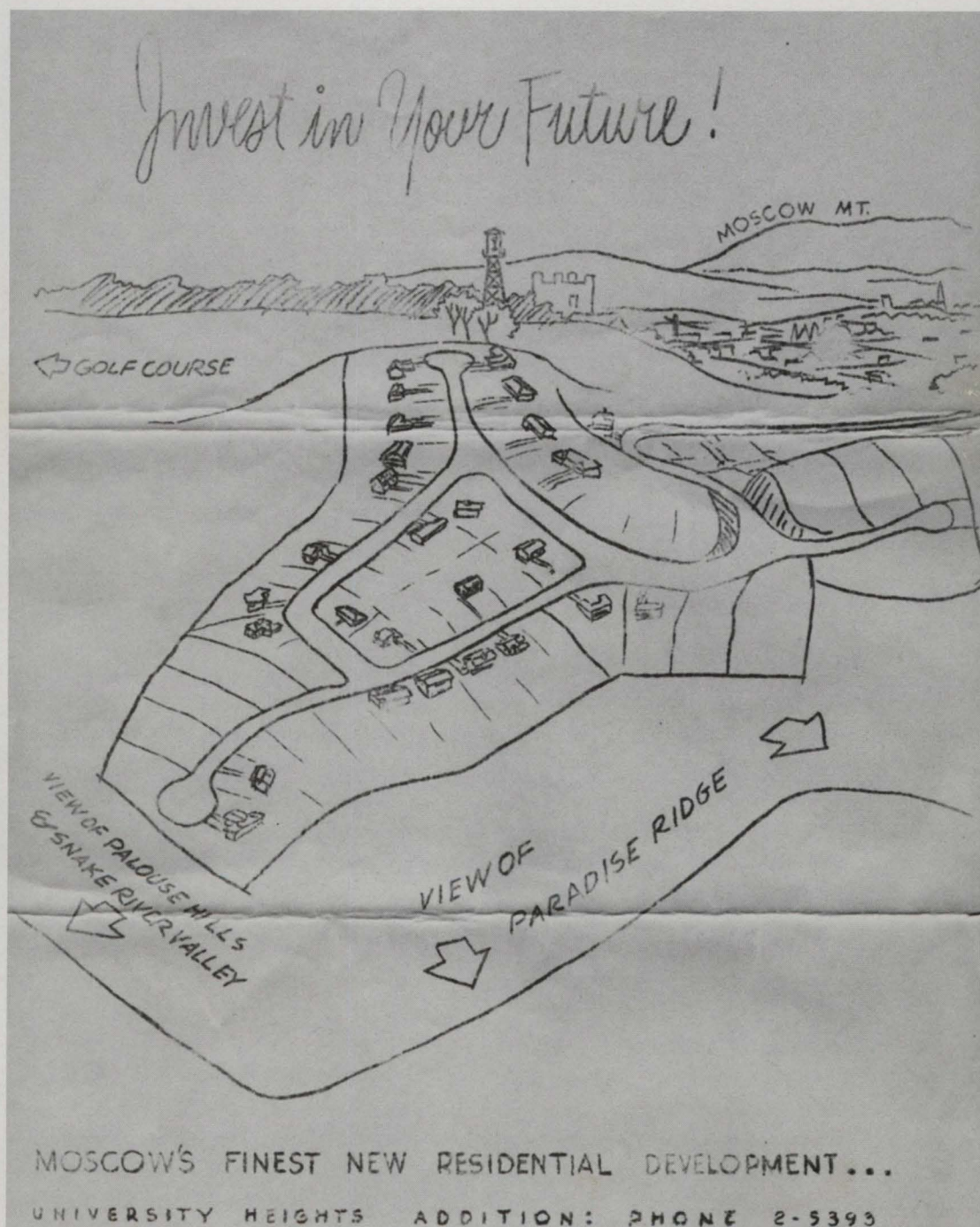
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Arthur Christopher Ross, Luthier
Recollections of Tamarack Ski Area on Moscow Mountain
Not of Noble Birth: The Triumph of Jennie Hughes Smith

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FROM THE GROUND UP:

A HISTORY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD

By Julie R. Monroe

INTRODUCTION

Over a half-century since the University Heights neighborhood was first envisioned in 1949, most residents of Moscow, Idaho, would be surprised to learn of the origins of this neighborhood located in the southwestern part of the city. With its landscape of tall, leafy trees and comfortable homes, University Heights seems little different from any of the city's other established neighborhoods. Yet the University Heights neighborhood is unique, for one simple reason. It was built, not by professional developers and builders, but by private citizens who pooled their resources to build their own homes and their own neighborhood.

Located on a ridge once cultivated in wheat, the University Heights neighborhood was built by University Heights, Inc., an enterprise formed by University of Idaho faculty in response to Moscow's housing shortage following the conclusion of World

Located on a ridge once cultivated in wheat, the University Heights neighborhood was built by University Heights, Inc., an enterprise formed by University of Idaho faculty in response to Moscow's housing shortage following the conclusion of World War II.

War II. A history of the founding of University Heights, Inc., and the early years of the neighborhood, is significant, not only to the history of Moscow but also to the social history of Idaho and the nation.

It is significant because it is a story of community. At the midpoint of the 20th century, a group of families built their own neighborhood – from the ground up – by utilizing the diversity of their expertise, by exercising their resourcefulness, and through their willingness to work hard. The University Heights neighborhood happened in a particular place at a particular time due to a particular set of circumstances – circumstances that were unprecedented in the history of the

United States. The story of the origins of this neighborhood, unparalleled in Idaho in its concept, is the story of a group of pragmatic people who had confidence in their abilities and faith in their future.

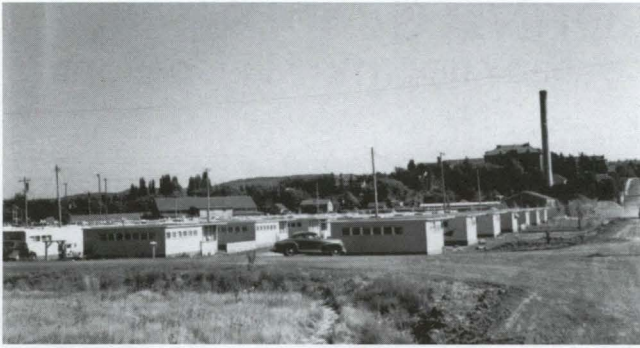
SETTING THE COORDINATES

Following the end of World War II, millions of young men and women, who had just a few years earlier helped liberate the cities of Europe and the islands of the Pacific, were doing something they had not been expected to do. Upon their return to civilian life, former servicemen and women did not flood the nation's labor market. Instead, they took advantage of one of the benefits of the now-famous G. I. Bill of Rights and enrolled in the nation's many institutions of higher learning.

The University of Idaho in Moscow was no exception to this trend. For the academic year 1942-43, 2,155 students were enrolled in the University but following the nation's entry into World War II, enrollment had dropped to 944. In 1945-46, as the war drew to a close, enrollment increased to 2,345, exceeding pre-war numbers. In 1946-47, with the war's end, student enrollment increased again to 3,724 and 3,827 in 1947-48. Enrollment peaked in 1948-49 when nearly 4,000 (3,912) students were in residence. After 1949, the student population stabilized, hovering around 3,000 for the period between 1950-1954. In response to this swell of students, the University hired dozens of new faculty.

But there was a problem. The population boom created a severe housing shortage. With students set up on cots in the University's Memorial Gymnasium in 1946, the University created three temporary housing villages in 1947, which housed both students and faculty. Referred to as "Vet Villages," these housing complexes consisted of war surplus trailers, prefabricated houses, and former military barracks. While better than homelessness, an apartment in one of the University's veteran's village was anything but deluxe.

Bill and McGee Parish, who were among the original members of University Heights, Inc., lived



Most likely Park Village, a "Vet's Village" on the northern fringe of the UI campus, c. 1946.

in one of the veterans villages after Bill was hired to teach electrical engineering in 1947. Their upstairs apartment in the West Sixth Veterans Village was 400 square feet with two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and bath. It was heated with a woodstove on which McGee prepared the family's meals. The refrigerator was an old-fashioned icebox with a tray underneath to collect the water from the melting ice. The Parish's remember that the tray would often overflow and leak into the inverted bowl light fixture over the dining table in the apartment below. Bill and McGee shared their 400 square feet with their one-year-old son, Robb and three-month-old daughter, Susan.

The Parish family was characteristic of those who resided in the University's temporary housing. In the past, the University had provided housing typically associated with university life—dormitories, cooperatives, fraternities, and sororities—accommodations suitable for single students. After the war, however, the demographic



Park Village, Third and Line streets, up close and personal, c. 1946.



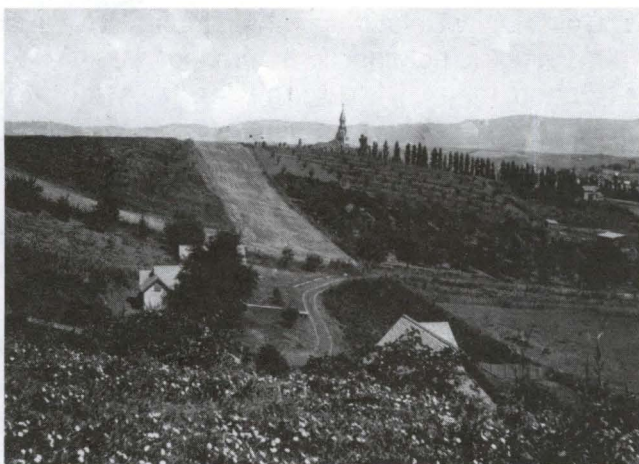
South Hill faculty housing, Taylor and Deakin Avenues, c. 1950.

of the student population was different. Many students were older, veterans either resuming their interrupted studies or just beginning them. New faculty, too, many not much older than the students they were teaching, needed housing suitable for raising a family. And even though the University had constructed South Hill Homes in 1946-47, a complex of 25 houses for faculty, the demand for affordable family housing still exceeded the supply. It seemed the American Dream of home ownership was just that – a dream.

FOUNDATION

As if raising a family in a tiny apartment that was frigid in the winter, sweltering in the summer, and surrounded by mud in the spring were not motivation enough, the incentive to find better housing became urgent when the University of Idaho began insisting that faculty leave its temporary housing. And that's exactly what several University of Idaho faculty members took steps to do in the fall of 1949. Just who came up with the idea originally is not clear, according to Bill Parish. "Most likely," he adds, "it started at the Faculty Club." Located in the center of the campus, the Faculty Club was itself a war surplus building from the Farragut Naval Base near Athol, Idaho, and the place where faculty met to drink coffee and, in the period immediately following the end of World War II, bemoan the shortage of family housing.

Talk led to action. Bill and approximately 40 other faculty members decided to pool their money, as well as their skills and talents, and build their own housing development. Putting first things first, on a perfect autumn day in October 1949, Bill, Frank Junk, Chester Moore, and Charles Sargent – all engineers – began surveying farmland south



The property of John and Bertha King, c. 1903; note the distinctive spire of the UI Administration Building in the background.

of the water tank located on the southwest perimeter of the University of Idaho campus. Soon, they found, according to Bill, "a premier site for a housing development."

When the engineers identified a suitable site, another University of Idaho faculty member, Thomas R. Walenta, a professor of law, assumed responsibility for establishing the administrative framework for the endeavor. The faculty, then known as the Faculty Housing Group, accepted Walenta's proposal to form a non-profit housing cooperative to build the development. In a memorandum to the Moscow City Council dated March 30, 1950, the corporation explained that its purpose was "to assist its shareholders in the design and development of a small residential community of single detached homes at a cost within the ability of the shareholders to finance."

The site the engineers had identified was described in the March 30 memorandum as "an irregular narrow plateau contiguous to the University, immediately south of the University I-



The farmhouse of John and Bertha King, c. 1903.

Tank, accessible by means of city streets, Blake and Taylor, and about one mile from the intersection of Third and Main Streets." It consisted of two plots of farmland, one owned by John and Bertha King and King's sister, Margaret King Trout, and the other by Paul Eke, a former University of Idaho economics professor. At about 200 feet above the area surrounding it, the ridge would not only provide its residents with a panoramic view of the University and Moscow to the north and the Palouse hills to the south, but would also be only a 10-minute walk to the campus.

On the campus, the corporation's principal office was located in Room 331 of the University's Administration Building. It was the office of Thomas Walenta, and under his guidance, University Heights, Inc., was operated with the judiciousness one would expect of an attorney. On the same day he filed incorporation papers for the corporation, Walenta convened the first meeting of the corporation's Board of Directors on February 7, 1950. Besides Walenta, the membership of the corporation's first Board included Charles Sargent, Chester A. Moore, Willard J. Wilde, Clayton M. Page, J. Irving Jolley, Paul Mann, William W.



Thomas R. Walenta, UI Law Professor and first Chairman of the Board, #3-1786a, Historical Photograph Collection, University of Idaho Library, Moscow, Idaho.

Tinniswood, Richard H. Ross, Eugene Giles, Kermit F. Hosch, and Lowell A. Jobe. Walenta was voted President and Chairman of the Board; Chester Moore, Vice President; Richard Ross, Secretary; and Willard Wilde, Treasurer. Moore was a professor of civil engineering; Ross, a professor of dairy science, and Wilde, a professor of accounting.

At this meeting, too, the Directors decided the president of the corporation would be its chief executive officer, too and, in this role, Walenta was responsible for the "general and active management of the business of the corporation." (Minutes, University Heights, Inc., Board of Directors meeting, 7 February 1950) He was also given enforcement authority and was responsible for seeing that "all orders and resolutions of the board are carried into effect." (Minutes, University Heights, Inc., Board of Directors meeting, 7 February 1950) The functions of the other officers were identified, as were those of the corporation's standing committees:

- Incorporation and Finance: Charter and by-laws, assessments, negotiation for and purchase of site, sale of individual lots, disbursements, accounts, and records.
- Site: Property line and topographic surveys, road and lot layouts, evaluation of lots, filing of subdivision plot, roads, driveways, sidewalks, grading, and quantity and cost of estimates of site improvements.
- Sewage and Water Systems: House plumbing and sanitation, sanitary and storm sewers, septic tanks, water supply and distribution, quantity and cost of sewage and water installations.
- Architecture: House orientation and placement on lot, room sizes and arrangement, light and ventilation, circulation, kitchen planning, closets and storage, review of individual house plans and specifications for conformity to community standards, and interior decorations.
- Mechanical-Electrical: House heating systems, electrical wiring and fixtures, electric supply and distribution, streetlights, quantity and cost estimates of heating and electrical installations.
- Lot Improvements: Trees and planting, lawns and gardens, terraces and fireplaces, fences and walls, street names and signs, house numbering.

- Community Relations: (The minutes of the first meeting do not specify a purpose.)
- Construction: Mortgage loans, structural systems, construction contracts, negotiations, construction supervision and inspection.
- Purchasing: Furniture, furnishings and fixtures, electric equipment and appliances, garden and lawn equipment, nursery stock, seed and fertilizer, maintenance supplies.

The responsibilities of each of the standing committees clearly reveal the magnitude of what the members of University Heights, Inc., were undertaking. Perhaps the corporation's "impressive display of talents," as Allen Derr wrote in his article about the project in the January 20, 1957, edition of the *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, explains the scope of their endeavor. In this same

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The responsibilities of each of the standing committees clearly reveal the magnitude of what the members of University Heights, Inc., were undertaking.

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article, entitled "Moscow's Professor-Builders," Chester Moore, head of the university's civil engineering department at the time, is quoted as saying, "Any time there was a question, out came the slide ruler, law books, drawing boards and adding machines and we had the answer."

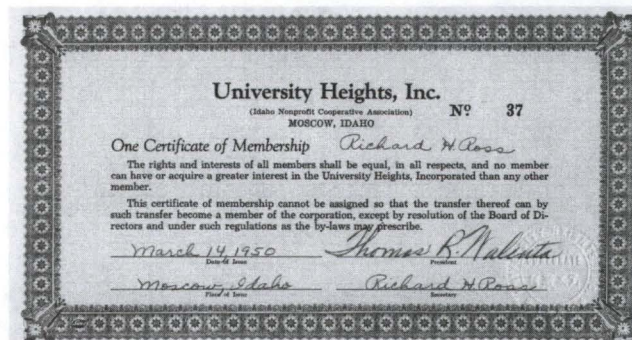
The corporation's By-Laws were adopted on April 21, 1950. Article IV of the By-Laws specified an annual membership fee of \$100, with one half due at the time of election into the corporation. At a meeting on January 25, 1950, the Executive Committee of the Faculty Housing Group (Walenta, Moore, and Wilde) had "decided to initiate the publication of the University Heights, Inc., News Letter." (*University Heights, Inc., News Letter*, 3 February 1950) According to the March 16, 1950, edition of the corporation's newsletter, the following individuals were members of University Heights, Inc., as of February 28, 1950:

William F. Barr – Entomology
 Reuben H. Krolick – Economics
 George M. Bell – Law
 Glenn C. Lewis – Agricultural Chemistry
 G. Bryce Bennett – Civil Engineering

Mabel Locke – Physical Education
 J. Lawrence Botsford – Mathematics
 Paul Mann – Electrical Engineering
 C.T. Brackney – unknown
 L.P. Mentzer – unknown
 D.B. Camp – unknown
 Chester A. Moore – Civil Engineering
 C. C. Cousins – unknown
 Clayton M. Page – Architecture
 Clifford Dobler – Political Science
 W.R. Parish – Electrical Engineering
 S.K. Forney – unknown
 Roland W. Portman – Entomology
 Theodore K. Freeman – Physics
 Elmer K. Raunio – Chemistry
 Eugene Giles – Psychology
 Thomas M. Riley – Electrical Engineering
 Mark Gurevitch – Physics
 Richard H. Ross – Dairy Science
 Alfred E. Halteman – Mathematics
 Charles Sargent – Civil Engineering
 E.M. Hause – Political Science
 S.I. Scheldrup – Economics
 William Hilton – University staff
 L.H. Sriver – Veterinary Science
 Mr. and Mrs. Kermit F. Hosch – Music
 Arthur C. Thompson – Chemistry
 Lowell A. Jobe – Chemical Engineering
 W.W. Tinniswood – Civil Engineering
 J. Irving Jolley – Chemistry
 Thomas R. Walenta – Law
 James V. Jordan – Agricultural Chemistry
 Calvin Warnick – Civil Engineering
 Frank S. Junk – Civil Engineering
 W.J. Wilde – Accounting
 Charles D. King – Civil Engineering

FRAMING

In December 1949 – two months before University Heights, Inc., was officially incorporated— the members of the Faculty Housing Group had contributed \$10 each toward an option to purchase the John King and Paul Eke properties. On February 10, 1950, Thomas Walenta purchased the King property on behalf of University Heights, Inc. Toward the total cost of \$11,000, the corporation paid \$1,125 to exercise the option rights, and then paid \$4,000 on June 10. The remaining balance of \$6,000 was carried as a five-year mortgage at the rate of 5% per year.



The membership certificate of Richard H. Ross, first Secretary of the Board

On April 3, 1950, following completion of the survey by G.A. Riedesel and Associates, bulldozers broke ground in the addition. A month later, on May 9, the corporation purchased 14.98 acres from Paul and Meleta Eke, and on June 14, when University Heights, Inc., dedicated 20.96 acres to the City of Moscow, the University Heights Addition was officially accepted within the city limits of Moscow.

In March 1950, University Heights, Inc., had applied for preliminary acceptance of the subdivision. Attached to the application submitted to the members of Moscow's City Council were two mimeographed sheets entitled, "Essential Facts Regarding University Heights Subdivision." According to this fact sheet, the new subdivision would have 60 lots, which would be laid out later that spring by Chester Moore, then head of the Civil Engineering department and former manager of a General Electric building project in Richland, Washington.

Typically, the lots would be either 80' x 125' or 100' x 100'. Typical lot size would be 10,000 square feet, with a density of 2.4 lots per acre. Over a period of two years, 60 one-family detached dwellings would be built within a price range of \$8,000 to \$12,000; the corporation expected to build 40 units the first year, and 20, the second. The subdivision's 60 lots, which had been divided into five blocks, would range in price from \$300 to \$1800; average value was \$1000.

At a meeting on March 7, 1950, University Heights, Inc., and the members of Moscow's City Council had come to an agreement on arrangements for the subdivision's utilities and roads. While the corporation would bear the cost of building a sewer system to connect with the city's system, the city agreed to provide water to a curb

cock near the lot line of each lot. Members of the corporation would pay \$35 to cover the cost of a water meter and the laying of the line to individual curb cocks. The corporation would provide fire hydrants and street lighting; electricity would be installed by a public utility company, Washington Water Power, and telephone service would be provided through joint use of the electrical poles.

University Heights, Inc., assumed responsibility for building streets in accordance with the city's standards for residential areas. Sidewalks of four feet wide Portland cement would be installed on one side of streets, and street planting would be "carefully limited to protect utilities and views." (Memorandum to Moscow City Council from University Heights, Inc., 3 March 1950) In their meeting of April 21, 1950, the Board of Directors proposed and selected the names of the subdivision's streets. Eight names were proposed: King Place or Palouse Place, Ridge Road or Buchanan Drive, Borah Avenue or McConnell Avenue, and Alpowa Avenue or Walenta Way. With a minor revision, the following four were selected: King Place, Borah Avenue, Alpowa Avenue, and Walenta Way was changed to Walenta Drive. A few years later, Ridge Road would be selected for the street name of the second University Heights addition.

In addition to plotting the development and determining the specifications of its infrastructure, the corporation was also responsible for assisting its members in financing the construction of their homes. The first edition of the corporation's newsletter, dated February 3, 1950, explained how each member's financial obligation for the cost of building materials was determined.

"The general policy followed where loans are insured by the F.H.A. [Federal Housing Authority] is about as follows: The loaning agency with [will] loan up to 90% of the of the first \$8,000.00 of cost, and 80% beyond \$8,000.00. That is, on a home valued at \$10,000.00 the purchaser would advance 10% of \$8,000.00 or \$800.00 plus 20% of \$2,000.00 or \$400.00, a total of \$1,200.00. The F.H.A., however, will accept, where the borrower owns the lot, up to \$800.00 on the lot. Thus, in our subdivision, if one were to pay \$1,000.00 for his lot, the F.H.A. would permit \$800.00 of this amount to be applied on the \$1,200.00 loan requirement

for the \$10,000.00 home. The borrower would then advance another \$400.00 toward the purchasing of materials. It will be seen then, that a minimum of from \$1,200 to \$2,000 will be required, depending upon individual needs and choices."

On April 11, the corporation created a committee to "prepare and distribute information relative to mortgage applications and to instruct the members of the corporation in its execution." (Minutes, University Heights, Inc., Board of Directors meeting, 11 April 1950)

The members of the corporation needed all the help they could get when it came to financing their homes, according to Bill Parish. Bill recalls that it was difficult to obtain credit before the G.I. Bill of Rights eventually "forced banks to lend." As a result of the unavailability of credit, Bill and McGee teamed up with Frank and Peggy Junk to finance the construction of each of their homes. Bill and Frank "scared up" \$2,000 each and pooled it so that Bill could start building his family's home. After Bill and McGee's house was partially constructed, they were able to get a mortgage on their home. They then paid back Frank his loan of \$2,000 and loaned him another \$2,000 to finance the construction of the Junk family home.

On June 10, 1950, with their reserve of \$4,000, Bill and McGee Parish began excavating the land for their home on lot 8, block 5 of the University Heights Addition. A general meeting of the corporation had been held on February 28, 1950, for the purpose of deciding upon a method of selecting lots. The members decided that the order of choice of lots would be determined by drawing



Breaking ground for the home of the Parish family, June 1950. Left to right: Robb Parish, McGee Parish, Bill Parish, Tom Riley, Frank Junk, Max Jensen (on tractor), Ted Norgard.

capsules containing numbers ranging from 1 to 42, the total number of members in the corporation at that time. By choosing this method, each member had agreed to assume the risk of not getting one of the prized lots located on the perimeter of the development. The members were then divided into four groups, and each group had five days to make its selection of lots.

The members of each group had two days to inspect and "acquaint themselves with lots available for selection. During this time the members of each group should attempt by common consent to make a choice of lots." (*University Heights, Inc., News Letter*, 16 March 1950) The members of Group I made their selections on April 17, 1950. This group included Bill and McGee Parish, who having selected the capsule containing the number 'eight', were the eighth members of their group to "place on a table face up, a slip of paper upon which shall be written" their choice of lot. (*University Heights, Inc., News Letter*, 16 March 1950) Apparently, the Parish's were fond of the number 'eight' as that was the number of the lot they chose in the development's block 5. Group II made their selections on April 22; Group III on April 27, and Group IV on May 2. An exception, however, was made to this process. At a general meeting of University Heights, Inc., on April 21, 1950, Thomas Walenta was given first choice of lots in honor of his service to the corporation.

While Bill and McGee were the first to excavate their lot, which had been appraised at a value of \$600, Charles D. King, a professor of mechanical engineering, had been issued the project's first building permit. Parish and King, in fact, formed their own construction business, KP Builders, and eventually built their own homes and seven more in the University Heights neighborhood.

On June 21, 1950, only four days before the start of the Korean Conflict, Walenta and Richard Ross, secretary of the corporation, signed the papers obligating the members of the corporation to a set of covenants, which imposed restrictions upon the use of the land in the addition. According to these covenants, which Walenta had suggested, members of University Heights, Inc., were restricted from using the land belonging to the corporation for purposes other than residential housing. The cost, quality, size, and location of dwellings in the addition were also restricted. No

dwelling of a replacement value of less than \$7,000 could be built, and each was required to have a ground floor area between 400 and 700 square feet.

Additionally, the covenants prohibited owners from dividing or combining lots to create new or additional lots. Minimum lot dimension was set at 7,500 square feet. The third covenant restricted construction on the lots to "a detached single family dwelling, a garage, or other out-building." It also prohibited any structure from being remodeled for any purpose other than those specified in the covenant. While the corporation restricted the type of construction in the development to residential housing, it did not require its members to hire an architect to design their house plans.

It did, however, require the members to submit their house plans to the Architecture Committee for approval. Clayton Page, a professor of Architecture, chaired this committee; Page, according to the March 16, 1950, edition of the corporation's newsletter, had "a well organized plan of service which his committee is prepared to offer the membership." The plan of service included establishment of a lending library of home building materials located in the University's main library, organization of those members interested in "developing a house with variations (interior and exterior) of a basic plan to be contracted in a group," and preparation of a map that suggested the "types of houses best suited for the various lots." (*University Heights, Inc., News Letter*, 16 March 1950)

During the late spring and summer of 1950, the corporation hired contractors to build the subdivision's infrastructure. Duncan Construction Company was awarded the contract for grading the addition's streets, and Edward C. Moore, a professor of philosophy, "selected and supervised the installation of wood-burned street signs," according to a February 2, 1950, story in *The Daily Idahonian*. William Tinniswood supervised the installation a 4000-foot sewer system. At the time, Tinniswood, a professor of civil engineering and second vice president of the Pacific Northwest Sewage Works Association, was nationally recognized as an authority in the field. The contract for the subdivision's sewer system was awarded to the City of Moscow.

On November 1, 1950, only two short years after a group of University of Idaho faculty had

conceived an innovative idea to supply themselves, their families and their friends with affordable housing, the first family to move into its brand-new University Heights home was that of Willard Wilde, the corporation's treasurer. So eager was the Wilde family that they moved into their new house before the electricians could finish stringing the wires in the walls.

At the mid-mark of the 20th century, in Moscow's new and novel University Heights subdivision, there were no ivory towers – only much-needed homes for families eager to get down to the task of building a neighborhood.

At the mid-mark of the 20th century, in Moscow's new and novel University Heights subdivision, there were no ivory towers – only much-needed homes for families eager to get down to the task of building a neighborhood.

FINISH WORK

In 1949, the University Heights neighborhood was but a shared dream of not quite four dozen University of Idaho faculty. In 1950, the dreams were transformed into action, and by the end of the year, the Willard Wilde family could boast of being the initial occupants of Moscow's first housing addition. In 1951, anyone near the southern edge of Moscow must have been deafened by the roar of bulldozers, the ricochets of nails being pounded into wood, and the whirr of saws trimming lumber to size. By the end of the year, there were 48 members of the corporation; 27 had built or were building.

The members of University Heights, Inc., however, were building more than houses. They were also building a neighborhood, and the values of cooperation and mutual benefit that characterized the mission of University Heights, Inc., could also be found in the way the members of the corporation built their neighborhood. Bill and McGee Parish recall the time Malcolm Hause, who was taking a break from building his own family's house to help Frank Junk stain the roof of his new house, needed the help of his neighbors-to-be. Malcolm lost his grip on the roof and slid

four feet to the ground, breaking his wrist. Upon learning that Malcolm was unable to resume work on his house, the Parishes and others pitched in so that there would be no lengthy interruption of work on the Hause family house.

Bill and McGee also recall how the neighborhood jointly responding to construction "emergencies" that most likely had everyone asking themselves, "What were they thinking?!" For example, in 1951, bachelors Thomas Riley and Ted Norgard decided to build a house on Alpowa Avenue together. On the day before Thanksgiving, Ted framed all the walls of the house except for the east one but failed to brace them, against the advice of engineer and house builder, Bill Parish. "Sure enough," said Bill, "a wind came up during the night and knocked all the walls down." Because the residents of University Heights were frequently chided about locating their neighborhood on a ridge sometimes mockingly called Hurricane Hump, Bill and others in the neighborhood spent Thanksgiving morning putting



The gang's all here! The house-building professors take a break from their labor to have their picture taken in the doorway of what would soon be the house of the Malcolm Hause family. Bill Parish probably took this photo.

the walls back up so that none of Moscow's other residents could say, "I told you so."

A similar action was taken for a similar reason a few years later when Edward Moore decided to add a room to his home on Alpowa Avenue. He attached the roof to the new room using what proved to be less than adequate nails. A gust of

Palouse wind passed through the neighborhood during the night, picked up the new roof, and placed in the intersection of Alpowa and Borah avenues. "Another work party," said Bill.

In addition to enjoying the benefits of communal construction projects, the members of University Heights, Inc., also enjoyed the cost advantages resulting from volume purchasing. One of the corporation's original standing committees was the Purchasing Committee, which was responsible for coordinating the bulk purchase of a variety of materials for its members at substantial discounts. The Purchasing Committee was well-organized with its own requisitions system. Requisition forms had to be filled out in triplicate with one copy going to the supplier, one to the individual member, and the third to the Purchasing Committee. The members made payments directly to the corporation, which in turn, paid the vendor.

The range of goods purchased through the corporation was astounding: furniture, furnishings, electric equipment, garden and lawn equipment, nursery stock (including 2000 roses in 1951 to be used as plantings around the perimeter of the subdivision), seed, fertilizer, maintenance supplies, and heating oil. Bill and McGee Parish recall the day in 1951 that items purchased from the General Electric Corporation were delivered. Bill said, "all hell broke loose" when the semi-truck carrying everything from kitchen stoves to freezers to cabinets arrived at the Consolidated Freightways depot in Moscow from GE's warehouse in Spokane, Washington. In 1957, Spokane Dry Goods Co. opened an account with University Heights, Inc., to supply its members with a variety of household items, including carpet, appliances, and furniture at "prices from 20 to 33 percent below retail prices," according to the April 22, 1957, minutes of the Board of Directors. In 1963, the Board of Directors approved the purchase of 1000-1500 red holiday lights.

In addition to group purchasing, University Heights, Inc., also provided the neighborhood with a television cable system. In 1953, Moscow businessman Sam Haddock was seeking a franchise to develop a TV cable system for the City of Moscow, but with authorization from the city, University Heights, Inc., built its own non-profit system. The neighborhood's Master TV Antenna System, described as the "finest T.V. system available" in the minutes of the November 8, 1954,

annual meeting, was built by the members of the corporation under the supervision of electrical engineer Bill Parish. Parish donated his services as technical advisor so that the project's only expenditure was for materials. In a October 16, 1953, letter, Board president Edward Moore informed the participants in the system that, "The manual labor [for the project] will be apportioned to participating members, who may either do their share of the work or pay to hire someone to do it."

A month later, George Bell, leader of the corporation's Work Team B, coordinated a work party to complete the installation of the system. In his memorandum dated November 23, 1953, he informed those participating in the system that work is scheduled for "Wednesday afternoon, Thursday morning (with Thanksgiving in the afternoon), Friday, Saturday and Sunday." Cost to participate in the system was \$100 per member. In 1970, the neighborhood's cable system was turned over to Sam Haddock; all those residents of University Heights who were already connected to the system received free service for one year.

Work parties, like that organized to install the cable system, were not uncommon in the neighborhood; in fact, in 1953, the corporation divided its membership into three work teams to tackle "projects to be done which require some time and effort and which are for the mutual benefit of all." (*University Heights, Inc., News Letter*, 10 April 1953) On the other hand, there were some projects that the corporation expected their members to handle on their own, such as maintaining the appearance of their individual lots.



The individual in this photo is unidentified but could be Edward Moore. The roof of the addition to his house was blown off by a fierce gust of Palouse wind before he had a chance to secure it properly.

In the May 10, 1952, edition of the *University Heights, Inc., News Letter*, the Board of Directors and the members of the Landscape and Architecture Committee expressed their hope that "everyone concerned will make a rather definite effort to improve the looks of his property wherever possible by cleaning up old plant refuse, abandoned lumber, or anything else which needs to be moved," adding that if "there is enough demand, it might be possible to get the services of a truck in order to haul away any material which must be moved." The Committee went on to acknowledge the "fine cooperation, which was received in regard to planting the street trees," which had been provided at the expense of the corporation. The Landscape and Architecture Committee had developed an overall landscaping plan for the neighborhood which although "may not be perfect, best fills the needs of the development and will be much more satisfactory in the long run." (*University Heights, Inc., News Letter*, 3 April 1952) The Committee also provided suggestions for parkways, planting strips, lawns, and foundation plantings.

Another group effort that garnered something of a reputation in Moscow was the annual



Left to right: Peggy Junk, Dodie Page, Mary Jean Ross, and Marian Thomas pose for their photograph at one of the barbecues held annually by the University Heights neighborhood in the UI's Shattuck Arboretum, c. early 1950s.

barbecue for the "Heights Families," as Board secretary Mabel Locke referred to her neighbors in the minutes of the November 8, 1954, annual meeting. The event was no slipshod affair; the corporation even had a written procedure for preparing the deep pit barbecue, thanks to T.C. Thomas, who wrote a memorandum on May 18, 1954, thoroughly outlining the steps involved in preparing the pit and the meat as well as the cooking process.

For many years, the pit was located in the University's Shattuck Arboretum, south of Memorial Gymnasium. Its sides and bottom were lined with stones, and Thomas recommended that the fire be built from wood of deciduous trees rather than that of conifers, "as the resin and pitch of the latter is apt to give the meat an unpleasant taste." The preferred cuts of beef were round steak roasts or rump roasts averaging between eight and ten pounds. In 1954, 60 pounds of meat were purchased to feed an estimated 140 persons. Because the meat was placed in the pit for cooking about seven hours before the time of service, Thomas advised the "Barbecue Master" (Thomas' term) to arrange for volunteers to stoke the fire during this period and that those gathered around the barbecue when the meat is put in the pit should be provided with a "little brown jug."

Melbourne Jackson, who moved into the neighborhood with wife Betty and their children in 1954, recalls that it was necessary to post guards at the barbecue site to prevent University students from raiding the pit. It is likely Thomas' tongue was firmly planted in his cheek when he acknowledged this "threat" in his memorandum, "[Last year] Two of the members volunteered to get sleeping bags and bring down a watch dog and stay at the pit. This was done and no disturbance took place." Two new features were added to the event in 1955. The first was a dog show with Clifford Dobler as judge. The second, the result of an "influx of Packards and Oldsmobiles" according to an April 2, 1954, memorandum from the Board of Directors, was a stock car race. The memo informed the residents of the Heights that the entrants to the race would include "Dodie (Hot Rod) Page and Maurine (Go for Broke) Bell."

The amount of effort expended to ensure the success of the neighborhood's annual barbecue was equal to that given to two of the biggest challenges the neighborhood faced in its early years. In 1952, the residents were denied city mail delivery because less than 50% of the neighborhood had been settled. The residents were unwilling to accept rural delivery service, and it was only when negotiations with local postal officials proved fruitless that Edward Moore, then president of the Board of Directors, wrote to Idaho Senator Herman Welker to request his help in the

matter. City service was finally extended to the neighborhood in the mid-1950s.

"One of the most important problems," reported the January 24, 1952, edition of the *University Heights, Inc., News Letter*, "facing the corporation this coming year is the sale of the rest of the lots." The income from the sale of lots was needed to pay the corporation's debts and to pay for the paving of the development's roads and for landscaping. The corporation had assumed responsibility for a fourth road, Ridge Road, when it added four lots on the northeast perimeter of the subdivision. According to the January 24, 1952, edition of the *University Heights, Inc., News Letter*, the corporation expected its members to "accept the responsibility of pushing the sale of lots."



Susan Ross, daughter of Richard and Mary Jean Ross, and Robb Parish, son of Bill and McGee Parish, stand in front of the first tree planted in the University Heights neighborhood; the tree was located on the property of the Parish family.

To assist the members in promoting the subdivision, the corporation prepared a booklet in 1952 entitled, "Invest in Your Future!" The mimeographed booklet extolled the advantages of home ownership in the University Heights neighborhood, one of which was that the price of a "beautiful and inexpensive" lot went toward the down payment on a new house. "For this reason," as was explained in the booklet, "the most important thing for the young couple getting started is to get a lot and get it paid for. To aid you in doing this the Board of Directors of University Heights has voted to allow you to SELECT THE LOT YOU WANT AND BUY IT ON TIME." Beginning March 1, 1952, buyers were able to

purchase a lot with 25% down and the remainder in 30 monthly payments. A year later, the corporation reduced the cost of the 12 lots not yet sold, and by 1960, with a total of 69 lots in the subdivision, all lots had been sold.

CONCLUSION

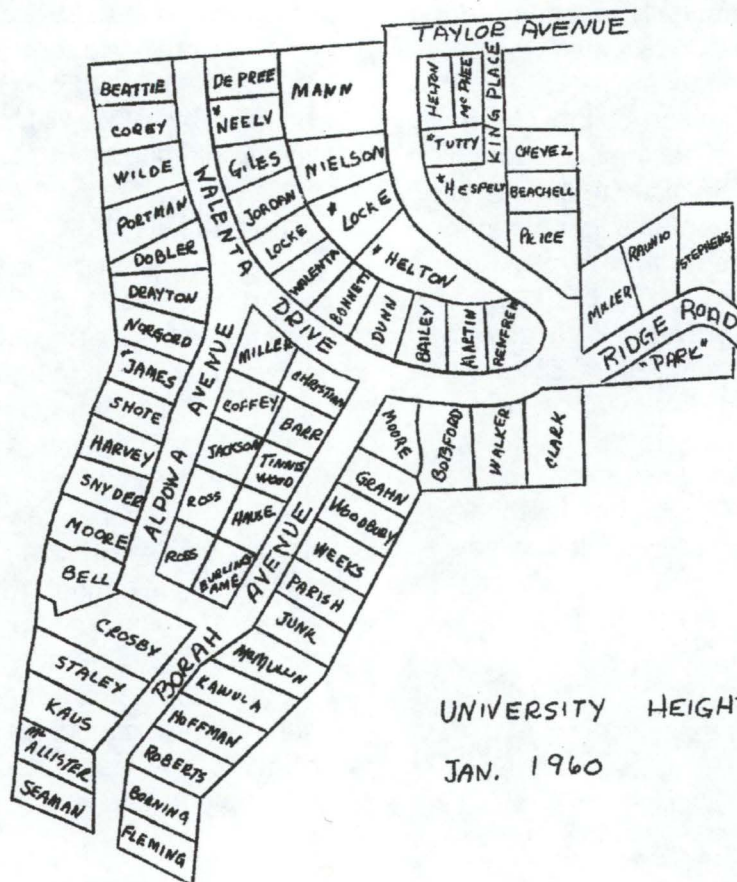
In a decade's time, a group of motivated and skilled University of Idaho faculty, through industriousness and cooperation, had built a neighborhood from the ground up. Beginning as a persistent topic of conversation in the Faculty Club, Moscow's University Heights neighborhood evolved from an idea to a neighborhood through a series of well-conceived and well-organized steps. This was a neighborhood built on a foundation of optimism and rationalism. The members of University Heights, Inc., were also members of a generation of Americans that had achieved victory in a war of unimaginable violence, and they were confident they had the means – if not individually, then certainly collectively – to build, not simply a neighborhood, but their own future as well.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank Bill and McGee Parish for sharing your project, as well as your archive and memories, with me; Richard Ross for writing such detailed minutes of the meetings of University Heights, Inc.'s first Board of Directors; Duane LeTourneau for getting the ball rolling; and Mel Jackson, whose generosity made it possible for me to write this history.



This aerial view of the University Heights neighborhood was taken Christmas 1956.



* INDICATES MEMBERS WHO HAVE NOT BUILT.

On pages 13-19 are materials concerned with University Heights, Inc.

In writing *From the Ground Up*, author Julie Monroe focused on the history of the establishment of University Heights, Inc. and the founding of the University Heights neighborhood. Due to time constraints, the social history of the neighborhood was only superficially examined, despite its importance. You now have a chance to help the author right this wrong. Perhaps you lived on Idiot's Nob, as the University Heights neighborhood was not so affectionately called, and have reminiscences and photographs you would like to contribute toward a more thorough examination of the social life of the neighborhood. If so, please contact Julie at the addresses below:

Julie Monroe
611 East Third Street
Moscow ID 83438
jmonroe@turbonet.com

She thanks you.

University Heights, Inc.

Box 386 University Station

Moscow, Idaho

AGREEMENT

This agreement made and entered into this ____ day of March, 1950, by and between the University Heights, Inc., an Idaho nonprofit cooperative corporation, with its principal office at 331 Administration Building, Moscow, Idaho and the undersigned persons by the terms of which:

The undersigned do make application for membership in University Heights, Inc., and pay therefore the sum of \$100.00 the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged.

That University Heights, Inc. does hereby agree to sell and the undersigned persons do hereby agree to buy a lot to be used for the erection of a home thereon upon such terms and conditions as its board of directors shall determine to be fair and equitable. The purchase price thereof to be determined by the board of directors based upon the costs thereof plus expenses of development prorated among all the lots.

The signers hereof agree to pay upon the purchase price of such parcel of land the sum of \$500.00 on or before May 1, 1950, and the balance upon tender of a good and merchantable title to said lot. The total purchase price as above determined will be limited to \$1000.00 per lot, unless the corporation erects or causes to be erected thereon, permanent improvement such as buildings, homes and their furnishings, together with their appurtenances, in which events, the cost thereof shall be added to the purchase price.

It is agreed and understood that the signers hereof shall have the right and opportunity to select their respective lots following these members who have heretofore been accepted for membership in this corporation, in the order

in which they sign this agreement. Membership in University Heights, Inc. may be had by purchase of a Certificate of Membership and compliance with its Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws. All members shall be equal in rights and privileges, without personal liability for the acts of the corporation.

It is further agreed and understood that the said University Heights, Inc. will refund to each buyer of a lot, his or her money so paid and applied less all expenses incurred by or on behalf of the corporation in the development of this project, if it is discontinued or abandoned by the corporation. And, should any buyer for good cause shown as determined by the board of directors, desire to sell, abandon or surrender his interests in said lot, the corporation will return all sums paid by such persons, as appears just and equitable in respect to all buyers and within the funds available for such purposes, provided the members convey to the corporation by a good and sufficient deed, title and interest in the lot without encumbrance of any kind.

University Heights, Inc.

By Thomas R. Valenta, President

PURCHASE REQUISITION

TO: UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, INC., Box 386, University Station, Moscow, Idaho.

FROM: Richard H Ross

As a shareholder in University Heights, Inc., I wish to purchase for my own use only in the new home I am building on University Heights, the following items of equipment.

You are hereby authorized and requested to purchase the following:

Dishwasher Sink 127.⁰⁰

Kitchen Range Speedster D11 203.47

Attached is my check for (380.47)
which I understand is the approximate cost of the above equipment f.o.b.
Moscow.

It is understood that the above items of equipment can be purchased only if the total of this and similar requisitions amount to ten or more units of the same item.

I further agree to pay any additional sum which may be necessary to meet the actual cost to the University Heights of the above equipment including freight, handling charges, and expenses. It is understood also that if the actual cost runs below the amount remitted, the difference will be refunded to me.

Richard H Ross
(Signed)
July 25 1950
(Date)

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP
University Heights, Inc.
November 3rd, 1952

<u>BLOCK 1 & 2</u>	<u>BLOCK 3</u>	<u>BLOCK 4</u>	<u>BLOCK 5</u>
*P. Mann	C. C. Warnick	*E. K. Raunio	S. A. Walker
B. Martin	*L. A. Jobe	W. F. Barr	*J. L. Botsford
J. I. Jolly	L. H. Scrivner	W. W. Tinniswood	*C. A. Moore
*T. E. Walenta	*W. G. Wilde	*M. E. Hause	H. C. Caldwell
*M. Locke	*R. W. Portman	*K. F. Hosch	*G. W. Woodbury
*J. V. Jordon	*C. I. Dobler	*R. H. Ross	*R. H. Krolick
*E. Giles	*A. E. Halteman	*H. D. Rushong	*W. R. Parish
*C. D. King	*J. T. Norgord	*M. Gurevitch	*F. S. Junk
A. W. Helton	F. J. James		*C. M. Page
W. G. Burke	R. D. LaRue		A. Thompson
M. C. Jensen	*S. O. Scheldrup		D. S. Hoffman
M. A. Unger	W. Howard		L. P. Mentzer
	*E. C. Moore		*B. C. Borning
	*G. M. Bell		*J. A. Parker
	C. L. Woodward		
	W. H. Knight		
	A. Schuldt		

(* Indicates members who have built)

Expenditures and Income
to October 31, 1952

Expenditures:

Land Project Land, grading, abstracts, blueprints, sewers, surveys, deeds, shrubs.	42025.03
Road gravel and Oiling (Including blacktop in summer of 1952 at 4138.20)	10447.45
Sidewalk and Curbing	18772.60
Legal Expense	153.50
Office Supplies	164.35
Interest Expense	197.33
Total	<u>71760.26</u>

Income:

Interest on Notes Payable	75.26
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Reimbursing Accounts

Oil Purchases	5956.49
Lawn Seed Purchases	343.05
Other Purchases	24518.16
Total	<u>30817.70</u>

Estimated savings to members of 20% on these items	6153.54
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BALANCE SHEET

University Heights, Inc.

October 31, 1952

Assets

Cash on Hand	392.29
Notes Receivable	2592.75
Accounts Receivable	440.20
Lots on Hand (12)	11250.00

Total	<u>14675.24</u>
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Liabilities

Notes Payable	5600.00
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Total Worth	<u><u>9075.24</u></u>
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Commitments

Estimated cost of developing Ridge Road Area (with a safety factor of 15%).	4881.75
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Net Worth

(Total worth less commitments)	4193.49
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MECHANICAL
C. D. KING, REGISTERED
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER

KP BUILDERS

CONTRACTING ENGINEERS
1394 WALENTA DRIVE
MOSCOW, IDAHO
Feb. 18, 1956

ELECTRICAL
W. R. PARISH
PHONE 6671

University Heights, Inc.
Moscow, Idaho

Gentlemen:

We have been informed that University Heights, Inc., offers the following lots for sale at the prices indicated:

Lot 1, Block 1	\$1200	
Lot 2, Block 1	1200	<i>Netten</i>
Lot 3, Block 1	1000	
Lot 5, Block 1	1000	
Lot 6, Block 1	1000	<i>Benchel</i>

We understand that these prices include the abstract of title, the current paving assessment of \$322 per lot, and improvement of King Place to include curbs and a crushed rock surface.

Providing satisfactory terms can be arranged, we accept this offer. We propose the following:

1. A down payment of \$50 per lot.
2. We will pay taxes starting with 1956.
3. We will pay \$50 plus the annual instalment on the paving assessment each year, until we have built on and sold that lot, at which time the remaining balance due University Heights, Inc., will be paid in full.
4. In any event, the total indebtedness to University Heights, Inc., will be paid not later than five years from this date.
5. We will pay simple interest at the rate of 5% per annum on the unpaid balance due University Heights, Inc.

Our purpose is to obtain building sites for high quality houses. It may be recalled that, a few years ago, these lots were offered as a group to some local contractors. There is also a precedent for the minimum down payment, as in the case of the Ferrell house. We intend to build attractive houses promptly on these lots, with the belief that an enhanced appearance of our neighborhood will be welcomed by all members.

Very truly yours,

KP BUILDERS
C.D. King
C.D. King

ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER ROSS, LUTHIER

By Lois Blackburn

During the middle of the twentieth century, Moscow, Idaho had a violinmaker who made over 150 stringed instruments: violins, violas, 'cellos, and string basses. Not just crude fiddles made by an amateur, his instruments ranged from good to fine, and many are in use in widely-dispersed locations today. The master's name was Arthur Christopher Ross. Ross was also a hard-working Idaho artisan of great integrity, first a "lumberjack," then a skilled woodworker and concrete finisher. In addition to his professional construction work, he over the years built three houses for his family, put new foundations under two more of their houses, and built three houses for his brothers.

Even in the Northwest, rich in unusual personalities, this is a unique story. Arthur Christopher Ross died in 1977, and only a few people remember him. When I encountered his story in a surprising coincidence, I determined that he should be part of the recorded heritage of Latah County. During the summer of 2001, I decided that I would like to augment my instrumental repertoire and learn to play the viola. Since I am a cellist, it would be a painful challenge to learn to hold an instrument under my chin, as one does a viola, the larger relative of the violin. I began a search for a somewhat rare instrument, a vertical viola, which is a large viola with an endpin, held and played like a cello.

My search took me to the Hammond Ashley shop in Seattle where I tried out the three vertical violas they had. None of them matched my mental model of the sound I wanted. I sighed and said, "I guess I'll go back to Moscow and think about this." "Moscow," mused the shop owner. "We used to buy a lot of violins from a maker in Moscow." Knowing that a violinmaker named Ross had once lived in my house at 314 South Polk Street, I asked, "What was his name?" "Arthur Christopher Ross," he replied. While I swallowed and blinked at this coincidence, he checked in a battered-looking ledger and brightened. "I think we have one of his instruments in the shop, to have the pegs adjusted. It's been there for a while."

He returned from the shop with the instrument. It was a vertical viola. The label inside said, "Alto



This Ross family portrait was taken in 1965. Seated are Chrystine and Arthur Ross, their daughter Vernice is on the left, their son Wilfred, center, and on the right is Vernice's husband, David Barnes.

violin. No.1, 1968. Made by Arthur Christopher Ross." Whether or not Ross ever made more vertical violas, this was his first. It was built in either the attic workroom or the basement shop of what is now my house. Now somewhat dizzy with coincidence, I played the viola. The violinist friend who had come along with me as consultant exulted, "That's it! That's the mellow viola sound you want!" I bought Art's viola and took it home where I held it up and said, "Mr. Ross, I've brought it home." I've been happily playing it ever since.

Later, David Johnson wrote a story for the January 7, 2002, *Lewiston Morning Tribune* about this musical coincidence, having heard about it from Bill London (previous owner of my house), to whom I had reported it. David included a note about my interest in learning more about Ross. In response to that article, several people who had

known the Ross family called me with information. I began to compile the history of Arthur Christopher Ross, luthier. And here it is:

It is rare indeed to find an independent, self-taught craftsman in a small town, quietly making fine instruments by himself. Arthur Christopher Ross was one of those. He never had an opportunity to serve an apprenticeship and gleaned what he knew from books. The rest of his training was his own hands-on experience. Graduates of violin-making schools would be disdainful of such home-grown talent – unless they were to play one of his instruments. I own one of these, and I know it to be a beautiful piece of work. This is why I want to ensure the place of Arthur Christopher Ross in the annals of Idaho.

Art was born in 1904 in Okanogan, Washington, the oldest of five brothers. There were Paul, Glen, LeRoy, and Wesley, and two sisters, Faith and Evelyn. His father was a lumberjack, and his mother grew up on a farm near Moscow, Idaho. When Arthur was still an infant, his family moved to Troy, Idaho, where he and his siblings grew up and graduated from high school. After high school, in the 1920s, Art followed his father into the woods. He became a lumberjack, going back and forth for work between Idaho and Washington, where his mother and brothers Paul and Wesley lived after the death of their father. Sometimes, shortage of funds made it expedient to make the trip “riding the rails,” hopping freight cars for free trips.

But his heart was with music, and he also was interested in building and playing stringed instruments. As for playing, he probably first taught himself to play the violin, possibly consulting occasionally with a local musician. At some point, he became even more interested in the ‘cello. While he was living in the Clearwater/Snohomish, Washington area, he walked seven miles each way to Everett, Washington (carrying his ‘cello) for ‘cello lessons with Marian Little. He also played in the Everett Symphony, which later became the Seattle Symphony. And he continued his earlier experiments with making violins and ‘cellos.

His principal ambition was to become a professional cellist, ‘cello teacher, and conductor. When he was about 28, he began studies at the Cornish School of the Performing Arts in Seattle. (This school, now known as The Cornish College of the Arts, is still operating robustly on East Roy Street in Seattle.) While he was there, he pursued

his interest in violinmaking through books on the subject in the Seattle Public Library. Occasionally, he would visit violin shops to observe the craftsmen at work. But this was about 1932, in the shadow of the Great Depression— a bad time to start college. Art went back home to Troy, Idaho and went to work with building contractors, specializing in woodworking and concrete finishing. He also outfitted his own workshop with luthier’s tools,

Art built the couple’s first house on Flannigan Crick (nobody seems to call it “creek!”)

some of which he made himself, and continued making instruments. At one point, he went to Nampa, Idaho to attend Northwest Nazarene College, but shortage of funds again cut short his education. Back in northern Idaho, in 1937 when he was 33, he married Chrystine DeWitt, who had grown up on a farm near Moscow in the Robinson Lake area.

Art built the couple’s first house on Flannigan Crick (nobody seems to call it “creek!”), in the Moscow, Idaho area, near Viola. This house is still stoutly standing – not surprising considering Art’s building skills. During these years, their son Wilfred and daughter Vernice were born.

In 1950, when the children were in elementary school, the family moved “into town” to a little house Art built on Morton Street in Moscow. In 1955, Art built the larger “house on the hill” off Public Avenue. The next house was at 216 East A Street, a Victorian-era house. In his practical, provident way, Art augmented this home for his family by putting in a new concrete foundation. His shop was in one of the bedrooms.

During those years, Vernice studied violin (on instruments made by her father) with LeRoy Bauer, at that time professor of violin at the University of Idaho. Wilfred sang in choirs, an interest that he continued later when he fulfilled his father’s ambition to attend Northwest Nazarene College. Wilfred and Vernice graduated from Moscow High School. [It was Wilfred’s friend Danny Hood, a fellow MHS graduate in 1958, who first helped me contact Wilfred for part of this history.] Vernice married David Barnes, a graduate of Northwest

Nazarene College, and moved with him to San Diego, where he worked at Boeing. Wilfred graduated from Northwest Nazarene College, worked for Health and Welfare in Coeur d'Alene, and now is a consultant for private companies.



Now owned by Lois Blackburn, Chrystine and Arthur once lived in this house on Polk Street, originally built in 1897. By himself, Arthur poured a new foundation for the house in 1967.

In 1967, Chrystine and Arthur moved to the house at 314 South Polk Street, originally built in 1896. His first instrument workshop there was in a little attic room. Then – no surprise – Art put a new poured concrete foundation under this house. Vernice says that he (at age 63) dug the basement out by hand, throwing the dirt out of the hole and having it hauled away. Inside the spacious new basement, Art built his new shop. And a splendid foundation it is; I know because this house is now my home, and I have many times admired that mighty work that holds my house securely onto the earth. Wilfred testifies as to the high standard of Art's concrete work: "It never cracked," he declares. (I find that very reassuring.) Other fortunate recipients of Art's building skills were his brothers LeRoy and Glen; he helped LeRoy work on a home in Lewiston and built two houses for Glen, one in Coeur d'Alene and one in Lewiston.

Any history of Arthur Ross must be fleshed out with the kind of person that he was, as witnessed by his children and his many friends and acquaintances. Wilfred Ross warmly describes the central core of Art's character: his belief in God

Wilfred Ross warmly describes the central core of Art's character: his belief in God and his determination to live the way he felt God wanted him to.

and his determination to live the way he felt God wanted him to. As an example, Wilfred tells a story from his own childhood. One day, during the Flannigan Crick era, Art was driving home with his wife and two small children. Just before they reached Viola, they saw a man with his wife and kids standing beside the road, hoping for a ride. Art picked them up and took them home with them, giving them shelter in a finished shed on the property. This empathy, said Wilfred, stemmed from Art's own experiences in the Depression.

From childhood, Art was a Nazarene. The existence of an orchestra in the Nazarene Church was partly due to the instruments Art made for members of the congregation and partly also to his own enthusiastic participation in that orchestra. He also donated violins to the Northwest Nazarene College and loaned some to the Moscow School District.

"Art was a humble man," says Karen Schefflin Hagan; this humble man gave the gift of music to Karen's family. The Rosses lived "up the river" from the Schefflins, and the youngsters all played together. Art made a violin for Karen in 1958, and two different violas for her brother James ("the second one was very good..."). Her brother Fred and sister Consuela also played viola. Karen still has her Ross violin, but ultimately became a flautist and now plays piano as an accompanist for the Genesee School choirs.

Another characteristic pointed out by Wilfred about his father was his lack of bitterness. Although he had been repeatedly frustrated in his efforts to achieve his original dream – to study music and become a professional 'cellist, teacher,

and conductor – he emphasized that "life is good." Art loved classical and religious music and had a special affinity for traditional Ozark/Appalachian fiddling (as differentiated from the Western tradition). Wilfred

searched out recordings for him at country sales and other such outlets, and now has these recordings himself.

Art's compassionate nature also showed itself in his commissioned violinmaking and sales of instruments. Wilfred and others remember that

Art would tailor the price to his perception of the customer's ability to pay. ("Unlike me," says Wilfred with a grin. "I tend to be businesslike about things, as I was when I sold some of Dad's instruments after he died.")

Art's brother LeRoy admired and tried to emulate Art's abilities as maker and player of instruments. LeRoy played the string bass and played with the Old Time Fiddlers. According to David Sandquist of Juliaetta, Idaho, LeRoy went to David for help with a "bull fiddle" he was making, since David had the tools to help him hollow out the back of the large instrument.

There is an aura of mystery and awe associated with the making of violins. People who otherwise know little about music or instruments know the name "Stradivarius." An unpredicted high score at the box office was achieved by a film called "The Red Violin," a saga of a mythical instrument passing through generations of owners. The violin was varnished with a formula including the blood of the beloved wife of the grieving violinmaker who hoped thus to immortalize her. The Kodak Corporation at one time financed research on the formulas of varnishes from violins by Stradivarius and other early masters (and there were many others!), hoping (in vain) that discovery of that secret would make it possible to duplicate the early masterpieces. With the same goal, physicists and experts in acoustics have studied the characteristic vibrations of wood in various shapes and thicknesses. Although some progress has been made in all this research, a stringed instrument in progress is still little more predictable than other works of art.

Even in this age of technology, there are many individual craftspersons bent over their workbenches with their cherished tools, making instruments by hand. Many of these luthiers (an early word that once referred to makers of lutes, but now usually means persons who make instruments of the violin family) refer to the patterns and measurements of the early masters of the mid-16th through early 18th centuries. Most of these current-day luthiers have studied at an established violinmaking school and/or apprenticed to a fine craftsperson. Justifiably proud of their credentials

and experience, these makers become members of exclusive federations and maintain networks of information. Arthur Ross was never able to go to a violinmaking school or apprentice to a master. He became a master by reading books, using his woodworking experience, and applying himself with the same honest, focused effort with which he built awesome concrete foundations. I hold and play my beautiful viola with the same reverence I feel for the foundation of my house.

In the *Daily Idahonian*, March 13, 1968 (the year my viola was made), there was an article by Judith Blake about violinmaker Arthur Ross. At that time, Art had made 110 instruments, 40 of which were violins. Art is quoted as saying that he frequently used wood from the Moscow area in his work, and

that one of his projects at the time was a viola (mine?) with a top made of Engleman spruce cut on Moscow Mountain. Art had no interest in making his own

varnishes, believing that prepared varnishes were adequate. He focused his efforts on the tone of the instrument, which he attributed to the volume of space inside the instrument rather than the shape or the varnish. For the general shape of his instruments, he relied on the traditional patterns of Stradivarius and other makers.

He also experimented with shapes of his own devising, including what daughter Vernice described as a large violin or viola with an "inside curve" that curved around the neck of the player. Of all the instruments of the violin family, the viola is the least benign to its player. The best tone comes from the largest instruments, which are, as a result, difficult to hold and play. Ron Meldrum has an unfinished viola that Art had designed with a curved shoulder for better access for the player's hand. And of course, he made at least one vertical viola, which need not be held under the chin at all.

In 1962, Art retired from everything but violinmaking. By then, his name had appeared in a *World Book of Famous Violinmakers*. He never advertised, having all the business he could handle. Hammond Ashley regularly picked up Art's violins as soon as he had completed them and sold them in his shop in Seattle. Occasionally, the instruments traveled to the shop before being varnished, and Hammond would finish them.

***There is an aura of mystery and awe
associated with the making of violins.***

During the 1970s, Art taught classes in violinmaking at a "School of Country Living" that was held in Kendrick Idaho.

Art died in 1977. Most of the Ross men lived to their 80s or 90s. Arthur's death at one month short of 73 was sudden and unexpected. He had been in the hospital for a week for treatment of varicose veins. On a Friday, he went home. On Sunday, he died from a blood clot in the brain.

The funeral service was held at the Church of the Nazarene with Reverends Harold Stickney and Harold Gilliam officiating. Art and Gilliam were longtime friends, having met in the logging camps. The Gilliams were a music-making family and had spent many musical evenings with the Rosses. Wilfred remembers Gilliam as "a gifted speaker who gave a fine eulogy."

Joy Youngman played the organ. Pallbearers included Harry, Jack, and Wayne DeWitt, Henry Nygaard, Melvin Lyon, and Paul Million. Music selections were offered by Eugene Lubiens, music minister of the Moscow Nazarene Church, and Eddie Gray, a longtime family friend. Then there was a violin solo – on one of Arthur Ross's violins – played by Dr. LeRoy Bauer, professor of violin at the University of Idaho. Arthur Christopher Ross was buried in Moscow Cemetery. Chrystine continued to live at 314 South Polk until her death in 1983. Her nephew, Harry DeWitt, kept the house maintained for her.

Art's instruments are still owned and used by people throughout the Northwest. Of course, his son, daughter, and other relatives have some of his instruments. Jeanette Talbot, a distant relative of the DeWitts, has a violin made by Art who let Jeanette's husband finish it. The violin was for Maida, the Talbotts' daughter, who wanted it to be "...the color of a bay horse." Jeannette still has this violin, in memory of Maida who died at the age of twenty.

Lorraine Hudson, receptionist at the *Moscow-Pullman Daily News*, relates that her daughter Judy first rented a violin from Art. Later, she bought one. Inside, the label says, "Rebuilt in 1966."

Ronald Meldrum has a uniquely-shaped viola made by Art. Meldrum bought Art's tools after his death and used them in some violin repair. Julia Cohen, violist and string teacher of Pullman, Washington and member of the Washington-Idaho Symphony, taught Marianne McGreevy and her brother. Marianne had a Ross viola. Out there somewhere in the music world are all of the other Ross violins, violas, 'cellos, and string basses. I wish that they could all answer to a roll call and tell us where they are and who is playing them now.

The most recent piece of this history arrived when a tall, sturdy, smiling man knocked at my door. It was Charles E. Powell, information officer at the Washington State University School of Veterinary Medicine, and he was carrying a piece of plywood. Sketched on the plywood were overlapping outlines of two standard violas and one violin, with measurement markings: some of Arthur's pattern drawings.

It seems that Charles had cleaned out the loft of the Polk Street shed for Bill London, then owner of the house, who told Charles to take anything he cleaned out. There were scraps of "very good wood" (Engleman spruce from Moscow Mountain?). But it was the plywood sheet of patterns that appealed to him. As a youth, Charles had played a viola that his father had brought home from Germany. Charles kept that board sketched with those familiar shapes until he read David Johnson's article. Then he brought the pattern-board back to me; now it will be back in the last luthier shop of Arthur Christopher Ross.

RECOLLECTIONS OF TAMARACK SKI AREA ON MOSCOW MOUNTAIN

By Malcolm Furniss, member of the Ski Patrol

In the fall of 1965, a new ski area was in the offing on Moscow Mountain thanks the efforts of a corporation formed by eight men including wildlife professor, Ken Hungerford. Others besides



Steve Davis surveys the ski slope from the toboggan station at the top of the 2,000 foot T-bar. Patrolmen were constantly on the move, ready to render aid if needed, but one person was always present at the top should power fail.

Hungerford were Roland "Ron" Byers, Merrill Conitz, William Durbon, Bill Murphy, Bill Poppy, Larry Williams (all of Moscow) and Ray Hanson, Colfax. Hungerford had been chairman of a University of Idaho recreation committee and as such had gathered snow-pack records beginning in the 1950s for several areas in Latah County with the help of several UI students. The selected site lay six miles northwest of Troy at approximately 4,000-foot elevation, accessible by a road that leads up to East Moscow Mountain (4,721 foot elevation).

The area opened in the winter of 1965-1966. The facility consisted of an A-frame building, a 2,000-foot Buehler T-bar built in Switzerland, and an 800-foot rope tow. The A-frame lodge housed a ski rental shop and a lunch counter. The corporation had built the facility aided by a loan from the Small Business Administration. They astutely attracted public attention by sponsoring a contest to name the area. Winner was a Moscow resident, Mrs. Yvonne Slutz, who suggested the

name Tamarack Ski Area for which she received a free pass. Her son, Stan, joined the ski patrol there later.

My tie with the area came about unexpectedly. I came to Moscow in 1963 as a forest entomologist on the staff of the Forestry Sciences Laboratory on South Main Street. I had been living in Boise and had enjoyed skiing at Bogus Basin so I was following the new development, as were other skiers in the community. But I was just an average intermediate skier at best, and I was incredulous when Ken asked me to form a ski patrol there. I explained that I was not an expert skier, but Ken replied, "We mainly want someone with organizational ability." How he came to me for that is still a mystery, but I eventually became comfortable with the idea and enthused with the prospect of becoming a better skier and learning and practicing advanced first aid.

A crucial factor in my decision was that a pool of highly qualified candidate patrolmen was available among students and faculty at the local universities. Among them was my son, Rick, still in high school but already competing throughout the Northwest as a junior expert ski racer, having begun in grade school as a Mighty Mite racer at Bogus and the old "jumping hill" on the outskirts



First aid instructor Wilson Rogers expresses approval as Don Chapman finishes applying a leg splint during a practice first aid session at Tamarack.

of McCall. I suspect that his skiing reputation may have been a factor in calling me to Ken's attention.

I had no trouble gathering together a cadre of reliable, competent skiers who were soon enrolled in 35 hours of first aid training that was freely and ably provided by Wilson Rogers. Rogers was at the time head of security at UI and was what today would be called a paramedic who volunteered to ride in Moscow's ambulance tending to accident victims. He really knew how to teach practical first aid directed to our needs. All patrolmen were required to take advanced first aid involving treating the severest accident, should it happen. And they took refresher training annually.

Concurrently, I arranged with the National Ski Patrol for representatives from Spokane and Lewiston to provide classroom and on-slope training in first aid procedures and transporting victims in toboggans. They included John Fruit, Regional Chairman; Gordon Berk; Marlin Guell, a former National Ski Patrolman of the Year; Bud Matteson, Lewiston; and Warren Williamson, Regional Avalanche Instructor. On-slope testing consisted of grading each of us on first aid (50%), skiing proficiency (25%) and toboggan handling (25%). We also had to climb 600 feet elevation with skis on. One rule was drilled with no uncertainty: a patrolman never, ever, let go of the toboggan should he fall. Each year, we attained further training and skills leading to becoming Senior National Ski Patrolmen and a core group of four of us even earned the insignia for avalanche training. That avalanche training now seems a bit of a stretch considering Tamarack's elevation and intermediate slope! But we were now supposedly



In this photo, Regional National Ski Patrol examiners judge candidates seeking certification as patrolmen. Members of the Tamarack Ski Patrol received training to become members of the NSP, and several became Senior Patrolmen after testing at Bald Mountain near Pierce, Idaho.

qualified to do duty at any other ski area served by NSP.

Early members of the Tamarack patrol included Don Chapman, UI fisheries professor, who followed me as leader and who ran the ski school there. The ski school was very popular and had 120 adults and juveniles enrolled. To become certified, the instructors went through training and testing comparable to that of the ski patrol. There were two levels: Associate and Full-certified. Chapman took the Associate test at Mission Ridge and the Full certified test at Anthony Lakes. Testing was by the Pacific Northwest Ski Instructor's Association. The American Technique was taught.

Another member of the ski patrol was John Barker of Lewiston who later became affiliated with Cottonwood Butte Ski Area. More recently, he has written skiing articles for the Outdoor section of the *Lewiston Morning Tribune*. Other ski patrolmen were Steve Davis, Barry Barnes (who also taught lessons), Alan Purdy, Rich Krebs, Ray Boyd, Trygve Culp, and Mike Cheney. Others followed, but as the original group gradually drifted to other pursuits, I sensed a different ambience among the patrol and especially worrisome was that on one occasion I found myself on patrol alone. Should that day be the one with a severe injury requiring assistance of two patrolmen, I shuddered at the consequences.

Throughout my tour as Leader, I required that a report be made of each accident, and I followed up with a phone call checking on the condition of the victim and asking an evaluation of the first-aid rendered. Without exception, these evaluations were favorable and the victim or family member



In this training exercise, Bud Matteson of Lewiston directs trainees in the manner of probing for avalanche victims. Four Tamarack patrolmen went on to receive avalanche training.



The ankle of Kandy Watson, University of Idaho student, is checked for injury by Mal Furniss while Steve Davis looks on. The crossed skis protect against approaching skiers.

was grateful. Once, it was made known that, according to the doctor, a broken leg had been set in the process of applying a splint at the scene! The intention, of course, was merely to stabilize the leg during transportation to the hospital, but I still liked the doctor having mentioned it to the victim's parent.

As it turned-out, Tamarack was snake-bit from the start; although, it took several years for that to be apparent. Actually, the area was popular especially with families, and I personally enjoyed skiing there. It was truly a great place for beginners and intermediate skiers to recreate and to advance in their ability. But from the management side, there were fatal problems that led to eventual bankruptcy about 1970.

Hungerford and Merrill Conitz, another Corporation member, recalled some of the adversities that could not be overcome. One was the cost of snow plowing about five miles of road. Assistance from the County was unavailable, perhaps due to there being no residences along the way. Also, the cost of extending a power line to the ski area was prohibitive and resulted in having to purchase and maintain a diesel power plant on the premises. Ultimately, however, it was the vagaries of snowfall at this low elevation that dealt the fatal blow. I remember heading there on a Saturday morning engulfed in such a blizzard that I turned back at Joel, far short of Troy. But at another time, a good snow-pack melted to bare ground in hardly more than a day when a warm wet wind (Chinook) invaded the Palouse.

Conitz speculates that the area still has potential and that timing was a factor in Tamarack's downfall. In the mid-1960s, T-bars were in vogue. Chairlifts were yet to become standard in smaller areas as they are now. But a T-bar could not take a skier comfortably up the increasingly steep slope to the top of East Moscow Mountain. There, at higher elevation, greater snow depth prevails, and skiers would have been able to traverse the shaded north-slope back to the bottom. I wonder, too, if the present popularity of cross-country skiing might contribute to profitability of the enterprise had the timing been different

After the corporation defaulted, Tamarack was bought by Merrill Conitz's father who operated it for a year or so. The sequence of ownership thereafter is obscure but Troy's Mayor, John Blom, provided some insight from minutes of meetings and from recollections of other city employees. The facility evidently reverted to Latah County along the way, perhaps due to tax delinquency. Whatever the case, the City of Troy bought the chairlift from the county for \$150 and sold it in 1992 for \$300 to Cottonwood Ski Club, a non-profit group involved with operation of the facility on Cottonwood Butte. Soon thereafter, the A-frame



Barry Barnes returns a toboggan to the top of the T-bar.

building was given to someone in Troy for removal. Following its removal, city workers broke up and buried the building's cement foundation.

Today, the area shows no sign of Tamarack ever having existed. Now, there is a small parking area near the site of the former lodge from where bikers and hikers explore the diversity of the mountain's forests, animal life and the majestic view of the

Palouse from the top. Last fall, I stood on the mountaintop, entranced in thought, looking down at the now grown-over site where 38 years earlier I embarked on becoming a National Ski Patrolman. I took a photograph, but it seemed to have no connection, and I welcomed the insistence of my dog companion who wanted to venture elsewhere.

The *Latah Legacy* welcomes your letters, comments, and stories. Our mailing address is 327 East Second Street, Moscow, ID 83843, and our email address is Ichlibrary@moscow.com. Correspondence should include the writer's full name, address, daytime telephone number and/or email address.

Thank-you.

NOT OF NOBLE BIRTH: THE TRIUMPH OF JENNIE HUGHES SMITH

By Julie R. Monroe

"Our school days are over and we leave the rather narrow boundaries of our alma mater, the old college halls, but we step out into the great theatre of life, for knowing, from the experience gained during our school life, that we will succeed or fail, only insofar as we apply ourselves to the task in hand and the cheerfulness with which we overcome every barrier."



The commencement photograph for the University of Idaho Class of 1899. Seated, second to the right, is Jennie Eva Hughes, the UI's first African-American graduate.

At the cusp of the 20th century, Jennie Eva Hughes wrote these optimistic words of advice for her classmates as they graduated from the University of Idaho in June 1899. Jennie's counsel to "overcome every barrier" with cheerfulness takes on a special poignancy when we learn that Jennie was African-American and that her parents had most likely been slaves. But because she left no diary, no letters – nothing to tell us what was in her heart and mind – we will never know just what those words meant to this extraordinary young woman. Fortunately, though, there is much we do know about Jennie's life – as a student, wife and mother, and as an American.

Jennie Eva Hughes was born on July 20, 1879, in Washington, D.C. Little is known about Jennie's father, Alexander Hughes, but we do know that her mother, Louisa, married Lewis E. Crisemon shortly after Jennie was born. Like other

Americans during the nineteenth century, the Crisemon family moved westward, first to Pennsylvania, where daughter Gertrude was born, then to the Indian Territory (Oklahoma), where second daughter Lousinda was born, and finally to Idaho, where Louisa and Lewis' third daughter, Carrie, was born. It is interesting that the Crisemon's, as African-Americans, migrated to what would become the state of Oklahoma. Were they Exodusters? During the Great Exodus, as this migration came to be known, thousands of black Americans left the eastern and southern states and migrated to those of the Midwest and Plains in the decades immediately following the Civil War. Oklahoma was particularly attractive to black Americans because, after the U.S. government had opened the Indian Territory to settlement by non-Indians, many black settlers pooled their land parcels to create all-black towns.

After a few years in the Indian Territory, Jennie's family was drawn westward again; this time to Idaho, where, according to the Census of 1890, there were only 201 blacks in the state. The Crisemons settled in Moscow in the early 1890s; they were, in fact, Moscow's first black family. While there is little doubt the family encountered prejudice of some sort, we do know that the Crisemons were well regarded in Moscow. Lewis was a successful businessman, operating either a restaurant or a barbershop – two occupations traditionally open to African-Americans on the western frontier. According to Jennie's University of Idaho registration card dated September 23, 1898, her mother's occupation was housekeeping. The card, however, incorrectly shows Jennie's address in Moscow as Almond Street; probably Jennie and her family lived on Almon Street in the northwestern part of Moscow.

Although some western states restricted enrollment of black students in public schools, Jennie had not been prohibited from attending Moscow's public schools. In fact, the registration card for her last semester at the University of Idaho, dated February 15, 1899, shows that she had been "prepared for college" in "Moscow Public

Schools,” and she graduated from Moscow High School on April 26, 1895. As a student at the University of Idaho, according to historian Keith Petersen in *This Crested Hill: An Illustrated History of the University of Idaho*, Jennie “accumulated an admirable academic record.” She won the prestigious Watkins Medal for Oratory in 1898, and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree, one of seven students in the Class of 1899.

“Miss Jennie E. Hughes, ’99, will visit Oakland, Cal., during the summer,” reported the June 1899 *Argonaut*. The October 1899 *Argonaut* reported, “Jennie Hughes Smith is living in Wardner, Idaho.” Sometime between June and October, Jennie married George Augustus Smith. Little is known of George’s personal history; however, according to historian Keith Petersen, George was a “railroad employee who had speculated in mining stock.” In her book, *Idaho Ebony: The African-American Presence in Idaho State History*, Mamie O. Oliver writes of “George Smith from Georgia.” George and Jennie’s grandson, Kenneth Smith, understands that his grandfather had indeed been born in Georgia, and that the town of Augusta in Georgia had inspired his middle name. According to Oliver, George Smith was a “galena” or lead miner in Wardner. Kenneth adds that his grandfather was both a miner and a mine owner; among the mines he owned were the Little Pittsburgh, the Amy (or Amie) Matchless, and the Cougar. Kenneth also understands that George’s mother, Fanny, may have run a boarding house called the “Kellogg House.”

Despite the success George enjoyed in the Silver Valley, Jennie and George, and their four children, left Wardner and moved to Spokane, Washington in 1912. As Kenneth says, the Smiths departed, at least in part, because Jennie did not consider the rough-and-tumble atmosphere of the

mining towns “a suitable place to raise children.” Jennie and George had three sons and one daughter. Berthold Augustus was born April 30, 1901; Amie, March 24, 1904; Leonard Wilbur, October 11, 1907; and Ralph Donald (Kenneth’s father) on April 4, 1911. Each of the Smith children, with the exception of Amie, graduated from high schools in the Spokane area. Sadly, Berthold, who was the second African-American student to enroll in the University of Idaho, died in 1919, while still a student. Leonard earned a law degree, probably from Gonzaga University in Spokane, and practiced as an attorney in that city. Kenneth’s father, Ralph, attended what was then Washington State College (now Washington State University) in Pullman, graduating in 1935 with a degree in Electrical Engineering.

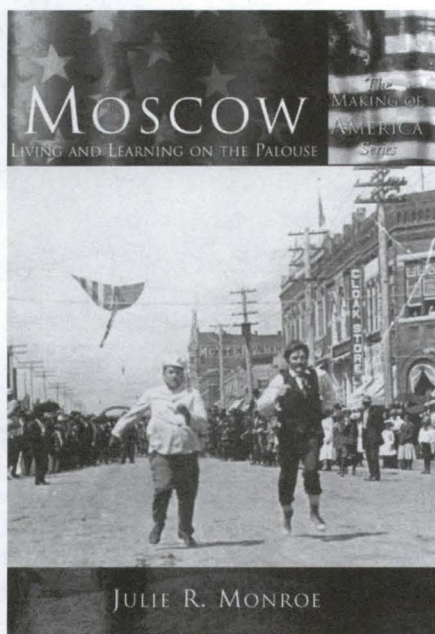
Four years after her son Ralph graduated from Washington State College, on August 19, 1939, Jennie died at the age of 60 in Spokane. In her June 1899 address to her classmates, Jennie

urged them to “occupy positions of usefulness.” We will never know if Jennie felt she had succeeded in this regard, we do know, however, that the life of Jennie Eva Hughes Smith was remarkable.

At a time when less than one percent of Americans earned a bachelor’s degree, an African-American woman – whose father, mother, and stepfather had likely been emancipated only four decades earlier – seized the opportunity of education and left us with a legacy of determination and distinction that enriches the lives of not just Idahoans but all Americans.

This article was originally published in the Winter 2003 edition of “Here We Have Idaho,” the alumni magazine of the University of Idaho, and is reprinted here with permission of the editor.

Sadly, Berthold, who was the second African-American student to enroll in the University of Idaho, died in 1919, while still a student.



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Centered in the glorious Palouse, a richly fertile area, the small Idaho town of Moscow was once home to the Nez Perce, who introduced the famous spotted Appaloosa horses. The intimate Moscow feel inspired by current residents has persisted since the original homesteaders settled here, a place they called "Paradise Valley." Resisting the anonymity of many rural agricultural towns, Moscow proudly claims an educational, civic, commercial, and cultural reputation far beyond a town of its size, a monument to the people who elevated the community.

Author and historian Julie R. Monroe is a member of the Latah County Historical Society and produces the newsletter of the Moscow Historic Preservation Commission. She has collected vivid historic images and produced a lively narrative, offering readers an entertaining volume that commemorates the vigor and determination of this town.

Arcadia Publishing, the country's leading publisher of local and regional history books, launched the Making of America series to celebrate individual communities and their unique contributions to our national character. These new books combine comprehensive narrative histories with a selection of vintage photographs, period maps, and antique postcards. Together, they record America's epic story town by town, city by city.

Copies of *Moscow: Living and Learning on the Palouse*, which is expected to be released in early summer, will be available from the Latah County Historical Society at both the Centennial Annex and the McConnell Mansion Museum Store. To request a copy by mail, please contact the historical society by telephone at 208-882-1004 or by email at ichsoffice@moscow.com.



SUMMER *of* DISCOVERY 2003

Summer of Discovery 2003 is a series of history, art, music, literature, theater, and cultural activities that will launch the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial in Latah County. It is a cooperative effort of the Latah County Historical Society, the Moscow Arts Commission, the University of Idaho Laboratory of Anthropology, the Appaloosa Museum and Heritage Center, the Moscow Public Library, and the Kenworthy Performing Arts Centre.

The series includes historical presentations and portrayals, Fresh Aire Concerts, art and archaeology exhibits, Discovery Day for Kids, drama, and library programs. For more information about *Summer of Discovery 2003*, call the Latah County Historical Society at 208-882-1004 or email the historical society at Ichlibrary@moscow.com.

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The services of the Latah County Historical Society include maintaining the McConnell Mansion Museum with historic rooms and changing exhibits, actively collecting and preserving materials on Latah County's history, operating a research library of historical and genealogical materials, collecting oral histories, and sponsoring educational events and activities. Historical materials relating to Latah County are added to the collections and made available to researchers as well as being preserved for future generations. If you have items to donate or lend for duplication, please contact us.

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