

# LATAH LEGACY

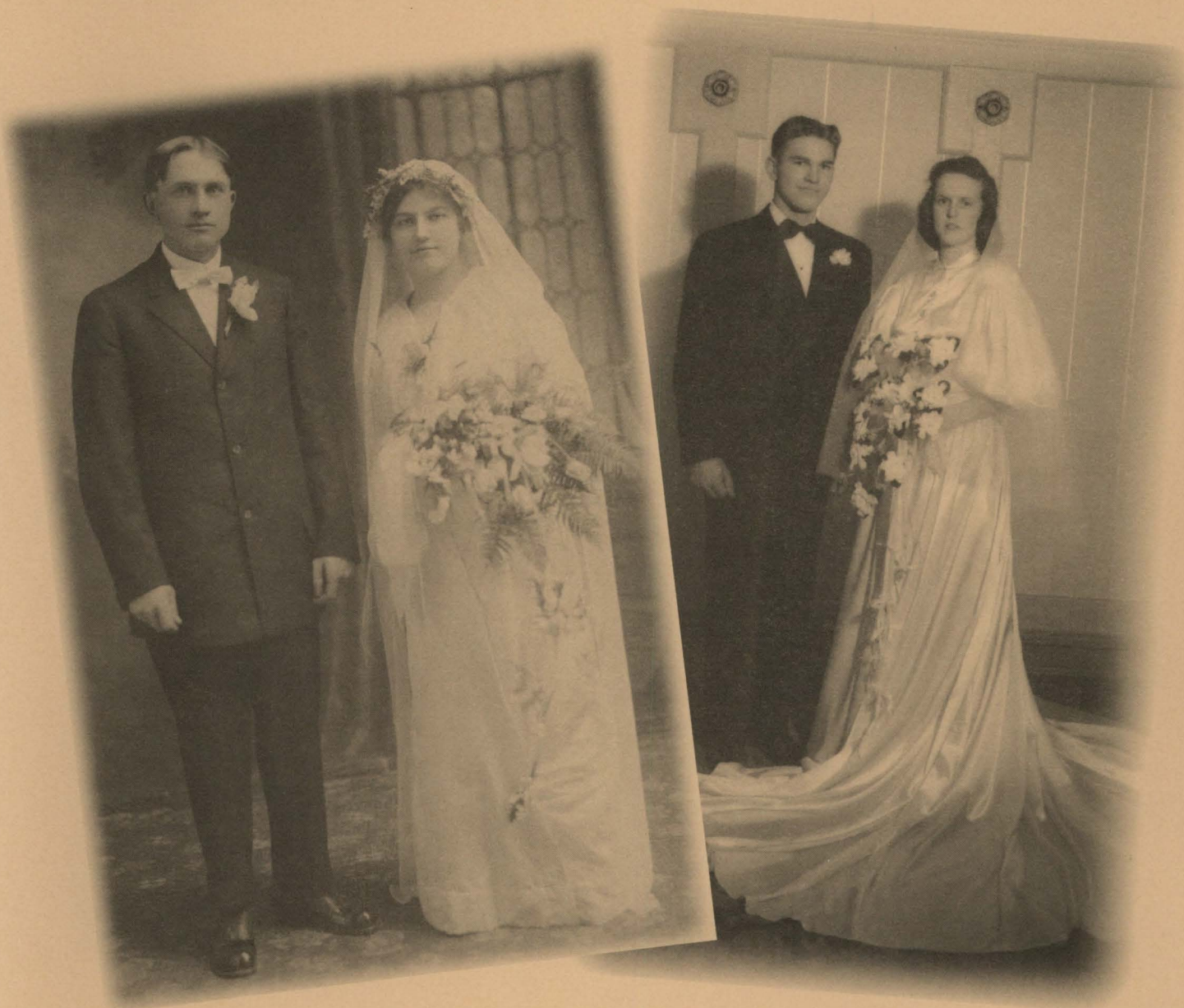
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Wedding Memories of Latah County

Reflections: A Tribute to Mary Reed

The Mystery of the Nameless Portrait

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**Cover:** The wedding portraits are of two generations of the Hagedorn family. At left is the February 1914 wedding portrait of Elizabeth Viola Scheyer and Frederick William Hagedorn. On the right are Margaret Virginia Finch and Elizabeth and Frederick's grandson, Gerald Hagedorn. Their wedding took place in June 1946.

**Editor:** Mary Reed

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## The Wedding Memories Exhibit

**Introduction.** The donation of three wedding dresses from Gerald and Harriot Hagedorn provided the spark for an exhibit that would spotlight items from our collection and the stories of the bride and groom associated with these beautiful garments. A search of our collections turned up several dresses that represented a hundred years of fashion. Some are elaborate, with silk and lace fabrics, embroidery and beading. Others are simpler, made at home by the bride, a family member, or a friend. These dresses were often shared among sisters and cousins. When news of our interest in a wedding exhibit spread, other individuals loaned us dresses and accessories as well as photographs and stories of that special day.

The process of turning the dresses and artifacts into an interpretive exhibit involved research for the items we had as well as for those represented only by photographs and stories. We also spent many hours patiently steaming wrinkles and dressing the manikins. This procedure was somewhat difficult as many of the dresses were made for small-waisted women. To allow an intimate view of the dresses and to protect them at the same time, we designed a glass barrier made of panels of glass held by clips and stabilized by a wooden base.

**Wedding Memories of Latah County: A Century of Fashion and Culture** opened June 17, 2005 as part of Moscow's ArtWalk. It proved to be one of our most popular exhibits. What follows is a sampler of the exhibit.

### **A Pioneer Wedding Charles and Emma Munson December 28, 1890**

Courtship and wedding ceremonies were often simple affairs in Latah County's early years. Charles Munson had come to Moscow in the fall of 1884, when the area was suffering hard times. The next year he filed a preemption claim on 40 acres and settled into a small cabin.

A few years later, in 1889, Clemma Etta Roderick left Kansas, where she had edited a newspaper, to move to Moscow with her family. She began teaching school 35 miles away at Stanford where she lived with her brother and his wife. A friend encouraged Charles to ride out and meet the new schoolmarm. He did just that and was impressed, recording this impression in his autobiography, *Westward to Paradise*:

*She was a tiny, little thing, barely five feet tall, with a serious air of reserve about her. Only after getting to know her did you realize what a spunky little miss she*

*was, with a delightful Irish sense of humor. She didn't seem very impressed with me, although at first sight I decided she was just what I had been looking for.*

After an exchange of letters, Charles rode out to see her a second time and asked her to marry him. She agreed but said she would have to wait until the school board found a replacement for her. The couple arranged to meet in Moscow for the wedding, and Etta rode the long journey all alone on her pony. They were married at the McGregor Hotel on December 28, 1890, without a license, as there weren't any at the time. They spent the night at the hotel and then left for Charles' farm. His neighbors insisted that the newlyweds spend the night with them, and it soon became apparent why.

*After supper a crowd of over 100 gathered to give us an old-time charivari. The crowd stood outside banging on pans, ringing bells, and making all kinds of racket. The newlyweds mustn't go out too*

*soon, lest they spoil the fun. After a suitable time, everyone was invited in for refreshments, cigars, and a good time.*

Their wedding portrait shows Emma wearing a two-piece dress of a dark color. The bodice is embellished with a white bow at the neckline, a row of tucks, and pleats on the sleeves. The front of the skirt is shirred. She holds a small hat, perhaps velvet, embellished with ribbons.

Charles is holding a derby hat and the vest of his dark suit sports a gold watch chain. The photograph was taken in a studio which supplied the backdrop and props.



### **A Rushed Marriage**



**On September 18, 1900, Eunice Westall married Clarence Elzy Talbott.** It was a rushed affair. Eunice's father, Noble Bacchus Westall, decided the couple should marry and live in his house as he had rather suddenly decided to move to California to live with his son. His proposed that he would give them all the furniture, the cow, and all other equipment. The couple agreed, and Mr. Westall and Clarence went to the courthouse for the marriage license. Clarence had to attest that Eunice was at least 18 years old and white.

The next step was to get a minister. Clarence went to the Methodist prayer meeting and explained his mission to the minister. "He got his coat and hat and accompanied me home. All was set. Eunice had on her graduating dress which served as a wedding dress." After the ceremony Clarence asked the minister what his price was. The answer was, "Oh, just whatever you think she is worth." Clarence handed him \$5.00 and later stated, "I have never thought him overpaid."





**Alma Mathilda Olson and Victor  
Nathaniel Ramstedt. May 31, 1904**

The couple were married in Red Wing, Minnesota, and soon moved to Moscow. Their wedding portrait shows Alma wearing the dress with a locket and a long veil with a large ruffle at the top. Victor has a high collar and a white bow tie. The painted backdrop lends a romantic air with a column and drapery framing a misty landscape.

Victor began working at Creighton's clothing store when he was only 17. He eventually became sole owner, retiring at age 93. His trademark was an immaculate white shirt and bow tie.

The Ramstedts' granddaughter, Joan Gareth Ramstedt, wore Alma's dress at her wedding to Larry Neil Norby at the First Lutheran Church in Moscow on August 11, 1956. She added a satin underskirt and a headpiece decorated with pearl rosettes. The wedding veil may have been the one Alma wore in 1904.

Joan donated Alma's dress and veil which were placed in the parlor to complement the story of Lulu Adair's wedding.

**A Wedding in the  
McConnell Mansion  
Lulu Adair & Orren Shomber  
December 23, 1908**

*From the Moscow Star-Mirror, December 24, 1908:*

At the home of the bride's parents, Dr. and Mrs. Wm. A. Adair, December 23, there occurred one of the most pleasant affairs of the season, the marriage of Mr. Orren E. Shomber of Spokane and Miss Lulu Adair of this city, the bride being one of Moscow's most beautiful and accomplished young ladies and the groom, Mr. Shomber, one of Spokane's promising young men. The bride, with her sister, who acted as bridesmaid, were both displayed in triumphs of the dressmakers art, beautiful laces and silk being the prominent features. The groom and his best man, Mr. Tillishof, were arrayed in the conventional black. The ceremony was conducted by Rev. B. E. Kootz, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal church of this city.

The bride entered the spacious parlors where the ceremony was performed on the arm of her father to the accompaniment of Mendelsson's wedding march rendered by Prof. L. W. Cogswell. The marriage ceremony was beautiful and impressive. There were 36 guests in attendance and after congratulations had been expressed a wedding feast was served, at the conclusion of which the happy couple took their departure for Spokane, their future home, accompanied by the best wishes of not only the guests present but all the citizens of Moscow who have now the bride from her early childhood.

*Note: Professor Cogswell taught music at the University of Idaho. He later rented a room in the house where he gave private lessons to young people, including Carol Ryrie Brink.*



**A Double Wedding**  
**Mary Wernecke and George Johann,**  
**Adelaide Johann and Joseph McLaughlin**  
**October 12, 1917**

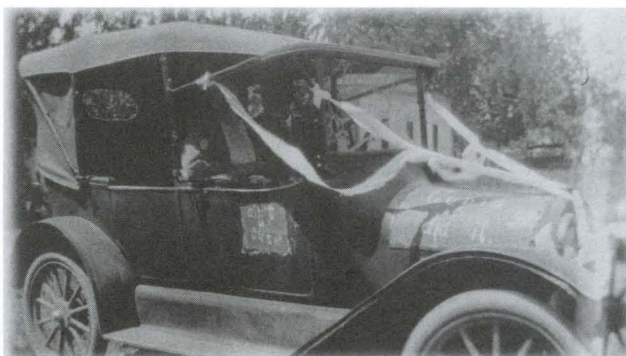
In October 1917, the *Genesee News* happily announced the double wedding of the two couples, noting that Adelaide and George were brother and sister, and the brides were dressed exactly alike in "beautiful creations of white messaline and Georgette crepe, with bridal veil and wreath so becoming to youthful faces." After the wedding the families and friends enjoyed a "bounteous dinner" hosted by George's parents in rooms decorated with asters and sweet peas. Afterwards the guests attended a large dance with music furnished by the Carey orchestra.

The following September the newspaper announced the birth of a son to the Johanns, but then just a few months later in December it carried the sad news of death. Both husband and wife had contracted influenza, and like millions of people the world over, became victims of the Spanish flu. They succumbed to pleural pneumonia on the same day, leaving behind their two-month-old son.



*In the photograph George and Mary Johann sit in front with Mary's sister, Loretta, the ring bearer. Loretta wore a dress of pink silk. Addy and Joe McLaughlin sit in back.*

**A 1920s Wedding**  
**Ruth Otter and Ben Vogel**  
**June 1922**



*From the Moscow Daily Star-Mirror, June 29, 1922:*

A very pretty home wedding was solemnized at the home of Bro. and Sister John Otter when their daughter Ruth was united in marriage to Mr. Ben Vogel at eleven o'clock Thursday morning, Rev. H. O. Perry officiating. The bride and groom came in to the strains of Lohengrin's wedding march played by Miss Viola Otter, and took their places before a bower of evergreens and syringas. The bride was very daintily dressed in white georgette over pale yellow satin, and carried a bouquet of white carnations. Immediately after the ceremony a splendid luncheon was served at which plates were laid for twenty-four, only the immediate relatives of the bride and groom being present.

Miss Bessie Bennett and Miss Viola Otter served.

Mr. Vogel is one of the highly respected young men of his community, his family having lived in the same place for thirty years. Miss Otter is a most worthy young lady and her people are early settlers in the Moscow community. She has been teaching school in the Potlatch district.

The happy couple left for a week's honeymoon trip to Spokane and surrounding lakes in Mr. Vogel's automobile in the afternoon. The Moscow Methodist extends heartiest congratulations. They will live with Mr. Vogel's people on their farm near Potlatch.

The signs on the honeymooner's car read, "Ain't We Cute," and, "They Lived Happily Ever After."





## A Society Wedding Bernice Day and John Fuller Maloney October 28, 1925

In September Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Day entertained several guests at lunch in their home. As dessert was being served, a messenger arrived with telegrams for each guest announcing the engagement.

The *Idaho Statesman* described the ensuing wedding as *Idaho Statesman* described the ensuing wedding as "quite the smartest wedding of the year at Moscow," and the *Idaho Post* declared it was perhaps the most brilliant affair of the season in Inland Empire society."

The wedding was held at St. Mark's Episcopal Church at 8:30 in the evening.

The bridesmaids, maid of honor and

matron of honor wore chiffon dresses with rhinestone-studded girdles, capes, silver hose and slippers, and silver-trimmed headdresses.

The bride wore an elaborate dress of ivory embossed velvet trimmed with rhinestones. The long train was of white chiffon and finished with silver cloth edged with lace, and the tulle veil was fastened with a coronet of orange blossoms and rose point. Bernice wore a going away suit of grey velvet trimmed in fur and a purple velvet hat.

The Day home was lavishly decorated with bouquets of giant chrysanthemums, ferns, roses, and daisies arranged amid light from hundreds of pink, white and blue candles. The *Idaho Post* described it as presenting "a brilliant appearance, with its bright lights and beautiful flowers." Several hundred guests attended the wedding, and more than a thousand attended the reception and dance, many arriving on a special train. The wedding party danced to music provided by two orchestras from the University of Idaho.



*Jerome Jr., Lucy, and Bernice Day*

Jerome and Lucy Mix Day were among Moscow's most prominent and richest residents. Jerome moved to Wardner, Idaho when he was nine years old and helped with the family's general store. He attended Gonzaga University in Spokane and then the University of Idaho where he studied mining and chemistry. He became president of the Moscow State Bank, organized the Idaho International Harvester Company, and from was state senator from 1910 to 1916.

In 1912 he became president and general manager of the Tamarack and Custer mining companies, directing successful explorations in silver-lead production. He moved to Wallace in 1923, and served as president of the University of Idaho board of regents. He accumulated a comprehensive library which he bequeathed to the University.

Jerome married Lucy Mary Mix and they had two children: Bernice Eugenia and Jerome James, Jr.

*Note: The description of the wedding is from the May 2004 issue of Cornerstone, published by the Moscow Historic Preservation Commission.*



## Three Generations of Weddings

*It is fortunate to find materials belonging to three generations of the same family. A donation of three wedding dresses and later other related materials, most of which were also donated, to the historical society was the inspiration for the exhibit. The wedding dresses, memorabilia, and photographs of three Hagedorn weddings, which extend from 1914 to 1969, document changes in fashion and culture.*

### **Elizabeth Viola Scheyer and Frederick William Hagedorn February 25, 1914**

Elizabeth married Frederick when she was 18 years old. Her 1914 homemade wedding dress is soft and loose, trimmed with pearl and silver beading, and in her wedding portrait the skirt is pinned to the side with sprigs of flowers and her veil is fastened by a band of flowers.

Elizabeth's German heritage is reflected in the lithographed marriage certificate printed in old German script. Another keepsake is a die-cut valentine with a honeycomb fold-out that her fiancé may have sent. In the age when etiquette restricted displays of affection and types of gifts engaged people could exchange, Valentine cards were an acceptable means of communicating sentiment.

Among Elizabeth's possessions that the family saved are a corset cover and a "combination," a one-piece garment consisting of a chemise and drawers. They are part of the several undergarments a bride of the Edwardian era would wear underneath her wedding dress.

Following the journalistic custom of the time, the newspaper described the wedding in sumptuous detail. An edited version is below.

*From the Moscow Star Mirror, March 5, 1914:*

More than sixty fortunate friends were present at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Scheyer to attend the wedding of their daughter. The ceremony was performed at high noon. The bride, who is a very beautiful young woman, was gowned in a handsome creation of white charmeuse trimmed in pearl, passementeries, and cut a little low in the neck. She wore a long bride's veil decorated in lily of the valley and carried an exquisite bouquet of white roses, lily of the valley and sweet peas.

The solemn and beautiful words of the marriage service were announced in the handsome parlor under a great arch of ferns and pink and white carnations. Immediately after the ceremony the party was seated with a delicious elaborate collation. The menu consisted of pressed chicken, salad, fruit salad, fancy jello pudding, coffee, cakes, grape punch, and many relishes. Pink and white carnations stood in tall vases in the center of each table and from these streamed ribbons of pink and white crepe paper.

After the repast, the newly married couple took their leave and departed for their new home which is located three miles west of Moscow where the groom owns a fine ranch.



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*The Sterner photography studio recorded the occasion against a studio backdrop of a leaded church window.*

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**Margaret Virginia Finch and  
Gerald Hagedorn**  
June 12, 1946

**In 1946, society news was a regular and popular feature of most newspapers.** Descriptions of weddings were a prominent theme, as reflected in the June 16 article printed in the *Boise Idaho Sunday Statesman* of the Hagedorn-Finch wedding. Miss Margaret Virginia Finch of Boise became the bride of Gerald Hagedorn of Moscow at a ceremony performed at 4 p.m. before 105 guests in the First Presbyterian church.

Along with a large photograph of the bride, the article described in some detail her gown which reflected the simpler tastes of the post-war years: "white satin with a full skirt and long train. The full sleeves were brought in at the elbow. Small buttons were placed down the front of the bodice, and the neckline of the gown was high with a small round collar. The bouquet was of gardenias. Margaret's mother wore a blue afternoon dress and a small blue hat with a large pink rose. The bride's cousin sang two songs, "Because" and "The Lord's Prayer." After the reception dinner at the Owyhee Hotel, the couple left for their honeymoon after first washing their car which had been decorated.

**A 1946 Honeymoon Diary.** The war and rationing were over so there was plenty of gasoline. Margaret and Gerry joined other post-war couples in enjoying the end of the war with a 16-day trip to the Oregon coast and Canada. Margaret kept a diary of the trip, which is a lively record of sightseeing, shopping, and eating. Except for hotels in Portland, Victoria, and Vancouver, British Columbia, and Spokane the newlyweds stayed in small motels. Their motel in Seaside, Oregon had a small kitchen where they cooked breakfast and a supper of pork chops, string beans, and strawberry shortcake. They planned to cook a crab for dinner, but being unsure of its condition, they went out for a steak dinner. The couple amused themselves with walks on the beach where they hunted for shells and watched the sunset.

Traveling north Margie and Gerry breakfasted in Astoria where they took the ferry across the Columbia River. After traveling on what Margaret termed "stinkin' roads" they arrived at Port Angeles and were the last car to get on the big "streamlined" ferry. The couple visited Seaside and Astoria, Oregon, and then traveled to Victoria, British Columbia where they stayed at the Windsor Motel and dined at the Empress Hotel where Margie reported the meal as fair and cheap. After shopping for dishes at Hudson's Bay Company and eating a chicken dinner at Molly's Bar B Q, they headed north





on Vancouver Island. On June 27 they drove to Spokane by way of Grand Coulee Dam, arriving in Spokane at 5 p.m. They ate dinner in the Spokane Hotel, went for a walk, and listened to a rental radio which cost them 75 cents. The returned home on the 28th, the only misfortune being a flat tire just two miles out of Pullman.

The diary reflects dramatic changes in post-war America with good roads, the end of gas rationing, and the desire of people wanting to enjoy themselves and leave behind the lean years of the war and the 1930s depression. Mom-and-pop motels with kitchens, seeing movies in a theater, meals of fried chicken, and splurging on steaks give a sense of what tourism was like in the 1940s.

Margie was also careful to note each of her wedding presents and the presents from two wedding showers. Gifts ranged from a simple potato peeler to fancier crystal bowls and several divided relishdishes. The Presto cooker, four aluminum serving trays, braided rug, sherbets, and dust pan salt and pepper shakes, measuring spoons, can opener, orange squeezer, and an apron are all practical gifts a bride of the 1940s would expect to receive to set up her new household.

Among Margie's possessions was a framed series of six paintings by a popular and romantic artists, Harrison Fisher did photo layouts for *Saturday Evening Post* and *Cosmopolitan* between 1910 and 1934. The paintings, entitled *The Greatest Moments in a Girl's*

*Life*, depict stages in a young couple's life, from the proposal, to the trousseau, the wedding, the honeymoon, the first evening in their own home, and finally their new baby.



## Harriot Hagedorn & Daniel Lannigan June 21, 1969



Harriot's June wedding took place at noon at the Moscow Methodist Church. She chose this time as it was the same time her grandmother, Elizabeth Scheyer Hagedorn, was married.

Her wedding dress reveals the romantic trend of that time with its pleating, sheer fabric on the sleeves and overlaying the bod-

ice, lacy ruffled collar and cuffs, and large appliqué flowers on the skirt. Her tulle veil, like Elizabeth's, was held in place by a band of flowers.

Harriot purchased her dress at The Crescent, which was the fashionable department store in Spokane. Later she found a photo of her dress featured in *Bride* magazine.



*Although each dress is quite different in style, they share a common theme of white, flowing lines, rich materials, and the desire to follow a tradition of the romantic wedding and the white dress begun in 1840 with the royal wedding of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.*



## Audrey Sorensen and William Barr A Wartime Romance



Audrey and William first met on a double date when she was engaged to Bill's good friend. Both men were pilots in the Air Force. They flew P-38s over Europe during WWII. Audrey's fiancé was shot down and killed, and a year later Bill visited her.

They dated a couple of times, and discovered to their surprise that their parents knew each other very well. After several more dates, they became engaged at the fashionable Hotel Claremont in Berkeley, California.

At the time of their engagement, Audrey was completing her senior year at the University of

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*Here Audrey and Bill cut their wedding cake which is decorated with birds and topped by a small bride and groom. Audrey's aunt looks on in the background.*

*The modern elaborate wedding cake dates to Roman times when brides carried wheat ears in their left hands. Anglo-Saxon brides wove the wheat into chaplets to wear on her head. The next progression was a thin, wheat biscuit which was broken over the bride's head with the pieces distributed to the guests. Much later the biscuit became an iced cake which the bride broke into pieces for her guests. Finally, the tradition evolved into the bride and groom cutting the cake with a knife.*

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Force after flying 50 missions over Italy and was studying entomology and parasitology at the university. They were married at the Piedmont Hotel in Piedmont, California, on August 31, 1946.

Unlike most of the home-made wedding dresses in our exhibit and our textile collection, Audrey's dress was designed by Adelibe of California. The floor-length gown has a thirty-inch train of ivory satin peau d'soir. The bodice has a scoop neckline banded with satin and filled with netting. There are thirty-six, fabric-covered buttons and a gathered skirt with a curved hemline.



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*The recent custom of bride and groom mashing pieces of their wedding cake into each others' faces is one which Miss Manners adamantly deplores.*

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## A Wedding Dress to Share

### 1941 to 1951

During the Second World War, it was nearly impossible to find fabrics suitable for a wedding gown because of wartime shortages. Kathleen Orr, who lived in Buhl, offered to make a dress for her sister, Joan. When she couldn't find any suitable fabric, she asked their sister, Peggy, to help. Peggy, who was an army nurse stationed in San Francisco, found lace and cotton chiffon material and sent it to Kathleen.

Joan had met her fiancé Lt. Charles Miller in Moscow when she spent the summer of 1943 as a waitress at the Moscow Hotel. Kathleen sent the dress along with a veil she purchased in Twin Falls for their September 1944 marriage. But at the last minute Joan decided that it would be more suitable to be married in her going away dress.

The next opportunity for the dress to be worn happened when Joan's best friend, Ruth Bowman, a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin, announced her engagement to Ensign Darrel Engle who was waiting to be shipped out.

The dress was sent, but, again at the last moment, Ruth chose to be married in a street length dress.

Finally, the dress was worn, and this time by its creator. In June 1945, Kathleen married Dr.

John Porter, a veterinarian in graduate school at Madison, Wisconsin.

The dress had a second wearing when Peggy married Douglas Crane, an officer in the military Sea Transport System. The wedding took place in August 1951 in Seattle. By that time, the original satin slip had been put to other uses, so Peggy replaced it with a taffeta one.

Three of these marriages were long and happy ones. Unfortunately, Kathleen's husband, John Porter, was killed in a car accident only a year after their wedding.

The photo shows Peggy and Douglas,

still happily married, on their wedding day. Kathleen, who enjoyed a long and happy second marriage to Calvin Warnick, has donated the dress and veil to the historical society.



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"The Going-Away Dress." Emily Post, *Etiquette*, 1922. A bride necessarily chooses her going-away dress according to the journey she is to make. If she is starting off in an open motor, she wears a suitably small motor hat and a wrap. If she is going on a train or boat, she wears a "traveling" dress. If she is going to a near-by hotel or a country house she wears the sort of dress and hat suitable to town or country occasion. She should not dress as though about to join a circus parade or the ornaments on a Christmas tree, unless she wants to be stared at and commented upon in a way that no one of good breeding can endure.

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*November 9, 1915, Carl Granlund and Annie Sandstrom, both of Troy, are married. This studio photograph with its Norman Rockwell flavor, was most probably staged after the wedding. The wedding ensembles are simple with a boutonniere for the groom and a fairly plain dress and veil for the bride.*

**One of the most popular wedding dresses in the exhibit was this one made of parachute silk.** The groom who served in the Army Air Force in the South Pacific during World War II brought the silk back with him for the September 1949 wedding.

The groom's sister designed and sewed the dress and matching slip. The demure style has a rounded collar, shirred bodice, and gored skirt. On the table is the framed photo of the bride and groom, Barbara Russell and Ray Dahl.

Posing with the dress at the exhibit opening are from left to right, granddaughter Kym Dahl, the bride Barbara Dahl Means, her daughter Pauly Waldron, granddaughter Kirsten Dahl, and Barbara's daughter-in-law Dayle Dahl.

## A Brief Reflection on Weddings

Although we now associate wedding dresses with luxurious fabrics, embellishments, and even substantial investments, many of the dresses in the exhibit reveal a practical even frugal nature of their time and their creators. Most were made on home sewing machines by the bride or her mother or sister. Some were worn more than once, often by a granddaughter or a friend. Some dresses in the exhibit were intended to be used after the wedding. The oldest one, worn in 1878, shows signs of being mended and worn on many occasions. Pioneer weddings were often simple affairs with a best dress serving as a wedding gown.

Descriptions of weddings transcribed from early newspapers reveal that many weddings were held at home with only a few members of the family and friends in attendance. After the ceremony, the guests usually enjoyed lunch or dinner prepared by the family and served at the family table. Honeymoon trips might be to Spokane or Coeur d'Alene by train.

Although the hopes of young couples for a happy married life together and the wishes of family and friends have not changed over the decades, our contemporary wedding customs with their elaborate staging, expectations, and expenses would amaze and perplex earlier generations. A well-made dress of a special fabric, flowers in the church or the parlor for the ceremony, a sumptuous lunch in a dining room decorated with paper streamers, flowers, and the best china and silver were sufficient. A studio portrait affixed to a cardboard backing or a photograph taken outside the bride's home were simple treasured records of this enduring ritual.





## Courting and Wedding Traditions from the Victorians to Our Times



*An 1895 ad for the Crescent Bicycle manufactured in Chicago. The absence of chaperones on excursions alarmed many parents.*

**Victorian traditions surrounding weddings begin with courting**, a ritual that had rules designed to protect the young woman's reputation. Sixteen was thought to be the proper age when a young woman could begin keeping company with a man. Unlike women in Europe, American women of the 1880s enjoyed greater freedom. Bicycling and roller and ice skating provided opportunities for young men and women to be together, and parents even allowed parlor visits behind closed doors. Another popular activity for meeting and socializing were dances and balls where the dance programs were a useful tool for selecting favorite partners and screening others.

The courting ritual also prescribed the types of presents that a woman could receive, preferably candy, flowers, or other gifts of token or sentimental value. A proper gift for a man was something handmade or inexpensive. Valentines, which became popular in the late 19th century, were a perfect means of expressing sentiment in a socially acceptable way.

Then, as now, men took the initiative in proposing marriage either by letter or in person, which was the preferred way. After the woman accepted the proposal, the prospective husband had the duty of asking her father for his consent. It was the father's right to delay or forbid the wedding if he did not approve of the young man. In the Victorian patriarchal society, becoming engaged meant that a woman exchanged her father's authority for that of her fiancé's.

A Victorian woman's wedding ring might contain a variety of gems, such as a pearl, ruby, amethyst, or even a diamond. Men of modest means could substitute a flat gold band to be worn on the right hand until the wedding when it was transferred to the left hand. However, the more common or proper wedding ring was of plain, heavy gold.



*The 1895 Montgomery Ward catalog carried 18K wedding rings. This ring cost \$3.00.*

**The wedding dress** was one of the bride's most important decisions, and a white gown was not the most common choice. Many women preferred dark colors, even black, and practical styles that could be worn after the wedding. In pre-Victorian times women often selected blue because of the association with the Virgin Mary. The custom of wearing something blue has endured today with bride's adding an article of blue to their ensembles. Another acceptable color choice was pink, but red was thought too provocative. In England green was considered unlucky because it was the color worn by fairies and elves. Poorer women often selected grey as a color that could be worn to church, embellishing it for their weddings with bows, love, knots, or flowers.

When Queen Victoria married Prince Albert in 1840, she set a new fashion trend by not wearing the traditional silver wedding dress. Her white, and fairly simple satin dress was trimmed in



*Amanda Brown wore a two-piece green and black striped dress at her 1878 wedding. The bodice has been mended repeatedly and shows signs of much use.*



Honiton lace, a type of pillow or bobbin lace. She wore a long veil and a wreath of orange blossoms to emphasize purity. She influenced weddings in other ways by having twelve bridesmaids dressed in white. For her daughter's wedding she ordered a tiered cake covered with pure white icing and chose the Mendelssohn's wedding march.

White wedding dresses became especially popular and affordable with the introduction of machine-made textiles and lace. However, these white elaborate dresses were not considered symbols of virginity; rather they reflected the wealth of the family. Moreover, because the light-colored fabric was difficult to keep clean, it was not a practical choice for many brides.

The Victorian wedding dress was two-piece with a fitted bodice and a full skirt of several panels. Accessories included white kid gloves, silk stockings, and fancy button shoes. Wedding dresses were commonly viewed as a garment to be worn often after the wedding, and many were altered to more chaste styles. It was not just the poorer women who made over their wedding dresses. Mary Todd Lincoln replaced the off-the-shoulder bodice of her dress with a simpler and more modest one. Often seamstresses would use material from a panel of the full skirts or the train to fashion an entirely new bodice. Women of wealthier classes also wore their wedding dresses at other grand occasions, such as the anniversary of their wedding day. The custom of bridal visits dictated that the bride would visit family and friends wearing her wedding dress.

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The 1886 Bloomingdale's catalog carried this bridal "suit" made of white brocaded and plain satin. The full train was puffed in back, and the pointed waist was trimmed with lace and flowers. Prices ranged from \$40 to \$50, and the white nun's veiling was \$22.50.

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**The Edwardian period** of the first two decades of the 20th Century emphasized a long, sleek look and added extravagant lace, beading, ribbons, a headdress, and a long train to the wedding dress. The bustle disappeared. World War I cut short this elegant episode, and dresses became simpler, hems shorter, and corsets discarded in favor of a natural waistline. Dresses of the 1920s followed the current style of dropped waists, loose-fitting bodices, and a headdress worn low over the brow mimicking the popular cloche style.

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The October 1909 issue of the *Delineator* proclaimed this was the "month of months for happy brides." The suggested fabrics for pattern design 3288 at left was cachemire de soie and silk voile with all-over lace for the yoke-facing and collar. The train could be made in three lengths.

The article stated that "while some are married in traveling suits and start right from the home for their honeymoon, there is a feeling among many that "a real wedding" should be held in the church . . . the bride dressed in white or cream.

The article included an illustration of a fashionable dress pictured at left.

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*Kathleen Warnick made this simple wedding dress of lace and silk in 1944 from material her sister found in San Francisco. Because of wartime rationing, many fabrics were unavailable in places like Buhl, Idaho, where Kathleen was living at the time. She wore it at her wedding to John Porter in 1945, and her sister, Peggy, in the photo at right, wore it again in 1951 when she married Douglas Crane.*

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**The 1930s depression** prompted more brides to economize by wearing their best dress or by altering or dyeing a wedding dress a darker color. Sometimes a bride would add a lace collar and cuffs for the occasion. Hemlines dropped below the knee and the bias cut was popular.

**The Second World War** had its special impact as many weddings were conducted after a short engagement, and brides often wore their best suit instead of a wedding gown. Because of rationing, women found it difficult to find the appropriate satin or silk materials to make their own dresses.

The post-war period with its emphasis on consumerism ushered in the modern period of the elaborate ceremony with the bride in white. There was a variety of styles to choose from, from the full-length elaborate gown to ankle or ballerina-length gowns with bouffant skirts and a fitted princess style. Some women preferred a flower headpiece or a large hat rather than the traditional veil.



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*This photograph of an unidentified wedding couple was taken by the Hutchinson Photo Studio which occupied part of the Skattaboe Building in downtown Moscow from 1955 to 1966. The young bride is wearing a ballerina-length gown, and the couple are flanked by bouquets of white gladiolus.*

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The modern bride's preference for the white, full-length dress has endured, although one recent variations are the strapless gowns or dresses cut low in the back. Brides still wear veils, carry bouquets, and wear something blue, usually a garter. Wedding rings are most often the traditional gold band. Perhaps the most abrupt changes in courtship and wedding traditions are cultural. Bicycling is viewed more as an active sport rather than a courting opportunity. No rules govern the types of gifts the engaged couple can exchange, and greeting card companies produce a variety of sentimental messages for lovers year round. Weddings can be boisterous affairs, even including cake fights. Perhaps the most important change is where once the bride exchanged the authority of her father for her husband, the modern day bride makes her independent way in her new life as a married woman.



# Weddings - A Matter of Etiquette

Three writers offer advice on the etiquette of weddings from the perspectives of 1877, 1922, and modern times.

## 1877

### The Age of Propriety

**Mrs. E. Duffey, *The Ladies' and Gentlemen's Etiquette: A Complete Manual of the Manners and Dress of American Society*.**

*Mrs. Duffey's etiquette book offers "A complete manual of the manners and dress of American society." It covers topics from those of general etiquette such as conversation and visits, to etiquette for Washington, D.C. and foreign courts, special ceremonies, dress, and letter writing.*

*Mrs. Duffey was the author of several books, including What Women Should Know and No Sex in Education, and poetry. She was also the Associate Editor of Vineland (New Jersey) Daily Times where she worked with her daughter and wrote editorials. An internet search indicates that she is regarded as a major source on Victorian culture and manners.*

*The advice Mrs. Duffey offers reflects a time of prescribed social courtesies and strict rules governing all aspects of social behavior. It is interesting that the author, like Miss Manners of our time, was critical of the wedding present tradition.*



### Courtship

A gentleman whose thoughts are not upon marriage should not pay too exclusive attention to any one lady. Neither should a young lady allow marked attentions from any one to whom she is not specially attracted.

### Proposals of Marriage

It is impossible to lay down any rules in regard to proposals of marriage. The best way certainly is to apply in person to the lady and receive the answer from her own lips. Failing courage for that, one can resort to writing. A spoken declaration should be bold, manly and earnest. It should be, moreover, plain in its meaning, so there may be no misunderstanding.

Let young ladies always remember that, charming and fascinating as they may be, the man who proposes to them pays them a high compliment - the highest in his power. This merits appreciation and a generous return. A scornful "no" or a simpering promise to "think about it" is the reverse of generous.

### Asking Papa

In presenting his suit to the parents, he should remember that it is not from the sentimental but the practical side that they will regard the affair. Therefore, after describing the state of his affections let him give an account of his pecuniary resources and his general prospects in life.



### An Engagement Ring

All lovers cannot afford to present their lady-loves with diamond rings, but all are able to give them some little token of their regard.

### Courtship of the Betrothed



Two hours is quite long enough for a call. Very few young men comprehend the real pain and inconvenience they occasion to the lady of their choice when they keep her up to untoward hours



and subject her to the ridicule and censure of others. It is not inappropriate to sometimes leave an engaged couple by themselves, but that they should always be so left is as absurd as it is delicate.

### **Presents After Engagement**

If the gentleman has means and the lady's parents do not object, he may with propriety make presents to his affianced. If there are any scruples on this point, he can at least present her flowers, music and periodicals or books.

### **Lovers' Quarrels**

Neither party should ever try to make the other jealous. Such a course is contemptible. No lover will assume a domineering attitude over his future wife. If he does so, she will do well to escape from his thrall before she becomes his wife in reality. A domineering lover will be certain to be still more domineering as a husband; and from all such, "Good Lord, deliver us!"

### **Bridal Presents**

Bridal presents are always sent to the bride and are most commonly some article of jewelry or plate. This is an onerous tax upon society; and it is to be hoped that the better sense of community will yet prevail, and wedding presents be recognized as spontaneous rather than obligatory gifts.



### **The Wedding-Dress**

The costume of the bride is of the first importance. A bride in full bridal costume should be entirely in white from head to foot. Her dress may be of silk heavily corded moire antique, brocade, satin or plain silk, of lace merino, alpaca, crepe, lawn or muslin. Her veil may be of lace, tulle, or illusion, but it

must be long and full. The flowers of the bridal wreath and bouquet must be orange blossoms, either natural or artificial, or other white flowers. The dress neckline is high and the arms are covered. No jewelry is worn save diamonds or

pearls. Slippers of white satin and gloves of kid complete the dress.

### **Bridesmaid Dresses**

The bridesmaids are usually dressed in white trimmed with some delicate color. The color should be alike for all.

### **Bridegroom Dress**

The bridegroom's dress should differ little from his full morning costume. Black or dark-blue-frock coat, light trousers and necktie, light or white vest and white gloves, with flowers in the buttonhole of his coat is the conventional costume.

### **The Wedding-Ring**

The wedding-ring should be of eighteen-karat gold, weighing not less than eight pennyweights, and of the half round pattern. In the inside should be engraved the initials of the bridal pair, with date of their marriage.

### **Wedding Reception.**

At the wedding reception, held at the bride's parents, the guests offer their congratulations. On going forward to congratulate the happy couple they should address the bride first.

### **The Wedding Feast**

The refreshment table is made brilliant with flowers. The wedding or bride's cake is an important adjunct of the feast. If there is no regular breakfast given, cake and wine are passed among the guests.





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# 1922

## Loosening the Rules Emily Post, *Etiquette*.

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*Emily Post was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1873. She had a privileged life, attending private schools, spending summers at Bar Harbor, and attending her debutante ball at a Fifth Avenue mansion where she met her future husband. She lived in New York's fashionable Washington Square. She first wrote romantic stories of society which were serialized in popular magazine and published. In 1922 she published *Etiquette* which topped the bestseller list. That book went through twelve editions with the assistance of her granddaughter, Elizabeth Post, who continued updating the book through 1995.*

### Courtship

In nothing does the present time more greatly differ from the close of the last century than in the unreserved frankness of young women and men towards each other. Today no trace of stilted artificiality remains.

### First Duty of the Accepted Suitor

As soon as he and she have definitely made up their minds that they want to marry each other, it is the immediate duty of the man to go to the girl's father or her guardian, and ask his consent. If her father refuses, the engagement cannot exist. The man must then try, through work or other proof of stability and seriousness, to win the father's approval.

### The Engagement Ring

It is doubtful if he who carries a solitaire ring enclosed in a little square box and produces it from his pocket upon the instant that she says "Yes" exists outside of the moving pictures! As a matter of fact, the accepted suitor usually consults his betrothed's taste. A solitaire diamond is the conventional emblem of the singleness and endurability of the one love in his life and the stone is to be pure and flawless as the bride herself. The en-

gagement ring is worn for the first time "in public" on the day of the announcement.

### Engagement Announcement

On the evening before the day of the announcement, the bride's mother either sends a note or has some one call the various daily papers by telephone. It is now considered entirely good form to give photographs to magazines and newspapers.

### Engaged Couple in Public

Even in this era of liberty and naturalness of impulse, running the gauntlet of people's attention and criticism is no small test of the good taste and sense of a young couple. The hallmark of so-called vulgar people is unrestricted display of uncontrolled emotions. No one should ever be made to feel like withdrawing in embarrassment from the over-exposed privacy of others.



### The Engaged Couple and the Chaperon

It is not good form for an engaged couple to dine together, but it is all right for them to lunch or have afternoon tea, and few people would criticize their being at the opera or the theater, unless the performance was of questionable propriety. They should take a chaperon if they motor to road houses for meals and they cannot go on a journey alone that can possibly last over night.

### Gifts

If the bridegroom-elect has plenty of means, she may not only accept flowers but anything he chooses to select, except wearing apparel or a motor car or a house and furniture until she is given his name. He may give her jewels, a fur scarf but not a fur coat. If the engagement should be so unfortunate as to be broken off, the engagement ring and all other gifts of value must be returned.



## Wedding Presents

When the presents begin coming in, the bride should enter each one carefully in her gift book and the presents should be put in a certain room. There is absolutely no impropriety in showing the presents at the wedding reception. Wedding presents are all sent to the bride, and are, according to law, her personal property. The bride who is happy in receiving a great number of presents spends every spare moment in writing her notes of thanks, which must always be written by her personally. Telephone won't do at all and neither will a verbal "Thank you so much."

Not so much in an effort to parade her possessions as to do justice to the kindness of the many people who have sent them, a bride should show her appreciation by placing each one in the position of greatest advantage. Colors should be carefully grouped. Imitation lace should not be put next to real, nor stoneware next to Chinese porcelain.

Some people think it discourteous if a bride changes the present chosen for her. All brides exchange some presents, and no friends should allow their feelings to be hurt. To keep twenty-two salt cellars and sixteen silver trays when she has no pepper-pots or coffee spoons or platters of vegetable dishes, would be putting "sentiment" above "sense."

## The Bride Groom's Wedding Clothes

If he does not already possess a well fitting morning coat, he must order one for his wedding. The frock coat is out of fashion at the moment. He must also have dark striped gray trousers. At many smart weddings a groom wears a white pique high double-breasted waistcoat. As to his tie, he may choose an "Ascot" of black and white or gray patterned silk, or he may wear a "four-in-hand." White buckskin gloves are the smartest, but gray suede are the most conventional. White kid is worn only in the evening. Very particular grooms have the soles of their shoes blacked with "water-proof" shoe polish so that when they

kneel, their shoes look dark and neat.

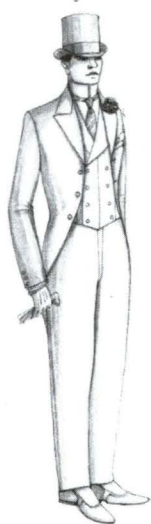
## The Wedding Dress

It may be of any white material, satin, brocade, velvet, chiffon or entirely of lace. It may be embroidered in pearls, crystals, or silver, or it may be as plain as a slip-cover. As for her veil in its combination of lace or tulle and orange blossoms, perhaps it is copied from a head-dress of Egypt or China. It may have a cap or fall in clouds of tulle from under a little wreath. If the bride chooses to wear a veil over her face, the front veil is always a short separate piece about a yard square, gathered on an invisible band, and pinned with a hair pin at either side. It is taken off by the maid of honor when she gives back the bride's bouquet at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Brides have been known to choose colors other than white. Cloth of silver is quite conventional and so is very deep cream, but cloth of gold suggests the habiliment of a widow rather than that of a virgin maid.

## The Bride's Table

The feature of the wedding breakfast is always the bride's table. There are white garlands or sprays or other arrangement of white flowers, and in the center as chief ornaments is an elaborately iced wedding cake. On the top it has a bouquet of white or silver flowers, or confectioner's quaint dolls representing the bride and groom. The top is usually made like a cover so that when the time comes for the bride to cut it, it is merely lifted off. The bride always cuts the cake, after which each person cuts herself or himself a slice.





# 1995

## **The Age of Entitlement** **Judith Martin, *Miss Manners on*** ***(Painfully Proper) Weddings***

*Judith Martin was born in 1938 and attended Wellesley College. She worked at the Washington Post for 25 years as a journalist, theater and film critic, and covering social events in Washington, D.C. In 1978 she launched her Miss Manners column which is now syndicated. She has also written several books on etiquette.*

### **The Prenuptial Contract**

Miss Manners believes in true love. She is merely pointing out that concerns about the eventual disposition of money and property when a marriage begins is not a new phenomenon. The Victorians knew how to handle it a lot better than modern couples who are looking out for their own interests.

### **The Wedding Invitation**

*Dear Miss Manners.* We are having a wedding for my daughter and her fiancé at 3:30 with a reception afterward. That night we plan to go to a restaurant where a band plays and the bride and groom can dance. How can we correctly invite guests to join us for eating or dancing, to watch the bride and groom dancing, and let them know that any expenses will be theirs?

*Gentle Reader.* There is no correct way to issue an invitation for people to take themselves out to dinner, and providing entertainment in the form of allowing them to watch a newly married couple dancing doesn't change that.

### **The Wedding Shower**

In proper American etiquette, a bridal shower is a lighthearted event among intimate friends. They are supposed to be given by the hostesses, never by the guest of honor or her relatives. Presents should be mere tokens. However, we live in an age of entitlement.

*Dear Miss Manners:* I have been asked to be maid of honor for a good friend who lives quite a distance away. Her fiancé lives in another part of the country and nearly all the invited guests reside all over the country and in Europe. How am I to throw a shower? Is it proper to have a "shower by mail?"

*Gentle Reader.* A shower is a party. What you are describing is a mail solicitation, which is not regulated by etiquette but by the Post Office.

### **Wedding Presents**

Brides will accept and acknowledge each gift with graciousness and gratitude. They will recognize that not all gifts will be "new" or returnable and they will never ask for a sales slip or suggest that they will exchange any gift.

*Dear Miss Manners.* Is it true that a cash wedding gift these days should be a least \$100?

*Gentle Reader.* Who told you this? Some sweet little bride who could hardly stop blushing as she said it?

*Dear Miss Manners.* When I was young it was the custom to spread out all the wedding presents for display at the bride's home with the card of the donor beside the presents. No one does that now.

*Gentle Reader.* As partial as she is to tradition, Miss Manners can think of many wedding customs that she would be leery of reviving. In an age of consumerism, it would be unwise and unseemly to encourage people to evaluate and compare one another's wedding presents.

### **Wedding Cake**

It is more and more prevalent for the couple to grind the wedding cake in each other's faces. Even fathers will urge the groom to "give it to her, smoosh it in her face." I've seen brides with cake in their cleavage, grooms with frosting on their moustaches and beards.

*Dear Miss Manners.* Most wedding cakes are so vulgar, with all the overly fancy trimming, and I would prefer to have a perfectly plain cake. My



fiancée says that would look “cheap” and wants one of those several-tiered monstrosities.

*Gentle Reader:* Who are you, the Mies van der Rohe of the pastry shop? Wedding cakes are supposed to be vulgar. Go buy yourself a doughnut to satisfy your aesthetic sense, and let her have that wedding cake.

### **The Wedding as Fund-raiser**

When people used to speak of “marrying for money,” it meant that one half of a couple was plundering the other. Only now it is the guests to whom bridal couples turn when they think of making a profit out of matrimony through direct cash contributions and wedding presents, after deducting the expenses of allowing them to attend.

*Dear Miss Manners:* Just when I thought I’d seen it all, my daughter received a wedding invitation with a card asking, “If you would like to assist us in saving for the purchase of our first home together” and giving the name of their mortgage company.

*Dear Miss Manners:* HELP!! My daughter is getting married soon and she has just decided to

carry a Money Bag during the reception! She hopes to make enough money for a down payment on a house!!!

*Gentle Reader:* You might inquire of your daughter whether she is under the impression that your friends and hers will be so emotionally overcome by the event of her marriage that they will be moved to help her buy a house. She is counting on the guests forking over under the threat of embarrassment. This is not exactly what we call hospitality.

### **Wedding Traditions**

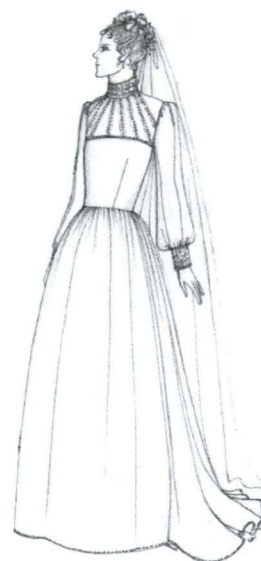
Dear Miss Manners. At a wedding reception I attended, the bridegroom took off the bride’s garter with his teeth. Is this considered inappropriate wedding etiquette? Is it considered appropriate or not for the bride to sit on the best man’s lap while the groom takes off the garter?

*Gentle Reader.* You know the answers, and the people doing these things don’t care. It’s times like this that make Miss Manners wonder why she went into the etiquette trade instead of something easy, like teaching canaries to fetch sticks.



**By the 1970s wedding attire for men had dramatically changed.** Although many men preferred the traditional tuxedo or a white dinner jacket, others opted for a more elaborate costume. The drawing at left shows a man in an evening suit with wide, satin lapels, diagonal flap pockets, and narrow sleeves. The trousers have straight-cut legs with a slight flare, no cuffs, and satin trim on the outside seams. The shirt has frills and lace on the front and cuffs, a large collar, and a black velvet bow tie.

**Bridal gowns of the 1970s and present times follow a traditional princess bride look.** The major change has been in fabrics. The bride’s dress at right is described as being of nylon with a fitted bodice with a transparent yoke trimmed with pearl and crystal beads to match that on the high collar and cuffs. The dress has a long train with a hem edged in pearl and crystal beads. The long tulle veil is held in place by a spray of flowers.





## Reflections: A Tribute to Mary Reed by Keith Petersen

Note: The author was director of the Historical Society from 1977 to 1981 and is married to Mary Reed.



*Mary in 1980 at an annual meeting in the American Legion Log Cabin.*

My association with the Latah County Historical Society (then called the Latah County Pioneer Historical Museum, Inc. - later shortened to make check printing easier, among other compelling reasons) began with a phone call from my former major professor at Washington State University, David Stratton. He told me there was a position open as director/curator. I had just finished graduate school in Wisconsin and had asked him to keep an eye open for jobs in the Northwest. "This would be a good position for a year or so, and then you'll probably want to move on," he said.

This was in the summer of 1977, and 29 years later, I have yet to move on. Dr. Stratton remarks upon that curiosity occasionally.

But this isn't a story about me. Still, it might help to know that the reason I am still living in the Palouse is because of an event at the McConnell Mansion one year later, the summer of 1978. A group asked if they could use the grounds for a summer party. They planned to have mint juleps on the porch. I agreed, as long as they made a donation to the Society, and as long as I got to share a julep or two.

It was probably about mid-way through the second julep when I was introduced to a most remarkable woman - or so she seemed to me, and my first assessment has proven to be accurate. She told me her name

was Mary Reed, and she had a Ph.D. in history from Berkeley. I was impressed. You just don't find that many Berkeley historians around the Palouse.

We met at the McConnell Mansion that summer evening 28 years ago, and the Society, the Mansion, and all the friends we have met through the organization have been inextricably entwined in our lives since.

For the next three years I continued to serve as director of the Society and began to interest Mary in the organization. I must be honest here - it was not always an easy sell.

Mary was a European historian, who had written her dissertation on Croatian women during the resistance in World War II. She had lived among those fierce and patriotic women, and I think contemplating something as mild as Palouse history did not hold intrinsic appeal.

But I kept working at it, and at some point - either I told her, or she found out on her own - Mary discovered that one of her favorite childhood authors, Carol Ryrie Brink, grew up in Moscow. What began at that point was a flurry of activity that I have come to appreciate as typical - exhausting, but typical - every time Mary undertakes a task.

She read all she could about Carol Brink. She interviewed people who knew Mrs. Brink and who would become longtime friends, like Clarice Sampson, Lola Clyde, and June Armour. She researched at the Historical Society and wherever else there was information. She wrote a grant that allowed her to travel to California and spend a week visiting and interviewing the author. That also led to a friendship that lasted the rest of Mrs. Brink's life, with an appreciation on Mrs. Brink's part for Mary's professional capabilities.

This multi-year research project resulted in an impressive body of work by Mary: a short biography published by Boise State University; a chapter in a book about the Northwest; numerous articles in professional journals and magazines; speaking engagements throughout the state; and dozens of first-person interpretations of Carol Ryrie Brink at schools in Latah County.

In 1980, if you had asked Idahoans to name an Idaho author, most would have said Ezra Pound or



Ernest Hemingway, both of whom lived in the state only briefly and neither of whom wrote about Idaho.

I am not naive enough to believe that Carol Brink has supplanted those two on most lists, but she is now receiving her professional due as one of Idaho's outstanding authors.

Brink Hall on the University of Idaho campus, the Carol Brink wing of the Moscow Public Library, and Carol Brink Nature Park in Moscow are three of several honors the author has received posthumously - and it all can be attributed to the work of Mary Reed in reclaiming this Idaho author and bringing her the attention she deserved.

Because Mrs. Brink had so much confidence in Mary, she gave her the last unpublished manuscript in her possession, trusting Mary to find it a suitable home. That opportunity arose nearly 15 years later when Mary convinced the Washington State University Press to publish *A Chain of Hands*, a touching memoir of people Carol knew while growing up in Moscow.

In typical Mary Reed fashion, however, she did not stop there. She also convinced WSU Press to obtain the rights and republish Mrs. Brink's trilogy of Moscow history: *Buffalo Coat*, *Snow in the River*, and *Strangers in the Forest*. Mary wrote new forewords to all. The books are still in print, still selling very well.

Any of you who have ever volunteered for the Historical Society know it is not composed of shy people. Once Mary had shown an interest in Latah County history, not to mention an impressive gift for completing a complex task, the phone began ringing from Historical Society trustees asking if she would volunteer for various activities.

At first (this, by the way, is a cautionary tale) it started innocently: "Can you bring some cookies to the annual meeting?" "Can you help serve at the fall dinner?" Eventually, I was quite astonished to find Mary serving on the membership and fundraising committees, and finally as Second Vice President on the Board of Trustees. It was a rather remarkable



*At the 1985 Annual Meeting a fairly new director presents the Volunteer of the Year Award to Stan Shepard for his work on our journal, Latah Legacy.*

transformation from Yugoslav to Palouse history, but I never got the feeling that Mary regretted a moment once she learned how engaging local history can be. When I left as director in 1981, I suggested that Mary apply for the position. But she was not yet convinced that local history was a vocation rather than an avocation.

When the job opened up in 1982, she again declined to apply. But in 1983 when the job came up again, she did not hesitate, perhaps because as a Trustee she was tired of the constant job searches! She had become a true believer in the Society and its mission by then, and had a vision for the direction in which she wanted to lead it.

I knew Mary was going to sign on for more than a year or two.

But I would have been surprised

if someone had told me she would remain for 23 years. It has been an extraordinary time not only in the development of Mary as one of the Northwest's most respected historians, but also in the growth of the Society into one of the nation's most respected historical organizations.

During the past 23 years, the Society has won just about every award that is given to historical organizations in our state: an Orchid Award from the Idaho Historic Preservation Council; a Take Pride in Idaho Award for preservation of the McConnell Mansion; Honorable Mention in the White House Take Pride in America awards program; the Idaho Humanities Council's Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Humanities; an Esto Perpetua Award from the Idaho State Historical Society (an award the Society shared with its director); and the nation's most prestigious honor for local history efforts, an Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History. Turns out that Mary Reed and the Latah County Historical Society were meant for each other.

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In 2006 the Latah County Historical Society does not look much like it did in 1983. No one person can be responsible for elevating an organization. Mary was fortunate during her tenure to be surrounded by a dedicated and talented staff. Among them were Holly



Meyer, Chris Talbott, Deborah Kruger, Lorraine Micke, Michelle Farah, Sue Fodor, Julie Monroe, Connie DeWitt, Lisa Kliger, Ann Catt, Kym Dahl and, the curator for almost the entire time of Mary's tenure, Joanne Jones.

She also was fortunate to serve with a progressive Board of Trustees, presided over during that time by Everett Hagen, Duane LeTourneau, Stan Shepard, Warren Owens, JoAnn Thompson, Richard Beck, Christi Jackson, Nancy Johansen, Becky Kellom, Dale Everson, and Jeff Mix.

But a director sets the tone, adjusts the bar, and focuses the resources. What we see in the Latah County Historical Society in 2006 is very much a part of the vision and leadership that Mary provided during the 23 years she guided the institution.

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One cannot condense 23 years of history into this article, but even a short list of accomplishments is impressive.

A quick review of the Society's archives indicates that financial stability has been one of Mary's central goals since starting the job. During her tenure the Society opened its Museum Store in the Mansion as a

way to capture additional revenue. Mary wrote dozens of grants, bringing in hundreds of thousands of dollars for projects ranging from museum exhibits to school outreach to artifact conservation. She writes grants so well that the Institute of Museum and Library Services - the nation's leading grant giver to museums - has used her applications as models for



*In 1989 Mary posed for the Daily News with the Mansion's donation box for a story on the Society's fundraising activities.*

other museums to follow, and the Society has received more IMLS grants than any museum of any size in the West.

When the County Commissioners proposed to cut the Society's budget in 1991 during difficult financial



*With Michelle Farah and Joann Jones in 1990*

times, Mary rallied a force of supporters so large that the Commission reinstated the budget. Always one to rise to challenges, Mary used this threat to enhance relationships with the county: a couple of years later the Society's director and curator became county employees, for the first time making these true professional positions with full benefits. Mary also initiated efforts with the City of Moscow to garner funding for the Society, an effort that has provided annual revenue since 1987.

Mary inaugurated the annual giving campaign. And virtually every significant anniversary became a cause to raise money and raise exposure for the Society - Potlatch's 80th anniversary; the centennials of the Mansion, Moscow, Latah County, and Idaho; the bicentennial of Lewis and Clark.

Many of the funds procured on these special occasions went into an endowment that was initiated two weeks after Mary started work at the Society when Lieutenant Governor David LeRoy came to town to help kick off an endowment campaign, with a goal of reaching \$100,000. That goal looked almost insurmountable at a time when the entire annual operating budget was less than half that. But in 1989 the endowment reached that milestone, and in 1990 began to provide annual revenue for the Society's operations.

As Mary retires, the endowment has reached nearly \$600,000 and provides vital annual operating support. It is now overseen by the Latah County Historical Foundation, incorporated in 1997 with the purpose of investing endowment funds and providing steady revenue to the Society.

While financial gifts and wise budgeting helped to create a much more stable organization, it was a gift of a different type that opened doors enabling increased programming and greater accessibility for the



Society's many services.

In 1988, Calvin and Kathleen Warnick donated an apartment building across the street from the McConnell Mansion. Under the direction of curator Joann Jones, and thanks to hundreds of hours of work by volunteers, by 1990 the apartment had been transformed into Centennial Annex, one of the outstanding lasting legacies of the Idaho centennial. Today it houses a research library, thousands of museum artifacts and photographs, a conservation lab, and staff offices.

Moving staff offices from the cramped Mansion allowed for restoration of the McConnell house, and during Mary's tenure the kitchen, dining room, maid's quarters, parlors, hallways, staircase, and three bedrooms have all been beautifully restored, providing an elegant showpiece for visitors.

Those visitors' attentions were captured by some imaginative exhibits, curated primarily by Mary, Joann Jones, and Ann Catt. The Society's exhibition program matured during this time, with a combination of professionalism and innovation.

From the first exhibit during her tenure - *Crop Dusting in the Palouse* - to her last - *Wedding Memories of Latah County* - the exhibits were always rich in interpretation and unique in the stories they told specifically about Latah County and the Palouse.



*The USO scene was part of the 1992 World War II Home Front exhibit and project.*



*In 1988 Mary and benefactors Clarice Sampson, Calvin and Kathleen Warnick held a press conference on the porch of the Mansion to announce the donation of Centennial Annex*

Many featured lectures at the openings. Many came with exhibit brochures to help people better understand the topic. And all were creative.

*The World Rushed In*, Moscow's centennial exhibit, encapsulated 100 years of community social life, including a 1987 bedroom designed by guest curators from Moscow High School.

*A Century of Change*

featured not only contrasting parlors - one from 1900 and another from 2000 - but also recorded memoirs from each decade and exhibited contemporary photographs taken by school students throughout the county with cameras donated to them (another fundraising effort) by the Society.

The multifaceted "The Home Front in Latah County During World War II" was years in the planning. In addition to a major exhibit at the Mansion, it also included traveling exhibits, a *Latah Legacy* devoted to the theme, and a program held on Pearl Harbor Day at the University of Idaho with guest speakers, a military honor guard, and a full house singing World War II-era songs.

The Horse Era, was a hands-on exhibit and activity which allowed kids to smell and touch horse-era artifacts, feed, and liniment. They could also test their skill at figuring out how to harness a horse. Along with the exhibit and activity, Mary developed a curriculum program for fourth-graders with activity sheets and readings that drew upon local history sources.

*The Lives of the House* featured an architectural and personal history of the McConnell Mansion. *There was Always Sunshine* highlighted the lives of three Moscow pioneer families. *Alf Dunn: Storyteller in Words and Color* used an oral history with Mr. Dunn and pieces of his art to illuminate the career of one of the state's most acclaimed contemporary artists.

A couple of guiding principles ran throughout all the programming at the Society during Mary's time: education and outreach. Convinced that the Society's true mission was education to people of all ages and that the Society could not meet that mission simply





*From left to right Mary portrays Moscow author, Carol Brink; Kirsten Anderson, the Mansion's hired girl; and school teacher, Lena Whitmore*

by hosting events in the Mansion, Mary and Society programs were often on the road.

Given that her entree to Latah County history came via her interest in Carol Ryrie Brink, it is not surprising that Mary's first program to schools featured a slide program on the author. Over the years the program evolved into Mary doing first-person interpretation of Brink to classrooms, at which students frequently dressed in vintage clothing from the Society's hands-on education collection, another project developed by Mary and Joann Jones. Mary also gave first-person interpretive tours of the Mansion as Kirsten Anderson, the live-in 1915 hired girl.

Not infrequently when she walked downtown, kids would say hello to Mrs. Brink or Kirsten. There are a couple of generations of Latah County school kids who probably don't know Mary's real name, but have learned some history because of her efforts.

Mary's scrapbooks of her years at the Society will be filled with hundreds of letters like this one from Tim Chatburn, written after a 1992 tour of the Mansion: "McConnell Mansion was cool. I like the cigar box people used for a piggy bank. How can the soap made of lard and ashes clean a person. McConnell Mansion has steep stairs. How come?"

Educational programming also included such efforts as the Society co-publishing seven books with Washington State University Press, an unusual alliance between a small county historical society and an academic press, but an indication of the stature of both the Society and Mary in the academic world. During her 23 years Mary continued the Society's previous efforts to develop a major research library, with the addition of thousands of manuscripts,

archives, and photographs. The State Historic Records Advisory Board recognized that the Society possessed the outstanding state's outstanding local history collection. Governor Phil Batt was impressed enough that he appointed Mary to the State Records Board.

The Society sponsored numerous speakers and panel discussions, and even a major statewide conference at the University of Idaho entitled "Idaho Writers/Idaho Lives." Mary oversaw the publication of walking tour brochures for Moscow and Potlatch, and she spearheaded efforts that resulted in a brochure published by the Palouse Tourism and Marketing Committee of loop tours to historic and cultural sites in the Palouse.

She developed exhibits on Latah County mining, lumbering, and agriculture that traveled to school libraries, and for kids who visited the museum, she instituted a treasure hunt program that awarded a prize to anyone who identified all the hidden treasures at the Mansion.

A museum's collections are what set it apart from other educational institutions. The Latah County Historical Society is charged with preserving artifacts from Latah County, as well as with educating the public through those artifacts. With the assistance of the outstanding staff and dedicated volunteers, Mary bolstered the Society's collections and access to them.

During her time, all of the storage facilities in the Mansion were upgraded to provide better protection for artifacts. The move to Centennial Annex did not begin until proper storage facilities, cataloging work areas, and a conservation lab had been constructed.

To provide better access to these materials, and to



*The Idaho Centennial was the climax of 5 centennials the Society celebrated from 1986 to 1990. Left to right are hands-on activities at the Fairgrounds in 1987 for the Moscow Centennial. The hot air balloon was a highlight of the 1990 Idaho Centennial at the Fairgrounds in July. Below is the parade entry from the Palouse Ranger District for the celebration of Moscow's 1987 centennial.*



integrate the artifact collections with the library and manuscript collections, the Society adopted a computer data base in the 1980s which was recently converted to one meeting high professional standards.

Mary and the staff refined the scope of the Society's collections, publishing brochures to inform donors of the type of materials sought, and also collecting both actively and vertically, something few small organizations do. Many museums are content to accept whatever donors want to give, which often results in great horizontal breadth (a blacksmith hammer here; a wedding dress there), but not much vertical depth. The Society's staff in the past 22 years has outlined voids in the collections and actively worked with potential donors to fill those gaps. As a result, outstanding donations have come to the Society that record in detail the histories of families, businesses, or organizations through manuscripts, photographs, artifacts from several generations. These collections can tell a story in much greater depth than an array of unrelated artifacts.

The staff also worked diligently to inform donors that history did not end with some magical date in the past. As a result, the active collecting of contemporary materials has become a Society hallmark.

As a recognized leader in the museum field in Idaho, Mary nearly single-handedly resurrected the Idaho Association of Museums in 1987 after a six-year dormancy - and was rewarded by being elected the organization's president. The IAM has provided professional services to Idaho's museums since that time: annual conferences, workshops, travel scholarships, on-site consultations. It has also become a significant advocate in the legislature for museum issues, including a successful campaign in 1989 to remove the state-imposed limit on the amount of funding counties can provide to museums and historical societies. This opened the door to Latah County providing the greatest amount of funding to its county historical society of any county in the state.

Never letting an opportunity pass that might help get the word about the Society out to the county, Mary spearheaded the region's efforts during the Moscow, Latah County, and state centennial commemorations. The county commissioners appointed her chair of the county's state centennial committee, and Mary spent a lot of time that year riding in parades and speaking in every county town.

True to her belief in the significance of education, she also instituted one of the more innovative efforts of the entire Idaho centennial, an educational exchange with Latah's sister county, Power County in southeast Idaho. Twenty-five students from each county trekked to another part of the state for a week





*On March 17, 1990, after spending a week with host families, students from Power County wait to catch the University of Idaho van back to American Falls. The students attended classes in five rural schools, visited the U. I. Anthropology Lab and Art and Architecture School, and toured the county, ending at David and Dorothy Wahl's farm for lunch and a look at a self-leveling combine. The students participated in school and community events and were invited to speak at city council meetings. Mary and Carol Reynolds, the centennial representative from Potlatch, are in the background.*

of living with host families, attending classes at different schools, working on farms, and taking tours. To some people, a lasting legacy means constructing a statue. But I have always thought of this exchange of teenagers from two very different parts of the state as one of the most significant legacies of the Idaho commemoration.

Mary and then-librarian Chris Talbott began a project to preserve and catalog the Society's own archives. That seemed only proper for an institution that labored to convince other organizations of the value of preserving the documents of their past.

One could spend a lot of time browsing through the expansive and growing Latah County Historical Society archives. I only took a quick glance, but it reconfirmed my notion that Mary spent a lot of her time gaining new audiences for the Society and new advocates for historic preservation.

I pulled one folder from 1987 and found that Mary that year spoke at the Moscow Garden Club, Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, PEO, AAUW, Latah Care Center, Good Samaritan, and schools in every Latah County

town. A 1993 folder headed "Society Special Events" held brochures and press releases about that year's annual meeting ("A Tribute to Lola Clyde"); *the Victorian Valentine's Day* exhibit at the Mansion; notice of a public reception upon the publication of four Carol Brink books by WSU Press and the Society; advertising for the summer Homes and Garden Tour; promotion for three new exhibits at the Mansion *Apple Box Derby Days*, *Folk Art by Fred Kottke*, and *Scrapbooks from the Home Front*; an invitation to a reception at the Mansion following a lecture at the University by White House historian James McDaniel; a ribbon won by the Society's exhibit at the county fair; notice of a program on "Halloween Stories and Legends for Children" at the Mansion; a mailing about the annual fall fundraising dinner; a brochure for a presentation at the community center on "Collectables from the War Years;" a newspaper story about the Victorian Christmas open house at the Mansion; a program on Christmas traditions and stories for children told around the Mansion Christmas tree; and an invitation for the grand opening of the newly restored hired girl's room at the Mansion.

There are similar folders for every year of Mary's time at the Society. Sometimes when I look back over the past 22 years, the activities and programs blur. But I know one thing - it was always lively. Because of this emphasis on outreach by the staff and trustees, the Society transitioned in the last two decades from a little-known organization that labored in obscurity to a leading cultural institution in the state and region.

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More could be said about Mary's time at the Society. Her assistance as a consultant to other museums and historical organizations throughout the state. The implementation of a docent program at the Mansion. Her efforts to establish the Moscow and Latah County Historic Preservation Commissions and her work since 1987 to research, record, and preserve significant sites. During her tenure the Society's membership more than doubled. Her continuous work with the local media to gain coverage for Society activities and her constant reminders to civic leaders that Moscow is not just the "Heart of the Arts," but the "Heart of the Arts and Culture."

Mary led the Society as it changed from Selectric typewriters, card catalogs, and slide programs to the era of e-mail communication, computerized record keeping, and power-point presentations. She enjoyed





*A cutout figure of Lord Hugh Bovill was one of four Mary fabricated from historic photographs. The traveling exhibit, Portraits from Latah County, visited the Moscow Mall and other sites. Below Mary and Julie Monroe at Moscow's Friendship Square in May 2000 with a "Taste of History" program and traveling exhibit.*



the challenge of learning how to master this new technology. She recognized its many benefits. But, typically, she gave the possibilities - and the liabilities - of these new capabilities serious contemplation before jumping on bandwagons, and the Society is better for it. In 1999 she wrote,

*Technology promises much....I can envision the story of the McConnells or the Rambo family who homesteaded on Randall Flat or the Otness and Woodworth families unfolding on the computer screen. A click of the mouse can take teachers and students from text to photos, to a map, a letter, or a page of Lillian [Otness's] diary as she describes a day as Camp Fire leader.*

*Yet I still have reservations about this new technology....We tell our stories in a real place where the only mouse may be the one in the basement. Our stories with the interpretation of real people and real events will continue to capture the interest and imagination of our audiences. And there is something else we can offer that a CD-Rom cannot. We are real and we care about our audiences. The docents who greet our visitors at the museum, the staff helping researchers, working with volunteers, and accepting donations, and even our historical character from 1915, Kirsten Anderson, who lives and works in the McConnell Mansion, have a personal touch a computer screen cannot fabricate.*

Mary believed in recognizing those who helped the Society. The walls of Centennial Annex are adorned with the names of the many people who contributed to allow this facility to become an integral part of the organization. And her first year on the job she instituted the Volunteer of the Year Award, which has now been given 23 times.

I suppose a summary of the past 22 years should also include mention of the many exhibits the Society developed that were shown outside the museum at the mall, the courthouse, in Main Street display windows. And it should take note of the traveling exhibits from the Smithsonian and elsewhere that came to the museum.

*Mary's walking tours of the Moscow cemetery proved very popular. She used stories of ordinary and extraordinary people to tell the story of Latah County.*





Many local residents might remember Mary best for the walking tours she led of downtown Moscow, the Fort Russell neighborhood and the very popular tours of the Moscow cemetery. Residents of Potlatch still thank her for her assistance as they labored to establish the Scenic 6 Historical Park on the site of the former Potlatch mill. Some historical society directors might have viewed the development of another historical institution in the county as a threat, but that is not Mary's way. If education and historic preservation could be fostered by encouraging a community to save its own history, then Mary was bound to be a part of that effort.

Given the exposure Mary brought to the Society, perhaps it should not have come as too big of a surprise when, one day, Moscow attorney Len Bielenberg stopped by to visit with her. He had been named executor of the estate of Warner and Hilda Cornish, and his instructions were to find a worthy and professionally run organization to bequeath. Neither the Cornishes nor Mr. Bielenberg were members of the Society, and Mr. Bielenberg later said he could not have anticipated that his search for a recipient would have led to the Society when he began his search for a meritorious organization. But as he spoke to many people in the community - people like Jim Lyle - one organization kept rising to the top of conversations. As a result, when Mr. Bielenberg came to visit Mary that day, he brought a check for \$120,000 from the Cornish estate. The Society invested the money in its endowment, and it will in perpetuity generate revenue to assist in its educational and preservation mission. I did not know Mr. and Mrs. Cornish, but I imagine they would have been pleased.

I have been on the periphery of the Society the past 23 years. But I have had a catbird seat to enjoy the successes and experience the challenges. - as Mary guided the organization. Still, I can't add much that was not said very well by one of Mary's colleagues.

Duane LeTourneau joined the Board of Trustees along with Mary in the early 1980s, and he resigns his position on the Board this year as Mary retires. The two have been through much together. Duane once wrote, reflecting on the time he served as Board president, "One of the most significant events of late 1983 occurred when the Society hired Dr. Mary Reed as Director....This decision made my job as president much easier and led to a stability of Society operations that exists to this day....Under her direction, we have become one of the best small historical societies. We can all be justifiably proud of our reputation and

stature."

I believe the hallmark of a successful administrator is to leave an institution better than they found it. By any measure, there is not much question that Mary accomplished that. The next director will be able to build upon this solid foundation as the Society continues to grow, to preserve, to educate, and to interpret.

I look forward to observing that future growth, while I reminisce about our family's past association with the Society, going back nearly 30 years. I can conjure up many memories. I think of that emotional day as multiple generations sang together "I'll be Seeing You" at the Pearl Harbor commemoration at the University of Idaho. I recall the soggy dedication of Carol Brink Nature Park when a cold rain could not dampen the joy of the many children and adults who came to see Mary cut the ribbon.

I laugh as I recall Mary trying to figure how to harness a stationary wooden horse, standing ankle deep in leather accouterments, and I marvel that, as always, she stuck with it until she unraveled the puzzle, and then went on to teach the method to hundreds of school kids. I remember our two young daughters, fresh from India, riding in a parade on bales of hay, barely able to speak English, but happy to be there with Mary promoting "Mommy's museum." And I remember fondly all the Ice Cream Socials with music and crafts and good old-fashioned visiting.

Most of all, my memories seem always to return to that warm summer evening in 1978 on the porch of the McConnell Mansion, sipping a mint julep (or two) and conversing with a most remarkable woman. I did not know then that this meeting would forever change for the better both me and the organization where we met. But my lasting legacy to the Latah County Historical Society will be the fact that I introduced Mary to the group. I could not have accomplished more had I labored there a lifetime.





## The Mystery of the Nameless Portrait

### by Julie R. Monroe

Recently, longtime historical society member Rose Sharp came into possession of a portrait through her friends Walt and Luella Frey who had lived for many years in the house located at 824 South Washington in Moscow. According to Rose, several years ago, Walt had ventured into the house's attic where he found nothing except an unframed portrait. Upon moving out of the house, the Freys gave the portrait to Rose.

The portrait is particularly provocative because its subject is a young person, a child or perhaps an early adolescent. However, there is absolutely no indication of the identity of the subject nor is there a date. If we make like Watson (neither Rose nor I would even dream of trying to deduce like Holmes!), we can make some fairly solid guesses about the time period. Rose says the portrait reminds her of the era in which *Buffalo Coat* was set; in general, I agree with Rose, mainly because of the formal and frilly shirt or blouse the subject is wearing.

With few clues but assured that that the game was afoot, Rose began her own investigation into the mystery of the nameless portrait. Her first steps led her to the Latah County Courthouse where, with the able and generous assistance of Stacey Chapman in the Recorder's Office, Rose learned the names of the people who had owned the parcel on which the house at 824 South Washington sits. The lot has had several owners, and the original ones were Henry and Thyrsa McGregor.

Henry McGregor was one of Moscow's major landowners. In fact, he was one of the founders of Moscow. Along with Almon Asbury Lieuellen, John Russell, and James Deakin, McGregor donated a parcel of land to form Moscow's commercial district. His holdings included property in what is now the South Washington area of Moscow. In 1890, he built a hotel, the McGregor House, where Gritman Medical Center now sits.

On June 1, 1891, the McGregors sold the 824 South Washington parcel to Martin Anderson. On July 8, 1916, Anderson sold it to N.E. and Hattie Beach. Two years later, on September 14, 1918, N.E. and Hattie sold the lot to Herman Gustafson. On June 13, 1923, Gustafson sold the property to Margaret I. Blake. Following Margaret's death, the lot came into the hands of her daughter, Nellie I. Summerfield, and her son, Edward Blake. On December 15, 1942, Nellie, her son, and daughter-in-law sold the parcel to Hildur M. Cox who, in turn, sold it to Wilmer J. and Cynthia Cox on July 23, 1975. On September 2, 1986, Wilmer and Cynthia sold the parcel to Robert and Candace Shepard (husband and wife), and on March



1, 2004, the Shepards sold the property to Zia Enterprises LLC

Playing Archie Goodwin to Rose's Nero Wolfe, I spent some time in the historical society archives searching for information about each of the property owners. Surprisingly, I found some information about Thyrsa McGregor, the wife of Henry McGregor. The author of the document I found, filed in the historical society's Genealogy/Biography files, is unknown; perhaps the author was Lola Gamble Clyde, one of Latah County's most dedicated amateur historians. On the document is a handwritten note from Mrs. Clyde explaining that someone from Massachusetts had once wrote to her requesting information about Mrs. McGregor. A transcript of Mrs. McGregor's biography follows this article.

As interesting as is Mrs. McGregor's biography, it did not provide any clues to the identity of the person in Rose's portrait. Learning, too, that Wilmer Cox was active in the commercial and political circles of Moscow and Latah County Commissioner and that his wife, Cynthia Oslund Cox, is the



is the author of *Min Släkt / My Family*, a history of her paternal and maternal families, also did not offer up any clues (not even a red herring!).

In fact, the closest this mystery has to a red herring is the uncertainty about the gender of the youth in the portrait. Rose thinks it's a girl. On the other, my sister Mara Lei Monroe and I think it's a boy because the child's hair is short. Our reasoning is that a girl's hair would have been much longer. We're also not sure of the medium of the portrait. Rose believes it is a pastel; while others wonder if it isn't a colorized portrait. (To see the portrait in color, visit our website, <http://users.moscow.com/lchs>).

Lacking the detection skills of a British aristocrat assisted by a faithful manservant named Bunter or those of a Los Angeles shamus with a penchant for gimlets and punchy similes, Rose and I failed to solve the mystery of the nameless portrait. If you have any ideas, please let us know. E-mail me at [jrmonroe@turbonet.com](mailto:jrmonroe@turbonet.com). It sure would be nice to have some information about the subject of the portrait, which Rose donated to the historical society, because both of us just don't like not being able to close a case!

### **Thyrza Collins (Brown) McGregor**

No more significant, no more typical American figure has passed away from the life of Moscow than Mrs. McGregor. Mrs. McGregor was not only one of Moscow's pioneer women. She symbolized in herself a whole era of American life and American history.

Thyrza Collins was born of old Virginia stock in the heart of what had been the first great "West" of the American pioneer, in Morgan County, Indiana, some twenty miles southwest of Indianapolis, on November 16, 1842. Indiana was then still practically a pioneer state; but its own pioneer impulses made it a breeder of emigrants, and its people swarmed like bees, first toward the plains west of the Mississippi and then toward the far distant Pacific.

How closely she and her family represented the pioneer stage of American life is seen in the fact that among her family papers is a presidential deed to her aunt, Mrs. Rebecca Collins Douglas, signed by President Martin Van Buren on August 10, 1837, only five years before the birth of Mrs. McGregor. Her family relations brought her into close connection with every American war from the Revolution, in which her Grandfather, John Collins of Virginia, fought with Washington, to the Great War, in which her Grandsons fought.

The first westward trek of the Collins family from Indiana ended in Pleasant Plains, Iowa. Here in 1859 Thyrza Collins was married to Howard Brown. In the spring of 1860 the young couple moved to Fairfield, Iowa, and in that year she heard Abraham Lincoln speak in the beginning of the most fateful presidential campaign of our history. Later her husband cam-

paigned for Lincoln, and in 1861 he volunteered for the Union Army, rising to the rank of captain. During the war Mrs. Brown returned to her Mother's home. In 1875 Captain Brown died in southern Kansas, leaving his young widow with three children.

Only two years afterward, on the first of May, 1877, her indomitable pioneer spirit started her – with her children, her Mother, and her Brother across the plains by mule team for Idaho. Sometimes the caravan with which she journeyed would have only twenty-five teams, and sometimes it increased to forty or more by joiners along the way. Through the long journey they had several scares but no real Indian attacks.

On the twenty-fifth of July, 1877, Mrs. McGregor and her family arrived in Three Forks, Whitman County, Washington. She was not satisfied there, however, and in August 1877, they all moved to Moscow. They lived for awhile in the Russell Fort. When they arrived, there was only one store and post-office combined, within the present confines of Moscow, and one family. There had been other families, but they had left because of rumours of an Indian uprising. The men had to be out at work, and they felt better to have their women and children in the fort, which stood in the Russell addition in the north east part of town. It was on a little rise, and a good view of the country was spread out from all sides of the fort – a very necessary thing in times when hostile Indians might creep up.

After the Indian scare quieted, in the fall of the year in which she came to Moscow, Mrs. Thyrza Brown secured a school in the section that is now known as the Snow District. Two years later, on May 25, 1879, she was married to Henry McGregor, the first school teacher in what is now the Moscow district, and she



lived there continuously until her death on the old McGregor homestead, just above the Gritman Hospital. All the homestead is now a part of the townsite of Moscow. For years they ran the McGregor Hotel, the first and the most famous hotel of Moscow's earlier days. It is now the Gritman Hospital. Though she was the busy mother of a large family, her energetic, capable spirit made her a leader in various activities of the growing community. She was, for example, the first president of the Moscow W.C.T.U. [Women's Christian Temperance Union]. For years she worked with the Rebeccas [fraternal organization]. She continued her active interest in her family and in the life of our time to the very date of her death. Except physically, she never grew old.

She lived to see her fifth generation. In the sermon delivered by the Rev. Dr. Purdy at her funeral, he noted that her life and the people she knew spanned the history of her country. Daniel Webster had heard George Washington give an address. Mrs. McGregor was ten years old when Daniel Webster died. He furthermore said that if we went back from Mrs. McGregor's years of life, taking twenty-five people whose age was the same as hers, each life overlapping a little, the twenty-fifth one could have seen the face of Jesus of Nazareth. Hers was a great life span. In herself and in what she

saw she was a part of a great era in the life of America and of the world.

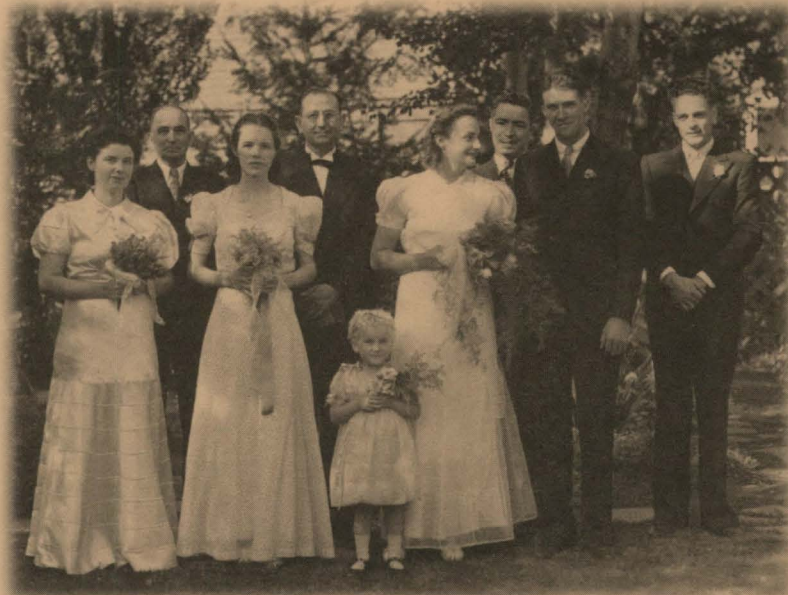
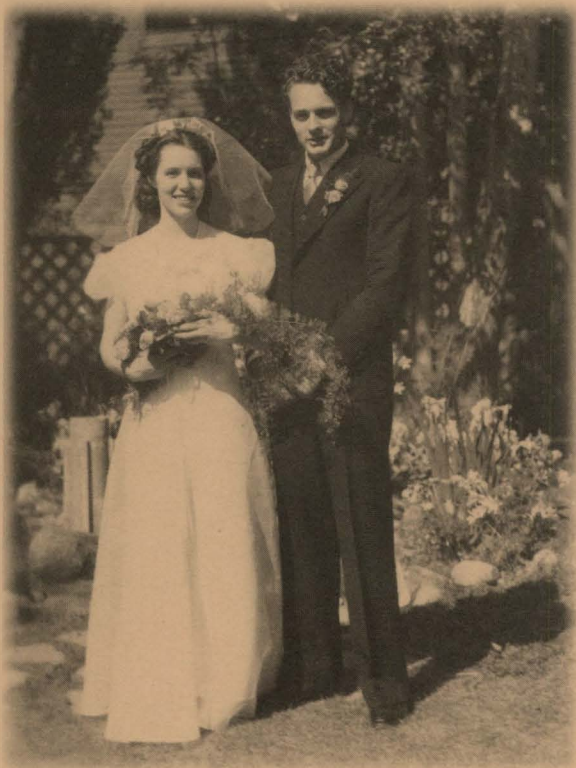


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*Thyrza with her daughter Effie (Brown) Foster*

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Marriages of the Talbott and Fleener families often took place in the garden of Clarence and Eunice Talbott. When Clarence and Eunice bought their house on the corner of Third and Washington Streets, they were told that the ground was unsuitable for growing plants. Undaunted, they created a garden that was well-known for its beauty. The green lawn was bordered with roses, delphinium, and annuals. A grove of trees served as a backdrop and also screened the yard from the nearby vinegar plant. The garden also had two ponds with goldfish.

Jeanette Fleener and John Talbott were married there on June 12, 1938. In September of that year, they were members of the wedding party for John's sister, Louise, and her husband, Jesse Campbell.

The photographs from left to right are Jeanette and John's wedding and the wedding party of Louise and Jess Campbell.

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**LATAH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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In 1968 dedicated volunteers organized the Latah County Historical Society to collect, preserve, and interpret materials connected with Latah County's history. If you would like to assist us in this work, we cordially invite you to become a member. Subscriptions to this journal and a discount on books we have published are included in membership dues. The membership categories and dues are as follows:

	<b>Member</b>	<b>Friend</b>	<b>Contributor</b>	<b>Sustainer</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Patron</b>
<b>Individual</b>	\$20-25	\$26-35	\$36-80	\$81-150	\$151-499	\$500 up
<b>Family</b>	\$25-35	\$36-55	\$56-105	\$106-250	\$251-549	\$550 up
<b>Business</b>	\$35-60	\$61-110	\$111-260	\$261-360	\$361-549	\$550 up

*\*Note: For Canada and Mexico, add \$4; for other countries, add \$8.*

Privileges are identical for all classes; the higher categories and sliding scales are available to those wishing to make a donation above the basic membership dues. We sincerely appreciate these donations, which help us provide our many public services. Dues are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

**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.

**Our library and offices** are in Centennial Annex, 327 East Second St., Moscow; hours are Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The McConnell Mansion Museum is open May through September, Tuesday through Saturday, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., and October through April, Tuesday through Saturday, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Museum visits at other times can be arranged by calling (208) 882-1004. Admission is free to members, and donations are requested for non-members. Our FAX number is (208) 882-0759 and our e-mail address is <lchsoffice@moscow.com>. The Mansion's first floor is handicapped accessible. Researchers who cannot access the Annex can request information by mail or by e-mail. Research materials can also be made available at the nearby Moscow Public Library.

**For current or additional information**, please visit our Web site at <<http://users.moscow.com/lchs>>.