

LATAH COUNTY MUSEUM SOCIETY

McConnell Mansion 110 South Adams Moscow, Idaho

Quarterly Bulletin
Kenneth B. Platt, Editor

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Indian Summer Viewpoint

Looking around at the remnant flowers that so far have escaped fall frosts, I think of a mule skinner I knew in my youth who used to greet this season with the remark: "This is the time of year that makes a guy think what went with his summer's wages." Leo wasn't exactly grammatical, but he made his point.

The Museum Society, fortunately, can take more satisfied stock in the summer now closing, and a more confident view of the months ahead. The McConnell Mansion has been put in sound condition in almost all details, including replacement of the 1890s water meter and painting of the fire escape. A long accumulation of litter in the eave troughs was cleared out during the summer. Minor masonry repairs needed on the chimneys will be done soon. The storm windows installed last year and the sash painting done then are good for many seasons. No major maintenance expense is foreseen in the near future.

A similarly gratifying program of activities and growth has been going on inside the Mansion, as will be seen in the Curator's report below. On the outside, continuing work on Oral History interviews by project director Sam Schrager has brought field work on that project to near completion. Karen Purtee's recent booklet on Lola Gamble Clyde, gleaned from the Oral History tapes, is expected to be the last of this series for the time being. Application has been made to the county for CETA funding of a transcriber position to continue work on getting the taped interviews into written form, but no further funding of the Oral History project by the Society is contemplated. With some 510 hours of taped interviews now accumulated,

the project has produced a treasury of pioneer material that can only become more valuable as the years go by.

Printing delays have held up release of Opal Lambert Ross's history of the extreme NW corner of Latah County, Fields and Pine Trees, which will be the Society's Local History Paper No. 2. All writing and editing work was completed in July. An attractive printing job by Ye Galleor Press of Fairfield, Washington, is assured, with promise of delivery within a few weeks. The Society will get 200 copies, to be paid for out of the Publications Fund as half the cost of the publishing venture--the first use made of this fund for its intended purpose of helping local authors to get Latah County pioneer history into print.

Ahead is the prospect for publishing Charles J. Munson's pioneer recollections from the 1879-1910 period as Local History Paper No. 3. A fascinating account of personal adventure and achievement, Munson's recollections were published in serial form when written in 1942-43 in a small-circulation sheet called Nan's Moscow Home News, edited by the late Theodora Smith and now long since discontinued. Besides being compelling reading for anyone interested in western frontier adventure, the record given in this account has significant historical value for several states traversed, but especially for northern Idaho. A foretaste is given in the book review of this MS later in the Bulletin.

Our operating finances have never been in better shape, as shown by Leora Stillinger's report, farther on. The Society now is in position to feel confidence in our ongoing funding for the operating budget and to take forward-looking action to generate the much larger funds urgently needed to expand our storage and public service space by finishing excavation of the Mansion's basement area. Equally urgent is the need for an underground storage vault to protect Museum items from fire and deterioration.

Many members have pondered this need in the past. Can we move into an action phase now?

Double Exhibit at County Fair

The Museum Society's exhibit of pioneer pictures prepared by Clifford Ott again drew many interested viewers at the Latah County Fair, September 14-18. The five completed albums, three for Moscow and one each for the Genesee and Viola areas, now contain nearly one thousand pictures.

Also exhibited were samples of publications on local pioneer history now available from the Society at the McConnell Mansion and a display asking suggestions for items to be included in the Latah County time capsule being prepared by the county's Bicentennial Committee. This display was made especially attractive by the efforts of "Pat" Spangler of Creative Workshops Design Studio, to whom thanks are hereby extended. Many ideas for the capsule were offered by viewers. The overall exhibit won second place in its class.

The disappointingly small space allowed the Society this year gave seating room for only one viewer at a time and thus limited public enjoyment of the exhibit. However, this was offset to some extent by vicarious benefit from the Mountain View 4-H Club's exhibit on the history of the Fair. This featured many pioneer photo enlargements by Mr. Ott and sound-taped interviews with old-time fair goers. The club also prepared a printed handout on the fair's history from the time of its first inception, including a facsimile of a stock share certificate issued by the Latah County Agricultural Fair Association in 1888 to M. A. Cornwall, founder of the association.

Society members who helped in setting up and tending the booth included Elizabeth Gaston, Lillian Otness, Lola Clyde, Cliff Ott, Vicki Zimmer, and Lee Magnuson.

Copies of the Mountain View 4-H Club's history have been supplied for our museum files. Following is a condensed version of the report. As seen here, the fair had some colorful beginnings.

"History of the Latah County Fair"

"The origins of the Latah County Fair can be traced back to 1888, when Mason A. Cornwall provided the leadership to incorporate the Latah County Agricultural Fair Association under the laws of the Territory of Idaho. From 1888 to 1904 a number of small community fairs were held each year around the county.

"In 1904 Nathaniel W. Williamson, a Moscow merchant and businessman, sponsored the first Williamson's Great Fall Fair. Williamson was the owner of the Greater Boston Store at the present site of Cox & Nelson. He gained local fame by being arrested three times in one week for blocking the sidewalk in front of his store with a large shipment of mattresses. He continued his Great Fall Fair until 1909. Exhibits included farm produce and livestock. The produce was exhibited in a tent on the present site of Dorothy's Fabrics. Horses were shown on Main Street in front of the Williamson store. Prizes ranged from handbags, pants, and clothes wringers to lace curtains, overcoats, and Stetson hats. The store pushed a strong program of civic promotions, doing much to advance the cause of agricultural fairs, livestock shows and sales.

"Williamson and other county businessmen and leaders sponsored the first county-wide fair in 1910. The Moscow Chamber of Commerce played a leading role. Many communities such as Kendrick, Deary, and Princeton held local fairs just ahead of the county fair. Genesee had a livestock show. Kendrick won the trophy for best community exhibit in 1910. The fair received strong support until 1919.

"Outstanding displays of farm produce and livestock characterized these early fairs. One popular event was the baby judging contest, with first prize of \$100. Horse races were a highlight, with purses up to \$300. The fairs started off with a parade, and concerts were provided by local bands. Commercial exhibits were a strong feature.

"The opening day of the 1915 fair was termed a record

breaker by Moscow's Daily Star Mirror. The paper reported that 2,000 children thrilled the crowd by singing America, and that one could get a first class meal at the fair for 25¢. N. Peterson had a booth showing his anti-freezing and combination toilet flushing tanks. The Idaho National Harvester Company exhibited combined harvesters made in Moscow. As many as 3,000 people attended in one day.

"By 1920 interest in sponsorship of the fair had declined. J. F. Papineau, a local rancher, expressed disappointment in the failure to have one. Local communities continued to have fairs. The Troy fair of 1920 featured a 16-piece jazz band. U.S. Senator Nugent and other politicians spoke. Many young farmers also attended fairs in Garfield and Spokane. Earl Clyde won two prizes at the Spokane fair with his pigs. In 1925 a Latah County Day was designated at the Whitman County Fair and the Garfield Fair.

"In 1925 the 4-H club influence began to show up strongly at county fairs. The Latah County 4-H livestock judging team won first place at the Lewis County Fair. A smaller version of the Latah County Fair was held, featuring a 4-H style review and livestock judging contest. 4-H work became an important factor in fairs in surrounding counties during the 20s and early 30s. By 1937 reviving popular interest led a group of farmers from around the county to visit neighboring county fairs and plan for a renewed Latah County Fair. In 1938 the first fair of this new series was financed by advertising subscriptions in the premium book. Approximately 150 head of livestock were exhibited. A Board of Directors was organized at this point.

"In 1940 the fair was finally set up under state statutes and state financial aid was obtained. There were no fairs in the years 1942-44 because of the war, but they have continued uninterrupted since 1945. 4-H exhibits and competition have long been major features in the fair. The present 4-H building was built in 1975 especially for the exhibits of the clubs, which have grown immensely in size and standing. Attendance of 15,000 in 1975 illustrates the continued and growing interest.

"The fair has served as a unifying force in the county over the years by stimulating agricultural and livestock development, and by encouraging both farm and town youth of the county to develop practical skills."

Notes from the Curator

Summer Activities: The McConnell Mansion enjoyed increased visitation during the summer of 1976, with the July-September total at 507, compared with 345 for the same period last year. Several special events livened the scene. As a contribution to the Bicentennial celebration, the Museum sponsored a reception in honor of senior citizens on July 6. About 100 guests enjoyed refreshments served in the garden of the McConnell Mansion by members of the Historical Club. Music was provided by Mabel Vogt, Sandy English, and the Magnasons--Lucille, Dana, and Lee.

On July 22nd the Washington-Idaho Symphony Association utilized the parlors of the McConnell Mansion for a chamber music program. About sixty enthusiastic listeners enjoyed a performance by Symphony Maestro H. James Schoepflin on the clarinet. It was agreed by all in attendance that the elegant setting contributed a great deal to this fine cultural event.

The distinguished theologian, historian, and author Dr. Clifford M. Drury visited the Museum on August 8th. He was pleased to see the exhibit displaying his Naval chaplain's uniform and some of his many books.

Sister Mary Christina of Beaverton, Oregon, visited the Museum August 18th. The sister visited often with Mary McConnell Borah during her residence at the nursing home at Beaverton. She presented the Museum with two elephant figurines (one of ivory) from Mrs. Borah's collection, and also a book which had belonged to "Mamie." On August 20th Sister Mary Christina was honored with a tea at the Glen Baumgartner home near Genesee. She shared reminiscences of Mary Borah's stories, and her vibrant memories were recorded on tape for use by the Society in future years.

The coming of September brought the resumption of school class tours and children's groups and a slight decline in daily attendance at the Museum. A Moscow High School history class of twenty visited the Mansion, as did a Campfire Girls group of eighteen.

The Latah County Museum participated in the "Cultural Afternoon" of September 26th in conjunction with the Moscow-Latah Library and Creative Workshops. Museum visitors enjoyed a film, "U.S. Art, the Gift of Ourselves," and also were serenaded by the "Thirteenth Edition," a women's barbershop quartet from the Lewis-Clark Chapter of Sweet Adelines.

On September 28th the "Just-Us," a law student wives group, held their meeting in the Mansion parlor and enjoyed a tour of the Museum.

Upcoming Museum Items: The Hill and Valley Garden Club of Kendrick has volunteered to contribute bulbs and plants of the pioneer days to the grounds of the McConnell Mansion as a historical project. The interest of the club is most pleasing, and the Museum will benefit greatly from the contributions to the landscaping.

The Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity at the University of Idaho has volunteered to contribute their labor to get the fall yard work done around the Mansion. Their public-spirited contribution will be greatly appreciated.

Debbie Anderson, CETA assignee for August, did mostly cataloging of new acquisitions. Vickie Zimmer is working this semester as a museum intern assigned by the Museology Department of the University of Idaho. Her duties include cataloging of objects, some care and conservation of materials, and help with ongoing exhibits.

Several exhibits are now in the planning stages. An exhibit built around the many Swedish and Norwegian settlers of Latah County will be developed this fall. Persons having photos, handicrafts, articles brought from Scandinavia by immigrants, or other relevant material which they would donate or loan are requested to call Lee Magnuson at the Museum, 882-1004.

An exhibit concerning the McConnell family, a display of their pictures and possessions, is being constructed. More displays connected with the life of our homesteaders are under way.

The exhibit case in the County Courthouse has been remodeled and moved down the hall; a new display about logging in Latah County is being installed.

Notable Acquisitions: To mention a few of the noteworthy recent donations to the collections:

Harry and Clarice Sampson generously gave many bits of Idaho history, including Harry's Moscow City Band uniform, dolls and toys from Clarice's childhood, and the first desk used by George Moody in his monument business in 1892. Especially unusual is a doll-size china cabinet made by a miner or shepherd for little Almyra Moody in Salubria, Idaho, in 1891. This masterpiece of whittling is truly an example of western folk art. It is on display in the homesteader's cabin exhibit in the Museum.

Alma Lauder Keeling has contributed many important items from her parents' and grandparents' homes, including a Delftware salt crock for the kitchen exhibit, a plaque painted by Carrie Hayes McIntosh in 1886, and a cane belonging to Alma's "Grandpa Lauder."

Kenneth Hedgelin recently donated a wide variety of farm and mechanic's tools.

Glen Summerfield has donated the beautiful collection of Latah County school bells which was assembled by his aunt, the late Dora Sudderth.

Correction: The July issue of the Quarterly Bulletin was in error in reporting the names of the donors of the beautiful three-piece parlor set which was recently given to the Mansion. The Louis XV-style chairs and settee were the gifts of Mr. and Mrs. Aldon Hoffman of Moscow. Many thanks to the Hoffmans.

Munson Pioneer Recollections

Charles J. Munson, former Latah County resident and once one of Idaho's most prominent citizens, is now almost a totally unknown figure to all but a fading few old-timers. He deserves far better. We are pleased, therefore, to have approval to publish his pioneer recollections as Local History Paper No. 3 of the Society.

Few, if any, did more for the state in his time. As Idaho's first State Land Commissioner, he rescued the school lands program from disaster and selected for the state great areas of choice white pine and other timber that were being rapidly dissipated into unmanageable small private parcels. He then worked out and put in force the cooperative timber protective association idea that kept this great resource from going up in smoke--an idea soon after adopted throughout the U.S. wherever mixed timber land ownership required a cooperative approach in fire fighting.

Munson also was instrumental as state legislator from Latah County in strengthening support for the University of Idaho in its early years. Again cooperation was his key, opening doors through walls of regional obstructionism that were stifling the infant institution. His efforts brought about the quick replacement of the first Administration Building after it burned in 1906, and the addition of the original agricultural, science, and other important buildings.

Back of these remarkable achievements was an equally remarkable history of personal advance from lowly beginnings. It is the great good fortune of present and coming generations that Munson took time, in his final years, to set this story down. Writing in longhand, after age 80, he recalled his main experiences as a pioneer heeding Horace Greeley's "Go West, young man."

Starting from an Indiana farm in 1879 at age 19, with three 3-month school terms as his "education," he traveled in five years through experiences as a Dodge City cowboy, a railroad worker and wagon freighter in

Colorado, a miner and wood hauler in Butte, a gold rush participant in the Coeur d' Alenes, a homesteader in the Spokane area, before settling in Moscow in 1884. It was a rough trail all the way, with physical hardship and constant danger as normal background.

As we will see, adventures were not long in coming. Having proved himself by riding his first mustang in a Dodge City corral, he is now on a cowboy payroll. Let us turn to Munson's own account to see how he got to Moscow, and why he stayed.

"It was a grand and glorious feeling to be a man of the West. . . . Not least was the satisfaction of having a good job at \$30 a month, for where I came from farm hands worked for \$10 to \$12 a month. . . .

"But Dodge City right from its first beginning had the reputation of being the roughest place in the West. . . . I don't suppose, at the time, Dodge had as many as a thousand permanent residents, but its ranks were filled each day with thousands of new visitors swarming into town. Whenever a new herd arrived all but a few of the thirsty cowboys would head for town for a spree of drinking, gambling, women, and just plain 'horsing around.' Their play got pretty rough. . . . The townspeople recognized this and gave them plenty of leeway, knowing most would not leave till their last dollar was gone. . . .

"The outfit I worked for was a local one, so we didn't have to suffer as much as the long trail drivers. . . . I liked my job. I was learning to be a real cowboy. There was no romance built around cowboys in those days. No fancy shirts or slicked up dudes, singing with a 30-piece orchestra in the background, like in the movies today [1942]. The cowboy was a hard-working man in a dirty job. . . . Exposure to all kinds of weather left him wrinkled, his skin brown and leathery. His clothes were usually caked with dust. . . . Nights were cold and often very uncomfortable, spent either slumped on his horse riding herd, or rolled up asleep with a lone blanket to ward off the chill. . . .

"Although I was growing up fast, I was . . . appalled at the 24-hour view I had of life around Dodge. One afternoon as I was walking down the street a drunk came weaving out of a saloon and began shooting in all directions. As one of his bullets whizzed past my ear I made a dive under a wagon, smacked my nose against another guy, who had dived under from the other side. After someone grabbed and disarmed the drunk, I crawled out. This was the only injury I received in Dodge City, but [the incident] made me realize this was no place to 'grow up with the country.' So I drew my six months' pay, minus what I had already drawn, and bought a ticket to Denver.

"Arriving in Denver, I found all Colorado full of mining excitement. . . . I took the train to Central City. We passed many mines. . . . I wandered about the town, talking to the men and looking at some of the mines. . . . From what I saw it looked like dirty work under the ground in the dark, and I wasn't interested.

"I returned to Denver, but decided I had not come West to live in a city. Thousands of men were wanted to build narrow gauge railroads. . . . I got a pass to work on the Denver & Rio Grande, from Royal Gorge to Gunnison. So I joined a work crew leaving for the site. We went by way of Pueblo up the Arkansas River, past Canyon City to the end of the tracks at the mouth of the Royal Gorge. . . .

"It was surely the greatest hills, the most magnificent scenery I had ever seen. Above our heads the massive red walls shot up for more than a thousand feet. . . . Looking around we spotted a trail. . . . Soon it became very steep. The high elevation had its effect on me, so I had trouble breathing in the thin air. I was burdened with my heavy carpetbag and two blankets. We had to rest often, but we finally made the top. Darkness had come; we had to camp without supper. It was very cold that night, and we were extremely hungry and thirsty from the climb.

"Early next morning I unlocked my carpetbag, took out some socks, handkerchiefs and shirts, locked the bag

again and sent it spinning down the hill. I never wore a 'boiled' white shirt again until I was elected to the Idaho Legislature some sixteen years later. We found a trail to the upper end of the Gorge, arriving at a camp in time for breakfast. . . .

"We went to work that afternoon in Marshall Pass, over 10,000 feet high, where the railroad crosses the Continental Divide. . . . Our work was pick and shovel grading, building trestles, making props for the road-bed, etc. . . .

"There had been a bitter struggle between the D & R G and the Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe, as to which would get through the Gorge, for it was only wide enough for one track. The D & R G had built as far west as Canyon City in 1875, but then nothing more was done. In 1877 the Santa Fe dispatched a crew from Pueblo to the mouth of the canyon. The D & R G, getting word of it, rushed a crew from Canyon City and won the race for a right of way by a matter of an hour. There were a lot of hard feelings between the crews, and it got so everyone was wearing guns, but the companies compromised and settled without bloodshed. . . .

"There was still a race on to see who could get first to Gunnison, seventy miles away. The D & R G won, but to do so we worked seven days a week, and they paid double for night work and Sundays. My first month I was paid for 45 days. . . .

"Gunnison was a roaring frontier town, with about 10,000 inhabitants, founded in 1874. Following a rich silver discovery, Aspen, Crested Butte, and a number of other towns boomed along with Gunnison. The coming of the railroad was a great day for all these towns. To celebrate, Gunnison put on a big whing ding. Gambling halls were running full blast, and bars were jammed.

"Late that night some of us from the railroad crew heard a lot of yelling and saw men running up the main street. . . . It was a lynching, the first I had ever seen. My stomach turned over, I stumbled back down the street. When the rest of the gang came back they said

the lynched man was a card sharp. . . . In a game one of the players had accused him of cheating. The gambler shot him. When friends of the victim grabbed the gambler, some extra cards fell out of his sleeve. He was doomed. . . .

"After the big celebration I started on a new job, on the blasting crew. The hard rock men were considered a select group around the railroad and mining camps. It was a taxing profession that required exact precision. . . . A good rockman knew more about rock than a geologist. He angled the holes in such a way that he could break up twice as much rock as a green driller.

"One day while we were tamping one of the holes Mr. Sweeney [crew boss] said, 'Charley, pick up those drills and take them to the blacksmith. . . . Make it snappy.' He had always sent someone else on that job. . . . I had got up the trail, around some projections, where it was safe. All at once I heard a tremendous blast that shook the earth. The blacksmith came running. We reached the canyon and saw a terrible sight. The whole ledge had gone into the river. Mr. Sweeney was never seen again, nor any of his crew. . . . I made a resolve then and there that I would never again work where they handled powder."

[From Gunnison, Munson hiked with another young man to Mt. Pleasant, Utah, almost dying of thirst on the way. A month of farm work there earned the price of a horse, which he rode to Salt Lake City. Although he admired the Mormons, he did not accept their beliefs, so moved on to Pocatello and another railroad construction job, this time on the Oregon Short Line across the "Great American Desert" between American Falls and Wood River. This work was done by competing contractors, some of whom were notorious for bad treatment of their men. One, for example, fed its crews on tin plates nailed to the tables and merely swabbed out with a rag on a stick, rather than being washed between meals. Working on a Mormon crew, Munson had better treatment, but even there water was rationed, the summer heat got as high as 120 degrees, and the work was long and hard.]

"Idaho Territory at that time was practically unknown, outside of its boundaries. In the Geography in use in the public schools at that time was a map of Idaho Territory. One town, Boise City, the capital, was on the map; one river, the Snake; one lake at the far north, but no name for the lake; occupation, mining; production, gold; and then there was added this interesting information: 'There is no timber. The brown sagebrush of the north and the cactus of the south are the characteristic vegetation.' . . . Transportation was at its worst. It was the poorest and most despised of all the territories of the West, and no railroad would build into such a country. It was fortunate that Idaho had to be crossed in order to build to other places."

[Their contract finished, the Mormon crew headed for Butte to haul wood for the mines.]

"Our job was not a healthy one on account of all the fumes, and many men were 'leaded,' as it was called, and became sick and rundown. Butte was a terrible city, with a bad health hazard due to the chemical fumes hanging over the town. They were so intense that often at mid-day the sun would be obscured. . . . The mines used a cheap process of removing sulfur from copper sulfide ore, by laying alternate layers of crushed ore and logs, then setting it afire. This process was called 'heap roasting.' It was against the law, since the city had ruled there must be 75-foot chimneys. However, the Boston and Montana plant lay just outside the city limits, so they ignored the ruling until 1891. At that time 15 people died of the fumes and there was such an outcry the mine finally put in the chimneys.

"Another health problem was the bad sanitation. The curtains of flies were beyond belief in summer. Typhoid, diphtheria, scarlet fever, pneumonia were rampant. Water was bad. . . . We decided to work until spring and then get out and start breathing good Western air again."

[In the spring of 1883 Munson and a partner joined four other young men on a trip to look at homestead lands in eastern Montana. They were turned back not far east of

Helena, however, when marauding Crow Indians killed the other four men, took all the horses and burned their camp outfit. Escaping westward next day along the Mullan Road, they met a cavalry troop which fed and resupplied them for the trip back to Helena. From there they went to look at land in the Flathead Lake area, a 2-week trip, mostly on foot. Although the land was good, mosquitoes made life so miserable they decided against settling there. The next area to be explored, they decided, should be the Inland Empire, about which both had read. Going to Missoula, they arranged to trek west from there, a trip that proved vital to Idaho's future by giving Munson a cross section view of the great white pine treasury of that area.

Traveling north along the west side of the Bitter Root divide, they prospected for a month without success. Their supplies gone, they struck west, expecting to find outposts of civilization in a couple of days. Instead they spent two weeks working through steep country and down timber toward lower ground, living on berries, grouse and trout. Finally they struck an old Indian trail, but had to abandon it at once because of a forest fire.7

"It looked like the whole mountain was afire. Flames leaped from tree to tree, with the sounds of a high wind. There were crackles and bangs from the dead wood as it burned. We feared for a while we would be trapped, but by cutting off and racing down a hill we got into burned territory. Everything was sooty and burned black, and of course nothing to eat, but we were safe. A burnt forest is one of the most ghastly scenes, everything gone, everything laid waste. We soon became as black as the stumps around us. At last we stumbled out of the burned area, hit fresh green trees and grassy meadows, where Clarkia, Idaho, is now located. . . . As I was making a campfire my partner shot a young deer. We now had a lot of venison, found camas, berries, wild onions, etc., and we sure had a great feast.

"My partner suggested we take a day's rest and I seconded it, for it was the 14th of August and my birthday. I was twenty-two years old."

Going downstream from Clarkia, Munson and his partner found several settlers at the present site of St. Maries. One of these was going to Fort Sherman for mail and supplies, so they rode in his canoe down the St. Joe River and Coeur d' Alene Lake. Going on afoot, they visited Spokane Falls, then a town claiming 500 population. A new depot stood beside the new N. P. tracks there, but the homestead cabins in the surrounding area were deserted. The largest town was Cheney, they learned, but did not take time to see it. The need for jobs took them back to Missoula, with participation in the silver spike ceremony at Garrison, celebrating completion of the transcontinental N. P. system on September 8, 1883, as an added attraction. But hardly were they settled in a good wood cutting job when gold fever lured them away.⁷

"The N. P. Railroad was in need of more revenue, and to get it they wanted to see a great rush to the gold fields. H. C. Davis, of the Company, issued 'The Gold Circular' stating that gold panning \$25 to \$45 per day was very common. . . . Men in his employ traveled over the railroads carrying buckskin pouches containing nuggets claimed to have been picked up on Pritchett Creek [in the Coeur d' Alene Mountains]. Papers were full of rumors and a most spectacular mining excitement was at fever heat. The rush was on. We could stand it no longer. We had our wood measured up, drew our money and shipped all our stuff to Trout Creek, arriving there on the 15th of December, 1883."

[At Trout Creek Munson's partner hired out as a carpenter so they split up. Taking his wood tools and camp outfit on a toboggan, Munson joined hundreds of others in an arduous two-day climb over the Bitter Root divide to a mining camp called Eagle City. There he spent the winter, alternately cutting and selling wood at \$25 to \$30 a cord and hauling supplies from Trout Creek on his toboggan, for hire. But the high earnings were eaten up by high prices--\$25 for a bag of flour. By spring it was plain that Eagle City riches were a false report. Munson left on April 30, 1884. The N. P. now offered free passes from Trout Creek as far east as Missoula and as far west as Spokane Falls. Munson headed west.

With the influx of destitute miners from Eagle City, there were far more men in the Spokane area than there were jobs. Munson scouted the area for land to settle on, started a claim but sold it, worked a month breaking sod in the Big Bend, then headed for Walla Walla looking for harvest work. There, too, labor was in surplus, and he was advised to go to Lewiston. At the La France Hotel he had a good meal, then started job hunting.7

"The town looked good, the best I had seen in the Inland Empire, . . . but it did not compare with the beautiful and modern city of Lewiston today [1942]. There was no sewerage, no sidewalks. On Fifth Street, south on Main and east about 40 rods were the packing corrals, made of dilapidated poles that had been used continuously since gold was discovered. They now had a lot of braying mules and burros packing in all directions. . . . This place had never been cleaned during the twenty-three years it had been used. There were large manure piles, and Main Street was two feet deep with the filth. As it was hot, the stench rose to high heaven. The flies were terrible. They would walk all over the grub you ordered, and when the waiter brought your coffee, one or more flies were ready to jump in. . . .

"I got to talking with a couple of men who had arrived a few days before. They said, 'We came by the Spokane Bridge to Lewiston and at a little place called Moscow, some thirty miles back, everything looked late.' I decided at once to go to Moscow. . . . I got Roman Nose [his horse] and crossed the ferry. I paid the fifty cents and noticed my pouch felt light. I investigated and found only ten cents. Ten cents was the smallest coin in circulation in the West and was called a 'short bit.' . . .

"It was now 3:00 p.m. and hot as blazes. A terribly steep hill and after a mile or two my friend [horse] was all in a lather, so I got off and led him. I must have sweat a gallon that afternoon, but the days were long and I got to the top before the sun had set, and soon came to Uniontown. . . . I would have liked to stop there overnight, but my short bit was too small. On we went, sometimes on a wagon road, sometimes on

Indian trails, until it became pitch dark. I unsaddled, tied my picket rope to my leg and slept in peace, waking next morning near where Thorncreek schoolhouse is located. In a few miles I got a full view of the South Palouse Valley. . . .

"I looked out over the beautiful view. To the north and west were Kamiak and the Thatuna Hills, the Twin Sisters, and farther east the lovely green Mt. Thatuna. The settlements up and down the Palouse and up the Paradise, with their stake and rider rail fences on their surveyed lines looked like a great map. Dotted over the beautiful hills and valleys were log houses and cabins and here and there, a frame. . . . The fields were of many colors from green to golden yellow. One half of the acreage was in flax and it was in full bloom [blue]. About four miles northwest were a few houses and sheds huddled together and that was the village of Moscow. . . . I knew I had come to the place where I could 'grow up with the country.' . . .

"It did not take me long to get to the fences, for I was hungry and lonesome. . . . We followed Jim Deakin's ten-rail fence to Sixth and Main. . . . Looking north I saw a good-sized two-story building by itself. That was the Barton House on the site of the modern Moscow Hotel. I tied my friend to the hitchrack in front and inquired for work."

[Munson's first job in the area came that afternoon on the Frank Groat farm a quarter of a mile east of what is now Mountain View Road. The job was for a half day only, with a threshing crew that customarily picked up extra help at the farms it served. By sticking with the crew, he picked up other short jobs, and finally a steady one. The rig traveled widely over the county, giving him a broad acquaintance with both the area and the people. That familiarity was to be a great asset when he launched his political career a few years later, for he had become both well known and well liked. Most of the rest of his story deals with political affairs as a contemporary and co-worker with such figures as W. J. McConnell, Fred T. Dubois, Willis Sweet, W. J. Brigham, K. O. Skattaboe, George Shoup,

Burton L. French, and others of that period. This review has touched only some of the highlights. The full account will be published as soon as possible.7

Financial Statement

Oral History Fund	\$ 217.90
Publications Fund	1680.23
General Checking Account	<u>6688.02</u>

Total \$8586.15

Building Fund	
Bank of Idaho Savings	\$ 470.08

Savings Certificates Total 3300.00

Information Needed

Miss Anya Springer of Gooding, Idaho, recently brought to light a collection of letters written by Mary (or May) Belknap Forney, wife of Judge J. H. Forney and herself a prominent University of Idaho figure. The letters were written in 1880 and 1881 while Miss Belknap was in California and Forney was a lawyer practicing in Mt. Idaho and Lewiston. The high quality of the literary style, the historical significance, and the tender sentiments of the courting couple make these letters especially interesting. It may be possible for the Museum to copy and perhaps even publish these important social and historical documents. Anyone having known the Forneys or anything about them is encouraged to contribute the information in order to help in piecing together the story of this couple during their residence in Moscow.

LATAH COUNTY
MUSEUM SOCIETY
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Moscow, Idaho 83843

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COMING EVENTS

The Latah County Museum Society is sponsoring a Halloween Happening on Sunday, October 31. The program will include readings of the macabre by University of Idaho faculty and other persons. A spine-chilling evening is promised, starting at 8:00 p.m. All Museum Society members and interested area residents are encouraged to attend. Refreshments will be served, and surprises are promised.

Notice of Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Society will be Saturday, January 8, 1977, at 1:30 p.m. at the McConnell Mansion. It will be preceded by the usual potluck dinner at 12:00 noon. Bring a hot dish, salad, or dessert sufficient for six persons. The meeting agenda will include reports of committees and others and the election of officers for the coming year. Mark the date on your calendar now. Those on our mailing list will receive an advance notice of the meeting. Friends of the Museum are welcome.