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Gault-Upham Residence Halls

You Never Forget: Remembering the 1956 Fire

Latah Vignette: Bernice Morin Building a Charter School Building The LATAH LEGACY is published by the Latah County Historical Society,

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Cover Photo: The Mona Lisa mural, produced by Moscow Charter School students, graces the school's entryway.

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A STANDARD OF LIVING NOT KNOWN TO THOSE OF THE PAST

By Julie R. Monroe

INTRODUCTION

Just days after the conclusion of the Spring 2003 semester, two not-quite-middle-aged student dormitories on the University of Idaho campus were torn down. Not the proverbial wrecking ball but a shear, mounted on the boom of a track-hoe operated by hydraulic pressure, was used to deconstruct the Gault-Upham Residence Halls situated on the north side of Sixth Street between Line and Rayburn streets. These dorms, which less than 50 years earlier had been the pride of the University's student residence system, were razed to make room for an expanding complex of brand-new dormitories, the Living and Learning Center.



Gault-Upham is razed, June 2003. Photo courtesy of Julie R. Monroe.

Before their razing, the University of Idaho hired the Pullman, Washington, architectural firm, Design West, to document these structures under guidelines established by the National Parks Service's Historic American Building Survey. The Historic American Building Survey was established in 1933 "as a make-work program for architects, draftsmen and photographers left jobless by the Great Depression. Its mission then, as today, was to create a lasting archive of America's historic architecture." (www.cr.nps.gov/habshaer/habs/index.htm)

There are three components to an official Historic American Building Survey: measured drawings, historical reports, and photography. I was hired by Design West to provide the historical narrative portion of the survey, and what follows is my report.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

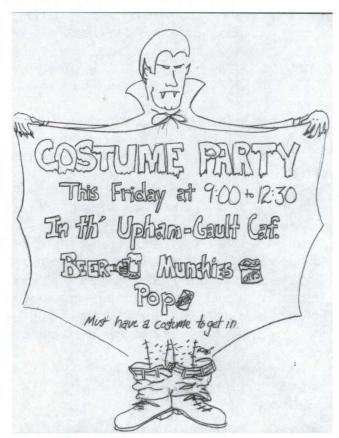
Following the conclusion of World War II, the University of Idaho experienced a tremendous increase in student enrollment. The institution's initial response to the population boom was the installation of numerous temporary buildings, many of which were war surplus, to serve as student housing. By the 1949-50 biennium, the University had begun a ten-year building program "to start catching up with needs that have been accumulating for 20 years," according to an information sheet printed and distributed by the University of Idaho Alumni Association. The Gault-Upham complex, which would serve as a men's dormitory, was one of four buildings the University proposed to build over the next decade; these buildings, which included a new women's dormitory, would be financed not by state appropriations but by bond issues paid for by revenues and fees.

The University of Idaho is a residential campus, and from the first year of their occupancy in 1955 through the present, the Gault-Upham Residence Halls have served as one of several options for students wishing to live on campus. Named in honor of two past presidents, Franklin B. Gault, the university's first president, and Alfred H. Upham, president from 1920 to 1928, the Gault-Upham Residence Halls met the needs of male students who sought an alternative to off-campus living, to fraternities, and to co-ed on-campus housing.

As Regent John Remsberg put it in his address when the Gault-Upham dormitory was dedicated in October 1955:

"These very dormitories are an example of the standard of living not known to those of the past. But I hope you all remember that the walls are not important – it is what you do within the walls that is important. I hope you will take advantage of the many opportunities to get together and discuss problems – both academic and non-academic. In this connection I would like to rise to the defense of the average student. I would defend him against the exceptional student who has become an isolationist to secure for himself alone the benefits of the university. The principal purpose of an education is to teach people to live together in harmony and to join in mutual enterprises."

Mr. Remsberg appears to have been gifted with clairvoyance. While students have been known to study in the dorms, the significance of Gault-Upham lies in its role in teaching people to live together and "to join in mutual enterprises." Based on anecdotes collected by this researcher, former and present residents of Gault and Upham regard their experience in the halls as a very positive one for the main reason that they provided an environment where individuals of the same gender



An invitation to a Halloween party organized by the men of Upham Hall, c. 1985. Courtesy of Julie R. Monroe



Former Gault Hall resident, Tom Stroschein, far left in the foreground, poses with his date at one of the dances he attended as a student at the University of Idaho, c. 1956. Photo courtesy of Tom Stroschein.

and roughly the same young age could develop a sense of "brotherhood," as Martin Johns, vicepresident of the Upham Hall Association in 2003, so aptly put it.

For most residents of Gault-Upham, it was a special time in their lives. They have stepped across the threshold of adulthood, leaving behind the security of home and family but not yet facing the adult challenges of a establishing a career and starting their own family. Gault-Upham provided a communal living environment that tolerated encouraged) (more likely personal experimentation and expression. In these dormitories, young men developed lifelong friendships, engaged in youthful (and generally harmless) high jinks, and experienced the agony and ecstasy of social interactions.

According to Matthew Labrum and Martin Johns, 2003 president and vice-president of Upham Hall, the hall government carries the mantle of maintaining several hall traditions, including "48 Hours of Hell," an event held over the President's Day weekend that features dancing and the racing of plastic tricycles known as Big Wheels. Another Upham Hall tradition is the 2:00

a.m. barbecues staged on the lawn between the Upham and Gault wings.

One of the traditions of Gault Hall is the "University of Gault Cheers." At one point, the cheers were collected and preserved on a handout, which explained the goal of the hall:

"Goal....Our perpous [sic] in organizing a yell section goes further than merely supporting the team——It is a tradition that Gault is heard at a ballgame, and that everyone else knows that Gault is at that ballgame. Please bring your voice and your booz [sic], and we shall maintain this status."

Here are a few examples of "University of Gault" cheers:

"We like ice cream. We like molasses. We'll knock the tigers back on their elbows."

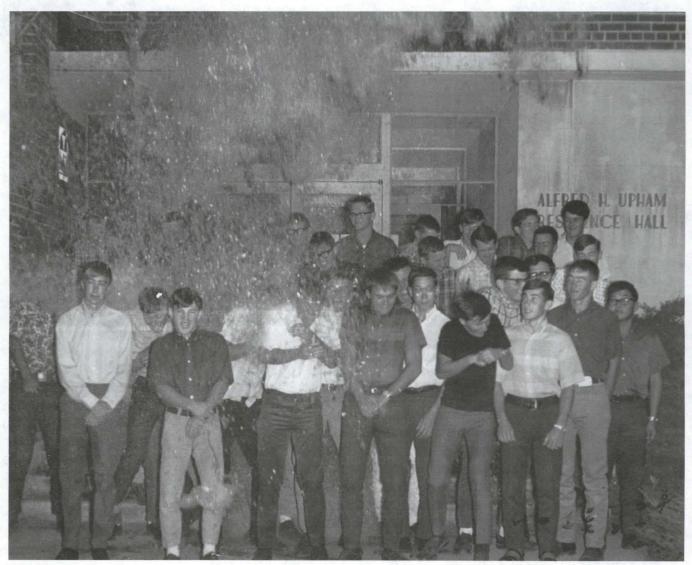
"Elevator, elevator. We got the shaft."

"Zamalookie Boomalaka, Zim Zam Zack. Vandles [sic] Vandles [sic], Drive them back!"

"Here Kitty Kitty Kitty, Meeooowwwwwwwww.... (satirical inflection in voice.)"

"Upham, Upham, Stick it Up-ham."

As this last cheer reveals, there was a gentlemen's rivalry between the two halls that share the same building. The men of Upham are proud that they are "not Gault," as Matthew Labrum put it, and vice versa. The rivalry manifests itself most prominently in a flag football contest between the two halls; similar to the America's Cup, the winner of the contest gains control of a trophy. In



The freshmen of the Class of 1967 are introduced to life in Upham Hall. Chick Mabbutt is in the front row, fourth from the right. Photo courtesy of the Mabbutt brothers.

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In 1967, the men of Upham Hall, including brothers Chick and Bill Mabbutt, celebrate their victorious defense of the mud hill that resulted from the excavation of the site for the future Theophilus Tower. Photo courtesy of the Mabbutt brothers.

this case, the trophy is the mounted back section of a deer shot by a former Gault resident.

Chick Mabbutt, now an architect practicing in Moscow, lived in Upham Hall while attending the University of Idaho during the 1960s. He recalls several examples of youthful high jinks while there. One involved the conversion of the communal showers to swimming pools by lining the floor with sheets of plastic, placing plywood across the doorways, and turning on all the showers full blast. This practice continued well into the present and was inevitably "enhanced" by the presence of kegs of beer.

Minutes from meetings of the Upham Hall Association held from the late 1950s through the early 1990s reveal commonalities. Repeatedly, the men of the hall were warned not to have alcohol (and beginning in the 1960s other types of moodaltering substances) and women in their rooms, but if they did have them in their rooms, they were not to get caught. Former Upham Hall resident Chick Mabbutt recalls that his brother and his roommate, also residents of Upham, lived on one of the hall's upper floors. They were "notorious," he said, for having both girls and beer in their room. In an effort to contain this behavior, the proctors

moved the two men to a suite on the ground floor next to his apartment. Mr. Mabbutt's brother praised this move, saying it made it that much easier to sneak in girls and beer through windows on the ground level. Plus, the young men were "closer to the enemy" and could, therefore, keep better tabs on the proctor.

But the most common admonition in hall meeting minutes was to stop throwing trash out of the windows of the dorm. This practice, like the conversion of the showers, continues to this day. One tradition that has not withstood the test of time was the prank played on the freshmen of the hall. Chick Mabbutt, a freshmen beginning in the 1967-68 academic year, recalls the prank with much amusement, despite being a victim of it. At the beginning of the school year, freshmen were gathered at the entrance to Upham Hall for a group photograph. After the photographer had positioned his camera, he called out, "1, 2, 3." At the same time, the hall's upperclassmen, positioned at the windows of the building's upper floors with buckets of water, dumped the contents of their containers on the heads of the unwitting freshmen.

Chick also recalls that while he was a resident of Upham the University began excavating the site

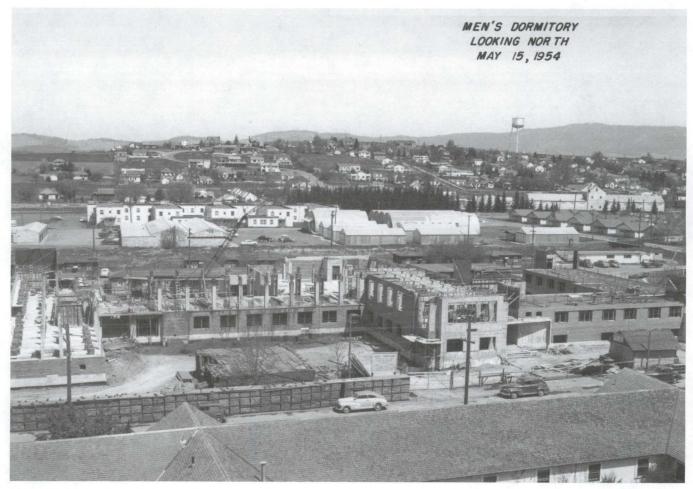
of another dormitory, Theophilus Tower, directly north of the Gault-Upham dorm. The excavation produced a tremendous amount of mud, which the men of Upham formed into a large hill and claimed as theirs. More than once, the men were forced to defend their turf from interlopers seeking the title of "Kings of the Hill."

For all the good times experienced in Gault-Upham, the dormitory was also the scene of tragedy. On October 19, 1956, the University experienced its "saddest hour," as University President D.R. Theophilus described the aftermath of the explosive fire that blazed through the third floor lounge and fourth floor suites of Gault Hall. Three students, Paul Johnson, John Knudson, and Clair Schuldberg, lost their lives in the blaze started by fellow University of Idaho student, Paul Matovich. "Explosive fire laden gases," found in the building's fourth floor northern corridor, caused the deaths, President Theophilus explained in an October 30, 1956, letter to a concerned parent.

Before Matovich confessed to the crime in November 1957, special student and police guards were posted on the campus to protect students from future occurrences.

In April 1957, a Latah County jury of nine men and three women found Matovich guilty of second-degree murder. Judge Hugh A. Baker sentenced Matovich to a prison term of 25 years with the recommendation that he receive psychiatric treatment. After his conviction, the April 19, 1957, edition of the *Argonaut*, reported that Matovich had been "hung in effigy from a lamp post between Campus Club and Gault Hall..."

Despite this tragedy, for many students, like Matthew Labrum, the dormitory "felt like home." While Gault-Upham was built to replace temporary student housing, and although the time spent in the halls was brief, for many students, the dormitory, as well as the people with whom they shared their lives and quarters, has left a permanent place in their hearts.



Gault-Upham Residence Halls under construction, May 1954. Note the temporary student housing in the background. Photo courtesy of Historical Photograph Collection, University of Idaho Library, #ID 1-95-15a.

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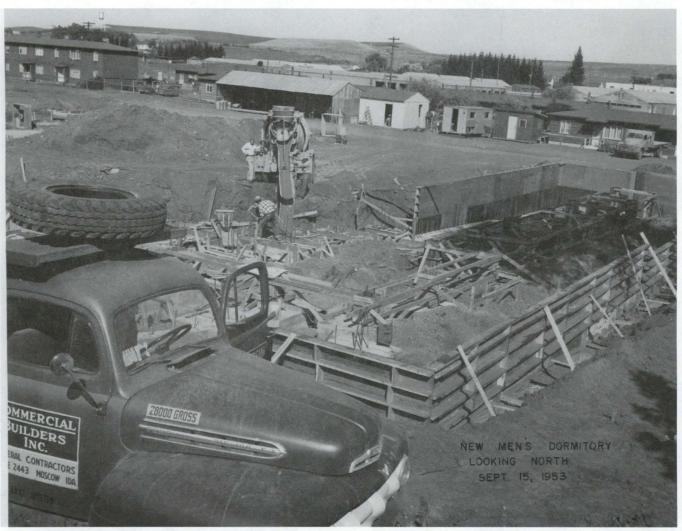
HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Following the nation's entry into World War II after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, enrollment in the University of Idaho dropped significantly. During the academic year 1942-43, 2155 students were enrolled, but during 1943-44, enrollment dropped to 944 students. In 1945-46, as the war drew to a close, enrollment began to increase; that year, 2345 students attended the University. In 1946-47, with the war's end, student enrollment increased again to 3724 and 3827 in 1947-48. Post-war enrollment peaked in 1948-49 when nearly 4000 (3912) students were in residence at the University of Idaho. After 1949, student population dropped in comparison to the years immediately after the war, but by the mid-1950s, enrollment began gradually increasing year by year.

In response to the post-war increase in student population, the University bought several types of

temporary housing, some suitable for married students and others for unmarried students. Many of the temporary housing units were organized into developments known as "vet's villages" because their primary occupants were World War II veterans taking advantage of the educational benefits of the G.I. Bill. Most of the vets were what are now called non-traditional students; they were older, married, and with children. An example of a vet's village was the one at the corner of Third and Line streets; it was an assembly of "prefabricated houses owned by the government at Richland, Washington, and formerly occupied by men engaged in developing the atomic bomb," according to a report in a September edition of the Argonaut, the student newspaper.

Another example of temporary student housing was Pine Hall. As explained in a summary statement dated December 11, 1952, prepared for an upcoming meeting of the University's Board of



Gault-Upham Residence Halls under construction, September 1953. Note the pick-up truck in the bottom left-hand corner belonging to Moscow's Commercial Builders, Inc. Photo courtesy of Historical Photograph Collection, University of Idaho Library, #ID 1-95-09b.

Regents, "At the close of World War II another wave of increased enrollments required expanded dormitory facilities, which demand was met by acquiring through the Federal Government a 'war surplus' dormitory unit, Pine Hall, which was reconverted for 360 men."

Pine Hall, also known as the Hudson House Dormitory, was a prefabricated building originally from the Kaiser shipyard that the University had placed on Warehouse Drive (west of Line Street and south of Third Street) in either 1946 or 1947; it was part of the collection of temporary housing known as the Sixth Street Vet's Village. The west half of Pine Hall was torn down in 1955 or 1956, and the rest of the building was demolished in 1960.

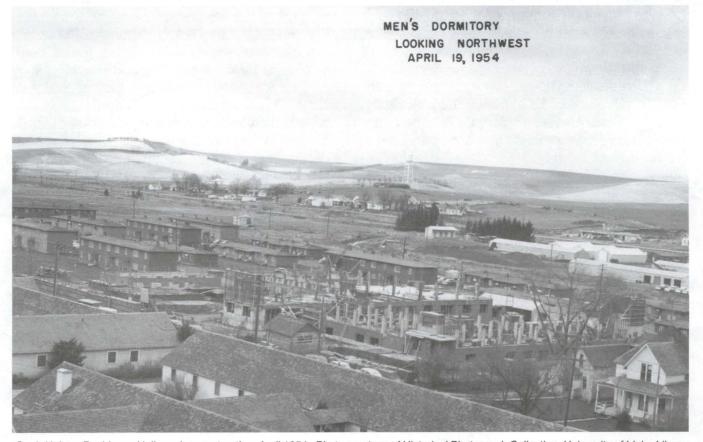
As fitting "a pioneer in the modern dormitory program," as the University boasted in a 1952 Summary Statement, the University sought approval from the regents to replace temporary dormitory facilities for men, including Pine Hall, with a new 272-capacity dormitory at an estimated cost of \$1,280,000. The summary sheet prepared

for the regents broke down the estimated costs of the project:

Estimated cost of building:	
83,543 sq. ft. @ \$13.20	1,102,767.60
Architect fee @ 5%	55,138.38
Financing, administration	
and contingencies at 5%	55,138.38
Furniture and equipment	67,000.00
Total	1,280,044.36

Unit cost was then calculated at \$4,705.88 per man based on occupancy of 272, and minimum semester rentals were set at \$75 per semester.

According to the summary statement, the construction of the new dormitory would be financed through the sale of bonds in the amount of \$1,150,000. As was stated in the summary statement, with the exception of the University's first dormitory, Ridenbaugh Hall, constructed in 1902, "all subsequent dormitory units have been financed by bond issue or note issue of the Regents of the University of Idaho without appropriation." The sale of bonds for the new



Gault-Upham Residence Halls under construction, April 1954. Photo courtesy of Historical Photograph Collection, University of Idaho Library, #ID 1-95-14a.



Entrance of the Gault-Upham Residence Halls, c. 1955. Photo courtesy of Historical Photograph Collection, University of Idaho Library, #ID 1-95-05.

dormitory was specified by the requirements of the College Housing Program of the Housing and Home Finance Agency; Title IV of the Housing Act of 1950.

"With the waning of April, 1953, Kenneth A. Dick, University Business Manager, and Robert Greene, Director of Dormitories, had hurriedly boarded a plan for Washington, D.C., to beat the May 1 deadline in completing arrangements for a federal loan to construct \$1,150,000 Gault-Upham dormitories." So wrote Rafe Gibbs in his 1962 history of the University of Idaho, *Beacon for Mountain and Plain*. Gibbs' statement leaves the impression that the cost of the dorms was \$1,150,000; in reality, however, Dick and Greene had flown to the nation's capitol to finalize the arrangements for a loan of that amount. The Home and Housing and Home Finance Agency had just approved the loan.

According to the April 30, 1953, edition of the *Daily Idahonian*, the trip was made to beat an increase in interest rates on May 1, thus saving the University roughly \$100,000 during the course of the 40-year loan. In this article, UI President J.E. Buchanan was quoted, "While this building [Gault-Upham] will not increase our housing

capacity, it will mean a considerable saving in the long run to the university. The frame structure of Pine Hall has been highly expensive to operate and maintain."

Monies from the Housing and Home Finance Agency loan were released to the University on June 8, 1953, and the University accepted construction bids on what was now a 344-capacity dormitory until 2:00 p.m. on July 9, 1953. (Sometime between December 1952 and May 1953, plans for the dormitory that would become Gault-Upham were altered to make room for an additional 72 residents.) The sale of bonds to finance the dormitory was held on September 15, 1954, in the office of the state Department of Education in Boise.

PHYSICAL HISTORY

Excavation of the Gault-Upham site was completed in the summer of 1953, with construction beginning in August of that year. Hugh Richardson, Lewiston, Idaho, was the project architect. W.L. Malony was the Structural Engineer, and H. Jack Reeves, Mechanical Engineer. The general contractor was Commercial Builders, Inc., 301 College Avenue, Moscow,

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Idaho, with a bid of \$885,430; the firm's officers were President, R.H. Sutherland; Secretary, C.K. Irwin; Superintendent, Herb Dunham; Office Manager, Ray Howerton. C.M. Wilderman Co., 520 South Main Street, Moscow, Idaho, was the heating, ventilation, and plumbing contractor, with a bid of \$212,850. Spence Electric, 306 South Washington Street, Moscow, Idaho, was the electric wiring and fixtures contractor, with a bid of \$87,835.

Interestingly, there was a typo in the contract signed by the general contractor, Commercial Builders, Inc., which called for completion of the project in 480 calendar days, which would have meant a completion date of September 18, 1954. In May of that year, however, the contract was corrected to read 481 working days. Final inspections of the structure were made in July 1955, and the University accepted the building on September 22, 1955.

The opening of the new halls was front-page news in the September 23, 1955, edition of the *Argonaut*. The reporter's interest in "wearability" revealed itself in his description of the dormitory, "Both halls are equipped with the latest in sturdily built modern furniture and in each two man room, the study desk has a paneltype top for rough wear. A sink and mirror can be found in every room. An added feature in the halls is the room to room intercom system. Each dorm has a separate recreation room and their own modern living room with fireplaces." According to this article, the board per semester was \$80.

The Gault-Upham Halls were formally dedicated by the University on Saturday, October 15, 1955, at a ceremony that began at 10:00 a.m. on the day of a football game with classic rival, Washington State University. Presiding over the dedication ceremonies was new president D.R. Theophilus; Regent John Remsberg gave the dedicatory address. Platform guests included the widow of Alfred Upham; the architect, Hugh Richardson; the student presidents of Gault and Upham Halls; Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Hoff, the proctors of Gault; and Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Chavez, the proctors of Upham.

ORIGINAL PLANS AND CONSTRUCTION

The structure's original plans are dated May 7, 1953, and are on file at AES Construction

Document Archives at the University's Facilities Services Office. The Gault-Upham structure was a 344-capacity dormitory orientated in an east-west alignment, with Gault Hall constituting the east wing and Upham Hall the west wing. The original plans show that each unit would have their own dining room, recreation room, study rooms, and student organizations.

The dormitory structure was constructed of reinforced concrete encased in brick walls. The brick face was called Clayton Missions and was manufactured by the Washington Brick and Lime Company. According to the materials legend on the original plans, the following materials were used: concrete, brick, tile, metal, wood, wood partition, plaster, and terrazzo.

According to the original plans, the square footage for Gault, the east wing, was 50,272, and on the first floor, there were 16 rooms; 16 on the second; 24 on the third, and seven on the fourth. The square footage for Upham, the west wing, was 40,177. On the ground floor, there were 11 rooms;

15 on the first; 15 on the second, and 25 on the third.

In both Gault and Upham, there proctor's apartments. The student rooms were two-man suites. divided into study and sleeping areas. An individual stepping into the suite from the central hallways would step into the study area first and would see a window directly in front of him. Each suite had a double desk in the study area and a double bunk bed in the sleeping area.

In the basement were areas for general storage, trunk storage, and kitchen stores;



Before cafeteria food service became the norm, students living in UI residence halls enjoyed seated service and were served by waiters, more commonly known as "hashers." Bernice Morin took this photo of one of the hashers she supervised in the mid-1940s. Photo courtesy of Bernice Morin.

rooms in the basement included the mechanical room, the electric room, the ash room, and the ash hoist room. Living quarters were on the ground, first, second, third, and fourth floors. In addition to the two-man suites and proctor's apartments, there were also pressing rooms, laundry rooms, communal toilets and showers, telephone areas, mail offices, guest rooms and baths, and women's lounges, complete with makeup shelf, mirror, and pouf stools. The recreation rooms were furnished with 16' x 16' benches covered in Naugahyde, 36' x 36' tables covered in Formica, chairs, loveseats, smokadors and a piano. The post office included a master radio set.

Located on the first floor of Gault-Upham was a common central kitchen designed to serve both units of the dormitory. According to the September 23, 1955, edition of the *Argonaut*, "The only facilities that Gault and Upham use in common is a giant stainless steel kitchen. Designed by Director of Dormitories, Robert Greene, the kitchen is layed [sic] out to accommodate two serving lines five minutes apart."

Generally, at the time of the dormitory's construction, food service was not centralized in a single facility; each hall or pair of halls had their own facilities for food preparation, according to Bernice Morin, who directed food service at the University of Idaho for nearly 40 years. Ms. Morin was hired in 1944 to re-establish food service for the Hays and Forney women's dormitories, which had most recently been occupied by the U.S. Army. According to Ms. Morin, Robert Greene, the director of dormitories, was adamant that the University provide its students with seated food service. Mr. Greene felt it was the University's responsibility to teach students how to behave in a formal dining situation.

Thus, students dining in the early days of the Gault-Upham dining room were treated to elegant meals at small tables seating six to eight people. They were served by "hashers" who wore over their street clothes white jackets, if male, and white aprons, if female. At each table was a centerpiece of fresh flowers, and each diner had a complete set of dishes and silverware (in the Colebrook pattern), as well as a folded napkin. Apparently, meals were announced by the ringing of chimes, as an inventory of items in the kitchen conducted for insurance purposes, shows that each dining



Sometime in the 1960s, Bernice Morin took this photo of some of her staff standing proudly before an impressive display of food set up in the Gault-Upham dining hall. Photo courtesy of Bernice Morin.

room had a set of chimes. Sit-down service was not reserved for the evening dinner but was the norm for all three daily meals.

In addition, most likely at the insistence of famed Dean of Women Permeal French, each hall was required to have dress dinners to which a special guest was invited. According to Ms. Morin, guest nights were Wednesdays and Sundays; for Upham Hall, Wednesday was the dress dinner night, and guests included University administrators and faculty. By the early 1970s, however, the men of Upham had decided to abandon the tradition of Wednesday evening dress dinners.

During the 1960s, the University, too, had abandoned seated meal service for its residence halls students. The cost of that type of service, not surprisingly, was high, so much so that the University renovated the Gault-Upham kitchen in 1969 to make it suitable for cafeteria-style service. Also, according to Ms. Morin, the University closed the Gault-Upham kitchen after centralizing dormitory food service in the Wallace Complex. However, by 1973 when this researcher began her career as a student of the University of Idaho residing in French Hall in Theophilus Tower, the University had re-opened the Gault-Upham kitchen. This researcher recalls that weekdays meals were served at Gault-Upham, but there was no service there on weekends. Sometime in the

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late 1970s, probably 1979, the Gault-Upham kitchen was closed.

ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS

No major alterations were made to the Gault-Upham Residence Halls, nor were there additions. However, in 1956, Gault Hall sustained over \$100,000 in fire damage, which was repaired during the summer of 1957; the building's original architect, Hugh Richardson of Lewiston, Idaho, oversaw the repair of the third and fourth floors.

In June 1969, the University remodeled the Gault-Upham kitchen under the direction of the architectural firm of Dropping, Kelley, and Finch. According to Food Service Manager Bernice Morin, the main purpose of the project was to make the structure suitable for upgraded kitchen equipment that would make the conversion to cafeteria-style food service possible.

In 1981, the University made interior renovations, which included resurfacing the floors, adding restroom areas, and installing new draperies and light fixtures. The timeline for the renovations was shortened to prepare the structure for a reception in honor of movie star Robert Redford in the fall of 1981. According to Bernice Morin, who was responsible for coordinating the reception, the University went to great lengths to present an elegant welcome for the actor. Too bad, Ms. Morin recalls, Redford, who was running behind schedule, was unable to enjoy it. Thinking it would be a shame to let all the food go to waste, Ms. Morin treated her staff to a sophisticated meal worthy of a Hollywood prince.

In July 1991, another renovation took place to "enhance existing life safety features and generally improve emergency exiting from the building," according to University of Idaho Project Architect Norm Yandt. He explains in an email correspondence dated May 16, 2003, that the "project added a[n] emergency stair tower to the south end of Upham Hall, provided an interconnection on the top floors of Gault and Upham which allowed 2 means of exiting from that area, and modified corridor conditions within Gault." Spokane contractor Leone & Keeble did the work and project plans are available at the AES archives.

CONCLUSION

Like former residents Chick Mabbutt, Martin Johns, and Matthew Labrum, the Gault-Upham dormitories are remembered as special places. Within their walls, young men not only pursued the ideals of education but also those of friendship, loyalty, and service. They embraced Regent Remsberg's counsel and achieved the often-elusive ideal of living together in harmony.

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YOU NEVER FORGET: REMEMBERING THE 1956 GAULT HALL FIRE

By Julie R. Monroe

Latah County Commissioner and Historical Society member Tom Stroschein was a resident of Gault Hall when the tragic fire of October 19, 1956, took the lives of three students and injured eight others. Even though the events of that night took place nearly 50 years ago, Tom nonetheless recalls them vividly.

"Things like that you never forget," he said in an interview I conducted with him on a rainy Sunday afternoon in November 2003.

Departing his hometown of Aberdeen, Idaho, Tom arrived on the University of Idaho campus in 1955 and moved into Gault Hall, the easternmost wing of the brand-new male student dormitory, Gault-Upham. Although by the fall semester of 1956, Tom had pledged to a new fraternity on campus, FarmHouse, he was still living in Gault when fire struck. "It was the FarmHouse guys who saw the fire first," said Tom. At that time, the FarmHouse residence was an old house located directly east of Gault Hall.

According to newspaper accounts, the blaze was discovered at about 2:00 a.m. by a student in adjoining Upham Hall, but it was the "FarmHouse guys who were the first to respond," said Tom. He explains, "The FarmHouse guys went running through the halls pounding on the doors to alert people." Had they not, the fire might have claimed more lives simply because the structure's fire alarm system had failed.

"I remember it vividly," said Tom of what he saw after being awakened. "When I first woke up, I could see the fire's reflection on my blind," he said. When he looked out his window, he could see the fire blazing through the dorm's north side. "It had blown out all the windows and was shooting out at least 40 feet; it was like a blowtorch. It was that weird orange color, just like a blowtorch."

The fire, originating in the second floor lounge, had quickly spread through the hallways and up the stairs to the living quarters on the third and fourth floors. Two students, Clair Schuldberg, a freshman from Terreton, Idaho and John Knutsen from Idaho Falls, also a freshman, died in the fourth

floor hallway, close to the window. Sophomore Paul Johnson died of suffocation in a shower room next to his living quarters. According to an account of the fire in the October 1956, edition of the Spokane newspaper, the *Chronicle*, "Taken to the infirmary were Elwood Kintner of Idaho Falls; Gene Bodily, also Idaho Falls, and Terrence Murphy of Mullan." Five other students were treated for "minor burns and smoke inhalation."

According to Tom, his buddies Elwood Kintner and Gene Bodily had escaped the burning building by climbing onto the roof of adjoining Upham Hall. They had accomplished this by running down their fourth floor hallway, which was filled with flames and intense heat, to get to the northernmost room on the floor. Once in the room, they climbed through its window, which when open, made it possible for the two young men to climb onto the roof. Kintner suffered severe burns on his chest, having covered only his head with wet towels.

"The hero of the thing," said Tom, was Floyd Lydum, who Tom knew as they both worked at the University as "hashers." Described as a "slender, blond 20-year-old agriculture student from Firth, Idaho," in the October 19 *Chronicle* story, Lydum, after being awakened by the blaze, ran from his room in Gault and climbed onto the roof of Upham, taking with him a rope, most likely from the fire



A student room following the October 19, 1956 fire. Photo courtesy of Historical Photograph Collection, University of Idaho Library, #ID 1-95-01.

truck of the Moscow Volunteer Fire Department that had responded to the fire. From the roof, Lydum, with assistance from another student, Lawrence LaRue, lifted four students to safety: Stephen Hinckley, Harold Jacobs, Don Archer, and B.J. Schaffer. Tom recalled seeing Schaffer standing on the window of his room, which opened outward, calling for help. He also recalled that after the blaze had been contained, "Floyd was in shock; he passed out from the exertion."

In the aftermath of the fire, there was "paranoia," said Tom. "People were just plain scared." The Gault fire, while the only deadly one, had been the fourth in a string of fires that had struck the campus that fall. Only a few days earlier, there had been fires in other dorms, Sweet and Chrisman. "After the fatal fire," writes Keith C. Petersen in his account of the blaze in *This Crested Hill: An Illustrated History of the University of Idaho*, "the university posted student, ROTC, and police guards at all buildings on campus. There were no more fires."

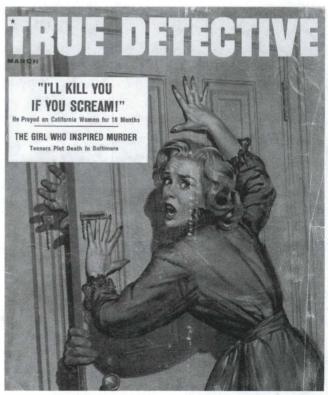
On November 21, a month after the University's memorial service for the students who died. Paul D. Matovich, a 20-year-old freshman majoring in journalism, confessed to setting all the dormitory fires. Ironically, Matovich had covered the fire for the Argonaut, even going so far, as Tom recalls, interviewing the sister of Clair Schuldberg. As investigators revealed, Matovich had had a history of pyromania, coming under suspicion for starting fires in his hometown of Kellogg and while serving in the Air Force. In April 1957, a jury of nine men and three women found Matovich guilty of seconddegree murder, although he had been charged with first-degree murder. Judge Hugh A. Baker imposed a sentence of 25 years and "recommended psychiatric treatment," according to the April 16, 1957, edition of the Argonaut.

"I knew a lot of these kids," said Tom, as the interview drew to a close. "You never forget something like that fire."

Terror on the Campus

Coverage of the Gault Hall fire and its aftermath was not restricted to local and regional newspapers. The story found its way to the pages of some of the nation's more lurid publications.

In the March 1957 edition of *True Detective*, for example, was Stuart Whitehouse's account of the days immediately following the fire. The story, "Terror on the Campus," begins with the following subtitle: "With three dead and 2000 suspects, Moscow, Idaho, became an armed camp during a tense month-long day and night vigil by police and volunteers." It concludes with a quote from Paul Matovich, the UI student who confessed to starting the fire, "I didn't mean to hurt anyone."



Cover of the March 1957 edition of *True Detective* that includes "Terror on the Campus," a nonfiction account of the search for the person responsible for the fire.

LATAH VIGNETTE: BERNICE MORIN

By Julie R. Monroe

Described as the "mother superior" of University of Idaho Food Service upon her retirement in 1983, Bernice Morin supervised the feeding of thousands of University of Idaho students for nearly 40 years. The choice of the term "mother superior" by Ms. Morin's own superior, Robert Parton, could not have been unintentional; it must have been in recognition of the outstanding administrative skills Ms. Morin displayed during her long career with the University. In a time when few women, except perhaps mother superiors, were given the opportunity to supervise complex organizations, Ms. Morin oversaw, at one time or another, many aspects of food preparation and service on the UI campus.

Bernice Morin, who still resides in Moscow, is a native of Missoula, Montana. After graduating from the Sacred Heart Academy High School, she attended the University of Montana where she earned a bachelor's degree in Foods and Nutrition. A one-year internship at Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago qualified her for Dietetic Certification as a member of the American Dietetic Association in 1942. After nearly two years working in hospital therapeutics and administrative supervision in various facilities in the Northwest, Ms. Morin began her career in the college food service field when she started working for the University of Idaho in 1944.



Shortly after beginning her career with UI Food Services, Bernice Morin repaired a UI ROTC flag, c. 1944. Photo courtesy of Bernice Morin.

Robert F. Greene, Director of Housing and Food Service, hired Ms. Morin to restore traditional food service in two UI dormitories, Hays Hall and Forney Hall. Prior to 1944, explains Ms. Morin, "The residence halls were engaged in feeding and housing various military groups; the Army Specialized Training Program in Hays and Forney, and the Naval Reserve Training Program in Sweet, Chrisman, and the Idaho Club." Women attending the University during the war years, she adds, were housed in the three fraternity houses, including Sigma Nu. As the war drew to a close, the dorms were reopened to women, and it became Ms. Morin's responsibility to convert the mess halls back to dining halls.

"The return of the young women to Hays and Forney was a refreshing experience," she says, "as the gracious style of seated service with china, linens, and silver and waiters and waitresses was resumed." At this time, it was University policy to provide seated service in the residence halls – a policy fully supported by the director of Housing and Food Service, Robert Greene, and the Dean of Women, Permeal French. Ms. Morin recalls that the board rate per day at this time was \$1.05 per student or \$.35 per meal.

By 1947, the University was coping with the need to house and feed a large influx of new students, former servicemen and women taking advantage of the educational benefits of the famed G.I. Bill. Ms. Morin recalls the 100' x 100' Quonset hut that became the Pine Hall Cafeteria for it became her duty to organize and open this cafeteria, in addition to managing food service in both Hays and Forney. Located at Line and Third streets, the Pine Hall Cafeteria was in service until January 1953 when the building was converted to a central food and equipment storage building.

In 1949, as enrollments continued to expand, Ms. Morin was appointed Director of Food Service to manage five separate food service operations: Hays, Forney, Pine, Sweet, and Chrisman. At this time, she also organized the University's first athletic dormitory at the Idaho Club. Originally open only to members of the football team, the

dorm was eventually opened to other athletes and students but was closed when the Gault-Upham halls were opened in the mid-1950s.

Not only did Ms. Morin manage food service for these two new halls, she and Robert Greene contributed to the design of their kitchen and dining facilities. In 1952, when the Gault-Upham dormitories were still in the conceptual phase, it was decided that food service would be the traditional, seated-waiter service but that one central kitchen would serve both halls. Ms. Morin and Mr. Greene were "required to present all twoand three-dimensional sketches for all equipment in this facility," she explains. "Fortunately, under Mr. Greene's excellent direction and my background in an architectural family [Her father, Fred Morin, had been an architect.], an efficient kitchen was developed which served its purpose well."

Less than a decade later, in 1961, with the nation's youngest president in the White House, the University of Idaho began planning for a new dormitory complex, what would become the Wallace Complex. In designing food service facilities for the dorm, it was acknowledged that seated service was becoming obsolete. "While aesthetically more desirable," explains Ms. Morin, seated service had become "too costly in labor and maintenance." The University sought a solution that would provide "greater volume in income with lower food and labor costs" and found it in the now familiar cafeteria-style service. The Wallace Complex cafeteria opened in 1963.

In 1969, with the completion of the new Theophilius Tower and the move of the old Sweet, Chrisman, Hays, and Forney halls to newer dormitory structures, the kitchen serving the Gault and Upham halls, originally designed to serve less than 300 students, was revamped to serve over 600 hundred. By 1975, the University knew that its two food service facilities were inadequate, and Ms. Morin then took on the biggest challenge of her career.

Food service would be consolidated in the Wallace Complex cafeteria, and Ms. Morin was given responsibility for remodeling its kitchen and dining areas. Ms. Morin worked with the Boise architectural firm of Dropping, Kelly, and LaMarche to design an efficient, but also visually pleasing, large-scale facility that would offer greater variety in the foods served at lower operation and

maintenance costs. The remodeling of the cafeteria, which continued to operate during the construction, was completed in 1978, and in 1979, it received the Food Facility Award from *Institutions* magazine. "Working on this facility," said Ms. Morin, "was a rewarding climax to my career."



Bernice Morin upon her retirement as Director of Food Service at the University of Idaho, 1983. Photo courtesy of Bernice Morin.

In retirement, Ms. Morin has pursued her hobbies, which include reading and traveling, and continued her service to the community. During her career, she was served as an officer for several professional organizations; acted as a consultant on kitchen remodeling projects, including Latah Health Services; and became an Affiliate Professor at the University of Idaho, teaching courses in dietetics. In addition to her service to Moscow's St. Mary's Parish, of which she is a member, she also assisted in Moscow's Meals on Wheels program.

BUILDING A CHARTER SCHOOL BUILDING

By Mary Lang, Ed.D.

Editor's Note:

The Moscow Charter School in Moscow, Idaho, is an accredited public elementary school serving grades kindergarten through sixth. It was founded in 1998 by a group of parents and educators with the common purpose of providing children with an educational environment in which they could master a variety of skills that would provide them with the tools to become good thinkers and successful adults.

The article below is the personal history of the process the administrators, educators, and parents of the Moscow Charter School underwent to provide children with a safe and useful school building. Photos are courtesy of Daniel K. Mullin Architects.

OUR STORY

In the summer of 1998, the Moscow School District approved the request of the Moscow Charter School to begin operation that fall. At the time, Idaho charter school legislation contained no provisions to finance facilities; in fact, it was illegal for charter schools to hold bond or levy elections. It was also illegal for public schools (including charter schools) to be in debt; thus, we at the Moscow Charter School were left with only two alternatives for housing our school: renting, or using a facility that had been donated.



Exterior of the completed Moscow Charter School building before landscaping.

Prior to approval of its charter, the Moscow Charter School had already located a temporary home in the basement of a local church. The basement extension where we were located had originally been built in the 1970s by a group of individuals to house a private religious-based school. When the charter was approved, the church leased the space to us and added new carpet and paint while we provided the labor for the renovations.

Yet, as we soon found out, this facility was an issue. Although the local school district had approved our charter, the Idaho Department of Education had concerns because our proposed school site was in a church. The Department's approving group worried the public would associate the school with the church, even though there was no connection between the two. Furthermore, the church basement had a number of logistical drawbacks, including very small classrooms.

The founders of the Moscow Charter School realized early on that our initial facility was inadequate and began searching for an alternative almost immediately after the charter was approved. To some extent, our problems were unique because we are a small school in a rural location. Moscow is a northern Idaho community of approximately 20,000 individuals, and facilities that either met the codes and requirements of a public school facility, or have the potential to do so, are virtually non-existent within the city limits of Moscow. All the facilities that even came close to meeting the regulations still required extensive renovation. Charter schools in cities where large warehouse facilities exist would not necessarily experience these same problems.

For the first two years of our school's existence, we struggled to learn about codes for public school facilities and to find a location for a new school building. By the end of our second year, we had realized there were no existing structures in the Moscow area that would suit our needs. Thus, we decided to gather information about purchasing property on which to build our own facility and to explore options for the building itself. Should we purchase a modular building or construct our own?

In addition, we also began exploring ways to change the law so that charter schools could take

out loans for financing their facilities. We contacted our local legislators to explain our need. In turn, they worked with us to support legislation that now allows Idaho charter schools to borrow money to finance facilities. Despite this legislative success, drawbacks continued to exist. The then existing Idaho charter school legislation contained a sunset clause that required the state of Idaho to review charter schools at the end of five years to determine whether they would be allowed to continue operating. This provision made it difficult if not impossible for us to get bank approval on long-term loans for facilities.

During the third year of our school's existence, we decided to purchase land and either rent a modular structure or construct a school building. Having made this decision, and knowing that we could purchase land only with a long-term loan that went beyond a five-year period, we again worked with our local legislators to pass legislation

that would eliminate the sunset clause from Idaho charter school legislation. By this time, we had developed some savvy concerning charter school

legislation development, and, after an extensive letter writing campaign, the Idaho legislature eliminated the sunset clause.

We were then ready to find two things: a site and a lending institution willing to lend us the money to purchase it. We contacted several banks from the surrounding area and immediately came up with a short list of two banks that were willing to talk to us about loans. We soon found out that the amount of time spent researching banks and filling out paperwork would be tremendous in scope, which was frustrating because we administrators were also expected to get the curriculum up and running. Adding to the tension was the fact that we were turned down by all of the local lending agencies, leaving us with the appearance that we had no options for borrowing money.

In response, we decided to find a property that would pay for itself, thus providing us with better collateral for a traditional bank loan. That same year, we located a property that met this requirement and appeared to meet the local, state, and public school codes. The site had a house

that we intended to turn into rental property, thus providing us with additional cash flow that we hoped would appeal to a lending institution. We went back to AmericanWest Bank, one of the local banks that had previously turned us down, and demonstrated to them that the rental income for the house could be used to pay on the loan. The bank agreed to loan us the money. We then purchased the property, and it appeared we had conquered our first hurdle toward obtaining our new facility.

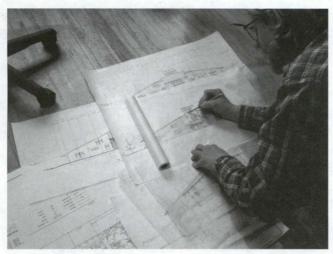
Throughout the third year of operation of our school, we investigated and debated the pros and cons of purchasing or renting modular units versus building a new facility. After a thorough research campaign, we determined that purchasing modular units was just as expensive as building a new building and provided less equity in the long run. We learned that, upon first examination, modular units are much cheaper. However, the brochures

and basic pricing structures that come from the modular companies typically contain only the modular shell. They do not contain the cost of extra

features that are necessary to meet state and local codes for public facilities. After the add-on features are calculated, the price is similar to that of constructing a stick-built structure at approximately \$100 sq/ft. We also learned that modular units depreciate much quicker than a stick-built building. As a result, modular units are generally financed for a period of only 10 to 15 years, whereas a stick-built building typically can be financed for up to 30 years, which means a more reasonable payment schedule during a school's start-up years.

In our third year, based upon the projected loan payment that the Moscow Charter School would be able to make, and the fact that modular structures tend to deteriorate faster over time, we made our final decision to build. Once this decision was made, we began to focus our energies on finding architects, obtaining financing, and preparing the site for construction. With grant funding, we hired architects to design a footprint of the building and engineers to design a site preparation plan. The local bank that gave us the loan for the property agreed to loan us the money that we needed to complete the site preparation.

...we had conquered our first hurdle towards obtaining our new facility.



Architect Kurt Rathmann.

Using our growing enrollment as an incentive, the bank tentatively agreed to finance the building construction in stages. We also presented them with research demonstrating that we were eligible for two public financing programs that would support a construction loan.

The original site design and preparation was completed during this third year. However, the members of the Moscow Charter School board were unhappy with the basic rectangular footprint plan that had been designed by the original architects who had also been hired to manage the site construction. Therefore, we decided to interview other architects to see if an innovative plan could be produced, one that more accurately matched the unique qualities of the school and that would also fit within our budget.

Thus, we put the design process out to bid and scheduled a series of presentation meetings to view potential architects. At the time, the only person on our board who was experienced with house construction was an individual who was a product designer by profession. After interviewing a series of architects, we chose a local firm of individuals who were associated with the University of Idaho Department of Architecture.

In the summer prior to our fourth year, the first building design was completed, and we were ready to put out a bid for a contractor. It was at this point that a new principal, with school facilities experience, joined our school. She was the only individual involved in the building planning process who had had experience with any type of public school construction. Specifically, she had overseen the construction of two schools while she served

as a superintendent in Montana. In addition, she had built many houses with her husband who was himself a contractor. During the first bid process, we were in for a rude awakening. Only one contracting firm presented us with a bid, and it was 50% over our budget. The building the architects had designed was beautiful but much too expensive.

For the second bid process, our architects changed a few minor elements in their design. It was surprising to learn that the actual bidding process can cost thousands of dollars, depending on the number of contractors who request a bid packet. During the second bidding process, eight construction firms requested bid packets. In response to the second bidding, we received three bids, all close to 50% over budget. At this point, we were faced with the reality that we would need to restart the design process and to invite submissions on construction bids a third time.

On the third design, board members were more realistic and practical about design changes. We decided to go with a single story building with smaller classrooms than had been originally planned. In essence, we opted for a bare bones building, leaving out a lunchroom and a multipurpose room for special classes and physical education classes when the weather was bad. During the final construction phase of the main building, however, we decided to build a metal pole building on the grounds to house both the lunchroom and the multi-purpose room at significantly less money per square foot than the main building.

After putting this much-reduced design out to bid, we received the exact bid we could afford. However, we discovered later that construction projects usually have additional cost overruns not included in the original bid, and the only thing holding up construction at this point was obtaining suitable financing.

While in the process of finding a contractor, we had been discussing the building project with the local bank that had originally loaned us the money for the purchase of our land. This bank agreed to work with us on a construction loan if we could provide proof of ability to pay back the loan. While continuing to research options for obtaining guarantees, we learned that the size of the construction loan would be determined by the type of loan we would obtain (based upon the rate/term)

as well as the value of the project appraisal. The bank provided us with an individual to perform the appraisal.

In the process of conducting our research on loan programs, we discovered two public finance programs that applied to our circumstance as a charter school. The first program is under the auspices of the Idaho Housing Authority (IHA). This program offered 100% financing but had substantial upfront costs of \$15,000. In addition, this program would require us to pay a trustee fee of 1% yearly, or approximately \$8,000 per year.

The other program, through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is for rural charter schools in a community with a population under 20,000. Under this program, there was a USDA loan fee in addition to the bank's loan fee, totaling 3.5% of the loan. We were, however, able to obtain an interest rate at prime +0.5%, which when compared to market rates, means we would recoup the USDA fee in little more than one year. Under the conditions of the USDA program, the agency provided the bank with guarantees for 80% of the costs of the appraised value. With grants and other donations we had received during the design phase of the project, we demonstrated that we had already achieved our 20% equity.

Thus, in the final analysis, we chose the USDA option for two reasons. At the time we applied for our loan, we had not yet received an appraisal because we were building our buildings in phases, which meant we were unable to determine the exact amount that we needed for the IHA loan. Secondly, we had invested so much of our own cash into the project that we no longer



Building exterior, looking east.

had a reserve fund big enough to pay the \$15,000 finance fee required by the IHA.

By choosing the USDA option, the appraisal became a critical element of the financing equation for several reasons. As a cash-strapped, start-up school, we needed to have our property appraised at its highest value since we would be able to secure a loan for only 80% of that amount. Securing the appropriate loan amount to cover construction costs was critical as it meant our operating budget would not have to bear the strain of providing additional cash for the completion of the project. Unfortunately, because there were no comparables for charter schools, the appraiser was forced to use a comparable that we feel undervalued the school, causing long-term complications for us in procuring the proper loan amount.

Thus, we were left in a bind when it came time to finish financing both the main building and the second building situated on the back of the property. We needed an additional \$50,000 to complete the second building, which now serves as a multi-purpose facility. As a result of what we felt was an under-appraisal, we had to furnish additional cash to complete the construction of the main building and work with the bank to find an additional loan for the remaining \$50,000.

Financing the additional \$50,000 for the multipurpose building required creativity on both our side and on the side of the bank. Because we were unable to borrow any more money under the USDA loan, we were left with few alternatives. One was to have the building reappraised. A re-appraisal would have cost approximately \$5,000 and could have taken months to complete. At this point we were under a time constraint to finish the second building while the first building was still under construction. Completing the second building at this time would save us between \$10,000 and \$15,000 because the contractor was still on site and was willing to work with us on the cost. We had already spent all our contingency funds, and there was no certainty the appraisal value would increase.

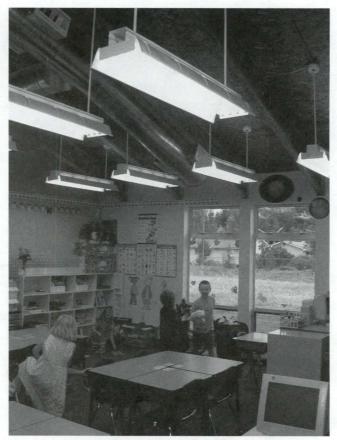
We came up with two different solutions to provide collateral for the final \$50,000 required to finish the project. The first called for parents to purchase Certificates of Deposit (CDs) at the bank holding our loan, at a special interest rate offered by the bank. The duration of these instruments

would be for three years during which they would serve as collateral for a portion of the \$50,000 loan amount. We decided not to extend this offer to board members due to possible conflicts of interest. With the second solution, parents, board members and interested individuals would offer to co-sign the remainder of loan. To our delight, the bank approved both methods for financing the remaining loan amount, and we were fortunate in that enough volunteers came forward to make this option work.

At this point, one more hurdle remained: to reduce our loan payment by \$1,000 per month. We approached the bank and requested that we finance our \$50,000 loan over 30 years instead of five. The bank approved this request. Moreover, once the overall debt is decreased to less than 80% of the long term value amount, the bank will release the guarantees of the collateralized CDs. To date, we carry two loans for our new buildings, and we have a loan payment that fits our budget. The only remaining construction item not completed is to pave the parking lot.

CONCLUSION

The process of building our school was a trial that stretched everyone's limits and talents, but it all worked out in the end...for the most part. We continue to struggle to correct some of the problems that still exist. These problems include a mechanical system that does not regulate separate thermostats for each region of the building, which means some classrooms are freezing while others are too hot. In addition, the mechanical system is built with open ducts that are noisy, making it difficult to hear in some locations in the building. We also paid extra fees to re-grade the site and are working with the City of Moscow to finalize an acceptable drainage system that should have been included in the



Building interior, an open, light-filled classroom.

original design. These basic problems continue to cost the school time and money.

Despite these problems, which many administrators responsible for managing facilities may also experience, the students of the Moscow Charter School now have a beautiful new building in which everyone takes ownership. As a result of our dedication, hard work, and creativity, we overcame what appeared to be an insurmountable obstacle, but there is still work to be done now and in the future. Specifically, we are continuing to work to reform Idaho legislation regarding facilities funding for charter schools.

Look for these stories and more in the next edition of the LATAH LEGACY:

◆ The 1947 Douglas-fir Tussock Moth Outbreak in Northern Idaho: Target of the Largest Aerial Spraying Project in Western Forests by Malcolm Furniss



◆ Blaine Schoolhouse: The Beat Goes On by Bill London

◆ Book Review: White Pine Route by Thomas E. Burg



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:

	Member	Friend	Contributor	Sustainer	Sponsor	Patron
Individual	\$10-15	\$16-30	\$31-75	\$76-150	\$151-499	\$500 up
Family	\$15-25	\$26-50	\$51-100	\$101-250	\$251-499	\$500 up
Business	\$25-50	\$51-100	\$101-250	\$251-350	\$351-499	\$500 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 website at http://users.moscow.com/lchs.