

A Walking Tour of Residential Moscow



"I remember the unpaved streets of my childhood, dusty in summer, frozen into ruts in the winter, and...a welter of mud in the spring....In town high board sidewalks bridged the rolling hills...The streets...are paved now, and automobiles go up and down. There is even a small airport; and, farther and farther out into the hills, the people are building ranch-type houses with picture windows."

(Excerpt from *Snow in the River*, by Carol Ryrie Brink)



Other locations, not on tour

Fort Russell Marker – 800 Block on East B Street

In the parking between Nos. 804 and 810 East B Street is a boulder noting the nearby location of Fort Russell. Originally it bore a plaque, in recent years removed by vandals, relating the history of a stockade built in 1877 by settlers who feared an attack during the Nez Perce War. The fort was located between Monroe and Lincoln Streets about a half-block north of the marker. In spite of the settlers' fears, no hostile Indians appeared, and the fort was used chiefly as a retreat during the hours of darkness. At present the Moscow Centennial Commission has plans underway to replace the missing plaque.

Fort Russell Historic District

A number of houses located on this map are part of the area designated in 1980 in the National Register of Historic places as Fort Russell Neighborhood Historic District. This consists of 116 structures which as a group are considered historically important and homogeneous in style and scale. (The designated district is a very irregularly shaped area bounded roughly by Washington, Monroe, Second, and D Streets. The tour indicated on this map has been planned for architectural and historical interest and is not intended as complete coverage of the many structures of the Fort Russell Historic District.)

110 South Jefferson – Moscow-Latah County Library, 1906 and 1983

As a result of the efforts of the Moscow Historical Club, this building was constructed with Carnegie Library Endowment funds. One of the rare early examples in Northern Idaho of the Spanish mission architecture, it is in the National Register of Historic Places. Its most striking feature is the gable style with its graceful curves protruding above the roofline. Note the tile roof and the arched windows with their fan-like upper panes. Originally the entrance was approached by a curving stairway on either side. The addition on the north was opened in 1983, with the children's library renamed the "Carol Ryrie Brink Memorial Children's Library."

Information for the tour is from a book by Lillian W. Otness, *A Great Good Country: A Guide to Historic Moscow and Latah County, Idaho* (1983).

Other suggested reading is by Homer David, *Moscow at the Turn of the Century* (1979), and by Carol Ryrie Brink, *Buffalo Coat* (1945) and *Snow in the River* (1964).

Published by the Latah County Historical Society, 110 South Adams, Moscow, Idaho (Ph. 882-1004), with funding from the Moscow Centennial Commission and the Idaho Humanities Council, a state-based program of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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This tour outlines an hour walk on a loop of 12 blocks length, beginning with the McConnell Mansion and ending with the J.J. Day home. (See map.) Sixteen homes of architectural and historical interest are described. A few other such locations which are not on the route are pointed out as being well worth a visit. Of all buildings listed, only the McConnell Mansion and the Moscow-Latah County Library are open to the public.

1

110 South Adams Street—McConnell Mansion, 1886

Built by William J. McConnell, Idaho's first two-term governor, this Victorian Gothic-style house is in the National Register of Historic Places. Note the graceful chimneys, the curved brackets supporting the eaves and porch roofs, the two-story windows topped with sharp gables, the ornamental patterned shingles, and wooden millwork. The door facing Adams Street has etched and beveled glass and small squares of colored glass. W.J. McConnell came to Moscow in 1878. Active in business in the 1880s, he built this home and the downtown McConnell-Maguire Building. A later owner of the house, Dr. Frederic Church of the University of Idaho history faculty, bequeathed it to Latah County in 1968.

This building is operated by the Latah County Historical Society as a combination of restored period dwelling and museum. It is open to the public without charge Tuesdays through Saturdays from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Its professional staff maintains a collection of clothing and Latah County artifacts, arranges historical exhibits and programs. Its research library contains not only books and pamphlets but personal reminiscences, hundreds of photographs, and a large oral history collection. The Society publishes a quarterly journal, "Latah Legacy," as well as books on county history. The Latah County Historical Society is a private, non-profit educational organization. Membership is open to all interested persons.

2

120 North Adams—George Creighton Home, 1908

When Creighton built this house, some of its features were its colored-glass windows, large bathrooms, and beautiful hardwood floors with inlaid borders of wood in a contrasting color. Its exterior has remained basically unchanged, except that some of the original colored glass windows have been removed. The garage has been enlarged, but the original lines and stone pillars of the old carriage house remain. Creighton was one of the original owners of the Chicago Bargain Home, which opened in 1891 and later became Creighton's dry goods store. In 1909 he built a brick building at Third and Main.

3

221 North Adams—Charles Shields Home, early 1890s

Best approached from the south in order not to miss seeing the attractive south porch, this is a good example of Queen Anne architecture. It is distinguished by two hexagonal bays, one with a turret, and by three patterns of shaped shingles—fish scale, diamond and hexagonal—on the second story and in the gables. Windows on the street side have panes of colored glass. Charles Shields was associated in a hardware store with M.J. Shields (no relation); his wife was a niece of Governor McConnell.

4

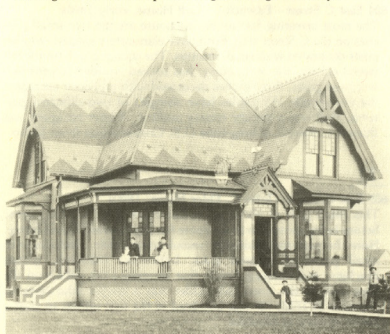
410 East B Street—William Kaufmann Home, 1885

This is one of a group of early large homes built by leading businessmen. Note the large gable on the street side, surmounting a small balcony over a first-floor sunroom, twin gables on the east side, and the fan-shaped window above the entrance. In 1881 Kaufmann and his brother-in-law Henry Dernham founded the business that became the Dernham & Kaufmann store. The building they constructed at Third and Main eventually became the store owned by the Frank David family. In 1895-97 Kaufmann was a Regent of the University of Idaho.

5

411 East B Street—William Baker Home, 1886

When this house was built, the property included the entire block. The main entrance faced Adams Street, and a porch ran around the corner between the two entrances. The elaborate millwork, brackets, and patterned shingles survive today, as do the bay windows and colored glass panes. The carriage house at the rear is similarly decorated. William Baker was associated with the Baker-Clark bank, Moscow's first. In 1890 the house was purchased by M.J. Shields, Moscow's leading entrepreneur of the period. He owned a number of business enterprises, including Moscow's first plant for generating electricity.



William Baker Home

6

418 East B Street—Henry Dernham Home, 1885

Note the large bay at left with the balcony above, also the wraparound porch with its paired pillars. The tower at right is capped by a cone-shaped turret and a large wooden finial. The home Dernham built next to that of his brother-in-law, William Kaufmann, was later owned by a dentist, then by the founder of Gritman Hospital, Dr. C.L. Gritman. Most of the time since the late 1940s the home has been occupied successively by two other prominent physicians.

7

325 North Polk Street—Mark P. Miller Home, ca. 1911

The Polk Street side of this chalet-style house has four half-timbered gables adorned with elaborate carving. Note the large brackets supporting the eaves, the square bay window and patterned brick chimney on the south side, and the leaded colored-glass panes of the first-floor windows. At the northeast corner of the house is a porte-cochere designed for horse-drawn carriages. The circular stairway at the northwest corner is a modern addition. Miller owned hay and grain warehouses at Joel, Troy, and Deary as well as grain elevators and a flour mill in Moscow.

8

328 North Polk—Howard David Home, 1927

The entry with its leaded glass side-panels and fan-shaped overhead window make the approach to this house especially distinguished. The one-story addition dates from 1962. Howard David was associated with his father and his two brothers in Davids' department store. Together with the Miller house, the Butterfield house, and the E.C. Hall house, this structure comprises the handsomest intersection on the hill.

403 North Polk — Charles L. Butterfield Home, 1902-03

One of Moscow's most stately buildings, this is the town's only Greek Revival home. The massive portico with its twin pairs of fluted columns, second-floor balcony, and graceful pediment is topped by its small round window. A garlanded frieze circles the house just below the eaves. Butterfield, a partner in the Butterfield-Elder farm implement business, came from Wisconsin, bringing the plans for this house. When built, it was the only house on the block.

10**604 East C Street — Edward C. Hall Home, early 1890s**

The most arresting features of this house are the two small porches on the C Street side. Both have elaborately shaped wooden posts decorated with small rosettes. The square porch on the left (west) corner, the main entry, has arched wooden screens between the posts; three arches decorated with millwork ornament the east porch. All gables have shingles of two different patterns. Hall was a deputy county auditor. A later occupant was Burton L. French, a long-time U.S. Congressman from Idaho.

11**605 East C Street — John C. Elder Home, 1890s**

This small gem of Victorian architecture stood on the corner before being moved to make room for the Howard David home. Note the patterned shingles, round-arched attic windows with small panes of colored glass, lattice-like millwork, corner brackets, and hanging finials that ornament the gables on the west and on the street side. Elder was a lawyer who came to Moscow in 1885. He was involved in the first efforts to start a public library in Moscow.

12**622 East B Street — Robert S. Browne Home, 1885**

Passersby can still see much of the variety of ornamentation that caused the local newspaper to call this "one of the handsomest houses in Moscow." It includes three enormous gables with patterned shingles, an arched decoration augmented by curved flat boards, a diamond-shaped window above four sash windows separated by Greek-style half columns, and brackets of unusual shape. R.S. Browne was a prominent businessman who built the Browne Block on Main Street. The home was later occupied by several prominent men, including Ben Bush, whose wife, Carrie, was a daughter of Governor McConnell.

13**634 East B Street — William Whitson Home, ca 1892**

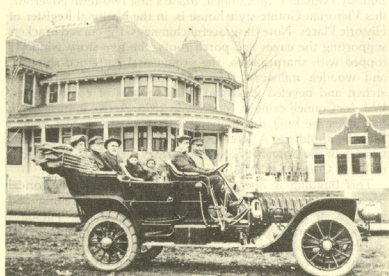
This house originally had a porch extending across the B Street side and along the Howard Street side. The two-story bay and the multiple gables on the east side are characteristic of houses of the period. The present owners have lovingly renovated the house, adding some Victorian millwork to the porch and the main gable and constructing the tower and the gazebo. The half-round stained glass window was not originally part of the house but was salvaged from the Ursuline Convent building when it was razed.

14**124 North Polk Street — Alexander Ryrie Home, ca 1893**

An excellent example of the Queen Anne cottage, the house is elaborately ornamented with brackets, rosettes, shaped shingles, and on the front, hanging finials. Note the elegant round window with its colored glass side sections, and the "eyelid" dormers filled with sunburst design millwork which ornament the roof. Alex Ryrie came to Moscow in 1880 to engage in the real estate and loan business. He was an early mayor of Moscow and the father of the well-known writer, Carol Ryrie Brink, author of *Buffalo Coat*.

505 East A Street — Alfred Spotswood Home, early 1890s

Among the interesting architectural features of this house are the bay windows on the east side and the angled window on the northwest corner; both have hanging finials flanked by roof brackets ornamented with a stylized floral motif. The north side has two gables, the large one having patterned shingles and decorative woodwork around the windows, echoing the floral motif. A smaller, higher gable has a Palladian view. Spotswood was associated with Fred Veatch in the Latah Abstract business. Two streets in south Moscow are named for these men.



Jerome J. Day Home

16**430 East A Street — Jerome J. Day Home, 1904**

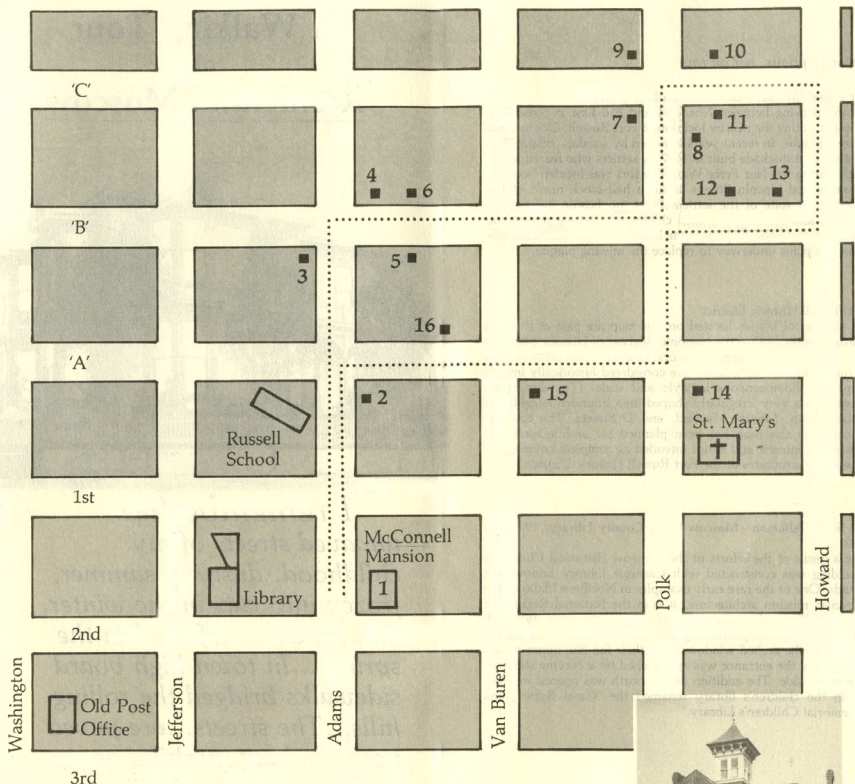
The home of Moscow's first millionaire has a two-story turreted bay on the east and a square two-story bay on the south, joined by a wrap-around porch. Note the metal decorations along the ridge beams of the roof, the metal finials on the turrets, and the elaborate display of glass around the main south entrance. The house has 24 rooms, including the carriage house, which was moved and is now an apartment. Day's family of miners struck it rich in the Coeur d'Alenes. Except for a small apartment on the second floor, which is rented, the house is occupied at present by a single family, which has been carrying out a long-time restoration project.

Other locations, not on tour**608 East A Street — H.R. Smith Home, early 1890s**

This house has been re-sided, but high in the front gable and over the entry porch can still be seen the type of patterned shingling that once covered the building. Elaborate wooden millwork still decorates the top of this gable. Brackets in two sizes, the smaller ornamented with rosettes, support the gables of the two large two-story bays on the front and alley sides. Harvey R. Smith was a local attorney and the brother-in-law of Mrs. Frank David. Originally the home occupied the large corner lot but was moved to make room for the house now at 604 East A Street.

528 East First — Frank A. David Home, 1891

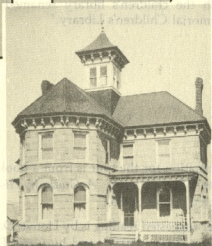
Located on the northwest corner of Polk and First, this has shaped shingles adorning the east gable, while the west gable has an oval attic window with four keystones. The wrap-around porch has small ornamental pediments facing in four directions. David is best known as the founder of David's department store. Three of his sons eventually took over the store, which they operated until selling it in 1959 after 60 years of family ownership.



122 South Howard Street – Frank B. Robinson Home, 1934 and 1938

Built in 1934 as a model home, but enlarged in 1938, this was owned by the founder of Psychiana, a mail-order religious movement headquartered in Moscow which achieved worldwide fame. The volume of mail generated by Psychiana alone boosted the Moscow post office to first-class status. Robinson installed a pipe organ both for his own pleasure and for use in his Psychiana radio broadcasts. Two sound-proof chambers in the basement contain the working parts, the motor, and blower. Besides the organ, the present owners have the oriental rugs in the formal living room and on the front staircase which were made especially for the house. They have also kept Dr. Robinson's favorite chair, in which he felt he received the inspiration for his teachings. For some years Robinson housed his lesson-assembly and mailing departments in two downtown buildings, in one of which he established Moscow's first youth center. He also built the Professional Building at Third and Jackson and established the newspaper which eventually became the *Idaho-Idaho*. In 1935 he purchased and donated to Latah County the land for the park northwest of Moscow which bears his name.

Mason A. Cornwall Home



308 South Hayes – Mason A. Cornwall Home, 1889

Situated on the southeast corner of Third and Hayes, this home is of brick covered with stucco to resemble stone. The dominant decorative motif is the raised bands connecting the arches over the first-floor windows and encircling the house below the window line on both stories. The two-foot high metal brackets under the eaves are handmade. Originally the entrance was on the north side, and a small structure with windows capped the roof. Cornwall came to Moscow in 1883, founded a village named Cornwall east of Moscow and opened the Bank of Moscow in a downtown building. The house is in the National Register of Historic Places.