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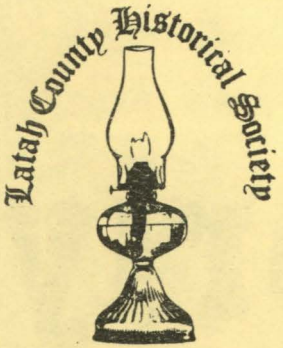

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STAFF

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Cover Photo: Interior of Blanchard's Cigar Store, Moscow, circa 1895. Charles and George Blanchard. LCHS photo.

WHEN BOVILL ALMOST BURNED

by

Lillian W. Otness

Author's Note: Most of the quotations herein are from tapes recorded for the Latah County Historical Society's oral history project. In compiling this account I have been less interested in historical accuracy than in the reaction of the participants to the events as they perceived them. With the exception of Viola Cameron and Grace Ryan, who talked with Laura Schrager, all informants were interviewed by Sam Schrager, who most ably directed the project from 1973 to 1978. Of the informants quoted, all are still living at this time except for the late Nell Wood Smith. The footnotes identify (in the first citation only) the number of a given informant's interview. In subsequent citations only the page number(s) are identified.

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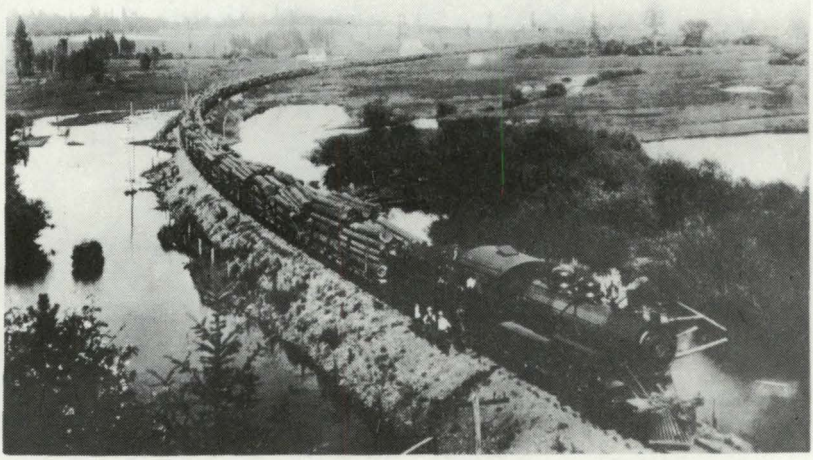
What is it like to be told to run for one's life? How does it feel to leave one's home and one's cherished possessions, perhaps never to see them again? How does one react? And how does a community react? In the early years of this century the people of Bovill and its neighboring settlements were faced with an emergency which was still vivid in the minds of the participants more than sixty years later. The year was 1914; the occasion was the Beal's Butte fire.

In those days fire was a frequent threat to settlers. As John B. Miller notes in *The Trees Grew Tall*, the use of old-fashioned stoves, metal stovepipes, and kerosene lamps made for a high fire risk.[1] And for those who lived in wooded areas forest fire was an added danger. The residents of Bovill, situated as they were near the finest remaining stand of white pine in the United States, had reason to be aware of these risks. Still fresh in their minds must have been the recollection of the disastrous fire of 1910 in the Bitter Root mountains which had killed 85 people and practically destroyed the

town of Wallace, Idaho.[2] In 1912 a fire originating in the Groh grocery store in Bovill had destroyed six buildings, and on July 4th of 1914, less than a month before the Beal's Butte fire, two lives were lost in a Bovill fire which started in the Bean boarding house and burned fifteen business buildings.[3]

The Potlatch Lumber Company had constructed the Washington, Idaho & Montana railroad to haul logs from its major timber operation centered at Bovill to its mill at Potlatch. At Bovill the WIM connected with the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul line which ran in the direction of St. Maries. Two miles north of Bovill on the railroad line was Potlatch's Camp 8, with a settlement called Slabtown a short distance away. A somewhat larger settlement, Collins, was two miles farther north.

In August of 1914, near the end of a hot, dry summer, fire broke out northwest of Bovill. As Mike Bubuly tells Sam Schrager, "That was my first experience [with a] forest fire. I was working on what they call Beal's Butte, north of Bovill there. . . . And they had a camp right on top, right on top of the butte, up there. . . .



The W, I & M Railroad hauling the longest trainload of logs in the world, 105 cars, 1,100,000 board feet. Clifford Ott photo.

Fire broke out down in old slashing at the foot of the hill, Camp 5. . . . In those days they just slashed; everything was right on the ground then, that stuff dry as a powder. And fire got started there and got out of control; started up that mountain. Well, anyway, it was about two o'clock in the morning, two or three o'clock in the morning. They had those, what they called dinner gongs; a foreman was out there pounding that to beat hell, and everybody got out and said, 'Fire, fire, fire, boys!' You could hear a roaring from down there someplace. And boy! We got outta there, just as fast as we could. They led us up around the ridge, away from the fire. And you oughta seen that fire goin' up that mountain--what they call a crown fire? I'll bet you could hear it five miles away, the roar of it, just like one of these planes, 'way over head. That's the way it sounded, goin' up that mountain. Right on top that crown fire just took everything . . . the whole thing was gone. What they called the donkey--donkey engines, and everything was gone, even the camp; the whole thing was burned up."[4]

Byers Sanderson describes the origin of the fire: "When it first started, the Potlatch set it, burnin' the slashings, which they done every year. But they come down, and they told Jones[5] that the fire was getting away from 'em, he'd better get some more men onto it. He says, 'Let 'er burn!' He says, 'That'll clean it up!' . . . They didn't try to control it then. They didn't know it was gonna bust out like it did. But when it broke out, why, I'll tell you, it was a terrible thing."[6]

A crown fire is indeed a terrible thing. Byers Sanderson was running the stationary engine and pumping station at Camp 8. As he recalls it, "Boy! There was chunks of wood [two or three feet long and six or eight inches wide] just sailing right through the air, afire. They'd go two, three hundred yards and drop, and they'd set another fire. That's why it traveled so fast. Limbs of trees--the top of the butte, the wind come up on one side and the fire on the other, and when they met, why, it twisted off trees (gesturing) that big around. Just twist 'em off like matches."[7]

According to Naomi Boll Parker, "When a fire is rolling, jumping from one place to another, it doesn't even touch

the ground for quite a while."[8] In the words of John Sanderson, Byers' brother, "It roared like a thousand freight trains."[9] Byers says, "The fire creates its own wind. And when it gets to roaring, why, you know it's crowning. And when it crowns, it'll outrun a racehorse."[10] Such a fire can travel 50 to 75 feet above the ground, roaring like a cyclone.

He continues, "And when they get to crowning, you'll see black smoke in balls that look just like a big balloon. Then they'll bust, and fire'll shoot out from 'em. That's gas. It makes gas, you see, and it's traveling in that ball, and when that explodes--it gets so hot that it explodes--and then it sets fires again. It's an awful thing, I tell you, when a fire gets to crowning. . . . It just takes the limbs and stuff and starts them awhirling, and they'll go a hundred yards ahead of you before they drop. And sets the fire ahead of it all the time.[11] . . . And boy! I tell you it killed horses, cows, chickens, pigs, everything."[12]

Meanwhile as the day wore on and Bovill seemed certain to be destroyed, people were preparing to evacuate the area. The lumber company had an engine and several flat cars in readiness. Preparations for leaving were necessarily hasty. Kate Sanderson Waldron lived halfway between Slabtown and Bovill. Apprehensive about the fire danger, she had been assured by her father and a neighbor that the fire "couldn't possibly come over here." But, she says, "I was still worried about that fire. And within an hour's time, we were running for our lives. . . . And the first thing I knew, a man came by in . . . some kind of a car. . . . And he grabbed both of my kids, and they were little. My little girl was about three, and my little boy was about five. And he picked up my sister's baby. She was only about a year and a half or two years old. And he said, 'Now you people get out of here and get downtown.' He said, 'Because that fire's here and it's dangerous.'"[13]

Kate's mother refused to leave before searching the house for some bonds she knew were hidden there, but finally she was persuaded to leave. Kate says that they ran to Bovill "just as hard as we could go. We ran. And the fire was breaking all around; when we got down to the depot, the fire had come over the hill."[14]

To add to Kate's distress, she recognized signals for help from the whistle of a logging engine on which her husband was the fireman. (He escaped when the engineer made a run through the flames.)

Reaching Bovill, Kate found a scene of confusion at the depot. "Of course, I was looking for my youngsters. And I saw my sister's baby there, and she'd been crying. And she was dirty. She'd gotten in the dirt and had rubbed it on her little face, and I didn't even know her. And finally I said, 'My land, Lela,' I said, that's your baby. That's your little girl, that dirty little girl there. And we were just horrified. . . . And I found my two kids in the depot. They were all huddled around there, you know, in the depot, waiting for the flatcars. They had flatcars there, 'cause they expected Bovill to go. . . . And I was on the flatcar. And I looked over at a pile of clothes over there. . . . I had a brand new dress, brand new, peculiar shade of blue. And I said, 'You know, Mother,' I said, 'that dress looks like my dress.' And I said, 'That other thing looks like my winter coat.' . . . I went over there, and it was my dress; I never have known where it came from. . . . I think somebody went by the house and saw those clothes hanging there and just grabbed them and put them on their truck and dumped them on the car and thought the people had disowned them. . . . And when we came home [after the fire was over], I saw a stove sitting out in the meadow there as you come down that hill to go into Bovill . . . and I said to my mother, I said, 'Mama!' I had a brand new range, wood range. We had just bought it, and I said, 'That looks like my stove!' . . . And got out and went over there, and it was my range. I don't know how it ever got there. Somebody just grabbed it out and set it over there where no fire could get to it. And just took a chance. That's the way people did things."[15]

Prior to this, at one of the camps above Collins, Odin Tarbox, the engineer of engine 23, was being urged to delay his departure in case the firefighters needed to get out of there. As Byers Sanderson tells it, Tarbox said, "You fellas can stay here if you want to, but I'm takin' the engine and goin' into Bovill. . . . I've got a wife and babies there,[16] and I'm not staying here and

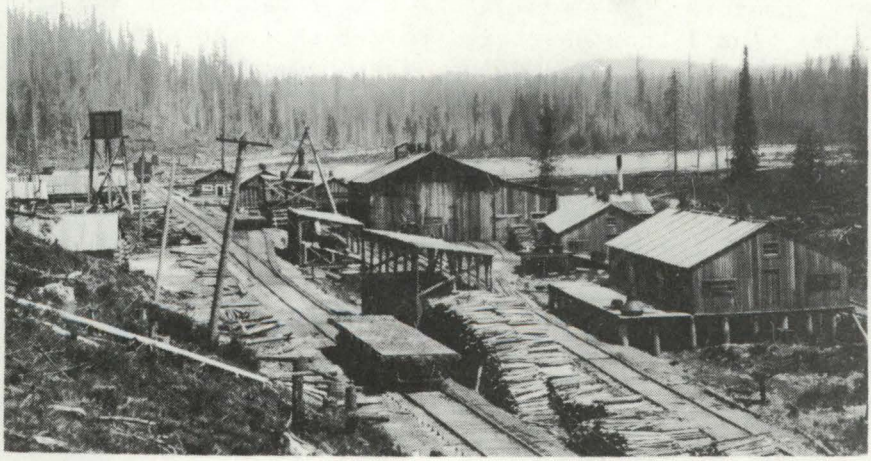
let them get a chance of burning 'em up." Sanderson continues, "He picked people up as he come through. But when they come through Camp 8, now I'll tell you, he was traveling. And they told him the bridge was on fire, the railroad bridge, and that made him all the worse. He opened it up, and, boy! he went across that bridge miles an hour."[17]

Nell Wood Smith tells another incident of that run: "About halfway between Slabtown and Bovill, why the little fireman, Red somebody[18]--they called him Red anyhow --he looked out the engine, looked out the window there from the engine . . . and said, 'Hey! hurry up! Hey, Tarbox, get ready to jump! There's a tree across the track!' or something like that. And they said Tarbox just grabbed a wrench and turned around and turned on him and said, 'You jump and I'll just crown you with this wrench. You shovel coal faster than you ever shoveled in your life.' And 'You pour it on.' And the kid kinda got scared of him, because he was drawn back to whack him one. So he went to pouring the coal on, and by the time they got down to the thing, why, he had her good and hot. . . . There was a tree had burned and fallen across the tracks right in front of that trainload of people. And so Tarbox said that the only thing he could think of to do was to fire it up and hit it hard, and maybe he could break it. And it looked to him like it's be an average, you know, a small enough tree that he thought he could break it and go on through. And he hit that, and he broke the thing through, broke the tree and went on through with his crew. Got there, everything safe and sound."[19] On that part of the trip, Nell says, "it was so smoky and all, they couldn't hardly get their breath on those cars. And they had to take blanets and put over their heads to breathe."[20]

Byers Sanderson takes up the narrative: "Then, after they got to Bovill, they grabbed three, four flatcars more and loaded the people on from town and took 'em to Potlatch. And by that time the fire was burning even down by Harvard--twenty-five mile front."[21]

Sometimes in the rush to get away families became separated. Naomi Parker, about eight years old at the time, was living with her parents on the edge of Bovill. She recalls, "This friend, May Featherstone, . . . told

Mother, she said, 'Now, you pack some clothes and come, because,' she said, 'they say there's no way--that everything's going to go.' Well, our house, our place, would be the back of it would be facing what was Camp 8, see, and all that timber and all. Although it had been logged, there was still enough that it's a cinch that it was going to take that, too, you see. And so I remember Mother telling me, 'Now you go out in the yard there'--she had washed; it must have been Monday, because in



Camp Eight, two miles north of Bovill, with Slabtown in the background. Clifford Ott photo.

those days you always washed on Monday, so I'm assuming it was Monday--'and get [your] clean stockings off of the line.' I had nice white stockings, and I put on a nice clean dress, and [got] little brother, Kenny. And so May says, 'I'll take the two kids, and you pack just what you can.' And she took a change of clothes for each one of us, and Mother was to come. And so, of course, again, Mother began packing what she wanted to save and burying it. And do you know the train pulled out without my mother! . . . When it got close enough,

why, they just blew the whistle and took off. Everyone was supposed to be on there, you see. And I don't know if she ever got down to the depot or not, but then the wind changed, you see, and it saved Bovill although it took Camp 8. The wind changed enough that they could backfire enough and save the town again. . . .

"And so then here we were all down without our mother, down to Potlatch. And that was quite a calamity. And this May Featherstone had--I don't remember--a friend or relative that she stayed with us. Here she was, not married or anything, just a friend, you know, and here she had two kids to take care of. Well, of course, Mother came down the next day to get us."[22] The children understandably had been worried about her and felt very insecure. "We wouldn't let poor May out of our sight! And I know she tried to get us to go outside and play, and just nothing doing, just had to sit on both of us, and I was as big a baby as little brother, and I wouldn't let her out of my sight either."[23]

Viola White Cameron recalls that "some people got off all along the way where different [ones] had friends. Some of them had friends in Deary and Avon, and we went clear to Potlatch 'cause we had friends down there. Imagine those lovely people that put up with us, Mr. and Mrs. George Fulton. . . . We stayed there seven days, I think."[24]

After the run to Potlatch Tarbox returned to Bovill, bringing additional firefighters and preparing to evacuate the few people who were still in the town. By the time he reached Bovill, however, the danger from the fire had lessened. The remaining residents waited at the depot for five hours before it was considered safe for them to return to their homes. Even then, their anxieties were far from over. It was agreed that if the danger increased, they would be warned by four long blasts of the engine whistle. Nell Smith says, "And so we all went home again. . . . When we were asleep in bed, about three o'clock in the morning, something like that, I heard the whistle start." It blew four long blasts, and Nell's husband, Ernie, rushed out to investigate. Soon he was back to report a false alarm. "He said it was some kind of mixup in the instructions, and they'd blew that blast of four long, shrill whistles

. . . and that was to call the night crew--firefighting crew--call 'em in and send the day crew out."[25] Tarbox is said to have been given "quite a bad time" about rousing the residents unnecessarily.[26]

The shift in the wind enabled the firefighters to control the blaze, thus saving Bovill, although 5,000 men were to work for more than a week on the fire lines.[27] But to John Sanderson, who lived a little north of Bovill, the shift in the wind was the result of more than chance. As Nell Smith relates, "He said that that fire was coming right for their house . . . and it was just bounding; it was coming a-tearing, heading right for their place and all. And he said he just grabbed his wife and pulled her and said, 'Come on! We got to go!' And he said they stopped . . . and prayed to God that He would save their house . . . that they'd be spared and that things would be all right. And he said almost immediately that the wind turned and the fire begin to go the other way. . . . And it stopped right there, and he said you couldn't tell him that God didn't answer prayer. Prayer saved him, he said, and saved their home and even their furniture."[28]

Although no lives were lost, not everyone in the area was as fortunate as the residents of Bovill. Collins was spared, as were the machine shops at Camp 8, where the crew had remained, wetting down the buildings, until the last possible moment. But at Slabtown, where Sam Frei had built a store and eleven homes for rent to men who worked at Camp 8, everything was wiped out, and twenty families were left homeless.[29]

Sam Frei understandably blamed the Potlatch Lumber Company for the destruction of his property. Byers Sanderson tells the story: "Sam Frei . . . went after Jones, says, 'What are you going to do about burning my houses up?' Jones says, 'I'm not going to do anything.' Sam says, 'Yes, you are,' he says, 'it was your fire and your fault,' he says. 'My houses and stores and stuff burnt up,' and he says, 'you're going to pay for 'em.' He says, 'If you don't, I'm going to start suit onto you right away.' Old Jones says, 'What do you want for 'em?' I think he said $2500. . . . 'Oh, he says, that's too much.' 'No,' he says, 'it ain't too much. And I'll get the suit started against the Potlatch right away.'

He started out again, and Jones says, 'Well, come back.' He told the timekeeper to make him out a check for two thousand. He knew that they'd started the fire, and they had proof of it and was responsible for it. He paid him off! Mrs. Stockwell come down and [Frei] was talking with Mrs. Stockwell, and she's the one that owned the laundry up here. She said, 'I can't get a thing out of him.' Well, Sam says, 'You come with me.' [They] went down to the office, and Jones happened to be in. He says, 'Mr. Jones, what are you going to do about Mrs. Stockwell's laundry up there?' He says, 'You burnt that out.' 'Well,' he says, 'I can't do anything there. We can't do anything.' 'Well,' he says, 'you are going to do something. You're gonna pay her for her house, too.' He says, 'I don't care about anybody else,' he says, 'her house you're gonna pay.' He give her $2000. [Sam] was just a friend, and [he] knew he had [Jones] over a barrel, and he just pressed it for Mrs. Stockwell. They was old settlers in here together, you see." Apparently Jones had little choice about accepting responsibility. Sanderson continues, "The camp set the fire up there. . . . And they was burning the slashings. And then old Sam and them heard 'em when they told him the fire was getting away. He heard Jones say, 'Let 'er burn.'"[30]

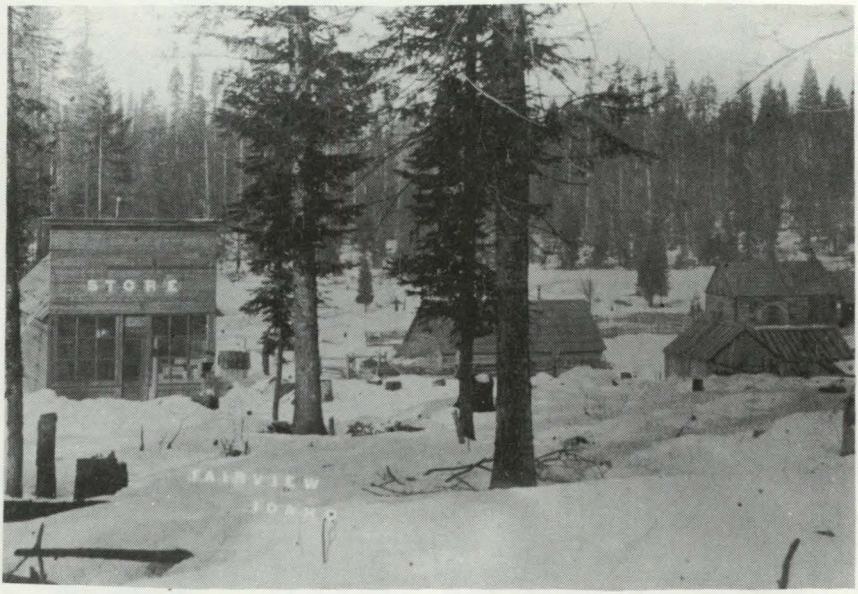
What of the others who were burned out, those who had no such compensation? How did they manage? Viola White Cameron says, "Our father owned a home at Bovill . . . and he was renting it. Then when our place up at Slabtown burned, why, then we came back from Potlatch . . . and we didn't have any furniture, but you know how people are in a small town. They all help, and then . . . our parents [went to Spokane] to the Northwestern Trading Company--it's Burgan's now--and bought furniture and brought it back. . . . So we had that house, and that's where we lived, just moved into the house. So we were lucky; some people didn't have any--" Viola's sister, Grace Ryan, interrupts: "Most of them pitched tents, you know--lived in tents . . . till they could build a little shanty or something, because actually all the homes were was really shanties, kind of shanties. . . . We had one big room, and then our dad had built a little lean-to on for our bedroom." The White girls had wanted to take some spare clothing with

them, but the time was too short. Viola says, "Grace and I were never much to go barefooted, anyway, and Mother thought we should go barefooted in the summertime to save our shoes, and so we came in and wanted to put our shoes on, and we had our shoes on and the clothes we had on us, and that's all we had, and our brothers didn't even have shoes on."[31]

Kate Waldron and her husband moved in with her parents. "And I lived with Mama all that winter. I had to. I had to. We didn't have no place, no home, or anything to keep house with, or anything else. And then Ray was just a working man. And we lived with Mama that winter . . . and that next summer, too. And then we moved downtown here. That ended our building a home out there. . . . We never did recover some things. All my wedding gifts and my silverware. I recovered a lot of it and kept it as a souvenir. Because it was so hot that it had just melted."[32] Kate's pain at the loss of their furniture comes through clearly as she speaks of it: "I had been up here all winter long and all summer, and we had just gotten along the best way we could, you know, and we sent for our furniture, and we bought that little house."[33]

Their furniture had come from southern Idaho. Kate says, "It had just come; it wasn't even unpacked. And I felt terribly bad about it because I had some of Ray's mother's furniture, and it was antique. Marble-topped tables and things like that. I was so happy to have those things. And one of the most beautiful dressers I have ever seen. It was just mammoth. The mirror was [very long] and had little drawers on each side of it. It might have been Ray's grandmother's. But I was just keen about that. And the forest fire got everything we had."[34]

People had prepared to leave in different ways, depending on how much warning they had. Kate Waldron remembers, "You're just in such a hurry to get it out, and you'd want to try to get things that you prized. Mama didn't prize nothing but those bonds. That's what she was after, what held her up."[35] Many women, apparently, buried their dishes and silverware. Kate says, "Some of those women, they buried their fruit. They had their fruit--it was in August, you know, and they had their



Store and post office in Fairview, two miles north of Bovill. The name was later changed to Slabtown. Clifford Ott photo.

canned fruit. And in Slabtown they . . . saved their fruit, canned fruit. Course, then canned fruit was really a lot harder to get up here than it is now 'cause we didn't have no cars, and we just had to buy it down here at the store and can it, you know. And it was really expensive."[36] Later she says, "I didn't think about doing anything like that. That wasn't what was bothering me. I wanted to get out with my kids--get away."[37]

Her father took a philosophical attitude toward his home, according to Byers Sanderson. "They was people down here that knew Dad, and they run in, and they was lugging the furniture stuff out in the meadow here and was going to leave it out in the meadow. Dad says, 'Just lug her back in the house,' he says. 'If she burns, we'll let her burn.' He says, 'Tear it all to pieces, anyhow, getting it out and in.' He says, 'No use of spoiling everything!' He says, 'I ain't afraid but what we can save the house.' Course, the creek was running then. There was lots of water in the creek, and they'd filled buckets up and had one up on the roof and pouring water. As the sparks would light on the

house, they'd pour water on it."[38] In this way they managed to save the house, and with it the cherished bonds.

Sam Frei's family lived at Collins. His daughter, Violet Boag, recalls, "We buried as much stuff as we could--I remember that--and Mother threw her silverware into the well. Dad buried a lot of it or put it in the creek--we lived right on the creek--and he put us on the train, and we went to St. Maries, but he had to stay because he had a lot of cattle. And I'll never forget that. We had to leave our dad. But luck would have it, it didn't take our home there at Collins. It went around us and went down into Slabtown and took its mill and the houses, and then it didn't touch Bovill."[39]

If Viola Cameron's father could have done so, he would probably have chosen to save his supply of fire wood. Viola says, "My dad had this whole woodshed, all his winter wood split. He said he felt worse about that than anything."[40]

In retrospect many of the things that people did were laughable, the irrational behavior of those seized by panic. Byers Sanderson says, "The bookkeeper at Camp 8 got down to Potlatch, and he had a little fox terrier dog, old Jack Donovan, and he had this dog under his arm, running around hunting for his wife, and his wife hadn't got on the train. She was up here in Bovill."[40] In Nell Smith's version of the story, the man is a timekeeper who got onto the train carrying a dog and a mop.[42]

Kate Waldron says that in packing to leave "I grabbed a suitcase--I guess anything I'd see. And I had my sister's graduation underskirt. Mama made it with strips of insertion and little tucks . . . and it was a beautiful lace skirt. I had that in my suitcase, and I had an evening slipper; I had one of her slippers, just one. Didn't have the pair; I had one. And I had the awfullest mess in that suitcase. You just wouldn't think anybody that was--I wasn't sane. You know, I was just insane. At the things--anything I could see--I grabbed and shoved into that suitcase. I didn't have anything that amounted to anything."[43]

Nell Smith relates the story of "some of the ladies who

lived in the edge of town here: the banker's wife, and the hotel lady, that ran the hotel. . . . Mrs. Nelson, the banker's wife, and Mrs. Ellison. . . . You know, kinda fancy dressers and persnickety. And here they were, those two women that I mentioned, Nelson and Ellison, they had did like we did. They were going to take their good things . . . and have them saved. And I guess they buried their linens and their silverware and everything. . . . But they had gotten all dressed up in their best clothes and all. Put on their things . . . to take along. And then here it was in August, but one of 'em had her furs on and earmuffs and all. In August, you can imagine. And their hats, just like they were going to a wedding or something."[44] (According to John Miller, Mrs. T. P. Jones was one of this group.)[45]

Nell Smith herself must have presented quite a picture. She describes how earlier in the day, upon learning that women in the north end of town were burying their dishes and silver, she and her mother had packed some trunks with clothing and assembled some bundles of bedding. These they sent by dray to the station just in time to be loaded onto the flatcars departing for Potlatch. Nell's father accompanied these possessions and had them unloaded at Deary.

Nell, who was expecting a baby any day, was wearing a blue calico Mother Hubbard, the only thing she could get into. But she had borrowed a dress from her great-aunt, a woman who weighed over 200 pounds. As she tells it, "I happened to think as I was about to pass the little closet--clothes closet in my bedroom--why, there was Aunt Mary's dress hanging there. I thought, oh, my goodness, I can't let that dress burn up. And I grabbed it and put it on over top of what I had on. . . . I put the dress on, and I had that safe, I figured." She then used another blue calico dress to make a bundle of five or six dozen diapers. Running one arm through the bundle and picking up her suitcase, she was about to go out the door when she spied her hat. "I had a white horsehair braid hat, and it was quite a pretty thing. . . . I had bought a beautiful blue . . . ostrich plume . . . for that hat just a while before, and I just couldn't stand to see that hat go up in smoke. I grabbed it and put it on. . . . And then I

happened to think about . . . my guitar. And I'd had that ever since I was twelve years old. Mother and Dad had got it for me for Christmas, and I couldn't stand to see that go up in smoke. So, well, I loaded that on. And I can't figure what I looked like, but here I was: a suitcase in one hand and a big bundle of diapers in the other, the guitar tucked under [my arm], and the hat. . . . And I was going along then wobbling."[46]

As Nell, with her husband and her mother, started for the depot, she joined her great-aunt Mary, who also presented an unusual appearance. "She had kind of a Mexican sun hat she always wore when she was out . . . just for shade. So she had that hat on while she was working around, and she happened to look up. Hanging on a nail there, oh, my goodness, there was her good hat, and she didn't want to lose that. So she grabbed it and put it on that peak and put a pin through it, on the top of that peaked hat, you know. [The second hat] was a dress hat really, a Sunday-go-to-meeting dressy hat, and it was pinned onto the top of that straw hat, sun hat. She looked funny with that dangling up on the top of that with a pin run through it to hold it.

"And Uncle Henry was going along. . . . He was a great big--about two fifty--big man, big tummy on him. . . . And he was dressed in a--well, he was always kinda dressed up when he wasn't working or anything. And he had his white shirt and suit on, and he chewed tobacco. He was walking along . . . and he'd spit and splattered on his shirt. And he said, 'Oh, I'm so darn scared I can't see to spit over my chin. So we just laughed."[47]

Although the actions of Bovill residents might seem humorous, the cost, both in money and psychological damage, was not laughable. Thousands of acres of valuable timber were destroyed. Viola Cameron comments, "When it was finished burn[ing, the fire area] was completely black. There wasn't a tree or anything on that for years and years, and it just amazes me when I go up there now, and how green it's getting again, because there was nothing there after that fire. And there wasn't any homes; they were all burnt."[48]

A number of people lost their homes and all their pos-

sessions, but nowhere in the many hours of interviews with Bovill residents did I find mention of people who left the area as a result of the 1914 fire. With the help of their families and neighbors they somehow managed to carry one.

But there were emotional scars. Kate Waldron's description of her reaction probably represents the experience of many survivors. She says, "That fire had worried me for days,"[49] and "Dad had warned me every morning, 'cause that fire had been going there for days."[50] This can hardly be accurate, because Kate had left Bovill within fifteen hours of the time the Beal's Butte fire started. That she recalls it in this way, however, tells something about the impression the experience left with her. In retrospect the time must have seemed very long.

"I've never, never forgotten it, and I had nightmares over that fire. My dad had the awfullest time with me. I slept out on the front porch, and for two, three days, I had a nightmare. And there'd be a tree that was still burning, you know. And it was at night the wind would burn it up . . . and I would see that and I would scream bloody murder. My dad slept upstairs; he'd come downstairs. 'What's the matter?' I says, 'Everything's on fire again!' I said, 'Look at that tree!' And Dad would say, 'Katie,' he said, 'that's just one tree, and it can't do a bit of harm.' Oh, it was an awful experience. I was a wreck for weeks after that. Because we had lost everything we had."[51]

Her fear was still strong at the time she spoke with Sam Schrager in 1976, over 60 years later: "I'm deathly afraid; that's the only thing I'm afraid of here. We don't--the snow and things like that don't bother me a bit, but I am deathly afraid of forest fires. I'm just scared to death of them. A pile of smoke coming up unexpectedly, even as long as that's been, it just sends chills down my back, 'cause I'm so afraid of them. But, thank goodness, we don't have many of them right around here; we haven't had. But you could never, never, never--it could be clear over there on those mountains, and I'd want to leave and get out, because you can't tell."[52]

One positive aspect of human nature runs like a bright thread through the accounts of disaster and near-disaster: the concern of people for their friends and neighbors, as well as for their families. We see it in the Fultons of Potlatch and many others who opened their homes to the evacuees, in the unnamed men who took Kate Waldron's children to the depot and rescued her clothing and her cookstove, in May Featherstone's looking after her friend's children, in Sam Frei's insistence that Mrs. Stockwell be compensated for her loss, and in Odin Tarbox's willingness to risk danger to run the train taking people to safety. It must have been there in countless unrecorded incidents as well. For in a frontier society people depended upon each other and took for granted the obligation to do whatever they could to help in an emergency. In the Bovill area they undoubtedly helped each other to reconstruct their log homes and rebuild their lives. As Byers Sanderson says of Sam Frei and Mrs. Stockwell, "They was old settlers in here together."[53] That seems to sum up the community solidarity which played an important part in the development of Latah County and which today we honor as part of our heritage.

NOTES

[1](Moscow, Idaho, 1972), pp. 95-96

[2]See Ruby El Hult, *Northwest Disaster: Avalance and Fire* (Portland, Oregon, 1960)

[3]John B. Miller, work cited, pp. 99, 102

[4]First interview, pp. 10-11

[5]T. P. Jones, woods superintendent for the lumber company

[6]First interview, p. 30

[7]P. 29

[8]First interview, p. 7

[9]In Byers Sanderson interview, p. 29

[10]P. 41

[11]P. 42

[12]P. 29

[13]First interview, p. 2

[14]P. 3

[15]Pp. 3-5

[16]His wife had had twins that morning

[17]P. 31

[18]John B. Miller says it was Dick (Red) Murphy, work cited, p. 108

[19]Fourth interview, pp. 27-28

[20]P. 27

[21]P. 35

[22]Pp. 7-8

[23]Pp. 8-9

[24]Untranscribed tape, No. 63, Side A
[25]Pp. 22-23
[26]Sam Miller, "Lumber Towns of the Past," unpublished paper held by the Latah County Historical Society and the University of Idaho Library, p. 4
[27]John B. Miller, work cited, p. 108
[28]Pp. 31-32
[29]Sam Miller, work cited, p. 2
[30]Pp. 33-34. The last statement conflicts with other accounts. See John B. Miller, work cited, p. 103, and Sam Miller, work cited, p. 5
[31]Tape cited
[32]P. 7
[33]P. 5
[34]P. 1
[35]P. 8
[36]P. 7
[37]P. 9
[38]P. 32
[39]Untranscribed tape, No. 16, Side A
[40]Tape cited
[41]P. 32
[42]P. 27
[43]P. 8
[44]Pp. 24-25
[45]P. 109
[46]Pp. 18-20
[47]Pp. 20-21
[48]Tape cited
[49]P. 2
[50]P. 9
[51]P. 5
[52]P. 8
[53]P. 34

Collins in 1913. LCHS photo.

A CENTURY OF FORMAL EDUCATION IN GENESEE

by Marie Scharnhorst

Editors' Note: A slightly longer version of this paper was distributed to the 33 graduating seniors of the class of 1979 on the 100th anniversary of Genesee schools. Research was conducted by Mrs. George Alderman. The author would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Jess and Pearl Johnson, Mahlon Follett, Adrian Nelson, and Margaret Baumgartner.

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Genesee, garden spot of the Palouse, has had the advantage of public school for a century. The first town school was established in September of 1879, in the "Old Town," about a mile east of our present townsite. This was eleven years before Idaho attained statehood and ten years before Genesee was incorporated. The schoolhouse was located near the four corners, now the Luedke place. Mr. Vernon and Mr. Dent were the first teachers and commanded the overwhelming salary of $150 for a three-month stint. The first Board of Directors was D. Spurbeck, Daniel Markham, and William Evans. Lewis Jain was a Trustee in 1883, with Miller and Evans.

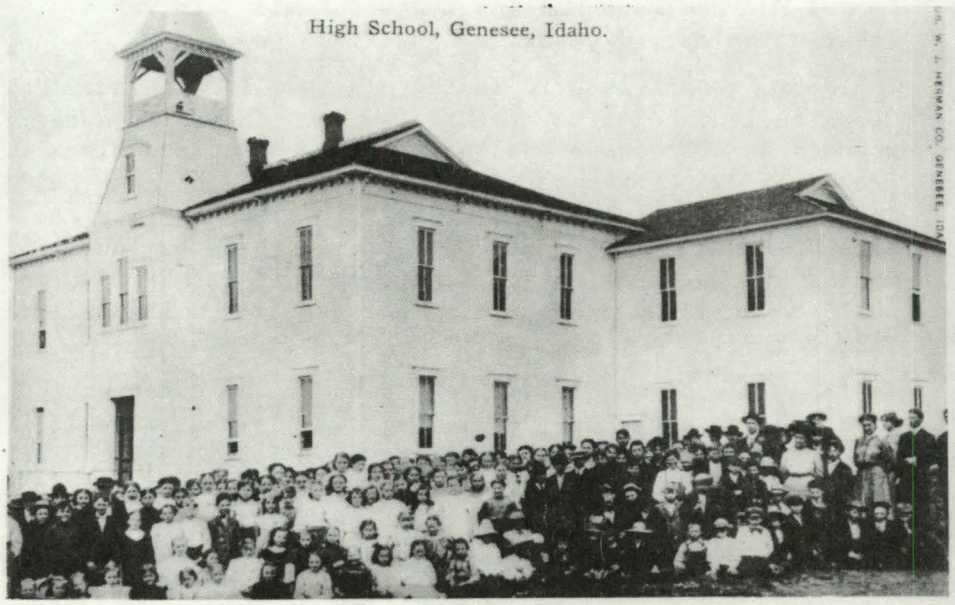
In 1883, school was held in the old fort located near Cow Creek on land belonging to Mr. Beeman. The fort, surrounded by a stockade, had been built as a precaution around 1877. Church services were held in the same building. Snuffy Lettenmaier now farms the land that is the site of the old fort. School term was three to four months at that time. Later that year, it was decided to sell the building and build a new structure. The building sold for $21.

In 1884, school was held in a warehouse and construction was begun on a new building. This was completed in 1885 and stood one-fourth of a mile east of old Genesee. The building was 24 feet wide, 36 feet long, and 12 feet high. Teachers were paid $20 a month, plus board. They boarded with parents of their pupils and sometimes were paid with wood or canned goods. Students furnished one-fourth of a cord of wood each to heat the building.

In 1888, the railroad was constructed to Belmont, then to Marshall Junction. A terminus was built at Genesee. Jacob Rosenstein, an early merchant, asked too much for right-of-way, and as a result John Vollmer purchased 40 acres a mile west of the original town. By some coincidence the railroad stopped there. Businesses were moved to the new site as the old town broke up. A special meeting of the school directors was called and it was decided to move the schoolhouse to the new town. This was done for $100. Six lots were purchased for $200 for a school site.

The population of Genesee was booming and several hundred people lived here by 1889. One hundred forty-six students were in the district and a new addition was built. The contract was let for $3,374 for construction. In 1889, the town was incorporated and in 1890, the year Idaho became a state, another wing was added to the school.

Mr. Hartzell Coff was the first high school superintendent and served for eleven years. The first high school offered a three-year course but later a four-year course was adopted by the Board. The Independent School District formed in 1894 was District No. 2.



High School, Genesee, Idaho.

LCHS photo.

Salaries in those early days? Janitors, $2 a day; principal, $75 a month; superintendent, $82 a month; other teachers, $55. The principal and superintendent both taught classes and ruled with an iron hand or a willow switch! In fact, the principal stated to the board that, "in his opinion marble playing was not conducive to good discipline on the grounds and he requested the board to stop it." They did.

The first graduating class was the class of 1896 and had four members.

Between 1902 and 1910, running water and a sewage system were installed. Another new wing was added, this time to the east side of the building. Several decisions were made including deciding that students must continue to buy their own books and NO MARRIED FEMALE TEACHERS would be hired!

Basketball was started in 1910. Since the beginning of basketball in Genesee teams have always fared above teams from schools of the same size. Teams comprised of the Wardrobes, the Grays, and Herb Martinson became famous in the Inland Empire. One of these gentlemen, Wm. Gray, established a scholarship and many Genesee graduates have been and will continue to be recipients. Those early teams played and won from the University of Idaho prep and Washington State College, among others. Schools were played in Spokane. Genesee won the Inland Empire championship in 1911-12. A right to the championship was disputed and a game played on a neutral court. Genesee defeated Rathdrum for the championship 18-16.

Football was introduced in 1910. The first season record: played 4 - won 1 - lost 3. Well, records improved!

In 1912, the wooden structure was sold for $300 and a new school built. This is part of the present elementary school with classrooms and the superintendent's office. The year 1912 is recorded on the cornerstone. The original wooden building was torn down and wood used to build the highway barn and the Comnick house, south of the city park. The new brick structure was built and furnished for the sum of $21,220.

Consolidation of the country schools was begun in 1936-37. A bus was purchased by a private individual and children were brought to town. During the winter of 1937

several students from the rural areas were snowed in town for a week. Snowplowing was done by local farmers and often after plowing all day, the roads would be blocked by snow by the time the farmer returned home. Temporary consolidation was completed in 1937 and all students bussed to town. The country schools closed forever.

In 1947, the courthouse records reveal permanent consolidation of the Genesee Joint School District. Names of the rural schools include Aurora #15, Pine Grove #16, Smith #35, Keene #39, Lone Star #56, Ebel #67, Gray Eagle #28, Jain #64, Lenville #26, Aspendale #27, Union #63, part of South Thorncreek #3, Blaine #21, and Fix Ridge #17. With consolidation and bussing, an addition was needed. The old Opera House, now torn down and then located across from the present Legion Building, had been the gymnasium. A new addition to the original school was completed by 1940, and included a gym, several classrooms, and a stage. A five-trustee district was set up to manage the consolidated schools. A hot lunch program was established and lunches were served in the old Smolt house west of the school. Mrs. Emma Hoduffer was the first cook. The first Junior Class dance was held in 1945. A Girls Club was begun as Sigma Phi Chi in the late '40s. Mrs. Tom Boyd was among the charter members and later served as an advisor. During the years of World War II, boys football was not played. The girls had strong basketball teams in the '40s. Mrs. Al Zenner was one of the coaches. In 1951 students still purchased their own texts. The Gray Eagle Schoolhouse was moved to town and became a Home Economics classroom. Band classes were held in the basement. The first librarian was hired in the early '50s.

In 1955, a new Agricultural Shop was completed. In 1961, a ruling by the School Board stated that "married persons who are permitted to attend the school shall not be allowed to take part in extracurricular activities."

In 1967, the last addition to our building was completed. Five new classrooms, a music room, Home Economics department, gymnasium and lockers, audio visual room, meeting rooms, kitchen, and remodeling of the old gym into a multipurpose room took place. In the '70s, special education was added to the curriculum.

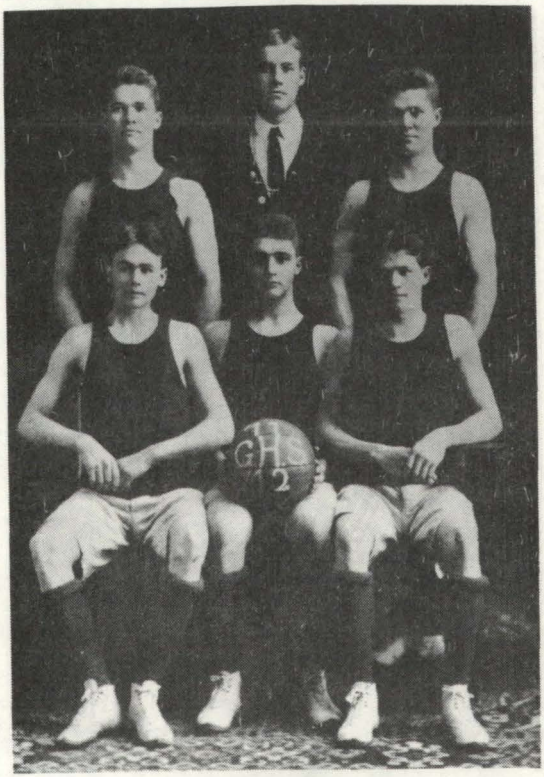
High academic standards have been maintained in the Gene-

see district with a high percentage of our students going on to higher learning.

The smallest class was the first which had four members. The largest was in 1939 with 43 students. Mrs. Emma Shirrod, who with her husband, Fred, established the Shirrod Scholarship, graduated in 1903. The oldest living graduate of Genesee High School is Antone Kambitsch of Lewiston, who graduated in 1911.

The assessed evaluation of the School District in 1903 was $7,000. Currently, it is about 10 million dollars.

Twenty-two superintendents and 428 teachers have been employed by the system. Counting the 33 in the class of 1979, 3,966 students have graduated from Genesee High School.



The undefeated 1911-12 GHS basketball team were the Inland Empire champions. Front row, l. to r.: Charles Gray, James Keane, Melvin Wardrobe. Second row, l. to r.: Andrew Wardrobe, Herbert Martinson (mngr.), John Wardrobe.

A HISTORY OF MOSCOW, IDAHO

by W. G. Emery

Editors' Note: In 1895 W. G. Emery moved his photography studio from Portland to Pullman. One year later he opened a gallery in Moscow. In 1897 he wrote *A History of Moscow, Idaho, With Sketches of Some of its Prominent Citizens, Firms and Corporations.* The *History* was published as a supplement to the Moscow *Mirror* newspaper. It remains the only comprehensive history of the town ever written.

The *Quarterly* will serially re-publish the *History* in this and the coming two issues. The sketches of individuals and businesses, the last half of the original document, will be deleted. Not only does the *History* provide a valuable insight into the early development of Moscow, but as Emery wrote of himself in his own biographical sketch in the original version, "He is an interesting descriptive writer, and as may be seen from the historical sketches of Moscow in this publication, an interesting chronicler of events as well."

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Standing on the steps of Idaho's University and looking eastward across the beautiful townsite of Moscow, with its substantial business bricks and neat brown and white cottages and elegant residences thickly clustered along the western slope of a low, rolling hill, a spectator can hardly realize how it appeared to the early settlers as they first saw it over twenty-six years ago.

It was as attractive probably then as now but its beauty was wild and untrammeled and the undulating hills were covered with luxuriant grasses. No roads traversed the rolling prairies, save an occasional Indian trail and lying serene, and undisturbed beneath the shadow of Moscow Mountain no wonder it secured its first name, Paradise Valley. One evening early in March, 1871, one of our oldest settlers, Asbury Lieuallen, "struck camp" at a spot now far from where the Imbler house now stands. He found here an abandoned shanty which had been put up by a couple of immigrants named Haskins and Trimbell,

and impressed alike by the picturesqueness of the scenery and the richness of the soil as evidenced by the abundance of forage, he determined to locate here a claim and build for himself a home that would insure him a prosperous old age. The nearest house was at Lewiston, in those days, a little settlement about thirty miles southward. Eastward from Moscow mountain lay a wild and unbroken timber country where virgin forests extended to and beyond the grim and towering crests of the unexplored Bitter Root range. To the north was an almost equally unsettled country there being but two houses between Paradise Valley and Spokane Falls. To the west, one hundred miles away, was Walla Walla, at that time the principal supply post of this sparsely settled inland empire and the site of the only flouring mill between Portland and St. Paul.

The homestead located by Mr. Lieuallen is situated about three miles east of Moscow and here he farmed till the early part of the year 1875. [The homestead was near the present location of Syringa Trailer Court.] In the mean time a number of other settlers had located claims in his vicinity whose names as taken from the records

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Third and Main, looking east, 1885. W. W. Langdon Hardware at right; George Weber's Harness Shop on left. LCHS photo.

of the Pioneer Association of Latah Co. were Wm. Ewing, Jno. Russell, Jas. Deakin, Geo. W. Tomer, Henry McGregor, Thomas Tierney, Wm. Taylor, Wm. Calbreath, John and Bart Niemyer, John Neff, Jas. and Al Howard, Rueben Cox, O. H. P. Beagle, Jas. Montgomery and probably a few others whose names have been lost in the lapse of years.

In 1872 the first mail route was established in this section and the post office was situated about one mile east of Moscow and called Paradise P. O. [located near the present intersection of Hillside and Mountain View Road]. The mail was then carried from Lewiston on horseback by Major Winpey. In May, 1875, Mr. Lieuallen, at the urgent request of his neighbors, decided to establish a little store at some convenient point and having purchased from Jno. Neff that tract of land extending westward from the present Main St. for one-half mile he erected a little one-story building on the vacant lot just north of Kelley's jewelry store, laid in a small stock of merchandise, christened the embryo village and, thus Moscow was started on the road to future prosperity. [The store was at the present southwest corner of First and Main.] He hauled his goods from Walla Walla, then the nearest railroad point, and that was reached only by Dr. Baker's "rawhide road." [For more on Baker's railroad, see George Estes, *The Rawhide Railroad.*] Two ordinary wagonboxes would have held his entire stock in the store, but the prevailing prices made up in size for the smallness of the stock. Five pounds of flour sold for $1, brown sugar was 50¢ per pound, common butts and screws were 50¢ per pair and everything else in proportion. But at Lewiston prices were infinitely worse. Some of our older settlers will remember paying C. C. Bunnell $1 for one-half a joint of stovepipe, although a whole joint could be bought for fifty cents. He charged fifty cents for cutting it and had half left. In 1877 the post office was moved to Moscow and located in a little shed in the rear of Lieuallen's store, he becoming Moscow's first postmaster. The office furniture consisted of a boot box about the size of a half-bushel which Postmaster Lieuallen used as a receptacle for the mail. This box is still preserved as one of the relics of the early history of Moscow. About this time, John Benjamin now at Kendrick, Idaho, put up a little "shack" and opened a blacksmith shop, and a

little box house was torn down and moved over from the former Paradise P.O. and put up on a little knoll which was just back of Zumhoff & Collins' present blacksmith shop. This was afterwards remodeled and moved on to Wm. Hunter's lot adjoining I. C. Hattabaugh's. The only other building the village contained was an old log barn which may yet be seen standing just south of the fair grounds on the John Niemeyer place. In June, 1877, came the Joseph Indian war. At the first alarm the settlers sought safety in temporary forts and stockades that were

Interior of George Weber's Harness Shop, Third and Main, c. 1883. George Weber and Henry Ryrie. LCHS photo.

hastily constructed as a protection again the raids of the treacherous redskins. Moscow's first stockade was built near the residence formerly occupied by J. S. Howard who died in the early '80s. The permanent stockade was built where part of Moscow now stands, back of the residence of John Russell and now the residence of Mrs. Julia A. Moore. [A marker on the curbing between 804 and 810 East B Street marks the location of the Fort Russell stockade.] The stockade was built out of logs from six to ten inches in diameter, set on end in the

ground close together. They were hauled from the mountains six miles distant and at a time when it was taking a man's life in his hands to make a trip. These old posts may yet be seen along the road to the south of the Moore residence. Here about thirty settlers and their families spent many anxious days and nights. The greatest danger was from the Coeur d'Alene Indians of the north joining their forces with those of the wily leader of the Nez Perces and making a raid on the settlers who were very poorly supplied with arms and more poorly supplied with ammunition. But through the efforts of their chief, who was always peaceably disposed towards the whites, and the timely assistance of the good Father Cataldo, the mission priest, they were held in check. In the meantime the U.S. troop and volunteers pressed the hostile Joseph and his warriors so hard that they retreated across the old Lo-Lo trail to Montana, where they were finally captured. The very scarcity of settlers in this section caused the savages to turn their attention southward towards Grangeville and Mt. Idaho, where there were more scalps and plunder to be obtained. By way of digression one little incident of this war may be mentioned as it concerns one of our most estimable ladies of Moscow who was also one of our earliest pioneers. Herself, husband and little child, a boy about 10 years of age, and another settler and family were fleeing from near the southern portion of the county to Mt. Idaho for a place of safety. En route they were surrounded by a band of the blood-thirsty cutthroats and at the first fire her husband fell, mortally wounded. Calling his little son to his side he told him to slip away if possible and go for assistance. The little fellow succeeded in eluding the savages and made his way to Mt. Idaho, 30 miles distant. Early next morning a score of avenging settlers arrived at the scene of the fight, but too late except to succor his mother who had been shot through both limbs and left for dead, the others had all been killed. Tenderly she was conveyed to the settlement and in time recovered from her wounds. She has since married and Mrs. Eph. Bunker is known and respected by all. Her little boy is now a man and who is better known to the boys, who call him friend, then Hill Norton? Hill is now acting as one of Marcus Daly's foremen in Montana, but expects to return belong long to Moscow.

First and Main, looking north, c. 1885. Left to right: Liquors & Wines; City Hall; Bakery; Bank Exchange; White's Drug Store; McConnell-Maguire Store. Original from Homer David; LCHS photo.

The first saw-mill in the Paradise valley was about six miles north-east of Moscow, owned by Stewart & Beach but was soon moved away. Just at the close of the Nez Perce war, R. H. Barton, our present efficient Chief of Police, arrived in the Palouse country, bringing with him a portable sawmill, which he hauled all the way from Corine, Utah, with an ox team. He settled in the foot-hills six miles east of Moscow and here together with S. J. Langdon and Jack Kump succeeded after many difficulties in manufacturing lumber late in the fall of 1878.

In the meantime Hi Epperly bought out the interest of Kump, who returned to Utah and these three men continued in the business over two years, sawing all the lumber used in Moscow at that time including the lumber used in building our first hotel erected by Mr. Barton. On the same ground where stood the Barton House, afterwards burned down, there now stands that magnificent structure known as "The Moscow." [The original Barton House was on the present location of the Hotel Moscow.]

By this time several had pitched their tents in Moscow, among them Curtis and Maguire who had wandered here distributing eyeglasses among the members of our little community, collecting thereon their usual commission.

Attracted by the many natural advantages of the locality they built a little box house where the Moscow National Bank building now stands and were ready for business. St. George Richards had also built on the lot just south of Miss Farris' millinery store, and kept a stock of drugs in the front room. The stock consisted principally of a barrel of Old Bourbon and a few bottles of "Hostetter's" stomach bitters.

Early in the spring of the following year W. J. McConnell, our ex-Governor, visited Moscow and impressed with the richness of the country and its future possibilities, bought out Mr. Curtis and went into partnership with Mr. Maguire under the firm name of McConnell-Maguire & Co. This new firm at once proceeded to erect a large and commodious store on the corner of Second and Main Sts. where now stands the Moscow National Bank. The store was 120 feet deep with a 30 foot frontage and stocked with $50,000 worth of goods. The people in the surrounding country were greatly encouraged at the sight of this, at that time, mammoth store and from that time on the town began to grow rapidly. When this store was complete, Moscow had the immense population of twenty-five. The news of the great store at Moscow spread everywhere and people from all parts of the Potlatch and Palouse country flocked to Moscow to do their trading, and it is no exaggeration to say that to no man living in Moscow, is the town so much indebted for its present size and flourishing condition as to ex-Governor McConnell and J. H. Maguire. Dr. H. B. Blake, Moscow's first physician, and the Rev. Dr. Taylor arrived during the year 1878, and James Shields and John Kansley came in the fall. John Henry Warmouth had started a hotel on the present site of the U.S. Store, and also kept whiskey for "medical purposes." Shields and Kanaley boarded with him; Splawn and Howard had built a saloon where the Commercial Bank building now stands and A. A. J. Frye had a small house on the present site of the Commercial Hotel and "Hog" Clark kept a butcher shop on the lot now occupied by the drug store of Hodgins & Rees. They often amused themselves by shooting holes through the ceiling of Howard's saloon or taking a shot at the whiskey bottles on the rude shelves and by way of variation Scott Clark would proceed to paint the town red until someone would yell "Indians" when Clark

would at once subside. The next summer, that of 1879, there were but three families living in Moscow. R. H. Barton had moved to the North Palouse and engaged in the sawmill business with Jerry Biddison, leaving Dr. Reeder, Asbury Lieuallen and A. A. J. Frye to hold the fort. While Barton was living in Moscow and before he went to the Palouse he had been keeping boarders; Johnson's family had in the meantime come out from the east and were working with Biddison on the Palouse, and so when Barton went to Palouse to go into the sawmill he sent the Johnsons to Moscow to attend to the boarding house, which they did till the spring of 1880, when one morning Barton got up and found the dam had washed out and all his logs floated down the river to Palouse City. Being disgusted with the turn affairs had taken, he came back to Moscow and built the old Barton House and also a livery stable where the handsome Skatteboe brick now stands. [The Skatteboe Building is currently the General Telephone Building.] The old wooden building was moved back and became a part of the Red Front stables. Moscow did not grow much during the summer of 1879. Jas. Shields had gone into the implement business in a building afterwards occupied by Kelly & Allen, which was afterwards torn down to make room for the handsome brick in which he has his present quarters. When he opened business he had in stock two wagons, half a dozen plows and a second hand standing plow-coulter. Barton bought the coulter for what he would have to pay for a first class breaking plow nowadays and traded for one wagon which he in turn traded to Splawn for the house and lot adjoining his, being a portion of the ground now occupied by the Hotel Moscow. About this time C. & M. C. Moore built the "Peerless," afterwards the "Moscow" Roller Mills which was located just west of the ball park and was destroyed by fire about four years ago. This together with the noted and McConnell & Maguire's store gave the town a start and it has been growing ever since, except in 1884, when Moscow became almost bankrupt owing to the collapse of Villard and the failure to complete the railroad into the growing city. Before this the residents of Moscow and vicinity had to go to Palouse City for flour and of course that diverted from this place a great deal of trade that rightly belonged here.

Hodgins Drug Store, June 23, 1892. LCHS photo.

People who come to our city today have but little conception of the hardships and difficulties which fell to the lot of the early settlers. All the grain had to be hauled to Wawawai and shipped by boat down the Snake river, and all other products had to be sent the same way. Freight rates were exhorbitant and prices for grain were low, while everything brought in was almost worth its weight in money. Had this not been one of the richest and most productive countries in the world, every one would have been bankrupt. But Moscow continued to steadily increase in population and wealth till 1890 her position as one of the leading cities of the state was assured. From that date to the summer of 1893 was witnessed a prosperous and growing city and a happy and contented people, and these three years will long be remembered as the time during which Moscow reached the high-water mark of prosperity. Everybody made money and everyone had money and the volume of business transacted here during that period was enormous. Among the great business enterprises which were rapidly building up fortunes for their owners at that time may be mentioned the elegantly furnished and palatial store of the McConnell-Maguire Co. who had built

up a business which any Chicago or New York house might justly have been proud of; the magnificent establishment of Dernham & Kaufmann on the southeast corner of Main and Third, they carrying at that time a $100,000 stock, the largest amount of goods in any store in the Palouse or Potlatch country; the mammoth business of M. J. Shields Co. which taxed to its utmost capacity their three-story brick with its 160 foot frontage. This company was also owner of the electric light plant which lighted the city, the Moscow planing mill which gave employment to fifty skilled mechanics and was besides interested in five large grain warehouses outside of Moscow; and the Chicago Bargain House, an exclusive drygoods store owned by Messrs. Creighton & Co. who had just moved into their new and commodious quarters in the Skatteboe block. Many other lesser business houses and corporations, too numerous to mention at this point, were flourishing and all combined to make Moscow one of the wealthy cities of the Northwest, and the wealthiest in Idaho. But as it is with individuals, so it is with cities, a truism, that prosperity is no test of stability, and it was destined that Moscow should pass through the refining and crucial test of adversity, crop failures, and business depression before we could prove to the world and to ourselves that the superstructure we had reared was as solid and permanent as the foundations laid by the pioneers of the '70s. In the fall of 1893 a long continued wet season caused almost the entire loss of our staple produce the wheat crop, and to make matters worse there was a complete demoralization in prices on all products. Wheat dropped from 85 cents per bushel to 50 cents, then down lower and lower, till it seemed that it would be a drug on the market. Debtors were absolutely unable to meet their obligations, the farmer had no money to pay his bills, the smaller concerns could not settle their accounts with the wholesale houses and money could not be borrowed even though gilt-edge security was offered. The panic spread to large cities and business houses of long standing and established credit toppled and fell into ruins carrying with them many smaller firms. Banks everywhere were compelled to close their doors. In Portland there were seven bank failures recorded in one day. A number of our business houses were driven to the wall, but the most far reaching failure of all was

that of one of our largest and most important establishments, the McConnell, Maguire Co.

In 1894 and 1895 wheat was quoted in Moscow as low as 23 cents per bushel and it seemed as though universal bankruptcy was inevitable, but the pendulum of adversity had reached the lowest point of its arc and slowly but steadily it swung onward and upward to better prices and better times and we had time to draw a long breath and find out where we were "at." One fact patent to all was

McCallie Dentist Office and White's Drug Store, Main Street, 1880s. Girl at right is Lillie Lieuallen. LCHS photo.

that, though some of our strongest props had crumbled and fallen, yet Moscow was still here and though tried in the crucible of hard times, had maintained her title as the Queen city of northern Idaho. In 1896 an abundant crop, with prices of our staple product touching 70 cts per bushel, brushed away the last dregs of depression and the season that just passed with its enormous yield and a market like those of former years is already making its influence for better times felt. Along all lines may be seen unusual activity, old debts are being cancelled, old

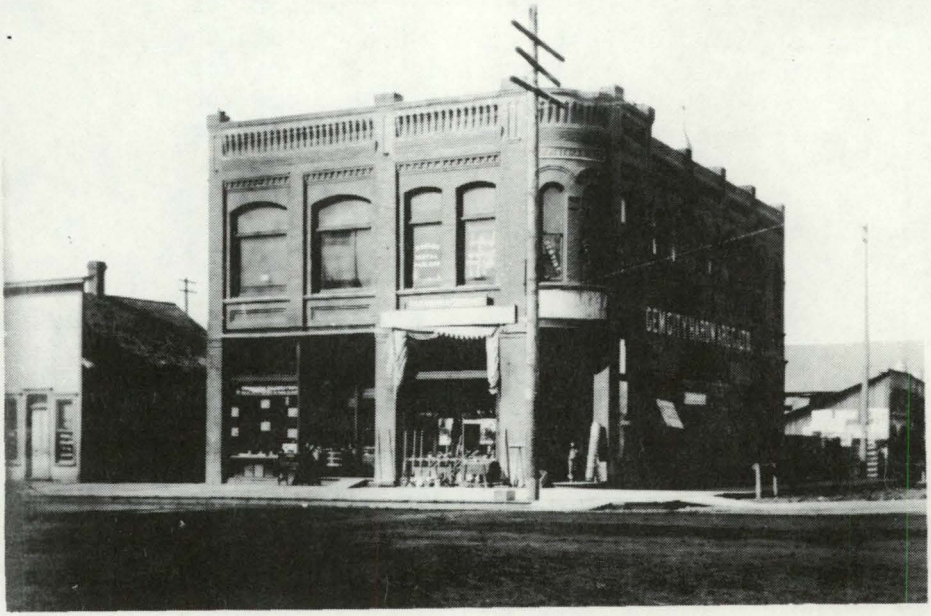
scores straightened up and new business houses opened and old ones enlarging their quarters. Moscow has truly proven that, unspoiled by prosperity, she can, unscathed, withstand the "slings and arrows" of adversity.

MOSCOW OF TODAY.

The county seat of Latah, and with a population of 5,000, Moscow stands today the gem city of the northwest and is an educational center of unsurpassed facilities with her public schools and the University of Idaho. Nowhere in the northwest can be found a more thriving town. On other pages will be found the names, and the parts the business men have taken in making Moscow what it is now, and in pushing it from an unknown and obscure village to be the leading city of northern Idaho. Its location is favorable to its rapid growth and development, having a site that is both healthy and accessible to the surrounding country. The principal business center is on Main Street. To stand at the north end of this principal street and look south without having a knowledge of the population of the city, one would think, judging from the palatial business brick buildings to be seen, that it might be a city of ten or fifteen thousand people. The business part of the city proper begins at the corner of Main and A streets. On the south east corner of Main and First streets stands the magnificent building occupied by Motter, Wheeler & Co., and known as the McConnell-Maguire brick. This is a large three story building covered on the outside with cement. It has three entrances on Main street to each of the three departments of clothing, dress-goods, groceries and hardware. The windows are of plate glass with beautifully stained and ornamented glass transoms. It is as elegantly finished inside as out. This is the building of the latest architectural style and beauty and one which would be a credit to any city in the Union.

On the south-west corner of Main and First streets is a brick building occupied by the Idaho Star. On the other corners are a two story brick, built by F. L. White, and the Del Norte Hotel owned by A. J. Favor. The lower floor of the White block is occupied by the hardware store of H. C. McFarland and the Kansas City Bakery. The upper floor contains offices for professional men. The entire block on the east side of Main

street from First to Second is built up with two story bricks, the lower floors of which are stores, with offices above, except the second floor of the McConnell-Maguire Co. building on which is handsomely fitted up and furnished the large room and elegant offices of the U.S. District Court. On the northeast corner of Main and Second streets is located the two story brick of the Moscow National Bank which, with one exception, is the handsomest structure in the city, being built entirely of pressed brick. On the west side of Main street between First and Third is the commodious two story building formerly occupied by the Smith, Dolson Co., now the headquarters of that enterprising firm Creighton & Hall of the Chicago Store. Adjoining it on the north is the two story brick of J. W. Lieuallen, on the first floor of which is the Torsen Drug Company and fitted up on the second floor as the residence of Mr. Lieuallen. Adjoining the Chicago Store on the south side is another two story brick occupied by the book store of Hall Bros, while the second floor is divided up into elegant offices. Next to the south is the neat little brick known as the "Free Coinage," Moscow's



Skatteboe Block, southwest corner of Fourth and Main, 1890s. Clifford Ott photo.

popular resort and dispensary of wet goods. On the south-west corner of Main and Third streets is the massive three story structure of the First National Bank of Moscow. The first floor is used for the offices of the bank and the elegant hardware store of Clark & Lestoe. The second floor is divided up into offices occupied by the Telephone Co. and professional men and the upper story is used as a lodge-room by the different secret and benevolent orders of Moscow. The southeast corner of Main and Third streets is occupied by the three story building of Dernham & Kaufmann. Adjoining this building on the south is another two story brick in which the Post Office is located and next to the south is the large furniture store of Brice & Son's, also a fine two story brick. On the northeast corner of this block is another fine two story brick, known as the Farmers Bank building, occupied on both floors by stores and offices. Just across the street on the northwest corner of Main and Fourth is the "Hotel Moscow," which is conceeded [sic] to be the finest building of its kind in the northwest. Standing three stories and a half high and built of pressed brick and stone, it is the most magnificent structure in the city. The next three story brick is the M. J. Shields Co's building on the southeast corner of Main and Fourth street. It was the first three story brick in Moscow and is still a model of beauty and structure. On the northwest corner of Main and Fourth is another handsome two story building which is an ornament to the city, this is called the Skatteboe block. The Cornwall block on Third street is also a beautiful structure, three stories high, occupied on the first floor by stores and saloons, the second story fitted up for offices and the upper one used as a hall. The Commercial Hotel just one block north on Main street from the model store of Motter, Wheeler & Co. is also a three story brick. The McGregor House on south Main street is also a beautiful two-story brick and attic and is used at the present time for a hospital. Besides those mentioned there are other one and two story bricks scattered throughout the entire city. Nor are the business houses the only buildings of architectural beauty and grandeur, for the homes of many of the business men are commodious palaces. Ex-Governor McConnell's residence is a beautiful two story structure and is the handsomest residence in

either northern or southern Idaho. Among the many other beautiful residences are those of R. S. Browne, M. A. Cornwall, R. H. Barton, M. J. Shields, F. A. David, H. R. Smith, A. A. Lieuallen, Dr. Carithers, Henry Dernham, and Henry McGregor. Besides these there are a number of handsome cottages and villas. In this connection must be mentioned the elegant two-story club house occupied during the past year by the B.P.O.E. of Moscow. This is the only building of the kind in the northwest and has on the lower floor reading and card rooms and a completely furnished billiard hall. On the upper floor is the lodge room and large dancing hall, over the polished surface of which may be seen, during the winter evenings, the fair forms of Moscow's elite, threading the mazes of the quadrille or circling to the dreamy music of the waltz. Socially speaking, Moscow has no equal in the northwest, for it is a city of cultured ladies and beautiful rosy cheeked maidens. During the long winter months there is no dearth of amusements; musicals, social dancing parties, theatre parties, etc., etc., follow each other in rapid succession and the stranger within our walls is always sure of a pleasant time and a hearty welcome. There are to be seen here neither "finicky" cliques that make life a misery in many of the smaller cities nor the chilly exclusiveness to be found in a metropolis. Thus it may be seen that Moscow is a very desirable place to live. We have two railroads, the O. R. & N. and the Northern Pacific. The city is well supplied with the purest water free from all organic and deleterious matter and derived from artisian [sic] wells situated within the city limits. The climate is delightful and healthy and within a short drive of mountain or forest is situated our beautiful city. These are environments especially appreciated by invalids and convalescents and the benefits derived from a residence amid this diversity of scenes is incalculable. No epidemic disease makes its home here. It is a matter of fact that the longevity attained by many of our citizens is greater in proportion to our population than in other places. We are fanned by airs untainted by malaria and we have sunshine and shadow in sufficient quantity to suit the most fastidious. Between the months of March and October we rarely have much rain, the air during this time being light and dry. During the remaining months we have an abundance of

rain and snow; often enjoying the finest of sleighing and the tinkle, tinkle of the merry bells may be heard night and day for several weeks at a time. Our average temperature is about 50 degrees, the thermometer seldom registering 10 degrees below zero in the winter or higher than 90 degrees above in the summer. The "Chinooks" or warm winds during the spring rapidly melt the snow which carries in its bosom a fruitful and refreshing fullness to the soil. Finally, Moscow is a natural distributing point and has a class of business men who always work in harmony and concert for the upbuilding of all her interests and is destined to become a great manufacturing center, which will increase her population, her wealth, her prestage [sic] and make her a power and producer among the great cities of the northwest.

NEXT TIME: THE NEWSPAPERS AND SCHOOLS OF MOSCOW.

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RECIPES--1896

Editor's Note: The following recipes are taken from *Favorite Recipes of Moscow Ladies,* published by the Ladies' Aid Society of the Moscow Methodist-Episcopal Church in 1896. If your appetite is whetted, you may find this and several other early recipe books in the Society's research library.

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CHEESE.--Strain twelve gallons of morning's milk in the cheese vat, having it at a temperature of 82 degrees for warm weather and a little warmer for cold weather. Put in one tablespoon of rennet and let stand fifteen minutes, then stir with a curd knife till it crumbles. Let stand 10 minutes and strain. Salt to taste and when cool put in the press, where it should remain from two to three hours. Take out the cheese, turn and bandage it, return to the press and let it remain for twenty-four hours. Put on the rack to cure. It should be turned and greased daily with butter for three months. Keep in a dry place.

Miss Dora Hinst

SALAD DRESSING.--Four level tablespoons of butter, one of flour, one each of salt and sugar, one teaspoon of mustard, a pinch of cayenne, one cup of milk, two-thirds cup of vinegar and three eggs. Heat the butter in a custard kettle and add the flour. Stir until smooth, being careful not to brown, then add the milk and boil up. Beat the eggs, salt, pepper, sugar and mustard together and add the vinegar. Mix with the boiling misture and stir until it thickens like soft custard. Let it cool, bottle and place in a cold place. This will keep a week or two and is nice for potato salad, cabbage salad or any green salad.

Mrs. P. Stewart

SMOTHERED CHICKEN.-- Split the chicken down the back and lay it breast upward in a baking pan after it has been washed and thoroughly dried. Pour over it two cups of boiling water with a large tablespoon of butter melted in it. Cover closely with another pan turned over it and bake for one-half hour. Baste well. Cover tightly and baste again in twenty minutes, and again in fifteen minutes. Bake for an hour and a quarter and baste with a tablespoon of butter ten minutes before serving on a hot platter. Keep tightly covered all the time and it will be a delicious yellow brown. Thicken the gravy with a tablespoon of brown flour.

Helen E. Sweet

VINEGAR.-- To make good vinegar, save apple peelings in a jar and keep them covered with soft water. Let stand four weeks and strain. Add brown sugar enough to sweeten a little and put in the jar again. Tie a cloth over it and set aside for a few weeks until ready for use.

Mrs. Thomas Grice

CONTRIBUTORS

W.G. EMERY was born in California and lived his entire life on the Pacific Coast. For many years he was a photographer for *Outing* and other magazines, until in 1895 he moved to Pullman and opened a photographic studio. One year later he moved to Moscow and opened a studio there. Besides being one of the town's earliest photographers, he was also one of its earliest historians.

LILLIAN W. OTNESS is a former editor of the *Quarterly* and contributes to it frequently. She has served the Latah County Historical Society in many capacities, including being President of the Board and chairman of the oral history committee. The article appearing in this issue represents part of her continuing effort to make the oral history collection readily available to the public.

MARIE SCHARNHORST was born in Washington, D.C. and attended schools in Baltimore and Pennsylvania. She moved to Genesee in 1937 and graduated from Genesee High School. She is also a graduate of the University of Idaho and is presently librarian and media generalist for the Potlatch School District. She has been married to Dick Scharnhorst for 32 years. They have three sons. All of the family graduated from Genesee High School. The article appearing in this issue was originally distributed to each 1979 GHS graduating senior by Genesee School Board member Bill Shirley.

The *Quarterly* invites suggestions and submissions from readers. Correspondence should be addressed to the editors in care of the Latah County Historical Society, 110 S. Adams, Moscow, Idaho 83843. All work for the journal must be considered strictly on a volunteer basis.

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COMING EVENTS

Monday Feb. 25: John Barnhart, "The World Food Situation," 2:00 p.m., McConnell Mansion. University of Idaho Retirees Association (UIRA) lecture.

Monday March 10: Lambert Erickson, "Norway: Travel by Slides," 2:00 p.m., McConnell Mansion. UIRA lecture.

Monday March 24: Mary Kirkwood, "Religious Paintings of Rembrant and El Greco," 2:00 p.m., McConnell Mansion. UIRA lecture.

NOTE: The public is invited to all UIRA lectures.

Friday April 11: Latah County Historical Society sponsored workshop on historical preservation. See the next Newsletter for more information.

Saturday April 19: Open house at the McConnell Mansion. Further details in the next Newsletter.