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LATAH COUNTY PIONEER
HISTORICAL MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

McConnell Mansion 110 South Adams Moscow, Idaho

Quarterly Bulletin Vol. 2, No. 1 April 1, 1973
Kenneth Platt, Editor

With this third issue of the Bulletin, we feel that we are firmly on our way. Interest in the Bulletin is growing, and there surely is no shortage of material to fill each issue. We are pleased to be giving readers another review of an interesting new local history contribution. Already a similar review for yet another of these valuable gems of pioneer lore is typed up, ready for our next issue. By that time we hope to be able to announce plans for taking on the publication of full manuscripts for local history authors.

But while the subject matter of our concern at this stage is the retrieval and recording of vanishing pioneer memory and culture, this preservation is not an end in itself. Our basic mission is educational. This mission requires much more of us than the mere accumulation of objects and records, and a greater outreach than can be had purely within museum walls. Much of this issue of the Bulletin deals with various aspects of our outreach function.

MODERNIZATION STRIKES THE L.C.P.H.M.A., INC.

The continuing and rapid growth of public interest in Museum Association affairs has encouraged us to expand and diversify our programs, especially those primarily educational in nature. New opportunities have been popping up in all directions, bringing multiplied public contacts with them. A streamlining of our operating organization is required to cope with the enlarged responsibilities. At the same time new emphasis must go to carrying our programs beyond the confines of the

Museum itself, even while we maintain the caretaking role that necessarily was our first concern.

How best to meet these forward needs has been studied in numerous meetings of the Directors and of designated ad hoc committees for the past several weeks. Conclusions reached include several proposed changes in the Articles of Incorporation, related changes in the by-laws, and the creation of an administrative staff to handle the regular operational functions of the Museum. For convenience in business, correspondence, records, labeling, public presentations, etc., it is proposed to change our cumbersome present name to simply "Latah Museum Society." "Society" is the accepted current term for museum organizations across the U.S., and its adoption would help clarify our status among this group.

So that all members may be fully informed and prepared to vote their wishes at the annual meeting on May 5, the proposed changes are presented now as a supplement to this issue of the Quarterly Bulletin.

The authority to make the proposed changes has been cleared in principle with the Secretary of State. If approved by the membership, they will be forwarded to him for formal approval and filing. The bylaws do not require approval by the Secretary of State, but they do concern all members and will be voted on at the May 5 meeting.

Since the bylaws empower the Board of Trustees to set up a suitable administrative structure, the structure itself will not be voted on at the May 5 meeting. That structure as now proposed by the Board is included in the Supplement, however, so that all concerned may better understand its intended workings, and the duties and responsibilities of employed staff.

The proposed changes in both the Articles of Incorporation and the bylaws reflect the experience of the Association in carrying on its affairs to date. The proposed administrative structure outlines the working relationships already established in practice. The

Board solicits the thoughtful consideration of all members of the Association in bringing the proposals to final form and approving them for official adoption.

ON THE FRONT BURNER

An Oral History Project has been proposed by two young men from Troy--Rob Moore and Sam Schragger. The immediate objective is to tape record the recollections of people who lived through the settlement and development of Latah County. The tapes would then be transcribed into readable narratives. Records research would be done to verify and round out the narratives. From the combined sources would be drawn newspaper articles, a book-length general history of the County, and a children's booklet for distribution in the schools.

Mr. Moore and Mr. Schragger both are recent college graduates in the field of creative writing. The oral history project was conceived as a means of gathering authentic materials from which to write. They are seeking a grant for their project, for which they need a sponsor such as the Museum Association.

Before coming to the Association they had already obtained the endorsement of their project by Mr. Lester Clem, Project Chairman, Idaho-Washington Resource Conservation & Development Fund, Troy. However, funds from the R. C. and D. Fund are only granted to match private funds already obtained. The same is true of grants available from the Bicentennial Fund for local history research.

After hearing these men explain their proposition at a March 12 meeting, the Board of Directors voted to sponsor the project, but without commitment of funds. Use of Museum office space and equipment will give substantial value to the sponsorship. In addition, the Board agreed to help solicit private funds to be matched by grant sources. As we go to press, contributions and pledges in hand total \$2,800. The amount sought for matching is \$5,750. Substantial partial funding is sought now to enable work to proceed through the

summer. Interested members may contact either Moore or Schragar at route 1, Box 20, Troy, or any officer of the Association.

A whole new look awaits you at the Museum if you have not been there since January. Three excellent new room exhibits occupy the second floor. A pioneer kitchen has replaced the former schoolroom exhibit. The 6-lid range, with "granite" facings on the warming oven panel, is pretty fancy for that period, but the style is right. The wash bench and basin (for hands and face) beside it will remind old timers of the welcome warmth after an hour of frigid outside winter chores before breakfast. Opposite stands the work cupboard, with flour bins slung below the cilcloth covered work top, their fronts rounded back to speed the scooping of flour on baking day, and to keep from banging Mother's shins!

You can almost smell the hot bread coming out of the oven. Who hasn't prized that luscious heel crust--the first slice off the end of a hot loaf--with or without added butter or jam?

Across the hall stands a Nez Perce Indian chief in feathered headdress and buckskins, centerpiece of an excellent presentation of pre-white artifacts and other portrayals of former Nez Perce life and culture. Relics from Joseph's war and photo portraits of the great chiefs of that period recall heroic episodes on both sides of the tragic struggle. Some school groups guided by Lola Clyde have been lucky enough to have Janice Smith, a Nez Perce Indian student at the University of Idaho, explain this exhibit, but it can be enjoyed by all without that added dividend.

The third exhibit is a mixed display of pioneer memorabilia. Included are relics from the gold rush period, surveying implements used to mark the land for homesteading, carpentry tools that converted wildernew trees to finished cabins and barns, a "town" lady in fashion's best beside an exquisite settee that somehow

crossed the continent unbroken, and - - - - but we can't tell all there is or you wouldn't come to see it!

We can promise, however, new and equally exciting exhibits in the future, because of the excellent help being given by Dr. Ellis Burcaw of the University of Idaho. Director Larry French has accepted Dr. Burcaw's generous offer to assign his classes in local history exhibit preparation to study our stored items and plan new series of exhibits from term to term, under his supervision. Thus we are assured of the very best advice and technology in our ongoing program of educational displays.

The Pioneer Association collection formerly stored at Courthouse, and donated to the Museum last year, now has been fully acquisitioned into the property records of the Museum, Director French reports. Items from this collection are among those now in the exhibits, and many more will be used in the future.

Students, students, students--412 of them have toured the Museum so far this year, and hundreds more are coming. The Association has sent a special invitation to all elementary schools in the County to bring their 4th grade classes to see the exhibits now on display. 4th grade is introductory Idaho history year, so it is particularly appropriate that these classes should see the excellent Nez Perce Indian exhibit and the display of gold rush and early settlement implements used by the pioneers.

Museum staff and other Association members who have been handling the student visits have been much impressed with the fine behavior of these "restless-age" citizens and with their real interest in what they see. Teacher escorts are praised also for their help in forming the students into manageable sub-groups for best viewing results.

A Prospectus of Program and Facilities Development for the Museum is in preparation. It will set forth the development needs of the Museum for the information of prospective donors, and can serve as a non-"pushy" approach to persons who want time to think and might feel crowded by direct personal solicitation. When ready, the brochure will be available to members both for their own information and for use in approaching friends or others they think could be interested in donating to help meet our needs.

Meantime, the following outline of facts that cause us to need substantial funding beyond that now being received may help you frame your own ideas on this subject:

1. Two different kinds of funding are needed, namely (a) capital development and (b) operational. Capital development funds are needed both to expand our facilities and to equip them. Operational funds are needed mostly for labor, but also for substantial costs of utilities, expendable materials, and some travel.
2. The \$3,500 now being received annually from the County barely pays for a 3-month stint of off-farm-season labor by our part-time Director and even less time by assistants hired to increase the effectiveness of his efforts, after covering costs of utilities. Beginning in 1974 the County will be authorized to provide up to \$9,000, but even this would not cover the full scale of operations needed to keep the Museum open to the public full time.
3. The amounts collected in membership and use fees are almost negligible in terms of our total operating needs, and there is little apparent prospect for substantially increasing this source, which is expected to yield some \$350 this year.
4. The possibilities of worthwhile income from contemplated publications are promising but not immediate. Likewise, possible sales items of interest to visitors (guide maps, pictures, calendars, etc.) cannot be expected to net much until we are in position to attract and accommodate far larger numbers of visitors.

5. The prospects for obtaining space in the present Post Office Building are uncertain, and even if we should get generous space there, the need for expanding our space at the Museum itself will remain. The need to accommodate groups wishing to meet there cannot be met with present space, and the desirability of encouraging educational activities there is self-evident.

6. Current Federal retrenchment on grant programs in general, State budget difficulties, and growing resistance to tax increases at all levels seem to make it unlikely that we can obtain grant funds for our capital needs.

7. Two possible private funding sources within the County which have large potential for us are bequests and tax write off donations. There are many families in the County from pioneer stock who well may welcome an opportunity to give substantial sums in honor of their forebears. The tax reduction aspect of donations to the Association is worth consideration by those now heavily taxed.

The above considerations justify us in launching an aggressive campaign to inform and interest prospective donors as to our needs and to cultivate favorable attitudes toward donations and bequests. Members need not wait for the brochure to begin this promotional work. Some principal needs that can be mentioned are: (a) excavation of the basement area and installation of a large meeting room, rest rooms, display room, air conditioning, and projection equipment--\$25,000; (b) construction of an underground reinforced concrete storage vault opening off the basement but situated outside the Mansion--\$6,000; locating and marking historic sites, buildings, etc., of Latah County and preparing and printing guide maps of these locations for distribution to Museum visitors--\$2,500. In the not distant future there will be need to acquire adjoining properties to provide Curator living quarters and office space outside the Mansion and to provide parking space for visitors. Acquisition and development costs for this program, if carried out within the next 10 years, would approximate \$75,000; later costs seem sure to be higher.

A brief brochure on existing Museum attractions, for distribution to schools, clubs, granges, civic groups, and Museum visitors, has been drawn up by Director Larry French and will be available soon.

BOOK REVIEW

Book I of Coming West from South Dakota brings us the girlhood recollections of Dora Marian (Otter) Fleener. Coming to Moscow in 1902 at $7\frac{1}{2}$ years of age, the author could bring but limited glimpses of her North Dakota beginnings and of the train ride via Spokane. Most of the story is of experiences after her arrival.

This 96-page offset copy volume published in 1971 actually introduces a person, more than an era. From infant baptism to age 15 the author gives intimate glimpses of her thoughts and experiences, against the backdrop of her immediate family similarly portrayed. Thus the principal charm of the work also becomes its limitation, for in this mainly introspective record one finds only incidental consciousness and perspective of the times and the community. Being a girl in that period put its own limitations on both exposure and perception, which point may interest students of women's liberation. Just seeing things through a girl's eyes offers a new approach for most readers.

The following excerpts are chosen for their more general historic interest. Having recounted the family's arrival and getting settled on a small farm near Moscow, Mrs. Fleener describes a washday routine of about 1905:

"We often stayed home from school to help do the washing. Papa saw to it that Mama never had to do a washing on a wash board. We older ones could help by pushing a handle back and forth or turning a crank, depending on which type of washing machine we had at the time. I'll say it wasn't easy to stay with it for twenty minutes, that being the length of time it took for the first washing process. After that the clothes were wrung through the wringer. Each batch

was put on the table and each garment was looked over for grimy spots. A bar of soap was applied and rubbed into the grimy place. When all the clothes had gone through the first water and all had been gone over, then they were ready for the second washing. The white clothes had been brought to a boil in soapy water in the boiler. Of course, the water from the first washing must be carried out in a bucket and emptied on the ground. The second washing took less time per batch. After all the clothes had had this second washing the washer was emptied and clear water was put in, along with some bluing, and the clothes were put through that. That was the rinse, and now they were ready to be hung on the clothes line. Hanging out in summer was quite pleasant, but other times of year there might be wind, rain, or freezing weather. When the washing was done there was the floor to be mopped and the stove cleaned, as well as the table and odds and ends to put away to await the next wash day, which was usually in a week, depending somewhat on the weather."

Foods and table manners are recalled as follows:

"Our breakfast was quite varied. We always had a cooked mush--farina, corn meal or graham, but most often oatmeal. Oatmeal was all right except for the hulls in the meal. Likewise the boiled eggs (which was the favorite way of cooking them), when scooped out of the shell by Papa's helping hand, were often concealing bits of egg shell. So the oat mush and boiled egg along with the 'Johnny cake' (corn bread), which was a great favorite with most members of the family, was only sparingly endured by me. But if there were graham gems or baked potatoes I could make out.

"Pie and cake were luxuries but we did have a great variety of puddings, usually topping the evening meal. Mama could make lush custards as well as different kinds of puddings, all to my liking. If she wanted to be quite fancy, she would make what she called a Thousand Island pudding. It was similar to a corn-starch pudding but had dabs of meringue on top.

"I might add that toast was a rarity, principally because it was so difficult to make. There were no electric toasters, so the way we did was to get a good bed of hot coals, take off one stove lid, and hold the slice of bread with a fork down near the hot coals--but not too close, or the bread would catch on fire. . . . Sick people were treated to a dish of hot milk and poached egg on toast. That was about the extent of the toast making. I don't remember that we ever had fruit for breakfast as we had at other meals, but whenever we did we were told to eat bread with the fruit because it was too rich to eat alone.

"The manner of eating using the blade of the knife to convey food to the mouth was just coming into disfavor, although the blade was wide and could hold quite a mouthful. It seemed that some liked to show how many beans or peas they could balance on their knives."

Problems and methods of dealing with house flies--now almost an "endangered" species, fortunately--may seem scarcely believable today:

"Although we had no earwigs, we did have flies, with no effective way of controlling them. Poison fly-paper was used. The paper contained a deadly poison and when pieces were put in a saucer of water, the water took on the poison of the paper. The saucer was placed where the most of the flies gathered, which was on the window sills. Most of the houses had low windows (toddler height) therefore it was risky to use this poison where there were small children.

"Next came the sheets of Tanglefoot, a sticky fly-paper (about 6 x 10 in.). They were not poison, but they did have their drawbacks inasmuch as they were easily blown from any surface with a breeze from an open door or window, and usually the sheets would land sticky side down on the floor, on your latest magazine or newspaper, or worse yet on some garment.

Soap and water wasn't effective in removing the sticky spot. Then came the sticky ribbon flypaper. That hung from the ceiling, out of the way of everything and everybody except the tall ones. This fly catcher was usually hung near or behind the cook stove where the flies gathered to get the warmth from the stove on cool evenings. Flies would cluster on the screen door, and of course when the door was opened to let a person in or out a flock of the 'varminths' would come in. There was a continual cry of 'Don't hold the screen open' or 'Shut the door, the flies are coming in.'

"Some summer mornings when the sun was shining on our east porch we would arm ourselves with long leafy branches or, if not available, a dish towel would substitute. We would shoo the flies from the other rooms into the kitchen, then we would wave our 'banner' driving as many flies as possible ahead of us toward the screen door. Then the door was flung open. We hoped more flies went out than came in. Newspapers were sometimes cut to make a fringe over the top of the door to discourage the flies.

"We disliked freezing weather to come, but one good thing about it was that it killed all the flies outside or stupefied them so we could sweep them down. The ones inside seemed to dwindle away; but what a mess they left, fly specks everywhere, especially in the corner of the ceiling over the cook stove. It was too disagreeable at that time of year to do a thorough job of house cleaning, but earlier a quick job was done."

If these brief samples have whetted your appetite, the whole volume may be read at the Moscow Public Library. A limited number of copies may be for sale by the author--a decision not made for sure at time of this writing. Meantime, Book II is being written, and we will be pleased to take note of it when it becomes available.

NEW CHALLENGES

Historic Accounts in Search of Authors are strewn richly over the Latah County landscape. Anyone with a yen to set the record down, to see his name on the title page, or any of the other urges that move people to write, can have a wide choice. Here are some to start your thinking, in no order of topic relation or priority:

- (1) George McMahon, Pioneer Pharmacist of the Palouse;
- (2) The 1912 Genesee State Basketball Champions;
- (3) The Idaho Harvester and Other Local Farm Machinery Developments;
- (4) Pioneer Cemeteries of Latah County;
- (5) The Palouse Chinaware Plant;
- (6) The Moscow Vinegar Works;
- (7) Pioneer Orchards and Fruit Handling;
- (8) The Moscow Brick Plant;
- (9) Tramlines of the Potlatch Canyons;
- (10) Genesee's Years of Glory (as railhead for the Clearwater basin);
- (11) Vanished Towns of Latah County;
- (12) The Saga of P.F.I. (logging out of the Palouse drainage);
- (13) The Indian Tradition of Potlatch;
- (14) The Bear Creek Train Wreck (Troy-Kendrick);
- (15) The Hoodoo Mines;
- (16) The A. P. Green Ceramic Products Enterprise;
- (17) Psychiana and Its Creator.

Now if that list has stimulated your gray matter even mildly, you should have thought of half a dozen more topics equally good. Take one from this list or one of your own and get going with it. We can publish right here in the Bulletin papers up to 2,500 words. Longer ones can be published as special supplements, or as separate papers. The Publications Committee of the Museum Association will be pleased to help on any problems of preparation. The Committee also will welcome any suggestions for other story subjects; send your ideas to the Museum office at 110 South Adams, Moscow.

Honorary memberships are provided for in the revised bylaws coming up for approval at the May 5 meeting. One good use of such memberships would be for high school students making worthwhile contributions to

Latah County history. Contributions could consist of historical research essays done to publishable standard, school contest-winning speeches on the significance of various aspects of our pioneer history to present situations, or finding and donating of old diaries, letters, photos, artifacts, etc. Another useful record easily within student capabilities would be to trace present large operating units of farm land back to their original homestead ownerships, showing the steps in consolidation and relating them to changes in farming methods and equipment and to other influences. The history of a given family from its pioneer beginnings down to the present would be yet another worthy contribution.

Membership keeps on growing as word of Association programs gets around. With 8 new members enrolled since February 25, the total stood at 178 on March 30. Of these, 91 are life members. At the beginning of last year there were 164 total members, of whom 83 were life members.

We especially appreciate the continuing loyalty of the many members who cannot attend the annual or other full-membership meetings, yet keep up their dues to help us along. Without this support, the relatively few who serve as officers or committee members to carry on the ever-expanding programs of the Association soon would lose heart. No one keeps track of hours donated, but you should know that for the principal officers and a few others they run to several hundred each, per year.

Neither compensation nor glory is sought for this service; to see membership and supporting public interest grow is reward enough. But as we consider that present membership probably represents less than 5% of the pioneer families of the County, we fervently hope for a way to reach and interest the great majority still "unjoined." May each member set himself the goal of bringing in at least one new member during 1973!

If your spouse does not belong to the Association, please help us by enrolling him or her as a member. Membership is open to all interested persons, regardless of where they were born or how long they have lived in Latah County.

LATAH HISTORIAN RETURNING

Of special interest to many Association members and others whose memories cover the 1928-1938 period will be the return visit of Dr. Clifford M. Drury to our community at the end of June. It was while serving as pastor of the Presbyterian church in Moscow that Dr. Drury began his now illustrious career as a historian of pioneer Protestant missionary work among the Nez Perce, Yakima, and Spokane Indians.

His biography of Henry Harmon Spalding in 1936 was followed by one on Marcus Whitman in 1937, and in 1940 by the story of Elkanah and Mary Walker in their post at Spokane Falls. During the early 1960's he published a 3-volume work entitled First White Women Over the Rockies. All these books have since become collector's items.

The production of the first three works resulted in relocation of the old missionary and Indian routes through Latah County between Lapwai and Spokane and the monumentation of Missionary Springs at the foot of Viola Ridge and of other known stopping places. By digging much of his basic information from old letters, journals, and diaries retrieved from forgotten attics of the Inland Empire, Dr. Drury demonstrated the rich possibilities of this area for pioneer history.

Now announcing a monumental 3-volume rewrite of the Marcus Whitman record due for release on June 1, Dr. Drury has planned a return visit to our area to celebrate the culmination of his writing career at the scene of its beginning. He will arrive in Spokane on June 29 and in Moscow on June 30. On July 1

he will fill the pulpit of Moscow Presbyterian Church, where a public reception in his honor will be held that afternoon. Following days will be spent among old friends in the Nez Perce tribe and others who helped him in his original historical endeavors.

Recent Museum benefits

--A new directional sign pointing the way to the Museum has been installed by the City of Moscow at the intersection of 3rd and Adams streets.

--The Chamber of Commerce has donated generous supplies of a tourist directory for the Moscow area as well as several pamphlets of broader tourist interest. The Chamber also has offered to turn over to us its sales of books on local history, such as Elsie Nelson's Today Is Ours and John Miller's The Trees Grew Tall. Too bad our present limitation to part-time operations prevents our taking advantage of this offer.

--A copy of W. J. Emery's 1896 History of Moscow now is in the Museum, as a donation of City Hall, through Bill Smith.

January-March Museum visitors

In addition to the 412 students who have visited the Museum in groups since January 1, other visitors have numbered about 130. At present the Museum is regularly open at the following times:

Wednesdays--2 to 5 p.m.

Saturdays-- 10 to 12 a.m.

Sundays-- 2 to 5 p.m.
