

LATAH COUNTY MUSEUM SOCIETY

Quarterly Bulletin  
Kenneth B. Platt, Editor

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Summer slack season needs to be redefined, as far as Museum activities are concerned. It is the time when the women put on slacks to do even more work than usual. Jan Kern, our volunteer assistant curator for the summer months, has been working three mornings a week on accessions and other records. Gertrude (Mrs. Walter) Lundquist is giving one afternoon a week to work on the photo files. Lately she has been drymounting enlargements on display cards. Several men of the Society have been busy with preparing the newly delivered storm windows for mounting. The more than 70 separate panels have been prime-coated with linseed oil by Leonard Ashbaugh, Ray Berry and Don DuSault. Next comes painting them and installing them over the windows. Beginning soon the Youth Development Program of the State Employment Agency will supply a student for the rest of the summer to work on general maintenance around the Museum, and help with the extra visitors expected in that period.

Meanwhile, Curator Lou Cormier has done much work on beautification of the Mansion grounds, with relocation and expansion of flower beds, and addition of some shrubbery. A gift of a shrub by Lola Clyde in memory of her late brother, Bert Gamble, has been used to start setting columnar-type Hix yews in the niches by the bay windows of the Mansion. Four more such yews are needed, and would make appropriate further memorials to Bert Gamble. Interested persons should contact Mr. Cormier to place orders for the right size and species to complete the project. Lou reports that Robert Metters of Moscow has been giving preferential prices for plant materials for the Mansion.

Special summer hours will apply at the Museum for the next two months. It will be open from 1 to 4 p.m. every day through July and August. Already a noticeable proportion of visitors are people who have come to Expo '74 at Spokane and are taking in other sights while in the area. Nine hundred Museum brochures were furnished the Expo literature office for hand-outs to visitors there. Leaflets giving the summer schedule of the Museum have been placed in all Moscow motels and hotels, Bill's Antique Shop on North Almon, and some service stations.

Visitor numbers are running well ahead of 1973 figures, Mr. Cormier reports. Up to June 1 there had been 1225, with 200 or more in each month. If the trend holds, the 1974 total may top 3,000, Lou believes. That compares with round figures of 1000 in 1972 and 2000 in 1973. Special interest in our Museum is being generated at Expo by home craft demonstrations done by Society members and friends. At the invitation of the Smithsonian Institution through its Folk Life Festival there, home butter making was demonstrated during the week of June 9-15. This was to have been done by Larry and Karen French, but when haying demands kept them on the farm, Karen's sister, Delores Leslie substituted. She churned six gallons of cream a day in an old French family glass churn and turned out 72 pounds of butter. The butter was used on crackers passed out to Expo visitors watching the demonstration. The pioneer wooden churn donated to the Museum last year by Joanna Hooker Nelson of Kendrick was on display. Lola Clyde's demonstration of hominy making, scheduled for June 20-24, has been postponed until September.

The most distant visitors so far this year were from Taiwan. Here to attend the graduation of a son at WSU, they signed the register in Chinese, and we're not positive of the Anglicized version. However, the daughter who

translated, between them and Mr. Cormier, signed her name Juli Han, and the new graduate signed as Hsiang Han. The elder Hans said they were interested in seeing old American houses and they were delighted with McConnell Mansion.

Notable recent gifts to the Museum have included a special donation of \$1000 to the operating fund by Leora (Mrs. C. R.) Stillinger, and a 50-state flag by Miriam (Mrs. Wilbur) Shelton. The donation from Mrs. Stillinger was deeply appreciated by the Trustees, as it enabled the Society to operate at a much more effective level than otherwise would have been possible. The new flag will give us one to fly outdoors for general use, while reserving for special uses the one donated last year by member Melvin Alsager, given to him after it had been flown at the White House.

The new 1974 exhibits on the 2nd floor of the Mansion have been completed. Those who saw the 1890's bedroom earlier will enjoy seeing it again for added details. An especially appropriate new item is the ivory vanity set recently donated by Jean (Mrs. Leonard) Ashbaugh.

In the trapper's cabin may be seen not only the general plan and construction of this rude form of shelter, but also much of the essential equipment of the trade: traps, skinning and fleshing knives, a beaver pelt stretcher, snowshoes, frontier rifle, etc. Also displayed are typical bear and cougar hides and trade-ready pelts of raccoon, wolf, beaver, marten and red and silver foxes. Accompanying photos and explanatory cards add much to the interest and educational value of the exhibit.

In the third room, what we reported in the April Bulletin as a pioneer range cowboy's equipment exhibit has grown to a composite sampling of eight different interest areas: Women's fashion accessories, doll furniture, a door-

knob collection, logging tools, a ranch blacksmith shop, railway depot paraphernalia and the cowboy's equipment. Each of these is well displayed and worth a careful study, but the cowboy exhibit rates special mention here. Included are different styles of chaps, spurs, bridle bits, ropes and numerous other items, all authentically recalling the range rider's accouterments. The saddle, however, is the main attraction. Recently loaned to the Museum for a year by Bud Thompson of Albion, Wash., this saddle is more than a 100 years old, with a history dating back to earliest southwest trailriding days. Its story is best told by Mrs. Clear of Palouse, a niece of one of its early owners, as written down for Thompson when he got the saddle from her ten years ago. We quote:

**"The History Of The Old Saddle"**

"The early history, as handed down from one owner to another, started back in the days of the cattle drives over the noted 'Old Chisholm Trail', which was a trail named for a Jesse Chisholm - a half Scottish, half Cherokee scout - who blazed the trail in 1866 from south Texas across Oklahoma to railroad shipping points in Kansas. U. S. Highway 81 follows part way along that trail at the present.

"This saddle made three trips over the trail. It was first used by a Texas cattleman who had a saddlemaker build it the way he wanted it - strong, good leather and sewing, but 'nothing fancy'. He made one trip with it. The next trip his foreman took the herd up and used the boss's saddle. The third trip he (foreman) had bought the saddle and also was 'fed up on trailing steers', so he sold it to one of the crew who wanted to stay in Kansas too. This man's name was Frank Pike, and he afterward became my uncle.

"My father's folks were on a farm in Kansas

then, and he and Frank Pike both hired on for a cattle drive from Kansas up to northern Nebraska. Pike decided to stay in Nebraska, so Dad traded him out of 'the easy riding saddle' and rode it back to Kansas. That was in 1882, and the saddle was 3rd hand and already had some of its deepest scars. In 1883 Dad and his folks came overland to Nebraska and he and Frank Pike later married sisters there, then stayed there until 1895.

"Then the old saddle rode a horse from Springview, Neb. to Plains, Montana, but the horse was mostly led behind a wagon as it took all hands to drive the four wagons. That trip took from July 6 to October 8. Besides the teams they brought some extra horses and colts and the saddle horse was to round them up if they should decide to hit back for Nebraska while grazing. In Nebraska many wild horses were broken to ride for other people, but they didn't buck so hard as the Montana horses. And the old saddle stayed with the worst of them, helped on many little cattle roundups and drives and even helped bring in a herd of buffalo that were shipped from Plains, Mon., to Canada in around 1901. Later more were sent, but they were boarded at Ravalli. At both places a buffalo broke his neck charging those specially built corrals, and the Indian squaws skinned them out for meat.

"Coming back to the bad horses - the worst I saw was a big black outlaw that was said to have killed one man and thrown several. In his frenzy to unload that saddle he just flew up in the air and threw himself over on his back so hard the saddle horn was jammed in the dirt so hard it seemed to hold him a few seconds with all four feet flailing in the air. But when he bounced back up on his feet there was the old saddle and the man too, both on top. I think that was when he gave up fighting the situation so hard at least, and he made a magnificent

horse. He wasn't afraid of anything, would go through fire or water.

"And there the old saddle saw history again, when my Dad took a bunch of horses and packed supplies for the fire fighters in the big forest fires between Montana and Idaho in 1910. And so it whiled away the time till 1917, when the Clears decided to move out to Palouse, Wash., where my grandparents and uncle were living.

"Just for a change we loaded a small outfit - 2 teams, 3 saddle horses, some household stuff, tools, etc., two saddles - in a freight car. But the old timer mostly rode a rafter in the woodshed until 1964, when a guy came along who 'admired its age and lack of beauty' so it was sent to join his collection.

"The last 'stockman' to ride it was Herb Hill; when a small boy got a nice saddle mare he borrowed the old saddle and bought a can of saddle soap and rode it until he could get his folks convinced he needed a better one.

"So, Mr. Thompson, you can take from there."

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With that account for background, who could stay away from our cowboy exhibit? But when you come, don't overlook the hand-pumper fire cart in the upstairs hall. It is 140 years old and its interesting story is being traced by Mrs. Ken O'Donnell as part of the history of the Moscow Fire Dep't. which she is now writing.

### Project Roundup

The republication of Whispers From Old Genesee And Echoes Of The Salmon River, by John A. Platt (1959) announced in the April Bulletin has been held up by previously scheduled work - delayed by installation of a new press - but now is expected to begin shortly. Likewise, publication of local History Paper No. 1, "Some Pioneer

Glimpses of Latah County", has been held up for additional tracing of first settlers in the county. The manuscript will be sent to the printer soon.

Our 15-month calendar planned last spring is ready to go to press, so far as its general makeup and the historic pictures are concerned. On the advice of persons experienced in calendars Director Larry French dropped earlier plans to make this an activity calendar and is concentrating on making it a historic events record as much as possible. For this he is anxious to get dates from all interested persons on any noteworthy events you can think of. Familiar examples would be the date Latah County was established, founding for each town in the county opening of the Potlatch mill, dates of discovery, historic fires, flood, railroads openings, etc. Put on your thinking cap and jot down all such items, even if you don't know the date, and send your list to Larry.

Clifford Ott made history in his own right when the Idahonian last month ran a feature article on his project of collecting and restoring historic photos of Latah County and adjacent areas. Pictures of the first county post office (1870) and of the burning and demolition of the University's first administration building (1906) illustrated the writeup. Cliff now has a well earned reputation for restoring to visibility far more detail in age dimmed photos than at first seems possible. But beyond that, he has developed a photo-documented knowledge of historic changes in the community, as shown by buildings, roads, signs, industry developments, that now make him an authoritative source in this field. The Museum benefits from his efforts by getting copies of the most significant of his finds, enlarged by display use. A series of his albums, compiling on schools, post offices, railroads, businesses, farming, other subjects are intended to be in the Museum in due time.

Peggy Ott hasn't made the front page yet with her hobby of collecting and restoring old scrap books - and creating many of her own - but her results are fully as fascinating as those Cliff is turning out. Her most recent book is a collection of old post cards, including a replica of the very first one printed in Austria in 1869, reproduced in the April, 1974 issue of Smithsonian magazine. Friends who have helped her in this absorbing activity include Jeanette Talbott, Nellie Handlin, and Abe Goff of Moscow, Elsie Valliquette of Lewiston who has a similar interest in the Luna House Museum there.

Oral History progress is reported by Sam Schragger and Rob Moore as follows: The Oral History Project continues to range in search of personal recollections of Latah County's early life. The project is now about 60% toward its goal of 200 hours of actual tape recordings and many hours of finished transcript await duplication by the special collections division of the Univ. library.

An additional grant of \$2,500 from the Idaho Commission on the Arts and Humanities at no cost to the Museum Society, is greatly enriching the scope of the project this summer. David Greenberg, who worked as an educational specialist and as a photographer in Philadelphia before coming West, will spend two months taking and developing pictures of people who are contributing tapes, and of their homesteads, old time skills, equipment and historic sites throughout the county. Also, the grant has made it possible for Laura Shragger to join the project as a part-time interviewer, concentrating on women's memories of pioneer life. It also is providing funds for a limited number of old photographs to be borrowed from project contributors and copied by Clifford Ott.

Recently Project staff has been asked by the



U. S. Forest Service and a state agency to give workshops in oral history techniques. A staff article about Bovall's colorful deputy sheriff Pat Malone is appearing in the Idaho Bi-centennial Review, the first of three annual editions planned for this magazine to be issued July 4.

In measuring project results, it is important to realize the amount of time needed to set up and process each interview. Our experience, confirmed in similar projects elsewhere, shows an average of 10 hours of contact work, travel, and interview preparation to go into each hour of good tape. Indexing and correcting the transcript takes another 10 hours for the interviewer and 15 hours for the secretary.

Names of people who might be good informants can be called in to the project office, 882 - 2901 - by 2:00 p.m. weekdays. During the 2nd week in July the staff is planning to interview a limited number of county old-timers who have moved to the Spokane area, so names and information about them would be especially helpful now.

#### Museum Society Affairs

Continuing the plan for out of Moscow meetings of the Board of Trustees that started with the Feb. meeting in Potlatch, the Board held its April meeting at Kendrick. About 20 people from the Kendrick - Juliaetta area attended. Extra dividends included a fine dinner arranged by Grace (Mrs. Gerald) Ingle, and visits to the private museums of Herman Schupfer in Kendrick and the Noble family in Juliaetta.

The Genesee Meeting which would have fallen in June was postponed because of the urgency of farm work there at that time. The possibility of making this a potluck affair in September with a speaker to help draw attendance is being explored.

Over in Whitman County speakers have been used to good advantage in a "circuitrider" schedule of Board meetings since their museum society was formed last year. Attendance at their meetings has run at 50 to 60 and good permanent papers have resulted from at least some of them. For their June 28th meeting an ice cream social was staged at Perkins House in Colfax (counterpart of our McConnell Mansion) and Abe Goff was the speaker. As a native son of that area with a colorful pioneer family background of his own Abe doubtless added another good paper to their collection and we hope we get a copy of it.

The Society's treasury, as most members know, is never equal to all that needs to be done in carrying on our program. The first half of the year is especially difficult as that is when the Museum staff (Director, Curator and Secretary) do most of the year's exhibit preparations and other work requiring purchase of materials and equipment, as well as payment of wages. Although our county funds were increased this year to \$5,500 from the old level of \$3,500, only half of that was available for the January - June period. In order to cover the heavy costs concentrated in that period, it was necessary to defer payment of \$700 in salaries to the second half of the year and to borrow \$200 to help cover smaller operating costs. These measures were necessary despite a gift of \$1,000 to the operating fund as mentioned earlier.

So we pass the midyear solvent only by the generosity of some members and the patience of others. The second half of county funds will enable us to pay off the "back dues" and meet normal operating costs to the end of the year, and that is how the year's budget management was planned. We hope, however, that this sort of maneuver will not be needed in future years, as Museum support grows. The situation is outlined here to answer the questions that some-

times arise, of why the Society is not doing more on Oral History Projects and other highly desirable activities.

Possible revision of the Society's membership and support fee schedule was directed at the June meeting of the Trustees, as one way to help ourselves out of our financial stringency. The \$2.50 fee for an annual single membership was nominal even eight years ago when it was established. It is unrealistic today, in view of the greatly increased costs of wages, materials utilities, and other requirements of Museum operations. Other fees need proportional re-scaling. Suggestions for new levels will be welcomed by Kenneth Platt, Carol Renfrew and Lillian Otness, the committee appointed to study the matter.

#### BOOK REVIEW

Our review this time really doesn't cover a book, or even a booklet, but a few pages of the unpublished recollections of a pioneer Genesee woman, set down in recent years for the benefit of her family. The author, Agnes (Mrs. H. B.) Jones, still keeps her own house and garden at Genesee, where she spices warm talk with mild wit and fond memories in ready conversation. She kindly showed me the way to her grandfather's farm on a sunny day last fall, and posed for pictures by the tumbled remains of his first log cabin, reputedly built in 1870. Because her story is so short, we give it almost in full and without further comment:

"My Grandfather, Thomas Tierney, was the first pioneer to settle in the Thorn Creek area, in September of 1870. My grandfolks came across Kansas, Utah, and then travelled into Idaho . . . Grandfather Tierney rode a horse up from Lewiston to the Thorn Creek area and Moscow to look the country over. He talked to Mr. Buchanan, one of the first to settle in Moscow, before he made his choice of a place to stay.

"He said Thorn Creek had two to three feet of clear water in it at that time with lots of thorn bushes along the sides. There were also many wild berries and flowers of all kinds. The creek was so clean and clear then, he thought it was the most attractive land for miles around so they settled there and took up an 80 acre timber claim (timber culture tract). Later he planted trees and cultivated 10 acres of it, which was the requirement in those days.

"At that time there wasn't a town of Uniontown, just lots of grass and sunflowers and a few Indian tepees, cattle and horses. The first cabin, built of mud, logs and wooden pegs was built in 1870 above the creek. It was near where the present house now stands... Later (1882) a new home was built and J. S. Sullivan, a stone mason, built a basement for the price of a cow.

"The Indians would come to the timber culture and stay there until they harvested the camas. They had some big rocks and would roast the camas on the rock when it was heated ... In the early days the Indian women would do all the driving while their men would sit on the wagon seat beside them. They would often get off the wagon and have their babies by themselves, off the trail.

"When my grandfather Tierney first started farming, the sod had to be broken up before it could be seeded and this was not an easy task. A walking plow was first used to break the sod ... The first crop was cultivated by a home-made harrow made with 4 by 4s. The ground was rolled by a big log to pack down the soil. They would hand sow the wheat. They cradled the first crop. The first thing they raised was a vegetable crop garden. My grandfather was the first to break up the ground. He liked garden produce and had a fine yield. The first crop was produced in the summer of 1871.

"He would raise flax one year, wheat the next. The flax fields would be blue in color when in bloom and very colorful. Finally he gave up raising flax as the soil was so rich it all grew to stems. The first school was built of logs in 1875 and it sat on the place farmed by Louis Herman, later moved within a quarter of a mile from Tierneys.

"My Mother's name was Annie Tierney. She was the first white baby born south of Moscow, on the 15th of October, 1871 and was baptized by Father Cataldo in their home on Thorn Creek ... In 1873 Uncle Will was born. Grandmother Tierney died in January, 1874 and was buried in Moscow. At that time there was deep snow and the horses would be belly deep in the snow most of the way to Moscow. Rocks would be heated and wrapped to put in the straw for heat. It would take 3 to 4 hours to travel to Moscow in bad weather. The older men would all wear thick felt boots under their high boot shoes when it ~~got~~ real cold in the winters.

"After grandmother's death, the teacher, Mrs. Monroe) stayed with grandfather and helped raise the children for a while. Now a young man often gives his 'best girl' a gift of candy, flowers or even a car, but in the early times the young man gave his girl sometimes a saddle pony. I remember one time a young man gave his girl a gray pony, then he heard she was dating another fellow so he slipped into their barn and recovered the pony out of the back of the barn! Grandfather kept my grandmother's saddle pony a long time after she died.

"In the first cabin my grandfolks had a pot-bellied cooking container on a tripod, and grandmother would roast the spuds in the open fire. They boiled all the food in the pot and liked everything that way, never liked to fry foods. My grandfather would go to the town of

Palouse once a year for supplies. The families would buy barrels of dried apples, sugar, and 3 gallon 'jackets' of syrup. They also bought coffee beans to be roasted and ground for their use, spuds and sauerkraut were kept in the cellar. Prairie chickens were very abundant in the early days - Indians used to cover them with a mud batter and cook over a bonfire. Then they would pull them out of the fire, strip off the mud and feathers and eat the meat.

"The mail was delivered to Thorn Creek in those days, carried by horses in saddle bags from Palouse by way of Tierney farm. A post office was established in the Tierney home. In earlier times my Grandfather hired out to ride in the famous Pony Express for 6 months. He also freighted with ox teams for the government during the Civil war. There used to be 'cuckoo' birds and 'curlew' birds, but you don't see them any more. They would lay their eggs out in the squirrel holes. They were cute, about the shape of a barn owl, cuckoo in the mornings and call just as plain. There were lots of squirrels - children made pets of them - even chicken hawks.

"In 1901 my grandfolks moved to Moscow and lived in the first brick house built there. It was located where the Safeway parking lot is now. My grandfather Tierney had good health up to the last. He walked into his garden a few days before he died, lived to be 94 years of age. I was the oldest of 28 grandchildren.

"My Father, Dan Healy, came to San Francisco from Ireland around the horn in 1870. He never missed coming into Genesee for St. Patrick's Day even once in his life of 50 years. He was small of build but did lots of hard work all of his life. He was wise in choosing the land.

"My Mother always used clean, dry grass hay for the ticks used on the beds. We had floors on

our home and Mother used to keep them scrubbed white. The rooms of our home were lined with cedar.

"My folks had cayuses and lots of hogs and cows. They had self-feeders for the hogs and also dug wells for the water supply. They would haul wheat to Genesee for ground flour, bran and shorts to bring back for hog feed. They used to cook potatoes for their hogs if they had lots of spuds that year. They would put the spuds in the vat with wheat over them and cook them.

"I was 3 years old when my folks moved to Genesee, where there were lots of saloons, stores, livery stables at that time. My father ran the Grand Central Hotel in Genesee - they charged \$5.50 a week for board and room. I remember the drummers coming in with their samples. They always kept a sample room where they would show their merchandise, also go around the country and show in homes, and send orders back to the mail order house to be filled.

"There were two Chinese laundries in Genesee at this time. St. Joseph's school was started at Genesee in 1896 for the Catholic children. The railroad came in 1886 - when it was built into Lewiston in 1898, it marked the beginning of the end of much of the shipping of livestock and grains from Genesee.

"The stage would come from Lewiston to Genesee, on to Moscow, and then into the Palouse. Ezra Meeker was one of the stage coach drivers of that time. Felix Warren ran a coach through Genesee in 1893, during the time my Father ran the Grand Central Hotel. Mr. Warren was a good fellow with a whip and in handling his team of horses. It was often said he could 'flick a flea off a dog's tail'. His sister was Mrs. Mary Spaulding, wife of Henry Hart Spaulding, son of the famous missionary. The stage coaches changed horses at the Smith place, North of Moscow. . . . Warren died at Almota, Wash., at the age of 85."

LATAH COUNTY  
MUSEUM SOCIETY

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