

LATAH COUNTY MUSEUM SOCIETY

McConnell Mansion 110 South Adams Moscow, Idaho

Quarterly Bulletin
Kenneth B. Platt, Editor

Volume 6, No. 1
January, 1977

Busy Year Foreseen

As a new year, 1977 has special significance for the Society in several ways. Besides being a new year in its own right, it is the first year of the national tricentennial century, with all the portent that may signify for the distant future. Important short-term objectives include a building fund drive and the launching of a program of traveling exhibits to be circulated to the schools of the county through the bookmobile service of the Moscow/Latah County Library System. Vital to the support of both these objectives is a third--expansion of Society membership and support to a truly county-wide basis.

The building fund will be used to pay for developing public service space either in the basement level of the McConnell Mansion or at an alternative site, and for constructing the underground fire-proof vault planned in the southeast corner of the Mansion grounds. As presently envisaged, the new basement space, if developed, would provide a large meeting room under the first-floor parlor and hall area, with projection facilities and rest rooms. Leading to this space would be a room situated under the front porch, with a floor-level outside entrance off the driveway along the north side of the Mansion. Besides access to the meeting room, this room would also house exhibits and office areas.

The traveling exhibits will carry the Society's educational emphasis to all children of the county. In so doing they will promote expanded interest in Society membership and support. When fully developed, the

traveling exhibit project will provide nine portable exhibit cases, to be placed in the schools and rotated from school to school at monthly intervals through the school year. Accompanying cassette tapes will explain each of the different exhibits. New displays will be prepared each year.

Detailed planning and cost estimates for the projected space development is, of course, another and even more immediate objective. Assistance of the University's architecture staff and of local construction contractors will be sought for this task. By excavating through the area under the porch, the front grounds of the Mansion can be left undisturbed. Providing basement-level entry through this area also will avoid changing the historic front approach lines of the Mansion with a basement entrance.

How soon actual excavation can begin will depend on the success of the building fund drive, but 1978 is being set as a target date. Until more exact estimates can be made, a funding level of \$50,000 will be sought as the probable minimum need.

Time Capsule Captivates

"They'll Remember Latah County in 2076" was the headline given the Society's time capsule project by the Lewiston Tribune in a recent progress report. As the capsule project nears completion, technical aspects of actually "doing" it have aroused growing interest and participation. Approached for suggestions on design, the Physics Department of the University of Idaho volunteered to construct the capsule, using the design of Reynolds Aluminum Company for capsules it presented each of the fifty states for Bicentennial commemoration. Plant science staff of the University have advised on seed storage requirements and have provided some of the seeds. Other farm seeds are being provided by Latah County Grain Growers, Inc.

Forest tree seeds and forest resource figures are being provided by the experiment station of the U.S. Forest Service. The Soil Conservation Service will make soil profile records by which to measure erosion losses over the next hundred years.

The capsule is a heavy aluminum cylinder $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter by 12 inches long, with airtight caps at each end. When filled, the capsule will be pumped free of air and refilled with argon, a chemically inert gas.

Initially proposed to and endorsed by the Moscow Bicentennial Committee, the time capsule project fell to the Society for execution when Bicentennial funds were not available. The \$150 now in the Society treasury for time capsule costs was solicited by Lola Clyde and donated by the H. J. Heinz Co. (\$100) and by Mary Schedler, a McConnell descendant (\$50). Fittingly, the capsule will be stored in the fireproof vault of the Museum when that space is ready. Until then it will be stored in the county treasurer's vault at the courthouse.

Contents of the capsule are being selected mainly to document the state of affairs in Latah County in 1976 for comparison in 2076. Materials so far collected include a land use classification and zoning map of the county; a detailed road map showing also the railroads, electric power trunk lines, gas pipelines, city limits, and approximate locations of all occupied farm homes. Aerial views of all the towns, showing streets and buildings; county total assessed valuations by classes of property; human and livestock populations; forest inventories, sustained yield capacity estimate, and 1976 actual production; pictures showing various farm tillage practices and associated erosion conditions, and typical farm equipment in use; soil profile records on a typical farm to measure topsoil losses over the next hundred years; and statistics of current agricultural production will be included.

In another group of items are figures on telephone, TV and power use; microfilm copies of all issues of the Idahonian, Gazette-News, and Lewiston Tribune for the month of July, 1976; and an LP record of today's popular music as played on a typical TV or radio program, with commercials included. Non-documentary items include seed samples of all major farm crops, selected garden vegetables, and some weeds; a ballpoint pen with sealed ink cartridge; and a few other miscellaneous small things.

Suggestions are invited for other inclusions, particularly for things in common use but subject to rapid change or discard. Ideas should be sent or phoned to Kenneth B. Platt, 1213 Spruce Circle, Moscow, within the next few weeks (phone 882-0234).

CETA Grant to Pay Curator

Funds available to the county from the Comprehensive Education and Training Act (Federal) have been allotted to pay the salary of Lee Magnuson, Curator, for at least the first nine months of 1977. This grant enables the Society for the first time to pay more than the subsistence-level salary that has prevailed in the past. Although Mr. Magnuson and others before him have willingly donated much time to the job, the full salary now available will enable him to increase his service substantially. Present open hours at the Museum will not be increased, but more work will be done on exhibit preparation and other behind-the-scenes necessities.

Exciting Publications Ahead

Printing delays--we hate to say it yet again--still hold up delivery of the Society's Local History Paper No. 2, Fields and Pine Trees, by Opal Lambert Ross, of Farmington. A current estimate from the publisher

puts probable delivery at late February. Costs have not stood still while we wait, and the necessary selling price will be well above the \$2.50 per copy first estimated. Partially offsetting this increase will be higher quality printing and a larger book size than originally planned.

The Society will get 100 copies, to be paid for from the Publications Fund, not 200 copies as stated in the October 1976 Bulletin. The author will get 100 copies for distribution in the Farmington area. The publisher is printing another 200 copies for distribution to libraries through his own channels. The book thus promises to serve well the objectives of the Publications Fund--to assist local authors in publishing manuscripts they cannot manage by themselves and to preserve valuable historic information that otherwise would be lost to posterity.

Local History Paper No. 3 now is definitely planned to cover the pioneer recollections of Charles J. Munson, first State Representative from Latah County. The full manuscript presently is being reviewed and prepared for publication cost estimates. Containing nearly 200 double-space typed pages in its present form, the Munson recollections will be larger than previous papers in this series.

As noted in the October '76 Bulletin, the material goes far beyond local interest, with its swath of pioneer experiences running across the wildest of the 1880s West. Dodge City trail driving, Denver's mining boom, railway building through Gunnison Canyon and across the "Great American Desert" of Idaho-- "the poorest and most despised of all the territories" --Butte under smelter fumes that blotted out the sun, gold stampede in the Coeur d'Alenes. Munson's story records the raw leading edge of pioneering in many aspects, its daily dangers and frequent tragedies. His own many hairbreadth escapes from violent death make the account a first-rate adventure story with

appeal for readers of all ages and locales.

Thus the series of Local History Papers launched by the Society in 1974 with Pioneer Glimpses of Latah County as Paper No. 1 now seems well assured of continuance, with the long-awaited Paper No. 2, Fields and Pine Trees, in press now and manuscripts in hand for Nos. 3 (Munson recollections) and 4 (Forney letters). The only problem now is to find time to get the last two materials into form for submission to printers and to replenish the Publications Fund rapidly enough to cover their costs.

Oral History Field Work Completed

In 1976 the Oral History Project added 233.3 hours of tape to the 326.7 hours gathered in the two and one half years of interviewing through 1975. This gave a total collection of 560 hours of taped interviews with roughly 200 Latah County people. The increase of over 70% during the past year was possible because prior experience made the field interviews much easier.

Two more oral history booklets for use in grade school social studies were written by Karen Purtee and printed during 1976. These stories of Lola Clyde and Carl Olson brought the total number of booklets in this series to five. Our Bicentennial slide show was shown to audiences in fifteen small towns across the state as part of a special program called "A Future for the Small Town in Idaho," paid for by the Association for the Humanities in Idaho. A national release of cassette recordings for classroom use titled Grass Roots: An Oral History of the American People included more material from our project than from any other source in the Northwest, Mr. Schrage reports. The invitation to Schrage to address the annual Pacific Northwest History Conference about oral history in Boise last April was a further recognition of the high caliber of work done on this project.

Important further work on existing tapes is needed. The first objective will be to make finished transcripts of a substantial remaining part of the collection, so that it will be accessible for research in the future. A second objective is to make permanent archival tape copies from the cassette tapes so that the collection will be preserved in top condition for the indefinite future. Much of the collection already is in either final or rough transcript, but about 175 hours of tape still are to be transcribed from the original interviews, and an additional 175 hours of rough transcript need to be converted into finished transcripts.

These two objectives will require a full-time transcriber for an estimated one-year period. CETA funding of this job now looks promising. In case CETA money does not materialize, the Society treasury may be able to cover a substantial part of the cost.

Mr. Schragger's CETA support will end in March. In the remaining time he will be drawing up a directory of the contents of the tape and transcript collections, giving a brief summary of each interview. Some follow-up interviews will be done to complete life stories already in process and to fill some of the gaps remaining in the collection. After his paid job ends, Schragger still will supervise the work of the transcriber and the final filing of the collection. In the next year he plans to produce a book of oral history drawn from the collection.

Changes at the Helm

The slate of officers taking over administration for the year ahead includes three new faces in our leadership. Elected for one-year terms by unanimous vote at the January 8 annual meeting were:

Donna Bray

Moscow

President

Eugene Taylor	Juliaetta	1st Vice-president
Art Clanton	Moscow	2nd Vice-president
Ray Berry	Moscow	Secretary
Steve Nielson	Moscow	Treasurer

Leora Stillinger, retiring Treasurer, was elected to a three-year term as Trustee at Large. Leonard Ashbaugh will continue on the Board for the next year because of being the immediate past President.

Wasting no time, the new Board convened a business session immediately after the election and started action on the following major projects for 1977:

A building fund drive to finance development of more public facilities space for Museum visitors and users. After discussing various possibilities for such space, President Bray named a task force to find probable costs of excavating the remaining available space for basement enlargement under the Mansion and instructed them to report at the next regular Board meeting on February 2. Members of the task group are Art Clanton, Gerald Ingle, Eugene Taylor, and Kenneth Platt, Chairman. Based on cost estimates found by this group, the amount of money to be sought will be decided.

Construction of a set of portable exhibit cases to be circulated to the schools of the county, as outlined at the beginning of this Bulletin.

Preparation of building plans to make best use of the space selected for development. When the site has been decided upon, cooperation of the architecture and museology departments of the University will be sought for preparing the best plans.

Membership expansion will be a further objective for 1977. No special project was set up for this, but aspects of it will be included in both the fund drive and the traveling exhibits.

Year End Notes

Two highlights of the closing year were tributes to Gerald Ingle as retiring County Commissioner and to Leonard Ashbaugh as retiring President of the Society. Grace Wicks noted Ingle's service of some twenty years as a commissioner, many of them as chairman. Included among county improvements in which he took a leading part, Mrs. Wicks listed planning and construction of the present courthouse and jail, founding and support of the Museum Society, development of today's county-wide waste disposal program, and many others.

Special thanks to Mr. Ashbaugh for his long and unstinting service to the Society were voiced by several. Always busy but always ready to do more, Leonard has had a major hand in almost every aspect of renovation and repair of the Mansion. Such jobs as erecting the fire escape, repainting the window frames and painting and installing the storm windows, putting in extra electrical outlets, stripping and refinishing interior woodwork, and reactivating the upstairs heat radiators are examples of his devotion. Much of this work has been done while he was also serving as President of the Society the past two years.

Lola Clyde reported she had made 102 appearances in the county during 1976 as a member of Moscow's Bicentennial Committee to talk on the theme: "Take pride in your country's past; take part in your country's future." Such love and loyalty must surely bear good fruit in a growing interest in our pioneer history among the many hundreds who heard her. In fact, some part of the 27 new members who joined the Society in 1976 can be safely credited to Lola's efforts.

Total membership now stands at 234, reported Don DuSault, membership chairman. Of these, 102 are regular, 129 life, and 3 business. A goal of twice this total seems a modest figure out of Latah County's more than 21,000 permanent population, not counting college students.

The 65 new members added in the last two years--a 38% increase--is most encouraging. Perhaps we should be looking at student membership possibilities as a way of building interest at grade and high school levels.

Museum Events of the Fall Quarter

October 31--"An Evening of the Macabre" was enjoyed by a capacity crowd of approximately sixty people. The program included U. of I. faculty members Ron McFarland, David Barber, and Gary Williams reading appropriate literature. A brief seance was also held, and the crowd enjoyed punch served from a huge pumpkin shell.

November 14--The Mortar Board organization met at McConnell Mansion with Grace Wicks serving as hostess. The young women enjoyed a tour of the house and a discussion of public service projects, past and present.

December--Moscow Junior Miss candidates came for a group photo in an old-fashioned parlor setting. Then a flurry of activities in preparation for Christmas. The Moscow High School home economics classes under Mary Blanton decorated the Mansion in the manner of the 1890s. A magnificent fir tree donated by the University City Four Wheelers Club was authentically decorated. Cranberry and popcorn garlands were strung, gingerbread men baked, paper dolls cut out, and ornaments fashioned by hand. The tree decorations were completed with candles (unlit), recalling the style of the late Victorian period.

Front porch railings and the inside staircase were garlanded with evergreen branches. Bernadine Adair Cornelison and Ione Adair confirmed the twining of greens up the staircase as authentic from their childhood in the Mansion. Old paper garlands and arrangements of fruit and holly completed the interior decoration.

These efforts were well rewarded. Record numbers of elementary school students visited the museum during December to admire the decorations and the exhibit of

toys from the turn of the century that was installed early in the month. Many toys used by early Moscow boys and girls proved amazing to visiting youngsters accustomed to Bionic men and women dolls. Mrs. Blanton and all her class members deserve special thanks for contributing so much.

Growing interest in the museum was shown by the record numbers of visitors in 1976. The 2,559 total attendance was slightly above the previous high of 2,526 in Expo year 1974. All the increase was in adult numbers, as student visitors were down. Registration of visitors never has been complete, so the figures are only approximate and are always below actual totals. The 5-year comparison of recorded numbers is:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Total</u>
1972	--	--	1,000 plus
1973	1,250	750	2,000
1974	1,471	1,055	2,526
1975	1,238	778	2,016
1976	1,863	696	2,559

From the Desk of the Curator

Having now been a resident of the McConnell Mansion for a year, I feel quite at home here and have acquired a good knowledge of the museum and its daily operations. Getting acquainted with the membership has been a great boost. I have been pleased with the response to museum programs and hope to continue such activities to stimulate public interest and draw new visitors and members. Various outside financial resources exist for the advancement of such programs, and a great wealth of historical and human resources exists in our immediate area.

Plans for new exhibits on the second floor are taking shape and will be implemented through the spring. An exhibit about the Scandinavian settlers of the area is still in need of artifacts, although some materials have come to light through interested people. Another

planned exhibit will include the stories of some early Moscow businessmen. The period kitchen is still in need of a wood range, and again I ask prospective donors to call the museum. Two and possibly more University of Idaho museology students are scheduled to assist with these exhibits and other practical aspects of museum work.

In addition to programs and exhibits, a project to encourage more public school student participation could perhaps be undertaken this year. Extending invitations to the county's schools and offering a special student membership could produce a desirable increase in visitation and participation by students and their families. The possibility of constructing traveling exhibits for the schools is also being investigated, as noted elsewhere in this Bulletin.

As 1977 progresses, I hope the Latah County Museum can maintain high quality educational exhibits, expand its noticeability through programs and the media, and move forward in its efforts to perfect and expand the existing facilities. I am proud to be involved with the organization and am eager to continue doing my best to maintain the museum and its projects.

--Lee Magnuson

Funding Help Possibilities

New possibilities for support of LCMS programs were noted at the annual meeting by Dr. David Rice of the U. of I. Department of Sociology-Anthropology. Later, speaking as a member of the state board which reviews project applications for the Association for the Humanities in Idaho, Dr. Rice explained the possibilities of these various sources to President Donna Bray, V.P. Art Clanton, and members Lillian Otness and Kenneth Platt at an introductory consultation on January 13. Three potential sources Dr. Rice listed are:

1. Association for the Humanities in Idaho (AHI),

our state's organization for channeling funds of the National Endowment for the Humanities. This source grants money on a matching fund basis for projects dealing with human values in process of change. To qualify for help, projects must a) involve public policy (e.g., land use planning), b) bring adult Idahoans into dialogue on the subject matter of the project, and c) utilize professionally trained people from a humanities field (art, music, philosophy, etc.) in both the planning and the execution of the project. The matching amount put into the project by the sponsoring agency (the Museum Society in this case) may be in contributions of work time, office facilities, etc., in lieu of money, to the extent that these are needed.

2. National Registry Office of the National Park Service. The National Registry is interested in restoration, renovation, preservation, or improvement of historic sites and structures. The McConnell Mansion, as a listed National Registry historic building, is eligible for use of funds from this source.

3. The Idaho Historical Society. This organization can provide help on historic research projects such as, for example, documenting the lives of the McConnell family.

The group also discussed other buildings which might be acquired for museum use. Based on Dr. Rice's information, the participants felt that securing funds from the National Park Service for the needed improvements in the basement of the Mansion might well be a strong possibility.

Ideas for projects under the AHI and the Idaho Historical Society are being explored. Members are urged to offer any suggestions they may have for projects under any of the three assistance sources.

Treasurer's Report

The overall financial position of the Society showed a strong gain during 1976, from a beginning balance of \$2,919.46 to a closing balance of \$7,231.45. Most of the gain was in the general operating fund. The Publications Fund gained about \$788, while Oral History Project receipts fell \$54 below costs. The following tables show details:

Annual Financial Report, Calendar Year 1976

General Receipts

Balance on hand 1/1/76	\$ 2,919.46
County allocations for 1976	9,000.00
Membership dues	279.50
Publications Fund Receipts	1,039.55
Donations (\$150 time capsule)	569.50
Door receipts	621.00
Oral History donations	1,217.00
Miscellaneous income	18.95
Total 1976 credits	<u>\$15,665.56</u>

Summary, operating funds balances

General checking fund balance	\$5,493.85
Oral History Fund balance	-- --
Publications Fund balance	1,737.60
Overall year end balance	<u>\$7,231.45</u>

Oral History Funds

Balance on hand 1/1/76	\$ 156.24
Donations and Magic Show receipts	1,217.00
Expenses	<u>1,427.31</u>
Deficit	(54.07)
From general account	54.07

Publications Fund

Balance on hand 1/1/76	\$ 937.78
Income	1,039.55
Expenses	<u>239.73</u>
Year end balance	<u>\$1,737.60</u>

Savings Accounts

Bank of Idaho (Building Fund)

Balance on hand 1/1/76	\$1,080.00
Interest and memorials	502.75
	<hr/>
	\$1,582.75
Savings certificate bought	1,000.00
Balance in this bank	<hr/>
	582.84

Idaho First National Bank (Building Fund)

Savings certificates in safety deposit box	\$3,300.00
--	------------

Total savings \$3,882.84

1977 Budget Distribution

Salaries:

Curator (Oct-Dec)	\$ 900
Transcriber (Jan-Sept)	2,700
Office operations	500
Taxes and insurance	500
Utilities	1,800
Permanent fixtures	500
Displays	500
Maintenance	600
Oral History:	
Permanent tapes	700
Directory preparation	600
Bulletin publishing costs	300
Miscellaneous costs	350
Total	<hr/>
	\$9,950*

*Amount above \$9,000 to be taken from 1976 carryover

LATAH COUNTY
MUSEUM SOCIETY
110 South Adams St.
Moscow, Idaho 83843

Non-profit Organ.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 161
Moscow, Idaho

Recent Acquisition

The museum has acquired a copy of a tape-slide show recently completed by the Kendrick Garden Club dealing with historic roses of the local area. Watch for announcement of opportunities to see this interesting presentation.

Museum Hours

The hours when the McConnell Mansion is regularly open to the public are:

Wednesday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Closed Monday and Tuesday

Change of Address

If you are moving, please notify the Society of your change of address. Mail sent under our bulk permit is not forwarded nor returned to us. Help us to keep our mailing list up to date, so that you will not miss getting your copies of the Bulletin.