
LATAH LEGACY

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE LATAH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



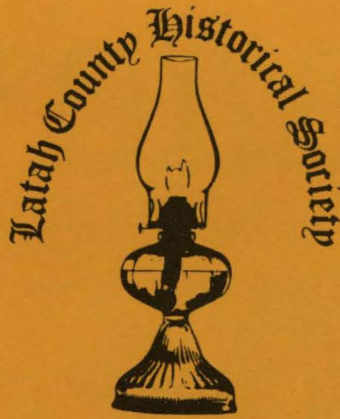
Biography Issue:

CAROL RYRIE BRINK, OUR IDAHO AUTHOR

THE LIFE OF FREDERIC COROSS CHURCH

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Cover Photos: Carol Ryrie Brink as a young woman. LCHS collection.
Frederic C. Church as a young man. U of I collection.

CAROL RYRIE BRINK, OUR IDAHO AUTHOR

by Mary E. Reed

But I can only make a fiction of it, and write down how it seemed to me that it must have been. So any tale is a shadow of real life, and what we write an echo of a sound made far away. (Snow in the River)

The fertile memory and imagination of Carol Ryrie Brink transformed those shadows and echoes of a Moscow childhood into books which will forever delight children and adults. Carol's life spanned eight decades, 1895 to 1981, with the first twenty-two years spent in Moscow. In this period the town was shedding the rougher edges of the homesteader's west, and its citizens, mindful of their isolation from the larger world, were consciously striving to bring gentility and a patina of culture into their community. It was in that era of literary reading circles, traveling theatrical groups, and a multiplication of lodges and churches that Carol Ryrie grew up.

Carol's earliest years were marked with the opposing but complementary strengths of her grandfather, Dr. Watkins, whose "big, upstanding figure with the fierce black eyes, the bristling eyebrows and the mutton chop sideburns" were familiar to every person in Moscow; and the somewhat more enigmatic grandmother, Caroline Watkins. Gram Watkins, the headstrong and plucky heroine of Caddie Woodlawn, spent the happiest years of her life as a child; as the wife of the gregarious and energetic Doctor she cultivated a rich inner life, preferring the company of close friends to the social bustle of the little town. Carol's father, Alex Ryrie, had

immigrated with three brothers from the Ryrie's meager farm in Scotland. One uncle returned home to Scotland, disgusted with the independent nature of American women in the West where the men milked the cows. Another brother, Henry, worked as a harnessmaker. Donald, the most ambitious and charming of the brothers, involved himself in various and somewhat speculative business concerns. Alex, "remarkably upright in the days when that was prized," married the eldest Watkins daughter, Henrietta, a talented musician who "likes things to be gay, lively and happy." Unfortunately, Henrietta, like her youngest sister Winnifred, was headstrong and spoiled by an indulgent father. Neither sister was keen on fulfilling the routine duties of housewife and mother. The middle sister, Elsie, inherited her mother's practical nature but remained a spinster until late in life. Both Dr. Watkins and Alex Ryrie impressed the town with their civic mindedness. Dr. Watkins contributed a forceful personality to efforts to build the University and was an early regent of that institution. Alex Ryrie, a staunch Presbyterian who taught Sunday school and designed the weekly church bulletins, helped survey and name the streets and also served a term as mayor.

This rich leaven of personalities and talents foretold an active and interesting childhood for the Watkins' first grandchild. Then, within five short years, a clustering of tragedies swept away father, grandfather, and mother. Alex died of consumption in 1900; in 1901 Dr. Watkins was murdered in the Moscow streets by

a deranged young man. After Alex Ryrrie's death, Henrietta hastily married a second time to a timber locater, Nat Brown, alleged to have been a complete scoundrel. He certainly helped to dissipate the small resources of the family, drank and socialized to an excess, and finally drove Henrietta to a painful suicidal death in 1905.

How quickly these events transformed a family of leadership and prominence to one marked by tragedy and financial struggle. The change was both public and rapid; the eight-year-old Carol knew--perhaps from whispers and her own intuition--that something sad and sorrowful had impressed itself upon her family. For Gram Watkins, these sorrows had come too fast. Instead of struggling she retired into herself, keeping to her house and garden, sharing the household responsibilities with Elsie and taking in her granddaughter. In the early years Carol had been a frequent visitor at Gram's house, preferring it to her own household fractured by the quarrels and intemperance of Henrietta and Nat. Now Gram and Aunt Elsie would shape and guide Carol's childhood. The hearty and lavish love of Uncle Donald, the quiet strength of Caroline Watkins, and the practical care of Aunt Elsie greatly alleviated the pain and loneliness of those years. Except for a short time when the three women moved with Donald to Spokane to keep house for him, Carol spent her childhood and youth in Moscow, learning to be self-reliant, independent, and conscious of the existence of suffering in the world.

Carol realized that she was different from her friends. She lived in a quiet house where a grandmother and aunt took naps in the afternoon, and she yearned for the hubbub of brothers and sisters and youthful parents. Forced to accommodate herself to the calmer pace of the Watkins' home, Carol quickly learned to make her own amusements. One of her best friends was Timmy, the Iceland pony who took her on long, solitary rides into the Idaho hills. Her inner and outer sense eagerly responded to this freedom. Possessing a



Gram Watkins. C. R. Brink Estate photo.

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lively imagination and the need to invent companions, Carol devised elaborate stories which sometimes lasted for weeks. She also noted the details of the landscape, the changing seasons, the wildflowers and weeds, the colors and textures of the hills.

The pony rides were extremely important because they gave her the means to easily move around town and become familiar with the inhabitants and the different sections, from the swinging doors of the saloons on Third Street which emitted their boozy odor, to the shanties along the railroad tracks, to the dignified homes of the town's leading citizens. Carol was also fortunate in having the trust of her Grandmother and Aunt which gave her the freedom to explore at will the town and the countryside.

If her childhood was darkened by the loss of parents, it was also happily illuminated by the uncommon story telling talents of Caroline Watkins. In the mornings, Carol often climbed into bed with her grandmother, entreating to be told a



Dr. W. W. Watkins. LCHS collection.

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story. The stories of Caroline Woodhouse, her brothers and sisters became so real and familiar that if Gram changed a detail "on purpose or because she was sleepy," Carol would protest, "That's not the way it goes!" The simplicity and grace of a good story teller is deceptive. What Carol learned from her Grandmother was much more than the enjoyment of a tale. She learned the importance of details, the selection of dramatic elements, and the subtle coincidences which knit together the common and uncommon.

Gram's stories served another purpose which would be crucial for a writer. Carol grew up with a keen sense of her interesting and somewhat unusual forebearers: a father from a Scottish "croft," a grandmother from pioneer Wisconsin of Indians, circuit riders and country schoolhouses, and a grandfather who was an integral part of Moscow's history. Through the communication of these stories about her family, Carol felt that her own life was important and a part of theirs.

Although Carol loved to write and began writing poetry and keeping a diary at an early age, few of those around her knew of her ambitions to be a writer. To most Moscow residents, Carol was a quiet and pleasant child who gave other children rides in her pony cart. An extreme shyness prevented Carol from displaying her writing talents. Her embarrassment at being in the public eye sprang as a defense against the notoriety surrounding her family's misfortunes and the uncomfortable knowledge that her life was so different from the lives of her contemporaries.

The dilemma of wanting to see her writing published and dreading the attention it would bring is captured in Carol's book for children, Louly. The incident was real: Carol submitted a poem to the children's section of a Spokane newspaper when she was around 13 years old. To her horror, the newspaper printed the poem along with a drawing.

Louly held out the paper for Chrys to see. There it was, her poem. Chrys felt as if she would sink into the ground . . . She thought that she had never felt more miserable in all her life before. . . . She remembered the rage of ambitious hurry that she had been in just two weeks ago when she had written her poem and drawn her picture. And why was she so ashamed now? She really didn't know.

Only later did Carol learn how to accept praise without being ashamed as her friend Beth Soulen (the model for the fictional Louly) know how to do with poise and graciousness.

Louly was not afraid of being different. She did what she longed to do as well as she could, and when people praised her, she accepted the praise modestly but with pleasure.

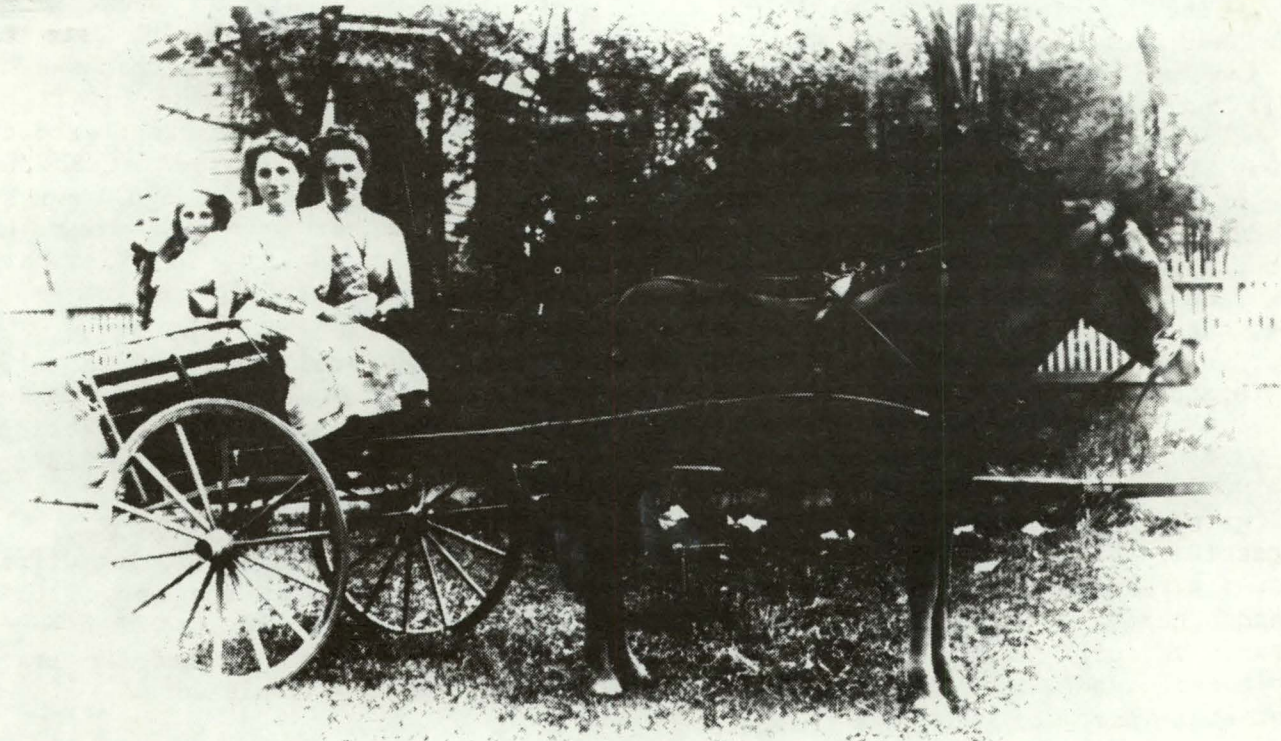
Overcoming this handicap marked an important stage: a self-confidence and participation in a larger world of school publications and skits, dances, parties,

and all the enjoyments of the typical life of a charming and intelligent young woman. Carol attained this new freedom at the Portland Academy where she had transferred from Moscow, out of frustration and unhappiness. During her junior and senior years, Carol began to write more seriously. As the Academy published a monthly magazine, Carol decided to submit a story, shyly dropping it in the editor's box. The story was published, but this time she was thrilled instead of embarrassed, and thereafter succeeded in having a story printed in each magazine. This was, in Carol's words, a Cinderella affair. Prepared at last to come out of her "shell," she completed the last year in triumph, escorted by the handsome and popular editor to the senior prom.

Returning to Moscow to attend the University, Carol eagerly joined in the fun of a sorority and college amusements, realizing that there was a certain snobbishness about all this, but as she remembered, "happy to be in the swim at last

after being lonely and shy for so many years." Carol was society editor of the college newspaper, the Argonaut, wrote skits for her class, loaned her pony cart for the May Queen procession, and particularly enjoyed the weekly meetings of the Sans Souci club, Sunday afternoons at Professor Wilkie Collins's apartment in the McConnell house. There the students discussed literature and read their own works over tea, toast and marmalade, enjoying the slightly risqué nature of the gatherings in a bachelor's room. [See "Museum Piece" in this issue for details.]

With this independence and maturation came a feeling of restlessness, a sense that Moscow and the University were too small. With her good friend Nora, Carol transferred to the University of California at Berkeley to complete her senior year. This was also the year she and Raymond Brink, whom she had met as a school girl when he was a serious teacher of 19 at the Moscow Prep School, decided to marry after her graduation. Their



Carol with friends in her pony cart.
C. R. Brink Estate photo.

friendship which had endured for many years proved to be a solid base for a long and fruitful marriage.

Before Carol moved from Idaho and away from the setting of the painful and happy memories, she had to endure one last, bitter disappointment. Aunt Elsie, whose dominant personality now ran the Watkins' home, opposed the marriage and refused to allow Carol to be married at home. Elsie, frustrated in her own unsuccessful attempts to become financially independent and have her own career, now felt that her niece was surrendering her chance for a writing profession in choosing to marry. Heartbroken at being denied the pleasure of a wedding ceremony at home and among her friends, Carol gratefully accepted the invitation of her future mother-in-law to be married in Wisconsin. As she travelled east, the world unfolding outside the window of the railroad car, Carol remembered how limited Moscow seemed to her. What a backwater it was. Soon she would realize the outside was not so different.

Her new life was initiated by an informal wedding at the Brink family's lakeside cottage. Raymond Brink hastily gathered a huge bouquet of wildflowers to replace the formal one which did not arrive in time. This gallant gesture eased her shyness while the sight of so many new relations--young and old--delighted and momentarily overwhelmed the Idaho bride who had grown up in such sober society.

The happiness and well-being which accompanied the wife of a talented and successful mathematics professor at the University of Minnesota, two children of her own, and frequent trips abroad, did not, however, deter Carol Brink from her own ambitions. These family duties meant that her own writing would often be done on the end of the ironing board, at the kitchen sink, and when the children, David and Nora, were asleep. But the passion for writing and the persistent memories of an Idaho childhood were compelling and undeniable forces.



Carol as a young woman. C. R. Brink Estate photo.

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Carol began her writing career modestly enough, submitting stories to her son's Sunday school paper (a total of around 200), and then completing her first children's book, Anything Can Happen on the River. Even before Macmillan published this book, Carol turned her attentions to the stories of Caroline Woodhouse. She visited the Woodhouse's pioneer homestead, talked to local residents, and wrote to Gram to check details. Gram's stories had encompassed six years of adventures of the five Woodhouse children; these years now had to be compressed into one, and some incidents altered in the interests of a cohesive book.

The genius of the book lay in Carol's ability to bring the characters alive, select the small details which illuminate character, and reproduce a natural dialogue that rings true to the reader's inner ear. When the book was completed, Mrs. Watkins remarked in amazement to her granddaughter: "But, Kit, you never knew my father and mother. How could you draw them just as they were?" Carol, who had

listened with tireless enjoyment to the cadences of Gram's words and phrases, answered, "Why Gram, you told me." Caddie Woodlawn appeals strongly to our emotions, to us as children and as adults. This reflects Carol's own style and philosophy of writing. Carol described herself as an emotional rather than an intellectual writer who began each work with a "feeling for a person or place," and intended that her characters grow and change as the book progressed. These factors--the details that delight our eye and ear, the self-awareness of the characters, and the emotional commitment of the author to her story--insure the continued vitality and endurance of Carol Brink's writing.

Caddie Woodlawn achieved immediate and permanent success. In 1936 it received the prestigious Newberry Medal for the year's most distinguished contribution to children's literature, propelling both book and author to literary distinction. For Carol, the Newberry award encouraged her to continue writing and won her many friends. Later when Macmillan requested that Carol produce a Caddie series similar to those written by Laura Ingalls Wilder, Carol refused. Magical Melons which contains some stories not used in Caddie is the sequel, but Carol decided there would be no others. Because the children who read Caddie knew that it was based on real characters and events, Carol felt she could not misuse that trust by fabricating new stories.

Although Carol wrote a total of 28 books and plays, her stronger works are those written from her early memories and experiences. To Carol this was not surprising as her emotions proved the greater impetus to her work. It amused her to think that the forty years spent in Minnesota had inspired no books, except for a non-fiction account of the Twin Cities, the research for which she found extremely tiring and boring.

The three adult novels of the Moscow area were written over a period of 20 years, and were considered by the author to be



Gram Watkins, Aunt Elsie Phiel, Carol and daughter Nora Brink Hunter.
C. R. Brink Estate photo.

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a trilogy. Buffalo Coat, published in 1944, recounts the migration of her grandparents to Moscow, the internal friction of the small western community as reflected in the characters of the Doctor and Anna, the murder of Dr. Watkins, and the suicide pact of a married doctor and the young daughter of the Methodist minister. However much the novel delighted and stimulated Moscow, its impact puzzled the author who had thought that Moscow had quite forgotten her. And although Buffalo Coat was a work of fiction and not history as the author insisted, the portrayal of historical events and local characters inspired a mild tumult in Moscow as comparisons were drawn between the novel and what others remembered.

The second Idaho novel, Strangers in the Forest, published in 1959, caused little controversy and less excitement. The

central character was based on Carol's Aunt Elsie and her adventures in taking up a timber homestead in the white pine forests near Clarkia. The Moscow setting is less prominent than the great pine forests, and the central theme is one of personal courage and growth. This isolated wilderness of scattered clearings for homesteaders' cabins dominates the novel. Most of the characters do not belong here, they want only to prove up on their claims and then sell the timber, and most are demoralized by the loneliness and difficult tasks. Meggie proves an exception with her newly discovered preserverance and resourcefulness. Like the fictional Meggie, Aunt Elsie had entered the forest a "sickly green girl" and emerged "hardy and able to cope with anything."

The last of the trilogy is Snow in the River published in 1964. Because it recounts the events surrounding the suicide of Henrietta Ryrie, it was the most difficult of the three novels to write. Conversely, Snow in the River provided the greatest emotional release, a catharsis of feelings and memories which had haunted the author for almost 60 years. The novel was also Carol's favorite, partly because it included the adventures of the Ryrie brothers, Uncle Donald being her favorite and a substitute for her own father.

Snow in the River, which is the most autobiographical of the three books, examines a later phase in Moscow's history. The town builders have paved the dirt streets of Buffalo Coat and now boast of a mature University, business and social amenities. In this landscape of a progressive town, the characters play out their lives of ambition, greed, intemperance and despair. This is the second generation where the serious game of land and timber speculation jostles with the more altruistic civic and church affairs. The emotions evoked by the novel's disparate cast are intertwined with a moral perspective, one which is imbedded in all three of these novels. The issues avoid prudishness or artificial piety, reflecting the author's own struggle with re-

sponsibility to self and duty toward others. If some of her fictional characters must falter and destroy themselves, the author views their failings with genuine sympathy for she has witnessed their temptations and weaknesses. As a child, in Snow in the River, Kit refuses to succumb to the charms of Uncle Douglas's newest temptress, the fascinating Mrs. Rossiter. "I had taken my first step toward adulthood, by aligning myself with the smug and virtuous women against the charming and unvirtuous." Her life continued in that upright direction, circumspect and sober, although her imagination was stirred by the desires and flamboyant deeds of the livelier women she had observed in the past.

As a counterpoint to the three novels with their darker themes, Carol wrote children's books based on the adventures of herself and her friends in Moscow. These stories, All Over Town, Louly, and Two Are Better Than One, reflect the happier memories, an innocence and high spirits that characterize a period when children could know with some intimacy the workings of a small town. Although the books were meant to entertain children and stimulate their imaginations, they have a spirit and movement that raises them above the category of juvenile entertainment. Through their adventures the children gain a perspective on life that will guide them into the adult world.

In Louly, the friends who have spent a summer living in a tent and cooking outside lament the end of their vacation freedom, and, in a larger sense, growing up. Louly consoles them, "Nothing lovely is over and done for until the last person who remembers it forgets." The two close friends in Two Are Better than One (who are modeled on Carol and her best friend Charlotte Lewis) are ready for high school at the end of the book. They have put away their dolls and finished a romantic, melodramatic novel. Their teacher tells them on their last day of elementary school that now they must begin to widen their appreciation of the real world. ". . . now you must begin to look around

you here at home. Use all of your senses to find out what kind of a place you are living in. . . . Then someday when you wish to write real books, you will put your real experiences into them. . . . Perhaps someday you will even write about this very year in your lives in Idaho."

The process of growth and change is more serious and complex in the Idaho novels with their sharper focus of loss and death, and the crueler yet more beautiful world. In Buffalo Coat, Anna, like Gram and Carol, accepts the death of her husband with an inner serenity gained from overcoming previous disappointments and losses. She has learned to compromise and accept:

In all of their variety, [the mountains] were the only certain thing, the serene, unchanging peaks which rose above the quicksands of passing days and of humanity. And birth and death, and gain and loss, and even love itself, these were the shadows and the transiencies. Anna stood for a moment with the smell of the late summer flowers in her nostrils, and then she dropped her hands to her sides and went alone into the quiet house. In spite of all that had happened to her, she felt at peace.

In Strangers in the Forest, Meggie has lost her claim to her forest homestead which symbolized her independence and her transformation into a self-reliant and courageous woman. She reflects on her loss:

There was a time in there, a few peaceful weeks, when I had a home and intended to live in it and keep it. I really meant to make it a home, to stay, to love it, to have my little house under the trees. . . . Well, I gambled. . . . I didn't know what I was getting into, but I wouldn't change it now. I gambled and I lost. I grew up doing it.

In Snow in the River, Carol Brink speaks directly to us through the autobiographi-



Mrs. Brink in her later years.
LCHS collection.

* * *

cal character of Kit. As the child and the adult, she grapples with those tender and wrenching memories and the process of disconnecting ones present life and emotions from the past. In this novel Carol acknowledges the burden of the years in Idaho and demonstrates her ability to transcend that legacy by framing the painful scenes with kindness, pity and forgiveness. The farewell to the past comes at the beginning of the novel as Carol studies the photographs on the mantel of the Ryrie's Scottish birthplace. The photographs of the Ryrie brothers and their American wives and children evoke her desire to recapture their lives.

All of the faces in the old photographs looked hopefully alert and eager, but I knew that the eyes of most of them were closed in death. Better than any other living person, perhaps, I knew how they had been gay and happy or cheated and sad, thwarted or successful, good or mistaken, and what strange and interesting things had befallen all of them. If I could tell it, as it really was! But I can only make a fiction of it, and write down how it seemed to me that it must have been.

The epilogue to Carol Brink's life--fore-shortened in this novel as it is in her

own account of her life--contains the happiness of her married life, the satisfaction with her work, and the wisdom of her years. As Grandmother Watkins had realized the importance of securing happiness from adversity, Kit and the real Carol also learn these lessons:

As I grew older my life was satisfying. . . . My college days were not affluent, but in better ways they proved rich and exciting, for they were filled with new friends and small personal triumphs. If I had had a lonely and sometimes unhappy childhood, it proved to be an excellent conditioner for life. I had learned to recognize and seize upon the good and fortunate when it came, and to weather the tiresome and unrewarding without rebellion. So I made a happy marriage and had a son.

After Snow in the River Carol wrote one more adult novel, the Bellini Look, but this was written just for fun. Although Carol resolved not to begin any new books, she continued writing her personal thoughts, much of it as poetry. The habits of a lifetime could not be broken. A book of her poems, Shreds and Patches, reveals the undiminished talents of a sensitive and perceptive writer. In the poetry, as in the prose, the world unfolds in the details of flowers and birds, the sense of sight and touch, the forgivable imperfections of mankind. The poems praise the creative efforts of mankind which are in themselves sufficient reward for the artist.

Everyone is silent, looking, walking.
Oh, artists who burst your hearts
To put your souls on canvas,
Was it for this?
But, no, the doing was enough.
(Museum)

And above all, there is the magnificence of the natural world which dwarfs man's understanding.

Let me remain silent.
Some strange force that is beyond my
comprehension has lavished kindness
and mercy upon me.
I have seen miracles in seeds and
drops of water;
I have beheld the convoluted wonder of
a rose,
A shell, a baby's ear.
I have known love
Which makes me bold to think
That somewhere a greater force than
mine exists;
That sometime I may be drowned in a
sea of compassion.
(After a circle meeting)

Much of this article is based on interviews the author conducted with Carol Brink at her home in San Diego, California, July 1982. Copies of the interviews will soon be available at the University of Idaho, Idaho State Historical Society, and Latah County Historical Society. Funding for the project was provided by the Association for the Humanities in Idaho.

Of the Idaho novels, only Snow in the River is still in print. However, the Latah County Historical Society plans to reissue Buffalo Coat. The Society has also published Four Girls on a Homestead, an account by Carol Brink of a summer she and three high school friends spent in the Idaho forests with Aunt Elsie on her homestead claim. Copies can be obtained from the Society. Several of the children's books are still in print, including Caddie Woodlawn, Magical Melons, and All Over Town.



MUSEUM PIECE

by Carol Brink

The Latah County Historical Society has made a museum of the old McConnell Mansion. The house was given to the county by its last owner, Dr. Frederic C. Church, who, until his death in 1966, was Professor of history at the University of Idaho. I never knew Dr. Church, although I understand that he is as worthy of a personal memoir as any of the other mansion inhabitants. I have many random memories of the old house, and perhaps they are worth setting down.

I remember once, when I was quite small, that I saw the original owner and builder of the house walking down Third Street, and someone said to me, "There goes Governor McConnell. Remember that you have seen him."

He was always Governor McConnell to the people of our town, although he was ex-governor to all of the other people of the state. As a child I believed that he was the first governor of Idaho, but I am told now that he was the second or third. At any rate for us he was the governor. I own a copy of his History of Idaho, which is a curiously unscientific mixture of fascinating anecdote and day-by-day recording of purely routine matters--unassimilated, perhaps that is the word for it. He was a man of action rather than a social scientist. As well as being governor, he was one of Idaho's first senators, and, what was perhaps an equally great distinction, he was the father-in-law of Senator William E. Borah. The mental picture that I retain of Governor McConnell is that of a small, stocky man in a dark suit with flowing white hair and beard--a fleeting glimpse, then gone.

In 1883 he began to build a large American-Gothic house on one of our hills. It was finished in 1886 and is supposed to have cost, together with the furnishings, about \$60,000, a large amount of money for those days. [Current evidence exists to show that the house was completely built in 1886. See the Latah Legacy, Vol. 9-10, No. 4-1, Fall 1980-Winter 1981, pp. 6-9.] It has been durable. So it stands there today, dignified, stiff, slightly formidable. I knew quite well the Adair girls who lived there during most of my childhood, but, except for a very vague recollection of some sort of formal birthday party, my memories of the house are not connected with children's play. It was the type of house in which children did not play, it seems to me. Perhaps, someone can contradict me on this. To me it always appeared sinister.

For many years after the governor's day, the mansion was a superior type of high-class rooming house. Only very select people, mostly university professors, were taken as roomers, and it was considered a distinct privilege to be able to stay at the McConnell Mansion. On the second floor there was a large room (with connecting bedroom and bath, I believe) which was particularly desirable. It was the home for many years of an eccentric bachelor named Isaac Cogswell. Dr. Cogswell was head of the Music Department at the university and arbiter of musical taste for the whole community. Whenever there was a concert of any degree of importance, he was there playing March Militaire with great intensity and virtuosity. I never heard him play any other piece, and this one still rings in my



McConnell Mansion about 1910. LCHS collection.

* * *

mind's ear just as he played it, his nearsighted eyes close to the piano, his powerful hands banging away with eloquent precision. He must have loved March Militaire very much to have played it so often and so passionately. That it might have been the only concert piece in his repertoire was naturally unthinkable.

As a pupil of his I came to know the large room on the second floor of the governor's mansion with horrendous intimacy. The grand piano, the partly shuttered windows, the long and slippery staircase to the upper regions, the bleakness of it all comes back to me now with overwhelming oppression.

I enjoy music when somebody else makes it, but I am not a music maker. In fact, I have a mental block about music-making that would give the psychoanalysts a field day to explain. I understand the mental block pretty well myself. I had a beauti-

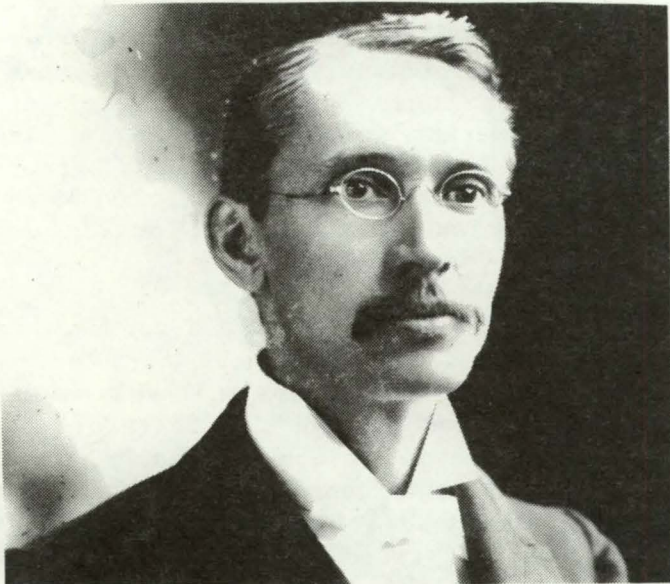
ful mother who was a gifted musician. She died young. My early youth was plagued by people who looked at her shy and awkward child, a child who resembled the father, and said to me, "What a beautiful and talented mother you had, dear. You are not a bit like her, are you? But perhaps you inherited her musical ability? Do you play the piano, dear?" The answer was "no," and "no, no, no!"

But my failure to perform was not because of lack of interest on the part of my family. "Her mother was a lovely musician," reasoned my aunt, "therefore we must make one of her too." Even Dr. Cogswell, the supreme commander, who had known my mother and sometimes played duets with her, even he agreed to see what he could do with me, although it was not his habit to bother with untalented children.

So I trudged drearily up the long slippery staircase, conscious that, when I sat down

at the grand piano, absolutely nothing would come out, that The Good Fairy Waltz was beyond me, that my fingers could not follow the intricacies of Sweet Clover, my mind could not untangle the 4-4 beat of Little Toy Soldier on Parade. I knew and marvelled at how dumb I was. In other fields of endeavor I had a healthy respect for my capabilities, but here I was defeated before I began. No one knows how I suffered.

Dr. Cogswell didn't. He welcomed me every week with some measure of gradually ebbing hope in the pale eyes behind the thick lenses. For my mother's sake he gave me the benefit of the doubt. I was grateful to him, but, at the same time, I understood that there must come a snapping point for anybody's patience. I used to sit down at the piano with actual fear that someday he would take me by the heels and dash my brains out against the wall in a fit of rage at my incredible stupidity. Actually, I suppose, I had nothing to fear from him. It was much, much later that I learned that his sadistic preferences were all directed toward little boys. But I still shudder at the thought of a grand piano in a partially shuttered room at the head of a long slippery staircase.



Dr. I. J. Cogswell. U of I collection.

Yet later that room was to become a delightful place to me. If I did not know that it was the same room, my fancy would certainly deceive me. What happened to Dr. Cogswell, I do not remember, but I assume that death removed him.

At the time that I became a freshman in college the large room at the head of the stairs in the old McConnell house was inhabited by Professor Wilkie Collins of the English Department. I can only suppose that Professor Collins had a romantic and literarily-minded mother, who, when she married a Collins, determined at once that she would name her first born Wilkie. I never heard that he was in any other way connected with the Victorian novelist. The original Wilkie Collins, from all accounts, seems to have been a dull and uninteresting fellow in spite of his lively imaginings concerning moonstones and women in white.

But our Wilkie Collins was an expansive, good-looking man with a rolling nautical gait which was supposed to have originated in his years of deck pacing in the Merchant Marine. He had more of an affinity with Conrad than with the original Wilkie, and we all felt that he had seen life, not just read about it. This glamorous aura of having lived genuinely rather than vicariously is much more important to the freshman student than the authorities ever realize. We hung on Wilkie's every word, uttered in a lazy drawl that seemed to roll with the sea as surely as his walk did. He had a sense of humor that crinkled his round, deep-set eyes, turned up the corners of his ample mouth and let us glimpse the white teeth in the well-tanned face. An English teacher, oh, assuredly more than that--an influence, certainly an influence!

We all competed for his casual favor. I remember how thrilled I was when he suggested that I might do some screening of pessimistic poetry for him in anticipation of a treatise on that subject which he proposed some day to write. I was at that stage of development when the pessimistic poets greatly appealed to me and

I leapt to the assignment with almost fanatical zeal. Actually I think that my enthusiasm frightened Professor Collins just a little bit. He had me into his office one day to ask if my health was good. He did not wish to run the risk of sending me into a psychic decline along with the pessimistic poets. But I must have convinced him of my physical soundness, for he let me continue with the project until my own interest gradually declined. I don't know what ever because of the treatise on pessimistic poetry. I have never heard of its being published, but then World War I came along, and Wilkie Collins was one of the first to leave us to return to the Merchant Marine. Yes, he, like Governor McConnell, was a doer, not a commentator; but of course, the war was another story, the end of a small and safe world that was still unchallenged for us when Wilkie lived on the second floor of the mansion.

Sometimes when I cannot sleep at night, I put myself into a drowsy mood by repeating to myself Wordsworth's sonnet, "The world is too much with us, late and soon, getting and spending we lay waste our powers. Little we see in nature that is ours, we've given our hearts away, a sordid boon--" It usually works as a gentle soporific, and I am grateful for it. To learn this poem was one of the few rote requirements that Wilkie asked of his freshmen. In the main, he was satisfied to give us large ideas and general concepts and not to bother with sterile specifics. But on this one point he was adamant. Every freshman had to be able to recite The World Is Too Much With Us. It was like the church expecting every Christian to know the Lord's Prayer and the Twenty-third Psalm. Wilkie felt that every civilized teen-ager must have Wordsworth's sonnet on the tip of his tongue. Many of the boys in the class, while admiring Wilkie for his adventurous past, did not feel it essential to be civilized to this extreme extent. But Wilkie took valuable class time to make every student recite the poem until he was sure that each one had it. I remember still how some of the boys in vengeful

frustration bellowed out the "Great God, I'd rather be a pagan" line. But Wilkie only smiled his Mona Lisa smile and never gave up.

I have always hated to learn by rote, and consequently my stock of quotations is pitifully small. A few Walter de la Mare poems learned for fun in spite of myself, some totally useless lines from Evangeline knocked into me by a less perceptive teacher than Wilkie Collins, these and a very few others are among the paucity of poems that I can repeat word for word to myself in the dark hours of the night. But there is always the great, calming organ swell of The World Is Too Much With Us to fall back upon. I wonder how many other freshmen of the year 1914 in Idaho accompany their wakeful nights with the sonorous measures of a never-to-be forgotten poem.

Wilkie Collins had no apparent female connections. He was so attractive that we all wondered at that and speculation ran wild. It was said that he had fled to the far west from a disastrous marriage. It was said that he was in love with a lady baritone. The fact was that nobody knew a thing, but the girls all loved him just as much as if they had known--maybe more.

It was a college custom for the various sororities to invite favorite professors to luncheon on Sunday noons, and Wilkie Collins was always in demand. The sororities tried to stagger their company luncheons somewhat, so that the same faculty members were not invited to several houses on the same day. Thus the Gamma Phi Betas might invite several admired professors to luncheon on the first Sunday of the month, while the Delta Gammas or Kappa Kappa Gammas might pick the second or the third Sundays for their entertaining. When company was not expected the sorority sisters often came down to luncheon in curlers. I remember one such Sunday on which the Gamma Phis, unprepared for guests, were comfortably relaxed in old clothes, curlers and bedroom slippers, when suddenly the doorbell rang and there stood Wilkie Collins, hungrily looking

for lunch. No one knew what to do except to invite him in and give him potluck. He did not seem to notice the curlers or the fact that there were no other guests beside himself. He had a fine flair for unaffected enjoyment and now he was content to be here and to make himself amusing. Instead of the company pot roast or stewed chicken with dumplings, he seemed to relish the lowly hash that the cook had prepared. His humorous invention flowed freely in anecdote and lazy comment. The girls forgot their curlers and bedroom slippers. It was a marvelous occasion. We talked about that luncheon for years, and it was made the more memorable for us by the fact that the Delta Gammas in their best clothes had waited half an hour for a missing guest before they gave up and served the stewed chicken. Wilkie never knew the difference.

Toward the end of my freshman year I was invited to attend a select group of eight students who were to meet in Wilkie's rooms on alternate Sunday evenings. Two of my best friends, with whom I had collaborated on a prize-winning playlet, and another girl selected for her literary leaning were invited and there were four equally arty boys. The boys were upper classmen while we girls were all freshmen. It was terribly flattering. To make matters more enticing, it was understood that the Dean of Woman was seriously concerned. Freshman girls meeting in a man's room with older boys! In those days it was an unthinkable situation, and, perhaps, we were riding the first faint ripple of the great tidal wave that was soon to sweep away all conventions and restrictions for the female undergraduate.

But actually nothing could have been more innocent or charming than those Sunday evenings in Wilkie's big room. We made toast on an old toaster and ate it with marmalade and tea, and we were unabashedly ourselves, with life, death, love and the fabulous world to discuss and pronounce upon. After much cogitation we named ourselves the Sans Souci Club. This was shortened in private to the "Sans C Club," meaning "without chaperone." We read

aloud things that we had written or had found admirable in the writings of published authors. Wilkie let us do the talking, but he invented informal little projects for us that seemed to be fun and not hard labor.

I remember that one of the boys and I were given the task of making a translation (which Wilkie said that he very much needed) of a French libretto of Le Jongleur de Notre Dame. It was written in a complicated French verse form, and Wilkie never suggested what kind of translation we were to make. We decided to do one in the same rhyme and meter as the original French. We both knew French; we both wrote poetry; QED it would be very simple. We had a lot of fun. We spent hours at it with the concentration and alacrity that we seldom brought to school assignments. Miraculously we produced several pages of poetic translation. Then suddenly one day we found ourselves rhyming ditches with breeches. We looked at each other and burst out laughing. After a few more feeble attempts we let the whole thing slide. Wilkie never rebuked us. I'm sure that he had achieved as much as he expected and he must have been more than satisfied.

Oh, the lovely Sans Souci Club! The war came and it was all over, but I remember it. I remember the light and gaiety and inspiration that filled the big room on the second floor of the old McConnell Mansion. All of my memories of horror connected with the grand piano, the half-shuttered windows, the long slippery staircase, were overlaid with memories of warmth and unalloyed pleasure. What wonders can be worked by a good teacher, a congenial subject, and the will to learn.

Someday I must visit the museum and see what the County Historical Society has done with the big room at the top of the stairs. I hope that they have been kind to it.



THE LIFE OF FREDERIC COROSS CHURCH

by Evelyn Rodewald

Frederic Coross Church lived in the McConnell Mansion in Moscow, Idaho, for forty-five years. In accordance with the terms of his will, the house became the property of Latah County on his death. It was his desire that his home be used for historical purposes and as a meeting place for groups in the city.¹ Church loved the house, appreciated its architectural quality and recognized the historical significance of the building to the city of Moscow and the state of Idaho.

The story of the McConnell family is well known to the citizens of Latah County and visitors to the restored mansion and museum.² The life of the man who made the bequest is less familiar. Born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, on October 3, 1885, and christened Frederic Coross Church, he grew up in a family of educators and clergymen as one of five children. The family established a home in Kingston, Pennsylvania, and it was there Frederic attended elementary and secondary school, leaving home in 1905 to attend Cornell University. After earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Cornell in 1909 he studied in Zurich and Paris on a fellowship from that University for the following two years.³

Church returned to the United States and taught at the University of Missouri for two years and at Williams College for one year. He earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree in history in 1916, again at Cornell. From there he went on to teach two years at Pennsylvania State College.⁴

Europe drew him again and in 1919 Church accepted the position as Secretary of the YMCA in Italy. The program gave aid to soldiers, particularly those who remained

hospitalized after the World War. Interest in college teaching brought him back to the United States. He came to the University of Idaho as a Professor of European History in the fall of 1921.⁵

Church kept a diary or year book, as he referred to it, during the period spent with the YMCA in Italy, and again from 1935 to 1965. In it he recorded daily activities, the weather, expenses, books read, letters written and received, and movies attended, but rarely revealed the reasons behind his activities or his feelings about events. He remained a very private person. The diary pages reproduced at the end of this article illustrate the form and content of a typical entry.

Church's short stature became a familiar sight on the streets of Moscow. He never owned a car, preferring to walk to and from campus and around town. Persistent problems with his legs and feet plagued him for years, resulting in a short, almost mincing walk. Usually dressing in a conservative fashion, he enjoyed whimsical touches like brightly colored socks. One year he bought green and white shoes and became known as "the guy with the green shoes."⁶ Wrapped in a fur coat and hat purchased in Poland, he combated the cold Idaho winters and took pride in the white suit he bought in Seattle for summer wear. Frederic carefully kept his clothing in good condition, mentioning in a letter home in 1910 "I like to sew on my buttons and darn my socks except it takes so long."⁷ His sewing skills had not improved fifty years later when he reported that it took two days to mend a pair of pants.⁸

A quiet and unassertive person, interviews with some of Church's friends reveal that he rarely ventured opinions about the policy of the University, the city or the nation. They remember him as reticent, but also genial, sociable, and possessing a restrained sense of humor.⁹ Frederic remained unmarried and although he had many friends of both sexes the only reference to the matter in his diary was the wry remark, "be suspicious of match making couples."¹⁰

Life for Frederic Church had settled into a routine by 1935. His principal interests were his classes and students. That year he taught courses in Renaissance and Reformation History, German Civilization, and European History with a total enrollment of 215 students.¹¹ Class loads in those days were heavy and frequently he lectured up to eighteen hours a week. This necessitated spending much time preparing for class and reading examinations. Church kept extensive notebooks for each course taught. Before class he reviewed the notes and then gave the lecture from memory.¹² He is remembered by his students as proceeding very systematically and thoroughly, enriching his talks with experiences and information gained from study in Europe and the extensive reading to which he devoted much of his free time.¹³

Students were important to Church outside the classroom. In the financially difficult times of the 1930s he made loans to many and occasionally paid their tuition. He kept records of these transactions, expressing pleasant surprise when, sometimes after a long duration, the money was repaid. An attempt to deduct the amount he had loaned from his income tax in 1936 was disallowed by the Internal Revenue.¹⁴

Church acted as the advisor for the Alpha Chapter of the Phi Delta Theta Fraternity and had a longstanding, pleasant relationship with its members. He ate lunch at the fraternity house once a week and attended the chapter meetings. Serving as a chaperone at social functions in the days when alcohol was forbidden on the



Frederic C. Church as a young man.
U of I collection.

* * *

campus, Church related that he was very careful from which punch bowl he took his refreshments, preferring not to make a discovery requiring him to take official action. His Christmas gift to the House was often a book of somewhat risqué nature appreciated by the young men and frequently worn out by spring. The men responded with affection, attending social evenings at his house and giving him gifts which included a new overcoat one Christmas.¹⁵ He proudly noted that they had honored him with a surprise party on his seventieth birthday.¹⁶

A member of Phi Beta Kappa since 1908, Church believed the organization could play a role in raising the academic standards in the humanities at the University. He was a charter member of the chapter started on the Idaho campus in 1926.

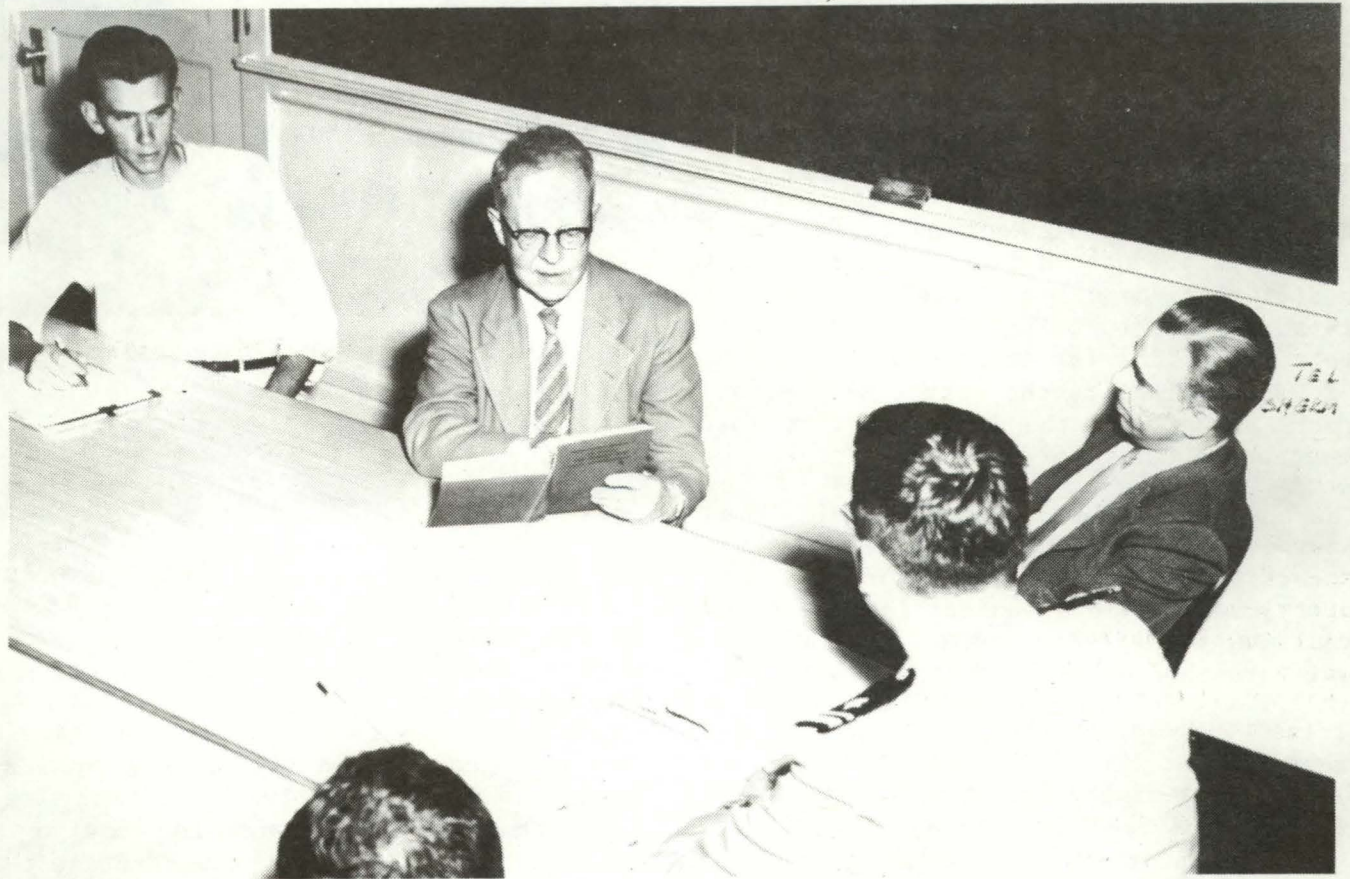
Serving as secretary for many years, he kept the membership records with meticulous care. In 1955 he served as President of the honorary. His colleagues relate that the membership and activities of the group were of great importance in his life.¹⁷

Granted a sabbatical leave the spring quarter of 1929, Church went to the University of Chicago as a visiting professor. The teaching schedule was light enough to give him time to finish his book, The Italian Reformers, 1534-1564, which Columbia University Press published in 1932. The Italian edition came out in 1935. He occasionally attended meetings of the American Historical Association and reviewed forty books for their American Historical Review. His article, "The Literature of the Italian Reformer," was

published in The Journal of Modern History.¹⁸

Frederic had a rich intellectual life. He read extensively, not only in his field of European history, but also in other areas of history, philosophy, poetry, and fiction. He received catalogs from several second hand book dealers with whom he frequently placed orders. His collection of Reformation and Renaissance literature is now at the University of Idaho Library, making it one of the best holdings on that subject in the Northwest. Later in life he enjoyed mysteries which he passed on to friends when he had finished.¹⁹

Grandfather Coross had been a Presbyterian minister and the church remained important to Frederic throughout his life. He served the First Presbyterian Church



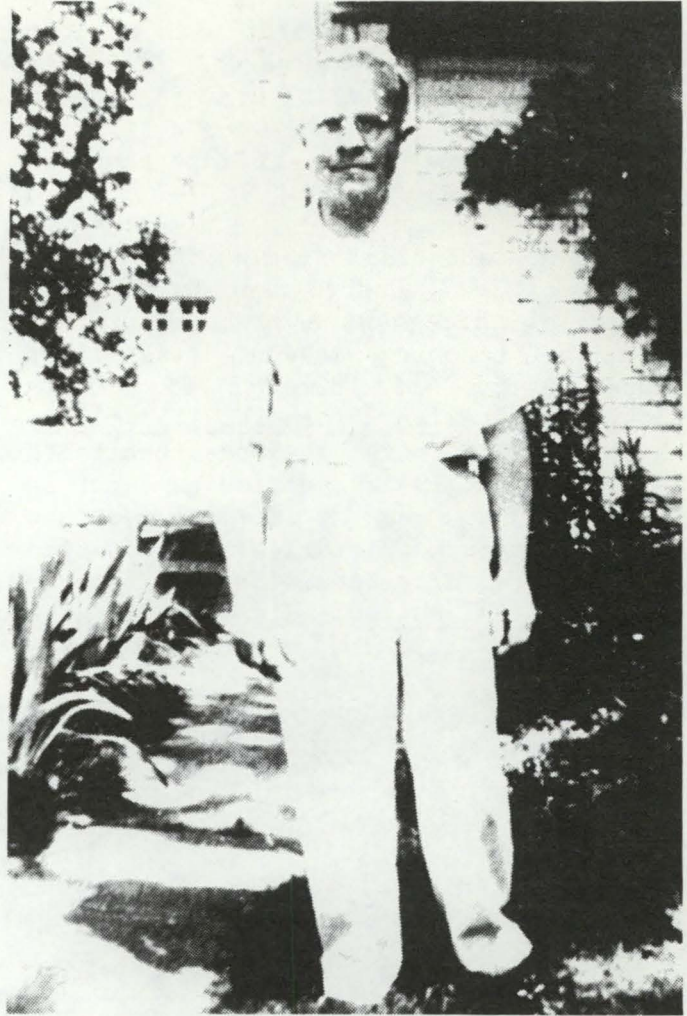
Dr. Church teaching at the University of Idaho. U of I collection.

in Moscow as clerk of the session, the administrative body of the congregation, and, since music was also important to him, as director of the choir. Music was a life long pleasure for Church. He apparently had a pleasant voice and enjoyed singing. In addition to the church choir he occasionally sang in the University summer chorus. Music events on the University campus were a favorite pastime as were events in the the touring Community Concert Series in Moscow and Pullman.²⁰

A passion of Frederic's life was the motion picture. He attended movies while in Europe on his fellowship, as well as during his tenure with the YMCA in Italy and within two days after his arrival in Moscow. He was such a devoted fan that when on November 14, 1936, the Nu-Art Theater opened in Moscow, Mrs. Kenworthy, wife of the owner, invited him personally to the first showing. Frederic enjoyed them all, westerns, comedies, and drama. His reviews were brief and to the point. Four Hours to Kill was "just peerless" and he saw it twice, but Our Little Girl elicited the remark "surely no one but her parents want to keep on seeing her." The films produced during the war brought a different response: "Gung Ho is what it is advertised to be but I certainly don't go to war films for amusement" and again, "I Wanted Wings is the most timely propaganda as well as the kind of story most worthwhile doing."²¹

Church read movie magazines avidly and knew details of the lives of even obscure actors and actresses. He recorded in his diary every movie attended; in some years years he totaled the number for the year which reached as high as 140 annually.²²

Trips to Spokane provided a break in his routine. At first he stayed overnight but later, with improved transportation, he went up and back in one day. Church enjoyed shopping in the large department stores and spent hours at the bookstores. And then there were the movies! When he spent the night in Spkane he could see as many as six throughout an afternoon and evening.²³



Dr. Church at age 50. LCHS collection.

* * *

As time passed, the house at 110 Adams Street grew in importance to Frederic. The legend that through chance he spent his first night in Moscow at the McConnell mansion is verified by notes in his expense book.²⁴ Dr. W. A. Adair and his family lived in the house and rented the bedrooms on the second floor to single men or women, frequently faculty or students at the University. One story relates that Church planned to stay at a cheap hotel in Moscow, but was met at the train by the wife of the President of the University and taken by her to the Adair home as a more suitable accommodation for a faculty member.²⁵ In another version, Ione Adair related that as Church walked

Something within instinctively spurns
 The law of diminishing returns;
 Of course it's only age that makes
 Me conscious of lacking what it takes
 To feel traditional Christmas joy;
 Yet I wouldn't go back to being a boy,
 For to make real sense of the old refrain,
 You must have passed the cinquantaine.

Frederic B. Church

Merry Christmas

Poem written by Dr. Church to send as a
 Christmas greeting in 1935. LCHS
 collection

* * *

by the house, admiring it and the surrounding garden, he struck up a conversation with Mrs. Adair as she worked in the yard. He commented to her that the house was similar to the one in which he grew up.²⁶ Whatever the circumstances, Church immediately paid Mrs. Adair \$20.00, the monthly sum charged all roomers, an amount which would not change for the next thirty-six years.²⁷

The rooming arrangement did not include meals so every weekday morning Church left the house at an early hour to walk to campus, stopping enroute for breakfast. The Pastime Restaurant or the Tip Top in downtown Moscow were favorites, lunch at the Blue Bucket on the campus was popular with many of the faculty, including Frederic, and the Idaho Hotel was a typical stop for dinner.²⁸

After the death of Dr. Adair the heirs of the estate put the house up for sale in 1935 and approached Church as a possible buyer. The appraised value of the house was \$5,000. The following laconic entries do not reveal his thoughts about the purchase or his decision not to buy the house.

March 22, 1935 "Talked to Howe about the idea of fixing the house."

April 1, 1935 "Discussed with Miss Sweet the project of buying the house." "Interest at 8% is about what I am now paying in rent."

April 5, 1935 "Talked to Miss Adair about buying the house."

Without further comment he mentioned in June 1935 that he "met a Mrs. Jackson who is thinking of buying the house." Although Church did not give an explanation for not making the purchase, during this time he tried unsuccessfully to change the date of his forthcoming sabbatical leave which was planned for the spring of 1936.²⁹

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Jackson moved in on July 3, 1935, as the new owners. They had a grown daughter and a teenage son. Thomas Jackson worked for the Union Pacific Railroad and made frequent overnight trips out of Moscow. The couple rented out the large front room on the first floor and the small back bedroom in addition to the three suites upstairs. The

Jacksons, a warm, friendly family, soon had the renters, Church included, addressing them as "Mom and Dad." Church noted with satisfaction in his diary that the Jacksons took care of the house and frequently made repairs. When they re-decorated the upstairs, Church chose new wallpaper for his rooms and they extended his balcony for the sunbathing he enjoyed.³⁰

Frederic occupied the two adjoining rooms on the south side of the upstairs hall. He had a screen built to divide the rooms and strategically placed the furniture to separate the space into a sleeping area, kitchen, and sitting room. Mr. Jackson helped him replace the radiator with a cook stove and changed the plumbing to install a shower stall. Low bookshelves lined the bay windows, and two early purchases, a rocking chair and ottoman, offered a comfortable spot in the sitting room.³¹

After the question of the disposition of the house was settled, Church devoted the rest of 1935 to making arrangements for his trip to Europe. He spoke Italian, German, and French which he polished in his years abroad but now he began the study of Polish. In the spring of 1936 he traveled to Poland to do research at the University of Warsaw. Although he continued work on the language with the help of a tutor and did some research in the library, he found the University closed because of anti-Jewish sentiment. He witnessed a group of Brown Shirts in a Memorial Day parade honoring the veterans of the Great War and heard reports of German troops marching into the demilitarized cities of the Rhineland.³²

After returning to the University of Idaho in September 1936, Church recorded in his diary instances relating to the growing anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe. His academic interest in Poland, Germany, and Italy, along with years spent in those countries, gave him an intimate knowledge of the people and he had difficulty reconciling the Germans he knew with the events of the day. He refers to letters received

from friends in Europe telling of the arrival of Jewish refugees from Germany. During this period he subscribed to several German and Polish magazines and ordered books on the Jewish problem in Europe.³³

The war news from Europe aroused interest in the United States and Church was invited to talk on "the races of Central Europe" and became a member of the Committee on Polish Relief. When the war involved the United States many of the students, including fellow roomers in the house, left to join the armed services. The following years brought smaller registration at the University and the enrollment in his classes diminished. During the summer of 1943 he taught Italian and social sciences to soldiers on campus for special training. He corresponded with many students and enjoyed their visits when they were home on leave.³⁴

The Jacksons were soon talking of selling the house. In the summer of 1938, after a conversation with Mr. Jackson, Church agreed to buy it the following July for \$5,000. Although the transaction was not completed in 1939, the other roomers were aware that when the residence became available, Dr. Church planned to purchase it. When the following year brought the opportunity, again Church hesitated, but at the urging of his friends, who persuaded him that new owners might ask the roomers to leave, he finally agreed on August 9, 1940, to take over the property.³⁵

Entries about the care and furnishing of the house and property filled his diaries during the following years. Although the Jacksons continued to live there until the spring of 1941, Church informed the downstairs roomers that the front bedroom would no longer be rented. He preferred that room revert to its status as "front parlor." Frederic himself continued to live in the upstairs suite which he had occupied since 1921. He was very comfortable in the rooms where he had spent nineteen years as a tenant and he had no desire to change his arrangements. Mom and Dad Jackson moved into their own home in



Front parlor of the McConnell Mansion after 1940. Mrs. Howard V. Leslie photo.

* * *

March 1941, but she agreed to continue helping with the housekeeping chores.³⁶

The Jacksons took their furniture with them so in the following months Frederic shopped for furnishings. He owned a set of Dr. Adair's chairs and as one of his first projects had them re-seated. Purchases included rugs, a sofa, chairs, bookshelves, a library table and dining room furniture. By the time the Jacksons moved out he had installed a telephone on the second floor and purchased a table and chair to accommodate it.³⁷

In the years between his return from Europe in 1935 and the purchase of the house in 1940, his mother, brother, and Aunt Martha died, leaving only himself and one surviving sister, Mary, in Pennsylvania. They agreed to share the family furniture and household goods. His sister sent him an inventory and he chose the pieces he wished to have. The shipment arrived the summer of 1941 and included items which recalled personal memories for Church. He happily unpacked, finding Aunt Mattie's lounge, Mother's parlor chair, the bureau bookcase from Aunt Nancy, the Smithfield cherry bed and the "Sleepy-hollow" chairs. He had some of the pieces re-upholstered and repaired before arranging them in the house. Thereafter Frederic enjoyed making the formal rooms

available for others. The Business and Professional Women, The Dames, French Club, and Phi Beta Kappa met there regularly. On at least one occasion a friend used the rooms for a wedding reception.³⁸

Church continued to keep roomers upstairs. Legend has it that they were frequently history students whom he helped through school. Some may have been, but the list also included faculty members and others who worked in the community. One year, a young couple, friends of Church, lived in the downstairs bedroom.³⁹

With the small food preparation area upstairs, Church rarely used the downstairs kitchen except for the ritual Sunday afternoon pie baking. He enjoyed sharing chocolate, rhubarb, strawberry, and other varieties of pie with his friends and roomers. After his retirement in 1956 Church cooked most of his meals at home instead of making the daily trips to a restaurant.⁴⁰

Frederic had originally planned to have someone live downstairs to do the housekeeping. Mrs. Jackson helped until they moved from Moscow in 1945 but, failing to find regular help, those chores became his responsibility. Saturday mornings found him running the vacuum cleaner and dusting. Summers offered additional free time to devote to thorough cleaning and repairs. In August and September 1951, for example, he washed the upper panes of ten windows in the parlor, wiped forty shutters and sashes, cleaned the wallpaper, and shook out the drapes.⁴¹

The care of the furnace grew to be a particular problem. Installed when the McConnells lived in the house, it was coal fired and had to be stoked properly to maintain heat. Finally, in 1960 he converted to gas and could enjoy the freedom of leaving the house without worrying about the continual care the old system required.⁴²

Church replaced the roof on the front porch and enlarged it to accommodate space for seating. He carefully had new balus-

MORE THOUGHTS OF AN EMERITUS

Snow in winter, leaves in fall,
Lawn in summer; I can't recall
Any year without them all.

Keeping the house clean (that's the joker),
Remembering to fill the stoker,
Stirring the fireplace with ^{it} poker.

Swelling the chorus, with the choir
(To solo work I can't aspire;
Than first bass I can't go higher).

Cooking and serving (stress the first),
Washing the dishes (that's the worst);
But one must satisfy hunger and thirst.

Mental setting-up exercise too,
Library dates to be kept when due,--
Routine familiar as an old old shoe.

Keeping this mansion in repair
Is work for which I have no flair,
And plumber's visits are not rare.

This is the life of an emeritús
For whom at this point the traditional goose
Hangs a bit lower, with some excuse.

Poem written by Dr. Church in December
1960. LCHS collection

* * *

ters made for the porch to match the originals. In the winter of 1947 fire destroyed the old carriage house at the rear of the lot. The heat of the fire blistered the paint and broke windows on the wall of the mansion nearest the blaze. As a result it was necessary to paint the house in the spring.⁴³

Frederic's sister, Mary, visited in December 1941 and spent Christmas with him before going on to California to be with their niece and nephew. Several years later Church briefly returned to Pennsylvania where they discussed her possible move to Idaho. They had both lived alone

for many years and, although they continued to talk about the possibility until the time of her death, she never moved from Pennsylvania. He outlived his immediate family and, with Mary gone, a niece and nephew were his closest remaining relatives. He saw them only occasionally, keeping up family ties through correspondence and Christmas gifts.⁴⁴

A former student, Carl Engler, became a close friend, also through letters. Dr. Church remarked when Carl left the University that, like all students, Engler would leave and forget the people in Moscow. Carl vowed that he would not and

wrote Church monthly. In the last year of Church's life he urged him to come to California to live with him. Frederic refused but the friendship was important to them both.⁴⁵

Never very specific about his ailments, Church had problems with his back, legs, and feet which increased in severity as he grew older. He was troubled with painful sciatica, had eye problems and traveled to California in 1955 for prostate surgery.⁴⁶

Church retired from teaching in 1956 at age of seventy, but continued his daily walk to the University library for research. Always willing to spend evenings with friends, he continued to do so, and, as television became popular, watched it at the homes of his companions. Frederic spent many hours on the genealogy of the Coross and Church families and sorted their papers and photographs.⁴⁷

The disposition of the house was a great concern to him in his last years. He finally decided to leave it to Latah County for historical purposes, intending



Dr. Church and Carl Engler in 1965. Mary Banks photo.



Dr. Church at work at the University of Idaho Library. U of I collection.

* * *

that it be used for meetings as it had in the past. Many members of the Latah County Historical Society like to think that the preservation of the house and furniture and its present use would have pleased him.

The man revealed in the diaries was one who enjoyed many activities and the freedom to come and go as he wished. He carried a heavy burden of teaching and involvement with students and friends. A quote in his diary that illuminates his personality was "For me to be happy is to be spontaneous."⁴⁸ His last diary entry was in July 1965 and, after suffering increasingly poor health, he died October 14, 1966.⁴⁹

End Notes

¹Frederic Coross Church, Holographic Will, June 1, 1965, Latah County Historical Society, Moscow, Idaho.

²Karen Broenneke, "The McConnell Mansion," Latah Legacy 9 & 10 (Fall 1980-Winter 1981):1.

³Moscow (Idaho) Daily Idahonian, 29 May 1956.

⁴Jacques Cattell, ed., Directory of American Scholars (Lancaster: The Science Press, 1942), p. 42.

⁵Ibid.

⁶William Greever, interview, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho, November 8, 1981; Frederic Coross Church, Diary, January 1, 1951; Frederic Coross Church papers, Day-Northwest Collection, University of Idaho Library, Moscow, Idaho.

⁷Frederic Church to Betty, October 13, 1970.

⁸Church, Diary, March 14, 1965.

⁹Nancy Atkinson, William Greever, Helen Olson, Siegfried Rolland, and Clarice Sampson, interviews held in Moscow, Idaho, November 1981.

¹⁰Church, Diary, April 30, 1939.

¹¹Church, Diary, February 1935.

¹²Greever, Interview.

¹³Frederick Dumin and Clarice Sampson, interviews held in Pullman, Washington, October 1981 and in Moscow, Idaho, November 1981.

¹⁴Church, Diary, December 4, 1936.

¹⁵Greever, Interview.

¹⁶Church, Diary, October 3, 1955.

¹⁷Daily Idahonian, Nancy Atkinson and William Greever.

¹⁸Church, Papers.

¹⁹Greever and Dumin.

²⁰Church, Diary, January 5, 1935, April 28, 1943, April 16, 1950.

²¹Church, Diary, November 14, 1935, May 25, 1941, June 15, 1935.

²²Greever and Church, Diary, January 17, 1941.

²³Church, Diary, April 1, 1935.

²⁴Church, Expense Book.

²⁵Greever, Interview.

²⁶Ione Adair and Bernadine Adair Cornelison, interview with Sam Schragger, January 27, 1976, Tape 1.4. Oral History Project, Latah County Museum Society, Moscow, Idaho.

²⁷Church, Expense Book.

²⁸Church, Diary, September 1936. Nancy Atkinson, Interview.

²⁹Church, Diary, June 15, 1935.

³⁰Church, Diary, January 28, 1936, September 5, 1936.

³¹Church, Diary, January 11, 1937, March 24, 1938, January 3, 1940.

³²Church, Diary, February through May 1936.

³³Church, Diary, December 8, 1938, December 14, 1938, April 2, 1939, July 31, 1939.

³⁴Church, Diary, September 18, 1939, December 14, 1939, September 28, 1942, November 12, 1942.

³⁵Church, Diary, August 24, 1938, August 9, 1940. Helen Olson, Interview.

³⁶Church, Diary, March 12, 1941.

³⁷Church, Diary, April 21, 1941, April 30, 1941.

³⁸Church, Diary, June 1, 1941, August 13, 1941, August 15, 1941, September 3, 1941.

³⁹Church, Papers, Diary, May 4, 1944.

⁴⁰Church, Diary, January 8, 1950.

⁴¹Church, Diary, August 29, 1951, September 1, 1951.

⁴²Church, Diary, March 23, 1960.

⁴³Church, Diary, April 23, 1947.

⁴⁴Church, Diary, September 28, 1945.

⁴⁵Carl Engler to Church, 1963 to 1966.

⁴⁶Church, Diary, July 2, 1955.

⁴⁷Church, Diary, June 2, 1956, July 1, 1956.

⁴⁸Church, Diary, April 29, 1939.

⁴⁹Church, Papers, Latah County Historical Society, Moscow, Idaho.



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HISTORICAL SOCIETY
110 South Adams St.
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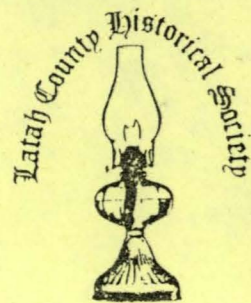
In 1968 interested individuals organized the Latah County Historical Society to collect and preserve materials connected with the history of Latah County and to provide further knowledge of the history and tradition of the area. Every person, young or old, who is interested in the history of Latah County and who would like to assist in its preservation and interpretation is cordially invited to become a member. Subscription to this journal and a discount on books published by the Society are included in membership dues. Dues for the various classes of membership are as follows:

	Friend	Contributing	Sustaining	Sponsoring	Benefactor
Individual	\$ 5-10	\$11-25	\$26- 50	\$ 51-100	\$101-499
Family	9-15	16-40	41-100	101-200	201-499
Business	25-35	36-75	76-150	151-300	301-499

A "500 Club" is reserved for contributions of \$500 or more. Privileges are identical for all classes; the higher dues represent a much needed donation to help the Society's work. Dues are tax deductible.

The Society's services include conducting oral histories, publishing local history monographs, maintaining a local history/genealogy research library and the county museum, as well as educational outreach. The Society wishes to acquire objects, documents, books, photographs, diaries, and other materials relating to the history of Latah County. These are added to the collections and made available to researchers while they are preserved for future generations.

The Society is housed in the William J. McConnell Mansion, 110 South Adams, Moscow. The museum is open from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. Visits to the museum or research library are welcomed at other times and can be arranged by calling (208) 882-1004.



SUN

MON

TUES

WED

THURS

FRI

SAT

The Latah County Historical Society is open to the public Wednesdays through Saturdays from 1 - 4 p.m. Admission is free. The research library is open during the same hours. We are located at 110 S. Adams Street, Moscow, Idaho, telephone 882-1004.

Meetings are open to all members. Take an active role in your Historical Society. Join a committee and bring your friends!

2

Special Exhibit for 9 days only
April 2 through 10th during regular museum hours.

3

4

Palm Sunday

5

6

Exhibit
History of the Univ. of Idaho at the Student Union Building lobby-2 days only.

7

Speaker Series
"Historical Archaeology" 7:30 pm at the Mansion.
Movie Committee meeting at 5:00 pm
Board meeting follows.

8

9

10

11

Easter Sunday

12

13

14

15

16

Exhibit Opening and Open House
"Carol Ryrie Brink" 7 - 9 p.m. at the Mansion.

17

IT'S SHOWTIME!!
The Movie Committee proudly presents:
"Jedediah Smith" & "No Where To Run"
Borah Theater, Student Union, UI, 7:30 "G"

18

Library Work Days - 1 pm at the Mansion.

19

Julietta incorp. in 1892.
Troy incorp. in 1892.

20

Collections Comm. meeting 7:30 at the Mansion.

21

22

IMS Special Proj. meeting 7:00 pm at the Mansion

23

24

SPRING CLEANING 10 - 3 and bring a lunch!! and rakes, and rags.

25

26

27

28

Publications Committee meeting 7:30 pm at the Mansion.

29

30

APRIL EVENTS 1982

Exhibits now open:

April 1st

"Women At Work" will close Thursday^Vat 4:00 p.m.

"Folkart in Latah County" and "Genesee - The Garden Spot of the Palouse"
are still open and will be here until June.

The "Special Exhibit" planned from April 2 - 10th is a special one-time showing of spinning and weaving by local artisans. At the moment, this exhibit is still in the planning stage. If we do not receive enough textile material for showing, we will instead have a small art exhibit. Please call the Society at 882-1004 to be sure the textile exhibit has been installed prior to your visit. Thank you.

LATAH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Volume 11, Number 1

April 1982

IT'S SPRING! IT'S SPRING!

Yes, I know that all the long-time residents of the county know better. And I have been told that it could snow again at any time. But it has been a beautiful week to shake off the long winter blues and pull out those spring and summer shoes.

Girl Scout Troop 133 from the Moscow Neighborhood started the spring feeling around the McConnell Mansion by cleaning up the yard and raking out the gardens. There's all kinds of green stuff coming up in the flower beds!! The Junior Scouts really helped out, but lots more needs to be done to prepare the grounds and building for spring and summer use.

A Spring Cleaning event has been planned for April 24th--a Saturday. The "dirt" is that work will commence at 10:00 with cups of coffee and tea and hot chocolate to open up those eyes, a break at noon for lemonade and sack lunches (you bring the sack), and quitting time at 3:00. Inside jobs including waxing and polishing the wood-work (all those shutters!!!!), moving the large pieces of furniture for corner cleaning, and lots of dusting and polishing. Frustrated apartment dwellers who are dying to get their fingers into some soil can help clean out the rose garden, rake, and clean up the outside.

Anyone interested??? You may call the Society at 882-1004 to reserve your spot and find out if you can bring some equipment. We encourage drop-ins. Particularly those who can tell a petunia from an onion.

Kit Freudenberg
Director

INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM SERVICES
SPECIAL PROJECT

Tom Wolfe, Project Director for the IMS Special Project involving the expansion of the attic space and insulation reports that the attic renovation is complete. He is installing the shelving at the moment and soon the collection storage area will be ready for use.

Interns, volunteers, and members of the Collections Committee have put in many hours already and look forward to many more hours preparing, cleaning, and photographing objects prior to their placement in storage.

Tom also is working with the Long Range Planning Committee in developing goals and plans to achieve them over the next five years. This committee is addressing questions such as space utilization within the building, budgets, volunteer services, exhibits, education, and other topics pertinent to the future of the Society.

The Board of Trustees joins Tom and the staff in thanking those who generously contributed to the insulation funds. They are:

Margaret Smith
R.L. Chrysler
Mr. and Mrs. Charley Stevens
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Williamson
Leora Stillinger
Anna M. Mitchell
Kathleen Probasco
Ruth and Francis Nonini
Judy Glenn
Robert Nonini
Ken Hedglin

LETTERS

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 Lillian and H. Robert Otness
 Mabel Kayler
 Gertie Otness
 Jeanette and Jack Petersen
 Harry and Clarice Sampson
 Glenn Tarbox
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To date, \$260.00 has been collected through donations for this specific fund. This is \$340.00 short of the \$600.00 purchase cost of the materials. We thank those who have donated and ask others for a small contribution.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The following people have joined LCHS since the last issue of the Newsletter. Thank you for your support and enjoy your membership!

Rai Cammack, Potlatch
 Scott Eckert, Moscow
 Richard Hamm & Kristine Anderson, Pullman
 Mrs. Roger Hungerford, Tucson, AZ
 Wilma M. McCabe, Moscow
 Charles J. McConnell, Quincy, WA
 G.R. Murrell, Post Falls
 Marguerite C. Smiley, Moscow
 Raymond H. Stall, Spokane, WA
 Wayne & Henrienne Westberg, Moscow

Encourage your friends and neighbors--and all those who are interested in the Society and its work--to join the Historical Society. Gift memberships are excellent presents for friends and family.

Yes, we receive letters and news from members and friends. We thought we would share three with you.

(letter with membership)

"I am sending subscription to the Latah Legacy. Each copy brings memories of long ago days. For instance - "Moscow Fairs" - I see a young boy of 12 with a giant sunflower to enter at the fair (it won a prize). A tiny girl of nearly 7 - a buggy and horse trotting along with the boy driving and the girl gingerly holding the head of the sunflower in her lap hoping none of the seeds would tumble out and spoil its perfection. High over the seat and sticking up high in the air; the sunflower stalk. How carefully the boy drove the 4 miles to Moscow and how proud to enter such a giant flower, and win a prize. Date 1912.

"That was my brother Burton (Munson) and of course I was the kid sister.

Caroline (Munson) Ott

(from St. Mary's 4th graders after a tour of the Mansion)

"Thank you for letting us come to Mc Connel Mansion. It was really fun. I hope we can go there again sometime! I liked those pictures a lot! Good buy for now.

Sincerely,
 Bobby French

(and)

"Thank you for letting my class come to the McConnell Mansion. The pictures were really nice. Thank you for taking us up stairs. That was really nice. I felt sorry for Mr. McConnell when he lost his Mansion.

Yours truly,
 Paula Dambra

RECENT DONATIONS

We thank the following people for their recent donations of artifacts and manuscripts to the Society.

Lillian Otness: 1899 cook book
 Beth Mickey: manuscript, Traveling With the Mickeys
 Tom Upshaw: draw knife
 Roger Freudenberg: sports coat
 Dorothy Schell: manuscript, Latah County, Idaho Birth Records: 1907-1911
 John Miller: cast aluminum cooking pan
 Melva Hoffman: WW II ration books, set of toy kitchen utensils, toy accordian, and Camp Fire Girl armband
 John and Jeanette Talbott: souvenir calenders, reproduction Kresge's Katalog; child's book bag, child's reader, girl's gym blouse, dress shields, Ken's Stationery catalog, checkbook ledger, blotter, photograph of the Freshman class of the University of Idaho, 1899.

MEMORIALS

Many people have made memorial donations to the Society. Sometimes the funds are directed into certain project accounts by the deceased's family or the donor. Several recently designated funds are the Carol Ryrrie Brink memorial booklet, the Mansion maintenance, the library, and our general fund. These gifts have helped continue the Society's work and research.

Memorials can also be given to the Society through a will. This gift would not only stand as a memorial to the donor, but also as a contribution to the entire community through the preservation of Latah County history and culture. Bequests may be either direct gifts or in the form of different trusts. In either case, there can be a benefit in terms of reducing or eliminating estate tax as the Society is incorporated as a nonprofit organization and qualifies for tax-exempt status.

Kit Freudenberg, the director, and several Board of Trustee members are available to answer questions and concerns about bequests and memorials. Call the Society at 882-1004.

We were saddened to hear of the death of Helen Whitehead Cross, Moscow journalist and longtime supporter of local history research and publication. With her husband, Bert, Helen produced a study of the "Lewiston Morning Tribune" funded by a 1976 National Endowment for the Humanities grant. The family has suggested memorials to the Historical Society. Memorials received are from:

Kathleen Probasco, Moscow
 Arthur and Shirley Hook, Moscow
 Staff, "Lewiston Morning Tribune"
 Butch and Nancy Alford, Lewiston
 Donna Bray, Moscow
 Charles and Mary Votaw, Asotin, WA
 Mr. and Mrs. Peter Haggart, Moscow
 Elmer and Margaret Raunio, Moscow
 Ann Turner, Troy
 Jim and Barbara Kraus, Moscow
 Joe and Margaret Casey, Moscow

Other memorials received are:

for Mabel G. Hazeltine, from
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Neely
 for Charles R. Hungerford, from
 Harry and Clarice Sampson

Memorials directed to the Carol Ryrrie Brink fund are:

in memory of Grace Woodworth Weber and
 Jay Woodworth from Mrs. Marjorie Weber
 and Lillian Otness
 from Mrs. Robert S. Newland
 from Clara Otness
 from Gertie Otness
 from Dorothy Lord
 from Jeanette and Jack Petersen
 from Mr. and Mrs. Francis Nonini
 from Maude Carlin
 from James and Margaret Armour
 from Mr. and Mrs. Ardie Gustafson

COMMITTEE WORK

Many members volunteer their time to the Society by serving on committees which work to further certain goals and commitments we have targeted. Depending upon their time and committee, these people come up to the McConnell Mansion about once a month to work on certain projects.

There is always room for more members on these committees. Here is a listing and description of each; see if you would be interested in serving on one committee this year.

Oral History Committee - plan and collect recordings from the community about the growth and development of the county; transcribe the recordings; and help promote the use of oral history.

Publications Committee - plan and promote future publications for the Society; sell publications at community functions; and help distribute the books and materials throughout the county. Meetings every 4th Wednesday of each month.

Handicapped Access Committee - evaluates the Society's programs and the Mansion; finds new or better ways to promote the use of the building and activities for the handicapped; and meets twice yearly.

Collections Committee - actively collects materials for the museum collection; helps the curator accession objects and place them into storage; and inventories certain portions of the collection yearly. Meetings are the 3rd Tuesday of each month.

Quarterly Committee (Latah Legacy) - plans, edits, and assembles the "Latah Legacy" four times each year. Each edition needs volunteers to help with the collation and preparing the material for mailing; this is fondly referred to as a "stapling" party.

Memorials Committee - lists memorial donations in the Memorials Book and helps the director with thank you notes and acknowledgements. Meets when needed.

Nominations Committee - appointed by the President of the Board to help nominate and select new members of the Board; and meets during the nomination process during the fall.

Library Committee - works in the library processing new manuscript material, repairing damaged books, actively collecting new material; recommends purchase of certain publications; and meets for a general work day every 3rd Sunday of each month.

McConnell Associates - Volunteer Committee - works on various projects with the staff such as exhibit preparation, processing objects in the collection, inventories, and education programs. The Associates meet with the director according to their own work, school and personal schedules. Members can suggest own projects.

Fundraising Committee - contains several smaller committees which work on specific fundraising projects such as:

- showing historical and entertaining movies and slides throughout the county,
- planning and presenting the Historic Homes Tour
- our annual Ice Cream Social
- our annual Ham Dinner
- and other special fundraising events.

*****Please call the Society and sign up for a committee. The work can be very productive and fun!

EXHIBIT OPENING
CAROL RYRIE BRINK

The Carol Ryrie Brink exhibit will have its opening Friday, April 16th from 7 to 9 p.m. The exhibit researcher, Mary Reed, and her crew will be available to answer question about the exhibit and Mrs. Brink.

Refreshments will be available and this event is open to the general public. Please plan to attend.