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# LATAH LEGACY

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE LATAH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Inside:

The Chinese Work Force in Moscow and Vicinity (Conclusion)

More Than a Circus, A Reminiscence

Martha (Bonnett) Remembers Moscow

The Bovills

Book Review



Main St., Moscow, looking north. The first cross street is 4th Street. To the immediate left is the Skattaboe Bldg., built in 1892, and now occupied by General Telephone. Across the street on the left is the Hotel Moscow, and across Main St., we can see the building presently occupied by Jackle Jewelry Store - at one time the Moscow City Hall. This photo dates between 1899 and 1909.  
(Cliff Ott Photo)

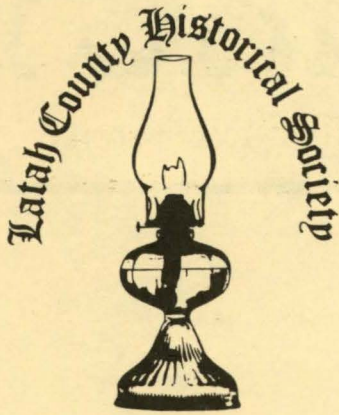
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(Book Review, continued from p. 28)

John Fahey is a prolific writer. Unfortunately, I feel he rushed this project in order to get on to his next book. That is too bad, because he among all area historians has the best potential of providing a true synthesis of Inland Empire history, a synthesis we do need. I would like to see him try again--extending this current work further into the twentieth century, making use of the rich sources he has to date left largely untouched.

Keith C. Petersen  
 Pullman, Wa.

THE CHINESE WORK FORCE IN MOSCOW, IDAHO,  
AND VICINITY, 1880-1910

PART II (Conclusion)

by Priscilla Wegars

Characteristics of Local  
Chinese Residents

Little is known about the life of the Chinese once they arrived in the Palouse area, although Wilbert<sup>121</sup> is useful for Whitman County, especially Colfax. He notes that there were Chinese in Colfax, Palouse City, Pullman, Tekoa, Garfield, and Oakesdale.<sup>122</sup> Much of his information appears to have been taken from Feichter<sup>123</sup> who is particularly useful for the wider Inland Empire geographic area. Newspapers, too, occasionally reported on the activities of local Chinese residents, and sometimes the Moscow papers reprinted these news items when they were thought to be of interest. One, from the Gazette,<sup>124</sup> noted that Marshal Mackay arrested a chinaman (sic) for having \$60 worth of unstamped or smuggled opium in his possession. The prisoner was released on bail and later discharged; although the U.S. Marshal had been notified he "failed to send instructions as to the disposition of the case."<sup>125</sup> Lee King, a Chinese resident of Colfax, used a .44 caliber revolver to shoot off the lower jaw of another Chinese man, and was "placed in bonds of three thousand dollars."<sup>126</sup>

Although Moscow did not have a "Chinatown" in the sense of those found in larger cities, one is remembered. An early-day Moscow resident described "China Town" as being located "Across Street East of the Idahonian."<sup>127</sup> This would put it at about the same location as the two Chinese laundries on Jackson Street. Occasional newspaper mentions also referred to Moscow's Chinatown.

Specific information on Moscow's Chinese

residents and related events is not common, and there are only a few newspaper mentions of them. One, however, refers to both the use of opium and the celebration of Chinese New Year's, briefly stating:

The Chinees [sic] this week have changed the smell from opium to powder by fire-crackers, rost [sic] hog, the devil and New Years.<sup>128</sup>

The 1890 New Year's celebration was also reported. The Chinese were said to have been having a great time, with "fire crackers, roast pig, candy and China whistles" playing a big part with "the gorgeousness of the occasion seldom equaled except when their whiskey bottles don't get broke in shipping"; "free fights and black eyes" were alluded to.<sup>129</sup> Reports of the 1892 festivities were more subdued:

Pork, . . . whisky [sic] and other things which suit the appetite of the Celestials will suffer for the next few days. The usual devil frightening with fire crackers will come off early next week.<sup>130</sup>

The 1880 census lists no Chinese living in Moscow. The 1890 census is lost, so it is not until 1900 that there is an official enumeration of Moscow's twelve Chinese residents. They lived in two households, both on Jackson Street; one consisted of three residents and the other of nine. Each head of household rented his house and the rest of the inhabitants were listed as boarders. All were born in China and were aliens, although they had been in the United States from 10 to 27 years, arriving from 1872 through 1890.

Their ages ranged from 28 to 57. All could read and write, and all but three could speak English. Four were cooks, three were day laborers, two were laborers, two were laundrymen, and one was a mine laborer. Their names, as listed by the enumerator, were Goon Ging, Ah Gon, Sam Gee, Chung Ling, Wong Gon, Gim Lee, Mon Ban, Lin Bow, Alamon (or Ah Mon) George, Bim Kee, Wun Geet, and Wing Dock.<sup>131</sup>

All of Moscow's Chinese residents in 1900 were men. While four of them reported being married, for from 18 to 36 years, their wives were presumably still in China. Chinese wives were first dissuaded by custom, and then forbidden by law, from immigrating with their husbands, except under special circumstances. Most of the few other Chinese women who came into the United States in the 1900s were illegally imported and forced to work as prostitutes. Although some could and did later marry Chinese men, laborers typically could not afford the purchase of such wives, and miscegenation laws did not allow them to marry white women in most states. For these reasons the predominately male Chinese were known as a "bachelor society." Inter-marriage, when it did happen, was vigorously condemned.

Society makes a great outcry when some foolish girl marries a Chinaman. There is where society errs. It ought to rejoice over the fortunate escape of the white man who would have won the girl if a Chinaman had not appeared upon the scene.<sup>132</sup>

Lonely Chinese bachelors were therefore particularly susceptible to such swindles as the one which happened in the Moscow area about 1896. A man and two women, a blonde and a brunette, preyed on single Chinese men; the women would pretend to want to marry the men, and then relieve them of money and/or property. A description of the trio was printed in the Spokesman-Review. The blond one got \$60 from a Moscow Chinese man named "Chick" by pretending she wanted to use it to buy furniture for them.<sup>133</sup>

Two Chinese who died in the early years of the twentieth century are buried in the Moscow cemetery. Neither is listed in the 1900 census, and the causes of their death are not known. One is Yeem Toy, who died in 1901, and the other is Lee Li, who died in 1903. Birth dates are not given.<sup>134</sup> One might be the servant who worked for the Taylor family, although neither person is buried in the Taylor lot as their servant was said to have been.<sup>135</sup>

Other available sources, with the exception of laundry advertisements, name few of Moscow's other Chinese personalities. "China Sam" and "Gut Long" have already been mentioned in connection with mining. One of the Moscow papers, in 1889, reported in the "Police Record" column that two men, Charles Gou and Young Loy, were arrested on October 26 the previous fall. The charge was "nuisance," and they were each fined \$1 and costs.<sup>136</sup> In July, "Wau Lee and another celestial had a sparring match" and Wau Lee

gave the other chinaman [sic] a heavy thump on the head and the marshal took them in. They put up forty dollars for appearance. . . .<sup>137</sup>

Some items are tantalizingly too brief, as when "The chinaman [sic] had a matinee last week and the lawyers added the finishing stroke - with words."<sup>138</sup>

One unnamed Chinese man "fell through a hole in the walk at the Union Pacific depot platform . . . and broke his leg in three places."<sup>139</sup> New Year's in 1890 was "celebrated" by a Moscow citizen who was reported to have split a Chinese man's head with an axe handle.<sup>140</sup> The amount of the fine, which he paid, was not stated.

Most Idaho towns with a Chinese population had Chinese Masons, although not necessarily a Masonic temple. The Chinese Masonic order is not related to that of whites although much of the ritual is said to be similar, and the lodge is said to have acted as arbitrator of disputes among the Chinese of the community.<sup>141</sup> Moscow's Chinese Masonic organization

once "held high carnival at one of the wash houses . . . seven candidates rode the 'goat.'" Two members of Paradise Lodge were present by special invitation, and reported that the ceremonies began at 10 p.m. Although the visitors left at midnight, the "performance" continued until at least 8 a.m. The ritual involved the candidates and the "master" sipping from cups of tea, and a kneeling man "apparently offering a prayer and chanting by turns over a number of roasted chickens and other edibles." The entire assembly, with the exception of the two visitors, wore "a sort of robe with bare feet."<sup>142</sup>

One of Moscow's Chinese residents aspired to becoming a citizen in 1892. Quong Lee<sup>143</sup> appeared before the district court and testified that he had applied to become a citizen some years previously; he was informed that he was "fully entitled to become a citizen upon presentation of the necessary proof to the court."<sup>144</sup> It is not known what sort of proof might have been acceptable, since the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act prohibited Chinese from becoming citizens.<sup>145</sup>

Another, unnamed, Chinese man was in the news the following February. He and

a small boy created some excitement . . . on Main street. The boy hit the celestial with a snow ball and the qued [sic] gentlemen [sic] immediately "flew off the handle" and started after the "kid" with a vengeance, but he was caught before he caught the boy. . . .<sup>146</sup>

Sing Gee was probably Moscow's best-known Chinese resident. Besides operating a laundry from 1889 perhaps intermittently until at least 1905, he was in the news in 1908. Described as "the well known China man," he was confined to the state penitentiary for burglarizing Moscow's Pastime billiard hall. He had applied for a pardon which was to be heard the following month.<sup>147</sup>

Other mentions of Moscow's Chinese in the local newspapers reported upon incidents

of anti-Chinese antagonism, harassment, and overt violence, scenes which originated in centers of greater Chinese population but which gradually spread to encompass the Palouse and even Moscow itself.

#### Anti-Chinese Agitation In The Pacific Northwest

Local interests were so anxious to have railroads reach their communities that "they would have welcomed the devil himself had he built a road."<sup>148</sup> At first Chinese railroad workers, if not welcomed, were at least not met with the antipathy that characterized their employment in later years. In one account, from the perspective of a white man, "no animosity was shown" against those who worked in Whitman and Spokane counties.<sup>149</sup> This may have been true provided they were working on the much-wanted railroads at a time when whites enjoyed full employment, but in later years their presence would become greatly resented.

As the railroads were completed in the Pacific Northwest during the mid-1880s, particularly the Northern Pacific in 1883 and the Canadian Pacific in 1885, thousands of Chinese and whites were thrown out of work.<sup>150</sup> The Chinese were quick to take up any sort of job, however menial, as servants, cooks, and laundry workers. Whites who had previously scorned such employment became extremely resentful of the Chinese; they were working while whites were unemployed. Congress's Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, together with a nation-wide depressed economy, led to the formation of anti-Chinese crusades, which sprang up in various localities throughout the West as outrage against the "Yellow Peril" mounted. On September 2, 1885, 28 Chinese miners were massacred in Rock Springs, Wyoming, and the Chinatown which was housing hundreds more was burned to the ground.<sup>151</sup>

The Rock Springs tragedy probably had a catalytic effect upon subsequent events in the Pacific Northwest, where trouble had been smoldering in many areas for

some time. In Tacoma and Seattle, in late 1885 and early 1886, the lawless element forced the removal of the Chinese from those cities.<sup>152</sup> Also in 1886, in Idaho, Boise City was reported to have "given the Chinamen till May 1st, to leave the city."<sup>153</sup> South Idaho "has set May Day for the departure of the Chinese" who were said to be arming.<sup>154</sup> In preparation for this event, a "territorial anti-Chinese convention" met in Boise City with delegates from southern Idaho; "resolutions in opposition to the Chinese were passed."<sup>155</sup> A Chinese packer was killed by highwaymen above Mount Idaho,<sup>156</sup> and a reward of \$150 was offered by his countrymen for the apprehension of his killer.<sup>157</sup>

In 1887, in Vancouver, Washington Territory, a mob attacked a Chinese camp, demolished and burned it, beat the inhabitants, and forced them to flee.<sup>158</sup> The worst anti-Chinese violence in the history of the West, however, the Snake River Massacre, occurred in May of that same year, when 31 Chinese miners were shot, beaten, or hacked to death by a group of outlaws hoping for a cache of gold, and the bodies of the victims were thrown into the river.<sup>159</sup> One of these bodies was probably what the Moscow paper described in mid-June as

The body of a Chinaman clothed only with a belt around his body and ornamented with a gun shot wound passed Lewiston down the Snake.<sup>160</sup>

Some of those murdered may have been the same ones mentioned in the 1880 census of the Snake River Mines in Nez Perce County, when 62 Chinese men, ranging in age from 16 to 47, were listed in three camps.<sup>161</sup>

#### Anti-Chinese Agitation on the Palouse

While the Chinese had never been especially welcome on the Palouse, at least resentment had not yet found expression in acts of violence. The earliest account of anti-Chinese sentiment there seems to have occurred when a number of "moon-eyed heathen" arrived in Colfax

in 1878. The local paper exhorted its readers to "ignore this obnoxious race" and to "employ every peaceable means to get rid of them."<sup>162</sup>

Ten years later, in Rosalia, Washington, indignant citizens protested the employment of Chinese labor on Northern Pacific section gangs.<sup>163</sup> At Colfax, in February 1889, eight Chinese men who had begun work on the Oregon Railway & Navigation's Coeur d'Alene extension were escorted down the road by some 50 white laborers, "and told to go, and they went. No Chinaman are at work on the road."<sup>164</sup>

Shortly thereafter the residents of Tekoa became angered because Chinese had recently replaced whites on an O. R. & N. grading crew. When the graders reached Tekoa the whites ordered the Chinese to leave, "helped them pack . . . their traps" and escorted them part-way along the road towards Farmington.<sup>165</sup> Soon afterwards some of the Tekoa residents reportedly hanged a Chinese man "for daring to seek work on the railroad in defiance of the edict. . . ."<sup>166</sup> Open anti-Chinese violence had finally flared on the Palouse, matching that of larger cities in virulence if not in amount.

Sometimes the Chinese fought back. Near Tekoa, a group of Chinese railroad workers, including a boss,

rebelled against the authority of two white overseers and when ordered to go to work attacked the overseers with stick [sic], weapons as picks, shovels, etc., putting them to flight, their superior running qualities saving them from serious injuries. The Chinamen were promptly discharged and compelled to return to their camp, seven miles distant on foot.<sup>167</sup>

A Chinese cook at the Farmington Hotel was alleged to have tried to "butcher the land lady and daughter with a carving knife" but a lawyer "took the case and shot the Chinaman."<sup>168</sup>

Whereas Whitman County's Chinese numbered

530 in 1880,<sup>169</sup> there were only 103 there in 1889,<sup>170</sup> probably directly attributable both to decreased work opportunities and increased harassment.

Intimidation of the Chinese was cyclical in nature; as economic conditions worsened for whites in the early 1890s, they looked for scapegoats. Typically, much of their wrath was once again vented upon the Chinese. Pullman's Chinese, for example, did not escape the attention of tormentors. In June 1892

A party of small boys whose parents should be punished for neglect of duty, assisted by a few irresponsible toughs, distinguished themselves . . . by going from one Chinese house to another, stoning them until their windows were broken and ordering the inmates to leave town. The citizens are very indignant over the affair and several arrests are about to follow.<sup>171</sup>

The Moscow Mirror's version of that same story was headed "Chinese Driven Out" and reported that

the Chinese were notified to leave Pullman which they did during that night and the next day. The cause of the trouble was the firing of a pistol shot into a crowd of boys who were throwing stones at a chinese [sic] house. The excitement has subsided and it is possible that the quod [sic] gentlemen will return and continue their avocations as usual.<sup>172</sup>

During 1893, a year of great depression and massive unemployment, the Chinese were especially targeted for attack.

Thus the Chinaman is only one of the causes of idleness and low wages. He is only one of the elements we must dispose of. The wages system is an enslaving system. But for it the Chinaman could not be used to rob us of our living. If the workman had free access to natural opportunities and owned what he produced, he would have no fear of the Chinaman as a competitor. This was the

condition of things our forefathers contemplated when they declared this country to be an asylum for the discontented of all nations, and until the American workman return [sic] to that happy state, I hold that he has a right to protect himself from invasion by any person or class, by whatever means may be found necessary; peaceably if he may, forcibly [sic] if he must.<sup>173</sup>

In 1893 Farmington whites raided a Union Pacific section house, and gave the Chinese a few hours to get out.<sup>174</sup> Later that year a Colfax newspaper suggested that a boycott against the "pig-tailed heathens" might encourage "these obnoxious residents" to return to China or to "emigrate into eastern states and cities."<sup>175</sup>

Often the railroads were directly to blame for fostering antipathy towards the Chinese. Time and again, as in the Tekoa example cited earlier, one reads of white crews being replaced by Chinese workers on the Palouse and in neighboring areas, presumably because the Chinese would work for lower wages. In Spangle, in July 1888, a group of 25 masked men told a Chinese section crew to "git," but the crew was brought back by the bosses.<sup>176</sup> In 1890, when the Northern Pacific replaced white section men with Chinese in Garfield, it is bound to have caused some hard feelings; in Fairfield, for example, citizens had earlier refused to let a Union Pacific gang get off the train.<sup>177</sup> Several years later Farmington's citizens petitioned Union Pacific to remove the Chinese as railroad workers there, and in 1895 the Northern Pacific discharged white men at Pasco and gave their jobs to Chinese.<sup>178</sup> The railroads were not alone, however; in 1897 the owners of the Spokane Match Factory replaced white workers with Chinese.<sup>179</sup>

#### Anti-Chinese Agitation in Moscow

Closer to home, in Moscow, harassment was of a more subtle kind at first. Since, of course, there were no newspaper wire services in those days, local papers re-

lied heavily on telegraphed accounts and newspapers from other parts of the country to keep up with events in those areas. The arrival of the telegraph simultaneously with that of the railroad was a real boon to small-town papers, whose news from places as close as Seattle had previously often been nearly two weeks out-of-date.

The attitude of the editor of the Moscow Mirror towards the Chinese was a curious one. He seemed to agree with the prevailing attitudes of the day that "the Chinese must go," yet occasionally the short "filler" pieces he printed concerned Chinese culture and civilization, attributes which were presumably much more palatable, even acceptable, provided they remained in China where they were thought to belong. At other times it is difficult to determine just where the editor's sentiments lay. In reporting on the religious conversion of a Chinese cook, the editor mocks the man's sincerity:

He was hardly installed in the kitchen before he proudly announced his conversion to Christianity. "Me Clistian Chinaman," said he; me [the editor] can say, "Tinkle, tinkle, ittle tar."

But in the closing paragraph he notes that

It is not likely that Chinamen would be eager to embrace Christianity when they see themselves mobbed, disenfranchised and exiled by those who profess it. While the doors of the school house are shut to them, they will not pay much heed to the fact that the doors of the Chinese mission stand open.<sup>180</sup>

A Southern Idaho newspaper was described as giving a Coeur d'Alene paper "a column of abuse only such as could emanate [sic] from a Mormon mind." This is followed by the comment that

such might be edifying to a Mormon or a low class Chinaman but is disgusting to an educated and civilized people.<sup>181</sup>

It is interesting that the editor evi-

dently feels that there are classes of Chinese who would, to him, be more acceptable than Mormons. He does give credit to Idahoans for being less anti-Chinese than their neighbors in Washington Territory, for in an editorial against annexation to Washington he implies that the majority of Idaho residents would not want to "take up their [Washington's] war cry against the Chinees [sic]."<sup>182</sup>

While a prominent Moscow citizen, "our own Dr. Taylor," spoke in Portland "on the anti-Chinese side,"<sup>183</sup> the same issue of the paper reported on an incident which occurred in Moscow itself and which could have had far worse consequences than it did:

There was a meeting of the I. O. U. or anti-Chinese society on Tuesday last. One Drury and Meyer from the Potlatch were the leaders. They got nicely drunk according to the custome [sic] of that society and at midnight raided the chinese [sic] house here, discharging their fire arms to intimidate the heathens. The Chinese crowded themselves into one room for protection. At this junction John Hamilton the night watchman who is also a deputy sheriff came upon the scene and arrested Drury and Meyers and had them dealt with according to law. If we are to have our choice of evils between the Chinese and a class of drunken midnight merauders [sic] like Drury, Meyers and the gang who endanger the lives of innocent citizens while sleeping, by firing random shots through the darkness, why let us take the Chinese evil which is much the less. . . .<sup>184</sup>

From time to time advertisements from local firms would blatantly display anti-Chinese sentiments. One was that from the "Delimonco" (sometimes spelled "Delimonico") Restaurant which read:

Cleanliness is Godliness.  
Think of that and don't eat China cooking. Go to the Delimonco Restaurant where you will find every thing neat and clean. We cook in a good holesome



[sic] style and by a white woman. White cooks, white waiters and white prices. Give us a call. Ball and party suppers a specialty.

Mrs. S. E. Heath, Proprietor.<sup>185</sup>

That advertisement appeared for the next five weeks and then was withdrawn. When an ad next appeared it was for the Delimonico, advertising meals at 25 cents and lodging at 25 cents. "No pains is spared to please guests."<sup>186</sup> Since the proprietor probably did not become pro-Chinese in the interval, one is tempted to entertain the suspicion that the "white woman" cook quit, forcing Mrs. Heath to hire a Chinese. Still more anti-Chinese propaganda was put forth in a Robbins' shoe store display advertisement (Fig. 5) which appeared weekly for seven weeks.<sup>187</sup> Another advertising notice, for the City Hotel, began in November of 1889 and ran regularly for over a year. It read:

The City Hotel is the best equipped \$1 a day house in Moscow and employs only the best white labor. Clean beds.<sup>188</sup>

This was no surprise, since the City Hotel had been listed in the 1888 "Directory of the Live Business Men of Idaho Territory" with the notation, "No Chinese labor employed."<sup>189</sup>

These sentiments were echoed by the Home Restaurant, which in 1890 advertised "Home like Cooking. All white help,"<sup>190</sup> and by the Johnston House, "White Women Cooks & Waiters."<sup>191</sup> There were a number of other hotels and restaurants in Moscow at this time and some of them probably had Chinese employees, although few records have yet been found to substantiate this.

One firm which claimed not to hire Chinese was the Hotel Del Norte. The news story extolling their Thanksgiving dinner describes it as "without exception, the best ever served in Moscow. The popular proprietor . . . employs nothing but white help and of the neatest kind."<sup>192</sup> Nearly 20 years later, in 1909, a newspaper ad-

vertisement for the Del Norte emphasized, "ONLY WHITE HELP EMPLOYED,"<sup>193</sup> conveniently forgetting the fact that Chinese had formerly been employed there, one of whom was reported in jail and awaiting deportation hearings in the spring of 1904.<sup>194</sup> Not to be outdone, the Hotel Corkery trumpeted the cooking skills of its white labor (Fig. 6).

Some items were probably not intended to be racist, but that was their effect. Readers were invited to hear a lecture by Miss Minnie A. Buzzell, a recently returned missionary from China. Miss Buzzell would also "exhibit some heathen idols and other relics of Chinese worship."<sup>195</sup> On occasion, the Chinese also provided "comic relief" in performances put on by travelling theatrical troupes. The Chicago Comedy Company's mining drama "My Partner" featured new evidence brought to light by Lee, a laundryman "who finds a shirt in the hills and after washing it finds it bears the murderer's name on the cuff."<sup>196</sup> The part of Wing Lee was played, not by a Chinese actor, but by Mr. Eugene Kay, who "had the house in a roar all evening."<sup>197</sup>

Sometimes Moscow's Chinese residents were the unfortunate victims of actual or near violence. An old vegetable peddler was seriously wounded in the head by a brick thrown by a local tough. The youth was arrested, and fined \$5 and costs; his friends took up a collection and paid his fine which saved him from having to spend two and a half days in jail. The brief article concluded with the note that ". . . a number of boys . . . have been in the habit of annoying and throwing rocks and stick [sic] at the Chinaman just for meanness," but that they had probably been taught a good lesson by the fact that one of their number was arrested and fined.<sup>198</sup>

A later incident, which could have had very tragic consequences, occurred in May 1893. A "Chinaman" who had been working for Judge Willis Sweet was accused of having attempted

a criminal assault on a little four-

**A Clear Success !**

Have just received a tremendous stock of boots and shoes from  
the east. White labor.

**No Chinese Work.**

Every pair warranted and I guarantee to save you from one to  
two dollars on every pair. Flannels, Dress goods, blankets,  
cloaks, etc., etc. I extend a general invitation to all my friends  
to call and examine my stock and prices, before purchasing  
elsewhere. Yours for

**Live and Let Live.**

*W. D. ROBBINS.*

Fig. 5. Anti-Chinese display advertisement from Robbins' shoe store,  
1889. (Moscow Mirror 8(21):3, 4 October 1889).

**It's the Cook**  
**Behind the Meal**

After all it's the cook that makes the meal  
good or bad. A poor cook can spoil the  
best of food. At the Corkery Hotel the  
cooking is done by white labor and is good.  
Ask any of our boarders about it. We  
serve the best meal in the city for 25 cents.  
It is just like home cooking, for it is  
home cooking.  
This hotel has been put into first class  
shape. The rooms are clean and comfort-  
able. Every bed has an Ostermor mat-  
tress, and the service is good.  
When in Moscow stop at the—

**HOTEL CORKERY**

North Main St near the Island Electric depot.

Fig. 6. "White labor" display advertisement from the Hotel Corkery,  
1909. (Star-Mirror 28(20):5, 14 October 1909).

year-old daughter of Mr. Sweet's. Crowds gathered on the street and it was only with great care that prevented a mob forming . . . and moving all the Chinamen from town without any ceremony.<sup>199</sup>

Probably the main reason a tragedy was avoided was that Governor McConnell sent the following message to J. L. Naylor, Latah County Sheriff, dated May 23, 1893:

Dear Sir: - It is rumored that an outrage was perpetrated by a Chinaman, on the daughter of one of our citizens, in consequence of which, an attempt will be made tonight to wreak vengeance on the Chinese residents of Moscow. I hereby notify you of the initial movement, and request that you use every power at your command to protect the innocent, and bring the guilty to justice; as any exercise of mob violence would be a reflection on the fair fame of the county of Latah, and the State of Idaho.<sup>200</sup>

Although Moscow newspapers are available for the month following this incident, no further mention of it is made. Perhaps the "outrage" was nothing more than simple affection which was misinterpreted; in 1888 a Chinese man in Portland, for example, was sentenced to 50 days in jail for flinging his arms around a white woman and hugging her on the street.<sup>201</sup>

More "Trouble in Chinatown" flared in 1904. Five local men, Walter Cochran, Herbert Hannas, Pete Bowers, Bus Robbins, and Earnest [sic] Gardner, were charged with breaking property. They "broke windows and doors in the place occupied by Sing Gee as a laundry." Hannas and Robbins were arrested, but the others were still at large; Hannas pleaded guilty.<sup>202</sup>

During archaeological excavations in Moscow in 1983 adjacent to the site of the Chinese laundry on the east side of Jackson, north of A Street (Fig. 4), an elderly woman visited the excavation and shared some of her recollections of Moscow's Chinese with us. She remembered

when the Chinese lived in the area on the east side of Jackson Street, north of Sixth, in back of what is now Ken's Stationery, and recalled that the local "cow-boys" ran them out of town. After the Chinese left she was given some of their dishes and things to play with.<sup>203</sup> If they could not take their things with them, they must have indeed left very hastily. Although no date was specified for this event, it is likely to have been between 1904, when two laundries are shown in that location, and 1909, when both buildings are "vacant and dilapidated."<sup>204</sup>

Mrs. Sheffield, who was a young girl in 1908, also remembered how the local boys, called "the dirty dozen" for their pranks, used to tease the Chinese laundryman. He would deliver the clean clothes in a laundry basket carried on his head. One Halloween the boys stretched a wire across the path, tripping the laundryman and sending the newly washed clothes tumbling into the dirt. Mrs. Sheffield recalled that this bit of meanness made her "feel bad,"<sup>205</sup> even as a child.

By the time of the 1910 census Moscow no longer had any Chinese residents, and only one was listed for the whole of Latah County. That was Chung Lee, of Kendrick, a 62-year-old single alien who had lived in the United States since 1855. Lee was self-employed as a gardener, could read and write, and owned the house he lived in.<sup>206</sup>

#### The Chinese on the Palouse after 1910

Since research for this paper was mainly confined to newspapers and other accounts covering the years 1880 to 1910, it is not surprising that little mention was found of Chinese on the Palouse after 1910. With the exception of Jan Lee's laundry in Colfax, which operated "well into the 1920s,"<sup>207</sup> Kendrick's Chinese gardener,<sup>208</sup> and a hotel cook in Potlatch in 1924,<sup>209</sup> local Chinese were not otherwise encountered, except for a few in Moscow beginning in the 1920s.

One day in 1926 the Lee family from Spokane stopped in at Huff's Cafe in Moscow for coffee and cookies, and before they left that day Mr. Lee had bought the restaurant. The Lees moved to Moscow that year, and Marie Lee started high school, later attending and graduating from the University of Idaho. Her future husband, Mi Lew, grew up in Walla Walla and graduated from Washington State College in 1929. Following their marriage the couple bought the restaurant from Mrs. Lew's parents.<sup>210</sup>

The final mention of local Chinese occurred in 1927 when the Hotel Moscow had two Chinese cooks; they were replaced within a few months, however, supposedly "by popular demand."<sup>211</sup>

#### Conclusions

While the first Chinese to arrive on the Palouse probably came as gold miners, subsequent residents more often found their way there as a result of having been railroad workers in the area from the early to mid-1880s. Besides working for the railroads, Chinese were employed in service occupations, chiefly in laundries and as cooks. Most apparently first came to Moscow and vicinity following completion of the Oregon Railway and Navigation's line to that city in September 1885. Shortly thereafter, advertisements for Chinese laundries began to appear in the weekly newspaper, and occasional mentions of the Chinese were made in its column on "Local News."

In late 1885 and early 1886 anti-Chinese violence reached its height, and the effects of it in Rock Springs, Wyoming, were felt in Tacoma and Seattle. Events in those cities directly influenced those in smaller communities throughout the Pacific Northwest and the Palouse, and Moscow was no exception. Although opposed to violence, the local newspaper's editorial position was one of definite opposition to the Chinese presence. Anti-Chinese incidents in other areas were faithfully reported, thus contributing to the hostile reception accorded the Chinese in

Moscow as well as everywhere else at that time. Although overtly violent incidents were few, the Chinese were frequently harassed and intimidated, with incidents escalating during periods of white hardship and unemployment. The Chinese were driven from Moscow sometime before 1910, leaving Kendrick's lone Chinese resident as the sole representative of all his countrymen who had once toiled so industriously in Latah County.

#### Notes

121. Wilbert, pp. 10-25.
122. Ibid., p. 16.
123. Feichter.
124. Probably the Palouse Gazette, a Colfax, Washington, paper.
125. Moscow Mirror 8(7):3, 9 August 1889.
126. Moscow Mirror 9(35):3, 20 February 1891.
127. Earl David, "Edmundson's Mother Was First Teacher," Special Collections, University of Idaho, Vertical File 202, Moscow - History, n.d., 3 p., p. 1 (handwritten). Lists facts about Moscow around 1890. Acquired from estate of author, 1970.
128. Moscow Mirror 4(32):3, 5 February 1886.
129. Moscow Mirror 8(32):3, 31 January 1890.
130. Moscow Mirror 10(31):1, 29 January 1892.
131. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 12th Census 1900: Idaho. Non-Chinese were listed last name first in the census. Chinese names are customarily written and spoken last name first, so it is difficult to determine how they were told to the enumerator, and how he

interpreted what he heard. "Ah" is a title, somewhat like "Mr.," and is not a name. George Alamon, or Ah Mon, is probably the same person who opened the Sam Sing Laundry in 1892.

132. Moscow Mirror, 10(32):4, 5 February 1892, quoting Review, probably the Spokane Review.

133. Feichter, pp. 96-97; Wilbert, p. 24. The citation given by Feichter is apparently in error; her reference could not be located in the newspaper of 5 May 1896, the date given. Wilbert has evidently perpetuated her mistake. He uses the same quote, saying that the incident happened in "late April" of 1896, but provides no citation, not even Feichter's name.

134. Latah County Genealogical Society, Latah County (Idaho) Cemetery Records (Moscow: Latah County Genealogical Society, 1981), pp. 67, 115.

135. Keeling, p. 40.

136. Star of Idaho 2(27):8, 29 March 1889, Moscow, ID.

137. Moscow Mirror 8(3):3, 12 July 1889.

138. Moscow Mirror 8(21):3, 15 November 1889.

139. Moscow Mirror 9(25):3, 12 December 1890.

140. Moscow Mirror 9(28):3, 2 January 1891.

141. Fern Coble Trull, "The History of the Chinese in Idaho from 1864 to 1910" (Master's thesis, University of Oregon, 1946), pp. 69-70.

142. Moscow Mirror 9(45):3, 1 May 1891.

143. Perhaps this was the same person as laundryman Quong Loy.

144. Moscow Mirror 11(13):1, 23 September 1892.

145. Feichter, p. 138.

146. Moscow Mirror 11(35):2, 24 February 1893.

147. Star-Mirror, probably 26(39):n.p., 6 March 1908. Date is missing from this partially complete issue but was tentatively supplied from internal evidence together with the date of the following issue, 10 March. Unfortunately, no mention could be found of Sing Gee's earlier arrest for the alleged offense, or his pardon, if granted.

148. Wynne, p. 84.

149. Ibid.

150. Hildebrand, p. 64.

151. Wynne, pp. 97-98.

152. Hildebrand, pp. 39-40, 47-57, 69-74.

153. Moscow Mirror 4(33):3, 12 February 1886.

154. Moscow Mirror 4(34):3, 19 February 1886.

155. Moscow Mirror 4(36):3, 5 March 1886.

156. Moscow Mirror 5(5):3, 30 July 1886.

157. Moscow Mirror 5(6):3, 6 August 1886.

158. Works Progress Administration, An Index of Spokesman-Review 1887-1900 (Washington: WPA Indexing Project, 1938), p. 571.

159. David H. Stratton, "The Snake River Massacre of Chinese Miners, 1887," in A Taste of the West: Essays in Honor of Robert C. Athearn, pp. 109-129 (Boulder: Pruett Publishing Co., 1983), p. 117.

160. Moscow Mirror 5(51):3, 17 June 1887.

161. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 10th Census 1880.
162. Palouse Gazette 1(30):4, 20 April 1878.
163. Works Progress Administration, p. 571.
164. Morning Review 8(196):1, 21 February 1889, Spokane Falls, WA.
165. Spokane Falls Review 8(46):5, 28 February 1889, Spokane Falls, WA.
166. Ibid., p. 8, quoting from a Dayton, WA, paper.
167. Moscow Mirror 8(7):2, 9 August 1889.
168. Moscow Mirror 5(10):2, 3 September 1886.
169. Meinig, p. 505.
170. Moscow Mirror 8(10):3, 30 August 1889.
171. Spokane Review 9(6):7, 23 June 1892; Wilbert, p. 18, errs in saying it was January.
172. Moscow Mirror 10(52):1, 24 June 1892.
173. North Idaho Star 6(43):2, 21 July 1893, Moscow, ID, quoting from People's Voice.
174. Spokane Spokesman 11 January 1893, p. 7, Spokane, WA.
175. Wilbert, p. 18.
176. Works Progress Administration, p. 575.
177. Ibid., p. 572.
178. Ibid.
179. Ibid.
180. Moscow Mirror 4(10):1, 4 September 1885.
181. Moscow Mirror 4(23):3, 4 December 1885.
182. Moscow Mirror 5(10):2, 3 September 1886.
183. Moscow Mirror 4(34):3, 19 February 1886.
184. Ibid.
185. Moscow Mirror 4(39):3, 26 March 1886. The restaurant was probably intended to be "Delmonico" after its more famous New York counterpart; if so, "Delimonco" and "Delimonico" are misspellings, but whether on the part of the restaurant owner or the newspaper is uncertain.
186. Moscow Mirror 5(3):2, 16 July 1886.
187. Moscow Mirror 8(15):4, 4 October 1889.
188. Moscow Mirror 8(21):3, 15 November 1889.
189. Clifford Ott, interview, Moscow, Idaho, March 1986.
190. Moscow Mirror 9(19):3, 31 October 1890.
191. Clifford Ott, interview, Moscow, Idaho, March 1986.
192. Moscow Mirror 8(23):3, 29 November 1889.
193. Star-Mirror 27(33):7, 21 January 1909.
194. Latah County Journal 1(3):3, 21 April 1904, Moscow, ID.
195. Moscow Mirror 8(13):3, 20 September 1889.
196. Moscow Mirror 10(16):1, 9 October 1891.

197. Ibid., p. 4.
198. Moscow Mirror 9(50):1, 5 June 1891.
199. Moscow Mirror 11(48):1, 26 May 1893.
200. Ibid., p. 2.
201. Works Progress Administration, p. 573.
202. Latah County Journal 1(3):3, 21 April 1904.
203. Mamie Jabbora Sheffield, interview, Moscow, Idaho, September 1983.
204. Sanborn-Perris Map Company, Moscow, Latah Co., Idaho, Dec. 1909 (New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1910).
205. Mamie Jabbora Sheffield, interview, Moscow, Idaho, March 1986.
206. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 13th Census 1910: Idaho.
207. Wilbert, p. 18.
208. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 13th Census 1910: Idaho; Brocke, p. 23.
209. Harris, p. 10.
210. Mi Lew and Marie Lee Lew, "Second Interview," interviewed by Sam Schragger, December 10, 1975 (Moscow: Oral History Project, Latah County Museum Society, 1976), p. 20; "Fourth Interview," interviewed by Sam Schragger, October 7, 1976 (Moscow: Oral History Project, Latah County Museum Society, 1976), pp. 1-2.
211. Elsie Nelson, Today Is Ours (Moscow, ID: The Idahonian, 1972), p. 102.  
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Camels in Moscow! A 1912 circus parade on south Main St. Behind the pole at the left edge of the picture, a glimpse of Gritman Hospital. (Photo from Cliff Ott)

## MORE THAN A CIRCUS

by Mary Whetstone

In my hometown of Moscow, Idaho, in the 1920s, a circus coming to town was a major event, even for adults. For me, as an eight-year-old, it was Easter, Halloween, and Christmas all rolled up into one. For weeks everybody in town had been making plans to go see "The Greatest Little Show on Earth." Everybody but me and my six hospital wardmates.

"It's not fair," I protested to my mother and older brother when they visited me the day before. I had been in the hospital a month already. "Why does the circus have to come when I'm in bed with both feet in casts?"

"Never mind, dear," Mother tried to soothe me. "The circus will come back next year. By then you'll be out of the hospital for good--and walking!"

"But next year is such a long time away, Mama." At my age, a year was a lifetime away.

Just then Nurse Godron came in with a tray of water glasses. Her pretty face was beaming under the starched cap perched on her dark hair. She was my favorite nurse, always full of fun, making us laugh.

"What is it you can't wait a whole year for?" she teased, emphasizing "whole year."

"For the circus to come back to town," I moaned. "I can't go see it this year. Can't even see the parade and I like that best of all."

I tried hard to hide my tears, as Nurse Gordon looked at me, then at the faces of my roommates. "Well now, you all put on happy faces, and who knows. Maybe a good fairy will surprise you." She smiled at us before she left the room. She always tried to make us cheerful.

"I'll bring you back some cotton candy, Red," my brother Ron promised. He always called me Red because of my short red hair.

His good-hearted promise made me feel ashamed of my tears of self-pity. I managed a weak smile. "Don't work too hard tomorrow, Ron."

"I won't. Besides, it's fun washing elephants and carrying water for the animals."

Ron, twelve, was my idol. I knew he and my ten-year-old brother Tim would get up early tomorrow to watch the circus trains arrive and would follow the circus to the nearby empty field, in hopes of getting jobs, as they had done the year before. That year they had earned free tickets to the performance, plus extra tickets for Mama and me.

But what good would those tickets be this year, I thought after they left. I flopped back on my pillow in disgust. I knew the doctors wouldn't let me out of bed yet. Just my luck.

I had been born with cerebral palsy and had never walked before, all my eight years of life. Now after this operation the doctors thought I would be able to walk with crutches. That sounded like heaven to me. But why couldn't the operation have been postponed until after the circus?

I looked at my three roommates. Surprisingly, they weren't complaining, Gretie, Amy, Betty Jane. What was an old circus anyway? I asked myself, picking up my favorite fairy tale book. But thoughts of the circus kept coming between me and the beautiful princess and handsome prince. I closed the book and joined in the teasing and bickering with the other girls.

Early the next morning I awoke to the strange and thrilling sound of bellowing elephants. "Hey Gretie, wake up," I shouted excitedly to the little blonde girl in the next bed.

She rolled over, mumbling peevishly. "Who cares? We won't get to see it."

"She's right, Mary. You just be quiet." Betty Jane, two beds away, was always bossing the rest of us because she was older. But she's right, I thought, sinking back on my pillow. I wouldn't think about that silly circus.

Later Nurse Gordon came breezing in with our breakfast trays, flashing her usual dimpled smile. "My goodness, what a bunch of gloomies you all are this morning."

Usually I enjoyed her cheerfulness but not now. No wonder she was cheerful--she'd be going to the circus tonight.

"Why so glum, girls?" she insisted.

"It's circus day," I said. "And we can't even see the parade. So we don't want breakfast."

Nurse Gordon smiled. "Well, if you girls eat all of your breakfast in a hurry, maybe there will be a surprise for you later." She was always trying to bribe us to eat by promising surprises.

"Like what?" Betty Jane asked with a sneer. "Bread pudding for dessert tonight?" She was too old to believe in miracles. She knew everything. She was a non-believer.

But just in case, I cleaned up my prunes, oatmeal, and milk. Soon the ward came alive. Several nurses came in all at once and began getting us clean and dressed. They put those who could sit up into wheelchairs. Quickly my bed was changed and I was helped into a fresh nightgown. We were all washed and combed.

"What's going on?" Gretie kept asking, and

kept getting the answer, "Why, we're just making you pretty."

Then the orderlies came and began to push us, beds and wheelchairs alike, not out to the sun porch but down the ramp and out to the sidewalk. There they left us.

The orderlies just smiled away our questions. "Be patient. You'll see."

Suddenly in the distance I could hear a calliope! That magical, musical, tantalizing sound was getting louder and louder. It couldn't be! But yes, oh yes, it was. It was the circus parade. Soon our eyes were dazzled by lovely princesses right out of my fairy tale book, riding bareback on decorated elephants. Their blue spangled capes flowed over brilliantly gold tights. Regally plumed horses pulled gilded cages with lions and tigers pacing inside. And the clowns! The clowns tumbled and capered and did flips in the air, handing out balloons, tin crickets, and cotton candy. It was a fairy tale come true. And all for us. Only for us.

While that marvelous parade was passing by us, I never stopped to wonder why the circus had taken this route, not their usual one to the circus grounds. You don't question miracles. But later, when we were back in our ward, Nurse Gordon came in again with her dimpled smile and said, "See what happens when you eat your breakfast like good girls?"

Still dazzled by the memory of all the color, music, animals, clowns, we nodded, sure that eating breakfast had caused the parade to pass by the hospital.

Even Betty Jane, the non-believer, believed in miracles that day.

I've been to many circuses since then, and I've walked in on crutches, and later, been wheeled in, seated in the wheelchair I must now use. But never have I enjoyed one more than I did that special parade some sixty years ago.

## MARTHA REMEMBERS MOSCOW

by Jean Rudolph

It was raining in August 1918, when Martha and Bob Bonnett arrived in Moscow on one of the daily trains. Expecting their first child, they came from Kansas via Pocatello, Caldwell and Joseph, Oregon. Bob had taken a job as head of Agronomy and Extension Agronomist at the University of Idaho for the grand sum of \$2100 per year. He had had offers from Massachusetts and Idaho; they flew to an old atlas to discover where Moscow, Idaho, might be. It listed the population as 675, and Martha wanted to go to Massachusetts. But Bob promised that if she would live in Idaho for two years, they would move back East. He felt his salary was such that he could change jobs easily. Nearly 70 years later, Martha is still here and says that Moscow has been a good place to live and bring up children. They discovered that at that time, the city had about 3000 people, and the University enrolled about 400.

They stopped in Caldwell to see a friend, Ralph Musser, who told the young couple that Moscow was a nice place to live and, noting Martha's pregnancy, that it had one of the best doctors in the Northwest.

A tall, nice-looking older man got on the train in Caldwell and introduced himself as Dr. Lindley, the president of the University. He was kind and welcoming, and when Mrs. Lindley met the train in Moscow, they piled "the little rubbernecks" (Martha's description) in the car and took them up to the hotel through the rain.

Their first night was spent in the Moscow Hotel, Tom Wright, manager. It had such a good reputation that the drummers (salesmen) scheduled their trips so they could spend weekends there. It served good home-cooked food which improved even more when Elsie Nelson took over its kitchen some years later. The hotel was also a

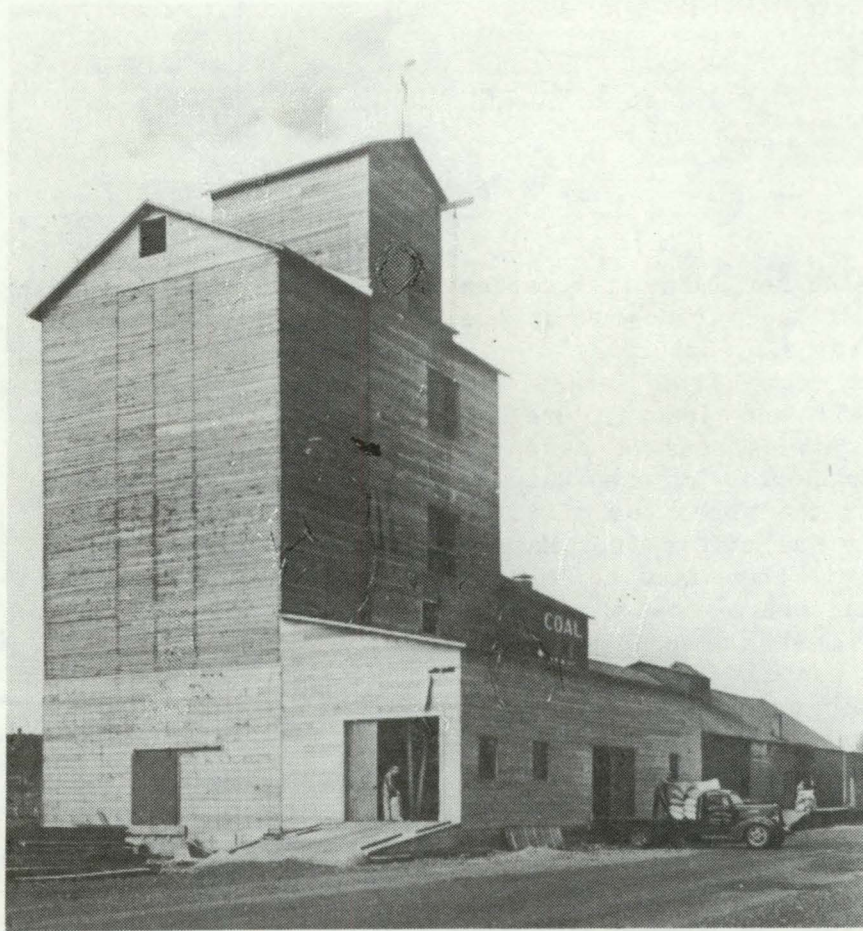
place for social gatherings such as a club the Bonnetts belonged to. The minutes of this club show that they voted never to pay more than 85 cents for dinner!

Next day Bob went off to check out the University, and Martha contacted Mr. Veatch, the real estate man, about a place to rent. As is still the case, there were few to look at--four to be exact. The choice place was the Woodworth apartments at the west end of Second Street, but none of them was available. She looked at a house on Second and Adams which the owner specified was not to be changed in any way. The bathroom could only be reached through the living room and contained a bright blue tin bathtub she didn't like.

Bob's dean told him about a place he was sure they wouldn't be interested in because it was "way out of town" on West C Street. Martha said, "Let's go look at it." She continued, "So we walked out there and peered in the windows. It was a nice big house, more than we needed then, but cheap because of its location. Bob said the bank had a key we could get, but I said, 'You just go down there and tell them we'll take it!'" So they rented their first house for \$25 a month.

At that time there were three big houses on that hill. They had been built in 1913 for professors Vincent, Kennard, and a botany professor, from the same floor plan for a total of \$7000. Fruit trees were planted along what would become streets.

There were adjustments to make. The big house had only a wood cook stove, and Martha was used to coal oil. She says, "Everything I didn't burn up never got done, so we just had to have an electric stove, and we bought a used one for \$75."



In 1940 when this picture was taken, this building was owned by the Builders & Growers Supply Co. Located on the south side of the Troy Highway, near Washington, it was purchased in 1945 by Washburn-Wilson Seed Co., and converted into a modern pea seed processing plant. It was destroyed by fire in 1962.

Robert K. Bonnett. Employed as a professor at the University of Idaho, from 1918 to 1923/24, at which time he became a salesman for Washburn-Wilson until his retirement in 1959.

(photos and commentary courtesy of Clifford Ott)



Accustomed to paying cash, they found that just wasn't done in Moscow. People always charged everything. Groceries were delivered, and once Ned Phillips of Lane's Grocery made a trip to their house just to deliver 10 cents' worth of parsley.

Bob, Jr., was born in September, and World War I ended in November of that year. Williamsons was a big department store with an elevator and a very fine restaurant. To celebrate the armistice, Mr. Williamson piled all the used furniture he had taken in trade on the corner of First and Main for a big bonfire. Everyone was asked to add whatever they could to it.

The excellent doctor their friend had mentioned was Dr. Gritman, who delivered all five Bonnett children. Martha recalls, "He was the best doctor. He could tell more just by looking at you, it seemed to me, than they can nowadays with all their fancy equipment." Most of the babies were delivered at the hospital on Main Street, but once the mud was so deep the doctor had to come to the house. He got stuck trying to get up A Street and had to be pulled out and come by another route. Dr. Gritman could be counted on at any hour of the day or night, and Martha was one of his last patients. In her words: "I'd had a car accident. I tried to take out one of Mabel Driscoll's trees, and it wouldn't go down." Tina Cox, Mrs. Gritman's sister and the doctor's office help, told Martha to come down, and the doctor saw her even though he was in bed with his last illness. There were those who didn't like Dr. Gritman, however. Martha says she recalls a trial which split the town over an incident between him and a female patient.

Mud drove them from West C Street--it was so deep no mail was delivered in bad weather. Even Main Street had board sidewalks raised above the winter mud and ruts and the summer dust. When one of the babies was due, Mr. Weeks, a man with short arms, came to fetch Martha who sat on top of his old cab. She remembers, "There was no trouble delivering that baby--the cab would hit one rut and then slide over and hit another rut. I didn't

know whether I was going to get there or not."

So the next year they moved to a house on Third and Jefferson. Dr. Aspray owned the house, and Dr. Stevenson had a hospital next door. Dr. Aspray had gone off to war, and when he returned he established a radiology practice in Spokane. But the rent for this place was raised \$10 every three months, and they decided that was too much, so they began to look for a place to buy.

They heard of a nice house with a big fenced yard on the corner of A and Jefferson, and they bought it for \$4100 in 1920 from the widow of Frank Johnson, a farmer. It had a lovely wisteria vine, and Bob always said they got the house because Martha loved that vine. Later Mrs. Johnson found housing more expensive than she'd thought and told Bob she'd just have to have more money. He pointed out that she had signed a contract and would have to stick to it. "I didn't want to give up that house," Martha says. "I'd like to have it right now." They lived there 35 years, and four more children were born--Dick, John, Betty and Chuck. Dick died of bulbar polio.

The house had no furnace and no wall sockets, bare bulbs dangled in every room. Later they added a Caloric heater with registers to the second floor, built in the front porch, and lifted the roof to make five bedrooms upstairs. They needed a lot of room for their family and visitors.

Once Mr. Otness said he had a buyer and asked if they would sell the house. Martha told him they were happy in it and had made many improvements. When he found these included a furnace, he spluttered, "A furnace! You've ruined it!" and lost interest.

They bought their first furniture at Davids, and Martha found it amusing that the kiddie coop she wanted was in the grocery department. Davids then sold groceries in the back of the store where the shoe shop was later.

Much social life revolved around the Elks Club, which had an opening reception every year for new faculty. It was quite an affair with fancy food and gorgeous decorations.

The Kensington was a popular form of entertainment for the women. These were often held in the old Episcopalian hall, and 25 to 40 guests might hear a violin player or someone speaking a piece, followed by refreshments furnished by the hostess.

In 1919, Bob's father bought them a big old Oakland, and Martha loved to drive it --especially to Lewiston over the old road that went up one hill and down the other. "When you got to the top of the hills, you could see so far away. I just liked distances," she declares. She found the new straighter road a disappointment.

They attended the white frame Presbyterian church which preceded the present one. Dr. Clifford Drury was the minister, and he was quite a scholar. He and Dr. Brosnan, of the University history department, used to disagree on historical facts, she remembers.

Their children attended the old white wooden Russell grade school on Adams Street, where Martha recalls a principal named Berryman. On hot days he either came to school barefoot or took his shoes off after he got there.

Occasionally the Bonnetts went to the Davenport Hotel in Spokane where they had luscious dinners in the Italian Gardens for \$1.25, including shrimp cocktail and chicken gumbo. They also went to the Early Birds Club in that hotel where they had fancy dinners and were entertained by people like Ilka Chase and Edward R. Morrow.

Prohibition prevented the sale of hard liquor, and Frank Moore (prosecuting attorney?) rigidly enforced the state law

against gambling for money or prizes, even at ladies' card parties. Card games were frowned upon until the time of Dr. Upham's presidency. Mrs. Upham had many decks of cards she wanted to use but was afraid she'd be criticized if she gave a card party. Just before they left town, she broke the ban and gave the first bridge party.

Martha loved popcorn and for years the only place to get it was the Pastime, a saloon on Main Street. Men played cards there, though not for money. In Kansas no reputable woman would go in such a place, but it was acceptable in Moscow, and occasionally Martha would venture in to buy popcorn. She was delivered when Jerry Gelwick began to sell it from a pushcart outside the theater on Main between Third and Fourth. Jerry later did the community a great service by providing a clean gathering place for high school kids at his little fountain on Third Street.

The Bonnetts left the A Street house for one they built on Walenta Drive in the new University Heights addition, a former wheat field locally known as Idiots' Ridge because of the modernistic houses some professors built there. This was their home from about 1955 to 1976.

After some years at the University, Bob went to work for Washburn-Wilson, a seed company. He died in 1977 after they moved to the Good Samaritan apartments.

In spite of Bob's promise to stay only two years, they never left Moscow except for trips to Kansas and, later on, a good deal of world travel.

Martha has kept track, partly because they were engaged on August 20 of one year and married on August 24 of the next, and, as on that first day, there has been at least some precipitation in Moscow between those days, with the exception of just one year.



## THE BOVILLS

by Charles A. Peters

[The following is taken from a manuscript in the Day-Northwest Collection of the University of Idaho Library, "The University of Idaho and Charles A. Peters." Peters came to the UI Chemistry Department in 1901.]

Along towards Spring of my first year I said to Dr. MacLean [president of the University of Idaho, 1900-13], "What about this white pine country I keep hearing about?"

"You know," he answered, "I don't know the least thing about it. I have been hearing about Heaven all my life and I know as much about one as the other."

"Some students speak of homesteading out there."

"So I understand."

"I have been advised to take up a claim."

"I can't advise you about that. But if I did consider such action I would look into the matter very carefully. From what I hear some transactions or parts of them, at least, may be rather shady. Not that anyone is violating the law. Well, I don't know much about it, as you see, but I would not be drawn into anything I did not know all about."

It was evident that he did not think faculty members should get involved in timber deals.

"I hear that people going in and out of the timber stop at Bovills."

"I understand that Mr. and Mrs. Bovill are very nice people."

So I decided to see the white pine country and find out the mystery behind it. My trips to Bovills were made generally about the first of September after a summer traveling around. It was a wonderful

place to rest up in and get in shape for the college work ahead. It was necessary to get in touch with the Bovills to find out when they would be "in." That might take a week, for the mail depended on whether anyone was going in or out. We got off the N.P. train at Troy and were driven out the 25 miles by Mr. Bovill with a stop at "Nigger Joe's" for dinner. One year I wanted to go out, but had no time to send getting a letter back and forth, so I got off at Troy and began inquiring around the village, "Are the Bovills in today?"

"No, they came in last Wednesday."

"I want to find someone going out that way."

"Isn't \_\_\_\_\_ in today?" turning to a companion.

"Yes, he is. You might find him at the grain store. He lives out that way."

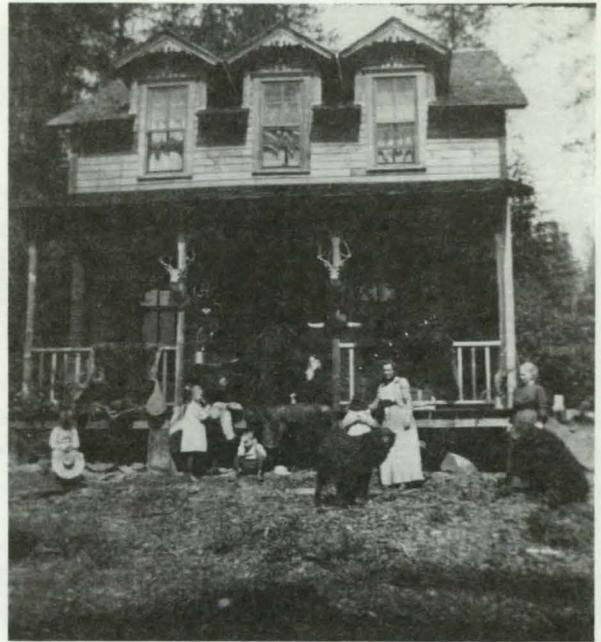
When I found him and explained my predicament, "You can ride out with me as far as I go. I live about half way out." That was good enough for me. The horses walked all the way. We were riding on a farm wagon. I had my .22 rifle along. When we got in late in the afternoon he said, "I got a dog. He is pretty good on birds. Not always though. You want to go out and look around?" So we went hunting and got grouse for supper. The method was the same as the Bovills had showed me the year before. The dog flushed a bird. The bird to get out of the way of the dog flies up to a limb on a tree. The dog barks and continues to bark while the grouse sits there with an eye on the dog. The man with the rifle has to spot the bird and bring him down. A shotgun would be murder, expensive and fill the bird with lead. By the time we had plenty of fresh meat in the bag my host was quite thawed out and recovered from shyness. "In the morning I will hitch up and drive you

over to Bovills. The horses are tired now. A long day for them with the heavy wagon." It seems that my host did not have a .22 rifle and so was glad to have a supply of birds. I think he said, "Better take some of these to Mrs. Bovill. We have more than we can use."

Mrs. Bovill said, "How did you get here? Rode out with Harry. How did you know he was in Troy."

"I didn't. I took a chance someone would be going in."

"The very idea. You were lucky that's all." The cost for the trip was generally about \$5. If the Bovills had to go in or out anyway the fare would be less. How much we paid for a week's entertainment I do not remember. Possibly \$8 or \$10. The Bovills place was approached through a wide natural meadow. We crossed a bridge over a brook as we neared the houses. The houses sat in the edge of the thinned out woods. The road forked before the houses, the right to the St. Joe country and the left to St. Maries. The Bovills were English, pleasant, cultivated people. Of much higher social level than one found in the timber. There were two little girls. The main room was a post office and store. It was the last chance to stock up before entering the timber. The Bovills had a good dog and it was easy to keep the table supplied with grouse. Within a mile to the right a creek in the woods was 25 feet wide and a hole could be found for bathing. Some said fishing but I had no luck. They spoke of deer. Mrs. Bovill said there was a salt lick out a way. I found it, added more salt and set out to get a deer. The ax cut some limbs and I made a rest up a tree overlooking the lick. As late in the evening as I thought wise, it is easy to get lost in the dark, I climbed up the tree and waited. The rifle was borrowed from the host. It was a long wait up a tree in the dark. I heard the deer jump and saw dozens, at least I thought I did. One or two shots brought down nothing. I had "buck fever" and could see deer everywhere. So I gave it up and went back to the house. How long I was out I don't know.



The first house at Warren Meadows (Bovill). From left to right, members of the Bovill clan: Gwen, Dorothy, unid. boy and girl, Mrs. Bovill, unid. young woman

In 1905, in August, the wife and I finished up our honeymoon with a week out there. At Christmas we returned. This time I was in for big money. I had eight steep traps to get a mink coat for the

bride. The snow was so deep that it was dangerous to be out in it. The Bovills used skis. These were new to me. To set a steel trap with a chicken head and not fall into the snow without ski poles is for a novice a tricky feat. I got one weasel. He was white with his winter coat.

One afternoon in September a rough specimen of a man approached from the St. Joe road. Mrs. Bovill, "Look! Whose that? I believe it is Sam. He is coming out." Sam dropped the lines of his cayuse and came in.

"Hello."

"Hello, Sam. Well how've you been?"

"Pretty fair."

"How did you make out? Find anything?"

"I got some rock that may have values in it. Looks like it. Shall have to have it assayed before we can tell." So it gradually came to light that Mrs. Bovill had "grub staked" the man in the early summer and he had just got back. How he could not find the rich vein in the ledge he saw five years before; how his horse got frightened by a bear one night; how he got sick eating too old deer meat I never heard for I gathered it would be a long time before he loosened up and gave out details of the trip.

One day a group of Indian squaws arrived. Mrs. Bovill was at once concerned, "Our ax is out on the block. Hugh, I wish you would bring it in. I wonder if this is

the group that were down at Troy a couple of years ago. They tanned some deer skins for them. They were wonderfully soft. Wait. I'll ask them." The Indians took the skins down by the brook and worked on them several days. "They don't want money. They want skins, one for every two. They wanted one for one but I wouldn't give them half, that is too many, don't you think. They say we must not go near them while they are at work."

At Christmas time, 1905, Mrs. Bovill had worked all the morning on the elaborate meal, we said, "Now you just sit down and eat. We will serve the dinner." She demurred at first, then somewhat resigned, sat down. We had a merry dinner trying to imitate professional waiters. When it came to the pudding I poured on a little



The Bovill Store, c.1905. Mr. and Mrs. Bovill in the doorway.

whiskey. The pudding would not light; more, no blaze. Still more and a faint flame resulted. As I sat it down before Mrs. Bovill we heard the words escape from her, "They have spoiled the pudding." Mr. Bovill said, "Made it better." Mrs. B. said, "You!"

The last time we saw the place they told me, "The railroad is coming in right over there," and pointing to the edge of the timber on the St. Joe side. The Bovills held quite a bit of timber, I understand, and were waiting until it could be turned into money, meanwhile making a living off the country as it were. I still wonder how they came out.

At Christmas, 1905, the other guests were two Libby girls from Clarkston and young Mr. Vollmer, son of the proprietor of Lewiston's large store. The girls' father, Edgar H. Libby had developed Clarkston under the financial guidance of Charles Francis Adams of the Union Pacific. Mr. Libby was of the class of 1874

of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, my alma mater, and so known to me.

The joke about the town of Troy is so old it may be new. The old timers said, "You know the town of Troy? It was started by Mr. Vollmer the merchant of Lewiston and he wanted it called after him but there was no one in the place who could pronounce the name so they had to change it to Troy." The sons and grandsons of these early settlers are probably University graduates now and may slap me down hard for poking fun at their Scandinavian ancestors.

In 1932 in Moscow I said to someone, "I would like to go out to Bovills. I wonder how the place looks now?" The reply was, "Don't. If you remember how it used to be better let it go at that." Some months ago the Scientific Monthly had an article by the head of the Conservation Department of the U.S. A picture showed a farm pond, newly made, "four miles east of Troy;" right on Nigger Joe's place, I thought.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

Farming the Frontier: The Agricultural Opening of the Oregon Country, 1786-1846. James R. Gibson. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986. 278 pp. \$25.00.

Farming in the Pacific Northwest began long before wagon trains loaded with settlers began reaching the Willamette Valley in the 1840s. Hudson's Bay Company employees had begun growing crops near trading posts two decades earlier to ease dependence on expensive, imported provisions or monotonous local fare ("many a night I go to bed hungry and craving something better than this horrid, dried salmon," wrote one clerk (p. 25). After the able and far-sighted George Simpson took control in 1821, the "Honourable Company" made a determined effort to expand agriculture at its numerous Northwest posts. Company employees hacked out clearings in dense coastal forests (where

it once took twenty laborers three weeks to clear stumps from but 5/8 of an acre) and battled frigid winters, late spring frosts, summer drought, disease, and predators as they raised crops and livestock at inland outposts scattered from present day Boise to Wallula to the Peace River Valley far to the north. Missionaries also farmed the frontier near their stations in the valleys of the Willamette, the Walla Walla, the Clearwater, and elsewhere for sustenance and, more importantly, in an effort to convert semi-nomadic Indians to a sedentary lifestyle.

James R. Gibson, a Professor of Geography at York University in Toronto, makes use of extensive primary sources, particularly the newly available records of the Hudson's Bay Company, in his study of these early struggles to raise crops on the Northwest frontier. He finds the efforts of missionaries to "use the plough as

well as the Bible" among the "poor, benighted children" (contemporary quotes from pp. 151, 161) to have had little lasting impact. The fur trading company, on the other hand, "succeeded in producing enough wheat, beef, and butter to meet not only its own needs but also those of the rival Russian-American Company and some of those of the Sandwich Islands [Hawaii] . . . as well as the emergency requirements of starving Indians, . . . arriving migrants, overland travellers, company ships, and visiting vessels and expeditions" (pp. 187-189). Gibson concludes that these farming ventures helped give the British a strong claim to the territories occupied jointly with the United States north of the Columbia-Snake-Clearwater river system. Because British statesmen lacked the resolve or the interest to protect these claims when the boundary issue was settled in 1846, the author feels that "present-day Canadians have valid reasons for regretting and even resenting the Oregon settlement" for "they were dispossessed of part of their rightful Columbia heritage" (p. 205).

Farming the Frontier is a well written account of a previously neglected period of agricultural development on the Pacific Northwest frontier. Gibson is probably correct when he states that this neglect stems in part "from the ethnocentric bent of American historiography" (p. 5). But the author occasionally stretches too far in restoring the balance when he claims that the fur traders "had already tested and proved the soil, water, and forest resources" (p. 190) or when he suggests that one nation's citizens have cause today to resent a boundary settlement that, for better or worse, occurred over 140 years ago on a sparsely settled and little known frontier. The 3,000 acres cultivated by Hudson's Bay employees near outposts scattered from the Willamette to Alaska were significant, as was the assistance Chief Factor John McLoughlin generously offered those who settled near Fort Vancouver. But the process of testing and proving the soil and water resources had barely begun by 1846. The families who came west to

raise stock and to turn over millions of acres of prairie with the plow still had much to learn through trial and error about an unusual land of widely varying

climatic conditions. James Gibson nevertheless fills a significant gap in our understanding of the process of agricultural development in the Oregon Country with this readable, well-researched account.

ALEXANDER C. MCGREGOR is currently Vice President of the McGregor Company, part of a 105-year-old family owned agricultural business headquartered in Whitman County. He has written several articles and a book--Counting Sheep: From Open Range to Agribusiness on the Columbia Plateau--about farming in the inland Northwest. McGregor graduated from Whitman College, received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Washington in 1977, and taught briefly at both schools before joining his family business.

The Inland Empire: Unfolding Years, 1879-1929. John Fahey. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986. 298 p. Bibliography. Index. Hardcover.

John Fahey has written more about the Inland Empire than any other historian. No one is better qualified to attempt a synthesis of this diverse region's history than he.

The Inland Empire is a valuable contribution. In it, Fahey deals with the region's major economic forces in concise, well organized chapters. His descriptions of harvest work, everyday life on farms, and the impact of technology upon the region's people are particularly valuable. This book is more significant because it reads well. Fahey has a crisp writing style. His is a "popular" history in the best sense of that word.

As Fahey states, it is rare for a writer to deal with a synthesis of the entire region. Too often we confine our reading

to narrow histories of particular towns, counties, or families. Fahey helps us to see the broader picture. I recommend the book for all residents of the region who want a deeper understanding of their area's history.

Having said that, I would be remiss if I did not point out some serious flaws. First, it seems that the dates selected for study are at best arbitrary, chosen so a neat 50 year period can be examined. In order to understand the "Influx of Strangers" Fahey discusses in his first chapter, one must begin earlier than 1879, for the area's "unfolding" came before then. Fahey ends his study in 1929 because "the stock market crashed, ending an era" (p. xii). Yet, as he adequately points out, the "crash" in this region actually came in the years immediately following World War I. The New York Stock Market had little impact, and the year 1929 is, for the Inland Empire, an imaginary benchmark. Fahey claims his book "does cover nineteen more years of the twentieth century" (p. xi) than D. W. Meinig's masterful history of the area, The Great Columbia Plain. But is that enough time to justify a book-length manuscript? Fahey has the skills and background to carry his story much further into the twentieth century. It is unfortunate he chose to begin and end with capricious dates.

In earlier years, historians could write about this area without mining the resources located at local historical societies. But now, as those societies become more professional, they do so at their own peril. Fahey gives no evidence that he is aware of journals like the Bunchgrass Historian and Latah Legacy, or that he knows that many local historical societies now maintain archival, photographic, and manuscript collections which provide invaluable information concerning the area's history. He makes no use of rich oral history collections. Many of his photographs, coming as they do from the area's largest and most used depositories, have been seen in publications before (and here are unimaginatively arranged--a problem of the publisher, not

the author). He uses outdated sources. Thus, early in the book (p. 5) he discusses the roles of James Perkins and J.P.T. McCroskey as typical local boosters, but does not avail himself of recent writings about these men: his source dates from 1890. Inevitably, he makes mistakes. McCroskey, for instance, was not a town booster--he lived in a rural area. Utilizing recent articles in the Legacy would have helped eliminate some errors in his writing on the Potlatch Lumber Company. For example, current residents of Elk River will be surprised to learn that their town only "lasted for about twenty-five years" (p. 193), and Fahey's descriptions of Potlatch houses (pp. 192-3) and the Weyerhaeusers's long struggle with Idaho politicians over logging laws (p. 190) are simplistic to the point of inaccuracy. He relies almost totally on Hidy, Hill, and Nevins's 1963 Timber and Men to tell the important story of the Weyerhaeuser move to the

Inland Empire when Fred Kohlmeyer's Timber Roots (1976) and Charles Twining's Phil Weyerhaeuser (1985), along with other works, provide more updated--and different--versions of the story.

Fahey seems to have difficulty deciding the geographical limits of his study. At times he includes north central Idaho (for logging), but at other times ignores it, causing inconsistencies. For example, he has a couple of good pages (80-1) on the impact of Washington State College and its outreach programs to farmers, but completely ignores the University of Idaho, the area's other land-grant institution, and its even more broad-based outreach to miners and lumbermen, in addition to farmers.

Finally, the index is abysmal. Fahey makes key references to Pullman throughout the book. He mentions the important role of Moscow's Idaho National Harvester Company. Yet, neither Moscow nor Pullman is even mentioned in the index. As a reference tool, a book is often only as good as its index.

(continued on the inside front cover)

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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Moscow, Idaho 83843

Non-profit Organ.  
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



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NOTE: Due to the high cost of returned issues, we appreciate  
being advised of changes of address

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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:

	Member	Friend	Contributor	Sustainer	Sponsor	Patron
Individual	\$ 7.50-15	\$16-30	\$ 31-75	\$ 76-150	\$151-499	\$500 up
Family	12.50-25	26-50	51-100	101-250	251-499	500 up
Business	25-50	51-100	101-250	251-350	351-499	500 up

Note: For Canada and Mexico, add \$4; for Europe, add \$8.

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 local history/genealogy research archives 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. Tuesday through Saturday. Visits to the museum or research archives are welcomed at other times and can be arranged by calling (208) 882-1004.