

# LATAH LEGACY

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Frank Brocke served the First Bank of Troy from 1926 to 1973 and became a legend of his time. He and the bank received national and even international notoriety for the homey, individual approach they made to their customers. He is shown here at his desk in the Troy bank building. His story, in his own words, appears in this issue of the *Legacy*.

*Inside this issue:*

## **Money Lending in an Earlier Time**

Frank Brocke and the First Bank of Troy

## **Mining in the Palouse**

## **Prohibition Hits Moscow**

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## Vol. 19, No. 2, Fall 1990

### The Latah County Historical Society

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*Lending Money in an Earlier Day. . .*

## **Frank Brocke and the First Bank of Troy**

### **Introduction**

*The year 1990 has brought to national attention numerous times when greed and thirst for the good life prompted people in the business of lending money to others (especially in the Saving and Loan Associations) to make huge loans in the millions and billions of dollars and to amass personal fortunes by doing so. Many of the actions were both unethical and illegal and some people are going to jail because of this. This seems to be the story of the 1980s and it will be interesting to see how history treats that period.*

*The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation was created by act of Congress at the depth of the Great Depression in the 1930s. Banks were closing all over the country and people were losing their life savings. There was no such thing as insurance for depositors then. One of the first things President Franklin Roosevelt did after his inauguration was to immediately declare a Bank Holiday on March 6, 1933, to help settle the panic that many banks were having to face.*

*Now, of course, most depositors are insured up to \$100,000 per account, but it has been estimated that it will take more than \$5 billion for the government (and actually the American taxpayer) to bail out the S&Ls.*

*So with all this fresh in our minds, let's go back to an earlier time when, at least in Troy, Idaho, banking and loaning money was conducted on a more personal level. And this lasted right up into the early 1970s.*

*It is fair to say that Frank O. Brocke became a legend in his time. Yes, even a national legend. And so did the First Bank of Troy. Glen Barrett, in his history, "The First Bank of Troy," published in 1974, describes it thus:*

*It was an established Troy institution when Brocke was born in 1906, and the community at large was, in a sense, responsible for the bank's survival during the crisis of 1933. During the years that followed it became a unique bank in a pleasant, productive community where independence has remained a cherished characteristic of the people and their institutions.<sup>1</sup>*

*By 1971, in a town of about 514 population, the First Bank of Troy had 6,000 account holders scattered over 41 states and in 45 countries and with more than \$15 million in deposits. It had been guided by the slogan "Liberality, Courtesy, Accuracy, Stability" and maintained a policy of "no service charge." This meant no charge for writing checks, no minimum balance required*

*". . .it became a unique bank in a pleasant community where independence has remained a cherished characteristic of the people and their institutions."*

*in accounts and no notary or escrow fees.*

*In 1975 Sam Schragger, working in an oral history project with the Latah County Historical Society, conducted a series of interviews with Frank Brocke. From these interviews we hope to put together a coherent story of banking in the early and middle part of the 20th Century in Idaho. The story is told in Brocke's own words with added commentary by this writer used only to bring Brocke's words together for continuity and coherence.*

*--Bert Cross*

## **The Great Depression**

*That period called the Great Depression actually began with the crash of the Stock Market in 1929 and probably hit its depth in the early 1930s. During that period it was a common thing nationally for home owners to lose their homes and farmers to lose their farms through foreclosure by the banks. That was not true of the First Bank of Troy.*

"In Latah County there was very few land foreclosures. In fact I know of only one and that was a voluntary in the Troy area. And that man redeemed it, and he gave a deed to the bank in my name and I held it in trust. And we held it, I believe, around five or six years, just for the idea that maybe he can pay it off and get it back and he did. His family grew up, he got help. And he had two boys and two daughters and he was a good person, and he redeemed his farm. And that is the only one that we ever came close to owning.

"We didn't outright promise him. He outright deeded to us with the idea, but he was to live there. He was to go on farming it. And we could do as we wanted to. If we felt that no, we're through with you, we're going to sell it, why that would have been the end. But we just absolutely gave it to him with that. We could see he was gaining and that he had had good years, and the crop. . .and we took the taxes, we paid the taxes, paid the interest on the investment we had, and the balance was applied to his debt even though we had the deed. And we could see that he was gaining and so then we just decided to

hold it in trust until he could pay it off in full. And as loaning capacities became more desirable for the insurance companies he was finally able to go to the Federal Land Bank and finance it. And so we just gave it back to him, and he paid the debt in full.

"This was the only land foreclosure. We had one land foreclosure and one machinery foreclosure. That was not a foreclosure on the land, that was a voluntary act. But on the other one, that was actually a sure sale of equipment and he had no chance to ever recover and the bank sold him out. But there was no animosity. It was expected. Anybody that knew what we had done felt that we were justified. There was no hard feelings. It was not one of these that you read about in the East where they all ganged up on the banker. But in our case it was strictly. . . we were at the end of our rope."

## **Raised Money from Depositors**

*On March 6, 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt declared that all banks in the nation be closed as an emergency measure. This is how it affected the First Bank of Troy:*

"The First Bank of Troy always was a money-making bank. And the demand for money was reasonably good. And it prospered. The people that owned it at that time were not people that bled it by constantly declaring dividends which was a policy that was good. They wanted to build the bank and they did. They had an outstanding reserve account when the banking holiday hit in '32. The bank was in very good shape to be able to muster to take on such a thing.

"And of course when the bank holiday was declared which was in January. . . or March 6, . . . believe is when the President took over and he closed all the banks. Every bank in the United States was ordered closed. And they was to be only re-opened by the consent of your banking department. And of course there was only one examiner in the state of Idaho and he was in the south.

"So we stayed open, and we made change and we waited on people, but there



This photograph, taken in the 1950s, shows the Bank of Troy building built in 1941. It was expanded to the north in 1967.

was no withdrawals or there was no loanings until the examiner could come and clear our records which took three weeks from the time that the holiday, before the bank was free to start in again. But we had an examination. As I recall it took about three days for him to go through and in the process of doing this, why, he had ordered that our capital was impaired and that we had to raise \$50,000 to replace undesirable loans.

"So we went out one afternoon. Frank Green, Ole and Axel Bohman, and I had prepared a list, I believe it was eight people for them to go to see. And they started out, and they left, I would say, about noon and by three o'clock they were back. And they had \$50,000 in their pockets. And I can recall calling the examiner, he was in Moscow. And I said, 'Well, we got the \$50,000, when can you come back?' He says, 'What?' And I says, 'Yes, we have it.' He said, 'All right, I'll be there tomorrow morning.' And that was, believe it or not, I think he was as surprised as he could be and we knew we had no problem.

". . . Frank Green was a very, very

outstanding individual. And as I recall the conversation, I didn't go along, I had a job and I stayed at the bank. And the type of people they went to were money people that had money on savings and had banked in the Troy bank all their lives, and it seems as though when they walked up to these individuals, so the story goes, why they told 'em what they wanted, and it was just a question of how much do you need.

"And they said, 'Well, we'd like to have either five or ten thousand dollars.' 'Okay, that's all I want to know.' And they got it. No arguments, no explanations, just on the reputations of these three men. But that's how simple it was because that's what you can do when you have respect. I can see 'em to this day when they went and came."

### ***Brocke Learned from Bohman***

*Ole Bohman, a Troy lumberman turned banker, headed the First Bank of Troy when Brocke went to work for him in 1926. Bohman was Brocke's mentor and Brocke learned most of what he knew about the banking business*

*under Bohman's tutelage. Brocke had deep feeling and respect for Bohman.*

"Well, of course, by the time I came to Troy I knew the fundamentals of banking. I knew all the bookkeeping angles, I knew how to post, I knew of, the general principles of banking because I had already spent three years in a bank. But all you learned when you came was the policy of the present management.

"Ole Bohman was a very kind gentleman. He was not a cold-blooded banker as we know cold-blooded bankers. He wanted to help people and he had a desire to help 'em. Very rarely could he demand of an individual, now you pay this or else. He never said that to any man. He just could not and he would not. So that rubbed off onto me to a degree that I have never been that type either. That

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*". . .I could never walk into a tavern where there was being beer served and alcohol. . ."*

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is, I knew when I was licked or if I knew that if a man wasn't trying and that he was dishonest and boozing, that he was drinking up his money, that he was neglecting his family, I could become very, very irritated with him. And I would tell him so. . .

"I used to laugh because I could never walk into a tavern where there was being beer served or alcohol served because one would punch the other one, 'Here comes Brocke, be careful.' And that was common knowledge, you know. So I stayed out of 'em. I finally had to because it was embarrassing. Even though I didn't care unless they were, as I say, the ones that abused. And of course they had a guilty conscience too.

"But I would say to a man that would come in and 'I need a hundred dollars.' 'Well, by golly, I'll give it to you but I don't want to

see you in that tavern.' Well, he'd 'No, no, no, no.' But an hour later he went down there and there he was. So consequently you kinda learned to know 'em and you knew that, well, next time he's gonna be that much harder to get the next two hundred. But anyway, that's life.

"But Ole Bohman, of course he was a religious person to the degree that he never went near those places. He was about as dry as they make 'em. So, but anyway, I learned those things through him. I think I remember Ole has always been a very fair one. And that's what he wanted to be and he was.

". . .And we never had words. We were always so close. I knew what he would do and he seemed to know what I would do and so he never worried. We never had problems. He made mistakes. I made mistakes. I could tell him when he would make a mistake and I think he probably would tell me. I've told him when he loaned a man money--I never called him 'Ole,' I always called him Mr. Bohman. I said, 'Mr. Bohman, you know darned well he's not going to pay that.' 'Well, he might.' And he wouldn't.

"And on the other hand there was many times that I have loaned money, Ole Bohman has loaned money, to a man that staggered in your door he was so drunk. And we'd kid him and say, 'Well, I hope you remember the hundred dollars, see. And I hope you remember this, by golly, because it's gonna be due now next month. And you only want it for 30 days and you're pretty drunk.' 'I'll remember it and I'll see that you're paid.' And he would be back there probably the next week when he got his paycheck.

"He'd pay it, Ole and I used to laugh at that. He would never stand it, he could never go into Moscow, he could never go into a Spokane bank and stagger in the door and get a hundred dollars. Yeah, that's right, that's the way we did it. But that's true and that's the way we did it and you weren't ashamed of it either. Because it wasn't everybody that could do it, but sometimes, you know, these boys would get carried away. We never denied this either and we never lost those kinds of loans."

## **'Compassion with Conservatism'**

*Brocke adopted a money-lending philosophy from his mentor, Ole Bohman. It was something he absorbed rather than being taught. Ole Bohman apparently mixed compassion with conservatism, as Brocke describes:*

"I don't think he ever would say no, but oftentimes if you needed \$300 you walked out with maybe \$150. Now that was pretty much my philosophy too. I got that off him obviously because a man came in with \$500 and he was a marginal case and we were financing him and you had a feeling, well, he's pulled that figure out of the air. In other words he's

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*"...the more they owed  
the more sadder it was to  
collect."*

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asking for \$500 with the idea, 'Gee, I might not get it. I'm going to ask for five because I know he's going to pull me down.' So that got to be pretty much of a practice and obviously it was dealt between us because we were both doing it, I can recall that.

"But there was one time that he would always fail. And if John Jones lost his wife by death last night and he came into the bank the next day and he wanted to know, 'Mr. Bowman, Matilda died last night and I've got to have the funeral and I suppose I got to pay cash. Can I get it?' 'Oh yeah, yeah. We'll loan it to you no matter what.' Now that man. It might be \$300, that would be a good funeral in those days. Two hundred to three hundred dollars was a normal deal. But that's when he'd really go soft. I noticed that so. . . Now that was Ole Bohman, see. Because he would, he was kind. He knew that man was in trouble and he knew his wife had to be buried. And he knew that he was honorable and he would pay it back. But it was too bad. It was

no value received, in other words. But 'Yeah, we'll see that your wife is buried and we'll loan you the money.' And that's when he could get awful soft.

"But another person might come in and say, 'I need \$300 for a team of horses.' 'No, no. That's too much. You don't have to have that good a team.' And they'd either walk out or else they would end up with maybe \$150 and get 'em a couple of old nags. He didn't go into the facts of what he was getting for \$300. He just took it for granted. 'Well, you can get by with \$150, see. You don't have to have that good a team of horses.' Well, sometimes that's just false economy, you know, that's just business. But that was his way.

". . . Now that was separate from the fact, if a man, if a farmer would come in--and I got into the habit of this--and he needed a thousand dollars to pay his harvest hands and he didn't have a list, he didn't know. He picked that figure out the the air--that is I felt that way, that he'd picked his figure of a thousand dollars because, 'Well, I'm going to ask for plenty. I know him, he's going to jew me down.' And I would say to him, 'I'll tell you what. I don't think you need a thousand, and here's seven hundred dollars, or here's eight hundred. You go out, and then if you are short come back.'

"And it always worked because, there again, you were doing that borrower a favor. That was always what I worked for. I swear that if it'd been up to me, every young, poor person wouldn't have ever owed a dime. And you *hated* to loan to 'em because you knew that day was coming that they had to pay it, and if they didn't have it, if it was a short year, the more they owed the more sadder it was to collect. So that was my thinking, that was where I got this idea, if you want a thousand dollars, you better start out with twelve hundred, right, cause he's going to jew you down. And that was common."

## **The First Bank Robbery**

*The First Bank of Troy was robbed twice during the time that Brocke was with the bank. The first time was the first week in July*

1950, by Dick McConnell, a grandson of former Governor William J. McConnell, also a former businessman and mayor of Moscow and builder of McConnell Mason, now the museum for the Latah County Historical Society. Brocke made banking history when some years later, after McConnell had served his term in prison and had been out for some time, he made a loan to the former robber. This is how Brocke describes it:

"Yes, he was a very large man, and of course, lived up in the Clarkia and he had married a widow that had, I believe it was five or six kids, and they were destitute. He just couldn't get a job. He was a sort of slaphappy man, anyway, and they owed over \$300 in rent, they owed over. . . between \$300 and \$400 grocery bill. The electricity had been turned off the week before. Although it was summertime they were destitute. And the story is and the way he told it, she said to him that particular morning, which was on July 7th--after the Fourth of July--she said, 'Dick, if you don't go out and raise some money, I won't be here tonight.' He says, 'Where will I get the money?' And she says, 'Well, go rob a bank!' Just like that! And he did.

". . . he walked up to the second window where I was standing. Jean Kerr stepped over and he just turned--he had a lunch pail, these things that open at the top, and he just said to her, 'This is a stickup. Fill up the pail, fill up the box.' And she sort drooped over and she just passed out, fainted on the floor and fell right down beside me.

"And I says, 'My golly, Jean's fainted.' And so I stooped down like this to talk to her and she says, 'A stickup.' And so I raised back up and walked over to him. By that time he had backed away. But he had a good sized gun on him, and that barrel looked about the size of a dime, at the end anyway, the opening, and so he just walked back and then he walked over to me and I said, 'What do you want?' And he said, 'Fill the box.' And I reached in the drawer and threw out the money on the counter and I says, 'Put it in there yourself.' So, he had the gun in one hand and he opened the box and he put it in.

Never said a word. And I looked that man over from top to the waist, all I could see to find a marking on him. Clean-shaven, smooth face, round face, big man. And he walked out just as calm and collected he as could be. Never said a word. And he walked out the door."

*McConnell got about \$5,500 from the robbery. A merchant at Clarkia called Brocke a few days later and said he knew who the robber was. The FBI took him into custody, he confessed and was sentenced to three years in prison but served only about a year and a half. Within a few months after the robbery, McConnell's wife came in to see Brocke and asked for money. He said, "No way!"*

"But three or four years--even after he was out, I would say it was at least three

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***". . . And she says, 'Well, go rob a bank.' Just like that! And he did."***

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years--he come and introduced himself and wanted to know if he could get a car loan. And he had divorced her. He was pretty stable. He had a job in Potlatch. Lived in Bovill. And he had his down payment, and so I did help him, that's true. And then he tried after that to get a loan to go into the vacuum cleaner business and I turned that down. Then he married a very good lady and they lived in Elk River. And Dick and I got along fine."

*A reporter from the Los Angeles Times, Charles Hillinger, was visiting his son who was a student at the University of Idaho and learned of the First Bank of Troy from students. He interviewed Brocke and returned to Los Angeles to write a feature story on the bank and its president that not only appeared in the Los Angeles Times but in newspapers*



throughout the country. Brocke became known as the banker who gave a loan to a man who had robbed him.

"Everybody thought they could borrow money since I was that easy, that's true. They were criminals. They had been in jail and they needed \$5,000 to get out. I got hundreds of letters like that."

## **The Second Bank Robbery**

*The bank robbery in 1963 was a much more harrowing experience and could have been life-threatening for Brocke and his family. The three gunmen, who turned out to be two young men from Troy and one from California, came to his home the night before and took him, his wife and son hostage. They then took him and his wife to the bank at 4 a.m. to wait for the time clock on the safe in the bank vault to open. It was supposed to open at 9 a.m. but it was 9:15 before it did open. During the wait, Willis Bohman, then the cashier, was the first to arrive at the bank, entering by the side door. He was immediately handcuffed and locked in the vault. By the time the clock went off and finally opened the safe, at least 22 people, employees and customers, were locked in the vault. The three young gunmen were later captured in a California motel and about \$47,000 of the \$55,000 taken was recovered. Brocke describes some of the aftermath:*

"We had as high as 12 FBI guys here. Came from Montana, they came from Spokane, they came from Salt Lake or Boise, and then the Lewiston bunch. They went over road after road up Moscow Mountain for evidence of what they might throw away. See they took my keys with them and we never did recover those. They threw that in Robinson Lake, and that's how they got out of here, they went that direction.

"But what they had done upstairs [*in Brocke's home*], was he kept lighting a match off of a match folder to see what time it was. He'd set by the window and it being dark and no light on, why he'd [*light it*] and then this match down on the floor. They didn't find it

at first, it was sort of under the bed. So on the second go-around, I think Saturday, they had found that match book upstairs and it referred to a Walla Walla motel. And that was the link that broke it. That's what solved it. Up to that point.

". . . they went to Reno and from Reno they went into Los Angeles where they lived. It was a suburb of Los Angeles. They put this money under a front porch of their father's home. And so they took out a thousand dollars apiece. Gave it to their wives, one of them had a girl friend. But they gave them instructions that they could go out and buy all the clothes they wanted, which they did. They had changed cars. They had traded cars in Reno, and bought a new one and gambled some. But over all, there wasn't over \$7,000

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***"They put this money under a front porch of their father's home."***

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missing out of the \$55,000 they took. I think they recovered between \$47,000 and \$48,000.

". . . So by the following Monday they had the number of the car, they had identification of it. They knew who they were, so they immediately ordered the California FBI to go to the parents' home. And at first they naturally denied it, and so then they finally confessed and turned over the money. They went under the house and found it and gave it.

"And the father called me the next day. And he called again because they had trouble getting a bond to get 'em out of jail. Wanted me to guarantee \$1,000 check.

[*Did he guarantee it?*] "No! No! Referred 'em to their family, they had relatives up here."

## **The Student Loan Program**

*Long before the federal student loan program was put in effect by act of Congress,*

*Brocke was loaning money to needy students at the University of Idaho. His obituary that appeared in 1977 in Context, the University of Idaho alumni magazine, had this to say:*

*Brocke was made an honorary alumni in 1976. He built the First Bank of Troy, in a town of 514 persons, into an institution with deposits totalling \$23 million with more than 10,000 depositors and borrowers throughout the world, many of whom were UI graduates.*

*Brocke had established a reputation as having a very exceptional ability to evaluate character, especially those who were requesting loans, and that included students.*

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***"We would call their superior or their professor and get the lowdown on 'em."***

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"Well, but you got to go back. Now when we first started making student loans there were a lot of things I did that people didn't know about. I used to call the Mother and Dad of the student who used to come in there and say, 'I want \$300.' And I wouldn't know him, and in some cases I knew the name, like an attorney from Orofino or Grangeville. I'd heard of 'em, see, and they'd come in there and I'd say, 'Do your parents know about this?' 'No." I would say, 'Well, you hang around maybe 15 minutes and I'll see. And when I get some time I'll see what it looks like.'

"So I would go into my room and I would call and nine times out of ten it would probably be the mother because she would be the only one at home, and I would say to her,

'Your boy is here, your son is here. He wants \$300. What about it? Should he have it, or should I say "no?"' She said, 'What did he want it for?' And I said, 'Well, he's got some unpaid bills and he owes some book rentals,' or whatever it happened to be. It sounded legit. She says, 'Okay, Mr. Brocke, you go ahead and I'll see that you get it.'

"All right, I went back to him, but she said, 'Don't tell him.' And of course he would refrain from me calling his parents, nine of 'em out of ten would. So the whole thing had to be under the board. And that happened many times. Yet they didn't know about it, I didn't reveal it, and I wrote it on the application, 'I called his parents; they have okayed this.' It was unknown to the student

"And to my knowledge I don't think there was a parent ever paid it. I did once or twice have to call the parent and remind, 'Would you tell John that you understand that he owes a note at the Troy Bank, he'd better pay it.' And wham! Next week I'd get the money.

"Now those are things that nobody knew about, yet I got credit for making the loan for that out of the blue sky, off of the top of my head. And there were other incidents. You sized a kid up.

"I helped a young gal attorney and I can't think of her name to this day, and she was in real serious--she **needed** help. She was on her last year--her last semester up here and I called--I often called the athletic department or the law department and get their records. And I would ask 'em, I would say, 'Now that gal wants some help.' I'd say to them, 'Do you think she's deserving of it?' 'Absolutely, you'll never have a problem.'

"And we did that time and again. Basketball coaches. We had more pledges from the athletic department because they were always the ones that needed the help. And I would call them, and Willis used to call 'em. If we ever made the loan, we'd call and get verification of their grades and of their standing and whether they were going to be there and should we loan them \$200, and invariably, 'You bet. You let him have it and I'll see that it is paid.'

"And that was also something that was between us and the departments at the university. Besides the parents, I had that to go with me. But I would *do* it. The chain banks say, 'Oh, to hell with you. Get out of here. We're not calling the university. That's their business.' But we would. We would call their superior or their professor and get a lowdown on 'em. Which is good.

"But anyway, this gal, this young attorney, and she had tears in her eyes, and so she needed \$600, and well, she couldn't graduate till she raised that kind of money. And I let her have it. And, by golly, that was one of the most grateful things that ever happened. She had a job, she had a place to go and she was rated the top in her class, one of the very potential, good Idaho graduates that went to Washington. And, boy, she waisted no time, and that note was paid before the six months was up. And that was what I remember. I had nobody to tie to but the university. But her impression to me, her sincerity, the fact that she was a girl, I guess maybe must have helped. A young student, a young girl. She was in her 20s but I went with her and boy. . ."

### **Women Avoided Banks**

*Early in the 20th Century and before, banks dealt very little with women. Women were not expected to be dealing in matters of business. That was a man's world.*

"When I first came to Troy, very seldom would you see a wife come into a bank and even cash a check. The only ones, as I told you before, is the ailing parent or the widow or someone who had to carry the ball. But normally, your wife, she was afraid to go in the bank. I've had housewives tell me years later, 'Gee, I used to be afraid of you! [Chuckles] You were the last guy I ever wanted to see.' 'Why?' 'Well, you were the banker and I was afraid, I was afraid of you in there.'

"But all of a sudden, in the years, time had started changing. Yes, and oh, probably 1940, oh, in the 40s, I don't know why, but a

housewife would come in. Her husband would be busy and she'd say, 'We got a note in the mail that we're overdrawn. Is there anything I can do? Would you give me a note and I can take it out and have John sign it.' That's what she'd say. I said, 'I'll go better than that. If you'll sign it Mrs. John Jones, why, that's all we want.'

"And that started it. You did that, and you did it and you would see people out on the street, and you would say, 'Gee whiz, your account's overdrawn, would you come in and sign a note?' 'John didn't tell me. If you think it's all right, fine' It was perfectly legal, they legalized it. There was a time when the wife's

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*"...Very seldom would you see a wife come into a bank and even cash a check."*

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signature was no good, and the only way it would be good, she'd have to sign it on the back, but it was not considered a legitimate instrument, if the wife signed it. But now it's of course different. But that's how you did it.

"Once you did it and the word got around, why pretty soon they were doing it, all. Criminy, you were just damn lucky to see the husband in six months because they'd be doing all the business. Depositing, borrowing."

### **Brocke's Out as President**

*Brocke joined the First Bank of Troy in 1926 and although he practically ran the bank after World War II, he did not become its president until 1962. It was during those years that the bank experienced its most spectacular growth. With new technology and the demands of the banking industry, the personal banking of which Brocke was such a part, became more difficult if not impossible. The board of directors became convinced that*

*changes had to be made and in 1973 Brocke was asked to step down. He was bitter about his forced retirement and probably never got completely over it. But he later was able to look at it a little more philosophically.*

"I came in '26 and so I was here nearly seven years before the bank holiday, until the real responsibility fell upon me to be my own boss, do as I please. Ever since then I was never told, 'Don't do this, don't do that.' It was always I did it on my own after I became their cashier and became the full management of the bank working beside Ole Bohman I still had a free hand to do as I pleased. It was my judgment against the whole thing.

"That's one of my difficulties, that's why I guess I was lost up here because after 45 years of running a bank under those conditions, being your own boss, doing as you please, it was hard. They wanted differently, they wanted to say, they wanted to put regulations and put demands on me that I couldn't do this and I couldn't do that. And I said, 'Okay,' but the minute they walked out of the door I continued this same pattern because I could not, might say, lower myself to stoop to what they demanded of me which was no more than to share responsibility. It was all right, but still it was hard to do.

"Just like they demanded I take a vacation and be gone for two weeks and I said, 'Well, that's up to me.'" Because if I left the

bank for two solid weeks, and I came home to an apple box of delayed correspondence, it was a terrible worry and an injustice because I couldn't ever catch up. And that's what was happening, even when I was gone three or four days. I'd come home and the correspondence got clear out of hand and it worried me. And so that was the reason I didn't take a vacation.

". . . And they wanted departmentalization. This present board that runs the First Bank of Troy now [1975], they demanded that I divide the loaning capacity up with other employees which was all right. But I still said that if John Jones comes in and he wants an automobile loan and he wants a private loan and he's willing to wait for me, I'm going to wait on him if it takes all day. And they didn't like that. They said, 'No, that's not fair.' They wanted me to say, 'Well, you go to that officer over there and he'll take care of you.'" And I couldn't do it, just because of the fact that I'd waited on him for 25 years, and he wanted me, and I was going to do it again. So it was little things like that that brought on my difficulties."

*Frank O. Brocke died October 15, 1977, of a collapsed lung enroute to Gritman Memorial Hospital in Moscow. He was 71.*

ENDNOTE

1. Barrett, Glen, *The First Bank of Troy, 1905-1971*, A Black Diamond History, Boise, Idaho, 1974.

**A Note of Correction. . .**

". . . This problem concerns the photo you show under the caption "Collins" on page 20 of the Centennial Edition of the *Legacy*. It is a problem of identity, and in origin is my own fault, appearing on page 56 of "The Trees Grew Tall" as a cabin "near Collins." In fact, it is a photo of the Trumbull homestead cabin at Elk River.

"I trusted the identification of an "old-timer" who seemed to recognize the cabin, and who possessed good near turn-of-the-century knowledge of the region. When I learned of the error, I wrote Keith Peterson about it. I cannot find a copy of the letter, and it is a rather long story which I will not repeat, but the letter was an attempt to correct things in your records. (There are a number of errors in my book. I am considering an article for the *Legacy* to correct them, or at least some of them, noting factors that caused or led to each. It would be helpful to future writers who, like me, are a bit new at this thing.) . . ."

John B. Miller  
15 Kimmie Ct.  
Belmont, CA 94002

## Frank Brocke Remembers

*When Sam Shrager was working on the oral histories in Latah County, he asked Frank Brocke to write his personal reminiscences of his growing up in the Kendrick area. Brocke paints a pretty vivid picture of life there in the early part of the 20th Century. It is presented here as he wrote it. No date was given as to when it was written, but it probably was about 1976.*

I was born on a small farm three miles west of Kendrick, Idaho, known as the Brillhart place and now owned by Harley Eichner who is my cousin. I have resided in Latah County ever since. At the age of 4 we moved to the Claus Eichner farm behind the Frank May farm and was there until we moved to my Dad's parents farm home at the head of Brady Gulch and from there I attended grade school on American Ridge.

I am the second son born to Frank and Julia Brocke on the 10th day of June, 1906. There were four sons and one daughter born to the Brocke family. My father died January 12, 1919, as a result of the flu epidemic.

My mother was a determined person, and we continued to live on our farm for the following two years and during the fall of 1922 we moved to Kendrick where we, from then on, attended the Kendrick schools and from which I graduated in the spring of 1925.

At the time of my father's death, I was 12½ years old and George, my older brother, was 14. I had a younger sister Margaret and two small brothers, Walter and Kenneth.

When spring came we were determined to put in the crops on 160 acres and still continued to attend the local elementary school on the ridge. We all worked hard; however, when fall came our uncle from Bovill, Idaho, came to our ridge and he took over one-half the farm and we continued to

farm the 80 acres for the next two years. Following a walking plow around a 35-acre field day after day was a trying experience; however, real determination and the desire to prove to Mother that we could keep on farming drove us on and on. Between George and I, we harvested the crops with a binder, stacked the grain and beans and during the year of 1920 George went harvesting as a bundle pitcher. I was too young and small and had to wait until the following year. George went on a combine with the Byard Davidson crew, and I stayed home and joined the local harvest crew running a bundle wagon on which I had three heavy work horses to care for. I soon became an expert on handling and throwing bundles in the threshing machine feeder.

Being with a threshing crew was a great thrill in those days. The food was great, and every threshing crew had at least one clown. Kyle Anderson was the funny guy in our crew and drove a bundle wagon for Walt Bigham and to which he had two horses and one stubborn mule. Well, that jackass was as stubborn as Kyle was and so it brought many laughs.

I hauled bundles on the William Cox farm which is now owned and operated by Andrew Cox and his son Tommy. Andy also now owns the Chris Maier land and Martin Thomas farms. From there we covered the Harry Landgon farm now farmed by Lawrence

*"I soon became an expert on handling and throwing bundles in the threshing machine feeder."*

Heimgartner. Lawrence also farms the Maude Daugherty farm and the Jessup farm. The Roberts' land is now owned by the Benscoter family and Dick Benscoter, son of Harry and Ella, farms the same. Frank and Jo Benscoter now live in what was our elementary school house. George Havens now farms the Keene place as he is the son of Elsie Keene Havens. The Warney May and Frank May lands are now in the hands of Warney May, Jr. The Ameling farms are now farmed by Dick Benscoter. Norla Callison now owns the family farm and Walter and Ernestine Benscoter own and farm the Frank Roberts farm. The John Woody farm is now owned and farmed by Wayne and Phoebe Davis of Pullman. Eddie Deobald now owns the Mary Deobald farm, and Harley Eichner owns and farms the Eichner farm. The Davidson farm and the John Johnson farm are farmed and owned by Robert Smith, a newcomer of recent years.

### ***Teachers Were Outstanding***

The elementary school on lower American Ridge was one of the best in the county. The teachers were outstanding and strict. At one time 40 pupils attended, and that year another teacher was added to help carry the load. School was held from mid-September to mid-May. As of this date and to the best of my knowledge, Ann Becker Deobald is the only living teacher that taught on the ridge while I was in attendance. She is the wife of Eddie Deobald, Kendrick.

After reading the story of Arthur Bjorke and Emmett Utt, I, too, am reminded of the gypsies that came through our community every summer. We were all taught to stay well away from any caravan of gypsies as they were known to steal young children. As for the Indians, we were all on good terms as during the past years we always went to Kendrick with our Dad to trade, and while there we met and saw a lot of Lapwai Indians and we learned to respect them as normal people.

During the early years and well into the 40s, Saturday was the day we all went to town. In the early days you went during the daytime hours as it was by horse and buggy,

while in the 20s and 30s the car came to pass and so on Saturday nights it was like a celebration. Streets in Kendrick and Troy as well as many towns were lined with cars, and one had to drive a lot to find a place to park.

Our life on the farm after Dad had passed away was nothing but hard work. My Aunt Sarah was a widow by this time as was by Aunt Mary, and their families had all gone from home. When help was needed I was called upon to plow the gardens, put up the hay and fix fences. This helped pass the time during the long summer days. My Mother grieved a lot, yet having five young kids helped to keep her mind occupied.

After moving to Kendrick it became a different life, and we all had many different opportunities to spend our time. Mother was strict with the younger of the family, but George and I were on our own. We were in high school, and many events such as basketball practice, school plays and parties were all held at night. Many nights we did not get home until 10 and 11 at night. We also had a car, and young people with cars was not usual in those days. I might add that all during our early lives, we attended Sunday School on American Ridge, and all church services were held there. My Sunday School teacher was the late Bertha Watts, mother of Joe Watts of Moscow and Robert Watts of Kendrick. Also Maude Daugherty of Juliaetta. After going to Kendrick we attended Sunday School, Luther League and Sunday night services in the Methodist Church. From all of this and the guidance of our parents, we were all taught to be honest. This trait was stressed more than anything else in our home, and I am sure has paid us all well.

### ***Started Work in Bank***

During the winter of 1924 I became very chummy with the assistant cashier of the Kendrick State Bank, and he asked me if I might be interested in asking the president and cashier of the bank if I might work there after school each night and learn the banking business. I was very much interested, and during the Christmas vacation in December, 1924, I went to work as an unpaid helper. I



Frank Brocke at the age of 69, a few years after his retirement from the Bank of Troy.

loved the work and by the fall of 1925 I was on the payroll at \$25.00 per month. I continued to work there until September 1, 1926, at which time I came to Troy as an assistant cashier.

Hardships? Yes, I had them and I saw many. The hardest part of my life was my Mother who at times became a grieved person. She cried a lot, and I shared her grief by lying on her bed and crying with her. All these things impressed my mind and I learned the hardships of death and loneliness. I was a young banker when the depression came and from 1928 to the early 30s, it was sorrow and grief for many families and individuals. I saw a man of reasonable wealth--Ole Bohman--change from a jolly but serious banker to a solemn and serious person. After the great depression the minds and character of many people changed. In my case it was an experience never to be forgotten. Opportunity had come, and I stepped into a position of great responsibility and opportunity. With the backing of Ole Bohman and F. M. Green there was great opportunity and from then on our

bank grew and grew.

### *People Deserve Help*

Being a small town banker one learns his customers and people well, and you in time become a part of their lives. You give advice, whether it be good or bad. You share their problems, and if you have the courage and far-sightedness you help them with faith and opportunity. I know that banking laws and banking rules make it impossible to help all persons, but there are the deserving and so many honest persons who do deserve that one chance. I believed in that philosophy, and we knew there was a risk involved but am sure it has all paid off in recent years. My many terms on the Troy and Whitepine school board which covered 27 years was a trying but good experience. I owe a great deal to the people of Troy, Deary and Bovill for giving me that opportunity to serve them.

My marriage to Margie Green on June 10, 1930, no doubt, had a great effect on my banking future. The Green family was held in the highest esteem of the community and the

personal advice given to me from time to time by F. M. Green was a great value.

During my tenure in the bank there were many interesting happenings. Two bank robberies created national attention. We had two bomb scares in one week, and I received a ransom note demanding a sum of money or else I would be injured.

The article written by Charles Hillinger in the Los Angeles Times was the greatest happening. That story, as well as a dozen other articles, went around the world three times and from which we received well over 6,000 letters.

### ***Walked to School***

During my first six years of schooling on America Ridge, we all walked to school, even from the youngest to the oldest. Only during the winter months when the snow got too deep or a bad wind that was a blizzard would Dad get the team and sled out for us. If it was too bad the youngest stayed home; however, this was rare as we all wanted to get to school. During the spring months the water used to get very deep in the creeks that we had to walk across while walking home. As all kids do, we had to investigate the depth and throw sticks and small logs in the water and watch them float down the small rivers. This brought many worries to our parents, and as we walked toward home one could see the worried mothers standing on their front porches awaiting the return home! I cannot recall that at any time did one of us fall into the creeks, but we usually had wet feet when we got home! Our home was two miles from school by road. While attending high school in Kendrick, I walked four miles to school.

As a youngster I recall that my Granddad Brocke came every fall to help my Dad with harvest. He was well in his 60s and to walk the two and one-half miles was hard, so he bought himself a Model T Ford which in time he mastered well to get to and from the farm. He lived at the bottom of Brady Gulch and, of course, it was a dirt road and had some steep hills. I recall that one morning he came to work in his Ford and the fenders were damaged and the top was gone. His story was

that the darn thing got to going too fast and he was unable to slow down, so he turned it into the bank. Yes, it rolled over once, and he was able to walk away from the car. It landed on its wheels, and he drove on home!

I recall that during my junior year at the Kendrick High School a group of about 20 students, boys and girls, hired a local drayman to haul us to Moscow in a sled to see an Idaho basketball game. It was in January, and we left Kendrick at noon. After the game we drove back home and arrived in the wee hours of the morning. I recall that on the return trip as we came through Troy we screamed, "Fire, fire!" all the way down main street.

### ***Purchased First Auto***

Dad purchased our first auto in the spring of 1917. It was about a 1915 Overland touring car. It served us well for three years, and the fall of 1920 or 1921 George and I bought a 1921 Gardner touring car. George dominated the car as he was older and had girl friends that needed his attention. When I had a date, I usually walked to and from my girl friends' house!

My uncle Ed, a bachelor, had a Ford Model T as long as I can remember. When we visited him and Aunt Sarah, he would take Dad and us kids with him for a ride on a Sunday afternoon. I can recall driving to the top of the Troy hill on several occasions. He would not come down the hill as he was a man weighing over 300 pounds and Dad weighed over 220 and with us three kids, it was a heavy load for the Model T.

Walter Bigham did his courting in a Hudson Super Six. The Eichner family enjoyed the services of a Reo. The Keene family was a great believer in the Buick. By the late 20s most all families enjoyed a car of some kind and make. Our roads were still dirt until in the early 1930s. The federal government assisted in building better roads and graveling the same.

To keep roads in repair was a trying job in the spring as high water did a lot of washing and many bridges would wash out. My Granddad was a road overseer in his late years and so it fell upon my Dad to help him



save Brady Gulch. Many times they would take a shovel in hand and walk the grade in the early hours of the mornings. Sometimes at night with a lantern. The purpose was to turn the water from the roads into the creeks rather than let the water continue down the road beds.

One of the many winter problems was how to travel from American Ridge to Kendrick, as the snow ceased to exist half way down the grade. When the ridge had a foot of snow it was probable that Kendrick streets were bare. In this case Dad would take only the front bobs of the heavy sled and place a small bed on it. It was easy for two heavy horses to pull this with no trouble. Mud in Kendrick streets was usually deep, and the sled went easier than when on rocks. I would guess that Kendrick streets were not graveled until the late 20s.

### ***Early Bookkeeping Simple***

Bookkeeping in banks during the 20s was plain and fairly simple. The same bookkeeping methods were the same in most banks. Machine posting was the slowest to come. When in Kendrick I would post for at least two and one-half hours per day, and when I came to Troy they had a late model posting machine and posting took near two hours with twice as many accounts.

All the bankers that I knew in the 20s and 30s are now deceased. My career which ran from December 1924 to December 31, 1973 ended very abruptly. I was forced to retire at age 67 but I loved every minute of the term. After spending 47 years in the Troy bank, one learned the customers well and you shared their problems and the successes jointly.

As I write this its ten days before Christmas, and my mind goes back to the early days when Santa Claus was for real. I recall Christmas Eve in 1917 and my Dad was Santa Claus. At that time we knew no difference, and the event that took only perhaps 15 minutes to come in the door, hand out the gifts and talk to each one of us was a thriller. In December 1918 it was all different as one week before Christmas my older brother George had found out that Dad was the Santa

Claus. I do not remember what took place in my mind; however, on Christmas Eve my Dad did perform his act, and George and I kept mum. Margaret and Walter knew no different, and Kenneth was too young to know. My Dad died the following January.

It seems to me that Christmas in those days meant so much more. Most all homes had a tree beautifully decorated, and the two or three gifts you received meant so much. In our school the week before Christmas we had a program, and each and every student had a part in that program. Some had to say a Christmas poem. The girls usually sang carols, and the more talented ones had a Christmas play. Each student received a gift of some sort. Small but appreciated. The program was always held at night and on the Friday before Christmas. The little old school-house bulged at the seams but all got in.

### ***Christmas Was Special***

There was no commercializing Christmas in the early days as you bought, and the merchants sold, Christmas gifts within two weeks or less of Christmas day unless you ordered it from the Sears or Montgomery Ward catalogues. The catalogue business was large during Christmas weeks, as the inventory at a small-town store was very limited and you had little to choose from. Gifts most popular were the Jumping Jack, rubber and hard balls, baseball bats, dolls that could shut their eyes, coasting sleds--all sizes, windup tin soldiers, and there was usually a five-pound sack of mixed candy in every home.

Christmas dinners were big and the older folks always ate at the first table. We kids ate an hour later at the same table, and still enough food left over for the next week!

When one compares the daily meals of today in the average home on a farm, it will not compare to our times. We always had eggs, bacon, fried potatoes and sometimes hot cakes for breakfast. For dinner at 12 o'clock noon was always cooked potatoes, one vegetable at least, pork or ham, fried or baked, always bread on the table, butter and preserves. For supper it was again potatoes, meat, beans or corn bread and gravy. We never got fat as

we ran it off during the day. If you were fat you accepted it as a pattern of life.

Our dwelling house was large, and we had linoleum on the floors and that made it colder than ever. We had one heating stove in our sitting room and it burned wood. After 10 o'clock the fires were out and all were in bed. We had a parlor with the high ceiling and carpet on the floor. That was used only when a party was held in the home and sometimes on Christmas as the Christmas tree was there. I dare say it was an unused room for well over 11 months out of the year.

Our dwelling house on the farm had five large bedrooms upstairs and one downstairs. You undressed and ran upstairs to bed. In the mornings you ran downstairs to the warm stove and dressed.

Sunday was the day for visiting, and during the summer we always went to the home of a relative. I had four Aunts and Uncles on the ridge. After we returned from Sunday School, we would get into the buggy and drive to one of the homes. Dinner was usually served by 2 p.m. and always more than enough to eat. As a rule we were home by 6 in the evening.

### ***Baseball a Thriller***

Later as I grew older George and I would go to see the baseball games in Kendrick and sometimes Juliaetta. It was always a thriller and usually it ended in an argument or fight. My idol was Charley White, an Indian from Lapwai; Gabe Forest, an outstanding catcher; Walt McCall, first base; and many others who could hit a long ball.

I recall that during the summer of 1917 Dad and Mother along with us kids got on the morning train and went to Moscow for the County Fair or the 4th of July. The one thing that I can remember was they had a Negro boy standing behind a canvas wall with his head stuck through a hole in the canvas. Men paid a fee to toss three balls or eggs at the young Negro. The man would cuss the young boy, and he would cuss them back. He had enough room to dodge the balls but I can recall that the eggs splashed in his face!

I can recall the last 10 years of prohibi-

tion. It brought sorrow to many families and little profit to those that made the "stuff." It was hard to buy good moonshine in Kendrick as it was on the fringe area as farmers cared little about making the booze. Bootleggers passed the town up to go on to Lewiston for a better market. I recall that the doctor who treated us during the flu epidemic, failing in his practice, took up the making of moonshine in a fairly good house on Main Street in Kendrick. He had placed a small pox sign on the front door, but the odors gave him away and he was caught in the act. I also recall that three high school boys had a still on a small island above town but they, too, were caught before the operation got very far.

I have been requested to make a list of the various councils, committees and organizations that I have been a member of since coming to Troy in 1926:

First secretary-treasurer of the Troy Fire Department in 1928.

Secretary-treasurer of the Troy Commercial Club.

President of the Troy Chamber of Commerce, two terms.

Member and Troy representative of the Latah County Chapter of the American Red Cross during the Second World War and Korean War at which time required considerable attention and demands of servicemen of both wars.

Member of the Latah County Soil Conservation Committee and treasurer two terms.

Member of Latah County Selective Service Board for over ten years.

Cited by the National and State Selective Service Board for outstanding contribution. Have three certificates signed by Harry Truman, John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, Presidents.

Member of the Latah County Zoning Committee.

Member of Troy School District 31 for eight years.

Member of Whitepine School District 284 for 18 continuous years and chairman of the board continuously.

Appointed as a charter member to organize the Latah Nursing Home in Latah County and served as chairman of the board for two years.

Honorary member of the Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity on the campus of the University of Idaho.

32nd Degree Mason, member of the Grand Chapter, RAM, State of Idaho, Moscow Lodge and Grand Commandery Night, Templar of Idaho and a member of Calam Temple in Lewiston, Idaho, and Latah County Shriner Club.

Life-time member of the Elk's Lodge 249, Moscow, Idaho.

## Mines of the Palouse

By Ted Van Arsdol

More than 120 years ago miners in the Gold Creek area of what is now Latah County built homes "which surpass for comfort those of all other camps in North Idaho," one early news report noted.<sup>1</sup> Over a number of years, the miners also installed numerous other structures that gave evidence later of the quest for precious minerals.

"Extensive activity is indicated by abandoned arrastras, stamp mills, sluice boxes and miles of old ditches and flumes along the hillsides," a researcher noted in the 1950s.<sup>2</sup>

The Palouse mines first came into prominence in 1865, and the early activity was mainly in the Gold Creek vicinity, near what is now the town of Potlatch. This is in what later was called the Blackfoot or Gold Hill mining district.

In the early years, Lewiston was the main base and outfitting place for miners fanning out into the wilderness in search of gold.

### **Major Rush Started**

The discovery of gold at Florence in the Salmon River mountains had touched off the major rush through Lewiston. But the heyday of Florence was brief, and by 1863 many of the miners had departed, frequently for reported rich new discoveries in the Boise area.

Prospectors also were moving north of Lewiston, some through the Palouse country. In the spring of 1865 miners scouring the land to the north reported finding gold in the Coeur d'Alene mountains. Some miners had also traveled as far north as the Kootenai country of British Columbia, where a town named Fisherville had been established.<sup>3</sup>

The first news in Portland of the Palouse "diggings" appeared in August 1865, reported by Frank Dalton:

"A new mining region has been discovered quite recently on the headwaters of

Palouse River about 50 miles from Lewiston. There has been quite a movement in the direction of the new camp for some weeks, small trains leaving secretly every few days, but the first intelligence made general was last week. Twelve or fifteen persons left Lewiston on Friday. A man named John Day, who had been to Coeur d'Alene, visited the Palouse mines and states that the diggings were good, paying an average of \$5 and \$6 per day to the hand. The gold was worth from \$17.50 per ounce."<sup>4</sup>

The *North Idaho Radiator* at Lewiston announced the discoveries in the Palouse River area:

### **Gold of 'Great Purity'**

"The immediate cause of the present excitement is the discovery of new placer diggings within 60 miles of Lewiston or a full day's brisk riding. Parties have left the diggings in the morning and reached town before sundown of the same day.

"We have seen the gold from these diggings, and although the mines have just been discovered, several hundred dollars therefrom have already been expended in Lewiston. The gold is of great purity, assaying \$17.50 to the ounce. As regards the richness of the ground, we are told that 'prospects' have been obtained that varied from 2 to 65 cents to the pan. Some of this gold is quite coarse, we having seen a number of pieces that would weigh from 5 to 50 cents."

Although the extent of the mining ground was a bit uncertain, the *Radiator* did mention that two small tributaries of the Palouse "northeast of Lewiston" were involved. Rockers were used to get out the gold.<sup>5</sup>

But the new mining area and the mining results of several other camps in central Idaho Territory were overshadowed at this time by new discoveries east of the

Bitterroot Range. Even the Lewiston editor, T. J. Favorite, was not immune to the gold fever; he moved his *Radiator* newspaper to Helena.<sup>6</sup>

One impact of the newspaper move is that news items are lacking during 1866 on much of the activity in the Palouse mines and other mining areas tributary to Lewiston.

On November 31, 1866, a Gold Creek miner wrote to the *Statesman* newspaper at Walla Walla:

"...This camp now comprises between 75 and 100 men; all are at work opening their claims...There are only three claims now open, and all are paying well. Up to this time most of the men that have had claims on this creek have been prospecting for something better...

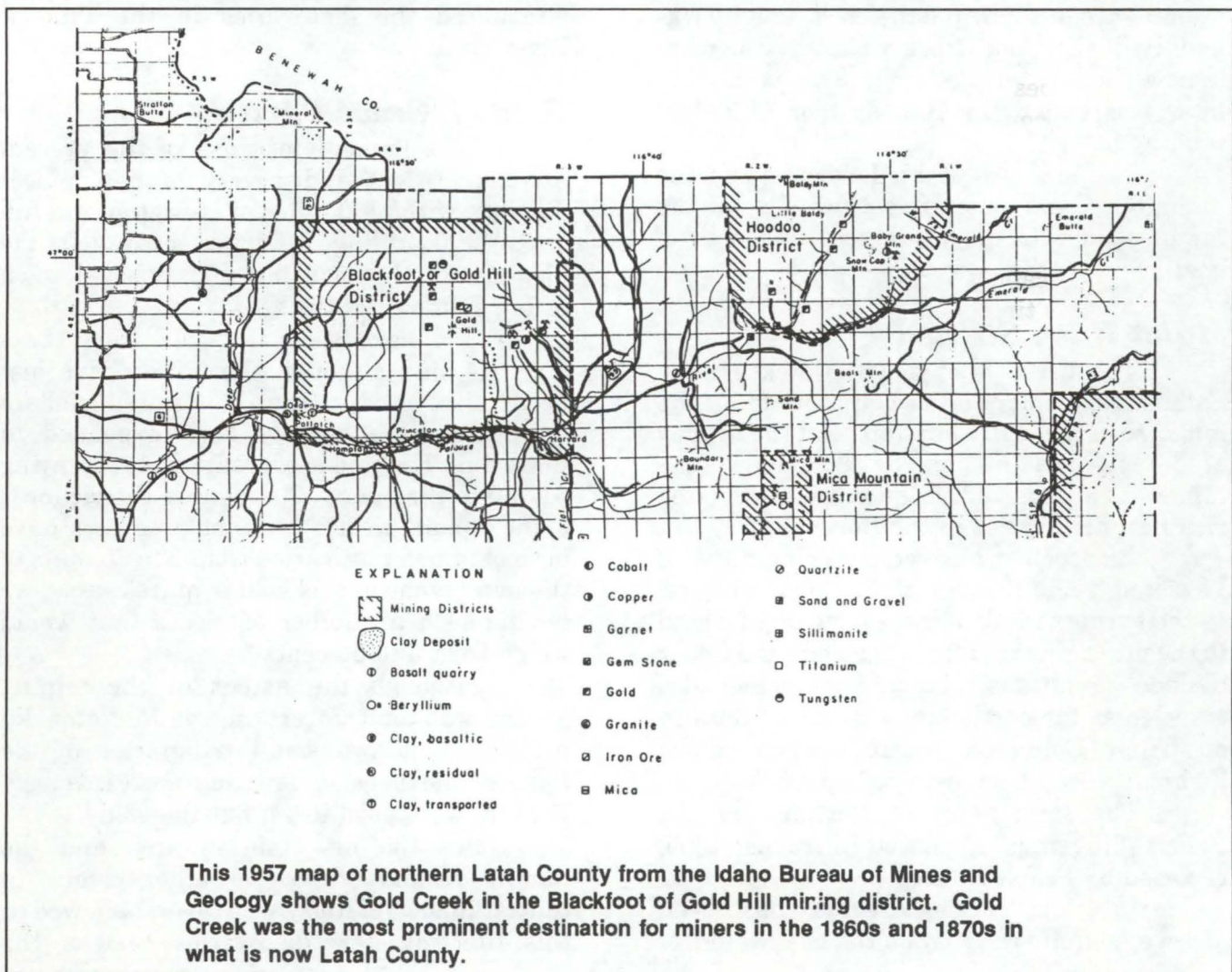
"There is, as usual, a town started called Hanksville which more properly ought to be called Big Hog'em. There is a store with

a good assortment of miners' goods, kept by Anderson and Co.

"All that are here now have good comfortable cabins and intend to winter in the mines.

"No doubt you have heard very poor accounts of this camp, for no other reason than at the time it was made known in Lewiston there was a grand rush from that place of merchants, tailors, blacksmiths, bummers, saloon keepers, hotel keepers and mechanics. No one brought a pick, pan or shovel, and all expected another Florence. They never prospected, and all went back, after taking up the whole country, never to return, without some poor hardworking miner should strike it rich on or near their ground.

"It is the opinion of all that are here that with a full head of water and 10 hours of work that the ground would pay from \$8 an



ounce per day, and gold worth \$18 per ounce...

"I might state that one-fourth interest in the discovery claim sold recently for \$600 in coin under pressing circumstances. Two of the company had a quarrel...and fought with an ax. The wounds, however, proved slight but the party using the ax had to leave; therefore sold his interest for \$600."<sup>7</sup>

In January 1867 Alonzo Leland started publication of the *Lewiston Journal*, and this paper carried a record of progress in the Palouse country in 1867. The first issue commented on the Palouse mines:

### ***Palouse Gold Promising***

"The recent discoveries on the head of the Palouse are promising well. The gold is worth over \$18 per ounce and is coarse. The climate of the diggings is much more mild than at other camps east of us. About 75 men have winter quarters here and will be able to work on their claims much of the season. Confident hopes are entertained that the mines...will become highly remunerative."<sup>8</sup>

In its January 24 issue, the *Journal* discussed mines on Gnat Creek, a tributary of the Palouse. Eighteen men were wintering in the camp some miles upstream from the Palouse. Six cabins had been built, and the men had some timber to remove in mining.<sup>9</sup>

This same source mentions the distance between the Gnat and Gold Creek mining camps as 30 miles which seems probably too high. Specific locations were not provided.

Also in the winter, Mr. Points from Gold Creek arrived in Lewiston and reported 30 men on that stream. Those with claims "opened and in good order" were said to be averaging \$5 to \$9 per day.

Points apparently was Frank Points, mentioned by archaeologist Richard C. Waldbauer as a miner for a number of years in the Palouse area.<sup>10</sup>

In the late winter Davis Evans was making regular trips between Lewiston and the Palouse mines with his pack train. He said Chinamen had bought "the Kelly claims" and were negotiating for another claim at the Palouse mines.

"The Franklin Company are at work

about a mile and a half from Gnat Creek and making an average of \$10 a day to the hand," the *Journal* learned from Evans. "The Peterson Company is located on what is called Big Creek and have good \$8 diggings."<sup>11</sup>

Snow apparently hampered work at the Palouse mines early in the year.<sup>12</sup>

A news item from Gnat Creek in late spring commented: "Plenty of water in these mines, and Coleridge and Co. took out last week \$328 with five hands, an average of over \$10.50 per day to the hand."<sup>13</sup>

In the late spring results from the Palouse mines were said to be "fair." Miners were optimistic that more extensive gold fields could be found during the summer. About 30 men were working at Gnat Creek.<sup>14</sup>

Richard Hurley, assayer and metallurgist at Lewiston, was assaying some of the dust from Gold Creek in June. Two new arrivals from the creek reported that gold prospects had been found in a basin about 120 miles east from Gold Creek.

"It seems that on account of the density of the timber, prospecting goes on slowly and is attended with much difficulty." the *Journal* noted.

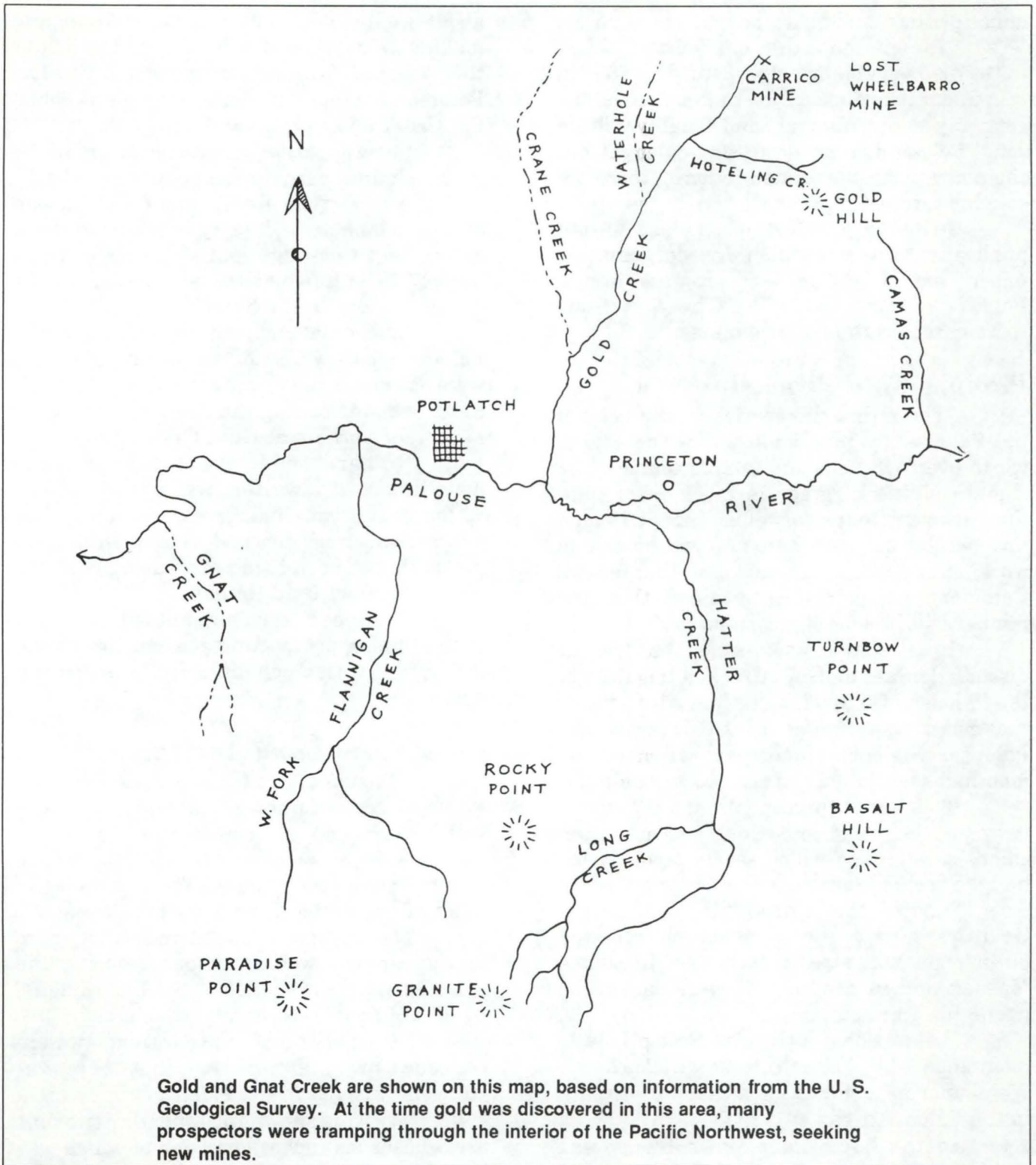
### ***Good Farm Land Available***

"Outside of the timbered section is an extensive tract of fine agricultural land which will be occupied as soon as the mines are found to be a success. In fact the whole country about the Palouse for a number of miles offers good inducements to settlers."<sup>15</sup>

The hopes on Gold Creek that more mining ground would be found during the summer apparently was not realized, judging by lack of news reports during that time.

Near the end of the year, readers were reminded in a *Journal* story that there was still some activity in the Palouse mining area:

"We were shown the other day two flint arrowheads six inches long, one of which was imbedded about two and a half feet in the bedrock, at the placer diggings on the Palouse River, 50 miles north of Lewiston. The other penetrated the bedrock, but was not entirely enclosed therein. Nearby was found the bones of some large animal."<sup>16</sup>



Lewiston continued as the main supply point for the mines. In the summer of 1868 at least one party set out from Lewiston for the Palouse headwaters "where rich quartz is said to exist."<sup>17</sup>

Activity probably continued in a low-key way at the mines in 1869 and 1870, although news accounts are almost non-existent. The reason for this is that the newspaper at Lewiston, the main source for

Palouse mining news, had suspended. The *Journal* did not resume publication until July 1871.

In late 1871 the *Journal* mentioned that the miners had averaged \$6 daily during the season and 13 men were employed constantly. The paper also reported:

"By the construction of five reservoirs, which discharge the water into each other, the miners have had sufficient water for purposes of mining.

"The flat which is being worked is narrow and extends along the creek about two miles---all of which prospects favorably. The gold is all, or nearly all, found near and on the bedrock, is coarse and assays about \$19 per ounce. The entire mining ground is covered with timber, some of which is of a large growth which is displaced by undermining.

### ***Mild Climate Helps***

"The advantages of these mines are found in their proximity to the settlements and the mild climate which permits mining the greater portion of the year. The miners have constructed houses for dwellings there which surpass for comfort and conveniences those of all other camps in North Idaho."<sup>18</sup>

In referring to the nearness to settlements and mild climate, the writer might have had in mind the contrast especially to the Warren's camp, the most publicized mining community in central Idaho at the time. Reaching Warren's in the Salmon River mountains involved a long, hard trip from Lewiston, and the place was frequently snowbound.

A visitor from the Palouse mines in March 1872 said at Lewiston that the miners had started work in earnest, "having plenty of water for ground sluicing which they had prepared during the winter."<sup>19</sup>

The work could be dangerous. One of the miners was killed while ground sluicing when a bank of frozen earth caved in on him. The body of William Spraggs, about 27, a former Iowan, was brought out to Gold Creek and buried.<sup>20</sup>

One of the miners, Billy Powers, visited Lewiston in August to have some sample gold

assayed, probably at the office of Richard Hurley.

He was back in town a short time later from what was said to be "the newly discovered camp on the headwaters of the Palouse." Miners were taking out from \$6 to \$10 a day with rockers and were constructing a ditch to supply several claims at the lower end of the gulch. This would enable the men to work with sluices. Specific locations and mileages were not provided, as in most early accounts of the Palouse mines.<sup>21</sup>

Some Chinese may have been involved in Palouse mining about this time. In August 1873 a Chinaman was reported to have arrived at the Penawawa Ferry on Snake River from the mines, but in a penniless condition. He said an Indian had robbed him of his food, blankets, coat and a \$10 greenback.<sup>22</sup>

Meantime, settlers were moving into other parts of the Palouse country, and the town of Colfax had been established. A correspondent wrote from there in June 1874:

"Some of our citizens have gone to the Palouse mines to stay during the season; some to work in the mines, others in the dairy business, etc. They think the prospect not quite so good as the days of '49 in California, but that from \$2.50 to \$5 per day is better than nothing in these hard times."<sup>23</sup>

### ***New Towns Started***

Town-making also had started in what is now Latah County. A Lewiston news item of 1875 commented:

"A new town, called Paradise City, has been started in opposition to Moscow. The rivalry is said to be very acrimonious. One is the St. Louis and the other the Chicago of the Northwest."<sup>24</sup>

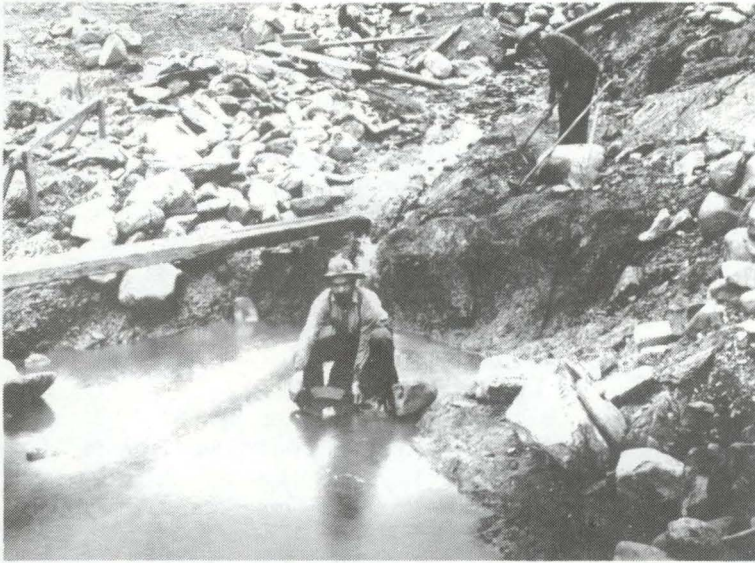
Farming began to overshadow the mining as a predominant economic interest, although some mineral activity was to continue for a long time. The Carrico name was associated with some of this activity. The Carrico family is said to have located in the upper part of Gold Creek in the 1870s and operated placer diggings for years later in Picnic Gulch and on the East Fork of Gold



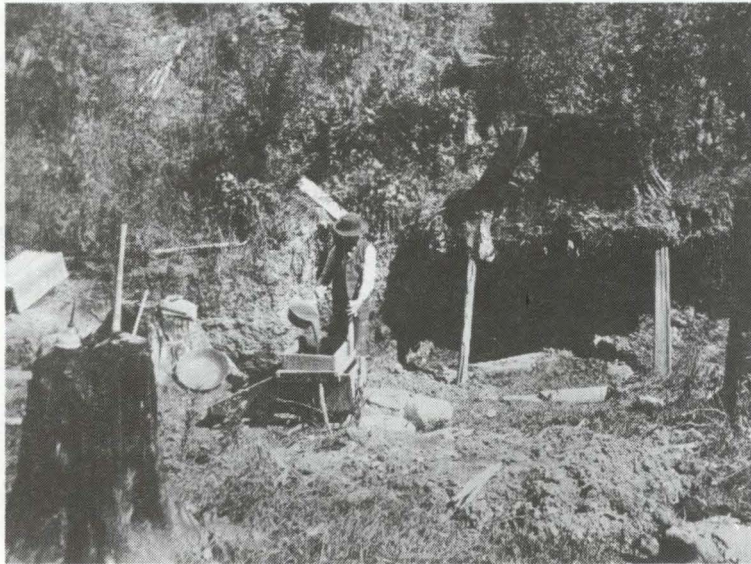
These three photos show the Carrico mine area on Gold Creek in 1909 and the Starner and Freeze families.







These are early photos of mining areas in Latah County and North Idaho. Exact locations are not known.



Creek.<sup>25</sup>

Jack Coyner, resource assistant for Palouse Ranger District of Clearwater National Forest, said there are still a number of mining claims on Gold Creek.

Miners have worked over all the drainage "at one time or another," Coyner added. Most of the activity in the early days was in the upper part of the drainage.

#### ENDNOTES

1. *Walla Walla Union*, Nov. 4, 1871.
2. Charles R. Hubbard: *Mineral Resources of Latah County* (Moscow: Idaho Bureau of Mines and Geology, 1957), p. 11.
3. *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, June 13, 29, 1865; *Morning Oregonian*, June 1, 15, 1865.
4. *Morning Oregonian*, Portland, Aug. 10, 1865.
5. Reprinted in *The Weekly Mountaineer*, The Dalles, Ore., Aug. 18, 1865.
6. *Morning Oregonian*, Nov. 1, 1865; *The Daily Mountaineer*, The Dalles, Nov. 3, 1865.
7. *Statesman*, Dec. 21, 1866.
8. Reprinted in *Morning Oregonian*, Jan. 26, 1867.
9. *Ibid*, Feb. 2, 1867.
10. *Ibid*, Feb. 13, 1867; Richard C. Waldbauer: *Grubstaking the Palouse* (Pullman: Washington State

University Press, 1986), pp. 15, 18, 28.

11. *Morning Oregonian*, March 15, 1867. This and most other items on the mines are reprints from Lewiston news columns.

12. *Ibid*, April 13, 1867.

13. *Owyhee Avalanche*, Silver City, Idaho Territory, June 1, 1876.

14. *Idaho World*, Idaho City, June 8, 1867; *Owyhee Avalanche*, June 15, 1867.

15. *Morning Oregonian*, June 26, 1867; Hurley ad in *Lewiston Journal*, July 4, 1876.

16. Reprinted in *Daily Oregon Herald*, Portland, Dec. 12, 1867.

17. *Idaho World*, Aug. 5, 1868.

18. Reprinted in *Walla Walla Union*, Nov. 4, 1871.

19. *Walla Walla Union*, March 23, 1872.

20. *Ibid*, March 23; April 6, 1872.

21. *Ibid*, Aug. 24; Sept. 21, 1872.

22. *The Weekly Mountaineer*, Aug. 23, 1873.

23. *Walla Walla Union*, June 27, 1874.

24. *Lewiston Northerner*, reprinted in *Walla Walla Union*, April 10, 1875.

25. Hubbard, op. cit., p. 12.

(Ted Van Arsdol is a former Vancouver, Wash., newspaperman. His latest book is "Tri-Cities--The Mid-Columbian Hub," published by Windsor Publications.)

#### UNTOLD WEALTH DISCOVERED!

The Moscow Mining and Milling Co. have been prospecting for over a year in Howard Gulch seven miles northeast of Moscow but until this week had found nothing in the form of a ledge that would be of value. There were plenty of small pieces of rock weighing a pound or more on the surface that was rich in gold, probably worth two or three hundred dollars to the ton. The ledge discovered this week is seven feet thick inside of solid walls, and free milling--we are informed that if the ledge continues to hold out as good as the present prospect indicates the mine will be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. The quartz taken out is very rich and the owners are confident that they have the richest strike in the Northwest.

--*Moscow Mirror*, May 16, 1890

## Early Prohibitionists Brought About

# The Drying of Moscow

This article is a sequel to the author's "Moscow, Genesee and Juliaetta, The Breweries of Latah County," in the Spring, 1979 issue of the Latah County Historical Society *Quarterly*, forerunner to the *Latah Legacy*. (Copyright 1988, Herman W. Ronnenberg)

By Herman W. Ronnenberg

No matter how difficult it may be to climb a mountain, it is easier to climb it than to perch indefinitely on the peak. So it was with the prohibition movement in Moscow, Idaho. After the excitement and strenuous effort of prohibition rallies, successful referendums, the City Council's dry ordinance, and the arson-caused conflagration at the brewery, the mundane tasks of enforcing the new law seemed long and dull.

The exuberantly victorious dries faced almost three decades of trying to enforce a law that was viewed with open hostility by a very large minority. The events of the first few dry months could set the stage for a long time to come.

The first problem after the passage of the prohibition ordinance was the attitude of the now defunct saloons. By early July of 1908, two saloons in Moscow had already closed but three were still open, allowed to wait until their city liquor licenses expired. The open ones hired lawyers to fight against the new ordinance.<sup>1</sup> There were three grounds for challenges: 1, the ordinance had been adopted by an irregular meeting with two members absent; 2, the ordinance was unconstitutional; 3, city authorities needed to accept license payments for one more year.<sup>2</sup> A succession of courts ruled against them. Two weeks later two saloonmen asked the City Council to reimburse them for the part of their state and county liquor licenses which had

been rendered unusable.

Although the local brewery was gone and the saloons were going, possession of beer in the home was not illegal. Newspaper advertisements for home delivery began to abound in the *Star-Mirror*. G. W. Gale, of the Moscow Hotel, offered beer from the Colfax Brewing Co., Schade Brewing of Spokane, Spokane Brewing Company, and the ubiquitous Budweiser of St. Louis' Anhauser-Busch.<sup>3</sup>

Early in August, owners and bartenders at the Moscow Hotel Saloon and the Third Street Saloon were arrested for selling liquor.<sup>4</sup> After a hung jury trial, they changed their plea to guilty and were fined \$30 each.<sup>5</sup> Later the *Star-Mirror*, proving themselves less than wonderfully prophetic, eulogized "here ends the liquor question."<sup>6</sup>

The saloons were supposedly selling "near beer" or "beerine" after the ordinance passed. These are beers with a very low alcohol content. Usually 2% alcohol was the limit, a much more liberal level than the bone dry Volstead Act which in the wake of the 18th Amendment made half-of-one-percent the national standard. Hundreds of long-time saloon patrons shared the opinion of one Moscow man that appears in the paper:

"...it took me less than a day to discover that near beer will never take the place of real

booze. The tank of the average man will not hold enough of that near beer to make him feel that he is the greatest politician and capitalist in the state of Idaho. I used to go into a saloon poverty stricken, and after half an hour I could go along the street happy in the belief that I had money to throw away. But it isn't so now. Near beer is flat, stale and unprofitable. I'm going to Lewiston for a few days.<sup>7</sup>

Near beer was soon a focus of concern in Moscow and then in all of Idaho. George W. Gale of the Moscow Hotel was arrested along with John Cantwell, one of his employees, in early December. The charge was selling liquor to two minors. It turned out that the evidence had not been gathered by the Moscow Police Department, but by two Spokane private detectives. E. B. Nelson and R. B. Hooker had been hired, supposedly, by a citizens committee that claimed to have \$1,200 raised to enforce the city's prohibition ordinance.<sup>8</sup> The detectives had used the two minors to secure near beer and deliver it to the detectives. Professor J. S. Jones of the University of Idaho analyzed the beer and said it had between 3 and 6 percent alcohol. The newspaper also hinted that evidence had been gathered against two drug stores in Moscow.

The case against Gale and Cantwell proved to be a long-running soap opera. They were found guilty in Police Court, fined \$100 plus \$5 costs, but released on bail until their appeal could be filed. When the appeal was not filed in the required ten days, they were re-arrested. Their fines were paid before they could even get comfortable in their cells. Next a writ was issued by the District Court asking the Police Court to show cause why a change of venue should not be granted.<sup>9</sup>

Finally a new trial was held before Justice of the Peace Cummings. He decided no real beer had been sold and therefore no state law had been violated. The case of State of Idaho vs. G. W. Gale and Jack Cantwell

ended in acquittal.<sup>10</sup>

While this was going on, related controversies raged. Local minister John M. Hupp wrote a long, rambling letter to the public forum column in the *Idaho Post*. Between the jokes and the inane comments, Hupp said the prohibition ordinance was being violated wholesale, the drug stores were no more respectable than the bootleggers, and it had been necessary for the City Council to employ detectives to deal with the situation.<sup>11</sup> This was the first time it was publicly admitted that the City Council, not the citizens committee, had paid for the detectives.<sup>12</sup>

At the same time a law enforcement league was being organized. They promised to pay rewards to those whose efforts assured prohibition violation convictions, and this time the amount being raised was supposedly \$5,000.<sup>13</sup>

The less ardently dry members of the

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*"...Hupp said the prohibition ordinance was being violated wholesale..."*

---

Moscow community began to have some serious questions about what this was costing and where the money was really coming from. They organized their own citizens league to investigate. W. J. McConnell, probably Moscow's leading citizen, became their spokesman. Their express purpose was to prevent the city issuing warrants of payment for the secret investigation. The league had 150 members and had raised a realistic \$225 to pay an attorney to look at the city records.<sup>14</sup>

Councilman S. W. Graham said as far as he knew no warrants were issued. The bills had not been read in open meeting, but paid indirectly through a committee. There were also suspected discrepancies in the street department funds. In March the league sought a restraining order from Judge Steele to prevent payment of the detectives' claims which were being channeled through the

Reverend Hupp.<sup>15</sup>

Mayor R. S. Mathews wrote a long missive to the *Idaho Post* in late March explaining his position.<sup>16</sup> W. J. McConnell replied for his organization. He said the churches had valuable allies in the Mayor and City Council but the churches are not taxpayers and it was not right to spend taxpayer money to support a religious goal. He went on to take specific exception to some of Mathew's statements. "You exclaim, 'Citizen, I would rather pay the \$170 used in securing the detective than have the law willfully disregarded and trampled underfoot.'" McConnell went on, "Do you intend to make the people believe that \$170 was the cost of the detective work? Why not give the correct figures? Do you not know that up to and including December 8, 1908, the following bills were allowed?"

15 days service, Hooker @ \$8	\$120.00
Expense bill and board	59.90
13 days service, Nelson @ \$8	104.00

Expense and board	<u>45.50</u>
	\$329.40

McConnell also mentioned that there were other warrants issued in payment for similar services up to December 30. The former Idaho governor ended with, "I merely suggest that honesty, temperance and virtue are triplets and should go together."<sup>17</sup>

While all this was transpiring, the City Council came up with a scheme to prevent further skirting of the law. They passed a new ordinance making near beer or beerine, an alternate name, illegal in Moscow. A \$100 penalty was provided. Certain members of the Council contended that near beer is somehow transformed into beer pure and simple while being passed over the bar and that, therefore, the sale of the beverage that cheers but does not inebriate will be prohibited the same as other brands of booze are prohibited."<sup>18</sup>

The editor of the *Star-Mirror* had been very sympathetic to the dry cause but this



The Moscow Brewery stood on the northeast corner of A and Main streets. A Grand Army of the Republic parade is in the foreground.

exhausted his patience.

The Council is about to pass an ordinance prohibiting the sale of near beer and beerine, because, as a member expressed it, "these supposedly non-intoxicating beverages somehow turn into the real article in passing over a bar to the thirsty customer." The same might be said of lemon pop and other soft drinks. In fact it has been reported that even water, Simon pure Adam's ale, has been known to change into highballs passing over a bar. In view of this the only safe plan for the Council to make prohibition effective is to pass an ordinance prohibiting the sale and use of everything to drink and then station a "gumshoe" at every well and hydrant in the city. The people might get along on ozone.<sup>19</sup>

In April two events occurred which calmed the situation. First, a new City Council was elected. It was the "citizens" ticket that swept into office. They favored prohibition enforcement but lacked the baggage of hostility their predecessors had. Also, the county went dry. Latah County's commissioners decided not to issue any more liquor licenses or to renew any existing ones when they came due. Latah was unique in Idaho in that prohibition came about by administrative fiat rather than referendum. From a legal standpoint, the issue in Moscow was closed. From a social standpoint, the final nail had not been driven in the coffin of John Barleycorn.

After some abortive attempts to rebuild after the spectacular July fire---one going so far as to see him construct a cement block wall around the old brewery site---Fred Francl officially announced that his brewery was closed.<sup>20</sup> On the 20th of April, 1909, Francl's county liquor license expired, and he was irrevocably out of business. Homer David, long-time Moscow resident, remembered the

Francls running a restaurant after prohibition had closed the brewery.<sup>21</sup> Their goose dinners were so good that a "goose club" developed among the affectionados of the meal.

Among the more enthusiastic members of the Goose Club were the members of the Moscow volunteer fire department. The next year, during June of 1910, they were anticipating a great goose dinner with a keg of beer to wash it down. When the police wouldn't allow this violation of the law, the fire fighters were incensed. They threatened to haul the fire equipment to City Hall, turn it over and disband the volunteer fire department on the spot unless the matter was dropped.<sup>22</sup> Eventually tempers cooled.

In 1910 the near beer issue was settled on the state level. The test case began in Troy. Eventually District Judge Edgar C. Steele ruled that a liquor license was needed

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*"From a social standpoint,  
the final nail had not been  
driven in the coffin of John  
Barleycorn.*

---

by G. W. Thompson of that city if he was to sell near beer. A state Supreme Court ruling was sought as a precedent.<sup>23</sup>

A related case finally forced the Supreme Court to rule. In Nampa brewer Jacob Lockman was told not to sell any more near beer based on the precedent in the case from Troy. A test was set up. Lockman sold two bottles of near beer to local Deputy Sheriff Paynter, and he was arrested. A chemist testified that it would be impossible for anyone to become intoxicated from the product. The stage was set for Idaho's highest tribunal to rule.

Considering legislative intent, they ruled that proof of intoxicating effects were not required for malt or spirituous liquors to be outlawed. They said the legislature was trying to keep youths from acquiring a taste

for liquor and, also, that near beer

furnishes extraordinary opportunities for violation of the state prohibition law; that it is made by those who make beer, and drunk by those who drink beer; and that it looks like beer, smells like beer and tastes like beer.<sup>24</sup>

Now the issue was really dead!

In 1911 it was reported that many Moscow people were accepting free rides in the big touring car of a Uniontown, Washington saloon keeper as he took them across the state line to legal drinking territory.<sup>25</sup> Moscow settled down and accepted the status quo after Washington State too went dry. Bootleggers and patience would see the town through the next quarter century of enforced time "on the wagon." For better or worse, no matter how uncomfortable or unpopular, Moscow was taking a leading role in the "noble experiment."

#### ENDNOTES

1. *Star-Mirror*, July 2, 1908, p. 1, c. 3.
2. *Star-Mirror*, August 6, 1908, p. 1, c. 1-2.
3. *Star-Mirror*, Sept. 10, 1908, p. 2, c. 1-6.
4. *Star-Mirror*, August 6, 1908, p. 1, c. 1.
5. *Star-Mirror*, Nov. 11, 1908, p. 1, c. 3.
6. *Star-Mirror*, Nov. 11, 1908, p. 1, c. 3.

7. *Star-Mirror*, August 13, 1908, p. 4, c. 4.
8. *Star-Mirror*, Dec. 11, 1908, p. 1, c. 1-2.
9. *Star-Mirror*, Dec. 24, 1908, p. 1, c. 2-3.
10. *Star-Mirror*, Jan. 21, 1909, p. 1, c. 5.
11. *Idaho Post* (Moscow), Dec. 24, 1908, p. 7, c.

1-3.

12. *Ibid.*
13. *Star-Mirror*, Dec. 24, 1908, p. 6, c. 4.
14. *Star-Mirror*, March 4, 1909, p. 1, c. 3-4.
15. *Star-Mirror*, March 4, 1909, p. 1, c. 2-3.
16. This copy of that paper is not extant. The contents of the letter can be surmised from the reply written by W. J. McConnell.
17. *Star-Mirror*, April 1, 1909, p. 11, c. 2-3.
18. *Star-Mirror*, Jan. 7, 1909, p. 1, c. 2-3.
19. *Star-Mirror*, Jan. 7, 1909, p. 5, c. 2.
20. *American Brewers Review*, Jan. 1, 1909, p.
21. Homer David, *Moscow at the Turn of the Century*, p. 77.
22. *Coeur d'Alene Evening Press*, June 22, 1910, p. 1, c. 3.
23. *Coeur d'Alene Evening Press*, June 20, 1910, p. 1, c. 5.
24. *Caldwell Tribune*, August 5, 1910, p. 1, c. 1-2.
25. *Idaho County Free Press*, July 20, 1911, p. 6, c. 3.

(Herman W. Ronnenberg, a former member of the Board of Trustees of the Latah County Historical Society, is media specialist for Pomeroy School District in Washington. He has a Ph. D. in historical archeology from the University of Idaho and has written a number of articles on breweries in Idaho and the Northwest.)

(Continued from Page 32)

missed living in cities," she explained. "I have traveled some, to Hawaii and to visit my grandchildren, but this has always been my home."

And to tell others about the history of her homeland has become her mission. She was on the founding board of directors of the Latah County Historical Society, in addition to uncounted other civic and church responsibilities. In 1976, she headed the county bicentennial commission. Also, she's taught courses and made dozens of presentations to school groups and service clubs about local history.

But perhaps her main claim to fame is her national exposure. An article in the *National Geographic* magazine of June, 1982, entitled "A Paradise Called the Palouse," featured Lola's reminiscences, and on page 810 a full-page color

photograph of her standing on the hillside above the family farm, holding an apple pie.

The background history about that article--the biggest dose of publicity the region has ever received--reveals much about Lola's influence. In 1974 she was making a historical presentation at the Spokane Expo, and a representative of the National Geographic Society met her there. Later an editor contacted Lola, to learn more about the region, and then sent a young writer, Barbara Austin, out to live with the Clydes while researching and writing. Lola recommended a local photographer, Phil Schofield, who was then chosen to provide the illustrations for the article. And Lola's historical presentation, the one that first interested the *National Geographic* editors, was entitled "A Paradise Called the Palouse."

## Roads and Bridges Built

By Talbert Preuit

It is a simple fact that those living in Latah county today are making tomorrow's history. None of the builders of McConnell mansion and the road grade to Bovill realized that those living here now would see and use their handiwork

In my case, that idea is pointedly true of my father, James Preuit, and my father-in-law, Ray Brown--both having lived out their lives in the Northwest. James Preuit traveled to Idaho and the Spokane area from a ranch near Waco, Texas, in 1888. He had heard of the great opportunities opening for the industrious in the great Northwest, Oregon Territory. He was a strong and healthy 19-year-old, so he came to check it out for himself. What he saw in the forests and fields of the Palouse region of northern Idaho and Washington, with nature's supply of plentiful rich soil and water convinced him that much of the report he had heard was true.

He was "hooked" on this country, but business and family ties sent him back to Texas for 35 years to live, dream of migrating to the great Northwest, and father nine children. Then in 1922, he and mother and we children cut loose and toured in two Model T Fords to the "land of his dreams." That of course is a large factor in the reason for having a home in Moscow today.

One of Papa's stories he told us was about the hard, cold winter of '88, which was a history-maker, record-breaker. The Spokane river froze over with a thick coat of ice, and he witnessed his fellow railroad workers (just to test it for strength) laid some track out on the ice and ran a steam locomotive out on it. It held.

Ray Brown, born on a farm in Iowa,

was my father-in-law. In 1892 he and his brother Jess, two years older than he, left the farm with their father Samuel Brown in a covered wagon to go and seek their fortune in the fabulous far away places of which they had heard stories of the pioneers.

The road to Idaho took them circuitously by the home of relatives in Louisiana--down in the bayou country. They had heard that was a great place to live, so they headed south, making 20 or 30 miles a day as they had a good team of horses drawing the covered wagon. They made camp each night beside the trail or road, wherever they happened to be. No, there were no motels for travelers in those days. They cooked their meals over an open camp fire, and fresh meat was prairie chicken and other game shot along the way.

Ray and Jess didn't know it, but they were headed for Bovill, Latah County, Idaho. They proceeded on to the home of their kinfolk just north of New Orleans first. The house where they visited was built up on stilts about eight feet above the ground to keep the Mississippi river high water from rising up into the parlor. There were cracks in the floor boards wide enough for the boys to look through and see the pigs and chickens foraging under the house.

Sam Brown had "had it" with that part of the country following a couple of nights sojourn. After everybody had turned in at night the pigs would start a ruckus of grumbling and squealing. The lady of the house had an iron kettle of hot water on the stove, and to stop the commotion made by the hogs below, she would pour some through the cracks in the floor and pigs would scatter in

*He came  
to check it out  
for himself*



all directions, leaving peace and quiet to reign for awhile.

The Brown wagon left Louisiana, going west across Texas, following roads where possible, going through herds of cattle, and fording streams as necessary. They led spare horses behind the wagon, and at night, Ray, man and boy of 7 years of age, slept with a shotgun at his side. They'd heard of renegade Indians stealing horses from travelers.

After considerable traveling time, and some hardships, they arrived in the Bovill area where Samuel set up a sawmill and hired available men to help him operate it. There

were plenty of pine trees available for saw logs.

Within five years Samuel concluded that good, dependable help was impossible to find. The kind he had to draw from were mostly drifters, outlaws and Indians, so he disposed of his Idaho holdings and returned to Iowa to own and operate a flour mill.

*(Talbert Preuit is a Moscow resident with an interest in history. He has worked on newspapers in Oregon and Washington and is retired from the Naval Reserve. He also edited newspapers while in the Navy.)*

### THREE LAST WISHES

I ask three things the day I die  
To make my passing seem more sweet:  
I pray that my last breath contain  
The treasured scent of Moscow's wheat;  
A second wish to soothe my heart  
Is that the carillon I hear--  
The tune, "Here We Have Idaho,"  
To echo softly in my ear;  
And last but surely not the least,  
Upon my tongue--oh, bless my soul!--  
The luscious taste of one whole pound  
Of Hunter's candy sweet Cream Roll.

--Sandra Town Lytle

# Lola Clyde's Adventure of **Living with History**

By Bill London

*(This article appeared in the July 1989 issue of the "Ruralite," the monthly publication circulated by the Clearwater Power Company. It is reprinted here with permission of the author.)*

One hundred and thirty-four years ago, Governor Isaac I. Stevens of the newly created Washington Territory, led a mapping and surveying expedition through what is now southwestern Washington and northern Idaho. The group left their boats on the Snake River at Almota (near the present site of Lower Granite Dam) and hiked up the Red Wolf Trail to the Palouse Country near present-day Moscow, Idaho.

On June 20, 1855, Stevens and his band camped overnight at a spring on the eastern shoulder of Paradise Ridge—a place known as Stevens' Spring. The next morning they headed north and east 3½ miles to the meadowland (near the Elks Golf Course today), where they found hundreds of Nez Perce, racing ponies and gathering Camas bulbs.

The diaries and maps left from that expedition constitute the very first written record of visitors to the Palouse. When the group's map-maker, Gustav Sohon, wrote that he was "astonished by the luxuriousness of the grass and the richness of the soil," he was only the first of many to recognize the agricultural potential of the area.

Stevens' Spring is now part of the Clyde Farm, 1,800 acres owned by the Clyde family, and presided over by 89-year-old matriarch Lola Gamble Clyde.

"I knew about that spring, but learned it was Stevens' Spring after I started grading papers for a history professor at the University of Idaho in 1922," Lola said. "Then when my son Robert purchased the land with the spring on it about 25 years ago, we were thrilled; we loved owning it, and going on picnics there."

Partly due to her interest in the history of the spring, Lola has become an acknowledged

amateur historian and chronicler of Palouse history. And no one is more qualified; she was born there at the base of Paradise Ridge, the daughter of the founder and first minister of the area's Presbyterian Church, Daniel Gamble, and later the wife of Earl Clyde. The Clydes were the founding members of Clearwater Power 50 years ago. Earl Clyde, who died in 1985, was the grandson of the first homesteader in the area, William Zeitler.

"Earl's grandparents arrived here in 1877 and built this house, the one we still live in, a year later," Lola said. "This was the first house in the area with plastered walls--plaster mixed with horsehair. We've given the house a facelift and additions since then, but it's the same house.

"And outside is the lilac the Zeitler family planted here; it's a huge tree now," she added. "They brought the lilac shoot with them in the covered wagon, and kept it alive by sticking it in a potato."

In 1928, the year she graduated from the University of Idaho, Lola moved the six miles from her parents' home to marry

Earl Clyde. For several years earlier she had been teaching at a local school, and had noticed that whenever she was invited to dinner anywhere in the neighborhood, another guest was a "handsome young man named Earl Clyde."

"I decided to marry him before those farm wives decided to introduce him to *another* teacher," Lola said, smiling.

Lola and Earl raised four children on the family homestead. "It was a poor winter when we didn't have 600 jars of fruit set aside," she noted. "I had paradise on earth: I lived at the foot of Paradise Ridge, and I was Earl Clyde's wife."

Never regretting that she sacrificed her teaching career for raising a farm family, Lola was selected the Inland Empire Queen Mother of the Year by the Spokane Chamber of Commerce in 1952 and then Idaho's Mother of the Year in 1972. "I am glad to have stayed here all my life; I never

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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. Subscriptions 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:

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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 Centennial Annex, 327 East Second St., Moscow, and is open Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon, and 1 to 5 p.m. The McConnell Mansion museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 1 to 5 p.m. Visits to the museum or research archives at other times can be arranged by calling (208) 882-1004.