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The Auction

The Farm Wife

Strength That Comes from the Hills

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The cover photo is titled "Washday on Big Bear Ridge," which aptly describes this scene. The photographer is identified as Fred Hecht who was born on the ridge. The book by Gerald Ingles, Gleanings from Big Bear Ridge, describes Hecht as an excellent and popular violinist who later operated a sawmill and a watch and clock repair shop. The print is from a glass negative which explains its clarity of detail. We would like to know the identify of the house and the woman in the upstairs window, and the purpose of the wooden keg attached to the pole in front of the house.

The Latah County Historical Society, a non-profit organization, was incorporated under the laws of the State of Idaho in 1973 as the Latah County Museum Society, Inc. In 1985 the Articles of Incorporation were amended to change the name to its present one.

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Memories from Farm Years

John B. Miller

In my article *Horses in "Latah County,"* published in the last *Latah Legacy*, I traced to a considerable extent the doings of my parents, William S. and Minnie B. Miller, and family through the years after 1902, when they arrived in Moscow, into the late 1940s. This account will dwell less on family history than the previous one, relying instead on those previous stories for background in time and setting, supplementing such information where appropriate.

A Start

The first several years after moving from the homestead in 1913 provided a start for my parents toward building a farm. For me these years contained the start of meaningful recollections I can trace backward definitely to the summer of 1915, but not earlier.

This farm and also the later one (started in 1929 on the Potlatch East Fork) were built from scratch on raw land, piece by piece pretty much in pioneer style. The changes that take place during such an enterprise are not easily forgotten or misplaced in their sequence.

In previous articles, I told of the move in 1914 from a temporary house, in what later became known as our upper field, to a house, still in construction, on newly purchased land just to the north. The temporary house in the upper field was torn down in 1915. I only faintly remember its removal, but do remember some details of its nature, and remember once walking to it across plowed ground of the field.

On stump-land of a recently cut forest, newly cleared, the ground had to be plowed repeatedly (once a year for several years) to rid it of the remaining roots of stumps, also to break up and

remove the remaining matted roots of bushes. If bush roots were not removed, the land would revert again to brush. No real sod (heavily rooted grass) was present, so the soil of the field was soft and mellow.

I carried in my hand a brass ramrod for cleaning guns that I used as a cane, emulating my father as he walked on an artificial leg (his left leg was amputated in 1909). On reaching the field, my ramrod cane punched deeply in the soft dirt, and seeing that if I kept it I would bend and ruin it, my parents took it away. Being deprived of my cane is what, I am sure,

has kept the memory fresh.

The field itself was fenced, at this time and for several years to come, by a more or less continuous pile of stumps, chunks of stumps, and logs, dragged and tumbled from the field during clearing. Long poles from the abundant forest slash were laid across gaps where some cow or horse might otherwise find it possible to step

through or over the barrier. The field was not yet complete at this time. I can remember my father struggling with a stump-puller to remove some stumps from its extreme southward end. Similar stump fences bordered ground of our other fields during early years, until finally barbed wire was in place. Dynamite was an important agent in moving stumps, whether in the early part of the century, or the later years toward mid-century.

Memories of stump fences and acres of stumpland remind me of the ground squirrels, which had become very numerous. My parents said that when they first came into the woods there were virtually no ground squirrels; actually in most places there were none at all.



Cutover land. 1910 photograph by Charles Dimond.

Ground squirrels were not a woods-type animal. As the country was settled, however, the squirrels followed the woodland roads (new avenues for travel), moving forward from clearing to clearing and into meadows. They preferred sunny slopes and earth embankments, but particularly liked the rather open, cut-over ground where grass was starting to grow among innumerable logs and stumps.

This stumpland formed the best imaginable cover from coyotes and hawks. A den under a stump, amid its roots, was reasonably safe from another enemy, the badger. From dens beneath stumps and clustered in steep banks commonly found along the edges of cultivated ground, and working from runways protected by logs and brush, they made great destructive inroads in the prospective crops of hay or grain. The stump fences were ideal protection. My father, with his shotgun and with me as his small companion, warred with them constantly.

Certainly in the starting up years, into if not through 1918, not much was done in the way of farming except for some hay (either grasses or some oats), and a garden. In reality, this farm never compared, in type or productivity, with grain and other farming in the western part of the county.

Most of the income in these early years was not from the farm, but came instead from the sale of lumber brought from the homestead, and from my father's work in or for the Chapin cedar yard. The cedar yard, which started in about 1914, had expanded southward through a broad flat to the northeast corner of our seven-acre parcel. The treatment plant for yard poles had been built at the end of a rail track in the yard, near that corner. My father worked in the shop or as the blacksmith's helper; he contracted for cutting wood for fuel; and was a night watchman at the yard roundhouse. Beginning possibly in 1917 and extending into 1919, my parents operated a meat market for short daytime service in the town of Bovill.

Time on the ranch actually was devoted largely to clearing land, growing a small amount of hay, gardening, and, of course, a good deal of constructing home and outbuildings. Along with this was a slow buildup of the cattle herd. My father later chuckled about an early time when he owned only one cow. When asked what he planned to do, he would grin and say he aimed

to start a dairy business. In the earliest days the "dairy business" was two or three gallons of milk a day, often carried to town by my older sister Gladys or by my mother in a couple of six-bottle hand carriers. Within a few years, however, this production grew to 45 gallons or more per day with regular deliveries of 150 bottles (pints and quarts) to customers.

The Setting

At the railroad track and northwest corner of our seven-acre tract was the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad section house where the section foreman, Patrick Conely, and his family lived. Bunk houses for the section gang were also here. On a 40-acre piece just east of our 40 acres lived the family of Henry Heidke who worked in the Chapin cedar yard. George Chrystal, who operated machinery in the cedar yard, lived with his family another quarter mile to the east.

The Conely family included two boys, Syl and Bill, and three girls, Helen, Kathleen, and Anna; the Heidke family had two girls, Merle and Helen; and the Chrystal family included the girls, Doris and Helen, and the boys Junior and Francis. These and people of the town, at least those on the nearest edge, were our neighbors.

My maternal grandmother, Julia Bakken, until her sudden death of a stroke late in 1914, lived in a one-room house my father built her. This was located within a small grove of jack-pines next to the small creek which ran through our land. It was on the land newly purchased (40 acres reduced to seven acres after partial sale to the cedar yard) and within land later designated as our "west field." I have no clear recollection of her, but clearly remember the house. For a short time it was occupied by a railroad section hand, a black man whom I presume chose to live there instead of in quarters available at the railroad bunk house, close by. The small house was later sold to Fred Lane, a director of the cedar yard, and moved for use as a garage at his home, corner of Third Avenue and Alder, in Bovill.

For a time we drew our household water from the boxed spring on the original 40 acres. This source must have served us well into 1915 because I can remember those long trips. A spring on the flat east of our second house site, also used by the Heidke family and previously

used by a Potlatch logging camp that had temporarily stood on the flat, was closer by. In summer, to avoid carrying water for laundry, my mother occasionally lugged clothes and a washtub to the spring, built a fire to heat the water, and did her laundry there by the spring, drying them in the sun on logs and stumps.

A couple of rain barrels under the eaves of our house also provided considerable water. In winter, snow or ice could be melted on the stove as a partial supply. Eventually, we started carrying water from a faucet at the cedar yard treating plant, supplied through piping extended from the Bovill town water system. Finally in 1919, my father obtained pipe from a long-abandoned school site on McGary Hill. This pipe was connected at the treating plant with the cedar yard/town system, bringing running water into our home.

For me as a small child the farmyard held some fears. I was trained to keep away from the horses' feet and to be equally careful around the cows. Gentle as they normally are, cows at times may react to some annoyance. For example, when released from her stall, if for some reason a bit irritated, a cow may swoop her head sideways, hardly in a vicious manner, but if you are not alert, she can give you a pretty good whack. Such a swoop of the head would send a child tumbling. My instructions for conduct in the barnyard while small were to keep my distance, for should I walk boldly up to a cow, there was no certain prediction of what she might do.

The sharp horns of the cows seemed a special menace. It was not uncommon to watch mild combat among the cows, part of the ritual within a herd which establishes an order of dominance. Just as there is a pecking order within a flock of chickens, so there is also a hooking order among cows. Almost every cow occasionally assails one she has established as an inferior, to remind her of her place. Any new cow added to the herd will soon have to fight it out to see where she stands. Confidence and good horns have a lot to do with who will be top cow or "boss of the herd." A "mooley" (hornless cow) works with a distinct handicap.

Consider a dog that is kept and handled by adults, not totally accustomed to children. While he is considered gentle, you cannot be sure how he will react with a child, especially if the child should do something unexpected. While the risk

was not great, surely much less than I imagined, surely caution was the right thing. I was not alone in such fears, for I have sensed a great deal of nervousness around cows in others, both children and adults.

The wide yard beyond the fenced inner yard of our house had another fear for me, as well as the cows. Our chickens, free-roaming by day, used this outer yard as part of their scratching area, but during a couple of summers we had some geese there as well. Among them was a big, mean gander. He was, in all his evil intent, my mortal enemy. I remember how we would drive into the yard, perhaps after church, in the family hack. There is not much space between the wheels of hack or buggy and so to leave room for the family to climb down, the team would be pulled to the right, creating space behind the left front wheel (passenger side) to allow women folk to dismount without soiling skirts on a dusty or muddy wheel. Too small to climb from this great height, I would be lifted down. If placed on the ground where the gander could see me, here he would come. I would reach for arms at once, for if he got to me he would beat me with his wings, peck and bite at my face, and leave me terrified. The fears are gone, but memories linger.

The Meat Market

In 1917 my parents purchased a meat market, an established business, buying the installed meat cooler and equipment, but not the building. Located adjoining the drug store on Main Street, the market had started under the ownership of Shattuck and Hughes, but of late was owned by Bill Thom. The cooler was a hardwood walk-in structure large enough to store several sides of beef, a couple of hog carcasses, plus bacon, fish, chickens, and other items. It was built in moveable sections with an ornate forward side finished in light oak. A rear compartment behind a thin wall held ice to keep things cool. Other items in the market consisted of two cutting blocks and, in a back room, facilities for rendering lard.

For the lard, there was a large cast-iron cauldron, built as a unit with a wood-burning stove beneath. The skin from the pigs, with fat attached, was put into the vat and vigorously cooked or fried, with the frying fumes vented outside through a stack. The hot rendered fat



Interior of the Jockheck meat market in Elk River.

was drained from the vat through a spout (the flow controlled by a spigot), strained through a cloth, and then poured into lard pails or large cans. There was a lard press as well. The fried remnants were gathered from the cauldron and, still hot, placed in the press. There, squeezed under considerable pressure, a bushel, more or less, of the fryings would give up several additional pounds of good lard.

Some of the beef, a few chickens, and occasionally a pig, came from the farm, but the majority of the meat was purchased from Hagen and Cushing in Moscow, or sometimes from suppliers in Spokane. The fish, in their season, were mainly salmon or halibut. During the winter run of Columbia River smelt, orders of smelt were received: 50 pounds of fish per box, packed in ice.

These years in the meat market were during World War I and included the period of Hooverizing, a program of resource conservation directed by a blossoming administrator and politician named Herbert Hoover. To meet wartime demands better, people were asked to restrict diets by eating less meat and butter and also by using wholegrain breads. White flour, less prone to spoilage and more resistant to vermin, was needed for shipment to France. The government also urged people to grow gardens. A type of bad-tasting margarine replaced butter. A farmers' lobby stood in the way of distributing

margarine that might look like butter, so with the margarine was a small gelatin capsule containing yellow color and instructions for mixing it in at home.

Leather was another scarce commodity, so the shoes we got were often made partly of cardboard and went to pieces about the first time we got them wet.

Whale meat was promoted as a substitute for other meat, such as beef. I don't know if this was done by government policy or if someone may simply have seen a commercial opportunity within the existing wartime psychology. I am not even aware of any real shortage in meat supply in the region. However, my folks yielded to whatever was there. Once or twice they bought whale meat for sale in the shop. It came in large chunks, probably 50 pounds or more per piece, all red meat, no bones. My parents believed people bought it more to satisfy curiosity than for other reasons, but some did buy. We tried the whale meat at home, but like most others, not with much relish or enthusiasm.

I wonder now how my parents divided their time between the farm and the market. Logic tells me they must not have opened the shop in the morning until ten or later and closed not later than five. Longer hours would not give time to farm chores. I am sure my mother must have spent short hours at the market and long

ones at home. Proprietorship of the market extended through 1919, surely into 1920. Jimmy Guilroy then took over the building, turning it into a confectionery, soft-drink place, and pool hall.

I have no idea what happened to the equipment for rendering lard, but father kept the meat cooler. He installed it later in an outbuilding on the farm, variously used as woodshed, shop, and carriage house. He remodeled the space for the cooler and for storage for an adequate supply of ice. Orders for meat were taken in town and the meat delivered along with milk. The labor was intensive.

During one winter, most likely 1924-1925, we obtained an administrator for the farm. I believe

it was a profit-sharing deal with a man named Wilson. We moved the meat cooler into the front-end (store) section of a cement building on upper Main Street in Bovill. Our family moved to living quarters in the rear part of the building and the Wilson family occupied the farm. The "partnership"

did not work. When Wilson left the following summer we then closed the town market and moved from town, back to the farm.

My Mother

I have said little up to now of my mother. Considering her great contributions, first to my father, including adaptations to help best in view of his impairment, to all work, and to family, I have been negligent until now not to mention her in terms that give full credit.

It is widely realized that almost all women of that time were secondary figures when it came to major decisions. While that was true in our family as in others, the fact in no way negates

all the influential strength that came from my mother. As wife and mother, the household was hers. For her, that was only a start. With endless energy, plus quickness and a desire to be where she was most needed, she would come with shovel, pitchfork, or hammer. While small, naturally rather slight, and lacking great physical strength, among a crew of men she would find a "notch" for her talents and accomplish her share.

It was my mother's work and energy, I know, that kept things going during several very hard years after my father lost his leg. That energy did not falter much in any of the next 40 years. Mother was usually up at 5:00 a.m. and then stretched her work day right up till bedtime,

9:00 or 9:30 in the evening. The list of things she did in house and barn, field, woods, milk deliveries and market, canning and preserving, sewing and piecing quilts, and all else is nearly endless. Her rests consisted of Sunday and holiday gatherings with relatives where

the womenfolk spent the day talking together while, probably after killing several chickens, they cooked elaborate meals.

Her recreation, during my boyhood, was crocheting or perhaps just patching clothes and darning family socks on long winter evenings in the dim light of a kerosene lamp while some other family member read stories aloud from a book. For one brief year at the Cedarview farm we had electricity from a Kholer farm electric plant, but thereafter had none till about 1940, when electric power was finally wired to the farm on the East Fork.

During more than thirty years, when cows and milk were a main source of income, the



The Miller family in 1920 on their front porch. In back are Minnie, William, and Luzelle. In the front are Marvin, John, and Gladys.

work was such as to be most unforgiving of the least neglect. In peak years of the dairy, mother regularly milked three or four cows twice a day; went the rounds delivering milk at doorsteps in town; attended to taking care and bottling of milk and cream, then to washing the milk utensils. These included dishes, pails, the cream separator, and at the Cedarview farm, racks of bottles. On the East Fork, while the tasks were less complex, still the obligation and steady duty was ever present, seven days a week.

More hesitant than her menfolk with regard to apparent risk, and therefore more nervous in dangerous situations, mother still did her part when what she called "gumption" was needed, for example, lifting a heavy log or beam that might slip and crush someone.

In building our barn on the Potlatch East Fork in 1930, we had to raise several trussed arches for support of the roof. They were built on the ground of heavy timbers and framed to span 26 feet and stand 26 feet high at center. The lift, done principally with a block and tackle, hung from a short gin-pole, assisted with thrust and braced support from the ground (support and an added lift from braces which moved progressively forward as the heavy timbers were raised slowly toward the vertical). Had there been a mishap, there was a real chance that the braces might not hold. The heavy truss could crash down on the two of us (my mother and me) who had the job of pushing on the braces and moving them. I cannot say we did it without a tremor, but we did it.

Another event, experienced while clearing land on the East Fork, also in 1930, comes to mind. An old door from a previous building of the one-time logging camp lay at meadow edge. I was going to move it to a trash pile, but stopped as I touched it, for yellowjackets swarmed from beneath, buzzing angrily. Later as my mother came to move it I warned her, "Don't! A yellowjacket nest is under that door. In the cool of the evening, when the fire danger lessens, I'll torch them out." The wasps will fly into a torch, singe their wings, and die, with little danger to the one who holds the torch. My mother took one look and decided she wanted a finished job. "I'm not going to let a few yellow-jackets bluff me," she said. She grabbed the door, and heedless of a half-dozen or more stings and a circling cloud of wasps, dragged it

a hundred feet to the river and dumped it in. I learned something by that example about toughness and dedication to a task. The lesson, while not one to be abused, has stayed with me. Occasionally it has served me well.

Hardly ever in her life, it seems, did my mother sit while others worked. Perhaps more to the point, she never complained. She was a credit, I think, to pioneer women and others of her time.

A Widening Range

The cows had wandered further south than usual, near the edge of the yet-uncut forest, and then turned to the west across a summit and down a small valley. They came by this route to the Milwaukee railroad tracks at a place where they could cross the tracks onto the hill slope below. Here they reached ground actually at the southwest extremity of our land, mostly steep ground, isolated, brushy, and unused. The route had taken them around the south boundary of our 40-acre- parcel of land into an area new to them. They had never reached this area before, because except by this southerly route, continuous embankments cut for the railroad were effective barriers to passage.

At the base of the hill was a "slough," really a cutoff with a pond in the bend, a former river channel of the Potlatch West Fork, left stranded by construction of the W. I. & M. railway grade which passed there. The railway basically followed the river.

A brownish cow from our herd, "Bonaparte" or "Boney" for short, left the herd and crossed the tracks to reach the banks of the river. Then (as we supposed) hearing a train, she decided to get back. Cows instinctively react that way when something might separate them from the herd. Boney didn't make it. She was struck by the southward bound train which could not see around the bend. My brother Marvin, searching for the herd later that day, found her smashed carcass lying by the tracks. We buried her there on the river bank adjacent to the cut and the hill.

My father, by letter, consulted with an attorney in Moscow, a man named Oversmith, and then went to see Mr. A. W. Laird, General Manager of the Potlatch Lumber Company in Potlatch and an official of the company's railroad. I was then about 8 years old and I

went along, my first trip from Bovill that took me farther than Deary. It was my first stay in a hotel and first time to order from a menu. My father recommended the "half fried chicken" which did not sound appetizing; I wanted my chicken fully cooked. My father had to explain that the word "half" meant the amount of chicken, not the cooking time.

The railroad paid for the cow, and my father left Mr. Laird's office quite satisfied. I am not sure of the legal grounds for the claim, but feel that "free-range" laws existing in Idaho for unfenced, open country may have played a part. I do not much doubt that Mr. Laird took a charitable "good public relations" viewpoint toward the matter as well.

I suspect it was unimportant that the accident did not occur on our farm property, but was actually at a site about 100 feet west of our property line. Shortly after this the Milwaukee railroad paid for fencing our pasture which adjoined their right-of-way, even though the sharp-cut embankment facing the railroad really made the tracks inaccessible to cows unless one should fall stupidly from its edge.

By 1920 our herd had increased to about ten milk cows (perhaps about eight of them at any time giving milk), and from two to six or seven calves, steers, and heifers. Because our barn space was inadequate, we commonly slaughtered surplus animals in late fall and early winter and then sheltered the rest in a lean-to off our hay shed. We had added a bull to the farm, kept in a separate, tightly-fenced pasture with a separate small house which he could enter freely for feed and shelter. We built additional barn space in 1924.

Our cows had started to roam widely over free range in order to find adequate pasture. The fences of our hay fields, by this time, had been replaced largely with barbed wire. Other parts of all our property east of the Milwaukee railroad were also fenced with barbed wire. Mostly this was the standard galvanized barbed wire used by all farmers.

Once, however, my father bought several rolls of war-time military barbed wire, advertised probably in the *Idaho Farmer* and surely very cheap. This wire, not galvanized, was protected from weather only by a coat of black enamel. It was a much heavier, thicker wire than that used for standard fencing. Also,

in design it was wicked stuff: instead of having two barbs spaced every four inches, there were four barbs a full inch long, every two and one-half inches. We added a couple of strands of this wire to strengthen further the fence of our bull pasture and put a strand or two of it in some of the more vulnerable parts of our eastward line fence.

While our own acreage provided some of the pasturage needed for our cow herd, even more was available in the cedar yard and also in the dump ground which was just to the east. The Chapin firm had granted us grazing rights in the cedar yard, and these rights were respected by the Potlatch interests after they took over the yard in the 1920s.

In late summer and early fall when this regular pasture ground was not adequate or at least did not seem to please the cows, the herd roamed to other areas more distant. These included brush and stump lands in a corridor along the county road toward the Horse Ranch; also the area of cut over brushlands to the east, occasionally even as far as Frei Meadow. Logging operations there by the Winton Lumber Company ceased about 1923. By 1924 most of the camp facilities were gone, and surely by 1925 the last steel was removed from the rail lines. "Little Meadow," site of one of the Winton camps, a half-mile below the headquarters camp on Frei Meadow, was one of the places frequented by the herd. In 1926 or 1927 my father was presented with an opportunity to buy the meadowland and immediately did so.

It was illegal for cows to be loose in the streets of town. We constantly watched to be sure they didn't go there – at first a primary job for my brother, then for me. They did not reach more than the bare outskirts of town before we were after them, accompanied by our cattle dog "Cub," who would help roust them from prohibited ground into a better direction.

The bovine animal has a wandering nature. A cow is never quite satisfied with what is at hand. Always she will stretch neck to reach through a fence for grass perversely disdained yesterday when she was there reaching the other way. With this same long neck, she will reach to eat hay from an adjoining manger when there is an abundance of the same in her own.

In each herd is a lead cow, a rangy animal, more often than not also the "boss" of the herd.

take off for somewhere, with others following. The lead cow of the herd was generally chosen as a "bell cow;" one or more of the others might also wear bells. The musical sound (or clatter) of the bells was helpful in finding the herd if they were feeding in the concealment of brush or woods.

Another time a cow might wear a bell was when calving time approached. When the herd was ranging near thick brush and woods, this was a precaution. A cow awaiting her calf might hide out. Actually, when we could closely guess the time of calving, we would confine the cow in a calving pen, a strategy that avoided what might be an extended hunt and eliminated the need to carry a newborn calf, slung across someone's shoulders, from some distant place to the barn.

When having a calf, cows were very clever about hiding out. They could so cunningly conceal themselves and stand so still you could walk within ten feet of them and never sense their presence. And I must add that if we hung a bell on her neck it might not help, for many cows seemed to sense its purpose and stand so still or move so carefully that no sound ever came from the bell. We had one cow that was an exception, a friendly Jersey cow named Jenny. She would hide out, but when she saw us coming in search, she would meet us and with seeming pride, lead us to her offspring.

Blloating

The legumes, such things as clover, alfalfa, peas, or beans, if eaten by a cow when tender and green, ferment in the stomach to form dangerous amounts of gas. Normally a cow can eliminate gas by belching. When too much gas forms, however, she cannot eliminate enough of it, and she will bloat. If a legume pasture is wet and a cow feeds there greedily, as she might especially during the first grazing of the early morning, the bloating may be fatal. To avoid this danger, when the cows were released to early morning pasture after a rainfall or heavy dew, it was wise to turn them toward non-leguminous grasses. We carefully watched when they went near the "lower dump ground" in the cedar yard which was mainly clover.

Late one afternoon in the mid 1920s I brought the cows at milking time from the vicinity of the dump ground. As I gathered

several of the young stock that had strayed a bit from the others, I noticed that a cow in the main herd was in some kind of distress. As I approached, I could hear wheezed breathing and heaving coughs. The other cows, in evident anxiety, were bunched around her so that I could not, at first, see which cow it was. Then I did see that it was a black and white cow named Spot. I did not recognize the strange coughing as a symptom of bloat. My idea was to get her home, but after catching them, managed only to move the bunch a hundred feet or so when, at a location very near the treating plant, Spot finally went down. I got close enough to see the bloat (I had seen mild bloat, although never severe bloat). I ran home to get my father.

The remedy for severe bloat is to "stick" the cow: with a knife or other sharp instrument, one punches a hole through the hide and the wall of the stomach to drain away high-pressure gas. This is done in an area high on the flank, a little forward of the hip. You would think an animal would die of such a wound, but actually if the cow survives the bloat, the stick wounds both in hide and stomach generally heal, and the cow will live.

It was late in the day; in fact the quitting whistle of a poleloader at the treating plant had just sounded. Ed Rowe, standing on a car-load of poles at the plant, looked across toward the cows and saw the problem. Ed, who had been a farmer, knew what to do. He pulled out his jack-knife and stuck the cow.

Father had a special tool which he had never had occasion to use. It was a narrow skewer-shaped stiletto fitted into a narrow tube covered with shiny nickel plate. The entire tool would be stabbed into the cow's upper belly, and when the stiletto was withdrawn, the gas would drain freely through the open tube.

We took the bloat instrument and quickly returned to Spot. Ed Rowe had drained the bloat, but the cow was dead. Apparently her heart stopped even as she fell. On the following morning we dug a large hole and rolled her in. Although most of the grass was dry on that day, Spot had found a patch of damp clover and eaten more than usual.

Butchering

The slaughtering of animals – calves and yearlings, two-year old steers, and the occa-

sional cow – took place rather regularly. This was done in a separate lot not far from the barn, where we had a scaffold to raise the carcass during the skinning and other routine procedures. Because the details of slaughter and butchering are not material, nor good reading, I will not describe them. But butchering was part of our life, and as such deserves some discussion.

The scaffold was a jack-knife affair built of four poles, joined to a short ridge-piece at the top. The lifting, with a rope, was done by combining a block-and-tackle rigging hung from the ridge piece, with added power from a crude, homemade winch mounted about chest high across two of the support poles. The rope that ran through the block was wound on a reel of the winch. There was a sheltering roof downward from the top, for eight or ten feet, to shelter the carcass overnight after butchering, until sufficiently cool to be cut into halves and quarters. Most of the butchering was done on cool or cold days, preferably dry ones, in fall or winter. Hides were salted, dried, bundled, and then sold.

Occasionally we purchased young pigs to raise for slaughter in the fall, especially when we had a surplus of skimmed milk, more than our calves could drink. Hogs, when butchered, are not skinned. Instead, they are scalded in hot water and "scraped," the hair and bristles pulled free of the skin. We had a scalding vessel consisting of half of a steel barrel, cut end to end.

In early years, our neighbors helped us butcher: Henry Heidke, George Chrystal, or Joe Fagnan when he was in town, and later Ed Rowe. Heidke liked to slaughter animals by crushing their skulls with a maul. I did not like that, nor did my brother, nor, I think, my father. My family preferred a gunshot to the head, which dropped the animal just as effectively. But when Heidke was there, he wanted to take charge, and he generally did.

My brother and I each started to help with the skinning part of butchering at age twelve or thirteen. By the time we had moved to the East Fork farm, Marvin was sufficiently experienced to take charge without help from my father. He also learned to cut up a beef, with cuts made as a professional butcher might do it.

Of all the jobs on the farm, the slaughter of

livestock was among those we most dreaded. Knowing it must be done, we fortified and readied ourselves. I think farm life conditions you to do the hard things without losing the capacity to care about things or be gentle. In butchering, cutting into the sticky, warm flesh of a newly killed animal in which there may still be an occasional lifelike twitch or quiver, is not a thing to relish. Almost traumatic for me and I believe for Marvin were the moments of the kill, especially with animals one has been with and handled through months or even years.

A Bull Named Skeezi

In summer of 1932 we added a young bull we named Skeezi to our cattle herd. Because he was just a yearling, manageable and not considered a risk, we let him range with the herd. We prepared, however, for the time when he would become a threat. We put a brass ring in his nose which hopefully we could grasp in defense or use to control him. Later he was to have his own pasture.

Running with the herd that summer, Skeezi somehow escaped one day and started up the hill toward town. Pursuing him, I turned him toward home, but he was stubborn and hard to drive. Eventually I cornered him and managed to grasp his ring, hoping to lead him. Untrained animals resist the lead even with a halter. A ring is worse, because it hurts. I gripped the ring with my middle fingers, switching from one to the other. It became such a struggle that after twenty minutes I felt as if my fingers would be torn away. I had to give it up and return to driving him. When help came finally, he was taken home.

Three years later, Skeezi was a fully grown animal. You can never, of course, fully trust a bull, but Skeezi turned more obviously belligerent than any of the other bulls we had owned. My sister, Luzelle, her husband Bill Musch, and their little girl, Yvonne, were with us that summer. Bill decided to make some minor repairs on the bull pasture fence and so, with tools and staples, entered the enclosure. For protection he carried a heavy hickory axe handle. In a short time the bull confronted him. With his head down, front feet pawing the ground and angry bellows, it was plain that Skeezi was not in a good mood.

I was somewhere in a far pasture. As I often

did when going some distance afield, I had taken my rifle. Returning to the home barnyard, I came upon the scene. Bill was striking viciously one way and the other with the axe handle to keep the bull at bay, fortunately with a great deal of success. The bull was pressing in an angry way, but was unsure of himself. Certainly he did not like the club. From outside the fence I set my gunsight on the vulnerable spot at the cross between the ends of the horns and eyes for a certain shot should the bull start a lunge.

Seeing an opportunity, Bill then leapt to the top of a nearby stump. Thwarted by this and pressured now in two directions, Skeezi backed away and the confrontation ended. Yet not quite! Skeezi was "on the butcher block" that

easy and that the required equipment was not elaborate, bulky, or expensive. We soon began selling milk to the Badger Meadow camp and continued for two years.

In 1935, two officers came to our house with the message that the camp would no longer be able to buy our milk. Under order from higher command, milk had to be purchased only from creameries which could be inspected. Farms could no longer supply milk. Only my mother was home at the time, and when my father heard the news, he was incensed. "Where," he said, "does the Army think the creameries get their milk?" The Moscow creameries, of course, underwent inspection, but not the dairies and farm premises that were the source of their cream and milk. Farmers with only two or three



The Civilian Conservation Camp in Bovill.

winter. By the following summer another bull was there in his stead.

Milk to the CCCs

The CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) camps were administered by military officers of the Marine Corps and U. S. Army. Soon after the Badger Meadow camp was established, the officers in charge approached us to buy milk. They wanted 10 to 15 gallons a day to be delivered in five-gallon cans during the working season through summer and fall, but by regulation, it would have to be pasteurized. The delivery in cans was highly satisfactory for us. It took only a little study and investigation to learn that the pasteurizing process was quite

cows accumulated cream so slowly that it became rancid before it was shipped. We knew that creameries used enough of this slightly rancid cream to taint their butter. Accustomed on the farm to butter made from only mildly soured cream, we disliked butter from the creameries.

My Wife Pastora and a Calf

On my first vacation to the farm from my geological work in Colombia, I was accompanied, as on future vacations, by my wife Pastora, a Colombian girl I married in late 1938, more than a year previously. There was a new-born calf, and one of my first tasks back on the farm was to train it to drink its twice-daily ration of

milk from a pail.

My folks did not like milking a cow that fed her calf, and they definitely did not want a calf in the pasture following its mother and taking the milk. Whole milk and particularly cream had good commercial value. Therefore we soon separated the calves from their mothers, penned them, and fed them from buckets. After feeding them whole milk for a few weeks, we gradually changed their diet to skimmed milk with some calf meal added as a nutritional supplement.

There was another, complex reason for keeping an unweaned calf from feeding in a pasture with the cows. The calves, loving milk, are of course reluctant to give up access to their mothers. When the mother's milk gets scarce, calves will sometimes find another amenable cow and take to her. In herds where calves were not weaned, I have seen well-grown yearlings still feeding, partly but avidly, on milk.

For the first few days after freshening we never combined a cow's milk into what went to the household as it had a strong flavor and was considered bad. We gave the cow her calf in that period and perhaps for a few days more, but after that the two were separated, both anxious and loudly protesting. Confined in a pen, the calf was fed milk from a pail. Naturally, to my wife, acquainted only with customs in Colombia, this strange North American way of doing things was a great curiosity.

The calf is introduced to milk in a bucket, just as it comes from the cow, by wetting the fingers in the milk, letting the calf have them, and then using fingers to lead its nose to the bucket. The calf is then in immediate trouble. It knows by instinct how to suck, but does not know how to drink. It sucks, gets some milk and likes it, but also blows and sputters, gets milk in its nose, pulls its head out, sneezes; then the fingers coax it back to the bucket. With fingers in the mouth, you feel the knifelike edges of sharp teeth, just breaking through the skin of its gums. The calf does not bite, for its instinct is to suck (and it does this with energy when it

can keep the milk from its nose). If it were drinking from his mother, the calf would ram her with his nose and give her a few butts with his head, so he does the same with the bucket. You have to be on guard, or he will spill the milk. My wife, Pastora (which means shepherdess in Spanish) was fascinated and had to give all of this a try.

After several days of this, the calf has learned a little and does not need the fingers, or needs them only to get started. It does not know enough yet to keep its nostrils free, though, and is so eager that it will plunge its head in the milk clear to its eyes. It blows bubbles in great abundance, gulps milk, chokes, pulls its head out, sneezes, and then goes at it again. The calf never sips milk as it may do later with water, but it does learn to drink with just the nose, not most of the head, plunged into the milk. Once it learns this, it may gulp away an entire bucketful, seldom coming up for air.

My wife was totally amused with all this and on later visits to the farm always wanted to be present when it was time to feed the calves. In later life the memory always produced a laugh.

Ending Years

In later years, onward from the late 1940s, the farm converted from horses to tractor; partly to a grain crop in addition to hay; more to beef cattle with less emphasis on milk. There were customers who bought milk in gallon jugs. Eggs had been supplied for years to the groceries in town, but extending well into the 1950s, a good market for farm-raised frying chickens developed. Bought in spring from hatcheries, several hundred chicks would be raised, then killed several dozen at a time, plucked and cleaned, sold in Bovill, and also hauled in bunches to markets in Moscow.

Marvin and my mother lived on the East Fork Farm for well over thirty years before selling it to members of the Jain family who moved from the farm into the town of Bovill early in the 1960s.

John Miller, a lifetime member of the Historical Society, is the author of The Trees Grew Tall, a detailed history of the forested areas of the county published in 1972. Mr. Miller grew up on his parents' homestead in the Bovill area and spent most of his working career as a field specialist in exploration geology. He has contributed other articles and is a generous supporter.

A Horse and a Loose Shoe

John B. Miller

There is a small click or slapping sound when, as the horse walks, his foot hits the ground. A shoe is loose. No problem, not if the hoof is sound and the shoe is good. A few hammer blows to tighten the nails, or new nails properly clenched, will put things right.

A recent issue of *Latah Legacy* (Vol. 24, Spring 1995) carried, over my name, two stories about horses. In each of these, as printed, something was amiss: figuratively, a loose shoe. A few words of explanation, in this instance, serve as a remedy in lieu of hammer and nail.

The stories came from material in two lengthy pieces (some 60 pages total) I sent to the Historical Society in 1994. These consisted of documentary material submitted to the Society, sent actually in response to a request. They were a bit hodge-podge, not contrived for publication; certainly not as written. I said, however, to draw on the work in any way as the Society might wish for future use. The two articles, each of which bears threads of family history, were the result.

In the first, "Horses in Latah County," my parents establish a homestead, taken in 1902 in the Ruby Creek area four miles south of the present town of Bovill. Then the story jumps. As told, my folks seem to have converted the homestead into a dairy farm, the Cedarview Dairy. For reasonably informed readers, such a site for a dairy farm in the backwoods (daily town deliv-

eries are implied) would seem unreal. A family move in 1914 to new land near the town of Bovill, related in the original, was not mentioned. Actually, Cedarview Dairy, located just a half mile south of Bovill, looked across the cedar yard there into the town beyond.

Other notes: it was my parents and not "friends," who won prizes for cabbages at the County Fair. And in an obvious typo, my brother-in-law's name, Bill Musch, becomes Bill "Munsch."

This excerpt is from the second story, "A Visual Companion:" "Old shoes were struck from the feet after clipping away the nail heads with a special curved knife." Nails of cardboard, evidently! No wonder shoes come loose. As I wrote it, the curved knife was for paring and trimming the hoofs. I could have said that a rasp was used on hoofs as well, much as a file is used for fingernails. Horseshoe nails were clipped away with a strong, hand-held pincers.

Resting on these comments, I consider that the figurative shoes are now tight. Please understand that all, as published, was edited from voluminous information, random in nature; certainly not well-organized with forethought nor phrased with care. The selection of material and editing it in new form surely was not easy. I am pleased, also grateful, that the Historical Society regarded what was there in context to be worth publication.

A Note from the Editors. We would like to thank John Miller for his gracious corrections and apologize for the errors which crept in during the editing process. His modesty to the contrary notwithstanding, his essays are models of clarity and information; any confusion is purely the consequence of our misreading, not his writing.

The Auction

Erma Burton Bower



Farm auction at the Stallings place around 4 miles northeast of Moscow in the 1930s. The second man on the left is Leo DeWitt.

The be-whiskered, straw-hatted, tobacco-chewing, philosophizing farmer is no longer with us . . . or is he?

Farms have become larger, thereby, have fewer owners. Ghostlike skeletons of old deserted farmhouses dot the landscape, their glassless windows staring vacantly into an empty future. There is something pathetic about the stories they portray – the end of an era, the passing of a community knit closely together by common bonds, management by absentee landlords. One experiences a feeling of sadness when traveling country side roads that lead only to deserted shacks where daffodils still struggle to retain a bit of what used to be.

For every half dozen or so forsaken homes, a new farm dwelling appears, resplendent in modern architecture, boasting of all the latest conveniences. There is only one family now, where many once lived, failed or prospered according to their abilities and the fruitfulness of the land. With the passing of the families went the little red school house where the community regularly gathered as neighbors for

socials, card parties, suppers, or just gossip sessions.

The advent of mechanized farming destroyed the old farm practices and traditions. However, one typical event still holds forth twice annually, unchanged by the years. I refer to the country auction sale, that bit of rural Americana that blossoms forth every spring and late fall along with the blooming of the crocus.

The farm auction, except for its lack of salable horses, has ignored progress in all its many forms. The reason for its survival has remained the same, the transferring of one man's life work into the able hands of a generally younger, stronger man. Sometimes illness or tragedy demands the change. Sometimes old age makes the transfer mandatory. Whatever the reason, a country sale is often the death of one man's dream and the beginning of a new dream for the buyer.

A person experiences a bit of the heartbreak while rummaging through the many accumulated implements which have been so much a part of one man's existence. A part of his life's

blood is on exhibition here.

Today as I watched the unbelievably large crowd of men appear seemingly from nowhere, I contemplated, "they are not unlike a flock of vultures, come to pick the bones for morsels left over from another man's misfortune." This was an unfair comparison, if true, unfair to the owner who must sell and unfair to the buyers who came to purchase, thereby performing a favor for both parties.

While poking and prodding and probing among the odds and ends on display, the men chattered like a flock of magpies. Unlike the birds, the buyers often pay dearly for the items they acquire. A successful auctioneer is a true artist on the job. He pits bidder against bidder with the skill of a circus barker at a "girly" show. He can not only coax the silver from a man's wallet, but the lock off his safety deposit box as well. Before a buyer knows it, he has come into possession of junk he does not want – for twice what it is worth – if he could use it.

Friendly competition begets a lack of sales resistance or maybe "auction fever." Either one should be classed as highly contagious. Most men rush out willingly to become exposed.

My husband would gladly be the instigator of a rush-hour traffic jam in order to reach a store window displaying one of those orange or blue farm sale signs. He reacts much as a bull reacts to seeing a red cape, by making a headlong dash for the colored object. Reading the listed items is so much wasted time as, Lord willing, he will check it out in person on the prescribed date.

From the size of today's crowd, I consider my

man's idiosyncrasy to be a common ailment of farmers, young or old. The sale brought out the best and the worst of the country's sodbusters, cattlemen, and junk collectors. They appeared in everything from white hats to chinwhiskers. Some of them must truly have crawled out of the woods or from under moss-covered boulders. Others were as neat and clean shaven as though attending a Sunday school picnic. Together they mingled – an odd assortment of ghetto and grotto, rat turds and wheat kernels – ready for the plucking by a silver-throated auctioneer with an aptitude for peddling scraps.

You want proof? My husband gleaned a fortune in old iron, rusty cable, nuts and bolts, a length of iron pipe, and fifty feet of rotten rubber hose! Seeing his loot, I muffled an outcry and settled for a few derogatory remarks concerning junk peddlers and fools.

We had driven miles over crooked roads and climbed a hair-raising grade to get there. We had braved that motley crowd of elbow crushers for hours, only to wind up with a load of trash too unsightly to be caught dead with! When the truth finally came to light, my man admitted that he went to see and be seen, to gab with the fellows, not to buy scrap-iron and rubbish. Now that I could understand. Had he but told me earlier, I would not have singed his hair!

It is regrettable that the country store with the pot-bellied stove passed away with the turn of the century. Men would not have to resort to such chicanery in order to gather and gossip if they went to purchase a lantern chimney or a gallon of kerosene.

The two articles, The Auction and The Farmwife, are from a collection of short pieces by Erma Bower. Others will appear in subsequent issues. Mrs. Bower, who died in June, 1994 at the age of 85, lived a very active and rich life. Born in Princeton, she lived all her life in Latah County. After her first husband's death in 1961, she married Charles Bower and moved to Big Bear Ridge between Deary and Kendrick. In addition to being a farmwife she operated an answering service for a grocery delivery business. Other interests included music, square-dancing, handwork, sketching, and ceramics.

Her reflections on farm life are full of humor and good sense, and we know you will enjoy them. Charlie Bower, who still lives on Big Bear Ridge, is long-time member and volunteer of the Latah County Historical Society.

The Farm Wife Erma Burton Bower

A farmer's wife is a composite of many things. She is an executive in an apron; a mender of broken dreams and bruised egos; a personnel director in hair curlers; a purchasing agent for everything from groceries to gypsum; a first aide administrator for insect bites, hammered thumbs, and barbed-wire lacerations; an efficiency expert (crowding fifteen hours' labor into every eight-hour day), and a dietitian with an aptitude for formulating menus from common everyday food products.

She counts calories, vitamins, and pennies. She appreciates a good-natured spouse: his dinner plate slicked clean, without complaints; a beardless husband at least twice a week; and a helping hand with the supper dishes. She is not fond of muddy boots on the porch, dirty eggs in her kitchen, drippy faucets, a tardy husband at mealtime, getting a five o'clock breakfast, snow in April, and finding the barnyard gates left open.

She can be found sweeping under, cleaning up, delving into, dusting on, washing out, toting in, running to, coming from, and working for her farm, home, and farmer. Even so, she finds time to attend Grange, join a Parent-Teacher organization, make clothing for needy families, visit old people's homes, join a club, go to church, and tend a flower garden. She operates on perpetual motion and nothing less than a broken leg can

slow her down.

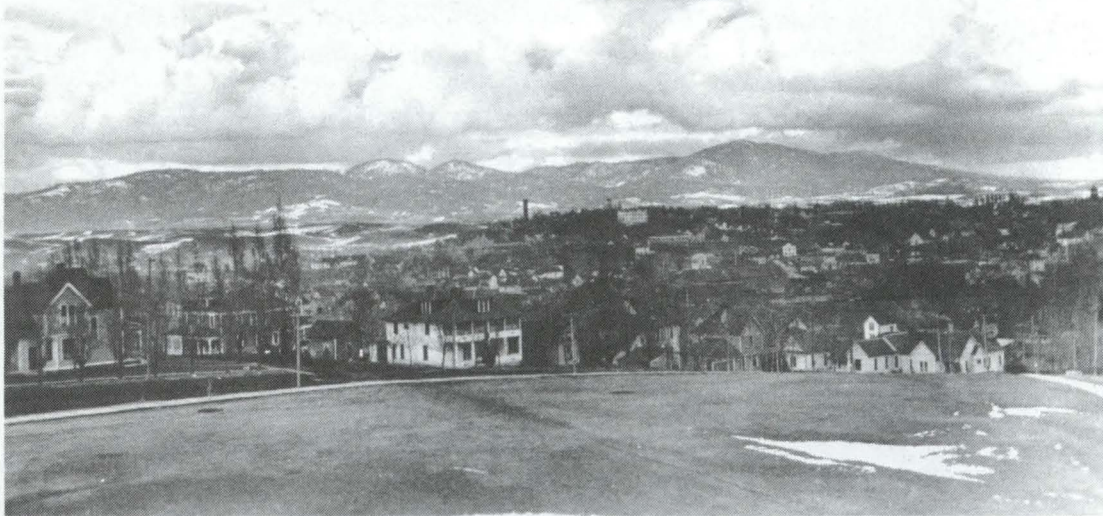
A farm wife is a combination of "Complaint and Comfort." She complains about the monotony of housework, the high cost of living, and the neglected items needing repair – the things that only 'hubby' can mend. She comforts when her man's pride has taken a beating, when misfortune falls upon her household, or when the price of wheat is under par.

The farmer's wife is the most important machine on the premises and is taken for granted the most. She requires less repair, consumes less fuel, performs more tasks, and needs no driver. Though she may sometimes nag and scold, she runs the family half of the farmer's life with the efficiency of a computer. She is a rural custodian, a blue-jeaned keeper of keys that unlock the doors of comfort when the provider of "Manna for Many" returns exhausted from helping to fill the bread-baskets of the world.

At day's end, when her strength is expended, she can be reconditioned by a few well-chosen words of praise from 'the man' in her life! She may not be classed as the farmer's right hand, but she, unmistakably, is his left. So, when raising your glass in a toast to the farmer for a job well-done, drink a small one to the "little woman" who stood beside him all the way, sharing the bad times as well as the good. She has earned it!



Washday on Big Bear Ridge, from a glass negative



Moscow Mountain, photographed from the University of Idaho campus by Ivan Osterhout, January 1, 1915. He wrote, "The clouds attracted me until I yielded to the temptation and made a pictorial record of them."

Strength That Comes from the Hills: Mountains in Brink's *Buffalo Coat* Gail Z. Eckwright

Carol Ryrie Brink was born in Moscow in 1895, attending schools here, including three years at the University of Idaho. She spent much time as a child exploring the fields and the mountains near her home. The mountains that hover near Moscow profoundly influenced the young Brink, and the adult Brink incorporated their eternal presence into her books. While the mountains do not dominate the texts, one can sense their omnipresence.

The mountains can be found in all of Brink's adult novels. *Buffalo Coat*, however, is particularly interesting to Moscow residents because we can relate to it in a personal way. It is certainly a work of fiction, but parts of it are barely fictionalized accounts of some of the events that took place in Moscow's early years. *Buffalo Coat* is also of great literary interest; it is an excellent work of fiction that found its way to the *New York Times Book Review* best seller list for a time after its publication in 1944.

Brink explores many themes in *Buffalo Coat*: music, the western frontier, and poetry among others. However, the theme of the mountains stands out as one that can be traced throughout the text. Brink's personal view of the mountains

comes through very clearly; few pages go by without some mention or reference to them. Also the major protagonists' fortunes are closely allied to their relationships to the mountains. The five major protagonists in *Buffalo Coat* are the town's three doctors: Doc Hawkins, Constant Duval, and Hugh Allerton; Jenny Walden, the Methodist minister's daughter, Katherine Allerton, wife to Dr. Allerton; and Anna Hawkins, wife to Doc Hawkins.

Brink introduced the mountain theme early in *Buffalo Coat* when she described the inhabitants of Opportunity and their reluctance to face the mountains in their day-to-day living. Homes were built, not with views of the mountains, but with views of alleys, backyards, hedges, and public buildings. Here were people who, in Brink's words, "seemed to prefer Pharaoh's Horses or enlarged photographs of deceased relatives" to the "spectacular . . . changing beauty that no artist's canvas could have surpassed" (Carol Ryrie Brink, *Buffalo Coat*, 1993, p. 42). Brink wondered about these people and focused on the possibility of fear as the motivation for this behavior, a "fear of something as vast and strange which laid a blight of mystery

and significance upon everyday living" (p. 272).

The mountains represent much in *Buffalo Coat*. They are a personified eternal presence that oversees the changing world around them. The mountains are all-seeing and all-knowing. They are passively watchful, but not judgmental. They also are paradoxical: unchangeable, and yet infinitely changing with the seasons. The colors of the mountains reflect the moods and feelings of the people: deep purple, sometimes blue, sometimes gray, and then again a stark white. The mountains are a physical obstacle, as they provide a barrier that shuts out the rest of the world, particularly in winter (p. 408). But they also represent the obstacles in the lives of the individuals in Opportunity.

Doc Hawkins is one of the key figures throughout the book. He is Opportunity's leading citizen, admired by all. He guides the town, provides medical care for it, and looks after it as a parent attends to the welfare of a much-loved child. Doc Hawkins is ever the pragmatist, looking to the future and considering what the town does and does not need. It is Doc who makes the Academy a reality in Opportunity. Early in the book, Doc is a visionary for his town, and something of a "god" to the citizens of Opportunity.

But as time goes by we discover that Doc Hawkins' vision is somewhat nearsighted. He allows his personal animosity against Dr. Allerton to get in his way when the town once again is needy, this time for a new sewer system that would prevent the annual outbreak of typhoid fever. His personal feelings also enter into his attitude toward law and justice, when he chooses not to report a murder. Unlike the other characters, Doc never takes note of the mountains. The mountains are the predominant natural feature, but this sometime "visionary" is able consistently to ignore them. Doc's attachment, as we hear him tell late in the book, is to the world in general, and more specifically, to his world, Opportunity in particular (p. 47). He fails to notice the mountains, or, another way to look at it, he fails to see what is right in front of his face. This inability to see what is sometimes in plain view is a tragic flaw for Doc and certainly contributes to his demise.

At least one individual in the story attempts

to confront the mountains. Constant Duval, the French doctor, has a past he is attempting simultaneously to escape and to preserve. His past and his tormented memories are an obstacle to the present. Duval often strides up into the mountains, perhaps wanting to overcome them and thereby overcome his personal obstacles. One Christmas Day finds Duval setting out again for the mountains, not as a man on holiday, but as a man "who is being pursued and must flee at all costs before he is overtaken" (p. 47). But the passive, omniscient mountains can impart no lasting peace to the restless soul. Eventually Duval discovers that the consolation he seeks must come from within himself.

Jenny Walden is not afraid of the mountains. For Jenny, the mountains are part of the landscape, something to be dealt with and considered, but they are "not terrible to a person with vision," which is how she views herself (p. 6).

Jenny is always at odds with most of the people of Opportunity. She is a rebel and a non-conformist in a town and time that does not well tolerate these individualistic traits. Jenny is

Jenny's romantic, dreaming nature sets her apart from most people in Opportunity.

unwilling to accept the norms and standards for herself that apply to others. She writes an award-winning essay, then defiantly reads it publicly, although Doc denounces it as "feminist twaddle" (p. 137). Jenny also challenges the town's assumption that because she is a "preacher's daughter" (p. 139), her behavior must be more charitable and reserved than the behavior of other young people (p. 65). Jenny likes to knock her head against the wall and Doc Hawkins alone appreciates her for it (p. 219).

Jenny is also a romantic. On at least one occasion Doc Hawkins chastises her for "wearing her heart on her sleeve" (p. 136). Looking at the mountains' blue color, she feels an "ache for words which expressed beauty" (p. 110). Jenny, too, walks toward the mountains, though unlike Duval she does not venture to the tops. She approaches them but chooses to keep some distance, often finding enjoyment in the flowers and fields. She romanticizes the mountains, even as she romanticizes her own life. Jenny dreams of going ". . . away somewhere, when she could, where there were blue silk dresses and lovers who would recite poetry, where the

sun would always shine, and she could be free and beautiful . . . and where she could weep if she wanted to . . ." (p. 110). Jenny's romantic, dreaming nature sets her apart from most people in Opportunity. Eventually her untempered romanticism leads to her death.

Hugh Allerton, the third doctor in Opportunity, is a reserved, self-confident man who "had no doubts about himself" (p. 232). He was sincere, upright, and honest, all virtues greatly admired by almost all (but with the exception of Doc Hawkins).

Allerton has planned and scheduled his life, choosing the route carefully since his teenage years in England. "In everything, he had been grave and sensible and taken at every crossroads the most advantageous turning" (p. 184). Even his marriage has been one of convenience, as when he made the decision to ask Katherine to marry him, he did it because it was the path "that led upward" (p. 186). Katherine is the only child of a doctor who is Allerton's mentor. Hugh respects Katherine, but love is not part of the marriage contract (p. 193).

And yet ". . . some inner force lay sleeping in him" (p. 185), a force that provoked a "restlessness . . . which should have had its fulfillment in his adolescence" (p. 187). It is not surprising that the mountain air surrounding Opportunity causes Hugh to feel alive in a way that he had not previously experienced. Like Jenny, Hugh feels an "almost physical aching for something . . . he had missed along the way" (p. 188). The bracing mountain air and the mountains themselves epitomize and confirm his aching aliveness. Hugh's senses awaken in the shadows of the mountains.

Initially, Allerton sees divine inspiration in the mountains. He recites Biblical verses as he travels in view of the mountains. But then, on one snowy day, Allerton gives Jenny a ride in his carriage and suddenly begins to feel "freedom" in the mountain air (p. 219). Bible verses give way to poetry by Browning, Eliot, and Macaulay. Hugh finds he gains as much pleasure, in itself a new-found feeling, from the poets as from the Psalms. Poetry becomes "a marriage of mountains and music" (p. 287).

As Hugh and Jenny spend more time to-

gether, Hugh finds that "for the first time in his life he had begun to feel rather than to think" (p. 316). It is unfortunate for Hugh that he has not allowed himself to feel his emotions earlier in life, as now the feelings overwhelm him like floodwaters bursting through a dam. Allerton had been "a serious man with a definite purpose" before he met Jenny (p. 183). But we learn that "life was harder on a man with a definite purpose, because he was never ready for the unexpected emergency which lay in wait for him along the course he had drawn for himself" (p. 183). Hugh's emotions constitute the emergency that he had not anticipated. His emotions make him feel nearer to the earth than he has ever been, but he also feels farther from Heaven (p. 286). He is unable to find the balance he needs, the balance between thinking and feeling, the balance between earth-bound and heavensent. The mountains loom over him like "docile giants" (p. 324) spurring his emotions, but granting him no

salvation from them.

Finally Hugh Allerton recognizes his dilemma:

. . . he suddenly knew how far he had strayed from the wide, plain road which he had laid out for himself. He had so firmly believed that the intellect could direct man's life. As he thought back now, he saw the life he had planned, the careful turnings he had made, all neatly finished like a map with a scale of miles and contours done in colors. But now he had lost his way in trackless regions, and his map no longer served him. For the first time he realized that there were forces in life which were beyond his control and understanding. He was no longer the map maker, the disinterested planner. He was not his own master. Something older and deeper than the intellect had taken hold of him and was moving very swiftly with him through the trackless dark towards some unforeseen denouement. He felt a deep despair, but it was tinged with ecstasy (p. 373).

Katherine Allerton is very different from her husband. Katherine identifies herself very early as one who can not get used to the vastness of

the mountains (p. 179). As with Hugh, the mountains provoke strong emotions for Katherine, but in her case, the emotion she feels is fear. However, fear is her life-defining emotion. She dreads the dirt and dust associated with everyday living (p. 385-86) and the untidy leaves that sweep into the house with the autumn wind (p. 304). She fears "icy roads, the Western horses, the mountains, they all filled her with dread and anxiety . . . particularly the mountains" (p. 222). In short she fears all of those things associated with her life.

And then there was Anna. From the very beginning we learn that Anna "loved the keen mountain air" and that she believed that the mountains had "made her happy" (p. 20). Anna repeatedly through the text reflects on the mountains and her seemingly personal relationship with them. She doesn't ignore the mountains, like Doc, nor does she aggressively seek them, like Duval. Anna accepts the mountains as they are; she is content to look at them, to live with them, and occasionally, to go up into the mountains: ". . . a person gets a little perspective that way" (p. 160).

Anna recognized the "danger in the air" here (p.23). But she was not fearful; rather, she had a "detached clarity of vision" that made her "face the danger from the very start" (p. 23). Most of all, she noticed "how small and temporary was the town, how large and permanent the hills" (p. 23). Anna had a strength of character unequalled by others in *Buffalo Coat*. Her ability to accept people and things for what they were gave her the clarity of vision that was lacking in the others.

Anna was a tower of strength. Doc Hawkins was unwilling or unable to see Anna's strength, even as he chose not to notice the mountains that figured in his everyday life. Doc preferred to maintain the conviction that "all women were fools" (p. 14). His thoughtless attitude makes it difficult for him to benefit from Anna's strength, although Anna clearly supports him through the more difficult moments of their life together. But Dr. Duval observes Anna's strength and gradually begins to rely on her emotionally as he works through his tormented past. Echoing her attitude toward the mountains, Anna ac-

cepts Dr. Duval as he is, all the while knowing about his past failings. Eventually Dr. Duval is able to turn his life around, to deal with the past that haunts him. It is Anna's acceptance of him that enables him to achieve that resolution.

Anna loves life and the mountains. She finds that "the more I see of life and all its cruelty and strangeness, the more I am devoted to it" (p. 396). And, "she knew the beauty and peace of wide horizons, of raising her eyes to the mountains when small things loomed too large" (p. 350). Her love for life involves some compromise, but she finds that she gets more out of life because of her willingness to compromise.

Those in *Buffalo Coat* who do not compromise, lose. Katherine loses Hugh; Jenny and Hugh lose their lives, as does Doc Hawkins. Only Duval is able to learn the art of compromise from Anna, as he is finally able to accept his past. Anna's ability to accept life on its terms makes it possible for her to find peace, even in the wake of her husband's death and the death of friends. She finds, too, that she no longer fears "this place" (p. 420).

The closing paragraph of *Buffalo Coat* has Duval leaving for France, while Anna chooses to remain in the place that she loves:

When he was gone, she turned towards the mountains, contemplating for a moment their eternal paradox. Ever changing, now blue, now purple, now pale as silk; sometimes tremendous and threatening the sky, and sometimes dwindled to a gentle undulation around a peaceful valley, the mountains seemed as fickle as water, and yet they were the only permanence. In all of their variety, they were the only certain thing, the serene, unchanging peaks which rose above the quicksands of passing days and of humanity. And birth and death, and gain and loss; and even love itself, these were the shadows and the transiencies. . . In spite of all that had happened to her, she felt at peace (p. 420-21).

Anna's strength allows her to continue, alone, secure in her relationship to the mountains, and by extension, to the rest of the world. Anna has the strength that comes from the hills.

Some Important Macmillan Novels

Forever Amber

By KATHLEEN WINSOR

Once in a great while a novel is written so magnificent in its sweep of events, so glamorous and powerful in characterization, so dramatic in plot that it carries all before it. Such is this story of Amber St. Clare, a woman of superb courage and passion who, left to survive as best she can in Restoration London, becomes the mistress of Charles II.

Being Met Together

By VAUGHAN WILKINS

Virginia, England, and the continent of Europe in the days of Napoleon are the locales of this new romance by the author of "And So—Victoria."

The Day Is Coming

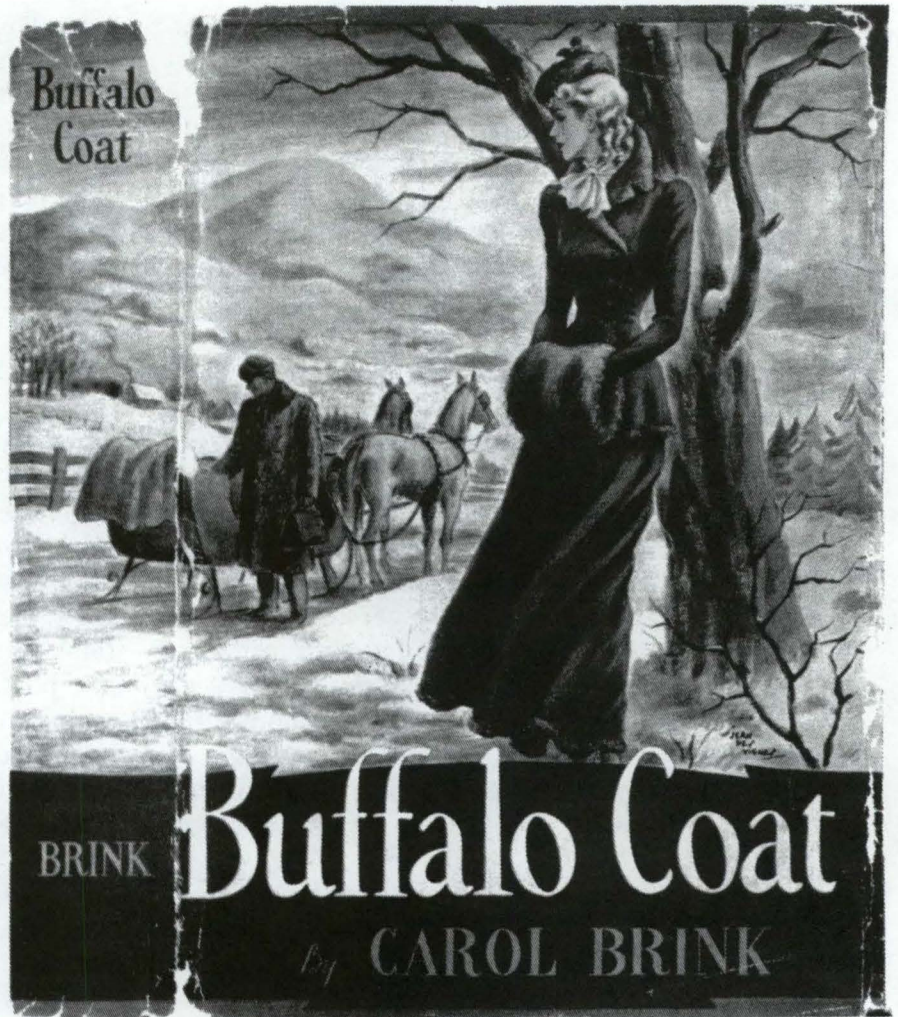
By WILLIAM CAMERON

This robust novel of a proud craftsman's struggle to follow where his conscience leads, in spite of an unsympathetic world of mechanization, is laid in the England of William Morris. Morris himself, as well as Oscar Wilde and G. B. Shaw, plays a part in the story.

The Journal of Mary Hervey Russell

By STORM JAMESON

Purporting to be the present-day journal of Storm Jameson's leading fictional character (the granddaughter of Mary Hervey of "The Lovely Ship," and the daughter of Sylvia Russell of "The Captain's Wife"), this is perhaps the most moving and the most intellectually provocative book she has ever written. All admirers of Miss Jameson will relish it.



INVEST IN VICTORY!

BUY GOVERNMENT WAR BONDS
AND STAMPS EVERY PAY DAY

The original dust jacket depicts a wintery, romantic scene. Published by Macmillan in 1944, the cover message encourages readers to invest in victory bonds and advertises another new novel, Forever Amber. Due to a paper shortage caused by the war, Macmillan was unable to reprint both successful novels. It selected the sensational Forever Amber as the more prudent investment.

Gail Z. Eckwright is the Humanities Librarian at the University of Idaho. A life-long fan of Brink's juvenile writings, she is somewhat of a latecomer to the the adult novels, having read them for the first time when they were reprinted by the Washington State University Press in 1993. She continues to be absorbed by Brink's powerful narrative abilities and understanding of human nature.

Bibliographical Notes: *The Macmillan Company of New York originally published Buffalo Coat in 1944. In 1980 the Latah County Historical Society reprinted the novel with an introduction by the author and a photo section. It proved so popular with local readers that a second printing was made. Then in 1993 the Washington State University Press republished it along with two other of Brink's Idaho novels which had gone out of print. The two books were Strangers in the Forest and Snow in the River. The Press also published a third book, Chain of Hands, a collection of Brink's reminiscences about growing up in Moscow which Nora Hunter and David Brink, Brink's daughter and son, donated to the Latah County Historical Society.*

Lives of the House: Restoration and Interpretation of the McConnell Mansion

Joann Jones

The McConnells

In 1871 the first permanent settlers came to the area that is now Moscow, Idaho. They were drawn by the abundant grasslands, the proximity of timber for house building, and the opportunity to acquire free land through the 1862 Homestead Act. By the 1880s the town had become a bustling trade center for the Palouse area, and on July 12, 1887, Moscow was incorporated. By 1890, the year Idaho gained statehood, it boasted a population of 2,010.

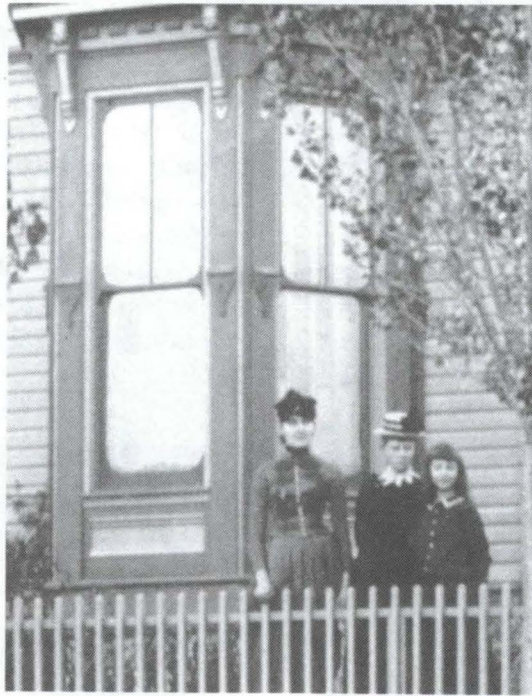
Eleven years before the town's settlement, William J. McConnell, a young man from Michigan, had signed on as a driver with a wagon train carrying freight to the western frontier. He took up a variety of occupations: mining and teaching school in California and Oregon, and after failing to strike gold in the Boise Basin, growing and shipping fruits and vegetables to miners. There he organized a vigilante committee to stop horse rustlers raiding local ranches and then served as Deputy U.S. Marshal.

In 1867 William McConnell moved to Yamhill, Oregon, where he met and married Louisa Brown. He opened a general merchandise store and served two terms as Oregon state senator. The Oregon Republicans offered him the candidacy of governor for the 1878 election, but he declined. Instead he came to Moscow to look for new business opportunities.

With his business partner, James H. Maguire, he opened a general merchandise store on the southeast corner of Main and First Streets in Moscow. He also invested in grain warehouses in Moscow and Pullman, Washington.

From 1878 and 1886, Mr. McConnell divided his time between his business interests in Mos-

cow and his family in Yamhill. On November 19, 1883, he purchased all of Block One in Russell's addition and began making plans for a family home. Construction started in the summer of 1886 and the "Local Brevities" column in the *Moscow Mirror* kept townspeople well informed of its progress:



Louisa McConnell with two of her children in front of their new house.

July 2: Teams are busy hauling rock for the foundation of W. J. McConnell's new residence.

July 23: McConnell's house foundation is almost finished and indicates that a fine house will surmount it.

August 27: W. J. McConnell has a family residence in this city nearly finished of imposing structure. It occupies a prominent site overlooking the city. It is a two-story building with a basement department. Its appearance indicates comfort and elegance and we are of the opinion that when it is finished it will be a structure of which Moscow may be proud.

Then on December 10, 1886, the *Mirror* announced, "W. J. McConnell will soon occupy his new residence."

Mrs. McConnell with her two sons, William and Benjamin, and her two daughters, Mary and Olive, arrived at the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company's Main Street depot on Main Street on Christmas Eve, 1886. Alan Ramstedt, a neighbor, met them with a hay-filled bobsled for the short trip to Adams Street.

Inside the new, two-story house, other neighbors had prepared a welcoming dinner. Two Christmas trees, one in the front parlor and one in the dining room, were decorated with tiny tallow candles. The *Moscow Mirror* reported, "The wife and family of Hon. W. J. McConnell arrived this week and are nicely ensconced in

their new dwelling.”

In 1890 William McConnell became the second U. S. senator from Idaho, and in 1892 he was elected third governor of the state, serving two consecutive terms. Mary McConnell, or Mamie, as she preferred to be called, accompanied her father to Boise to serve as his hostess and part-time secretary. His wife, Louisa, was a shy person who preferred to remain home with the younger children. While Mamie McConnell was in Boise, she was courted by a successful young lawyer, William E. Borah, who was McConnell's protege and assistant. Mr. Borah later became senator and one of Idaho's most prominent politicians.

As Moscow's population increased, the McConnell-Maguire store flourished. In 1891 the partners replaced their Main Street building with a large three-story stone structure. The business thrived until 1893, when a wet harvest on the Palouse, combined with a national depression devastated, local farmers and businesses. Like other Moscow merchants, Mr. McConnell lost his store as well as his grain warehouses.

The McConnell-Maguire building on Main Street still stands and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

After the 1893 depression, the McConnells were forced to declare bankruptcy. Mrs. McConnell filed a homestead claim on the property, but they finally lost their home in 1897. The family, which included a third daughter, Carrie, continued living in Moscow. Mr. McConnell was appointed U. S. Indian Inspector after the completion of his second term of governor in 1896. In 1909, President Taft commissioned him Inspector in the U. S. Immigration Service, where he served until his death in 1925. Louisa McConnell continued to live in Moscow until her death five years later.

Even with these official appointments, the McConnells lived quietly in Moscow, and little information exists about their later years. Carol Ryrie Brink recorded this one image in her reminiscences, *Chain of Hands*:

I remember once, when I was quite small, that I saw the original owner and builder of the [McConnell Mansion] walking down Third Street and someone said to me, "There goes



Dr. and Mrs. Adair with their five daughters and their families on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary.

Governor McConnell. Remember that you have seen him."

The Adairs

In 1901 Dr. William Adair purchased the vacant McConnell house. He and his family had arrived in Moscow in late 1892. Because his wife Losina suffered from tuberculosis, the family moved West for her health. She remarked she was also happy to leave Kansas and its electrical storms.

Their daughter, Ione, recalled in a 1976 interview that the purchase of the Mansion followed a timely meeting at the First National Bank:

My father was in the bank . . . the cashier said to him, "Doctor, how'd you like to have a big house?" and Dad said, "I'd like to have a big house . . . my wife's been wanting one. I can't afford to make a change." And there was a man standing right near him, and he said, "Doctor, don't you have a homestead up near Bovill?" And Dad said, "Yes, I took up a homestead when the Homestead Act came through." And Mr. Pearson says, "I'm Mr. Pearson from the Madison Lumber Company. I'll go out and look at your place. If it's anything I think we can use, would you like to sell it?" My father said, "Yes, I would." He said, "I'll buy it from you on one condition. If you get a larger house, would you let me have a room? I'm so tired of living in hotels. I'd just like to have a room in a home." Dad said, "I think mother can take care of that all right." So that's the way it was.

The deal with Mr. Pearson allowed the Adairs to continue using the homestead where Mrs. Adair and her daughters spent many summers where the girls enjoyed outdoor sports. Dr. Adair joined them on the weekends.

Mr. Pearson was the first of many roomers who lived in the house. A good business woman, Losina Adair took on the renting of rooms as her own project. These roomers proved to be quite helpful. Evan Guernsey, a university student, later recalled "pleasant memories of chopping the wood and toting it upstairs to keep eleven stoves going during the winters."

Mrs. Adair rented rooms to a number of University of Idaho faculty members, including a librarian, Miss Belle Sweet; Dr. Gurney of the Physics Department; and Dr. Jackson Cogswell, Professor of Music. Bernadine, one of the five Adair daughters, was quite musical. Dr. Cogs-

well composed a piece of music for her to play and sing. Mrs. Adair often sang as she worked. Ione remembered an "atmosphere of music and books in the house." Bernadine Adair like to perform from the large bay windows, opening the red velvet draperies, bowing, and then singing for her mother.

Young women from farms outside Moscow often worked for families in town, learning housekeeping and cooking skills. Many of the hired girls in the Adair home were like members of the family. Losina Adair, like Louisa McConnell, put a great deal of emphasis on cleanliness. Even though there was hired help, the Adair sisters were expected to do their share of cleaning. One winter task was sprinkling buckets of snow on the rugs to keep down the dust as they swept.

The roomers and the Adair daughters had bedrooms on the second floor while Mr. and Mrs. Adair used the back parlor for their bedroom. They purchased a "nice looking wooden frame bed which folded up and looked like a piece of ornamental wood" in the corner next to the folding doors. During the day the bed was folded up and the parlor was used by the family. The front parlor was opened only when they had visitors.

Losina Adair, just as Louisa McConnell had done, greeted friends in the front parlor during her "at home" days. On a specific day each week women would prepare for visits. The guests left their cards indicating the date they would receive visitors.

The Adairs tried various kinds of heating systems, including wood stoves, a small insert in the fireplace, an Arcola portable furnace. However, they found all these devices created a lot of work and did not produce enough heat. In the 1920s, Ione Adair, who was taking care of her parents and the house after her sisters left, installed a coal furnace with a stoker in the basement. The coal

went down a chute into the basement, and we had boys - we always had a boy staying with us to take care of the wood or the coal or the furnaces and the horses or the cow or the chickens. We had all those things on this block . . . and the boys would wheel it in and put it in. There's an outside vent there now that shows where it went in.

The McConnell mansion was a lively place

during the Adair era. An orphan bear cub they found on Moscow Mountain spent a summer in the Adair back yard. One time he got loose and scratched their mother's table, led their father on a speedy chase up and down the stairs, and then ended up high in a maple tree with his chain caught on a branch. The whole town knew about it when the "whole caboodle of firemen" came to get him down. Ione remembered the bear as quite playful and loving water. "We had the hydrants that came up in the yard. He'd stand there and he'd spray himself and if you went to turn off the water, he'd put his paw in. Just drench you."

When Dr. and Mrs. Adair celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 17, 1932, they recalled the wonderful memories in the house they loved. Lula, Ione, Bernadine, and Marjorie, along with their families, joined them. Another sister, Flora, had died during childhood.

The Jacksons

On Monday, July 1, 1935, headlines in the *Moscow Mirror*, announced, "Adairs Sell Old Mansion." The appraised value of the house was \$5000. The newspaper interviewed the new owners, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas L. Jackson, who had moved in with their teenage son the next Tuesday. Mrs. Jackson remarked:

At first we thought we would remodel the house by lowering the ceilings and changing the rooms, but the house is so well made and the windows run nearly to the ceiling, so we decided it would be too expensive. Now we feel that any change would destroy the atmosphere of the house and ruin its charm.

Thomas Jackson worked for the Union Pacific Railroad and made frequent overnight trips out of Moscow. The couple rented out the large front room on the first floor and the small back bedroom in addition to the three suites upstairs. The Jacksons, a warm, friendly family, soon had their renters addressing them as Mom and Dad.

Ellen Chandler Long rented rooms from Thomas and "Mom" Jackson in 1936, and her future husband proposed to her in the east parlor. When the couple visited the museum in 1993, Mrs. Long remembered Mom Jackson as a very clean, generous, and pleasant woman who washed the linens every day and was "always singing and mangling" sheets in the room off the kitchen.

Another roomer noted in his diary that the Jacksons took good care of the house, making frequent repairs. When they redecorated the upstairs, they let the roomer choose the new wallpaper for his rooms and enlarged the balcony so he could enjoy sunbathing.



Lula Adair with the family's pet bear

Frederic Church

Frederic Church arrived in Moscow as the new professor of European History in the fall of 1921. Mrs. Upham, wife of the University's president, advised him to talk to Mrs. Adair about renting a room rather than going to a hotel. He did so and spent the next twenty years as a roomer in the master bedroom suite on the second floor. In 1941, when the Jacksons left, he purchased the large, drafty house and continued to occupy the adjoining rooms.

Dr. Church, who was born one year before the McConnells built the house on Adams Street, moved the furniture from his family home in Pennsylvania into his new parlors. He continued to rent

the other upstairs suites for the same monthly rate Mrs. Adair had charged in 1921, \$20.

Although the house was somewhat run down, it was a lively center of activity. University clubs met here with students enjoying literary discussions over tea and performing in musical recitals. Local people identified the house as belonging to the former Idaho governor.

As years passed, friends prevailed upon Dr. Church to consider bequeathing the house to the county, and upon his death in 1965, his

handwritten will confirmed his decision that the house should belong to Latah County to be used for a museum and meeting place. He named the Latah County Pioneer Association, the Moscow Historical Club, and "other cultural organizations working in harmony" as the beneficiaries.

Dr. Church, the longest resident of 110 South Adams, admired the architectural qualities of the house and made few changes. He did enlarge the front porch, replacing the roof and matching the new balusters with the originals.

The Latah County Pioneer Historical Museum Association

In 1967 members of the Latah County Pioneer Association and the Moscow Historical Club formed the Latah County Pioneer Historical Museum Association. They began recruiting funds, furnishings, and artifacts for the new McConnell Mansion museum. They spent many volunteer hours in cleaning and restoring the house. The work included new wiring, wallpaper, and carpets, and making an apartment for a caretaker.

During the next two years work proceeded. The Museum Association allocated \$1500 for re-decorating, with the hope that the museum could be opened on April 1, 1970. Although that deadline was not met, around thirty volunteers continued working. Mrs. Grace Wicks, who headed the planning committee, negotiated with local businesses for donations of materials and labor. Despite the difficult tasks, morale was high; the museum was becoming a reality. New wallpaper, bought at cost from Davids' Department Store and Ward's Paint and Hardware, was hung and the high ceilings were repaired and painted. The splintery pine floors in the parlors were covered with historical braided rugs made by Matt Schumacher, a Moscow harness-maker, from unclaimed wool garments left at Carey's Cleaners. "Every man

in town has old pants in a Schumacher rug," was the town joke.

The Board of the Pioneer Museum Association approved a plan for insuring and transferring the collections of the Pioneer Association to the McConnell Mansion. It sought new donations connected to domestic living and representing the pioneer period to the end of World War I. Late 19th-century furniture from Latah County families joined the Church parlor suites, cabinets, and bookcases donated by his relatives. The lives of the house during the McConnell and Adair years were represented by pieces donated to the Museum Association by their descendants.

More repairs were needed before the house could be open, and again volunteers came forward. Rosemary Shull replaced missing pieces of glass in the front door and in Dr. Adair's Tiffany-style lamp. Ione Adair donated money for new upholstery fabric, and local upholsterers donated their labor to recover furniture. She selected the hall carpeting, and Waterman's sold it to the Museum Association at cost.

On April 30, 1971, the Museum Association held its grand opening of the McConnell Mansion. In addition to the period rooms on the first floor, there were exhibits portraying the development of the county, a Hall of Pioneers display, and several private collections on the second floor. Mary McConnell Borah sent a telegram

congratulating the organization on its work. It was an occasion to celebrate, but the hard work continued.

Larry French, general chairman of the new museum committee, installed exhibits in the upstairs rooms using cases that could be removed when a separate museum building would be available. Clifford Ott made prints and assembled a large display of photographs of early families, the Hall of Pioneers. More was needed, as Grace Wicks recalled in 1994:

The will designated this as not only a museum,



On right, Dr. Robert Bessey, a physics professor who rented a room from Dr. Church, on left.

but a meeting place. That meant fire protection. One day on a back alley in Genesee I saw a long section of metal stairs lying in the tall weeds behind the Genesee School. I asked how much we'd have to pay to get that part of their surplus and was told \$250. But how to get it moved? [Leon Danielson, Genesee farmer and District Two County Commissioner] consented to use his biggest truck and crew. This was marvelous! It meant that right in our back yard, we could get that huge item in place. The telephone company hoisted the heavy device into place, and Bill Knight and son came from the welding shop south of town to mend and splice so the whole thing was workable. Leonard Ashbaugh, a devoted volunteer, cut a door in the second floor bathroom. Presto, we had a fire escape for \$250, for the rest was volunteer.

The Museum Association also installed a public bathroom off the main floor hall to comply with city regulations for a place for public meetings as stipulated in the will. Now the McConnell Mansion needed a sign, as Grace Wicks described:

We needed a front sign. Elizabeth Hagedorn commissioned Leo Ames to fashion a Pritchard design into the present front guide. We are proud of that for it represents the generosity and talent of local folks.

Except for Mr. French who worked as curator during the three summer months, the new museum was strictly a volunteer operation. Friends and members of the museum society greeted visitors during the summer months when the Mansion was open.

The House

When the Adairs sold the house in 1935, the *Idahonian* glowingly described its character and workmanship:

For many years local residents have called the impressive structure on the corner of Adams and Second Streets the Mansion, although it is not the largest of the Victorian homes in the Fort Russell Historic District. The tall, white, old mansion, which changes hands in this sale, had been a Moscow landmark since most residents in the city can remember. When the house was built it was with extreme care and good workmanship, characteristic of the art of carpenters of "the old school." The ultimate in style and splendor of its day, the house was

built of lumber brought here, from Walla Walla in wagons. Every piece was straight-grained and properly seasoned, every joist, carefully fitted and tested.

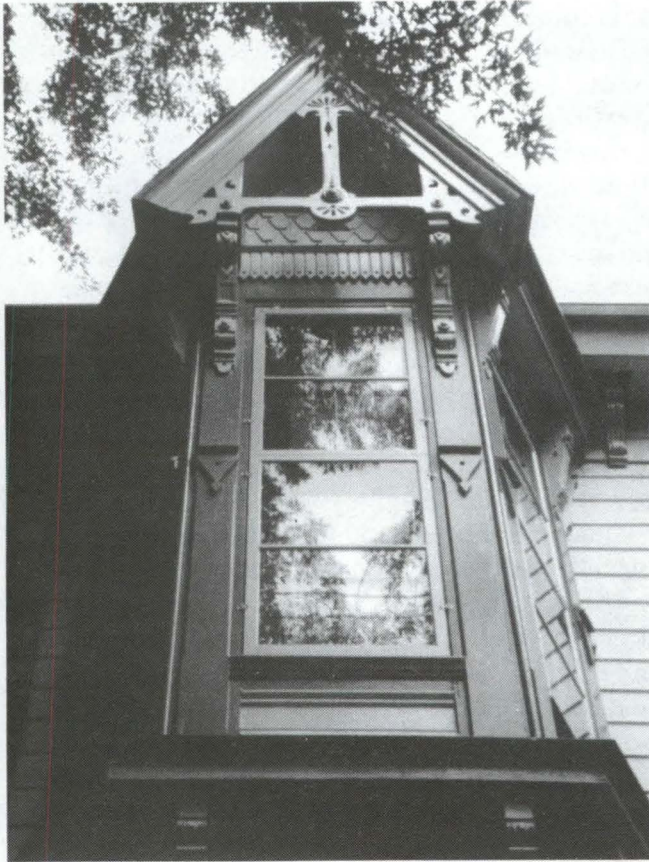
One of the glories of the old mansion is a mantle and fireplace made of Vermont marble, shipped out from the quarries of the northeastern state to satisfy Governor McConnell's wish for a beautiful home. High ceilings, heavy, dark woodwork framing high doorways which reach almost to the ceilings, tall shuttered windows, intricate designing and scroll work in the fittings – all lend a dignified air to the old house.

The original floor plan of the McConnell house included twelve rooms: front parlor, family or back parlor, dining room, small downstairs bedroom, kitchen and pantry, bathroom, three second-floor bedroom suites, and several halls. Along the front of the house was a glass conservatory and under the house, a small cellar. Two narrow stairways led from the kitchen to the second floor water storage area and from a back bedroom to the attic. A large zinc tank which held about 1000 gallons of water was on the second floor, providing gravity feed for the plumbing.

Relatively few changes have been made over the years. The Adairs added the radiator heating system and electricity sometime after 1900. The original gas lighting fixtures were converted to electricity, although the Museum Association replaced the light shades, using shades from other Moscow homes. The Adairs removed the stairway from the kitchen when they enlarged a back room to make a bedroom for themselves. They also removed the glass conservatory leaving a narrow porch which Dr. Church later widened. The Jacksons enlarged one second floor balcony, and the Museum Association added a small downstairs bathroom to meet city regulations for a public meeting place.

Today the McConnell house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The robust porch post, railings and balusters, spindles and gables characterize the dominant Eastlake style which was at the time quite popular on the East and West coasts.

Like most Victorian homes, the architecture of the house incorporates features of other popular styles. The richly decorated porches, bays, and



*Eastlake architectural details
embellish the prominent bay window*

verandas are in the Queen Anne style, and materials of various color and texture used to highlight corners and archways are typical of Victorian Gothic.

The originally colors were a light tan with a reddish-brown trim. The darker shade was produced by applying varnish to Douglas fir which has a natural red tint. The darker, contrasting color highlighted the ornate trim and other architectural features. Over the years the house's appearance has changed only slightly. The trim was painted white and Dr. Church installed white aluminum siding. In the early 1980s the historical society repainted the trim contrasting shades of blue, a change that disturbed Bernadine Adair who lived next door.

The county-owned building is now operated, interpreted, and staffed by the Latah County Historical Society. Maintenance, repair and restoration of the house has been a partnership between the historical society and the county commission. In the late 1960s the county allocated \$5000 to begin restoration work on the porches and chimneys. Subsequent work has

been done through private donations, grants, fund-raising projects, and county funds. And volunteers still do much of the work of operating the house as a historic site and museum.

Interpretation of the McConnell Mansion

This house on the corner of Adams and Second Streets has been home to many: to the four owners, their families, their roomers, and, in a special way, to the society's volunteers and staff who have spent countless hours here. Through this building, the largest artifact in our collection, we tell the continuing stories of life in this house and how it reflects the history of Moscow and Latah County.

In order to restore and interpret the house accurately, we have relied on the stories and firsthand accounts of how the McConnells, Adairs, Jacksons, and Dr. Church furnished and used the various rooms. In addition, Joann Jones, the museum curator, has extensively researched American interior and furniture design, lifestyles, and customs.

Victorian homes typically had two parlors. The formal parlor in the front of the house was used for Sunday afternoon visits, calling-card visits, and entertaining guests. It was also a place of ritual, for weddings and funerals. The family parlor was a place for family and friends to relax together.

The pieces exhibited in the McConnell Mansion parlors date from the late Victorian period, after the Industrial Revolution had brought a relatively high standard of living for most families in the United States. Moscovans, like other Americans, decorated their homes fashionably by selecting mass-produced wallpapers, carpeting, and numerous three- or five-piece parlor suites.

The furnishings of the formal parlor illustrate the eclectic look of the late 1880s which combined various styles. Furniture designers also selected and combined unrelated elements and motifs from past styles. The McConnell family owned a pressed oak parlor suite including a settee and two chairs, one of which, upholstered in tan brocade, is in the collection. The trim on this chair illustrates Eastlake's preference for honest and straightforward decoration. McConnell was described as a straightforward and honest man by many of his peers, which may be why he selected this style

for his furniture as well as his house.

Louisa McConnell placed one of her favorite pieces, an ornate majolica vase, in the entry hall to be enjoyed by all visitors as they entered through the beautifully etched glass front door. Large growing plants on stands and tables scattered about the Victorian parlors added a personal touch to the home during winter months. During warmer months Mrs. McConnell moved her plants and pet parrot to the enclosed conservatory, or bird house, which was to the side of the front entry.

In 1986 the Historical Society celebrated the centennial of the house with a fund-raising campaign dedicated to repairing the native pine wood floors and purchasing reproduction rugs and lace curtains for the two parlors. An East-lake-style pattern was selected for the rugs, sized to cover the portion of the floors that had never been varnished. The borders were carefully refinished to preserve the look of a 100-year-old house. White lace curtains resembling those hung by the McConnells were purchased with money donated by the Palouse Patchers Quilt Club.

Although we have no interior photographs of the home's early life, accounts of visits to the house in past years provide clues. Elsie Nelson, in her recollections of early Moscow, *The Day Is Ours*, tells of her mother's opportunity to go inside the McConnell home.

Mother recalled particularly how interestingly and splendidly it was furnished, its beautiful lace curtains, imported rugs, oil paintings, its hanging lamps, and the huge gold-framed mirror over the parlor fireplace.

Restoration of the parlors continued in 1987 when red velvet portieres and draperies were purchased with funds from the Gerald Ingle memorial. A story about the Adairs prompted this addition. During a trip to a medical meeting in the East, Dr. Adair bought red velvet fabric to hang at the bay windows. When he returned, the family discovered he had not purchased enough material. The Adairs then hired a local craftsman to make the ornate cornices for each bay area so that the drapes could be hung below instead of from the top of the windows.

After looking at numerous historical photographs, we decided to extend the new draperies to the ceiling as was typical of the period. Portieres were also hung in doorways

for insulation. We do not know that either the McConnells or the Adairs had portieres, but we decided to include them to complete our interpretation of late Victorian parlor furnishings.

Pianos, such as the family parlor upright ordered from Sears and Roebuck in 1902, Edison phonographs, and stereoscopes were favorite forms of entertainment during the early years of the 20th century. The Adairs used their back parlor not only as their bedroom but as their family parlor. Here, like other American families, they spent many enjoyable hours together reading, singing, conversing, and enjoying each other's company. The house enjoyed a happy era as the Adairs passed through years with young children to visits by their grandchildren.

In the hall there is a very small closet underneath the stairs which Ione Adair used as a dark room when she was a girl. The immediate popularity of the simple box camera and the new technology for developing your own snapshots is reflected in the exhibit under the stairs.

Another focal point in the downstairs hall is the oak veneer settee and mirror which the Adairs purchased for \$9.00 from the Creighton-Hall Dry Goods Store in Moscow. George Creighton and his clerk, Theodore Johnson, delivered the set and hung the mirror on March 13, 1908, recording the event on the back of the mirror. Mail order catalogs of the day included pages of furnishings with the popular quarter-sawn oak veneer of this Art Nouveau style.

The dining room reflects the Adair years with its 1910 period interpretation. The Tiffany-style hanging lamp was owned and possibly made by Dr. Adair. The oak buffet and dining room chairs donated to the collection are directly out of the 1910 mail order catalogs. The Adair's meals were lively affairs around a table that was certainly larger than the present one.

Ione remembered one story. The hired help joined the family at the evening meal where Dr. Adair always said grace. On one occasion the family asked an uncle who often came for dinner to say grace. As he began speaking his voice trembled, "Oooouurr Hheeaavveennlly Ffaathheerr. . ." When Ione looked up she discovered he had a glass eye that didn't move

when the real one did.

The next time the uncle came for dinner, Ione told the hired girl about the eye, and when they went to the table and he started his wobbly grace,

Bertha looked up and that eye was looking right straight at her; she just began to swell up, hold her breath, tried to stop it, and couldn't. She left the table, went out the back door, and you could hear her out in back of the woodshed, and she'd try to come in and get part way up the back stairs, turn and go back to the woodshed, and laugh her head off again.

Many of the hired girls in the Adair home were like members of the family. Bertha and Ione remained friends for many years, going places and doing things together and, of course, laughing together.

Our interpretation of the hired girl's room located off the dining room is important in our programs for school children. Mary Reed, who portrays the hired girl as a Swedish immigrant, uses the room to tell children about coming to Moscow and about the family she left behind. The hired girl's clothing, handiwork, mending, postcards, and books written in Swedish reinforce the historical portrayal of these women who were learning the language and culture of their new country.

The decision to restore the kitchen and pantry areas to the 1930 era came about gradually but naturally. We wanted to continue the lives of the house, and we knew the Adairs had made some changes to the kitchen when they removed the back stairway sometime in the 1920s. A friend told us of a wood range for sale which matched one advertised in the 1934 Montgomery Ward catalog in our library. Similar styles appeared in the 1927 Sears and Roebuck catalog. Then a member called us, asking if we

would be interested in an early kitchen cupboard. This piece was also very similar to cupboards advertised in the 1927 and 1934 catalogs. These furnishings and our plan to interpret the house at different stages of its historical life helped us make the decision to have a kitchen representing this time period.

Layers of wallpaper removed in preparation for restoration revealed two layers of paper with yellow backgrounds covering four earlier papers. Our 1927 wallpaper catalog indicated that these patterns and the yellow color were popular. The color seemed even more appropriate when we ran across this observation by a local newspaper reporter who interviewed the Jacksons: "Today university professors drop into the sunny kitchen

from the apartments above to drink a cup of coffee with the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. T. L. Jackson."

Our understanding of the purpose of the narrow room north of the kitchen was substantiated by the reporter's following statement: "If any of the pioneer ghosts linger on the stairway or slip into the long pantry for a midnight snack, they are a kindly, unobtrusive sort, unnoticed by the

present dwellers."

We uncovered valuable information about the placement of fixtures and appliances during the previous lives of the house as we removed layers of paneling and paper from the walls. A piece of linoleum that fit behind a porcelain sink and holes covered with metal can lids indicated where the sink and pipes had been. Steve Talbott, one of the caretakers of the museum during the early 1970s, confirmed this. He pointed out that a cabinet which stood next to the sink had been moved to the pantry when the back rooms were converted into the caretaker's apartment. Measuring an area of darker yellow paint on the wood wainscoting showed us the



The 1930s restored kitchen with hands-on activities delights visitors of all ages.

exact location. The cabinet was not original but was added before the second layer of yellow paint, very likely close to our 1930 date.

A hole high on the opposite wall, big enough for a stove pipe, opened up a whole new view of an earlier life of the house. Looking through the hole, we could see the chimney to which the stove pipe connected. We also saw the top framing of a door over the relatively new construction materials which were used in creating the public bathroom and a lovely wallpaper border. The space would have been just wide enough for a steep stairway ending in the angled ceiling in the adjoining room. The pieces were all fitting together!

Linoleum rugs were generally used as floor coverings in kitchens. They could be ordered through the catalogs and came in standard sizes, generally in grey with a bordered edge. The exposed floor around the rug was painted and often, as in the other rooms of the house, the inside wood was left bare. Although linoleum rugs are no longer sold, we bought a piece of gray linoleum and asked an artist to replicate a pattern from a 1930s catalog.

We interpret the setting of our museum store as a bedroom around 1940 that could have been rented to a university professor or graduate student. Removing layers of old wallpaper revealed the line of newer plaster added when the Adairs enlarged this room. Wallpaper reminiscent of the 1940s and glossy ivory enamel paint on the large expanse of windows changed what had been a dark office into a pleasant and light room.

This bedroom ends the chronological interpretation of the years the house has existed as a vital part of Moscow's history. Most of the furniture in this room is from the Church donation, representing the many roomers who enjoyed the hospitality of the Adairs, the Jacksons, and Dr. Church.

The Porch

The most frequent questions visitors ask our docents is "Why are there two doors so close to each other in the front entry?" We found the answer in Bernadine and Ione Adair's descriptions of the house they grew up in.

The front porch was much narrower than it is now and we had room for a seat or a couple of chairs on the porch that we used. At this end

[north] of the porch was what Mrs. McConnell called her birdhouse. It was enclosed and had a door that came in from the front porch into it and they could also go through the bedroom window into this enclosed front porch. It was glassed and she had geraniums and other flowers . . . [and] birds. I think it was a parrot.

The Adair sisters also recalled that "Dr. Church hired a carpenter to widen the porch and had the steps come up as they do now, which they didn't come up that way when we were there." The first three owners used the etched glass door was used as the front door; now the entrance is through the door on the long front porch.

The Yard and Gardens

Poplar seedlings, a white picket fence, grassy lawns, and a fruit orchard in back softened the landscape around the McConnell home. Carrie, the youngest McConnell daughter, remembered some of the details in a 1935 newspaper article:

My father had a deep well around 60 feet deep and all the neighbors came from all around to draw water from the well. When he fenced around the house and put up a windmill there were expressions of resentment from those who had made public use of the well.

The first plumbing in Moscow was put in this house by means of the windmill and a pump which raised the water to a tank on the second story . . . the neighbors looked askance at such high-faluting ideas. "Too lazy to step outdoors for a bucket of water," was one of the comments.

Carrie also remembered that for some time the house was the only one on the block and the land behind dropped to a ravine. The sidewalk running up what is now First Street was a wooden walk built on stilts and the hillside was covered by an orchard. She added that

The father of the Ramsted boys helped build the house and brought in and planted the willows and poplar trees. He carried them from the old Taylor place. At one time a double row of willows were set out along one side of the place.

A sunken area north of the house was covered with overgrown blackberry and raspberry bushes when the Adairs purchased it in 1901. This became a lovely garden as described by Bernadine and Ione:

Yes, Mother had a big round bed down here that she had cannas in and geraniums. But

Father was very interested in snapdragons. And he had a long bed, oh, it was probably ten, fifteen feet long along the edge of the sidewalk that came from the upper yard down across, and that was HIS snapdragon bed. And anything happened to those snapdragons, you were in for an awful mess. . . . The gardener brought in from the woods wild bleeding hearts, wild fern, and other small plants that he could get, and we had a wall that was possibly, oh, close to two feet high at the edge of the rosebed as it came into the under part of the garden. Our flower beds were star shape and crescent shape and little graveled paths that went down and around.

Large box elders and walnut trees shaded the gardens where Mrs. Adair entertained as many as one hundred guests in the early 1900s.

The Adairs enjoyed watching birds splash in the birdbath as they swung in a double swing. Ione remembered an entertaining woodpecker:

We've always watched an old woodpecker ever since we've been in that house. . . he's always had a nest in this first poplar tree out here. He always nested in that tree and you could hear him calling every morning bright and early.

In the winter of 1947, fire destroyed the old carriage house at the rear of the lot. The heat of the fire blistered the paint and broke windows on the wall of the house nearest the blaze. After the fire Dr. Church repainted the house.

The elite of Moscow were not the only ones attracted to the spacious back yard. The large house seemed to be a calling card for the many tramps and hobos coming through Moscow. When they appeared at the back door asking for handouts, Mrs. Adair never refused them. The

Mansion's shuttered windows attracted another sector of the population to the home one evening. It seems a group came to the house, bringing with them a man who had committed a crime. They assumed the "bars" on the windows, which were in fact the louvered shutters, indicated it was the city jail.

Over the past 20 years the historical society staff and volunteers have maintained the Mansion's grounds. More recently Alvin and Vivian Hofmann have donated hundreds of hours to improving the landscape. They have spaded the hard, root-filled beds, pulled countless weeds, transplanted perennials to sunnier or shadier locations, planted annuals to provide color for the yard, moved sprinklers, and raked bags and bags of leaves. The Moscow Garden Club, Beta Sigma Phi, Stookeys, and Moscow's Bill Bowler have also donated labor and funds to continue the work of restoring the Mansion's historic landscape.

Accessibility

Recent restoration inside the Mansion underscores the need to make the interior of this important landmark accessible to those who find it difficult or impossible to climb the porch stairs. Plans are underway to build an accessible walkway and ramp from the east alley to the south entrance leading into the family parlor. All this work will be accomplished without damaging the house's historic appearance.

Generations of county residents and visitors have enjoyed and learned about Moscow's history from the Mansion. Opening the house to more people will fulfill the spirit of Dr. Church's will to make the Mansion a museum and meeting place.

Joann Jones, curator of the historical society, began her research on the McConnell Mansion and its owners in 1984 through a project sponsored by the Idaho Humanities Council. That project resulted in the brochure, The McConnells and Their Times. In 1994 as restoration continued with the kitchen and bedroom, she researched and designed an exhibit to explain the changes the house has experienced in its 100 plus years. This exhibit, The Lives of the House: An Architectural and Personal History of the McConnell Mansion, is now in a scrapbook version which includes reproduced samples of the several wallpaper patterns. It can be used at the Mansion or borrowed.

Bibliographic Note: *Much information on the Mansion is in the transcripts of the oral history interviews made with Ione and Bernadine Adair in 1976 and 1977. Copies of the newspaper articles, the transcripts, and other sources used in the article are in the historical society's library collection.*

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The services of the Latah County Historical Society include maintaining the McConnell Mansion Museum with period rooms and changing exhibits; educational programs for youth and adults; preserving and cataloging materials on Latah County's history; operating a research library of historical and genealogical materials; collecting oral histories; publishing local history monographs; and sponsoring various educational events and activities. Our mission is to collect and preserve artifacts, documents, photographs, diaries and other items 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. If you have items to donate or lend for duplication, please contact us.

Our library and offices are located in Centennial Annex, 327 East Second St., Moscow. We are 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 4 p.m. Visits to the museum or research archives at other times can be arranged by calling (208) 882-1004.