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Alfred Dunn: Reminiscences of an Artist

Friendly Neighbors History

My Father

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The cover photograph of the artist is courtesy of Alfred Dunn.

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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Alfred Dunn: Reminiscences of an Artist

Introduction: In 1999 Alf Dunn graciously consented to be the subject of an oral history interview. Although his reputation as a watercolor artist is well known in this area, his talents as a storyteller were unexpected. Mr. Dunn's life has been full of hard work, friends and family, fun, and unusual experiences, all of which he describes in vivid colors. What follows is told mostly in his own words. Only a minimum of editing was done for clarification and to eliminate unnecessary words.

The photographs and drawings are from Mr. Dunn's personal collection. They were used along with artifacts for the recent exhibit at the McConnell Mansion. A scrapbook version of the exhibit is available for visitors at the Mansion. Moscow resident Linda Boyd conducted the interviews at Mr. Dunn's home in November 1998 and March 2000. The tapes have been transcribed, and both tapes and transcriptions are at our research library.

We wish to thank Mr. Dunn for allowing us to publish his reminiscences and to use his photographs and illustrations in this issue.

Family Beginnings - The Dunns

I didn't know my father, Frank Dunn. I only have, as a two-year-old, a dim recollection of someone coming up to the house where we lived in Los Angeles on Dalton Avenue and opening the gate and coming up the steps toward me. That's all I remember except that he was dark haired and had a mustache. But he had kind of a tough growing up, too, because he was raised by an aunt. My grandfather Dunn was a captain of a China clipper ship that went from Boston to China around Cape Horn and brought back silk and tea.

The reason that my father had been farmed out was that his mother died rather young. My grandfather's brother who ran a fishing boat from the Grand Banks was drowned with his six sons in a North Atlantic hurricane. That left my grandfather's sister a widow. She was alone then, up at Gloucester, Massachusetts. Then she moved to Boston so that she could take care of my father.

My father might have been [artistic]. I saw a little drawing that he had done on one of his letters to his father.

My grandfather was apparently a very moral sort of a person. I remember seeing two letters that he wrote to my father. The first one was written from Cardiff, Wales, when my grandfather was a first mate on a ship that went



Alfred, and Johanna Dunn, Los Angeles, 1911

back and forth between England and America. In the second letter I recall he was admonishing my father to stay in school. He'd gotten rumors that my father wanted to drop out of high school and go to a trade school equivalent which would allow him to become what was called then a "compositor," which meant a typesetter. My

father did that. He dropped out of school before he graduated to become a typesetter and finally wound up in Los Angeles working for the *Los Angeles Times*. There he met my mother who was a proofreader for the same newspaper.

An Idaho Connection - The McMillans



My grandfather, James McMillan, had worked for Wells Fargo in Arizona. His first wife, who would be my grandmother, died, and he moved his five children to Los Angeles.

He was always interested in irrigation, and when he got word of the beginning of the irrigation tract in Twin Falls County in Idaho, he immediately bundled up his children and his two maiden sisters whom he had brought from Scotland to help raise the children.

He came to Idaho at the beginning of the irrigation project in Twin Falls, around 1906, and became office manager for the Twin Falls Canal Company. He was also the secretary of what was the equivalent of a chamber of commerce. He also remarried to a well-to-do doctor's widow.

My Grandfather McMillan was responsible for some of the bigger projects in Twin Falls County. He brought in an amalgamated sugar company into Twin Falls, and he and partners were the first to experiment with dehydration of fruit and potatoes, which was a failure. And then he, again with partners, was responsible for building a short-cut railroad from Twin Falls to Wells, Nevada as a means of getting the produce from the county closer to California markets. Well, that would probably be before World War I, 1912 or 1913.

Moving to Idaho



Clockwise from left, Marian, Alfred, Eleanor, and Johanna Dunn. 1916

My mother, Marian McMillan, and my father, Frank Dunn, separated when I was two years old, and our family came to Idaho by train at that time. I have two sisters. My younger sister, Eleanor, was just a babe in arms when we came, and my older sister would have been four. They're both dead now.

Mother brought us to Soldier where my Uncle Bruce, who was 19 years old at the time, was trying to run a 640-acre ranch. He had no experience with farming and had only 20 acres of the 640 under cultivation. He was trying to raise wheat. The seasons are so short in Soldier that he didn't have much success. I would imagine he was only able to make about 20 bushels to the acre which wasn't much of an income.

The house was like many of the houses up in that primitive time, covered with slab boards which meant that they were not weatherproof at all. The winds could come through and it was pretty drafty. The house was essentially one main room with two beds. A wire stretched across the room with a blanket over it made a separate room for my uncle. We three children had one bed to sleep in on the other end of this room. Mother slept in the kitchen on a cot.

In addition to the two beds, there was room for a miserable pump organ and a tiny little wood stove that wasn't large enough to even fire it up. We didn't ever have a fire in it because the fire box was too small for the wood that we had.

The big black iron stove in the kitchen burned wood as we had no coal. It was a constant job to keep that stove fired up. The wood we were using was aspen which the ranchers gathered from the foothills. It would burn very fast, but it gives off a nice heat.

The kitchen was the center of activity. It was a lean-to attached to the back of the cabin. I remember very clearly my mother making fruit pies. The fruit would be dried apricots or dried apples or dried whatever was available and so we had the smells of those pies cooking and always there was a little pie crust dough left over. After the pies were made, mother would roll out the pie crust, douse it with sugar and cinnamon, and cook it in the oven for the children.

We didn't have electricity or water in the house which meant that mother would have to go out to the pump. In cold winters she first had to heat hot water on the stove and take it out and thaw the pump.

There was a hot water reservoir attached to one side of the stove but the water never got very warm. When it was time to take baths we had one round laundry tub. I think my uncle got the first bath followed by my mother and then we three children, all in this small round tub. As the water wasn't hot enough at any one time, it had to be helped along by a few tea kettles of boiling water.

The soap was not anything to look forward to. My mother made it at home on the stove using a mixture of lard and lye, which wasn't really conducive to a schoolgirl complexion.

I remember the cold. One week in Soldier the weather did not get above 40 degrees below zero, and we were living in the one room, slab-sided house with a lean-to kitchen. There was

no heat in the bedroom, so Mother would always heat some rocks wrapped in towels to put in the foot of the bed to keep us reasonably comfortable. So those are my earliest recollections of life in Soldier where there was the feeling of being cold all the time.

The outhouse was some distance from the house, and when the snow would get really deep mother would have to escort us at bedtime with a kerosene lantern.

Then the barn wasn't a barn as such. It was four posts sunk in the ground and then covered with other poles to make the roof and on top of the poles would be put pig wire, it was called, woven wire. Then during threshing harvest they'd move the threshing machine up close to the shelter and spray all the straw over this thing so it was covered with maybe three or four feet of straw. This made it reasonably warm for the two horses.

The only livestock that we had besides a flock of wild bantam chickens was a team of horses. One was a good horse and one was a mental case. Maude was a dangerous horse. As children, we weren't allowed to go in the stall where she was housed because she was so dangerous. When my uncle would start to put the collar around her neck, she would quickly whip around and bite him in the shoulder. You could not walk behind her at any time. She'd kick the daylights out of you.



Alfred in front of the house at Soldier, June 1914

My first recollection on a later trip going from Soldier to Twin Falls was the first time I'd seen a banana. It made a great impression on me. A railroad conductor came up and down the aisle trying to peddle bananas, and I looked at them longingly. But we had no money, of course, and so fresh produce was just something we didn't have in Soldier. Because of the altitude they couldn't raise any kind of fruit trees. In fact there were no trees at all on Camas Prairie, and it was also almost impossible to try and raise a garden. We had to pretty much live on dry beans and home baked bread.

We raised hogs in partnership with our closest neighbor, so we had sausage and Mother had lard that we made into soap, but we didn't have any fresh meat except during the deer hunting season. All the ranchers in the area would go together and hunt something up. We had no refrigeration, and anything to be kept cool was lowered into a well. We didn't have milk as children except what we could get from a neighbor who had cows. All the milk had to be lowered in a pail down into the well. The wells were not deep wells. They were what we called dug wells. They were just twenty or thirty feet deep but the water was cold.

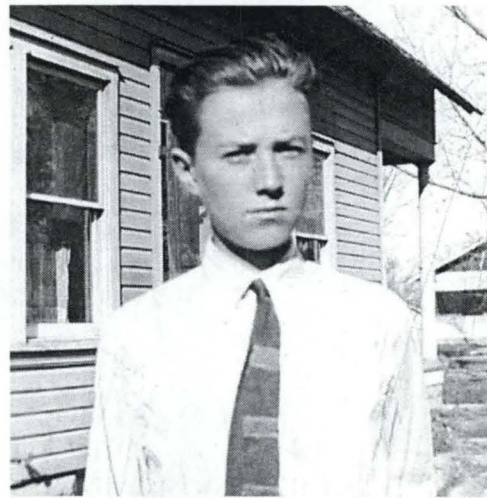
Twin Falls - Childhood Days



*Picnic in hills near Soldier, August 1914.
Left to right Bruce McMillan, Miss Minear,
and Marian, Alfred and Johanna Dunn*

After my aunts finished high school in Twin Falls, they went to Albion Normal School and became teachers. Then Mother's next oldest

brother died as a result of an accident, and her youngest brother Bruce, the one who was trying to run the ranch, didn't like the idea of living in Soldier and going to high school in Twin Falls. It was just too much of a task for anyone, and he was very anxious to graduate and then go join the army and go to France to fight the Kaiser.



Alfred Dunn, ca. 1923

When Bruce went into the army, we had to move off the ranch and come to Twin Falls. I had finished the first grade in Soldier when we moved. My grandfather and his second wife built a new house in the manner of Frank Lloyd Wright, that is, it was very much in the order of the prairie house, on Second Street in Twin Falls. He had previously built a house here, but his new wife didn't like the house. She did like the location. So it meant moving the older house from Second to Third Avenue where it sat vacant until Uncle Bruce went off to the war. We moved into that house.

The house was so large that Mother was able to remodel it into apartments which she rented. It was very nice of course, but it was at a time when Twin Falls was changing over to a new heating system. Originally, Twin Falls was going to be called the Electric City, which meant that all the houses would be heated by electricity. But when Idaho Power Company completed the power plant on Shoshone Falls, it decided that it would sell that power to the Anaconda Mining Company in Montana instead

of furnishing cheap power to the city. This meant that all of the houses in Twin Falls had to be converted from electricity to some other form of heat.

We had to heat this big house using coal. In the case of our family, the cheapest coal that you could get came in large lumps. My job as the only male in the family was to reduce the size of those big chunks. They sometimes measured two feet across, and I'd have to beat them into smaller pieces with an old ax. I was seven. It was a never-ending chore to keep that big old cooking range in the kitchen and the round parlor furnace in the front room going. The rest of the house was unheated.

Making a Living



Clockwise from top left, Johanna Dun, Grace Schadle, Alfred and Eleanor Dunn, and Barbara Young, a cousin. Twin Falls.

When we moved to Twin Falls we had no money. My mother worked in a bean sorting warehouse where women stood along an endless belt upon which the beans were spread. The women would pick out the bad ones and the rocks and all that stuff. She would come home dead tired and then go to night school to learn typing. When she graduated from Gregg's Business College, Mother immediately went to work in the prosecuting attorney's office. This was more or less the same role that Della Street played in television.

As Twin Falls County had very little money, the salary that she was paid was ridiculously

low. She had a lot of chores besides being secretary to the stenographer for the prosecuting attorney. She had to fill in as court reporter because the regular court reporter had a sort of a problem with "Johnny Barleycorn," and whenever he would



go on a spree, Mother would have to take over. This meant that she covered some of the most notorious trials that took place in Twin Falls County. As children, we could never hear about it while it was going on, but after it was over she would give it to us in detail. It was pretty fascinating stuff. Murders and all kinds of good things that thrill kids.

Mother must have had some musical training at some time. She could play the piano, she could read music, and she was able to teach my sisters the basics of the piano because we had an old beat-up piano in the Twin Falls house. In Soldier there was a pump organ, a very small instrument that required just constant pumping. Mother only weighed 122 pounds and didn't have enough strength to keep that pump going. So not only was the front room not heated, we didn't hear that organ very often.

Every Sunday in Twin Falls all the relatives would come to our house after church and mother would play the piano. They would all sing the old favorites from that time during World War I, tunes like *There's a Long, Long Trail A Winding* and a number of those that I still play on the clarinet.

During the summers I worked on my uncle's farm from the time I was very young until the beginning of high school, I guess it would be. I was just a field hand. That meant hoeing beans and beets and harvesting hay. I was just a handy man. I had a team of horses I was responsible for, so I learned to take care of them and to

drive various farm implements like a mower and a hay rake and that sort of thing. I also drove the derrick team to put the hay into the haystacks.

Clothes were always a problem because I was growing so fast that I would outgrow them from one summer to the next. I got to be six feet when I was beginning high school. So my feet were sticking out 12 inches below the hemline of my trousers. In the beginning my trousers were called coveralls, then I graduated to overalls which meant bib overalls, and then later, of course, all kids wore Levis which in those days could be purchased for about \$3.

I wasn't disciplined. Once on the Fourth of July a neighbor kid had a large paper balloon that he was going to put up after the end of the regular ceremonies about 10:00 p.m. I wanted to stay up and see that balloon go up, and I was late getting home. Mother was waiting for me with one of the whips little boys would buy as souvenirs. It was about three feet long. Here was mother standing waiting for me with this

little whip at 10:00 at night. She took me out to the coal shed and started to whip me with this damn little whip, and the whip was so fragile it broke after the first lick. We both started to laugh so much that we couldn't finish.

I was never athletically inclined. I tried with the neighborhood kids to play baseball. We had a vacant lot we used for a field, but we

didn't have gloves or any sports equipment. The baseball was an old one that had lost its cover and had been covered with black electrician's tape. When someone would get up to bat and hit that ball, it would take off and behind it would be trailing a long string of black tape.

Boy Scouts

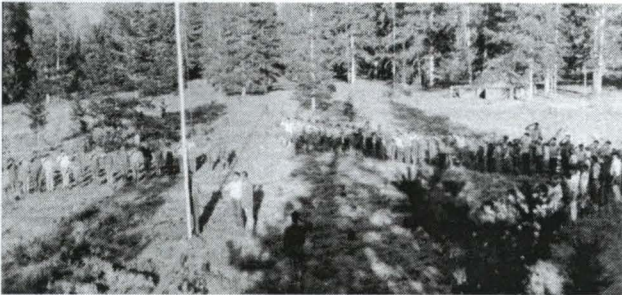
The most important thing in my life at that time was Boy Scouts. From the time I was twelve and old enough to join a troop, I joined. Troop 10 was sponsored by the Presbyterian church, and our scoutmaster was a guy by the name of John Feldheusen who was also a

I got to be six feet when I was beginning high school. So my feet were sticking out 12 inches below the hemline of my trousers



Alf, at right, and other scouts in 1927 working on the totem pole which Alf designed. It stood at the entrance to Camp Sawtooth for many year.

teacher. Under the Smith-Hughes Act in the 1920s, agricultural schools initiated young people's organizations. One was 4-H and the other was Future Farmers. Mr. Feldheusen became so involved in these groups, he could no longer take care of the Boy Scout troop. This meant that since I was the oldest boy, I became assistant scout master. Essentially, I was the scout master.



Camp Sawtooth

My best friend and I were activities directors for the Boy Scout camp that was just being started up in the Sawtooth Mountains. This involved planning activities for about 100 boys at any given time. We would usually have at least one mountain climbing experience during the two weeks. In the middle of August we took these 100 boys up Last Peak.

We got the boys up to the top of the mountain all right, but we could see a storm coming. There was a big black cloud off to the west, and before we could even get started down, it started to snow. Now this was the 12th or so of August which is sort of strange. It became pretty cold. Those kids were dressed in Boy Scout shorts and with no other protection. We decided that we had better get them off the mountain before the snow became a problem.

I suggested to my friend, Tom, that he should take the youngest scouts down to the timberline and hold them there. Wait. And then I would bring the other older boys down. We started down and got to the beginning of the timberline where many of the white pines had been killed during the winter storms. The boys below us had a fire going beneath a ridge. We said, "We're going to roll this old dead tree

down, but be sure and have the boys out of the way." Tom moved them, except for one boy who thought he could get out of the way of anything that we would throw down. Well, we rolled this dead tree down, and the tree lit first on its top and then as it sprung over, one of the sharp roots hit this boy right in the stomach.

Well, he was in agony. He was in pain. We got down, put out the fire, and then just hightailed it for the ranger station. The ranger said we better get the boy over to the camp and see what the scout executive wants to do about it. So we got him to the camp and Joe Jamee, the scout executive, said we better get him down to Ketchum.

He took off right away with the boy, leaving us with all these wet cold kids to take care of. We sent them to their tents first to get dry clothes, and told them to come back to the mess tent where we could give them some hot soup and get them thawed out. We had also built a fire.

We had discovered a hot springs about a quarter of a mile from the camp. There wasn't any shelter around the springs, but the kids were so anxious to get thawed out and to get warm that about half of them wanted to go to the hot springs, which they did. And pretty soon the scout executive returned with the boy and he was much better. No serious damage. So that was one summer's activities

Pets

We inherited Lassie, a Scottish Collie. She was very old at the time we inherited her because she just went with the old house. She became blind and all the other ailments that go along with dogs in old age. So she had to be put to sleep, and what a sad time it was for us. As children, she was the only pet we'd ever had and I didn't have any pets until I was perhaps in the sixth grade or so. I got a little Whippet Hound. I adored that dog, but he had to be killed because he snapped at a little child. Didn't hurt the kid at all but the policeman shot him right on the spot.

I was at a Boy Scout camp at the time, and when I returned home I asked my mother "Where's Major?" She had to tell me that he'd been destroyed so that was a sad time for me.

After I had Major I was given another dog. A doctor in town who understood my plight had purchased a registered Greyhound, a large tall dog. He was so tall he could look at the table where we were eating and see everything there and make his choices. His favorite food was dill pickles.

But he had no loyalties. He was the town's dog, is what he was. He made a route to every household that had ever fed him, and they were stuck. I finally sold him when I had to go to Seattle. I went to visit him every time I came back to Twin Falls, but he was never really a pet.

Christmas

In Twin Falls our family was heavily into activities of the Presbyterian church. All my uncles and aunts were officials of the church in some form and heavily involved financially and in every which way: trustees or deacons. My mother was a deacon and also Sunday School superintendent. So we had religion drilled into us from the time we were very small and to the point where it kind of turned us off after we left home.

There were no trees anywhere near Twin Falls except some native junipers far, far away which would be impractical to use as a Christmas tree. When we came into the church for our first Christmas, here on the stage was a great big sagebrush, decorated with all of the fancy stuff. For us children it was the first Christmas tree we had ever seen because we didn't have Christmas at Soldier. We'd never even heard of Santa Claus.

I didn't have a Christmas celebration until I was seven, and our family didn't think anything of it at all. But my grandfather and his new bride made a big thing of it. And so the church

was all aglow with lights.

There were no electric lights on the trees, so the lights on the sagebrush were candles which was pretty much of a hazard. I can remember very well we children were waiting for Santa Claus to come.

Suddenly over the railing from the choir stall jumped this

little Santa Claus and he said "Merry Christmas," and immediately we recognized Uncle Dewitt's voice. So right away we knew he wasn't Santa Claus.

Christmas dinner was a big affair at grandmother's house. She had a maid, and I remember very well she summoned the maid from the kitchen by pushing down her foot on a bell underneath the table. She was a very short person and sort of rotund, and to reach that bell she had to "skooch" down in her chair.

The turkey was a big affair, and after Christmas dinner Grandfather would reach in his vest and take out a cigar and hand one to my Uncle Dewitt, one to my Uncle Bruce and then he'd hand one to me. I was sort of flustered.

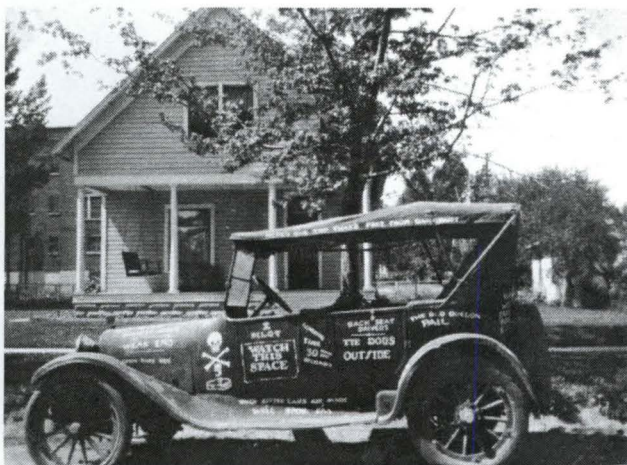
Oh, we never got anything but clothing as presents. We had no toys in Soldier. The only thing we played with in Soldier and Twin Falls to begin with was a little tin wagon.

Twin Falls - High School and Beyond

I graduated a year behind my class, because from the time I was a sophomore in high school I was driving a school bus, and I had to get up very early in the morning. The first bus that I drove had two routes which meant that I didn't get to class until about 9:30 a.m.

I was too young to drive, but August Wellner offered me the job. It was a bus that he had made himself starting with an old Reo

[The greyhound] was so tall he could look at the table where we were eating and see everything there and make his choices. His favorite food was dill pickles. But he had no loyalties. He was the town's dog, is



The Dunns house in Twin Falls. Alf and his friends painted their 1926 Dodge

Speed Wagon chassis, and he built a body to go on it. It was pretty basic. It didn't have a self starter; you had to crank it to start it. The only coolant was water, and it had cardboard over the radiator to keep it from freezing when you were on the road. You drained the water when you came in from each trip.

It was a pretty tough row for a guy who probably didn't weigh 100 pounds to try to crank that miserable thing in the mornings. Finally Mr. Wellner would get it cranked for me because I just didn't have enough weight to get it going.

That first year I had one flat tire right after another, and the only good thing about it is that there was no spare on the bus. I'd have to go find a telephone whenever I had a flat tire, and they'd send out a tire with Mr. Wellner. He would put the tire on for me because it was a very tough job.

After I had seventeen flat tires the first part of that year, a garage mechanic who had helped build the bus said, "I think I know where those tacks are coming from. It's right there in your shop where you park that darn thing." They were the tacks used for the cloth tops on the touring cars, which most cars were.

Once we discovered that, we quit parking the bus there, and we had no more flat tires. But it was a pretty harrowing time. Fortunately the school board wouldn't accept Mr. Wellner's bid

for the next year which meant that in my junior and senior years I was driving for the Shipman Brothers. They had International trucks that had self starters, no brakes but self starters.

When I got out of high school, I didn't have money to go to college. I laid out and was an apprentice in a sign shop under a sign painter named Lee Logan. While Twin Falls was not a union town, he'd been trained in Kansas City which was a union town, so the education that I got under him as an apprentice was the same as he had as an apprentice. I got some good training and became a journeyman sign painter. This made it possible for me to go to college.

Early Interest in Art

I became interested in art from the time I was able to hold a pencil. We had no toys at Soldier, and every amusement Mother suggested would have some kind of a religious connection. One day she was going to help us build an ark. She read the story out of the Bible about Noah and the building of the ark. That meant a lot of animals to make. She was trying to draw various animals on pieces of cardboard that she'd saved. I could see that I could do better than that, so I was drawing all of these animals to make the ark. I was very young, and that is my earliest recollection of any art experience.

University of Idaho

My grandmother was the only one of all my relatives who saw any future in anyone becoming an artist. She had said that I didn't need to worry about being able to go to school after high school because she would put me through the Chicago Art Institute. I made all my plans in that direction.

I didn't have much of a bank account, and I lost what I had in the bank failure. Then Grandmother died without a will which left me high and dry. I, in my innocence, thought, "- Well, I'll go up the University of Idaho for a

year and then maybe I'll have enough money to start back to Chicago." That never happened.



When I got to Moscow I was 21 and I immediately took what art was available at the time. Ted Prichard had just been advanced to being the head of the department, and Mary Kirkwood was teaching her first year here after graduating with an MFA from the University of Oregon. This was my first real art training because none of my high schools or grade schools had art classes.

When Ted Prichard came to the University of Idaho, he was not a licensed architect. He'd graduated from Minnesota in Interior Decoration, it was called then. After he'd been here for a number of years, the person who taught architecture left, and so Ted had to quickly become one. He went back to Harvard and got a master's degree in architecture and his license. In fact, he was made chairman of the state's examining board. He had a profound influence on my college years. From him I really learned about drawing.

While Ted professed to teach watercolor, he'd had very little experience. He'd gone to a summer course in Providence, Rhode Island, and had learned the basics of watercolor, but most of this I learned on my own.

I learned oil painting and portraiture from Mary Kirkwood. That had little or no bearing on my later career because I was never called upon to do anything in oils. I gave up oil painting when I discovered watercolors.

Student Life in Moscow

The first place I lived in Moscow was at 432 Spotswood Street. It's still there although the

house numbers have changed. There were about six of us who had very little money. We figured it would cost us \$20 a month for board and room. Two did the cooking, and the rest of us did all the rest of the house work. This was around 1930.



Alf and his friends in the Spotswood house, 1931-1932

We lived there during my first year up here at the university. At first we had only a two-room situation on the second floor, but then the people downstairs left (I can see why they would want to move). We got the whole house for the second semester, and we filled it. So for about \$500 a year we could go to college. We walked to classes. We'd step out pretty fast as we knew exactly how many minutes it took to get to campus. I think it was 17.

Pat Day, one of the boys who lived in the Spotswood house, had a brother from Kimberly, Idaho. Pat's brother had a big orchard and was fairly well-to-do because when he bought a new Packard car he gave his old Packard touring car to Pat. One day Tom, my best friend, and I were sitting on our porch speculating about how we were going to get back up to Moscow when this long, big old Packard touring car pulled up in front of the house. There, sitting in the front, were our good friends Horace Shipman and Pat

Day and they each had on taxi driver's hats. And we said, "Oh, what a magnificent car. Whose is it?" and Pat said, "It's ours," which meant that all of us would have to pay for the license. Well, so we used that car that first fall to get up to Moscow.



The 1918, 12-cylinder Packard, 1931

We couldn't afford to drive it. It was a 12-cylinder Packard which took lots of gasoline. So it sat up on blocks in a barn, back of 432 Spotswood Street, until it was time to come home for Christmas. We sold passage in it to various kids on the campus for \$7 a round trip which paid our gas. That was the last we saw of that car. It was sold to somebody who wanted to convert it into a sawmill. So from then on it meant hitchhiking

A Summer's Mining Experience

During the Depression I was apprenticing without pay in the sign shop and doing anything that would raise a little money. The depression hit hardest in 1929. I had been working in a Montgomery Wards store in Twin Falls, doing windows and writing show cards, but that store closed and I was without a job.

In 1933 the University's College of Mines sent out a team of a couple of guys to go through various towns in Idaho and give a workshop on how to look for gold and other minerals. When they came to Twin Falls they put on this workshop and showed how to pan for gold. Tom and I went, of course, and there we met two of our other friends, Louis Jones

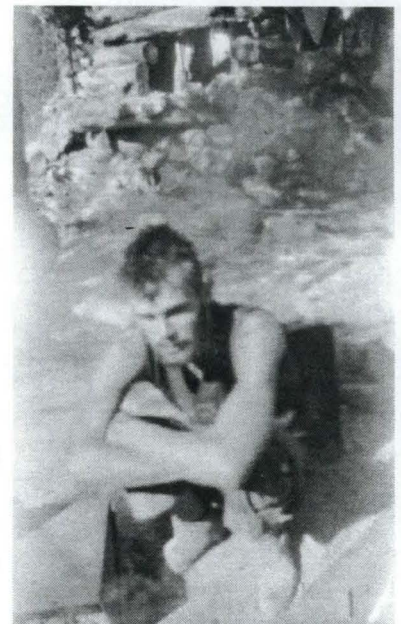
and Byron Rendahl. We formed a company right then, the "Jard Mining Company," of Jones, Adams, Rendahl and Dunn.

We put together whatever tools we would need to go look for gold up in Stanley Basin. Rendahl's father, who owned an automobile company in Twin Falls, loaned us a little used car called a Star. It hasn't been built since those days. A very small little car. And we loaded it with a tent, bedding and cooking equipment, my paints, and a 100-pound sack of white beans which we put in a tub and tied between the front spring shackles.

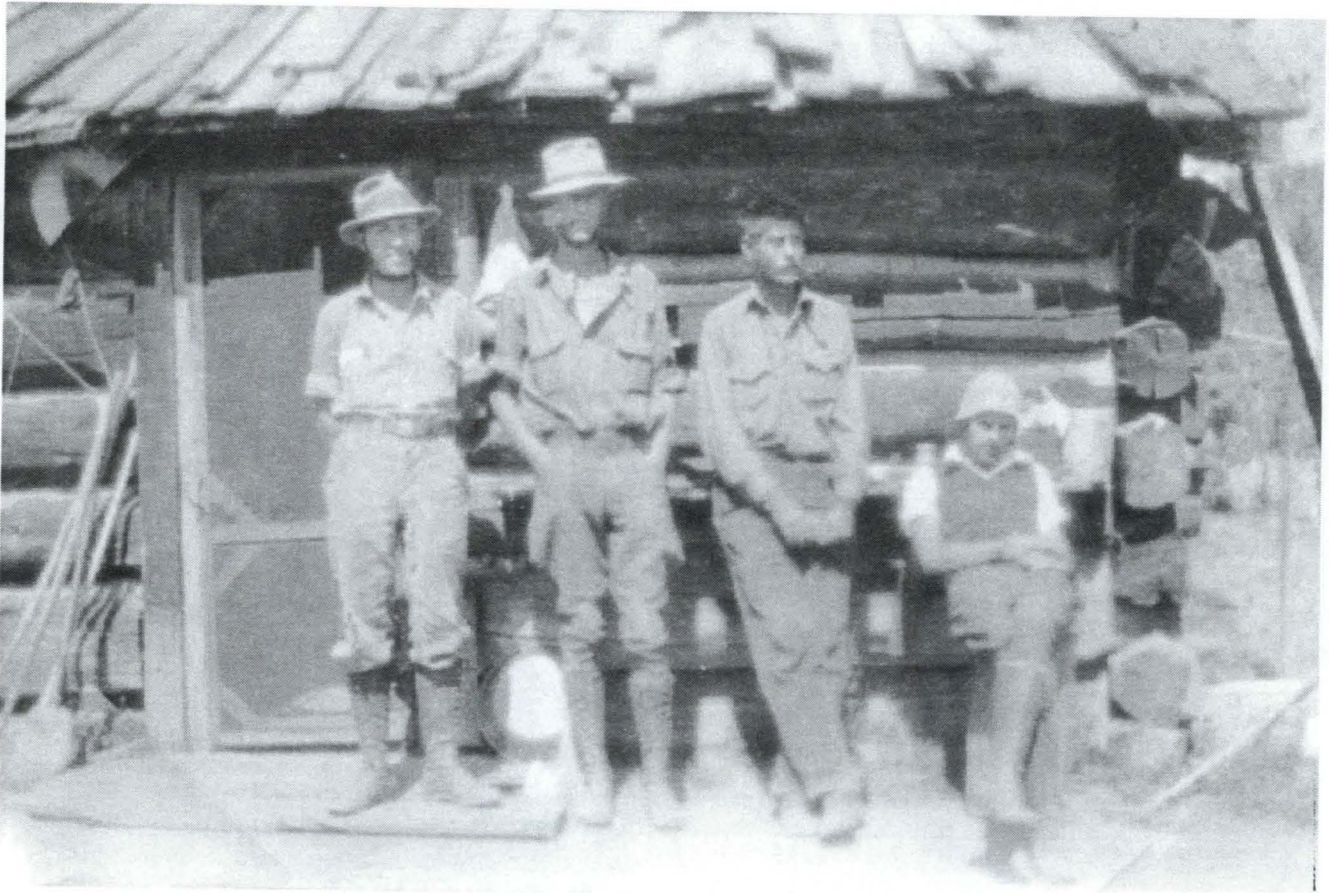
We set out to look for gold. We left Shoshone and started on a long stretch of graveled road. (In those days none of the roads were paved.) The road was very badly corduroyed, but we were going along in pretty fair shape when all of a sudden the front end of the car went up in the air. Terrible noises were happening underneath.

We looked out the back window and there in the gravel we could see a white streak that went back for 100 or 150 feet. That was our summer food supply. So we got out with our gold pans and picked up all the beans we could (a good part of it was the gravel on the road).

By the time we were able to gather up the beans and go on with the journey, we were very late getting into the mountains. The first spot we picked was not gold country at all. We didn't know that, of course, so we went back to Stanley. We went into a saloon there and asked the people if they knew of any place around



Tom Adams at the mining claim



The JARD Mining Company, 1933

where there was some gold mining going on. They recommended one: "Well, yes, John Wideman has a gold operation going up on the head of Kelly Creek. Would you be interested in going up there?" "Oh, yes, tell us how to get there." "Well, you go to Lower Stanley and by the Assay Office. You'll see a little trail going up over the pass. It's called Nip and Tuck Pass," which should have given us some clue as to what it was like.

Anyway, we followed his directions. He had said, "When you get over that hump, that Pass, you'll find yourself on the head of Stanley Lake Creek. Well, you go up Stanley Lake Creek for about six miles and you'll run into the tailings of an old dredge. There's no road. You have to go up and over those piles, and then off to the right you'll see a faint trace of a road going up over another pass."

We started out and followed the directions as best we could. Sure enough, we found that

little trail, went over Kelly Creek Pass, and there we found John Wideman and his partners. Ralph Bowers and George Moore were their names. George Moore was an old guy. Ralph Bowers was a young guy. John Wideman was sort of in-between. They were cleaning up an old sluice box that had been located in a tunnel that had caved in and they were doing quite well. In fact, they were doing well enough so that John Wideman was able to send his daughter to college at the College of Idaho.

Most of what we learned about mining for gold we got from those fellows that were mining. It was called the "Progressive #7 Wideman and Company." Well, we asked them when we first got there, "Is there some ground around here that we can put a claim on?" And he said, "Yes, right down below our claim. That's open. It's staked, but the guy who staked it, Tom Lynch, didn't ever prove up on it and he didn't pay the fees." It was a horrible fee: \$2.



The month of June was a total washout. We stayed in our tent and played bridge because the rain was just pouring down. But soon the weather cleared up and we were in business. We went back and located the dredge on Stanley Creek where we got enough boards to make a sluice box using directions we got from the miners on Progressive #7. We did make enough money to support ourselves which was the reason the University did this. It got us off the streets and we paid for our own keep.

When the summer was over, we took our last clean-up down to Twin Falls. We had concentrated the gold each week using mercury to make what's called a lisponge. It soaks up the small particles of gold until it becomes a hard, sponge-like, gray material.



The JARD Mining Company's cabin

We also took all the monazite sand where the fine gold collects. We put the sand in a tub in my mother's back yard, panned the last of the gold out of it, and sent it down to Salt Lake to a company called the Primrose Assay Company. They responded with, "Well, we're going to have to deduct 30% for the silver that's in the gold."

We knew that wasn't right, but we had to go with what they said. So when we finally wound up at the end of the summer, we each had six dollars. And with that six dollars, along with what I was able to squirrel away from the sign shop, I was able to begin another year of college.

Back to the University and Making a Living



University of Idaho art class in the second floor of the U-Hut,, 1936,. Alf Dunn seated at right.

I returned to the university after staying out for two years between my freshman and sophomore years. I had just enough money from painting signs to register, which in those days was \$35, and to pay the first month's board and room. Now, instead of the \$20 we had paid living on Spotswood Street, we paid \$25 a month. But the house was much nicer and very comfortable. It was on the top of the hill on Seventh Street and was owned by Ella Olson, the registrar at the university. She leased it to a lady by the name of Hager who had seven sons. There were various times during the next three years when there would be from eight to ten people living at that house.

I was going to be an art major, but still in the back of mind I thought I would go back to Chicago to a real art school. That never happened. As I became more involved in the university, I became art editor for the *Gem of the Mountains* and was involved in other art activities. I was also working all my spare time

as a sign painter for the town's only bootlegger, Al Crisp.

I should start at the beginning. When I came back my sophomore year, I didn't have enough money except one month's board and registration which in those days was \$35.

Well, that meant that I had to start making money right away, so I walked up and down Main Street, mostly looking at the upstairs windows. Wherever I'd see a gold sign that was in bad shape, I'd go up the stairs and say, "You got a pretty hefty investment in this gold leaf sign, and you are going to lose it unless something's done." Most often it involved scraping off the old sign and completely putting up a new one.

My first customer was a dentist by the name of Sylvester Scheutle. His gold leaf sign was coming off because the sign painter didn't know how to lay gold. He was using an animal glue. As all gold leaf window signs on upper floors were located above a steam radiator, the steam and the heat caused that animal glue to melt. The letters would just slide down the glass. Mr. Scheutle was so pleased that he passed the word around until pretty soon I had lawyers, doctors, and everybody who had an office on the second floor in Moscow getting their gold signs worked on.

So I had no problem convincing all these people that their gold signs should be replaced. They would say, "How much is it going to cost?" I'd say, "Well, the rate is 15 cents an upright inch per letter." Well if you figure that out, that makes pretty fair income.

I went sailing up and down Main Street. Eventually I ran into the sign painter who had



Gold leaf signs on the windows above Corner Drug Store on the northeast corner of Main and Third Streets

put the gold on originally. I introduced myself and said "I'm going to be your competition." He said, "Oh, don't worry about that. If you need a place to work come up and use my shop." It was down on Third Street above Moore's Cabinet Shop. It provided me shelter and was a place to work.

I was pretty well fixed and doing well with the sign business.

I had arrangements with Harry Gallup from the Gallup Lumber Yard to use the lumber yard to letter things like trucks and other big things. Also, I was doing a lot of big wall signs. I did a sign that went from Main Street to the alley on what was then the University Pharmacy. Then the next big job that I had was to do a wall sign that went from Main Street back to the alley and the entrance to the Egan Apartments, which was a big job, going from the sidewalk up to the second floor.

I was pulling in the money pretty good. I was making so much money that the Sigma Chi fraternity all of a sudden decided I might be a likely pledge. But even with my wealth I couldn't afford to live in one of those places.

Everett Will, who was later the mayor of Moscow, was just getting started as an agent for the Caterpillar



Everett Will

Tractor Company. He bought or rented a building somewhere in the neighborhood of what later became the American Legion Hall. He needed a sign on his window, "Caterpillar Tractors." It was in the winter time, and my schedule at school was horrendous. I was trying to do the illustrations for *Gem of the Mountains* and I was taking French, which was for me just awfully hard. The only time I had to work on that sign was at night. Well, fortunately there was a street light out in front, and I was able with very cool fingers to do the sign on Everett Will's tractor building.

Working for a Bootlegger

Because Al Crisp was self taught as a sign painter, he'd didn't really know how to put a gold sign on the window. He was using animal glue instead of gelatin as a sizing. I didn't know what Al Crisp was up to or what his line of work was. He didn't seem to be all that busy or interested in the sign business.

One day he said to me, "You're to re-paint the sign down over the gateway of the Genesee Lutheran Church. I want you to take my car (a Model A Ford Coupe), go down there, and do that sign over the arch over the gate. And be sure and park the car behind the church."

I thought that was a little strange, but I went. While I was doing the sign I had to move because a car came wanting to go in behind the church. I'm so dumb, I didn't know what was going on. They came out and again I had to move to let them out.

When and I came back to Moscow Al Crisp said, "How'd it go?" And I said, "Just fine." And he said, "Just a minute. I want to show you something." And he took me behind Bob Moore's cabinet shop where I'd parked the car. He lifted the hood of the trunk, and there were five gallon shiny metal cans. I helped him carry them up into the shop, but he didn't tell me what it was. I suspected what was going on. He said, "If you're gonna be working tomorrow," which was a Sunday, "I'll show you."

So on Sunday I came up. In those days the fraternities' pledges all had to supply their upper classmen with paddles used for their initiation, and Al Crisp was painting the fraternity crest on these paddles. There were a lot of those to do.

When I arrived, Al Crisp had a big, big wash tub in the middle of the floor. In it he'd emptied one of these big five gallon cans of this clear liquid, and I could smell what it was. He also had a hot plate going, and on the hot plate he had cherry pits and oak shavings from Bob Moore's cabinet shop downstairs.

The cherry pits gave it the right color; the oak chips were to give an aged-in-oak-barrels flavor. He was frying these up until they were well scorched. Then he dumped them into the mixture in this tub. Over the top - like using a magic wand - he had a slat of clear white pine he was moving back and forth over the surface which was beaded with drops of oil. He explained, "That's fusel oil, that will give you the blind staggers if we don't get it off."

And then the bottling process. He had boxes of what he called flat pints but were closer to ten ounces. He filled those until he had I don't know how many cases. He told to me that a local business man had a number of outdoor posters scattered throughout the county. When Al finished bottling this booze he would take it out at night and hide it around the bases of these outdoor posters. That was his distribution system.

When the students from the campus would come up, they were embarrassed to confront a bootlegger. They'd shift from first one foot and then the other. Finally Al would say, "Is there something you want? Is there something I can do for ya?" And they'd say, "Yeah, you know." They didn't want to come right out and say they wanted a bottle of hootch. He was just teasing them, but he would collect their two dollars and tell them where to go to find it. And so that is the way that his marketing system worked.

I hated the taste of this stuff; one drop in the bathtub was more than enough for me. And it was awful, awful stuff. There was only one

thing that could have been worse. The Idaho football team went down to play in San Francisco, and when they came back one of the players came up to Al Crisp and said, "Uh, could you use a gallon of grain alcohol?" And Crisp said, "Oh sure, you know the Elks Club needs that all the time. We'll send it down to Doc Einhouse and have him run a test." And so he did, and the word came back from Doc Einhouse, the University physician, "Well, that's good grain alcohol all right. The only problem is, I don't think you can sell it." "Why is that?" "It's had a body in it."

An Advertising Career

After receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree, Mr. Dunn went to Seattle to find work.

When I went to Seattle to find a job I didn't have much to show. The only thing I had done that was at all of interest to an advertising agency was a large map of the campus. It was used originally by the Associated Students in the *Argonaut* newspaper, but when the *Spokesman-Review* newspaper saw it, they printed it as a double truck spread.

I went to see Harry Bonath who was the art director for the Irwin Wasey Agency which had the best reputation. Harry took one look at the student stuff that I had, oil paintings, and life drawings, big old charcoal sketches which he just pushed aside. But when he saw this great

big newspaper spread he really perked up. He said, "Well, we don't have an opening right now in this agency, but I think I know a guy who can really use you. Just a minute and I'll give him a call." So he called up Frank McCaffery and said, "I think you ought to see this." He sent me right down there, and I was hired on the spot.

Well, I was perfectly happy in my job in Seattle. I worked for Frank McCaffery's Acme Press of Seattle. He was a publisher and printer of all kinds of books, but we did lots of work for advertising agencies as well.

I stayed there for five years and was doing quite well. I wasn't earning a lot of money but in lieu of raises and this sort of thing I'd get an increase in my title. I went from just an artist to art director which carried a lot of weight locally. I was elected into the membership of

the Puget Sound group of northwest painters and by the time I returned to the University of Idaho, I'd become president of that organization, filling in for Dale Goss. He was also an Idaho graduate and he'd gone back to Yale.

I'd no sooner gotten well started in that when Ted Prichard came

around to see how I was getting along. He asked if I would consider coming back to the University. And I said, "Why would I want to do that? I'm well fixed over here."

About this time World War II came along. The U.S. Office of Information cautioned us that "Advertising is going to be cut, perhaps



The Acme Press of Seattle. Frank McCaffery in suit and hat is at left. Alf Dunn with vest is at far right.



Alf Dunn, 1933

30%, and a lot of you folks are going to lose your jobs." So that made it look like maybe I might be better off in Moscow. My wife and I had one child at this time, and she thought, "Well, what could be better than living in a university town where you were assured education for your kids." So that was the inducement, and off we went to Moscow.

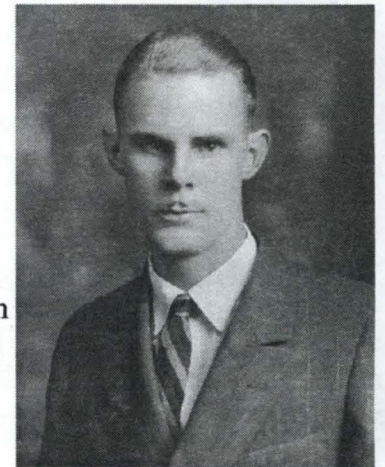
Helen

When I met Helen in the summer of 1939, I was living in this boarding house on Burke Avenue in Seattle. Helen and her best friend were both graduates of the University of Washington and both taught music in the Yakima High School. They had come to Seattle for a music workshop at the university. They found a place where they could sleep on Burke Avenue, but they didn't have any place they could get meals. The landlady said, "Well, the lady across the street takes in boarders. Would you like to go over there?" So they did, and the first night there, there were six guys at the boarding house scratching their heads about ways they could entertain these two gals. One of

the guys said, "Well, we could take them bowling." So it wound up we took them bowling. I'd never bowled in my life.

I didn't think too much about it, but within a week I got a call from Helen's sister whom I'd never met. She said Helen was coming to Seattle and could I come to dinner at her house? I did, and I came, and I saw, and she conquered. I'm afraid it was a setup, but we had a wonderful life together.

We had a church wedding. My best friend, Tom Adams, was my best man. He brought my mother up from Twin Falls to the wedding. The rehearsal was to be in the Presbyterian Church in Ellensburg, and the actual ceremony was to take place on top of about a three foot by three foot heat register. Tom was not very tall, but he had dark, slicked back, oily hair. I think that he fancied that he looked a little like George Raft.



Tom Adams

George Raft had a trick that he always pulled in his movies. He would take a coin and flip it up in the air and catch it. At the rehearsal when the minister said, "And now the ring," Tom reached in his vest, pulled out the ring, flipped it in the air, and it fell down into the heat register.

The minister and I took the cover off the register. He took one foot and I took the other, and then we suspended Tom down the opening. He pawed his way through inches of dust and insulation on top of the furnace until he shouted, "Eureka!" He'd found the ring.

A Teaching Career

When I first arrived at the university from Seattle, Ted Prichard, the head of the

department, was going back to Harvard to work on his Master of Architecture degree. I had to teach his classes, which were watercolor and free hand drawing, plus my own courses, which were graphic design. In those days graphic design was called commercial art.

Ted was so proud of my accomplishments and the fact that I had a good understanding of the silk screen process. The first week I was here was National Art Week, and he publicized that I would give a silk screen demonstration. Boy, people came from all over to see what this was all about. It didn't take very long for the people on the campus to see how they could use it. People in the Drama Department, the P. E. Department, and the Graduate Managers' Office said, "Boy, we gotta grab onto this because you know the price is right, he's doing it for free." And so I found myself doing all the schedule posters for basketball and football for the Athletic Department, plus doing all the scoreboards.

In those days before automatic scoreboards, all the visiting players' names had to be lettered by hand to go on the scoreboard. So that, including all the substitutes, meant several hours of work in the course of a week. And whenever there was a change of plays, I had to do the window posters for the Drama Department, usually no fewer than 50 for each performance.

The Wartime Campus

At that time there were some interesting programs going on. The Language and Area Program taught French and Russian to men in the ROTC program. I had two of the teachers in my drawing class. Alexander Korinsky was a middle-aged or somewhat elderly Russian; his



sister was a fashion designer, Valentine, in New York.

Mr. Korinsky was a very interesting person who also spoke French. In my night drawing class he used to keep the young soldiers pretty much on their toes quizzing them in French. None of the particular students we had in that class spoke Russian, and none of the rest of us did either.

Mr. Korinsky was a fine artist and a very interesting person to listen to. His sister, who was always called Madam, taught the French section. She had an interesting technique to teach French to these young soldiers. She'd take them down to the

Woolworth store and give them the French words for various items in the store and how they would ask for them in French. And when it came time to talk about railroads, she took the students to the railroad tracks by Joe Zeb's pea warehouse. She knew a lot about railroads: what kind of engines and what kind of cars that were used on the railroad to transport these Moscow crops. That was a very interesting period in our academic history here at the University.



That period was followed by the radio training school, part of the Navy program, which meant that we gave up half of the building to the radio training school. In the school, each desk was equipped with a typewriter, and each of the sailors wore earphones. They listened to radio broadcasts from Japan, propaganda broadcasts from Tokyo Rose.

I couldn't join the armed forces. When I came to teach I was 1A. When I was called up for a physical, I didn't say anything about my condition, but Doc Wilson said, "Oh, you've had a heart condition, haven't you?" I explained that I'd had rheumatic fever. He said, "You can't go into the military." So I was made 4F.

A Young Family

When I first came back to teach, I had to find a place for the family to live. Bruce was just a couple of months old. We found a basement apartment on Hayes and D which it was very cold. The apartment was nice. It had a fireplace and everything, but we didn't have anything to burn in the fireplace. The minute the landlady's daughter, Rose Rawson, would go off to work at the Assessor's Office, her mother, who occupied a room in the back of the house, would turn the furnace off. So poor Helen and little baby Bruce were freezing.

I was immediately on the lookout for a place to live, and I found this big old building on Eighth Street, which at one time had been a school. Earl Cornwall had converted it into apartments. We moved into the downstairs apartment. It was one of the best things that had happened to us because it was there that we became friends with the McGarvey family who lived across the hall from us.

Leo McGarvey was the bookkeeper for Davids Department Store. When he heard that I was an artist and I was going to be living across the hall from him, he threw up his hands in horror: "An artist. One of those." He changed his mind when he found out I fished and hunted.

Teaching Outside the University

During his college days in Minnesota, Ted Prichard had an outside job correcting

correspondence lessons for an art school that headquartered in Minneapolis. So he knew about setting up a curriculum for a correspondence course. He talked to the extension people here about setting up a correspondence program for a number of different art courses, watercolor and drawing. When I started teaching the correspondence course, there weren't very many students. My mailbox would have maybe four or five lessons each week. But all of a sudden when the armed services approved the courses, my mailbox just really got loaded. I had students from all over the world.

Some interesting letters came from places like Korea during the Korean conflict. I remember one in particular that described the hardship coming down from North Korea to Inchon. They were retreating at the time, and they took refuge at the town of Inchon in the middle of the winter and it was terribly cold, but his lessons came through, all with drawings of these retreating soldiers. It was interesting for me to get a first hand look at the conflict.

On top of that, I was teaching extension courses, which meant that after my 4:00 class was over on Mondays, I'd have to go get the state car and pick up Dr. Mabe, a professor in education. We'd drive to Lewiston where I'd teach a watercolor class until 10 p.m. We'd get home around midnight.

That was the first semester; then the second semester was much worse. All of a sudden the people in Orofino wanted me to come down and teach a night class. We'd drive 75 miles to Orofino, leave at 10:00 p.m., and get home usually a little after midnight. I had an 8:00 class the next morning which meant I didn't get much sleep. This was in the mid-1940s.

I remember one occasion in particular, I used to take the shortcut down Coyote Grade and return the same way. And on this one

We'd drive 75 miles to Orofino, leave at 10:00 p.m., and get home usually a little after midnight. I had an 8:00 class the next morning which meant I didn't get much sleep.

evening there had been a heavy snowstorm all during the three hours I was in Orofino. There were at least 12 inches of new snow on the road. I went up that narrow winding grade and got almost to the top. The snow was so deep I could go no farther. Thinking I could dig my way out, I looked in the trunk because all of the state cars are supposed to be equipped with a shovel for just such emergencies. But, no shovel. So there was nothing for me to do except back all the way down to the foot of Coyote Grade.

I then planned to go home on the old Lewiston Grade. I stopped at the Lewis and Clark hotel and there in the lobby were a couple of other fellas, Swartz, the music teacher and I think a guy by the name of Green, also of the Education Department. They were going to stay overnight there, and told me, "You better make the same plans because I don't think you can get up the grade." And I said, "I better try it. I've got an 8:00 in the morning." Fortunately, at the foot of the grade I got behind a sanding truck and made it to the top and home safely.

But those were really hard years. I think it went on five or six years that I had to teach the first semester in Lewiston and the second semester in Orofino.

Working as a Crime Artist



I have had lots of adventures. I worked as an artist for the FBI for a number of years. That happened when a guy by the name of Hap Moody was sheriff. There had been a bank robbery in Troy, and they didn't have anything to go on.

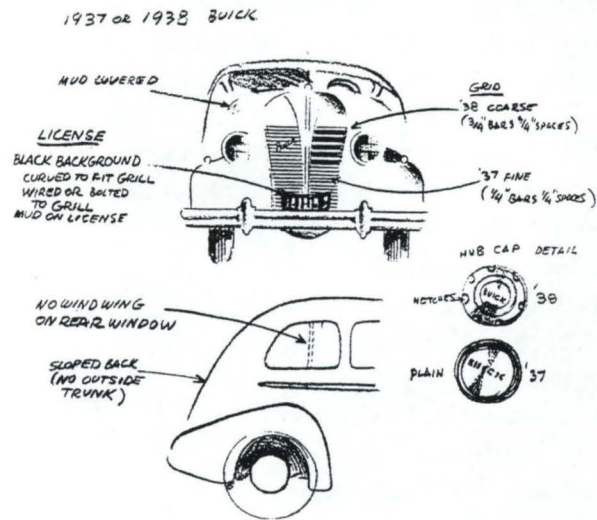
Mr. Moody came up to

the department when I was just coming out of a drawing class and asked if I would be interested in trying to draw a picture of the robber. I said "I've never done anything like that, but sure, I'd help any way I could and it won't cost you

anything."

I went down to Troy to interview the teller who'd been the primary target. She couldn't tell me very much. She was frightened silly really, and the manager of the bank was a young fellow who was really not hep on the business. He pretended to have seen the robber, but he hadn't.

We had to go to a lot of trouble to prove that there was no way he could have seen this, which took time. It wasn't until we questioned the owner of the service station next door to the bank that we got an excellent description of the robber. He also gave us a detailed description of the getaway car, such as the shape of the mud splash on the car door and the rear license plate fastened with baling wire. With the help of the drawings, we found the car and the robber.



Some Interesting Students

My drawing and watercolor classes were quite large. Ted Prichard was back at Harvard which meant that I was supposed to be teaching architecture. I'm not an architect, and I know very little about it even though my son is a fine architect. During the 1940s, architects were required to take watercolor with the idea that they would make better architectural renderings. Actually it wasn't a very successful plan because we didn't see eye to eye with the architects in matters of attendance. They would

come to the early part of each class, but they were gone before the actual work started, and as a result there was a big sort of crop failure among the architects come spring grading time.

I had one boy, Dick Albin, in the class. He only had one arm which made him very obviously 4F. He was studying architecture and had to suffer through a lot because whenever we'd encounter a problem in design or structures I'd have to go find a manual somewhere and learn about it along with him. We must have done a fairly good job because he went to California after he graduated and became very wealthy. He made his money not in architecture, but in real estate, which is often the case.

I had lots of successful people in the commercial art part of the program. Luther Linkheart went on to become first graphic designer and art director for all the Kaiser publications, and finally he became editor of all of their publications. Bill "Bumper" Lyons became art director for the Hoffman Electronics company in Los Angeles.

Frankie Kara came close to being famous. He came to Idaho as a boxer from Cleveland. Both he and his brother Ted were national collegiate champions in their weight class, and they were both B24 pilots. Frankie was stationed in Italy and completed 25 flights over the Paletzi oil field in Czechoslovakia. His brother Ted was killed flying over New Guinea.

When Frankie Kara returned to Moscow, Pete Fountain wanted to start a partnership with him. Frankie would fly one of Pete's planes which had a loud speaker over the town. At the time he and his wife lived down on Lewis Street. Frankie would come in low with that plane and he'd shout, "Mert, have lunch ready, I'll be home in 20 minutes!" So the whole town knew when Frankie was gonna have his lunch! That partnership idea didn't bear fruit because Frankie was too good an artist. He went to Hawaii and set up a business there.

I had Bobby Hamilton in a watercolor class. He's well known in the Moscow area because of

his very generous gifts to the university and the city. I got to know him well while he was here as a student. After he graduated he went to practice architecture in Anchorage, Alaska. One day I got a phone call. The caller said, "I guess you probably won't remember who I am." And I said, "Oh yes, and I'm not likely to forget that University of Idaho graduate architect who went to Anchorage, Alaska and designed the new J. C. Penney building and the whole front of it fell off in the earthquake." And he said, "You sure know how to hurt a guy."



Mary Kirkwood

Mary Kirkwood was my co-worker in the Art Department. She had been my teacher when I first came in 1930. She had just graduated with an MFA degree from the University of Oregon. She taught oil painting, and I don't think she really took watercolor very seriously. I think she used to tell most of the students that she considered watercolor painting as a sort of a colored drawing, which didn't rest very well

with my students.

At any rate, we had very many good years together. Sometimes I would teach life drawing, and maybe she would teach it the next year. Then for almost 12 years, we taught the summer workshop in painting, Workshop on Wheels. We had very close contacts in our teaching at the university over the years.



Changes at the University

When the war was over, suddenly with the G.I. Bill we had an influx of male students like you wouldn't believe. It was really interesting for us because in any one class you might have four or five Majors and Captains, and even a light Colonel or two. Gib Gail was a colonel; Frankie Kara was a captain. We had a lot of brass in our classes in those days, and they were wonderful students. Most of them were older than the average student and most were married.

There were changes in the numbers of courses. When I came there were only three of us in the department. Ted was head, Mary taught oil painting and ceramics, and I taught what was then called commercial ad courses plus drawing and watercolor. Soon Mary's load got to be so heavy she had to drop teaching design and we hired a woman from New York, to teach the design course. It was a fairly light load. In the meantime Ted had hired two other architects to help him in architecture, and my load just kept getting bigger and bigger.

The faculty got to be pretty informal when they allowed people to smoke in classrooms. Also, the dress changed. When I first came everyone wore a suit, but by the time the 1950s and 1960s came around, teachers were coming dressed in Levis or anything else comfortable.

When I first came we had what was called a faculty club in the building across from the Forestry Building which later became the Student Satellite Sub. It was designed for us and was a wonderful institution. It gave all the faculty a chance to meet with people in other disciplines. We got to know the entire faculty, and the only expense for the university was paying Mrs. Miller's salary. She was the one who took care of making the coffee and so forth. I finally got to be president which didn't involve very much on my part.

Joe Newton, who taught metallurgy, took over as president when I finished my term. He stayed with it until we got another president who didn't think too much of the faculty club. The new president sort of moved us out of that building and put the faculty club down in the basement of Chrisman Hall. Immediately the whole organization fell apart, which was sad because we lost that contact with the general faculty. It was also partly due to the fact that various departments started putting in coffee makers in their own departments, which meant that there was no excuse to cross campus.

Retirement

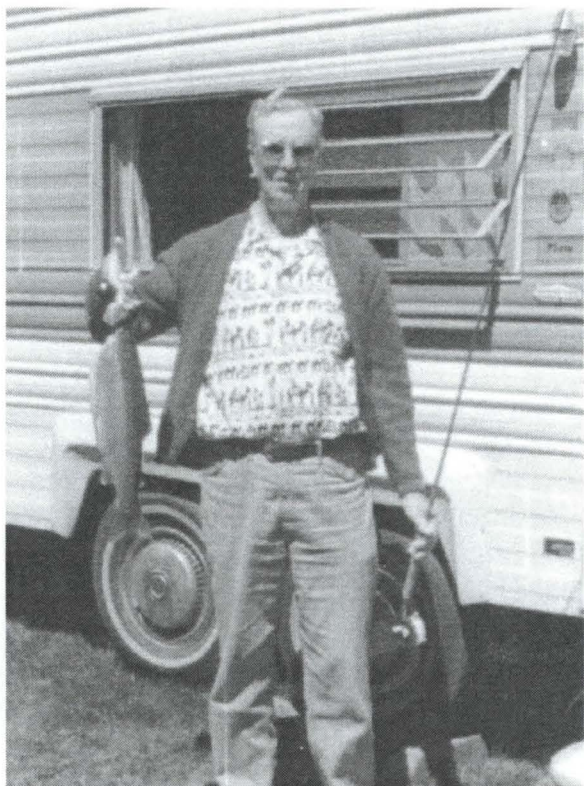


Alf, Jim, and Helen Dunn

In 1974, the university had a nice retirement party for me at the Student Union Building. Wally Stephens, a long time friend, was the master of ceremonies. George Roberts, a fellow Scotsman,

thought it would be nice to have a piper, and so after Wally made his going-away speech for me, here came the bagpiper. That was great because he was wearing the McMillan plaid tartan,

which was absolutely appropriate for our little McMillan clan. And at any rate, that meant retirement was off to a good start.



At that time, Helen and I had a camper mounted on a Ford pickup. Our friends Malcolm and Carol Renfrew had been at Peggy's Cove in Nova Scotia, and they recommended it highly as a place to paint. That fall we set out from our lake place, went across the southern border of Canada on the trans-Canada highway all the way to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and then on south to Peggy's Cove. I did a number of paintings there, but unfortunately or maybe fortunately, I had a show going on over in Ellensburg, and every last one of those things from the show sold out, so I don't have anything from Peggy's Cove.

Also, we'd heard Ella Olsen, the registrar at the University, tell about some of her trips on

freighters around the world. Our friends Don and Evelyn Dusault had made a freighter trip the year before to Southeast Asia. We talked to Joyce Thompson, a travel agent, and asked her if she could line us up with a freighter trip.

The Dusaults wanted to go again, and so we did it. We left early in January. We left from Seattle, went up through the Bering Sea, and for four days we were in a force nine gale in the Bering Sea which meant waves were approaching forty feet high going over the whole front of the ship and crashing against the windows of our staterooms. The Dusaults' window was knocked out, as was the window of the chief engineer on the deck below. It was pretty harrowing. Fortunately neither Helen nor I get seasick although everyone else was having a bad time. We were lucky because in later years we made many freighter voyages that were somewhat quite rough, but we never had any ill effects.

I was painting continually all the time. I think the Dusaults went with us with the idea that it would be one long bridge game, but I had other ideas. At night when the lights weren't that great for painting, I would play bridge with them the rest of the time.

When we would get into a port a whole bunch of people would immediately want to sell you anything and take you anywhere. I would watch everything. There wasn't time to actually make more than just a simple sketch. As soon as I got back on board the ship, I'd set out to paint what I had seen. So

I would watch everything. There wasn't time to actually make more than just a simple sketch. As soon as I got back on board the ship, I'd set out to paint what I had seen. So my paintings were from memory.

my paintings were from memory. I do have cameras, but frankly, I'm a very poor photographer, and I wouldn't be able to work from a slide because I couldn't get it developed until I returned home. I just did everything from seeing it, remembering it, and doing it.

Helen gave me all the moral support a person could want, and I think she enjoyed



Left to right, Malcolm Renfrew, Alf Dunn, and Chuck McConnell

doing everything that we did together. During the last few voyages she was almost a total invalid. She wasn't in a wheelchair, but she had to have a walker. Even so, it didn't slow us down one bit.

One of the most difficult things for Helen was a voyage that we took to the west coast of South America. On that voyage we started in the Caribbean, went along the north shore of Colombia, through the Canal down to Ecuador, again to Colombia, and then to Peru. We were going on to Valparaiso, but it was getting close to Cinco de Mayo. This is the day when almost all South American countries have their elections and political uprisings and shootings and so forth.

When we got to Peru we were told by the State Department that we shouldn't plan to go on down to Valparaiso because it was dangerous and we'd be confined to the ship. We couldn't go on shore because of the shooting danger. Instead of going down there, we went into Lima and started dickering with the travel agent to go up to Machu Picchu. We were to

leave early the next morning at five o'clock to fly to Cuzco which is the jump off point to take the narrow gauge railway to Machu Picchu. But first thing, before the sun was even up, we got a phone call from the travel agent who had made the arrangements for us. She said, "Don't plan to go to Cuzco. The airline is not going there anymore because five people were shot outside the hotel where you were going to stay. So you have to give up those plans, but we can offer you two different choices. One would be to go down to the south of Peru and see the lines."

I'd seen photographs in *National Geographic* and thought it wouldn't be much more than an aerial view of a highway system. But the other choice was, "Or we can take you up to Iquitos which is in the northeast corner of Peru. And from there you go down the upper Amazon in a dugout canoe to an Indian camp, it's called a Safari Camp, and go to the Indian villages out of there." Well that's what sounded great to us, so that's what we did. I brought back enough ideas for a lot of paintings that I did down there. Most of them are gone.

An Algerian Encounter

Did I tell you about being put in jail in Algeria? That was a low point for Helen who was frightened to death. Helen's concern really began the night of our arrival. As usual, I was painting a scene from our porthole, a glorious sunset over an oil refinery depot, and I was being observed by a little native hoist operator. Helen was nervous about his unseemly interest and cautioned me. And she was right!

A few hours later there came a loud knock on our door and in burst about five heavily armed army "heavies" demanding to see the unfinished painting. The leader snatched the entire pad of watercolor paper. I tried to explain that they could take the painting, but I should be allowed to peel off the painting, and to do so I was reaching for my pocket knife. Immediately all those menacing little Uzi machine guns came up. Helen let out a little cry of alarm.

Fortunately our ship captain and the shipping agent arrived on the scene and explained that I was only a harmless university professor. The threat seemed to be over.

However, the next day the Algerian police arrested me and took me to jail, convinced that I was a spy. I was in jail for just a short time, only for as long as it took for them to get the police captain there. I asked two French sailors who were in jail to explain to the captain that I hadn't taken any pictures. I had a camera that the police confiscated, but I hadn't taken any pictures. I explained I could prove it if the police would let me open up the camera and show that the film hadn't been used. I did this, and the captain of the police returned the camera. Helen wasn't there at the time; she was on board the ship. With me in jail was a woman doctor from the University of Chicago whose camera had been confiscated as well, but we both got off scot free.

Helen and Sons



Helen was very bright and very musical. She had a wonderful alto voice and was a great teacher. When she was in Yakima, the group

that she was working with won first in the state for choral music. After we were married and moved to Moscow, she became a substitute teacher. She substituted and taught music in the high school whenever they needed her. After our second son was born, she taught fifth grade at Lena Whitmore half days. She got along very well, and the kids thought she was marvelous. We had a wonderful life together.

When we lost our oldest son, Bruce, he was within a month of graduating as an electrical engineer from the University of Idaho. He had become an Eagle Scout and was a scoutmaster. Then on March 24, 1963, he was on his way to New York for the national college bowl contest after his team had won the regional one. He had been given a job with the guided missile program for the Boeing people, and it was a good job. On the basis of that he bought an English sports car, a Triumph, on Saturday.

He was very religious, too. He had a lot to do with building the little Baptist church on Mountain View Road. Also, he'd become engaged to a girl who had graduated from Florida State in Tallahassee. They had great plans.

On Sunday evening at 9 o'clock there came a knock on the door, and here were two of Bruce's best friends asking if we would come immediately to the hospital. Bruce had been in an accident. We got to the hospital but weren't let into the operating room. He died there, and that broke up Helen so badly her health just deteriorated right after that. She had arthritis, osteo and rheumatoid both, and she had diverticulitis. She had a lot happen to her just all at once, but that didn't stop us from our adventures.

At that time we had bought a trailer and we did a lot of exploring down through the red rock canyon country around Moab, Utah. I was doing lots of painting. I had two agents in Denver who were selling almost everything I was producing. We usually went there in August.

I was also teaching a traveling workshop here - a traveling workshop which meant that

the first part of the summer I spent traveling around the state teaching these workshops and then August we spent down in canyon country. Well, it was hot. We weren't suffering. We had an absolutely marvelous time, of course, because we were traveling with friends that I had grown up with in Twin Falls.



My youngest son, Jim, graduated in architecture. He had a long career back and forth between Puget Sound area and Boise where he worked for some of the biggest companies. He and his partner had a business in Edmonds. Then he was hired by this Callison Partnership which is a big outfit in Seattle with offices in San Francisco. His jobs take him all over. He spent two years commuting between Seattle and Omaha, Nebraska, doing a big shopping mall in Omaha. That was followed immediately by about two years in Chicago doing the same thing. Both he and his wife are airplane pilots. They have gone all over. In fact, he built an airplane. At any rate we're very proud of him and his accomplishments.

I have three grandchildren. One grandchild lived with me for a year. He graduated from the University of Idaho in electrical engineering too, high up in his class. He went to work as an administrator for Pacific Gas and Electric and he was put in charge of building a bunch of substations in California. His wife graduated from the University of Oregon in industrial engineering.

They both decided that they didn't want to be engineers anymore, although they were very good and had great jobs. He wanted to be a surgeon, so he quit the job in Portland and he and his wife went to Duke. He was in the medical school, and she got an M.B.A. Proctor and Gamble, who had heard about her, offered

her a job as soon as she got her Masters. She was a brilliant gal, and they had her lined up for a job as soon as she got her M.B.A. back there. They thought so much of her that they paid her and my grandson Jim to go to Australia for three months. He went to the medical school at Melbourne, and she was

studying possibilities for branching off into Australia. They decided to return, and they both work in Cincinnati. He's in his third year of medical school and in the top of his class of 200.

My second grandchild has a business. He's a painting contractor with a business in Boise. He's doing very well. He has twins, a boy and a girl. My granddaughter is married and has one child. She lives in Boise.

Art Career

I was selling my paintings when I first came back to Moscow to teach, and I was selling in Seattle, too. The Ford Motor Company put out a magazine called *Ford Times*. And they had other publications like the *Lincoln Mercury Times*, the *Ford Truck News*, and a number of other publications. The editor at the time was Arthur Lougee, and Rafe Gibbs, who was publicity director of the university at the time, had submitted an article on Moscow as part of a series that was called "My Favorite Town."

Arthur Lougee asked Rafe to send in samples of work from artists who might be able to do the illustrations. Rafe gathered up work from the artists he knew, including Mary Kirkwood, and other people in the state.

Apparently Arthur Lougee was impressed with what we sent and put me to work. Before this article appeared he asked me to go down to Enterprise, Oregon, and do one for an article



Alf Dunn and Rafe Gibbs

written by Nard Jones, a well-known writer in the Pacific Northwest.

I had just finished that one when he said William O. Douglas, the Supreme Court judge, had finished an article on Elgin. Would I do that one? So one after the other I started doing these articles for *Lincoln Mercury* and *Ford Times*.

All the work that I was doing took place on weekends. I didn't ever leave my classroom to do any work for myself. Well, that worked me pretty hard. That went on for almost all the fifteen years I worked for *Ford Times*. Other magazines like *Heritage* and *Cascade* also kept me quite busy. Usually every month I would do seven paintings plus drawings for a feature article for the Ford people.

I was also illustrating books. I illustrated a

book by David Sisselhoff about the land rush in Oklahoma, the Cherokee Strip, and two books for Rafe Gibbs, *Beacon for Mountain and Plain* and *Beckoning the Bold*.

Shortly after my work was seen all over the country, I got approached by various people who wanted to become agents. One of them was Sally Adams in Boise who has been with me all these years. She wanted me to work for her "Artists Unlimited" in Boise, and she had most of the businesses and corporations in and around Boise as clients. Then I went through a series of agents up in Coeur d'Alene and did a lot of work for various corporations in northern Idaho which Sally Adams also represented. Most of the work I was doing was going to corporations like the Morrison Knudsen

Company, an engineering firm in Boise; Boise Cascade; and Blue Cross. The biggest customer of all has been First Security Bank all through Idaho and northern Utah. It's been a long time since I've ever entered any shows because I've kept busy.

An Artist's Craft

I wouldn't have the foggiest idea of how many pieces I've done because I haven't kept track in any way. I've been very remiss in keeping records, and I don't even get everything signed. A lot of people bring the paintings back and say, "Would you sign this, please?"

The length of time it takes to do a painting varies depending on the complexity of the subject. Some things require quite a lot of research. Just recently I had a commission to do three paintings for one client, that included horses. I'm not awfully good with horses, but she and her husband had a business up near the

Hoodoo ski area. He was logging using horses instead of tractors to pull out the logs, so I did one painting showing this operation. Then she wanted a painting for each of her daughters showing them on their favorite horses.

I especially enjoy the research part of the sort of painting that I do. It's the approach that most illustrators have to use when they're asked to illustrate a book. For instance, usually the author lays down the house rules. He says, "I want this, I want this, and this," but you as the artist, an illustrator, have a different function. You have to cover the material that the writer didn't cover.

You have to enlarge upon it. I mean, if it's going to be a word picture in the manuscript, you use it as a guide but make your own interpretation. Sometimes the writer doesn't exactly go along with your interpretation and you have to come to an agreement. But I think that's the real function of an illustrator, to go beyond the limits of the manuscript.



Friendly Neighbors History

Jeanette Talbott



*The Old Time Fiddlers performing for the Friendly Neighbors.
Ernest Bunch and his guitar are at center. Photo courtesy of Scotte Hecht.*

In July or August of 1973, a group of about twenty seniors got together twice a week at the Moose Lodge for a noon meal of food and fellowship. Cora Knott was the first cook, rent was \$250.00 a month, and the donation for the meal was \$1.00 per person.

Ernest Bunch took a very active interest in the group, and with his help and enthusiasm the attendance grew to fifty or sixty. Besides the good meal, a drawing card was entertainment. Youthful dance groups, the Idaho Old Time Fiddlers, and other individuals shared their talents. Unfortunately, minutes from these more informal meetings were not recorded or have been lost.

In order to become a non-profit organization a name had to be chosen. The name "Friendly Neighbors," suggested by Mabel Tarbox, was selected. Officers in 1978 were Ernest Bunch, president; Harry Larson, vice president; Alma Mortenson, secretary and treasurer; and Cora Knott, Beatrice Bunch, and Ethel Johnson, board of directors.

Among the charter members were Marguerite Bumgamer, Harry Mortensen, Grace Rothwell, Fae Yockey, Lonnie Yockey, Mabel Crooks, Margaret Peterson, Stena Siron, Sam

Jensen, Florence Lange, Florence Jordan, Mabel Tarbox, Alice McCurry, Glee Stellman, John O'Reilly, Alma O'Reilly, Mary C. Curtis, Louise Wallen, Werner Pohle, Elfy Pohle, Nellie Pyle, Edna Terrell, Pat Terrell, Maxine Carico, and Geneve Lundquist.

The organization was eligible for commodities soon after it was organized, and transportation through funds provided by the Area Agency on Aging helped the attendance. Although the Friendly Neighbors were grateful for the use of the Moose Lodge, there were some difficulties with access. Stairs from the front were hard to climb, and the ground level back door was inconvenient and not wheelchair accessible.

A search was made for other suitable space. Many sites were considered, including the vacated Penney's building on Main Street. Most rents were prohibitive or parking space was too limited. About this time the old post office, which had stood vacant for some time, became a topic of community interest. Representatives from the Friendly Neighbors group went to the city council with a plea to save the building so that the seniors could have a permanent place to have their congregate meals.

After much discussion the council agreed that if the seniors could raise \$80,000 in three months their petition would be considered. This challenge swept the seniors into action. Ernest Bunch remembers going door to door explaining the need. Robert and Lillian Otness were very supportive, and Clifford Ott and Alvin Hofmann organized a paper drive. Everyone did their part through private pledges, various kinds of fund raisers, and help from business donors. Grants from the Area Agency on Aging to equip a kitchen brought the total raised to nearly to the \$80,000 amount. The city then matched with \$80,000 and more, and the renovation of the main floor went forward.

On October 24, 1981, the building was reopened. In a letter from Moscow Mayor Don Mackin, Ernest Bunch, president of Friendly Neighbors, was named honorary mayor for the day as a tribute for his contribution through Friendly Neighbors to the community.

In 1993 further renovation of the old post office, now the Community Center, made it necessary for the Friendly Neighbors to find a temporary meeting place. The Elks offered the dining room and kitchen. Again there were

problems with parking and access, and attendance declined. After major renovation that changed the kitchen area from the north end of the dining area to the south end, and the installation of an elevator, the Friendly Neighbors were permitted use of the building again.

At present, Friendly Neighbors meals are served to 60 or 70 people on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Attendance the last Thursday of each month, when the Idaho Old Time Fiddlers play, may rise to 80 or 90. Over the years the cooks who have had a big job guessing how many to prepare for are as follows: Cora Knott, Loris Walser, Eleanor Beiren, Esther Stone, Susan Rathbun, Clara Dockter, Diane Erickson, and Karen Peyer. All menus are approved by a nutritionist and menus for the coming week are printed in the *Moscow-Pullman Daily News*. Menus for the coming month and nutritional advice are given out at the meal site.

Volunteers, many of whom have served for years, help greatly in keeping the meal site running smoothly. Groups from local care centers, senior centers, and drop-in visitors are most welcome to join the Friendly Neighbors.



The Friendly Neighbors gather at the Community Center in 1999. Jeanette Talbott is at left in the foreground. Photo courtesy of Scotte Hecht.

My Father Juanita Frazier Dix

Note: This reminiscence is just one of the thousands of documents and other paper materials in our archives. The original is not dated, but it was accessioned in 1979. This archive, and other materials, are easily accessible to the public in our library. Mrs. Dix was active in the American Cancer Society, Gritman Hospital Auxiliary, Eastern Star, Eagles Auxiliary, Royal Neighbors, Moscow Historical Club, and the Business and Professional Women's Clubs. She and her husband, Corlis Dix, owned Moscow Electric Company. Her reminiscence does not mention that her father had been previously married to Lucinda Warmoth and had two daughters from that marriage. Mrs. Dix died in 1977.



William Frazier with a daughter from his first marriage, Anna Burr. At right is his granddaughter Audrey Wilson and her daughter.

One hundred years ago a few people with vision and courage came to this community and settled here. Why here? I do not know, but my father, William Frazier, was one of them. Today with our luxuries and conveniences I wonder how many of us could endure even a few of the hardships they suffered.

My father arrived here by covered wagon from Missouri on May 5, 1871. On the way they had several skirmishes with Indians. He homesteaded three miles northeast of town and built a log cabin.

In 1873 my mother also left Missouri by covered wagon. She was 17, with a husband and small baby. When they had gone some distance, the sheriff of the county caught up with them, as one man was leaving owing a debt. In the altercation my mother's husband was shot and killed by the sheriff when he stepped between the man who owed the debt and the sheriff. She came on with the caravan to this unknown land. In 1875 she met my father, and in 1876 they were married.

My father always believed in the idea that behind every successful man is a good woman, and I do not believe he ever changed his mind about my mother during their 61 years together.

Both of them were born in Tennessee, moved to Missouri, and finally met here. He liked to tease my mother by saying, with a twinkle in his eye, that she chased him from Tennessee to Missouri and finally caught him here. They lived in the log cabin for a few years and then built a house. The log cabin was still standing when my father died.



Mrs. Frazier, seated, and her daughter Edna Suddreth

There were no stores, so they grew what they could and twice a year made a trip to Walla Walla for staples. This trip took three weeks and prices were high. A barrel of four, 50-pound sacks of flour was \$50, and 50 pounds of sugar was \$25. Later they went to Lewiston, but the grade was so steep they had to tie a log behind the wagon to keep it from rolling onto the horses.

My father had the first header in the area. He was very proud of it and helped many of his neighbors harvest their crops.

He and a number of others thought Lewiston was too far away to be their county seat as it took three days to make a trip there. They began a drive to have Nez Perce county divided, and in 1888 succeeded in having Latah County created by an Act of Congress and signed into law by President Cleveland. The Act also appointed my father, J. L. Naylor, and W. W. Langdon the first county commissioners.

My father prospered and bought land on credit that reached from our farm to what was then the Frazier school. Then came the panic of 1893 and the loss of all the crops from the heavy fall rain. As there was then no government to bail him out, he buckled down and in time rebought the homestead. But it seems his incentive to own land was gone, and he never bought other land again.

As I was the youngest of 12 children, my father was 55 years old when I was born. As at that time we didn't know about the generation gap and that we weren't supposed to be able to communicate, we had very good communications and did so until he died when I was in my 20s. I remember that an orange was only a Christmas treat and hard to come by, but my father always saw that we had one in our Christmas stocking.

He was strong willed. One Sunday while he was waiting for my mother to get ready for church, he was reading the Bible in front of the fireplace and chewing tobacco. He went to spit in the fireplace, and some juice splashed on the Bible. From that instant, he never touched

tobacco again.

He was always interested in politics and was considered somewhat of a visionary, but I'm sure he would be amazed and pleased to see how many of the social reforms he believed in are now a fact. A hundred years have gone by and all of these people have gone to pioneer in another land, but the candle they lit by their efforts here lights our way today. I found a poem that with a little paraphrasing I thought fit these pioneers.

A candle's but a simple thing,
It starts with just a bit of string.
Yet dipped and dipped with patient hand,
It gathers wax upon the strand,
Until, complete and snowy white.
It gives at last a lovely light.
Their lives seem like that bit of string.
Each deed they did a simple thing.
Yet day by day on life's strand,
They worked with patient heart and hand.
They gathered joy, made dark days bright.
And gave to us a lovely light.



Four of the eight officials appointed in 1888 for Latah County. From left to right, seated, are William Frazier and John Naylor. Behind them are W. W. Langdon and John Lieuallen.

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

	Member	Friend	Contributor	Sustainer	Sponsor	Patron
Individual	\$10-15	\$16-30	\$31-75	\$76-150	\$151-499	\$500 up
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Privileges are identical for all classes; the higher categories and sliding scales are available to those wishing to make a donation above the basic membership dues. We sincerely appreciate these donations which help us provide our many public services. Dues are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

The services of the Latah County Historical Society include maintaining the McConnell Mansion Museum with historic rooms and changing exhibits, preserving materials on Latah County's history, operating a research library of historical and genealogical materials, collecting oral histories, and sponsoring educational events and activities. Our mission is to collect and preserve artifacts, documents, photographs, diaries, maps, and other items relating to Latah County. These are added to the collections and made available to researchers as well as being preserved for future generations. If you have items to donate or lend for duplication, please contact us.

Our library and offices are in Centennial Annex, 327 East Second St., Moscow; hours are Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The McConnell Mansion Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. Visits to the museum at other times can be arranged by calling (208) 882-1004. Admission is free to members and donations are requested for non-members. Our FAX number is (208) 882-0759 and our e-mail address is <lchlibrary@moscow.com>. The Mansion's first floor is handicapped accessible. Researchers who cannot access the Annex can telephone or write us; research materials can be made available at the nearby Moscow Library.