

# LATAH LEGACY



Community Foundations: Public Archaeology at Moscow High School

Idaho's Educational Activists: The Fight for Kindergarten in the 1970s

A Glimpse of the Golden Age – Exploring the Handmade Paper Dolls of Elaine Meyer

Thirty Seconds over Tekoa: The Japanese Balloon Bomb Attack on Latah County in March 1945

A Brief History of Emmanuel Lutheran Church

The Talisman House, the people project

Latah County  
Historical Society



Latah Legacy is published by Latah County Historical Society,  
327 East Second Street, Moscow ID 83843

Tel: 208.882.1004

[www.latahcountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.latahcountyhistoricalsociety.org)

Subscriptions are included in annual membership dues.

ISSN 0749-3282

©2023 Latah County Historical Society

#### Contributors

LeNelle McInturff, Editor

Melissa Rockwood, Design

Latah County Historical Society  
McConnell Mansion  
Window Project

Learn about the project and how you can support it at  
[latahcountyhistoricalsociety.org/windowproject](http://latahcountyhistoricalsociety.org/windowproject)  
or follow the QR code

## THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 BUSINESS SPONSORS

**Moscow Glass**  
& AWNING INC.

 **Gritman**  
MEDICAL CENTER

  
**Allstate**  
You're in good hands.  
Ted Curet  
208-882-8000

  
**Guardian**  
Property Services  
208-882-3511

  
**HODGINS**  
Since 1890

  
Friends of Cordelia

  
D/A **DAVIDSON**

  
**TRAIL & SWIFT**  
FINANCIAL  
Northwestern Mutual

*Howard Hughes*  
Appliance • Television • Sleepshop

  
MOUNTAIN VIEW  
AUTOMOTIVE

 **Hayden Ross**, PLLC  
Certified Public Accountants

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

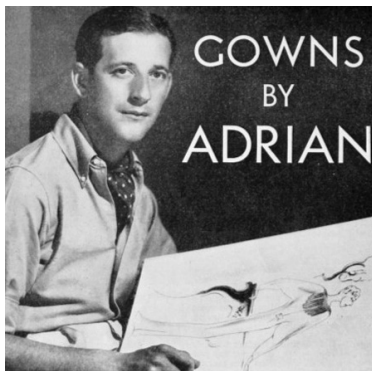


## **Community Foundations: Public Archaeology at Moscow High School..... 4**

*By Massey L. Jordan, Katrina C.L. Eichner, Renae J. Campbell and Mark S. Warner*

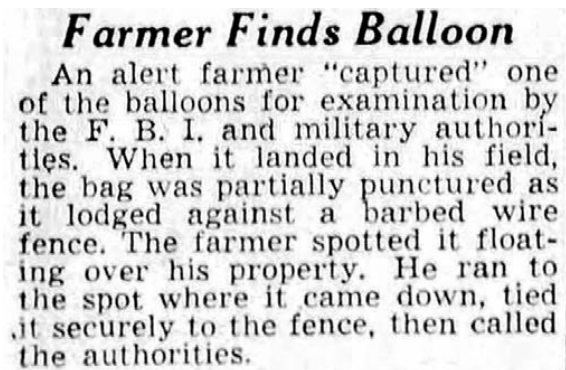
## **Idaho’s Educational Activists: The Fight for Kindergarten in the 1970s ..... 8**

*By Rebecca Scofield*



## **A Glimpse of the Golden Age Exploring the Handmade Paper Dolls of Elaine Meyer..... 12**

*By Jantzen Bates*



## **Thirty Seconds Over Tekoa: The Japanese Balloon Bomb Attack on Latah County in March 1945 ..... 23**

*By Robert Lee Sappington*

## **A Brief History of Emmanuel Lutheran Church ..... 30**

*By Nancy Ruth Peterson*



## **The Talisman House, the people project..... 38**

*By Ariana Burns, Palouse Anthropology*

# Community Foundations: Public Archaeology at Moscow High School

By Massey L. Jordan, Katrina C.L. Eichner, Renae J. Campbell and Mark S. Warner

## Our Project

The University of Idaho (UI) conducted an archaeological excavation in Fall 2023 at Moscow High School (MHS) in downtown Moscow, Idaho, which was a long-awaited continuation of a previous field season in the fall of 2019. The 2019 dig sparked a rebranding of the University's archaeological efforts: Idaho Public Archaeology (IPA), emphasizing our community engagement and public-oriented archaeological research. Our goals for the 2023 season aligned with the mission of Idaho Public Archaeology: to share our findings and interpretations with the community, to engage high school students with the project and materials, and to increase collaboration between the University and Moscow High School. We also expected to learn more about Moscow's history, especially about the town's educational institutions. The project also is a perfect opportunity to engage with Moscow residents as many community members currently attend MHS or attended in the past.



Idaho Public Archaeology team members enjoy the sunny work day.

Our 2023 project proved successful with the recovery of several thousand artifacts related to the school and to homes that once existed on the property, while also engaging with a total of 601 community members during the 8-week excavation.

## Background - The Site

Moscow High School as we know it today is in fact the third iteration of the community's high school. Its current

students who visited our dig were continuously surprised by how their school is a part of a complex history of education in Moscow, and that this history is still tangible on and around the property.



Idaho Public Archaeology team members spend the day washing and sorting artifacts.

The first Moscow High School was built in 1892 and stood where the current school's annex is located (see map in Figure 1). Later, it became known as the Whitworth

School and was razed in the 1930s. In 1912, the building now known as the 1912 Center was built across the street and became the second Moscow High School. Somewhat confusingly the 1912 building was also called the Whitworth School at one point. In 1939, the current high school was built, with subsequent additions added on in the 1960s and 1970s. Several houses and other buildings existed on the property in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. We believe there to have been at least nine houses and nine other structures present during that time period. Historic photographs, written sources, and Sanborn fire insurance maps from 1893-1950 provided key guidance for helping us decide where to begin breaking ground.

## The Fieldwork - What We Did

From the outset, this dig was intended to be accessible to as many students as possible. Typical archaeological field schools are expensive and take place over the summer, when many University students are obliged to work or care for their families. Instead, this field school was integrated into the regular curriculum of the fall semester, providing students hands-on field experience with minimal disruptions to their lives.

Our class met on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30-4:00 PM, and Saturdays from 8:00 AM-12:00 noon. The dig

lasted from the fourth week in August to the second week in October. In 2019 we had 18 students participate; this go-around we had an astounding 35 students enrolled, making this project the largest UI field school in at least the last 30 years. Participants ranged from freshmen to PhD candidates. Additionally, we had seven volunteers, one of



Nicole Rojas and Sophie Streiff excavate a unit in front of the MHS annex.

which was a Moscow High School student. Our volunteers contributed a total of 42 hours over the course of the dig. We did not meet our goal of engaging more high school students in the actual dig, but the reality was that with such an enormous number of college students participating we did not have the capacity to take on more than a few volunteers. On the other hand, as fieldwork occurred, a number of Moscow High School teachers brought their classes out for site tours. We had a total of 301 students visit: 213 high school students as well as 88 students from Lena Whitmore Elementary School.

Once our Sanborn maps and historic photographs had been properly inspected, we conducted a series of test pits using shovels and trowels around areas of interest at the site. Using the artifacts recovered in these pits, we decided where to conduct our full-scale excavation units.



Massey Jordan excavates a shovel test pit.



Trinity Hunter excavates a unit near the Moscow High School entrance.



An intact ROTC badge found down the hill beside the current school building.

## What We Found

Our 2023 field season was more productive than the 2019 dig, yielding several thousand historic artifacts. We recovered pieces of household ceramics, such as plates and tea cups; glass, such as bottle and window fragments; nails; architectural materials, including brick and mortar; plastic items such as toys; writing utensils such as graphite and metal ends from pencils (known as ferrules); and much more. Notable finds include an intact ROTC badge. We also found a cosmetics container that still contains makeup, a partial green plastic army man, and a decorative pocket watch chain. In addition to being visually fascinating, these artifacts and every other artifact recovered (even the rusted nails and bits of graphite) will begin to tell us about the lives of students at Moscow High School throughout the years, as well as the lives of people who lived on the property in the past 150 years. These narratives will become clearer in the spring semester as





Kelly Pape cleans a glass artifact.

students process and analyze what was found in a follow-up class at UI entitled “Archaeological Lab Methods and Public Outreach.” The key point is that even though the digging is done, there is still a lot more work to do to make sense of what we found.

The most surprising find from the 2019 dig was a portion of the foundation of the original 1892 school, located just in front of the current school annex. In 2023 we focused heavily on exposing and excavating more of this special structure. We uncovered most of what we believe to be the last remaining chunk of Moscow’s first high school. While a few artifacts were found near the



Massey Jordan inspects a metal comb.

foundation, we noticed something peculiar: a thick layer of yellow clay. We began noticing this layer of yellow clay in every single unit around the site, though the thickness of the layer varied depending on the area. This observation indicates that at one point in time, there was a mass filling event across the site where this yellow clay was brought in and filled on top of the property. While we are unsure at the moment of when or why this occurred, this layer of clay begins piecing together the puzzle of how this parcel of land in Moscow has been used over time.

## Next Steps

The 2023 Moscow High School field school proved to be extraordinarily successful, enrolling many university students and drawing a huge number of community members to the site to learn more about Moscow’s history. We also recovered several thousand artifacts and valuable information from the layers of the earth, which allow us to begin interpreting how the property that currently houses Moscow High School has been used throughout time by the town, educational institutions, and inhabitants. While we did not engage with more high school volunteers, we plan to continue sharing our project and findings with the public through online exhibits and multiple Master’s theses from University students who were involved in the dig.

## Sources

“Moscow High School [04].” Ott Historical Photograph Collection, University of Idaho Library Digital Collections, <https://www.lib.uidaho.edu/digital/ott/items/ott199.html>.

“Razing Whitworth School, with new high school at left.” Ott Historical Photograph Collection, PG 90, Clifford M. Ott Collection, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives, <http://www.lib.uidaho.edu/special-collections/>.

Warner, Mark S., Katrina C.L. Eichner and Renae J. Campbell. (2019) “Community Heritage From the Ground Up.” *Latah Legacy* 46(1): 19-23.

Warner, Mark S., Katrina C. L. Eichner and Renae J. Campbell (2020) “Rethinking Field School Delivery: Flexibility Fostering Accessibility.” *Journal of Archaeological Practice*.



Nicole Rojas and Sophie Streiff excavate a portion of the foundation of the 1892 school.

# Idaho's Educational Activists: *The Fight for Kindergarten in the 1970s*

By Rebecca Scofield

**In August 2024**, my second child will enroll in Moscow School District's public, all-day kindergarten. As it is for many of our friends, this is cause for great celebration in our home. Having access to public kindergarten will make sure my daughter has an excellent educational foundation and will save our family thousands of dollars. Not so long ago, Idaho families did not have these options. It took extraordinary efforts by grass-roots activists, politicians, and journalists to achieve education expansion in the 1970s.

Kindergarten was first conceptualized in the 1830s by Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel in Germany and was introduced in the United States in the 1850s by German immigrants. It did not reach Idaho until 1893 when Margaret Roberts, a prominent women's suffrage activist, founded Boise's first free kindergarten. Calls for statewide public kindergartens, which existed in other western states like California, increased in Idaho after 1900 through the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA). Some Idahoans,



The Moscow League of Women Voters studied the pros and cons of public kindergartens in 1970. Shown left to right: ??, Connie Talbott Hatch, ??, Marta Robertson, Nancy Hosack. 1966. LCHS 01-11-334



Unidentified young student in early Moscow School. 1899. LCHS 01-06-262

like the Falters family who wrote to Governor Cecil Andrus in 1975, fought for public kindergarten for their children, their grandchildren, and finally won it for their great-grandchildren. Idaho was one of the last seven states to introduce the additional grade to the public education system.

Working parents in the 1960s and 1970s often struggled to find quality care for their children. Private kindergartens could charge twenty dollars to thirty dollars per month per child. Around 40% of the state population made less than \$7,000 annually; for families with several children under the age of five, the cost was too high. For single parents who had to work, the situation was almost impossible. One letter explained these private situations thus: "There are 20-30 children enrolled in each session with only one adult" in "crowded playrooms without enough play equipment or fire exits or bathroom facilities." As one irate parent noted, dog kennels were more highly regulated in Idaho than kindergartens. Parents expressed distress at having to leave their children in these types of places, but smaller care situations were often too expensive. Activist Michele Hansen noted that in Idaho during the late 1960s it was about the 'haves' and the 'have nots.' Most importantly, "those that, probably, needed it least, got to go to kindergarten, and those who needed it most, did not."

Resistance in the state to the idea of public kindergarten focused on three main issues: finances, anti-statism, and concern over lazy mothers. In 1970, after years of failing to regulate private kindergartens, Governor Don Samuelson reinvigorated pro-kindergarten activists by threatening to veto any public kindergarten bill. He stated that Idaho could not afford the "luxury" of kindergartens because environmentalists were fighting against mining corporations entering the state's pristine White Cloud



Mountains. Without the additional tax revenue from economic development of natural resources, the state could not possibly expand the educational budget.

Many constituents supported this viewpoint, labeling it a money grab by teachers, as one indignant man wrote Andrus: “This Kindergarten stuff is only a baby sitting job meant to give more teachers a salary at the tax-payers’ expense. [...] Let their mothers play with them at home.”

Others believed that athletics, vocational education, or graduate studies should be prioritized over early childhood

*Resistance in the state to the idea of public kindergarten focused on three main issues: finances, anti-statism, and concern over lazy mothers.*

education. In Latah County, the League of Women Voters undertook a kindergarten study in 1970. Ten members served on two committees researching the history of kindergartens, the arguments in favor of and in opposition to public kindergartens, and the financing of kindergartens. They found that 80% of first graders in Moscow had attended a private kindergarten and that the benefits of public kindergarten were clear in terms of learning, socialization, and early intervention for some children. The membership voted that public kindergarten should be introduced but only with sufficient funding: “More than half of the members who expressed an opinion felt that additional funds for vocational education should have higher priority than initiating public kindergartens next year.”

Most importantly, opponents to kindergarten asserted that it posed a threat to the “traditional family.” As pro-kindergarten activist Anne Staton Voillequé from Idaho Falls explained, “[I]t seemed to be such a nasty thing to even talk about, to have public kindergartens. [...] There

was such a view that somehow it was a bad thing to do to children, to take them out of the home and put them in kindergarten.” Many people assumed that by expanding public access to childcare, women would be able to leave the home more easily, eroding the need for women to maintain their “traditional” roles as homemakers. Other opponents argued that women who wanted public kindergarten were not just seeking employment but engaging in frivolous pastimes – wanting more time to “play bridge and barhop.” Others called it a “Communist plot.” Having gone to kindergarten in 1944 in California, Voillequé could not understand the hostility towards it.

Samuelson’s threat to veto and the election of pro-education Governor Cecil Andrus helped rouse the statewide coalition of activists who made up the so-called Kindergarten Lobby. In the late 1960s, Jan Koch, a Stanford graduate and mother of four small children, worked with several like-minded women to call a meeting through the YWCA in Boise. A group of twenty-five women designed twelve non-tuition kindergartens in the Boise area for families earning less than \$1,000 per family member.



Class Picture ca. 1910 with Mrs. St. Johns, teacher. School unidentified. LCHS 01-11-338

Several of these women also helped funnel federal dollars into the Boise School District for Head Start and school district-run public kindergartens in the late '60s and early '70s.

While many of these activists remain nameless, a few who gave their time were Mary Clagett Smith, Marilyn Shuler, Mary Shinn, Jennie Lang, Jean Viegel, Virginia Gabica, Karen Trenholm, Beth Sterling, Carol Stockdale,



Bovill combined Grades 1 and 2 in days before public kindergartens in Idaho. 1959-60. LCHS 02-11-021

Mary Tate, Ruth Pauley, and Lindy High. Sally Terrill, a working mom with young kids, said, “I wasn’t the big politician. I was the foot soldier.” These women wrote to their legislators, attended educational conferences in the state, spoke to local Rotary and Lions clubs, rallied their PTAs, and volunteered at non-tuition kindergartens. They worked in tandem with women who were more politically connected or in the legislature themselves, like Edith Miller Klien and Hope Kading, who had worked within the legislature for decades to change policies concerning women and the rhetoric around education. They built a bipartisan effort with women like Kading working to persuade her Republican colleagues, while Democrats like Andrus were lending support to their efforts to keep the issue depoliticized. By their very presence in the statehouse, alongside the phone calls, letters, and women’s voices at community meetings, these activists were essential in making legislators address education and family issues.

Alongside Andrus, men in education and in the media were also instrumental in the campaign for kindergartens. Men like Byron Johnson, a prominent lawyer who eventually became an Idaho Supreme Court Justice, helped chair groups like the Public School Legislative Task Force and publicly spoke out in the press to support kindergartens. For many activists, a major victory was the election of Roy Truby as the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1974 because he had centralized a message of growing the educational finance pie, instead of simply slicing it thinner. These men not only had access to formal avenues of power that women did not, they also asserted that kindergarten was not solely a “women’s issue,” but instead about working families, children’s right to an education, and the benefits education can bring to society at large.

Between 1971 and 1975, Governor Andrus urged the

legislature to fund kindergarten every year. By 1973, years of activism were starting to change the public debate, but the legislature still refused to act. *The Idaho Statesman* pointed out, “By every estimate in the executive and legislative branch, the 1973 legislature will have nearly \$30 million more for spending than did the session a year ago. There is ample money for kindergartens if the legislature wants to take that route,” yet there was a “parsimonious aura” among legislators. In contrast, groups like the “Unified Education Council, comprised of the Idaho Congress of Parents and Teachers, The Idaho School Boards Association, the Idaho School Superintendents Association and the Idaho Education Association, are in agreement on the need [to] initiate a public kindergarten program on a voluntary basis.” The Idaho PTA explicitly stated at the 1973 annual meeting that if a kindergarten bill was not passed in 1974, they would push for a statewide referendum.

THE IDAHO STATESMAN,



### *Sticker Backs Kindergartens*

GOV. CECIL ANDRUS says, “You can’t knock Local 5 Year Old” bumper sticker on his black a live-year-old” as he pastes a “Support Your limousine.

\*\*\* \*\*

## **Campaign for State Kindergartens Begins as Andrus Affixes Sticker**

Governor Cecil Andrus was a long-time supporter of efforts to introduce public kindergartens in Idaho. *The Idaho Statesman*, October 23, 1971

As many parents began to have better access to preschool training for their kids through Head Start and other non-tuition kindergartens, parents in middle socio-economic brackets began to feel the squeeze. Mrs. R. G. Wieber from Lewiston noted that, because she worked, their family made too much to qualify for Head Start but she did not earn enough to afford private kindergartens. In her area she was paying \$72.50 a month for childcare.



Andrus Hails "Tremendous Victory"

## Kindergarten Bill Passes

Good news for supporters of public kindergartens in Idaho. The Idaho Statesman, March 5, 1975

# THE IDAHO STAT

111th Year, 312th Issue

Boise, Idaho, Thursday, March 13, 1975

A Part of I



AN 'ORCHID' FOR THE GOVERNOR -- Five-year-old Jeannine "J.J." Bienn selects an orchid-colored crayon for Gov. Cecil D. Andrus to use Wednesday to sign the Public Kindergarten bill into law. Watching the deliberations are members of the Lowell Ele-

mentary Kindergarten, Idaho legislators and Lt. Gov. John Evans. Jeannine is the daughter of Mrs. Anne Bienn, 1801 North Twentieth. Story on Page 4-B. (Photo by James Dean - The Idaho Statesman)

Jeannine "J.J." Bienn, 5, chose an orchid-colored crayon for Governor Andrus to use to sign the kindergarten bill into law. The Idaho Statesman, March 13, 1975

Ultimately, by the early 1970s, more low-income kids were finding support through local and federal programs and well-off parents could easily afford the cost of private kindergartens, but middle-class Idahoans were struggling and beginning to express their grievances.

In Potlatch a frustrated parent wrote Governor Andrus stating the school board rejected a kindergarten proposal because of "a few problems such as busing, space and expenses." This despite the fact that "a form was distributed to some townspeople with an outcome of 80% in favor of kindergarten." Appalled by the lack of discussion of how to surmount the challenges, she noted that she and other parents were working on a petition to get the school board to reconsider. The frustration of parents who wanted to see change happen more quickly clashed with local and state officials saying federal funds were simply too limited, especially as state revenues increased.

Finally, in February 1975, the Idaho House passed a kindergarten measure by the narrowest of margins, with 36 in favor and 34 opposed. Years of work had shifted only six votes, but this was the crucial support the Kindergarten Lobby needed. The Senate quickly passed the measure, and

the bill was signed by Governor Andrus on March 12, 1975. Kindergartens were rapidly introduced throughout the state. By the 1976 school year 74% of Idaho school districts had public kindergartens, including 65% of school districts within legislative districts that voted no on their creation.

**Looking back** on the fight and the eventual victory of 1975, Andrus asserted, "Kindergartens became part of our public schools for no other reason than the vocal and increasingly exasperated demands of literally thousands of people." After seven decades of fighting, the activism of the people involved in Idaho's Kindergarten Lobby showed how people across the political spectrum could band together over a single issue. Mostly, as Sally Terrill so eloquently stated, in Idaho, "if you work together with other people, you can effect change." Universal kindergarten has helped ensure that all Idaho students can enter first grade with foundational skills, no matter their family's income level, and has helped thousands of children get screened for learning disabilities at an earlier age. Finally, it helped working families of all kinds, ensuring that single parents and women seeking to find careers had one less barrier to overcome.

Personally, I have benefited from these efforts in many ways: I attended kindergarten in Emmett, Idaho, in 1990, I have two children in the Idaho public school system, and I work with countless students at the University of Idaho who are products of our public schools. I could not be more grateful for the efforts of these activists.

### Reference List:

- Cecil Andrus Papers, Idaho State Archives.
- The Idaho Statesman*.
- Idaho Oral History Collection, Idaho State Archives.
- PTA Papers, Idaho State Archives.
- Moscow League of Women Voters Papers, University of Idaho Special Collections and Archives.
- Personal interview and correspondence with Janice Koch.
- \*Much of this article is drawn from the forthcoming chapter "The Kindergarten Lobby: Women, Work, and Education in Idaho, 1970-1975" in *Voices of the Gem State: Idaho Women's Stories and Struggles*, edited by Laura Woodworth-Ney, (Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press, forthcoming 2024).

# A Glimpse of the Golden Age

## Exploring the Handmade Paper Dolls of Elaine Meyer

By Jantzen Bates

*It's a crisp autumn day and you pull your jacket tighter around you while walking home from school. As the breeze picks up, some new faces at the magazine stand catch your eye. "Are the new issues out already?" you think. Cover stories like "What it takes to be a 1939 Girl" and "Garbo in Love Again?" pique your interest enough to take a closer look.*

*Running your hands through your pockets, you find your spare dime. Perfect, enough to grab one for yourself—but which should you pick? With only ten cents you don't have enough for Photoplay, but maybe Silver Screen? There's always LIFE, but that doesn't seem as fun. Maybe this time you can try Star Comics, or Look Magazine, even Daily Detective. With so many options, how can they expect someone to pick just one? Better be quick about it though, Pat is waiting and she won't like you being late.*

*Right, that settles it, you'll grab a Silver Screen; they always have the best behind-the-scenes pictures anyway. As you pass your dime over and pick up the issue, your mind starts to race imagining what's inside. You resume your walk home feeling a little warmer, excited to show Pat your new find and wile away an afternoon together.*

In September 2023 longtime Moscow resident Holly Hein contacted the Latah County Historical Society to ask if we could help digitally preserve some paper dolls created by her mother (Elaine Meyer neé Ellis) and do a bit of research into the contemporary fashions that inspired the dolls' clothing. At the time, we had no idea this request would come with a treasure trove of over 100 handmade paper items, including four dolls and their accompanying clothing and accessories. The dolls' wardrobe sports fashion from the late 1930s, running the gamut from the golden age of Hollywood to early science fiction. To fully appreciate



Elaine at age 14 ca. 1940

this collection, it is important to understand not only the historical context of the fashion in Elaine's childhood, but also its creator: Elaine, herself.



Elaine at age 8 in front of her grandmother's boardinghouse, ca. 1934

### *Elaine's Childhood*

Elaine Meyer was born in Omaha, Nebraska, on April 6, 1926, to parents Dorothy and Robert Ellis. Dorothy and Robert divorced when Elaine was only three, resulting in Dorothy's move back into her mother Florence's home in Omaha. Florence owned a six-bedroom duplex that she operated as a boardinghouse for local women. By the start of the 1930s, Florence, Dorothy, Elaine, and Dorothy's sister Grace all lived together, along with various boarders. This was much to Elaine's delight, who enjoyed living and learning in this feminine environment. "These other young women, working women, living in the house, they traded clothes and shoes and jewelry [...] I think it was probably really fun living in [that] house," Holly recounted.<sup>1</sup>

In this community of women, Elaine grew up surrounded by love, discipline, hard work, and an appreciation for a well-assembled outfit. Although the entire United States was struggling from the Great Depression, the camaraderie and strength of Elaine's matriarchate resulted in a stable and fondly remembered childhood. She spent her formative years tending to her



Elaine at age 20, ca. 1946, and a coordinated creation. (All family photos courtesy of Holly Hein)

grandmother's garden, helping around the boardinghouse, reading adventure books, and spending afternoons at the movies.

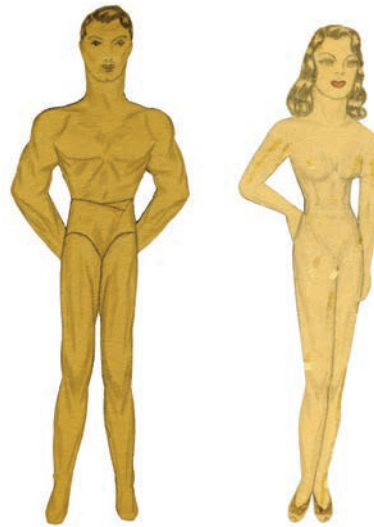
It wasn't until Dorothy's passing from cancer in 1938, when Elaine was twelve, that there was any crack in her otherwise solid foundation. A shocking blow to anyone, the loss of her mother was made even more difficult by Elaine's young age. It is likely no coincidence that this was when she began to make her paper dolls. Alongside her good friend Pat, Elaine collected a stack of magazines, her school notebooks, crayons, and pencils to spend hours in her grandmother's attic creating dolls. It was a way for Elaine to focus on something she enjoyed and dream about the places she would one day visit.



Elaine (left) with her Aunt Grace (middle) and Grandmother Florence in front of their home, mid-1940s

### *The Creative Process*

As a child of the 1930s, paper dolls were nothing new to Elaine. These types of dolls were not only commercially



Paper doll bodies were made using heavier paper.



Sample fashion creations

available, but also a common toy for children to create for themselves. Magazines would regularly feature paper doll inserts for the reader to trace or cut out, including the popular Dolly Dingle dolls created by Grace Drayton.<sup>2</sup> For children who could not afford store-bought dolls, but who wanted more unique fashions, any scrap bit of paper or miscellaneous art supplies could be used to create an inspired design.

Elaine's dolls were no different. They were made using whatever she had lying around. The doll bodies were made using heavier paper like manila folders or cardstock, and the garments and

accessories were made from reused pages of her school notebook. Many of the outfits still have remnants of old letters, lists, and even homework on their backside. Faint original pencil outlines of the doll bodies, seen on most of the clothing, illustrate how they were made. With a silhouette drawn, Elaine would then attach accessories like jewelry, shoes, handbags, even turbans and swords, before beginning the arduous task of cutting away the excess paper.

One of the most striking aspects of Elaine's costumes is their precise fit. It is clear which outfit was made for which individual doll body, despite each only having minute differences in size. Her use of cutaway negative space helps to show off the doll underneath, making the fashions feel more realistic. Typical paper doll clothing of the era featured tabs that could be used to attach fashions to the dolls without them falling off, allowing the dolls to be upright when playing. Elaine's creations did not have



Sample gown and accessory creations

tabs (except for a few hair accessories). This suggests it was really the act of creating the fashion she sought and not necessarily play.

This notion is bolstered by Elaine's impressive ability to depict fabric texture, highlights and shadows, and how the clothing is draped against the human form. She was incredibly adept at making the clothing follow the lines of the body with an innate talent for rendering fabric.

### *The Collection*

Some pieces from Elaine's work were lost to time, but the surviving collection includes:

- four doll bodies (three male and one female)
- 67 gowns/women's period costumes
- 15 blouse/skirt ensembles
- seven cloaks/coats
- 27 hats or hair accessories
- four pairs of shoes
- 16 men's period costumes
- five superhero suits
- six military uniforms
- nine "contemporary" men's suits

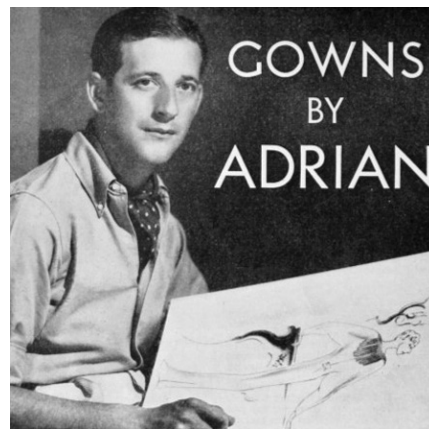
Not only is the sheer size of the collection impressive, but also its condition in the context of its age at nearly 80 years. Nearly all the clothing is fully intact, uncreased, and without signs of stains or sun damage.

The key to its preservation lay in the handmade black construction paper scrapbook Elaine used as a carrying case for the dolls. The dark black paper keeps the bleaching properties of the sun at bay, while each page houses the individual ensembles in their proper place. In total, Elaine had 17 categories for her clothing: Night Clothes, Sport Clothes, Town Clothes, Hair, Dance Clothes, House Dresses, Blouses and Skirts, Fun Clothes, Spring and Fall

Suits, Hostess Gowns, Winter Dresses, Coats and Capes, Evening Dresses, Wedding Clothes, Costumes, Men's Clothes, and Junk. Elaine was enamored with all types of fashion and showcased not only what she likely saw in her own home, but also in numerous outside influences. Some modern biases suggest fashion of the 1930s and 40s was staid or boring, but Elaine's dolls prove the opposite.

### *Hollywood Influences*

During the whole of the 1930s Hollywood was in its heyday. The start of the decade saw the increase of talking films and the end introduced technicolor, a dazzling new visual effect. The film industry was becoming bolder and brighter, creating more complex narratives with far-off lands, magical powers, and ragtag explorers. These all helped to feed the nation's escapist fantasies during the realities of the Great Depression.



Adrian Gilbert, head costume designer/couturier for MGM Studios from 1928-1941 (*Picture Play*, January 1935, pg. 38)

below: Virginia Bruce modeling two evening gowns from MGM Studios for *Screenland's* July 1939 issue (pg. 58)



Large-scale costume dramas and adaptations of classic novels also became incredibly in vogue, and by the middle of the decade, Hollywood reporters remarked on the trend:

“The technical excellence of the modern screenplay is such that no theme is too subtle or delicate, too mighty or impressive to be beyond the scope of the magicians behind the cameras of Hollywood. The classics, on the other hand, offer very inviting problems [...] the picturesque costumes immediately give a different appearance to the action, and the memories of the great players of the stage – Mansfield, Booth, Barrymore – spur the modern screen stars to prove that they are not secondary talents.”

- Eliot Keen, “The Great Costume Cycle Reaches Its Peak” for *Silver Screen* magazine, May 1935.<sup>3</sup>

For a young girl dreaming of adventure, these period films were a glimpse into different ways of life. Whether it was aboard the ships of swashbuckling pirates, in the court of Marie Antoinette, or among the people of Victorian England, a trip to the movies was a guaranteed escape into somewhere fresh and exciting.

Contemporary Hollywood fashion was also experiencing an enthralling change in style. Elaine may not have known it at the time, but many of the magazine images



Magazines selected for primary research were chosen from those shown in this John Vachon photograph from 1938.

and costumes she was most inspired by were all designed by the same man, Adrian Gilbert, professionally known solely as “Adrian.” As the head costume designer/couturier for MGM Studios from 1928-1941, Adrian worked on some of the most popular films of the decade. It was his time at MGM when he made arguably his most prolific impact on fashion. His sleek, highly detailed and figure-hugging costumes became virtually synonymous with the Hollywood glamour of the 1930s film industry. Adrian’s style was a far cry from the boxier and more boyish trends of the 1920s, and his elaborate period costumes are still referenced in industry to this day.

Often credited in films of the time with the single line “Gowns by Adrian,” he catered to the highest echelons of celebrity clientele, making exquisite evening wear for such stars as Greta Garbo, Joan Crawford, Marlene Dietrich, and Norma Shearer. His designs sought to showcase



Garments and accessories were drawn on used school notebook pages.

the unique charms and talents of each actress, creating fashions entirely different from one to the next. He was quoted in 1935 for a *Picture Play* magazine interview, expressing:

”It is the mind of a woman that counts. If that is dull the most exotic frock, as well as the most simple, will somehow look ridiculous. An active mind develops a definite personality with one character trait that a woman must dress for. If she expresses it, she cannot help but be smartly gowned whether she wear gingham or velvet.”<sup>4</sup>

Adrian’s impact can be seen throughout many of Elaine’s garments and it is clear that something in his work spoke to her artistic passion.

### *Adventure and Fantasy Influences*

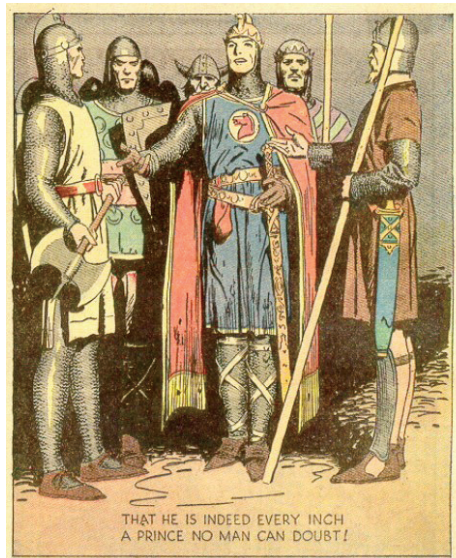
While clearly influenced by Hollywood fashions, there were also many garments created based on some of Elaine’s other interests. Comic books and newsprint comic strips were an increasingly popular form of entertainment during the latter half of the 1930s, and many consider 1938 to be the start of the Golden Age of Comics. Like dime store novels and pulp magazines of the day, comic books fed into the nation’s need for distraction. Paul Lopes wrote in his book, *Demanding Respect: The Evolution of the American Comic Book*, “As the field of pulp magazines faded into history in the mid-twentieth century, comic books easily replaced them as [the] reader’s favorite popular magazine [...] they provided avid readers with a menagerie of funny animal, teen, romance, crime, western, war, horror, and science fiction comic books.”<sup>5</sup>



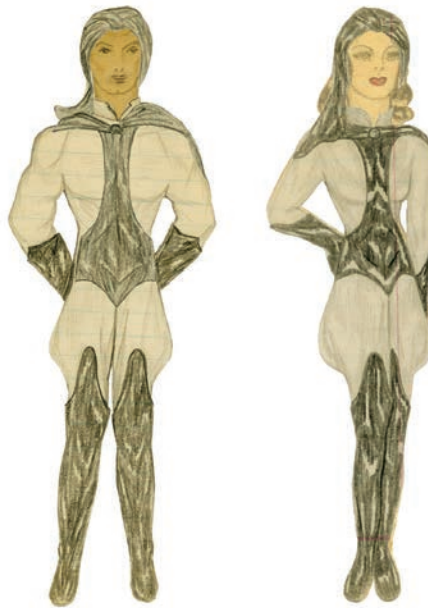
The Green Mask, issue 1, July 1940, created by Walter Frame, and inspired fantasy creations

This type of media would have been around Elaine at the newsstand or in school, and it is easy to see how it may have inspired her various super suits and futuristic garb. The smoothly organic lines, expressive colors, and distinctive highlights and shading can all be traced back to this early comic style.

Another popular series at this time was the Sunday comic strip, *Prince Valiant in the Days of King Arthur*. *Prince Valiant* was created by artist Hal Foster in 1937 and depicted the trials and tribulations of the exiled Prince Valiant as he journeyed toward becoming a knight of the Round Table.<sup>6</sup> Long praised for its intricate art style and electric action sequences, *Prince Valiant* became an instant favorite of Elaine's and one she continued reading



Prince Valiant writing and artwork by Hal Foster and one of Elaine's creations



for the rest of her life. Given her love of the series, it is no wonder she created a multitude of outfits that drew from Foster's artwork. Her knights in particular seem to echo Foster's attention to detail and punchy color schemes.

### Direct Inspiration

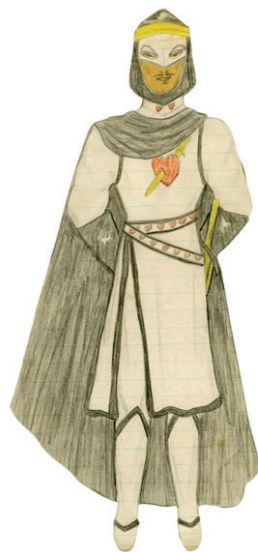
Elaine never saved the magazine images that inspired many of her dolls, so we hoped to find some exact image references that she would have used when creating her fashions. It was of the utmost importance to look for sources that would have been realistically available to Elaine between 1936-1943 (just before and after the creation of her dolls). When recounting her doll making later in life, Elaine mentioned

using magazines as a major source of inspiration, but given their ubiquitous nature at the time, narrowing down which magazines was a challenge.<sup>7</sup>

Ultimately, the magazines chosen as primary research sources were *Silver Screen*, *Screenland*, *Photoplay*, *Picture Play*, and *LIFE*. These were all selected because of their appearance in the photograph *Newsstand, Omaha, Nebraska* by John Vachon<sup>7</sup> from 1938, showing what would have been accessible to Elaine around the time she was making her dolls. Given her love of film and fashion, it is a reasonable estimation that she would have gravitated towards cinema-specific and human-interest publications.

Digitally scanning the full collection of her fashions allowed us to virtually dress the dolls and gave us an invaluable tool in terms of viewing the outfits as Elaine originally intended, without risking the integrity of the paper. Much of the compiled research is the result of poring through hundreds of pages of digitally-preserved magazines to find images or silhouettes that match Elaine's creations.

There were numerous costumes similar to those Elaine created. The specific pieces in the images shown here are some that, with a reasonable amount of assurance, we can say directly inspired her garments. Elaine often took her own liberties with style, colors, and accessories, even when basing her designs on existing photographs or illustrations. The outfits all have her distinctive flair for detail and embellishment.





**Photoplay March 1935, pg. 19**

This late 18<sup>th</sup> century-inspired gown (by Adrian) was created for Jeanette MacDonald, a popular contemporary actress and singer, for the filmed operetta *Naughty Marietta* in 1935. The extravagant costume was created using quilted taffeta, extensive handmade ruffles, yards of organza, and an ostrich plume hat.<sup>8</sup>



**Photoplay January 1936, pg. 20**

This headshot of actor Joel McCrea was featured in the article “Perfect Camera Face (Beginning a Revealing Story of a Star You’ll Recognize)” after he signed a five-year contract with top producer Samuel Goldwyn. The “hand-in-pocket” headshot was a popular pose for actors wanting to portray a more down to earth feel.<sup>9</sup>



**Photoplay January 1936, pg. 61**

In a fashion spread titled “Here’s Dietrich for Smartness,” the incomparable German-born actress Marlene Dietrich is photographed wearing a winter ensemble designed by Travis Banton of Paramount Studios. The two-piece skirt

suit (described as “startlingly short”) is draped with an elaborate silver fox stole and large gem encrusted brooch.<sup>10</sup>



**Silver Screen February 1938, pg. 33**

For the article “Behind Their Smiles Lies a Secret Dread,” discussing popular actors’ fears and phobias, American baritone singer Nelson Eddy was highlighted for his early career anxiety over not being a “real actor.” Eddy went on to star in several films with fellow opera singer Jeanette MacDonald to much acclaim.<sup>11</sup> While maybe purely coincidental, it cannot be overlooked how much Eddy’s pose resembles the three male doll bodies.



**Screenland March 1938, pg. 89**

“Stunning, not statuesque, is the word for Virginia Field, above” was the caption used for the following photo of British actress Virginia Field in a bizarrely written article discussing Douglas Fairbanks Jr.’s comeback from social exile after his splashy divorce from first wife, Joan Crawford.<sup>12</sup> Written “in his own words” the article does not directly implicate Field in any relationship rumors with Fairbanks, but her inclusion was likely not accidental.



Stunning, not statuesque, is the word for Virginia Field, above



**Screenland May 1938, pg. 60**

Actress Loretta Young not only modeled for this glamour school fashion featurette but also served as editor for the piece. Her ensemble was described: “Loretta’s white slipper-satin dinner ensemble challenges the eye by means of silver embroidery done over heavy padding so that the design of acorns and oak leaves stands out in carved relief on the tunic jacket.”<sup>13</sup>



**Screenland December 1939, pg. 27**

1939’s cultural touchstone *Gone with the Wind* (and Vivian Leigh’s eye-popping 17-inch waist) caused many popular fashion houses of the day to ask, “Should we bring corsets back?” Intrigued by the question, *Screenland* writer Elizabeth Wilson queried current stars for their own views on a corset revival. Most stars were squarely for or against. The constantly contrarian actress Mae West gave the double entendre-laden response: “I don’t recommend corsets for soft-ball or tennis, but I do recommend them

for indoor sports, man’s variety.” Marlene Dietrich was also polled, stating: “I do not believe corsets are coming back. American women will not submit!”<sup>14</sup>



**The Women 1939**

*The Women*, the movie based on the 1936 play of the same name by Clare Boothe Luce, is considered by many fashion historians to be the ultimate showcase of Adrian’s prowess as a top designer. Howard Gutner, a foremost expert on the designer, called the film “[Adrian’s] definitive take on the subject of costume vs. fashion. More than any other film he worked on at MGM, *The Women* was a dazzling example of what Adrian felt was his most important task as a costume designer: the ability to interpret character and mirror the mood of the scene.”<sup>15</sup> Famously the film features a five-minute fashion show in blinding technicolor (the rest of the run-time being in black and white) of futuristic and surrealism-inspired garments. This garment was only shown for roughly 30 seconds.



**LIFE Magazine October 14, 1940, pg. 39**

A remake of the 1924 Douglas Fairbanks film of the same name, *Thief of Bagdad* (1940) is an interpretation of “Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp” from *One Thousand and One Nights*, with the notable exception of the thief and the prince being two separate characters.

At the time it was the most expensive British film (with a two-million-dollar budget) ever made. Germany’s declaration of war on Britain in 1939 prompted producer Alexander Korda to remove his production team and stars to complete the last 10 percent of the filming in the Grand Canyon. *LIFE* magazine’s October 14, 1940, film review discussed the state-of-the-art camera tricks employed by the production:

“By means of rear-projection process shots, double exposures, miniatures and matte shots, they made a mechanical horse fly, a two-hundred-foot jinni sizzle in and out of a six-inch flask, a magic carpet soar through skies, a forty-foot spider ensnare a boy...”

- Editor Henry R. Luce<sup>16</sup>

The coverage in American magazines was slim, and very few production stills seem to have made it into the cinephile magazines. Regardless, *The Thief of Bagdad* was a major hit when it premiered in the United States. Given the number of outfits Elaine made in reference to the film, it is safe to assume she was also a great fan.



**LIFE Magazine January 15, 1940, pg. 31**

Alfred Hitchcock’s classic film about the mystery and intrigue within Manderley Mansion, *Rebecca*, was arguably the top film of 1940. The integral costume, the gown of Mr. de Winter’s (Laurence Olivier) late wife, is pictured. One or both of these two Selznick International Pictures publicity shots were featured at one time or another during the 1940 press tour in all five of the magazines researched for this article. Filmed and distributed in black and white, it is unlikely Elaine ever saw a color photo of this gown, so the color scheme was entirely her own choosing.<sup>18</sup>



Conrad Veidt as Jaffar in *The Thief of Bagdad* and one of Elaine’s creations

**LIFE Magazine June 17, 1940, pg. 68**

This advertisement for Dewar’s White Label Whiskey honored various uniformed Scottish military regiments and ran mainly from the late 1930s until the end of the Second World War. This particular advertisement was honoring the 10th Royal Hussars. The detailed illustrations were also available for purchase as frameable 9x12 reprints.<sup>17</sup>

“Rebecca” (continued)



Rebuke instead of praise from her husband is the second Mrs. de Winter’s reward for wearing the ancestral gown. He orders her to go and change. Then she learns that malevolent Mrs. Danvers has induced her to dress like Rebecca at her last ball.

**Silver Screen April 1940, pg. 12**

This in-depth interview of Hollywood newcomer Lucille Ball regales the audience with Ball's personal tips and tricks for a glamorous self, including steaming your face first thing in the morning, using a vinegar rinse and daily brushing for silky locks, and salon cold cream for makeup cleansing.<sup>19</sup>



of glistening patent and sparkling jet. Beneath is a basic dress which is perfect for wear with accessories." Listed for a steal at only \$19.95 at the time.<sup>21</sup>



**Silver Screen July 1940, pg. 39**

For this publicity shot of Joan Crawford and Frederic March for their film, *Susan and God* (1940), once again Crawford's evening gown was custom built for the star by Adrian using pleated chiffon and multi-color silk organza.<sup>20</sup>



**Screenland April 1941, pg. 5**

The film *Ziegfeld Girl* starred Lana Turner, Hedy Lamarr, and Judy Garland as they all vie for the opportunity to join the cast of the world-famous *Ziegfeld Follies* showgirl revue on Broadway. There is also an alternate version of this same poster design where the color scheme is blue rather than red.<sup>22</sup>



**Photoplay October 1940, pg. 36**

In the article "Success Clothes for White Collar Girls," fashion publicist Eleanor Roberts is shown in her cocktail dinner ensemble of a: "Black wool suit with its rich facade

**LIFE Magazine January 27, 1941, pg. 41**

This classic 1941 Johnnie Walker advertisement asks, "Can you name these immortal Scotch Figures?" with the accompanying clues: "A leader in his walk of life for over 120 years. Often to be seen in the company of kings and

well-known persons, yet a democratic spirit. All continents praise his rare qualities.”<sup>23</sup> Johnnie Walker’s iconic red cutaway coat and sphere-topped walking cane are a dead giveaway for this mascot inspired outfit.



### *Elaine’s Later Life*

When Elaine entered high school there was an abrupt decline to her doll making. The dolls’ clothing styles do not seem to age past 1942, putting their overall production timeline to a mere four years. While it had been an enjoyable hobby and a fulfilling way to use her artistic talent, as time passed the need to escape into her art was less prevalent. Her extroverted nature and love of community made Elaine a constant source of entertainment to those around her and helped in making lifelong friendships.

In her teenage years, some flirtatious note passing with a boy at her after-school job eventually led Elaine to the great love of her life, Jim Meyer. Elaine and Jim married in 1951 and relocated to Colorado until Jim’s career in television engineering led them to live abroad for multiple years. Elaine lived out her childhood dreams



Elaine at age 16, ca. 1942

of far-off places alongside her husband and two children, Holly and John, as they explored the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Europe, and the United Kingdom. In 1975 Elaine and her family settled in Moscow, Idaho, where she would spend the rest of her life until her passing in 2015. As a forty-year resident of Latah County, Elaine was loved and respected by all those who knew, worked, and interacted with her.

Holly later said about her mother’s collection:

“She did the paper dolls. She quietly played with her good friends who supported her after her mother died. And you know, she was in a good place. She couldn’t have been in a better place at the time. She had people who loved her. She did these things and she spent so much time being able to do these well. She didn’t just scribble them out. It was something that she really focused on. And then she healed from that. She started dating, she started working, going to dances and parties [and] then, you know, other things came in and she could leave that behind. So, I don’t think she ever regretted that she didn’t become a fashion designer or anything; I think it was something that filled a need for her at that time.”<sup>1</sup>

Artifacts like Elaine’s dolls help to put history in context and remind us all that creation and artistic passion have always been enduring parts of the human condition. In the midst of a chaotic world, it is rewarding to look back at hidden treasures of the past and imagine spending an afternoon with friends, designing art that would last a century.

### *Acknowledgments*

Thank you to Holly Hein for allowing Latah County Historical Society to explore her mother’s fabulous collection. Also, thanks to the LCHS crew, Kaitlynn Anderson, Elaina Pierson, and Hayley Noble, for their constant support. And lastly, thanks to the Media History Digital Library at the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research for access to their repository of thousands of high resolution, digitally-scanned periodicals, magazines, and newspapers, without which completion of this project would have been impossible.

### *References*

- <sup>1</sup> Bates, Jantzen. Holly Hein Oral History of her Mother Elaine Ellis Meyer for Latah County Historical Society. Personal, December 12, 2023.
- <sup>2</sup> Kirsch, Francine. “Costumed by Hand: Yesteryear’s Best-Dressed Paper Dolls.” Edited by Tanya Heinrich. *Folkart*:

- Magazine of the American Folk Art Museum* 32, no. 2, Spring 2007.
- <sup>3</sup> Keen, Eliot. "The Great Costume Cycle Reaches Its Peak." Edited by Frank J. Carroll. *Silver Screen* 5, no. 7, May 1935.
- <sup>4</sup> Reed, Dena. "Gowns by Adrian." *Picture Play* XLI, no. 5, January 1935.
- <sup>5</sup> Lopes, Paul Douglas. "The Early Industrial Age 1: Pulp Logic and the Rise of the American Comic Book." Essay. In *Demanding Respect: The Evolution of the American Comic Book*, 1–29. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009.
- <sup>6</sup> Murphy, Cullen. "Prince Valiant's England." *The Atlantic*. February 1, 1994. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1994/02/prince-valiant-s-england/303372/>.
- <sup>7</sup> Vachon, John. *Newsstand. Omaha, Nebraska*. Photograph. November 1938. Library of Congress.
- <sup>8</sup> "Letters." *Photoplay* XLVII, no. 4, March 1935.
- <sup>9</sup> Speare, Dorothy. "Perfect Camera Face (Beginning a Revealing Story of a Star You'll Recognize)." *Photoplay* XLIX, no. 1, January 1936.
- <sup>10</sup> Waterbury, Ruth, ed. "Photoplay's Own Fashions." *Photoplay* XLIX, no. 1, January 1936.
- <sup>11</sup> Silver, Gordon R. "Behind Their Smiles Lies a Secret Dread." *Silver Screen* 8, no. 4, February 1938.
- <sup>12</sup> Morley, Dickson. "Confessions of a Comeback – Douglas Fairbanks Jr." *Screenland* XXXVI, no. 5, March 1938.
- <sup>13</sup> Young, Loretta. "Screenland Glamour School." *Screenland* XXXVII, no. 1, May 1938.
- <sup>14</sup> Wilson, Elizabeth. "Hollywood Beauties in Corset War." *Screenland* XXXX, no. 2, December 1939.
- <sup>15</sup> Gutner, Howard. *Gowns by Adrian: The MGM years, 1928-1941*. New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, 2001.
- <sup>16</sup> Luce, Henry, ed. "Korda Opens Stops on Trick Camera Effects for his Thief of Bagdad." *LIFE Magazine* 9, no. 16, October 14, 1940.
- <sup>17</sup> Dewar's White Label. "For Distinguished Service, Honours of The 10th Royal Hussars." *LIFE Magazine* 8, no. 25, June 17, 1940.
- <sup>18</sup> Luce, Henry R., ed. "Movie of the Week: Rebecca, Alfred Hitchcock Films 'Story of a Man's Conscience.'" *LIFE Magazine* 8, no. 3, January 15, 1940.
- <sup>19</sup> Lee, Mary. "Even Glamour Girls Have Beauty Problems and Lucille Ball Frankly Talks about Hers." *Silver Screen* 10, no. 6, April 1940.
- <sup>20</sup> MacDonald, Jane. "Marriage and the Marches." *Silver Screen* 10, no. 9, July 1940.
- <sup>21</sup> Walters, Gwenn, Frances Hughes, June Smith, and Peggy Sweet. "Photoplay Fashions: Success Clothes for White Collar Girls with a Flair for Living." *Photoplay* LIV, no. 10, October 1940.
- <sup>22</sup> Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. "Ziegfeld Girl." *Screenland* XLII, no. 6, April 1941.
- <sup>23</sup> Canada Dry Ginger Ale, Inc. "Johnnie Walker: Can You Name These Immortal Scotch Figures?" *LIFE* 10, no. 4, January 27, 1941.

### Visual Only Reference

- Carroll, Frank J., ed. "Night and Day Under Southern Skies." *Silver Screen* 8, no. 4, February 1938.
- Foster, Harold R. *Prince Valiant*, Vols 1-3, 1937-1942. Seattle, WA: Fantagraphics Books, 2017.
- Frame, Walter. "Origin of the Green Mask and Domino." Comic strip. *The Green Mask* 1 July 1940.
- Bruce, Virginia. "Screenland Grammar School." *Screenland* XXXIX, no. 3, July 1939.
- Korda, Alexander. *The Thief of Bagdad*. Great Britain: United Artists, 1940.
- "LIFE Magazine Digital Archive." The New York Public Library, n.d. <https://www.nypl.org/node/444480>.
- "Media History Digital Library." Media History Digital Library, Wisconsin Center for Theatre and Film Research. Accessed Winter 2023. <https://mediahistoryproject.org/>.
- The Women*. DVD. United States: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1939.

# Thirty Seconds Over Tekoa: The Japanese Balloon Bomb Attack on Latah County in March 1945

By Robert Lee Sappington

## Introduction

The Japanese archipelago is separated from the mainland of Asia by approximately 120 miles and it encompasses four main islands, plus more than 14,000 smaller ones, that extend approximately 1900 miles from north to south. Archaeological evidence indicates that its geographic isolation contributed to the development of a distinct cultural history beginning 14,000 years ago, with state-level societies appearing CE 300 (AD 300) (Scarre 2018:257, 574). According to tradition, following a long series of conflicts, the Sun goddess *Amaterasu* decided to aid one of the participants and sent a golden kite (a hawk), whose brightness blinded his opponents. The victorious *Jimmu* became the first emperor in 660 BCE and he and subsequent emperors were considered to be divine descendants of the goddess (Martin 1997:18-19). Although many modern scholars consider that event to be mythological, it is still noted annually on 11 February (Martin 1997:1-2). Japan has the longest ruling dynasty in the world and the succession has continued unbroken to the present day with *Naruhito*, the 126th emperor, in place since 2019.

For thousands of years the emperor and his subjects considered themselves to be protected by supernatural forces. When a Mongol fleet arrived in CE 1272 (AD 1272; all following dates are CE/AD), the invaders were destroyed by a *kamikaze* (a “divine wind” or typhoon). After a second attempted invasion met the same fate in 1281, Japan remained isolated and was ruled by *shoguns* (warlords) who gradually reduced the power of the emperor. Although Portuguese sailors arrived in 1543, Japan’s leaders

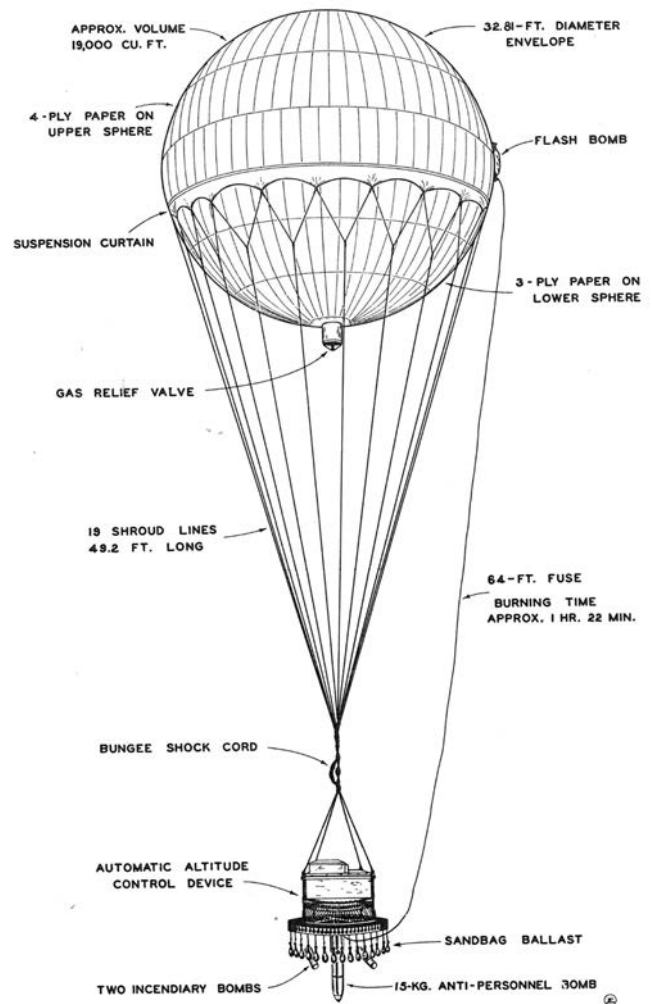


Figure 1. Japanese A-Type paper balloon bomb. Adapted by Mikesch 1973: Figure 37.

successfully limited contact with outsiders until 1853 when United States Navy (USN) Commodore Matthew C. Perry arrived with a squadron of steam-powered warships and demanded that Japan open itself to trade. Perry returned a few months later and formal relations were initiated with the United States and soon with other western powers (Feifer 2006).

The next emperor initiated the Meiji Era in 1868 which focused on the rapid modernization of their feudal society (Martin 1997). A growing sense of nationalism led to the replacement of *samurai* banners by the first national flags in 1871. During the Meiji Era Japan followed the example of western imperialism by establishing a protectorate in Korea in 1876. Japan sided with the western powers during the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900 and defeated Russia in a contest over Manchuria in 1904-1905. During World War I Japan joined the Allies and took control of German colonial possessions afterward. During the 1920s Japan continued to increase its naval power and began to fortify its island possessions as part of its policy of imperial expansion (Morton 1975).

As an island nation with limited natural resources, Japan's economy required it to import food and raw materials. Japanese hegemony into Manchuria in 1931 and then into China in 1937 led the United States and the League of Nations to embargo strategic materials (Morton 1975:190). In response, the Japanese leadership determined to obtain raw materials through conquest. Japan took control of French Indochina (now Vietnam) in September 1940. Japan simultaneously attacked the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), the British Empire in Hong Kong and Malaya (now Malaysia), and American territories at the Philippines, Wake Island, and Hawaii in December 1941 (Morton 1975:197). In response to this "day of infamy," the United States declared war on Japan on 8 December 1941.

By early 1942 Japanese forces were ascendant everywhere in East Asia and across the Pacific Ocean. Their unbridled success combined with the traditional sense of divine protection led its leaders to feel immune from attack. Following a succession of defeats, the United States was desperate for a response. Several months of planning led to the Doolittle Raid which involved a combined Army and Navy operation. Sixteen Army B-25 medium bombers were loaded onto the deck of the *USS Hornet* in San Francisco in April 1942. The plan called for the carrier task force to approach within 200 miles of Japan and then to launch the planes to bomb military targets in five Japanese cities. The planes would continue to interior China where they would land at bases that were not under Japanese control. However, detection by Japanese patrol boats precipitated an unanticipated launch from 600 miles away which meant that fuel would be critical. All American planes except one found their targets at Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, Kobe, and Nagoya. None of the planes were damaged by Japanese aircraft or antiaircraft fire (Glines 1991; Scott 2015).

One plane deviated from the plan and landed in the Soviet Union while the remainder exhausted their fuel and crashed along the Chinese coast. B-25s carried relatively light bomb loads and the physical damage was minimal, but the psychological impact was tremendous. The Doolittle Raid was an incredible boost to Allied morale. It was the first successful American military operation in World War II. *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* soon appeared as a best-selling book written by one of the participants (Lawson 1943). The next year it became a major motion picture starring Spencer Tracy as Colonel James M. Doolittle. The Doolittle Raid remains an iconic event in American history (Glines 1991; Scott 2015).

For American planes to have flown unscathed over the Imperial Palace and the home islands was inconceivable to the Japanese and the psychological blow was devastating. The Japanese response was a desire for revenge on the American mainland. A Japanese submarine shelled the West Coast in 1942, but that action was far too limited. The Imperial Army had begun research into balloon bombs in 1933 (Hidagi 1981:87). During the 1930s Japanese meteorologists calculated that it would be theoretically possible to attack North America by using the jet stream. That concept would now be pursued and military leaders would apply that knowledge to develop an ingenious means of retaliation.

## The Fu-Go Program

Beginning in 1942 the Japanese developed the *fu-go* program (from *fusen bakudan* or "fire balloons") to launch bomb-carrying balloons from the main island of Honshu to North America (Coen 2015). The balloons would be sent to an altitude of 30,000 to 35,000 feet, travel at speeds of up to 200 miles per hour for 6,000 or more miles, and

then silently descend without warning to wreak havoc. Once airborne, the balloons would be carried by the wind without human control. The planners estimated that only 10% might reach the United States and, therefore, thousands would be required.

Two types of balloons were invented. The B-Type balloon was developed by the navy and made of silk and rubber. It was used for recording weather data and was

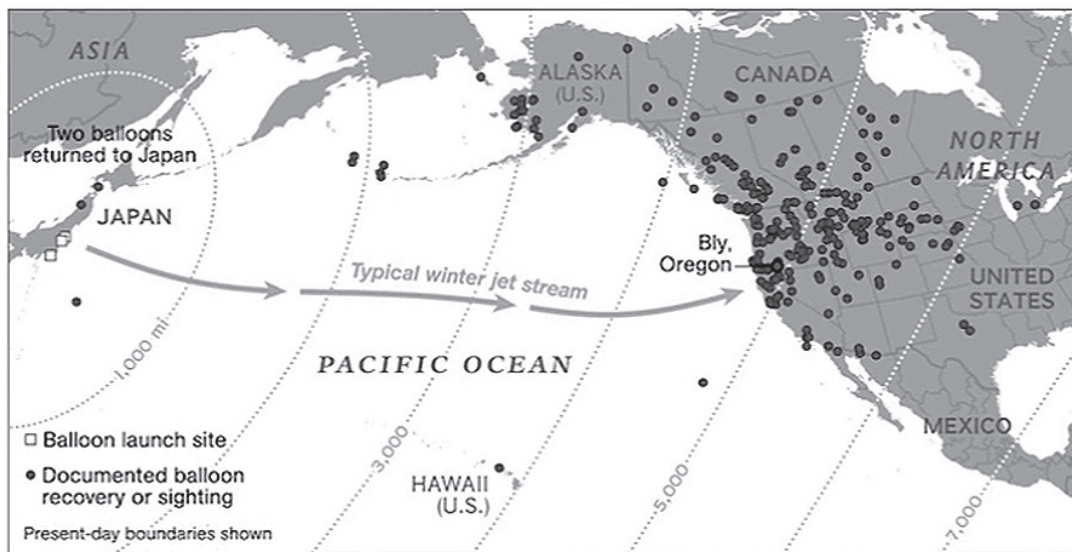


Figure 2. Location of known Japanese balloon bomb sites. Adapted from Rizzo 2013.



tested as a potential weapon, but it did not reach the production stage. Approximately 300 were launched, three of which were recovered by Americans in late 1944 (Mikesh 1973:11). The A-Type balloons were developed by the army and had a similar design, but they were made from paper and were much less expensive to produce. The A-Type balloons would become the first intercontinental weapon. The following details were summarized from numerous sources compiled by Mikesh (1973:40-66).

A-Type balloons were made from four or five laminated sheets of mulberry paper and coated with varnish. The various sections (gores) were assembled by high school girls to create the canopy (or envelope). The canopy was 33 feet in diameter and 100 feet in circumference. On the bottom of the canopy was a relief valve made from sheet steel. The completed canopies were transported to launch sites where they were assembled and inflated with hydrogen gas. Nineteen 45-foot-long hemp ropes (shroud lines) were attached by a suspension curtain to the outside of the canopy and tied together with rubber shock absorber cords that were attached to a chandelier (undercarriage) that hung some 50 feet below the canopy (Figure 1).

The chandelier consisted of two aluminum rings. The upper ring supported a one-cell wet battery that powered the aneroid barometer (altimeter) that controlled altitude and a series of charges that released 35 sand-filled paper bags, each weighing 3-7 pounds, at timed intervals over a span of four days. The ballast bags were attached to the lower aluminum ring. Also attached to the lower ring were combinations of anti-personnel and incendiary bombs.



Figure 3. Cover of the secret intelligence report that included the Farmington balloon.

Most balloons carried a standard army Type 92 15-kg (33-pound) high-explosive bomb and two or more army Type 97 12-kg (26-pound) or 5-kg (11-pound) thermite incendiary bombs. After a time calculated to reach North America, pre-set fuses would release the bombs at

measured intervals. The incendiary bombs were intended to create massive forest fires that would create panic across the Pacific Northwest. After the bombs were dropped, there was a timed self-destruct mechanism (destructor) with a 64-foot-long fuse that extended from the chandelier up to the equator of the canopy where it would detonate a paper bag filled with 250 g (8.7 ounces) of magnesium flash powder.

The cost of each A-Type balloon was approximately 1,000 yen (\$2,300) (Weidner 1946:18), and the program intended to employ 15,000 of these weapons (Mikesh 1973:17). Multiple launch sites were developed and the initial balloons were launched on 3 November 1944. Depending on the weather, a daily average of 30 balloons were launched (Mikesh 1973:63), and as many as 150 were sent aloft on some days (Conley 1968b:74). The first known balloon to reach the United States consisted of fragments of a B-Type balloon, with an undercarriage including a radio transmitter, that was recovered by a USN patrol boat off San Pedro, California, on 4 November. The U. S. Coast Guard then recovered an A-Type paper balloon near Kailua, Hawaii, on 14 November. The fragments bore Japanese markings but there was little concern until two additional balloons were found a few weeks later. The paper balloon near Thermopolis, Wyoming, carried a bomb that exploded on 6 December (Mikesh 1973:70). The Kalispell, Montana, balloon was a front-page story in Libby (*The Western News* 1944). When the news reached Japanese agents, it showed the potential for a successful program. Japanese propaganda soon claimed great results including 500 casualties and numerous fires (Conley 1968b:76-77) and it warned of more effective balloons to come, with some carrying biological agents and Japanese troops.

## The American Response

As more balloons were encountered, American authorities realized that they were being subjected to an entirely new kind of offensive weapon and they imposed voluntary censorship on the media on 4 January 1945. Federal, state, and local agencies were advised of the threat and military authorities created a standard form for reporting discoveries. Both the Army and the Navy compiled classified reports. Within months there were hundreds of documented cases ranging from Alaska to as far east as Michigan and as far south as northern Mexico. In one case near Alturas, California, an intact balloon was recovered which allowed American authorities to conduct tests that would soon enable them to comprehend the threat. However, in virtually all other cases only fragments of canopies or chandeliers were found; sometimes unexplained explosions resulted in the subsequent discovery of bomb fragments.

WASHINGTON			1 Envelope	2 No. Piles	3 Thickness	4 No. Gores	5 Width Gores	6 Color	7 Env. Destructor	8 Type En. De. Fuse	9 Length of (8)	10 No. Shrouds	11 Type shrouds	12 Type valve	13 Valve marking	14 Valve number	15 Valve pressure	16 Shock absorber	17 Ballast gear	18 Battery	19 Ca Cl solution	20 Pr. Un. Plugs	21 Single plugs	22 Type aneroid	23 Setting no. 1	24 Setting no. 2	25 Setting no. 3	26 Setting no. 4	27 Type bel. dest.	28 Wiring diagram	29 Arming wires	30 No. sandbags	31 Mt. sandbags	32 No. incendiary	33 Type "	34 No. H. E.	35 Type H. E.	36 No. top bag				
No.	Date	Place																																								
1	12-2	Spokane																																								
2	14-2	Prosser	✓										A			6997		0	A	A			Δ	2.6	6.3	22	36m															
3	21-2	Sumas	SP																																							
4	21-2	Sphrata																																								
5	25-2	Goldendale	✓									A	A			8478																										
6	28-2	Tacoma	F																																							
7	4-3	Puyallup Orting						C																																		
8	10-3	Toppeniah	B					A				B				3378						15.1																				
9	10-3	Sphrata number 2	SP					A			19	A	B			3398		A	A		23																					
10	10-3	Satus Pass	✓			38						A				12051		A	A		13.3																					
11	10-3	Moxee	✓																																							
12	11-3	Cold Creek	SP			40			A	A		A				6767		A	A																							
13	13-3	Everett Paine Field	✓																																							
14	13-3	Chinacum Fort Townsend	SP																																							
15	13-3	Farmington	✓			60			A	A	19	A				13729		A																								
16	1-4	Colville	✓						A			A																														
17	5-4	Walla Walla	✓									A	B	W		17781		A	A			4																				
18	3-5	Mount Ranier	B																																							
19																																										
20																																										

Figure 4. The official details for the Farmington balloon. It was light tan with light tan seams and included an intact envelope, 60 gores, had a standard destructor and fuse, 19 standard hemp rope shrouds, a valve numbered 13729, shock absorbers, and a standard ballast gear destructor. There was no chronological order to the valves, and high numbers were employed as a deliberate deception to inflate the actual number of balloons launched. *Adapted from Technical Air Intelligence Center Report #41 (1945:24).*

The Western Defense Command was designated to coordinate all balloon defense activities in the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> Service Commands on 4 January 1945 (Conley 1968b:74). The Fourth Air Force developed countermeasures that included the Sunset Project which placed radar stations and fighter squadrons along the coast of Washington that were intended to intercept and destroy incoming balloons. However, the balloons were not detectable by radar and by the time the project was established the balloons were no longer being launched. Although several balloons were destroyed by fighter planes elsewhere, 68 interceptions were attempted and no balloons were actually shot down over Washington (Mikesh 1973:36).

Few Americans were aware of the silent threat until a complete balloon landed in the forest near Bly, Oregon. An unsuspecting group on a Saturday church picnic found it on 5 May 1945. As they investigated it, a bomb exploded, killing the minister's wife and five children. By then the US was clearly winning the war and authorities decided that public safety required publicizing the program. The wall of silence ended on 22 May 1945 (Conley 1968b:82). Newspaper accounts then appeared which led to additional reports in the months to come.

By 4 August 1945 a total of 285 balloon-related incidents had been documented in 17 states, 7 provinces, and in both Canadian and American territories (Weidner 1946;

Mikesh 1973; Webber 1975). Nearly half had landed in the Pacific Northwest, especially British Columbia, Oregon, and Washington (Figure 2). During the postwar occupation of Japan the launch sites were discovered and members of the *fu-go* program cooperated with the Americans (Arakawa 1956; Hidagi 1981). The eventual declassification of documents indicates that approximately 9,300 balloons had been launched with an estimated 1,000 reaching North America (Weidner 1946; Conley 1968a, 1968b; Mikesh 1973).

### The Farmington Balloon

An alert but anonymous farmer discovered a paper balloon in a field 200 yards east of Farmington, Washington, on 13 March 1945. Officially it became Incident 113 and was attributed to Farmington since that was the nearest town, but it was actually found in Latah County, Idaho (Webber 1988:336). After securing the balloon to a nearby barbed wire fence the farmer contacted the FBI and other authorities. Another balloon that was recovered near Echo, Oregon, that same day (Incident 114) was sent to Walla Walla Army Air Base, then to Moffett Field, California, and then on to the division of Naval Intelligence in Anacostia, D.C. (Mikesh 1973:34). The Farmington balloon was photographed in place and then apparently followed the same route to Anacostia where it was included in a secret technical report issued

in May 1945 (Figures 3-4). The Farmington balloon was tan-colored and included an intact envelope with 60 gores, 19 shrouds, an intact destructor, valve number 13729,

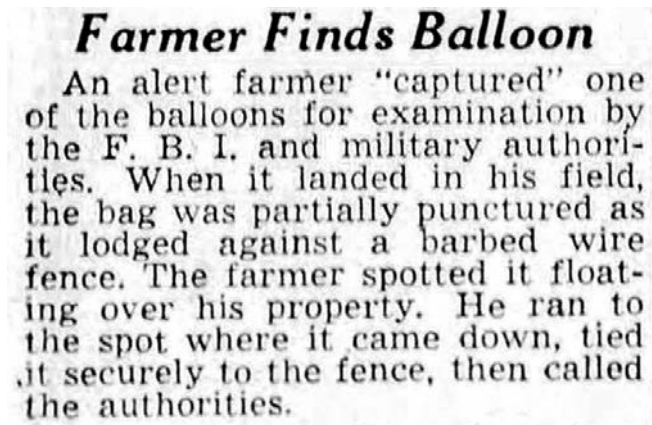


Figure 5. Excerpt from a front-page story in the *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 5 June 1945.

and ballast gear. The bombs had apparently been dropped previously somewhere in Washington. What became of the Farmington balloon after the war is unknown.

Records at the Latah County Assessor's Office indicate that the land where the balloon was found was then owned by Albert C. Leonard, Jr. and the property is still farmed by his descendants. The author interviewed his grandson but the family has no recollection of the incident (Heise 2023). After censorship ended, the incident appeared in the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* within the context of broader front-page articles in June 1945 and August 1945 (Figures 5-7). The Farmington balloon was one of the first to be publicized. The photograph appeared nationally as far away as New York City (*New York Sun*, 16 August 1945).

## Aftermath

The *fu-go* program was developed to retaliate for the American bombing of five Japanese cities in April 1942. By November 1944 the first balloon bombs had been launched and were intended to accomplish several objectives. The primary goal was to create widespread panic in western North America, but it was unsuccessful due to the rapid news blackout by American authorities. The next purpose was to initiate forest fires in the Pacific Northwest that would divert critical resources from the war effort. Since most balloons landed in winter to early spring when the ground was wet or snow-covered, the anticipated conflagrations did not occur. However, the annual Clearwater National Forest supervisor's report in September 1945 did attribute three of the 91 fires from that year to balloon bombs (*Spokesman-Review* 1945) (Figure 8). Current Forest Service records do not indicate where those fires occurred. Another goal was to create casualties

on the American Homefront. The bomb detonated by the church group in Oregon did cause the only civilian casualties to result from enemy actions during World War II, but that tragedy was too limited to affect the course of the war. Finally, American countermeasures resulted in tying down military personnel who could have been fighting in the Pacific War. Thus, the program did have limited success.

A United States Air Force (USAF) master sergeant wrote the first scholarly work on the balloon bombs as a master's thesis in 1968 (Conley 1968a) and summarized it in a journal article (Conley 1968b). A retired USAF major collected many of the formerly classified government studies, as well as many newspaper and magazine articles, and other resources (Hammond 1945; Military Intelligence Division 1945; Nash et al. 1945; Technical Air Intelligence Center 1945; Fourth Air Force nd) as part of his research for the definitive book on the balloon bombs (Mikesh 1973). These resources are now available through the Japanese World War II Balloon Bombs Collection in the National Air and Space Museum (NASM) Archives at the Smithsonian Institution (Mikesh 1988). Furthermore, the A-Type balloon that was collected at Echo, Oregon, on

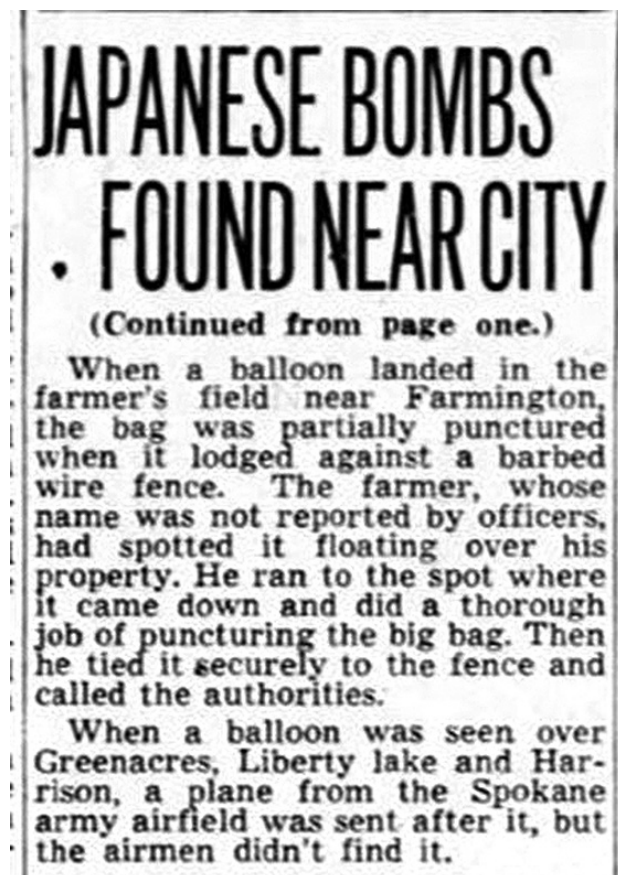


Figure 6. Excerpt from another front-page story which shows that the previous item referred to the Farmington incident. *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 15 August 1945.



Figure 7. Photograph of the Farmington balloon, photographer unknown. *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, 15 August 1945.

the same day as the Farmington balloon is in the NASM (accession number NASM-617) and should therefore be virtually identical (Mikesh 1973:34, 73, Figure 1). Parenthetically, balloon bombs were a pivotal aspect of a recent novel that was set during wartime Alaska and the author provided a very accessible description of them (Callanan 2004).

Parts of balloon bombs were reported for years after the war ended in September 1945, and it is likely that some remain undiscovered in remote parts of the Pacific Northwest. As examples, two have been found recently in remote parts of British Columbia. Forestry workers found an intact high-explosive bomb and aluminum ring near Lumby in October 2014 (Figure 9). The bomb was considered to be too dangerous to move and was destroyed in place by Canadian Navy personnel (Moore 2014). A man looking for mountain goats found a valve and aluminum ring in an old burn near Valemont in October 2019. Whether the fire had been caused by the bomb

was unknown (McCracken 2019). National Public Radio issued a story with a warning in 2015 (Weeks 2015) and *The Detroit Free Press* provided another story and issued another warning in 2019 (Metheny 2019). Examination of balloon discovery sites shows that most were recovered in relatively populated and well-traveled areas. Hundreds of balloon bombs remain unaccounted for (Mikesh 1973:82). In summary, at least one Japanese balloon bomb from World War II is known to have landed in rural Latah County and there may have been others, at forgotten locations on the Clearwater National Forest, or elsewhere. If a reader finds something that looks like a bomb while working or hiking in the woods or elsewhere, they should mark the area and contact law enforcement as soon as possible.

### Sources

- Arakawa, H. 1956. *Basic Principles of the Balloon Bomb*. Meteorological Research Institute. Mubashi, Suginami. Tokyo.
- Callanan, Liam. 2004. *The Cloud Atlas*. Random House. New York, NY.
- Coen, Ross. 2014. *Fu-Go: The Curious History of Japan's Balloon Bomb Attack on America*. University of Nebraska Press. Lincoln and London.
- Conley, Cornelius W. 1968a. "The Great Japanese Balloon Offensive." Master's thesis. Air University, United States Air Force. Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.
- 1968b. "The Great Japanese Balloon Offensive." *Air University Review* 19(2):68-83.
- Feifer, George. 2006. *Breaking Open Japan: Commodore Perry, Lord Abe, and American Imperialism in 1853*.



Figure 8. *Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 20 September 1945.

- Smithsonian Books. HarperCollins Publishers. New York, NY.
- Fourth Air Force. nd. "Japanese Balloons." Chapter X in *Fourth Air Force Historical Study No. 111-2*.
- Glines, Carroll V. 1991. *The Doolittle Raid: America's Daring First Strike Against Japan*. Schiffer Military History. West Chester, PA.
- Hammond, William H. 1945. "A Study of Japanese Free Balloons and Related Incidents." *Western Defense Command Intelligence Study No. 1*. San Francisco, CA.
- Heise, Dean W. 2023. Personal communication.
- Hidagi, Yasushi. 1981. "Attack Against the U.S. Heartland." *Aerospace Historian*. June 1981.
- Lawson, Ted W. 1943. *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*. Random House. New York, NY.
- Martin, Peter. 1997. *The Chrysanthemum Throne: A History of the Emperors of Japan*. University of Hawaii Press. Honolulu, HI.
- McCracken, Andru. 2019. "Looking for Goats, Man Finds WWII Bomb." *The Rocky Mountain Goat*. 22 October 2019.
- Metheny, Keith. 2019. "How the Japanese Bombed Michigan During World War II." *Detroit Free Press*. 15 December 2019.
- Mikesh, Robert C. 1973. *Japan's World War II Balloon Bomb Attacks on North America*. Smithsonian Institution Press. Washington, D.C.
- 1988. "Finders Aid, Japanese Balloon Bombs of World War II." [https://edan.si.edu/slideshow/viewer/?eadrefid=NASM.XXXX.0558\\_ref505](https://edan.si.edu/slideshow/viewer/?eadrefid=NASM.XXXX.0558_ref505). Smithsonian Institution. Washington, D.C.
- Military Intelligence Division. 1945. *Japanese Free Balloons and Related Incidents*. No. 6. 1 July 1945. War Department. Washington, D.C.
- Moore, Wayne. 2014. "Bomb blown to 'smithereens.'" *Vernon News*. 10 October 2014.
- Morton, W. Scott. 1975. *Japan: Its History and Culture*. Thomas W. Crowell Company. New York, NY.
- Nash, W. E., Jr., W. H. Pickering, and D. W. Hagelbarger. 1945. *Japanese Paper Balloon*. Guggenheim Aeronautics Laboratory, California Institute of Technology. Pasadena, CA.
- New York Sun*. 1945. "Jap Balloon Hunt to be Extensive." 16 August 1945.
- Rizzo, Johnna. 2013. "Japan's Secret WWII Weapon: Balloon Bombs." *National Geographic*. 27 May 2013. <https://nationalgeographic.com/science/article/130527-map-video-balloon-bomb-wwii-japanese-air-current-jet-stream>.
- Scarre, Chris, ed. 2018. *The Human Past*, 4th edition. Thames & Hudson, Ltd. London.
- Scott, James M. 2015. *Target Tokyo*. W. W. Norton and Company. New York, NY.
- Spokane Daily Chronicle*. 1945. "Two Unexploded Jap Balloon Bombs Found Just North of the City Limits." 5 June 1945.
- 1945. "Japanese Bombs Found Near City." 15 August 1945.
- 1945. "Jap Balloon Lands Near Farmington." 17 August 1945.
- Spokane Spokesman-Review*. 1945. "Jap Balloons Caused Three Forest Fires." 20 September 1945.
- Technical Air Intelligence Center. 1945. "Japanese Balloons and Attached Devices." Report #41. Naval Air Station. Anacostia, D.C.
- Webber, Bert. 1975. *Retaliation: Japanese Attacks and Allied Countermeasures on the Pacific Coast in World War II*. Oregon State University Press. Corvallis, OR.
- 1988. *Silent Siege - II: Japanese Attacks on North America in World War II*. Webb Research Group. Medford, OR.
- Weeks, Linton. 2015. "Beware of Japanese Balloon Bombs." *National Public Radio History Department*. 20 January 2015.
- Weidner, George E. 1946. "Technical and Engineering Survey, Japanese Bombing Balloons." Engineer Technical and Technological Survey. Submitted to the Chief of Engineers, War Department. Washington, D.C.
- The Western News*. 1944. Libby, MT. 14 December 1944.



Figure 9. Photograph of the Japanese Type 92 high explosive bomb as it appeared on 9 October 2014 near Lumby, British Columbia (Moore 2014).

# A Brief History of Emmanuel Lutheran Church<sup>1\*</sup>

By Nancy Ruth Peterson

## The 1960s Merger

During Lent of 1960 the two congregations at First Lutheran Church and Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Moscow, Idaho, met together for the first time for mid-week services. Following this experiment, in May of 1960 the Board of Administration of First Lutheran suggested that the two congregations form a committee to explore a merger between the two (Minutes, 1951-1960). The committee was formed, and three members of each congregation set the wheels in motion for a merger. On December 18, 1960, Our Savior's Lutheran held its last council meeting. On December 24, the two congregations held a joint Christmas Eve service (Minutes, 1951-1960).

There were reasons for a merger set forward in a subsequent communication from the six men on the merger committee: William Kyle, Conrad Luvaas, Glenn Peterson, Allen Ramstedt, Fay Reams, and Lester Torgerson. Avoiding duplication of Lutheran programs would create a stronger single Lutheran church in a town not large enough to support two very similar churches. It was expressed that having two Lutheran congregations presented a "distraction" to potential members having to make a choice between the two. Greater participation in adult and youth activities, music, and worship were all cited as positives for the community. The committee also pointed to a revitalization of the spiritual life of all church members. Another consideration was the maintenance of only one worship site rather than the two then in use (Merger Report, p. 1).

The University of Idaho Lutheran student population was mentioned as a challenge for each church with the future possibility of hiring a campus pastor who would also work with one congregation. At the time of the

merger talks there were three Lutheran pastors working in Moscow. A seemingly altruistic attitude noted that "releasing one worker in these times of critical shortages of pastors would be a significant contribution to Lutheranism." (Merger Report, p. 2).

The financial issues involved were also considered by this committee, pointing out that both standing buildings were deteriorating and their congregations were struggling both in membership and finances. It was hoped that the combined assets of the two congregations would result in a single stronger entity which would attract more members and participation.



Pastors Martin Larsen and Edward Weiskotten break ground for the new Emmanuel Lutheran Church building.

The recommendations of the committee were to merge the two congregations and to do so under the auspices of the American Lutheran Church with the smaller First Lutheran congregation leaving the Augustana Synod during the merger. The newly formed church would be

<sup>1\*</sup> This excerpt of text and images from *A Brief History of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Moscow, Idaho, Established in 1961* printed with permission of Emmanuel Lutheran Church.

given a new name rather than keeping the name of either of the existing churches. While apparently foreseeing a time of transition, the leaders at both churches were to encourage their members to abide by the will of the majority and become active participants in the newly formed church. As another piece of the transition, it was recommended that a building project begin as soon as feasible to construct a new church rather than keep either of the existing building sites (Merger Report, p. 2).



Framework of the roof and spire shows what the final church structure will be.

The merger was discussed in meetings at each church, presented for ratification to each congregation and to the Columbia Conference of the Augustana Lutheran Church, and moved forward with agreement from all three entities (Minutes, 1951-1960).

On January 12, 1961, Pastor Leonard Nelson of First Lutheran Church led a meeting held at Our Savior's Lutheran Church. This was the last time those two church names would be used. The first order of business was the election of temporary chairperson Conrad Luvaas, secretary Mrs. R. G. Fredekind and parliamentarian James Esmay. The possible names for the new church were Redeemer, Messiah, Faith, and Emmanuel. The name Emmanuel was chosen by a vote of those present (Minutes, 1951-1960).

A constitution committee reported; each article was read and voted on by the newly formed congregation. A church council nominating committee reported; the following men were elected to the new council: Wilmer Cox, Martin Deesten, Wayne Hill, Robert Kessel, Roger Larsen, Wallace Lundquist, Conrad Luvaas, LaVerne Nelson, Allen Ramstedt, Kenneth Riersgard, Lester Torgerson and

Stanley Windham (Minutes, 1951-1960). This council was also appointed as a call committee for a new pastor. Even at this early stage, possibilities for a site for a new church building were discussed.

By January 17, 1961, Pastor Sam Babington had been called by the congregation to become the new pastor. He had previously been the pastor of Our Savior's Lutheran of Moscow and Genesee Valley Lutheran of Genesee, in a joint calling of the two churches. He accepted the call to the new church at the February 14, 1961, council meeting (Minutes, 1951-1960). Also at that meeting, plans for fundraising for the building fund were put into motion. Loose offerings and any special gifts received at Easter were to be designated to fund a new building.

As the new church moved forward, many things began to happen. The last service at the First Lutheran Church building at Second and Van Buren Streets was held on May 13, 1962 (Building Committee Notebook). The selling of the two original church buildings was considered. Because the Sixth Street building housing Our Savior's Lutheran was larger, it was decided to pursue the sale of the Second and Van Buren Streets property

first. The Van Buren Street parsonage was sold for \$14,400 in April of 1962. The proceeds from all the sales were designated to the building fund for a new church. At the same time the council agreed that an architect was to be contacted to create preliminary plans for a new church (Minutes, 1961-1965).

The sale of the Second and Van Buren property experienced several bumps along the road. The church building was first sold on May 7, 1962, for \$5,000.00 to Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Douglas for use as a day nursery (Minutes, 1962). After no payments had been made by March of 1964, a lawyer was retained to bring this sale to an end. The next month a meeting with the Senior Citizens Board of Directors brought about the sale of the property to that organization with the stipulation that the organ would be removed and other furnishings sold to the highest bidder(s) (Minutes, 1964).

### **Building a New Facility**

Two potential building sites were discussed during the summer of 1962. A 3.2 acre plot at Henley and Main for sale for \$25,000 and a 70' X 200' adjacent property for an additional \$3000 were considered. In August of 1962 a



**Spire Off on Long Trip**

A 47-foot aluminum church spire, built in Spokane for the Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Moscow, is lifted prior to being loaded on a truck for the journey. Welders fabricated the spire and a 14-foot aluminum cross at Ed's Welding, E5809 Sprague. The Moscow church was designed by the Spokane architectural firm of Trogdon-Smith, Vern W. Johnson & Sons, Inc., Spokane, is general contractor for the \$300,000 church project.

A 47-foot aluminum church spire, built in Spokane for the Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Moscow, is lifted prior to being loaded on a truck for the journey. Welders fabricated the spire and a 14-foot aluminum cross at Ed's Welding. (Undated newspaper article)

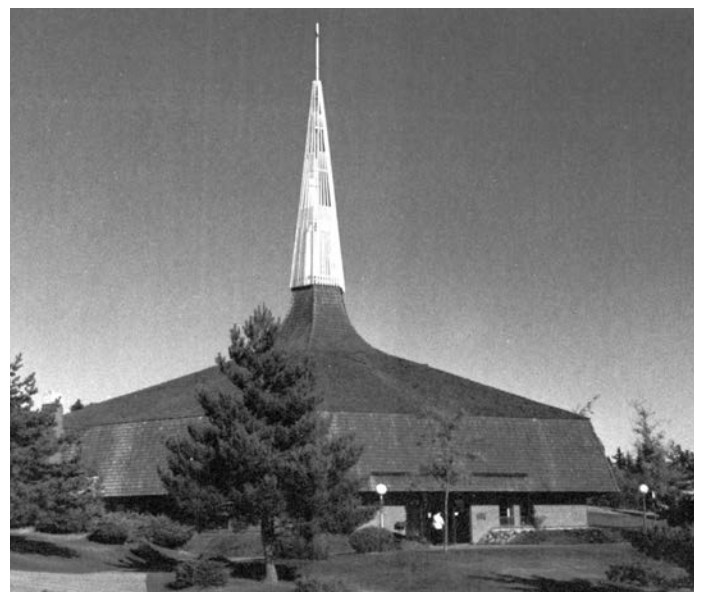
building committee was formed. The next month a gift of three acres of land from the Claus Peterson family was accepted as the building site for the new church (Festival of Dedication program, p. 14). This property was located north of the proposed extension of West A Street (Minutes, 1962). Acceptance of this gift was made official at a congregational meeting with a 98-11 vote in favor (Minutes, 1962).

With the building progress and the Second Street property sold, the Sixth Street property was listed for sale for \$90,000. By January of 1965, plans for the new church were voted on by the congregation with 75 people voting in favor and 25 voting against accepting the plans presented by architects Trogden and Smith. It was noted by the architects that the concept for their plans included: "the Baptismal font was placed on the level of the congregation as a Doorway to the Body of Christ. The positions of the Altar, Pulpit and Cross relate the importance of the Sacraments, Word and the Cross of Christ overall as it binds the Body of Believers" (Twenty-fifth Anniversary

pamphlet, p. 5). Building progress began to pick up steam in 1966 with the addition of detailed plans from the architects so that bids could be let for construction. A loan application was made to Lutheran Brotherhood, and a course of action for construction was presented to the congregation (Minutes, 1966). During this time Pastor Sam Babington resigned, and a call made to Pastor Martin Larsen was accepted in the fall of 1965 (Minutes, 1965). This transition may have been a cause of the seeming pause in progress between the acceptance of the plans for the new church and the actual beginning of construction.

In January of 1967 the building fund was \$58,025.18. By March a loan from Lutheran Brotherhood for \$175,000 at 6% interest had been obtained (Minutes, 1967). Bids were let for site grading and street improvements which included moving over 20,000 cubic yards of dirt for the site and the street. Water, sewer, curbs, walks, and crushed rock base were also included in the preliminary work. In May of 1967 the congregation approved hiring the firm of Vern Johnson and Sons to build the church at a cost of \$288,000 (Minutes, 1967). Groundbreaking ceremonies were held on May 18, 1967, and construction began on June 15. The total final cost to complete this part of the project was \$328,000 (Minutes, 1968).

Construction was not without its issues. The City of Moscow had not approved the first plans because the church spire was to be made of wood. This was viewed as a fire hazard because of the location on the west side of town with prevailing winds from the west. If the spire caught fire, flames could spread to the east quickly. Plans were changed to build an aluminum spire which was accepted by the city. This was to become an ongoing point of interest and consternation for the congregation when it was later found that in the case of those winds, the spire tended



Emmanuel Lutheran Church (undated)



to “sing.” As early as March of 1969, the architects were asked about some sort of repair so the noise would stop (Minutes, 1969). Apparently the architects were not able to resolve this issue; the singing of the spire continues.

During the night of September 26, 1967, there was a collapse of part of the roof of the church. This was attributed to an “oversight in the welding of a steel purlin” (*Daily Idahonian*, p. 1). No one was in the church when the collapse happened about 9:30 PM according to a neighbor who heard the noise as it came down. Construction was delayed only a matter of a few days.

Construction took nearly a year, with the first service in the new building held on Easter Sunday, April 14, 1968. Final cost of the new building was \$363,009.18 (Minutes, 1969).

### Dedication

The last service held in the Sixth Street property was on Palm Sunday, April 7, 1968 (Twenty-fifth Anniversary pamphlet, p. 1). Dedication of Emmanuel’s new facility was six weeks later. The dedication celebration lasted three days beginning with a banquet on Friday, May 17. This was followed on Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup> by a Music Festival of Praise which included an organ concert, singing of hymns and choral music by the adult, youth, and junior choirs. Sunday, May 19, was the Dedication Service led by Pastor Martin Larsen and guest pastors who were former pastors of the two merged churches. These included Pr. Sam Babington, Pr. Leonard Nelson, Pr. Ed Weiskotten, and Pr. Sig Lokken. This service was preceded by a Youth Service and followed by an afternoon Service of Thanksgiving and an open house for the community (Dedication schedule, p. 1).

Now the process of selling the Sixth Street property could move forward in earnest. Among those interested were Gritman Hospital, a fraternity which would use the building for housing, Gary Anderson who wanted the property to be used to build an apartment house, the Church of God of Tennessee which wanted

to establish a church. All these offers were ultimately withdrawn. In May of 1969 Grace Baptist Church of Moscow made an offer to purchase the church for \$21,000 in cash; the offer was accepted (Minutes, 1969).

### The 1970s

Dorothy Meyer was hired for the position of Parish Education Director in 1971. In 1972 she proposed the establishment of a Christian Day Care School for Emmanuel. It was agreed that this could open in September with an enrollment of 20 children ages 2½ to 6 years old (Minutes, 1971-1973). The one-year trial period would begin with a cost of \$3.00 per child/per day, an amount which was thought to be self-sustaining (Minutes, 1976). Ms. Meyer was to be the part-time administrator and the church secretary would be the record keeper. The advisory committee for the day care would be made up of church members, with church members also being given priority for paid jobs. The day care began in September 1972 with 15 children and two teachers, but no cook. By December there were 30 children enrolled in the program which was soon being called a church school (Minutes, 1976).

Construction on the church property on A Street continued with outside landscaping and a sprinkler system installed and the removal of an old truck on the north side of the building. Inside, carpeting was laid in the choir



King’s Kids, led by Carol Nelson, 1975-1988. The youth choir would perform for Sunday worship and would perform Cantatas at various local churches.

“area,” and more pews were installed. The youth of the church requested a room as a lounge and meeting place, so they were given the room that had been designated previously for the choir. The large cross in the sanctuary was reinforced. The kitchen area and fellowship hall were also completed for use.

In the late 1970s divisions began to form in the congregation. Concerned congregants sent letters (signed and anonymous) to the church council and met with the council to discuss issues of a charismatic movement which was perceived as dividing the congregation. Some felt that the pastor at the time was not following Lutheran theology and had approved Sunday School materials from other denominations to be used in the church school. Classes on the Holy Spirit were led by Senior Pastor Marlow Engberg and on Lutheranism were led by Assistant Pastor

council, the steering committee, and the church treasurer, as well as Pastors Engberg and Thompson. All of the paid staff were asked to resign as well (Minutes, 1979).

Bishop Solberg of the district office became even more involved and put forward a pastor for a period of healing. Pastor Paul Braafladt became the interim pastor for the next two years. He was advised by the district that the congregation had “the most difficult lesson...to learn the message of grace—undeserved love and forgiveness” (Minutes, 1979).

## The 1980s

The early 1980s became known as the healing time for the Emmanuel Lutheran Church. It was noted early on that gratitude that the church still existed and members were willing to try to resolve their differences and move

forward were primary to furthering the mission of the church. The council was reorganized with changes made to the church constitution. New committees were formed including one called “Fellowship and Social Concerns.” All committees and the council were admonished to keep good records of their meetings. “The committee(s) must do business in an orderly manner!” (Minutes, 1980-1985). Collaboration with the Lutheran Campus Ministry was renewed. During the two years of Pastor Braafladt’s ministry, a call committee was

formed with the result being the call to Pastor Gordon Braun. His ministry lasted through the 1980s and into the 1990s and brought continuity of leadership to the congregation (Minutes, 1980-1985).

During this time the church school (now called a preschool) continued to expand with afternoon classes added; classes were made available five days a week in 1982 (Minutes, 1980-1985). The sale of the Emmanuel Lutheran parsonage located on Fifth Street was discussed. Intern Pastors were added to help with the day-to-day ministry. Property across West C Street from the church was considered for purchase with the hope of building more Sunday School areas and a small chapel for worship. At this time the purchase of the property was not approved,



Adult Choir members show their Pentecost pride before singing for a service.

Mikkel Thompson. Ongoing concerns were sent to the district office and questionnaires were sent out to the congregation. In December of 1978 a meeting was held where a vote of confidence in the pastors was taken. Sixty-two percent of those voting stated confidence in Pastor Engberg’s ability to lead the congregation. The district was involved and was said to be “not standing still, but rather standing by” (Minutes, 1979). After many months of divisiveness and attempts to unify the congregation, Pastor Engberg resigned his position in June of 1979.

This period of discontent in the Emmanuel congregation began as a relatively private, internal matter, but eventually became public. The *Lewiston Morning Tribune* (LMT, July 14, 1979) published an article about the issues in July of 1979 following the resignations of members of the church

but a committee for long range goals and planning was established with a ten-year plan as the focus (Minutes, 1986).

Continued improvements were made to the existing facility with an elevator installed paid by money from the Harry Larson estate (Minutes, 1986). Air conditioning was installed in 1987 after a gift from Beverly Innocenti. It was decided to enclose the entrance and cover the “bridge” during this time, as well, with a new roof for the church as a further priority (Minutes, 1987-1988).

In 1986, a 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration was held for the church and, happily, the mortgage on the building was completely paid. Perhaps the biggest change around this time was not a local one, but the merger of three Lutheran church bodies forming the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). A vote in favor of the merger was taken at Emmanuel in October 1986 (Minutes, 1986). The establishment of the ELCA became final in 1988.

### **The 1990s**

In the mid-1990s Pastor Gordon Braun retired and another search for a pastor began (Minutes, 1993). An interim pastor was found to serve the congregation while the search was being made. This again was a period of some discussion about needed changes at Emmanuel. Having communion every Sunday was begun in September of 1995 with communion alternating between the two Sunday services. Programs for youth and young families were sought which led to a study conducted by an outside expert on churches and their physical facilities. The results of this study showed a great attachment to the building among congregants. The celebration of joining of two diverse congregations and the need to make this diversity an asset rather than a liability were included in the report called “People of Emmanuel Lutheran” by Tim Freson (Minutes, 1995). During this time calls were made to become the next pastor; Pastor Dean Stewart accepted the call in 1996.

### **The 2000s**

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the church building was celebrated in 2018. An article in the *Moscow-Pullman Daily News* states that the church “has cherished its preschool, helping others the past half century” (p. 1A; 6A). Music, food, and conversations about the church were featured on Sunday, September 8, 2018. The congregation and members of other local organizations attended the celebration.

During the 2000s the church reconfigured its monetary funds. The purpose was not only to put all funding on a sound designated basis, but also to explain all the funds to the congregation (Dumroese interview, 2023). Better recordings of funds, both received and spent, were also

goals. One step toward this end was the improvement and, in some cases, establishment of electronic recordkeeping. Broadband wireless services with firewalls were approved and installed (Minutes, 2001-2014).

The sale of the Emmanuel Lutheran parsonage on Fifth Street was completed around 2003, with a housing allowance then budgeted to Pastor Stewart. A lease agreement with Verizon Wireless for a cell tower on church land was reached in 2004 resulting in income for the church of \$12,000 a year in rent (Minutes, 2001-2014; Peterson interview, 2022).

In 2007 plans were made to put windows in the “overflow” areas of the church to improve lighting and ventilation. Removal of pews and installation of individual chairs were also in the plan so that the space could be reconfigured for various functions in the sanctuary. Other renovations would have included a new HVAC and landscaping. After a year of meetings and concern, it became apparent that divisions were again forming in the congregation. Only the essential renovations were made. In 2009 a lounge for meditation and fellowship was completed near the narthex (Minutes, 2001-2014).

In 2009 the congregation became the first Lutheran congregation in Idaho designated as a Reconciling in Christ congregation. Training and information led to this change which means that all people are welcome at Emmanuel, no matter what their background and lifestyle might be. The congregation members continue to hold this as a core belief of their mission. Reconciling in Christ certification was presented in February of 2010 (Minutes, 2001-2014).

One of the several outreach missions during these years was the establishment of a community garden in cooperation with the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute (Minutes, 2001-2014). The location of the garden was across C Street from the church on property owned by Emmanuel Lutheran. This garden provided small plots for individuals and families to raise produce and ornamentals during the growing season at minimal cost to the growers.

The Moscow Ecumenical Outreach (MEO) group was formed in 2004 with leadership from the Emmanuel Lutheran Outreach Committee. The purpose of this ecumenical endeavor was to alleviate hunger both locally and internationally. Over the 15 years of MEO’s existence up to 15 different faith-based groups were involved. The core group consisted of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, St. Mary’s Catholic Church, St. Augustine’s Catholic Church, St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, Moscow First Presbyterian Church, Real Life Church, The Bridge Church, and University of Idaho’s The Center. Volunteers from other area churches and organizations also contributed to the efforts of MEO. Over the 15 years of participation at

the Moscow Renaissance Fair and 1912 Center Winter Markets, MEO raised around \$80,000. The funds were divided between the Moscow Food Bank and Heifer International (MEO records).

The Moscow Food Bank also received new flooring and a new refrigerator through funding from the Outreach Committee at Emmanuel. Part of the funding for these improvements resulted from “hymnal angels” created by the committee when new hymnals were purchased in 2008. The old hymnals were crafted into “book angels” and through a silent auction provided nearly \$1,000 for Food Bank improvements (Minutes, 2001-2014).

## 2011-2022

The original Community Garden was later designated as an all-organic garden. Eventually the use of the land as a garden ended when plans were made for possible construction of a building on the site, to be owned by the church (Minutes, 2015). The Emmanuel Piecemakers which had begun before 1981 (Isakson interview) continued to make quilts which were sent to Lutheran World Relief along with hygiene kits and school kits which were made up of donated supplies through Mission Endowment. Theology on Tap began to meet at members homes and in local watering holes to discuss theological issues of interest to members.

Other activities at the church during these years include a short-term involvement with Family Promise of the Palouse, annual involvement with Christmas for Kids, and Guess Who’s Coming To Dinner in 2006 (Minutes, 2006). Habitat for Humanity for a time had its office in the Emmanuel Lutheran facility. A scholarship program for Emmanuel Lutheran youth to attend Camp Lutherhaven and its affiliated camps was established as the Isakson Lutherhaven Scholarship Fund (Minutes, 2019).

The LOTTs Committee was formed in 2015 to begin studies for a building to be constructed on the A Street property across the street from the church. Site surveys

and geotechnical evaluations were made with thoughts of building a senior retirement facility or a hospice facility (Minutes, 2019). A free-standing chapel was also part of the discussion for the site.

Talks began in 2015 with the Friends of Cordelia about selling the historic Cordelia Lutheran Church and accompanying property near Genesee, Idaho, to the Friends. These discussions continued off and on until 2018 when agreement was reached. Emmanuel Lutheran ceded the small acreage with the Cordelia structure to the Friends of Cordelia who in turn paid for the remaining acreage at the site (Minutes, 2018).

During these most recent years as of this writing, renovation and construction needs continue. The estate gift from the LeTourneau family enabled a thorough renovation of the kitchen (Minutes, 2001-2014). Energy



Bell Choir led by Liz Brandt rehearses for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration Service. (Moscow-Pullman Daily News, Sept. 2018)

saving changes, a fire alarm system, and ADA upgrades have also been made. By 2018 a new roof and new carpeting had been installed over and in the sanctuary.

As in the rest of the world, much changed at Emmanuel Lutheran when the COVID-19 Pandemic hit in 2020. Regular in-person church services were suspended. Only zoom services were available. During Lent, fifteen minutes of contemplative worship were offered each Friday online. These Friday Fifteen services focused on music, prayer, and meditation. Efforts to keep the congregation connected to

the church and to each other were ongoing. The problems of loneliness, isolation, and depression were addressed through many electronic and other contacts (Minutes, 2020).

Complicating the transition to reopening as the pandemic eased was the resignation of Pastor K. David Daus. An interim Pastor Nick Nicolai was appointed by the synod to help with the reopening and during the time of reflection and calling of a new pastor. Face-to-face services began in June of 2021, with masks required and social distancing as outlined by the CDC and the synod. Communion was held with individual wine and bread for each communicant. Zoom and Facebook live streams were available for members who did not feel comfortable attending church in person (Minutes, 2021). These have continued into 2023.

Piecemakers resumed their quilting in the spring of 2021. The preschool resumed sessions in the fall of 2021. COVID-19 safety measures were implemented for these groups to reopen and they also continue into 2023 (Minutes, 2021).

### *Source Materials*

Abas, Bryan. "Torn Asunder: Moscow's Emmanuel Lutheran Church members wage philosophical feuds." *Lewiston Morning Tribune*. Section 4B. July 14, 1979.

Affidavit of Meeting to authorize loan application to Lutheran Brotherhood. August 14, 1967.

Copy of Resolution Adopted at Special Meeting to appoint members of the Legal Committee to negotiate a loan with Lutheran Brotherhood. August 13, 1967.

Cabeza, Garrett. "Emmanuel Lutheran Church celebrates 50 years." *Moscow Pullman Daily News*. Section A, Weekend Edition. September 1 & 2, 2018.

"Collapsed." *Daily Idahonian*. September 27, 1967.

Dedication planning document for May 17-19, 1968 for program committee. Undated.

Dedication program. May 19, 1968.

Dumroese, Deb and Kas. Personal interview. 10 October 2022.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Building Committee Notebook. Undated.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Bulletin. September 1966.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1951-1960.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1961-1965.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1966.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1967.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1968.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1969.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1970.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1971-1973.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1978.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1979.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1980-1985.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1986.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1987-1988.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1993.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1994.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1995.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1996.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—1997.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—2001-2014.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—2015.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—2016.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—2019.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—2020.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church Council Minutes—2021.

Festival of Dedication Program. May 19, 1968.

Information Form. The Building Program Report Form. Emmanuel Lutheran Church. Undated.

Isakson, Gretchen. Telephone interview. Quilting Records. Accessed by telephone interview. March 5, 2023.

Lass, Larry. "120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Emmanuel Lutheran Church." *Latah Legacy*. Latah County Historical Society. August 2004. Pp. 9-13.

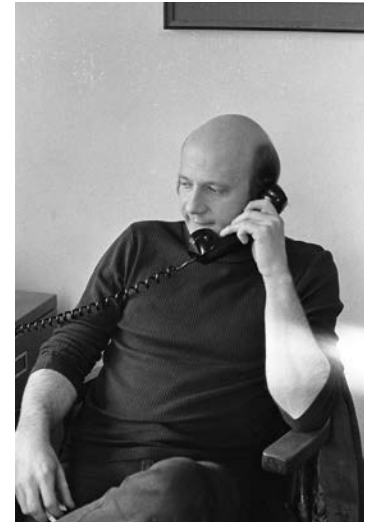
Merger Report to Members of First Lutheran Church and Our Savior's Lutheran Church. From members of the Joint Committee on merger of First and Our Savior's Lutheran.

Moscow Ecumenical Outreach Records. Accessed January 7, 2023.

Peterson, Elizabeth P. Director of Nexius Company. Telephone interview. 26 October 2022.

"Ringling In the Milestone." *Moscow-Pullman Daily News*. Section A, September 1-2, 2018, pp. 1 and 6.

Twenty-fifth Anniversary Pamphlet. Emmanuel Lutheran Church. September 13-14, 1986.



left: Porch at 625 Ash Street, the second location of Talisman House. Note “Walk Right In” sign posted next to door. center: Student in the Talisman House hostel sleeping area. right: Bob Cameron, first director of Talisman House. (Unless otherwise noted, all images from PG 126-01. University Photos photograph collection. University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives.)

# The Talisman House, the people project

By Ariana Burns, Palouse Anthropology\*

Prior to Richard Nixon being elected President of the United States in 1968, the nation’s drug policy listed the same punishment regardless of which drug was used and offered few opportunities for treatment. Nixon’s administration responded to drug abuse by introducing a drug schedule with varying penalties for possession and use of different drugs. It also brought a variety of new treatment options.<sup>1</sup>

Although people have used drugs with mind-altering effects for centuries, recreational drug use was becoming more common in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Looking to curb this activity and provide more avenues for recovery, Congress passed the Drug Abuse Education Act of 1970. The Act made possible grants, under the supervision of the Office of Education, to fund community information programs on illegal drug use.<sup>3</sup>

The grants provided almost \$30 million over three years for a variety of programs. Of particular interest to this paper was the creation of drug education programs for public schools, adult education programs, and community drug abuse education.<sup>3,4</sup>

This funding made it possible for the University of Idaho (U of I) to host the Talisman House, one of 20 experimental Office of Education college-based programs.<sup>5</sup> It received full federal funding in its first year; then it was to be supported 75/25, with the university picking up

the latter amount. In the third year, the university would assume full financial responsibility for the \$34,000 annual allocation (\$255,500 in today’s currency).<sup>6</sup>

Originally called the Nightline Drug Education Team (NDET), the program was part of the similarly named Nightline 24-hour Crisis Hot Line, a referral service.<sup>7</sup> But the team wanted to be trained to assume a more active role beyond referrals.<sup>7</sup>

In time NDET came to be known as the Talisman House or “T House” or “Talisman Project” to encompass its expanding role in the community. When settling on a name, the membership felt that “NDET House” was too cumbersome a title. Likewise, the “Drug House” gave the wrong connotation. A talisman was seen as a sign of good luck or a charm to ward off evil, making it the preferred name.

Over time the Talisman Project expanded beyond its original mission to offer “people-oriented” services until it was finally shuttered in 1977. A non-religious “drop-in” location, the Talisman House offered information to visitors with a minimum of red tape. It reached out to alienated people who were not comfortable going to state or federal offices for assistance for a variety of reasons.<sup>8</sup>

The House was not welcomed by the entire community. One report documented criticism calling it an “inn for the outs,” or a ‘fraternity for freaks.’<sup>9</sup>

Even with a modicum of support the Talisman House operated independently of the university, it was student directed and run by 50 volunteers and paid staff. Bob Cameron, who was involved in drafting the grant to start the program, was the first director and held the post for six years.<sup>10</sup>

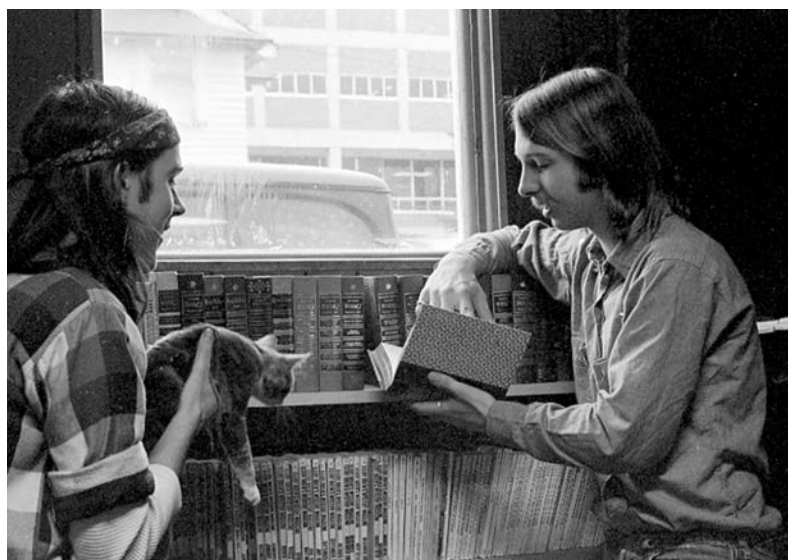
To encourage flexibility and allow new ideas and new people in on the Project, an open decision-making forum was adopted which allowed all interested people a vote. In time the House shifted to having a board of directors and decision making became more limited. Later reports found this brought more consistency and stability to the project, which had been difficult to maintain with rotating volunteers.

Talisman newsletter, she was affectionately referred to as “Her Celestialness.”

Among the Talisman Project’s goals were:

to provide knowledgeable and empathic resource persons to [those] seeking information about drugs; expand Nightline as a crisis intervention service; create a people-oriented environment; involve both youth and adults in the drug education program and [develop] meaningful alternatives to drug abuse.<sup>12</sup>

This approach stemmed from the belief that instead of criminalizing drug users, focus should be made on establishing a rapport. The Project’s target demographic wasn’t drug users with serious habits. Those users were not expected to visit the House.<sup>12</sup> Talisman wanted to reach people before they had a serious addiction, to address what



left: Parth Damke paints mural for the Genesee Train Station Coffee House. (Photo by Chris Pietsch, Argonaut, 9 Mar 1976). center: Students in the Talisman House library with Sydney the Cat. right: Bob Cameron and students in Talisman House living room.

Print media was used to get the word out about the House and what it had to offer the community. In the Mental Health Services newsletter, Cameron described the Talisman Project’s process of drug education:

We use a backdoor approach. We don’t tell them not to use drugs. We try to get them interested in other activities. Drug abuse is an adjustment, a way of handling something in their lives with which they can’t come to grips. We want to give them useful alternatives.<sup>11</sup>

Also involved in the development of the House was Mary Hartung, wife of U of I President Ernest W. Hartung. A member of the Idaho State Drug Education Team, Hartung devoted a major portion of her time to drug education efforts. She expressed the hope that the Drug Education Team would work itself out of a job. In the

the program identified as a societal problem. One Talisman report proclaimed:

It is a place where no idea is too far out, no product is dispensed, no one person is more important than another and ‘let’s see what can be done’ can realistically be said.<sup>12</sup>

Bob Cameron saw the T House through its first years of rapid creation. It developed a 2000-book, open-exchange library which held a significant section on drug information. The House held a Crisis Intervention Drop-in Center, youth hostel, message service, and a job bulletin board.

Its speakers’ bureau gave talks at the state and local level. The Talisman House presented to over 100 community organizations, including the Parent Teachers Association, Alcoholics Anonymous, the Kiwanis and the Genesee Civic Association.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the numerous presentations, the core of the project was the Talisman House itself. It offered a liminal space for visitors between their own environment and the formality of assistance programs. No one was a permanent resident at Talisman House except for Sydney the Cat.

Through the years of operation two different houses were called T House. Both were aging residential buildings on the edge of campus. In 1971, the first house was at 615 W Sixth Street; the following year the house was at 625 Ash Street, a building which was in better condition. Both buildings were owned by the U of I and the T House paid rent and utilities.<sup>13</sup>

Cameron ensured the House was continually remodeled to meet new demands. The basement was converted to sleeping quarters and a small photography lab.

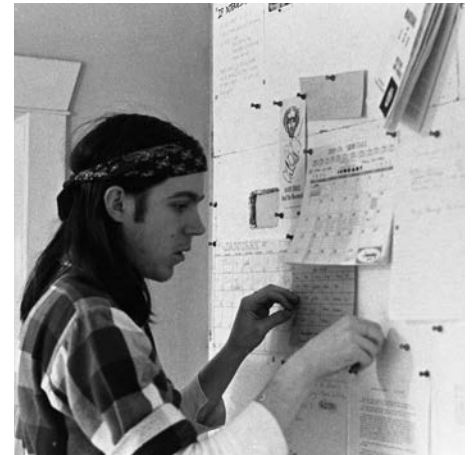
Of particular note, Talisman House created the Community Free University offering auto repair for women, karate, life drawing, shell reloading, juggling,

Almost any idea that someone brought to the Talisman House was supported. The industrious team built a community garden, published *The Pooh News*, a mimeographed newsletter, operated a free store and pantry, and founded the Elm Street alternative elementary school.

The House donated services to local concerts.

“The Peace and Aid people from Talisman House will be there to keep people in line, police the area, take care of drug overdoses and administer first aid. ‘We’ll be there to keep things cool.’”<sup>16</sup>

The project was also an alternate service opportunity for conscientious objectors, provided draft counseling and notary publics to register voters, and established a high school “Drop-In Center” with local churches. The hostel helped 200 people in a six-month period with housing by providing a free place to stay for a few nights if someone was being “hassled.”<sup>5</sup>



*left:* Students in the kitchen at Talisman House. *center:* A game of cribbage in Talisman House. *right:* The all-purpose bulletin board at Talisman House.

meatless cooking, astrology, dog training, and how to build a dulcimer. Instructors would volunteer to teach courses or students would request a course. The T House would arrange it if enough people expressed interest.<sup>14</sup>

Cameron reported the first year a success, pointing to the House itself, the Free University, the library, and supporting Nightline: “We found our goals over a six-month period sound and worthy of continuation.”<sup>15</sup>

During this first three years, the Project shifted in several significant directions, with the most profound being a shift from primarily a drug emphasis to a people emphasis. Our experience validated the philosophical feeling that drugs were not the problem, these represented a symptom of the problem. The real problem was the way people felt about themselves and their environment. ...[T]hese were the areas we directed our efforts toward.<sup>12</sup>

There was even a mini grant program to help groups and people with their own projects. The program supplied a grant to the Good Food Store, which we know now as the Moscow Food Co-op. The Co-op celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023. Talisman House also managed to find time in their first year to attempt a statewide marijuana initiative.<sup>12</sup>

In conjunction with the People’s Blue Mountain Music Festival, the Talisman Project started the Renaissance Fair, a family alternative to the Festival which was known to get wild. In an *Argonaut* article, Cameron remarked, “Blue Mountain is somewhat of a spectator sport. The Renaissance Fair will give local people a chance to participate.”<sup>17</sup> The 1974 Renaissance Fair had 5,000 people in attendance at Moscow’s Friendship Square.<sup>18</sup>



Latah county employees used Talisman House to do food stamp qualification interviews when the county has hurting for space.<sup>19</sup> The House created a walk-in "Psychomat," an encounter group with a campus counseling center psychologist leading the informal sessions.<sup>15</sup>

unemployment which triggered a drop in volunteerism as underlying factors in the Project's instability. "People had to scramble for their very existence. The days of soft money went the way of all grand ideas—into the sunset." He found in their place was a growing isolationist attitude "...and generally people smile less."<sup>22</sup>

## Your house

Your Moscow Rapid Transit System is accepting donated bicycles and parts at 625 Ash. Please leave your donations on the So. side of the house.

The University Sketch Club has merged with the Talisman project's Free Classes Drawing Class to form free sketch periods which run from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. on Tuesday evenings in the Old Women's Gym Art Annex. Models are provided.

If you need clothes, come check out your Clothing Bank at 625 Ash in the basement.

Let's prepare for those spring drug busts! Donate or pledge money to your Talisman Bail Bond Fund. Call 885-6738 — —

above: Advertisement for services available through Talisman House. (*Argonaut* 13 Apr 1973) right: Childcare service was briefly available at Talisman House. (*Argonaut* 25 Oct 1977)

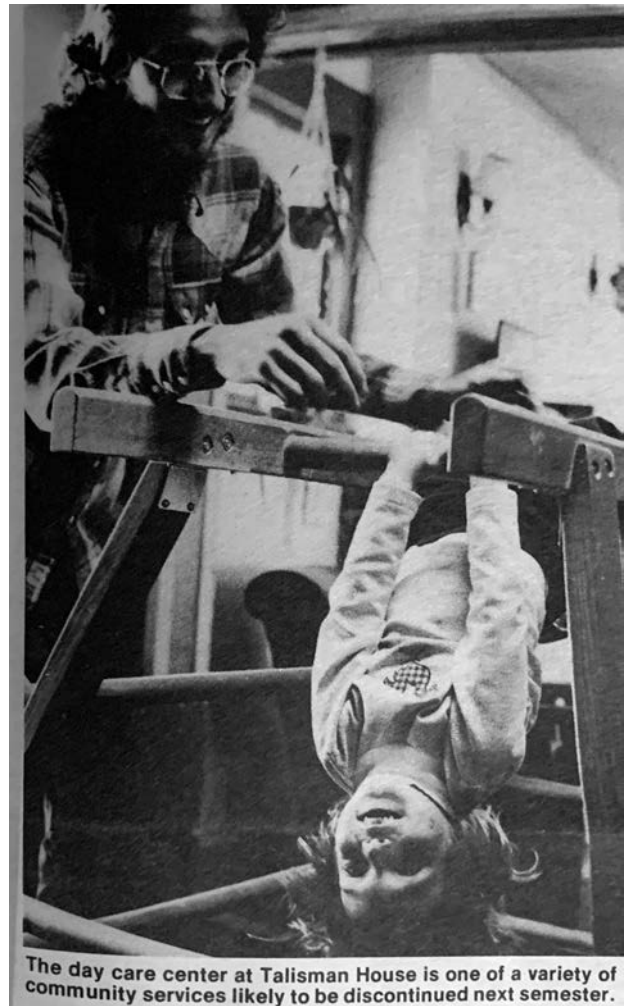
In 1976 the Talisman House's living area was remodeled into a coffee shop. The lumber for the remodel came from the Moscow Home Improvement Alliance, the group that had recently demolished the Genesee railroad station. With the source of the wood in mind, the coffee house was named The Genesee Train Station. It was a non-alcohol venue with live entertainment.<sup>20</sup> A year later it was renamed Star-Anise and run by a volunteer collective.<sup>21</sup>

As may be clear from the endeavors listed above, by 1975 drug education had become a minor part of the Talisman Project. The project had grown and expanded its outreach at an unmanageable rate. Cameron wrote in a report: "The ideals [sic] all sounded so good but no one dared suggest that they were not a part of the Talisman House's philosophy."<sup>12</sup>

The House had been plagued with money problems. Its federal funding was only available for the initial three years. Consequently, out of the 20 original experimental programs, ten had been eliminated. It was through fundraising and last-minute grants that the Talisman Project was able to continue each year. Cameron reflected:

The pressing concern to do something about drug use has evaporated and along with that concern went university, state and federal support.<sup>12</sup>

A final *New Pooh* newsletter piece written by Cameron reported that at Talisman's beginning "Idealism was rampant." He traced the changes in the economy, the reduction in funding of poverty programs, inflation, and



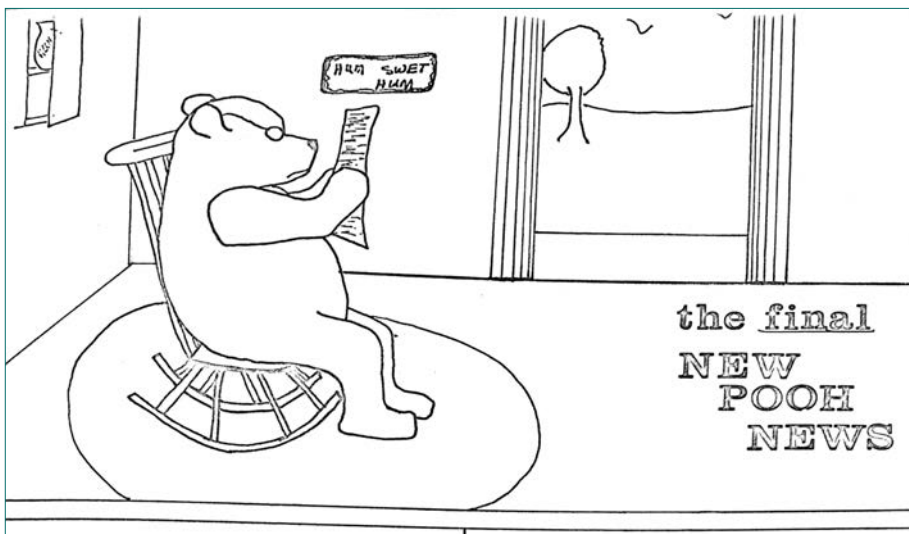
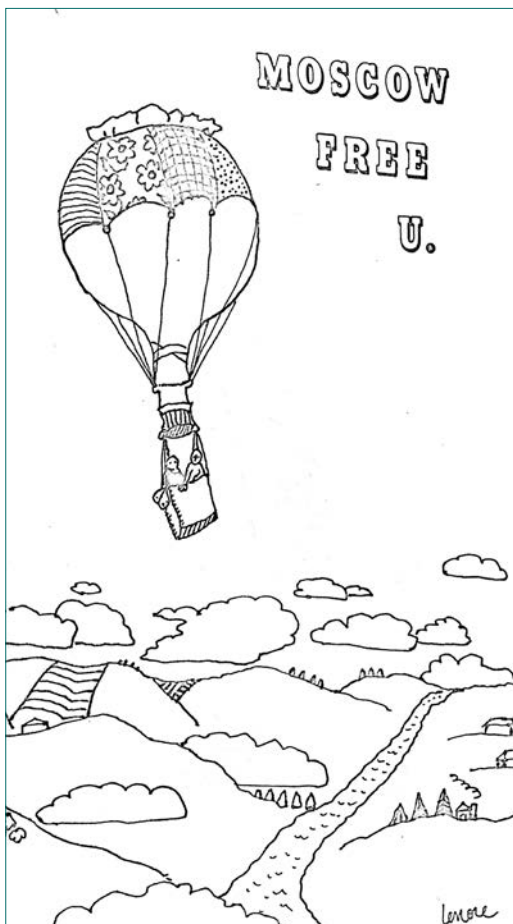
Not only was the Talisman Project facing a growing variety of problems, but its hostel was also running into difficulties. Intended as temporary housing, people wanted to stay longer, and the economy was leading to an increase in transients who also wanted to take advantage of the resource. An increasing number of temporary residents were not cooperating with the Talisman House staff. Incidents of theft and vandalism occurred more frequently.

With each year, the Project's continuance became more uncertain. Responsibility for it was moved into a section of U of I student services; it was no longer its own department.<sup>10</sup> In 1976 it was saved by another grant. Cameron reported that the Talisman House would begin training volunteers to become paraprofessionals and explore new opportunities for people over 55.<sup>23</sup> It appeared

as if the Talisman Project had lost its focus and was intent on rediscovering its relevancy. In a report on the Talisman House, Cameron wrote:

The Project borders on extinction partially because, like a dinosaur, the environment which spawned the effort has changed to the point that the new environment demands new programs.<sup>12</sup>

counseling, she worked to change the T House's reputation as a counter-culture hub and found funding through a Title I education grant. It would serve the whole community and be connected to the existing network of resources. The Free University and Ren Fair were continued. The Talisman Project would also provide mastectomy counseling. The House would acquire more training for



left: Cover of schedule for Moscow Free University created by Talisman House and offering a variety of practical courses taught by volunteers. (UG 13 President's Office (Hartung) records, UI Lib Spec Coll & Arch) above: Part of the cover to the New Pooh News newsletter published by Talisman House. (UG 13 President's Office (Hartung) records, UI Lib Spec Coll & Arch)

In 1976 Cameron resigned, frustrated by the financial challenges and the University's reluctance to commit full funding.<sup>24</sup> President Hartung responded to his resignation, saying in part:

In spite of the feelings which seem to be uppermost in your letter, that the University administration is basically not interested in "people programs," the fact is that given a bit more money, there is no question in the minds of anyone but that we would continue with the Talisman House program. Your letter does suggest some misapprehension concerning the enormity of the financial crunch we are in.<sup>25</sup>

Whether or not influenced by the President's letter, Cameron did stay on as a volunteer and Dianne Milhollin became the new director. A graduate student in guidance

their volunteers. Milhollin also planned on collaborating with Meals on Wheels and the MS Foundation.<sup>10,26</sup>

Milhollin stayed with the Talisman House for less than a year. She moved on to become the first coordinator of the U of I Student Disability Services. Corky Bush, the assistant dean of students, took over the House as part of her responsibilities in July of 1977.<sup>27</sup>

A childcare service was tried as a one-year experiment that fall for U of I students to drop off children for the hour or two they attended class.<sup>28</sup> It was discontinued at the end of the semester as the reality of the end of the Talisman House settled in. The end of transient housing soon followed. Bill Loftus reported for the Argonaut that, faced with poor funding, lack of community support, safety issues in the ever-aging building, and no live-in manager, the Talisman House could not survive.<sup>27</sup>

In November 1977 the Talisman House closed, marking the "end of an era of service and pioneering in community needs..."<sup>13,29</sup> It was survived by the Renaissance Fair and the Moscow Food Co-op. Both continue to this day. It is difficult to tell when the Community Free University

ended, or if it merged with Pullman's free university. Its last listing was in a 1997 *Argonaut*.

Bob Cameron described the Talisman Project as "an incredible learning experience for a lot of us."<sup>12</sup>

### Acknowledgments

LeNelle McInturff; Latah County Historical Society; Leah Evans-Janke, PhD., University of Idaho Special Collections and Archives

\*Palouse Anthropology is a group of researchers interested in preserving the micro-history of the Palouse through the collection and compilation of historical artifacts and oral histories for the benefit of researchers and future generations. [palouseanthro@gmail.com](mailto:palouseanthro@gmail.com)

### Sources

1. Clark, C. D. "Disasters Foreseen: Tragedy and Camp in President Richard Nixon's Antidrug Campaign." *Journalism & Communication Monographs*, 20(3), 254-257 (2018) <https://doi.org/10.1177/1522637918787816>, p. 254.
2. FindLaw Staff, "Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970." <https://www.findlaw.com/criminal/criminal-charges/comprehensive-drug-abuse-prevention-and-control-act-of-1970.html>.
3. "Drug Abuse Education." In *CQ Almanac 1972*, 28th ed., 03-531-03-532. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1973. <http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal72-1251145>, p. 586.
4. Ury, Claude. "The Drug Abuse Education Act." *The Phi Delta Kappan* 51, no. 5 (1970): 281. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20372630>.
5. "The Report of the Talisman Project." *Argonaut*, 29 Sept. 1972.
6. "Report to PAC, Jan. 16, 1974," UG 13 President's Office (Hartung) records 1973-1974 Talisman House 25/613, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives, p. 6.
7. Foley, John. "Feels mission misunderstood: Drug Squad approach candid." *Argonaut*, 7 May 1971.
8. Guilfoil, Mike. "Drop-in centers offer aid to troubled." *WSU Evergreen*, 9 Mar. 1973, p. 6.
9. Loftus, Bill. "Talisman House moves, continues past programs." *Argonaut*, 6 Sept. 1972.
10. Lewis, Bill. "Talisman House director resigns." *Argonaut*, 15 Oct. 1976.
11. Community Mental Health Services, Mar. 1972. Community Interstate Commission for Higher Education. University Research and Economic Development Vertical File. Box 5.
12. Untitled doc. UG 13 President's Office (Hartung) records 1973-1974 Talisman House 25/613.
13. Neiwert, David. "Talisman House directors may end community services." *Argonaut*, 25 Oct. 1977.
14. "Free U Starts Off on New Semester!" *Argonaut*, 6 Nov. 1973.
15. "Talisman house seeks expansion, improvement." *Argonaut*, 8 Feb. 1972.
16. "Campus Security takes charge of Blue Mountain." *Argonaut*, 8 May 1973.
17. "Renaissance Fair Features Spring Activities." *Argonaut*, 19 Apr. 1974.
18. "Emphasis Change." *Argonaut*, 28 Feb. 1975.
19. "Food stamp center location moves." *Argonaut*, 15 Apr. 1975.
20. "Catch the next train." *Argonaut*, 27 Feb. 1976.
21. "Star-Anise coffee house at Talisman." *Argonaut*, 11 Feb. 1977.
22. "A final Pooh News." UG 13 President's Office (Hartung) records 1973-1974, Talisman House 25/613. University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives.
23. "Talisman House to Continue." *UI General News*, 13 Apr. 1976.
24. Bob Cameron resignation letter. 16 Sept. 1976. UG 13 President's Office (Hartung) records 1973-1974 Talisman House 25/613.
25. President Hartung's response to Cameron's resignation letter. 30 Sept. 1976. UG 13 President's Office (Hartung) records 1973-1974 Talisman House 25/613.
26. Sample, Susan. "Reaching the total community." *Argonaut*, 19 Oct. 1976.
27. Loftus, Bill. "Monetary, management woes could close Talisman House." *Argonaut*, 14 Oct. 1977.
28. "Child care services for U of I students offered for first time." *Argonaut*, 2 Sept. 1977.
29. "Talisman closing now official." *Argonaut*, 4 Nov. 1977.



**LATAH COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**327 East Second Street**  
**Moscow, Idaho 83843**

PRSR STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Colton, WA  
Permit No. 4