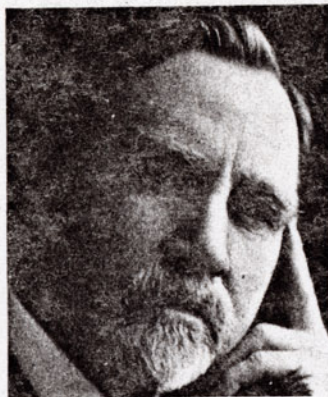




**GOVERNOR WILLIAM J. McCONNELL**  
Third Governor of the State of Idaho  
1893 to 1897



**DR. W. A. ADAIR**  
Prominent Moscow Medical Doctor  
1893 to 1933



**DR. FREDERIC C. CHURCH**

## The William J. McConnell Mansion

Located one block East of the Carnegie Library at 110 S. Adams Street, the McConnell Mansion is the home of the Latah County Museum Society. It contains two floors of exhibits which depict the development of Latah County through room displays, dioramas, artifacts and illustrations.

The McConnell Mansion was built between 1883 and 1886 by William J. McConnell. He became one of Idaho's first senators being appointed to that position when Idaho became a state in 1890. Later he ran in Idaho's first official election and became Idaho's first elected governor and third governor of the state. While serving two terms, his family remained here at home in Moscow. The oldest daughter, Mary, acted as the governor's hostess while he was in office at Boise and later married Idaho's distinguished Senator William E. Borah.

The house was owned by Dr. W. A. Adair from 1901 to 1935. He had been a practicing physician in the county since 1893 and acquired the house after the governor had lost it in bankruptcy due to the depression and the wet harvest of 1898. For many years it hosted lavish garden parties and social gatherings as the Adairs were quite active in the social affairs of the county.

Dr. Frederic C. Church professor of history at the University of Idaho purchased the house in 1941 and made it his residence until his death in 1966. In his will he left it to the Society for a museum and meeting place.

The McConnell Mansion is a particularly good example of early Idaho architecture, and the furniture of the Victorian style. Display areas in the upstairs portion tell the story of the development of Latah County for all who may be interested in the history and heritage of our county.

As headquarters for the Latah County Museum Society the mansion also houses the offices and workshops of the various programs, including research and publications, school and interpretive preservations, exhibit preparation and administration as well as priceless museum and library collections, archives and photo files.

## Governor William J. McConnell Mansion



## Latah County Museum Society

*The Latah County Museum Society was formed in 1968 to preserve the history and the heritage of the county.*

Hours:

2 - 5 P. M.    Wednesdays & Sundays  
10 - 12 A. M.    Saturdays

Admission:

Tourists	\$1.00
Children	\$.50
County Residents	Free

Telephone: 882-1004

GOVERNOR McCONNELL HOUSE, 110 S. Adams, was built from 1883 to 1886 while McConnell was a Moscow merchant. Costing \$60,000, the mansion was Idaho's most expensive house of the period. The tall narrow look favored in the 1880s, with two-story bays and sharp gables is described as "Eastlake" style. It is now the site of the Latah County Pioneer Historical Museum.

M.J. SHIELDS HOUSE, 411 B Street, was built sometime in the 1890s by one of early Moscow's most successful businessmen. Shields came to Moscow in 1878 and opened a

farm implement store. Before long he had the largest distributing warehouse for farm equipment in the Palouse. He was also a rancher, owned sawmills, and operated the town's electric plant. Steep gable roofs, ornate barge boards and brackets distinguish this white two-story "Queen Ann" style house.

MILLER HOUSE, 325 N. Polk, was built in 1910 by Mark P. Miller, who owned a flour mill on the S.E. corner of Sixth and Jackson Streets. The large three story mansion looks like a chalet, with half-timbered gables,

brown clapboard siding and white trim.

J.J. DAY HOUSE, 430 E. A Street, was built in the early 1900s by the millionaire owner of the Day Mines near Wallace, Idaho. Day spent most of his time at the mines, but maintained this sprawling two-story house, with its many porches and entrances for his family in Moscow.

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH, was built in 1903 from blocks of native basalt. The "Gothic" design includes slender stained glass windows and a tall square belfry topped by a shingled steeple with a clock on each face.

# Adairs Sell Old Mansion; House Built In Early '90s

The Adair residence at 110 South Adams street has been sold to Thomas L. Jackson of Tekoa, it was announced here Saturday. Mr. Jackson, father of Mrs. Roy Seek of Moscow, plans to move here Tuesday with his wife and son. Miss Ione Adair and Mrs. Lula Schomber, sisters, who have been living in the house since the death of their father, Dr. W. A. Adair, plan to move into an apartment nearby.

As far as can be learned at present Mr. Jackson plans to make the house his home here. He is connected with the rail-roading business, but is now on leave from any active duty.

The tall, white, old mansion, which changes hands in this sale, has been a Moscow landmark since most residents of the city can remember. Few are now here who can remember when it was built. Fewer are there who can remember when the hill upon which it now stands was bare of any structures.

## Built About 1893

The Adair house, as it has become to be known locally, was built about 1893, three years after Idaho gained her statehood, by W. J. McConnell, then governor. Mrs. William E. Borah, wife of Idaho's senior senator, and Mrs. Ben E. Bush, Moscow, daughters of Governor McConnell, lived there.

When the house was built it was with extreme care and good workmanship, characteristic of the art of carpenters of "the old school." The ultimate in style and splendor of its day, the Adair house was built of lumber brought here from Walla Walla in wagons. Every piece was straight-grained

and properly seasoned, every joist carefully fitted and tested.

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

## Saw State Receptions

During the governor's tenure of office the mansion was the scene of many state receptions. Almost like turning the pages in a dust-covered old book, one can look back in imagination to what those stately and dignified affairs must have been like—high officials of the state, prominent businessmen of the surrounding country, friends of the governor who was so prominent in molding Idaho's early history, all invited to his home here.

An 80-foot well was dug by the McConnells near the house. A windmill was erected over it and for a number of years it was the only water system in the town. Persons living at quite some distance came to draw water there. The well has since been covered and the springs drained away.

## Sold In 1901

In 1901 the house was purchased by the late Dr. Adair, pioneer Moscow physician, and in it he raised his family. For many years the sunken area north of the house had been covered with blackberry and raspberry bushes, but it was soon transformed into

a lovely garden by the Adairs and since has bowed to the demand for residence property. Tall, stately poplar trees, planted at the time the house was built, still stand and harmonize with the long, vertical lines of the old mansion.

Since Dr. Adair's death, recently, the house has been turned over to apartments for the most part. The only structure on the hill when it was built it is now one of eight or nine on that single city block. When built it was some distance from the town. When Dr. Adair purchased the property it was at the edge of the city. Now it is comparatively near the city center.

The Adair house has looked down on 45 years of progress and development of Moscow. As solid as a rock, there are many more years of life left in it, according to building experts who have examined it.

**110 South Adams — Latah County Pioneer Historical Museum** — This is the old McConnell Mansion. It is well worth visiting during museum hours. Construction took three years, from 1883 to 1886. It was built by William J. McConnell, the first elected governor of the State of Idaho. This is a beautiful home of the "Victorian Gothic" style. Some of the interior wood came from the southern United States. The staircase was built in San Francisco and shipped by boat up the Columbia River to the Dalles, Oregon. It was then transported by freight wagon from there via Walla Walla, Washington, to Moscow. The mansion was the first home in Moscow to have "indoor" plumbing. What is now a porch was a glassed-in conservatory. The mansion was the girlhood home of Mayme McConnell Borah, wife of Senator Borah. In 1901, it was sold to Dr. W. A. Adair, one of Latah County's pioneer physicians. In 1921, Dr. Fredrick C. Church, an

eminent historian, came to head the University of Idaho's history department. He fell in love with the mansion, boarded there, and in 1941 became its proud owner. Upon his death, he bequeathed the mansion to Latah County.

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Governor McConnell came to the Northwest in 1860, at the age of 18, seeking adventure. He traveled by mule train to Oregon; and lured by gold, he walked to the Payette Valley. Eventually, he lost interest in prospecting and turned to farming, being drawn to the Palouse Country of Latah County.

The last building on this tour is owned by Latah County and operated by the Latah County Historical Society as a combination of restored period dwelling and museum. Built in 1886 by William J. McConnell, the first two-term governor of Idaho, this beautiful Victorian Gothic style home is on the National Register of Historic Places. Worthy of note are the graceful chimneys, the curved brackets supporting the eaves and porch roofs, the two-story bay windows topped with sharp gables, the ornamental patterned shingles, and wooden millwork. The door facing Adams Street has a beautiful pane of etched and beveled glass surmounted by a panel bordered by small squares of colored glass.



The building is well worth visiting; admission is free. Inside are to be seen the original wooden shutters and staircase banister, shipped to Moscow from San Francisco; pine woodwork hand-grained to make it look like hardwood; the fireplace with its veneer of Vermont marble over steel, decorated with gold leaf and black onyx trim; and the period furnishings.

When this house was built, McConnell owned the entire block; he later sold to the Swedish Lutheran congregation the land on which its church was built. What is now the front porch was a glassed-in conservatory. Between the house and First Street there was a sunken garden and a two-level barn with entrance from First, which was later converted into the house presently at 415 East First. The mansion was the girlhood home of Mary McConnell Borah, wife of William E. Borah, longtime U. S. Senator from Idaho. In 1901 it was sold to Dr. William A. Adair, one of Latah County's early physicians. In 1921 Dr. Frederic Church came to Moscow as professor of European history at the university. As a roomer, he lived at the mansion until 1941, when he purchased it. Under the terms of Dr. Church's will the mansion became the property of Latah County.

W. J. McConnell had come to the Northwest in 1860, at the age of 18, seeking adventure. He traveled by mule train to Oregon and, lured by gold, went on foot to the Payette Valley of Idaho. Eventually he lost interest in prospecting and turned to farming. Before returning to Oregon, he served as a captain of the vigilantes in the Payette Valley. In 1878 he came to Moscow from Yamhill, Oregon, to go into business as a merchant. He was a founder of the McConnell-Maguire store (#11) and served as governor of the state 1893-1897.

*McConnell Mansion in the 1890s. Note the picket fence.*

# 'Governor's Mansion' Is Challenge To Historical Club Says Mrs. Clyde



**GOVERNOR MCCONNELL'S MANSION** —Completed in 1886, by W. J. McConnell, Moscow businessman who was elected governor of Idaho in 1892, this house at 110 South Adams Street was willed to Latah County "to be preserved for the use of the Pioneer Association and Historical Club as a meeting place and in general by other cultural organizations agreeing to cooperate," by the late Dr. Frederic C. Church, retired university professor.

2/12/69

"Here is your heritage," said Mrs. Earl (Lola) Clyde, in speaking of the "governor's mansion," willed to the county by the late Dr. Frederic C. Church, "what are you going to do with it?"

This challenge was given to the Historical Club, a member of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, as Mrs. Clyde concluded her discussion of the history of the house built by Idaho's first regularly elected governor, W. J. McConnell.

Seventy-five members and guests of the club gathered at Epworth Hall of the Methodist Church Friday afternoon to hear Mrs. Clyde reminisce about "The Governor's Mansion."

From the birth of W. J. McConnell in Commerce, Mich., in 1839 until his death in 1925, he made history for our city, county and state, said Mrs. Clyde. He was a United States Deputy Marshall, a leader of the original Idaho Vigilantes and a Moscow

businessman of high repute. The McConnell Store was considered as having the best merchandise this side of Portland. He was elected governor in 1892.

In 1883 he bought a plot in the John Russell addition to the city of Moscow and erected the \$60,000 mansion which still stands at the northeast corner of Second and Adams streets.

The beautiful cedar shutters, hand-carved cornices, red carpeting and the first plumbing in Moscow were much admired by those who attended the open house on Christmas Eve, 1886.

Mrs. William E. Borah, widow of the late Idaho senator who recently celebrated her 98th birthday and Mrs. Max Leudeman, 90, are daughters of Gov. and Mrs. McConnell and both reside in Oregon. Another daughter and two sons are deceased.

Others who have lived in the house were the Adair family; who bought the house and moved in between 1900 and 1901; the Jackson family, who obtained the home from the Adairs and lived there a few years. Jackson was a railroad man and when he was transferred, Dr. Frederick Church bought the property.

Mrs. Mary Louise Bush Perrine, granddaughter of Gov. McConnell, was honored guest and was presented a corsage by Mrs. Fred Handel, Historical Club president. Mrs. Perrine's latest book, "Salt Boy" was included among the many clippings and pictures of the house and family on display.

In keeping with the theme, Mrs. Roderick Sprague, accompanied by Mrs. William Billingsley sang two solos, "Long, Long Ago" and "Bless This House."

Mrs. W. J. Waller gave the invocation and benediction.

Hostesses were Mrs. Lloyd Scrivner, Mrs. Hazel Larson, Mrs. N. D. McCroskey, Mrs. Harold Jacobs, Mrs. V. G. Anderson, Mrs. LaRelle Stephens and Mrs. Bill Morrison.

Presiding at the tea table were Mrs. Ed Morken and Mrs. Juanita Dix.