

# George Tabor

## The life and times of an original Wallace pioneer

By NANCY LEE HANSON  
Staff correspondent

George Tabor, who died March 5, 1991 at the age of 97, was born at the Wallace Hospital Nov. 1, 1894. Much of the following story is taken from an article by Billie Shewmaker published in the North Idaho Press in 1980.

His father, Jesse Tabor, moved from Colorado to Murray in the Gold Rush of 1884 as a teenager, but left for Burke when the strike at the Tiger Mine was made. He and a partner went into business in a store there.

Mr. Tabor opened his first store in Wallace in 1890 at the West One Bank building site. When it burned it was replaced by the present brick structure. When a banking firm wanted the property, Tabor's was moved across the street.

This was in 1910 and George Tabor believed it was the oldest building in town. The wooden building a burned in 1933. The temperature dropped to minus 33 degrees the night of the fire. The icicles on the building were a beautiful sight.

Mrs. Shewmaker in her article on George Tabor's sale of the building and his retirement in August of 1980 wrote, "He is proud of the building." He said, "It is the post and pillar construction. That means that it is built with reinforced concrete. You could take out all the walls except those posts, and the building will still stand."

"It was built by the best carpenters the city has ever known," he said. The fire occurred during the Depression and the banks would not loan any money.

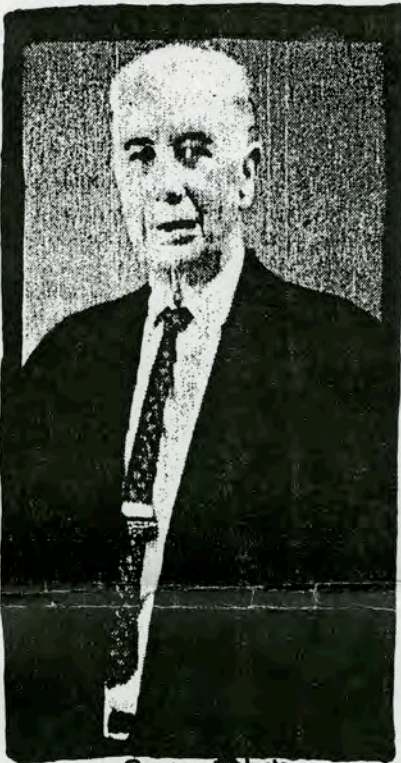
Jack Van Uden of the Wallace Lumber Company loaned the money for the new building, he told her. "They hired mean like Axel Carlson and a couple of other good carpenters. It was constructed by John Batts and Van Uden. It is the best building in town, no questions about it. The entire structure cost \$42,000. That included everything." He said the plumbing was installed by Dillon Inskip's father.

"The insurance man told me that at today's costs, it would take \$300,000 to build the same building," he said.

The Tabor and Pfirman Block, known at the Civic Center Building, was designed by G. A. Perherson of Spokane for J. W. Tabor and Franklin Pfirman. The two-story, multi-colored brick building has extensive terra cotta ornamentation on the second sto-

ry and ranks among the finest Art Deco commercial buildings in Idaho.

The family home at 225 Pine Street was purchased by Jesse Tabor and rebuilt. He lived there until he died in 1940 at 82. It



George Tabor

remained in the family until George's sister, Kathryn Tabor (Mrs. Joe) Osburn died.

The home is located behind the former school which housed the grade, primary and high schools. He remembered its dome. He was the only surviving member of nine students of the Class of 1912.

When the Tabor store first opened in Wallace it was primarily a stationery store but also carried fresh fruit, scarce in the late 1880's and early 1900's.

The business grew, and they began to carry records and photographs. They sold postcards with photographs printed in the store's dark room. George Tabor was responsible for starting the photography department. Later he expanded into home appliances, paint and wallpaper. In the past 40 years he carried electronic equipment, art and office supplies and engineering and draftmen's equipment.

George Tabor remembered seeing President Theodore Roosevelt when he visited Wallace in 1903. A photograph showed the school and a crowd of people in the ballpark gathered around the president.

Mrs. Shewmaker wrote, "His love for photography from childhood on has preserved much of the past. He has a priceless collection of photographs taken dur-

ing the Great Fire of 1910. He told her, "I didn't know the significance or realize the future value they would have." He wanted the collection to go to the Wallace District Mining Museum.

George Tabor loved to fish and caught his first when he was four years old. He never forgot that experience.

Downey Creek was his favorite campground. He said he went there the first time as a boy when the father of his friend Bob Moffit took them there on a fishing trip.

After he was married, the family often would spend a week or ten days camping there, he said. "We had to leave our car at Prichard and go in by horse and boat."

He was a member of a championship rifle team, along with Henry L. "Hank" Day, which was part of the Wallace Rifle Club. Hank's father helped sponsor the team on their trip back east to compete.

Mr. Tabor also was a member of the 1912 track team.

He was a member of the Shoshone Lodge, AF&M, Order of Eastern Star and the Calam Temple of Shrine, with its affiliated Shoshone County Shrine Club. He also belonged to the Wallace Elks Club, the Board of Trade (later Chamber of Commerce,) and the Kiwanis Club. He was a charter member of the Wallace Rotary Club, organized in 1929 and was president from 1949-1950. He took an active part in these organizations.

Mrs. Shewmaker wrote, "George described his method of raising spending money during his boyhood. Wallace didn't have paved streets or sidewalks then.

The boardwalks were built high above the ground and whenever you wanted a nickel or dime, all you had to do was crawl underneath those walks."

As a boy he worked at a four-lane bowling alley under the Fuller Hotel building (Wallace Corner.) "I got five cents a game. There was no automation, it was all set by hand, no racks...You had to work fast."

His mother took George and his sister Kathryn to her native Scotland for a visit once. "George still recalls the pleasure of meeting and mingling with his Scotch cousins during that trip," Mrs. Shewmaker wrote.

He told her the most important date in his life was when he married Lydia Edmiston at Moscow in the fall of 1917. He recalled his future mother-in-law gave him the 'best bit of advice' ever given him. "She told me 'never to nag.'" He said he enjoyed her companionship when she moved into their home in later years.

He was proud of his wife's background. Her father, George Edmiston, was a teacher in the first school in Kellogg where she was a native. He became the hiring agent in charge of Hecla's employment office and he was known as "The King."

Mrs. Tabor died in 1989. Mr. and Mrs. Tabor left a daughter Jean Quinn of Beaverton, Ore., three grandchildren, Diane, Denny and Debbie and five great-grandchildren, Todd, Chris, Lisa, Stacey and Jennifer.

Mr. Tabor is interred with his wife in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Coeur d'Alene. He and his family left a profound mark on Wallace and they will be missed.



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