

LATAH LEGACY

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The cover: Threshing wheat on the O'Connor farm in the 1930s.

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

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Remembering Lillian

Sam Schrager



Lillian and Doctor Robert Otness at Potlatch Days with their display of local history publications. A poster advertising the Ice Cream Social is on the tree.

Editor's Note: Lillian Otness died in July, 1994. H. Robert Otness died less than a year later in May, 1995.

Lillian Otness was the guiding spirit behind the flourishing of local history in Latah County in the 1970s and 1980s. She went about this work so quietly, with such aversion to drawing attention to herself, that there are probably few who know how much the historical society owes to her influence and foresight. Now Lillian is gone, and it is time to honor her as a visionary.

I say this as one whose involvement in the local scene, and indeed whose future vocation, Lillian in a real sense made possible. I met her when I was a newcomer to the area in 1973, awkward, fresh from college and smitten with the idea of recording old-timers' stories. It was at a meeting at the McConnell Mansion of stalwart museum supporters, among them Grace Wicks, Kenneth Platt, Lola Clyde, Leora Stillinger, and Leonard Ashbaugh, who were agreeing to back my proj-

ect. Lillian, as she often did, stayed a little to the side. When we were introduced, she told me that my plan intrigued her and that she'd be glad to chair the project committee. Nervous as I was about having to prove my good intentions to strangers, I felt instantly reassured by this woman, who cared about the work's substance, its documentary promise.

The oral history committee, it turned out, had an active membership of one. Everyone deferred to Lillian to keep tabs on the project. This was most fortunate because, although I was oblivious to it at first, my project stirred controversy.

The disagreement, hardly ever voiced directly, was over the right way to honor the past. While local history buffs had recently joined together, after Frederic Church donated the McConnell house to the county, to turn it into a public fa-

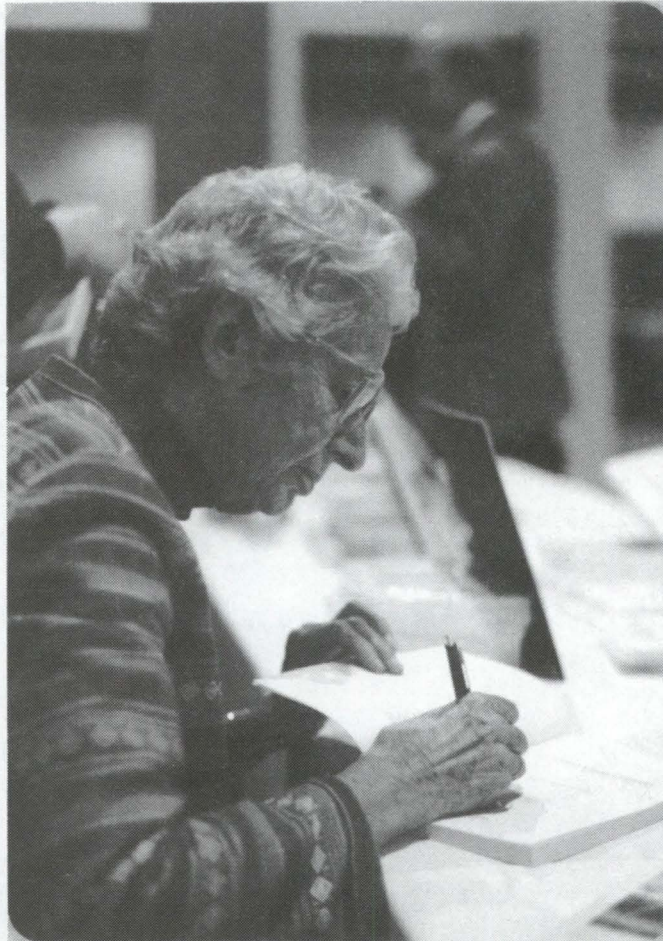
cility, there were real differences of opinion over the house's place in the local scheme of things. Some saw it mainly as a meeting center for the Pioneer Association and the Historical Club. Some saw it as a museum that would display artifacts of genteel turn-of-the-century society. My interest in life in the country and small towns, in logging and subsistence farming, in women's and ethnic experiences, didn't fit some folks' ideas of what the museum ought to be concerned about. But it fit Lillian's. She disliked rosy images of the past. She wanted true stories. And she knew that the museum, if it was to be of genuine worth, had to educate.

She envisioned the historical society as an institution that would help the community learn about itself. She didn't wax on about why people needed to study their shared history—she was too practical and too modest to make grand claims—but her desire to create such a place, a place to encounter and be stimulated by honest representations of the past, guided all of her volunteering.

As I got to know Lillian, I realized that she was keenly concerned about our ability, as citizens, to think and act for ourselves. The better our understanding of the past, she believed, the better the chance of acting for the common good in the future.

Lillian used her own experience growing up as a negative example of thinking for oneself. "I felt

as I got older that I was vastly undereducated," she told me on tape in 1975, "and that I had been cheated by not having the kind of teaching that would force me into some kind of independence of thought. Because it seems to me that this is one of the things that educated people ought to be able to do, is to hunt out the evidence and then evaluate it and draw some kind of conclusion from it—rather than making learning just a matter of memory."



Lillian Otness signing copies of *A Great Good Country*

Lillian was speaking here out of her life's work as an educator, a professor of English and physical education at the state colleges in Pocatello and Moscow. You can sense in her words something of her manner: matter-of-fact, self-effacing, incisive, reflective. Lillian loved local history, but was too clear-eyed about its narrowing of human possibility to be nostalgic.

The present, she believed, was in important ways preferable. In the same conversation, for instance, she spoke about the changing position of women. "I think the climate is much better now," she said. "It's not yet perfect by any means—that is, there's still discrimination, and women play, certainly, a much smaller part in the things that make the world go round than they deserve to, but it's much better than it was. But I think that a lot of it was that we had grown up surrounded by this

kind of conventional attitude, and a lot of us didn't rebel against it as we should have.

"And I can remember being burned up when I was on the faculty at the Southern Branch because the executive dean, who was the head of the school, made no secret of the fact that, given two applicants equally well-qualified, he would take the man anytime. I felt this was grossly unfair. And I also thought that if a woman happened to be interested in something like women's physical education or home economics, that this was to her advantage because those were jobs for which men didn't ordinarily compete. But I felt that it was very unjust that this should be so."

Remembering Lillian, I have imagined this indignation of a young woman in the face of the ingrained prejudice of her native West. I see a penetrating critic of what was wrong in the conventional morality, and an optimist who was exceptionally generous and gracious towards others. I see a feminist determined to live on an equal footing with men—and who found in H. Robert Otness a man who could respect her aspirations. These were convictions and qualities, undimmed by time, that she brought to her leadership of the historical society.

After I spent afternoons in Lillian's front parlor, describing what I'd been hearing as I went about my research, she listened intently. She was as excited, and sometimes as perplexed, as I, as we tried to grasp why certain stories mattered so much to individual tellers and, surprisingly often, to their communities. Like all the best teachers, she trusted me to find my own way while making me feel that she was, in spirit, with me on the journey.

After the oral history project was well launched, Lillian led the museum across the threshold to become a full-fledged historical society. She prevailed on the board to seek a full-time director. Federal (CETA) money was available to seed new public positions, and the County Commissioners, led by Donna Bray, were receptive to expanding funding for historical ac-

tivities. As with my project, Lillian's support was decisive in winning over other key people.

Not everyone was convinced that the museum could, or should, support a permanent director. Lillian was. Her judgment, expressed, as always, gently and forthrightly, carried great weight.

I wondered sometimes if Lillian's influence in historical circles was the result of genealogical credentials. The first thing I'd heard about her, even before we'd met, was that her grandfather was Almon Asbury Lieuallen, the founder of Moscow. The distinction of being by descent the first among pioneers was, in the eyes of many, a mantle of honor. Lillian wore it so lightly. With her usual dry wit, she liked to tell about the status her mother, Lilly Lieuallen Woodworth, had enjoyed with the Historical Club. In her old age Lilly Woodworth was the only charter member of the club still living. The ladies "just

carried her around on a pillow and did all kinds of nice things for her." They ignored the fact that she was not a member any more, had not been for many years. She had resigned when a friend of hers was blackballed from joining the club because she was a smoker. By resigning, Lillian said, her mother "showed a great deal of inde-

pendence." I felt that this story described Lillian's own relation to pioneer circles. Honored without seeking it, she acted out of principles. And in the end, she persuaded not by status but by force of character and insight.

I think of Lillian's contribution to the study of the past as having three dimensions. By supporting oral history, she saw to it that the stories of communities across the area became part of the documentary record. By seeking favorable conditions for the historical society to grow, she helped bring into being a remarkable institution. Finally, by writing *A Great Good Country: A Guide to Historic Moscow and Latah County, Idaho*, she created a superb resource for everyone interested in the area's history. I was gone to graduate school by the time of this last accomplishment. I heard from Mary Reed that Lillian resisted putting her own name on the

I think of Lillian's contribution to the study of the past as having three dimensions.

book, claiming that many had contributed to the walking-tour descriptions. True, but Lillian coordinated, compiled all the parts, and added a great deal. How like her!

Last fall I was back in Latah County for a week with a class from the Evergreen State College. As my students explored the towns, asking people they met about changes and continuities with the past, they were referred again and again to the Historical Society in Moscow. People in the rural county were enthusiastic about the Society, looking to it as a repository of materials,

skills, and knowledge. This is a testament to nearly two decades of hard work and creative programming, first by Keith Petersen and then by Mary Reed, both supported by many devoted volunteers and staff. Lillian would be proud to know that the institution's reputation, so well-established regionally, is strong where it matters, at home. She knew it would take time. She'd never take credit for it, but the Society prospers because it has been true to her vision of a thriving local culture.

Moscow Dogs

Mary Williamson d'Easum

Editors' Note: Mary is a native of Moscow, Idaho. She was interviewed by Joann Jones in August, 1993, about her memories of dogs in Moscow.

I am Mary d'Easum, I was Mary Williamson in my early days in Moscow. I was born here in 1905, so I know a lot of Moscow history, and it occurs to me very much a part of the early days in Moscow is concerned with dogs. I have never read anything in *Latah Legacy* on your tapes about dogs, which were everywhere, and of course a member of every family. I'll talk about a few of them that impressed me in my young days. They were impressive dogs.

The first dog my family had was a bulldog, a brindle bull, called "Bud." Father had him in the store as a watchdog. I have a couple of stories about Bud.

One day Father was in the store on First and Main, where Haddock and Laughlin's store was later. Father was alone in the store, just a one floor store with a balcony, and the dog, Bud, started acting suspiciously, snuffing and stamping round the restroom, as though he thought someone was in there, and Father thought he could hear someone rustling. He didn't like to accost whoever was there, because they might be armed, so he called the dog over and tied him up and called my mother. At that time, J. J. Keane was sheriff. My father was Irish and so was Mr. Keane. They were very

good friends. They had evidently talked about security at the store.

Father called to Mother. He didn't want the man in the restroom to hear the name of the sheriff; he didn't want him to know what he was calling about, so Father said to Mother, "Remember that little girl, Josie, that Mary goes with, what's her father's name?" Mother said, "J. J. Keane." Father said, "Yes, I want you to call him, and tell him that I would like to order a big order of what we were talking about the other day," meaning he wanted security to come. Mother said to him, "Nat, are you ordering whiskey?" Father said, "No, just call Mr. Keane, he will know what I mean. I want an order, and I want it right now at the store, or as soon as he can deliver it."

Mother, of course, called Mr. Keane and said that Papa wanted an order of whatever they had talked about. The sheriff and his deputy, I suppose, came to the door, and there *was* a man in the restroom. I told Jo Keane Shell, who just died recently, this story once, and I said I asked Father, "Why didn't you just go accost the man in the restroom?" Father said he was afraid that if he opened the door, he would shoot the dog. Jo said, "It didn't matter if he shot the sheriff, huh?" I said, "Well, the sheriff would be armed,

he could defend himself.” So Mr. Keane marched the man off, and Father unleashed the dog and took him home.

When my brother Frank, just a year older than me, was about two and Mother was taking care of me as a baby, Frank got away from her, in just his diapers, and started walking down Third Street. The dog was with him. Of course Mother thought she couldn't leave me to go after him, so she called Father at the store to send someone up to pick up Frank and the dog. But Bud wouldn't let anyone come near the little boy. He wasn't vicious, but he looked vicious, his brow and his jaw made you scared; so this poor man

from the store had to walk at this two-year-old's speed all the way down to the store. Then, of course, Father could speak to the dog and tie

him up while the man took Frank home. Bud was a very good member of our family, very gentle with all of us, but kind of scary to anybody else. When my three brothers were a little older and used to wrestle on the lawn, Mother began to worry about Bud because he was too protective. He would growl at other children, and she was afraid that he would bite someone. So we had to get rid of Bud. I hope they found a good home for him, I'm sure they tried hard, and I hope that he could transfer his loyalties.



Nathaniel Williamson and his family, including the dog Mike, on the steps of their Moscow home.

He was so devoted to our family, I don't know whether he could feel that he belonged to anybody else.

Father and Mother went to Europe several times; Father's home was in Ireland, and Mother's roots were there too. On one of their trips, Father brought home an Irish terrier. They are rather short-haired, but curly-haired, tan dogs, like an Airedale, except they have no black on them and are a little bit smaller. This was a female dog, a bitch. She was bred, and Father had her shipped. Now that would be a terrible trip for a dog, in a cage of course. On the ocean liners it took a week; Mother thought it was a hard trip, so it would probably be longer in a freight ship, or in the hold of a ship. When they got home, they told us that this dog was coming, and that she would bring little pups, which thrilled us of course. We loved little dogs. I said, "How is she going to take those little pups? Will they feed them and water them along the way?" And Father said, "No, they're inside her." And I thought, "How smart of her, she swallowed the pups and was bringing them across the ocean in her stomach, where they didn't have to be fed!"

Sure enough, Nellie arrived and she had four pups. Dear little things, I can still see them. The females were Lady Brook and Killarney. Father gave them away, but we kept the two males, Pat and Mike. Pat lived, I think, only two or three years. I remember him well, but he died rather young. Mike we had for, oh, I suppose ten years. We loved Mike, he was very, very gentle around home. But of course it was bred into him to be a herd dog, so he did chase animals, and he was kind of bloodthirsty. No rabbits were safe around our yard, our neighbors' or friends' or any other that got out. My brother used to say that Mike could open any pen that rabbits were in; we put them in cages, of course. He would open the pen, let the rabbit out, and chase it and kill it, which of course didn't make him very popular among our friends, nor with my brothers.

We thought he didn't ever run after sheep, until we found out differently one time. We had a

driving goat; we used to say we "drove," but we just got in a little cart and held the reins, and we went where she wanted. I don't think we could call it driving; she led the way and we followed.

One day when the family was gone, the neighbor discovered Mike at the goat's throat. "Nanny" was her name, she had a little kid called "Billy the Kid," very original. The neighbor could hardly get Mike off Nanny's throat. I wondered afterwards why he didn't attack the little kid, which would have been easy. Father said, "No, if you knew about Nanny's hooves and her horns, you wouldn't tackle the kid." Anyway, my brother Frank and I were really mad at Mike after that because Father then took the goat out to the ranch, about a mile-and-a-half west of town. Of course, when we wanted to drive the goat, we had to walk the mile out to get her. It wasn't nearly as convenient, and we blamed Mike for that.

I suppose Mike was about ten when Father sold the big store and had an office on Second Street, near to where the Star-Mirror was at that time. One day, Father went to the office, and found Mike was dead on the doorstep. We never asked Father if he were shot or poisoned, but none of us believed that it was a natural death. Father carried Mike home, I remember. At that time we lived on B Street. Later the house was the Woods apartment, and it's now renovated into a one-family home again. I think it sold recently for what looked to us like a rather husky price. It was a nice old home.

Anyway, Father brought Mike home, and he was buried under a tree in the yard of that house. It was a weeping elm, what we called an "umbrella tree." My young brother Harry and I read the funeral service while Father buried Mike, with tears all around, of course. I can tell you, Mike had a good Episcopalian funeral at least, and we hope he rested in peace. That tree is gone now from the yard, and I wonder if whoever took the tree out, dug around it and found the old bones, thought they had found an Indian grave, or at least an Indian's dog's grave. That was Mike.



Nanny, the goat, in harness pulling Harry Williamson.

Father didn't say much during the death and burial of Mike, but that evening on the porch I could see that he was sobbing, and I comforted him as best I could. Mother said to me after, "You know, Mike was a little bit of Ireland to your father." He loved him so because he had come from Ireland, as Father had.

One of the beautiful aristocratic dogs I remember in Moscow (everyone was impressed by him) was a St. Bernard called "Pat," a beautiful, big St. Bernard. Big even for a St. Bernard, he had a massive head. He belonged to Alan McDaniel. Alan's father was a dentist; and they lived in the house that later became the Gritman house on B Street. Anyway, Pat was a very handsome St. Bernard. He was as big as a little

colt that we had, a Shetland colt that we were just breaking; Pat was that big.

The other dog that was a constant companion of Pat was Rex, a Newfoundland. He was very tall, with a big head. He belonged to Victoria Wallace, whose father was the jeweler, W. D. Wallace. Rex was a very handsome dog too, he was golden. His hair was a little longer than Pat's and rather straighter. They both had beautiful plumed tails, and as I said, massive heads. They walked together down the streets, into town: they both lived up on the residence hill. When they walked into town, nobody ever questioned that the sidewalk was theirs, and I am sure the dogs never questioned it. They took charge, and it was very impressive to see them coming

towards you because of these two massive heads. They walked with great dignity, and their heads went back and forth in unison, a little bit like a pair of oxen or such. That was Pat and Rex.

Every day they used to go downtown around noon or so. They were very punctual; I don't know how they got together on it. They would sniff out all the stores on Main Street, and then lie down, Pat at Dr. McDaniel's office, and Rex in front of Mr. Wallace's jewelry store. Then, about 3:00, when school was out, which they seemed to know, people who watched them said that they got up practically simultaneously and walked home with the same dignity, so that they were home when Alan and Victoria, their owners, came home from school. They were a perfectly beautiful pair of animals. Everyone was impressed with them, and they were very gentle.

I am sure they were kept in at night, as they were very valuable. But one night the owners, McDaniels and Wallace, got a call that their dogs were out at the sheep barn at the University. They'd been caught killing sheep and had been killed. I couldn't understand; those beautiful, beautiful creatures, they were so handsome, how could anyone just shoot and kill them? But of course I realized that if you messed around with a purebred sheep out at the University of Idaho, you didn't get a second chance. So Pat and Rex were gone. I never mentioned them to Alan and Victoria again, and they never mentioned them. I don't know if anyone else ever talked about the dogs.

I think in some ways it was really a kind of disgrace, because here were these beautiful aristocratic creatures killing sheep, as if the prince next in line for the throne had been caught picking pockets. We always imagined that maybe our Mike taught them how to kill sheep, or probably led them out there. Mike was very quick. We had heard people say that when he was after rabbits or anything, that he could belly through the weeds, so he wasn't seen. He knew when he was out of gunshot range, and then he would take off like a shot.

Another dog that we all enjoyed and thought was very interesting was "Red." We called him "Phoney Red," because he belonged to the telephone company. At that time it was a private telephone company, and all of the workmen and repairmen traveled in a rather rattletrap old open truck. Red always ran beside them; the truck of course didn't go very fast, but Red was always right with them, Phoney Red with his tongue hanging out so that you would think he would trip over it. You never saw the telephone truck without Red. If you saw Red, Phoney Red, at the bottom of a telephone pole, you knew that one of the men was up the pole. Red was keeping charge of the ground and the truck while the man was up there. As soon as the man started coming down, Red went back to his place at the truck. I never saw him in the truck. I'm sure

Helen, my friend, was very bold and fearless. She would get right into the fight and separate the dogs.

they offered him rides, but he preferred to run. He was an Irish Setter, long and lean, with a beautiful

red coat. I am sure he was well-fed, but he was as lean as could be, because he ran all of the time.

Mr. Meeker, the owner of the telephone company, was a very good friend of my father's. One day he and Papa were on the train, the little Inland Electric train that ran to Spokane. They got several miles out, probably around Estes or so, when Mr. Meeker realized that Red was running along beside the train. Mr. Meeker had them stop the train. He told Red to go home, but that didn't impress him at all. He just sat there and grinned at them, and followed the train when it started up again. Finally Mr. Meeker couldn't stand it any longer. It was 80 miles to Spokane, and that train wasn't very fast, but it was awful fast for a dog to keep up with, and Red was right beside them. They stopped the train. It was against the rules to have a dog on the train, but Mr. Meeker talked the conductor into letting Red ride the rest of the way. When they got to Spokane, he bought a ticket for Red, to take him back. He told them just where to deliver him—wherever they saw a phone truck, so he would know that he was home.

I don't know what became of Red when Mr. Meeker sold the telephone company, and it became what it is now. Of course, they got newer and faster trucks, and I imagine Red couldn't keep up with them, but maybe he condescended by that time to take a ride. I am sure that he was taken care of, and I imagine he is in dog heaven now, boasting that he chased a train out of Moscow, chased it clear to Spokane.

Another aristocratic dog was Don Whittier: Mr. Whittier was a banker. They had this beautiful collie. I never see Lassie or any photogenic collie without thinking of Don. He also took the middle of the sidewalk, and people got out of the way. You never saw him show any emotion of any kind; he was just deadpan, with that beautiful pointed snout and plumed tail carried over his back. Something I noticed (maybe it is typical in collies), but he was very knock-kneed in his hind legs. I don't know whether that is typical of collies or not; I never investigated it, but Don was certainly knock-kneed. He cruised the town.

Another dog that was of note to me, because he belonged to my best friend, Helen Parsons, was Pat. He was a white little dog, an English bulldog. He was very tenacious. If he got hold of something he didn't let go. He and our Mike fought quite a bit, but Mike had the advantage, because Pat the bulldog had very short hair, and Mike could get hold of him. Mike of course had much longer and curly hair, so Pat got a real mouthful of hair along with any real part of Mike. Helen, my friend, was very bold and fearless. She would get right into the fight and separate the dogs.

There were lots of farm dogs that came into town. The ones I've mentioned were the aristocrats, the town dogs that took charge of things. Particularly on Saturdays when the farmers came into town, they brought their dogs in the wagons with them. Those were the dogs that Pat, Parsons' bulldog, tackled. Those dogs really were fighters, and Helen would be right in there getting him off until the owners came and really saw to it.

She didn't get hurt at all. Pat was her dog, but I don't know why the other dogs didn't tackle her. She would simply pry his jaws apart; she knew how. He would be the one who was hanging onto the other dog.

I don't know what became of Pat. He was still a pretty young dog when I last saw him. He used to ride in the little jalopies. Helen was very popular with the boys, and the boys had jalopies. Well, in those days, they were just a frame, four wheels, and a seat, called a "bug." My brother Frank had one he called "Lucy," and Helen could ride with boys. I was very seldom invited, but Pat would ride with them.

There was a Spitz dog, a white, fairly long-haired little dog, who belonged to Donnie Temawich. Mr. Temawich owned the paper or was editor. We used to think that Donnie was very mean, because he delighted in spilling ink or paint on the Spitz. I can't remember his name; I knew the names of most of the dogs in town, but I can't remember his. That beautiful white coat was always spotted with ink, which Donnie had placed there.

In our household, we didn't have a dog for a long time after Mike was gone, but we all missed him very much. Father still liked the idea of Irish terriers, but there weren't any in the country; Nellie had been shipped from Ireland. The nearest thing were Airedales. Father went to the Oorang kennels, somewhere in the Midwest. I was interested the other day to see in a magazine that the Oorang kennels are still advertising their Airedales. Father went back there and bought three Airedales. The male was Major, and the females were Nellie, after Mike's mother, and Lassie.

Of course, we had lots of Airedale pups with the two females and Major being very active. I think Father had an idea of populating the Palouse country with Airedales, because he liked them. All of my friends had Airedale pups. When I ran out of friends, Father gave them to the farmers around, so the farmers had Airedales.

They were rather rough dogs, the Airedales, and I think my young friends were kind of hard on them. They trained very easily and they were very loving dogs when they grew up. We kept a couple of them, and always had an Airedale.

That is the end of Moscow dogs as I remember them. They are fun for me to remember because

they were so much a part of the family. There was always a dog lying on the front step, or lying in front of the store downtown. They were very well-behaved; there was no ordinance, of course.

Remembering a Pioneer Benefactor

Jeanette Talbott

Caroline Munson Yarborough Ott was born November 13, 1904 to Charles and Clemma Roderick Munson. She was youngest in a family of five children. Friends remember Caroline, Carrie, as she was soon nicknamed, as a slender, fair-haired child—active and inquisitive. She was a quick learner and was determined never to fall behind her older siblings, Oscar, Vivian, Goldie, and Burton. This trait applied particularly to her interest in driving automobiles. According to an old letter, she learned to steer on the straight stretch while sitting on her sister Vivian's lap.

Her growing-up years on the Cozy Cove Farm east of Moscow are delightfully told in her booklets "Growing Up with Carrie, Books I & II." As a convenience for the older children attending high school, the family rented a house in Moscow. At the time, Carrie attended Lincoln School, sometimes called "Swede School," on Eighth Street. Later, she too went to Moscow High. Because she had recurring bouts of pneumonia, the doctor told the Munsons they must get Carrie to a warmer climate in the winter. Since the older brothers and sisters were by this time far away from home and neither of the parents drove, it fell to Carrie at fifteen to drive to California in the year 1919. Mr. Munson bought a new Model T Ford for the journey, but elected to stay home to manage farm affairs. The women's trip to California is engagingly written

in Carrie's last booklet, "Growing Up with the Model T Ford."

It wasn't until they reached Los Angeles and were stopped by a police officer that they learned that a driver's license was needed.

Perhaps Carrie inherited her interest in writing from her father, for he wrote a lively biography, *Westward to Paradise*, which included his eventful trip West, his marriage, and later many political activities. It was in part his influence in the Legislature that firmly established the University of Idaho at Moscow.

Though Carrie spent much of her time in California, she often returned to Idaho and kept her interest in her Idaho heritage and in the Latah County Historical Society. She was an early and most generous contributor to the Endowment Fund. Her booklet of poetry, "Jingles, Jangles, Rhythms and Rhymes" reveal much of the sorrows and joys of her adult years.

She married Vernon Yarborough and to them in 1928 a daughter, Caroline, was born. Sometime after Vernon's death in 1935, Carrie married Tage Ott. Caroline "Carrie" Ott died September 26, 1992. She left a daughter, Carolee Tucker, and a granddaughter, Kathy. Her daughter wrote, "She was such a vibrant person, I know she will be remembered with much fondness." Very truly she will.



The Munson family in 1907. From left to right, Clemma Roderick, Oscar, Burton, Goldie, Vivian, Charles, and Caroline.

Clarence the Barber

Richard J. Beck

Editors' Note: In honor of Clarence Johnson's recent (and much-lamented) retirement, the Legacy is pleased to run this article, based on a 1993 interview when he was still operating his barber shop on Main Street.



On a Sunday afternoon each summer, Clarence can be found at the Historical Society's Ice Cream Social. Here he entertains Melva Hoffman.

His picture hangs in the County Courthouse, has been on the cover of the *Latah Legacy*, and has appeared in the newspaper many times. He was the subject of a local television interview program and is regularly seen and heard playing at local events. Clarence Johnson has been a

barber in Troy and Moscow since 1931. He is also a talented musician and has played his "golden moldies" for many years at the Historical Society's Ice Cream Socials and Ham and Turkey Dinners. At 82, he still barbered full-time at his shop on Main Street in Moscow.

Clarence was born in Troy, Idaho, September 15th, 1912—rather by chance, as his parents, Ellef and Anna of Pollock, South Dakota, were visiting Troy to take care of his Uncle Raynard's five children: Raynard, a widower, had returned to Norway to remarry. When Raynard returned, Clarence's parents left Troy to homestead 160 acres near Great Falls, Montana. In 1917, they returned to Pollock.

By 1921, times had grown hard on the farm, and the family—by now including six children—piled themselves and everything they owned into a Model T Ford, traveling 1100 miles in eleven days to get back to Troy. Clarence remembers camping along the Yellowstone Trail, and the family dog riding on the fender.

Ellef Johnson farmed in Troy for a few years, but in 1924 the family returned to Pollock, this time by train.

Clarence was twelve and in the seventh grade. He didn't yet play the accordion. As he says, "It was heavier than I was."

But his Uncle Henry did. He was a friend of Lawrence Welk, who lived in Strasbourg, 13 miles away from Pollock. Welk, who had a pick-up band and played around in Moberg and Aberdeen, liked to visit musicians in Pollock. Welk often came into the barber shop where Clarence worked shining shoes, "but never had a dime to get his shoes shined then . . . and we never heard much about him until 1955, when Uncle Henry said, 'He's going to be on television!' Welk became the rage from Chicago back through the Dakotas." And the rest is history!

Clarence soon learned to play the accordion, saxophone, and violin. He was in the Pollock High School band and played violin in the orchestra, as well. In 1928 he returned to Troy for good. There he met his future wife, Evelyn Smith. In his sophomore year at Troy High School, he decided to go to barber college in Spokane. During the ten-month course, he traveled on the Inland Electric Railroad Train (on a 50 cent fare) to cut hair at Otis Gentry's shop across from the hotel on Main Street. While in barber college he was active in Our Savior's

Lutheran Church, Spokane, singing in the choir and playing the violin. In 1931, after completing barber college, Clarence set up his own shop in the photo studio behind the First Bank of Troy. He was nineteen years old. "All the young kids came there and that's where I met Evelyn. She came to get a haircut from that good-looking barber."

Clarence attended high school half days, graduating in 1932. As the school didn't have a band instructor during the Depression, Clarence directed the school band for two years with his accordion as the lead instrument. The band played at all football and basketball games. A highlight was going to Lewiston for the tournament, where Clarence made quite a hit playing the accordion in the grandstand. Evelyn graduated in 1933 and received a scholarship to attend

Kinman Business College in Spokane. Clarence went to Spokane also, to attend beauty school. He and Evelyn were married in the parish house of Our Savior's Lutheran Church, August 3, 1933.

Clarence paid the pastor

\$3, about all he had in his pocket.

When they finished school in Spokane, Clarence worked as a barber in Yakima for about a year. But the couple's parents wanted them to return home, so in 1934 he found a shop in Moscow at 109 East Second Street, where Bill's Barber Shop is today. Clarence worked there for twenty-five years—and through five fires! The last one, in 1961, burned up the whole block on that side of the street, and Clarence moved upstairs in Shorty O'Connor's building, where there were some doctors and dentists (Labine, Burgess, and others) and a beauty shop. The O'Connors treated Clarence very well, but the older people didn't like walking up all those long stairs. So he talked to Milburn Kenworthy, who said, "If I have a vacancy, you'll have first chance at it." In 1968, when State Farm Insurance moved out of its space on South Main between the Kenworthy and Nuart Theatres, Clarence moved in. This location proved to be a good one. Clarence says, "The students see my shop when they go to the movies." Clarence's barbering career spans six decades. He remem-

That's where I met Evelyn. She came in to get a haircut from that good-looking barber.



Clarence Johnson's barber shop in Troy in 1931.

bers things about the Depression and World War II "like it was yesterday." Here are a few of his recollections.

When I started barbering Saturdays, I would take in \$10, \$12, a lot of money in those days. When the Depression hit, in 1931, and they shut down the woods and laid everybody off, I'd be lucky to take in \$3, \$4. I made more money playing at school functions. They couldn't hire an orchestra, so they hired me to play the accordion and they'd pass the hat afterwards. In nickels, dimes, and quarters, I'd come home with \$4, \$5, \$6.

When I came to Moscow, the barbers cut all the women's hair. All the men got their hair cut then too. There must have been at least twenty barbers in Moscow, in ten to twelve shops. I ran three chairs in the shop on Second Street for a while. Now there are four shops, four barbers. During World War II, the beauty operators began catering to women, and the new hairstyles

came in which the barbers didn't know how to do. Today men go to the beauty shops too.

When the war started in December, 1941, a lot of men left and many of the UI students were taken into the service. A lot of the barbers left for war work and others went over to Ft. Lewis to work in the barber shops there. I was worked to death here. I'd go to work early every morning—7:00 a.m.— and never get out. Lots of times, about the time you'd close the door at 6:00 p.m., a car from Potlatch would drive up with five or six men wanting haircuts. And then we had 600 Navy (ROTC) boys up at UI studying electronics. Bert Bowlby, who ran Owl Drug, owned the concession on the campus barber shop and would have all the barbers left in town go up one night a week. They would bring over 100 of these boys a night. They all got crew cuts which didn't take over five minutes. Each barber took his turn up there, and at 50 cents apiece, it was the best money we made all week, for 2-3 hours work.

I never went into the service. I was called up for physicals but they told me I was sent back because I had two children. Mr. Marineau, editor of the Idahonian, who was head of the Draft Board, told me, "We're not going to take you, Johnson, until we have to—we don't want to lose any more businessmen."

As a block (air raid) warden, I had two square blocks on Lewis and Jefferson Streets. We were responsible for certain nights and would walk and patrol for two-three hours and someone else would take over. We would see that cur-

tains were pulled on windows. We had blackouts . . . they were worried about enemy war planes. If people didn't comply, we would remind them. And they did.

Clarence is the oldest of seven children, five of whom are still living. He has a brother, Henry, a retired barber, who lives in Clarkston, and three sisters. Sally (Mrs. Norm Johnson) lives in Moscow, Ellen in Seattle, and Esther Miller in Sun City, Arizona. Clarence and Evelyn have seven children, three boys and four girls.

Horses in Latah County

John B. Miller

While I have no special or expert knowledge of horses, I have handled them a bit, been around them a good deal, and observed. I know of the early years only from stories and remembrances told within the family. Arriving in Moscow in the spring of 1902, my father began work as a barber, but soon, as the summer came, went into the woodland and, at a location south of the Horse Ranch in what was known as the Ruby Creek area, filed for a homestead.

I know from his story that his access by wagon was not easy. There were homesteads on many meadows; also scattered through the woods; small stores at Anderson and Jansville; but no towns east of Troy. Whether he may have had to cut his way, in part, to the site I don't know for sure, but I suspect the barest wagon track went through to connect to a homestead road from the mouth of Ruby Creek to several homesteads on McGary Hill. Along with my father was his



The Miller's house on the Cedar View Dairy Ranch in Bovill, 1926.

brother Charley, who also filed for a homestead. I remember my father saying the woods there were so thick that they had to take the wagon apart to turn it around (quicker than axe work). Wagons could be disassembled: the box taken off, the king-pin pulled, forward wheels with tongue in one section, back wheels with reach in the other.

Horses were in continuous need. I do not know details, but have no problems in picturing the cir-

cumstances. Essentially all travel on the roads (there was no railroad into the eastern County until 1907) was with horses, mainly by wagons, hacks, and sleighs. Household goods were moved on wagons or bob-sleds, as were most household supplies, such as sugar and beans in 50 pound sacks, feed for livestock, and most hardware. Land clearing used horses extensively, as did breaking new ground to the plow and cultivation. In the first years the stores were stocked by merchandise and foodstuffs freighted by team. The logging of timber and movement of logs to the mill was handled exclusively by team. Virtually every homesteader had a team of horses. Through most of this period, I believe my father owned two teams, which were moved from Helmer to the homestead and back, with barns in both places. His favorite pair was named Bell and Star.

In 1913 my father's team was a pair of blacks named Nig and Bird, a fine pair, but already about twelve years old. The horses were maintained in a temporary barn during the winter of 1914-15, until a barn at the second building site was constructed in 1915. Bird did not survive long after that, succumbing, I am sure, to old age. He was replaced by a bay horse named Maggie. Then we lost Nig as well, I would imagine about in 1917. Nig was replaced by a young bay horse named Nellie. None of the horses I speak of during this period were large (only carriage to small draft size, perhaps 1,000 to 1,200 pounds). Maggie and Nellie worked together for 6 or 7 years.

My father, always the teamster, was not much disposed to riding and always averse, as many farmers were, to riding an animal that did a day's work in harness. He was accustomed to walking until he lost his leg in 1909.

The horses were used daily, and sometimes for long hours. They took on more work as the

ranch gradually became the Cedar View Dairy. They were important to land clearing and all hauling—wood cutting, milk and

meat deliveries, haying and cultivation, until Dad bought a small delivery truck in 1924. At different times my parents operated meat markets in town; at other times they sold and delivered meat from the farm.

During the peak period, the livestock needed at least 40 tons of hay a year. There must have been an equal tonnage of manure, which had to be hauled and scattered over the fields and garden. This manure surely was a reason my friends regularly won prizes at the county fair for such things as cabbages and rhubarb.

I remember several trips to Deary and back by buggy or sleigh to spend Thanksgiving or Christmas with relatives there. Twelve miles each way (on the roads then existing) ate up never less than five hours total in travel, which had to be accomplished between morning and evening chores. This left no more than five hours in mid-day for a festive meal and a much needed visit. During this time the horses, blanketed and fed on oats, stood waiting for the long trip home.

It was in winter of 1921 or 1922 that we lost Maggie. My brother, Marvin, disposed of her at a place among thick trees on a ridge near the southeast corner of our 40-acre parcel. At the time, Marvin was doing some trapping in winter, mainly for mink and muskrat, but with a dead horse for bait, decided to try for a coyote.

Without a rope to the halter, all a boy could do for security was to hold to the top of the halter behind the ears.

He did catch one, but also caught our dog Cub. Since he generally stayed at home, and had not been near the dead horse, we did not expect him to stray so far from home in the deep snow. In freeing Cub from the trap, Marvin got bitten in the hand. As a reaction to the sudden sharp pain when the trap was released, Cub made a snap and put his canines through the fleshy pad of Marvin's thumb. Luckily, neither Cub nor Marvin sustained any lasting injury.

Maggie was replaced by Buck, a cayuse-type buckskin that was a surplus horse to the delivery team maintained by the Groh brothers in their grocery business. Buck was a lazy horse with a mulish stubbornness. Nellie, his working mate, on the other hand, had a somewhat fiery and nervous temperament. At rare times she even had a tendency to balk. At these times, not liking a situation or a particular job she would back into the "evener" and refuse to move. My father's response to this was to slash her hard with the end of the line, hauling her in when she would jump, until she was subdued enough for obedience. Then he would drive away.

Marvin occasionally rode Nellie and I rode Buck to bring in the cows at night. I am sure permission to do this was given as a concession

to our aspirations as cowboys, for I know how protective father was of a hardworking team. Mostly our cows grazed the cedar yard and the adjoining "dump grounds" and within stubble fields and pastures of our own ranch. However, in late summer they ranged two or three miles into the brush and slash of cut-over areas or meadows along the East Fork of the Potlatch. Accustomed as we were to walking, and considering difficulties in riding through down-timber, never, on the way home, able to move faster than the plodding rate of a cow, riding was fun, but not much of an advantage.

Buck had a phobia about wire. Apparently at some time in the past he had gotten tangled in wire and into trouble. Once I rode him along the trace of an old road where someone had dumped some trash. There was a loop of wire in it, which touched Buck's leg. He jumped, started to run and pitch, and threw me for a loop!

As for my father's defense of the horses, I remember his anger when, on several occasions, boys from town would catch one or both of the horses in the pasture and start to ride. Generally this would be as fast as they could make the horse go—at a run or a gallop. There was concern for the boy's safety, of course, but also for



Horses and the spacious barn owned by the Potlatch Lumber Company.

the horse's. Without a bridle, except for the ability to pound the horse for speed, the boy would have absolutely no control. The ground of the stumpland pasture was irregular, with many soft spots, squirrel holes, snagged logs and stumps of brush. A horse could be guided to an extent with a rope to the halter by pulling either outward or across the neck. Without this, all a boy could do for security was to hold to the top of the halter behind the ears.

In 1929, after a visit in the east, we moved from the older ranch just south of Bovill to our new place, which was centered on the Hobbs Meadow. We were in urgent need of horses. Luckily we purchased a team from Bob Grant. Grant, a blacksmith-farmer, had moved from the Palouse area to the old Woolsey place on Moose Meadow sometime around 1921.

Probably in 1928 he left the meadow and moved into town. Working mainly as a blacksmith, he needed only one of his two teams. Had there been time to look around, we might have found a team that suited us better. Winter was at hand, and we had much to do: firewood to get in, shelter for chickens, a mess from the recent forest fire including two burned bridges. Barney (brownish, almost black, 1450 pounds) was all that Grant said he was—old, but with the noble spirit of a champion. Charley (1600 pounds at least, a bay horse of Clydesdale type, 7 years old) had a defective foot.

It was enlarged for several inches just above the hock to double size, at least. I suppose the thing was a large, fatty cyst. Surely it made the foot heavy, but it did not seem to hold him back or bother him in work nor appear sore.

With Barney and Charley, during the next two years or so we cleared several acres of burned-over forest and stumpland, got out firewood, brought timbers for construction of a new barn, also for fences and bridges across the East Fork, and made hay in the summers of 1930 and 1931. In 1931 we bought a cow, and in 1932 a half-dozen more. We would be in the milk business

again, but this time not with a delivery route quart by quart—too much work! We planned simply to ship cream to the commercial creameries, have eggs for sale, have our own meat and vegetables, and beyond that, eventually sell half a dozen cattle on the hoof each year.

It was late summer in 1931 when my mother noticed Barney grazing alone in the meadow west of the home building site. When, after a short while, Charley did not appear, she began to wonder, and called our attention to it. It was unusual when the horses were not together. For them to be separated for a considerable time was indeed strange. After a while, someone went to check. He found Charley at the meadow's edge, a little way from the river at a spot hidden by some brushy ground and a shed.

He had laid down to roll, as horses do, but had picked a bad spot at the edge of a small grassy sag or depression. A tree might have stood there at some ancient time and been uprooted, or more likely a hole had been dug there during logging activities, the ground afterward reverting again to grass.

Charley was in a predicament. A horse, when lying on the ground, lies flat, with legs out, not halfway on belly with legs partly doubled beneath as do cows. The mechanics of getting up are consequently quite difficult. A horse rolls for pleasure, probably often to rid himself of sweat or an itch. It is not a thing he does with ease.

However, a great surge will, as a rule, suffice to roll him over to the other side. Apparently Charley had done this, but the roll had carried him into the hole. With further movement, he had worked his way into the bottom. Then, whether he rolled to the left or the right, his legs were always uphill, and no matter how he struggled, he could not plant front legs to the ground in order to rise. In frantic effort, by all evidence lasting for hours, he had thrashed back and forth, beating his head on the ground until it was bloody and swollen from nose to ears, with eyes swollen shut. It was pitiful to see. Marvin got his gun and shot him on



A farmyard scene.

the spot. We dug a hole beside him, rolled him into it, and buried him there.

With the closing of many logging camps during this depression year, finding a team was quite easy. We arranged at the Potlatch Company office at Bovill to pick up a good team of 6 or 7 year olds at Camp 10 on Round Meadow. We went by car to the camp, inspected the horses, named Boley and Dan, and Marvin brought them home, riding one bareback and leading the other.

It was winter, 1931-32, when Barney died. He had seldom been in harness in late months. An old horse, 17 or 18, his life simply failed. He was a favorite with us, not in a special sense as a pet, but in plain respect for his indomitable heart. Outweighed by every horse he had been hitched with, outmatched in actual strength, and old, he was always determined not to be outdone. He finished many days very tired, yet if there was an advantage at the evener, it generally went to Barney.

Then in the spring of 1933 we lost Dan. My sister Luzelle, her husband Bill Munsch, and baby daughter Yvonne lived with us intermittently, excepting the periods when Bill, a logging camp cook, was at work during the discontinuous operation of the camps. Bill had purchased the adjoining land at Frei Meadow. We exchanged land clearing work, first on our place, then on his. Bill went one morning to bring Boley and Dan from our eastward pasture, taking his shot gun because there were some Chinese pheasants out that way. When he returned, he was leading only Boley. He entered the house with a shame-

ful confession, "I shot old Dan." He had been leading the horses by the cheekstraps of their halters. He was carrying the gun tightly in the crook of his right arm, with the hand up high close to his face. Suddenly Dan, startled by something, jumped sharply away. Bill's arm was jerked outward. The gun was released, to fall with the butt near Bill's foot, the muzzle pointing away to the right. The impact when the gun hit the ground must have jarred the safety off, and the gun went off. The full force of a 12 gauge charge of bird shot went into Dan's ham muscle. He walked a few steps, then stood trembling. Bill, shaken, but well aware of the extent of the injury, dispatched the horse with a second shot. As with Charley, we buried him on the spot.

We obtained as a replacement for Dan, again from the Potlatch Company, a horse named Douglas, a fine harness-mate for Boley. Douglas was brought by truck on an afternoon when we were working in the yard preparing a site for the construction of a new, permanent house. We saw the truck as it came from the trees at the top of the hill on the road from town. Boley evidently saw the truck at the same time. Instantly he was aware of the horse. My mother, ever watchful of the animals, called our attention to him. I remember her voice as she said, "Look at Boley!" He was standing, head raised in attention, ears pointed forward. Then he whinnied and took off directly toward the truck at a high gallop. Coming to a stop at the far edge of the cleared field, he wheeled and whinnied several times

as the truck came down the hill, then watched alertly as the truck turned sharply off the main road along the lane to the farm. As it came, he raced back to meet it when it stopped in the yard by his fence. He had been a lonely horse. There



Minnie Miller with son John, daughter Luzelle, and dog Keno, about 1915.

was no question about his joy, or the fact that Douglas was instantly his buddy.

Sometime in the fall, Boley injured his leg. Probably he spiked it on the dead stub of a bush in the pasture. It became badly infected. To treat it we called on Dr. White, a veterinarian who attended the horses at the Potlatch Company barns—a handsome man with the physical build of a guard or perhaps halfback on a college football team. There was a large pocket of pus on the lower leg a little above the hoof. After administering a local anesthetic, Dr. White made about a three-inch incision to drain away the pus, cleansed the wound with a carbolic antiseptic, packed it with sulfa powder, and sewed it up. “Only a year or so ago, before the introduction of the sulfa drugs, I would not have dared to close a wound like this with stitches,” he said. “I would have had to leave it open, binding it lightly with a bandage to hold the skin in place, then trusting it would heal without a major problem.”

One wonders how a horse can so placidly receive this medical care. Horses are especially patient when someone works with or around the feet. That may be because of the attention given to their feet, so important to keeping the horse fit. During this process the horse learns to respond to certain verbal instructions, and also to signals. Boley once stepped on my brother’s foot, in some way turning the foot on one side. The heavy weight, well over 400 pounds, was borne fortunately by a thick shoe sole. “Boley,” Marvin said, “Pick up your foot.” Boley obligingly picked up a foot—but the wrong one!

Marvin was able to reach over and tap the ankle or touch the fetlock, however, and that got the response needed. A horse understands a slight pull on the fetlock or tap on the lower leg in the same way most dogs know, even without words, that when you hold out your hand in a certain way they are expected to shake hands.

By 1938 Boley and Douglas must have been twelve at least, maybe thirteen. My father had an opportunity at the Potlatch Company barns to buy a pair of half-trained colts. I was in South America. He found a buyer for the old team at a low but satisfactory price. Needing as he did a young and sound team, he felt he could not miss the chance. The colts were Chub and Rowdy.

Sometime around 1947 or more likely 1948, the horses on the farm were replaced with a caterpillar type tractor and hay-making equipment adapted to it. A hay-baler picked up hay from the windrow and made small bales tied with jute cord. A small combine harvested our field of wheat.

Nothing is more fitting than to close with a word recognizing the horse of the past era as an obedient servant and friend, ever useful.

A Visual Companion to "Horses in Latah County"

John B. Miller

A Variety of Horses

The horses commonly used in Latah County varied from the smaller, light-bodied animals weighing perhaps 800 pounds and standing hardly over 4 feet at the shoulder to heavy bodied draft horses weighing 2000 pounds or more, shoulders and backs more than five and one-half feet above the ground. Horses used in town usually weighed 1000 pounds.

Horses varied widely in breed. The farmer generally wanted a heavier horse as weight and strength were required to pull a plow or a harvester. On many farms there were trees to cut and logs to be dragged from the woods, loaded on wagons or sleighs, and then hauled to the mill.

The typical farm horse was a mixed breed combining characteristics of the more nimble horses with the strength of the draft horse.

Horses well matched in size, strength, and temperament worked best together. There was a satisfaction, too, in a team well-matched in color. The farmer, in particular, often had to settle for what he could afford. By comparison, the Potlatch Company, which owned hundreds of horses, found it easy to form compatible teams. Once a good team was formed, it was generally kept intact until accident, sickness, or perhaps death of one horse.

Horses in the Logging Industry

The logging industry, most specifically the Potlatch Lumber Company, obtained the best large draft animals they could find. These horses were a mixture of heavy breeds: Percheron, Clydes

dale, Shire, and Belgian. The Company's horses were geldings and mares; colts were rarely seen. Potlatch and other logging companies disposed of a number of horses during the 1930 depression, when many operations closed. Logging expanded again slowly, but trucks began replacing horses, especially after World War II.

Horses in Town

Well into the 1920s the average family did not own a car. Even those having cars kept them in a garage through the winter when snow was deep or when streets rutted badly in the summer. As a convenience to customers, grocery stores employed a teamster and kept a team of horses, a delivery wagon, and a bobsled for home deliveries. These conveyances also carried freight from the railroad depot to the store.

Each town of any size had at least one livery stable where a visitor or a family going on a Sunday picnic could rent a team with buggy, hack, wagon, or maybe just a horse and saddle. Most livery stables provided dray services as well.

Wagons, Hacks, and Buggies

The larger wagons, called farm, freight, or lumber wagons, were versatile and fundamental. Their running gear was extendible as the distance between front and rear adjusted by lifting a pin from a hole and sliding the rear wheel section backward or forward. One could put a plain flat-bed, a box, or a rack for hay or bundles of grain as wide as nine feet on the frame. The frame was flexible, allowing a wheel to lift

King and David Ingle operating a road grader near Kendrick.



O. E. Mang's blacksmith shop in Deary.



The versatile hack could be used to haul light loads by removing the rear seat. This photo was taken in Potlatch during the town's construction, 1905-1906.



A team is tied up to the hitching pole in front of the Skattaboehouse near Moscow. Note the lap robe hanging over the side of the handsome hack.

over a rock, but the front wheels were held reasonably level by a stabilizing frame-structure attached to the front axle. These wagons had no springs except on the seat—if you had a spring seat. The wagon with its steel rims, rigid wheels, and springless construction rumbled, rattled, and shook with every irregularity of the road. On a rock road, the wagon would rattle you until it seemed your teeth would come out of your head.

The second common vehicle was the hack. Much lighter than the farm wagon, the hack was used every day. It took the milk and cream, meat, vegetables, eggs, and butter to town, and as a family vehicle it had a rear seat. Springs over the axles and beneath the seat added greatly to comfort. The back seat could be removed to make room for small loads.

The third type of vehicle was the buggy: very light and good for quick trips. It had a top and side curtains for protection, but it was used less often because it only seated two people.

Roads and Road Work

The tools to make the first crude roads were an axe and cross-cut saw, a shovel, mattock, common plow, dirt scraper, a pick for loosening rock, blasting powder (dynamite), and a logging chain. In the course of the work, the horse was all important.

After a “way in” was found, it had to be made into a road before there was real access to the wilderness homes. First a ditch was opened at the sides; cuts were made in hill slopes with the dirt moved outward to form a shoulder. Eight feet or so was necessary for a roadbed, to be widened wherever possible to ten feet or more. These roads were pretty awful at times: muddy and rutted, gullied by rain wash on slopes. Even the town streets were sometimes seas of mud or powdery beds of choking dust in summer. As rutted dirt roads and town streets reached a

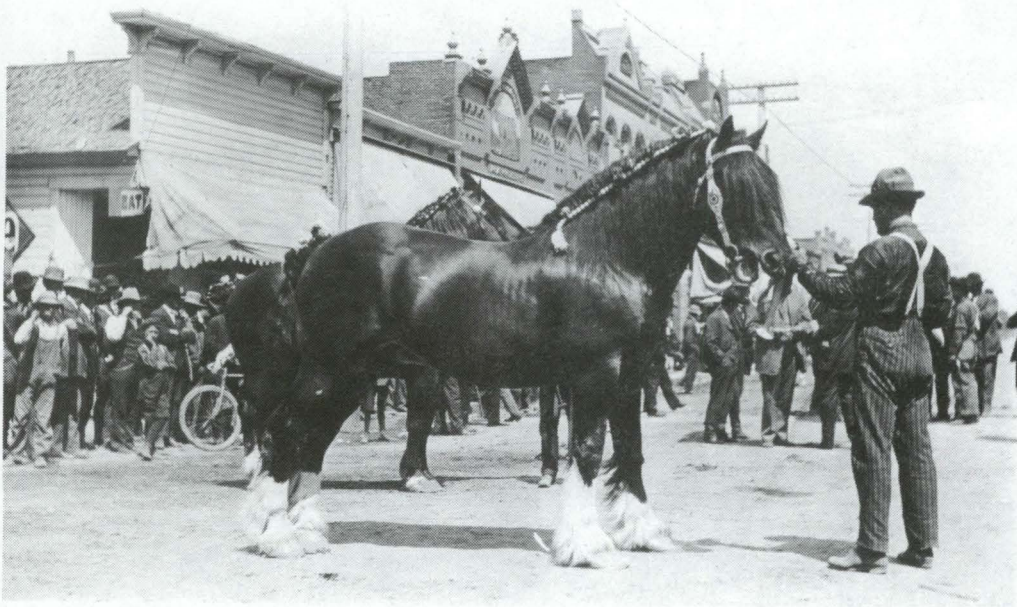
drying stage during spring months, a road-drag, made of two heavy timbers bound together with a metal piece on the edge were pulled by a team of horses. The drag was pulled on the diagonal, scraping the dirt into the ruts.

The Hitching Pole

Hitching poles, or posts, were found in many places: downtown, at churches, parks, theaters, and in front of houses. While these hitching places sometimes fronted sidewalks at the place of a business, more often they would be in vacant lots that adjoined, or perhaps in a lot or park across the street. There would be manure, of course, around the pole or post, so businesses would not want them directly in front of the store.

Horseshoeing

Usually a blacksmith did the shoeing although a few farmers did their own. The shoes for the heavier work horses were made for protecting the feet and pulling heavy loads on any surface, be it dry ground, mud, snow, or ice. Old shoes were struck from the feet after clipping away the nail heads with a special curved knife. From his supply of horseshoes, he picked those of the right size. Working one foot at a time, he held these to the feet to note the fit. Each shoe was tossed into the forge and heated to redness, then shaped to the curve of the hoof. If too large, surplus metal was clipped from the heel end. About three-quarters of an inch was left at the ends there and bent down by hammering over the edge of the anvil to form cleats at the rear. A toe cleat about three inches long was fitted to a slot at the forward end of the shoe. Then the smith reheated the shoe and welded the toe cleat on. When it was still hot, he pressed the shoe to the hoof for a moment to seat it to a tight fit. There would be a little curl of smoke and an acrid smell much like burning hair. The finished shoe would be tossed into a tub of water to cool. It was then nailed to the hoof with the nails clenched down to hold it securely in place.



An owner proudly shows off his draft horse on Moscow's Main Street during the July 4th celebration in 1912. The fine silky hair around the horse's hooves distinguishes the horse as a Clydesdale.



Potlatch Lumber Company prided itself on its matched teams of draft horses. The renowned photographer Clarke Kinsey recorded this logging scene around 1910.



Horses, buggies, hacks, and wagons line up along Moscow's Main Street. Hotel Del Norte is on the left and the Stewart Livery is on the right.

The Shooting of George Marion Nichols: Local Myth and Family History

Nicholas Alforde

Local myth is a particularly stubborn and yet malleable form of regionalism. The myth is usually based on an actual event, yet, within a short time it will alter key points within the event to suit its own purpose. Thus it becomes more than merely a history of the locality, it reflects the values and concerns of the place in which it resides.

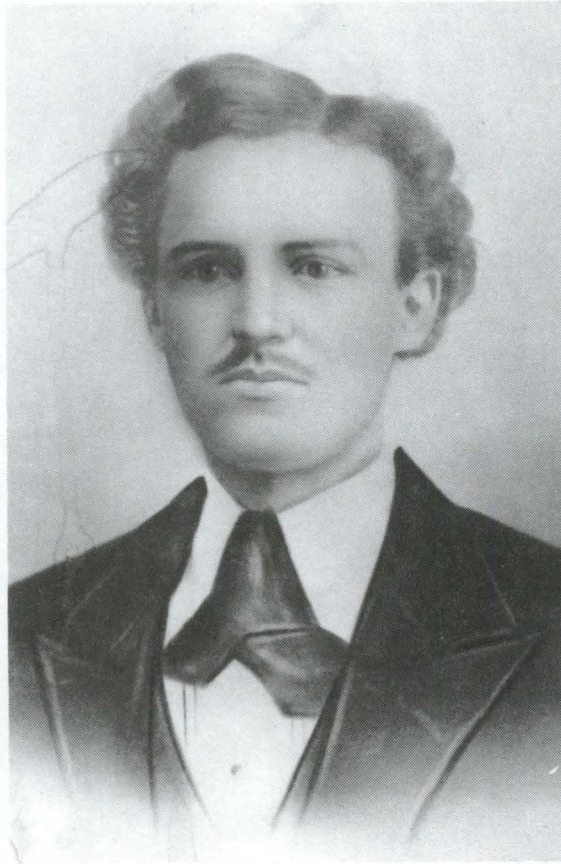
This article recounts my attempts to uncover the facts surrounding the shooting of my great-great-grandfather, George M. Nichols, by William Hordemann. The shooting took place on the Nichols farm, some ten miles south of Moscow, Idaho, in 1887. When I began my investigation, I noticed that the local version differed significantly from the stories told within the Nichols family in Portland, Oregon. My initial assumption was that time and distance had been the agents of change, and that the Nichols version was simply inaccurate.

Upon further investigation of contemporary newspaper accounts and court records, I discovered that I was wrong. In fact, the Nichols version I had heard at my mother's knee was, aside from a few embellishments, basically in agree-

ment with the official version. The Moscow story, however, had radically altered the facts. It became the orthodox version of the community. The very citizens who had witnessed the shooting had altered the story to fit better local concerns arising from the event. I set out to discover why.

There are three different versions of the myth: the "official" version reported in newspapers and court records, the local version as told in the farming community around Moscow and Genesee, Idaho, and the Nichols version, which has served as a kind of "creation myth" for the West Coast Nichols clan. I will describe all three versions and examine possible reasons for their differences. Both the local and Nichols versions

are the result of interviews. The Nichols' family accounts of the shooting are consistent enough to allow one consensus account.¹ Likewise, there is only one local version of the story in the



George M. Nichols

¹ The bulk of the Portland Nichols account is provided by Fern Nichols Ingalls, great-granddaughter of G. M. Nichols.

Moscow/Genesee region.² The Hordemann family version is supplied by the Hordemann family historian, John Hordemann of Cheney, Washington.³

The Official Version

The most complete account of the shooting of G. M. Nichols appeared in the *Colton Eagle* of Colton, Washington, which lies some fifteen miles over the state line from the scene of the shooting. Salient points reported include:

About dusk . . . Mr. Herdemann [sic] directed his son . . . and his daughter to drive some cattle to the range. In order to do this they would pass through a lane that divides the farms belonging to Mr. Girard [Hordemann's stepson] and Mr. Nickles [sic]. The cattle entered the lane and Mr. Nickles, whose house is close by, came out and stopped them.⁴ Some words followed between Nickles and the young man. Directly Mr. Hordemann



Amanda M. Rosecrans Nichols

came upon the scene bearing a Winchester . . . from the vicinity of Girard's house . . . which is just opposite the Nickles home. Language we cannot repeat was used. A club of considerable size is said to have been raised by Mr. Nickles.

They were standing, one with a rifle, the other with a club on opposite sides of a small spring branch that cuts across the lane. Mr. Herdemann raised his gun and fired . . . Only children were present as witness to the quarrel. Mrs. Nickles appeared on the scene . . . immediately after the shooting. Miss. Herdemann, the thirteen year old daughter of the unfortunate [!] who is now in the Lewiston jail . . . was obliged to swear . . . "her father killed Mr. Nickles because he would not let them drive their cattle through the lane".⁵

Other details not reported in the *Eagle* appeared in the *Lewiston Teller* and the *Moscow Mirror*, and include that the men stood only fifteen feet apart⁶ and that Mr. Nichols died of his wound some six hours

later.⁷

Hordemann turned himself in to the Nez Perce County authorities the next morning, May 19, where he awaited his trial in district court (Latah County did not yet exist). Trial was set for the first week in June, 1887.

² The local version is based on recorded interviews with Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Wolf, for which I am very grateful. Mr. Wolf's account is based on information he obtained from an eyewitness, a woman who witnessed the shooting as a child from the Girard house. When I asked others in the community what they knew about the events, they either gave incomplete versions of Mr. Wolf's story, or told me to "go ask Cliff Wolf."

³ Mr. Hordemann's enthusiasm and assistance in this project proved invaluable. I encountered only kindness and willingness to help from both the Hordemann and Nichols families.

⁴ See Map A.

⁵ *Colton Eagle*, May 1887.

⁶ *Lewiston Teller*, May 1887.

⁷ *Moscow Mirror*, May 1887.

For the next three weeks, the Moscow newspaper made sure the good people of the region were aware of the great murder trial to be held in Lewiston: "Herdiman [sic], the slayer of Nichols has a poor appetite in his jail quarters," one item reports.⁸ Quite out of the blue and during the actual trial a sympathetic article appeared: "Herdiman [sic] the killer of Nichols is a German Catholic and always bore the reputation of a good man."⁹ Nothing good, bad, or indifferent was printed about Nichols.

William Hordemann was charged with first-degree murder, but the jury returned a verdict of manslaughter and he was sentenced to six years in the Territorial Prison in Boise City.¹⁰ The sentence, "certainly was as mild as any . . . either Herdeman [sic] or his friends could have expected."¹¹ The *Teller* reported on the day of the sentencing that there were reasons to believe Hordemann's sentence had indeed been mild:

*There were points in the evidence given that caused many to believe that Herdeman had deliberately planned the killing of Nichols some time before it took place and that this conduct on the fateful day . . . gave strong presumption that he brought about the meeting on purpose to [show] Nichols not to interfere with his using the lane for his stock . . . except on penalty of being killed.*¹²

Was one of the "points in the evidence given" the fact that Hordemann was apparently sitting in his stepson's house with his loaded gun awaiting the arrival of his son and daughter, the cattle they were driving, and, of course, Nichols?

⁸ Ibid, June 1887.

⁹ Ibid, June 27, 1887.

¹⁰ *People v. William Heordemann [sic]*, U.S. District Court in Lewiston, Territory of Idaho, Nineteenth Judicial Day, June 23, 1887. Court records.

¹¹ *Lewiston Teller*, June 23, 1887.

¹² Ibid.

The case was a *cause célèbre* and attracted attention county wide, which contributed of course to the development of the myth. To add to the drama, Mrs. Nichols, having traveled to Lewiston to give her evidence, gave a bit more than was expected. "Mrs. Nichols, while at the Raymond House [possibly a boarding house] gave birth to a son."¹³ She testified in the parlor of the Raymond House, where the court temporarily convened. While this event has little to do with either the official or the local version, it is highly significant to the Nichols version, as we will see.

The Local Version

In the local version of events, one begins to see the elasticity of myths as they reflect the cultural concerns of their community. Folklorist Richard Bauman asks:

*What is the information one needs to know about a culture and a community in order to understand the content, the meaning . . . of an item of folklore? What aspects of the people's way of life are expressively represented, [and] projected in their folklore?*¹⁴

In the case of the shooting of George M. Nichols, the answer is, "hogs."

A little background information on the Palouse helps explain many of the changes in this myth. Moscow was once called Hog Heaven, because it was.¹⁵ Most wheat farmers kept hogs. After harvest, the hogs were released onto the fields where they would fatten themselves on the loose grain. They would later be rounded up and slaughtered. The fattened hogs provided both a welcome source of meat for the winter and a good price if sold on the market. On balance, the feeding system was a good one. Hogs could also, however, completely destroy a family

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Richard Bauman, "The Field Study of Folklore in Context," in Richard M. Dorson, ed., *The Handbook of American Folklore*, (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1983), p. 363.

¹⁵ One may well consider the decision to drop this sobriquet as a victory for chambers of commerce everywhere.

truck garden in a matter of minutes. This was no small matter. The loss of one's vegetable garden could spell disaster in the winter ahead. Thus loose hogs were a scourge of the farming communities. The matter concerned enough local farmers that the Moscow newspaper devoted all of page one to printing the statute concerning fence and enclosure laws for Nez Perce County:

[Fences must be] *four rails or boards or three rails with barbed wire on top fastened to posts no less than three inches in diameter set . . . in the ground no less than eight feet apart. [Anyone maintaining such a fence] may recover damages from the owner of any animals which break through . . . or hold the animals for security for the payment of such damages and costs.*¹⁶

Thus, in the local version of the Hordemann vs. Nichols myth, as told by neighbor and long time resident Clifford Wolf, it is loose hogs and not herded cattle that are at issue:

Mr. Hordemann . . . was bringing Mr. Nichols' hogs back who had got out . . . frequently. This particular time [Mr. Hordemann] was running the hogs back down this here lane [between Hordemann's land and Smith's]¹⁷ and had his shotgun with him [not a rifle]. He drove the hogs across the road and anyway they encountered each other right . . . The houses were so close together [Girard's and Nichols'] that, . . . anyway it happened here in the garden. Mr. Nichols came out and met Mr. Hordemann, ya know, and they had a confrontation right here between the houses and that's where the shooting took place.

I asked Mr. Wolf if he thought Hordemann really meant to shoot Nichols. He replied,

*Well, Hordemann was a . . . [pause] You'll have to understand some of these old-time Germans around this area here, they're pretty hot-tempered. Some of them were, ya know, pretty bull-headed and this . . . the hogs probably broke out several times and this disturbed him when someone else's livestock gets into your fields and buildings. They can walk right through barbed wire.*¹⁸

Note that the statute above-quoted disallowed fences built only of barbed wire. When I asked Mr. Wolf if he had heard anything about a dispute concerning a property line or easement, Mr. Wolf replied that he had not. He did mention that Hordemann got twenty years for murder.

Mr. Wolf's remark about the Germans intrigued me. One look at the county survey map of the time (property owners' names are listed) demonstrated that Germans dominated the area.¹⁹ At the time of the shooting these "old-time Germans," as Mr. Wolf called them, were first-generation, German-speaking Catholics, mostly from Kassell, a small area in Germany. One may safely assume that they were rather clanish. Was Nichols an unwanted Protestant alien in what was virtually a German Catholic colony? The *Lewiston Teller*, showing no compunction in speaking ill of the dead, described Nichols as "not meaningly a bad man, yet he had on occasion shown an overbearing disposition to his weaker neighbors." The article concludes that "his bad reputation . . . as much as anything else saved the neck of Herdeman."²⁰

Whether the dispute was over hogs or easements, the six year sentence of the man the *Teller* referred to as the "unfortunate Mr. Hordemann" and the above-quoted description of his victim leads me to believe few tears were shed locally for my great-great-grandfather.

¹⁶ Sec. 2. "Concerning Fences and Enclosures in Nez Perce County," as printed in the *Moscow Mirror*, August 7, 1885.

¹⁷ See Map B, drawn by Clifford Wolf during his interview. Compare with Map A. Note that while an easement exists between Hordemann and his neighbor, no such passage exists between Nichols' and Girard's land.

¹⁸ Clifford Wolf, interview, Moscow, Idaho, February 1994.

¹⁹ See Map C.

²⁰ *Lewiston Teller*, June 23, 1887.

The Family Versions

The Hordemann family history dealing with the event resembles the local version, possibly because the Hordemanns stayed in the area after the murder. An interesting variation, however, comes from the Hordemanns of Cheney, Washington. While accepting the "official" version that the conflict arose over Hordemann's right to easement, this version has Nichols tearing down his own fence bordering the lane and planting barley in the strips as a way of fixing his claim to it.²¹ Interestingly, Mrs. E.J. Brenner, granddaughter of William Hordemann and long-time resident of Moscow, confirms the local version involving hogs,²² while the Cheney Hordemanns embrace the cattle and easement version, demonstrating the power of local myth over extended family myth.

The myth within my own branch of the family emanates from Portland, Oregon. The movement of the story from Moscow to Portland deserves some explanation.

One of the Nichols' family oral histories is that George M. Nichols came from Albany, New York. Actually, Nichols migrated from New York to Albany, Oregon in the late 1870s. By that time, land in the Willamette Valley was already at a premium. The family thus sold the house and bought a covered wagon to head east. Had Horace Greeley been editor of the *Portland Journal*, he might have written, "Go east, young man!" for there was a great movement into the Idaho Territory at the time as young families sought homesteads. George Nichols was the head of such a family. He established his farm in 1882 and was a prosperous farmer until his murder in 1887. Twenty years after the shooting, Nichols' son, Leon G. Nichols, my great-grandfather, graduated from the University of Idaho (Class of 07) and moved to Portland, where he founded the original Oregon Institute of Technology. Here the Nichols family remained.

²¹ John Hordemann, telephone interview, Cheney, Washington, April 1994.

²² Mrs. E.J. Brenner, interview, Moscow, Idaho, February 1994.

The myth of the shooting of the family patriarch took on special qualities at that distance. There are three important features of the Nichols family version. First, the narrative lacks specific detail which would correspond to a real setting, perhaps because the story took place "long ago and far away," during what might be referred to as the creative period of the Portland Nichols family. Second, there is a high level of indignation in the Nichols family version. It focuses on the wrong done to George Nichols and his family. Finally, there is a "Hollywood" quality to the Nichols family version, owing to the urbanization of the family. The idea of a "Wild West" homestead (although it was in fact well east of Portland) naturally evokes images closer to a Billy Wilder production than to the realities of the Palouse.

Interestingly, all of the Nichols versions of the story contain references to the right of easement. This central theme survived for many years four hundred miles away, yet vanished in the community in which the events took place.

One version of the Nichols myth is that Elmer Nichols, one of G. M.'s sons, was driving in the cattle for the night and was shot by a neighbor for having crossed a piece of his land. The shooting took place in front of his pregnant mother.²³ What she was doing out on the range is not mentioned, nor is it important. The fact that Elmer did exist is all the authority this version needs. Interestingly, the roles are reversed. Here a Nichols is driving cattle instead of a Hordemann. It also implies that Elmer and his mother were out on the range on horseback. This version does make sense. As Wilbur Selinsky points out:

The concept of an "American West" is strong in the popular imagination and is constantly reinforced by the romanticized images of the cowboy genre. It is tempting to succumb and accept the widespread Western livestock complex as

²³ Mrs. O. Nichols, telephone interview, Bonners Ferry, Idaho, March 1994. Mrs. Nichols admitted being sketchy on the facts. What she remembers clearly is that Elmer's mother was pregnant, and that property was the issue behind the shooting.

somehow epitomizing the full gamut of Western life.²⁴

To be "out on the range" driving cattle on foot is quite out of place with the popular iconography of the "Wild West."²⁵

The myth which I inherited directly is very close to the official version, except for a startling array of further wrongs committed by Hordemann. One is that he shot Nichols on his own porch, a dastardly violation of gentlemanly conduct which defiled the sanctity of Nichols' home. It gets worse. Another version claims that Nichols' five-year-old son (my great-grandfather) was sitting on his lap when Hordemann shot him. This of course cast the villain in the worst light possible: not only does he defile another man's home, but he literally shoots a boy's father out from under him. Finally there is the motif derived from the most classically villainous act in the Wild West repertoire: Hordemann shoots Nichols in the back.²⁶

Of course, none of these embellishments actually occurred, but that is immaterial. The family's versions are alive and well, acting as a sort of consecrating myth, a Book of Genesis, for the Portland branch of the family.

Conclusions

These three versions of the same story provide interesting comparative interpretations. The "official" version acts as a guide for judging subsequent versions. The most remarkable transformation of the facts occurs in the community in which the shooting took place. In the Nichols-Hordemann case, the driving of cattle from one place to another does not provide sufficient justification for the shooting. Therefore, the cattle are replaced by loose hogs and the is-

sue of easements is replaced by ravaged vegetable gardens.

The local myth is communal property and reflects community concerns; the Nichols myth is the private property of the family, and its differences reflect that relationship. The right of easement is identified as the source of conflict, as in the official version. The enormity of murdering someone over such a right accounts for the indignant tone prevalent in the Nichols myth. The many embellishments such as "shot on his own porch" and "shot in the back" serve to cast Nichols and his family as victims.

Both the local and the Nichols family myth serve a purpose. The former relates the story of a man who got shot for not controlling his livestock: the lesson is obvious. The latter tells the story of a great wrong done to the family patriarch. The shedding of innocent blood serves as a cohesive agent in the shared narrative of the Nichols family.

²⁴ *The Cultural Geography of the United States*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1992), p. 129.

²⁵ See Ray Browne and Marshall Fishwick, eds, *Icons of America*, Bowling Green: Popular Press, 1978.

²⁶ Fern Nichols Ingalls, interview, Port Angeles, Washington. The "porch version" is the version my mother told me, always beginning with the disclaimer, "Now, this is only what I've heard . . ."

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Map A

ESTATE

DYBERT,

CRIPIN'S HOUSE

SMITH

Nichols

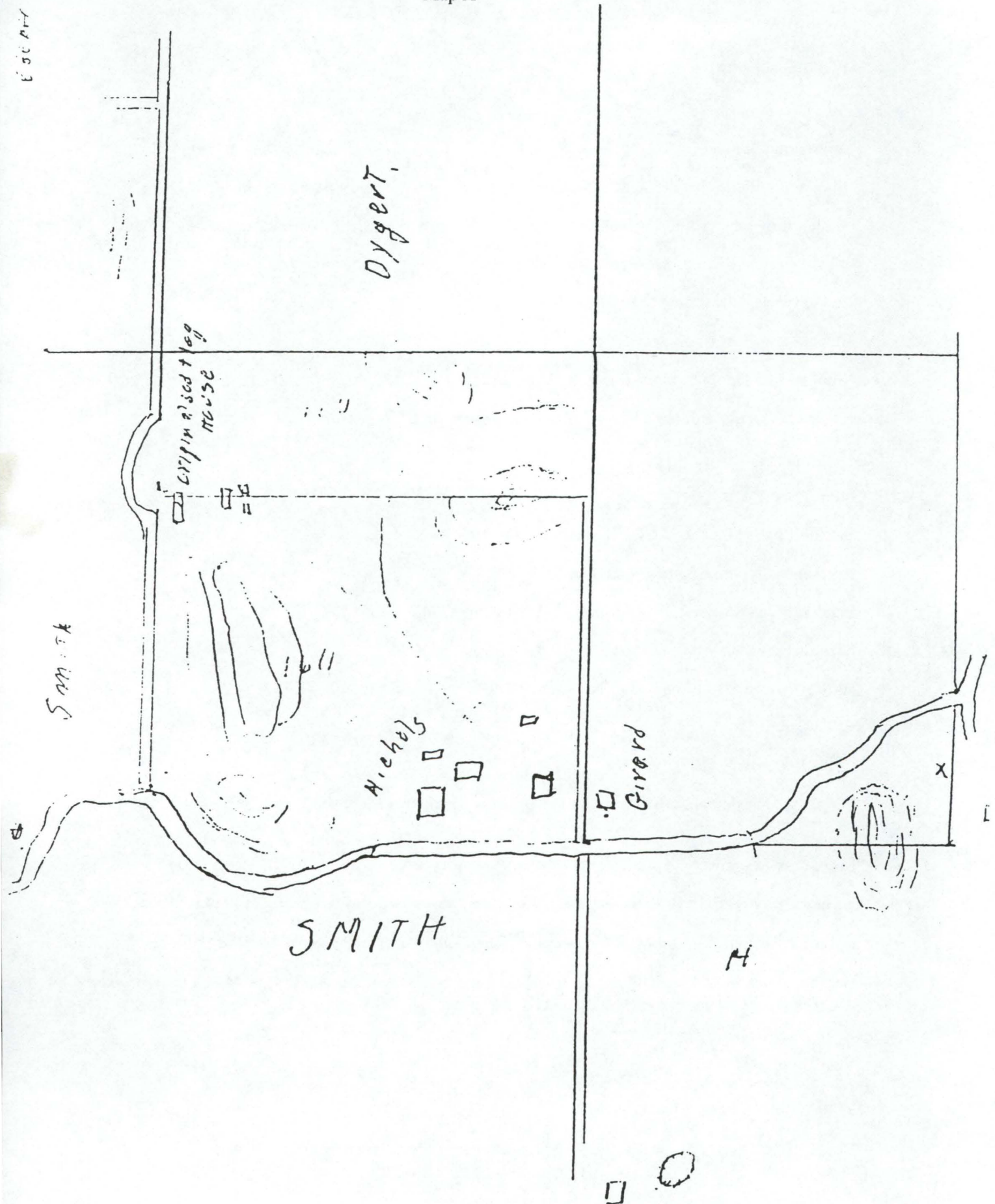
Givard

SMITH

H

X

L



Map B

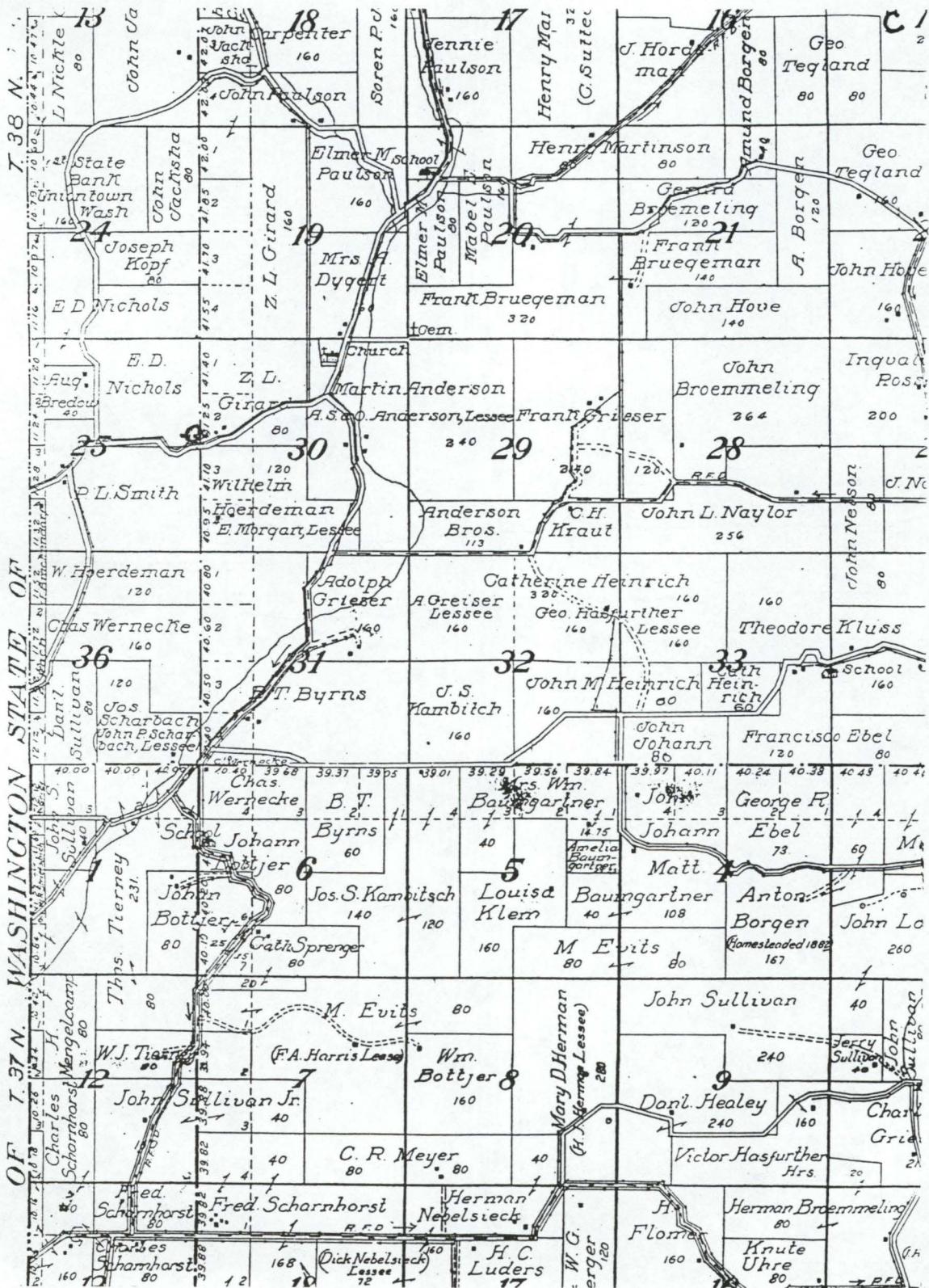


Clifford Wolf's
map

Hordemann



Map C



Contributors' Notes

Sam Schrager now teaches at Evergreen College in Olympia, Washington. He completed his doctoral dissertation based on interviews he conducted for the Latah County Historical Society in 1983: *The Early Days: Narrative and Symbolism of Logging Life in the Inland Northwest*.

Mary Williamson d'Easum is a native of Moscow, Idaho. She was interviewed by Joann Jones in August, 1993, about her memories of dogs in Moscow.

Jeanette Talbott is a descendent of pioneer Palouse families. She is a member of the Latah County Pioneer Association and a trustee of the Latah County Historical Society.

Richard Beck is the author of *Famous Idahoans* and a history of the Knights of Columbus' Moscow Council. He also co-authored a history of the University of Idaho Library, where he served as Associate Dean. He is a trustee of the Latah County Historical Society.

John B. Miller, a lifetime member of the Latah County Historical Society, is the author of *The Trees Grew Tall*, a detailed history of the forested areas of Latah County published in 1972. Mr. Miller's parents moved to Moscow in 1902 and then settled on a homestead in the Bovill area two years later. He left Bovill as a young man, spending most of his working career as a field specialist in exploration geology with Standard Oil of California. In addition to his book, Mr. Miller wrote an article on buffalo in Latah County for the Spring 1981 *Latah Legacy* and an article on a local tragedy for the last issue. In addition to documenting the history of the area, Mr. Miller has been a generous supporter and has donated numerous historical materials to our collection.

Nicholas Alforde is a graduate student in history at the University of Idaho.

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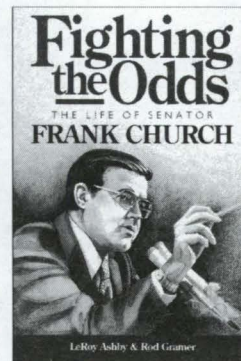
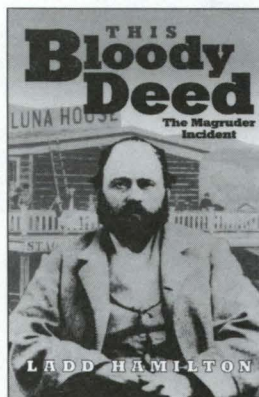
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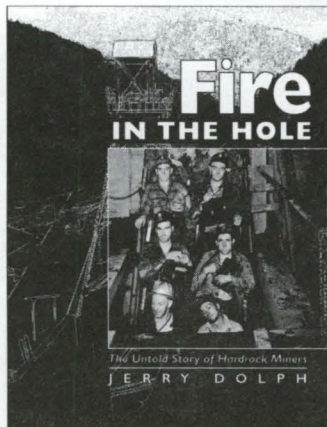
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In 1968 interested individuals organized the Latah County Historical Society to collect and preserve materials connected with the history of Latah County and to provide further knowledge of the history and tradition of the area. Every person, young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

	Member	Friend	Contributor	Sustainer	Sponsor	Patron
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The Society's services include maintaining the McConnell Mansion Museum with period rooms and changing exhibits; educational programs for youth and adults; preserving and cataloging materials or Latah County's history; operating a research library of historical and genealogical materials; collecting oral histories; publishing local history monographs; and sponsoring various educational events and activities. Our mission is to collect and preserve artifacts, documents, photographs, diaries and other materials relating to the history of Latah County. These are added to the collections and made available to researchers while they are preserved for future generations. If you have items you wish to donate or lend for duplication, please contact us.

Our library and offices are located in Centennial Annex, 327 East Second St., Moscow. We are open Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon, and 1 to 5 p.m. The McConnell Mansion Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. Visits to the museum or research archives at other times can be arranged by calling (208) 882-1004.