

Wallowa History Center

Preserving Our Past for the Future

*The Wallowa History Center works to save the memories, stories,
and photographs that define the history and culture of the places we call home.*

– Newsletter Number 6 • June 2006 –

The Wallowa Sun • April 26, 1917

Wallowa Boys Join Hospital Corps Leave Wednesday for Vancouver

Long before three o'clock yesterday afternoon the people began to congregate on Main Street and at the station to bid good bye to our 29 boys who have volunteered their services to the country's call in the crisis of the present war with Germany. At three o'clock the Wallowa Band played a few snappy selections on the corner of Main and Storie Streets. And then with martial music, marched to the station with at least 500 people falling in line. At the station the band played the national airs. After a few selections, Rev. Mr. Boque was introduced by Mayor H. K. O'Brien and made a short patriotic address to the soldier boys who were waiting for the outgoing



Wallowa volunteers for the Hospital Corps in World War I. Left to right, back row: Orell Poole, Ralph Couch, Bruce Brace, Virgil Coverstone, Vernon Hammack, Melvin Bue; middle row: Donald McDaniel, Ray Hendricks, Ross Hood, Jim Plass, Eugene Alford; front row, sitting: Harold Soden, Charles Thompson, Heber Greer, Lawrence Southwick.

train to depart. He told them of their duties and the patriotism to their country and flag, that this country entered the war for humanity, and when it is over it will mean the overthrow of autocracy and militarism in Germany.

The corps, organized here and at Joseph by Dr. Verdo Gregory, will enter the hospital division of the Army—at least, that is what they signed up for. Before leaving some of them may be transferred to other departments in the service after they are mustered into the service at Vancouver Barracks on their arrival. Much credit is due to Dr. Gregory for his untiring efforts in securing such a fine lot of young men as he sent out yesterday. There were fully 1500 people at the station to bid the boys good bye and God speed. All the business houses and the Nibley Mimnaugh mill closed from three until four to give everyone a chance to show his patriotism and bid the boys good bye.

Letters from men serving in Europe were published every week in The Wallowa Sun. Excerpts from some of those letters follow.

Dear Grady,

They can talk about their sea voyages that want to, but I am through. I want to take one more trip again, back to the good old U.S. and when I get there, I am going to stay. If I ever do any traveling, it will be "see America first." Well, this is a strange country I am in, everything is different from what is in the states. Things are more reasonable in price than I expected. Of course some things are scarce and some things you cannot get at all. Everything with sugar is high, and sugar can only be bought with a card. Bar chocolate is the only form of candy we can buy. It is reasonable and good, too. We can buy a brown bread for 20 cents a large loaf and more for the money than you can get in the states. Tobacco is our stumbling block. We all try French tobacco once, and only once. And at that we can only buy one package at a time.

I would like to hear from you soon, for I'll tell you, letters are greatly appreciated over here.

H. B Purcell, March 4, 1918

Dear Ones at Home,

Several boys who had studied English in school wanted to show us around town and of course we were in for it. We saw all the town and then had a real treat. We went through a palace. The boys were very good interpreters.



Orell Poole in France, 1918

We saw and understood everything. The palace was started in the 11th century, and in a raid of the Romans 21 meters was destroyed and it was rebuilt. The Black Prince was imprisoned there by John the Good. There is a big room which was used by Joan of Arc. It was decorated with fleur-de-lis.

There sure is a lot of history connected with this country. From our barracks we can see the building where Napoleon raised his first army. Everywhere are old stone walls crumbling down and historic buildings. This town is a regular French town, cobbled stoned streets hardly room for two of their big wheeled carts to pass each other and the sidewalks are regulation (two feet wide). The town is cut up by the long winding streets. It is impossible to walk around the block. You start down one street expecting to land up at some place and the first thing you know you are at the other end of town. Every-other store is a wine shop, and what surprises me is that a uniformed man is not barred from them. I don't believe they have half the trouble here along this line that they have in the states where he is barred.

Orell Poole, March 15, 1918

Dear Mother, Father and All,

Received a whole bunch of letters from home yesterday, so will answer them tonight. Some of them were written in August and just got here. Guess they must have been held up somewhere but seemed good anyway. Am still Corp of the U.S. Guards. It is a very easy job. Sheenie A. is one of the guards now, and Tubby Richard and Couch are on outside police work. Soden works in the hospital and Shrimp H. in the mess hall. Harold S. got a big box from his Aunt in Ohio tonight and it sure had a lot of good stuff in it. I am going to take out \$10,000 insurance tomorrow in your name. Think it will only cost me about six dollars a month.

As ever, your loving son,
Lawrence Southwick, April 18, 1918

D. McLean of the McLean Theatre wishes the parents and friends of our soldier boys who have enlisted from Wallowa and vicinity to loan him a picture so that he may have a slide made of them. He desires to throw pictures of our soldier boys on the screen on Saturday nights. Last Saturday night the pictures of Hugh Dougherty, Henry Murphy and Ross Hood were shown on the screen, and it was several minutes before the applause subsided. Mr. McLean intends flashing three pictures of the boys each Saturday evening if he can get the photos on time to have the slides made.



In France, troops from Wallowa smoke cigars sent from home.

– *The Wallowa Sun* (April 18, 1918)

Grouse

No region of Wallowa County exceeds in productiveness and possibilities that called Grouse, which name to the rest of the county means Grouse precinct, but to the people living our there the precinct includes a half-dozen distinct communities, such as Grouse, Bartlett, Moore’s Flat, Troy, Dry Creek, and Eden.

All the districts are much alike in general, though differing essentially in details. For instance, Bartlett is on a high plateau, where the summer nights are cool and winter is marked by deep snow. It is a grain region, while Troy proper consists of “bars” or flats in the narrow valleys of the Grande Ronde and Little Salmon rivers, with mild winters and long hot summers. Between the two rise the terraced bluffs, each terrace a big bench containing maybe thousands of acres of the most fertile land, water gushing forth from numerous springs, the climate mild and equable, not too cold in winter



Schoolhouse at Grouse

or hot in summer, and where every product of the temperate zone, especially apples, cherries, peaches, plums, prunes, small fruits, tomatoes and all garden produce, wheat, corn and barley grow to perfection.

– *The Wallowa County Chieftain* (undated, 1913)

Wallowa History Center *Preserving Our Past for the Future*

Wallowa History Center
PO Box 481 • Wallowa, Oregon 97885
E-mail: mburrows@eoni.com

*As a member you receive three free copies of
historical photographs from our archives, and
10% off your purchase of regional history books.*

FAIRVIEW SCHOOL

One of the oldest school buildings in the extreme north end of the county is Fairview, on a bench above the Grande Ronde River; Miss Myrtle Edwards is the teacher this term. Getting the children to school is one of the great problems in remote districts of this county of hills and canyons. In many districts, families live three to six miles from a schoolhouse, and not infrequently fences have to be opened and closed on the road.

At any season this is bad; in winter when the snow is deep, it is a practical impossibility for small children to make the trip each day.



Fairview School

—The Wallowa County Chieftain (November 26, 1914)

*Thanks to Ron and Celine Gay of Shell Mercantile
for providing the space for the Wallowa History Center.*