

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 19 • January 2013 -

Early Carpenters and Builders of Wallowa

On March 22, 1889, the surveying and platting of Wallowa Oregon began. The survey was ordered by Island City Mercantile and Milling after purchasing the homestead of Lucian Cole. The Wallowa History Center has not determined how long Cole lived in the area due to him moving prior to the sale of his land. George T. Vail, of Enterprise Oregon, elected as the County surveyor in 1888 did the survey for the corporation. Island City Mercantile and Milling built a store and flourmill as well as other structures necessary for a town at that time, which included a livery stable and a hotel. In 1896, the company being the proprietors of the town dedicated the streets and alleys to the use and benefit of the public. There had been a store and blacksmith prior to their development by the company. The homes during that time had been smaller structures but as the town was established, the building of more substantial homes began. Island City Mercantile and Milling Company sold the lots for the homes and buildings that would lead to the incorporation of the town of Wallowa in 1899.

The Wallowa History Center has not found records of the earliest carpenters for the 1895 to 1900. The only record found during that time was a house built for Samuel Sproston by Marshall Davis in 1887. The 1900 census listed six carpenters, Marshall Davis, Joseph Hogeland, Lewis Coverstone, Frank Whiting, Lysander Stokes, and William McCullough. Marshall Davis had a planing mill and Marvin Brothers and Huber's owned the larger sawmills providing the lumber for construction. There were other small sawmills operating at that time.

The 1900 census listed a William McGee, Charles Lockhart, and J. Dayl as paperhangers. The Wallowa River provided the power for the flourmill and the early electricity for the town.

This historical account lies around the houses and buildings, not the people who lived there. In 1907, the oldest house in town was demolished it had been built in 1887 by Marshall Davis for Samuel Sproston. Sproston had the homestead east of the Cole homestead, when the city expanded this area became known as the Sproston Addition. Bruce Cox had bought the house so that he could have his new home built by Thomas De Vall who had bought the Marshall Davis planing mill. Thomas De Vall had emigrated from England, he built the Cox home at 408 E. Hwy 82 in 1907, and the Queen Ann Bungalow built for Charlie Hunter at 107 Holmes Street was built in 1903 (Hayter).

Prior to that time, the building of several homes throughout the town included, the William Sherod home on Storie Street, the Tulley homes on Holmes Street and the Dr. Gregg home at 115 Holmes Street and the home of John and Maggie McDonald which was at 103 E. First Street. The stories about the construction of these homes are not available. The McDonald home was listed on the State of Oregon Inventory of Historical sites in 1976, but was demolished. The other buildings listed on the historical survey were the Masonic Lodge building, Shells General Store, Wallowa Hardware (now the Blonde Strawberry), The Wallowa Mercantile Co Warehouse (destroyed), The Presbyterian Church, The IOOF Building (destroyed) and the Original Methodist Church.

The Wallowa Sun Newspaper started featuring stories about some of the homes constructed during the 1907 to 1920 period.

In 1910, the census listed 15 carpenters, 3 bricklayers, 1 cabinetmaker, and 1 painter. Of the carpenters listed Jacob Hall, John Langmo, and Harry Moulton received the most publicity about their house building in the newspaper.

Builder Jacob Hall is remembered best for the construction of the Gymnasium at Wallowa High School. He built his home, which is located at 102 S. Spruce and the Haisten Home and Mortuary which is a Queen

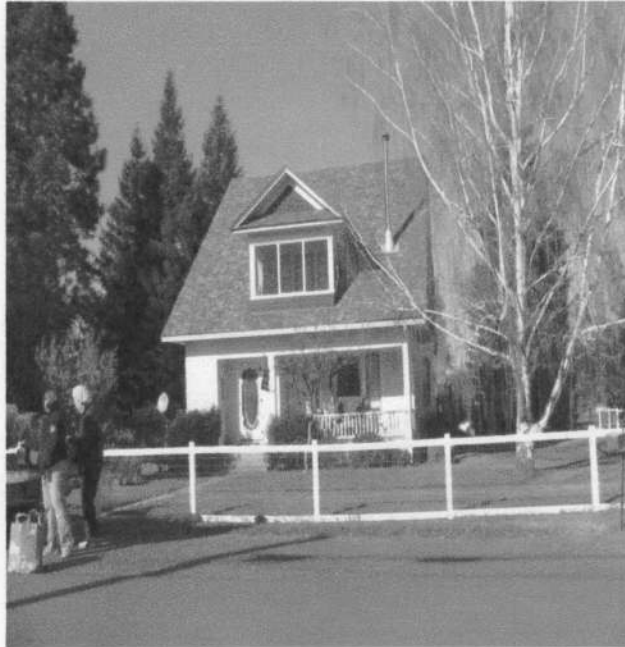
Anne Style on 000 N. Storie Street. in 1910. He also helped start the manual training program for carpentry at Wallowa High School. This program was one of the first manual training programs in the State of Oregon. One of their projects was the house on the corner of N. Clairmont and Third St. built in 1915, for George Rogers who was later the first Oregon State Police Officer for Wallowa County. In later years, this house was the home of the Bill and Macel Fisher family for many years.

In 1908, Harry Moulton built the bandstand which was a project sponsored by the Ladies Progressive Club and was used to house the hose cart in case of fire on the east side of town. He built a shop as his headquarters on N. 2nd St. He would also go on to build the Mitchell home, now owned by Cheryl Cox on Whiskey Creek Road. A story about Harry Moulton's remodeling of the Eugene Holmes house at 304 E. First Street was published on July 17, 1908 it tells the complete story of the remodeling and building of the furniture for the home. The newspaper story tells this story about the house "The front of the house was finished in modern style inside the furnishings are superb. A beamed ceiling finished in mission style, bird's eye maple floors and mission style furniture gives an appearance of grandeur. At the entrance to the living room is a white bear rug and above it swings a chandelier of art glass with a tulip shade. In the reception hall a black bear rug lies under another art glass chandelier. Mr. Holmes now has a residence of which he may well be proud and to which the town people can point with pride. It is also a tribute to the ability of Mr. Moulton and James Hill of Walla Walla who did the painting and paperhanging."

READY TO BUILD
your house, store, or other building
I have my own lumber
Having purchased a large supply of lumber, I am prepared to furnish estimates or to begin building promptly. No tiresome and annoying delays while waiting for lumber. I have plenty of building material of good quality and I solicit your orders for prompt building service.
H. H. MOULTON
Carpenter, Contractor and Builder.
Wallowa, Oregon.

Advertisement for Moulton Building 1

Builder John Langmo was Norwegian by birth moved to the Wallowa area from Wisconsin. John's first recognition came when he completed the woodworking in the Masonic Lodge building on N. Storie Street. John and Emory Rognas built the Shell home, which Jason and Melanie Crenshaw now own, refer to picture below.



Shell/Crenshaw House 1

He worked on the interior of the Post Office building on First Street. He also had cabinetry shop building Mission style furniture for the area. He built the house at 106 Holmes Street in 1910 for the Edward Holmes Family, starting in July and completing the first floor by fall. He did not finish the upstairs in the house until 1916 for the Charlie Hunters who bought the house when the Holmes family moved to Portland. John built a house for himself at 306 Storie Street and then built the house next door at

308 Storie for Charles and Vesta Hauprich owners of the Wallowa Candy store. They moved into their home one of the finest cottages in the city July 4th 1915. It is a two story with a full basement. In the hall there is a large French plate glass mirror built in the wall. The story tells about the well-lighted kitchen with all the modern conveniences built in. John Langmo, the contractor drew the plans for this beautiful cottage. When John Langmo finished a job one could rest assured that it was done correctly. Ina Mae Dempsey currently owns this home, she found a note in the window seat stating that John Langmo had built the house, refer to Hauprich/Dempsey photo.



Hauprich: Dempsey House 1

In 1915, he built a home for J.C. and Bessie Baird on what was known then as Mill St. in the Sproston Addition the address is now 601 E. Hwy 82 and is owned by Charlie and Patty McDaniel. John Langmo did all the work alone on this house he had help putting up the frame and shingling the roof. Every joint

and every corner fits just as though it had grown together. He is a first class cabinet worker. One of the major features of the Baird house was the sewing room on the second floor which boasted exceptional lighting and included a large closet on the west wall, refer to Baird/McDaniel.



Baird; McDaniel Home 1

John also built the Couch House on Holmes Street featured in an earlier newsletter.

Population of the town in 1900, 243 Wallowa Precinct 1,010

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Wallowa History Center
P.O. Box 481
Wallowa, OR 97885
Email: powwat@yahoo.com

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