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WALLOWA QUARTERLY

Magazine of the Wallowa History Center

— *Preserving Our Past for the Future* —

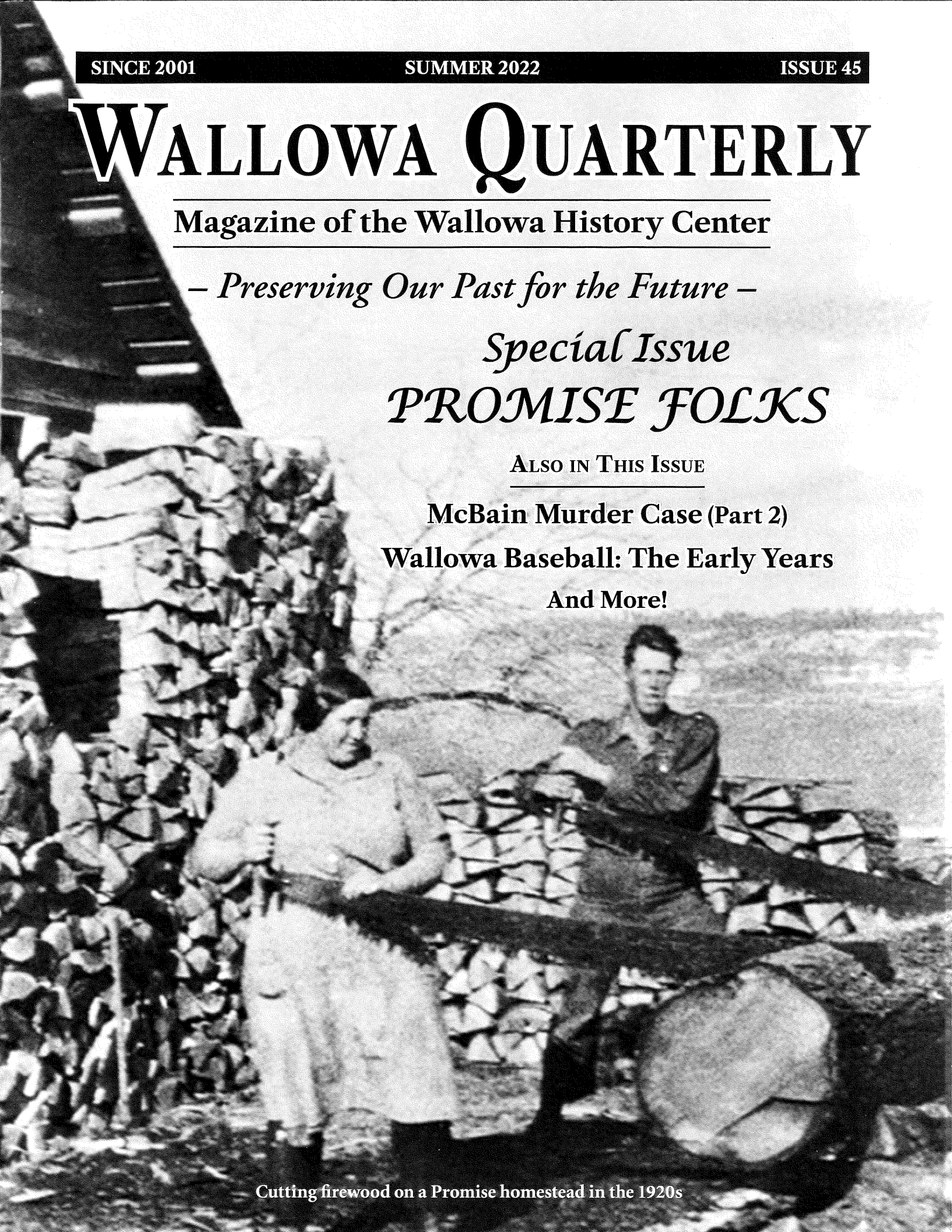
Special Issue
PROMISE FOLKS

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

McBain Murder Case (Part 2)

Wallowa Baseball: The Early Years

And More!



Cutting firewood on a Promise homestead in the 1920s

WALLOWA QUARTERLY

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Front cover: Promise homesteaders cutting firewood in the 1920s.

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WALLOWA QUARTERLY

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Mr. Grossman, the Trapper

By David Weaver, WHC Board President

In the northwestern corner of Wallowa County is a vaguely defined area—a knobby, thickly-timbered plateau, mazed with meadows and cut by deep canyons draining into the Grand Ronde River—that the locals refer to as “the Grossman country.” No one I know could draw you a precise boundary of this area, and no one I know could tell you the full story of Mr. Grossman, the trapper, after which it is named.

Almost everything we know about him comes from two sources; the recollections of James Powers published in *The Wallowa Sun* in 1941 (reprinted in full in this issue of the Wallowa Quarterly), and from information gathered by John Harley Horner in his unpublished manuscript known as the *Horner Papers*:

Grossman Creek and Post Office: Empties into Grand Ronde River. Named for an old Trapper by name Grossman. He was a short, heavy-set man, very bald-headed, with a heavy beard, and well-educated. He had a cabin at the forks of the creek [possibly Grossman and East Grossman creeks].

The last time he was ever seen was at his camp at junction of Grand Ronde and Wallowa rivers [today's Rondowa]. He had been to La Grande and disposed of his furs and got supplies and was supposed to have been killed by a bunch of outlaws from the Lookingglass district, as this was the Jackson Hole of eastern Oregon [Wyoming site infamous for its outlaws].

At one time, Henry Boyd and James Reagan went into this district investigating the disappearance of Grossman, and the bunch in there resented it, and seeing blood on a bedstead, [Boyd and Reagan] asked how it got there, but could not get any satisfactory explanation. And thinking they might be the next to disappear, they left the place.

And then there's this brief, tantalizing news item from *The Oregon Scout*, published in Union, Oregon, June 18, 1891:

A Lostine correspondent of the Chieftain says: "It is reported that the body of Mr. Grossman, the trapper, who has been missing since last April, was found a few days ago a short distance from the mouth of the Wallowa River. It appears that he had left his camp and started for the meadows. In climbing out of the Grande Ronde Canyon, his snow shoes had failed him and he fell over a bluff, killing him instantly."

It would seem, perhaps, that this last bit of information solves the mystery of his death—but certainly not of his life. How, for instance, is it that James Powers, who knew him and spent time with him, seems to have not known his first name? And how exactly, as Grossman told Powers was the case, would trapping mink, lynx, beaver, and other fur-bearing animals alone in the dead of winter in one of the most remote, rugged areas of the continental United States improve one's health? It's striking that he left such an out-sized impression on the area while leaving almost no trace of his footprints in the usual, official records.

It may be that Grossman, the trapper, like some others, came West not so much *toward* something, as *away* from it.

* * *

Notice is hereby given that all people must keep their cows off the streets of Wallowa, or they will be found in the pound [the cows, not the people]. – “Wallowa Local Items,” from *The Wallowa News* (February 1, 1907)

Historical material in the Wallowa Quarterly may occasionally contain language considered to be stereotyped or prejudiced. Retaining this language, however, is often necessary for understanding the historical context in which it is used.

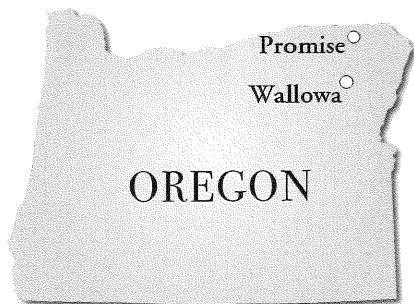
Promise was never a “town” in the usual sense of the term—no downtown or neighborhoods or businesses, no city councils or municipal services, sidewalks or streets—just a broad region of far-flung homesteads north of Wallowa, where folks struggled to plow, plant, and pull a living from a land whose “hills and hollers” reminded many of their West Virginia roots.

John C. Phillips and W. Mann settled near the present site of Promise about 1891 and took up homesteads. Mr. Mann called the place “Promised Land” and “Land of Promise,” and when the post office was established about [1896], it was called Promise on that account. – *The History of Wallowa County, Oregon* (1983)

PROMISE FOLKS

Part I: A Fiddler’s Life Charles Franklin Trump

By Allen Schnetzky



From an oral history project, Eastern Oregon University (2001)

Charlie was born in 1917 on his grandparents’ homestead near the breaks of East Grossman Creek, north of the town of Wallowa. He was the oldest of four children born to Luther Franklin, and Mary Lee (Barton) Trump. Luther was a logger by trade and also owned a 160-acre ranch on Sickfoot Creek, near Promise, where Charlie and his three sisters were raised. Luther built a new frame house shortly after buying the place and raised hogs, had two big horse teams for logging, three smaller teams for farming, a few cows, milk cows, and chickens, and raised big gardens.

Charlie’s grandfather, Joner Trump, was an early settler of the Promise country. After constructing a small sawmill, he sawed logs and built a large 2-story, 18-room house with a wraparound porch. This is the house in which Charlie was born. It was located near a fresh water spring, which the family used for drinking. He also built a log barn and several outbuildings to complete the place.

When the Great Depression hit in 1929, neither Charlie’s family nor neighboring families felt the effects like the rest of the nation did because they were so self-sufficient. They raised their food and had good shelter and strong family and neighborly connections to help get them through the hard times. Buckskin dollars, a local currency produced and traded only in Wallowa County and actually produced on buckskin, were created to help the local economy through the Depression, and most people traded with them.

The neighborly bonding was incredible. Everyone helped everyone. Whether it be in a barn raising or as

midwives helping deliver babies, the support was there from neighbors. Dances were held every Saturday night. At these dances, these neighbors would get into fights and sometimes brawls. When the fight was over, they once again were best of friends, as if nothing had ever happened. No ill feelings were ever held.

Wallowa was the nearest town to purchase or market many of the larger things, or to do any formal business tasks required. Shoes and clothes were ordered from either Sears & Roebuck or Montgomery Ward catalogs. None of these items were ever bought from a store. Maxville, a logging community near where they lived, is where basic supplies such as flour, sugar, and salt were bought. Maxville really wasn’t a town, just a community. It consisted of a large commissary store, schools, and a post office. Mail was brought to the area twice a week.

The railroad came to Wallowa County from Elgin in 1908. Much of the logging in this area was supported by the railroad, as it was used to transport logs to nearby mills. African Americans, mostly from Arkansas, were a large part of the logging community at the time, working in the woods and on the railroad. They had their own school with their own teachers. Social activities and entertainment were of their own making, interacting with the whites only during work. They did, however buy goods from the store at Maxville. There was no racial tension or fighting between the two races.

Also in the county at this time were several logging camps. These camps were put up for the loggers, and



Charles Trump

“Promise Folks” comes from the work of Linda McCrae Bauck of Wallowa, who researched, compiled, organized, and contributed its material. She is the author of *Homesteading the North End Ridges & Benches*, Volumes 1 & 2.

Charles Trump is a man who lived and worked his whole life in, and who dedicated many years of service to, Wallowa County. He was a man who has been termed a "legend" for his musical talents, and who was also a very good friend, one whom I greatly looked up to and respected. – Allen Schnetzky

sometimes their families, so they could be closer to their work. Some loggers lived at these camps, calling them home as they followed the logging trade. Others would only stay temporarily, as they had a home and family elsewhere. Camp 5 was located on nearby Promise Ridge, on the breaks of the Wallowa River, where Charlie's father logged.

Sheep were raised in great numbers in the area. Sheep drives were the only way of getting these animals to market, or to a place so they could be transported by train to a market. Charlie, in his younger years, had been on a lot of these sheep drives. The town of Wallowa had the nearest stockyards along a railroad. The sheep were herded by horseback, with several people driving them. One thousand head of sheep, and more, were driven at a time.

From the community of Maxville, it would take at least three days to drive the sheep to Wallowa, where they were then railroaded to market. The job didn't pay much, but the experiences and memories of the drives are something Charlie always cherished.

Whiskey, or moonshine, made during the prohibition years by people in the area, was taken to Maxville to be sold or traded. Word-of-mouth was how people knew who they could acquire alcohol from. A certain "moonshiner" or bootlegger would usually be in the community on certain days. Word traveled fast as to when, and the consumer usually knew where to find the supplier. The law knew that the illegal trading was taking place, but rarely did anything to stop it, as long as no trouble was created.

The main form of social entertainment were the Saturday night dances, usually held at the Promise Grange Hall. A fiddler by the name of Leander Smith played nearly all the area dances. Charlie started playing mouth harp for these dances with Smith in 1930. Eventually, Charlie would also play the fiddle. Although his home place was only six miles from the Promise Grange, he would stay the remainder of the night there (if there was much night left), sleeping on the ground under a wagon. However, he had to get home early the next morning for milking chores.

His first fiddle was given to him by his parents when he was eight years old. They purchased the Stradivarius copy from a Sears & Roebuck catalog for eight dollars. His mother played fiddle and taught him as much as she could. The first tune Charlie learned to play was "Casey Jones" on the E string. Says he about drove everyone nuts playing that tune over, and over, and over. Persistence definitely

paid off, for he won many trophies in competitions and entertained people for generations with his unique style. He claimed to know over 1,000 fiddle tunes, which truly made him a master. He taught and helped many people to play (including me). He also played at least three times per week for local senior centers and nursing homes.

Riding horses was not only a way of life, but also a form of entertainment. Every year on the 4th of July, a three-day rodeo was held at Promise. Bronco horses, steers, and sometimes cows were ridden at these events. Charlie had a lot of good, fun memories of riding and competing in these small rodeos. Never being seriously hurt, he did take many a spill. Having no corral or arena, standing spectators formed a barrier around the rider, and would try to prevent a runaway situation from happening. There was no such thing as an eight-second ride; the rider just stayed on as long as he could. Firecrackers were usually brought from Wallowa, sold, and fired off.

The family always had a telephone for as early as Charlie could remember. Lightning somehow traveled through the line one time when he was using the phone, and nearly electrocuted him. Since then, he has had a tremendous amount of respect for electricity.

The only radio in the early years that he knows of was owned by his Uncle Bill Carper, who had purchased a new one. Everyone in the community wanted to listen to it, so people would gather at his house to experience this new technology.

The area always had good schools. Eighth grade, however, was as far as they went. The nearest high school was in Wallowa. Charlie only received an eighth-grade education, due to the traveling distance to the high school. He felt that this is why the Promise country started losing population. The people started moving closer to Wallowa, enabling their children to receive a high school education. Teachers at Promise were usually hired on a one-year contract, and had to board with local families throughout the year.

For two or three nights a week, circuit preachers also would board with families of the area. They would go from place to place one at a time, sharing the word and spending time with families, studying the Bible. People then would gather for Sunday services, held at the Promise Grange, with the circuit preacher as host. Many times, the circuit preacher stayed with Charlie's family. A strong faith in God has always played a big part in their life.

The railroad, which had been used for logging, was eventually abandoned due to other ways of transporting logs. A lot of iron, steel, aluminum, and other materials left from the railroad was left lying on the ground. People of Wallowa County would gather up the iron to sell and make a little extra money. One person buying it was Johnny MacDonald, or “Johnny Mack,” in Wallowa, for \$3.00 a ton. He then railroaded it elsewhere to sell. .

Charlie eventually married his sweetheart Ella, and the couple lived together in the same house for more than 55 years. After Ella passed away in 1997, Charlie married Nancy, with whom he shared his little red house. Sitting with him in his little kitchen, which hadn’t changed much in all those years, I can’t help but get carried back to the times that he called “the better days.” They, according to Charlie, were harder times, but much simpler and happier times as well. A twinkle came to his eye as he thought

about the people who helped shape his life. He referred to these people as ones who “worked hard, played hard, yet had a soft heart.” Honesty and sincerity were two of the many things he stood for and believed in. These traits were common values that many people of his generation lived by.

Much of this was due to the grit it took to survive, in a time when people relied on one another, and the only means of getting by was to “Just do it!”



Charles and Ella, 1936

PROMISE FOLKS

Part II: A Grandmother’s Advice

By Stella Lee (Smith) Poulson

From a letter to her granddaughter, Jereta Rae Smith

My mother was 19 when I was born in 1905. I was the oldest. I looked more like my dad. I had one sister, six years younger, born in 1911. We didn’t dare to fight. Theresa was so much younger and Dad’s pet. We had the same bedroom and slept together. We didn’t have many play things, each had a doll. We didn’t get birthday presents as we grew. Mama would make us a cake. We had no tooth fairy. Dad pulled our teeth. We didn’t get an allowance, we had chores to do that were everyday routine. For punishment, my folks spanked me. My mother was the strictest. As soon as I cried, Dad would stop, but Mama walloped me good. I would climb a ladder that set against the house to get away from Theresa. She was afraid to climb.

I liked to play ball at school and also tag. At recess and noon we would coast and ski. In the winter and summer we played hide-and-seek. Dad made a sled and ski for us and we had lots of fun on them.

Skiing was fun on moonlit nights as you couldn’t tell where the bumps were. Dad would play cards and checkers with us. Mama would play cards and we’d read at night. We had a certain time to go to bed and we went! We had no TV, had a record player. We didn’t argue with our parents. Their word was law.

We went to bed at 8 p.m. I was never in the hospital until I was grown. Our doctor was our friend but I didn’t have shots. We lived out in the country about 25 miles from town. When angry, I had a favorite spot on the hillside where I’d sit on a flat rock and hate the world. I never thought of running away.

We had a team of horses and a buggy. I had a horse and I took good care of him. We rode on a train about 60 miles when I was young. (Probably from Wallowa to La Grande.) I had to do dishes and had to help milk the cows and feed the calves and pigs.



Jereta Rae Smith



Stella Lee
(Smith) Poulson

I hunted the cows, too. I had a dog, Bally, who helped me get the cows and carry wood. He would go every place with me and was always a good guard dog. No one could touch me. Some of the boys wanted to make me mad by teasing. We had one bully at school who was real brutal. He'd try to grab you and yank you around, but I'd kick him on the shins as hard as I could.

We didn't have free weekends. We had work to do, and always Sunday School. I was never grounded or lonesome. I got to go to town once a year and I stayed with my grandma and was lucky if I had 25 cents to go to the show.

I had a best friend, She was a good friend that I shared secrets with. We never had a fight. She married the man that first proposed to me!

We had a big yard with several cherry trees in it. We had a two-story house with four bedrooms upstairs and four rooms down, kitchen, dining room, living room and bedroom, with a large pantry. It had eight rooms with an unlighted attic where we stored junk, and when we came down the stairs Theresa was scared to be behind. My room was about 12 X 12 with a full-sized bed, a table with drawer and chair. The bed had to be made each morning and the rugs straightened and swept if needed.

My dad, mother, sister and me and my Grandpa Smith lived at our house. We had kerosene lamps for lights, later we got gasoline lights. We had a wood-burning cook stove, also heaters and we washed on a washboard. Later we got a gasoline washer. We had a wood burning heating stove for winter. In the summer we just opened windows and doors and let the air in.

My favorite thing in the house was the old Edison cylinder record phonograph. Our house burned and we lost everything.

We had snow every winter. We made snowmen, caves, forts, and lots of snowballs that we used in snow fights. We would have a nice Thanksgiving dinner, usually a fat hen roasted, and pumpkin pie. Mom was an excellent cook. I remember the homemade bread the best.

For Christmas we always had a big dinner; sometimes we had guests, other times just our family. We went to the woods and cut our own tree. We made chains of colored paper and strung popcorn. We made cakes and cookies. My favorite cookie was a star. I made a handkerchief and embroidered the corner for my mother. We hung our stockings and usually got candy, nuts, and an orange. Santa came in the night while we were asleep. The only time we got to talk to him was at the Christmas programs held at school or church. We used our imagination to create fancy cards for Valentine's Day. We had Easter egg hunts and

sometimes we forgot where we hid the eggs and maybe the next year we would find them with the innards dried. We usually had a community Fourth of July picnic with a big dinner and a ball game in the afternoon. We had firecrackers and saved the sparklers for night time.

We might have a party and play games for Halloween. Our neighbors were too far away to "haunt them." I wasn't afraid but my sister had to come down the stairs ahead of everyone if it was dark.

No family reunions. My first four years I went to school in Wallowa, then we moved to Promise and I went to a country school and graduated from eighth grade exam. When I was in the sixth grade I passed in all but English and ag, then went on to school. I got good grades. At that time [math] was called arithmetic. I liked spelling and reading. I hated English and ancient history. I walked about two miles to school. In the winter, if the snow was real deep, I'd ride my horse. We didn't have much to do with the teachers except in the classroom. NO! I never played hooky, and I was late only one time in all my school years. We would have spelling matches and debates. We played baseball, tag and coasted and skied in the winter. We never had homework.

We didn't get to take trips or vacations. Dad went to town [Wallowa], 25 miles away, twice a year to get supplies, but we stayed home to do chores. About the longest trip I took was 25 miles in the buggy and 60 miles on the train when I was 8 years old. We went to the county fair once or twice and went to the carnival. We were in the big tent where we walked by the snake pit. I fainted and when I came to we were outside! No more snakes!

We went fishing. Had to walk down a canyon to the creek, which was miles from our place. We were on a party telephone line so we had to be brief.

You were lucky if there was a car in the family. My dad didn't have a car until after I was married. I was 18 when we got our first car, a Star.

Once in a while, my chum would come over for the night and we'd talk. We wore granny nightgowns which our mothers made.

I was almost 16 and my first date took me to the show. We walked about a mile to the theater. I was staying with my grandmother in town for a week. The show cost 10 cents and, yes, my parents had to approve of my date.

The boy I remember the most was the one that became your Grandpa. He and his folks came for dinner one Sunday. He sat up so straight I thought he was "stuck up." I was about 15 then. He went into the army and was gone for some time. I dated other boys. Getting home at night depended on how far we had to go to a dance or party.

Should be home by midnight. On your grandpa's and my first date we went to a dance at one of the neighbors. He was a big tease. We would go to the dances and we both loved to ride, so we would go horseback riding. When my folks got to know him they felt I was safe with him, so there was no question of me going with him. We never had a big argument.

We were walking to a dance through the woods to a neighbor's place. We sat down on a log and rail fence when he told me he loved me and wanted me to be his wife. I wasn't sure if I was in love with him at that time, but later I knew he was the right one for me.

We were married the first of June 1922, and had a lawn wedding under the cherry trees. I had a white satin dress. My bouquet was daisies and narcissus, and my chum was my maid of honor. We had a honeymoon of a week.

We were delegates to the State Grange Convention in Bandon, Oregon. We went by train. My nickname became Peggy. We lived on a farm in Promise, Oregon, had cows, horses, pigs, and chickens. We raised our own meat and canned stuff from the garden. We had fruit trees. We carried water from the spring. Our home had four rooms and we heated the house with a wood stove. I was a good cook. My mother started me cooking when I was about 12, and I baked bread, pies, cakes and made butter and was taught to sew. Grandpa was good to clean chickens but wasn't too keen at housework.

A favorite funny story was there was to be a visitor to our Grange and your grandpa was the Master. I wanted him to look real nice so I cleaned and pressed his hat. When he put it on it had shrunk and just sat on top of his head.

Your mother was a real cutie and a very good baby. Your grandpa called her his Princess. She liked to tag [her older brother] Glenn and play with her dolls and the neighbor kids. She got a pretty doll one Christmas and the next summer she laid the doll on the chopping block and Glenn chopped the doll's head off. They carried in the wood for the stoves and swept the snow from the walks if it wasn't too deep. They didn't get an allowance. She was good about hanging up her clothes but had to have help to make the bed straight. When they went to a fair or carnival they would always bring something home to me. When your mother learned to write she made a folder with flowers she had drawn and wrote a poem, "To My Mother." I have it yet. School was hard for your mother, but she studied and got good grades. She went through high school in three years.

Grandma's advice to Jereta Rae: Never do anything you'd be ashamed for your parents to know about. When you get married don't be too stubborn to say, "I was wrong. I'm sorry." If you have children, be firm in discipline, but let them know you love them and that they are precious to you, they grow up and are gone so quickly.

God bless you, dear, and grant that your life will be a happy one. I love you. Signed, Grandma

PROMISE FOLKS

Part III: A Family's Wet Walk to a New Home

By Edith Downard Bramlet

Adapted from the *Wallowa County Chieftain* (October 12, 1995)

On the fourth day of April 1894, with a light camp outfit in a covered wagon, a team of mules, a saddle horse, and 110 dollars in money, we left Missouri and started for Wallowa County, Oregon, to take a homestead. We arrived at La Grande in Union County about the first of August with just 15 dollars and our outfit left. Father [William Downard] fixed up a camp by the side of the road a few miles out of La Grande and went to work in the harvest field.

That October, we moved on into Wallowa County and stopped for the winter by the side of the Wallowa River in the canyon about a mile below its head [today's Water

Canyon]. Father built a small log cabin with a fireplace in one end. We got a wood cookstove somewhere and were fairly comfortable.

The next spring he began to look around for just the place he wanted for a homestead. There was lots of vacant land. Some people advised him to go to Imnaha, some to Grande Ronde Canyon, and still others said Flora was the best place. It was very hard to decide. We stayed in the canyon about three years. But at last father chose a place in what was called the Meadows [today's Downard Meadow]. It was a remote unsurveyed country covered with forest



Lucy Downard Schaeffer

trees, except for meadows dotted here and there among the timber. There was lots of undergrowth and a great variety of wild flowers in the spring and summer. There was plenty of game, too, such as deer, elk, and bear, lots of coyotes and some cougars. It was about 14 miles north from where we lived, by a trail that went straight through or 18 miles by the wagon road. Father had built a good log cabin on the place in the fall. Mother [Nancy

Bell] and Brother [Sullivan] had been to see the place and they all thought it was ideal.

At last the morning dawned that we were to move to our new house. I think moving is always a time of extreme excitement for a child, and this was probably more so than usual. We three youngsters, Brother, Sister [Lucy], and I, were up early and impatient to get started. Our two mules had died in less than a year from the time we arrived in Oregon. We now had a gray mare and the saddle horse we had brought with us for a team. Father had bought a couple of milk cows, and we had three heifers and a calf. Brother and Sister were to go on foot with the cattle over the short cut. I begged to go with them. I was the youngest and small for my age, so Mother was afraid the walk would be too hard for me. But Father said I could make it all right. They decided to let me go, so my joy was complete.

The sun was shining bright and clear. The birds were twittering their springtime songs in the brushes along the river. The morning was perfect. We turned the calf out of the corral. That was new to him and he, too, must have caught the jubilant spirit, for he willfully made several trips up and down the road at full speed while his anxious mother trotted awkwardly in pursuit. At last we got old Red and Daisy started up the hill and the calf decided to follow his mother and the heifers gave no trouble. We climbed up out of the timber that grew along the river and a little way up on the hillside, on up through the bunch grass and rocks.

Looking back occasionally as we climbed, we watched Father and Mother loading the wagon and preparing to start. Our little black dog and yellow pup were at our heels and seemed to know something unusual was going on.

The cattle climbed slowly, but at last we reached a cliff jutting out of the hillside about a half-mile from the river. We drove the cattle through a gap in the ledge and gained the top. Then turned and walked out onto the cliff to take our farewell look at our temporary home.

I think then as now there was a little ache in my heart, for I had spent three happy years there by the riverside. They, perhaps, were three of the happiest years of my life, for I was too young to realize the troubles of life and old enough to enjoy it. Then, too, we were leaving our playmates and at our new home there would be no other children, except in summer a little girl came with her aunt and two uncles to Howard Meadow about two miles west of our place. They milked a dairy herd there for about two months each year and moved back to the valley. Then our only neighbor was a bachelor about four miles away, for we were the first family to settle in that part of the country.

We rested a short time on the top of the ledge and started the cattle again. From there on, the ascent was more gradual and it was not far to the top of the hill.

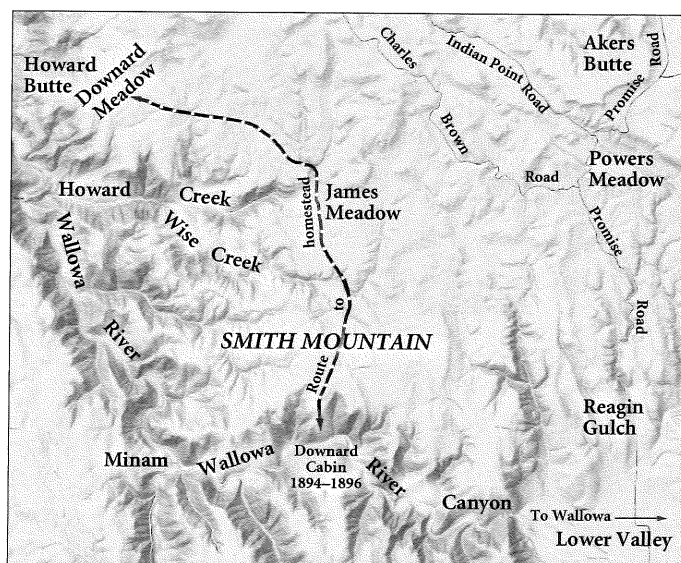
The springtime was less in evidence than it had been in the canyon, and as we penetrated the timber farther and farther, this became more noticeable. The grass was

shorter, the leaves on the brush were smaller, small patches of snow still lingered in the shaded places in the thickets. Brother was only 12 years old, but he had a good deal of experience finding his way through timbered country, so had no trouble following the course, though some of the way there was no trail at all.

As the sun rose higher the day grew warmer and warmer until it was quite hot. About noon we reached a spring.



Edith Downard Bramlet



The timber there was often open, the grass was fairly good, and the water was clear and cold. It was a pretty place and we stopped beside the spring to eat our lunch of fried trout and a generous number of Mother's delicious buttermilk biscuits and butter. Some of the cattle lay down and the others grazed nearby. There was a small bunch of range horses near that came curiously toward us, whistled, whinnied and trotted back into the timber only to return nearer than before to get a better look at us. We were a source of interest to them as long as we stayed there. But we paid little attention to them, for we knew they would not hurt us.

The air began to grow sullen and soon dark clouds were peering over the western horizon. Brother said we had better be going on as he believed it was going to rain.

We threw the dogs into a large hole of water to cool them off and to see them swim. We gathered up our wraps and started the cattle again. The timber grew more dense from there on. The clouds rolled even higher and the heat became more offensive. Not a breath of air was stirring. The distant thunder began to rumble. Then the sun was blotted out. I do not recall any feeling of fear. I think children of earlier days were more used to hardships and bore them with less thought than they do now. We knew we were sure to get wet, for the light wraps we had considered sufficient in the morning would not keep us dry in a hard rain. So we traveled as fast as we could that we might reach shelter as soon as possible after the storm. We knew it would be cold when the rain was over. The clouds came on at a racing speed. The thunder rolled louder and nearer. The elements seemed to be gathering themselves for a mighty spring, with the forest and its inhabitants as its prey.

The wind began to blow, first with a gust that set the leaves and boughs to fluttering, then came a blast that swayed and tossed the trees and moaned through the cracks

of tall, limbless, dead tamaracks. Large rain drops began to fall here and there. We were in heavy timber then, and we selected a fir tree with dense boughs that came near the ground and gathered as close to the trunk as we could. The dogs huddled up close to us. They seemed to have a dread of the storm. We had hardly gotten settled when the storm broke in all its fury.

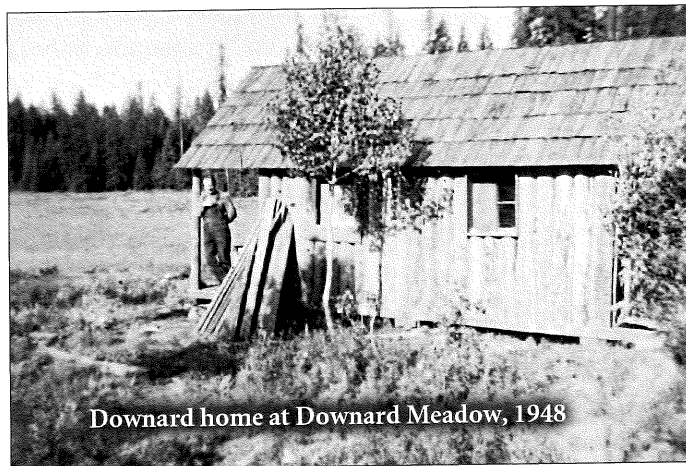
Tall slim trees bent nearly to the ground as the wind thrashed and whipped their branches. The water seemed to fall in sheets that were dashed to pieces by the tops of the trees. Somewhere in the distance we heard one of the forest monarchs crash to the ground as it stripped the branches from its nearby neighbors. The melting snow had soaked the earth around the roots until it was not firm enough to hold the tremendous weight of the tree against the wind. The thunder boomed, echoed and re-echoed among the hills and swept into confusion with the winds continually howling among the trees only to be repeated again and again. At last the wind began to abate.

The rain slackened. The water had begun to drip through the boughs of the tree we were under. Brother ran out and over to another tree nearby where he found a better shelter than the one we were under, so he called us girls to come quickly as we could. We stayed there until the rain had almost stopped but, at best, our clothing was quite wet. The cattle had also sought the shelter of the trees, so we drove them out and on toward our destination. It was not far to where the trail we were following joined the road.

When we reached it, we looked for wagon tracks but none had been made since the rain and we thought it not likely that father and mother had passed before, so we must be ahead of them. We did not wait but pressed on as fast as we could. At last we reached Howard Meadow and headed the cattle along the side of the meadow on a trail that led toward our place.

We went about a hundred yards on the trail when we saw Father walking across the meadow on the road. He hollered to us and said to take the cattle to the corral and go up to the house. Then he hurried on. When we reached the house, father and a man that was camping there (I will call him Sam) were getting ready to take a team and go back after the wagon. The rain had made the road so slick that our unshod team had not been able to draw the heavy-loaded wagon up a steep little hill on the way.

Sam had a fire in an old cook stove. He put more wood in the stove, drew a bench up near it for us, gave us each a handful of raisins, and hurried away to help father. An old gentleman who was camping with Sam stayed with us. He kindled a fire in a little fireplace in a lean-to house that had



Downard home at Downard Meadow, 1948

been dug into the hillside and roofed with shakes. We were very glad to have the fire, for the rain had cooled the air immensely. With our wet clothing we were quite chilled. Just about dark, Father, Mother, and Sam arrived with the wagon. Mother was damp and cold, too. She had her troubles as well as we. The old rooster had smothered in the heat as they climbed the big hill, and her anxiety for us children had increased with the storm but was greatly relieved when father examined the trail where it joined the road and announced that "The children are ahead of us." During Father's absence, when the wagon was stuck on the hill, Mother walked around and around a tree where the ground was dry to keep warm while she watched the team, the chicken coop, and the hog to see that nothing went wrong.

The menfolk made more fire in the fireplace and Mother got dry clothing for us all, and soon we were made comfortable again. Just as Mother was preparing to leave the little cellar room to start supper, Sam came to the door. I can see him yet in my memory. His face was red from being out in the cold and then over the hot stove, his arms were folded and he held a dishcloth in one hand.

Supper is ready he said. How surprised Mother was. The supper of hot biscuits, bacon, potatoes, gravy, beans, rice, and stewed fruit was good, too. Good old Sam! I have not seen him for many years, though I have heard that the world has dealt rather harshly with him. But I feel sure that its cruelty had not changed his big kind heart and his thoughtfulness for others.

The weather continued stormy for about a week, so we stayed with Sam and the old gentleman until it settled and then moved on over to our place without further trouble. It was indeed a beautiful place. The wilderness was unchanged except for the cabin, which stood on a sort of a knoll on a hillside a little above the elevation of the meadow. Willows and small trees of the forest grew almost against the cabin. Wild honeysuckle veined to the top of a tree about 30 feet high near a spring close by. The grass was sending up its tiny green blades all over the meadow.

We all went diligently to work to fix up our house. We had many experiences and difficulties while proving up, but I will close by saying we lived seven years and spent several more summers on the homestead.

SULLIVAN DOWNARD was killed by his horse falling late yesterday afternoon near the fish hatchery. He was riding for Hector McDonald. His skull was crushed and he died almost instantly. — *The Wallowa Sun* (August 13, 1907)

PROMISE FOLKS

Part IV: A Trapper's Legacy

By James W. Powers

Adapted from *The Wallowa Sun* (April 10, 1941)

In 1880 a man by the name of Grossman was trapping along the streams and in the mountains near Wallowa Lake. He was a printer by trade, and in his younger days worked in a printing office in southern Missouri. After a few years, his health began to fail. A doctor told him that he would not live long if he did not get out of the office and into the pure air.

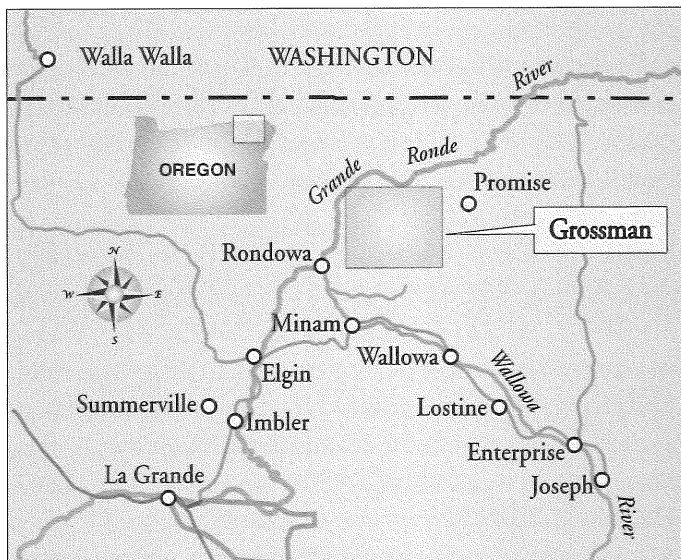
Taking the advice of his doctor, he went into the Ozark Mountains and occupied himself for a while in hunting and selling wild honey. He then came to the Northwest and spent a few years about the lake and then began trapping in the North Woods between the Lower Valley and the Grande Ronde River. Furbearing animals were quite plentiful at that time. The lynx pelts brought good prices and there were more of them in his shipments than there were of all

the other pelts combined. The fact that he loaned money to a Lower Valley farmer on real estate security indicated that his living requirements did not take all of the returns from his furs.

Grossman was a man of medium build and about five and one-half feet tall. He wore medium long hair and whiskers. He lived alone but he was always pleased to see a visitor and was congenial with all people he came in contact with, and would willingly share his food and the comforts of his cabin with anyone who happened to meet him in his sphere of influence. He would always take time to talk as long as the other man would engage him in conversation. He was very deliberate in the use of words, and seemingly endeavored to misapply and mispronounce them in a way that listeners found funny.

One day in the autumn of 1885, for example, a fire was started in the edge of the Big Meadow (afterward known as Bishop Meadow). Mr. Grossman, a couple of men who were looking for a location, and myself, by working through the afternoon, extinguished the fire. After our work was done, one of the men expressed the belief that the fire was set on purpose. "If I knew who did it," Mr. Grossman said, "I would do my best to have him put in the tenepentuary."

Then in the summer of 1886, a crew put up something like a hundred tons of hay on Big Meadow. Yellow jackets were numerous that summer, with myriads of them gathering around the camps. Now and then a yellow jacket would sting one of the children. "I can always tell by the music," Mr. Grossman said, "when a child bites itself with a jaler yacket."



One day when the horses were being brought in, one of them came dragging a rope through the grass, which frightened a saddle horse. Mr. Grossman turned to the owner of the frightened horse and said, "Jim, did your horse ever snite himself with a battle rake? I thought by the way he acted he had bit himself with a snattle rake sometime."

When asked how he killed his lynx after they were caught in the traps, Mr. Grossman said, "I usually knock a club in the head with them."

The cabin Mr. Grossman built at the Big Meadow was a curiosity. The walls were made of lodge poles with the bark left on. It had no floor except what we call dirt floor, and the roof was made of pieces of lodge poles that were

split in halves with the split side placed upward with a foot of dirt thrown on top of them. The main part of the cabin and the part that was roofed was in size about 10 feet by 14 feet, and the side walls were about 6 feet high.

The other part of the cabin was also made of lodge poles and was a right-angled triangle in shape. Its hypotenuse, a distance of approximately 10 feet, was the distance between the points where the two walls of the triangular part of the cabin joined the main part. This part of the cabin had no roof over it, and there was no partition between it and the other part of the cabin. This section was Mr. Grossman's fireplace. Here he would make a fire for warming his cabin and for cooking his food, and the walls were so far away from the fire that there was but little danger of them igniting.

In good weather he could sit with comfort in his fireplace near his fire and look up at the sky and in stormy weather he could sit under his roof before the fire where the rain or snow could not fall on him while it was falling on the fire. His bedstead was made of split poles and was nailed to the walls of the cabin in one corner. A portion of the end wall of the cabin was the head piece for his bedstead, and a portion of the side wall was the back side of his bed. The bedstead had only one leg. The cabin walls furnished the other supports.

He had three stools and a box for himself and his guests to sit on. The other furniture was a small dining table, the top of which was made of surfaced lumber and was about two feet wide by three feet long. Nails had been driven into the walls where the trapper hung his rifle, his cartridge belt, and his clothes.

During the trapping season, many skins which he had stretched on boards for drying could be seen by looking up toward the roof, and in the corner across from his bed lay a stack of cured furs. The cabin had the scent of a den of wild animals.

Mr. Grossman made other cabins at convenient points in his sphere of operations, and they were all very similar in construction.

One autumn after spending something more than a decade in the woods north of the Lower Valley, Mr. Grossman mysteriously disappeared. Some evidence obtained at the time seemed to indicate that he was murdered. There was not sufficient evidence, however, even to justify a strong suspicion as to who the murderer was. Mr. Grossman's body was never found.

“Without parallel...
for fiendish brutality.”

THE MCBAIN MURDER CASE

Part 2 of 2

“Why should the acts of the courts and their judgments be set at naught by petitions circulated by relatives and interested parties, and signed by people who know nothing of the facts...?” – John S. Hodgin (February 8, 1911)

The Petition

Date: December 30, 1910
From: Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen
To: Oregon Governor Jay Bowerman

– *The Wallowa Sun* (August 25, 1911)

We, the undersigned, members of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen and citizens of the state of Oregon, respectfully request your interest in the case of one, J.H. McBain, now in the Oregon penitentiary, sentenced to life imprisonment on the charge of murder in the second degree, with the view of effecting his freedom. The following is a brief history of the case of McBain, as taken from papers filed with the Grande Lodge of the Brotherhood, and our reasons for asking consideration of him.



Jay Bowerman

In 1904, McBain located an agricultural claim in Wallowa County, Oregon. After making arrangements with a couple men living nearby to build a cabin and care for the claim, he returned to his home in Grand Junction, Colorado, intending to return some months later with his family.

In the early part of 1905, McBain was notified that his claim had been “jumped” by two men—Theodore and Charley Trost—and that they had refused to leave and had driven off the two men whom he had arranged with to build the cabin. McBain reached the vicinity of his claim April 7, and in company with two others visited the claim that date, but the Trosts were not there. After asking the two men to accompany him the next day, he returned to the claim alone. He found the two bothers there [and] told them who he was; a quarrel followed.

The older brother, Theodore, started towards him with a double-bitted ax. McBain warned and then shot him. At the same time, a shot from the younger brother,

Charles, passed through McBain’s hat, and the younger brother was turned on and shot. The whole affair lasted but a few minutes, both Trost brothers being killed.

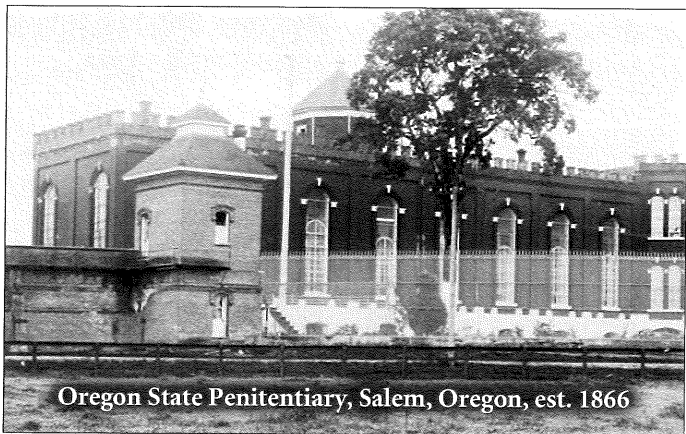
After McBain realized what he had done, he summoned some neighbors, told them the story, and after requesting them to remain with and guard the bodies, departed for Wallowa, where he gave himself up to the authorities.

The grand jury brought two indictments against McBain, and his trial came up May 16, 1905, resulting in a verdict of murder in the second degree and a sentence of life imprisonment. McBain has now served more than five years in prison. He was a man of family and good character. He did kill the two men in question, but we believe consideration should be given to the circumstances leading to the killing.

It was brought out at the coroner’s inquest that the elder Trost already had an agricultural claim. The younger brother was 19 years old, therefore was not old enough to take up a claim.

The claim had been illegally taken possession of, and it was in the defense of his own rights that Mr. McBain went to his claim on April 8 [1905] and demanded the removal of the intruders. We believe that McBain did only what many another man trying to make a home for himself and family would have done under like circumstances.

We believe he commenced firing only when it was necessary for his self-defense. We believe that the character of McBain is exemplified by his immediately turning himself over to the authorities after the affair, and we believe he has more



Oregon State Penitentiary, Salem, Oregon, est. 1866

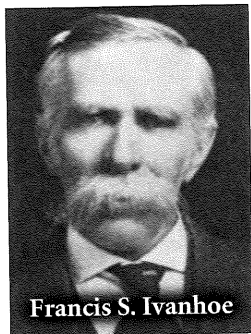
than paid the penalty of his offense against society and that it would gain nothing by his continued imprisonment and separation from his family. We earnestly urge your intercession in behalf of this unfortunate man, and hope, by the power vested in you as the State’s Executive, you can consistently grant his pardon.

Date: December 31, 1910

From: Oregon Governor Jay Bowerman

To: District Attorney Francis S. Ivanhoe

Please advise whether or not you have any recommendations to make in case of J.H. McBain, now serving life sentence in the penitentiary for murder in second degree, committed in Wallowa County.



Date: January 3, 1911

From: D.A. Francis S. Ivanhoe

To: Oregon Gov. Jay Bowerman

Assuming the statements in the petition are true, I personally favor the parole of McBain, but I was not prosecuting attorney when he was tried. Claire Crawford, who now resides in Los Angeles,

California, was district attorney who tried McBain.

The Pardon

From *The Wallowa Sun* (August 25, 1911)

Without any further investigation, so far as the records show, Bowerman paroled McBain on January 7, [1911], his last official act [as governor], and the first known in this county of the efforts to secure McBain's freedom was when the Salem dispatches to the Portland papers reached this county January 9.

From *Enterprise News Record* (January 14, 1911)

News of the pardon of J.H. McBain by Acting-Governor Bowerman last week is not received with very good grace in this county, where the double-murder took place and where in the trial he escaped hanging only by there being a "tender-hearted" man on the jury. The murder was caused by a mix-up over a squatter's right [near Promise] five years ago last April. McBain had been "located" on a claim, but left for Colorado leaving no marks of occupancy. Charley and Theodore Trost of Promise went over to the new township and happened to settle on the land McBain claimed. The latter in Colorado was informed of the fact

FRANCIS SWIFT IVANHOE Born 1856 in Loudoun County, Virginia. Early education by private instruction; later, at Planter's University, at Richmond, Virginia. Served from 1876 to 1887 in United States Regular Army. Admitted to practice in Oregon in 1887. Present District Attorney for Tenth District of the state. Resided and practiced since 1887 in Union and Wallowa counties. — *History of the Bench and Bar of Oregon* (1910)

and hurried back. He secured a rifle and went to the claim and killed both boys. Two indictments for murder were returned against him, on one of which he was tried at the May term [of court] and sentenced to the penitentiary for life. As far as known, no petition for the man's pardon was circulated in this county.

The Response

By John S. Hodgkin

From *Enterprise News Record* (February 2, 1911)

My personal knowledge of the facts of the trial of this case, as well as the circumstances I learned while attending the coroner's inquest in an official capacity at the scene of the crime, convinces me that this case is without a parallel in this part of the state for fiendish brutality or justification; and the long time the 10 jurymen who wanted to bring in a verdict for first degree [murder] held out before they would consent to a compromise verdict of second degree, which means a life sentence, in itself shows what the jury who heard the evidence thought. Two brothers shot down and murdered without mercy, and the fiend that perpetrated the awful crime and who escaped the hangman's noose by such a margin, turned loose without the citizens of the county even knowing it!

The Pursuit

From *Wallowa County Reporter* (February 19, 1920)

Word was received by Sheriff Rinehart this week from the police of Edmonton, Canada, that they had in custody James H. McBain, who is alleged to have murdered Chas. and Theodore Trost in 1905. The Trosts were killed on a squatter's claim in the Promise country by McBain, it is claimed, over a dispute regarding the ownership of the claim. McBain served three years in the penitentiary and was paroled in 1908 but was never tried for the murder of Theodore Trost. The Canadian police say that McBain came in with a shipment of cattle from Grand Prairie 300 miles north of Edmonton and they nabbed him. District Attorney Fairchild is preparing papers for his return to this county for trial.

JOHN S. HODGIN From 1900 until 1907, John Simeon (Jno. S.) Hodgkin (1864–1940) practiced law in Enterprise and served Wallowa or Union counties in a number of legal positions: lawyer, city attorney, deputy district attorney, district attorney, "referee in bankruptcy," and U.S. Commissioner. He was also known as "Father of the Enterprise Public Library" for his instrumental work in establishing it.

The Evidence

From *The Oregonian* (February 20, 1920)

When advised that others had settled on the land, McBain came back from Colorado and hastened to Grossman. He found the two brothers on the disputed land and shot and killed both of them. When arrested he claimed he had killed them in self-defense after they had refused to leave the land, but at the trial strong circumstantial evidence was produced to support the state's contention that he had hidden behind a log and shot them from ambush.

The Search

From *The Oregonian* (February 20, 1920)

Two indictments were returned against McBain, one for the murder of each of the brothers. He was tried on one indictment at a special term of the circuit court, and on May 20, 1905, was found guilty of murder in the second degree on a compromise verdict, and was sentenced to life imprisonment. After a few years, however, he was pardoned and immediately disappeared. The second indictment has remained on the county records and a search for the man has been conducted quietly ever since.

The Capture

From *The Morning Oregonian* (February 20, 1920)

Angus McBain, 45 years old, charged with the murder of two brothers named Trost in Wallowa County, Oregon, in 1905, and for several years a rancher in the Grande Prairie District [of Canada], was arrested by Constable Powers of the Alberta Provincial Police yesterday, just as he was about to leave Spirit River to join his family in this city. McBain's arrest was effected as a result of the work of Constable Powers, who has been in the north country for the last nine months.

Information received by Powers was to the effect that McBain was believed to be the man wanted in Wallowa County for the murder of the two brothers no less than 15 years ago. A careful watch of the man was carried on, a full description as to his general makeup being later forwarded to the police authorities of Wallowa County by a return wire. Although McBain denies he is the man wanted, the Alberta police here declare that the description furnished by the Wallowa County police authorities confirms their opinion that they have the wanted man. The police here state that McBain had been in the Peace River country for some time, and that apart from dealing in cattle, he had also been an employee on Northern Railway construction work. Evidently the alleged murderer is known in Oregon as James G. McBain.

The Flight

From *The Morning Oregonian* (February 25, 1920)

McBain shot and killed Charles Theodore Trost following a dispute over title to some land in Wallowa County. He was afterward arrested for the murder of Charles Trost and upon being tried was convicted and sentenced to an indeterminate term of from one to twenty years in the penitentiary. He remained in the prison [during] the temporary reign of Jay Bowerman as governor in the year 1911, when he was pardoned.

Before the warrant charging him with the murder of Theodore Trost could be served, McBain left the country. Although he was located at several places following his release from prison, it was not until about two weeks ago that he was taken into custody. The sheriff of Wallowa County will leave for Washington this week to obtain the necessary legal papers before continuing his journey to Alberta [Canada] after the prisoner.

The Release

From *Enterprise Record Chieftain* (March 4, 1920)

On their return from Edmonton, Alberta, last Thursday, Sheriff F.D. Rinehart and Joner Trump said there was no doubt that the suspect arrested there was not James H. McBain, wanted in Wallowa County for the murder of the Trost brothers in 1905. The Alberta McBain formerly had been a railroad man in Colorado and was about the age of James McBain, but the points of difference were so many and so marked that he was released at once. His physique was not the same as that of James McBain, and he had a heavy head of hair, whereas the man wanted was nearly bald on the front of his scalp 15 years ago. Mrs. James McBain and two children were here for the trial of their husband and father, and did not tally with the family of the Alberta suspect.

The Return

From *Wallowa County Reporter* (February 26, 1920)

Sheriff Rinehart failed to identify the man held at Edmonton, Canada, as James McBain, the murderer of the Trosts, and is returning without his man, according to a telegram received Tuesday.

* * *

Brothers Theodore H. Trost (1883-1905) and Charles L. Trost (1885-1905) are buried in the Promise Cemetery.

James H. McBain was never apprehended after his pardon, and never stood trial for the murder of Theodore Trost.

WALLOWA BASEBALL

The Early Years (1868–1899)

“The world is going too fast. Railroads, steamers, packets, race against time. Oh, for the good old days of heavy post coaches and speed at the rate of six miles an hour!” – Philip Hone, New York City mayor, 1826–1827

In the beginning was baseball. Starting in the East, it set out toward the Pacific, hitching rides with stagecoaches and freight wagons, wandering alongside steam trains and sternwheelers. It traveled so fast that it often arrived before the trappings of civilization appeared on the scene. A town might not have a fire department or a flour mill, but it always seemed to have a baseball team. In northeast Oregon, for example, the La Grande Base Ball Club—yes, it was two words then—formed in 1868, just seven years after the first settler staked the first homestead claim in the Grande Ronde Valley. Consequently, La Grande had a baseball team just three years after it was incorporated. Similar situations are found throughout the region: Union, Baker City, Pendleton, and Walla Walla were all playing baseball in the 1870s, and Wallowa County teams began playing no later than 1894.

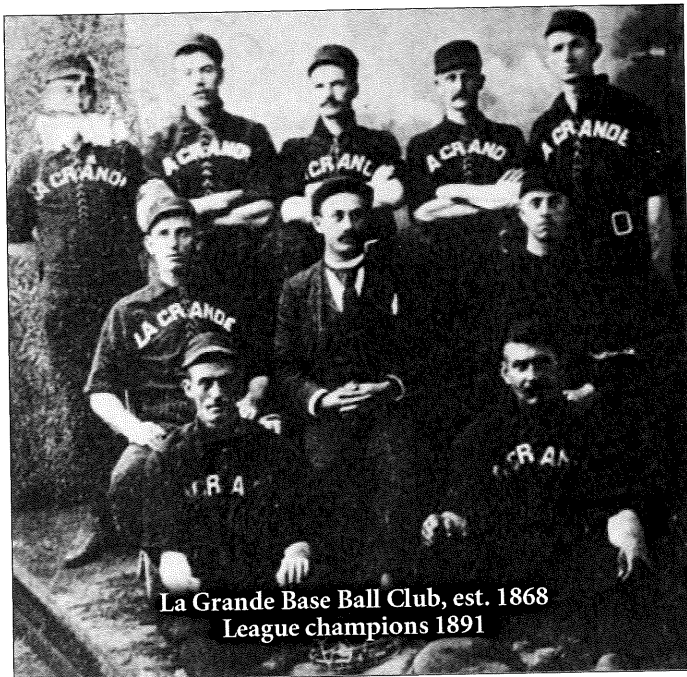
1868

La Grande Base Ball Club

The organization of the La Grande Base Ball Club was perfected on Thursday evening last by the election of officers. – *Blue Mountain Times* (May 2, 1868)

The members of the Base Ball Club are notified to meet at the city council room this evening at 7-1/2 o'clock. Regular monthly meeting. Business of importance is to be transacted. By order president. – *Blue Mountain Times* (May 30, 1868)

The Base Ball Club will meet this evening on the grounds at 4 o'clock p.m. for exercise. After the game a business meeting. – *Blue Mountain Times* (September 12, 1868)



La Grande Base Ball Club, est. 1868
League champions 1891

1877

Muscle and Good Looks

The members of the La Grande Base Ball Club enjoyed a game of base ball on last Saturday. The La Grande people will match the club against any—for muscle and good looks. S. Otten, captain of the first nine, Joseph Baker of the second. – *The East Oregonian* (March 24, 1877)

1877

Match Game

The Arctic Base Ball Club beat the La Grande Base Ball Club in a match game of base ball. – *Mountain Sentinel* (July 7, 1877)

In the same news: “People of Cove and Summerville build a stockade for mutual protection against raids from Joseph’s Indians.”

1877

Arctic Base Ball Club

The Arctic Base Ball Club of Union is ready and willing to accept a challenge from any of the surrounding clubs at any time or place. – *Mountain Sentinel* (July 21, 1877)

In the same news: “Exiled families returning to the Wallowa.”

1880

Pendleton Base Ball Club

The Pendleton Base Ball Club is to go to Centerville today to play the Centerville Base Ball Club. – *The East Oregonian* (April 3, 1880)

The “Scouts” are to play the Pendleton Ball Club today. The club to have three-eighths of the innings. – *The East Oregonian* (April 10, 1880)

BASEBALL TOURNAMENT In the summer of 1888, Baker City hosted a baseball tournament that awarded \$200 in prize money to the winning team. Although details are scarce, we know that the Boise team lost to Baker City 7 to 2, and a team from Pendleton also competed. – From the *Idaho Statesman* (June 27 & July 21, 1888)

1880

Black Eyes and Broken Fingers

The Centerville Nine will play a return game with the Pendleton club at this place today. Considerable excitement prevails, and we hope the best club will win and that black eyes and broken fingers will not be heard of. – *The East Oregonian* (April 24, 1880)

1887

Second Nines Play

A match game of base ball between the second nines of La Grande and North Powder next Sunday. Boys, get in and drill. – *La Grande Journal* (May 27, 1887)

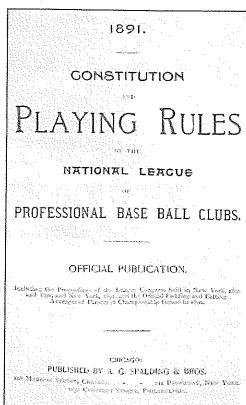
1892

League Reorganizes

The reorganization of the Pacific Interstate League to include Caldwell and Boise City in Idaho, and Baker City and La Grande in Oregon were effected at Baker City Sunday. The league agreement or by-laws provide that the board of directors shall have general supervision of the affairs of the league and shall decide all disputed games; each visiting club shall be guaranteed \$60 by the home team, and the home club is to pay the expenses of the umpire. The league shall be governed by the playing rules of the National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs as revised in 1891.

The personnel of La Grande's team for the opening series will probably [include] Wm. Bray [catcher], J.G. Munday [pitcher], A. Andrews [left field], and A. Ray [center field], who were members of last year's team. La Grande's battery will be the same as last year—Munday and Bray—who went through all last season without change or relief and wrested at the close of the series what there was left of the silken scarf known as the pennant.

Munday is known as the "Man with the Tireless Right Arm." It is a sort of an Indian title, and was



acquired from the dazed inhabitants of the reservation on the other side of the Blue Mountains. Bray, his catcher, is in good condition and will no doubt be heard from when the command to "Play ball" is given. Andrews and Ray are great favorites as fielders. They did splendid work last year, and almost any pop-up flies that come their way are liable to get caught. La Grande is fortunate in having kept together so many of her old players, but the other towns of the league, particularly the two new ones, are reputed to be "blooded" and will put strong teams in the field. – *La Grande Gazette* (June 20, 1892)

1894

Season Opens

The baseball season opened here last Sunday. The Enterprise nine will play against any other nine in the county in a short time. – *The Aurora* (April 13, 1894)

1895

First Imnaha Baseball Game

The second photographer on the [Imnaha] River was S.O. Smith, a consumptive who lived there with his wife about one year. He took pictures of the first baseball game played on the Imnaha River at the Park at the celebration, July 4th, 1895. – *J. H. Horner Papers* (1953)

1897

League Champions to Clash

One of the most attractive and interesting features of the [Fourth of July] celebration at this place [Enterprise] this year will be the game of ball between Alicel and Enterprise nines. The Alicel team is the recognized amateur champion of Union County, and the Enterprise team is the champion team of Wallowa County. The Enterprise team is at a disadvantage on account of not practicing long enough. All the members of the team are old players but have not played together enough for all to work in unison. However, it will be one of the most stubbornly contested games ever played in Wallowa County. – *Wallowa Chieftain* (July 2, 1897)

1899

Wallowa County League Forms

The delegates from the different towns met at Wallowa last Saturday and completed the organization of the [Wallowa] County Base Ball League. The schedule of games was not completed, but it was decided to begin a series of games on May 1st. Meanwhile, Wallowa will play a return game at Enterprise, and Lostine and Joseph will organize and play a practice game. – *Wallowa Chieftain* (April 21, 1899)

First Northwest Base Ball Game

From the *Oregon City Enterprise* (October 27, 1866)

Before Portland, Oregon, had a streetcar, a high school, or even a city park—it had a baseball team: the Pioneer Base Ball Club, formed in 1866 as the first such club in the Pacific Northwest. It also played in the first documented baseball game in the region, defeating the Clackamas Nine of Oregon City—the Northwest’s second baseball club—by a score of 77–45 on a “pleasant” October Saturday afternoon. With this game, the formation of other Base Ball Clubs throughout the Northwest, including in northeast Oregon, began to spread.

BASE BALL — The Pioneer Base Ball Club of Portland paid our city a visit on Saturday the 13th [of October] and participated with the Clackamas Club in a match game. The day was pleasant and the playing fine. The first two innings put the Pioneers far ahead of the Clackamas Club and won them the game, although the last seven innings were performed much better by the Clackamas Club. It will be seen that the Pioneers returned with two straight blinds on their score. The following runs were made:

CLACKAMAS NINE.		Runs.	Home Runs.						
N. W. Randall, Capt., catcher	8	0							
S. D. Pope, pitcher	6	1							
Geo. Sheppard, 1st base	6	0							
G. Bridges, short stop	5	0							
G. Harding, left field	4	1							
P. Barclay, 3d base	4	0							
A. M. Zigler, right field	4	0							
C. Mason, center field	4	0							
F. Charman, 2d base	5	0							
Total	45	2							
PIONEER NINE.		Runs.	Home Runs.						
W. K. Witherell, Capt., 1st b.	9	0							
T. F. Miner, catcher	9	2							
Jas. Steel, center field	8	0							
J. Upton, short stop	8	0							
Wadhams, 2d base	7	0							
Quackebush, pitcher	5	2							
J. Buechel, left field	11	0							
F. DeHaft, right field	8	1							
F. M. Warren, 3d base	9	0							
Total	77	5							
The runs made each inning were as follows:									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Clackamas	2	7	4	6	1	1	3	11	10
Pioneer	20	22	8	7	8	6	8	0	0

At the conclusion of the game, the participants sat down to a sumptuous feast at the Barlow House, where good cheer prevailed until the hour of departure for Portland. The Oregon City Brass Band, which under the leadership of Mr. Thomas Miller discoursed fine music throughout the game, headed the procession on the line of the march, and “played” their part in a most creditable and satisfactory manner. A large number of ladies, both from Portland and Oregon City, were on the grounds and witnessed the playing. The Clackamas Club passed resolutions expressive of their sense of pleasure at the proceedings of the day, tending thanks for the Brass Band, etc., which we regret to say have been mislaid, and we cannot publish them at this time. The Pioneer Club sent us the following for publication:

“At a regular meeting of the Pioneer Base Ball Club held on the evening of Monday, 5th October, 1866, it was unanimously resolved:

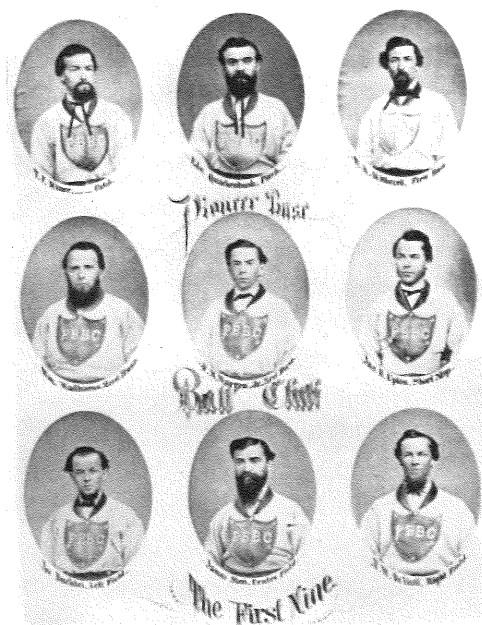
“That a vote of thanks be and is hereby tendered to the members of the Clackamas Base Ball Club at Oregon City for hospitalities extended to the members of this club while in their city on the 13th inst [of this month].

“To the Oregon City Brass Band for services rendered on the occasion, and to [our] host at the Barlow House for his many kindnesses to our visiting members and friends from Portland.

“To the People’s Transportation Company for especial favors conferred upon the members of the club by Capt. Baughman of the steamer *Senator*.

“That these resolutions be ordered published in the *Daily Oregonian* and *Herald* of this city, and the *Enterprise* of Oregon City, and that the secretary be instructed to forward a copy to the secretary of the Clackamas Base Ball Club.”

F.M. Warren, Secretary
Theo F. Miner, President



Pioneer Base Ball Club of Portland, 1866

* * *

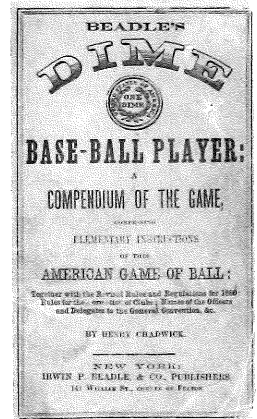
Early Base Ball Rules

In that first game, the defensive players—including the catcher—played without gloves or mitts; the ball was pitched underhand; there were no walks; and balls caught on first-bounce, as well as caught fly balls, counted as outs. The batter, who was called the “striker,” indicated to the pitcher, where he would like the ball pitched, and did not have to swing if he did not like a pitch. Ten-cent fines were imposed upon players by the umpire for inappropriate language or unsportsmanlike play. — John Denny, the *Clackamas Review* (July 21, 2009)

1899 FIRST WALLOWA COUNTY LEAGUE GAMES *The first baseball games under the schedule of the Wallowa County League were played last Saturday at Wallowa and Joseph. The scores resulted as follows: Enterprise 22, Wallowa 21; Joseph 35, Lostine 20. In the game between Enterprise and Wallowa, the score stood a tie at the close of the ninth inning, and another inning was played to decide the contest. – Wallowa Chieftain (May 19, 1899)*

Base Ball Timeline: The Early Years (1845–1899)

- 1845 First “recorded” baseball game played (at Hoboken, New Jersey).
- 1851 New York Knickerbockers wear first baseball uniforms.
- 1858 National Association of Base Ball Players—first organization governing baseball—founded.
- 1860 First documented baseball game played west of the Mississippi River (at St. Louis).
Beadle’s Dime Base Ball Player Manual, which standardizes baseball rules, first published.
- 1866 Pioneer Base Ball Club of Portland becomes first organized baseball team in Northwest.
 Northwest’s first documented baseball game: Pioneer Base Ball Club vs. Clackamas Nine.
- 1867 Pitcher W.A. “Candy Cummings invents and pitches curve ball.
- 1868 First newspaper mention (*Blue Mountain Times*) of “Base Ball Club” in region (La Grande).
- 1869 Cincinnati Red Stockings becomes first professional baseball team.
- 1871 National Association becomes first professional baseball league.
- 1876 National League established as first Major League.
- 1877 *Mountain Sentinel* newspaper mentions Arctic Base Ball Club of Union defeating La Grande Base Ball Club.
- 1880 *East Oregonian* newspaper mentions games played between Pendleton Base Ball Club and Centerville Nine.
- 1882 American Association, a professional baseball league, established; it operates for 10 years.
- 1884 Overhand pitching becomes legal in National League.
- 1885 Overhand pitching becomes legal in American Association.
- 1887 Pitchers required to pause between pitches.
- 1887 *La Grande Journal* newspaper mentions baseball game played between La Grande and North Powder.
- 1888 *Idaho Statesman* newspaper reports baseball tournament to be held in Baker City, winner to receive \$200.
- 1891 La Grande Base Ball Club wins Pacific Interstate League championship with 20–10 record.
- 1894 First newspaper mention (*The Aurora*) of organized baseball in Wallowa Valley.
- 1895 First mention of baseball game played at Imnaha as part of Fourth of July celebration.
- 1899 Wallowa Co. Base Ball League forms with teams from Wallowa, Lostine, Enterprise, Joseph (and sometimes Alder).



IT WAS A GENTLEMEN’S GAME. *All the players [in the early days of baseball] were businessmen or professionals who were well-regarded in the community—bankers, lawyers, bookkeepers, saloon keepers, grocers, town councilors. – Dave McCloskey, president, Pioneer Base Ball Club of Portland*

Wallowa Then & Now

WALLOWA'S GRAIN ELEVATOR (1947)

Eastern Oregon's First Elevator

The first bulk elevator in [eastern Oregon] will be constructed [in Pendleton]. The elevator will have a capacity of 100,000 bushels and will be 80 feet high. – *The Wallowa Sun* (September 7, 1916)

Grain Sacks

The amount of money spent [by Wallowa County farmers] last year...for [wheat] sacks was more than \$15,000. – *Enterprise Record Chieftain* (March 1, 1917)

Wallowa County's First Elevator

The first grain elevator in Wallowa County...will be built at Enterprise. It will be constructed on the railroad track and will have a capacity of 50,000 bushels. – *Enterprise Record Chieftain* (July 26, 1917)

Sack Expense

A portable granary with a capacity of 1,000 bushels can be put up on any farm for less than the cost of sacks for that quantity of grain. The lumber for the granary can be bought for \$38.20 at the yards in Enterprise. The sacks for 1,000 bushels of grain cost \$60. – *Enterprise Record Chieftain* (August 23, 1917)

First Grain

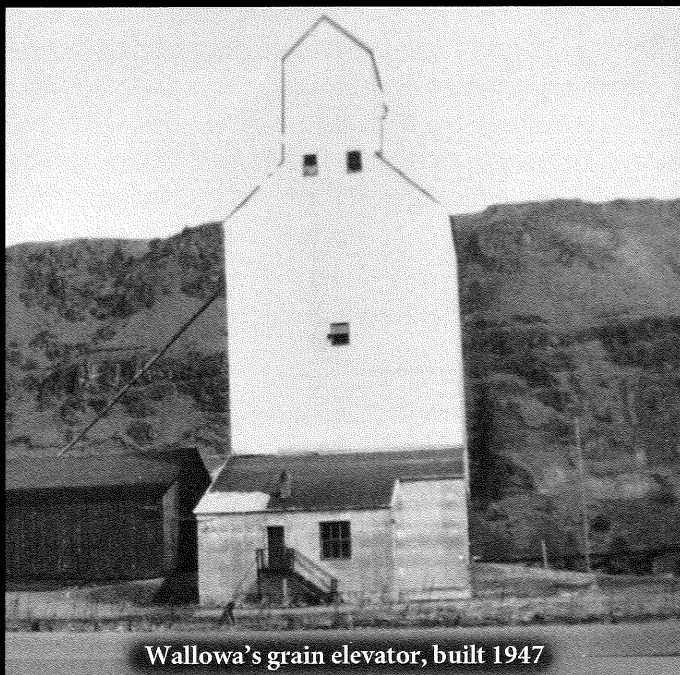
The new elevator at Enterprise was christened on Tuesday when it received its first grain...The wagons are unloaded very quickly by simply dumping into the pit, and the men in charge have no handling. – *Enterprise Record Chieftain* (November 1, 1917)

High Cost of Grain Sacks

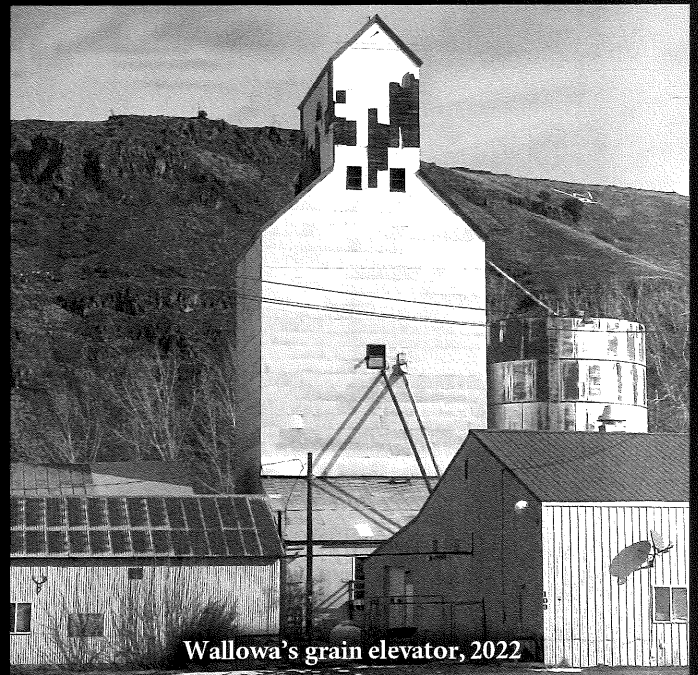
The cost of grain sacks promises to be out of sight next year, entailing an expense that will be a very heavy burden. – *Enterprise Record Chieftain* (January 3, 1918)

Wallowa's Grain Elevator

The Wallowa County Grain Growers has started construction on a new 70,000-bushel grain elevator at Wallowa. The foundation has been laid, and work is well started on the cribbing. The new elevator will go a long way toward relieving the load on the elevators at Enterprise and Joseph. The lower end of the valley is a large grain-consuming section, and storage facilities at Wallowa will be a decided convenience to livestock feeders in that district. It is expected that the elevator will be ready for use by around August 1. – *Wallowa County Chieftain* (July 3, 1947)



Wallowa's grain elevator, built 1947



Wallowa's grain elevator, 2022