

WALLOWA QUARTERLY

Magazine of the Wallowa History Center

– Preserving Our Past for the Future –

In This Issue

Wicked Wallowa

Memories of a Lifetime

Wallowa's "Other" Sawmill

Forgotten City Streets

The Winter of 1949

The Gift of a Horse

Shell Mercantile Co.

And More!



Freight wagons on Main Street Wallowa, c. 1900

WALLOWA QUARTERLY

WINTER 2022–2023

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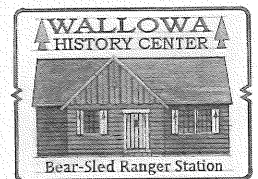
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The *Wallowa Quarterly* is published by Bear Creek Press of Wallowa, Oregon, in conjunction with the Wallowa History Center. The editor of this issue is Mark Highberger. All errors within—factual, historical, technical, and grammatical—are his responsibility. We welcome well-written manuscripts of approximately 1,000-2,500 words on regional history. Before submitting, please contact the editor at WallowaQuarterly@gmail.com for guidelines and requirements. We hope you enjoy this issue.



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*Wallowa
History
Center*

Front cover: Wool-laden freight wagons on Wallowa Main (Front) Street, c. 1900

Readers Write

Fire & Mud

I enjoyed seeing [in the Fall 2022 issue of the *Wallowa Quarterly*] great uncle Earl Sherod on the Wallowa baseball team. My niece still has my father's baseball mitt from his high school baseball days. But what caught my attention was the articles about the livery fire. The reason is a story about my stepfather, William Sherod.

In the mid-1960s my father's business partner panicked when he walked into the shop at the sawmill and saw a five-gallon bucket of parts cleaner on fire and tried to pick it up to take it outside. Fires like this, which were caused by sparks from welding, weren't uncommon. Millwrights would simply throw a sweater over the bucket, smothering the firecracker, and continue working.

Unfortunately, Dad's partner panicked, and while attempting to run outside with the burning bucket he fell, thus engulfing himself in flames. While he was on fire, he took off screaming and running around the lumber yard, but nobody could catch him. My father grabbed a firehose and used the high pressure to knock him down and put out the fire. Afterwards, Dad instructed his men to pack mud over his terribly-burned body, which had fourth-degree burns, before taking him to emergency.

A doctor told my father that had he not covered him with mud he positively would have died, then asked my father how he knew to do that. Dad told the doctor that when he was a boy my grandfather told him about a livery fire in Wallowa, that during that fire several horses were caught inside. Some ranchers were going to shoot the horses but some local Native Americans talked them into letting them save the horses, and that's when they began covering the bad burns with mud and saved the horses. It was this knowledge that saved my father's partner's life. – Gary Faules

Trost Murder Site

For those interested in finding the murder site of Theodore and Charles Trost [WQ issues 44 and 45], it is located at the following map coordinates: the southwest quarter of Section 11, Township 4 North, Range 41 East. – Marilyn Hulse

Please respect private property when looking for historic sites.

To share your memories and stories about Wallowa history, send them to us at WallowaQuarterly@gmail.com.

News Notes (1901-1907)

1901

Oregon Hunting Seasons & Bag Limits

Elk: Protected until Dec. 1, 1910.

Moose: Open season July 15 to Nov. 1.

Deer and mountain sheep: Open season July 15 to Nov. 1.

Prairie chicken: Oct. 1 to Dec. 1.

Grouse: Aug. 1 to Nov. 1, limit 15 birds.

Pheasants: Open season Oct. 1 to Dec. 1 west of the Cascades, limit 15 birds.

Wild turkey: Protected until Feb. 1, 1904.

Swan: Open season Sept. 1 to March 15.

Ducks: Open season Sept. 1 to March 15.

Geese: Not protected.

1902

Two Things the City Council Should Attend To

1. Curfew Ordinance: An ordinance for the purpose of clearing the street of youngsters after seven o'clock.

2. Bridge Light: An electric light on the bridge across the river. This is a very dangerous affair as it now stands, as a person driving up to the bridge from the east cannot see the bridge at all, owing to the fact that the lights of town blind the driver. And teams coming to town are liable to run off the culvert before approaching the bridge proper, for the same reason. A 32-candle light would not cost much and it might be the means of avoiding a sad accident. – *The Wallowa News* (November 14, 1902)

1907

Sufficient Mud

George Miller of Lower Valley was a pleasant caller Tuesday. He reports a great sufficiency of mud en route. – *The Wallowa News* (February 22, 1907)

1907

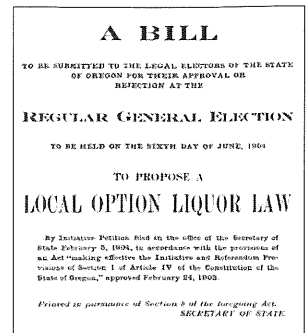
Wallowa News Moves

Notice to Correspondents: *The Wallowa News* plant is now located in Enterprise and our correspondents will kindly forward all communications to us at that place in order that same may receive immediate attention. – *The Wallowa News* (March 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.

WICKED WALLOWA

To drink or not to drink—that was the question facing Wallowa, along with most other Oregon towns, in the early years of the 20th century when Oregonians passed two state constitutional amendments. The first of these was the 1904 Local Option Liquor Law, which permitted individual communities to control—or ban outright—sales of alcohol. The second amendment was the 1906 Home Rule Law. Until then, Oregon cities could set no rules or policies without the approval of the state legislature. Passage of Home Rule, however, gave cities unprecedented power to make and shape local laws—including those concerning prohibition. And so it was in the early years of the 20th century, the stage was set and the lines drawn for the inevitable clashes between imbibers and abstainers, tipplers and teetotalers, and even saloons and soda pop shops.



Appeal to the Governor

From *The Wallowa Sun* (October 4, 1912)

Wallowa Sun editor's note: The Wallowa County Interdenominational Ministerial Union has asked Governor Oswald West to extend his vice-crusade to Wallowa County. A communication purported to have been sent to Governor West and printed in the Portland Telegram is as follows:

At a meeting of the Interdenominational Ministerial Union held in the town of Wallowa on September 16, a committee was appointed to confer with you regarding existing conditions in Wallowa County and ask you to lend us a hand to bring about a better condition of affairs. We have every reason to believe that the Local Option Laws are being violated, that gambling and prostitution are being indulged in, and that the authorities are aware of the above facts and not putting forth any effort to suppress the evils or bring the offenders to justice.

Within the last month, there were shipped from Wallowa and Lostine, on one day, 58 empty beer kegs, and this is only a sample of what has been going on for some time. In Joseph we have licensed saloons, and while they keep their saloons closed on Sunday, they sell booze from their homes.

It has become a very common rumor that the Mitchell Hotel at Joseph keeps girls, and only recently when these facts were laid before the proprietor she replied by saying that she had to take such help as she could get, and resented that anything should be said to her about it.



Governor Oswald West related his bitter experience as a boy in a drunkard's home and declared he was going to enforce the law and get even with the business that caused his mother to suffer... [He also] advocated for a state drunkard's home and a law making it a crime for a saloon-keeper to cash a check.
— *The Sabbath Recorder* (1912)



These are only a few of the things that are going on, and we are helpless, so far as our county officials are concerned, to better conditions. We spent about \$1,500 last year to prosecute some of these offenders but had to employ a special attorney in order to accomplish anything, and the district attorney gave us the worst of it by letting one of the worst offenders go without being brought to trial.

Therefore, we come to you, praying that you will consider us in connection with your anti-vice campaign by doing something according to your plan to bring these offenders to justice and make this a better and safer place to live in. We also beg the liberty of recommending to you for appointment as special prosecutor the name of J.A. Burleigh of Enterprise, Oregon.

Oswald West (1873–1960) who was Oregon's 14th governor, served 1911–1915. Noted Northwest writer Stewart Holbrook called him "by all odds the most brilliant governor Oregon ever had."

Wallowa Sun editor's note: The views expressed in the letter have caused a varied amount of criticism among the people of Wallowa. Below are interviews with representative citizens of Wallowa that best express the views of the community.

Mayor E.A. Holmes: "Wallowa has a representative body of men as a council, men who are capable and able to handle the local situation. There is liquor sold here, as everybody knows, but the city is one of the cleanest I have ever known for a prohibition town. I am satisfied the soft drink houses do not boot-leg, and the liquor secured here is done so through outside houses and delivered by the express companies. Under the present law we are powerless to regulate that condition, so I am informed."

Edwin Marvin, a member of the council: "While I am not acquainted with conditions up the valley, I believe the town of Wallowa is an exceptionally clean place to live in. Our present government, both city and county, is able and willing to enforce the present laws."

Chas. Hauprich: "I do not believe the soft drink houses in Wallowa sell liquor. We see an occasional drunk man on the street, but I firmly believe that the liquor traffic in Wallowa is confined to outside houses that make their deliveries by means of the express company."

C.A. McClaran: "I do not know anything about the booze part of the question, but speaking from a moral standpoint, I never lived in a better town in my life."

Postmaster J.P. Morelock: "I have lived in Wallowa for 15 years and am acquainted with the conditions here. I don't believe there is a community in existence the size of Wallowa that is any cleaner."

Edwin Mason, a member of the council: "I can't see that Wallowa needs any cleaning up. So far as I am able to determine, the laws are enforced in Wallowa, and the restrictions on the liquor traffic is as great as it can be made under the present laws."

E.A. Searles: "I never considered Wallowa a very immoral city, and in comparisons with other places it seems to me this is a pretty clean town."

Rev. Dr. Wingo, pastor of the Christian church: "I disclaim any responsibility for the publication of the letter and think it is unwarranted and hurtful."

Rev. A.W. James: "If the soft drink houses are adhering strictly to law and offering only non-intoxicating drinks over their bars, then the proprietors of such places are entitled to the aid and help of officials and citizens, affording them protection from drunks and rowdies who secure intoxicants from other places and yet make these places a resort."

Attorney W.G. Trill: "Referring to our town, I think the assertion is untimely, unjust, and uncalled for, and is an injustice to our city officials."

J.H. Mimnaugh, a member of the city council: "I don't believe there is any call for anything of this kind in Wallowa. I don't know of a cleaner community of this size in the state."

Chas. Mimnaugh: "I can see no reason for calling on the governor to clean up Wallowa County. I believe the local officials, both city and county, are very capable of handling matters."

K.W. McKenzie, a member of the council: "The appeal to Governor West seems to me uncalled for. The local officials are willing at any time to enforce the laws without the aid of outside help."

C.T. McDaniel: "I believe the town of Wallowa is as clean a town for its size as there is in eastern Oregon. I believe our city council and mayor are a highly representative body of citizens. There may be liquor sold in the town of Wallowa by bootleggers, but this is a matter difficult to handle so long as express companies are allowed to carry liquor into dry territory."

F.E. Baker: "I always thought Wallowa a very clean city, morally. I believe the present city officials are capable of handling the situation."

B.M. Rounsavell: "There is no doubt in my mind that the law is being violated, but I don't think it was necessary to call on the governor. Our local officials are able to handle matters."

Rev. John E. Youel, Secretary of the Interdenominational Ministerial Union: "The statement and appeal to the governor was not intended for publication, and we shall consider that Mr. West has treated us most discourteously by causing our confidential letter to get into the press and be sent throughout the country. Since it was not intended for public reading, it is not understood by the people. The officers of the respective cities mentioned are probably taking it as a personal matter when it was not meant as such. Locally, I am sure that we have a worthy body of men as our officers, and we are trusting them to work out a better state of things than now exists. It takes time for the accomplishment of this. Since our officers are men who want vice and intemperance cleaned out, I am sure they can take no offense at our request to the governor and would welcome any assistance that he could give them in their fight for observance of the law."

Prohibition News & Changes

1906

Soft Drinks Only

The first week of prohibition has found several of the residents prepared to serve ice-cold lemonade, soda pop, and ice cream to the thirsty as well as the traveling public who formerly quenched their thirst with fermented and vinous liquors. There seems to be little change in the general conduct of the town since the two saloons are closed. The Commodore is shut up while the other one has been converted into a billiard parlor, restaurant, and lemonade stand. – *The Wallowa News* (July 6, 1906)

1906

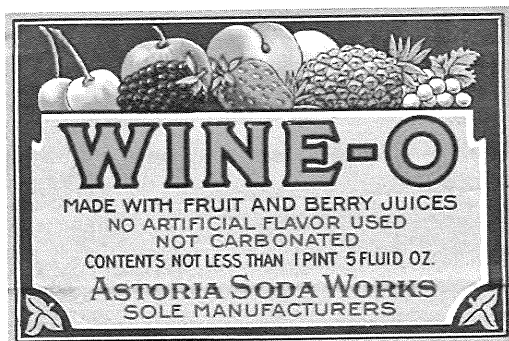
In Place of Saloons

In place of the two saloons, which occupied the large building between the post office and meat market, are a billiard and pool parlor, soda and ice-cream stand, and a restaurant. In the half formerly occupied by Everett Berry, a grocery store is to be established. – *The Wallowa News* (August 3, 1906)

1907

Soft Drink Parlors

A short time ago, the city dads of Enterprise took the initiative in putting a ban on soft-drink parlors. In one of the Portland papers we notice that the city dads of Eugene, Oregon, have followed suit. In Eugene, before the Local Option Law went into effect last July, there were 12 saloons running; only 5 closed, but the proprietors of the other establishments hung out a “soft drinks” sign and continued to deliberately sell liquor. The council took the matter in hand and now there is an ordinance in force which will close altogether the “soft drink” parlors of that city. Such movements by the common council in many other towns of this state would do much to eliminate the sale of liquor in forbidden territory. – *The Wallowa News* (January 25, 1907)



Loopholes in prohibition laws that permitted people to continue to drink included “a provision allowing up to 200 gallons of non-intoxicating cider and fruit juice” to be made each year at home. Soon people could buy large blocks of grape concentrate known as “wine bricks.” Instructions admonished people to avoid dissolving the concentrate in water and putting the mix in jugs for 20 days because the resulting fermentation would create wine. Other creative examples of skirting the law circulated around Oregon and the nation.” – Oregon Secretary of State, “Prohibition in Oregon”

1911

Two More Near-Beer Depots Given License

There are three wet spots in this dry town [Wallowa]. They are not very wet, for only near beer and other such temperance drinks may be dispensed. A.J. Pipes and John Goebel were given license to sell near beer at the meeting of the council Thursday evening. The matter was under advisement by the council the full 15 days. There was not a dissenting vote on either license. – *The Wallowa Sun* (August 25, 1911)

1912

Governor West Having Trouble

Governor West has met with several adversities in the beginning of the cleanup campaign of Portland. But nevertheless, he has put his whole soul into the job and it is believed he will accomplish his desired results. In furtherance of his fight against “blind pigs” [establishments that continued selling liquor during Prohibition] and other resorts where liquor is sold in violation of the law, Governor West has addressed letters to liquor interests of the state, giving notification that sale of liquors in such places must cease forthwith. He has also notified the railroads not to haul liquors into dry territories. Reports have it that Governor West will direct his attention to Klamath Falls after he completes his cleanup job in Portland. – *Lake County Examiner* (September 5, 1912)

1914

Half of Wallowa to Vote on Bars

In addition to voting on state-wide prohibition, the first ward of Wallowa—all the city north of the center of First Street—will vote next month on a Local Option issue of its own. This is a new situation in Wallowa County Local Option history. Heretofore, the unit has been the county or city. By adopting the ward as a unit, the chances of [licensing the sale of alcohol] undoubtedly will be far greater than with the city as a whole voting.

There's bound to be a difference in the sentiment in the various subdivisions of any city; one part will favor saloons, and in another the residents will be opposed to them. Thus, under the Home Rule Law of the state, this plan probably can be counted on to give saloons in nearly every city, no

matter if the majority of the voters of the entire city are against it, license. In the same way, a city—or ward or other minor political subdivisions—can vote wet although the county as a whole votes dry. – *Enterprise Record Chieftain* (October 8, 1914)

* * *

Home Rule

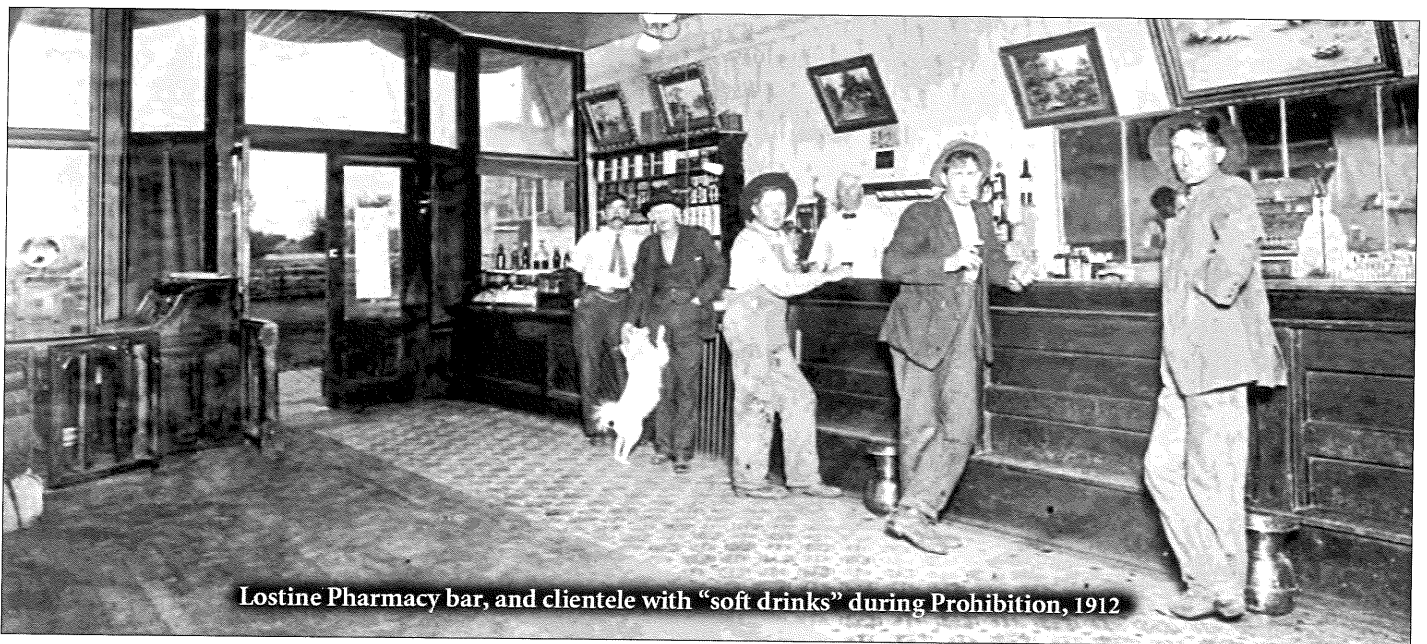
Until Oregon voters passed the 1906 Home Rule Law “only the Oregon State Legislature had the authority to incorporate a city, adopt a city charter, and define the city’s form of government.” – League of Oregon Cities

Prohibition

[This] era was a time in American history when people formed numerous organizations to solve society’s perceived evils. One of the many social ills was the problem of alcohol consumption. By some, alcohol, and its accompanying vices of prostitution and domestic violence, was viewed as a moral vice to be banned in order to purify society. Others held that alcohol was directly related to the abuse and misuse of women and children and should be dispensed with for the protection of the weak through either encouraging temperance or instituting prohibition. Some felt that promoting temperance, the idea of moderation and self-control, was an appropriate solution, while others saw prohibition, a legal ban on consumption, as the ultimate solution. – Sarah B. Hardy, Western Oregon University (May 25, 2020)

Oswald West

Thirty-eight years old when he assumed office, the “boy governor” championed women’s suffrage, workmen’s compensation, prohibition, prison reform, federal control of natural resources, and good roads. After one term of office, he had created several state commissions, including those for fish and game, highways, industrial accidents, and public utilities...West’s most famous achievement was [successfully arguing] that the Oregon beach, from north to south, should be declared a public highway. – Stephen R. Mark, *Oregon Encyclopedia of History and Culture*



Lostine Pharmacy bar, and clientele with “soft drinks” during Prohibition, 1912

Located in the main storefront of the building, the Lostine Pharmacy [which would eventually become the Lostine Tavern] was in an important and central location in Lostine. Within this portion of the building, there was a bar along the south side of the building. This bar likely served soft drinks to patrons during the Prohibition era in Wallowa County, which began on June 4, 1906, and lasted until 1933. There is no evidence for or against the suggestion that the bar served alcoholic drinks before or during Prohibition. – “Lostine Pharmacy,” *National Register of Historic Places* (2014)

Outsmarting the Sheriff

By Dale Victor

From *Signal Mountain* magazine, (Fall 1999)

The year was 1932. A number of citizens' second job was moonshining. We had a neighbor who we got milk and cream from. This day my father asked if I wanted to go along, and I agreed.

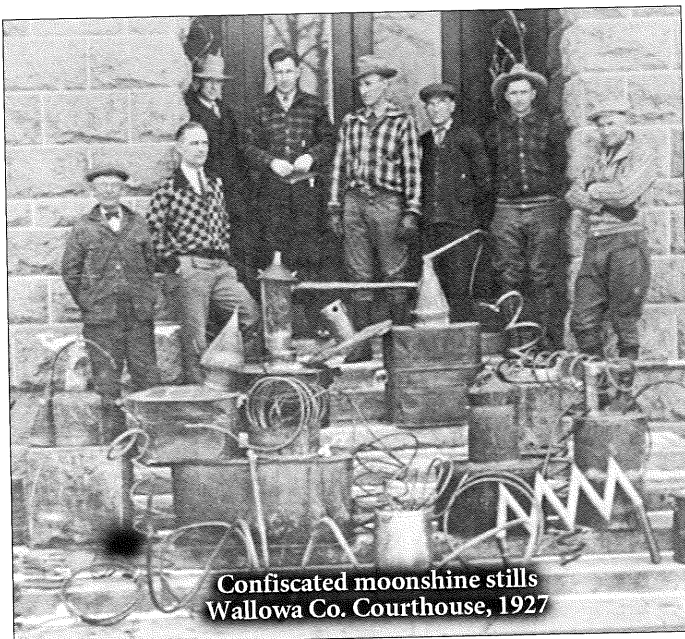
Our neighbor lived off the main road down a long, narrow lane. When we started down the lane, we saw several cars coming up. We waited on them. The sheriff was in the first car followed by two carloads of police.

Our neighbor was standing on the end of the lane by a large pile of split wood. When my father asked him what the sheriff was up to, his reply was that the sheriff had a search warrant and had spent the last two hours searching for his moonshine. When my father asked if they had found any, his reply was that the sheriff could not find it when it was under his nose.

The sheriff had a reputation for catching moonshiners. It was said that when the sheriff found a still, he destroyed it and would bring the moonshine to the courthouse and pour it on the front lawn. It was also said that after Prohibition, it was five years before grass began to grow there.

The neighbor then threw back the split wood, revealing a large chip pile. He then kicked off the top of the chips, and there was his moonshine in gallon jugs.

All the time the sheriff was looking for the moonshine, our neighbor was splitting wood as fast as he could, throwing it on the chip pile, covering up his moonshine. He was one of the few to outsmart the sheriff.



Confiscated moonshine stills
Wallowa Co. Courthouse, 1927

100 Years of Prohibition (1833–1933)

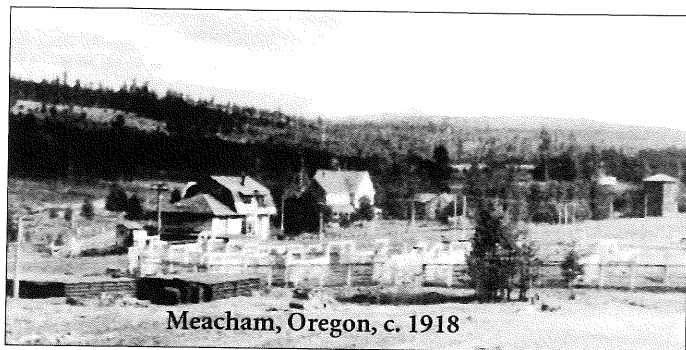
- 1833 Massachusetts establishes nation's first Local Option Law for alcohol.
- 1836 Temperance Society established in Oregon.
- 1844 Provisional government passes law to "prevent the introduction, sale, and distillation of ardent spirits in Oregon."
- 1876 Woman's Christian Temperance Union founded.
- 1893 Anti-Saloon League founded.
- 1904 Oregon voters approve Local Option Law.
- 1906 Oregon passes Home Rule Law, so municipalities can choose whether to go "dry."
Wallowa Co. passes its first prohibition law.
- 1908 Wallowa Co. voters pass Local Option Law by more than 61 percent (1,101–686).
- 1912 Oregon women earn right to vote, bringing a pro-temperance voice to prohibition issues.
Wallowa passes prohibition law by more than 63 percent (95–55).
Interdenominational Ministerial Union asks Gov. West to extend his anti-vice crusade to Wallowa.
- 1913 Wallowa passes prohibition law by more than a 2–1 margin (188–91).
- 1914 Voters pass law "prohibiting the manufacture, sale, or advertisement of liquor" in Oregon.
- 1915 Legislature imposes statewide prohibition.
- 1919 18th Amendment establishes national prohibition: "No person shall manufacture, sell, barter, transport, import, export, deliver, or furnish any intoxicating liquor..."
Congress passes 19th Amendment, giving women nationwide the right to vote.
- 1920 18th Amendment ("Prohibition") ratified.
- 1923 Oregon Legislature establishes Prohibition Commission to enforce liquor laws.
- 1932 Voters "eliminate state's machinery for penalizing infringements of the prohibition laws."
- 1933 Oregon voters repeal state's prohibition laws.
21st Amendment repeals 18th Amendment, ending Prohibition.

MEMORIES OF A LIFETIME

By Mrs. B.T. Worstell

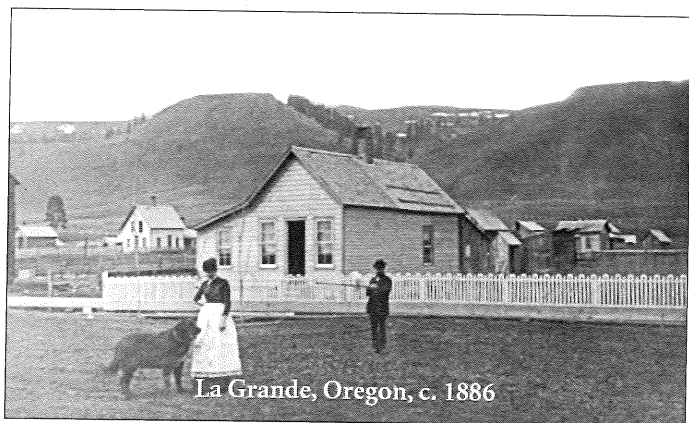
From her letter to the *Enterprise Record Chieftain* (March 3, 1925)

We were surely Oregon pioneers, having gone there in 1884. At that time, the railroad was only laid as far as Meacham. [It reached La Grande the same year.] We started from Meacham in the evening, arriving the next morning in La Grande.



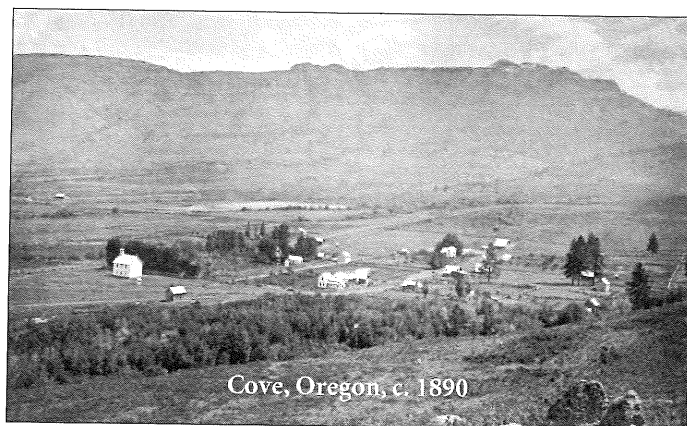
Meacham, Oregon, c. 1918

We traveled all night through the mountains in a large open wagon drawn by four horses, which was called a stagecoach. As the driver used his whip most of the time, the horses ran up the hills and down. The noise would have been heard for miles. We were expecting to be held up at any moment. The mountain air was very refreshing, as this was about the middle of March. This was our first introduction to Oregon.



La Grande, Oregon, c. 1886

We lived at the Cove for three years, Mr. Worstell teaching school there. By this time we felt as though we wanted to do something else [so] we went to Lost Prairie and took up a homestead. The farm is now known as the George Lightle farm. There were just a few families living there at the time.



Cove, Oregon, c. 1890

We all seemed to be one large family, not living for self but for all. Those happy days are gone, and nearly all the old pioneers are at rest.

We moved from there to Hurricane Creek and bought a farm. We were there for several years, Mr. Worstell teaching in the Reavis District several terms. Enterprise was our hometown, as we did most of our dealing there. Also, we attended lodge there.

After leaving Hurricane Creek, we decided to go back to Ohio so as to give the children a better chance for an education. In 1914 we returned to Oregon, thinking the change would be of benefit to Mr. Worstell, as his health was very poor.

In 1920 we returned to Ohio. Mr. Worstell's health was failing fast. [In 1923] he departed from this life.

I am still on the farm, doing as best I can. I have a boy with me. I went to the orphan home and got him. I am sending him to school, and if I live I expect to make a great man out of him.

I have lots of dear friends in Wallowa County and also some very near relatives.



Enterprise, Oregon, c. 1909

WALLOWA'S "OTHER" SAWMILL

Did Wallowa have sawmills other than the big one north of town?

"Another mill, the Valley Lumber Company, with a cut about half the larger mill [originally the Nibley-Mirnaugh and then the Bowman-Hicks mill], started operations this summer...and is operating on a long-term basis. With industrial and economic conditions justifying the continuance of operations, Wallowa and Wallowa County will see that bright era of former years return like the golden sun rising in the morning to dispel the gloom and murk of the night before." – *The Wallowa Sun* (August 27, 1936)

A number of small mills were scattered through Wallowa's timberland, but perhaps the most significant "other" sawmill in Wallowa was the Wallowa Valley Lumber Company. Though its beginning and end are uncertain, its presence left a big, lasting footprint in town for several decades, especially with its location on Storie Street, just a block or two north of downtown Main Street. Despite newspapers of the day claiming it "started operations" in 1936, the company was one of the largest taxpayers in the county as early as 1909. We also know the company owned timber along Bear Creek before 1919, was incorporated in 1920, and went through several owners in the 1930s. It lasted approximately until the World War II years.

1909

Large Taxpayers on Roll of 1909

The names and amounts of those who are assessed on the 1909 [county] tax roll for \$3,000 or over: Wallowa Valley Lumber Co. \$15,000. – *The News Record* (March 2, 1910)

1919

Wallowa to Have Another Sawmill

New Company Formed to Cut Bear Creek Timber

The organization of the Wallowa Pine Lumber Company was completed here Friday. The new company at its formation decided on the purchase of the holdings of the Bear Creek Lumber Company and the Wallowa Valley Lumber Company, and several other tracts which amount to 100 million feet of timber. – *Enterprise Record Chieftain* (November 6, 1919)

1920

Business Changes, Incorporations and Fires

Ponca, Neb. — Wallowa Valley Lumber Co., Inc., \$200,000 capital. – *Lumber World Review* (January 10, 1920)

1937

Valley Mill Starts Monday

The Wallowa Valley Lumber Company mill in Wallowa, after weeks of intensive preparation, probably will make its trial run next Monday and, if all is found in readiness, immediately start its season's run with a crew of 15 in the mill and yards, and 10 in the woods. A fleet of three trucks will supply the logs from the woods south of the Jess Allen farm. Under the direction of C.P. Hutchens, who with B.A.

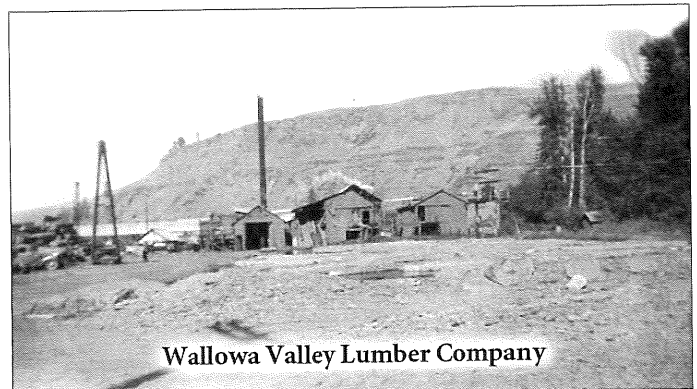
Van Wormer of La Grande is owner of the property, the mill was changed over from circular to band saw, and will cut with a six-foot band.

The pond was doubled in capacity, a heavy bulldozer being used to widen and lengthen the dimensions and increase the depth to five feet. It will now hold more than 100,000 feet of logs. Water is supplied by a 10-foot water wheel operating in the nearby mill race and throwing a stream of 2,800 gallons an hour.

A two-story filing and mill room, 42 by 24 feet, has been built and connected with the sawmill proper with a covered bridge, while in between runs the loading spur from the main line of the railroad.

On Storie Street at the west edge of the mill grounds an office building has been erected.

Operations will be on an eight-hour basis and probably will be from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. unless, Mr. Hutchens said, it is the wish of the crew to work from 7 to 4. Key men in the organization will include Chas. Smith as sawyer; W.S.



Wheeler, filer; George Wise, who will set ratchets; Chester Shelton as edgerman; and Bill Eddlemon as engineer and fireman. – *The Wallowa Sun* (May 27, 1937)

1937

Valley Lumber Curtails Operations

Due to the glutted condition of the lumber market, the Valley Lumber Co. has curtailed operations in Wallowa, and for the time being will ship but four cars of lumber a week. – *The Wallowa Sun* (July 29, 1937)

1938

C.P. Hutchens Sells Valley Mill Interest

C.P. Hutchens yesterday announced the sale of his interest in the Valley Lumber Company mill in Wallowa to his partner, B.A. Van Wormer, superintendent of the Mt. Emily Lumber Company at La Grande.

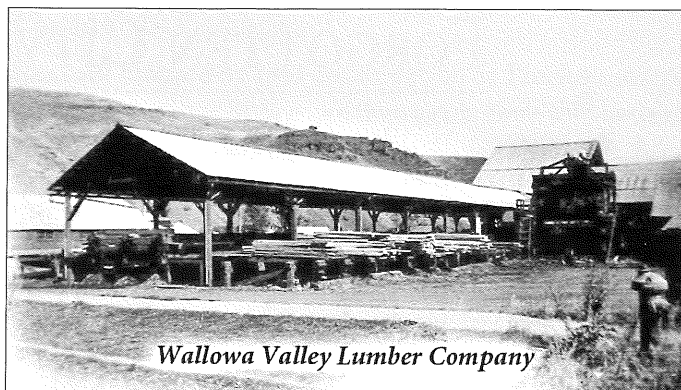
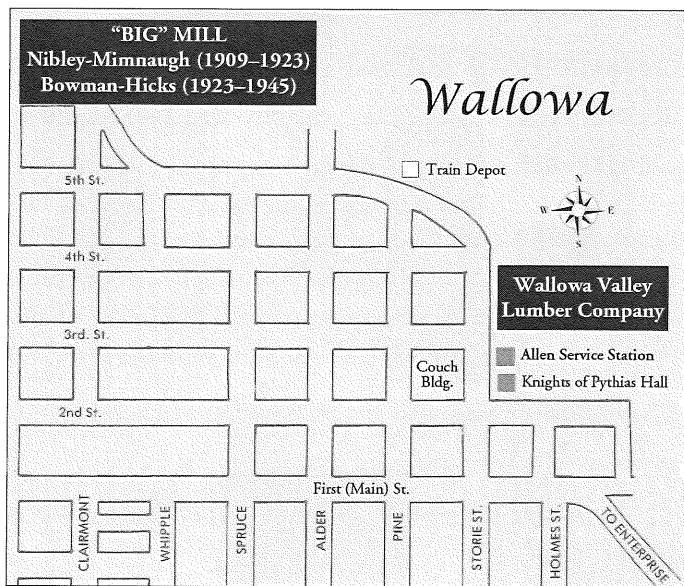
This gives Mr. Van Wormer sole ownership of the mill, which has a cutting capacity of 4 to 4-1/2 million feet per year. Under normal conditions it employs 16 men, with 14 in the woods and on trucks. The company has options on timber in the immediate vicinity to keep it operating steadily for 2-1/2 years.

The average daily cut of the mill during the last month of its operation was 30,000 feet. – *The Wallowa Sun* (January 27, 1938)

1938

Add to Holdings Here

The Valley Lumber Co. Monday completed the purchase of 22 city lots adjoining their mill property in Wallowa, to be used for contemplated expansion. – *The Wallowa Sun* (March 3, 1938)



Wallowa Valley Lumber Company

1938

Valley Mill Resumes Cut

The Valley Lumber Company mill of Wallowa resumed operations following a winter shut-down, and features labor entirely recruited from local ranks. The company during the winter increased its land holdings to provide for expansion and has purchased a planer which is to be installed on the west end of the block formerly occupied by the Miller Hotel. – *The Wallowa Sun* (May 12, 1938)

1938

Effects of New Law Felt Here

The new national law governing wages and hours will be felt most noticeably in Wallowa with the closing of the Valley Lumber Company's mill. Conditions at the Valley mill differ from those of Bowman-Hicks in that this mill's output is sold to the Mt. Emily mill at La Grande. – *The Wallowa Sun* (October 20, 1938)

1939

Valley Mill Puts in Planer

Installation of planing equipment will be completed for the Valley Lumber Company in a building on the railroad siding north and west of the sawmill proper. The new building is 24 x 56 feet built on a log foundation. It has a corrugated iron roof and will eventually be enclosed with siding. – *The Wallowa Sun* (April 27, 1939)

1939

Moore Buys Valley Mill

W.E. Moore of Elgin, whose phenomenal success with the Pongosa Pine Lumber Company has made him an outstanding mill man of the Pacific Northwest, last week became the sole owner of the Valley Lumber Company of Wallowa. As to the length of the operations of the Wallowa mill, Mr. Moore made this comment: "We shall continue to operate the Wallowa mill as long as the national economy justifies it." – *The Wallowa Sun* (December 28, 1939)

FORGOTTEN CITY STREETS, 1911–2021

A dozen years after Wallowa was incorporated as a city in 1899, its face began to change. Streets drawn on the original 1889 plat began to be closed, vacated, or rerouted for one reason or another, largely to accommodate the schools. The result was a city map somewhat different from what early city councils had imagined for their fledgling town.

* * *

Closed 1911: Whipple Street, from First to Fifth.

Reason: School wanted property for school grounds.

At the regular meeting of the city council...The ordinance vacating Whipple Street from First to Fifth was passed. – The Wallowa Sun (May 5, 1911)

Closed 1921: Clairmont Street, from First to Second.

Reason: School wanted property for athletic field.

At the regular meeting of the city council...Clairmont Street, between First and Second, was ordered vacated, and at the next meeting an ordinance will be passed closing that portion of Clairmont Street so that the school property will have use of the ground. – The Wallowa Sun (June 9, 1921)

It is now possible to have a good athletic field west of the high school building. The corner known as the "Brittain" [or possibly Britton] property now belongs to the school district, and there is just room for a football field between the high school building and Douglas Street. A track can be made around the field, with a baseball diamond and football field within the track. It is hoped that the athletic field may be in readiness by the time school opens. – The Wallowa Sun (August 11, 1921)

The extra land for the athletic field had been purchased by the vote of the district, but this summer the board was able to get a clear deed to the land and to have the old buildings on the "Britain" property cleared off. Now it is possible to utilize the entire space between the school building and Douglas Street. An athletic field can be laid out. – The Wallowa Sun (September 1, 1921)

Closed 1932: Second Street, from Clairmont to Douglas.

Reason: School wanted to enlarge its athletic field.

In the [city] budget, an appropriation was made for the development of an athletic field on the block west of the high school by the acquiring of the half-block just north of the

VACATED STREETS A street or alley "vacation" means that the public is letting go of, or "vacating," the public interest in a property. After a street or an alley is vacated, the public no longer has a right to use the property for access.

ORIGINAL WALLOWA CITY STREETS

Streets running east-west: First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth, with First (Main) dividing north and south.

Streets running north-south: Storie, Pine, Alder, Spruce, and Whipple, with Alder dividing east and west.

vacant block and closing Second Street, giving a block-and-a-half space to be developed into an athletic field. There is only one house on the newly-acquired half-block which is planned to be removed. – The Wallowa Sun (November 3, 1932)

[Because] the street closing of the high school athletic field has been amicably settled, a motion [at the city council meeting] was presented and adopted rescinding the action of the [school] board some time ago in endorsing the closing of Clairmont Street for the school athletic field enlargement. A counter motion was made and adopted by the council to endorse the closing of Second Street between Clairmont and Douglas streets for the above purposes. – The Wallowa Sun (November 10, 1932)

The Directors of School District No. 12 have filed with the city recorder a petition for the vacation of Second Street between Clairmont and Douglas, and the city council of the city of Wallowa will consider the same on the 3rd day of January, A.D. 1933 at their regular council meeting. – The Wallowa Sun (December 22, 1932)

Closed 1934: Madison Street, from First to Seventh.

Reason: Wallowa Lake Highway rerouted over Madison.

The new right-of-way for the highway through Wallowa... will go from the west city limits up Madison Street to First Street. It will be necessary to move one barn and one house off the right-of-way. The improvement will be a 40-foot road bed graded, graveled, and surfaced with a 320-foot oil mat through the town. – The Wallowa Sun (January 18, 1934)

Closed 1951: Clairmont Street, north of Fifth Street.

Reason: Northern segment covered by Truck Route.

City Signs Contract for By-Pass Route. – The Wallowa Record (April 5, 1951)

Closed 1955: Bruce Street, running south of and parallel to Lockwood Street in the southwest corner of the city, seemingly along the lower slope of Green Hill.

Reason: Street was dedicated but never built.

Notice is hereby given that the City Council of Wallowa will hear objections, if any, to the proposed vacation of streets and alleys of Wallowa, described as follows, to wit: Madison Street from Lockwood Street to its south terminus; Douglas Street from Lockwood Street to its south terminus; Bruce Street in its entirety. – The Wallowa Record (April 14, 1955)

Closed 2021: Eighth Street.

Reason: Blocked by 1951 construction of Truck Route. As a result, it became little more than a driveway, and nothing remained but a street sign, until it was vacated in 2021 to make room for the construction of a medical clinic.

The city council approved an ordinance vacating a portion of 8th Street. [Mayor Gary] Hulse said the vacated portion never has been paved and is near the Wallowa Health Care facility. “It was a vacation of it so they can do some landscaping,” he said. – Wallowa County Chieftain (September 29, 2021)

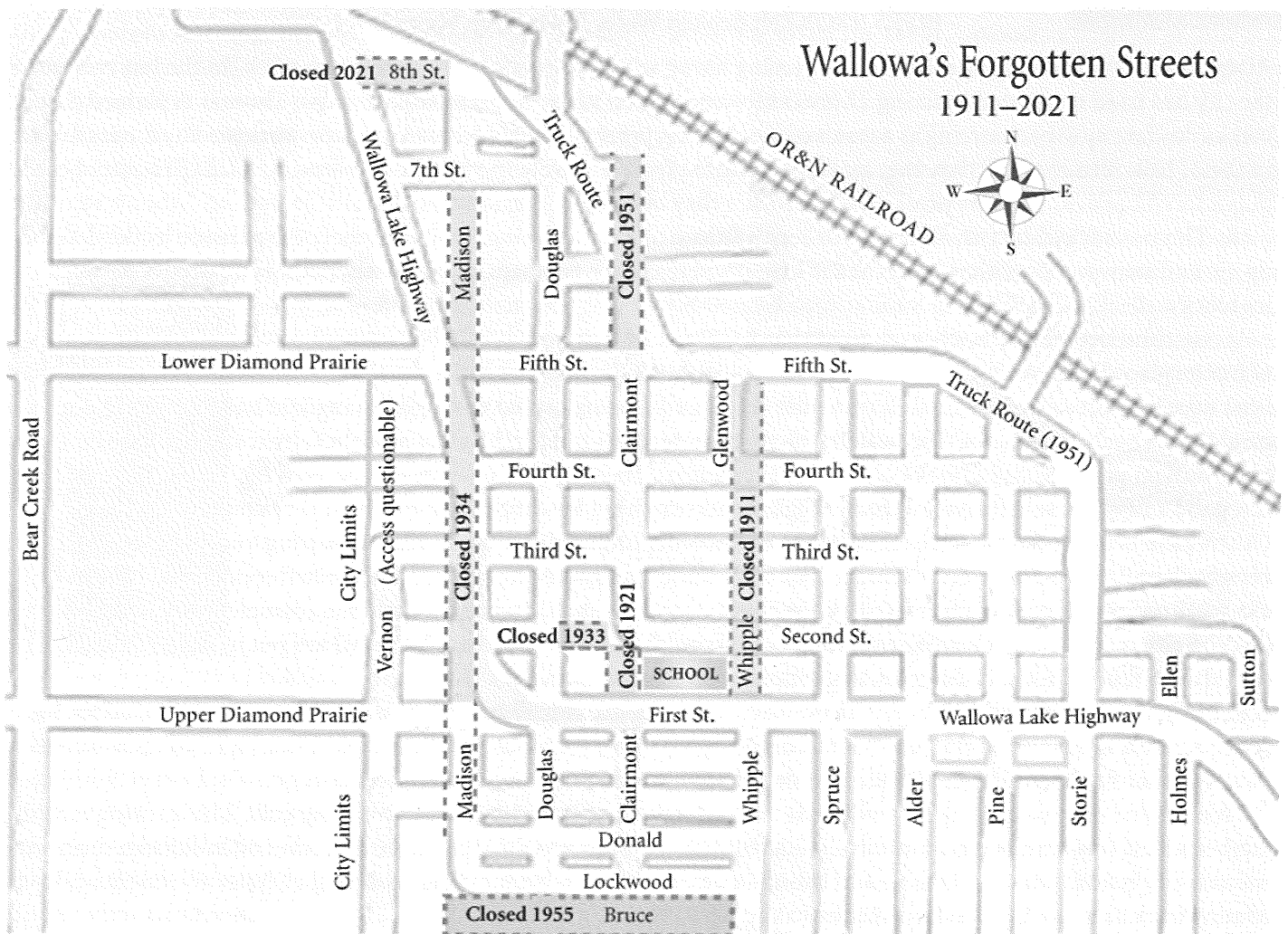
LOST STREETS

Besides having its share of vacated and closed streets, Wallowa has at least three “lost” streets—no street signs identify them, no modern map lists them, nobody even remembers them.

Bruce Street South of Lockwood Street, running parallel to Green Hill.

Vernon Street Marks western city limit of Wallowa. Once extended from Bruce Street against Green Hill all the way to the railroad right of way near Eighth Street.

Parker Street On the east bank of the Wallowa River, between Whiskey Creek Road and the railroad tracks, quite possibly now the driveway for Wallowa River RV Park. (Parker is not to be confused with Park Street in the Riverside Addition.



THE WINTER OF 1949: PIPES FROZEN & BROKEN

How cold was the winter of 1949? "For sustained cold, it probably set something of a record," reported the Wallowa County Chieftain. "On January 28 the mercury sank to 3 below, followed the next night by 18 below, then 20 below, and on January 31 it was 26 below. A snow survey crew reported a temperature of 33 below at Aneroid Lake with snow seven feet deep. On February 1 it was 24 below, 25 below on February 2, and 24 below on February 3. Then it moderated slightly. Out at Flora, it was reported, chickens that backed into the biting cold and wind were laying the same egg as many as three or four times before achieving a successful delivery." – Wallowa County Chieftain (December 23, 1971)

But when compared to the waterless residents of Wallowa in that bleak, cold winter, those Flora chickens almost had it easy.

PIPES FROZEN: Wallowa Cleaners Steams Up After Two Waterless Months.

O.J. Jensen received a pleasant surprise at his cleaning plant [Wallowa Cleaners, northwest corner of Main and Storie] Thursday afternoon of last week. The plant had been without water for two and a half months, entirely crippling any cleaning operations here, since the pressing requires steam in the ironing board and iron.

The plant had restored service for a couple of days through use of a hose brought in from across the street. Then, quite unannounced, the water began to run in the cleaning plant's faucets.

The freeze-up imposed a great many hardships, but we know of none more severe than this one which entirely tied up one business operation. And we know of no one taking this inconvenience more patiently. Good luck henceforth to Mr. Jensen and the Wallowa Cleaners. – *The Wallowa Record* (March 24, 1949)

PIPES BROKEN: Broken Water Pipes Keep Many Busy.

After-effects of last winter's cold were still playing havoc with Wallowa's water system this week. In the last two weeks, the city has fixed or assisted in fixing 22 breaks in water pipes. Water Superintendent Ralph Thomas explained that the breaks now are mostly occurring as a result of the thawing process. Pipelines may have been weakened by the ice freezing in them. Now that they are thawing, air trapped by the frozen ice is being freed and warming up. Expansion of the air puts a terrific pressure on the pipes and sometimes they burst.

Mr. Thomas advised householders still to keep a stream of water running. This will relieve the pressure by the dammed-up air and may avoid another break in the line. The breaks are most apt to occur where thawing occurs between two ice blocks.

At one time last winter, it was estimated that 3,600 feet of water main in Wallowa were not delivering water because of frozen places. It is now estimated that there are still 2,000 feet of water main out of commission. Householders whose lines attach to these frozen sections of mains are most all being served through having laid hoses to the hydrants of neighbors who do have water. The peak may have been reached, but Mr. Thomas said that city is still getting lots of calls to fix broken pipes.

A good many householders have been digging and searching for shutoff valves which they couldn't find last winter. Others have been digging the valve standpipes out in order to shut off pressure while repairing lead-in pipes which have been broken. In most instances, these are four-inch wood standpipes in pretty badly battered conditions. Whenever the city has known of these excavations, they have put in concrete standpipes eight inches in diameter, with a steel 10-inch lid. The city is furnishing these new standpipes without charge and is anxious to have them put in wherever standpipes are excavated. About 30 of the concrete standpipes have been put in.

The city's records of water lines are incomplete, lost or destroyed. The city is finding quite a number of errors in the records which are on file and is, of course, correcting the information as rapidly as the errors come to light. There are still about six fire hydrants where water has not started to run.

Patience and diligence in digging will close the last chapter of last winter's havoc-raising cold. The ditching machine has been busy in several parts of the city. With this heavy equipment and the use of a tractor and bulldozer, short work is made of getting down to the pipe and filling in afterward. One by one, faucets devoid of water for many weeks are coming back to life. – *The Wallowa Record* (March 24, 1949)

THE GIFT OF A HORSE

By Mark Highberger

Adapted from “The Gift of a Horse,” *Persimmon Hill* (Fall 2000)

“A man’s word is still good after 105 years.” – Keith Soy Redthunder, descendent of Chief Joseph

This is the story of an unlikely friendship and an undelivered gift, which came together after more than a hundred years because of an Appaloosa stallion. The friendship was between Lieutenant Charles Erskine Scott (C.E.S.) Wood of the U.S. Army and Chief Joseph of the Wallowa Nez Perce. In 1877, the two men met on the last battlefield of the Nez Perce War.

After a 1,200-mile chase across what would eventually become four states, U.S. Army troops commanded by General Oliver Otis Howard finally caught up with the Nez Perce near the Bear Paw Mountains in Montana Territory, less than 50 miles from the freedom of the Canadian border.

“As we approached [the battlefield] that cold snowy evening, it was dark,” Wood later wrote, “and we saw the flashes of the rifles from the rifle pits on both sides.” But because Wood had arrived on the fifth day of the siege, the battle was near its end.

By sunset the next day, the Nez Perce were freezing, their children starving. Because Joseph was one of only two surviving chiefs—the other, White Bird, would flee with his band to Canada—he climbed out of a rifle pit, rode across the battlefield, and surrendered his people: 184 women, 147 children, and 87 men. “From where the sun now stands,” he reputedly told Col. Nelson A. Miles, “I will fight no more forever.”



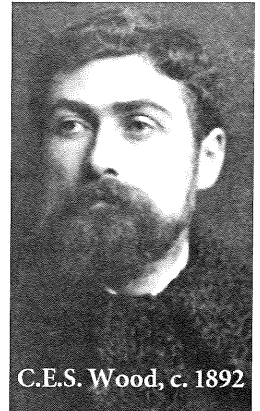
Chief Joseph, 1877

Joseph’s words marked the end of a 106-day war that saw 750 Nez Perce—500 of them women, children, and elderly—fight 20 battles or skirmishes against approximately 2,000 soldiers. Wood, the general’s aide-de-camp, is said to have written down the surrender speech as spoken through an interpreter, then escorted Joseph into custody as a prisoner of war.

“For General Howard and all the soldiers,” Wood said, “I wished him good luck and hoped his troubles were over, and then left him.” But the troubles for Joseph and his people were only beginning. Instead of being returned to their homeland in the Northwest as the army promised, the 418 Nez Perce prisoners were exiled to Indian Territory, first Kansas and then Oklahoma, where for eight years they suffered from disease and starvation.

“Many of my people sickened and died,” Joseph said, “and we buried them in this strange land.”

Yet public opinion refused to let the exile continue. Individuals and groups across the country deluged Congress with pleas to return the Nez Perce to their homeland in the Northwest. Prominent among those lobbying for the Nez Perce was C.E.S. Wood. “After I resigned from the army [in 1884],” Wood said, “I also tried in my own way to carry on the fight for justice for them.”



C.E.S. Wood, c. 1892

When some sense of justice finally prevailed in 1885, Joseph’s people were eventually moved to the Nespelem Valley on the Colville Reservation in northern Washington. And through the years, the friendship between Wood and Joseph grew. While Wood practiced law, wrote poetry, and influenced both politics and culture in Portland, Oregon, Joseph spoke for his people, traveling between the agency and Washington, D.C. On some of these trips he visited Wood’s home. “It must have been at about this time that my father asked Joseph whether at some time in the future I could come visit him,” said Wood’s son, Erskine. “Chief Joseph acquiesced. Therefore, in July 1892, when I was 12 years old, I went to Chief Joseph’s camp at Nespelem Agency.”

Erskine was a guest in Joseph’s lodge for almost six months. During that time, he lived as a member of Joseph’s family. “At first I pitched my little white tent—it was an A-tent—right next to Joseph’s teepee,” Erskine said. “That only lasted about two days. Joseph told me it would be better if I came in with him. So I moved into his teepee with his two wives and Nicky Mowitz, a young boy a year or so older than I.”

It was an idyllic life for a boy who loved the outdoors. “I quickly became accustomed to Indian living,” Erskine said, “picked up enough of the language to get along, dressed in



Erskine Wood, 1893

buckskins and moccasins made for me by Joseph's squaws, and hunted and fished with Nicky Mowitz."

But perhaps Erskine's strongest memories involved Joseph himself. "Although I was only a boy, I knew that with Joseph I was living with a great man," Erskine said. "He was the kindest of fathers to me, looking after me, providing for me, caring for me, and, it must be said, sometimes gently rebuking me when necessary."

The next year, 1893, he stayed with Joseph's family again. But this time when he left the Nez Perce camp to return home, Erskine made a mistake that haunted him for the rest of his life.

"The regret that has lived with me longest occurred at our saying good-bye," Erskine said. The cause of this regret began with a letter Erskine had received from his father.

To repay Joseph for the kindness he had shown his son, Wood asked in his letter if he could do anything in return. "I gave this message to Joseph," Erskine said, "and he said that he would like a good stallion to improve the breed of his pony herd."

But the answer surprised the 14-year-old boy, who saw Joseph as a great man. "I revered him so," Erskine said, "that I thought his request for a stallion was too puny—was beneath him. I thought he ought to ask if my father could do anything to repair the great wrongs done him, perhaps get him back a portion of his Wallowa Valley or something like that, so that when Joseph asked for a mere stallion, I shook my head and said, 'No, that was not what my father meant.'"

So Erskine never told his father of the request, and after leaving Joseph in December of 1893, Erskine never saw him again. Finishing school, attending Harvard, and recovering from tuberculosis kept him away from home until 1904, the year Joseph died. "That I never saw him again," Wood said, "still makes me sad."

When C.E.S. Wood died in 1944 at the age of 92, he was still unaware of Joseph's request for the stallion; before Erskine died in 1983 at the age of 104, he said that as far as his silence was concerned, he had "always regretted my utter stupidity."



Chief Joseph, 1904

That silence was finally broken in 1976, when the story made it into the pages of *American Heritage* magazine and then—two decades later—into Ken Burns' *The West*, a 1996 PBS documentary. After seeing the program, some of Wood's descendants began searching for the horse they felt they owed the Nez Perce.

The quest eventually led the family to Utah, where they found a three-year-old Appaloosa stallion, the breed of horse so closely identified with the Nez Perce.

"I wasn't ready to sell him," said Lynn Walk, the stallion's owner, "but this was a chance I couldn't pass up."

So on a July day in 1997 in a meadow near northeast Oregon's Wallowa Lake, a place held sacred to many Nez Perce, approximately 100 people gathered to see C.E.S. Wood's gift at last delivered to Chief Joseph's people. Among the crowd that day were Nez Perce from three reservations and Wood family members from five branches.

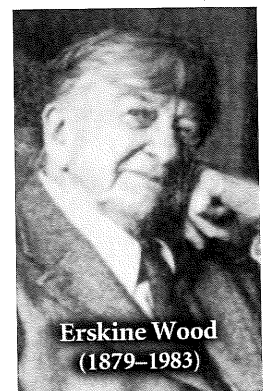
Erskine Biddle Wood, Erskine's son, presented the stallion to the Nez Perce while Mary Wood, Erskine's granddaughter, delivered the message. "The family presents the gift of a stallion in this beautiful valley," she said, "in recognition of the continuing importance of the homeland to the Nez Perce people."

Receiving the gift was Keith Soy Redthunder, the oldest descendent of Chief Joseph living at Nespelem on the Colville Reservation. For the Nez Perce, the horse might help heal the cultural and political divisions that have separated the tribe since the time of the war. "We need occasions like this to bring us together," he said. "Let everyone realize the gift for what it is—growth for all our people."

For the Wood family, the gift pays a debt they owed to a friend, no matter how much time had passed. As Redthunder pointed out, "A man's word is still good after 105 years."

It also corrects the misunderstanding that caused Erskine grief through his life. According to one of his granddaughters, Erskine "used to talk about it with tears rolling down his face."

As far as the future is concerned, the Appaloosa helps fulfill the reason for Joseph's request in the first place: "to improve the breed of his pony herd." The stallion is to be involved in a program producing a new breed of horse—the *Nez Perce Horse*. Developed by the tribe's Young Horseman Program, this new breed is a cross between the



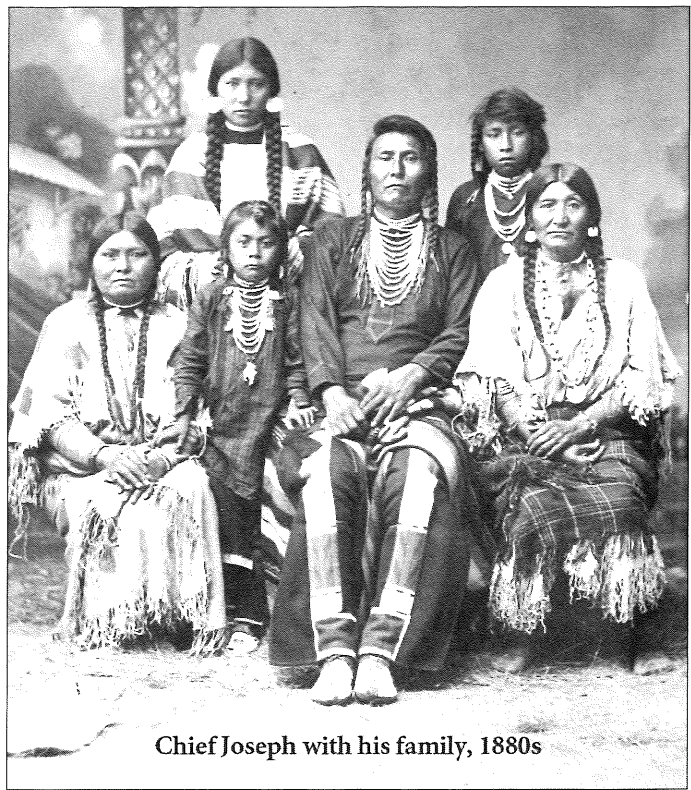
Erskine Wood
(1879–1983)

Appaloosa and the Akhal-Teke, which was originally bred as a war horse in what is today northern Iran, and which has been famous for its stamina, speed, and courage in battles and on racetracks for more than 3,000 years. At the Nespelem Agency, eight mares were already waiting for the gift stallion's arrival.

So it's a sad story with a happy ending. "My effort to do this started out as one of sorrow," said Mary Wood, "but it soon turned to one of joy."

N. Scott Momaday, a Pulitzer Prize-winning writer and a member of the Kiowa tribe, spoke at the presentation ceremony. "The gift of a horse is a wonderful thing," he said. And that's true even when the gift comes after a century-long wait.

Today the descendants of C.E.S. Wood seek to complete the circle of words and consummate the gift of a stallion to honor the friendship and respect between Chief Joseph and C.E.S. Wood... Though much has changed in Nez Perce Country with the passage of 100 years, the family wishes to carry out the intent of the words spoken as faithfully as possible... A gift of a stallion today carries the weight of 100 years of purpose and symbolism. – Mary Christina Wood, excerpt from "The Gift," written as part of the gift-giving ceremony at Wallowa Lake, Oregon, July 27, 1997



Chief Joseph with his family, 1880s

"I often think of his magnanimity in taking into his tepee a little white boy, the son of that race which had so cruelly treated his people, and treating him like his own son." – Erskine Wood

* * *

The Ghost Wind Stallion

by Mardi Wood

According to oral tradition, hundreds of years ago Russian seamen sailed their trading ships to the coast of the Pacific Northwest, bringing their vessels into Tillamook Bay, Oregon. Aboard these ships they carried silvery white stallions with black spots marking their bodies, faces, and muzzles. The stallions were pushed into the sea and then towed ashore by Siletz Indians in rough-hewn log barges. Nez Perce traders traveled far to buy these horses, paying twice the usual price because they were said to have powerful medicine they passed onto their young. They were known as "ghost wind stallions," and it is believed by some that these are the true ancestors of the Nez Perce Appaloosa.

The Appaloosa was famous for its courage, endurance, and speed. It could outrun other horses, buffalo, even the U.S. Cavalry. But the horses of Joseph's band became lost in the mountains or were deliberately destroyed by U.S. soldiers "to kill their Indian spirit." As a result, few Appaloosas remained.

In 1996 Ken Burns' documentary *The Opening of the West* was shown on television. The end of the last sequence was a narration by N. Scott Momaday, a Pulitzer Prize winning Kiowa writer, of his interview with my then 93-year-old grandfather, telling this story and this regret, and ending with a beautiful spirited horse shown galloping across the screen through mountain meadows.

A family fund raising began. Katherine "Tash" Livingston, my second cousin and the granddaughter of C.E.S. Wood, worked lovingly and tirelessly as our family's fund-raiser and scribe. Checks large and small came in. We searched all the available Appaloosa stallions in the United States and Canada, over five hundred, through the Internet and videos. In the spring of 1997, I joined five members of my family and we flew to Spokane then drove to Colville reservation at Nespelem to present papers and videos on twelve horses to Soy Redthunder, a descendant and the present spiritual leader of Joseph's band. Already my two sisters and my father had made visits to Nez Perce people to express their desire to

make the gift of a horse. There had been a question whether the Nez Perce would agree to any *gift* from white people, whom they never had reason to trust.

We sat in Redthunder's house for hours watching videos. We waited late into the night while the elders conferred. Finally, they spoke: for a black stallion with a fine white "blanket" on his rump covered with large black spots.

Earlier that evening Redthunder had spoken to us of the problems faced by their young people: drugs, alcohol, gangs. The horse had been forgotten, replaced by trucks, cars and motorcycles. By caring for a horse, a youth can connect to Indian ways and values forgotten, such as breeding programs, ceremonies using the horse to commemorate their history, parades and horse shows expressing their culture. This fine stallion could provide incentive, could help Indian lives now. This is why they would accept the horse from our family.

And so we met in a mountain meadow, on Chief Joseph's ancestral land. All branches of the Nez Perce were there: from Colville, Lapwai, Umatilla, and from Whitebird's clan in Canada. They prayed and sang songs of the ancient Seven Drum religion. Then the Wood family, forty descendents in all, joined the half circle. Scott Momaday spoke about the importance of the horse in Native American culture. A sacred song, created especially for this horse, was sung. And we were invited to offer our words, words from the heart.

The Appaloosa was led to the center of the half circle by the Utah breeder and his family. The horse reared. Then, head held high, he leaped into the air, with all four feet off the ground. His spirit was big. Tommy Waters took the reins for Redthunder; the horse quieted.

Redthunder said, "Treaties written down were never fulfilled. Yet this one family...can fulfill spoken words between two people more than 100 years old. To make those words good now is an extraordinary thing."

In this moment, we came together.



At Wallowa Lake, July 27, 1997

Mary Christina Wood, Zip's Wild Man, Keith Soy Redthunder

The Gift of a Horse: A Timeline

1877 Chief Joseph surrenders at Bear Paw, Montana, ending the Nez Perce War. Lt. C.E.S. Wood records Joseph's surrender speech. The surviving Nez Perce are exiled to "Indian Territory," first to Kansas and later to Oklahoma, contrary to the army's promise that the captives would be returned to their homeland.

1884 C.E.S. Wood retires from the army, eventually opens a law practice in Portland, and lobbies for the return of the Nez Perce to their home in the Northwest.

1885 Nez Perce exiles return to the Northwest, with Joseph's band eventually settling in the Nespelem Valley on the Colville Reservation in northern Washington.

1889 C.E.S. Wood invites Chief Joseph to his home in Portland so he can pose for a bronze medallion to be created by the sculptor Olin L. Warner. During this visit, Wood asks Joseph if Wood's son, Erskine, can visit Joseph at his camp, a request Joseph grants.

1892 Erskine Wood spends the summer and fall living with Joseph's family at Nespelem. During these six months, Erskine not only observes his 13th birthday, but also keeps a diary, which is eventually lost.

1893 Erskine makes his second lengthy visit to Joseph's camp, and once again he keeps a diary, which is published years later as *Days with Chief Joseph: Diary and Recollections*. It is during this time that C.E.S. Wood, wanting to repay Joseph for his hospitality, writes his son and asks what Joseph would like in return. But Erskine fails to convey Joseph's request for "a good stallion to improve the breed of his pony herd."

1976 Now in his 90s, Erskine Wood writes the story of the "unfulfilled gift," which is published in *American Heritage* magazine.

1996 Two decades later, the same story is featured as a segment on the PBS documentary *The West*, bringing it to the attention of C.E.S. Wood's descendents. The five branches of the family begin raising money and searching for the horse that will serve as a suitable gift for the descendents of Chief Joseph.

1997 The families of C.E.S. Wood and Chief Joseph meet at Wallowa Lake, one to give and the other to receive the gift of a horse.

Life With Chief Joseph (1892, 1893)

By Erskine Wood (1879–1983)

Adapted from "An Officer's Son With Chief Joseph," *American Heritage* (August 1976)

Chief Joseph

You cannot expect a boy of 14 to penetrate an Indian's inner beliefs and feelings, but this much I can say well and truthfully: Joseph, when I knew him, was about 50 years old and was a very handsome man with noble features, a beautiful forelock rising from his forehead and then falling a little off to his left side, fine eyes, and a pleasant voice; and as even I could tell from the minimum knowledge of his language that I picked up, he was an eloquent man with an eloquent voice. Two heavy braids of black hair hung down his shoulders, one in front of each. In speech he was moderate but clear and unmistakable, and whatever he said was respected and listened to. He disliked obscenity and on one occasion reproved it. He was unquestionably looked up to by his people as their chief. By the way, they never called him Joseph; they always referred to him as *Hin-Mah-Too-Yah-Lat-Kekht*, meaning "Thunder Rolling in the Mountains.: His advice, his decisions, had always proved right.

Deer Hunting

When I spent the nine months with him, on two separate visits in 1892 and 1893, I participated in the two fall deer hunts of those years when we laid in our supply of venison and smoked it on racks over the tepee fires. Those hunts occurred in November in the mountains whither we moved from the pleasant little Nespelem Valley, where was our main camp. The band would split up into groups of four or five families, hunting in different parts of the mountains, and I, of course, always was with Joseph's group, where I participated in the arduous work of the hunt along with the men. We used to get up long before daylight each morning and take a sweat bath to get the human scent off our bodies so the game we were hunting could not smell us. Joseph always took part in these along with the rest of us. I only mention this to show that Joseph mingled freely in all that his men did. Soon after daylight we would be off hunting.

Home Life

Of course, all the menial housework was left to the squaws. Joseph's life was occupied in handling any of his band's affairs with the agency, such as issuing rations, clothing, etc., or any special matters. As I remember it, he had a little grain patch and threshed the grain by spreading it out and walking the horses round and round through it to thresh it out onto the canvas spread beneath their hooves. But there wasn't too much of that. Of course, he would moderate and settle any possible disputes, of which there were very few. He kept a calendar. It was a bunch of 10 or 12 little white, smooth sticks, each the size of a pencil, and on each stick, for whatever current month or year it was, he would file a little mark for that day, and on Sundays he would bore a little hole and color it with red. This calendar must have carried perhaps two or three years.

Joseph's Family

I have not mentioned Joseph's family. He had two wives. The elder was *Wawin-Tip-Yay-La-Tal-E-Cotsot*, and the younger was *Lyat-Too-We-Anet-En-My*. They slept together with Joseph and lived in perfect harmony, the two women doing all the household work like cooking, mending clothing, making moccasins, taking down and putting up the tepees when on the move, and all such necessary chores. There also lived in our tepee a boy about a year older than I named *Cool-Cool-Smool-Smool*. He and I together had the job of looking after Chief Joseph's pony herd of perhaps 50 horses, driving them to water hemmed in by a pool in the Nespelem River and there catching fresh horses for the next day's use and turning the others back into the herd. And, of course, we and the other boys played games together, but we never had much to do with the girls that I saw—maybe I was too young. I should add in describing tepee life that Joseph shared his tepee with another family.

Wallowa Then & Now

SHELL MERCANTILE COMPANY (1906–2009)

The Shell Mercantile Company is a rectangular, wood-frame building with a gable roof and false front which stands on the southeast corner of First [Main] and Pine in Wallowa, Oregon...The structure houses a general store owned and operated by the same family for the past 70 years. – Stephen Dow Beckham, *State of Oregon Inventory, Historic Sites and Buildings* (1976)

In 1906 the Shell Mercantile Co. went into business in Wallowa. The store carried most everything from a darning needle to a threshing machine. This was the first time I had ever been in the Shell store, having gone in for a pair of shoes. The stock of shoes they had startled me. The ceiling was 14 feet or more high, and the whole west side was boxes of shoes from the floor to the ceiling, and full length at least 40 feet. Near the top was a track full-length of the building. From this track hung a ladder on rollers that came just a short step up from the floor. The old Mr. Shell himself ran the shoe department. You just explained to him exactly what you wanted; up the ladder he'd go, up, down and across, all over that wall, looking into one box and then another. It might take him a little while, but pretty soon there he would come with just what you wanted, or something so near like it that it wouldn't make any difference. It is my opinion that the Shell Mercantile Company did more for the development of Wallowa County, especially the North End where there was Smith Mountain, East and West Grossman, Promise, Powwatka, and Middle Point, than any other one business. – Don Riggle, *35 Years on Smith Mountain* (1983)

Shell's had a two-story building where the cleaners now stands [northwest corner of First and Storie streets]. It burned [in 1934], as did the hardware store next to it. – Kate J. Goebel, *I Remember* (1977)

The history of the Shell Mercantile store has been linked with the very beginning of the town and county of Wallowa. It has been a vital factor in the growth of the community. – *The Wallowa Sun* (August 16, 1928)

The Shell Mercantile Company store at first was not so large as at present, the east half of the building containing the stock and the west half being a warehouse. When the store was enlarged, the partition was removed, making a large, roomy store housing a shoe department, men's and boys' clothing, dry goods department, and groceries. – *The Wallowa Sun* (March 10, 1932)

Extensive remodeling to increase floor space by tying in their present building with the adjoining brick building on the east was started by the Shell Mercantile Company. The newly-acquired building has been occupied by the post office and the Pacific Power & Light Company. The post office will remain in its present location, and the vacated quarters of the power company will be incorporated into Shell's by eliminating the walls between the two buildings and extending the roof over all. This will give the mercantile company added frontage on Main Street of approximately 14 feet, add another display window, and provide two main entrances. – *The Wallowa Sun* (July 18, 1940)

The oldest continuously operating business in Wallowa may soon be closing its doors. Ron Gay, owner of Shell Mercantile in Wallowa, this week confirmed rumors that he is planning to close the century-old business...

The doors of Shell Mercantile grocery store in Wallowa were closed last week as part of a foreclosure action in Wallowa County Circuit Court. – Elane Dickenson, *The Observer* (December 10, 2008 and January 7, 2009)



Shell Mercantile, Main & Storie, est. 1906



Shell Mercantile, Main & Pine, 1976