



# Bunchgrass Historian

Volume 4, No. 1

SPRING, 1976

## Pioneer Architecture Advances



J. A. Perkins House

Gingerbread, balconies and roof repaired, the Perkins house "stands tall" in sparkling new paint. A picture of its original splendor the exterior fully restored (except for finials) by the Whitman County Historical Society.—Photo taken January 20, 1976 by June Crithfield.



# Bunchgrass Historian

Published quarterly in March, June, September and December during the calendar year by the Whitman County Historical Society, at P.O. Box 447, Pullman, Washington 99163 to further an interest in a rich and wonderful heritage by sharing memories of those days of early settlement in the bunchgrass country. Subscription rates are three dollars the calendar year.

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## The Perkins House

**“The foundation for J. A. Perkins’ spacious residence was laid out this week. It occupies the site immediately in front of his present dwelling.”—Palouse Gazette, August 20, 1886.**

The above notice was confirmed one week later by the **Commoner** which stated, “J. A. Perkins has the foundation laid for a fine residence.” August 27, 1886.

A column note in the **Palouse Gazette** (October 29, 1886) entitled **Keeping Pace** gives insight to the building going on at that time, “Nothing less than a stroll through the north end will give one an idea of the extent of substantial improvements made in that quarter within the past few months. Many comfortable and in some instances elegant residences, have been erected or are in the course of construction, showing that quarter to be keeping pace with the general growth of the city. Never before has Colfax improved so much in a single season.”

Surely this meant the Perkins’ house was one of those spoken of, but which? Was it one of the residences under construction at that time or one of the “elegant” homes recently completed? August 20 to October 29 seemed time enough to build a new home. But where was the record that verified this? Our search of the records continued. Surely by Christmas they would be in the house, so many gay parties and get-togethers going on a new home owner would hurry the contractor toward the date, if possible. The new year came and continued month by month and still no mention of the new Perkins’ house being completed, or occupied.

The search continued for further information on construction progress. At last, in the July 29, 1887 issue of the **Palouse Gazette** were these words, “Honorable J. A. Perkins’ elegant residence is receiving a pretty coat of paint.” Eleven months after the foundation had been laid the house was ready to paint. Had the family moved in yet? Surely there would be a house warming or something else to celebrate the completion of the new home. But if there was, nothing was mentioned in any of the early day papers about it. In fact, no mention at all—until the **Palouse Gazette** states in the Aug. 19, 1887 issue that **Kane’s Illustrated West** for August, a magazine published by T. F. Kane and printed by Lewis and Dryden at Portland, Oregon, contained an article with illustrations of

the James A. Perkins' house and other new homes in the vicinity as well as information about the growing town of Colfax. Inquiries to all Washington Historical Societies and the Oregon Historical Society as well were to no avail. No one had a copy of this publication for August 1887, although a December issue for 1886 was found at Eastern Washington State College at Cheney by Terry Abrams, W.S.U. archivist.

However, the notice that Wm. Turner of Viola and Pauline Allgier of Colfax were married at the residence of J. A. Perkins, was carried in the October 21, 1887 **Palouse Gazette** leads us to assume the Perkins family had moved into their spacious new Victorian-style house, at last.

This ten room plus, two storied house is an excellent example of home construction at that time. Of balloon construction, the wall studs extend from the ground floor joists to the roof. Lumber of that day was cut in extra long lengths as a matter of course. Today, anything over twenty feet in length would have to be special-ordered. The Perkins' house has 12.5 foot ceilings on the lower floor and 11.5 foot ceilings on the upper floor, hence, the wall studs were at least 24 feet long.

The house has a balcony on every side of the upper story. These are unusual in that the balusters are designed to fit the size of the individual balcony. Every window casing has a carved motif. The gable ends are hung with scroll work (gingerbread) and the siding is applied at the corners of the house to give a masonry effect. When the house was new it had finials on the gables and new ones will be installed during the restoration period by the Whitman County Historical Society. To date, the exterior of the house has been completely restored, except for the finials, and painted a color that matches that of the original paint. Restoration of the interior lies ahead. Wall paper, varnish and paint have been removed in many of the downstairs rooms preparatory to restoring this portion of the Perkins House. [For details on Perkins family see Volume 1, No's 1 & 2, **Bunchgrass Historian** 1973.]□

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## J. L. BAILOR & Co.

PROPRIETORS OF

# THE STEAM PLANING MILL.

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CONTRACTORS & BUILDERS. Estimates furnished on short notice.

OAKESDALE,

WASHINGTON.

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—The Oakesdale Weekly Sun—December 25, 1891

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Henry Skeels, Uniontown, is now sole owner of the Potlatch sawmill, having bought M. Schulthesis' interest.—**Palouse Gazette**, April 1, 1887.

# Time for Elegance

The first settlers into the county lived roughly for a time in dugouts, tents, log cabins or battened board shacks while they began to build a new life for themselves in this part of the West. (See Winter '75 issue of **Bunchgrass Historian**). It took the next decade to fence, stock, clear and plant the farmlands and to plat the townsites, establish businesses and start a local government. Everyone worked long hard hours to accomplish this. It was a raw land, this bunchgrass country. Nothing came easy.

After a time, their efforts began to pay off, and many began to prosper. Signs of this change in the economic status appeared all around the county. It was most often shown in the replacement of the rude shelters, the homesteaders had first used, with new homes of great splendor. The architectural grandeur of some of these homes was enhanced by the extra trimmings of gingerbread, finials, balconies, widow's walks, turrets, towers, cupolas, verandas, and leaded or stained glass windows. We are fortunate to have prime examples of all of these in Whitman county today. It would be impossible to locate and mention the specifics of each such house in the county. Some outstanding homes are restricted from mention where families have indicated they do not wish the family home to be pointed out in any way, and we abide by those decisions.

Public and commercial buildings constructed during this same period displayed strength, dignity and durability. Many of them built from the period of the mid 80's to just after the turn of the century are in use today. Late comers to the county brought their affluence with them and they added to the building boom. Opportunity was everywhere.

The demand in the 80's for building materials created a need for new industries and brought about the establishment of sawmills, brick kilns and quarries.

Pictured on the following pages are examples of the building trend showing the extreme pride in exacting craftsmanship used in construction in those long-ago days. This pride, which the owner rightly assumed upon completion of the structure, we feel today. This, too, is part of our county's heritage. □

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## S. M. Wait's Sawmill at Elberton—1888



Courtesy Washington State University Library

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Wm. Codd and his forty-five hardy rivermen reached here (Palouse), on Tuesday with two million feet of logs. Mr. Codd expects to reach Colfax with his drive in about twenty days. —**Palouse Gazette**, April 1, 1887.





James E. Randolph House

—Photo courtesy Charles E. Blickenderfer and owner, Harry Schubert

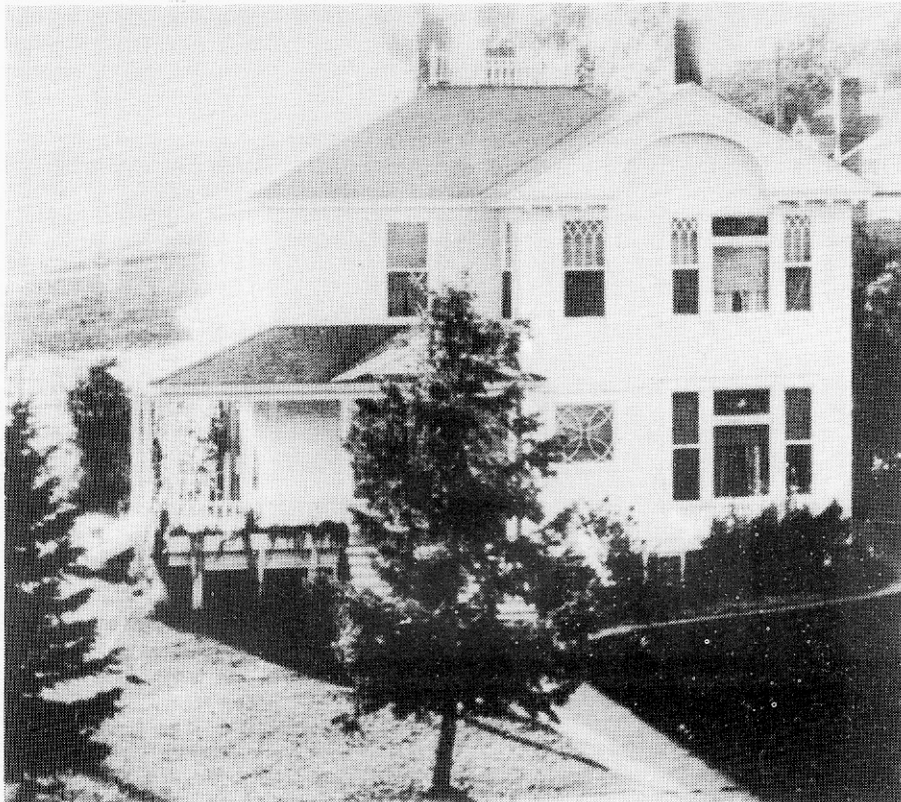
The ornate James E. Randolph house in Farmington was built in 1880. One very interesting feature which the picture does not show clearly was the windmill tower which stood behind the house. The house and the cupola shown enclosed an upper portion of the windmill shaft. This device pumped the water for all family needs.

# The McCroskey House

By Nick Manning

R. C. McCroskey, a prominent agriculturist and legislator who came to Garfield in 1882, built one of the county's residential show places. His expansive, ornate frame house built in 1897 boasted stained glass windows and a widow's walk. The house was designed by the Spokane firm of Preusse and Zittel, the architects of the original buildings at Gonzaga University, Cheney Normal School (now Eastern Washington State College) and the Spokane City Hall.

The McCroskey house at the northern edge of Garfield is a two storied structure containing fifteen rooms plus corridors. The exterior and interior of the house appear today as originally built except for the widow's walk which has been removed. The house foundation is stone and concrete. Clapboard siding covers



**R. C. McCroskey House**

—Photo courtesy Barbara Butts

the exterior. The interior walls and ceilings are nine feet eight inches in height and are finished with lath and rough plaster, with fir woodwork and floors. The construction is of balloon framing. The front stairway is a wide straight-reversed stair with a large, three sash, ornate window on the landing. The rear stairway spirals in a small, square well. The parlor has two sets of sliding doors and a tiled fireplace. Hardware on all the doors—including hinges—is brass.

The use of leaded-glass, stained glass and ornamentally mullioned glass in various windows, as well as the three large porches and open walk, undoubtedly contributed substantially to the McCroskey House being the finest house built in Garfield.

The McCroskey house owned by Mrs. Blanche McCroskey Johnson, remains a prime example of the late nineteenth-century blooming of eastern Washington's late-pioneer era elegance. □

**CORRECTION:** In the Winter issue of the **Historian** a quote from the Aug. 10, 1888 **Garfield Enterprise** mentioned Mr. McCroskey building a fine residence at Garfield. It was further noted by the Editor that this house had been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. This is incorrect. Obviously, the house placed on the National Register is the one described and pictured in the present issue. It was built in 1897. The early house built in 1888 by S. C. Roberts was destroyed by fire.

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## The A. B. Willard Home

By Mrs. Lewis Miles

A. B. Willard arrived in the Tekoa vicinity in the fall of 1878. He homesteaded a mile and a half south of the little settlement. In 1882, he purchased 160 acres of railroad land adjoining his homestead for \$2.60 per acre.

He farmed for ten years before going East to Michigan to marry Sara M. McLaren, his childhood sweetheart, on January 21, 1889. He continued to farm for many years, then leased his land to others. He served as president of the Citizens State Bank, which he had organized in 1908, until it merged with the Tekoa State Bank in 1931.



**A. B. Willard House** —Photo courtesy Mrs. Lewis Miles

According to the **Tekoa Blade** of June 1908, "A. B. Willard has had plans drawn for a residence at Main and Howard, which will be the largest and most costly structure of its kind in the city. It will be of Colonial style architecture, 40 by 48 feet and two stories in height. It will have a cellar, stone foundation and will in every respect be modern. The estimated cost is \$8,000."

After the death of Mr. and Mrs. Willard, Dr. C. B. Clizer purchased the home at a private auction to be used as a hospital. Later, Judge and Mrs. John Denoo owned the home and lived there several years. Then it was used for a nursing home by Mr. and Mrs. Ray Payne. Finally, in July of 1971, Reverend Robert E. Baggett was given use of the home, provided it would be used for drug rehabilitation. It is now Alpha Incorporated, Home of the Beginning. □



Built for Ed Johnson in 1905, this home on Fairview street in Colfax has patterned shingles, ornate carvings, mullioned windows with a wreath motif, and a turret. The house is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Marler who bought it in 1929 and are living there now.

# Good Times

The rapid manner in which farmers and others are paying off their notes at the bank and stores this fall speaks volumes, not only for Whitman county's prosperity, but for the general good credit of our people.—**The Pullman Herald**, November 10, 1888.

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# Sad Times

A sad accident occurred this afternoon near Sexton & Codd's sawmill in Palouse City. James, the eight year old son of John J. Gooch, while playing on a bank of sawdust which extends into the river, lost his footing by the sawdust caving and fell in twenty feet of water. No one was near by to give him assistance. The body was recovered later in the day.—**Palouse News**, June 5, 1884.

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Wm. Codd added one of the most complete planers to his establishment this week, that has ever come into Eastern Washington. A reporter passing yesterday dropped in and observed that his saw and planing mill is being fitted up with considerable new machinery, of the latest patterns.—**The Commoner**, June 24, 1887.

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# Bricks Were Big Business in Uniontown

By June Crithfield  
as told by  
Walt Wieber

A brick factory established by George Herboth in Uniontown before 1898 was still in operation until the late '30s. It employed about a dozen men and most of the work was hand labor.

The clay for the brick was dug by hand from the bank just behind the present Walt Wieber home and loaded onto a one horse dump cart equipped with two grain wheels off an old push binder. When the cart was full Joe Kuntz hauled it to one of the two stockpile pits near the brick machine down in the flat.

Once dumped into the pit the clay was wet down with water and allowed to set while material was being used out of the other pit. The brick making machine moved from pit to pit on wooden tracks topped with strap iron, and was operated with horses on a full circle sweep.

One man fed mud (clay) into the machine as the bricks were pressed out in rectangular molds of six bricks at a time. Another man took the mold and dumped the compressed bricks from it onto a lathed tray to dry enough so handling would not damage them. A second man took the mold and cleaned it of any remaining clay, then sanded it so the next batch would not stick. There were two such molds—one for each side of the machine.

After the formed bricks had dried sufficiently for handling they were "hicked" or stacked on pallets in diagonal rows with air spaces between the rows. The pallets were then moved with a special wheelbarrow which lifted and moved each pallet to the drying sheds. There were four or five drying sheds, long buildings roofed with rough boards to which leather hinges were fastened so they could be opened in good weather to speed the drying process, which took from two to three weeks. Each drying shed was 16 feet wide by 100 feet long.



When the bricks had dried enough they were moved to the kiln site where these same bricks were used to construct the kiln itself. The kiln was about 40 feet square when completed. The bricks were stacked up so arches were formed every two feet at each end of the kiln. Each arch was left open after being bricked around and the lower part of each arch had a heavy iron door covering the fire box. The arches allowed better ventilation and the movement of the hot air around the bricks for more even firing. After the kiln was formed of the green brick the top and sides were bricked over with cured bricks and brick bats (broken bricks) which sealed the kiln for firing.

The furnaces were fired twenty four hours a day. Wood to fire them was cut in four foot lengths and hauled from the Moscow Mountains. For the first few days the heat only drew the steam off the bricks but after that the furnaces became quite hot and the firing process continued for a week or ten days getting so hot finally that the bricks looked almost transparent. Once the firing process was completed the bricks were left in place to cool and then only awaited the public demand.

Some 200,000 bricks a month were manufactured at Uniontown. Many local buildings were constructed of the hometown brick. The Catholic Church at Uniontown built in 1904 with Albert Valk as contractor and Father Faust as architect is a solid brick building. The bricks for the church were dipped in Venetian Red dye to obtain a rich deep red color and were then set with a dark red mortar. The convent was built a year later with slightly lighter color brick. The priest's house not built until 1913 is of a darker brick because these bricks were near the kiln arches when they were fired.

Many private homes used the Uniontown brick in construction, among them are the J. P. Klein home now owned by Ed Dahm; the Alan Heitstuman home on the Tuschoff place on the Moscow road; the Gene Stout home on the Goedde place and the Jutte place north of Uniontown. Mrs. Stout is a granddaughter of Mr. Herboth who owned the brick business.

Most local brick chimneys and building foundations came from the yard as well as sewer and drain tile. There was a separate and permanent kiln to fire the tile. Tile was shipped from Uniontown to Hahn Plumbing in Lewiston in carload lots in the 1920's.

Mr. Herboth was indeed a pioneer business man. Using the material at hand he formed a product which others needed and used to build structures that stand today. □

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## **BRICK! BRICK! BRICK!**

When in want of First-Class Brick, go to the Uniontown Brick Yard.

GEORGE HERBOTH, Prop.

Colton Newsletter—Jan. 1893

## **ROBERT BARBER,**

COLTON, - - - W. T.

**CONTRACTOR AND BUILDER.**

I am now prepared to do all kinds of work common to the business at prices that cannot fail to give satisfaction.

Colton Eagle—Mar. 1888

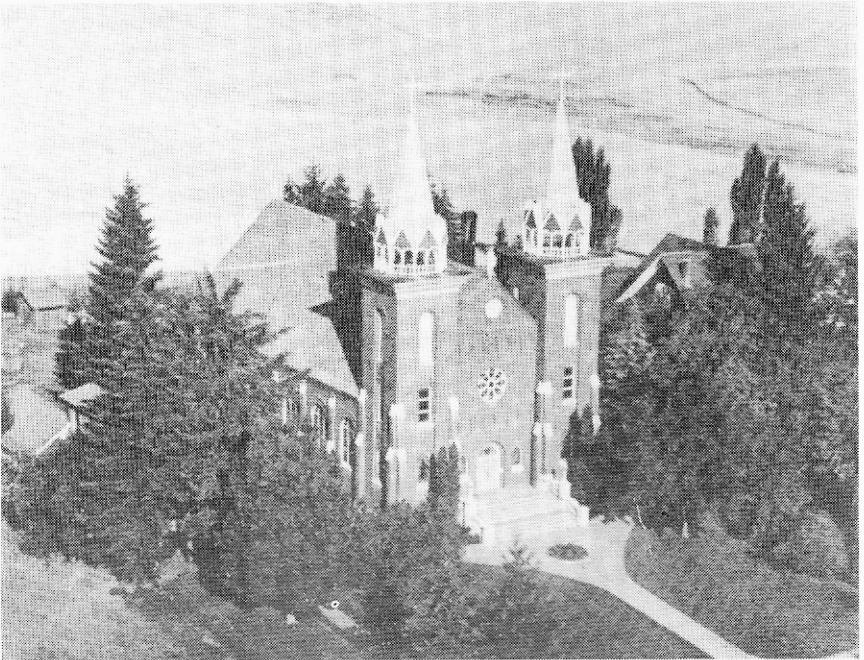
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Sexton & Codd—Manufacturers and dealers in Lumber, sash, door, mouldings, window and door frames. Colfax and Palouse City, W. T. We keep constantly on hand a large supply of lumber and building material, which is sold at **BOTTOM PRICES FOR CASH!** For the next sixty days we will take wheat, oats or barley, to be delivered at any warehouse on Snake River, in payment for Lumber. **Weekly Vidette** (Colfax) June 28, 1883.

# St. Boniface Catholic Church

Uniontown's first St. Boniface Catholic Church was a simple frame structure completed in 1879. This unpretentious building with plank pew seats, enlarged to double its size in 1887, served the Catholic families of the area for twenty-five years, although plans for a new church were entertained much sooner than that.

A plot of ground was obtained and the foundation for a new church of brick, from the local kiln, was laid in 1893 by Father Anton Joehren. The wet year of 1893 was a financial disaster to Whitman county farmers. The financial panic of '93 had the nation by the throat as well. Plans to go on with construction of the new church had to be laid aside.



**St. Boniface Catholic Church**

—Photo courtesy Father Cornelius Verdoorn

It was not until July 1, 1904 that the cornerstone for the new church was finally laid. Largely through the determination of Father J. A. Faust and the generosity of the parishioners the funds were raised. On Christmas Day that same year they celebrated the first mass in the new church.

Laid out in the form of a cross 57 x 140 feet the building is 82 feet wide at the transept. The front entrance is centered between two spires and the front gable supports a seven foot statue of the Immaculate Conception, the second patron of the church. The stained glass windows and the gothic arches inside enrich the building further.

The total cost of construction of the church was \$17,415.20. The architect was H. Preusse of Spokane. W. H. Williams, also of Spokane, drew the plans and specifications for the structure. Albert Valk was the contractor.

St. Boniface Catholic Church in Uniontown was dedicated in 1905. □



Interior view of St. Boniface Catholic Church

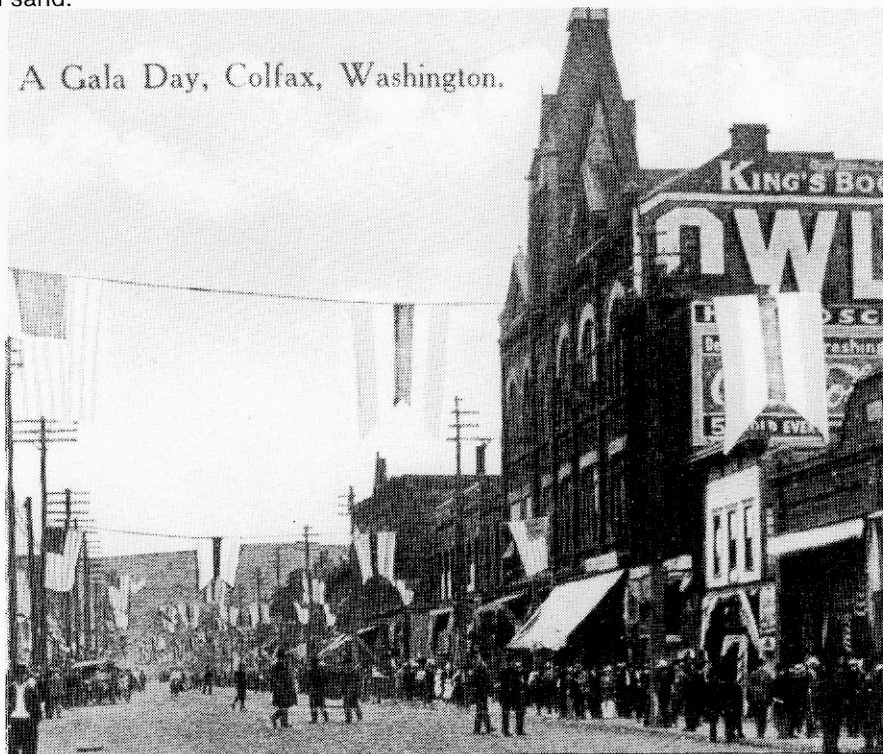
—Photo Courtesy Father C. Verdoorn

# The 'Fraternity Block'

By Bill Wilmot

Still one of the largest buildings in Colfax, the "Fraternity Block," now housing the **Colfax Gazette**, J. D. McMannis law office and El Rancho restaurant along with Masonic lodge rooms, was completed in 1890. The Masonic and I.O.O.F. lodges advertised for bids in July 1889 for a building "80 by 80 feet, three-story brick," according to the **Palouse Gazette**.

A contract for the brickwork of the building was awarded to A. F. Perry, Walla Walla, for \$24,000, and the **Gazette** said "the building will be numbered among the finest in the Northwest. The rear foundation wall is the best ever constructed in Colfax and rests on concrete of four parts cement to one part of sand."



A Gala Day, Colfax, Washington.

Fraternity Building with Tower

—Photo courtesy Elk Drug Store

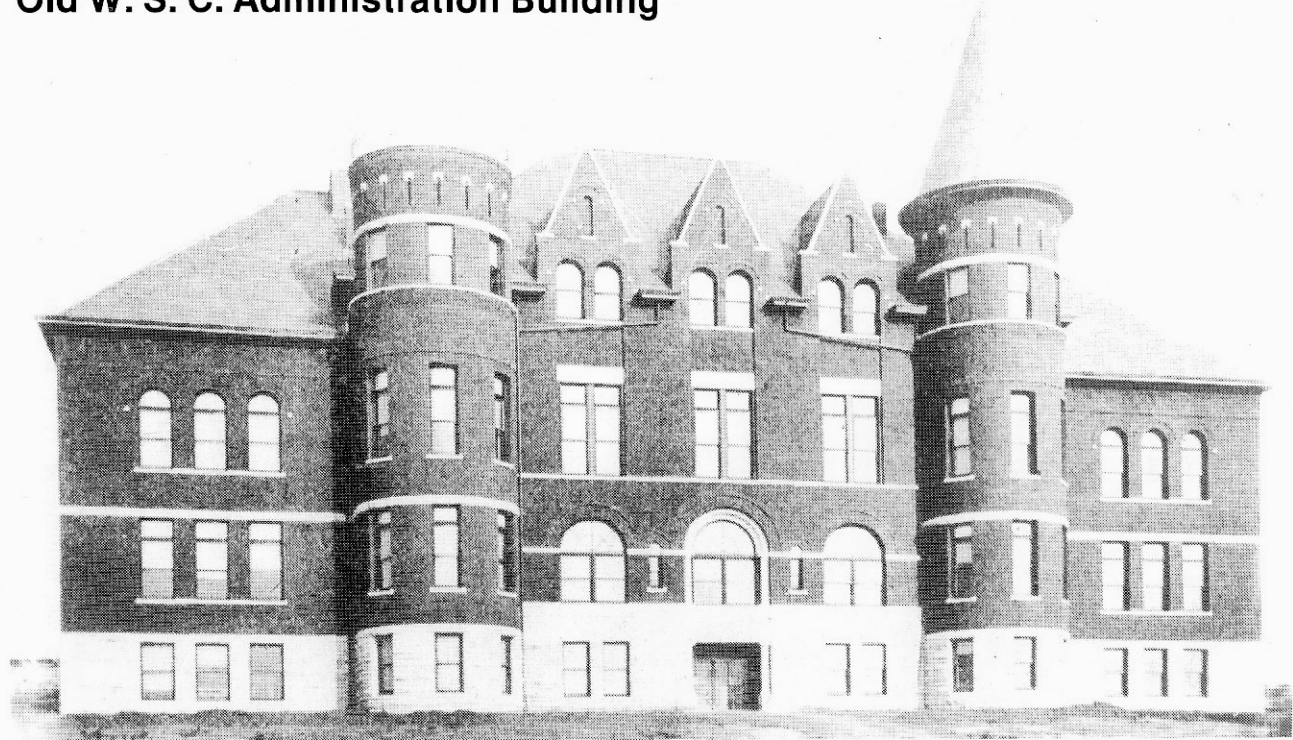
By November, 1889, bricklayers had reached the second story and the cornerstone had been laid. Also completed were "commodious vaults" for the Colfax Bank. In November, the Colfax Foundry made the largest casting in its history, a pilaster column weighing 2500 pounds, for the new building. A scheme was underfoot to raise funds for a town clock in the tower of the new building but no further mention was made of it.

In April, 1890 the **Gazette** mentions that the Colfax Bank had elegant quarters and that the architect had accepted the building and the first meeting of the I. O. O. F. was held in the structure. Formal dedication was not held until June, 1891, when 300 were served in three shifts at a banquet table and a grand ball "climaxed the festivities." □

Footnote: Mr. Wilmot is editor-owner of **The Colfax Gazette**.



## Old W. S. C. Administration Building



—Photo Whitman County Historical Society

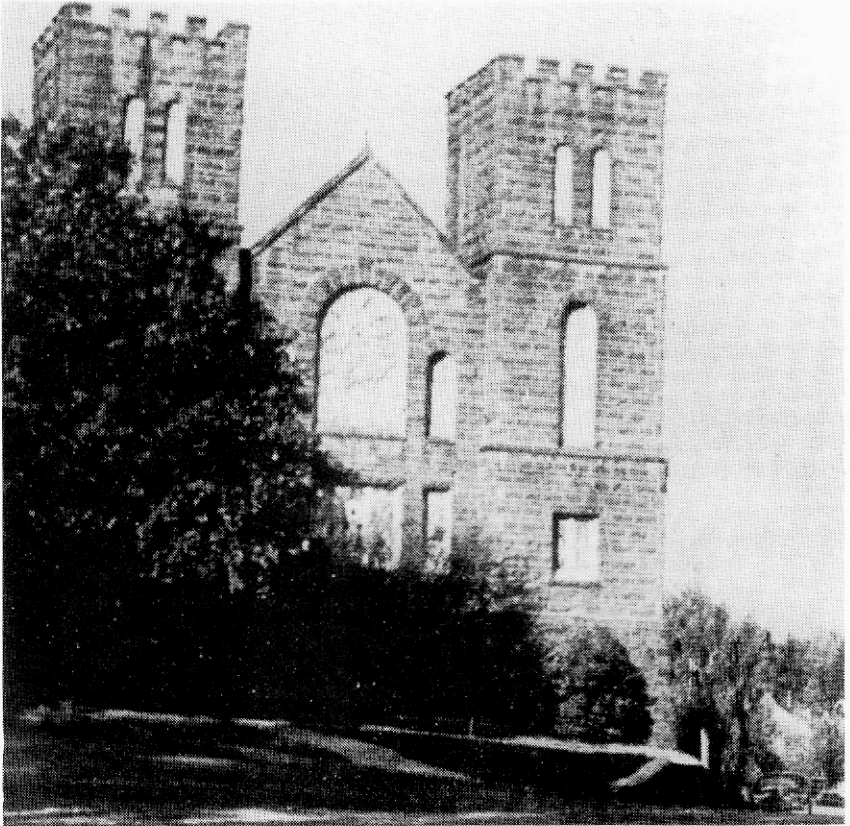
Designed by James Stephen & T. Josenhans of Seattle, the old Administration Building was completed in 1894. Built of brick made from clay taken from a bank adjacent to Stevens Hall, and fired in a kiln at the site. Renamed “Albert W. Thompson Hall” in 1972, in honor of the retired Dean of Humanities in the College of Sciences and Arts at WSU. It has since been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. □



# Greystone Church

The old United Presbyterian Church in Pullman, known as Greystone Church located at the point of Maple Street and Maiden Lane, is unique in several ways—in utilization, design and materials used in construction.

The original church, a frame structure which faced Maple street, was built in 1899. J. R. Moys, Lee Webb and Albert Valk, a Pullman contractor, completed the building in April, some three months later than anticipated due to the uncooperative weather that winter. The cost of the lot, total construction and furniture came to \$4,000.00.



-Photo Courtesy Rev. Edgar Pearson

By 1908 the auditorium was no longer adequate for the increased size of the congregation. A new church was needed. But it was not until four years later that the first church building was moved back on the lot and turned one quarter of the way around. This allowed for excavation of the basement and forming the foundation walls for a new building. The cornerstone was laid in December, 1912.

The cornerstone was placed in December 1912. This ceremony had been on the building committees for both of these early United Presbyterian churches in Pullman.

The plans completed by architect William Swain called for basaltic rock to be used on the exposed basement walls and the super structure to be of brick and Tenino sandstone with the whole, the old and new building, to be stone veneered. The church design features two front towers, each fifteen feet square with battlement tops. The one tower had been part of the original 1899 structure. Designing

the new church around the older one and adding another tower presented a building with outstanding architectural features. A Scotch stone mason, Mr. Wilson, did much of the work. Completed in 1914 the finished building cost \$50,000. Sale of the Waitsburg Academy, an institution founded by Rev. Hays had brought the first \$10,000 for the church construction.

The new stone United Presbyterian Church was dedicated Oct. 18, 1914.

The Rev. Dr. W. G. M. Hays conducted services that day with the dedicatory prayer by Rev. Leo L. Totten.

In use almost fifty years the stone church was sold in 1962 and is now known as St. Thomas More Catholic Chapel. In 1963, the Presbyterians moved into their latest church building on Stadium Way. □

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## Spokane District Directory-1890

Wm. Codd—Planing and Sawmill .....	Colfax
I. B. Doolittle—Paperhanger .....	Colfax
C. H. Henderson—Contractor .....	Colfax
C. Colvin—Painter's Supplies .....	Colfax
Elmer Hall—Painter .....	Colfax
W. White—Architect and Builder .....	Colfax
Brickyard, Prop.	
G. C. Butts—Carpenter & Contractor .....	Garfield
James Faught—Brickyard .....	Garfield
F. O. Kallenberg—Brickyard .....	Garfield
Alliance Lumber Co.—Lumber Yard .....	Oakesdale
(E. L. Scott and W. A. Beardsley)	
J. L. Bailor & Co.—Planing Mill .....	Oakesdale
(Contractor & Builder)	
H. W. Bassett—Planing Mill .....	Palouse
(Contractor & Builder)	
Skeels & Langdon—Planing & Sawmills .....	Palouse
Andrew Clyde—Sawmill & Brickyard .....	Palouse
Zirngibl & Sherman—Sawmill & Contractor .....	Palouse
Chas. Brown—Brickyard .....	Palouse
Wm. Buckley—Carpenter & Builder .....	Pullman
T. W. Enos—Lumber & Builders Supplies .....	Pullman
McKenzie & Moss—Lumber .....	Pullman
A. Pare—Architect .....	Pullman
Schrader & Burns—Contractors & Builders .....	Pullman
Wilmer & Dwyer—Hardware & Lumber .....	Rosalia
Beard & Gallaher—Contractors & Builders .....	Tekoa
E. A. Conrad—Contractor & Builder .....	Tekoa
Wells & Johnson—House & Sign Painters .....	Tekoa
Decorators & Paperhangers	
Dan Struppeler—Lumber Dealer .....	Uniontown