

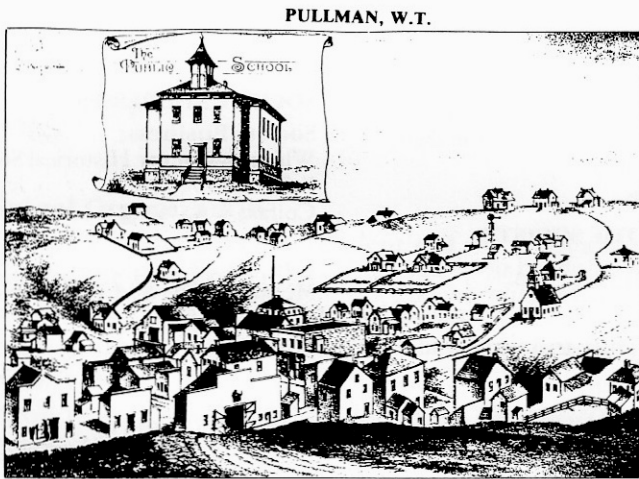
# Bunchgrass Historian

Whitman County Historical Society Quarterly

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Colfax, Washington

Fall 1986



- **Whitman Lodge #49: 1889-1986**
- **Sarah Ann Bell McKenzie**
- **The Story of One Rosalia Family**

# CONTENTS

The First One Hundred Years of Whitman Lodge Number 46 by Charles F. Martin .....	3
Sarah Ann Bell McKenzie By Eileen Nelson .....	14
The Story of One Rosalia Family Inez Elliot Miller .....	19
Publication of Note .....	24

## THE AUTHORS

Mr. Martin's history of the Pullman Masonic Lodge first appeared, in slightly different form, in the Centennial book produced by the Lodge in 1986. Eileen Nelson's sketch of Sarah McKenzie was written for the Pullman Methodist Church. Inez Miller's account of her family and early Rosalia is based on a copy of a paper presented in a public reading 25 years ago.

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**The Bunchgrass Historian** is published four times a year by the Whitman County Historical Society. Its purpose is to further interest in the rich past of Whitman County.

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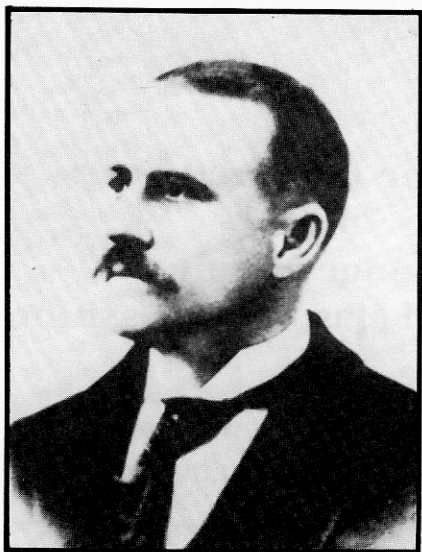
**The First One Hundred Years  
of  
Whitman Lodge Number 49  
Free and Accepted Masons of Washington**  
  
by  
**Charles F. Martin, Past Master  
and Secretary Emeritus**

**Original Organization**

Seven Master Masons, resident's of the town and the countryside surrounding the town of Pullman in 1885, desiring to establish an organization in this community that would provide them and their uninitiated friends an opportunity to join together in fraternal friendship, made the necessary overtures to the Grand Lodge of Washington Territory for permission to establish a masonic lodge on March 8, 1886. These men were accordingly authorized to organize Whitman Lodge. They were O.H. Depuy, J.B. Tabor, D.P. Pankey, A.M. Rogers, E.H. Letterman, Martin Zender and Erastus Oliver. O.H. Depuy was appointed by the Grand Lodge to direct the organization of the lodge as Master, with A.M. Rogers as Senior Warden and E.H. Letterman as Junior Warden.

At the first communication (meeting) of Whitman Lodge, held on March 12, 1886, petitions for initiation were received from Eugene W. Downen, age 26, postmaster and justice of the peace, and from Edward T. Hall, age 29, farmer. At this meeting, Master Depuy also appointed officers to fill the other chairs of the lodge. He also appointed an auditing committee and a committee to draw up the by-laws of the lodge.

At the second communication of the lodge, held on March 26, 1886, petitions for affiliation were received from C.C. Branham and W.O. Barbee. These brothers were elected to membership during the fourth communication of the lodge on April 9, 1886, at which time another petition for affiliation was received from W.B. Pendall, a petition for initiation was received from J.N. Garrison, and Eugene Downen was initiated.



*Oscar H. Deputy-  
organizer of Whitman  
Lodge #49.*

Brother Eugene W. Downen was the first petitioner for the degrees to be raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason in Whitman Lodge. This event took place during a special communication of the lodge on May 7, 1886. Parenthetically, it is of interest to note that his son, Daniel C. Downen, a long-time insurance agent in Pullman, now deceased, was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason in Whitman Lodge on January 26, 1912, and was honored by the lodge as a fifty-year member on the same date in 1962.

On June 5, 1886, the charter, for which petition had been made the preceding March 8, was signed by the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Masons in Washington Territory, Louis Ziegler. At a communication of the lodge held on June 6, the charter was read, and Thomas Amos, District Deputy of the Grand Master, acting under authority of Grand Master Ziegler, constituted Whitman Lodge No. 49, Free and Accepted Masons, and installed the officers. The initiation fee was set at \$40, with annual dues at \$6. Thus was born the forty-ninth masonic lodge in a territory that was not to be granted statehood until three years later. Incidentally, it should be pointed out that the imprint of the official seal of Whitman Lodge No. 49, F.&A.M. still in use today bears the inscription, "Pullman, Washington Territory." Among many other events to which one's atten-

tion may be drawn, 1886 was the year that the 22nd President of the United States, Grover Cleveland, was beginning his first term, and the Statue of Liberty was unveiled in New York harbor. It was also the year that a young railroad man in North Redwood, Minnesota, Richard Sears, sold his first pocket watch, and in partnership with another young man, Alvah Roebuck, founded the mail-order catalog business we have long known as Sears, Roebuck and Company.

### **Financial Affairs**

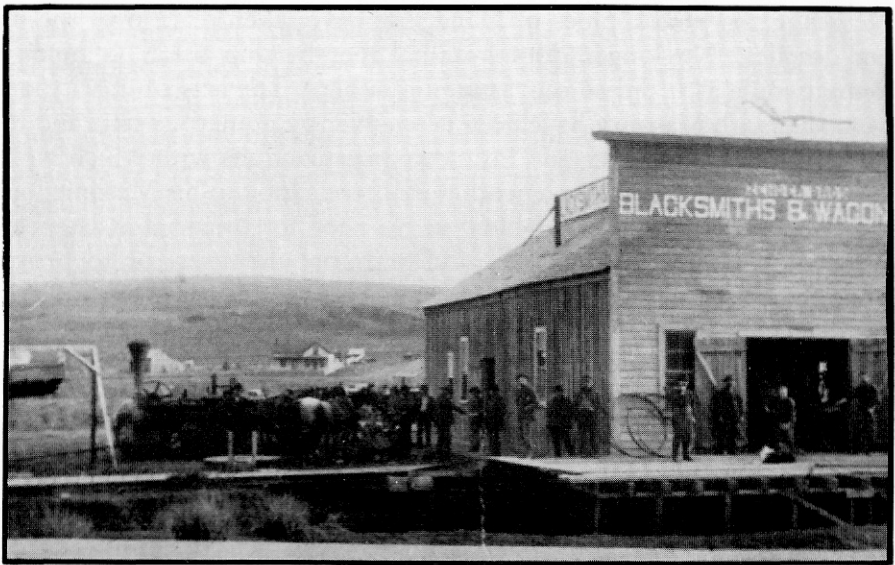
The lodge, during its early years, had some serious financial difficulties meeting its financial obligations. Fees from petitioners for the degrees and annual membership dues were insufficient to defray expenses incurred at the time the lodge was chartered. These expenses included the initial charter fee to the Grand Lodge, the purchase of required paraphernalia, rental of the lodge hall, and expenses of District Deputy Amos, who traveled from the Grand Lodge headquarters in Olympia to Pullman to constitute the lodge. However, through the generosity of Brother E. H. Letterman, who appeared to be financially better off than others in the lodge at that time, these and other incidental expenses were covered by outright gifts of cash and loans.

Further financial problems developed when several petitioners for the degrees were permitted to accompany their petitions with promissory notes instead of cash. In several instances, these petitioners were unable to retire their notes on the six-month due dates at the rate of one and one-half percent interest per month. Once again, the lodge turned to Brother Letterman to bail it out when it could not pay its bills. Eventually, the officers instituted an austerity program that put the lodge onto a more businesslike basis, with a steady increase in the number of dues-paying members. By the time it had been in operation for seven years, the lodge found itself in the position of being able to invest surplus funds in the stock of a local building and loan association on a regular basis. Still, during the difficult depression years of the 1890s, many lodge members still found it impossible to pay their annual dues. In view of this, in 1895 the lodge took the action that "all members of the lodge one or more years in arrears on the payment of dues shall pay whatever amount they can afford by January 1, 1896, and the lodge will remit the balance." On January 10, 1896, a motion was made to amend the bylaws to reduce the annual dues from \$6 to \$4. This amendment was eventually adopted, and the annual dues of the lodge remained at \$4 from that time until 1952, when they were raised to \$7.50. An unsuccessful attempt was made, also in 1896, to lower the lodge fee for the degree from \$40 to \$30.

As the economy improved during the early 1900s, the lodge fee was increased to \$50, and it remained at this level until 1933, during the dust-bowl depression, when it was, indeed, lowered to \$30. Then, in 1936, as the economy began once more to show improvement, the lodge fee was raised to \$79. At that time, with added contributions of \$20 for a Washington Masonic Home, and \$1 for support of the Washington Masonic Memorial in Washington D.C., a petition or the degree in Whitman Lodge No. 49 was to have been accompanied by a negotiable instrument or cash in the amount of \$100. In keeping with the economic growth of the lodge and its desire to invest in its future, annual dues were increased to \$9 in 1959, to \$15 in 1965, and \$20 in 1982. And, in 1984, the lodge fee for the degrees were increased to \$85. At the present time (1985), with added contributions of \$20 for the Washington Masonic Home, and \$5 for support of the Washington Masonic Memorial in Washington, D.C., a petition of the degrees in Whitman Lodge must be accompanied by a negotiable instrument or cash in the amount of \$110.

Adding to some of the early financial woes of the lodge were several instances at the turn of the century involving rejections of petitioners for the degrees. For example, in 1905 there were seven rejections, and in 1906 there were four more. These actions may have triggered a number of demits (drops, in effect) that were processed in those years also. All this led to a crisis which could have doomed the future of Whitman Lodge No. 49. On May 10, 1907, two Whitman Lodge members who had been demitted, along with nine active members and nine other Master Masons holding memberships in neighboring lodges, petitioned the Grand Lodge of Washington for a charter to establish a second lodge in Pullman. The records do not show what happened to this petition. Apparently, however, within a short period of time, personal differences which existed between the officers and members of Whitman Lodge and those who had petitioned for the new charter were settled, because several of the petitioners who had previously been rejected were elected as members, and some of the members who had been demitted were re-elected. Thus, during the following several years, Whitman Lodge showed a degree of vigor that it had not experienced for a long time, and particularly just prior to, during and following World War I.

It was not until 1924 that another crisis developed which had a devastating effect on the financial status of the lodge, as well as on membership morale. Early in that year, an audit of current assets and a subsequent investigation revealed that one of the officers had embezzled a sizeable amount of cash from the Treasury. The records do not reveal if a masonic trial was convened in the case, but it is known that the officer, in all probability upon admission of guilt, was expelled from Masonic membership by the Grand Lodge on June 24, 1924, no doubt on a charge of



*Blacksmith shop of Martin Zender, co-founder of Whitman Lodge #49.*

misappropriation of funds and malfeasance in office. Although it has long been conceded that these funds would never be recovered, the final chapter in this scenario occurred in 1957 when, entirely unexpectedly, and by mail, full restitution of the misappropriated funds were made to the lodge by the expelled member.

### **Membership**

During the 100 years of its existence, Whitman Lodge has enrolled by initiation and affiliation 935 members. Of this total, 592 were enrolled during the first 50 years, an average of 11.8 members per year. During the last 50 years, 343 members have enrolled, averaging 6.9 members per year. For the last 10 years, the average number of new members enrolled per year has dropped to 2.6. The current roster of active members, many of whom do not reside within the jurisdiction of the lodge, total 187. Of this number, twenty are fifty-year members who dues are remitted annually by the lodge.

These figures demonstrate the trend in Masonic membership that some members may find disturbing. Parenthetically, it should be noted that the average number of enrolled members in the last 10 years could have been improved to 3.2 if several candidates had completed the requirements for enrollment by finishing all three degrees and passing a satisfactory examination in the posting lecture of the Master Mason degree. Even so, this overall trend, which became apparent during the 1960s, presents Masonry with a serious problem. As some of our friends in the field of sociology will tell us, this might have been expected in light of the

changes in the philosophies of living that have taken place over the past two decades. No longer does fraternal membership mean as much to young people as it did to our founding fathers. The acts of charity once associated with Masonry have been taken over by numerous state and federal governmental agencies and insurance organizations with which we are all familiar. No longer does a brother in distress look to his Masonic lodge for relief, as would be exemplified in his need for financial assistance to help him pay medical, hospital, and/or burial expenses, or to provide food, clothing and shelter for his family should he become unemployed. Adding to this trend in masonic membership has been the growing popular concept among the generation of adults who were born in the 1940s and later that elite organizations for men only, or for women only, are socially unacceptable. Potential Masonic members in these times appear to be more interested in activities outside of the community in which they reside because of the ease with which one can now move about. Also, the ready availability of entertainment sources that were unknown to those who once sought Masonic membership for social intercourse has had a major influence on this trend.

Hopefully, the trend in membership may reverse some day, but until it does, the average age of members of Masonic lodges will continue to increase, and the availability of younger members who would take the places of those of us who inevitably must leave this earthly retreat will continue to decline. Masons everywhere must come to grips with this problem by recognizing that in recent years there have been dramatic changes in human values, and, if it is to survive, Masonry in this and every other jurisdiction must be willing to adjust to these changes.

On the brighter side, it is to be emphasized that the records of Whitman Lodge Number 49 throughout its existence, including recent years, do show a number of instances of true masonic charity. Noteworthy are accounts rendered assistance to bereaved families, demonstrated concern for brothers who were suffering through periods of serious illness, and the organization of programs to honor through special recognition ceremonies and special events the widows of deceased members. The lodge has also on special occasions honored brothers who have served our nation overseas and at home during periods of armed conflict. The members of Whitman Lodge have from the earliest beginnings taken great pride in their performance of the ritualistic work, and the understanding that the officers have shown of their responsibilities and obligations to the craft. Members of the lodge have been prominently associated with agribusiness, retail business, banking, public secondary education, governmental affairs of Whitman County and the City of Pullman. Many, also, have been associated with the administration, faculty, staff and student body of Washington State University. A significant number of past and current out-of-town mem-

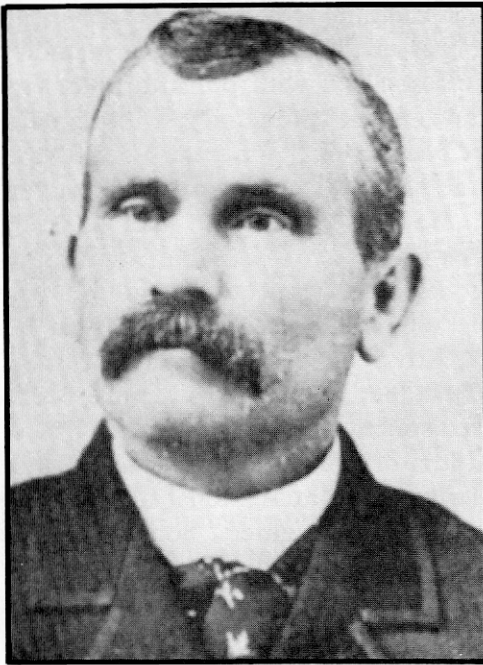


bers were university students at the time they petitioned for membership and completed their masonic degrees. In addition, many members of the lodge have been prominently associated with philanthropic, civic, religious, and patriotic organizations in the community. During national observances of the United States Bicentennial, Whitman Lodge was granted special dispensation by the Grand Master to participate as a body in Bicentennial parades in Pullman on May 17, 1975 and on May 22, 1976. Many members of the lodge have been very active in the affairs of Masonic organizations outside of the lodge itself. A good number hold memberships and have served as officers of Pullman Chapter No. 31, Royal Arch Masons, Nomad Council No. 25, Royal and Select Masters, Crescent Chapter No. 53, Order of the Eastern Star, the Colfax Commandery and the Shrine. Some have served with distinction as Deputies of the Grand Master in District 25. Some have held advisory and honorary positions in Masonic youth organizations, particularly in the International Order of DeMolay and the International Order of Job's Daughters. Some, also have been elected or appointed to chairs or committees within the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge, F.&A.M. of Washington, and to high positions as officers of state and national concordant Masonic bodies, particularly in the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Washington, the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters, the Grand Commandery, and the York Rite Sovereign College of North America.

Because of its unique location in the heart of a community which is the home of an active center of higher education in the state of Washington, Whitman Lodge has been, and is continuing to be, called upon by other lodges within this grand jurisdiction, and by those in many foreign jurisdictions, to coach, examine, and confer degrees by courtesy on candidates who are attending Washington State University. There were years, particularly those following the cessation of World War II hostilities, when courtesy candidates being initiated, passed, raised and coached in the posting lectures of the several degrees outnumbered those who had petitioned for membership in Whitman Lodge. During those years, the officers, the past masters, and other members who could find the time to learn the work, got plenty of practice, because in addition to stated communications, the lodge scheduled numerous special communications for the sole purpose of conferring degrees.

### **Real Estate Transactions and the Establishment of a Masonic Building Corporation**

From early times, the officers and members of Whitman Lodge had a dream that they would one day own property upon which to build a Masonic temple. Records are incomplete on how and precisely when it occurred, but the lodge apparently in the early 1920s acquired a sizeable



*E. H. Letterman  
His generosity carried the  
Lodge through financial  
stringency.*

piece of property on the southwest corner of Kamiaken and Paradise Streets in Pullman which would have been an ideal location for the construction of a Masonic temple which the lodge could have had as its permanent home. However, and perhaps in view of struggles to make ends meet, a campaign to raise funds for such an ambitious building program never materialized. It was at this time, as we previously noted, that the lodge was faced with an internal problem involving embezzlement of funds by one of its officers. Hence the climate for moving ahead with a building program was terribly clouded. It was at this time, also, that the federal government was looking toward the purchase of property in Pullman upon which to construct a new post office building. A member of the Lodge who served as Worshipful Master during these trying times (he is now deceased) would never discuss the details of what happened, but it is known that the lodge, perhaps through some "arm twisting," voted to abandon its plans for building on the site and sold the property to the federal government. The cornerstone of the building constructed on this site was laid in 1930, and when completed, the building served as the office of the postal service in Pullman for many years. The building was sold several years ago when a new postal service building was constructed on Pullman's South Grand Avenue. It is now being used as a motion picture theater.

The next chapter in the never-dying hopes and dreams of the lodge to build a Masonic temple in Pullman did not occur again until 1951 when it was learned that the property on the northeast corner of South Grand Ave-



**OFFICERS OF WHITMAN LODGE NO. 49, 1986**

*Front Row, left to right: Michael L. Taylor, Lester N. Liebel, Carl F. Engle, W.M., Vernon R. Parks, Merle G. Harlow, Oliver A. Leonard. Back Row, left to right: Emil Schell, O.J. Johnson, Kenneth J. Morrison, S. Allen Manning.*

nue and Blaine Street was for sale. The property included a house which at the time was in fair condition and adequate for rental until such time as the lodge could organize a campaign to replace it with a new temple building. In view of this, and the fact that the lodge then had some savings that could be used toward a cash purchase of property, a committee was appointed, with power to act in acquiring an option to buy. This committee reported back with a recommendation to proceed with the purchase. After proper notification of the membership that a vote on the recommendation would be called at a subsequent stated communication, the lodge approved the purchase unanimously on December 13, 1951. Recognizing that management of this property and the eventual development of places to build a temple required something more than the three principal officers of the lodge, upon advise of counsel, the first steps were taken by the membership on February 9, 1956 to establish a Masonic Building Corporation. A duly constituted committee, charged with examining the laws relating to the establishment of tax-exempt corporations in the state of Washington, and the relationship that such a corporation would have with the Grand Lodge, reported back to the lodge with its recommendations in October 11, 1956. Based upon these recommendations, the lodge accepted plans to proceed with an application for articles of incorporation of a separate organization that would be responsible for the management of all lodge prop-

erties and building funds, and which would also include on its board of directors representatives of all Masonic bodies currently using the lodge facilities. The final report of this committee was received and adopted by the lodge on October 8, 1959. Thus was born the Masonic Building Corporation of Pullman.

The Building Corporation took over the management and leasing of all Masonic properties, the collections of rents and of funds from dues and fees authorized by the lodge, the receipt and investments of funds from bequests, and the management of all investments designated for future building purposes.

As time went on, even with adopted increases in lodge dues to be deposited to the credit of the building fund, it was recognized by the lodge and the corporation that the hope of ever accumulating sufficient monies to construct a temple on the South Grand Avenue site was becoming very dim. The climate for borrowing money for this purpose at prevailing interest rates was also terribly clouded, particularly in view of a declining lodge membership. Consequently, upon serious reflection of the overall situation the corporation sold the South Grand property in 1980 with hope that another site could be found at some future time when the corporation might be in a better position to fund a building program.

### **Consolidation of Other Lodges with Whitman Lodge**

The disturbing decline in Masonic membership that has affected most lodges in this and other grand jurisdictions caught up with Reynolds Lodge No. 114 of Albion and Palouse Lodge No. 46 of Palouse in the early 1970s. Finding the number of members required to fill the chairs at stated communications, and even on some occasions to fill the chairs of the three principal officers necessary to open a lodge, was becoming a problem. Petitions for the degrees and for affiliation in these lodges had dropped off to zero for several years, and it was becoming commonplace for those members who were still active to accept re-election to the chairs of the three principal officers year after year. Consequently, overtures were made by the members of Whitman Lodge for consolidation. Eventually, and in keeping with Grand Lodge procedures, the members of Reynolds Lodge No. 114 petitioned Whitman Lodge for consolidation. Based on an unanimous ballot by the members of Whitman Lodge, this consolidation was consummated on May 8, 1975. The same actions resulted in the official consolidation of Palouse Lodge No. 46 on May 13, 1976.

### **Summary**

Throughout its 100 years, Whitman Lodge No. 49 has shown remarkable vigor in developing a program that from its origins has been tru-

ly based on the teachings found in the Masonic ritual. The tenets of brotherly love, relief and truth, as well as the admonitions of faith, hope and charity are to be found exemplified in many ways is within the records of the lodge. So long as these tenets and admonitions continue to be significant bases for the actions taken and the work done by the craft, there should be little concern for the continued good health of Masonry in Pullman. Certainly, there are some clouds on the horizon, but they are not being ignored. The good work performed, and the examples of good living by the members, continue to be maintained as the lodge moves on into its second century.

### **Acknowledgement**

The author is indebted to the late Edward C. Johnson and the late Ralph W. Gelbach for some excerpts that were taken from their brief papers on the early history of Whitman Lodge No. 49, written in 1956 and 1965 respectively. The author also wishes to extend fraternal thanks to Oscar J. Johnson, Secretary of Whitman Lodge No. 49 for making available lodge records, without which the writing of this history would not have been possible.



# Sarah Ann Bell McKenzie

by  
Eileen Nelson

*Editor's note: This article was originally prepared as historical project in the Pullman Methodist Church. It is about one of the first permanent residents of the area now occupied by Pullman, Sarah McKenzie. Not surprisingly the account of Mrs. McKenzie's involvement with the Methodist Church figures prominently in the story.*

Sarah McKenzie spent her girlhood days in Hancock County, Ohio, where she was born on February 19th, 1832. She died in Pullman, Whitman County, Washington, on February 19th, 1910, at the age of 78 years.

When Sarah was eighteen years old (1850) her family moved to Iowa where she met Daniel G. McKenzie and on September 3rd, 1855, they were married. In 1868, they moved to Kansas "to till the soil." On May 9th, 1877, they joined one hundred other families at Carthage, Missouri, to begin a three-month crossing of the Plains to Walla Walla, Washington Territory, travelling in two wagons pulled by three mules and one horse.

It was on September 16th, 1877, when Sarah and Dan with five of their seven children, came over the crest of the present Sunnyside Hill (the southwest quarter of present Pullman) through the stirrup-high brown bunchgrass that covered the land for as far as they could see in all directions, to view for the first time their homestead at the junction of three small streams to be called for a time "Three Forks." Their daughter May was ten years old at the time; when she remembered the event in later years she would impress one with the sense of remoteness and the wild solitude that prevailed that day.



*Daniel and Sarah McKenzie*

The McKenzies hauled logs from the Moscow Mountains to build a small log cabin that they later enlarged with a “boxhouse” addition. It was in this modest home where Pullman’s first Sabbath School was organized in the fall of 1881 and where in January of the same year the organization and election was held for Pullman’s first church, the Methodist Episcopal Church.

It was Mrs. McKenzie who persuaded Reverend C. M. Bryan, pastor of the Moscow Methodist Church to come to Pullman for a week long revival session in the “new school” building, that resulted in a number of converts and the organization of the church.

Sarah McKenzie was a splendid cook and set so bountiful a table that people felt fortunate when they could board at her place. The Moore brothers of Moscow had purchased land on Sunnyside Hill for Bolin Farr, and of course when they were in Pullman they took meals at Sarah’s. These Moore brothers were then persuaded to donate two lots near the “new school” of Sunnyside Hill for the new Methodist Church, which was soon completed.



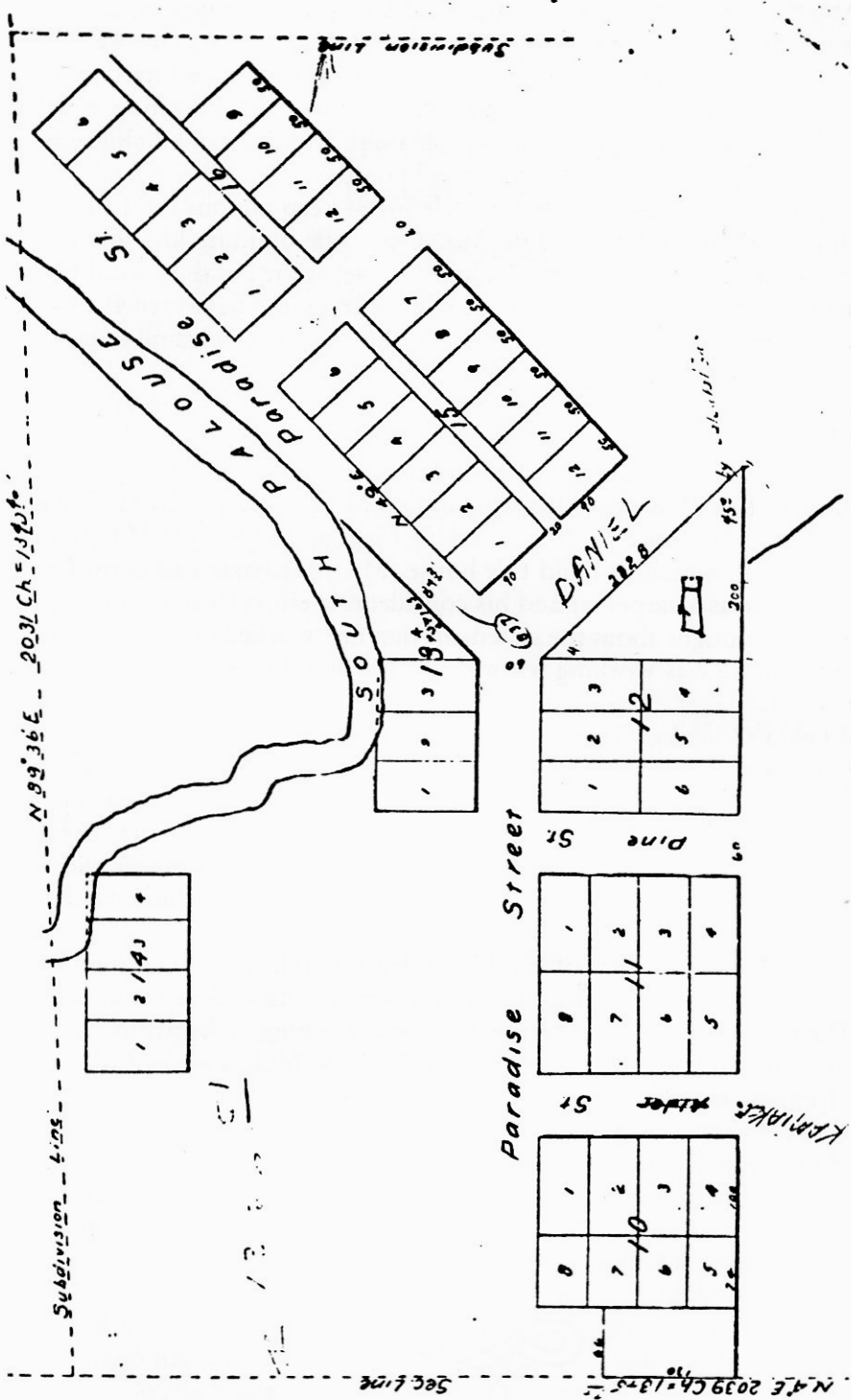
*Group of Pullman pioneers — 1907.  
D. C. McKenzie, center of back row.*

Sarah McKenzie was an influence in the community in many ways. The McKenzie children had to walk four miles out of town to go to school. It was the closest one in the area, organized in 1878. In 1880 as the local school district was organized and Mrs. McKenzie was one of the first three school directors. When the small school house got too cold for use during the winter of 1800, the teacher and her small flock finished their three-month term in Mrs. McKenzie's front room. Shortly thereafter the "new school" was built and opened on January 9th, 1882, to be used not only as a school but also for the Methodists' revival meetings.

Mr. McKenzie purchased an organ, the first such item in Pullman. When the Methodists met in the McKenzie home for prayer meetings and singing, the organ and the singing could be heard on all the other hills, and so their area of town came to be called Methodist Hill (it is presently known as Pioneer Hill, a name change attributed to the insistence of a member of the Presbyterian church).

In the early years Sarah McKenzie's home became something of a community center as many people gathered there and all were always welcome. Also, the pond in front of the McKenzie place attracted people for such things as skating in the winter. At times, her place was termed a "half-





Book A of Plats, page 50. Squire's House

McKenzie's First Addition of Pullman

way house” between Lewiston, Idaho, and Cheney, Washington, for the many travelers who stopped for a rest and to eat. Sometimes there were so many for a meal that a door had to be taken off its hinges and used as an extra table or as the means to lengthen the one they had. Preachers of all denominations were especially welcomed, along with wives and children, and of course they never paid for room and board.

Being a true Methodist, Sarah tried hard to keep saloons out of Pullman. She would not sign a land deed to any of the building lots the McKenzies offered for sale without first knowing what the building would be used for and that it was not for a saloon. She is known to have turned away one young man who asked to board at her place because he came to town to open a saloon.

The Pullman Methodist Church was on the Moscow circuit until 1888 when Reverend W. J. White was assigned to Pullman. In 1889, Reverend C. E. Gibson was assigned to Pullman and he and his family were taken in by Sarah McKenzie. It was then that Mr. McKenzie donated two lots on Pioneer Hill for a parsonage, taking his team to Moscow Mountain for lumber with which to build this house. Mr. McKenzie had considerable experience as a carpenter and his considerable effort to assist with the construction brought about the statement that he “worked on that parsonage as though he was working for wages.” Reverend Gibson helped with construction.

When a Congregational church was organized as Pullman’s second church and a new pastor arrived to serve it, the many Congregationalists left the Methodist church they had been affiliated with up to that time. This left the Methodist Church with a small membership. In fact, Sarah McKenzie and Lulu Downen (a convert of Reverend Bryan’s revival meetings) were the only members who lived inside the town of Pullman. But Sarah held the small group together and it grew again.

By 1892 the members of the Methodist Church in Pullman felt the need to build a larger building, this one closer to the college on College Hill. The minutes of the Quarterly Conference meeting of April 8th, 1892, when the prospectus was adopted, list both “Mrs. McKenzie and Mr. D. G. McKenzie” as members of the Official Board. Mr. McKenzie, however, had never been a member of the Methodist Church and seems to have been of the Catholic faith, but over the years he had been supportive of his wife and the church in many ways, including financial assistance. He may have been asked to participate on the Board because of his expertise in real estate, financing and building.



# **The Story of One Rosalia Family Inez Elliott Miller (November, 1963)**

*Most of this material was prepared for, and delivered to, The Rosalia Study Club, Rosalia, Washington.*

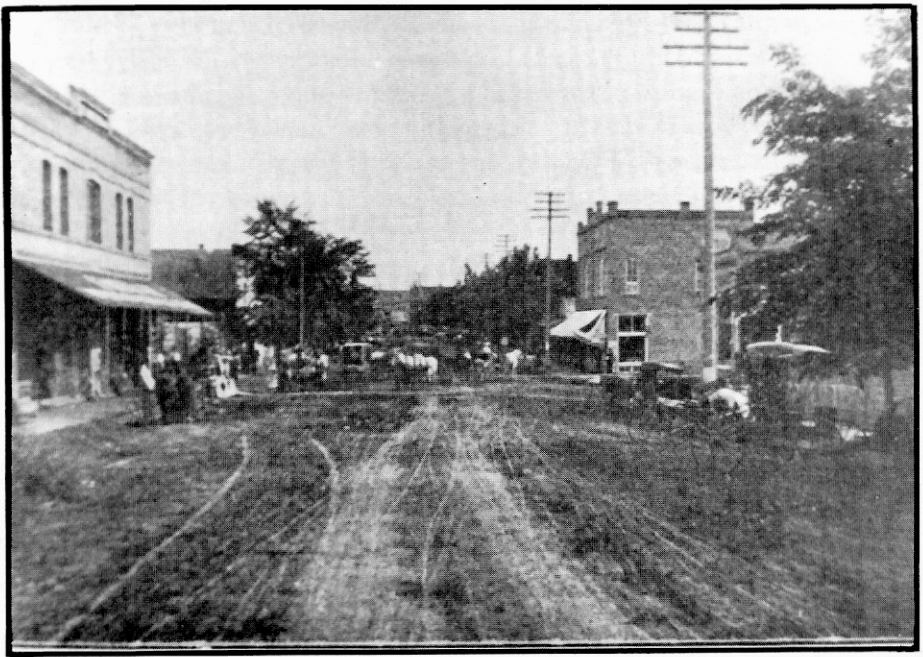
NOVEMBER 11, 1889—————NOVEMBER 11, 1965

*Madame President, and Club Members:*

Had you realized that our State is 76 years old today? — (about the age of some of us - but not as old as I!!!) And since our topic for today is “Lest We Forget Our Forefathers”, may I do a little remembering? My family did its little bit in starting the State on its way.

My father, Martin VanBuren Elliott (commonly called Van) was born December 7, 1839, near Kansas City, Mo., the oldest of four brothers, two of whom died in infancy. His father died when Van was about 10 years old; and his mother remarried some two years later. When the new husband moved into her home he brought his seven children - of whom she had known nothing. A year or so later Van ran away from home - to some distant relatives in Kansas; and from there he entered government service and became Master of a Government Military Wagon Train on the Mullan Road between Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and Forts Walla Walla and Colville in Washington Territory.

While in this service he met a young man named Hamblen Epps Hardy, from South Carolina, and they became lifelong friends. They loved this part of our country; and Van said, “When I get married, I’m going to name my first daughter, Wallua”, - which was the name given to old Ft. Walla Walla when it was closed down.



*Coming into Rosalia — 1907*

Van returned to Missouri in the late 1860s and at his brother's home he met Miss Alice Knight, a sister of his brother's wife, and that was the end of the Wild West for him.

Mr. Hardy remained here, and was appointed by the government to teach the Indians farming. He and father kept up a correspondence, and as Van's first daughter, WALLULA, grew older, she put in small notes, which grew longer as she grew older; and when she was 21 years old, he came to Missouri at the age of 59, and they were married in our parlor. He was a handsome, courtly gentleman who charmed all the aunts and sisters. The Hardys returned to Washington in March, 1890, the State at that time being about five years old.

Wallula grew very homesick after a while; and in 1893 she came home for a visit — and took me home with her. I was 10 years old and loved being here. Mr. Hardy was my friend and companion, — I could slide down his haystacks, wade in his wheat bins, and ride the natural-born bob-tailed pony without saddle or bridle. And I walked over the whole ranch, helping put out poison for the innumerable ground squirrels which could mow down *acres* of wheat. (I believe they are now extinct - or almost so.) And I will never forget the beautiful, bountiful wild flowers; nor the Indians who would walk unannounced into our house and say "Where's Hardy?", as they trekked from one camp to another. But Mr. Hardy put an end to that one day when he came into the house while they trying to trade their

headwraps for our sunbonnets! He said "Dont you come into the house again", and they never did, though they sometimes camped and fished at the lower end of Rock Lake.

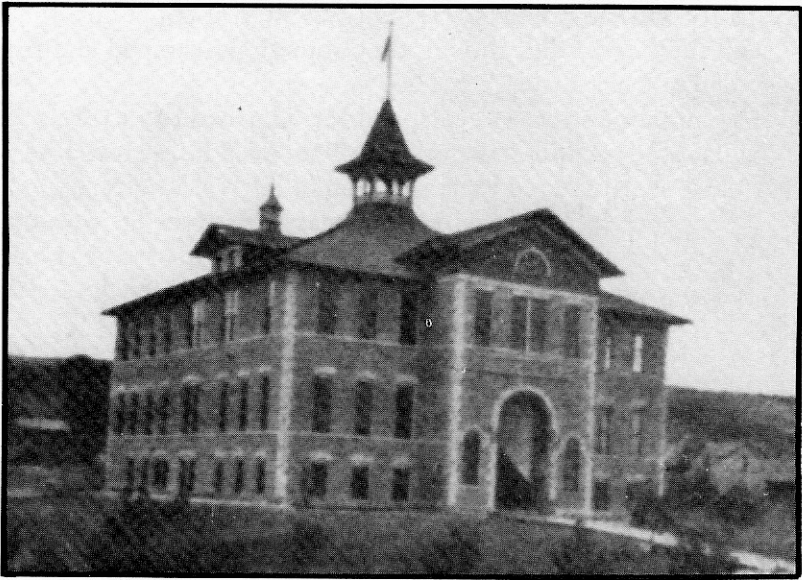
I was sent home after 1½ years, and Mr. Hardy died in 1896.

Wallula came back to Missouri in 1898 to keep house for father; but a few years later she answered letters from another Washington man, and in 1910 she returned to Washington and married Jervis D. Swannack, a wheat farmer near Sprague - there was no Lamont at that time. I had been teaching school and music since 1903, but gave up the school and kept house for Dad until January 17, 1912, when I married Marcus W. Miller of Plattsburg, Mo., and we came to Washington in March; and we have been in government service ever since, - I as a teacher and Postmistress at Lamont, and he as a Rural Mail Carrier (now retired).

Father's only living son was named "Epps" for that same Mr. Hardy; and after C.P.O. naval duty in World War I, Epps Jackson Elliott came to Washington to visit his relatives, and went on to the coast with a friend and located there. He was employed by the Standard Oil Co; became an independent dealer; married a school teacher, Miss Winnie Baclay of Pullman, Washington; bought a farm; and now raises Belgian horses which win prizes every year at the Puyallup State Fair, and the Pacific International Stock Show in Portland, Oregon. He initiated the International Plowing Match with the Canadian farmers held near Lynden, Washington, each June for the past 25 years, - unique in that only four-legged traction is permitted — horses, burros, cattle, etc. A Girl's Class in plowmanship was added about 1948, and Nancy Elliott was the first winner. She is now Dr. Nancy Elliott Sydnam, (M.D.) in Anchorage, Alaska, the mother of three children, is a licensed Air Pilot, and a novice scuba diver.

In 1956 the Plowing Match was held near Sumas, Washington, on the Canadian border. The boundary fence was lowered; the competitive plowing was done on Canadian soil; the judges stand was on the Border Line - and a man and team from each country plowed a furrow across the border, meeting in the middle. The Plowing Match is now listed as a Tourist Attraction by the State Chamber of Commerce.

I have long wondered about that old Mullan Trail, and in November we went to Washington State University in Pullman - and that was one of the most interesting days I've had in years. If ever you want to know about Washington history, go to the Archives Department in the Holland Library... Mrs. Mary Avery knows ever nook and cranny, every book and pamphlet; and I brought home a volume of Captain Mullan's Journals. I'm sure all of you have seen the monument marking the Mullan Road on your way to Spokane. It has been there many years; and a much later one was erected near Lamont, Washington, which was unveiled by Wallula's son,



*Public School, Rosalia, 1907*

Jervis D. Swannack, Jr. because his grandfather drove over that road many times with food, clothing, and supplies almost 100 years ago.

Now, I hope you are not thinking I am boasting about my family! - They were common, ordinary *pioneers* - whom N. Webster defines as "those who go before to remove obstacles for those who follow" - (in any field). They were a freedom-loving, God-fearing, hard working group of people. They had no electricity, indoor plumbing, intricate machinery, telephones, daily papers, automobiles, or highways; and if they wanted their mail, someone drove the twelve miles to Sprague and got it. I remember that once Wallula and I went in a two-wheeled cart, driving ol' Dock over those twelve miles. The soil there is very light, and I can still see the dust flowing like water as the wheels passed through the deep ruts. On a little slope between two great rocky bluffs that still look like stacks of books, was a sort of track crossing the road. We stopped to look at it - a sort of wavy one, about 4-5 inches wide; and she said "A rattle snake!" (and rattle snake was not a gourmet food in those days!) We spent the night with friends in town — too long a trip for one day.

But those pioneers built small churches and school houses. I remember two lessons I learned there. In the school taught by Miss Charlotte White, (the eldest sister of Florence, Ray, Elmina, and Audrey) who boarded with us, Eddie Robertson and Hardy Pearse (named for Mr. Hardy) got into a fight. Hardy was a slim, wiry lad, - Eddie far on the

plump side; Hardy was topside, flailing away when Miss White appeared, took him by the ear, placed a few good licks where they would do the most good (and the least harm), and sent him into the house. She then helped Eddie up, brushed him off and sent *him* in. The rest of us stood about watching, - and she knew we were questioning this procedure and she said, "I spanked Hardy for fighting; Eddie had *his* licking; he won't be fighting again." All was peace and quiet in that school. (See Footnotes to History)

And in the little church; after Sunday School one morning, a quiet fell over the place as the preacher stood up in the pulpit and Shelley Robertson with Rose Cook on his arm marched slowly up the aisle (no music). The preacher met them and solemnly read the marriage ceremony; the first church wedding I can remember — a beautiful, simple service. They drove away immediately to their individual Paradise. The rest of us stayed for the sermon. but there was a great charivari later!!

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#### Footnotes to History

No. 1. The Robertsons were our nearest neighbors, and Eddie was my most frequent playmate — good for "hide 'n seek" when Mr. Hardy was busy; and especially good at catching polywogs in the small stream below our spring; and once he caught a water snake! So - I asked him what the fight was about. Said he, "I said you were my girl, and he said you were his girl." They were both mistaken — I was Lucius Barnes' girl. The Barnes were comparative newcomers from down south (California, I think.) They were wonderful gardeners and Lucius and Nita frequently brought flowers to Miss White. One day they brought roses, and Lucius kissed the rose and tossed it to me. Miss White witnessed the incident and said not a word - nor did I - nor Lucius. I placed it on my desk and dashed out to "Run, Sheep, Run". Many years afterward, in far-away Missouri, Wallula asked me if I remembered that rose! Miss White had told her about it that very afternoon!! They thought it quite charming! (No one else in my whole life has kissed a rose and tossed it to me.)

No. 2. I was started home to Missouri in the care of Miss Florence White who was going to New York to become the wife of Mr. Bert Wagner. I was left in St. Paul, Minnesota to board a train for St. Joseph, Mo. By some mysterious mistake, after her train had gone on, I was put aboard a train for Chicago, Ill. The mistake was not discovered until we were far on the road, and I was deposited in Bloomington, Ill., where I spent the day in the depot, subsisting on nine of the dozen bananas which were given me. (I don't particularly care for bananas, any more). I reached St. Joseph the next day, where my father and sister had been anxiously waiting for about 24 hours.

No. 3. There are only two of my contemporaries of those days now living — Mrs. Myrtle Mills Wernick, of Sprague, (a widow) who owns large acreages of our old playgrounds around Lamont and Sprague; and Henry Judd, a retired electrical engineer in Spokane, now a dedicated gardener. He was a few years younger than Myrtle Mills, Beatrice Reid (his aunt, Mrs. Walter Lloyd, now deceased) and I, so he was something of a nuisance — tagging along when we were playing, especially when we were coasting down a long, nearby hill on a wonderful sled our hired hand had made for me. His mother, Eleanor Reid Judd, was a dear friend of Wallula; and when Mr. Hardy took Wallula upon Pyramid Mountain (now Steptoe Butte) to spend the night at Cashup Davis's "Dream House" with its marvelous telescope, the two women planned that at a certain hour next day "Nona" would perform some secret action in her back yard and Wallula would be watching for her through that telescope. IT WORKED!! Nona had a big spoon and was filling a pail with dirt! The "Dream House" burned in 1911 — visible for many miles in all directions.

## ● Publication of Note ●

*Grubstaking the Palouse: Gold Mining in the Hoodoo Mountains of North Idaho, 1860-1950*, by Richard C. Waldbauer. Pullman, Wa.: Washington State University Press, 1986. 75 pp., maps, photos, illus.

Have you ever dreamed of striking it rich by panning for gold in a rushing mountain stream? Have you ever wondered what sort of person would choose the rugged life of early placer mining?

Richard Waldbauer's *Grubstaking the Palouse* explores the world of frontier mining and its effect on early white settlements in the Palouse region. Mixing documentary evidence with fascinating anecdotes, *Grubstaking the Palouse* gives the reader a window into the past, the past that has shaped our present. The book states its own scope very well.

"The story of the Hoodoo Mining District is primarily about how important a small, local gold placer mining area was to the economic development of a much larger region. It is an attempt to show that for every bonanza, boom-and-bust, hell-bent-for-leather mining camp on the frontier there were dozens of quieter backwaters where the contributions to settlement were less notorious and more enterprising . . . the fruits of their [the miners'] energy fed others with visions of farms, factories, churches, and schools.

That is the surface interpretation . . . the wealth of the Hoodoos was social as well as mineral. The miners made up what has become a hallmark of American cultural history — a community in the wilderness."

The north fork of the Palouse River in northwestern Latah County, Idaho, known as the Hoodoo Mining District, bears evidence of intensive placer mining activities. The miners transformed small, forested creek valleys such as Excavation Gulch, covering them with great piles of gravel and rock which the forest is only now obviously reclaiming.

The perceptive text of *Grubstaking the Palouse*, augmented by numerous historic photographs, maps and illustrations brings to life the gritty reality of mining life at the time. The large format of the book allows the inclusion of detailed drawings of the mining equipment used in the Hoodoos.

—Jill Whelchel