

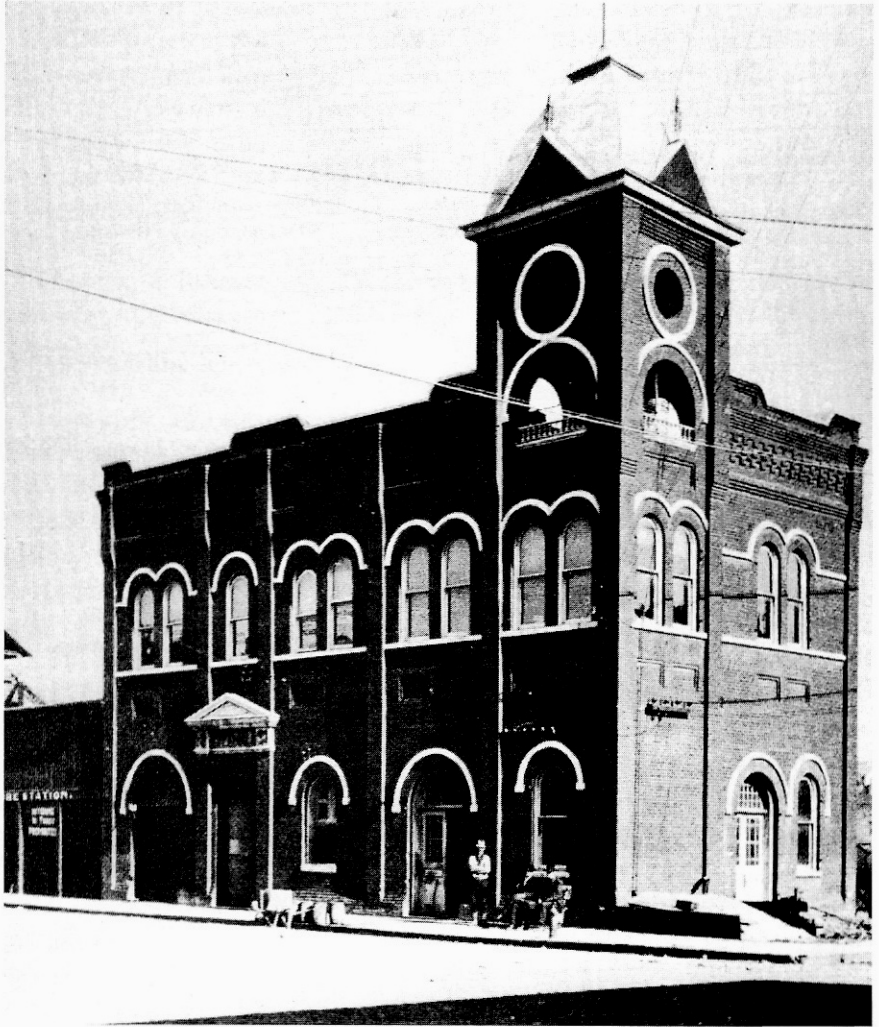
# Bunchgrass Historian

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**Pullman's Block 36 —  
— Streets Out of Time**



## Introduction

*In the course of their histories, rural communities like Pullman, Washington, have gone through many changes. Their miniature urban landscapes evolved to cope with social change, economic dislocation, and even political shortsightedness. Nurtured by the “boosterism” that accompanied the railroad-building era of the late nineteenth century, most of these towns grew for several decades. Then, as the twentieth century matured, they entered a period of supine decline.*

*What follows, is an extraordinary case study that reveals this life cycle in a dramatic way. It is the story of a single city block in Pullman, Washington. Written by long-time community resident and local historian Esther Pond Smith, the essay explores community development and shows how Block 36 evolved and how property owners and civic leaders adapted its character to meet the expedients of a quickening pace of life and modern technology.*

*Fortunately for us, Mrs. Smith has chosen to write history on the small scale. Her look at the microcosm reveals what has happened to rural America in general. Although it can be argued that Pullman has always been “a special case” because of Washington State University’s presence, the history of Block 36 is like the histories of countless other blocks in countless other Western towns. Once upon a time, there was open space. White settlers arrived and began to build a community. As the twentieth century progressed, buildings were constructed, replaced, and adapted to meet the needs of this community. But as the nature of America’s rural economy was revolutionized by mechanized farming, these communities changed, as well.*

*In practical terms, these changes have been devastating to small towns. Like the countryside that surrounds them, they are being depopulated. Rather than patronize local merchants, those residents who remain prefer buying consumer goods and life’s necessities from mass merchandising centers in far-off urban centers. Local businesses go on the rocks, or leave town; buildings fall into disrepair and are demolished; seldom are they replaced. Land that once housed prosperous mercantile establishments sit vacant. This is the story of Pullman’s Block 36, the former heart of a thriving business community. Drive by it some time. You will notice that it is mostly a parking lot.*

The Editors

# **Streets Out of Time The History of Pullman's "Block 36"**

**by  
Esther Pond Smith**

Lot 5, Block 36 in Pullman, Washington is the site where the old City Hall, more recently known as the Public Safety Building, stood as the center of Pullman's city government for nearly one hundred years. This landmark, built in 1893 and vacated in 1895, was razed in the summer of 1986, leaving Block 36 of the original townsite of Pullman, with the exception of Neill Public Library and a service station that stands next to it, much as it was when the first settlers came to make their homes in the area known then as Three Forks.

Three Forks never was a town. It was a watering hole along the Tinatpanup Creek in southeastern Washington Territory before anyone settled in the Palouse Country. It was where three creeks joined near the present Grand Street bridge in Pullman. Indians and later the first white homesteaders stopped at Three Forks to refresh themselves as they traveled through the area and to water their cattle, sheep, and horses which they had grazing on the surrounding bunchgrass land.

Block 36 is bordered by two of these creeks. It lies along the south side of Tinatpanup Creek, as the Indians called the stream that runs through the valley from east to west. Later, the white settlers named this stream the south branch of the Palouse River. Dry Creek, dry most of the year, flows from the south, under the east sidewalk on Grand Street. It borders Block 36 on the west and empties into the Palouse River at the northwest corner of the block. Missouri Flat Creek is the third fork,



draining the valley from the north of Pullman into the South Palouse River to the west of the present Grand Street bridge. Missouri Flat Creek was named by the homesteaders who came from Missouri and settled along its banks.

The first road through Three Forks followed Indian trails. It extended from the north, along the east side of the Missouri Flat Creek. This road, later named Grand Street when Pullman was platted in 1882, was the main road from Colfax to Moscow. It crossed Tinatpanup Creek at the junction of the three forks and then followed Dry Creek along the west side of Block 36.

Homesteaders, cattlemen, and sheep ranchers began settling around Three Forks between the 1860s and 1870s. By 1875 most of the land had been claimed and these newcomers felt the need for a place closer than Colfax or Moscow to do business. They discussed starting a town at Three Forks. Bolin Farr was one of these dreamers. He talked with his friend J.M. Palmerton, who later wrote these notes to another pioneer, W.R. Renfrow, the Postmaster at Colton.

My first acquaintance with the Palouse Country dates from June 2nd 1875 — 10 p.m. The event in my life long to be remembered. Myself and my wife landed at Almota on [the] Snake River and thus finished the trip across the continent. Commenced at St. Louis May 7th as the steamer hove in site [sic] of the landing, we beheld a narrow sandy bar and an Indian wickey-up our solitary cabin, a bright blazing campfire, Bowlin Farr and wife waiting our arrival, Henry Spaulding, the original settler, and wife were the only inhabitants of Almota bar. We accepted Mr. Spaulding's hospitality and staid [sic] all night. Coming out to Union Flat the next day, about June 15th, [18]75, I first beheld the present cite [sic] of Pullman haveing [sic] camped the night before less than one-half west on the Palouse, just above the present residence of Mr. Russell. As we went into camp that evening, I told Mr. Farr that I would try my luck fishing while he got supper. I caught a 3# salmon-trout and have never been able to equal that feat.

I will remember Mr. Farr told me while siting [sic] around our campfire there would be a town built on Pullman's present cite [sic]. He said it was a natural place for a town, as all roads would lead to that point. It was known as 3 Forks at the time. The Lewiston and Spokane Indian trails crossed here and it was a natural camping place for Indians. There was supposed to be a scope of country extending a distance of ten miles or more towards Staley that had but little snow on, where the rest of the country was deeply covered with a white mantle. This favored section was inhabited by a band of wild horses. And the early settlers used to run all of these good saddle horses to death trying to capture a worthless wild cyuse [sic]. I believe Fletcher Staley could tell of some experiences in that line.

The only indication of the white man's onward march was an occasional extinguished campfire or a picket pine where the faithful bronco had procured his supper from the luxuriant bunchgrass abounding on every hand.

Mr. Farr wanted me to take a ranch on Pullman's present cite [sic] but I was looking for a level valey [sic] a mile or more wide, so I went on to Moscow. Mr. Llewallen and fami-

ly were the only inhabitants. I wandered over to Palouse City where Pap Breeding and a force of men were hewing out the logs for Breeding's mill. A shanty was the only house. I went down Four Mile Creek and Spring Flat to Colfax. And having found a ranch, having passed over thousands of acres of the finest land on earth, yet I could not find the Paradise I was seeking — and I had been to Paradise Valley to [sic] as the pioneers around Moscow were wont to call their valley. But the settlers around Colfax spoke of their country as Hog Heaven. And it was known far and near to their disgust. It derived its name from the camas that grew in imence [sic] quantities on the upper Palouse valley.

### **Homesteaders Preceded the Businessmen**

Bolin Farr and his family were the first permanent white settlers to live in the Three Forks valley. In 1875 they claimed the northwest quarter of land in Section 6, Township 14, Range 45 for their homestead. It was recorded at the Whitman County Courthouse in 1875. In the early 1880s, they built a two story frame house on the northeast corner of their land. It was located on the north side of the South Palouse River within sight of Three Forks. The house, remodeled in recent years, still stands at its original location — Northwest 320 Park Street.

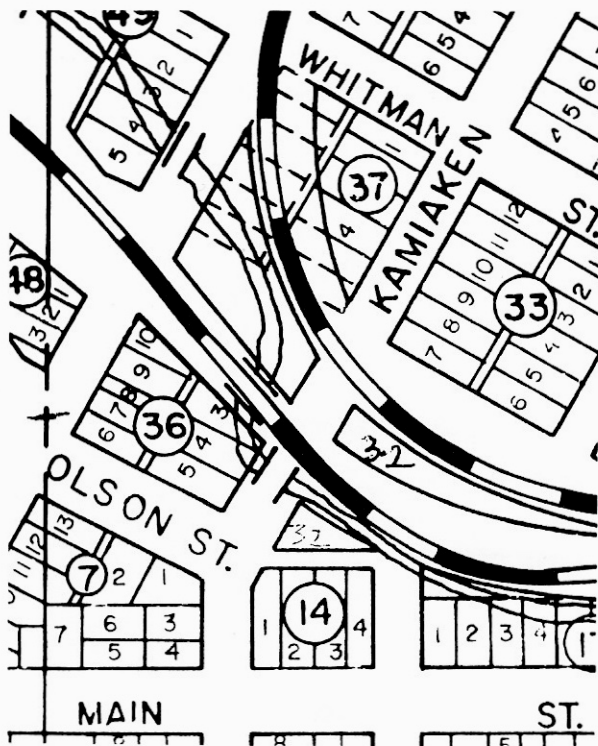
In 1877 Daniel G. McKenzie and family and the William and Ed Ellsworth families settled on Section 5, adjacent to the Farr land. McKenzie built his log cabin along the road on the south corner of William Ellsworth's land which later became Block 36 in the new town that was built.

Daniel McKenzie sold half an acre of his land adjoining the Farr property to Orville Stewart in 1881. Stewart and a partner, M.D. McKenzie, Stewart, Lee, the Ellsworths, along with a few farmers, began to shape a community changing the name from Three Forks to Pullman.

Mr. Farr gave land for the first one-room school located on the west hillside and for a cemetery higher on the hill (now Sunnyside Park). In 1881 Mr. Farr made a plat for the new town on his land along Dry Creek and Dry (Grand) Street. The plat included the present Main, Alder (Kam-ia-ken), and Paradise Streets which were on the McKenzie property and on the already established road.

The next year, 1882, Farr sold that part of his land which he platted to Charles Moore of Moscow. Moore also purchased land from William Ellsworth which bordered both Farr's and McKenzie's land. The original plat of Pullman made by Farr was declared vacated and a new plat was accepted, made by McKenzie and Moore on their combined lands. This plat has never been changed.

All blocks on the 1882 plat were given numbers, the one where the old City Hall (Public Safety Building) stood being number 36. No streets were established around this block except the road along Grand Street. In 1888 the city was incorporated and the next year the new Board of Trust-



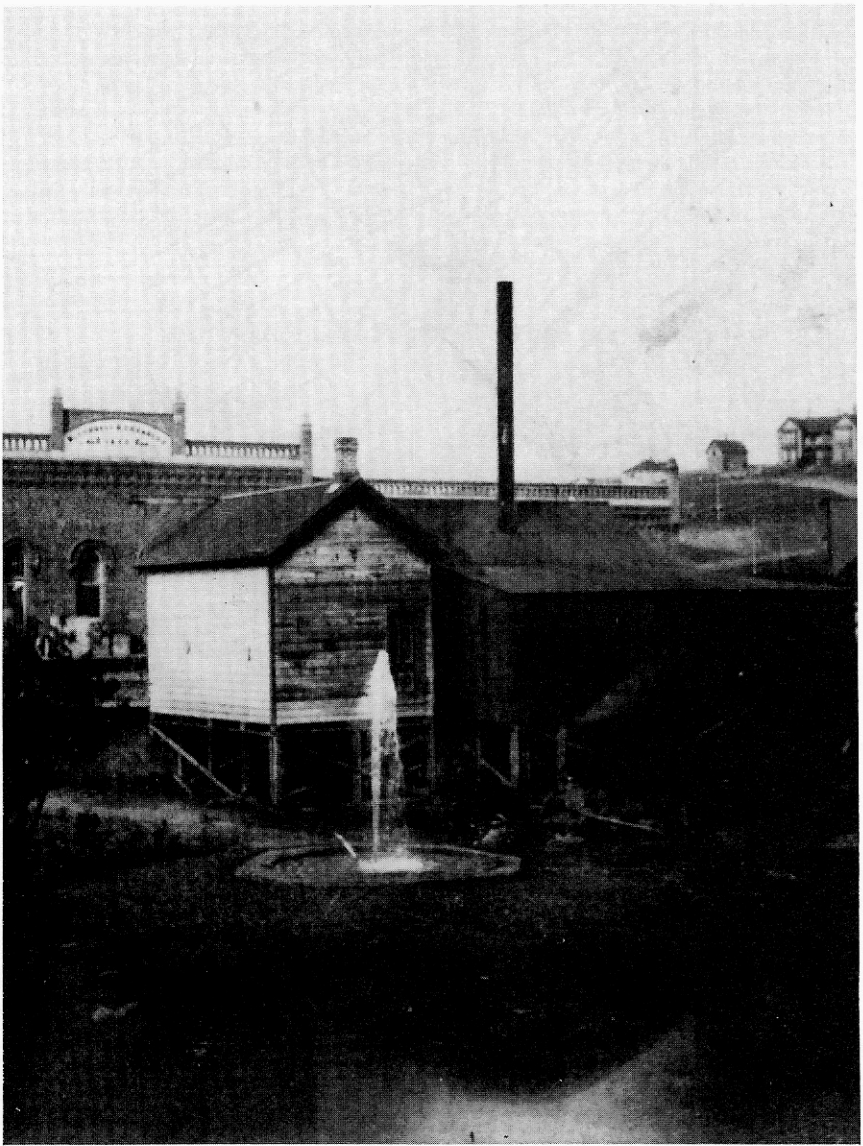
—Esther Pond Smith

Block 36 in Pullman, Washington has been important in the development of the city since the town was platted in 1882. From the first building on Lot 7, Reaney's Hall, built in 1887, to the Public Safety Building, destroyed in 1986, the block has served as business property and city government.

ees, as the city officials were called had all city streets graded. This included Main, Paradise, Alder, Grand, and Olsen Streets. With Olsen Street opened, Block 36 provided desirable building lots for the new town. Until then the entire block was low and often flooded by the creek. By changing the channel of the stream and with much filling and grading, Block 36 became the center of Pullman's city government.

### **Railroads Built Along Block 36**

Block 36 was an empty block when the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company was built along its bank in 1885. Although Pullman has not had passenger service on its two railroads since 1970, the OR&N (Union Pacific) and the Northern Pacific (Burlington Northern) and their depots, located on the west and north side of Block 36 were major influences in the development of this town. The OR&N, surveyed to Pullman in 1883, gave impetus to immigration and many new businesses. It was completed in



—*Esther Pond Smith*

*The "City" Artesian well and power plant for the first city water system. The buildings faced Olsen Street.*

1885 and the Northern Pacific came in 1887. These lines not only provided transportation from the 1880s to 1970 for immigrants, residents, and thousands of college students at Washington State University, but also carried the bountiful grain crops produced by the area's farmers to markets on both the East and West coasts.

The Union Pacific depot has always been located at the same place, North 225 Grand. It has been remodeled several times, the last time as the local office of Lincoln Mutual Savings Bank, 1974-1984, and for Washington Mutual Savings Extension, 1984-1985.

At first the Northern Pacific depot was located 600 feet north of the present depot - just north of Whitman and Grand Streets. This place was too far out of town, especially since there were no sidewalks or street lights. People had to carry kerosene lanterns to find their way after dark and often had to walk in ankle deep mud. The railroad purchased land at Kamiaken and Palouse Streets and in 1902 built a 32x160 feet frame building which in 1916 was replaced by the present brick building.

### **Pullman's Water Works System**

Olsen Street on Block 36 was where Pullman's water supply system started. In 1889 a well was dug on Main Street for the Palouse Hotel which resulted in an Artesian well, the first of twenty such wells in town. Pullman became known as the city of flowing wells — THE ARTESIAN CITY. In 1890 the city decided to provide a water system for the community and a bond issue was passed. A well was dug on the Olsen Street lot which resulted in one of the Artesian wells, the seventh one in town.

The pressure in the well was sufficient for a storage reservoir which was built on Alder Street 150 feet above the town on Pioneer Hill. It was adjacent to the present Woodcraft Park. Late in 1890 the 150,000 gallon tank was filled and seven hydrants were in operation on the downtown streets, mostly for fire protection of the business buildings.

In 1891 the well at the water works was made into a fountain with a cement basin 10 feet in diameter. The water rose 11 feet above it and by 1892 the well gave out and it was necessary to dig another which was done on the same property. The old well was rebuilt and by 1899 the city had two wells on Block 36.

As the town grew and the demand for water increased, the city purchased a lot north of the Alton Hotel (now Standard Lumber Company) and built a new well. In 1913 they purchased more property at the Alton Hotel location and built a second well. Both of these wells are in use today. In 1915 the city moved the old pump out of the city hall and destroyed the extinct Alder Street reservoir. (Part of the old pumping room in city hall became a jail vault and a dog pound.)

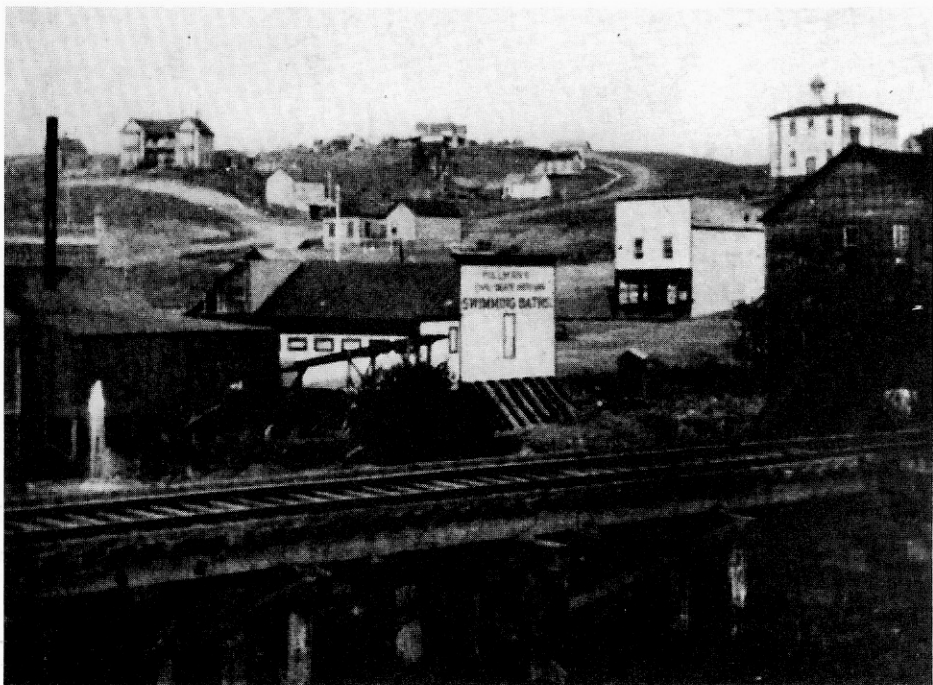
### **Pullman's Chalybeate Swimming Baths**

When the city artesian well was dug at the City Hall location, J. W. Thompson and attorney Thomas Neill decided to make use of some of the water by building a public swimming pool. In 1891 a building was constructed adjacent to the city water station. A tank 24X35 feet, with the

main part 12 feet deep, and holding 24,000 gallons of water was installed. In the front of the building were two small rooms fitted with tubs; shower baths with hot and cold water were arranged in the main room. The water was heated with steam from the engine in the water works station. Dr. Webb, a local physician, declared the water beneficial to health, perhaps superior to Medical Lake. Charges for swimming were twenty-five cents and season tickets were available.

When the baths were opened it was a festive occasion with the Pullman Kid Band providing the music. Popular with both the men and women, more than 200 took the plunge the first day, some even coming from Moscow, Idaho. Issac Newton, a local attorney, was given credit for being the first one in the pool. The Pullman Herald reported that "the arrangements of purifying the water and for convenience and safety of the patrons are so perfect that the institution is a 'thing of beauty and a joy forever.'".

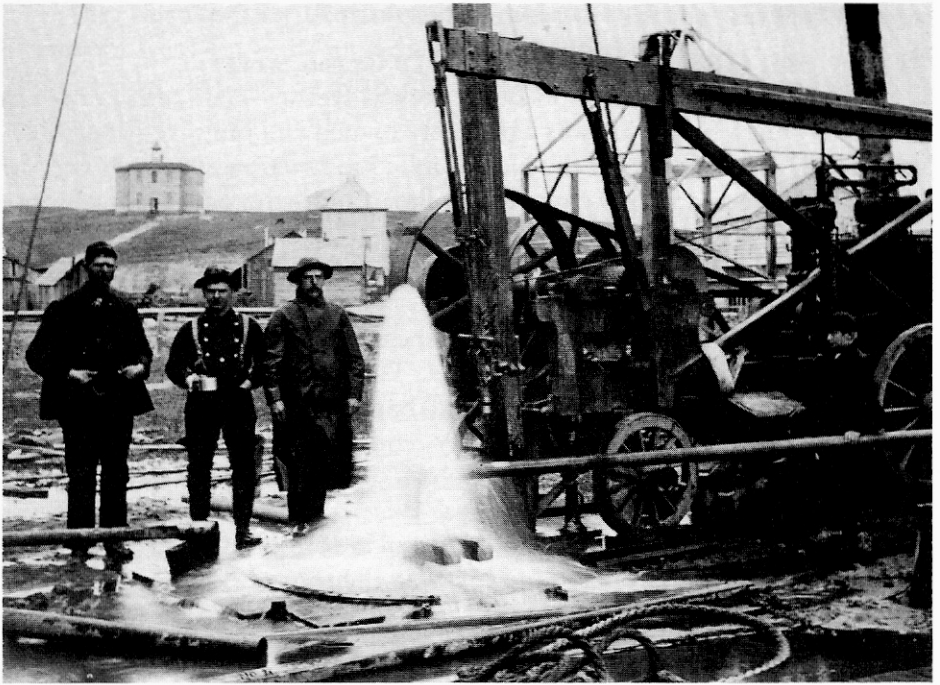
But the joy did not live long. While the baths opened in the 1892 season as a great attraction, by 1893 they were doomed. The Pullman Herald completed the swimming baths history with the following story:



—Esther Pond Smith

*The artesian well also furnished water for the Chalybeate Swimming Baths built next to the power house. Reaney Hall is the unpainted building at the right.*





—Esther Pond Smith

*The well digging crew and the machine that produced the seventh artesian well in Pullman. It was on Olsen Street and produced water for the city's first pressure system. The water was forced into a storage tank on Pioneer Hill south of McKenzie Street, adjacent to Woodcraft Park. The large building on the hill is the second school building in Pullman. Partially visible to the right is the first one room school and the First Community Church.*

In April of 1891, J.W. Thompson leased the unused portion of the city lot near the water and steam plant for \$15 per month for 15 years, the city reserving the right to buy from Thompson the building which he erected therein at cost plus 19% per annum for five years. Mr. Thompson erected the bath and with all additions and alterations, expended \$1800.

In 1892 Mr. Thompson sold the building and his contract to R.S. Morton for \$2500. When the present council took their office they found that they required the space occupied by the bath house and that its continuance there would present a special rating for the city insurance and that under their contract it was costing the city more than they received. They finally agreed to pay Morton \$2500 if he would move the building off the lot and surrender his contract with the city council. He agreed and the building is now being moved.

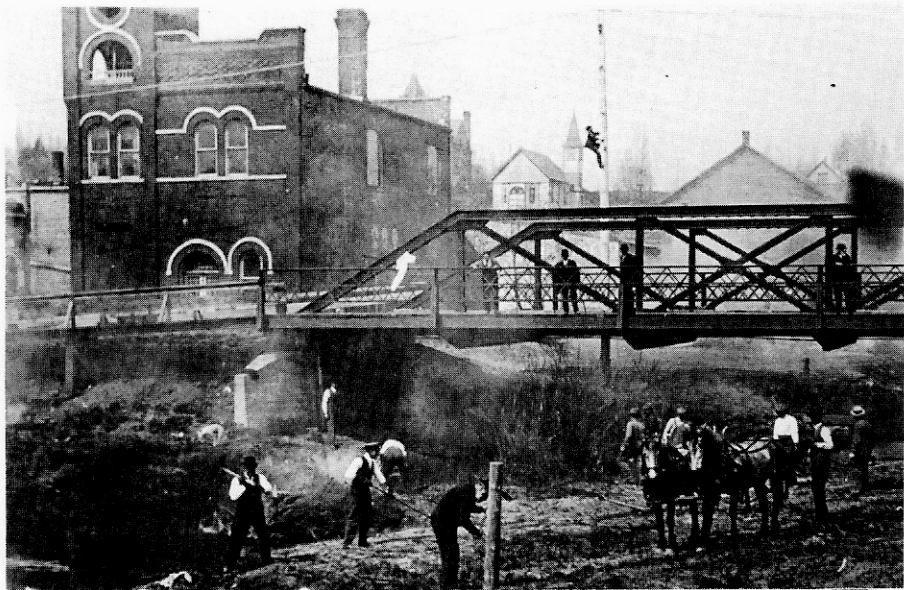
## Businesses Located on Block 36

### Reaney Hall (1887) 1006 Grand (N 210 Grand Street)

The first building built on Block 36 was Reaney Hall, also known as Reaney's Opera House. It was a privately owned hall built by Albert Reaney in 1887. It stood where the Neill Public Library now stands. It was the cultural and recreational center for Pullman until the city Opera House was built at the south end of Grand Street in 1893. The Hall was a two story building facing on the original road through Pullman. It was for rent for whatever use it could serve.

The first floor was rented most of the time to implement shops. Staver and Walker were the first occupants. T.L. Bramel had the implement shop in 1894 and in 1895 Reaney and Basher had a flour exchange for wheat. In 1896 they handled hides, hay, and grain. Mr. Reaney also had a dry cleaning plant in the building. From 1898 to 1899 this lower floor was Pullman's first bowling alley, known as Warners Bowling Alley. This was followed by a roller skating rink and later an indoor baseball place.

The actual hall or opera house was on the second floor. It served as a meeting place for the community; for speeches, mass meetings, voting, and revival meetings. It was also a social hall as many dances and dinners took place at Reaney's. There was a large stage at one end with scenery which was used often for plays, concerts, minstrel and acrobatic shows. The hall could seat 600 people.



—Esther Pond Smith

*The Chamber of Commerce Cleanup Day in 1911. After the flood in 1910, the new bridge and approach on Kamiaken Street had been raised.*



Mr. Reaney left Pullman in 1900 and the building was leased as the Farmers Livery Barn. Reaney died in 1910 and records show that his wife Phoebe sold the property (Lot 7, Block 36) to Henry Willies in 1911. The building then became Willies Garage.

### **Farmers Livery Barn (1905-1909)**

Mr. Colton ran the livery barn until 1906 when he sold the business to L.B. Schultz. *The Pullman Herald* reported in 1907 that the barn was under the management of A.J. Inman. Frank Burnett and Dan Crewing leased it for a sales barn in 1909.

### **Willies Garage (1911-1935)**

After Henry Willies purchased the Reaney Building, he started a garage and repair shop which he ran for more than twenty years. He named it the Novelty Repair and Garage but it was always known as the Willies Garage. It was a popular place for renting a touring car or leaving a car while in town. In 1921, Henry's brother Ernest, remodeled the building and sold Columbia Touring cars.

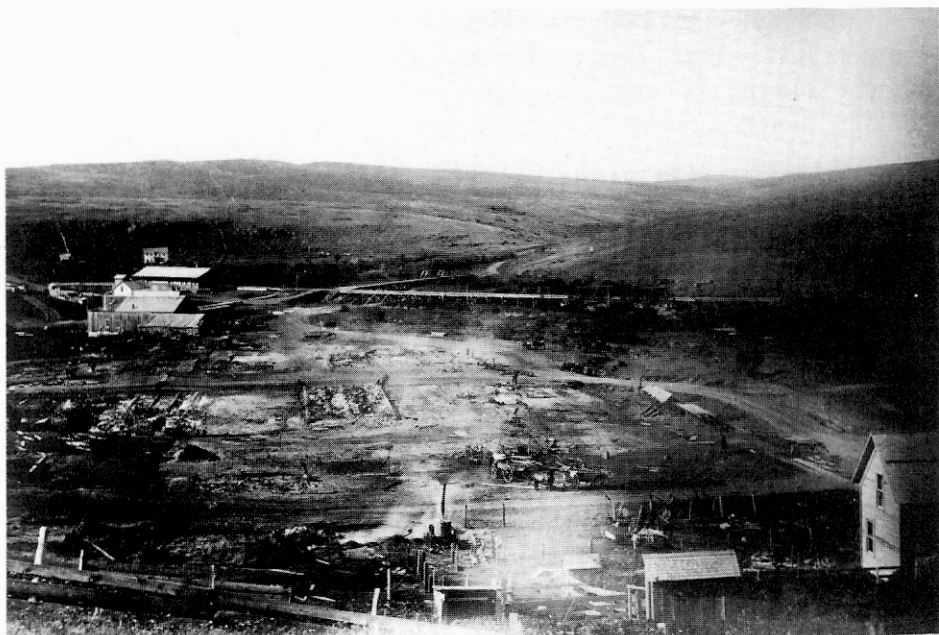
### **Potlatch Lumber Company Annex (1938-1957)**

The Potlatch Lumber Company which had its business in the old Star Livery Barn, expanded into the Reaney Building next door in 1938. They used it for their office and for finished lumber like moldings and trims. They sold this building to Bestway Building Center in 1957.



—Esther Pond Smith

*The Star Livery Barn, built in 1891, faced on Grand Street. It became the Potlatch Lumber Company in 1915. This view shows the area between the lumber company and the city hall in the early 1920s. The building on the right was the Standard Lumber Company as it looked before being rebuilt after a fire in 1952.*



—Esther Pond Smith

*In 1887, a fire destroyed all buildings on Main Street. Block 36 lies along the OR&N Railroad tracks near the brushy junction of the three creeks. The OR&N depot, built in 1885, is at the left. The two story house beyond the depot is the home of Bolin Farr, first settler in the valley.*



—Esther Pond Smith

*Pullman after the 1887 fire. The OR&N depot and the swamp where the three creeks join are in the foreground. Block 36 is to the left of the depot. The dark buildings at the left of the picture are the Daniel McKenzie homestead located on Paradise Street. The house highest on Pioneer Hill was the second McKenzie home built in 1887 and is still standing at SE 565 South Street.*



—Esther Pond Smith

*Pullman in 1889. The building on the left was the First National Bank, (now the Old National Bank). This building became Pullman's first city hall when it was moved to the northwest corner of Olsen and Alder (Kamiaken) just before the fire that destroyed the buildings on Main Street.*



—Esther Pond Smith

*Built in 1893, this brick building served the city until 1986. It was City Hall, Fire Department, Police Department, Jail, Chamber of Commerce, and Library. The entrance was on Olsen Street until it was remodeled in 1915.*

### **Bestway Building Center (1957-1961)**

Bestway Building Center used the old Reaney Building for about four years before moving to a new location on South Grand Street. The Reaney Building was sold to the city of Pullman and was remodeled into the Neill Public Library.

### **Neill Public Library (1963)**

The Pullman Public Library has had two locations on Block 36. The AAUW started a children's library in the basement of the Presbyterian Church as a summer library. It soon outgrew this space and was moved to the second floor of the Emerson Department Store Building in 1924. The city took over the administration in 1927 and by fall of 1930 there were more than a thousand volumes and an increased demand for adult books. The move was made to larger quarters on the second floor of the City Hall at Olsen and Kamiaken. By 1958 it had outgrown this room and was moved to a store building at N. 122 Grand Street. When the city of Pullman purchased the Reaney Building from Bestway Building Center, they hired Kenneth Stormont, a Spokane architect, to remodel it for the new library. The library was dedicated April 27, 1963, having been endowed by and named for a long time Pullman businessman and his wife, Robert and Anna Neill.



East on Olson St. From Grand St. City Hall in Center

—Esther Pond Smith

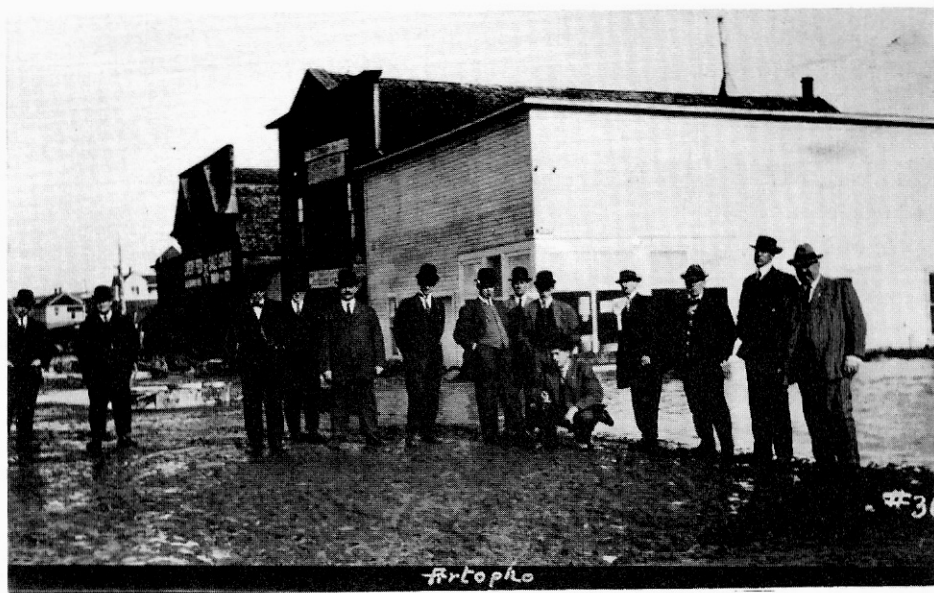
Olsen Street during the 1910 flood. The white building on the left was built on the corner of Grand and Olsen Streets in 1908 as The Pullman Chop Mill. In 1932 it was changed to the Chevron Service Station.

## Star Livery Barn (1891-1915) 1012 Grand

Early in 1891, architect William Swain of Pullman drew plans for W.S. Reider for a livery barn on Grand Street just north of Reaney's Hall. By the end of the year the barn was finished and the *Pullman Herald* noted: "Mathewson and Reider's new livery barn is magnificent, inside and out." The barn was a huge two story building with space for hay storage in the loft. It became a prominent livery barn in the area until horses lost their popularity with the coming of the automobile. Farmers left their teams there when they came to town and travelers often rented teams and fancy rigs to take a ride or visit a neighboring town. In late 1901, Reider sold his half interest in the barn to W.H. Kinkaid and from then on there were over twenty-five different proprietors. The last owner was R.H. Clayton of Moscow. He sold the building to the Potlatch Lumber Company in 1915.

## Potlatch Lumber Company (1915-1957)

In 1915, the Potlatch Lumber Company purchased the barn, and remodeled it into a lumber yard. In 1938, the company enlarged their space by moving into the old Willies Garage building next door. They sold this building to Bestway Building Center in 1957.



—Esther Pond Smith

Early buildings on Block 36, facing Grand Street. To the left is the Star Livery Barn, 1891-1915; the Potlatch Lumber Company, 1915-1938. In the center, Reaney Hall, 1887-1910; Willies Garage, 1911-1935. On the right is the Pullman Chop Mill, 1908-1932.



## Henry's Richfield Service Station (1940-1971) 1014 Grand

After the Potlatch Lumber Company had occupied this lot from 1915 to 1939 and prior to that the Star Livery barn from 1891 to 1915, the old building was torn down. In the 1940's the ARCO Oil Company built a service station next to the Palouse River on Block 36. It was operated by Arthur Henry from 1946 to 1959 and by Gerald Arnold from 1959 to 1961. The name was changed to Jerry's Richfield Service Station in 1961 and Jerry Arnold continued to manage the station until 1971 when ARCO Company closed the station and had it torn down.

The city owned the property and after the station had been demolished the space along the creek became a parking lot for the patrons of Neill Public Library. The rest of Lots 9 and 10 on Block 36 became an attractive park next to the library providing a pleasant entrance to the building and a place to sit and read outdoors.

## Pullman City Hall

In February, 1889 the newly formed board of Trustees of Pullman appointed a committee; Messers Hill, Kaylor, and Phillips, to select a site for a town hall, a jail, and an engine room. The committee chose the lot at the east end of Block 36 on Olsen Street for the new city building. Two different buildings have served the city government in this location. The city hall built on Paradise Street in 1972 is Pullman's third seat of government.



—Esther Pond Smith

*This frame building first served as a bank at Main and Alder, then as Pullman City Hall on Olsen Street and finally became a barber shop on East Main Street.*

For the first city hall (1890-1893) the Trustees purchased a one story frame building located on the W corner of Main and Alder (Kamiaken) Streets from The First National Bank (now Old National Bank) and moved it to the Olsen Street site. The bank was having a two story brick building built on their lots and reserved the right to occupy their frame building until their new one was finished. By the end of 1890, the bank moved to its new quarters, then the Trustees had an office and the city government had its first home. The frame building was used for the City hall until 1893 when plans were made for the brick building which served the city until 1986. The one room building was moved to east Main Street and used as a barber shop. It was destroyed in the 1910 flood.

Local architect William Swain was asked by the city council in January, 1893 to prepare plans for a City Hall. Swain's plans called for a two story brick building having a sixty foot frontage on Olsen Street. The first floor was to contain the engine room and pumps, Fire Department apparatus, and the coal bins. The second floor contained a council chamber, 24X40 feet in size, and offices for the officials. The building was to have a 50 foot tower which would contain the fire bell. In March of 1893 the council awarded the contract for the erection of the building to Thatcher and Larson for \$5285. The new City Hall was completed by the end of the year.

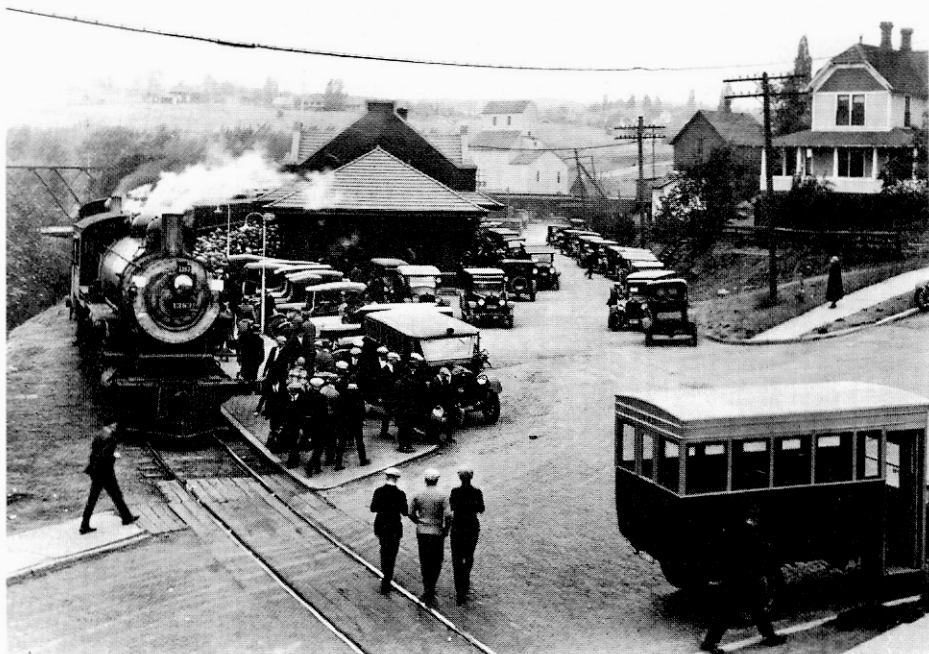
In 1915 plans were made for remodeling the interior of the City Hall at a cost of \$3000. The work was finished early in 1916 with a new interior arrangement in the building. The lower floor was fitted with rooms for various city offices. A restroom, jail vault, and Water Commissioner's office were also added.

All partitions were removed on the second floor and the area rebuilt. The remodeling provided a commodious assembly room, a dining room to seat 200, and a kitchen. It also served the Chamber of Commerce and City Council meetings.

The entrance, which had previously faced Olsen Street, was changed to the Kamiaken Street side.

The 1934 remodeling changed the exterior of the building from its original style of architecture to a straight line box type. A plaque was added to the Olsen Street side of the building giving the names of the City Council members in 1934.

The old City Hall not only housed city officials, the Police Department, jail, and Fire Department, but at times served whatever city need or emergency arose. When the building was remodeled in 1915, the Pullman Chamber of Commerce agreed to share half of the expense for rooms. With the dining and kitchen facilities available they used the council chambers for their weekly luncheons.



—Esther Pond Smith

*This Northern Pacific depot was built in 1916. Before paved highways college students from western Washington traveled to Washington State College on the Cougar Special. Buses and faculty waited at the depot to transport the students to their college dorms.*

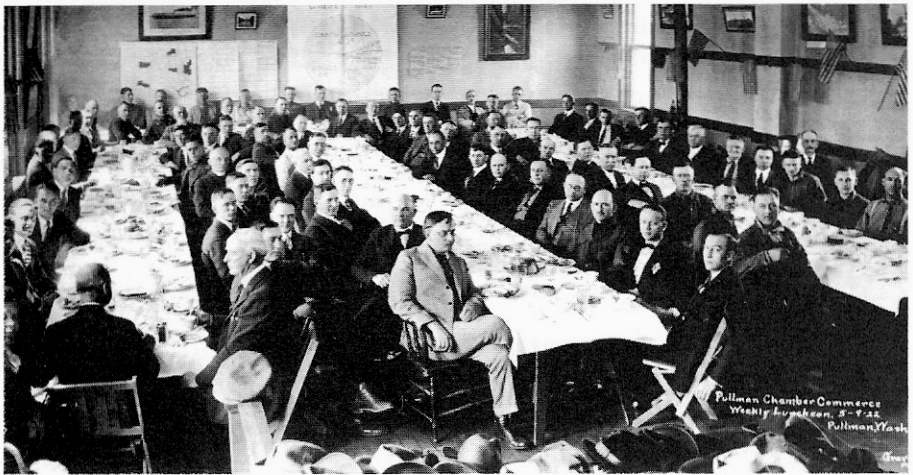
After the city took over the administration of the local library and more space was required, the library was moved to the second floor of City Hall. It occupied a front room space from 1930 to 1958, then was moved to larger quarters at 916 Grand. It moved back to Block 36 in 1963 at North 210 Grand.

City Hall even became a school for a time in 1904. The Pullman school building was overflowing with no place to house the extra students. A room was converted into a classroom which took care of about forty 4th and 5th grade pupils.

The council chambers served as a church for the Methodists in 1922 when their church building furnace cracked.

After the new City Hall was built on Paradise Street in 1972, the old City Hall became the Police Department. Renamed the Public Safety Building, this was the last duty for the old building. By 1985 the police had outgrown their space. A new police station was built on McKenzie Street, back of the City Hall. It was dedicated June 14, 1986. The old City Hall no longer had a use. The city tore it down and the area now serves as a city parking lot.





—Esther Pond Smith

*The weekly Chamber of Commerce luncheon was held on the second floor of the City Hall. In 1922 the Chamber entertained those who volunteered and helped clear the grounds of the city owned property on east Main Street which was to become a community building, the Washington Hotel. This group represents most of those businessmen and farmers who guided the affairs of the city from 1910 to 1950.*

### **Pullman Fire Department**

The city council established a fire department for the protection of the businesses and the residences in 1890. After the City Hall was built in 1893, a one story building was built on Olsen Street just west of the City Hall. With the exception of the Fire Chief all firemen were volunteers. This system was continued by the city until the 1970s. The volunteers were paid \$3.00 per fire by the city. Money to run the department was raised by the firemen with benefit dances and suppers.

The first fire station housed a hand pushed hose cart which was pushed to fires by man power. By 1910 practically all residences were on the sides of Pullman's four hills, making it difficult to get the hose cart to the fire in time to be of any help. In 1911 the firemen raised enough money to buy four hose carts, one for each hill. These were stored near the top of the hill and each hill had four firemen to get the cart to the fire.

In 1921 a fire truck was purchased by the city and the Olsen Street station was enlarged as it has been when other new fire trucks were purchased. In the days of the horse and buggy, a sign on the door of the station read, "Hitching in Front Prohibited".

When the City Hall was built a fifty foot tower was built atop for the fire bell. In 1921 it was replaced by a siren which was installed on the remodeled Fire Station. The Olsen Street station served the city until 1983 when a new station was built at S. 620 Grand.

## The Chinese Laundry 1008 Grand

For several years during the early 1900s, a Chinaman known as Baloney ran a hand laundry in a small white building between the Willies Garage and the Star Livery Barn. He lived there with several Spitz dogs who went everywhere with him. He was considered a town character and people in Pullman looked out after him. In the summertime Baloney helped harvest Mr. Letterman's garden on Sunnyside Hill and peddled the vegetables door to door around town. He was a colorful sight for he carried his vegetables in two large baskets hung on a pole across his shoulders.

## Corner Lot at Grand and Olsen Street (NE 100 Olsen)

Before there were any buildings on the southwest corner of Block 3, Indians brought their Cayuse horses here for sale to the settlers. If the horse had been broken it sold for three dollars, if not the price was a dollar and a half.

## The Pullman Chop Mill (1908-1931)

In 1908, Bickford and Hathaway built a chop mill on this lot, just south of the old Farmers Barn. After 1912 it became Bickford and McDonald's Chop Shop until 1915 when George McDonald became the sole



—Esther Pond Smith

*The South Palouse River was indeed the path of destruction in the 1910 flood. All foot and wagon bridges as well as some railroad bridges were washed away.*

owner. He installed a weighing scales in front of his property which he operated for the next fifteen years. Orville Lee became the owner of the property in the early 1930s.

### **Tini's Tire Shop and Gas Station (1932-1940)**

Leon Martini moved his tire shop from Main Street to Grand and Olsen where he did business for eight years. During part of that time Emil Pike had a car repair shop on Olsen Street next to the alley. Martini also operated the Chevron Station at the corner of Grand and Olsen.

### **Reggie's Chevron Service Station (1940-1986)**

In 1940, Martini sold his Chevron station to Reggie McArcher who operated the station until 1986. The property is now owned by the city and leased as Jerry's Downtown Service Station.

This has always been a busy corner and a place to have cars serviced, especially since the main entrance from Colfax into Pullman came from the west instead of from the north over the original dirt road.

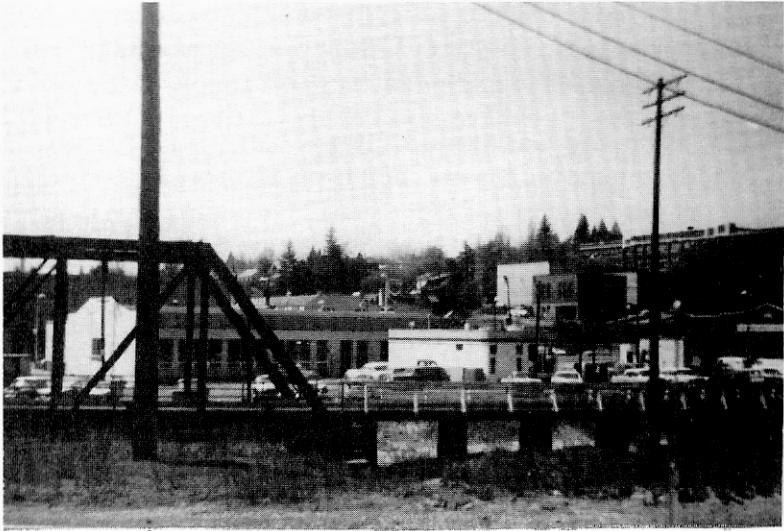
### **The Palm Cafe (1909-1910) Alder (Kamiaken) Street**

There were two vacant lots from the Pullman City Hall north to the creek. In 1908, Charles Parrish, a local contractor, built a two story frame building on the land. The second floor of this Parrish Block was used as a



—Esther Pond Smith

*The Palm Cafe and rooming house was built just north of the City Hall in 1908 but the flood of 1910 washed it down the stream and destroyed it. The Alder (Kamiaken) Street bridge was also wrecked but Reaney Hall (Willies Garage) and the Star Livery Barn, facing Grand Street, survived.*



—Esther Pond Smith

*A 1969 picture of Block 36 from the Northern Pacific (Burlington Northern) depot. The City Hall was to the left. The long white building beyond the Union Pacific railroad bridge is Neill Public Library. The small white building in the center was the Richfield Service Station, torn down in 1971.*

rooming house. Early in 1909, Frank Newton leased the first floor north room and opened the Palm Cafe. The cafe changed hands several times with Mrs. McAllister and Mrs. Edgar Muir the last owners. The building came to an early end when it was washed away and destroyed in the March, 1910 flood which did great damage to the entire business section of Pullman.

No other structures were put on this site after the flood. The area was filled with dirt and in recent years used by the Pullman Police department for parking patrol cars. Several times during the years there were animal side shows on the grounds.

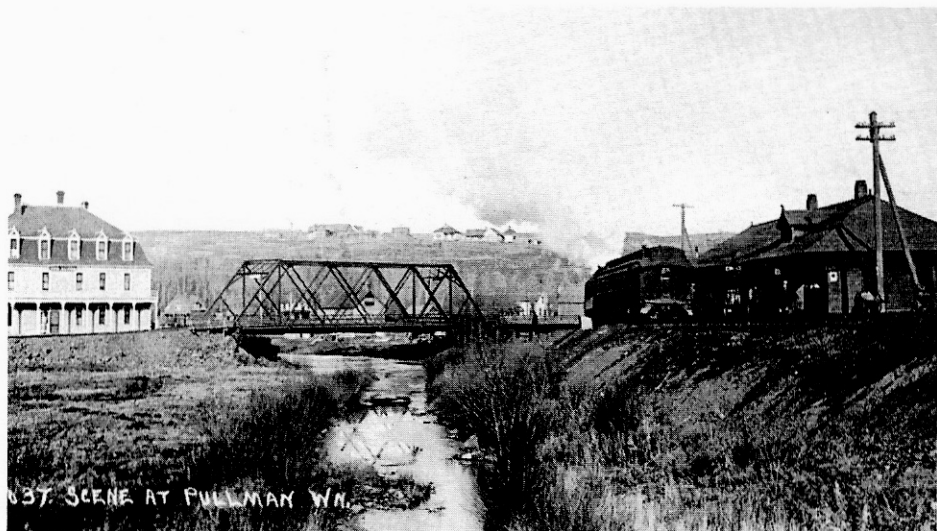
### **Cecil's Popcorn Stand (1920s)**

Cecil Blachley had a popcorn wagon which he moved around to different locations in Pullman. Most of the time he was on Main Street in front of the old city hall.

## **Street Bridges Bordering Along Block 36**

### **Grand Street Bridge**

The first crossing of the Tinatpanup Creek (the south Palouse River) at Three Forks was near the northwest corner of Block 36. This was where the Indians and first settlers forded the creek. The only road through the valley came from the north, following Missouri Flat Creek along its east



—Esther Pond Smith

*Across the creek from Block 36 (the vacant lot on the left) is the second Northern Pacific depot built in 1902. The first depot was located 600 feet to the north on Grand Street. Dry Creek flows into the South Palouse River at the left end of the Grand Street bridge. The Alton Hotel is on the left.*

bank. After crossing Tinatpanup Creek, the road extended along Dry Creek on present Grand Street, turning east at Pullman's present Main Street. Dry Creek, bordering the west side of Block 36, was later covered with a sidewalk.

In the early 1880s, a log and dirt bridge was built across the Palouse river being replaced by a wooden bridge in 1889. In 1894, a steel span took its place at a cost of \$3,694. This bridge was rebuilt in 1930 and replaced with a new steel bridge in 1948. The present Grand Street bridge was built and dedicated in November, 1976.

### **Kamiaken Street Bridge**

Until 1900 there was no bridge across the Palouse River on Kamiaken Street. The crossing was on Pine Street. In 1890, M.C. True, owner of the Palace Hotel at Pine Street for railroad passengers to use when walking from the depots to his hotel. This bridge was also used by the college students to cross Main Street until it floated away in an early spring flood.

The first wagon bridge on the east side of Block 36 also crossed the Palouse River at Pine Street, extending behind the present Spot Shop Cleaners to Kamiaken Street (then called Alder Street). There were no houses on College Hill until 1890 and no need for a street up the hill. The Pine Street road connected to Grand Street along the north side of the creek.



—Esther Pond Smith

*Some winters the Palouse River was frozen hard and smooth. 1912 and 1913 were especially good skating years and many residents and students enjoyed a winter day on the ice. Pullman merchants who sold perishable foods or ice cream cut large chunks of ice from the river to use in their ice houses during the summer.*

*In the background are the Northern Pacific Depot and the Grand Street bridge. The raised roadway gives an idea of the amount of fill that has been made at this location.*

In 1900, the county built the first Kamiaken Street bridge near the Pullman City Hall to replace the washed out Pine Street bridge. The 1910 flood destroyed it and it was replaced with a new span. The present Kamiaken Street bridge was built in 1930.

### **Sidewalks Around Block 36**

The first sidewalks in Pullman were made of boards. In 1902, a 14 foot board walk was built over Dry Creek along Grand Street. Sidewalks along the east side of the city hall were laid beside the Kamiaken Street bridge. With Dry Creek dry most of the year, the creek bed under the sidewalk made a wonderful place for children to walk and play. Several Pullman residents remember this pastime and how delighted they were, even against their mothers' orders, to spend spring and summer days trying to catch crawdads.

### **Hobo Jungle**

Originally a great deal of brush grew along the north and west sides of Block 36 and the land was quite swampy. After some draining and filling had been done, hobos started to come into town by rail and camp west of the Grand Street bridge next to Block 36. Pullman residents began calling the area Hobo Jungle. Hoping to get jobs in the harvest fields, the





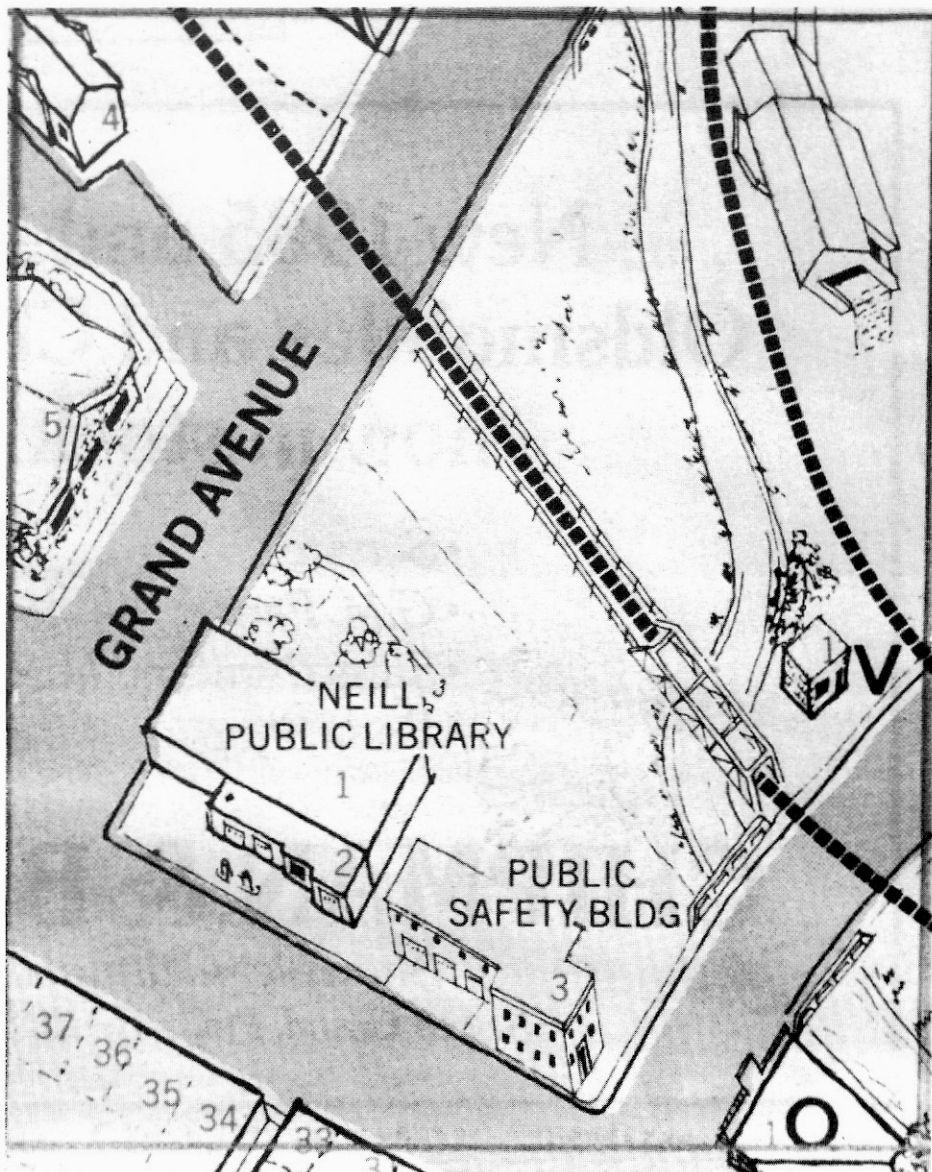
*The Pullman Public Safety Building, formerly the City Hall and Fire Station, was demolished in July, 1986. It occupied Lot 5, Block 36 in the city at the corner of Olsen and Kamiaken Streets.*

hobos slept in the bushes and cooked their meals until they were hired or run out of town by the marshall. Residents on Park Street often saw campfire smoke rising out of the brush and discovered that vegetables were missing from their gardens.

### **The Future of Block 36**

Today, Block 36 is mostly a city parking lot. Neill Public Library and the service station are the only remaining buildings. Without them the area would look somewhat like it did in 1875 when Bolin Farr and J.M. Palmerton stood on Sunnyside Hill above Three Forks and envisioned a town in the valley below. In 1882, Daniel McKenzie and Charles Moore platted that town, which had been named Pullman, and Block 36 got its first building five years later.

What could or should be the future of Block 36? 1988 marks 100 years of incorporation for Pullman. Perhaps a commemorative park which would host trees, shrubs and flowers; a place where children could play and a resting place for people strolling along the river's bank. Other possibilities include a fountain replicating the original artesian well, railbeds used for bike and walks ways, and/or historic depots refurbished into museums and community meeting centers. Any of these possibilities would be an appropriate new beginning for Block 36.



—Esther Pond Smith

*Block 36 as it looked the first half of 1986. Today with the exception of the Neill Public Library and the Service Station, Block 36 is about as vacant as it was in 1887 when Reaney's Hall was built on the same location as the library. The streets, railroads, and depots were established from 1885 to 1889. The river channel has been changed several times, both by nature and by man.*