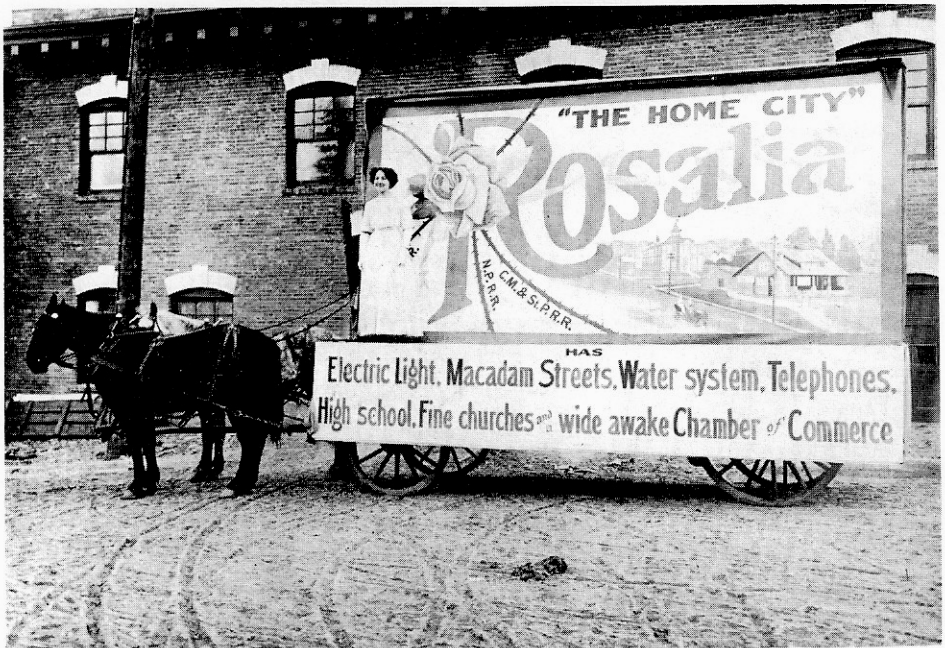


# Bunchgrass Historian

Whitman County Historical Society  
Colfax, Washington

Volume 21  
Number 3  
1994



- St. Gall's Church, Part II
- Biographies from Rosalia

# Whitman County Historical Society

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### AUTHORS

Thomas Weber is employed at the College of Engineering at Washington State University. This article continues from a previous issue of Bunchgrass Historian.

The various authors of the Rosalia biographies were part of a Washington State History Project in 1945. They appear to have been high school students at the time.

### COVER

Parade publicity sign for the town of Rosalia, circa 1915.



# St. Galls Parish History

## Part II

by  
Thomas Weber

*[The following is a continuation of the article carried in a recent issue of Bunchgrass Historian.]*

After Fr. James Frei's resignation in 1919, Father Joseph Stang was appointed pastor of the parish. He served until June 2, 1923, when he was appointed to the parish in Chewelah. Father Stang, a diocesan priest of the Diocese of Spokane which was established during 1914 under the leadership of the Most Rev. Augustine Schinner, was ordained on August 12, 1916, and received his assignment as pastor of the Colton parish on January 7, 1919. Being a young and humble priest, he adapted well to the fact that Father Frei, although retired and living in his house at the Academy, was still in charge. As was the custom from the beginning weekday Masses were alternated between the Sister's Chapel and the school or church. Early Sunday mass was said in the Sister's Chapel and the High Mass at the church. As late as about 1923 the sermon and concluding prayers at one of the Sunday masses were in the German language. Fr. Stang tried to maintain the strict moral control of the parishioners initiated by Fr. Frei. Following Fr. Frei's advice, he forcefully preached against socializing with the free Masons and from attending dances on Friday nights. Fr. Frei had insisted that "it was a sin to dance on the day Our Lord died" and felt also that the congregation would lose faith if it were allowed. Perhaps because of his youth, Fr. Stang wasn't heeded to the extent that the former pastor was and in the end the strict regulations were gradually weakened and more freedom given the congregation.

In a letter to the Bishop, shortly before Fr. Stang's departure from Colton he writes, "I have arranged for a mission with the Redemptionist Fathers the same to be held from Palm to Easter Sunday. It will be my farewell present to the congregation of Colton. I did not care for the riches in this parish but I feel very hard departing from the people. Of course, I know that on account of my age and furthermore on account of my poor talents, I had no right to this place for there are men worthier than I am."



*Parish facilities circa 1920*

Father John Baptista Herrmann took over leadership of the parish on June 2, 1923. He served until August of 1933 when failing health forced him to give up active parish work and live in retirement in Spokane. When he left, the parish had an indebtedness of \$3000, owing \$1500 each to the Diocese and Security State Bank.

Fr. Herrmann could preach sermons in English, German, French and to a degree in Bavarian. He could hear confessions in those languages plus Latin, Italian, Spanish, Finnish and Dutch. He was born on July 13, 1875, in Bavaria, the son of a merchant, and ordained by Archbishop Christie at Mt. Angel Abbey in Portland on December 14, 1908. He was the first pastor of Odessa and transferred to Waterville in 1914. His previous assignment was in Spokane.

Fr. Herrmann reported to the Bishop during December that he and the Sisters were getting along quite nicely, and they were very happy to see the arrival of Fr. Herman Eitel, the Sisters' new chaplain, who came from Ontario, Canada. He pointed out that since the Sisters and the parish no longer had a common chaplain and pastor, the Sister's Chapel should no longer be used as a substitute church by the parishioners.

During September 1925, Ervin Kaiser and Jake Wieber re-roofed the main part of the church and in the process removed the six small roof gables from the main portion of the church roof. Concrete sidewalks were also installed during 1926, replacing the badly worn wooden

walk. In 1930, Bishop Kelly of the Boise Diocese granted permission for the closure of St. Scholastica's Academy in Colton. On October 22, members of the Colton Council Knights of Columbus circulated a petition in support of continuation of the Academy and sent it to Bishop White in Spokane. The petition contained the names of 147 parishioners and friends. However, because of low enrollments the Sisters' decided to close the school. The peak year for the boarding school was 1914-1915 when the Academy was housing 72 girl-boarders, aside from about 20 small boys, who were housed in another building. The class of 1931, however, had only ten graduates. After the school term ended in May 1931, books and equipment were brought to St. Gertrude's School in Cottonwood, which had opened in 1927. Four of the Sisters returned in the fall to continue teaching at Guardian Angel School.

Several customs were recorded during this period of our history. One was the custom of bringing in a "strange priest" to hear confessions at Easter time. Perhaps there was some concern about the parish priest keeping his vow of silence, but more likely it was due to the sheer volume of confessions heard. Mention of this practice occurs throughout the early minute books of Colton's Knights of Columbus Council, beginning as early as 1912 and continuing through 1927. The second custom would be considered sexist today. During services, women would sit on the left side of the church and the men on the right. On July 11, 1932, a committee of three Knights was appointed to confer with Father Herrmann with regard to changing this custom. There was never any mention of the results of their meeting; however, Father did write to Bishop White and conveyed their request. The Bishop's reply on July 21 urged the congregation to abandon the practice. The custom was continued by some parishioners well into the 1950s.

On August 11, 1933, Fr. Herrmann was succeeded by the pastor of Clarkston, the Rev. Fr. Edmund A. Jordan. Fr. Jordan was born on September 26, 1889, and ordained on June 12, 1916. From a history written by Fr. Ralph Schwemin in 1937, it was reported that Fr. Jordan and his parishioners undertook a variety of parish improvements during the early 1930's; the parish grounds and cemetery had been beautified; a new heating system provided for the school; new roofs installed on the school and parish house; and a new stoker installed in the church. There were 591 souls in the parish, with 500 parishioners receiving Holy Communion monthly. One hundred twenty-five (125) children attended the parochial school, taught by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, who were brought to the Spokane Diocese in 1921 through his untiring efforts. In 1934 the old church building was finally



*Roofing  
Steeple  
Tower,  
1940*

dismantled and part of the lumber used to build a spacious garage and workshop for the pastor. The remaining lumber was sold for \$106.71 during the following year. New confessionals were built in 1934..

In 1936 the Cemetery was reorganized and the Perpetual Care program begun. A piece of land measuring 15 x 20 feet was transferred from the Benedictine Sisters of Cottonwood to the parish for the purpose of a well site. The cemetery was leveled, eliminating the small gully which ran from East to West through the property, and replatted with the addition of Sections D, E, F and G. Some of the tombstones were moved as much as six feet to accommodate realignment into a more geometric and orderly pattern. The Cemetery board, consisting of George Spills, Albert Bauer and Bert Schlicht, report a balance of \$417 in the Cemetery Fund at the end of the year. In 1937 the Cemetery Committee reported expenses for the drilling of a well and construction of fences, \$805.37; income from donations, sale of lots and the potato crop, \$1,178.31; and a Perpetual Care Fund balance of \$1,604.47.

During April 1937 the Academy building was sold to the School Sisters of Notre Dame from Mankato, Minnesota, who also took over teaching of Guardian Angel School. The Benedictine Sisters completed the 1936-1937 term with Sister M.Mildred O.S.B. recorded as teaching the fifth and sixth grades. When school reopened on September 7

under the direction of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Sister M. Annunciata served as principal and taught the seventh and eighth grades; Sister M. Regis taught the fifth and sixth grades; Sister M. Estelle, the third and fourth grades; and Sister M. Rosella, the first and second grades. A cigar smoker, Fr. Jordan's presence in school was immediately detectable by the students and Sisters. He had a habit of leaving his cigar on the staircase bannister as he entered school and retrieving it upon his departure.

Shortly after taking over the parish, Father Jordan shifted the parish's indebtedness from the Diocese and local financial institutions to members of the parish. This was done at the request of Bishop White who needed money elsewhere in the Diocese. When he left in June of 1939, the parish had an indebtedness of \$3350, all of which was owed to parishioners.

On February 22, 1939, in a letter to Bishop Schinner, Fr. Jordan requests to leave Colton, having already talked with Fr. Bender about trading parishes. Fr. Bender was agreeable to the trade. The parish trustees wrote to the Bishop requesting that Fr. Jordan not be transferred. The accompanying petition was signed by 180 parishioners. In a letter dated May 5, 1939, Bishop White writes: "My dear people: I received your petition asking that Father Jordan be retained as pastor of St. Gall's parish in Colton. It affords me considerable pleasure to receive this testimonial of your regard for Fr. Jordan and your confidence in his pastoral administration. I should be most happy to comply with your wishes in the retention of Fr. Jordan were it possible for me to do so. However, you perhaps know that he is by no means being transferred to another parish against his wishes. I trust that as faithful members of God's church you will give your local support to your new pastor Fr. Bender who comes to you with proper credentials as established by our blessed Lord. I am sure that you will find him very zealous for all that concerns the good of souls which is the mission of God's priests. Asking the divine blessing upon all the people of the parish that they may be devoted members of holy Mother church, I am faithfully yours in Christ." On May 1, 1939, the transfer was completed with Fr. Edmund A. Jordan moving to St. Patrick's Parish in Colfax and Fr. William Bender to St. Gall's Parish in Colton.

Within three years of taking over the parish, Father Bender had the parish completely out of debt. This was largely due to a debt reduction drive during 1942 which netted \$3612.25 and paid all outstanding obligations. In the years that followed, the parish began to build up a surplus of funds designated for a new school Play Hall. By the time Father Bender left the parish, the fund contained nearly \$15,000.00..



In preparation for the Golden Jubilee of the parish, repairs were undertaken to the church exterior. During July 1940, John Wieber and Wilfred (Willy) Meshishnek were hired to reroof the church and steeple. They were each paid \$257.25 for their labors; the materials were purchased from Dahmen Lumber Co. for \$786.27. Fr. Bender had previously applied to Bishop White about removing the steeple because of its expense to maintain and the danger involved in reshingling it. Permission was granted, but since the reshingling had already begun and because very few parishioners were in favor of his idea, the steeple remained. After reroofing the steeple, John and Willy removed the clock hands from the clock tower and repainted the faces white. John still has some of the clock hands and remembers vividly working on the steeple. "We painted the cross too. While standing at the base of the cross we could only reach the top of the arms, so we threw a rope over the top and one of us would climb up onto the cross while the other handed up materials. We didn't really pray for ourselves while working up there, because Father Bender was standing on the ground below us - praying intensely. While roofing the main church we would nail 2x4's to the roof to stand on as we worked our way up to the crest. One time the 2x4 we were standing on broke loose and we both slid down to the next one, which also broke loose... the last one held."

The Golden Jubilee was celebrated during May 1943 with solemn High Mass. Bishop Charles D. White of Spokane was in attendance, as well as a number of members of parish families who had entered religious orders. Many former members of the parish returned for the big celebration which was attended by visitors from many surrounding parishes. This was also a time of generosity by many families in the parish. During 1946 Frank P. Busch donated the pipe organ (\$4,650); Mary Bauer, the Carillonic Bells (\$3,811); Mrs. Christine Meyer, the Stations of the Cross (\$1,035); and Mrs. Theresa Bauer, new vestments. The following year extensive rewiring and construction took place to install the organ and Carillonic Bells. Jerry Druffel, who was home from the service, remembers cutting the holes in the old clock faces for installation of the speakers. St. Gall's was the first church in the Spokane Diocese to install Carillonic Bells.

On September 8, 1948, the Sisters of Notre Dame reopened the Academy as a high school for girls. Twenty-one freshmen and eleven sophomores were admitted. The junior class was added in 1949 and the seniors in 1950.

Fr. George W. Meiers took over the parish during June 1949 and served until his death in October 1957. Father Meiers loved elaborate church ceremonies, complete with processions of the blessed Sacrament and an entourage of altar boys. Ceremonies at Christmas

Midnight Mass and during Holy Week employed all available altar servers who, trained by the principal of Guardian Angel School, Sister Ligouri, struggled to recite their Latin prayers with the exactness demanded by the stern, never-bending, but beloved priest with dark bushy eyebrows. Father Meiers loved football and was no doubt a Notre Dame fan.

Throughout Father Meiers' service as pastor, he encouraged giving according to one's means as opposed to the paying of a church membership fee. In 1950, Bishop White and Father Meiers also enacted a school building fund. Before Father's death, the parish had a balance of nearly \$30,000 saved in the Play Hall and School Building Funds. Many parishioners continued to make special donations to the church. The Baptismal Set was donated by the Paul Druffel Family; the cushion kneelers by the Leo Druffel and Walt Meyer families; storm windows the main church windows by the late Michael Schultheis Jr.; new vestments (green, violet, white, red, and pink) by the families of Leo Druffel, Francis Druffel, George Bauer and Jacob Bauer; church doors by Herb Druffel; the processional cross by Vic Druffel; prayer cards by George Moser; the main altar candlesticks by the Altar Society, Vince Meyer and Mrs. Joseph Druffel Sr.; the main altar Crucifix by Leo Druffel; and new steps and entry by the Knights of Columbus and George Druffel.

Father Meiers was extremely active within the parish and attended most of the meetings of the Catholic Daughters, Altar Society and Knights of Columbus. It was at his request that the Knights became involved in sponsorship of the grade school basketball team and league. Competition consisted of teams from Colton, Colfax, Genesee, Moscow, Lewiston, Clarkston, Pomeroy and Uniontown. The first game was held on January 11, 1953. Teams continued to participate in the 1970's.

During 1957, the church interior was completely redecorated as well as the outside exterior trim and roof (including the rectory) painted. The parish also began thinking seriously of building a new parochial school. During June of 1955 the Building Committee composed of Leo Druffel, Harold Schultheis, Ray Reisenauer, LeRoy Weber, Vince Meyer, Vic Druffel and Ray Bauer traveled to Spokane to meet with the Bishop and architect John P. O'Neill about alterations and additions to the school building. Three alternate schematics and layouts were submitted to the Building Committee for approval. The parish's efforts stalled, however, because of Bishop White's illness and death; a lack of commitment on the part of the pastor; and a poor harvest resulting in an inadequate parish building pledge. Father Meiers died of a heart attack on October 21, 1957.

Father William Brennan arrived shortly after the death of Fr. Meiers and continued the parish's efforts to build a new parochial school. At the time the parish population was listed at 553, of which 251 were children or young adults under 18 years of age. Father Brennan, a young priest, would often play baseball with the upper grades during the lunch hour and organized a number of games between the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grade boys. He had an unpredictable fastball and left many a timid batsman diving for safety.

During January 1960, a 5-member Planning Committee was elected by the parishioners for the purpose of building a new school. Elected members were Harold Schultheis, Ray Reisenauer, Leo Druffel, LeRoy Weber and Vince Meyer. The original estimate for construction of the four cluster school with multi-purpose gymnasium and utility area was \$120,000. The architect for the project was the firm Culler, Gale and Martell from Spokane. The bids received and accepted were \$156,868.40 for the contractor, Commercial Builders of Moscow; and \$9,050.10 for the architect, for a total of \$165,918.50.

Because of the financial inability to meet required fire codes, the Sisters of Notre Dame were forced to close most of the High School Academy during 1960. In a letter to Bishop Topel on December 4, 1960, the Sisters of Notre Dame explain their concern: "I have considered the possibility of retaining the High School. As you know the third floor of the Academy has already been condemned with the threat that within two years the entire building will be condemned. Because the parents do not want their children exposed to fire hazards, the registration this year has dropped below 20. A number of girls now in attendance do not plan to return the second semester. The repairs we are asked to make in order to operate are prohibitive. The income at the present time does not even meet the current expense. Three years ago, two local Catholic girls went to the public school, this year even before the building was partially condemned, Colton's Sophomore girls had registered at the public school. This reveal is evident that as time goes on more will attend the public school." The facility was closed in May of 1961. The closure of the Academy brought an immediate need for the parish to provide for the Sister's housing.

On April 19, 1961, students of Guardian Angel School assisted in the move into the new school. Many students recall passing desks and chairs through the windows of the old school and carrying them into the new school. The final month of the school term was completed in the new school. On Pentecost Sunday, May 21, 1961, the new Guardian Angel School was dedicated and blessed by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. John J. Coleman, Vicar General of the Spokane Diocese.

Fr. Paul M. Goergen replaced Fr. Brennan on June 19, 1961. One of his first services was the funeral of Francis Allen Weber, 12 year old son of LeRoy and Trudy Weber, who was killed in a farming accident on July 3. He also inherited a parish debt of \$90,000 which, before his death in 1972, he was able to reduce by over \$60,000.

In the August 20th bulletin, the Sisters expressed their gratitude to the parishioners for helping them to get settled in their temporary convent - the old school. Fr. Goergen also began to plead for donations to finance the new convent, and urged families and parishioners to build it themselves or donate specific rooms as the parish's credit was severely strapped with their current debt. Ground breaking for the Convent was on September 25 and the building occupied by December. The building was blessed by the Most Rev. Bernard J. Topel D.D., Ph.D., Bishop of Spokane, on December 31, 1961. Father Goergen reported that during 1962, there were 402 Confessions heard during the Christmas season and 475 Holy Communions on Christmas Day. A total of 5,559 Holy Communions were served during the year. On May 14, 1962, Fr. Goergen celebrated his Silver Jubilee (ordained 5/22/37) at Colton with Bishop Topel and 60 other monsignors and priests. The Rt. Rev. Msgr. S.P. Buckley of Spokane delivered the homily. The following month, Father vacationed in his native Luxembourg and visited Rome where he offered Mass on the tombs of St. Peter and St. Pius X. Father Michael J. Schultheis S.J. was ordained on June 12, 1965, by Bishop Topel and on June 20, 1965, said his first Mass at Colton. In 1969 Gary Uhlenkott entered the Jesuits.

In 1964, Shared Time for the 5th through 8th grades was initiated between the parochial and public school. Afternoon classes in band and physical education were taught at the High School. By 1966, the program had been reduced to band only and was ultimately discontinued before being reinstated during later years to its present form. The Shared Time program provided for the return of busing and parochial school children on public school buses, which was curtailed in 1948 by decision of the State Supreme Court. At the beginning of the 1968-1969 term, St. Boniface and Guardian Angel parochial schools were consolidated with the 1st through 4th grades attending school in Uniontown and the 5th through 8th grades in Colton. The cost of education per child at the parochial school was listed at \$288.93 during 1970.

During 1966, the old school was torn down and the grotto moved from behind the gym in preparation for the construction of an addition to the school. Father had hoped to remove only the top floor of the old school, saving the lower floor for storage. However, after work had begun on the removal of the upper floor, damage to the lower floor necessitated the demolition of the entire structure. Bob Heitstuman

and the rest of the "D" crew threw a cable through the window openings and pulled the school down with a tractor. The new addition to the school cost \$6556.07 and consisted of a library, shower rooms and storage shed built on the back of the gymnasium. New church doors were also installed during 1967 and the church remodeled in accordance with Vatican II directives during 1972. This included the removal of the side altars, communion rail, sanctuary lamp and pulpit, as well as the installation of the present altar.

Father Goergen died of a heart attack on February 18, 1972, and is buried in the Colton Catholic Cemetery, near the foot of Father Frei's grave. The Rev. Aloysius Breznik, pastor of St. Boniface Parish in Uniontown, served both parishes as pastor until the arrival of Fr. Verdoorn in June 1972.

With the arrival of Father Cornelius Verdoorn from Spokane, the parishes of St. Boniface and St. Gall's were consolidated under the leadership of a common pastor. Both parishes, however, continued to function as separate congregations, with individual Parish Councils, financial obligations and accounts.

In 1973, the cross located at the top of the steeple was replaced with the help of a crane rented from Tyee Inc., the construction company employed by the Army Corps of Engineers to erect the electrical transmission towers serving the recently completed Lower Granite Dam. An auction was also held for the sale of surplus articles stored in the church and basement and netted \$3045.15. In 1973 the annual Bazaar was replaced with a Cash Bazaar and the St. Gall's Endowment Fund (the first in the Diocese) was instituted with an initial contribution of \$1,100. When Father Verdoorn left the parish for his new assignment in Davenport the parish's debt had been reduced to \$11,120.89. The Endowment Fund had a balance of \$14,940.80. There were 9 Baptisms; 13 Confirmations; 4 First Holy Communions; 8 deaths; and 5 marriages recorded during his final year.

Father Hulings arrived during June 1979 and immediately set out to reduce the indebtedness of the parish. In an early parish bulletin he addresses the happiness associated with giving: "I do not believe that God can be bribed. So, I cannot promise you that if you give more to the church God will give more to you. Yet, over the years I have noticed that happy people (those who feel close to God) are generous people. I don't know if they are happy because they are generous or if they are generous because they are happy. But from what I've seen, I would advise anyone who is unhappy and feels far from God to take the first step and increase your contribution. If you are happy and your conscience is satisfied that you have given according to your means, may God bless you."

Under his direction the first school auction and Steak/Wine Dinner was held (March 29, 1981). This fund raiser for the operation of the Catholic school has become the social event of the community each spring. During the 1982-1983 term, the parochial schools located at Colton and Uniontown were totally consolidated at the site of the Guardian Angel School in Colton. The Uniontown school was advertised for sale and sold. In 1983 the original flat roof construction on the school, gymnasium and convent were replaced with trussed composition roofs. The work was done entirely by parishioners.

When Father Hulings left for his new assignment at Fatima Parish in Spokane during June 1987, the parish's Diocesan indebtedness had been reduced to \$7,023.00. Fr. Huling was succeeded by Rev. Paul Vevik, 1987-1992, and Rev. Richard Root since 1992..

**Rosalia:**  
**Personal Accounts, 1945**  
  
by  
**Rosalia High School Students**

*[In 1945, students at Rosalia High School assembled reminiscences of people in their community, and then published them in a mimeograph booklet with the dramatic title "They Did Not Live in Vain." The students collected about 20 of these accounts in total. Some were about Rosalia and the nearby regions and some dwelt on experiences in other settings.*

*Bunchgrass Historian recently located a copy of this booklet. About half of the accounts have been selected for presentation here, with only slight editing.]*

**A. J. CALHOUN**  
by **Phyllis Harvey**

A. J. Calhoun was born the year the Civil War started, in 1861. In 1875, his father came out to see the west, and came to Eugene, Oregon. As his wife was sickly he left her and the children back east. He returned home but wanted to move west, so they started in a covered wagon. They came as far as Missouri in the wagon in May 1876, but because of the Indian scare they shipped their wagon to Sacramento, sold the animals, and took the train. In Sacramento they bought horses and started to Oregon in the wagon. At Eugene they met two men, one from Rosalia, and one from down by Colfax, who told them of this country. They even had a house down on Pine Creek which they would sell to Calhouns. They came on up by way of Walla Walla. There were Indian Wars the summer. The trail up was fairly good, except one flat was all mud. The farther they went the muddier it got. There was a straw-stack near here by, so they scattered straw on the mud to make it solid enough to hold the teams and wagons. They took double teams to pull the wagons across. They got across without the loss of one animal or person, but one mule got stuck and almost drowned.

They arrived in Rosalia in October, 1876. They moved the cabin from Pine Creek to Spring Valley for the winter. At that time Rosalia consisted of the Post Office and one house which belonged to Mr. Whitman. Mrs. Whitman was ill and was in Oregon. A Mrs. Strong and her three daughters lived at Whitman's and kept house for him. There were three families who lived near Rosalia; the Faulkners, Donahues, and a blind horse-trader, Mr. McNeal. The first merchant in Rosalia was Mr. Whitman. First, he sold things at his house. Then he built on a room. Finally he had a little 20 X 40 foot store built where Turnley's store now stands. The logs for it were hewed by A. J. and his dad.

The second winter, 1877, the Calhouns had their own house built at Spring Valley. That winter was very cold, with four inches of ice on Pine Creek, but with very little snow. A. J.'s dad was the first to grow wheat on the hilltops. He said if the hilltops wouldn't raise decent crops the country wouldn't amount to much, so he was going to try it. They got their first seed wheat at Latah, then called Alpha, from a man who had raised a little on a flat and had tramped it out by horses. Calhoun raised the first big wheat field on Pine Creek flat, and then expanded to the hilltops. They had to tramp the wheat out by horses when it was harvested. The wheat was raised mostly for feed for the stock. They had bought 12 cows, some with calves, at \$17 per head. The cattle ranged mostly on the bunchgrass and didn't need much winter feed. One year they raised 65 two-year-olds. At that time Calhouns were the only family between Latah and Rosalia. There were a few families at Latah, and a few people near Farmington. There was a little wheat and some oats raised in some of the flats.

About 8 years later Calhouns came, A. J. and the hired man hauled the first two loads of lumber to build the first church in Rosalia.

Church had been held in the little school house, which was a block or two above where the Christian Church is now. In 1887 or 1888 the school teacher was a very remarkable fellow. He worked at Calhouns during school vacation – they only held school three or four months a year – and was cook, singer, hired-hand and all-round handyman as well as the school teacher. He was popular with the youngsters around, although his wife had left him because of his drinking. He bought a new sleigh and after the first good snow he took ten or fifteen youngsters out for a sleigh-ride party. Mr. Calhoun said they had a wonderful time. They had, at that time, big spelling bees, which were taken so seriously that some rowdy boys were fined for disturbing the peace when they made so much noise they interrupted the spelling-bee. At the next bee, they were perfect little gentlemen. They held debates, had weekly literary meetings and held Sunday School and Church every Sunday.





*Civic band - Rosalia, Wash.*

## **MR. J. M. BUERGAL** **By Donald Rickert**

J. M. Buergal came from Ohio to Walla Walla in 1887. Here he stayed with an uncle and attended school. Then he went to Portland, where he drove a laundry wagon. Next he worked as an engineer. After this he became a relief elevator operator. Later his occupation was wood clearing. In 1895 he moved to Spokane; here he worked on a farm for \$16 a month during the summer, and \$13 a month in the winter.

Mr. Buergal then began clerking for one dollar a day, boarded and roomed himself. His salary was soon raised to twelve dollars a week. He worked for the same man six years without a lay off or a raise in salary. Next he went into business in Cheney and from there he moved to Spokane, and in 1905 to Rosalia.

The council room was where the shoe-maker is now. Rosalia's main street was only graveled. The only lights on main street were two gas lamps. Water was obtained from wells. Business places used kerosene lamps.

The post office was in the same location as Burgan's store, in a frame building. The post master was W. P. Ward. The jail was where Pete Terril's house now stands. It was made of 2 x 6's layed flat. One man hung himself in the jail. R. P. Turnley and Tatom and Brockway store

was in the Crites building. Schlegel and Koltzed Store was in a frame building up by the present site of the Helmer Hardware. F. J. Wilmer and Dwyer were in the Whitman County Bank, McCabe was cashier of the Bank of Rosalia. The black-smith shop was located where the Texaco Service Station is now, in an old sway-backed building. A livery barn was located where the Signal Service Station is now and another livery barn where the Rosalia Hardware is now located. This year makes M.r Buergals 40th year. in business in Rosalia. He was for 26 years a member of the school board and still stakes an active interest in the Rosalia Schools. The building of the new gymnasium owes much to his efforts while a school director. When Mr. Buergal first came here, the front part of the school house which consisted of an assembly and grades was built of wood and the grade library and science room was brick. About forty years ago the wood front part was torn down and replaced with bricks. The play-ground was rough and unfit for play-ground until W. P. A. money was available when it was enlarged and leveled. The shower room was made out of an old coal shed where the boys took their showers after games.

When the building fund reached about \$10,000 and P.W.A. money was available the school board decided to build the new gymnasium. In making application for P.W.A. money, photos were taken of the interior and exterior of the old coal shed-shower room and sent to Washington, D.C. After the W.P.A. was first contracted, it took three years to get the money to start the building. The P.W.A. money amounted to \$21,572, \$10,000 that was on hand, \$20,000 bond issue, \$7,000 gift from the state, the total cost of the building being \$60,000. The patrons of the school should appreciate school property sufficiently to respect and not damage it.

## **MRS. JAMES F. HARRIS** **by June Tupling**

My grandmother, Mrs. James F Harris, has been a resident of the state of Washington for 59 years. She was born in Wisconsin, but moved west at the age of twenty. Her father and mother, five sisters and a brother were her traveling companions from Wisconsin. They came west by train as far as Sprague. They had a freight car on the train to keep their livestock and possessions in.

When they reached Sprague, the women were left at the hotel while the men went on with horse and buggy looking for a homestead. They decided on a location near what is now Hartline. The country was all wide-open spaces with not a fence or anything to hinder progress.



*Harvard House - Rosalia Land Mark*

Very few families had migrated to this territory at that time so it was quite a distance to the nearest neighbor. The father and brother built a crude hut, and returned to Sprague for the rest of the family. In a short time all the girls had homesteads surrounding their parent's property. Church was held in the Father's home and all the neighbors attended. He was the founder of the first church in Hartline.

About this time James Harris came west and married my grandmother. They went back east to Wisconsin for about four years but the west lured them back. He bought a homestead next to hers and they lived there until his death. Her son-in-law now runs the old homestead and it brings in a neat profit for both of them.

## **CELIA HORLACHER** **By Stanley Horlacher**

Celia Widner, her family, and relatives named Bowerman, left Newtown, Missouri, April 1882, for Oregon. The caravan, consisting of twenty-two covered wagons, was guided by Dr. Hart. On the trip west, this train of wagons crossed the Mississippi and Missouri rivers several times.

At Conner, Nebraska, the Widners and Bowermans left the caravan, and took the railroad train, as Mrs. Widner was sick. They shipped their wagons to Silver Bow, Montana, which was their immediate destination. While on the train, they lived for nearly a week on crackers, because they had not realized the need for providing their own foods. Towns were far apart, and the train, slow.

While on the train they caught the measles. At Silver Bow, they lived in a 10 X 12 tent, with only a bale of straw for a floor. Sixteen people, everyone but Martin Widner, were sick in that one tent.

Arriving in Spokane, Martin Widner was offered a block in the heart of Spokane for his span of mules, but he refused. At that time Spokane was nothing but a few small buildings among the pine trees. The party went on to Pine City, where on July 22, they rested a few days, as Mrs. Widner had been ill.

The store-keeper, Coe Bradner, told Mr. Widner there was a farm for sale east of Pine City. This farm the Widners purchased. It is now a part of the W. Boozer place. The first house they lived in was a dug out, on the hill-side. Their second house was made of twelve inch boards with small glass windows.

At that time there were no fences between Pine City and Rosalia. The first fences were made by digging a ditch and piling the sod up along the trench.

The next were rail fences. The only buildings in Rosalia were the post office, and a place where the Spokane-Colfax stage stopped.

Mr. Widner and his neighbors hauled their grain to Cheney taking three days for each trip. The land was covered with bunch grass, over which large bands of horses and herds of cattle grazed.

## MRS. CHRISTINA JOHNSON

### By Lloyd Hames

This is some of my Grandmother's life, Christina Johnson, who is eighty-six years old. She was born in Sweden in 1858, and came to the United States, about the year 1875. She went to Minneapolis and stayed there for four years.

Then, she came out to Spokane on the Great Northern Railroad, arriving just after the Spokane Fire. They had just started to rebuild it. She worked for Doctor Bert for two years, then she bought some land near Lamont from the S. P. and S. Railroad. She bought 160 acres for two dollars an acre. There were no buildings around and the land was



*Auto  
Service  
Shop,  
Rosalia,  
1926?*

all bunch grass. That was in 1891. Then she went back to Spokane and worked for "John W. Graham" owner of the John W. Graham store now still in Spokane. There she stayed for two years.

Then she was married in 1893. That year they built a fence around the place and built a house, barn and other small buildings. In 1892 she bought forty acres on Cannon Hill, which is back of the Sacred Heart Hospital. Manito Park now is located on some of my Grandmother's land. If she hadn't sold this land when she did, she would have received eight times what she did.

Her first wheat crop was very good. She got 2,222 bushels of wheat from forty acres. They hauled the wheat to Sprague, 15 miles away. They made just one load a day.

She planted some shade trees in 1897. Last year she measured them and they were 19 feet in circumference.

In 1914 she bought 500 acres of land just below Lamont and raised cattle. She sold it six years later.

She now resides in Cheney, Washington with my Aunt, Mrs. Floyd Calvert.

# MRS. ISABELLA MACRAE

## By Frances Widman

Mrs. MacRae as a bride came to this country from Scotland, in 1884. She and her husband traveled directly to Cheney, where Mrs. MacRae stayed for three weeks while her husband went out to find a home.

He bought the right to homestead 160 acres, of which 16 were under cultivation. They bought their seed wheat for 35 cents a bushel. They harvested their wheat with a reaper, which cut the grain and left it in bunches. Then they stacked it, and waited their turn for the threshing machine. Sometimes it was late as November or December before they got their threshing done. Mr. MacRae hauled his grain to Cheney where he sold it. Two years later however, in 1886, the Northern Pacific Railroad was built through Rosalia. He was then able to dispose of his grain in Rosalia.

At that time there was a family on almost every 160 acres, but there were very few fences. Mrs. MacRae said that sometimes her husband had to walk as far as Malden and Rosalia for their horses and cows.

Rosalia, at that time, consisted of a schoolhouse, store, and postoffice. The store and postoffice were in one building not far from where the old West home is located today. The West home is one of the few homes that were in Rosalia when Mrs. MacRae came to this country.

The religious life of the community was centered in a church organization which held its meetings in the schoolhouse. It is interesting to us today to know some of the people were baptised in Pine Creek.

The MacRae children attended grade school at North Pine. The oldest of these children were able to attend school only three months a year, and that was held in the spring.

Helen, the oldest of the children, graduated from Washington State College, and St. Lukes Hospital in Spokane. She is now employed as a school nurse in California. Tom owns and operates a garage in Saskatchewan. Duncan is in business in Colfax, Washington. Elizabeth and Dan are living on the farm with their Mother, where Dan manages the farm. Three other children are deceased.

Mrs. MacRae still lives on the farm which she and her husband homesteaded 60 years ago.

# MR. M. H. WEST

## By Lester Kile

Mr. West was born in Iowa on July 10, 1835. There, he obtained his education in the public schools. When he became eighteen he began to work in the local sawmill to learn the trade of a sawyer, which he hoped to follow. He worked in the sawmill in Iowa till about 1876, when he decided to come out to Mendocino County, California. There he again took up the lumber business for about a year and a half.

In the year 1878 he came to Whitman County, Washington, and there he had his first home at the present cite of Colfax.

About a year later he was employed by James Managhan of Spokane, Washington, to drive a stage coach between Spokane and Colfax where he lived. He worked for James Monaghan for a little over a year. out of this work he got plenty of activity.

From Colfax, he came to Rosalia where, he was employed by J. M. Whitman as clerk in the first store in Rosalia. He worked for two years for Mr. Whitman.

(In 1880, he filed on a homestead in the same section in which the town of Rosalia is today. On this homestead he intended to devote his time to the farming of the land.

He decided that he wanted to do something else, so he started a repair and a blacksmith shop in the town of Rosalia, which he operated for four years.

He then bought out Mr. Whitman's property, and he and Mr. Gray bought out the sstore in which he used to work. Then, for the next three years he helped run the store, and worked on his farm. He decided he didn't want the store any more so he sold out his part. He then became an agent for the Pacific Elevator Company, and later on, had the honor of being Postmaster of the Rosalia Post Office.

After being Postmaster he turned back to the farm again. He owned an excellent farm adjoining the town of Rosalia, which was well equipped with good machinery, and very good buildings. He took great interest in caring for the farm and keeping up the land.

He lived in the vicinity of Rosalia for about twenty three years. Mr. West was a prominent and active member of the Odd Fellows, and also belonged to the Woodmen of the World.

On November 28, 1880, Mr. West married Miss L. Bourn, a native of Missouri, but at the time she was a resident of Whitman County. They had seven children, three boys and four girls, of whom Mrs. Verne Towne, and Miss Jennie West still live in Rosalia.

# FRANK J. WILMER

## By Lloyd Hall

Frank J. Wilmer was born April 6, 1860, in East Troy, Wisconsin. Graduate of Whitewater State Normal School in Wisconsin. Mr. Wilmer came to Washington, April 1886. His first job was milking cows for \$30 a month with board. He worked at that ninety days. Then he went to work on a milk wagon and did that for sixty days. Then he went to work on a milk wagon and did that for sixty days. Then he began teaching school at Walla Walla. He worked in the harvest when he wasn't teaching school, until June 1888. Then he came to Rosalia, where he started up a hardware business, which was called the Wilmer & Dyer Hardware. He also was in the grain business. Then he opened up the Whitman County Bank which later became the Whitman State Bank. He was in the banking business until the Banking Holiday in 1933. He stayed in Rosalia looking after his property.