Christmas Recap
Jack Breen’s War
The Placerville Token
President’s Message

Dear wonderful members and supporters of the DCHS and the Schick-Ostolasa Farmstead:

Happy New Year and welcome to 2019!

The DCHS is already hard at work planning great events for this year and working hard on a number of projects. For example:

- We will be hosting tours for 3rd graders from Collister, Shadow Hills, Cynthia Mann, and Hidden Springs schools in May. We have plans to expand to approximately 25 schools soon, and up to 50 schools per year before long.
- We are working with the BSU Construction Management program to rebuild the granary this year. The paperwork is in place, and we’re waiting for good weather to arrive. Once the building has been restored, we will display more artifacts and open the building for public viewing. The granary project should be finished by late summer.
- A group of about a dozen history grad students from BSU is helping us with a number of projects, ranging from grant proposal writing to identifying artifacts in the horse barn. We’ll let you know more about these efforts as they unfold.
- We have some exciting new acquisitions to show you this season—including one that is discussed in this issue—so we hope you’ll come visit us in the Farmhouse this summer.
- Our Garden & Grounds Committee will be cleaning up the Medicinal Herb Garden and identifying and marking all the plants.
- History Hikes will start again once the weather gets a bit warmer and drier.

A few dates to remember: (Please check our website for any date changes or updates.)

- March 19th, 7pm: DCHS Annual Meeting at HS Clubhouse – open to all. New Board members will be elected so please come!
- April 20: Hidden Springs Clean up Day. We need a contingent of folks to help specifically on the Farmstead grounds.
- May 4: Opening of the Farmhouse to the public – 12:30 to 4:30 every Saturday until Sept. 28.
- Front Porch Concerts – The Reeder family of Avimor will kick off the season with a show on Wednesday, May 29 at 6:00 PM.
- October 6th – Old Time Farm Day from 12-4 PM. More details as the date approaches.

We will soon be starting a capital drive to raise $25,000 for our Farmstead building restoration projects. If you would like to donate, please let us know. We also need volunteers—for the Board, Garden & Grounds Committee, events, fund-raising, maintenance, and more. And we need more members—our goal is 150 by the end of 2019, and we are currently at 100. Tell your friends, and remember that memberships make great gifts!

Last and most important, THANK YOU SO MUCH for your membership, support, and interest in our amazing historic treasure in the Dry Creek Valley.

If you have any questions or would like more information, we are available via email, Facebook, and phone. See our contact information on the last page of this issue.

Thanks again, and I so appreciate all of you!!!

Cyndi Elliot
President, Dry Creek Historical Society

On the cover: The Magnolia Saloon in Placerville, Idaho—once a thriving city, and now all but a ghost town. It would have been in a building similar to this that Charles Rowe had his own Placerville saloon (see story, p. 10).

DCHS on Facebook, and Our PayPal Option

The Dry Creek Historical Society has a Facebook page! Please stop by and like our page at https://www.facebook.com/DryCreekHistoryIdaho. We will have up-to-date information on what’s going on at the farmstead and invitations to new events like fund-raisers, hikes, concerts, Farmhouse open dates, and Old Time Farm Day!

We have also made updates on how you can pay for memberships and/or donations by having a PayPal account. You can go to our website at http://www.drycreekhistory.org/Membership.html and renew your membership, or simply make a donation to our cause!
Patrick Dennis Breen was born on St. Patrick's Day, 1849, in County Kerry, Ireland. He emigrated to America in his teens, and while living in Richmond VA as a 19-year-old soldier in the Union Army he met 15-year-old Elizabeth Carolyne Harris, known as “Lizzie.” She had come with her family from Skibbereen in County Cork, Ireland, and not been in America very long, having landed no later than 1868. Lizzie and Patrick fell in love and quickly married, since as an enlisted man, Patrick could be whisked off to a remote post at any time. Indeed, this is exactly what happened, and the pair traveled to various Western posts (including Tucson, San Diego, the Modoc country of northern California, and Fort McDermit on the Nevada/Oregon border) until 1881, when Patrick retired from the Army at the age of 31. They settled in Boise, Idaho Territory, where Patrick worked as a drayman (driver of a big flat-sided cargo wagon) and was active in the Catholic Knights of America.

The couple bought a parcel of land “adjacent to the Military reservation on the north side” and built a house. Patrick and Lizzie’s union was fruitful and bore them twelve children, eleven of whom survived to adulthood (little James Joseph, just 14 months old, wandered away from his mother’s attention one day in 1889 and fell into the Walling ditch, which carried water to the northeast Boise neighborhood where the family lived, and drowned).

When war with Spain broke out in 1898, Patrick and Lizzie’s fifth child and second son, 21-year-old John Patrick Dennis Breen (known as “Jack”), was a Seaman First Class serving as a gunner aboard the USS *Boston*, one of the first steel warships of the so-called “New Navy” that was begun in the 1880s. The *Boston* was a “protected cruiser,” having an armored deck to protect the spaces below from exploding shells better than the standard wooden deck. She was part of the US Asiatic Squadron, based in Yokohama, Japan, and went along with the Squadron to take part with the fleet in the Battle of Manila Bay on 1 May 1898, and the subsequent capture of the city of Manila on 13 August 1898.

Just two days after the Battle of Manila Bay, the Idaho *Statesman* ran a brief article mentioning that Patrick and Lizzie were concerned for the safety of their son Jack, but Patrick “expresses satisfaction that John was engaged in a glorious cause, even though his life may have been sacrificed.” Imagine their relief, then, when they finally received a letter from him over a month later, as recounted in the Statesman on 12 Jun 1898:
LETTER FROM JACK BREEN
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He Describes the Great Battle in Manila Bay
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Miss Katie Breen of this city has received a letter from her brother, Jack Breen, one of the gunners on the Boston. The letter is dated Manila, Cavite, May 4th. It was sent via Hong-kong, reaching San Francisco on the 7th of this month and Boise on the 9th. Young Breen was in the Manila fight and in the letter he describes the battle that resulted in such a remarkable victory for the American fleet under Dewey.

Breen says the Olympia, the flagship, steamed ahead, the Boston being third in line. The Cavite forts opened fire on the fleet, the shells falling short. The American fleet steamed to within 2500 yards of the Spanish forts and ships. After fighting an hour and a half, during which one of the Spanish gunboats was sunk, the American ships steamed away to let the guns cool and allow the men time to eat breakfast, “hard tack and corn beef.”

The Boston asked and was granted permission to bombard, and the ship's guns belched forth its death dealing projectiles steadily for half an hour, during which time the siren, or whistle, was set going by the shock of the firing, and this lead both Admiral Dewey and the Spaniards to believe the Boston had been badly injured. Breen says all the Spanish guns were trained on the Boston, which was struck four times, but with very little damage being done.

The general engagement, which resulted in the silencing of the Spanish shore batteries and the destruction of 14 Spanish ships, was fought at a range of about 1000 yards from Cavite, under the guns of which the Spanish warships had located.

Breen considers it a miracle that he and the Americans escaped so completely and adds that 3000 Spaniards were killed. He says the “shells flew so fast around the Spaniards they couldn't stop to load their guns.” Breen, in conclusion, says: “The best joke of all was the Spaniards said the Americans were cowards. But no coward ever trod our ships, I am thankful to say.”

Breen has been promoted to first gunner seaman at $35 a month.

The next news came two months later, and was summarized in this brief notice in the Statesman on 8 Aug 1898:

CAPTURED AT MANILA
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Gunner Breen Sends His Father a Trophy of the Big Battle
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Pat Breen is the proud possessor of a piece of Spanish flag captured at Manila. It was forwarded to him by his son Jack, who was on board the Boston. The letter which accompanied it said it was a part of the flag of the Isle de Cuba, which was sunk in the fight with Dewey's fleet.

Young Breens was promoted to first gunner for bravery shown in the action.

The Isla de Cuba after its completion.
Soon after the battle, Jack was honorably discharged from the Navy and immediately enlisted with the soldiers of Company H, 1st Idaho Volunteer Infantry, which had accompanied the American fleet to the Philippines. The Statesman ran the contents of a letter from Lt. George Steunenberg, a member of Company A, 1st Idaho who had taken part in the Battle of Manila on 13 August 1898. (That battle should really be named in quotes as it wasn't a real fight, but staged—it had been determined through negotiations that the Spanish defenders would surrender after a brief, face-saving show of force by the Americans.) If Lt. Steunenberg's name sounds familiar it's because at the time his father was serving as the fourth governor of the State of Idaho. The lieutenant's letter is reproduced in full in the sidebar on the next page, but at the end he mentions “I have a number of ship mates aboard the Boston, Jack Breen among them, but have had no chance to see them.” How fascinating, then, that Jack Breen saw action in the one big Pacific naval action of the war as a sailor, and in its one big land action as a soldier!

During this time, Jack's father Patrick was suffering from stomach cancer, and this played a role in a strange incident that was reported in the Statesman via a letter to the editor on 05 March 1899, written by Jack's older brother, 26-year-old William. It seems an itinerant tinker—a man “grinding scissors and knives for a livelihood”—by the name of George Van Avery approached William for work, and asked if he could stay with him for a while. Said William, “Out of sympathy for him I did so and he stayed at our house for three weeks.” During that time, at some point Van Avery stole a ribbon that Jack had sent William, one that said “USS Boston” on it; and Van Avery affixed it to his hat and began going around Boise calling himself George Breen and saying that he was in the Navy but was home on furlough to visit his ailing father. One can imagine William's fury when he discovered this act of “stolen valor.” It's not known what he did to recover the ribbon and put a stop to the impersonation, but his letter to the Statesman was written “to state through the medium of your paper to the friends and acquaintances of my brother, that the man as mentioned in the article above… is a rank impostor…”

Sadly, by this time Jack's and William's father Patrick had already passed away from his cancer on Feb. 27, 1899 at the young age of 49; he is buried in Morris Hill Cemetery. Lizzie stayed in Boise until at least the 1920s, living off a pension approved specifically for her by the State Senate, before moving to Jacumba, CA to live with one of her grandsons and his family. She passed away in 1936 at the grand age of 82 and is buried in Sacramento.

The Breen sons fared well enough in their lives after these events, but those lives were sadly short like their father's. Eldest brother William Breen worked in a Boise restaurant and also served as a hoseman with the Boise Volunteer Fire Department. One afternoon in March 1912 while at home, relaxing with his family, he suddenly fell dead of a heart attack at the age of 39. Jack himself died in Boise at the age of just 33 in December 1910, from causes unknown.
Manila, Philippine Islands, Sept. 2.— Statesman: Manila has a population of about a quarter of a million, and is divided into old and new cities. Old Manila is given a picturesque appearance by its mediaeval fortifications and its old-fashioned buildings. It is completely surrounded by a massive stone wall about three miles in length, twenty feet high and twenty-five feet thick. Outside the wall is a moat; each entrance has a drawbridge, and the whole forms a fortification that could stand off almost any army. Had not Dewey been here with his fleet the Spaniards could have given us all the fighting we wanted.

The wall is green, with moss, and is said to be about 300 years old. Strange stories are told of dungeons under the wall containing skeletons and old-time instruments of torture. I have been unable to find them, but have no doubt there is some truth in it, and think that some great revelations could be made.

The buildings are mostly of stone, brick and cement, with tile roofs. None of them are lofty, but many have elegant interiors. I have been through the palace, now General Merritt’s headquarters, a number of times. The lower floor is of black and white marble, and the upper one of mahogany. Fine statues, paintings and wood-carving abound, the throne room being especially elegant. I suppose it is the finest building in these islands, but I have seen others that resemble it. Churches and cathedrals are found on every hand, and their interiors show that no expense has been spared.

New Manila is located just across the Pasig river, and has grown up since the wall was built. The Pasig is a muddy stream, about the size of Boise river. A stone bridge connecting the cities bears the date of 1632. The new city does not differ materially from the old, having the same cobble stone street pavement, the same barred windows and the same innumerable churches. I have seen more churches, crosses, crucifixes and corruption here than I ever saw anywhere. Private residences are surrounded by high stone walls with broken glass on top, the windows having iron bars, and the people never know the security that is felt by the residents of an American town.

There are numerous small stores here, but no large ones, and only a couple of hotels of any size. What we miss most of all is a good American restaurant (a free lunch counter). I had dinner in a Spanish restaurant the other day—seven courses. I paid $1.50 and had just enough to eat to make me hungry. The barber shops have straight-backed chairs, and a man getting shaved sits upright. A shave costs 15 cents.

There are a couple of horse car lines in the city, and the fare is 3 cents a mile. One of their small horses pulls a car, but the driver always has a good whip, so they don’t need much of a horse. I rode two miles last night, and had to get out three times and lift the car on the track. It is like running an ore car in a mine.

There are a couple of large saloons in town, and countless small ones. These are thronged every night with American and Spanish soldiers, and German and English sailors. Drinks sell for about the same price as in the states, and everything is to be had except lemonade. They have no idea what it is, and the nearest we can come to it is lemon soda.

The saloonkeepers and small merchants are nearly all Spanish and Chinese, the wholesale houses being English. The Spaniards are all slow, and a good, live Idaho merchant or saloonkeeper would coin money here.
Dewey’s fleet is lying in the bay, but his men are not allowed ashore. They would eat the Spaniards first and then tackle the Germans. Visitors are not allowed on board, but, having once served aboard the *Olympia* I managed to get out to her. I went out in a small boat along with an old man I took to be a country preacher, but afterward found out to be Murat Halstead. I found about a hundred old ship mates on the *Olympia*, and soon had a great collection of relics of the battle, which I will show you when I return. Dewey is better looking than the pictures you see of him, and is well liked by his men. He talks and acts like a man who knows his own business, and his men say the best way to make him mad is to try to show him how to do anything. A couple of small boys, who travel with the Tenth Pennsylvania, managed to get aboard some how, and asked to see Dewey. He took a fancy to them and gave them permission to make a trip to Hong Kong in the *Olympia*. They are regular street Arabs.

I sent you a copy of the *Bounding Billow*, a paper published on the *Olympia*, which the ship’s printer sells at 50 cents a copy. The printer on the *Baltimore* also publishes one called the Searchlight. These papers are not published with any regularity, and are hard to obtain. I have one containing a description of Dewey’s victory, which I will show on my return home, but will not allow out of my possession.

Dewey’s men have not been ashore since April. His ships are going to Hong Kong now to go in the dry dock, but will return immediately. I have a number of ship mates aboard the *Boston*, Jack Breen among them, but have had no chance to see them.

LT. GEORGE STEUNENBERG
Company A, First Idaho.

Some of the 1st Idaho Volunteers at the time of the Spanish-American War.
December found the Farmhouse decorated for Christmas and awaiting the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus.
Paper chains, tin punch ornaments, and pinecones adorned the parlor Christmas tree while candles glowed in the windows and garland was strung over the doorways.

The arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus delighted the children, with each family sharing special moments and Christmas wishes with the visitors from the North Pole.
Charles Rowe
and His Dry Creek Connection

by Jay Karamales

I have a friend who likes to explore Idaho’s backcountry on horseback, doing what she and her friends call “mountain orienteering,” which is like geocaching with horses. She’s particularly fond of the Boise Basin around Placerville, just a few miles as the crow flies over the mountains to the northeast of the Dry Creek Valley. During the very first days of settlement in this part of Idaho, in the mid-1860s, that area in the mountains—very sparsely populated now, with just a couple of ghost towns—was a seething center of commerce with half a dozen small cities, each with thousands of residents, hundreds of buildings, and dozens of businesses of all kinds.

While surfing the Internet for more information about Placerville in its heyday, my friend came across an auction on eBay featuring what looked like a small brass coin. Stamped on one side are the words “C.F. ROWE PLACERVILLE IDAHO.” On the reverse it says “GOOD FOR 12½¢ IN TRADE.” Curious about both the purpose of the coin and the man whose name is on it, my friend asked me if I could shed any light.

It’s safe to assume, then, given the ubiquity of the practice, that many of the businesses in Boise and the Basin had tokens minted and distributed. Learning about these objects led me naturally to the next question: who was C.F. Rowe, and what was his business in Placerville?

Charles F. Rowe was born in 1876. We’re not sure of the exact date, or the place, though he had eight younger sisters and several of them were born when he was still a small boy in Ishpeming, a town on Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, so there’s a good chance that was his birthplace too. At that time Ishpeming was experiencing a huge influx of immigrants (mostly from Sweden) because of a recent discovery of large deposits of iron ore nearby. Thus, Charles was familiar with mining boom towns from an early age, and knew what the inhabitants of boom towns wanted.

By 1899 the 23-year-old Rowe had made his way to Idaho and was living in Placerville, a town just a few air line miles from the Dry Creek Valley and a remnant, by then, of the bustling boom towns of the 1860s gold rush. He was apparently working as a butcher—most likely as an assistant for James McDevitt, who had arrived from California with the earliest wave of miners in 1863 and set up the town’s first and most prominent butcher shop. The Idaho Tri-Weekly Statesman newspaper records frequent visits by Rowe to Boise, reporting that he stayed at either the Bancroft hotel (a cozy brick hotel at the corner of 9th and Main, with 40 rooms) or, more usually, the Capitol Hotel. The Capitol, a fine hotel, was built by merchant, brewer, and former Boise mayor John Lemp in 1881, between 8th and 9th Streets where the Wells Fargo Bank and Costa Vida stand today, and...
featured “120 rooms, hot and cold water in the bathrooms, electric lights, and service bells.” Very posh for its day, for those who could afford it. These visits by Rowe occurred irregularly every few months from 1901 through 1912, and may have been for the purpose of arranging deals to buy or sell meat for McDevitt’s butcher shop. Indeed, on some of these visits Rowe was reported to be traveling with McDevitt, and their relationship eventually was more than commercial: in 1904, Rowe married McDevitt’s daughter Josephine, and from then on they traveled not only as business associates but as father- and son-in-law. But let’s not get too far ahead of the story.

In the spring of 1903, the three feet of snow on the ground around Placerville was melting slowly, promising an abundant supply of water for the gold prospectors still working the creeks in the Boise Basin. Not everyone up there loved the snow, though. In March saloon owner Chris Seckel, having had enough of rheumatism in the harsh mountain winters, sold his tavern to Charles Rowe and a partner, W. Ellis. (This would be Mrs. Winifred Ellis, who in 1902 was advertised as the proprietress of the Ellis House hotel in Placerville.) This was apparently when Rowe began branching out in his endeavors, transitioning from a butcher’s apprentice to a tavern owner at the age of 27. It was shortly after this that Rowe and Josie McDevitt were wed, so if Rowe left James McDevitt’s employ to run his saloon, it was apparently with his father-in-law’s blessing.

In February 1906 Rowe purchased “the Veazy place” in Placerville, “which has been closed for some time.” Indeed the Veazy dance hall, and much of the town of Placerville, had burned down in August 1899 (see sidebar, p. 14). It was reported that “After remodeling the interior he will open up a saloon.” What happened to the old Seckel saloon he partnered with Ellis on is not known; but it appears that by his 30th birthday, Rowe was a solo saloon keeper.

Rowe’s Placerville saloon appears to have hummed along well for several years at least. Bar owners had to apply for annual renewals of their liquor licenses, and because of this we know that by 1913 Rowe had opened a second beer hall in downtown Boise, at 816 Main Street (where the Zions Bank skyscraper stands today). This indicates that many of those visits by Rowe from Placerville to Boise over the preceding few years may have been to oversee his second business. One has to think that by this time, the Boise establishment would have been a much greater source of income than the one in Placerville, since that latter place had declined from a population of thousands in its heyday to just 230 by 1900.

Rowe’s liquor license renewal for the Boise location in 1914 was also reported in the Statesman, with the additional information that the County commissioners charged $3,000 for every liquor license they issued—the equivalent of $76,000 in 2019 dollars—and this was charged every year! It seems this didn’t entail a cash payment by the licensee, but a bond payment that was probably a fraction of the full price. In 1914, that bond was put up by Rowe and John A. McDevitt, Rowe’s brother-in-law, and one T.A. Sloan. The same arrangement secured Rowe’s Boise license in 1915.

In November 1915 Rowe and John McDevitt were driving in McDevitt’s “machine” from Placerville to Centerville to attend a funeral, when they collided with the automobile stage that ran between Boise and Idaho City. (Please note, there was an internal combustion-powered “stagecoach” in those days—what must that have been like?) The crash was on the bend of the road at Henry’s Creek. Amazingly, while Rowe was unscathed, driver McDevitt was thrown from the car; yet they continued on to Centerville, their car “somewhat battered in front, but the stage will have to be towed to Boise for repairs.” I didn’t know they even had tow trucks in 1915.

That day was important to Rowe for another reason: on that day it was announced that many of the drinking establishments in Boise would be closing their doors in 1916, or switching to a different business model, offering cider and carbonated soft drinks instead. The reason was that Idaho had passed a prohibition ordinance making it a dry state as of January 1st. (This was five years before the 18th Amendment would make Prohibition go nationwide.) Rowe was one of eight Boise saloon keepers who promised to maintain business in as usual a form as they could, hoping that the billiard tables and card games on offer would be a sufficient draw without alcohol, though Rowe expressed doubts about how long that would be possible. Those doubts seemed confirmed when, instead of crowds of revelers wanting to go out with a final bang, on New Year’s Eve “the end was prosaic. There was no sentiment or excitement about
it. The town just went dry by degrees, and that’s all there was to it.” Something like 150 saloons in 11 Idaho counties went out of business either immediately or as local legislators declined to renew their licenses later in the year. One would hope in such a case that all those business owners would get pro-rated refunds on their exorbitant licenses—and apparently in C.F. Rowe’s case he did, the commissioners granting him a rebate of eight months’ worth of county tax (but not state tax) that he had paid for his Boise establishment.

It’s a long time before C.F. Rowe appears in the historical record again—not until July of 1934, when he is recorded as checking into Boise’s Bristol hotel on a visit from Idaho City. (The Bristol was on the SW corner of 10th and Grove, where currently there is a large surface parking lot across the street from Chandler’s Steakhouse. By the way, when did it finally become an unacceptable invasion of privacy to publish people’s comings and goings at local hotels? It’s very creepy to our modern sensibilities.) Within the year, advertisements were appearing in the Statesman for “Pineview—A Mile High Dancing Pavilion” with Charles F. Rowe listed as the manager. Presumably this venue was either at Idaho City (elev. 3900 feet) or, less likely, at Placerville (elev. 4300 feet) —neither a “mile high” but possibly close enough for promotional purposes. Prohibition had been repealed at the end of 1933, so perhaps this advertisement represented an upward turn in the business fortunes of Boise-area saloon keepers like Rowe.

Sadly, family fortunes weren’t so good. On Sunday evening, 23 Feb 1936, Charles and Josie’s 29-year-old son James Richard Rowe got into an altercation with 51-year-old John Hastriter on a street in Nampa. Rowe objected to Hastriter using vulgar language in front of a lady who was with them. The two men came to blows, and the younger Rowe “badly beat” Hastriter; but the older man pulled a knife and, apparently, repeatedly stabbed Rowe, who was taken to the hospital. After a few days he seemed poised to recover when he suddenly took a turn for the worse and died of his wounds. At the time of his death, James was living in a house owned by his parents that would these days be between Rainbow Books and DK Donuts on State Street in Boise. Born in Idaho City in 1907, he had graduated from Boise High and gone on to Gonzaga college, where he was an expert member of the swim team. His first job was with Morrison-Knudsen on the construction of the Boulder dam, and since returning to Boise four months before his death he had been employed by the Ford Motor Co. (Through an odd set of circumstances, Hastriter was not convicted in James’ death. He found himself on Wake Island in the Pacific when the Japanese conquered that base in December 1941—as a civilian worker for Morrison-Knudsen, which is probably how he knew both James and his brother Charles Jr. in the first place—and spent the entire war in a Japanese prison camp for civilians. Amazingly he survived, and passed away in Nampa in 1958, age 73.)

The family soldiered on after James’ death. Just a few weeks later at the end of May, Charles engaged a carpenter and a painter to refurbish “the pool hall he expects to open soon on Main street” in Idaho City. This was probably the location which had remained open after Prohibition as a “soft drink parlor” and pool hall, and which apparently went back to selling beer after the ban was lifted. But while this business was ramping up, Rowe’s Midway Bar at 717 Main Street in Boise was denied a license to sell beer on 01 January 1937, at the recommendation of Boise Police Chief Emer J. Harris; no reason was reported, though five other saloons in the same part of the city were approved at the same time. The Midway Bar was across the street from Rowe’s previous bar in Boise, being located next to the current Buffalo Wild Wings. Rowe continued to sell soft drinks and cigars from this business.

Then, more disaster. On the afternoon of 25 June 1938, someone threw a cigarette into a woodpile at the back of Rowe’s Idaho City parlor, which included a cigar store. Within minutes the one-story wooden building—which had been built in the very earliest days of the gold rush in the 1860s and had originally been a butcher shop—was engulfed in flames. It survived, barely, but there was severe damage “to the walls and building,” according to the firemen. Sadly, C.F. Rowe carried no insurance.

In March 1939 Charles, now aged 63, was reported to be ill,
So What’s the Dry Creek Connection?

Josephine (Josie) McDevitt was born in Idaho City on 07 Mar 1877. Her parents were Boise Basin pioneers James McDevitt, Placerville’s first butcher, and his wife Minnie.

Josie was known for her singing abilities. As early as age 15 (1892) she was singing “Il Corricola” in an Easter presentation at St. Teresa’s Academy (at 3rd and Jefferson in Boise), where she was a student. She was said to have a rich soprano voice. She also sang and played piano at the end-of-term ceremonies each year she was at the school. When she graduated she moved back to her family in Placerville, but made trips back to Boise to perform—often at her alma mater in weekly concerts, but sometimes even in special big performances at the Sonna opera house. The Statesman reported that Josephine “is no stranger in our city as her sweet voice has often been heard at the entertainments prepared by the sisters [of St. Teresa’s].”

Josie secured a position as the town postmistress in Placerville—the post office was located in her father’s butcher shop, but whether this was cause or effect we can’t say. She was working here when she married Charles F. Rowe on 16 Aug 1904.

Charles and Josie moved to a home on State Street in 1914. That’s when all his frequent visits to the Capitol and Idaho City hotels ended, but he still made frequent trips between Boise and Idaho City to look after his businesses, while it seems Josie mainly stayed in the capital.

I’m not sure how the wartime rationing of gasoline and rubber affected the briskness of business at either location, but there’s no hint of anything but business as usual until just after New Year’s 1943, when Charles (now 67) fell ill again and was confined at the family home on State Street in Boise. Ever resilient, he returned to the Idaho City cigar store by the beginning of March. He presumably continued running his two businesses, commuting between Idaho City and Boise, until Saturday, 24 July 1948 when he passed away in a Boise hospital from causes unknown at age 72.

Based, then, on the fragmentary evidence we have of C.F. Rowe’s businesses, the merchant token from Placerville should date from no earlier than 1906, when he purchased his first sole proprietorship saloon there, and probably no later than 1936, which is the last time we hear of a Placerville business of his.

I’m pleased to report that the merchant token for C.F. Rowe’s Placerville saloon that kicked off the research that led to this article, and which is pictured on p. 10, is now in the possession of the DCHS. As soon as we can construct a suitably secure shadow box for it, it will be on display in the Schick-Ostolasa Farmhouse.

What would 12½¢ buy during the period 1906-1936? Well, it was about the price of a single mug of beer, so I leave it as an intellectual exercise to the reader.
The Placerville Fire of 1899

Irish-born John Veazy, one of the original Boise Basin pioneers, was the owner of Veazy Hall, a popular dance hall/theater and saloon in Placerville. About 7 PM on Thursday, 17 Aug 1899, just as a minstrel show was about to start, someone overturned a lamp in the hall. The flames quickly grew and spread unchecked for four hours, consuming the town. The glow was visible from Centerville, 4 miles away, and even from Idaho City. According to the Statesman, the “fire [swept] Placerville from [the] face of the earth.”

With the exception of a few residences the town was wiped out. The business portion was completely destroyed, together with a number of homes in the main part of the town. Nothing was left except the school house and 14 dwellings, and part of the town’s Chinatown. Among the destroyed buildings were Veazy’s Hall, Mrs. Steckel’s place (one of the only places that was insured, for $600), Ellis’ hotel, McDevitt’s butcher shop (in which the town post office was located), McDevitt’s residence, and Chris Seckle’s residence, as well as many others. At the time, Placerville had a population of between 600 and 700. It declined sharply after the fire, as many residents chose not to rebuild their homes or businesses.

In early 1906, Charles F. Rowe purchased what remained of Veazy’s Hall, rebuilding and restoring it to house his own saloon, which likely was the business for which he had merchant tokens minted and distributed.

John Veazy died on 21 Aug 1911 in St. Alphonsus Hospital in Boise at the age of 81.
Annual Meeting

As discussed elsewhere in this issue, the DCHS Annual Meeting and election of officers to the Board of Directors will be held at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, March 19th in the Hidden Springs Clubhouse. Coffee, tea, and dessert will be provided, but additional dessert items are always welcome. The current Board of Directors will report on the Society’s activities in 2018, plans for 2019, and other items of business.

Garden and Grounds

The Garden & Grounds Committee held its initial meeting at the Merc on Thursday, February 21st. Master Gardener Barb Hickey distributed a list of tasks that can be worked on as soon as the weather allows. Kate Weber, who with her husband Brandon and sons Ian and Braeden devote many hours to the care of the Farmhouse’s exterior each year, will assume management of the committee.

The Hidden Springs Community Farm is going to be included in the Idaho Botanical Garden’s annual tour of gardens this year, and visitors will be encouraged to visit the Farmhouse while they are in Hidden Springs. If comments by our guests last year are any indicator, we should make a powerful impression and our landscaping will be a great source of publicity for the Society.

Collaboration with Boise State

The DCHS has begun collaborating with BSU on a number of fronts.

Of course, DCHS Director Dr. Casey Cline will be heading up the restoration of the granary on the Schick-Ostolasa Farmstead this spring in his capacity as head of the Construction Management Program. He will employ a number of his graduate students to perform the restoration.

In addition, the Board has met with Dr. Bob Reinhardt and about a dozen of his history graduate students to help them design projects which can earn them credits toward their advanced degrees and will also greatly benefit the Society, from designing a modular display system to planning an interactive mapping application to helping us regularize our grant application writing process.

We are also exploring opportunities with Hank Ebert of the BSU Career Center for interns to earn credit by working with the DCHS. Some options we have discussed are Website design and construction; botanical analysis of plants around the Farmstead and along Dry Creek; geological analysis of the terrain along the routes of our History Hikes; and historical research in various archives which will teach students how to use those repositories, and simultaneously aid the Society in some of its research and genealogy projects.

Call for Volunteers

The Society is as busy with various projects as it’s been in a number of years—and yet we remain staffed solely by volunteers. If you would like to get involved in any degree, from gardening to research, to being a Farmhouse host for a few hours on Saturdays, to helping with some physical repairs and small building projects, or as a volunteer to work as an historian for the grade 3 field trips, please contact us. We can use you!
The 2019 DCHS Annual Meeting

The Dry Creek Historical Society 2019 annual meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 19th at 7:00 PM in the Hidden Springs Clubhouse. The agenda for the meeting will be as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Introduction of Current Officers
3. Introduction of Candidate Officers
4. Questionnaire – 3 questions
5. Annual Report of the Treasurer
6. Annual Business Report
7. Election Results
8. New Business
   - Discussion of and vote on by-law changes
9. Adjournment

The three questions on the questionnaire will appear on the ballot, which is produced on p. 17 of this Newsletter.

CANDIDATES FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Debbie Dill
Ann Goodwin
Carol Goodwin
Jay Karamales
Su Stearns
Alison Thomas

In accordance with the DCHS charter, write-in candidates will be accepted from the floor during the meeting.
"Each member of a class of members entitled to vote shall be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to the members by the Board of Directors."

*Article II. 3*

DCHS has six classes of members: Individual, Family, Affiliate, Sponsor, History Lover, and Benefactor. Each membership is entitled to one vote. According to the by-laws of the corporation, nominations can be accepted from the floor during the annual meeting.

**VOTING INSTRUCTIONS:**

The Board has recommended the following candidates. Please indicate your approval for each candidate.

- [ ] DEBBIE DILL
- [ ] ANN GOODWIN
- [ ] CAROL GOODWIN
- [ ] JAY KARAMALES
- [ ] SU STEARNS
- [ ] ALISON THOMAS
- [ ] (write-in candidate)

**BALLOTS MAY BE CAST IN PERSON AT THE ANNUAL MEETING**

**PLEASE BRING YOUR PRINTED BALLOT TO THE MEETING**

**OR**

**MAIL TO:**
DRY CREEK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
5006 W. FARM CT.
BOISE ID 83714

Please be sure your name and address appear on the outside of the mailing envelope so the ballot can be verified.

**MAILED BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MARCH 17, 2019 TO BE COUNTED**

**ANY BALLOTS RECEIVED BY MAIL AFTER THAT DATE SHALL BE CONSIDERED INVALID**
Did You Receive This Newsletter in the Mail?

If you did, it’s because we don’t have a valid email address on file for you. If you do have an email account that can receive PDF attachments, and would like to help us keep our costs down (printing and mailing these newsletters is expensive, and we can put your membership money to better uses!), please email us at DryCreekHistory@gmail.com so we can update our records. Thanks!
Rent the Shick-Ostolasa Farmstead Grounds

The Schick-Ostolasa Farmstead grounds are available to rent; several pricing packages are available to fit your needs. The Farmstead grounds are perfect for:

- Weddings
- Reunions
- Banquets
- Receptions
- Seminars
- Holiday Parties
- Company Events
- Conferences
- Dances
- Family Gatherings

To reserve your date, or for additional information, contact:

The Dry Creek Historical Society
(208) 229-4006
DryCreekHistory@gmail.com

Commercial Photography Policy

Commercial photographers are required to purchase an annual membership at a price of $75 in order to take pictures of and on the Schick-Ostolasa house and grounds. This grants the right to sell photos of the Schick-Ostolasa Farmstead. In addition, you will be able to shoot at the Schick-Ostolasa Farmstead as many times as you like during the year in which your photographer membership is active. All photo sessions are by appointment only and you will need to contact DCHS at DryCreekHistory@gmail.com or call (208) 229-4006.

If you only want to have a single photo session we do offer a $25 single-session fee.

Photographer Membership benefits include:
- One-year admission to the Dry Creek Historical Society and photo shooting by appointment only.
- Full rights to sell your Dry Creek Historical Society photos.
- A link to your web site in our Newsletter’s Photographer Member Index.

Additional membership benefits include:
- Free admission to Front Porch Concerts.
- Invitations to members-only events.
- Subscription to the DCHS Newsletter
The area around the present-day Dry Creek Mercantile was part of the Schick homestead, and later passed through the hands of Frank Parsons, W.G. Ross, and one Noah Thomas Magee (sometimes erroneously spelled McGee). Magee was born in 1850 and owned property in the Boise area as early as 1913. He passed away in January 1934 at the age of 83. At the time of his death he was living at 1406 N. 12th St. in the North End, so he may have worked his Dry Creek property but not lived there; nevertheless, there was a residential house “located further west on Dry Creek” from the Schick-Ostolasa Farmhouse that was demolished in the 1950s. Bricks from that structure were brought to the Farmstead and used to clad the outside of the root cellar. Noah’s wife, Margaret Esther "Maggie" Prindle Magee, died a couple of years before him. They are buried together in Morris Hill Cemetery.

Cyndi Elliot
President, Treasurer
Casey Cline
Restoration & Construction
Sean Conner
Physical Plant & Buggy Master,
Lead Recruiter
Cheryl Cook
Fundraising, Events, Gardening
Kate & Brandon Weber
Garden & Grounds
Barb Hickey
Master Gardener
Jay Karamales
Stuff like cleaning the bathrooms

To contact the Board of Directors,
call (208) 229-4006 or
email DryCreekHistory@gmail.com
website www.DryCreekHistory.org

CALENDAR

DCHS Annual Meeting
Tuesday, Mar 19th
7:00 PM

Hidden Springs Cleanup Day
Saturday, Apr 20th
TBD

Ft. Boise Garrison Civil War Camp
Sat-Sun Apr 27th-28th
TBD

Farmhouse Opening
Saturday, May 4th
12:30 PM

Front Porch Concert
Wednesday, May 29th
6:00 PM

Cruisin’ Hidden Springs Car Show
Saturday, Jun 1st
TBD

Support the Dry Creek Historical Society

The Dry Creek Historical Society and the Schick-Ostolasa Farmstead are supported solely by volunteers, donations & grants. We depend on membership to keep the Farmstead open to the public and the property in good shape. Members receive regular Email Newsletters and advance notice of activities and events. Join us. Become a DCHS member! Mail in the form below, or join via PayPal at http://www.drycreekhistory.org/Membership.html.

Please fill out this form and mail to:  DCHS  5006 W. Farm Court, Boise, ID 83714

Name: __________________________________________________________________________
Address: ________________________________________________________________________
City/State/Zip _____________________        Phone:   __________________________________
Email:  __________________________________________________________________________

Membership type:       Individual – $30 (   )        Family – $60 (   )          Affiliate – $25   (   )
Sponsor – $100 (   )    History Lover – $250 (   )       Benefactor – $500  (   )
Make check payable to:  DCHS                              Additional Donation: __________________

DCHS is a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation. Your donation is tax deductible as allowed by law.