Editor’s Note: The Museum has been offered the White House on the condition that it be moved by October. A lease with the City of Coeur d’Alene for property south of City Hall at 8th and Young is in the works.

We are asking our supporters to donate to the building fund for Phase 1 which includes building the foundation and moving the house. The cost for Phase 1 is about $600,000. We have an anonymous donor who will match what we raise. Phase II will be to build onto the house a state of the art museum facility. See page 6 for more info.

From the time I was a young boy growing up in Coeur d’Alene in the late 1950s, Sherman Avenue has undergone enormous changes. The section from about 7th Street to 11th was residential then, and it was dominated by palatial homes of some of the most important people in town. There were large trees throwing their shadows across what could have been a quiet, sleepy neighborhood, except for one thing – east/west Highway 10 used Sherman Avenue as its route through the area.
My grandparents, Dr. and Mrs. John T. Wood, owned one of these homes, the F.A. Blackwell House at 817 Sherman (not to be confused with the home using that name that is across the street on the south side). My grandparents had purchased the home built by lumberman and railroad builder, F.A. Blackwell. And right next door sharing the other half of the block to the west was the White House (805 Sherman) built by J.C. White, manager of the famous Red Collar Line of steamboats.

I recall many warm sleepless nights I spent at my grandparent’s home with the windows open listening to truck traffic grind past in the wee hours of the morning. The construction of Interstate 90 brought that to an end, but the most significant change was the gradual encroachment of businesses. Back when the town was developing no one could foresee how the nature of this part of town would change.

I recall the first unsettling thing for my grandmother was in 1955 with the construction of the Flamingo Motel just east of 7th Street. She and many other residents considered this an encroachment into an area that should have been kept residential. But not too many years later she was forced into selling. After my grandfather died, my grandmother had no Social Security and little income other than what was made through the value of property that she owned. She had rented out the Blackwell House for a number of years, but things came to a point where she had to sell, and by that time no one wanted a huge old home with no insulation, astronomical winter heating bills, and a lengthy list of needed repairs. The only prospective buyers wanted the land, not the house. So the beautiful old Blackwell House became the victim of “progress” and a Sambo’s Restaurant was built. Now the White House next door is facing a similar fate.

The origin of the White House at 805 Sherman is far enough in the past that most are unaware of it and think the name came from the white color of the house, but that is incorrect. The home was built for J.C. White who for a time was one of the most important men in town. Construction on the house was announced in the Coeur d’Alene Independent September 5, 1902: “Clarence White has let the contract to build a residence to cost from $4,500 to $5,000 on his lots in O’Brien’s addition. The contract has been let to Mr. Varman, a local contractor, and work will begin at once.”

Work was completed the next spring and noted in the Coeur d’Alene Press March 14, 1903. “Mr. & Mrs. J.C. White are moving into their new residence this week. It is one of the most complete and comfortable homes in Coeur d’Alene and cost about $5,000.” At the same time, the home of another prominent businessman was constructed right next door at 817 Sherman, the Blackwell House, built by F.A. Blackwell of sawmill and railroad fame (this is not to be confused with the home across the street built later for F.A.’s son Russell). The two houses shared a full block and in the back shared an ice house that was built straddling the property line—half on each side. Not only did the two men share these things, but to an extent the businesses of the two became allied as well. Here is the story of J.C. White.
Joseph Clarence “J.C.” White (1865-1953)

J.C. White (as he was best known) is remembered as the manager and an owner of the Red Collar Line. Later in life he was sometimes referred to as “Commodore White” due to his role of being in charge of so many boats, and this seemed a title he enjoyed.

J.C. was born in the town of Wyoming in Otoe County, Nebraska, to Absolem K. and Francis (née Giles) White. When J.C. was 11 years old, the family moved to Denver, Colorado, where he later attended the University of Denver and studied civil engineering.

In 1887 he and his family moved north. J.C. took a job in Idaho Territory as Chief Civil Engineer finishing construction of the Coeur d’Alene Railway & Navigation Company narrow gauge railroad. The track had already been laid from the Old Mission Landing to Wardner Junction, but a dispute had arisen between the previous engineer and the president of the line, D.C. Corbin. J.C. was hired to replace the engineer who had been fired, and J.C. completed locating the rest of the line for Corbin.

J.C.’s parents settled in Farmington, Washington, and his father practiced law there. Later his parents moved to property in Idaho near the mouth of Emerald Creek on the St. Maries River, and his father came to be known as Judge White. Judge White died there on November 26, 1901, and Francis (J.C.’s mother) went to live with the J.C. White family. Francis died in Coeur d’Alene on March 31, 1931.

J.C. married Harriet Maysfield Whitmore of Farmington, Washington, in 1895. The couple resided at Emerald Creek, and there the couple’s first child, Clarence “Claire,” was born in April of 1897. Claire died prior to 1900 in a sleigh accident near Fernwood. The family moved to Coeur d’Alene where four children were born: daughter Francis, April 30, 1904; son Alfred “Al” Kirk, November 11, 1906; daughter Harriet “Constance”, March 13, 1909; and son Joseph “Joe” C. White, Jr., March 16, 1913.

Before moving to Coeur d’Alene, and following his work locating the narrow gauge railroad, J.C. worked locating lines for the Oregon Railway & Navigation and the Seattle Lake Shore & Eastern. Later he took up a homestead claim on Emerald Creek, and while there was hired by the State Road Commission to locate a road from St. Maries to Moscow (part of the original North-South Highway), and to locate another road from Grangeville to Elk City.

It was after this that J.C. came to meet F.A. Blackwell, William Dollar, and the Spaldings – father J.A. and his son Harry. The relationship between these men ultimately resulted in the formation of the Red Collar Line. Blackwell had come to Coeur d’Alene as a tim-
ber man and Dollar was a banker. Soon Blackwell and Dollar developed a vision of transportation in the area that included both railroads and steamboats; and J.C. White became part of that vision. Lake Coeur d'Alene had great potential as a scenic recreation destination, but it lacked both the population and transportation to promote that potential. The men looked to the potential of Spokane and surrounding small communities to supply the people necessary. Blackwell would provide the railroad (the Coeur d'Alene & Spokane electric line), and Dollar would supply the capital to build the infrastructure. All that was left was to enhance the draw of the scenery by creating the steamboats to provide recreation on the lake – and J.C. White was to become part of that.

But White's first work was again locating a railroad; this time it was Blackwell's Coeur d'Alene & Spokane electric line which would connect the area's population center (Spokane) to the lake. This railroad and the first Red Collar steamer, the \textit{Idaho}, were constructed concurrently – the boat was finished first and started operation on August 20, 1903, and the railroad was finished on December 28 the same year.

The Red Collar Line (officially the Coeur d'Alene & St. Joe Transportation Co.) had been incorporated by White, the Spauldings, and others March 21, 1903 (strangely after construction of the first steamer \textit{Idaho} began). Soon with the \textit{Idaho} and the Electric Line both in operation, excursions to Coeur d'Alene, across the lake, and up the St. Joe River became immensely popular. The main competition, the steamers \textit{Spokane} and \textit{Colfax} owned by J.D. McDonald and George Reynolds, were sold to the Red Collar. It apparently was at this time the idea of putting red collars on the smokestacks of the boats evolved into unofficially calling the company “The Red Collar Line.”

In 1904 there was a disagreement between White and the Spauldings over the direction of the company, and with the financial aid of Dollar, White bought control of the company. This was not the last fight White would have in making the Red Collar dominant on the lake. McDonald and Reynolds did not give up operating on the lake after selling their first two boats. They formed White Star Navigation in competition to the Red Collar. White eventually outmaneuvered that company and bought it out in 1907. White continued to acquire new steamers and secure dominance on the lake. But the completion of the Milwaukee railroad in the St. Joe Valley ended the absolute necessity of steamboat traffic in that area, and the new gasoline engine (both in automobiles and boats) gradually brought the Red Collar to its knees.

The Coeur d'Alene & St. Joe Transportation Co. (Red Collar Line) went bankrupt and the receiver announced its auction January 16, 1923. Fred Herrick, timber man, purchased the line which was renamed the Red Collar Steamboat Company. Herrick in turn went bankrupt in
a few years, but that’s another story.

The Red Collar bankruptcy forced many changes on the White family, and one was the loss of the family home on Sherman. The Coeur d’Alene Press noted in the fall of 1924 that J.C. had purchased the Totten residence at 510 Garden Ave. and would be moving there. I’m not sure who was the next owner of the White House as there could have been one or two people who owned it for a short time (as there was in the case of the Blackwell House that my grandparents bought), but I know that Philip M. McManamin and family became long-term owners soon after the Whites had to sell.

Philip, known as “Bronc,” was the woods boss for the Winton-Rosenberry Lumber Co. He was in charge of the horse teams the lumber company used, and that was probably the origin of his nickname. (Incidentally, his nickname also graced a couple of tug boats on the lake) Philip died in 1936 but Philip’s wife, Deborah, lived in the house until her death in 1965.

During WWII the back area of the house was converted into two apartments. Their daughter, Mary Bjorklund, continued to rent out apartments and reside in the home until her death in 1992.

After J.C. White lost control of the Red Collar Line in 1923 he remained involved with the steamboats for a time. In August of 1923 he was referred to as “traffic manager” of Herrick’s steamboat company, and this may have continued until Herrick also went bankrupt. But in March of 1925 White’s status became confused when he formed a new company, the J.C. White Boat Line. This line operated one boat, the Radio. The Radio’s construction was started by the Red Collar just prior to bankruptcy, and it’s unclear how White acquired her. It’s probable that he just leased her from Herrick, for in 1929 when Herrick went bankrupt, the boat was part of that company’s assets.

Long before the decline and loss of the Red Collar, White had become involved with promotion of business in the area, and not just that of his own. He worked to improve the roads even though they resulted in auto traffic that took business away from the Red Collar boats. He became president of the Coeur d’Alene Commercial Club (1903) – forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce (1912). Then in 1924 he was elected president of the Coeur d’Alene Chamber of Commerce. He retired from that job in January of 1926.

“Commodore” White died April 5, 1953 at age 88 and was buried in Forest Cemetery in Coeur d’Alene.

It is vitally important that the magnificent home built by J.C. White be preserved and remain a testament to the history of our area. Without the steamboats that White championed, Coeur d’Alene City and Lake might have never become the mecca of the Northwest we have today.

The interior rooms of the White House were opened up in the 1990s for an event venue and do not resemble what it looked like when the Whites lived there. Additions to the porch and the 2nd floor were added about the same time. Plans are to take those additions off to return the front exterior to look much as it did when it was built. Get involved and save this priceless piece of history so it can be enjoyed for future generations and to serve as a focal point for a new museum building to showcase Coeur d’Alene regional history.

The Museum is seeking donations of photographs of the White House and the people who lived there from any time period. Stories are welcome. Contact Dorothy Dahlgren at 208-664-3448 or dd@museumni.org
From the Board President

It has been an extremely busy but exciting past four months at the museum. As Julie Gibbs, Past Board President, noted in the Spring issue of this newsletter, the museum was exploring a site for a new museum between the Coeur d’Alene City Hall and the northeast side of Tubbs Hill.

The museum has been looking to relocate for fifteen years now. The current museum is too small and poorly suited for the kind of state-of-the-art museum our community deserves. In March, local architects Jon Mueller and Scott Cranston brought forth a concept of moving the J. C. White house, scheduled for demolition in August 2019, to the Tubbs Hill site to serve as the front entry for two additional wings which would be built to house a new modern museum as well as research and archival spaces, meeting rooms, a library, a theater and more. The concept caught on and spurred the imagination of the community. Since then the museum has engaged with the City of Coeur d’Alene and Ignite CDA, who both currently own lots on the site, the Tubbs Hill Foundation and the adjacent homeowner, and all enthusiastically endorse the project.

Much work has been done to secure the contractors and architects needed to prepare the White House for the move. City planners and staff have been hard at work expediting the permits and logistics necessary to move the house in time to meet the deadline to prevent its demolition. The current owner of the White House, Mark Launder, has graciously extended the deadline date, recognizing the mind-boggling number of tasks that had to be completed, and now the move is scheduled to occur in late September/early October. It will be an event worth watching but you may have to be there at 2:00 a.m. to see it happen. The house will then be “winterized” and restoration work will begin in the spring. Planning for the new wings will proceed throughout the fall and winter.

Just when this effort got started in March and April, the board welcomed five new members and they hit the ground running. They are all now heavily involved in all aspects of creating a new museum including building design, fundraising, and developing an Interpretive Plan for exploring the best way to tell our story and present it in state-of-the-art exhibits.

You can be part of this adventure as well. Soon we will bring local historians and community members together to help write our story – a story focused as much on the future as the past, a story that will help our community understand who we are, how we got to where we are today, and then ask “what are you going to do with it now?”

This will obviously come at a cost. You can make it happen by donating or even taking part in the fundraising campaign. It is rare to be presented an opportunity to help create something that will be a valued part of our community for generations to come.

Join us as we boldly(!) move forward.

Mike Dixon, Board President

Building Fund Donations

Nancy Criswell
Ken & Virginia Wright
Joe & Diane Dahlheim
Dwight & Martha McCain

Cash Donations

Charles & Marion Long (Chapel)
Brad Dugdale
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Ray & Eleanor Grannis
Ken & Victoria Roberge
Dave & Maxine Martin
Carol & Martin Stacey
Peggy Countryman
Sheena Christman

Other Donations

Scott and Cari Fraser donated a lawn mower for use at the storage building. Thanks to Geoff Howard for doing the mowing.

Thank you Terri J. Hunter for donating the 990 tax preparation. Review our 990 form at www.museumni.org

Board Position Open

We thank John McTear for his service on the board.
**Memorials**

Remember friends and loved ones with a memorial donation to the Museum’s Endowment Fund.

- For **Joy Porter** from Jane Robertson
- For **Bonnie Fossum** from Judith Stebbins and Patricia Mason
- For **Peggy Domit** from Jack Domit
- For **Ed Johnson** from Connie & Jay Gridley, Roy & Bonnie Cook, Lynn Purcell & Elton Turcotte, Carla Benson, Carrie Graham, Tom Mathison and Ray & Vickie Johnson, Eric Johnson
- For **Red & Patti Barry** from Marc & Tamara Richert
- For **Ronnie Mills** from Betty Mills

You can send the donation to us or deposit it directly to the Idaho Community Foundation at www.idcomfdn.org then type in Museum of North Idaho.

This is a nice way to honor and remember your friends and loved ones. Please include the address of the family member you would like us to notify.

**Remembering . . .**

**Joy Porter** was a volunteer since 2002. She served on the board from 2005 to 2009. She continued volunteering in the office putting in over 500 hours annually for many years. For years Joy sat next to me at the desk two days a week. She learned the computer and our collections database providing a great service by cataloging an untold number of artifacts and photos. She put in countless hours proofreading and was my sounding board for my writing. Joy was 77 years old.

**Stan Johnson** was passionate about the Milwaukee railroad and it was reflected in the many books he wrote on the subject. We were honored when Stan worked with us to publish three, plus one revised edition, of his Milwaukee railroad books beginning in the mid 1990s. Stan was 91 years old. Stan’s last request of the museum is to publish a historical fiction about our area called *Swept By the Devil*.

**Tony Bamonte** passed away at the age of 77. Along with his wife Suzanne he was a longtime Museum supporter. They published many books about our region’s history using and adding to Museum resources.

**Artifact Donations Since May**


Mark Weadick: Powderhorn, trade knife made by Mark Weadick.


**Robert, Mark and Bob** donated the above items for the new Fur Trade exhibit. Come in and see it!


Pat & Kay Powers family: 2 oak jury chairs from the Rathdrum courthouse.

Mike Flynn (Barbara Kobs): Pre WWII leather flying pants worn by Bill Bruell.


Dixie Parsons: Worley photos and information.

Clyde McCaw: Quilt frame.

Tom Lee: Photos of Thomas Kerl.

Bruce Shoemaker: Framed reproduction map of Lewis & Clark route.

Tamara Richert: “Wild Bill’s Bull Sheet”.


Susan Overby (Ralph & Emma Weeks): Three books on Coeur d’Alene Tribal history.

Siegund Kirchner: 1960s photos of the Kirchner farm at Squaw Bay.

JoNell Barber: 1934 booklet “Golden Gleanings.”

Tony & Gladys Herbes: Physicians prescription box from the early 1940s. The Herbes acquired it when they purchased the drug store.

**Esto Perpetua Award**

David Eubanks made the nomination stating “Having made multiple significant contributions to the preservation of Idaho history over many years Robert Singletary is, by most accounts, North Idaho’s most respected and cherished historian.”

This is the third time the Museum has been associated with an *Esto Perpetua* Award. The Museum of North Idaho won the award in 2018 and Director Dorothy Dahlgren was presented the award in 2016.

The Idaho State Historical Society recognizes people and organizations who have preserved and promoted Idaho’s history through professional accomplishments, public service or volunteerism, and philanthropy.

Robert Singletary was presented the *Esto Perpetua Award* in June for his work to preserve Idaho history. Robert, Teresa Little and Don Pischner.
**Museum of North Idaho**

Our mission is to collect, preserve and interpret the history of the Coeur d’Alene Region to foster appreciation of the area’s heritage.

**Board of Directors**

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Robert Singletary, Program & Marketing Director  
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The Museum is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and qualifies for the Idaho income tax credit for contributions to educational institutions and museums (the Idaho State Educational Tax Credit), in addition to the usual charitable deduction. Consult your accountant.

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**Get on Board!**

Send in Your Membership  
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□ **Georgie Oakes** $100+  
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Membership Benefits Include:  
Free admission to the Museum  
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Please add dd@museumni.org to your email contact list