Chewelah, Stevens County, Washington
In the Year Of 1903
As Seen Through the Pages Of

THE CHEWELAH INDEPENDENT

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History S 36
Mrs. Avery, Instructor
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Introduction

First, to establish the purpose of this paper, I hope that from the accounts given in the weekly newspaper of the town of Chewelah, the "Independent", I can recapture for a moment the spirit of that year, 1903, in which the town was incorporated and the newspaper founded. In a project of this type the endeavor is, through selected quotations and interpretations, to give that illusion of reality and feeling of participation which a reader asks.
Before the time of the Whitman Massacre the Reverends Cushing Eells and Elkanah Walker had held religious services at the present site of Chewelah in the Colville valley and with the discovery of gold in the region, more settlers came. By 1903 a busy community of five hundred people had arisen and in the first part of that year was incorporated. On the nineteenth of June, W.H. Brownlow and Sons published the first edition of the Chewelah INDEPENDENT with a headline reading:

**CHEWELAH THE COMING TOWN!**

**THE FUTURE BUTTE OF WASHINGTON!**

“...To contend that a town will build and prosper without something upon which to form a commercial basis would be an idle waste of words; it must have resources that can be developed; something that can give employment, health and wealth to the myriads of human ‘ants’ that would transform a bounteous nature...” Editor Brownlow then goes on to explain the bounteous nature – the fertile agricultural valleys, the minerals; gold, silver, copper, iron and marble of every known grain and color.

In the history of the American frontier one of the greatest indications that a community was becoming settled and respectable was a school system which it could be proud of. Chewelah was the second district in Stevens County to form a union high school. In 1901 the district was bonded for $3000 and the money applied to a fine brick building. The INDEPENDENT in that historic first issue reports that for the past year, four teachers were hired and it is intended that a fifth will be hired for the next year.

Organizations had established themselves and there were three churches: the Catholic, the Congregational, and the Free Methodists.
Of fraternal societies there were chapters of Modern Woodmen of America, the I.O.O.F., the Knights of the Maccabees, the Highlanders, and the G.A.R. Union.

These were the days of the Hotel Pomeroy and the Cottage House, the Buck Eye Barber Shop and the Pioneer Barber Shop, the Chewelah Brewery and Saloon (Drink Chewelah Beer!) and the City Saloon (Spokane Beer on tap!). There were three general stores; a furniture and hardware, one meat market, a bank, a creamery and cheese factory, one millinery and ladies’ furnishings, a bakery, a livery stable, a blacksmith shop and a planning mill. Mention is made of C.H. Montgomery, U.S. Commissioner, who came into the county in the days of the boundary commissions and the Hudson’s Bay Company. There were two doctors and a third who intended to begin practice soon, two drug stores, three real estate dealers, two confectionery stores with poolrooms in connection, and a number of other businesses such as building and construction and hauling services.

The ‘city dads’ were: Mayor W.W. Dickson, Councilmen Fred Kieling, Henry Pomeroy, H.T. Spedden, Dr. McIntire, Geo. McCrea, Clerk F.L. Reinoehl, and Marshal Thos. W. Gilson.

At that time the paper consisted of four pages of ‘ready-print’, which was sent in from the outside, and four pages of local news hand-set at the INDEPENDENT office. In the ready-print section the big news of the week was the flood disaster of Heppner, Oregon, in which 500 persons were reported drowned. Leslie Matlock, hero of the day, rode horseback down the river ahead of the flood crest, warning the people of Lexington and Ione so that no one in those two towns was killed. Subsequent issues reduced the number killed substantially, but it remained a great tragedy.

On the international scene, there was the murder of King Alexander and Queen Draga of Servia and the proclaiming of Prince Peter as King.
To cure your ills there were the advertisements of the favorite medicines: ‘No hair? The trouble is your hair does not have life enough. Act promptly. Save your hair. Feed it with Ayer’s Hair Vigor. If the gray hairs are beginning to show, Ayer’s Hair Vigor will restore color every time. $1.00 a bottle.’ – ‘For lazy liver, Cascarets, Candy Cathartic, are recommended.’

‘Doctor advocated operation...PE-RU-NA made knife unnecessary,” reports Mrs. Eva Barho, 133 East 12th St. N.Y. City, N.Y. A lithograph of Mrs. Barho is included. – ‘Castoria, (the kind you always bought bears the signature of Chas. H. Fletcher), in use for over 30 years.’ – ‘S.S.S. cured Mrs. M.P. Smythers, Wytheville, VA., who was horribly afflicted with boils.’

Sample fill-ins of the “ready-print”: ‘A Japanese boy has carried off first honors at the Kansas City high school. Six years ago he could speak no English, and he has supported himself in school.’ – ‘For the past 160 years the royal family of Britain has been identified with Free Masonry.’ – ‘Milk is now reduced to a powder by a new Swedish invention. Five quarts of skim milk yield one pound of powder.’ – ‘Necessity was the invention of mothers.’

In the hand-set pages there were personality-filled editorials: ‘So Kressly, the mining speculator and ‘promoter’ has gone to Mexico. This is exceedingly bad for Mexico, but a good thing for Spokane. It would be a most fortunate event for the mining interests of this section if a few more ‘promoters’ were to go to Mexico or some other warm climate.’

Cultural interests also were beginning to shape up. An announcement by the head school teacher reads: ‘The Heroes of History that the people subscribed for in May are at my house, and can be drawn for reading under such restrictions as are deemed advisable until regular library rules are adopted. There are also ten volumes of the Rollo books. The first nine volumes of the new encyclopedia are also here. James W. Dow.’
An early entertainment is also recorded: ‘The good people of Chewelah were highly entertained last week by a little play given by a ‘hayseed' troupe. The people of Chewelah are very good patrons of evening entertainments, but few nights like the one mentioned will break their confidence in traveling troupes.’

Fred T. Merrill Cycle Co. of Portland, Oregon, advertised that agents are wanted for Rambler, Oldsmobile, Waverly, and Toledo automobiles, $500 and up.

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The very next issue announced that Billy Drugan was in trouble again for taking a gun after those who ignored the 'No Fishing' signs on his property at Brown's Lake.

In this June 26, 1903 issue of the 'Independent' it is announced that among the arrivals at the Hotel Pomeroy is listed J.P. Morgan, New York. No other mention is made, but we shall hope that the J.P. Morgan, of Wall Street fame, did actually come to visit the 'future Butte of Washington', and that he was well satisfied with the accommodations at the Pomeroy Hotel.

The 'city dads' were having trouble getting a water works started, having revoked the franchise of Colville contractor W.L. Brown for not beginning by the time specified.

Sixteen not-called-for letters were advertised as waiting at the post office, and the names of the addressees given.

Big stories for the week in the 'ready-print' section were of a pastor in Delaware who supported the lynching of a Negro in his sermon, an axe killing at Pomeroy, Washington, more about the situation at Heppner, Oregon, and a fatal wreck at Spokane in which a runaway freight without an engine came down the four-mile Hillyard hill at ninety-miles an hour, jumped the end of the track at Division Street and plowed a furrow for nearly 600 feet, passing through a residence and scattering parts of the sixty cars in all directions.
Editorials of interest for that week: 'Some men don't want much; others want the earth; but the lean, hungry, disappointed-looking individual who went around town the other day looking for a ladder with only the top round in, wanted it all at once.' Commenting on the axe murder at Pomeroy: 'Farmers should be careful this fall not to leave any old empty potato pits lying around loose. A man living near Pomeroy left one open last fall and his wife killed him and chucked him in it. She was arrested and tried by a jury of twelve men, who say that she did not do it. Now that a precedent has been established women can go on killing their husbands and burying them in old worn out potato pits with impunity.'

The library was progressing: 'Pupils or others desiring to draw books from the school library can do so on Saturdays between 2 PM and 8 PM. Drawing can be made at other times if I am at home. Anyone above the fifth grade can find something useful and interesting. James W. Dow.'

The big celebration was announced for the Fourth of July at Chewelah: 'Big street parade, starting at Woodman Hall at 10:30 AM and ending at picnic grounds. Opening song by the choir. Prayer. Song by the choir. Introduction of Speaker. Address by Professor Bound. Reading the Declaration of Independence. Essay by Mrs. McPherson. Old-fashioned picnic dinner from 12 to 2 PM. Sports at 2:30 sharp. Girls' foot race, under 15, first and second prize. Boys' foot race, 75 yards, for boys under 15, first and second prize. Tug of war, Chewelah against Valley. Horse race, 600 yards, free for all, 5 to enter, 3 to start. First prize $10.00; second prize $5.00; third prize $1.00. Dance at Woodman Hall in the evening. Committee on program: Dr. McIntire, Ellis Kieling, H.S. Spedden, and Alf Bunker.' (Gee! I would like to attend a Fourth like that.)
An exchange article from the Newport Miner: *The anti-gambling law is strictly complied with in the Washington part of Newport. Even shaking the dice doesn't go, so some of the peaked heads fell to thinking and the result is a new game. You stand on one crack of the sidewalk and spit at another and the man in evidence furtherest from the mark buys. When a player can no longer expectorate over his chin the game is off.'*

*THE AIR SHIP AGAIN. Santos Dumont has again made his appearance with an air ship. This time he made a successful tour over the city of Paris and landed safely at his door. The new machine seems more manageable than some of his former ones.'*

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The 'Independent' for July 3, 1903, announces the arrival of bulletins 52 to 59 of the State Agricultural College at Pullman, and that they are on file for all those interested.

It seems the water works was still under controversy. Mr. Bowen stated that work had begun on time and that materials are ordered, so the city council decided it might reconsider revoking his franchise.

*CULTIVATE THE SOIL. Develop the country's resources and the cities will grow where the country flourishes. One hundred and sixty acres of rich bottom lands cleared and put under cultivation is worth more to Chewelah than a brick block standing idle. Improve the rich lands of the country, put them into a state of cultivation and productiveness, and the town will take care of itself correspondingly. Make highways into the valleys, build bridges across the rivers, work from the natural centre, at the 'hub' your city will grow.'*

*ATTENTION! There will be a meeting of the business men and all others interested in the future of Chewelah, at the Woodman Hall Tuesday evening, July 7 at 7:30 sharp, for the purpose of organizing a Commercial Club. It is desired that everybody come. A. Bunker, W.H.*
Brownlow, D. Van Slyke – Committee.' (On October 30th of that year comes a notice that the Commercial Club is finally established.)

Although the good citizens of Chewelah did not have solicitors for big city newspapers to contend with, there were occasional itinerant peddlers (perhaps not all of them of good repute) and the city council wished to reduce this evil as much as possible: 'Ordinance No. 9, Sec. 4 – Every peddler, hawker or itinerant merchant of any character shall pay a license at the rate of five dollars per day. Provided that this ordinance shall not apply to any person selling any produce, grown or raised by such person, either at public or private sale.' (Passed February 18, 1903.)

To minister to the citizens' personal ills there arrived: 'J.A. Lung, graduate of Cincinatti, Ohio, 1854, a licentiate of this state, offers his professional service to Chewelah and vicinity. Can cure epileptic fits by removing the cause. All examinations at his office free. Pure medicine for sale at his office.'

Editorial of the same issue: 'We notice from reading some of our exchanges who carry Chamberlin's medicine ads that we have had a very narrow escape from some dreadful malady by not carrying their ads. We are thankful.'

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July 10, 1903

'4TH AT CHEWELAH

It rained, it rained, it rained.

yet a good crowd turned out
to celebrate the nation's birthday.'
Yes it rained, but the people went to Woodman Hall and the Declaration of Independence was read, and Mrs. McPherson gave her recitations, and the choir sang. Folks went home or to the hotels for the 'picnic' lunch and there was no horse race, but the dancing in the evening was wonderful.'

Another community seems to have been even more determined that the rain should not spoil the fun on the Fourth: 'The Fourth seems to have been a red letter day at Addy in which the whole community became more or less involved. Beer and red liquor flowed freely, and some people got gay, among them a peace officer, a constable by appointment, who with his brain addled with whiskey, became so officious that he wanted to arrest everybody in sight...'

The 'city dads' were still having trouble about the water works and refused to rescind their order revoking the franchise of Mr. Bowen.

The United States Health Bulletin of April 15, 1903, is quoted: 'Among the beers that we feel justified in recommending for its purity and the sanitary and hygenic methods of its preparations, is that from the Engelbert Leible Brewery of Chewelah, Wash.'

Editorials: 'It is reported that Jim Hill has lost controlling interest in the Northern Pacific. Perhaps Uncle Jim will now be able to devote more time toward straightening out the kinks in the Spokane Falls & Northern railroad.'

'We arise to ask what the city council is going to do about building a sidewalk to the depot. While we understand the city limits do not extend quite to the depot, can the railroad company be prevailed upon to construct what will remain beyond the limits? It will at least do no harm to make a trial. It seems to us that when a company locates a depot at so great a distance from a town they should be willing to help build a sidewalk for the accommodation of their passengers.'
C.E. Ross reported that his mill could supply 25,000 shingles per day.

Local market prices were quoted as follows: Eggs, 20 cents per dozen; potatoes, 40 cents per sack; Chewelah cheese, 15 cents a pound; steak, 15 cents a pound for porterhouse and loin, 12 ½ for round, and 10 cents for shoulder.

A bit of tongue-in-cheek local color is given in this article: 'Ed Tarble came up from Valley Sunday to have Dr. McIntire dress his wounded ear, or what is left of it. All of the lower lobe is cut entirely away and has every appearance of having been done with a sharp instrument of some kind. Mr. Tarble complains of a severe pain in the left side of his head as if from a heavy blow. Abramson has been place under bond to appear at the September term of court.'

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July 17, 1903

Editorial: 'A lawyer down in the Big Bend country started in to 'do up' the editor, and his friends carried him home on a window blind and put him under the doctor's care. The man who tackles the country editor makes the mistake of his life. He does not take into consideration the strenuous life of the country editor in his battle from 'devil' to 'case', from 'case' to 'sanctum', and along with the ordinary battles comes the chopping of his own wood, (if it isn't borrowed), collecting his delinquent subscription list and standing off his grocery bill, all of which has a tendency to cultivate the defensive ability of a Fitzsimmons and a J.L. Sullivan disposition, particularly if his assailant is a little 2x4 lawyer who carries the accumulation of a lifetime under a No. 6 Derby hat.'

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July 31, 1903

J.H. King announced the opening of a new grocery.
The big news of the week was the race riot at Danville, Illinois.

August 14, 1903

The second annual county fair at Colville was announced with $1500 in prizes and three balloon ascensions, combined with aerial torpedo explosions and daring parachute jumps.

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DEATH OF A STRANGER

A bit of drama is perhaps suggested by this article printed in the July 10, 1903 issue of the 'Independent':

'A man giving the name of J.R. McKinsey, died at the Hotel Pomeroy Monday morning from pneumonia. He was about 54 years of age and of spare build. Little, if anything, is known of him in this vicinity as he was brought in Saturday from the King Gold and Copper company's camp, where he, in company with another man, has been engaged in cutting cord wood for the company since sometime in May. He was very reticent about his private affairs. Nothing could be learned beyond the fact that he was born near Boston, and to some he gave out an intimation of a family still residing at that place; while to others he talked only of a son of whom he had not heard for seven or eight years. He had $24.80 due him from the company to which they added enough to pay the funeral expenses.'

Yes, the West was the place where a man could become lost forever, or very nearly. McKinsey's birth is probably recorded at some county seat near Boston, his death at Colville; his marriage and the birth of his son may be recorded somewhere in between. Perhaps the only time he got his name in a newspaper is when he died. To the world it is nearly as if he never lived at all. Perhaps there were nieces and nephews who sometimes told the neighbor kids about their
uncle out west. Perhaps there are still men living who could say, “Yes, I knew 'Mac'. He wasn't a very talkative cuss – never said much about where he had been, or where he was going.”

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November 6, 1903

ORGANIZER WILKINS AT CHEWELAH

'M.W. Wilkins, national organizer of the Socialist party, made a two-hour talk on Socialism at the Woodman Hall Monday night to a small-sized audience. Mr. Wilkins is not only an able expounder of the Socialist doctrine, but an eloquent speaker as well, and holds the attention of his audience whether they be in sympathy with the Socialist movement or not. While his descriptions of economic conditions brought about by the present social and political systems are somewhat graphic, they contain, nevertheless, much food for thought for those interested in what is to the Socialist the burning question of the day, - 'what can we do to better the condition of our fellow men.'"

November 20, 1903

'NORTHPORT NEWS ON SOCIALISM. We do no exactly approve of the Republican casting slurs against the Socialists and their city administration last year, although we have no use for them politically, and think the present officials should all be re-elected, on account of the honorable and efficient way in which they have managed the city's affairs. They assumed office with a depleted treasury and now have over $3000 to their account and everything paid. It is true, we might get just as good a set, but we might get a great deal worse, and consequently we believe in keeping what we know to be good. But to give the devil his due, the Socialists spent
$2000 or more to good advantage on 4th Street, making it a first-class thoroughfare, and putting many idle men to work at a time when our city was very dull. Still we do not say this because we would stand for them but merely to see fair play. We would not vote for a Socialist under any circumstances. They are indulging in an idle dream that has no business basis behind it.'

December 4, 1903

'If the editor of the 'New Time' had used a little more care in reading the article in which he seems to have discovered such a mare's nest, he would have noticed that the article was in quotations and headed 'Northport News on Socialism', and was not written by 'Mr. Independent.'"

I think it would be great fun to know more about Mr. Wilkins and about how he made out, talking Socialism to the settlers of the northwest.

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One of the most important activities of the citizens of Chewelah at that time, and one which inspired most optimism, was mining. A few quotations from the 'Independent' would suffice to suggest the spirit and the hope that men held for the future.

The first issue of the 'Independent' starts off by describing Chewelah as the 'Future Butte of Washington', saying that it is 'surrounded by mountains rich in mineral wealth, gold, silver, copper, iron and marble of every known grain and color.'

The editor notes that a plant for sawing and polishing marble is much needed in the valley. In another article: 'It is the intention of the Northwestern Consolidated Smelter company to locate one of its smelting plants at Chewelah. The different companies working are the Copper
King, Jay Gould, Eagle, Nellie S., Nevada, Windfall, the Twin Sisters, Stella and Alice, and several others have pushed development work with the view of being in readiness when the smelter is erected....' The 'Single Standard' was reported to have a shaft well down to the hundred foot level. 'There are other deposits of iron in Stevens County. Last week a discovery was made on the high mountains east of Addy, where the crown of the ridge seems to be a solid deposit of high grade hematite, with ore of lower grade covering the slopes of the mountain for hundreds of feet below the summit...'

'The Jay Gould is in all probability the most promising mining property in the camp. At the hundred foot level the ore body showed a width of thirty feet of silver-lead ore carrying two ounces of silver to each percent lead, and running from 20 to 40 percent lead, and as depth is obtained the copper and gold increases.'

List of promising mining properties being opened that are tributary to Chewelah:

- Copper King
- Bunker Mining Co. Group
- Eagle
- Alice Gold Mining Co. Group
- Widow's Mite
- Nevada
- Revenue Group
- Jolly Boy Group
- Jay Gould
- 'Bay State
- Ben 'B'
- Lake Shore Group
- U.S. Gold Mining Co.
- Aetna Group
- Windfall
- Helena
- Single Standard
- Hartford Group
- Nellie 'S'
- Aurora
- Juneau and Echo
- The Finley
- Monitor Group
- New Era
- Mayflower Group
- Dewey Group
- Bird's Eye Group

Here is an editorial from the June 26 issue of that year which expresses the constant willingness of miners to gamble on a new strike and the consciousness of how many of these gambles are unwarranted: 'They seem to have 'struck' something up on the Lardo country that has created an old time Klondyke excitement, as every means of transportation in that section is
being pressed into service. While there can no doubt be some good diggings, we may look for the hard-luck stories that usually attend these stampedes.'

July 17, 1903

An article reports the visit of a marble expert from Ruthland, VT., Mr. A.J. Dunstan, '...who is of the opinion the marble deposit of Stevens County is far superior to that of any other in any part of the United States, and that all that is lacking is development to make it one of our greatest industries...'

August 7, 1903

Editorial: 'Why should we wait for outside capital to develop the mining interests of this section? There is plenty of capital here to take hold of a good property and prove to the outside world that the Chewelah mining camp is all right."

August 21, 1903

'H.H. Baker, manager of the Nellie S Copper Mining and Milling Company, will this week complete timbering the first hundred feet on the Nellie S. When completed it will be a double compartment shaft ready for installing pumping and air machinery as depth is obtained. The company will sink another hundred feet before opening up the ore body.'

'S.P. Domer and D.F. Strobeck, of the Copper King mine, returned to Spokane Monday, after starting the crew to taking out ore...'
"Mr. L. Bingham of Minneapolis, a representative of the Revenue mine was here the first of the week...Mr. Bingham says that he will, upon his return to Minneapolis, recommend they resume operations upon the Revenue group and active work may be looked for early this fall.'

"The Jay Gould mine, after six months of development work, began taking out ore again this week for shipment and will make the next shipment in about ten days..."

August 28, 1903

"Four miles northwest of Chewelah is located the quarry of the Great Western Marble Company, covering 120 acres. One of the new companies is the Royal Serpentine Company, which has valuable deposits. Two hundred acres of land are owned by the Columbia Marble & Onyx Company and the Standard Marble & Onyx owns 160 acres in the same locality. Other companies which have opened up rich deposits of marble and onyx in this country are the Chewelah Mottled Marble Company, the Northwestern Marble Company, the Florentine Marble Company and the Toronto Marble Company..."

September 4, 1903

"Mr. C.H. Conrady, who is interested in claims in the dyke of gold and copper property just east of Blue Creek and north of the Alice mine, has made arrangements to put in a diamond drill to prospect the property..."

October 23, 1903

"The papers have from time to time made mention of Hill's iron in Stevens county's hills of which the Hill's Syndicate possesses only a small part. However, a trip of inspection to the Hill..."
mines will forever put to rest any doubt that ever existed on the iron question, for Captain J.H. Davey and his assistant D.A. Marshall have gone down into mother earth after it, and now have on the dump tons of red hematite that runs above 60 percent metallic iron...'

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In regard to the Hill iron interest, a sad little note pops up in the 'Independent' for June 3, 1904. 'The Iron Hill Mine is a thing of history; the machinery, drills and everything being stored in the Valley U.S. Warehouse (another has-been), and the Davey and Marshall boys have gone to Missoula, Montana. Everyone thinks there is ore in the mine, but this is another presidential year of railroad pulls and monopolies.'

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Another bubble has burst. Let it suffice to say that it was by no means the last bubble to burst – for some citizens of Chewelah could tell of many heartaches connected with mining in Stevens County.

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