

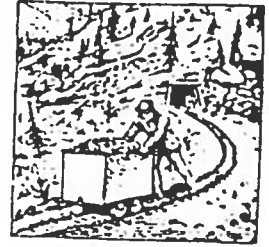


# WALLACE DISTRICT MINING MUSEUM, INC.

509 BANK ST.

Box 469

WALLACE, IDAHO 83873



(208) 556-1592

## "A SHORT DAY IN COURT"

### THE STORY OF THE JOHN HARRIS ESCAPE FROM THE COURT HOUSE IN MURRAY

JOHN M. HARRIS WAS A REAL ESTATE AGENT IN WALLACE AROUND 1890. HE ALSO HAD A STORE WHERE HE SOLD PIANOS FOR 15% DOWN AND 24 MONTHS TO PAY THE REMAINDER. CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW MANY PIANOS HE MIGHT SELL IN A START-UP MINING TOWN LIKE WALLACE BACK THEN?

REAL ESTATE WAS ANOTHER MATTER IN SUCH A START-UP TOWN, AND HARRIS DID QUITE WELL AT THAT. HE BOUGHT TWO LOTS ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF BANK STREET FOR 25¢ EACH JUST BEFORE THE BUILDING BOOM HIT. WITHIN A SHORT TIME, HE HAD SOLD THEM FOR \$25.00 EACH, A HUNDREDFOLD PROFIT! THE NEXT SALE HE MADE WAS TO JOHN FINCH, WITH A LOT THAT WENT FOR \$1,800. PLANS WERE TO PUT A LARGE BRICK BUILDING ON THAT LOT, WHICH WOULD BECOME THE OFFICES OF THE FEDERAL MINING COMPANY. IN LATER YEARS, WHEN ASARCO ASSUMED FEDERAL'S ASSETS, IT BECAME THE HEADQUARTERS FOR ITS NORTHWEST MINING DIVISION. OPERATIONS IN SUCH DIVERSE PLACES AS THE SMELTER IN TACOMA WASHINGTON AND LEADVILLE COLORADO ANSWERED TO THAT SAME OFFICE IN WALLACE. THE STRUCTURE IS NOW OVER 110 YEARS OLD, AND ALTHOUGH USED FOR PURPOSES OTHER THAN MINING MANAGEMENT, IS STILL QUITE ATTRACTIVE AND SOUND.

HARRIS WAS TO RUN AFOUL OF THE LAW IN SOME OTHER TRANSACTIONS, HOWEVER, AND ENDED UP IN MURRAY TO FACE TRIAL. HE MUST HAVE BELIEVED THAT HE WOULD BE CONVICTED, SO HE DEvised A DARING PLAN OF ESCAPE WHILE THE PROCEEDINGS WERE IN PROGRESS. THE DAY WAS HOT, THE WINDOWS WERE OPEN, BUT THE COURT ROOM WAS ON THE SECOND FLOOR. UNDAUNTED, HARRIS LEAPED OUT OF A WINDOW AND FLED TO CANADA.

HE EVENTUALLY SETTLED IN A NOT-SO-SMALL MINING TOWN IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, AND WENT ON TO BECOME A REASONABLY WELL RESPECTED MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY OF SANDON. THERE IS NO RECORD OF HARRIS EVER APPLYING FOR CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP. THE TOWN OF SANDON TODAY IS EVEN SMALLER THAN THAT OF MURRAY, AND MINING AROUND THE "SILVERY SLOCAN" IS ALSO A THING OF THE PAST. IT IS INTERESTING, HOWEVER, THAT ONE OF JOHN FINCH'S BUSINESS PARTNERS, PATSY CLARK, OWNED MINING PROPERTIES IN THE VICINITY!



B9 John