



The historic Hotel Lincoln in Harrington

A rich past, and a bright future

by Karen Allen

In 1882, W.P. Harrington, a California speculator, purchased land in Lincoln County, Washington Territory, knowing of the arrival of the railroad in 1883. It was pure speculation for the grain and cattle business that brought him there. By the turn of century, out of the “roaring desert” sprang a bustling little town.

In 1901, the Harrington Improvement Company was formed. The company was made up of a group of local businessmen, farmers and ranchers. These men designed several articles of incorporation to create and sustain the town:

First: To build, establish and maintain a hotel in the town of Harrington, and to supervise the management of the same.

Second: To buy or lease lands and town lots, and to build thereon and improve the same.

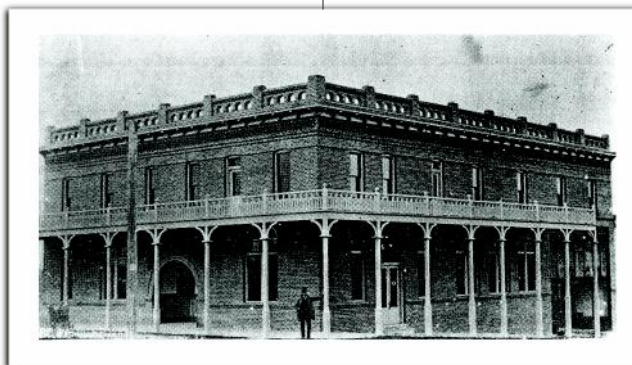
Third: To establish, maintain, own and operate a system of water works for the purpose of supplying the town of Harrington or the inhabitants thereof, with fresh and pure

water by conducting and conveying such water into, and distributing the same by means of aqueducts and pipes, through the streets and buildings of said town, and sell such water.

Fourth: To construct, erect and operate, for compensation, an electric light system for the generation of electricity, and for the purpose of supplying electric light to the town of Harrington, and the inhabitants thereof...

There are more articles, but these were first and foremost for the Harrington Improvement Company. On January 11, 1902, the first article of the Harrington Improvement Company was

complete and the Hotel Lincoln opened its doors. It was a fine hotel and was hailed as “. . . a two story brick structure, containing twenty-four large, light and airy sleeping rooms, fitted with the most modern appointments throughout. This may safely be pronounced the most comfortably appointed hotel along the line of the Great Northern between Spokane and Everett,” touted *The Harrington Citizen*.



While under construction, each stone was laid by hand for the foundation, every brick formed and fired at the area factory, Pratt and Rehms, and skillfully laid by masons of the local firm, J.E. Lowery. Huge timbers were unloaded from a nearby railcar and brought to the site on horse-drawn wagons by the contractor/builder from town.

The doors closed in the 1980s and have remained closed until this past fall. In November 2008, the Hotel Lincoln's rehabilitation began. A cement plaster worker, an administrative assistant, and a retired wheat rancher are the new owners of the hotel. The plans and dreams for this historic building developed slowly and are still growing as the project progresses.

"As long as there are grain elevators and wheat in this town, there will always be a town," said Archie Staley, retired wheat rancher and one of the owners of the hotel.

As rehabilitation progresses, the hotel has begun to reveal clues and secrets about its past. In 1912, a new owner purchased the hotel (J.A. Dalziel) and installed steam heat. When the sale took place, a great deal of remodeling also followed to accommodate the heating and electrical improvements.

Doors and windows that were unknown are now exposed. Openings that have been closed for over a half a century are opened. Walls covered in wallboard are uncovered and wainscoting that has been hidden once again shows a decorative face. Beautiful stenciling, fancy wallpaper, and a staircase for the kitchen staff . . . it is easy for the imagination to wander back in time.

A calling card found behind the chair rail in the lobby invites the detective in all of us to conjure up images of how it came to be there, who it belonged to. On one side of the card is the name and address of a company: Aetna Insurance, Hartford, Conn.; Rudolph Dorn, Manager. The other side of the card has a handwritten message that says "December 19, 1911, I found you." It was signed H. Jalmer Johnson, Alexandria, Minn. Perhaps a beautiful woman standing in the lobby was handed the card by a gentleman; or the hotel proprietor delivered it to her on his behalf. The woman, a proper lady, slipped the card behind the chair rail . . .

A tin of Copenhagen was found in a wall with a stamp dated January 22, 1912. The craftsman, employed to work during the Dalziel-era remodel, put his nearly empty tin in the wall to be discovered almost 100 years later. Perhaps he was a carpenter, or the plaster worker taking a short break for a pinch. He takes the last bit, and conveniently drops the tin in the open wall before closing it up.

Another card found behind a piece of trim in the lobby states that it is a business card for Mrs. Ida M. Parsons, Proprietress, Columbia Hotel, Wenatchee, Washington. Was she taking the train to Spokane? Was she invited to visit by the Hotel Lincoln's proprietor, T.T. Danilson?

Old receipts, a small flyer for a gospel crusade, and pennies from the early 1900s continue to provide welcome bits of rab-



bit trails and sidetracks during the hard work of restoration. Who were the people who descended down the main staircase after a good night's rest, relaxed in the lobby to read the paper and wait for a loved one or to prepare to catch a train?

Maybe they had a warm meal in the dining room, which served breakfast, dinner and supper. Menu choices were very distinctive: breakfast featured Olympia oyster omelet, hot or cold cereal, and crackers with cream and buttered toast. For supper, whole salt mackerel, raw oysters, steak or cold tongue sandwiches with Saratoga chips and coffee, tea or milk could be enjoyed.

An even more interesting mystery is the sampling room. Was it "men only?" Discovery of a separate door proved to lead right in to this unexplained room, and there is a separate entry door from the outside.

When standing outside the hotel, one can look north down 3rd street and imagine the horses and carriages passing by. The mind's eye can see gentlemen in derbies and suits marching down the street on their way to conduct business at one of the local shops, or to get a hot shave and haircut at the local barber shop. A road-weary traveler might alight from a rig to stay at the Hotel Lincoln, in a thriving town where he's likely to find work if he wants it, in the heart of Big Bend country. As he relaxes in the lobby, his eye might catch the headlines of a newspaper article announcing the opening of Hotel Lincoln and trumpeting: "Harrington is the most promising spot in Lincoln County. Anyone caring to know more about the prospects and possibilities of this rich portion of the Inland Empire may acquire the desired information by addressing the editor of *The Citizen*, who will place him in direct communication with 'those in the know' . . ." ■

More to come as the Hotel Lincoln restoration project continues . . .

Karen Allen was born in the region, grew up in Spokane, and went to Lewis and Clark High School. Her interests in photography and visual communication were cultivated at Shoreline Community College in Seattle. She finds inspiration in the outdoor world, and in the inventive and creative accomplishments of hard-working people of the past.

