

with such a limited scope in their plans. A major objective was attracting professionals, doctors, lawyers and newspaper publishers particularly, to set up practices in those communities.

Development of Professional Licensing Requirements

During the 1870's and 1880's, there were no standards or licensing requirements imposed by the Territory of Washington for the practice of a profession. The *caveat emptor*, let the buyer beware, was the prevailing wisdom in selecting a physician, a lawyer or a druggist to serve one's needs. Many a town, with a population of only a few dozen people or more, would have a physician in practice. Often the doctor presented qualifications of graduation from a medical school, but verification of that as a fact, and evidence of the quality of that education, if indeed it had been accomplished, was not required. Physicians came and left these communities with a rather high frequency. Building a practice to a level capable of supporting a family, even at the relatively meager life-style of a frontier town, was difficult. Those that did succeed often augmented their incomes by establishing a drug store simply by increasing the stock of drugs and medicines formerly kept solely for their own practice. Thus, most frontier drug stores were founded by physicians. From modest beginnings, they grew in size by featuring a broad spectrum of merchandise typical of the frontier American drug store.

As the communities grew, successful physicians took partners into their drug stores to share the responsibility of operating and expanding the business while they devoted more of their time to the practice of medicine. Those new partners often had no training in either pharmacy or business. The physician taught them how to compound their prescriptions and they learned how to operate a small retail business by on-the-job experience. As might be expected, that system often led to a short life for many drug stores and to a frequent turnover in operators of those stores that survived even for short periods of time.

Nevertheless, by 1890, almost every town in eastern Washington had at least one drug store, and towns with populations of 500 people or more would have two or more. The owners of those drug stores often employed at least one "drug clerk" who had among his responsibilities the compounding of prescriptions. Few of them had formal education or training in pharmacy. Some did have experience in midwest or eastern drug stores before joining the migration to the Pacific Northwest, and proudly touted that