

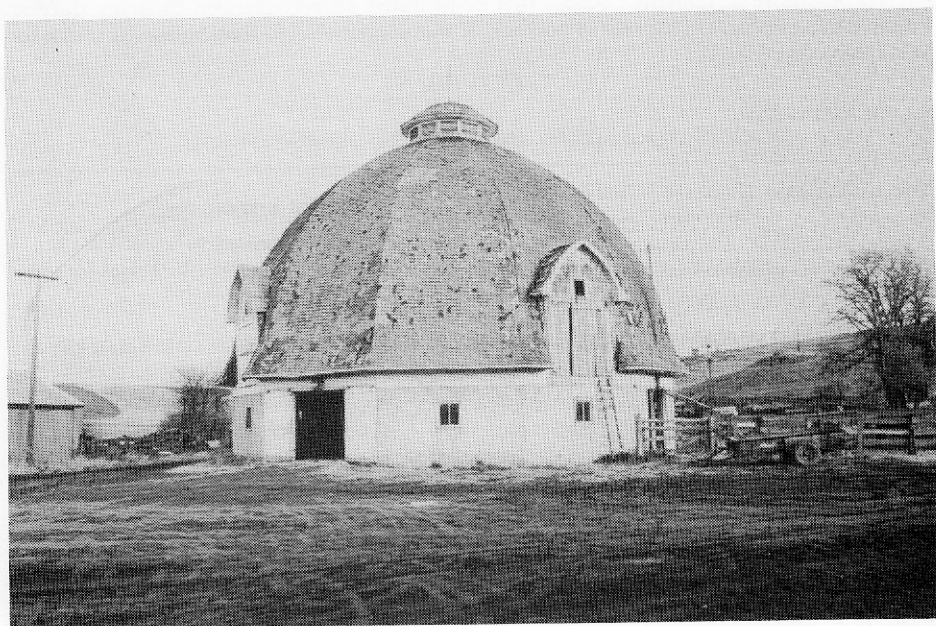
Bunchgrass Historian

Whitman County Historical Society Quarterly

Volume 17, No. 3

Colfax, Washington

Fall, 1989



- **Steinke Round Barn**
- **WPA Grazing History Account**
- **World War I in Pullman**

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THE AUTHORS

Craig Holstine is employed by Archeological and Historical Services, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, Wa.

The W.P.A. Grazing History interviews of 1941 were an early effort at a form of oral history. Three interviews from Whitman County have been selected of publication here, commencing with this issue.

Everett Skidmore of Colville, Wash., first contributed his recollections of Army duty at Pullman to a publication for retired persons. It was contributed to *Bunchgrass Historian* by Win Elwood of Albion.

COVER

Steinke Round Barn.

The Bunchgrass Historian is published four times a year by the Whitman County Historical Society. Its purpose is to further interest in the rich past of Whitman County.

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Max Steinke Round Barn

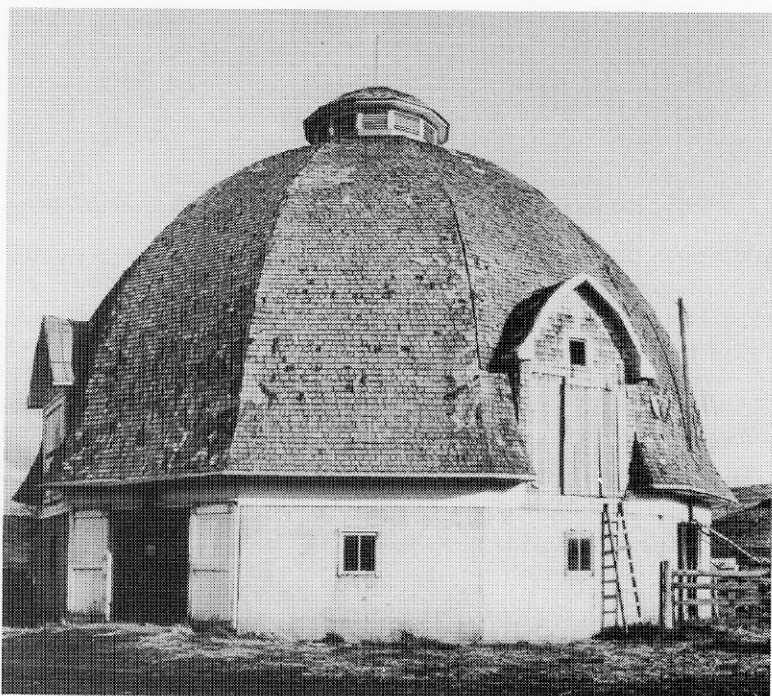
by
Craig Holstine

for the National Register of Historic Places

The following article is the fifth in a series taken from nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, all dealing with agriculture-related properties in Whitman County. Readers are advised that many of the structures discussed in these articles are located on private property. Those wishing to view these structures should treat them accordingly.

— editor

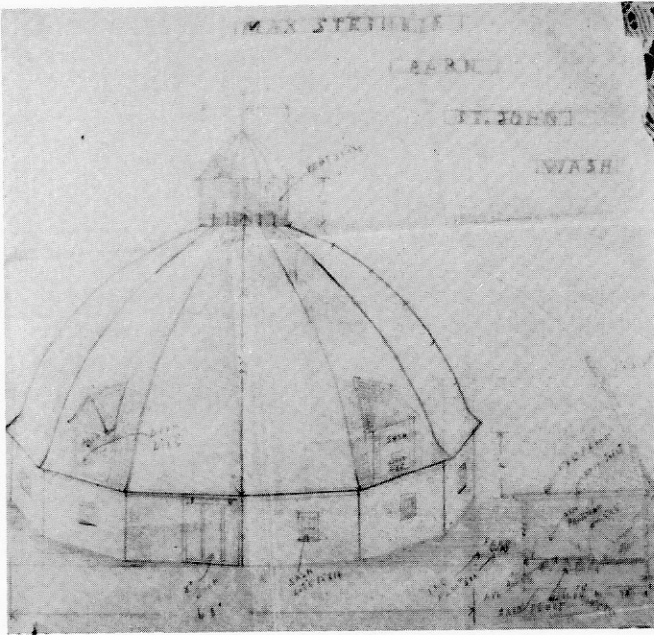
Located about 5 miles west of St. John on the flood plain of Cottonwood Creek, the Steinke barn towers above the more modern structures on the Charles and Martha DeChenne farm. The barn is in excellent structural condition, despite lacking a few shingles on its massive domed roof. It retains its integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location, feeling, and association. Included in the farm complex are two residences, two garages, a machine shop, woodshed, hayshed, chicken house, granary, cistern, and windmill. Although the barn, granary and windmill were all apparently built by Max Steinke during the period of significance, the other buildings on the property constitute intrusions into the historic setting. The original Steinke farmhouse and an earlier barn have been razed, further diminishing the historic setting. All the remaining buildings are in use on this fully-operational wheat ranch, including the round barn, which now primarily serves as feed storage for a small herd of cattle kept in the adjacent fenced lot.



The barn itself is not actually round but dodecagonal (12-sided), measuring 16 feet on a side. Its walls consist of reinforced concrete standing to a height of ca. 9 feet. The two main doorways with double sliding wood doors (all original) are situated at opposite ends of the structure, one opening to the west toward the vehicle driveway, the other to the east into the fenced livestock yard. A utility door was installed in one of the south-facing walls in the early 1950s to accommodate the rerouted manure trolley. Original wood window casings are centered on the other 8 sides, although no glass remains in them.

Atop the walls, a broad, frieze-like frame belt course encircles the structure under the boxed flared roof eaves. The roof itself accounts for the most surface area found on the building as well as its height (estimated to be ca. 60 feet). It is a rather low-vaulted dome in comparison with higher domed roofs common on other round barns. The dome is supported by 12 ribs of laminated 1 X 10 inch planks that are nailed rather than glued together, with their protruding corners hewed off to conform to the dome's curvature. One of the ribs is continuous across the dome; the other 10 are separate elements, joined together at the apex with the continuous rib under the wooden, 12-sided louvered cupola which is 16 feet in diameter.

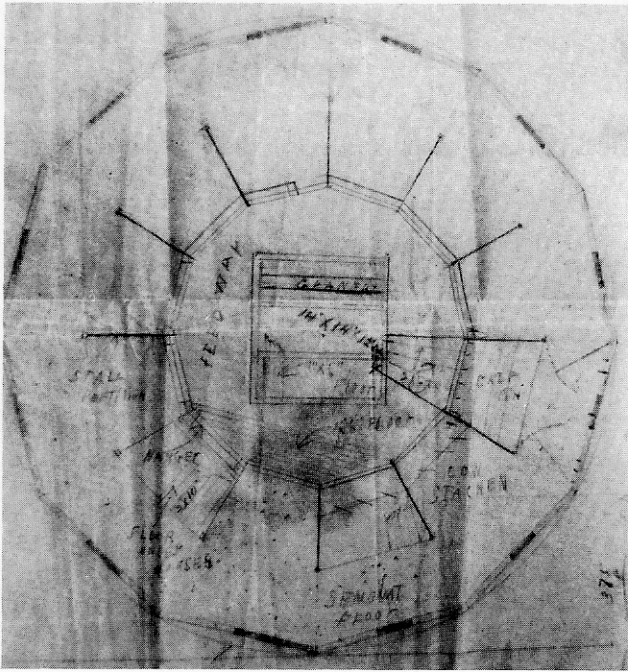
Like the barn roof, the cupola's roof has a nearly matching boxed flared eave. Unlike most others in the Palouse, the cupola is entirely frame and



Original drawing of barn

comparatively short. Other round barn cupolas tended to be all metal, manufactured and shipped in, probably ordered by the owner/builder from a catalog. Steinke built his own frame cupola, which was no doubt much lighter than the metal varieties, and in doing so probably prolonged the longevity of his barn. Theories explaining the collapse of most round barns center on the failure of the roof. A heavy metal cupola exerts considerable force on the bowed ribs, which tend to weaken and cause the structure to lean. Once a round barn begins to lean, there is almost no way to strengthen or repair it, short of encircling the roof in steel bands. In the case of the Steinke barn, the combination of the light cupola, strong ribs, and rounded dome shape may be responsible for its relative structural soundness.

When building the round barn, Max Steinke used sawn boards from an older rectangular barn he had dismantled nearby as sheeting for the round barn roof. A lattice frame of sawn boards nailed edgewise vertically and horizontally between the ribs provides the skeletal support for the sheeting. Reportedly two men hired by Steinke roofed the barn with cedar shakes. Composition shingles put on the roof in ca. 1960 have since deteriorated and, for the most part, fallen off, exposing the original shakes across nearly the entire roof. (Some newer shakes have been added as spot repairs).



Original layout schematic of barn

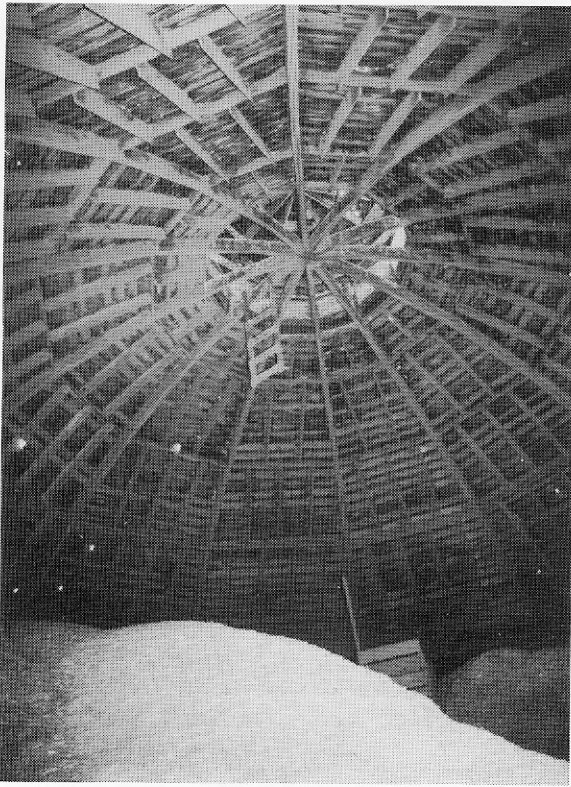
Three roof ribs separate each of the four roof dormers situated immediately above the concrete walls, the dormers sport decorative boxed eaves under arching roofs. Small windows in the shake-covered gables are centered above the sliding wooden doors on each gable. The doors were essential for loading loose or bundled hay when a motorized conveyor belt was used. The belt has since been abandoned for the more convenient method of loading chopped hay with a so-called hay cutter that blows the material into the loft or mow. Because the cutter is capable of blowing the hay into the far reaches of the mow, only one dormer is ever used; doors on the other three have been nailed shut. Chopped hay weighs considerably more than unchopped, exerting more pressure on the mow floor. For that reason, the floor was reinforced with vertically-placed 8 X 8 inch timbers in the late 1930s. Installed to prevent hay particles from falling through cracks to the ground level, the original tongue-in-groove construction has been retained in the mow floor, except in the center where the floor was cut out to allow chopped hay to drop through to the ground level, thereby providing greater storage capacity.

On the ground level, the barn's floor is concrete throughout. Centered in the interior is the entryway (via wood ladder) into the second floor mow. Two doors enter the central hay storage area created when the mow



floor above that area was removed. Feed bins face outward from the hub onto a walkway separating them from the 12 animal stalls radiating to the outer walls. Of the 12 stalls, 10 were designed to hold 2 draft horses each; the other 2 stalls could accommodate 3 head of cattle each. Along the inner edges of the stalls are original mangers, or wooden feed troughs, to which were attached so-called chop bins that held oats for draft horses. The bins were removed when the horses were sold in the late 1930s. Original stanchions hang from overhead cross-beams above the mangers, still used to keep animals in place while feeding. When in the stanchions, all animals face inward toward the center of the barn, allowing for easy feeding and, in the days of draft horses, harnessing by the farmer from the central location.

Running through the stalls just inside the outer walls is the so-called manure trolley, which consists of a large bucket or drum traveling on a single metal track mounted on the ceiling. The track runs the entire way round the interior, exiting via a swiveling cantilevered arm that hangs out from the door cut into a south-side wall. Originally the trolley exited what is now the front door of the barn. When Steinke's original farmhouse was abandoned to the east of the barn and a new residence erected (ca. 1951) directly in front (west) of the door, the trolley was rerouted to allow for



disposing of manure to the south side of the barn further away from the new house.

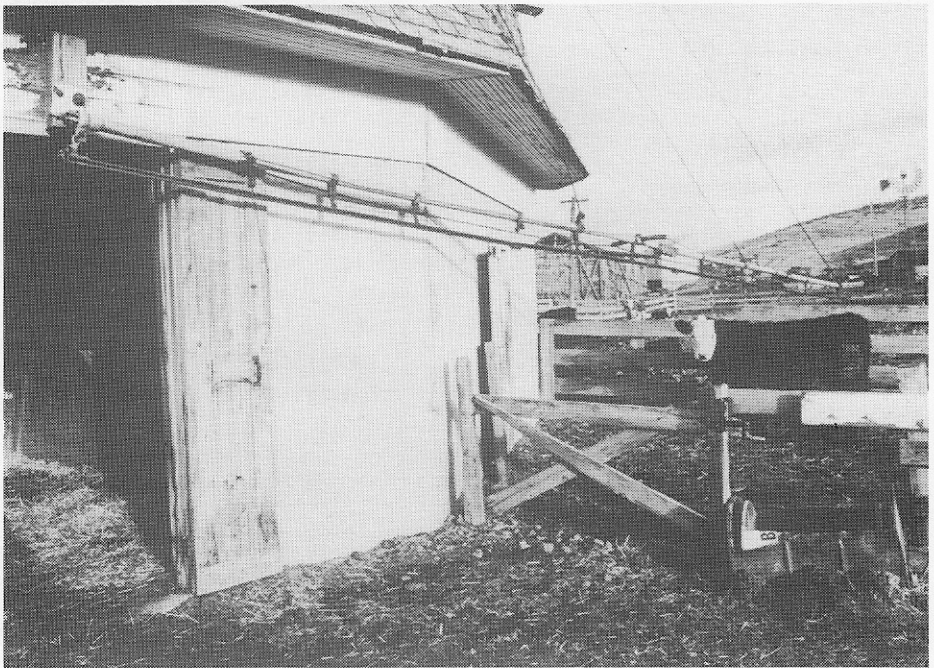
Although the roof of the Steinke barn needs new shingles and one of the ribs is starting to bow out slightly, the structure is in very good condition overall. The barn retains integrity of design, workmanship and materials. The minor modifications reflect functional necessity, as in the case of the rerouted manure trolley through the added door, or technological evolution, as seen in the reinforcement of the mow floor to support the added weight of chopped hay blown into the mow by modern devices. Removal of the center of the mow floor to allow for greater storage capacity may reflect the farm's shift from boarding draft horses to feeding beef cattle in the barn, or it may simply have been an innovation. Retention of the barn's original floor plan, roof shape, cupola, wooden doors on the dormers and at ground level, and the many interior features such as stalls, mangers, and stanchions provide this relatively rare and architecturally charming structure with authentic historic character.

The Steinke barn is significant for both its architectural design and integrity, as well as its association with an event (grain growing) important in



the area's history. Most round barns in Washington are significant primarily for their architectural style, which was less prevalent than the more conventional rectangular design. The Steinke barn is an excellent example of the round (including polygonal) style, and of the property type "Barns, Subgroup: Round Barns" identified in the Multiple Property Listing for Grain Growing in Eastern Washington. Enhancing the structure's significance is its exceptional integrity of materials and workmanship. In addition, the Steinke barn is associated with an historically significant event established in the Grain Growing in Eastern Washington Multiple Property Documentation Form. The barn meets the registration requirements for age, dating from the established period of significance that begins with early settlement and concludes in the late 1930s with the transition from reliance upon draft animals to conversion to motorized farming.

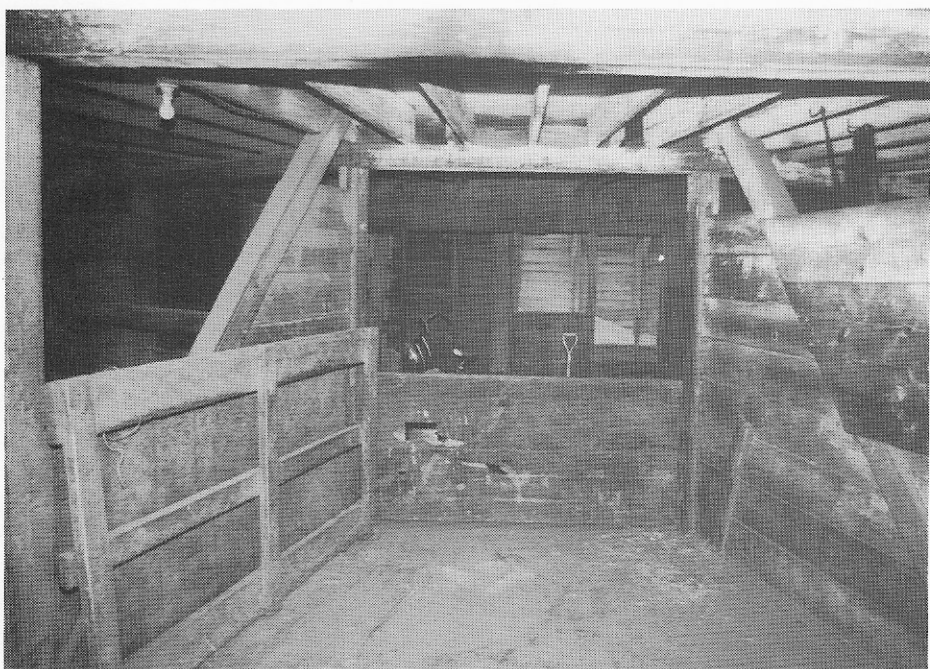
Max Theodore William Steinke was born in Sibley County, Minnesota, near Minneapolis in 1885. His father, Theodore Steinke, was a German immigrant who, according to a granddaughter, was "sort of a land speculator" as well as a farmer. The elder Steinke retained ownership of lands in



the Midwest even after moving west, where he soon acquired considerable acreage in Washington.

One of the properties he gained title to was the farm on which the round barn now stands. Theodore Steinke reportedly bought the place from the original homesteader and farmed it for a number of years before leasing it to his son Max. It is not certain how and when Max came to the farm; his daughter believes he was farming on land owned by his father in the Spokane Valley prior to arriving in the years before he, Max, married Ida Falk in 1906. Falk was also a native of Minnesota, born in the town of Youth America in 1883. She came west with her family in 1904, settling first in Springdale, Washington. She soon left the northeast part of the state and came to work on a farm as a domestic laborer in the Ewan/Rock Lake area and there met her future husband.

Max Steinke and his bride took up residence in the house that appears to have been built by the property's first owner. (Its foundation can still be seen east of the windmill). He set about making improvements on the farm he was leasing from his father, who farmed other property in the Ewan vicinity. Max enlarged the house, installed the cistern on the hill (the original brick top has been replaced), dug the well, erected the windmill, and built a milk house (now razed) and the granary. While he raised some pigs and



chickens and kept a few milk cows, Steinke's primary preoccupation was growing wheat (and some barley) on his 345 acre farm. For plowing, harrowing, and harvesting, he maintained twelve draft horses in a rectangular barn on the place.

Sometime around 1915-1916, Max began serious planning for a new barn. He favored the round style that had supposedly caught his fancy in the Midwest. He liked the convenience of the central feeding area and the spacious stalls promising more room for harnessing draft horses. An unknown draftsman sketched a round barn design apparently according to Steinke's expressed wishes (with "Max Steinkie," obviously misspelled, hand-written at the top). The drawings are interesting in that they depict a 12-sided barn appearing strikingly similar to the structure that was later built; but the sketched building has a noticeably higher domed roof and a large, tall cupola on its top, making the structure appear much like most of the other round barns that were built in the region.

For reasons unknown, Max Steinke modified the plans when he built the barn and made the dome shorter and rounder and topped it with a short, light-weight wooden cupola. Against the wishes of his father, who preferred traditional rectangular barns, Max hired a carpenter (possibly the man who had sketched the original design) and enlisted his younger brother Walter Steinke to help build the round barn. Before starting work, the



old rectangular barn on the place was torn down and its lumber used for roof sheeting on the new structure. Reportedly two men were hired to roof the round barn with cedar shakes. The total cost of the project was \$1700.

It is not known how long it took to build, but reportedly sometime in 1916 the barn was completed. Following an old tradition, local families gathered for a barn dance to christen what was without doubt Max Steinke's masterpiece of self expression. Musicians played from atop the chop bin (since removed) in the center of the mow as neighbors and lovers (some undoubtedly one in the same) danced about under the spacious dome.

Wheat farming was profitable for the Steinkes as it was for other farmers during the First World War. By 1920 many wheat ranchers in the St. John area were going into "semi-retirement," leasing their farms, moving to town, and living off rents or profit sharing arrangements from crops harvested by tenants. The tenant system was short-lived, however, as the agricultural depression of the 1920s took hold. Most farmers were forced to move back to their farms and make the best living they could from marginal profits.

After several prosperous years, the Steinkes, like many farmers in the area, began leasing their farm to tenants about 1919. (Ed Shuster was one

of the first tenants; others came and went over the next 16 years). Max, Ida, and their children moved to Post Falls, Idaho, where his father and brothers were living. There Max and his family lived on a "timber ranch" and kept a few dairy cows. He worked in a box factory that he invested heavily in before it went broke. From ca. 1922 to 1926 the family ran a dairy farm east of Cheney before moving to Ewan and starting a similar operation there, which eventually furnished most of the town's dairy products. After leaving the farm on Cottonwood Creek in ca. 1919, Max never again farmed the place, although it remained in the Steinke family.

In 1935 Martha, one of Max Steinke's daughters, moved back to the farm with her husband, Charles DeChenne. (Max and Ida remained at the dairy in Ewan). That year the DeChennes harvested the wheat crop in the usual fashion with their team of fine draft horses. But that year was different: during frequent breaks taken to rest their tired horses, they watched as their neighbor harvested, without stopping, using a tractor. It was to be the last harvest in which they used draft horses. In the fall of 1935 the DeChennes, like some of their neighbors had earlier and some were to do later, sold their horses to so-called "horse dealers" and have ever since relied upon internal combustion engines for their motive power.

With the draft horses gone, Charles DeChenne began making numerous alterations on the barn, primarily to better suit beef cattle that replaced the horses as the structure's main inhabitants. In 1936 he started using one of the so-called "hay cutters" that chopped and blew hay into the barn mow. To support the added weight of the chopped hay, DeChenne braced the mow floor with 8 x 8 inch timbers. Later he cut the center of the mow floor out, creating a bin reaching to the ground level in the center of the structure's interior. Other minor alterations included removal from the mangers of chop bin feeders especially suited to horses.

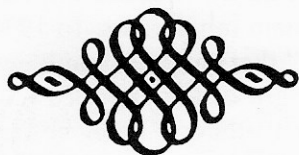
In 1950-51 the DeChennes built a new house on the opposite (west) side of the barn from the old homestead house. The original bucket trolley dumped manure out what had been the barn's back (west) door uncomfortably close to the new house. To remedy the situation, DeChenne rerouted the trolley through a new door he cut in one of the south-facing concrete walls. The next year he tore down the old homestead house that Max Steinke had lived in, and used some of the lumber to build the chicken house that stands today just south of the barn. Eventually the milk house Steinke had built was razed, and the granary was partially rebuilt after bursting when loaded with grain. Other buildings have over the years been added to the farmstead complex.

Max Steinke continued to live in Ewan until 1951 when he and his wife moved to Olympia to live near a daughter. He died there in 1963; Ida died four years later. If they were to return today to the farm on Cottonwood Creek where they first farmed together and started their family, they

would find it much changed. Nearly all of the structures are new and the focus of activity has shifted westward away from where their house stood under the clump of locust trees. But they would readily recognize the round barn, whose exterior has remained virtually unchanged. For nearly three-quarters of a century, it has withstood the test of time and the elements. Max Steinke's structural masterpiece has outlasted nearly all other barns like it built in the region, and continues to serve as one of the outstanding structural landmarks on the landscape of the Palouse.

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- Plat Book of Whitman County*. Seattle: Anderson Map Company, 1910.
- Weddell, Jim, Round Barns of the Palouse. Unpublished typescript report on file in the Department of Architecture, Washington State University, Pullman, dated ca. 1977.



Nominated property boundary - - - - -

To St. John
4.7 miles

23

To Ewan
3 miles

COTTONWOOD

CREEK

Granary

House



House



Garage



Quonset
garage



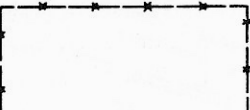
Shop



Barn



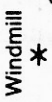
Fence



Chicken
house



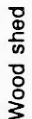
Windmill
*



Hay shed



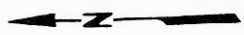
Wood shed



Site of old
Steinke house



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MARCH, 1896.
C. H. HOPKINS, PRINTER.
COLFAX, W. T.

From: History of Grazing*

1941

by

**Historical Records Survey
Works Progress Administration**

Sarah Mason, Endicott

Mrs. Sarah Mason crossed the plains by covered wagon from Iowa in 1863, at the age of 8. Her father's family brought two wagons, starting from Iowa with a wagon train of 15, increased to over 50 wagons after reaching wilder expanses. Mrs. Mason recalls the trip as extremely dangerous and hazardous, it being known that the Indians were warlike, and the train needed to be well-armed and ever vigilant. Sickness and disease took its toll, Mrs. Mason losing two brothers from whooping cough. They were buried along the trail, their graves marked by a small cross and a pile of stones, which was a common scene all along the route. One of the most exciting incidents of the trip, as Mrs. Mason recalls, was experienced when an Indian became insulting to her older brother, who drove him from the camp. Although it was feared he might attempt revenge, he was never seen again.

Camp was made at nights with the wagons drawn in a circle, fires were built in the center and cooking conducted in the open. The men of the train took turns at guard posts, armed with carbines, 45 revolvers, and some muzzle-loading shotguns.

Following the Oregon Trail, the group reached Walla Walla, after passing through Boise, and the train broke up, most settlers going to the Willamette Valley, in Oregon.

*Copy Courtesy Washington State University Libraries

The Mason family camped at the edge of Walla Walla that fall, on Rustle Creek, and the men worked in the harvest fields nearby. Grain was being cut by hand and wages were ample, usually \$4 or \$5 per day. Feed was cooked over a small sheet-iron stove, and the family slept in a small tent by the wagon. After harvest time, the family traveled on to Oregon to settle in the Willamette Valley.

In 1867 the Mason family returned to the Walla Walla district, driving four horses and a wagon, and trailing several head of cattle. Their route was by way of Portland, where a boat was boarded to The Dalles, then the wagon and cattle followed a wagon trail to Waitsburg. At a place now known as Starbuck, a small place was rented and a frame house constructed, made from lumber purchased at Colfax and hauled to the scene by wagon.

Mrs. Mason was married to John W. Mason in 1869 and settled with her husband on a small claim near Starbuck. Here four children were born. In 1877 the family moved to a point not far from the present Endicott, and constructed a small log cabin. Four years later, 1881, they moved to the mouth of Big Cove, where they started raising cattle. This location was approximately six miles north of the present Winona, and the surroundings were a wild expanse of bunchgrass, rocks and winding coves. The Masons soon learned that they were living in the heart of a famous cattle rustling hideout. Fortunately, they were never bothered, but they became acquainted with some of the tactics used by rustlers and horse thieves, and met many of the rustlers. From their home, they observed and saw the movements of cattle and horses in and out of the Big Cove, and a smaller adjacent cove known as the Little Cove, and knew that here was the last famous hideout in the Far West of horse and cattle thieves. From Mrs. Mason and her daughter, Mrs. Isaac Neese, as well as from numerous other settlers in and around Endicott and Winona, has been gleaned what might well be called the story of horse and cattle rustling in the Inland Empire.

The country north of Winona and Endicott today is still rough and wild, as it was back in the days when Mr. and Mrs. Mason were early settlers. It is a country of jutting hills, steep cliffs, jagged rock formations, winding coves, some wide and deep, others small and narrow. On the hill tops surrounding is a shallow top soil, now farmed by wheat farmers, but once fertile ground for waving bunchgrass. Lower, in the valleys and coves, where rocks and an occasional spring of water are major features, the grass is sparse and parched, except for small flats and along the winding Palouse River, where vegetation is again abundant. In frequent twists and turns, the coves, little and big, wind in a maze in between the hills, sometimes joining to form huge islands of jagged rocks, and sometimes narrowing and deepening in a series of pockets, almost impregnable. Geologists have said that once a raging torrent, formed from water melted at the foot

of a huge ice glacier to the north, ripped and tore through this country, uprooting rocks and tearing deep valleys and coves. Here, as if God-given, was a perfect hideout for cattle and horses - and rustlers.

At a point some seven miles north of the present Winona, where the Palouse turns south from its westward course to join the Snake River, begins the formation known as the Big Cove. The foot of the Big Cove is several miles wide; it then narrows and widens in a huge semi-circle, ending in a series of smaller coves and rills. At places the cliffs are 300 feet high, and one of the narrow coves at the head widens enough to allow a trail to an adjoining and similar formation known as the Little Cove. Spring water is abundant in both coves, while grass grows ample in the bottoms. In the pioneer period a small lake formed at the head of the Big Cove, which was drained by an ambitious rancher in a later period. In the midst of this formation was the famous hideout of cattle and horse rustlers during the period from 1859 to the late 80's.

Sometime in the early 60's rustlers saw the advantage of this unique formation, although it is thought the place was used at the time the Mullan Road was constructed through the country, in 1858. Cattle, stolen from the adjoining prairies and stock ranches, were driven into the Big Cove in herds of from 200 to 400, and were herded in smaller groups over a narrow trail into the Little Cove. On one side of the Big Cove, at a point which overlooked the entire surrounding country, rustlers climbed over the side



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Jackson, Wm., Palouse City. **WJ**

Jacobs, C. W., Pleasant Valley, right shoulder. **CS**

Jacobs, C. W. p o Coin, horses right shoulder, cattle right hip. **CS**

Jacobs, L. O., Palouse City, left shoulder. **HN**

Jacobs, N, Uniontown, horses left shoulder, cattle right hip, under bit right ear, over bit left. **HN**

Jacobs, S., Pleasant Valley, horses right hip, cattle left side. **CO**

James, W. H., p o Colfax, right shoulder. **HJ**

Jears, J. L., p o Steptoe, res 2 1/2 mi s, horses left shoulder, cattle left hip, upper half crop each ear. **CS**

Jeffries, F. M., res Pleasant Valley, left jaw. Also **J**

Jenkins Bros, Colton, hole in left ear and slit from hole down.

Jenkins, B. M., p o Colton, horses left shoulder. **3**

Jennings, Joshua A., Pleasant Valley, horses left shoulder. **H**

Jennings, L. W., p o Steptoe, horses left shoulder, cattle right hip, swallow fork left ear. **II**

Jennings, P., Pleasant Valley, horses left thigh, cattle left hip. **P**

Johnson, Elias, p o Pullman, horses left shoulder, cattle right hip, crop and split right ear. **EJ**

Johnson, J. B., Pleasant Valley, horses left shoulder, cattle left hip, under bit each ear, split right. **JB**

From "Marks & Brands", 1886

Parvin, Shelby, Wm. & James, S. Palouse, used by Shelby left shoulder, Wm. right shoulder, James right hip.	P
Paslay, Morgan, Steptoe canyon, left hip, crop and split right ear, swallow fork left.	P
Patterson, Norman, p o Colfax, horses left shoulder, cattle right hip.	P
Pearsons, J. J., res Four Mile, horses left shoulder.	P
Pearson, John J., p o Pitt, cattle top of left hip.	P
Peck, Charles, Penawawa, left shoulder, crop and split left ear.	P
Pendell, W. B., p o Guy, horses left shoulder, cattle top of left hip, crop off and hole in each ear.	PL
Penelton, Chas. S. Palouse, left hip.	C1
Person & Crow, Endicott, horses left shoulder.	C
Petty, John, p o Pitt, res Shubert Gulch, horses left shoulder, cattle top of left hip, hole in left ear.	P
Peterson, Peter, p o Guy, horses left atifle, cattle left hip.	PP
Peterson, S., left shoulder.	S
Phillips, L. D., p o Colfax, horses left shoulder, cattle right hip, swallow fork right ear, crop and slit in left.	P
Phinney, M. W., Rock Creek, horses left shoulder, cattle right hip.	J
Pitt, Wm. R., Four Mile, horses left shoulder, cattle left hip.	P
Pipps, Benjamin, p o Uniontown, right side.	BP
Pickard, J. A., p o Colfax, res 8 mi e, horses left shoulder, cattle left hip, crop and split right ear, under slope left.	WP
Polly, Jennie, left shoulder.	44
Pope, M., p o Garfield, horses left shoulder, cattle right hip, smooth bit off top of ears.	PO
Porter, C. D., p o Colfax, left hip, crop left ear.	CP
Potter, J. G., p o Colfax, horses left shoulder, cattle left hip.	P
Powe, B. F., p o Palouse City, horses left hip, cattle same, crop off right ear, swallow fork left.	JP4
Powers, Wm. L., p o Palouse, horses right shoulder, cattle right stifle, left ear, hole in right.	P
Powell, H. N., p o Colfax, horses and cattle left shoulder.	222
Prentice, John, near Pullman, right shoulder, hole left ear.	JP
Price & Arnold, p o Farmington, horses right shoulder.	LP
Prince, N. J., Steptoe, right hip.	-P-
Privett, Silas, Four Mile Creek, horses and cattle right hip.	SP
Privett, A. J., Four Mile, horses and cattle left hip.	S
Proff, Peter, p o Rosalia, horses left shoulder, cattle right hip, swallow fork in each ear.	PP
Prose, A., p o Farmington, horses left shoulder, cattle left hip, smooth crop right ear, swallow fork left.	AP

From "Marks & Brands", 1886

of a towering cliff and hewed a cave in the formation. In this vantage point, whose only entrance was by a rope from the cliff top above, rustlers placed themselves to watch for any possible danger of intrusion from irate ranchmen or unknown riders. Below them, and in the Little Cove, rustlers busied themselves altering brands, branding 'slickers', and cutting out choice cattle. Here trading took place with rustler gangs from Montana and Canada, the method being to exchange herds with rustlers from Montana or Canada so that brands could not be easily identified. Drives were made at night, with bunches of cattle coming and going, in constant exchange. A few of the ranchers in various parts of the Inland Empire, with respectable fronts, had business with this rustler hideout.

Both coves had nature water and feed, but the Little Cove had a formation of tremendous advantage to the rustlers, known as the "Natural Corral". This was a smaller cove within the cove whose only entrance could easily be blocked in a few hours by a rock wall. Within this natural corral cattle were herded, branded and handled and separated; then the rock wall was opened and the cattle driven by a narrow trail into the Big Cove. Water was plentiful, and a spring gushed up out of the rocks in the middle of the "Natural Corral." Horses, as well as cattle, were handled in the same manner.

King of the rustlers in the late 70's was man known as Bill Masterson, who maintained a front as a respected rancher. Masterson, for several years, ran a saloon at Colfax. Everyone knew or suspicioned him, for his ranch had many herds, constantly changing in brands, with frequent trips to Montana. He was most adept as a horse rustler, was ever trailed but never caught, and after the advent of the railroads, shipped many horses to Montana. It was said that Masterson built a cabin in the Big Cove, but only visited his lieutenants at night, and frequently. Late in the 90's his career ended with a shot from the gun of a county sheriff at Oakesdale. Masterson became embroiled in a quarrel when the sheriff attempted to arrest Masterson's son-in-law, Ed Harris, who had been caught rustling cattle. Harris was jailed, but later escaped from the penitentiary at Walla Walla and disappeared.

It is said that thousands of cattle were handled in the Big and Little Coves, and their rustling use was not ended until around 1900, after most of the open range had been fenced with barb wire. Today, the two coves are included in a huge farm ran by a respected farmer named Smith.

During the period the Mason family lived at the mouth of the Big Cove they had as high as 400 head of cattle, most of which were Durhams and Holsteins, of the milking variety. Mrs. Mason recalls the hard winter of 1881-82, when the weather was extremely cold and the snow very deep. Out of 200 cattle, they only saved 20 head, and these by hauling mill feed to them. Mrs. Mason saw thousands of dead cattle over the range the next spring.

The Mason ranch had 160 acres at the head of the Big Cove, fenced in to keep out the numerous stray cattle of the open range, as well as to keep the Mason herd from being bothered by the cattle handled by rustlers. A few acres of grain, including rye, was raised.

For several years the Mason's homesteaded in Idaho. In 1923 they moved to Endicott, the present home, and acquired considerable land, both for grazing and grain raising.

Mrs. Mason recalls that she rode the first passenger train from Walla Walla to Endicott, on its initial trip to Spokane, in 1889. This road was the O. W. R. & N., which later became a part of the Union Pacific system. Her recollections of the open range of that territory was a wild expanse of bunchgrass, "lots of coyotes, wild horses, and thousands of cattle, and many, many Indians."

World War I In Pullman

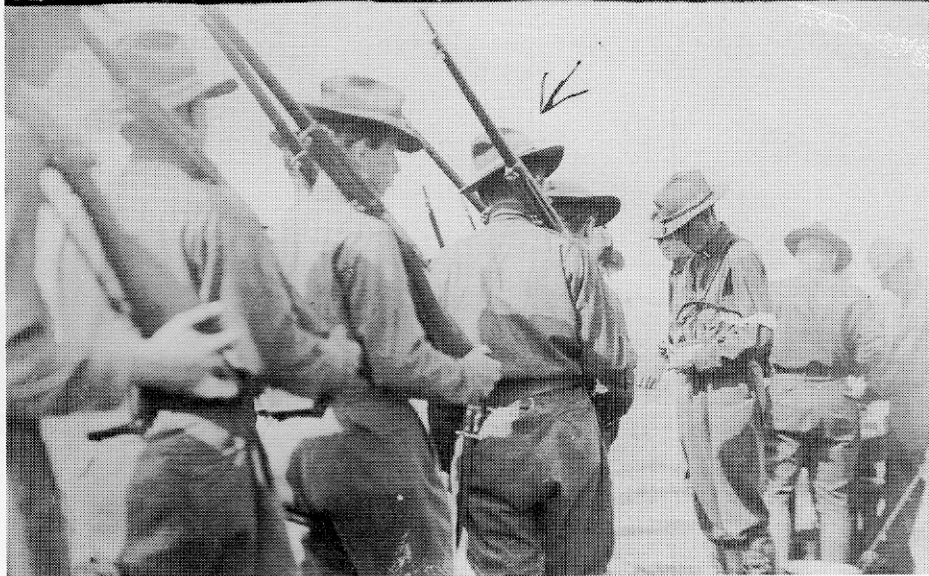
**by
Everett Skidmore
Colville, Washington**

This is an account of my part in World War I in Pullman. The army used the facilities of the college to train leaders in several occupations which were needed in different places over the country. They recruited about 1,200 men to study the different trades for two months. At the end of that time they were sent all over the country where they were most needed and a new class was called up. There were auto mechanics, radio operators, blacksmiths, carpenters, and what have you being trained in these classes and we were supposed to learn it all in two months. I chose carpentry as I had been working at it for a number of years and they made me one of the instructors right away. I had a rating of technical sergeant which didn't mean anything until I got assigned to some regular army company.

A big group of us were assigned quarters in the Mechanic Arts building (now Carpenter Hall) which was very much unfinished at that time. There were no finished floors, no windows, no heat, and not very much plumbing. There was one small room on the second floor just above the unfinished steps on the west side that had a finished floor, windows, and a couple steam radiators. This room was just big enough for thirteen cots and as there were just thirteen of us Army instructors we grabbed it and moved in with a sign on the door "Sons of Rest" do not disturb.

Among my other duties I was the only bugler at the post during the month of August and sounded every call day and night for 22 days, after that I got three other fellows trained so we could take turns. The guard house was on the floor directly below our room and at night the corporal of the guard would come up and wake me when necessary to sound a call. To get plenty of practice our carpenter class would go any place in town and even out in the country to build anything wanted if they would furnish the material and they must have a blue print even if it was only a wood-box. This service was all free.

We used the college mess hall until the students came back in September then we had to build a mess hall of our own. It was just a temporary affair two stories high and had stairways at each end eight feet wide for quick



entrance and exit. It was torn down after the war was over.

At the end of the two month term I was held over as an instructor for the next class and so was there when the flu hit. Out of 1,200 men about 800 had the flu and the other 400 were taking care of them. The post hospital, city hospital and all the churches were full to capacity with flu patients. There were no classes held, no drilling down on Rogers Field or much of anything doing. I didn't get the flu so just puttered around up in the carpenter shop and did some repair work on tables and cabinets in the different college buildings. I remember having to fix a table top in the Veterinary building and it didn't smell just too good in there so after I got my work all glued up with the clamps on I had to wait an hour for the glue to set so I looked around and found 4 dead horses in various stages of disrepair. I didn't stay longer than necessary.

As for the flag pole incident I don't know what happened to the old hal-yard (rope that lowers the flag) but anyway we were without a flag for a few days until the Officer of the Day found out somehow that I could climb. He asked me if I could climb the pole on top of the Bryan Hall tower and I told him I could if the wind wasn't blowing. I wouldn't climb in the wind and I thought that let me out because the wind always blows there. But about 7 o'clock that evening he came up in the barracks and said he had been up on the tower and there was no wind and could I climb it in the dark. I told him I probably could do as well, and maybe better in the dark as I could in day light. He said there would be a man to help me with the rope. There was to be a big inspection the next day and the Post had to

have a flag. So we went up on the tower and it was calm alright and dark as pitch. I put on the climbers and belt and tied an end of 200 feet of ½ inch sash cord to my belt and went up.

The first forty feet wasn't bad but after that the pole began to sway. The higher I went the worse it got until up at the top where the pole was pretty small only about 5 inches, it seemed to be swaying about six feet. It took quite a bit to steady it enough so I could hold it with one hand. I had to get the rope loose from my belt with one hand and work it through my fingers until I had about a foot or more free end then reach around behind and pull it through over the pulley and get the end in my teeth. Then I went back down. When I reached the bottom I looked at my helper and he was as white as a sheet and couldn't even talk he was so scared. I said let's get off this tower. So we went down the spiral stairs and when we got out on the sidewalk I got scared and had to sit on the curb for quite awhile before I could walk back to the barracks. I think that was the biggest fool stunt I ever did in all my life. I never got so much as a thank you for it.

I will never forget the morning of November 11th when Huddleson tied down the whistle string in the power house next door to the M.A. building. **THE WAR WAS OVER!**

Contributed by Win Elwood, Albion

