

# Bunchgrass Historian

Whitman County Historical Society Quarterly

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Fall & Winter, 1990



● **Family Histories from Hay**

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## THE AUTHORS

The many authors live in and about Hay, Washington, for the most part.

## COVER

On the road to Hay, Feb., 1991.

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**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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*From your editor —*

*This issue of **Bunchgrass Historian** is being numbered as a double issue. It is not only longer than the average issue, but it features the greatest number of authors and articles of any issue in the 18-year history of this periodical!*

*In some measure this special issue is meant to adjust for the delays that occurred in the 1990s publication schedule. These arose chiefly because your editor spent most of the year dealing with a medical situation that kept him moderately incapacitated during much of the weekend time he needed for work with the magazine. And no temporary editor emerged to pick up the task. Fortunately the medical picture is considerably improved. Hopefully, this will be to the good of the magazine.*

*The current issue features a large number of family histories written by many people living in and around the village of Hay. The many stories were assembled by Mrs. Ruth Nervig, a past contributor to **Bunchgrass Historian**. The photographs of Hay landmarks were taken in February, 1991.*

*The present also offers the occasion to remind readers that **Bunchgrass Historian** is always seeking material for publication. It remains an excellent channel for amateur writers, but can also carry the work of historians of the most skilled sort. Send submissions to the address on page 2.*

*Lawrence Stark, editor*

## **Family Histories from Hay, Washington**

### **The Cox Family History 1880-1881**

**by Roberta Cox - Wanda Carter**

In 1845 Anderson Cox and his family started from Mount Pleasant, Iowa by ox team. They joined the wagon train at St. Joseph, Missouri and crossed the plains heading west. There were 1000 persons, 100 wagons and 2000 cattle. Six months were spent on the road. Joe Meek, one of the guides, thought he knew a safer and faster route to the Willamette Valley, so part of the wagon train followed him and the other group took the route via The Dalles. The Meek party tried to reach the Willamette Valley by short cut via Mount Hood and the Three Sisters mountains, instead of going to The Dalles. They got lost; disaster overtook them and starvation stared them in the face. White trappers living at The Dalles had been told of their plight and took a rescue party down the Deschutes River in a canoe. Everything they brought across the plains; stock, wagons, clothing, plows and the few articles they intended to use in tilling the soil and starting homes had to be abandoned. The immigrants were glad to get through with their lives.

The family settled in Linn County, Oregon. Here, Phil Cox, Anderson's son, grew to be a young man. Phil who was now 17 heard of a rich country to the north and east, near a Fort called Walla Walla. In 1859 he and three other young men started to Fort Walla Walla, arriving July 4, 1859. In 1859 Walla Walla consisted of four buildings, two of them saloons. The party headed through Walla Walla to Touchet Creek and at the place where Waitsburg now stands Phil build a cabin. As son as Phil



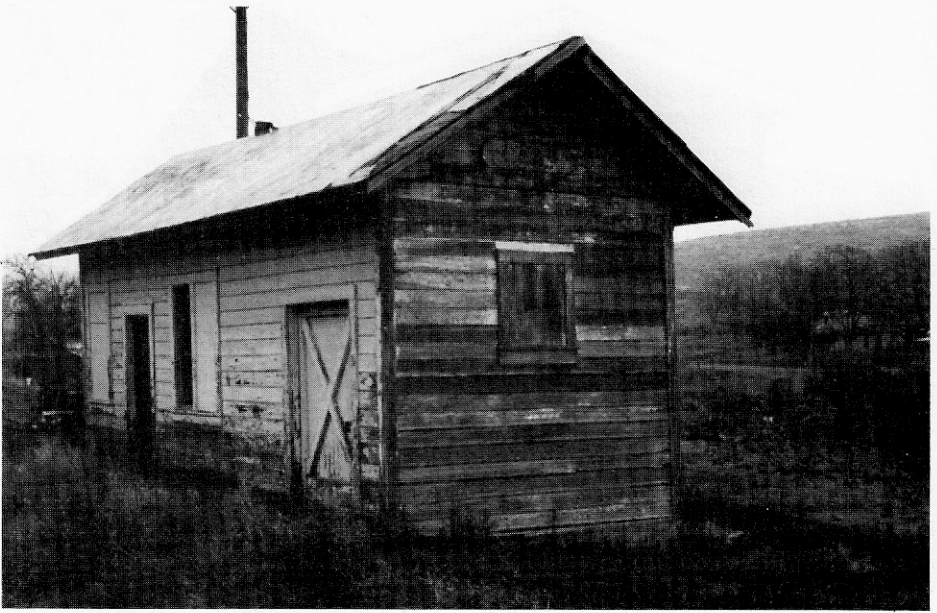
*Store and Gas Station*

Cox was established, his father Anderson joined him from Oregon bringing a lot of cattle. They got along nicely until the winter of 1861-62 when Anderson lost all of his 300 head of cattle. Phil had 60 head and they all perished except one. Cattle were about \$20 a head. This hard winter was what made this country a grain growing country. The people were forced to do something else and the possibilities of that as a farming country became known through the misfortune that befell the stockmen that winter. Phil Cox married Julia Fudge in 1863 in Waitsburg.

In the summer of 1869, Phil Cox and five other men crossed the north bank of the Snake River and explored what is now Whitman County. They located claims on Union Flat, returned to Waitsburg and in 1870 Phil moved his family to Union Flat. In 1875 Phil Cox moved to Penawawa and engaged in the orchard business. In 1880, he sold his orchard and purchased land at Hay.

### **CHERRYDALE STOCK FARM**

Phil Cox established a farm three miles from Hay Station in 1881. The 9000 acre farm was called the Cherrydale Stock Farm. Cherrydale Farm was formerly a sheep herder's range. Cox converted it to the most noted horse breeder's farm in the Inland Empire. The ranch was located on Al-



*Railroad Depot*

kali Flat and there was ample supply of water for both man and animal the entire year.

Cox owned 140 head of Percheron horses and produced 40 to 50 foals annually. Offsprings from these stallions and mares were too large for wheat farming. However, the logging industry required heavy horses and most of the geldings were sold to loggers in the Potlatch and Bovill, Idaho area.

In addition to horses the ranch produced many other farm products. The area was ideal for fruit trees. Eleven acres were in Bing cherries. Because of the cherry orchard, the farms' name was "Cherrydale". There was a long row of 1100 peach trees. In one year Cox planted 600 acres of wheat, 400 acres of corn for hogs and 35 acres to alfalfa. He owned large bands of sheep, cattle, horses and hogs. He kept 150 hens and 22 stands of bees. Eventually the farm was converted to an all-wheat operation and mules replaced the horses for farm power.

Phil Cox's two sons were Arthur and Anderson. Anderson had no children. Arthur was the father of Maude Carter, Gladys Weisman and Dallas Cox. Dallas Cox returned to the ranch in the 1930's. Today the land is farmed by Dallas's sons Durand and Jon Cox, and Maude Carter's son Keith and his sons Dan and Roger Carter.

*From the Colfax Gazette - Thursday June 7, 1884 "100 Years Ago"*  
During the past three weeks 20,000 sheep have been sheared at the Phil

Cox place. The sheep shearers say that the wool, after being baled, made a pile larger than any house in Colfax.

From the book - *Terrible Trail - the Meek Cutoff 1845* Mileage records given by Jesse Harritt, Samuel Parker, and James Field, emigrants of 1845. (Ox teams traveled, on the average, two to three miles per hour, depending upon weight of the load, terrain, and condition of the animals. Two miles per hour as a rough rule of thumb in computing the distances of a day's travel has proved surprisingly accurate. Ten to twelve miles was the daily average.)

### **The Wilkie Family 1888**

**by Dorothy Moore**

The Wilkies came to Riparia in 1888 by train as the railroad was built and came on up to Hay by team. In 1888-1889 Mary and Emma Wilkie attended school in Pampa. (Ethel Metsger's Book on Pampa.)

The Moores came to Hay about 1900 and joined family who had come earlier. Ralph and John worked on the railroad when they first came to Hay.

### **The Cochran Family (Cohorn) 1905**

**by Mildred Cruthers**

Tolbert Russell Cochran, ninth in a family of 13 children, was born December 25, 1871, and left Limestone, Tennessee around the latter part of 1800. According to the 1900 Census he was farming at Colfax at age 28. His three older brothers had come to Colfax earlier since an older brother had taken over the family farm in Tennessee. Their knowledge of farming and advertisement of cheap land had brought them West.

I don't exactly know when Mother, Laura Babb, came West but she came to Colfax and stayed with Nathan Hunts, friends who had left Tennessee also. She was born in Greenville, Tennessee and came West, as Aunt Ida Splater was already here. It could have been around 1904 as she met and married Dad in 1907. Mom also worked for the Sid Mays family down by Dayton before marrying and moving to the now Fennimore place farmed by LeRoy Rehman. I was born there.

I was asked recently to give a 5 minute talk at our "Young-Of-Heart" meeting telling of my 1 through 3 years of schools. Of course, I spoke of how I rode to school on horseback and stayed at Frank Stark's during severe weather - unheard of now. We then lived at Bugs Ullery place out Long Hollow.



*Grocery Store*

### **The Chandler Brothers 1882**

The Chandler Family first came to the Pampa-Hay area from Walla Walla in 1882 and five of them took up homesteads. William Chandler's homestead was patented January 18, 1892. Before 1910 the various family members owned 5 sections of land. It was said they lived in caves while they built their homes. They also donated land in the west end of Hay. It was said there was never to be any whiskey sold on that donation of land.

### **The Clemens Family 1883**

**by Ruth Nervig**

On March 20, 1893 the U.S. Government granted Sec. 30 SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  T. 14 N.R. 39 to Henry T. Clemens by Homestead Patent, the document being signed by President Grover Cleveland. In 1899 the land was passed on to Henry Newton Clemens by Warranty deed and signed by President Theodore Roosevelt. Henry Newton Clemens came to the Pampa-Hay area in 1883. Later, after 1903 Jeannie Reith, a nurse, came to Hay to take care of Mrs. Amos Henley through a bout of typhoid fever. She met Newt Clemens and they later married.



A brother of Newt, Fred, was born on a farm 3 miles north of Hay. Six years later the family moved to the Poor Farm, so-called because of poor wheat yields. At the present time Richard Nervig owns the farm and lived there until 1988. The Clemens family lived there until 1908. Fred Clemens became a newspaper man and worked for The Washington Farmer in Spokane for many years.

A few years ago I noticed in the Spokane Chronicle an item about him stating that he had been born in the Hay area so just for fun I wrote to him. I received a most interesting letter from him telling of his early days in Hay. At that time of my letter he was 94 years old. He died not too long after that.

### **The Day Family 1887**

**by Ruth Nervig**

The Day Family had a ¼ section of land where Berdie Summers now lives, possibly by Homestead. In 1902 William Day deeded the property to his wife Alice by Warranty Deed. In 1905 their son Fred Day bought Section 31 from a Mr. Rice by mortgage. Some of that land is still owned by his family and the rest of the section is owned and farmed by Richard Nervig.

On January 13, 1917 Lulu C. Day vs. Fred Day was granted a decree of divorce, a very unusual happening in that day. One of the Day daughters recently told me that the first white child born in Oregon was a daughter of a Day relative.

### **The I.M. Curtis Family 1888**

The Curtis family, Merritt and Amanda, came to Hay at least by 1888 as the U.S. Government issued a patent, either a Homestead or a Timber Culture May 2, 1893 and also June 4, 1894. The government also granted them a water right in 1898, which is still in use. On February 14, 1891 the Curtis' granted to School Dist. 108 a contract, a bond for a deed. Curtis had a brother, Robert and wife Dora, who homesteaded land out on the Snake River bluffs. They came to the Hay area about the same time. Neither family had children.



*Post Office*

## **The Splater Family 1889**

**by Lola J. Splater Vance**

Hay got its name in about 1893 because Smith and Johnson raised sheep and because so much hay was shipped into the area in bad weather. My grandparents — John W. Splater (Christened Johann Wilhelm Splater) born in Cincinnati, Ohio on November 19, 1856 and Mary Elizabeth Riddle born in Derby, Indiana, on December 27, 1859. John and Mary were married in Cannelton, Indiana, on March 25, 1883. Henry Ernest Splater was born to this union on June 9, 1885. In 1888 they came West by train (Mary's mother Malinda Riddle with Henry Riddle and Lavina Belle Riddle) to Waitsburg, WA. Anna Bell born October 15, 1891 — William Raymond Splater, my father born at Hay, WA, on April 30, 1894. After they left Waitsburg they moved to Bowles Junction then to Rock Springs where they spent the winter in a dug out at the Campamine place. My dad's father and dad's uncle, Henry Riddle, went down to the Snake River near Riparia and dismantled a boat that had been ship wrecked and built the house in Hay where my father was born. They came to Hay to homestead on the land below Hay in 1889. My grandmother Mary E. Splater was the very first postmistress in Hay in 1893. She had the Post Office for 7½ years. The train didn't stop in Hay to pick up the mail — they hung the mail bag up and as the train came by they snared it with a hook. To deliver the mail, the train crew just threw

the bag off the train. My grandfather not only homesteaded and broke the land out, but also bought several other pieces of land.

The new house on the hill was built in 1909. It is my understanding that in 1915 there were 2 stores and 2 restaurants along with a barber shop, and a dentist. J.B. Taggart had the bank in Hay. For recreation they had a pool hall, horse races and baseball games, square dances and rodeos. My father called square dances at picnics and rodeos. He also snubbed horses for Yakima Canutt. My father also bootlegged whiskey. Art Rhodie would get the whiskey and my father would take orders and make the deliveries. He also ran a dance hall up near where the Carters live. My father took over the farm in 1916. My mother Ida L. Babb was born on November 8, 1894, in Greenville Tennessee to William H. Babb and Sarah M. Brown. Her father died when she was 3 years old and her mother died when she was 8. She lived with her sister Elizabeth until she came West by train with relatives at the age of 16 to live with her sister Laura Cochran who was married to Tolbert Cochran. They lived on a farm at Canyon.

My mother and father met when she came from Canyon to Hay to the dentist. Later she saw him in Canyon and invited him to her birthday party. They were married on February 17, 1915 and lived in the building where my grandmother had the post office across the creek from the big house on the hill. In 1916 they moved to the farm where they lived. This is where we three children were born. In 1928 the house was built that is on the farm at this time.

You are asking me to reach a long way back. Some of my recollections are: The picnics at Shreck and up by the Knox place. The fun we had sleigh riding down the Magee hill. We had snow then. Those were the days. The shivarees — especially Walt and Anna Belle's — when I tried to smoke a cigar — bad news! The Sunday dinners with friends and family; the Baptismal services at the Snake River; the pajama parties my sister had; the fun we had on plays and operettas and of course after play practice — a program where I danced the Minuet in G with Billy Moore; the basketball trips and the play days; Berda Henley and I getting tickled in church and in assembly and getting in trouble — Halloween — when we were afraid to go by B.C. Harvey's house because we thought he had a gun and would shoot us. Riding to church in a sleigh with heated irons to keep us warm. The great community spirit. The way everyone rallied around when there was an emergency or a need in the area. This doesn't happen in the city.

One story told to me which supposedly happened in Hay about 1904 — mistaken identify — two couples — Nellie Clemens, Trial Carter, Lloyd Bolan and his girlfriend were riding in a hack going to a dance.



*Fire Station*

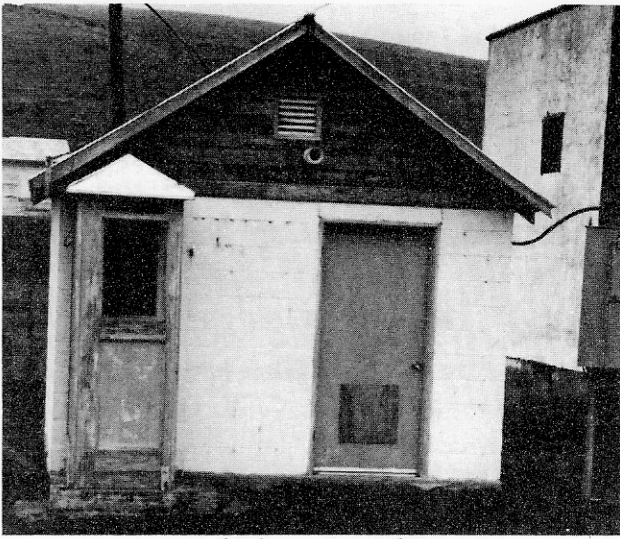
Nellie was afraid of her father Sam Clemens, since he had told he she couldn't see Trial Carter so she had Trial change places in the hack with Lloyd Bolan and when Sam saw them he thought Trial was riding with Nellie and Sam shot, but it wasn't Trial he shot. It was Lloyd Bolan — Lloyd was killed. Sam Clemens escaped to the San Juan Islands and wasn't heard of for years — he finally returned and gave himself up to the police. He was jailed for a time and then released.

### **James H. Scott 1898**

**by Boysie Scott**

My father came to the U.S. in 1898. His reason for coming? He was orphaned at a young age and was raised by his oldest sister. She was married to Alexander Smith, who was a nephew to an Alex Smith, who at that time was one of the largest landowners and sheep men in the county. His home ranch is now farmed by Robbie Pierson; in fact, there remains part of his home still standing on the Pierson farm and it was called "The Roost". An interesting side light, is the name "Hay Station" was designated by the O.W.R.N. as a siding for box cars hauling hay to Alex Smith's sheep.

Dad homesteaded where the old Vern Fields place was, now farmed by Piersons. He "proved up" on his homestead and sold it. He started a



*Telephone & Utility*

store in Canyon and in 1909 he started his business in Hay. His first store was next to the old Taggart post-office more recently owned by John Wilson, then by Willy Filan.

Dad returned to Scotland in 1911, thinking perhaps he would remain there. It was then he met my mother, whom he married in Jan. 1912.

They returned to Hay that year and remained there, as you know, the rest of their lives. Their first home is now Tyke Curtis'. They built the house that still stands in 1916.

I am really very proud of my parents and for the opportunity of being raised in Hay. There is something very special about that. Hay to me was, and is a very unique community. Perhaps it was our geographic isolation, but I believe there is more to it than that.

It was a community of pride, pride in family, pride in being a God-fearing people, pride in our school, and a fierce dedication to quality education, pride in our athletic accomplishments. Personally I feel I was highly educated in that system. I recall the first day I entered W.S.C., I was very apprehensive about being able to compete with students from larger areas. However, the first week my fears disappeared — I knew my preparation was quite adequate. I am sure my sisters felt the same.

The spirit and pride in Hay seems to grow in all its natives, as is exemplified in our recent reunions. That is why I felt years ago led to write my famous quatrain—

“Hay Station born  
Hay Station bred  
When I die  
I’ll be Hay Station dead.”

## **The Isaac Moore Family 1900**

**by Mabel Herron**

Ike Moore came to Hay in 1900 from Globe, N.C. to join other family members who had come earlier. He homesteaded a tract of land about 3½ miles south of Hay. He lived on Section 3 — about 3 miles south of Hay until 1928. In 1913 he married Claire McCall and they had a family of 7 children.

## **The Magee Family 1901**

**by Carl and Edna Magee**

Emma Burk Magee came from Lafayette, Minn. to Albion, Wash., to help her ailing sister-in-law with her family. Felix Magee came from Belfast, Ireland in 1886. He headed West, the first stop being Illinois. The weather was very cold so he left that area heading for the West Coast and landing in Everett, WA. There he worked in logging and when the woods were closed he hauled gravel for the streets of Everett. Annually he and his partner came to the Palouse country for harvest, used their earnings to buy horses which were cheap, took them back to Everett and sold them at a good profit. One fall the mills closed so he joined another logger, Alfred Burk, to cut fire wood and so met a sister Emma Burk. They were married in Moscow, Idaho in 1900. He worked at logging on Flannigan Creek. A home was built there. He learned homesteads that hadn't proved up were open for bids (grabs) so he came down on horseback to Hay to investigate (1901). Tearing down their house and loading the lumber on a couple of wagons and with 8 head of horses and a saddle horse headed for Hay. The home was reassembled very close to the present home. Six children grew up on this site: Mary, Teresa, Cyrena, Carl, Britta and Bill. The 8 head of horses provided the wheat-with-all for survival for he was able to find work on the railroad, which was upgrading its tracks.

The family attended Mass whenever possible which was held in various homes. Travel was by wagon with hay for the horses and a picnic basket to be enjoyed after the services. This practice continued several years until a Catholic Church was built in LaCrosse.

The first school in Long Hollow was a sort of a lean-to shed which housed 23 kids. In about 1906, I (Carl) knew they had built a regular school house, for Mary at age 5 went to school there. Their first teacher I remember was a Mrs. Broderick who lived with various families during the school year.

The Hay picnic, an annual affair, included races, rodeo, picnicking and dancing in the evening at a pavilion on the flat by the Carter ranch. Mrs.

Magee was known for her homemade cheese and usually had plenty to share there. Mary and Cyrena participated in the races, riding J.C. Luper race horses. The evening and wee hours were spent in dancing.

### **Esten Nervig — John Aune 1902**

Esten Nervig, sister Anne and her husband John Aune, came to America in 1882, settled in Minnesota for a number of years until 1902 when they sold their two separate farms to Halsten Knudson Nov. 19, 1902 in exchange for land near Hay, WA. Guri Berge came to the U.S. in 1896 and married Nervig the same year.

Their reasons for coming West were varied — poor crops, the cold, cold winters and hot summers, the deep snow, the terrible wind storms and hail storms, tornadoes, etc. Harry remembers hearing how a terrible wind blew a straw through a one-inch board.

Another story told by John Aune concerned a team of horses that was pulling a hearse heading for the graveyard. They became frightened in a wind storm and starting running at top speed. When they hit a rough spot in the road it jarred the coffin lid open and the so-called corpse rose up and said, "What's going on around here?"

So no wonder they decided to leave Minnesota and migrate West. When they heard of a farm of about 800 acres for sale they traded their farms with this Mr. Knudson and moved to Hay. Since there was more land there than they had back there, they bought the extra land at \$13.00 per acre. Interestingly, though the land was so cheap, the interest on the debt, was 7%, fairly close to the present rate of interest. They also acquired with the farm the water right first issued to Wm. Fudge in 1900 for Willow Spring and it is still in effect.

The life of the Nervigs and Aunes revolved around the Selbu Lutheran Church. We remember hearing how the men worked every day helping build a new church building in the open winter of 1902-03.

A custom grew of holding an annual picnic in their grove in the years preceding World War I. This was a big community event drawing visitors from as far away as Riparia, LaCrosse, etc.

Besides doing the farming on their places, the Aunes and Nervigs did custom threshing with a big steam engine to power their threshing machine. They would thresh in the early fall for neighbors as far away as Union Flat and Endicott with Anne Aune and Mary Nervig going along to cook for the crew in a cook house.

The farm women, Anne and Guri, supplemented the family income by churning butter and taking it and extra eggs to LaCrosse by team once a week to trade for groceries.



*Baptist Church*

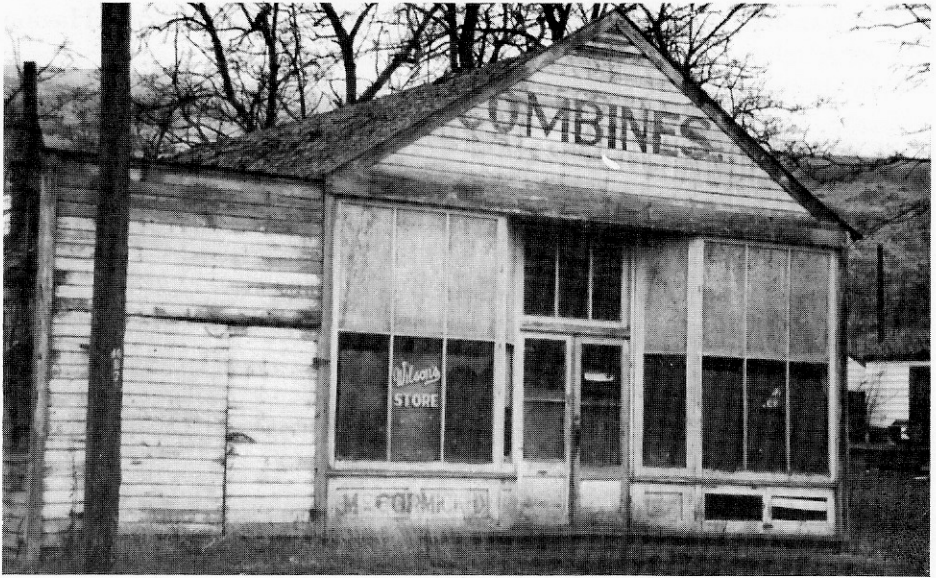
### **John Henley**

John Henley's parents came to Hay in 1903, traveling by train from Blowing Rock, N.C. When the train stopped somewhere in the wilds of Montana to take on water, John, who was three or four at the time managed to slip off the train unnoticed. As the train slowly started to pull out, another passenger asked Mrs. Henley, "Isn't that your little boy out there pulling icicles off the water tower?" Mrs. Henley's reaction was to order her husband "Fly, Amos, fly!" He did and thus assured the future population of Hay would include it's fair share of Henleys.

Dorothy Shell arrived in this area with her grandparents in 1913. After several years, she was working for Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Parsons in Cloverland and came to visit her grandparents in Hay. Her grandfather was a Baptist preacher and lived in the parsonage. John Henley at this time was living with his parents in a house next door to the parsonage. After meeting, the two young people "kept company" for two months before marrying.

Before John took on the responsibility of a wife and family, one of his favorite pastimes was trading or buying horses from the Indians camped near Palouse Falls. He and a friend, Everett Poe, would ride their horses to the Palouse River, ford it and go on to the Indian camp. He had a good relationship with the Indians and they called him "John Henry".





### *Hardware and Farm Equipment*

After John and Dorothy were married they purchased 160 acres for \$200 cash. They had many years of happiness and hard work and raised five children. They will observe their 72nd wedding anniversary in March of 1990.

During harvest, Dorothy milked seven cows and took care of the cream, making butter, etc. She also raised a large garden and cooked for the threshing crew. Water came from a well, powered by a windmill. When the wind failed, the water was pumped by hand at first, later by a gas motor.

The three older children went to school in Hay on horseback or by horse and buggy. Later they were the proud owners of a seven passenger Studebaker touring car. Once on their way to church in the summer, John Sr. happened to hit an extra large chuck hole and John Jr., about six years of age, flew up and out of the car, landing in a pile of Russian Thistles, alkali dust boiling up around him. After cleaning him up in Hay, at Grandma's house, and determining there were no broken bones they proceeded to Sunday services much to his disappointment.

### **The Charles Curtis Family 1904**

#### **by Polly Curtis**

Charles Omar Curtis was born in Alton, Illinois in 1872. His mother died when he was very young. He and his father moved to Steamboat Springs, Col., then to Kansas City, Missouri because of his father's failing health.

He was orphaned there at age 14, a sophomore in high school. Having no other relatives, he was totally on his own.

He decided to come West, first to the Washington Coast, then to Weston, Ore. where he lived for several years, working in the summer and attending school in the winter.

His next move was to Johnson, Wash. and then to Hay in 1904 to find land to homestead. His homestead was part of what is now the Fennimore farm.

He was married to Bessie Henley Dec. 30, 1909. They had five children, Catherine who died in infancy, Helene, Doris, Charles, Cecil (Tyke). He died in 1946.

## **The Gunder Aune Family 1909**

**by Ann Emerson**

My dad and his parents came to the U.S. in 1903. They came by wagon and took several weeks. They lived in Marietta, Minn. 6 years, then came to this area in 1909, and lived on land now owned by Dave McIntosh. In 1914 they became naturalized citizens (in Colfax). They lived two years, 1916-1918, in North Dakota, then moved back to this area in 1918 and leased land from the Coxes (where Dan Broeckel now lives). Dad and Jurgen Klegseth started farming this place together in 1927.

Dad attended high school in Spokane at Spokane College. Grandpa (G.G.) in 1927 bought the land that Oscar Aune owns and where Randy and Ellen Bachman live.

Dad and his family came to America because of family in this area and for farming opportunities. Family, Esten Nervig, and John Aune (G.G.'s uncle) Dad's younger sisters and brothers attended Cox School, located between Lois and Dan Broeckel's places.

I was born in the Wheeler house — Dr. Dan Henry delivered — the only one of us born there. Growing up in a large family and always having aunts, uncles and cousins around we were a close knit family. Our house was big and it was always full of extras — “always room for one more” — We had running water and a hot water tank heated by the kitchen stove — our bathroom had a sink and tub, but we had to go to the “out house” for the other necessities. We didn't think anything of it — that was the way it was. Our bathroom was large — it also doubled as a bedroom.

Lots of memories too numerous to mention. Dad served on the school board many years — a job he enjoyed and was capable. I graduated from Hay High School — many neat memories of school and friends.

## The Wise and Jaynes Families 1904

In the early years of the century, the Wise and Jaynes families resided in the North Carolina area near Morgantown or more precisely Glen Alpine. One family was on one side of the mountain and the other one the opposite. John Wise sired five sons and two daughters. All of the sons eventually wound up in the State of Washington, I believe. I don't know the history of Uncle John; but his sons, Malcom and Marion were around for years in the LaCrosse area. Of the others, Uncle Bill was the one I knew the most about. Grandma Becky's claim to fame that I recall was that she weighed in excess of four hundred pounds and had to be hauled to her funeral on a STONE BOLT. She was far too large for a buggy or hack. She threw a gene that has been the curse of nearly every Wise of the name since. Becky was lovingly spoken of and dad always thought she had been buried alive, an unsettling thought all of my life.

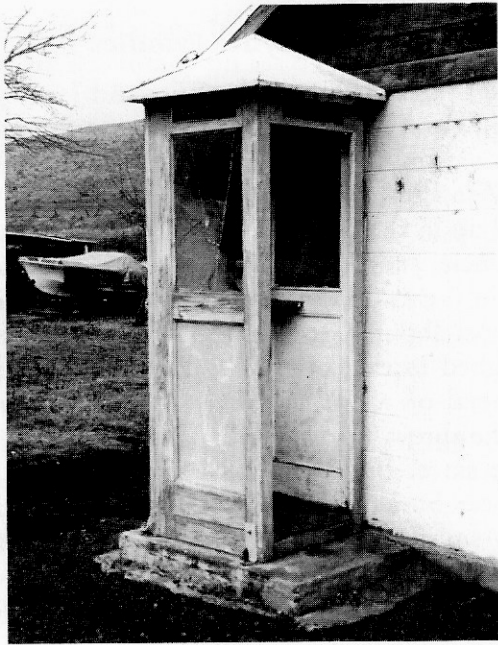
Uncle Bill was smitten with a school teacher. Her name was Alice Bracket. One day after Grandpa John had been away for a day or two buying cattle he returned. Behind him on his horse rode Alice. She delightedly took little Tommy in her arms and announced that she was his new mother. Uncle Bill, who somehow had hoped to claim Alice for his bride skipped out the back door and was next heard of from the State of Washington.

This leads up to the anchor that dad had in the State of Washington — precisely — Hay.

Dad has somewhat of a positive if not rebellious streak in him. At a very tender age he ran away from home and was gone all summer. Perhaps he was twelve. I don't recall how he survived, but at length he returned, a bit apprehensively. Dolly, his next oldest sister spotted him first in the yard. Her spontaneous greeting was, "Daddy is going to 'whup' you." No punishment was meted out however. His dad was glad to see him and have him home again.

The next crises occurred when Dad was sixteen. There was a heated argument between Dad and another young man — as they parted the opposing party yelled out an insult about Dolly, Dad's adored sister. Dad picked up a rock and flung it at the insulter knocking him to the ground. Dad left him presumably dead with no regrets.

News trickled up the hollow that Dad's target was indeed seriously injured, near death and the sheriff had been notified and planned to pick up Tommy Wise. It was decided that the best course of action was to remove Tommy further up the hollow to Cousin Gibbs until things settled down. That night however the sheriff did arrive and would have taken Tommy in but oddly enough no one knew where he was.



*Small Phone Booth*

At the conclusion of this scene, Grandpa John took himself off to Cousin Gibbs and later on that same night, Tommy Wise was astride a mule with a small valise in hand and enough money to buy a train ticket to the State of Washington. He crossed the mountains into Tennessee, left the mule at a prearranged spot and went West, not to return for eight years. His destination was Uncle Bill's at Hay, Washington. According to my arithmetic, the year must have been 1904 when he arrived in Hay.

For the next eight years dad cut quite a wide swath. He worked in the wheat fields. Became a driver which entailed handling 32 horses on a ground power combine. Homesteaded near section five which was later known as the Bennett place. Ran a dance hall, did a novelty act playing the violin while holding it behind his back — also with the bow between his knees. He played the mandolin and picked the 5 string banjo. He worked for years for Ralph Moore — courted and married a beautiful girl whose last name was Blount. Six weeks later she was dead of scarlet fever. After a period of mourning he sold out all he owned and returned to North Carolina — actually he was quite well off financially.

Leola Jaynes, six years dad's junior was nineteen years old in 1912. She had turned into a beauty from the eleven year old he had remembered 8 years ago. She had completed nursing school in Pennsylvania and was being courted by many young blades of the time. Mark Beck in particular had a beautiful team of horses for his buggy. There was also Lou Giles in



*Blacksmith Shop*

contention and Tillman Curtis. Dad however swept her off her feet. Aunt Matt, as many grandmother was known, arranged a beautiful wedding. The newlyweds left immediately for the West. They overnighted in St. Louis where the recent world's fair was still being celebrated.

After staying around with kinfolk, two nights per stand, mom and dad eventually wound up on what became known as the Chandler place. Dad was bankrolled by the owner who lived in Spokane. He really wanted to sell dad the place.

It was a glorious year, the farming went well. Mom met her new neighbors, the nearest of which were the Magees, just at the top of the hill. Mary Magee recalls mom's first visit. Mom was properly attired in riding habit and very lady like, rode side saddle on the most gorgeous black horse. Mary said she had never seen anyone as beautiful as mom. After refreshments she said to the twelve year old Mary, "Would you like to take my horse back? I can walk." Mary was overjoyed.

Promptly at the end of nine months, Edna arrived. Life would never be the same after that. The doctor had not properly cleaned out all of the after birth. Mom was paralyzed and contracted lock jaw. Dr. Bryant devised a system for trickling bourbon through a straw into the corner of her mouth. For seventeen days she received a pint a day, culminating in a life long addiction which cost her dearly — a fifth every decade or so strictly for medicinal purposes. On the seventeenth day, mom's jaw relaxed and she was able to take other nourishment. It was a long time be-

fore she regained the ability to speak. She would never regain the use of her right arm and she would walk forever with a severe limp.

After three years she became pregnant again contrary to the wishes of her doctor. Dad took her to Colfax to the hospital when her time was near. The doctor said she had at least two weeks to go but dad left her. Aunt Celia was in the hospital so she would have company. Anyway considering her paralysis it was best to be near hospital care. Life at the country club hospital wasn't bad — neither was the birth.

Communication was non existent except for the mail via train. Imagine dad's surprise when he got a letter from mom telling him he had a three day old daughter. So much for Lucile, she was even named compliments of her Aunt in residence with mom. A bonus — mom's physical condition was slightly improved.

Three years passed — mom was pregnant again. The year was 1920. No hospital was contemplated. Dad had decided to get Aunt Bell to be with mom. Also there was a telephone line from Hay to LaCrosse. It appeared that the time had arrived. Dad went to Hay and called the doctor, somehow he never arrived. Dad got Edith Bailey to come. She was a World War I registered nurse. I was delivered. Edith was short on supplies but not on ideas. She took some scissors and cut off a window shade cord to tie my umbilical cord. It has held for neary seventy years. The doctor arrived the next day but had nothing to do — he went home and committed suicide. The only thing left was to give me a name.

There was a gay blade in town who made the maiden's hearts flutter as well as those of the more mature women married or not. At any rate Roy Green demanded attention. I was named after him.

For all the years we lived in the Hay - LaCrosse area we frequently exchanged Sunday dinners with the Luther Wise family. One Sunday returning from LaCrosse from such an outing mom and dad were laughing. Dad said, "He's still mad at me. Didn't speak a word all afternoon." It appears that another guest that day at the Luther Wise's was Aunt Effie's brother, Charlie Shell. Charlie was the one dad had beaned with a rock back in North Carolina years ago and thus propelled himself westward.

## **The McCall Family 1911**

**by Ruth McCall Nervig**

The McCall family, James V., Ella, six children, Albert, Claire, Martha, Roy, Louise and Ruth, plus one other man, whose name I can't remember came by train from Lenoir, N.C. arriving after 7 days of traveling in Hay Oct. 11, 1911. My father had been out on a visit in 1908 and had fallen in love with the country. His health was poor in the rainy country of western N.C. so they finally decided to make the move West. My greatest tribute goes to my mother, who had to fix as much food, clothing, etc. as possible to make the trip. When the provisions she brought along ran out, they bought food at the stations, etc. since there was no food served on the train.

My main memories of the trip were the good fried chicken she had fixed for all that tribe and the fun we three younger children had when we would go through tunnels pretending it was night. Of course by the time we got settled down in the dark tunnels it was daylight again and time to get up.

My folks had bought a farm here at Hay before they left N.C. from I.M. Curtis, a Tar Hell acquaintance, who had come to Hay earlier, so they immediately started building a house here in Hay. Our first year we spent in an old shack full of bed bugs and other annoyances on land now owned by Tyke Curtis. We kids mainly amused ourselves with having baptismal services in the big water trough below the old cabin and funeral services for chickens, cats or whatever died.

Since there was no high school in Hay at the time, my three older brother and sisters had to live in Colfax to attend school. Our lives centered around the church and the immediate community with lots of neighborhood visiting.

My folks were much stricter than families are today in our behavior and manners. We were never allowed to call adults by their first names. It was always Mr. and Mrs., or if they were kin it was Uncle or Aunt so and so. I never heard my Mother call my Dad anything but Mr. McCall until they were old and then she lovingly called him "Old Man".

*The following pioneer reminiscence is from a typescript compilation of 1938 entitled "Stories of Early Pioneer in Whitman County, Washington," by Fred Yoder. It is the first of several planned for publication in **Bunchgrass Historian**. Mr. Yoder's preface to his project is presented as an introduction. The topic is Pine City, picking up a theme from the last issue of the magazine.*

These stories of early pioneers in Whitman County, Washington, were collected by personal interviews in the summers of 1936 and 1937. The language of the pioneers is used in telling the story just as far as possible. The purpose of collecting the stories was to get as complete a picture as possible of early pioneer life in Whitman County. It is the belief of the author that all the stories taken together give a fairly complete picture of early pioneer life in the County — from 1870 to 1900.

Fred R. Yoder, 1938

## **The Story of C. Y. Edwards, Pine City, Washington**

Came from Oregon to the Palouse country October 12, 1880. Was born in Decatur County, Iowa. Came to San Francisco by train in 1875, then by boat to Portland. Lived from 1875 to 1880 at Belleview, in Yamhill County, Iowa.

Father moved here to Pine City to give his boys an opportunity. Father built the first grist mill in Pine City. He made three trips to Walla Walla to buy machinery.

Father had a family of eight children.

Mr. Edward's brother taught school at Pine City in the early days when Cushing Eels was superintendent and Miss Leota West was deputy. Mr. Edwards home staded a farm in 1890. He now has 700 acres. When he came to the community, railroad land was selling at \$1.60 an acre. The Northern Pacific railroad went through Cheney in 1880, and they were receiving freight at that time.

Mr. Edwards has farmed since 1880. About this time wheat brought from 25¢ to 40¢ a bushel delivered at the railroad. At first, traded at Cheney, but after 1882, there was a pretty good store at Pine City. After 1887, traded at Rosalia.



The land was first broken with three-horse plows. Began to use binders in 1884. Raised a great deal of oats at first because there was not so much danger of loosing them by frost as there was in growing wheat.

Money borrowed cost from 18% to 24% interest. There was an old man by the name of Moore who lived to the north of Pine City who had money to loan which he usually loaned at 18%.

When Mr. Edwards came to Pine City, it had a three-room box hotel, a livery barn, a blacksmith shop, and a grist mill. Father built a box house of three rooms downstairs, and two upstairs.

There was a little over-shot saw mill that sawed lumber for the settlers for this part of the country.

School terms were about three months in the summer and three months in the winter. Some of the people had private schools in their homes.

Sunday school and preaching services were held in the school houses. The people attended very regularly. The Christians, Methodists, and Free Methodists were the most numerous. Preachers of these denominations would come in and hold meetings frequently.

Usually every summer just before the harvest, camp meeting was held. People would come in from great distances to attend the camp meetings, come as far as from Latah and Garfield.

At first, there was only a store and a post office at Rosalia and a barn for a stage station. An old man by the name of Warren Witcher living near Lamont, owned a stage line that operated between Sprague and Colfax and passed through Rosalia.

When Father came to San Francisco, the greenbacks that he had were discounted by 15%.

Mr. Edwards' brother organized a literary society patterned after a society to which he had belonged at McMinnville College. In the literary society were debates, literary programs, and open sessions once a month. Twenty-five or thirty people attended these meetings at the school house, and elected officers every month. Political matters were little discussed in the debates because the people were little informed.

There were singings, spelling bees, and dances over Brodner's Store at Pine City. Pine City at that time also had a saloon.

Got mail by star route. Papers taken were the Colfax Commoner, the Northwestern Tribune, and a weekly edition of the New York Sun. Most of the old-timers took the weekly Portland Oregonian.

Mr. Edwards sold wheat in 1893 at 18¢ a bushel delivered in St. John.

For eighteen years Mr. Edwards was deputy assessor. He was a director of the Pine City State Bank for twenty years. He has been a justice of the peace.

In his farming, Mr. Edwards has raised also beef cattle and horses.

In the early days, horse rustlers were a great nuisance in the country. They stole horses and drove them from Walla Walla into Montana. Ed Harris was the most notorious horse thief. He was a son of old Bill Masterson who was killed in Spokane by a deputy sheriff.

When Mr. Edwards first came to the country, there were a few Indians living about. They had a trail that passed through Hole-in-the-Ground. They used to visit old Henry Jones who could talk Indian language.



## Publications of Note

*Folk Arts of Washington State: A Survey of Contemporary Folk Arts and Artists in the State of Washington.* Edited by Jens Lund with Elizabeth Simpson. Tumwater, WA: Washington State Folklife Council, 1989, 108 pp., \$14.95 (paperback) (ISBN: 0-9623539-0-6)

It seems appropriate that this softcover survey of the folk art of Washington State should have been funded by the Washington State Centennial Commission and completed during the year that Washington State celebrated its Centennial. An outgrowth of the exhibition “‘For as Long as I Can Remember . . .,’ The Folk Art of Washington State.” The book is a celebration of those within the State that use their many and varied talents to enhance the lives of those around them.

The book begins by trying to give a definition of folk art. There is no tried and true definition agreed upon, however for purposes of the book, folk art begins with the role of the community in the “inspiration, production, and evaluation of folk art.” The artist’s role is to express the traditions of the group within which he/she lives. With there being so many different types of communities in Washington State, there are also many different types of art produced. From the loggers to the miners, from the Native Americans to the Italians, they arrived and settled in creating their own space where they could share their common identity — communities were created. From out of these communities came the artists themselves, they and their works are described and depicted in words and photographs. The photographs are in color and black-and-white, and the book is worth the price for the photographs alone. Depicted are wood carvings from Yakima, seed-art collage-murals from Molson, lace from LaCrosse, and many other types of beautiful and captivating art work from across the State. The art may be a handed down trait from the homeland, such as traditional Finnish weaving or Native American basketmaking, or it may be an art form developed in the “new country,” such as the Hmong people’s story cloth. The traditional forms of domestic utilitarian art are also included such as woven rugs, quilts, and all types of needlework. Even canned and preserved food are seen as works of art.

The book is a piece which brings to light the talents of those who settled in the communities of the State of Washington and worked to survive. They still found the time to make their lives, and the lives of others around them, aesthetically complete by the labor of their hands and the fruits of the land. They created the art, and the book is the perfect display piece for it all. The art was not done for themselves alone, but for all of us who share in the heritage and settlements of the State of Washington.

— *Tina Oswald, Moscow, Idaho*

*Norse to the Palouse: Sagas of the Selbu Norwegians.* By Marvin G. Slind and Fred C. Bohm. Pullman, Wash., Norlys Press, 1990. \$12.95, xiv, 155 pp. bib.

In the introduction to *Norse to the Palouse*, the authors note the embarrassing presence of a larger-than-life “heritage” history among Scandinavian-Americans. It features runic inscriptions found in the middle of North America — and even in the state of Washington — and other such efforts to invent an unneeded overly glorious past for their people. Seeking to correct such tendencies, the author provides us an account that is firmly grounded in reality.

The account is that of a number of Norwegians, almost all from one area in Norway, who immigrated to Eastern Washington over a period of about 15 years in the early 20th century. Coming from the area of the town of Selbu in Norway, the immigrants brought the name of the place along with them, and almost affixed it to an area near the town of LaCrosse mid-Whitman County, the most prominent landmark of which is now the Selbu Church.

The authors of *Norse to the Palouse* were able to trace this story with an amazing degree of detail and documentable accuracy. Unlike many other immigration histories, this one is based on more than half-remembered events, or things someone thought they heard their grandmother tell a long time ago. They were able to unearth all sorts of information about distinct individuals — many of them in fact. They know where these people lived in Norway, what they were doing there, when they emigrated, what sort of occupations they took up, details of family relationships, religious affiliations, and in some measure, even the financial condition of persons and families.

The book is available at some local bookstores and from the small publishing firm established by the authors. Write Norlys Press, P.O. Box 211, Pullman, WA 99163. \$12.95, plus tax and shipping.

— AOP

*Long-time readers of **Bunchgrass Historian** will note that **Norse to the Palouse** descends from an article carried in the magazine about a half-dozen years ago. — editor*