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Great Expectations

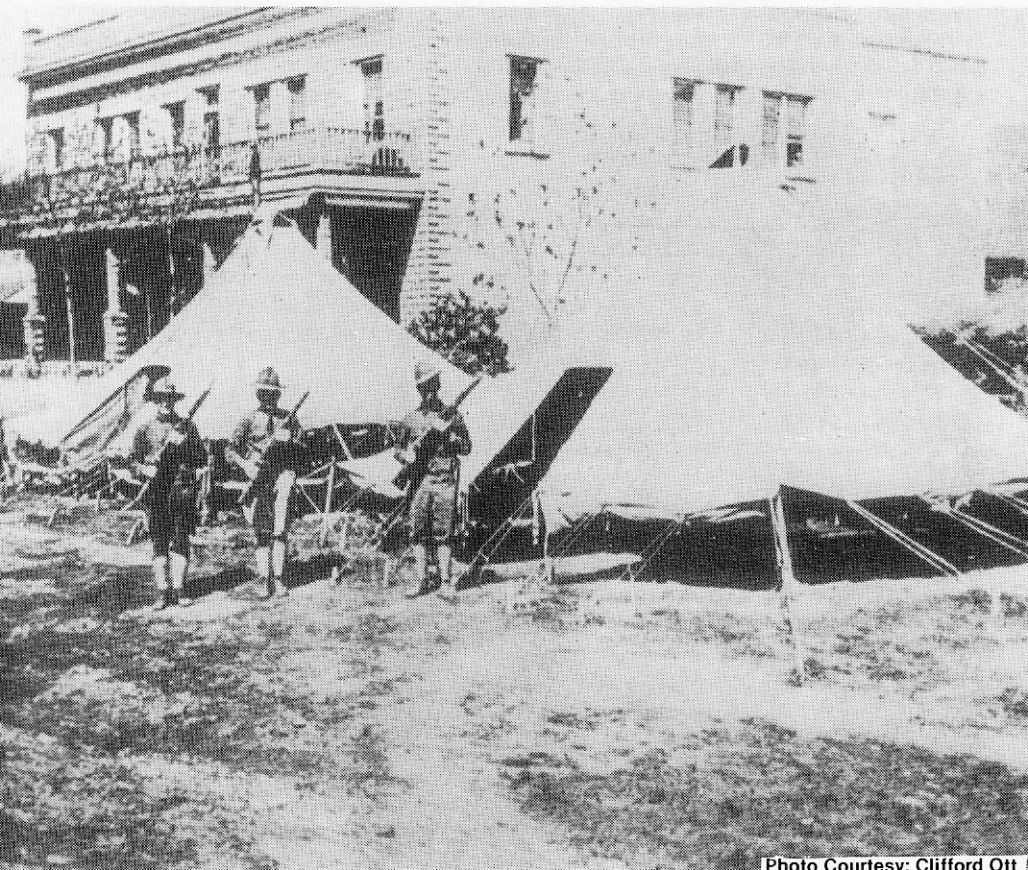


Photo Courtesy: Clifford Ott

Scene at Riparia 1917

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Front cover photo: The Riparia Hotel which housed a store, and post office on the ground floor as well as the hotel's lobby, dining room and kitchen was managed entirely by Clyde Dobkins in 1917. Two squad tents of Co. 'F' 2nd Idaho Infantry, N.G. from Lewiston, Idaho are shown. The detachment of soldiers was stationed at Riparia to guard the railroad bridge from April 7 to July 12, 1917. Mr. Clifford Ott was a member of the detachment during this time, coming to Riparia from service along the Mexican border. We are indebted to him for the two splendid photos of Riparia.

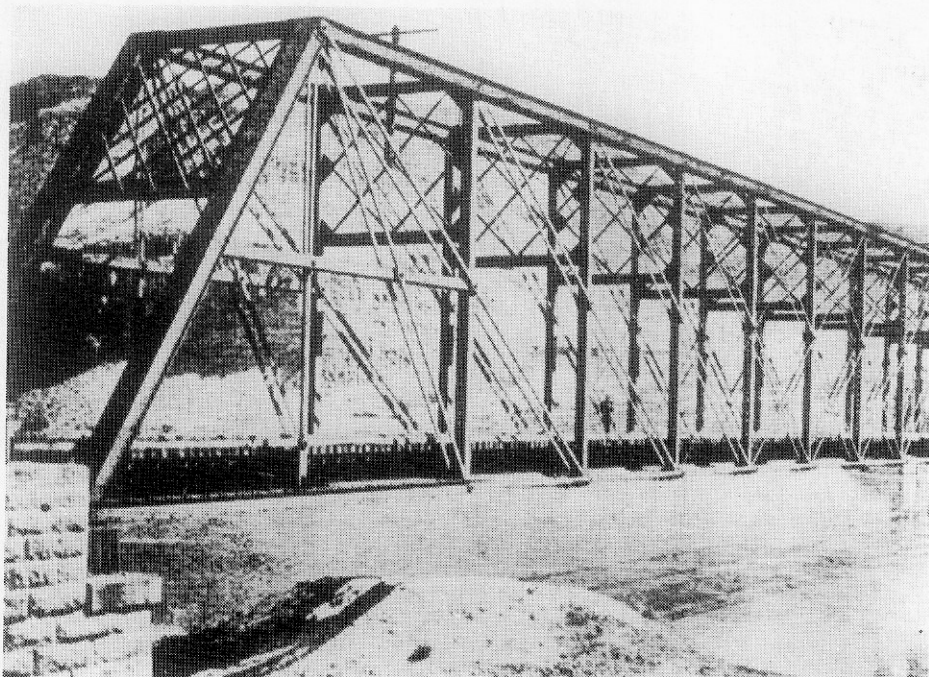


Photo courtesy: Clifford Ott

Camas Prairie Railroad Bridge

Construction of this bridge near the turn of the century spelled doom for old Riparia and Texas Ferry. Note soldier standing at "port arms" on the bridge.

Great Expectations

The early settlements in Whitman county grew for a variety of reasons but transportation was a major one. Wherever a ferry crossed, or a steamboat docked, or a stagecoach stopped, that spot became a gathering place for settlers. Later when the railroads came in they brought the demise of many small villages but in turn sparked the beginnings of new ones. This process continues today as some towns are bypassed by the highways and the old river settlements are drowned out by the dams.

Riparia and Texas Ferry

Taken from the word riparian which means of, pertaining to, or living on the bank of a river, a lake or tidewater the choice of the name Riparia was most appropriate for this settlement on the Snake river.

First established on the south side of the river in what is now Columbia county, Riparia boasted boat works and dry docks for building and repairing steamboats. After the explosion of the **Annie Faxon** at Wade's Bar just below Illia in Garfield county in 1893, the **Almota** towed the wrecked steamer to Riparia for salvage. Finding portions of the hull usable and the engine and driving shafts undamaged, plans were soon made for construction of a new steamer. Thus was born the steamer **Lewiston**, launched in 1894.

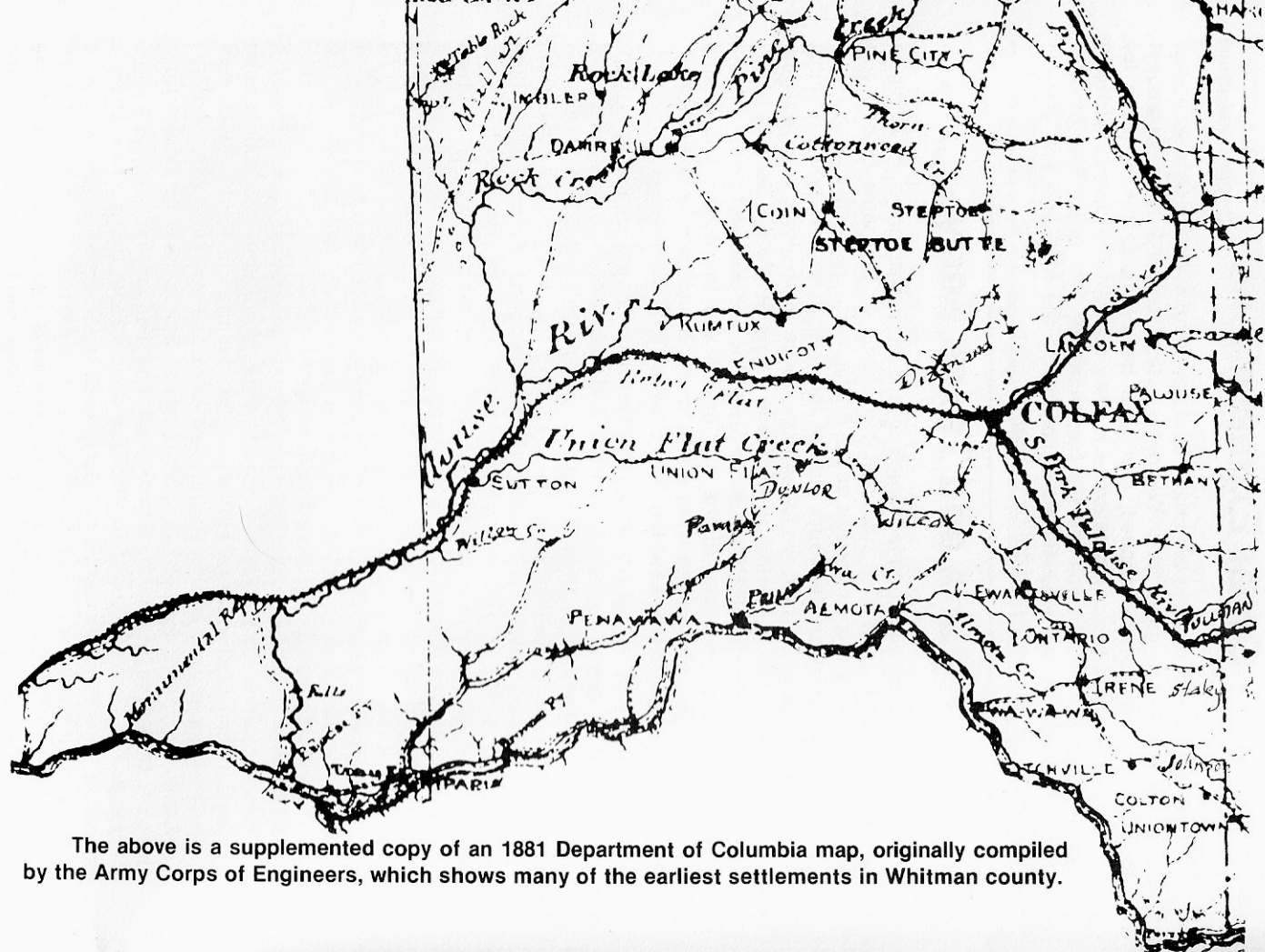
According to W. H. Lever's **History of Whitman County** published in 1901, Riparia counted eighty residents in 1882, and had a store, three saloons, a restaurant, hotel and post office. A post office was established there on November 7, 1882 and continued to serve the area until March 13, 1940. It remained closed until September 1, 1947 when it was reopened and continued until April 12, 1964 at which time the ongoing construction of Lower Monumental Dam had brought about the sale of the nearby river lands to the Army Corps of Engineers and the post office was closed at this time.

On the north side of the Snake river opposite the site of Riparia was another settlement. It originated with the establishment of a ferry crossing operated by Tom Bolen and was called Texas Ferry. This ferry served the area for generations. A post office was opened at Texas Ferry on February 2, 1880 but existed for only a very brief period being closed on October 10, 1890.

Near the turn of the century, the completion of the railroad linking Spokane and Portland called for a railroad bridge to cross the Snake river at this point and the building of the bridge blotted out forever the old Riparia settlement in Columbia county, and dealt a similar blow to Texas Ferry in Whitman county.

Some farsighted men in the area realizing that a junction was formed where the Union Pacific and the Camas Prairie rail lines met on the north shore decided to build a new Riparia in Whitman county. They knew since where a junction is formed there must be a depot and an agent and with that there were always section houses for the workmen to maintain the road, the nucleus for the town was already there. Envisioning the potential demand by railroad and steamboat travelers for accommodations there, these men built what for the time was an elegant hotel. This drew other people who opened other businesses common to the day and the settlement grew for a time. Its final struggles for existence were covered over forever in 1969 when the pool behind Lower Monumental Dam was raised.

Footnote: Members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-06) camped at Almota on October 11, 1805 and at Riparia on October 12, the same year, as they traveled west.



The above is a supplemented copy of an 1881 Department of Columbia map, originally compiled by the Army Corps of Engineers, which shows many of the earliest settlements in Whitman county.

Ewartsville

Ewartsville on the stagecoach run between Colfax and Lewiston was another relay station complemented by a small store and post office. The post office opened April 23, 1873 and served the area until October 21, 1891. The name is preserved in the Grange Hall still serving the community. Ewartsville was named for one of its earliest settlers Captain James Ewart, father-in-law of James A. Perkins, Colfax pioneer.

Irene

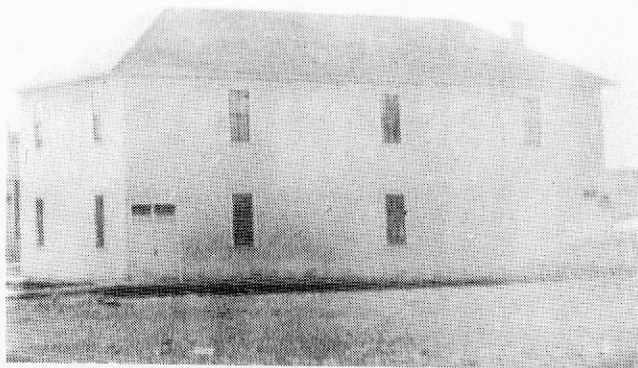
Irene was a stagecoach station on Union Flat located across the present county road from the Roe Hatley home. The corral for the relay teams was built next to the rock cliff back of the old barn which still stands on the place. The stage line was part of a regular run between Walla Walla and Lewiston, Idaho. The settlement boasted a blacksmith shop and a livery stable. A post office was opened there on September 29, 1879 with James Offield as post master. He also had a store. The post office existed less than a year being closed June 14, 1880. The first Irene school was on the Benton homestead and was held in the home. The second school was held in the James Bauer home. The first real school house was built in 1886, and was later moved over nearer what is now the county road. The third school was built in 1908 by William Thatcher near the present Cecil Hatley home. During the 1920's the Hatley family often plowed up square nails and found a powder horn and hunting knife in the vicinity of the former settlement, according to Cecil Hatley who supplied the above information.

Leitchville

Leitchville was another link in the long chain of early day stage coach relay stations on the run between Colfax and Lewiston. Named for Mike Leitch who owned the property three and a half miles west of Colton, the settlement soon had a store opened by John Standley and a post office opened there on February 1, 1876. This post office had first been named Owensburg and opened in that name on June 24, 1874 but was closed January 31, 1876 to be opened under the Leitchville name. A school building was erected in 1883 and was in use for five years serving fifty school children the first year with William Batty as teacher. The settlement began to decline as Colton gained more residents and eventually some of the Leitchville buildings were moved to Colton.

Sunset

Sunset was a small settlement established on land owned by Joseph Conatser, six miles from St. John on Cottonwood Creek. In 1901 it boasted three general stores, a hardware store, three warehouses, a hotel and a blacksmith shop. It had a fine public school and a post office. The village got its start as a railroad town when the O. R. & N. branch line passed through there.



High School Gymnasium



The Commercial Hotel

All photos of Johnson buildings courtesy of Mrs. O. E. Marine

Johnson

Named for its founder, Jonathan Johnson, this small town was born soon after the Palouse branch of the Northern Pacific came through. It is located about half way between Pullman and Uniontown. Once the town had four or five general merchandise stores, a postoffice, with Elizabeth Hooper as first post master, two blacksmith shops, a public school, several churches and some other business establishments. It is still an important wheat shipping point but the businesses of old and the public school are no more. However, the school building is now used for a Grange Hall.

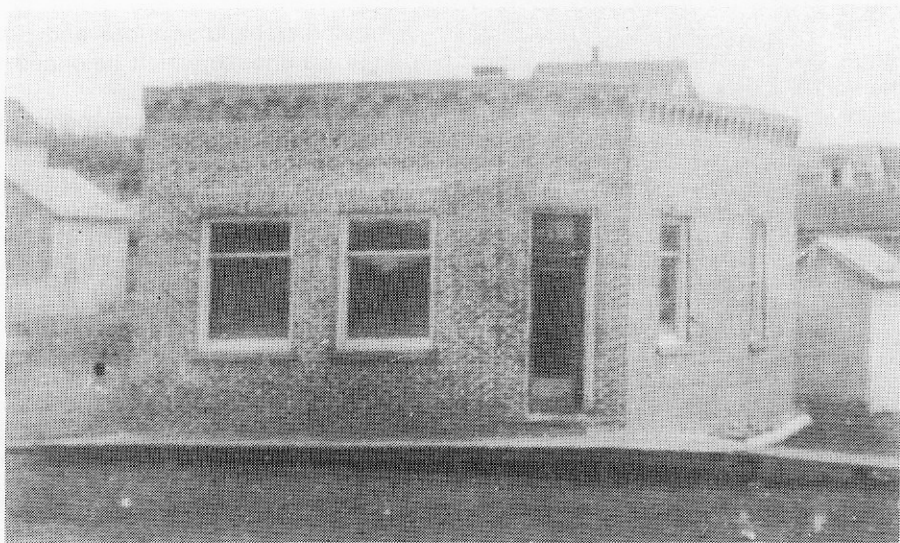
EXTRA!-EXTRA!-EXTRA!

Johnson, Wash., Farmers State Bank robbed of \$1400 by safe crackers.—**Lewiston Morning Tribune, November 10, 1923.**

Robbers Make Haul at Johnson Bank

(Excerpted from **The Pullman Herald, Friday, November 16, 1923.**)

Robbers blew the safe in the Farmers State Bank at Johnson, eight miles southeast of here, about 4 o'clock Friday morning and made away with \$1400 in



The Farmers State Bank

currency and silver. Four charges of nitro-glycerine demolished the safe, as well as two plate glass windows and the bank furniture. The door to the vault was "soaped," ready to blow, the robbers evidently intended to blow the vault in case the safe, which was on the outside of the vault did not contain the bank money. The explosion awakened several residents of Johnson and Jake Steiner is said to have emptied his gun in the direction of the bank, the robbers returning the fire.

The entire process required only a few minutes and before a posse could be organized the robbers were speeding on their way with the bank money. The telephone wires had been severed and it was some time before the sheriff's office could be notified. The bank loss in cash is fully protected by burglar insurance, but the damage to the furniture and fixtures will be considerable.

Sometime during the night the Standard Oil Station in this city was burglarized and fifteen gallons of gas, together with several buckets and a funnel, were taken. It is believed that the bank robbers passed through Pullman on their way to Johnson and supplied themselves with gasoline to aid in their get-away. Tracks left at the oil station are said to be the only clue which might assist in the capture of the robbers.

B. F. Druffel is president of the Johnson bank and L. R. Maxwell is vice-president. W. O. Druffel is cashier. □

Pampa

According to W. H. Lever's **History of Whitman County**, Pampa was a small valley settlement situated about forty rail miles south of Colfax and eighteen miles northeast of the Snake river. An abundant water supply was furnished by Willow creek which winds through the valley. The trees lining the creek were planted by D. S. Bowman in the 1880's. There were a few settlers there as early as 1871 but most of the land was taken up about ten years later. At that time the new Columbia and Pacific Railroad was being built through the area. The first settlers were mostly sheep and cattle men and the bunchgrass growing on the surrounding hills was invaluable to them. Later, as elsewhere in the county, they began to farm the hills and raised some wheat.

In 1901, Pampa boasted a hotel, a general merchandise store and post office, a blacksmith shop, a church and a large warehouse which belonged to the Pacific Elevator Company.

Pampa is known today for the pond maintained there for young people to try their hand at fishing and little remains of the former settlement.

Imbler

Named for the John W. Imbler family, early pioneers in the area, the settlement was probably a rail siding and post office.

Staley

Staley was a small town located between Johnson and Pullman. It was founded by D. M. Staley and was owned and occupied mainly by him and his sons.

Dunlor

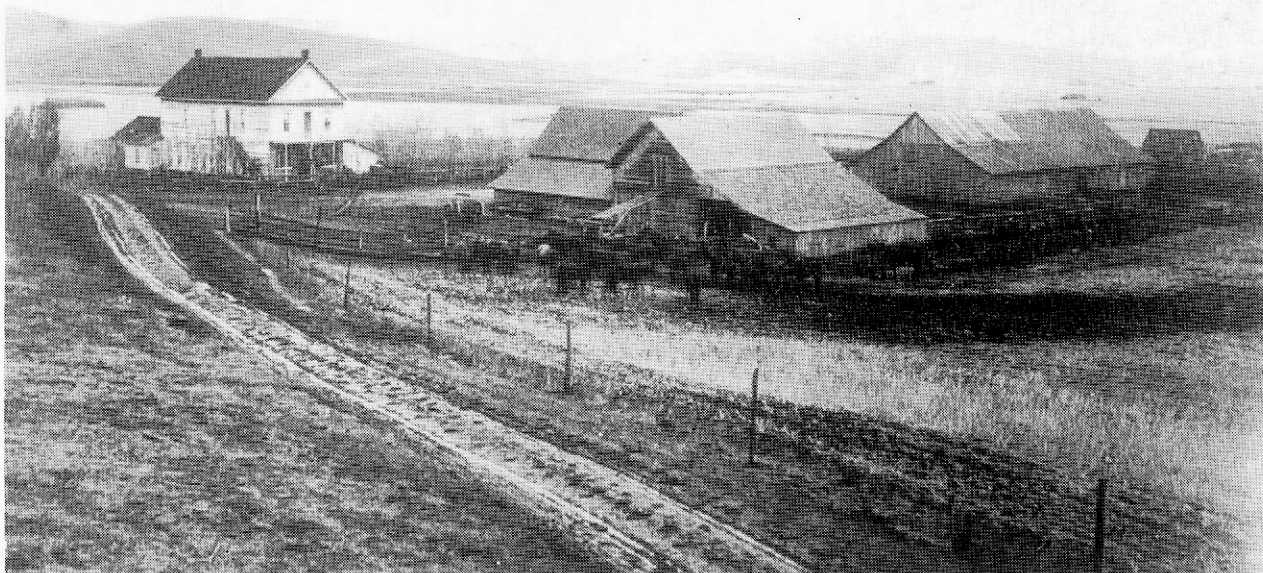
Dunlor was an important shipping point on the O. R. & N. railroad line between Lacrosse and Riparia. The post office at Dunlor was established in the 1800's.

Diamond

Diamond was another small village on the O. R. & N. line between Colfax and Endicott. It was named for Q. Diamond the man who platted and started the settlement. Diamond once boasted a blacksmith shop, a general merchandise store, feed mill, public school and post office besides an elevator and several warehouses.

Cashup

The settlement at Cottonwood Springs was soon called Cashup after the man who built the early accommodations for travelers and the freight and stage-coach relay teams here. The man was James S. Davis who settled at the base of Steptoe Butte in 1875. He earned the nickname Cashup from his habit of always paying cash and sustained it by asking others to do likewise. The place still bears that name at the rail siding where grain elevators advise the traveler of its only purpose today.



The James S. "Cashup" Davis Stage Station

Photo Courtesy Julia Eckhart

FOOTNOTE: For more information on Cashup Davis read Randall Johnson's book *Cashup Davis and His Hotel on Steptoe Butte*.

The History of the Wilcox Community

By Miriam Kammerzell (Feb. 14, 1957)

Wilcox is located in Township 15; Range 42; Section 11 of Whitman County, Washington. Union Flat Creek, rising in the Uniontown area, runs through Wilcox, and continues on to enter the Palouse River west of Lacrosse. The history of the Wilcox community and that of the immediate Union Flat vicinity are so interwoven that a separation is impossible.

The earliest settlers on Union Flat were two bachelors, George Pangburn and Joseph DeLong. They arrived in 1867, according to the Whitman County History by Lever. However, the Durhan Inland Empire History states that George Pangburn claimed land near the present location of Winona in 1863. No other settlers appeared until 1969, when Nicholas Whealen homesteaded on Union Flat, about five miles below the later location of Wilcox. In February, 1870, his wife Catherine and four children arrived, coming from California. The Whitman County History says that Mrs. Whealen was the first woman settler in what was to become Whitman County. This same year, 1870, witnessed the arrival of several other families. The John Harper family homesteaded on Union Flat above the Whealens, just two miles from Wilcox. The three McNeilly brothers, William, Robert, and Andrew, arrived that same year, William and Robert filing claims on Union Flat between the Harpers and the Whealens; Andrew settling farther up Union Flat, only a short distance from the site of Wilcox. The Frank Dowling family, and Joseph Hardesty, a widower with his six young children, homesteaded next to each other on Union Flat a few miles above Andrew McNeilly's location. According to historian Dr. C.S. Kingston, "In 1870 Union Flat was the only settled district north of the Snake River, having 118 people living along the creek." Other pioneers of the early seventies were John and James V. O'Dell, Philip Brogan, James Woodley, Tom Smith, Josiah Crampton, James Eagan, Dick Mooney, Peter Hoss, George Rogers, the latter homesteading on what is now the Ewald Heilsberg place in Wilcox.

November 27, 1871, Whitman County was created by separation from Stevens County. At the first meeting of the "Court of County Commissioners," on February 5, 1872, the boundaries were decided upon for the six voting precincts in the county. Quoting from the Commissioner's records of that day:

"First. The precinct in the South East Corner shall be named Upper Union Flat And its boundary shall commence at the SE Corner of the County on Snake River, running down midchannel of said river to the mouth of the Pen-A-Wa-Wa. Thence along the proposed Territorial Road to the middle of the ridge dividing Union and Rebel Flat. Thence easterly to the three forks of the South Palouse, Thence along the north fork to the Idaho line, thence along the line to the place of beginning.

Second. Lower Union Flat

Shall be bounded as follows: Commencing at the mouth of the Pen-A-Wa-Wa on Snake River running west or down said river to Texas Ferry, thence West to I.N. Warmouth's West line. Thence North to the dividing line between Union Flat and Rebel Flat. Thence East to the NW Corner of Upper Union Flat, thence along the Territorial Road to the place of beginning."

The voting place for Upper Union Flat was the home of G. D. Wilbur. George Pangburn's residence was the voting place for Lower Union Flat in this first election, held June 3, 1872. On August 3, 1872, John Harper was

created a road supervisor for Lower Union Flat, quite a road district.

The Territorial Road, which was so vital to these pioneers, was surveyed in 1872 by a Territorial Road Viewer, James Nosler. It was routed from Walla Walla via Waitsburg to Colfax and north, crossing the Snake River at Penawawa. Labor performed on the Territorial Road served as legal taxes for road purposes, and many of our pioneers took advantage of this method of paying taxes in those hard times. In May, 1874, the Territorial Road was declared a County Road. In 1915, the present Highway 295 was built to Central Ferry, and the old Territorial Road lost much of its travel. It is still in existence, a few miles of it being unimproved north of Wilcox; the rest a gravelled road which enters Colfax via the Whitman County Airport.

The first mail came from the Walla Walla country north to the Snake River, crossing it via the Penawawa Ferry operated by C. C. Cram, thence north by the Territorial Road. The mail for these early settlers was left at the Andrew McNeilly home on Union Flat. A pioneer of the Farmington area, W. W. Johnston, told in the Whitman County History of riding to this "postoffice on Union Flat" in the winter of 1871-72. He also told of having no meat, and in February, 1872, "hearing in Colfax of a chance to get some bacon on Union Flat, succeeded in buying 100 pounds . . . on which we feasted royally."

Later a postoffice was established in the home of R. J. Wilcox, who had the first blacksmith shop in the community. Wilcox received its name from this family. The postoffice was eventually located in the James Williams home. In these later years the mail came via a stageline from Colfax to Penawawa, horses being changed at the Wilkerson home a few miles south of Wilcox. Finally the R. F. D. compelled the closing of the Wilcox postoffice, sometime after 1920.

The earliest school was built on the John Harper farm on Union Flat. This is the present Harry Sanders farm, located on Highway 295. We do not know the exact date the school came into being, but it was in the early seventies.

The earliest record in the Whitman County School Superintendent's office for the Wilcox School District No. 11 is a report from the clerk of the school board, T. J. Brannan, signed by William O. Gilliland, Director, and dated June 29, 1888. Only the parents or guardians are listed for the 25 pupils, even the names of teachers being omitted. Other facts are interesting: The sum of \$260.00 was paid for teacher's wages for that year. Two teachers were employed probably for two separate terms, as 6¼ months were taught. The estimated value of the frame school and the grounds was \$25.00. School furniture \$35.00; apparatus (charts, maps, globes, etc.,) valued at \$25.00. The question was asked on this form: "Is your school furnished with the Webster's Unabridged Dictionary?" The answer was "No." The average salary for a male teacher was \$50.00 a month; female teachers were paid \$40.00. Hester O'Dell, who has been mentioned as a teacher at the McNeilly school, taught this school in the early days. Lucy Helm has been named as another early teacher. Frank Hardesty, son of Union Flat pioneer Joseph Hardesty, was a teacher in the nineties.

In later years this original school was supplanted by a two-room frame building on the site of the present building; and finally the large school population prompted the erection of a fine two-story school in 1913. All eight grades and two years of High School were available, with four and five teachers for the 100 pupils. But as has been the case with all these farm communities, with the coming of better roads and larger farming operations, the population dwindled until the once large school finally closed, and the district consolidated with the Colfax system in 1939.

FOOTNOTE: For more information on early Wilcox school see Vol. IV, No. 2 of the *Bunchgrass Historian*.

Many church services were held in the Wilcox school in the seventies, eighties, and nineties, as circuit riding ministers found their way about the country. If no minister was available, the neighbors conducted their own Sunday School and church services. Mrs. John Carroll, mother of Merritt and Marvin Carroll of this neighborhood, was one of the first Sunday School teachers. Mr. Copley, father of Harvey Copley of Colfax, also assisted at that time.

The Methodists held services here. Rev. M. S. Anderson was the first Methodist minister on a regular charge north of the Snake River. He organized churches at Colfax, Onecho, and several other places, serving all as a circuit riding pastor.

About 1900 several Seventh-day Adventist families moved to the Wilcox neighborhood, among the first being the families of George Krieger, Philip Sittner, Peter Link, Peter Heidenreich, Fred and Peter Ochs, Jacob and Conrad Reiber. The group first met for services in the Jones school on Highway 295, their leader being Henry Schlotthauer, a lay minister. In 1902 a church was built, and the congregation officially organized in 1903. Elder Fred Schnepfer preached, and also taught in the church-school. A new church was erected about 1918. At one time the membership reached 103. The church united with the Colfax S. D. A. Church in 1952.

The Wilcox Baptist Church history is similar to that of the Adventist group. These German Baptist people came to the Wilcox area after 1900, Gottfried and Edward Krueger being among the earliest arrivals. The Gustav Heilsberg, Ben Mohr, and F. G. Dierkes families came about 1904 and 1905. They organized the Wilcox Baptist Church on February 23, 1905, with 25 charter members. Of this little group, only two are living today, Edward Krueger, living a few miles from Union Flat in the McNeilly neighborhood; and Mrs. Anna Dierkes, 95 years old, living in Portland, Oregon. The church was built on land donated by F. G. Dierkes, and was dedicated July 22, 1906. High point in the membership totaled 125. In May, 1946, the congregation voted to unite with the First Baptist Church in Colfax. The old church building was torn down in 1948, and the land sold to the original farm, now owned by John Moore, on Highway 295.

Wilcox Grange No. 141 was organized November 4, 1903, with 39 charter members. Fred J. Waymire was the first Master. T. L. Williams the first Secretary. Dues were \$1.20 a year. The Grange first met in the Yeoman Hall, but in 1908 the members raised funds for a building of their own by selling stock at \$10.00 a share. Master of the Grange at this time was Ed Pyburn. The Grange Hall was built by the members on land owned by John Major, and still is located there. In 1918 the charter was surrendered to the State Grange, and the organization remained inactive until 1930, when it was reorganized, Harry Sanders serving as Master, and Mrs. Harry Sanders as Secretary. At the present time the membership is 181, the Master being A. S. Miller, the Secretary Wallace Luther.

Mention should be made of the social activities of the early days. Most of these early pioneers were of light-hearted Irish and Scotch-Irish ancestry and enjoyed dancing and like diversions. Sam McNeilly says, "John Harper built a barn in 1881 which was used for dances. He taught all the boys to dance, playing the violin himself and calling the figures." There was a lack of lady partners in those days. Mrs. May Coffman Williams, mother of Mrs. Marvin Carroll, who came here in 1881 at the age of ten, has told of being a sought-after dance partner when she was twelve years old; and Mr. McNeilly says, "We met for dances if enough women could be found."

Mrs. Williams' father built the Coffman Hall in 1883. Music was furnished by a violin and accordian. In later years an organ made its appearance in the Wilkerson Hall. No tickets were sold to these affairs, the musicians being paid by the simple process known as "passing the hat." Refreshments were brought

by the ladies, and consisted of pies, cakes, and the like. Waltzes, the schottische, and square dances were the popular dances of the day.

Later years found the dances being held in Wilcox itself, in the Yeoman Hall above the Whitten General Store. The Wilcox Grange has also held dances off and on during its long existence.

The young men and boys enjoyed riding bucking horses, horse racing, and similar activities. Merritt Carroll, whose father John Carroll came here in 1881, tells of those times. The well-known Yakima Canutt, world champion bronc rider and Hollywood stunt man, and other youngsters of the neighborhood spent every Sunday possible at the Carroll home, engaged in these enterprises. Baseball teams also flourished, playing rival teams from other neighborhoods. Sleigh-riding and coasting were popular winter amusements.

Another social organization of the past was the Wilcox Literary Society. It was instituted January 11, 1911, according to its first minutes. Clair Saxon was President; Sam Whitten, Vice-President; Guy Brotherson, Secretary-Treasurer; and Ed Pyburn, Sergeant-at-arms. Debates, plays, readings, and musical entertainment featured the meetings, and always, refreshments. Other clubs and like organizations visited, usually with debate teams of their own, and according to these interesting old minutes, great was the rivalry.

A Yeoman Lodge was organized in the nineties, and continued for some time, but sources of material concerning it were impossible to find. A more recent organization in the Wilcox neighborhood is the Daffodil Club, a women's club which has been active since its inception in 1930. It was founded February 20, 1930, by six women, Mrs. Marvin Carroll, Mrs. Ben Kammerzell, Mrs. Hugh J. McNeilly, Mrs. Hugh V. McNeilly, Mrs. Harry Sanders, and Mrs. Fay Templeton. Membership is limited to twenty, and the club members engage in Red Cross and other charitable work, and enjoy various social activities.

The earliest telephone service was provided by a single line which came to the Fouts store in Wilcox via a barbed-wire fence from the Almota neighborhood. Later the Crumbaker line was built, the lines being placed on fences, and serving subscribers for quite a distance. A switchboard was placed in the postoffice in the Williams home.

About 1906 the Penawawa Telephone Company was organized, Willis Adams being named president. This new system extended new lines through the surrounding area—poles were floated from the Clearwater country down the Snake River to Penawawa, the company paying \$1.00 a pole. John Major and Fay Templeton built this line, the Penawawa Telephone Company buying the switchboard from the Crumbaker owners. The Wilcox exchange connected with the Colfax exchange, with no toll charge. In the 1920's the Wilcox exchange was discontinued, the local subscriber's lines connecting directly with the Colfax office. In November, 1947, the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph instituted its suburban service, and thus ended the Penawawa Telephone Company. Dial Service arrived April 1, 1956.

A few of the early telephone operators in Wilcox were John Jones, Mr. and Mrs. James Williams, Hannah Moran Chamberlain, Louise Reichenauer Vickery, and Mabel Wilkerson Carroll. Mrs. Carroll has told of those days—she lived with the Williams family, and was paid \$4.00 a week. Her hours were 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and her duties in addition to operating the switchboard consisted of taking care of the postoffice and clerking in the little store, which sold a few school supplies, confectionery items, soft drinks, and on Sunday—ice cream.

James Williams, mentioned above, was a blacksmith. The Wilcox postoffice and telephone exchange were in one room of his home. Stores were operated in Wilcox by Adam Luft, Del Fouts, Sam Whitten, A. E. Studer. Homer Williams,

later a well-known business man of Colfax, owned a store in Wilcox, and also taught in the Wilcox school. Roy Morgan owned a feed mill, and a cobbler shop was operated by Bill Bock.

Mention should be made of the families in the immediate neighborhood who still own the original land their grandparents made such efforts to obtain. The extensive Whealen holdings are still in the family, with grandchildren Richard Whealen, Mrs. Sam Kissler, and Mrs. Clarence Caldwell all living on or adjacent to Union Flat. Douglas McNeilly, grandson of William McNeilly, lives on the site of the original homestead. Other grandsons of William McNeilly, William R., Fay, and Fred, live in this neighborhood. Hugh J. McNeilly, a son of Robert McNeilly, lives a short distance south of the Union Flat bridge, on Highway 295. The John Harper homestead has remained in the family, a grandson, Harry Sanders, now farming the land. John Harper's three daughters, Rosie Allen, Daisy Sanders, and Lillie Hibler, are still living. The Joseph Hardesty property is now owned by two granddaughters, Mary Wells Wilson and Catherine Wells Rahlf. Two sons of John Carroll live in the Wilcox vicinity, Merritt on the original homestead, and Marvin on Union Flat.

In its heyday Wilcox boasted a feed-mill, two blacksmith shops, a cobbler shop, two general stores, a postoffice and telephone exchange, a two-story school, and numerous residences. Today nothing remains of the little community but the old Williams home, now vacant, the shell of the once large school, and three or four empty homes. The John Heilsberg family is the only remaining one, living on the farm homesteaded in the seventies by Peter Hoss. In Wilcox itself no one lives. The coming of the automobile, better roads, rapid communication and the mechanization of farming operations have accomplished this, here in Wilcox as elsewhere. □

Long Ago Days Recalled

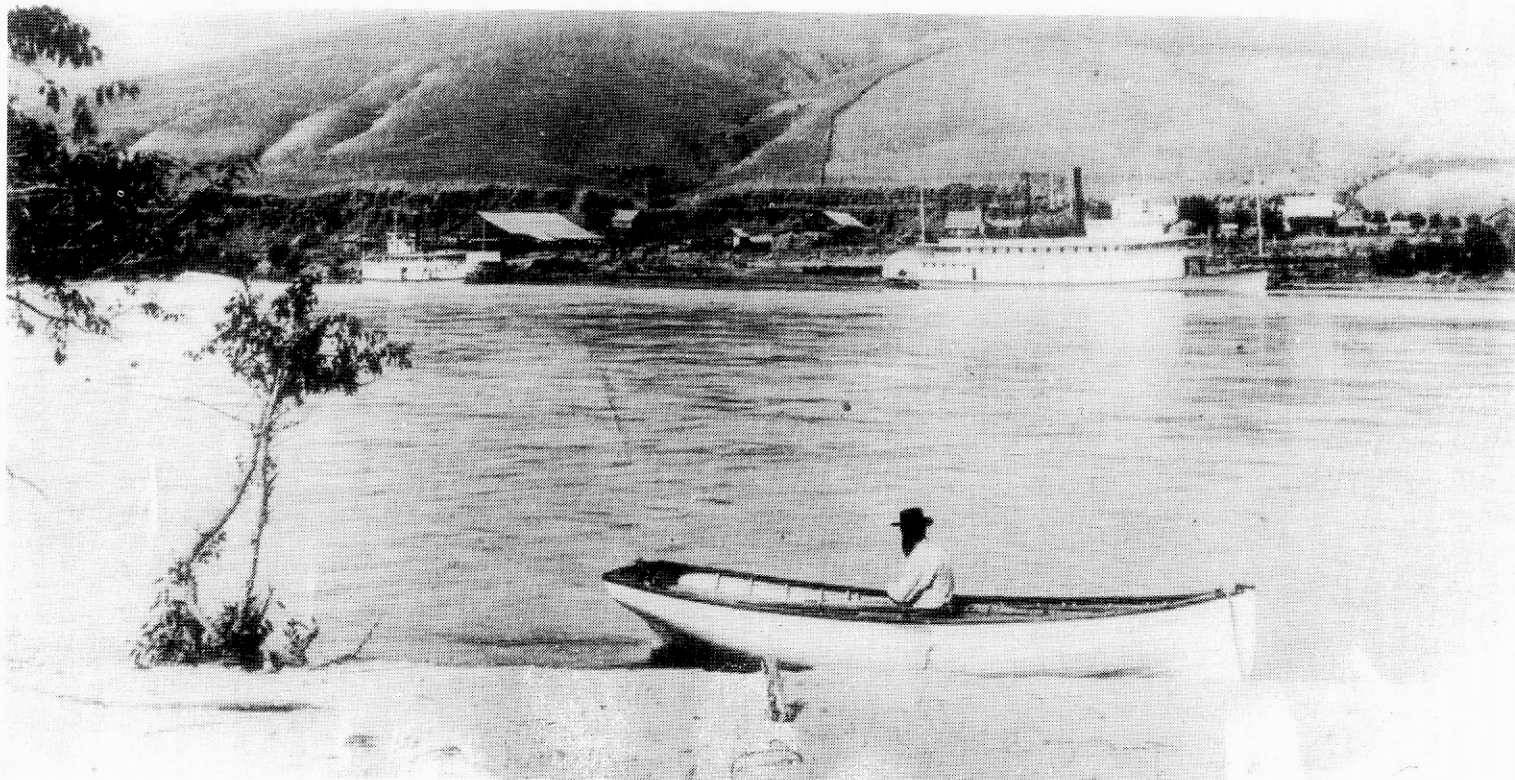
By Joseph W. Hungate

I was born at Alмота. My father operated a flour mill there using the waters of one of the Alмота Creeks, probably the large one, as there are two, Little and Big. I am not sure just how long he ran the mill, but I know he shipped a great deal to Portland by river steamer. Unfortunately the dealer to whom he shipped left in a hurry, without having paid him anything. This was a severe financial blow to my father, and he sold the mill and removed to a farm two miles from Pullman, on what is now the main road to Lewiston. Later he sold the farm and we lived in Pullman, where he soon built a home on Sunnyside. From there I walked sometimes two or three times a day to the college when I was attending classes there. In later years he built a second home near the college.

He was a member of the state constitutional convention in 1889. In later years he purchased a 320 acre ranch located near the head of Wawawai Canyon and I worked there during the summers. The last year I worked there I hauled wheat to a warehouse at Granite Point, driving a six horse team and hauling forty sacks of wheat weighing about 130 pounds each in what was called a California rack. My brother and I both hauled in these wagons, and we lifted and loaded the 40 sacks. I recall that once when he was gone I put the sacks up and arranged them alone in my wagon.

I can recall a good many things concerning my early years in Alмота. Rattlesnakes were very plentiful and I remember coming home one afternoon

Footnote: Mr. Hungate wrote this article in 1971 from his home in Atascadero, California. His father was H. H. Hungate. The author was a 1902 graduate of Washington State College and is deceased.



Scene at Almota in 1880

Photo Courtesy Mrs. Elliott Gay

Facing Almota from Garfield county this photo taken by Capt. J. W. Troup shows Henry H. Spalding, son of the missionary in rowboat, the large steamer *Harvest Queen* built in 1878 and the smaller steamer *Almota* launched in 1876, at dockside during the heyday of this port settlement.

from play and finding my mother lying on the sofa in the living room, apparently quite exhausted. She had had to kill an enormous rattlesnake that was trying to get under the house and she used a hoe for a weapon, so there were chunks of this big rattler scattered around a rose bush by the porch. They also told me that one time, when I had been playing on the floor in the kitchen they found a rattler behind a sugar sack that sat against the wall. To me now it is interesting to recall how I liked so well to go barefooted in the summer, without ever having any fear of the snakes.

I can recall the first winter we lived on the farm near Pullman my brother and I slept in a sort of garret with a window with no sash, and I can remember there was snow all over the cover of the bedding.□

Courting

This story of early courting days was told by William Batty to his eldest granddaughter, Evelyn Johnson Roberts, years ago. It is recounted here for our readers, and shows distance and obstacles were of little concern to the smitten.

Granddad Batty told of an incident when they were visiting his wife's parents, Daniel Miller and Elizabeth Ann (Lewis) Boone in Douglas County Oregon. The Boone's new home was not completed so the boys had to sleep in the loft or attic and the girls downstairs. Granddad's brother, Fenn, was courting Esther Jane Boone and was very interested in her. This one night, another suitor had come over to see her. Granddad and Uncle Fenn had retired to the loft for the night but Uncle Fenn could not contain his curiosity and Granddad was only one step behind him. Uncle Fenn crawled out on the rafters above the parlor as there was no ceiling yet, it had only been "dado sacked", or thrown together and tacked up. In those days men often slept in their red flannel underwear. Well, here they were quietly climbing out on the rafters to listen. The conversation got a little lower and Uncle Fenn tried to lean over a little more so as not to miss anything. His feet slipped and he found himself hanging with one arm over one rafter and the other arm over another and the rest of him hanging through the makeshift parlor ceiling. My Granddad nearly laughed himself sick when he told this. Aunt Jane screamed and ran out of the room and Uncle Fenn had to drop down into the parlor in his underwear. Granddad never would tell me exactly what his father-in-law had to say to Uncle Fenn. But I know it must have been good or Granddad would have told me.□

Pioneer Coffin-Making

By Doris Ferguson

Shortly after the county began to be settled up, the necessity for setting aside certain plots of land for cemeteries became evident. Myron Ferguson donated the land for the Colton Public Cemetery and years later his son, Archie, wrote of the first burial there. "My father made the coffin for Asberry Courtney and I can remember seeing him make it just as plain as if it was yesterday. He sawed the boards partly in two. Not like one usually saws a board, but laid the board flat down and sawed from one side to the other 'til they were nearly half in two, and then he poured boiling water on them to make the bulge in the coffin, like they used to be, wide at the shoulders and sloped to both ends. When the box was done, he covered it with black cloth. Asberry Courtney was the first person buried in the new cemetery."□

Profile of a Pioneer

By Gerald Druffel

John Jacob Schlee was born in Germany in 1850. At the age of sixteen years he emigrated to the United States, settling first in the state of Michigan.

In 1874, riding horse back, he accompanied several different wagon trains to the Territory of Washington. Here he looked for a place to settle. About one mile south of the present site of Uniontown, he found a forceful spring of water which would provide enough for both domestic and livestock use.

Mr. Schlee homesteaded the area surrounding this water supply. Originally the virgin land appeared best suited to livestock production as it abounded with native vegetation, such as bunchgrass and other wild grasses and flowers. He was a proficient livestock man. He raised cattle and hogs commercially and fine horses which furnished the power for farming the land after the sod was broken. A hydraulic ram was used to pump the spring water to a storage reservoir in later years. The ram was unique in that it required no outside power except the gravity fall of the water. Capacity was low as only about one seventh of the water was pumped, the balance was used to activate the ram. This system was used for nearly fifty years and was replaced only for a lack of volume by an electric-powered pressure pump.

Mr. Schlee built many barns and outbuildings on the homestead to serve his livestock and farming operation. The oldest barn, still in use today, was built with a mortise and tenon type construction, with wooden pegs instead of nails used in framing the beams. The one by twelve rough wood siding was nailed on vertically by using square iron nails.

In 1883, John Jacob Schlee married Caroline Scharnhorst, the daughter of Christ and Fredricka Scharnhorst. The Schlees raised a family of six children: Christian, Dora, Carrie and Clara (twins), Adam and John.

After establishing his own farm operation, Schlee seeing the need of neighbors in the community, helped many others in the area to settle and start farming. During a financial panic in later years, he helped support several of his neighbors, enabling them to weather the storm and remain on their farms. It meant a great deal to him to see the people remain in the community.

In 1896, Mr. Schlee started construction on a large brick home. This was the third house on the farm site, replacing the original homestead shelter and an intermediate frame house used later for a bunk house for the hired hands.

The new home in the Victorian style of the day, boasted many innovations not often found in farm houses of that era. Namely, a full basement, enclosed with mortared rock foundation. Two chimneys running from the basement floor to the roof, which allowed a heating stove in every room of the house. The brick walls, sixteen inches thick, were constructed with an air space which prevented condensation. The gingerbread gable trim and support brackets on the roof line were cut out by a foot-treadle-powered jig saw. The bricks for this house came from a quarry and kiln operation in Uniontown at the time. Many other homes, commercial buildings and churches in our area were built from the brick produced there. The durability of brick along with the stability of the rock foundation have made this house stand square and secure since its origin.

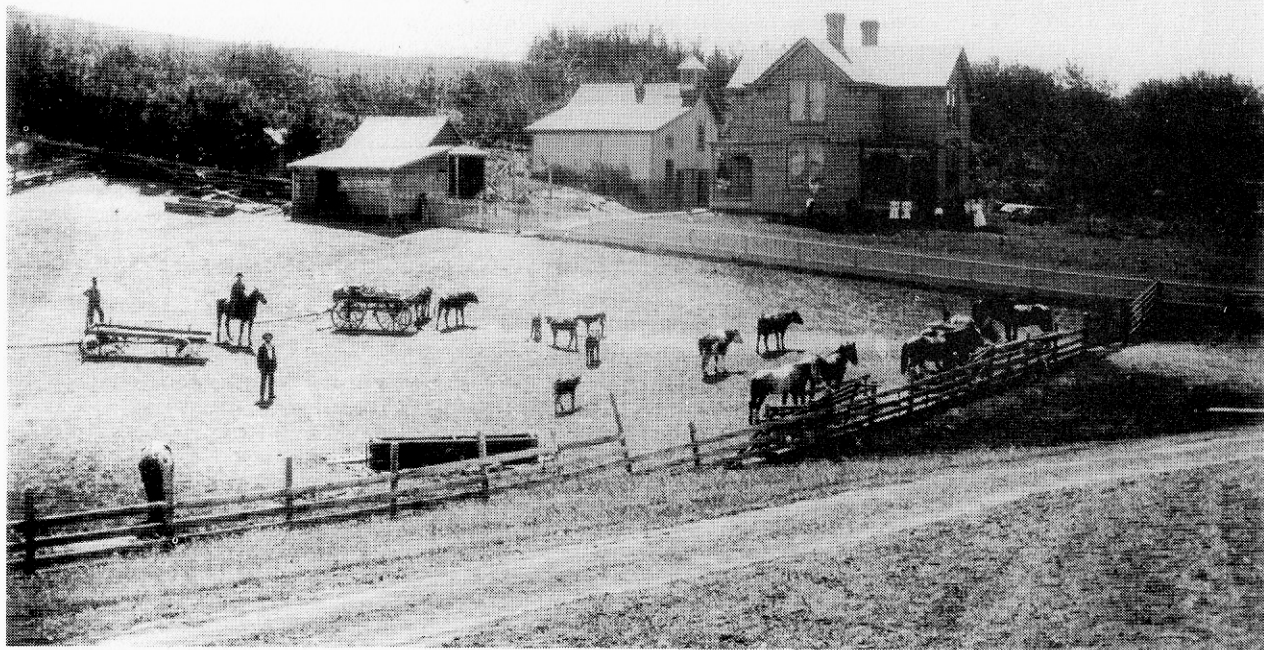
My wife, Carol, is a granddaughter of Mr. Schlee and we live in this house and farm the land. We observed the centennial of this homestead last year, 1976, for it has been in the same family for 100 years. □

FOOTNOTE: Mr. Schlee was a teamster for the government during the Nez Perce Indian War in 1877.



John Jacob Schlee Family Around 1900

Back row l. to r., Christian, John and Adam. Center row, Dora, Carrie and Clara, Front Row, John Jacob and Caroline.



John Jacob Schlee Farmstead 1900

On left: First shed—part of this was the original cabin built on the homestead. In center: This was the second house built, used later as a harness shop and bunkhouse. Lower part is still used as a root cellar. On right: Brick home built in 1896.



Photos courtesy Carol Druffel

John Jacob Schlee Brick Home Built in 1896.

Mexican War Vet Comes to the Palouse

By Roy H. Davis

Jesse H. Lewis was born in Brethitt county, Kentucky on May 3, 1830. The family moved to Missouri in the spring of the year 1840. Mr. Lewis joined American forces during the war with Mexico and later spent a year in government service among the Indians in the territory west of the Missouri river.

At the age of twenty-one he joined an immigrant train headed for the Oregon territory and four months later on September 14, 1851, he arrived at Outside Settlers' Place in Oregon.

The immigrant company settled in Marion county and it was here that young Jesse met Miss Mahala J. Dixon. They were married on January 30, 1853. Nine children were born to them, one dying in infancy. The children were: George W., William M., Margarete Ellen, Alice, Mary, Frances, Alla, Ida and Irvin, not necessarily in that order.



Jesse and Jane (Dixon) Lewis

FOOTNOTE: Mr. Davis received some of the information for this article from Oren Little, a grandson of the Lewis' and additional material was given by Mr. and Mrs. Ira Little of Moscow. Mrs. Little was Ida Lewis.



The children of Jesse and Jane Lewis
l. to r. back row: Ida, Margarete E., Alice, Mary. Front row: Irvin, George, Will

George Lewis, the oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Jesse H. Lewis was born in 1853. When I was a kid he lived on and owned the Martin Druffel place. Two of his children, Mary and Elton, came to our school. There were two younger children, Dwight and Mark. They all live at Midvale, Idaho, now.

William, born in 1859, was a cowboy and lived in Montana. He spent a winter with his folks and I knew him well.

Margarete Ellen was born in 1861. She married Jonathan Johnson and they later moved to Newport, Oregon.

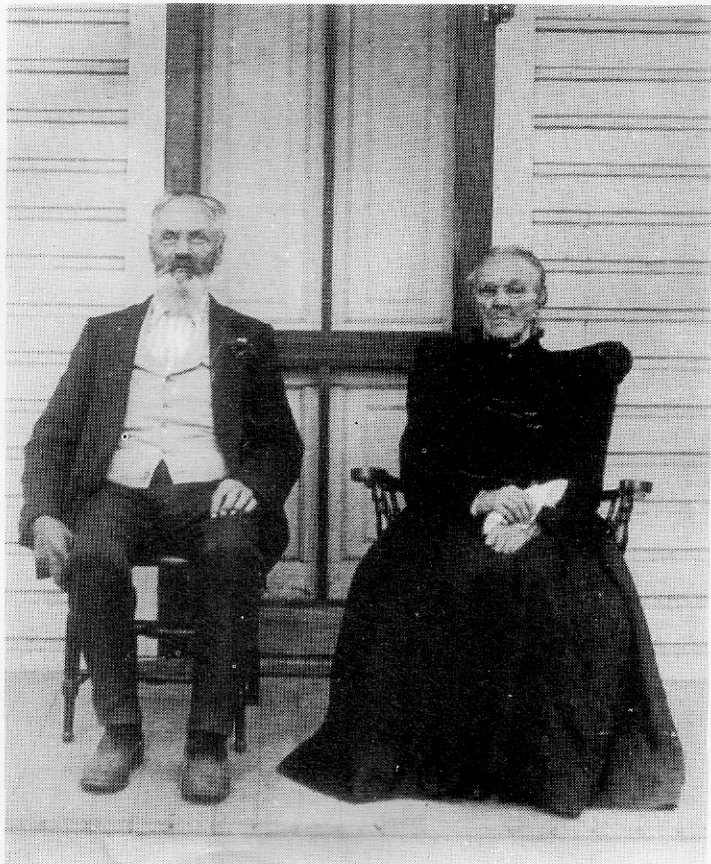


Photo Courtesy Roy H. Davis

Joel and Catherine Dixon

Mrs. Jesse Lewis's folks lived at Tekoa for a time. She also had a brother at Farmington.

Alice was born in 1863. She married a Mr. Harrison. They had two girls and two boys. They lived on the Moscow Mountain. One girl married Davy Schiesser, then later married a Dr. Mudd. Roger Mudd, the newscaster, is their son. One son, Irvin, still lives on the mountain. The other son, Lester, was an attorney at Kellogg, Idaho for many years. Three of the Harrison children, both girls and Lester were at the Johnson picnic a few years ago. Lester was killed in a car accident after that.

Mary, the fifth child of Jesse and Mahala Lewis, was born in 1865. She never married.

Ida was born in 1870. She married Elmer Little in 1896. He came out here in 1890 from Lipton, Iowa but didn't stay. The next time he came out he stayed.

Irvin was born in 1873. He was about four years old when they came to the Union Flat area. He never married.

In 1876, Mr. Lewis sold out in Oregon and moved to a farm near Dayton, Washington. In the fall of 1877 they came to the Union Flat area of Whitman county where they homesteaded. As they got old enough, their children also took up homesteads. At one time the family owned quite a piece of land. Some took timber claims so they could take 320 acres.

Jesse H. Lewis was always a generous man and interested in furthering the growth and development of the county. He contributed heavily to the fund for building the first grist mill in Colton and also to the founding of Washington State College. He was a charter member of Seats Grange. His interest in the growth of the county was shown in the diary he kept for over thirty years which told of all the important events in the county plus daily weather data.

Margarete Ellen married Jonathan Johnson who started the town of Johnson and they owned considerable land around there. He also homesteaded 160 acres out here, and owned the Rolph place of 120 acres.

My father came here in 1888 and broke out some of our original place or 240 acres. The 160 acres homesteaded by Margarete Ellen Lewis Johnson and 80 acres off the land Mr. Johnson had. Dad broke some of it out for Mr. Johnson for \$2.75 per acre with a team of mules and a breaking plow.

In 1891, the Farmer and Trader Bank was organized in Johnson. During the wet years of 1893-94 most of the farmers lost their crops. It rained for weeks on end.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis and their son, George, borrowed on a note to the Johnson bank the sum of \$745.46 at 12% interest. If not paid when due the interest was added to the principal and the interest went to 1½% per month.

Another note for \$3842.97 with interest at 1¼% per month. On this note, if not paid when due, the interest was added to the principal and interest went to 1½% per month. Unable to pay because of the loss of their crops two years in a row, there was a lawsuit and the Lewises lost. With attorney fees at \$100 and disbursements taxed at \$12.00, the bank foreclosed on 627 acres and there was a public auction by the sheriff at Colfax on July 20, 1895. C.A. Leighton bid it in at \$1.52 per acre or \$915.80.

Irvin Lewis told me the freight wagons from all around were freighting to the river. They would noon or stop overnight by the creek in front of their place. He said the flies just swarmed down there because the manure was so deep from the freight wagon teams. He told of freighters that hauled whisky in 50 gallon kegs from the river landing and other freighters would drill up through the wagon bed and into the keg and catch what they could.

He told of a doctor operating on a man on their kitchen table with only kerosene lights to see by. A man that died there was buried east of the house on the fence line and the grave covered with rocks.

I have Mr. Jesse Lewis's garden plow. It is homemade with the share and moldboard in one piece. It has a wooden frog beam and crooked thorn handles. I have watched him with his white mare plow the garden and hill up the potatoes with it many times. I think Mr. Dan Boone made it because he did a lot of blacksmithing for the neighbors around here.

Mr. Lewis was a devout Christian and spent many hours in the last years of his life writing a book of devotional prayers. Mrs. Lewis died in 1917 and Mr. Lewis followed in December of 1920. □