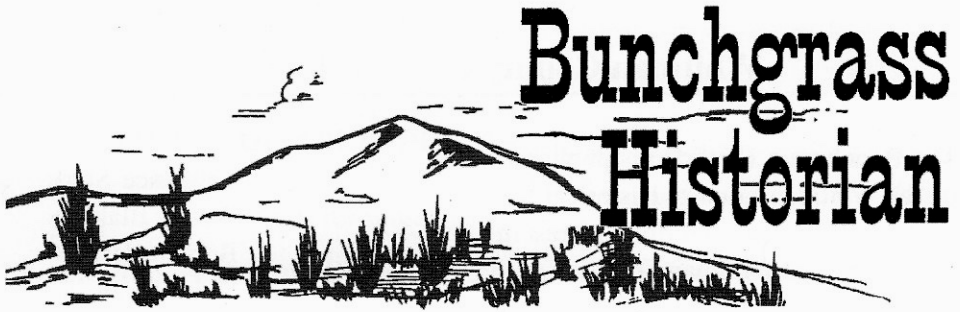


# Bunchgrass Historian



**Whitman County Historical Society  
Colfax, Washington**

Volume 26  
Number 2  
2000



- **Farmington - Past and Present (1955)**
  - **Pioneers of Farmington**
  - **My Life Story - J. J. Wagner**
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# Whitman County Historical Society

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

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*Editorial Ass't:* Wendy Blake  
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*Layout:* Steven Watson  
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## SOCIETY ADDRESSES

*Society Business - Articles for  
Publication - Current and Back  
Issues (\$2.50 per Issue):*

Whitman County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 67  
Colfax, WA 99111

*e-mail:* [epgjr@wsu.edu](mailto:epgjr@wsu.edu)

*Web Address:*

[www.wsu.edu/~sarek/wchs.html](http://www.wsu.edu/~sarek/wchs.html)

## COVER PHOTO

*Farmington railroad station,  
about 1950*

*Photo Courtesy of WSU Libraries (87-039)*



## CONTENTS

<b>Farmington - Past And Present</b> Anonymous, 1955 -----	4
<b>Pioneers of Farmington</b> by Mary Leonard and Gertrude Ladd -----	9
<b>My Life Story</b> by J. J. Wagner -----	15

## AUTHORS

The papers in this issue of the *Bunchgrass Historian* all concern the town and area of Farmington, Washington. One was written in 1955, and the other two appear to be have been written about five years later.

A large body of manuscript writing about Farmington is in existence. Copies of many of these accounts have been deposited at such locations as the Eastern Washington State Historical Society and the Washington State University Libraries. The three accounts presented here are a small part of the total, selected as example for printing. Many other papers are personal accounts and family histories of a similar nature. Many were due the efforts of Farmington storekeeper Charles Blickenderfer who encouraged this writing, did some himself and collected other accounts over a long period.

The late James Leuty, Farmington native and long-time pharmacist at Pullman, long sought a means to publish this material. This issue of the *Bunchgrass Historian* is a sample of what he intended, and which may yet come into being.



# FARMINGTON – PAST AND PRESENT

## c.1955

### Anonymous

Farmington is a small town in Eastern Washington surrounded in the summertime by rolling hills covered with golden grain. On the East lies the foothills of the Bitterroot Mountain Range. North, South and West as far as the eye can see lies the rich farm land of the Palouse country. The area where Farmington stands was once a camping ground for the different Indian tribes living near.

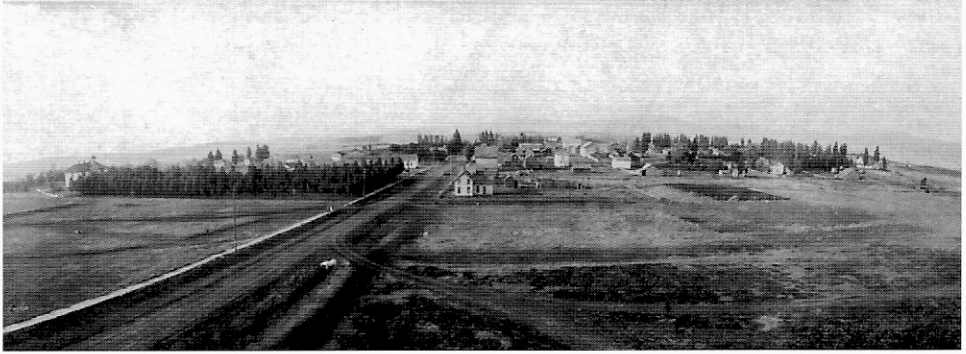
In 1870 the George Briggs and Hiram Youngers, Jr. and Sr., came from Walla Walla to take homesteads in this fertile area. Later that fall George Truax, his wife and daughter along with some others came in. They lived in prospectors dug-outs while log cabins were built. And on Christmas day moved into their new homes. They had planned to return to Walla Walla for a grubstake the first winter; however as the horses were weak from lack of feed and the snow came early, they were not able to make it. The only green vegetables they had the first winter were three sacks of green cabbage obtained from Palouse City. The only medical help that was available was in Colfax, about 30 miles distant.

People began to come to Farmington in greater numbers, as homesteads were available for a few dollars or the planting of a timber culture. Timber was close by for firewood, and water was easily obtainable from the many creeks and springs. Wild deer and pheasant were plentiful.

Stock raising was the first industry but it soon gave way in importance to the raising of grain. The crops were small at first as the only means of thrashing was the flail system and then later they laid the grain in corrals and hired the Indians to run their ponies over it. The grain was then fanned out by the wind, sacked and hauled by wagon to Almota to sell. Cheney later became the chief market.

Another early industry of lesser importance was the making of shakes. There was an abundance of cedar trees near by and the settlers used all the raw materials at their disposal in order to better themselves. The men would carve out the shakes by hand and in the fall haul them to Walla Walla to trade for supplies.

The first school house was built in 1874. All the people joined together to help with the building. As the hills were covered with tall bunch grass many children would get lost going to school. Search parties were often formed to search for lost children. To remedy this situation the farmers got together and plowed furrows from the farms to the school house, the children being instructed to stick to their respec-



*Photo Courtesy of Washington State University Libraries (87-094)*

*Farmington in the distance, about 1900*

tive furrows. Many of Farmington's former citizens got their education by walking the furrow. The school house in those days was the center of many social activities. Dancing, the chief form of entertainment, would be held on Saturday night. Occasionally, a preacher would walk all the way from Colfax to hold church services in the school house on Sunday. The settlers finally got together and bought him a pony to ride.

A stockade was built in 1875 for fear of an Indian uprising. When it was heard in 1877 that the Nez Perce Indians were preparing for an attack all the settlers gathered together in the stockade and spent a miserable night making bullets and expecting an attack at any time. None was made however, and the next day all the settlers went to Colfax for protection. The Coeur d' Alene Indians were friendly and took care of the stock while they were gone. In a few weeks all the settlers returned to their homes. A post office and trading house were later established in the stockade.

George Truax decided to make his homestead into a town in 1878 and had Oliver Walford, a surveyor from Colfax, lay out an eight acre tract. The town was named after Farmington, Minnesota, his home town, and was incorporated in 1888. He later turned over to the town 160 acres, which he had purchased for \$1.75 an acre. In a few years lots were selling for \$200.00 apiece.

Some of the first buildings established in Farmington were a store, blacksmith shop, Methodist Church, livery stable, meat market, hotel, bank and drugstore. The pharmacist, Dr. Fisher, was later to become the first doctor.

Farmington was in the direct route of the stage line between Lewiston and Spokane, and for this reason it early became a trading center for the surrounding area. It became such a large trading center that in 1886 the O.W.R.N. built a railroad into town. Shortly thereafter, the Union Pacific came in establishing a round house and shops here. The town now was in the most prosperous time of its history.

Many new industries came in, a flour mill, brick factory, planing mill, creamery and brewery were among the most important ones. In the late 1880's there were about 1200 people living in Farmington, and its hinterland must have included 1200 more. There were three hotels, a bakery, laundry, several stores and livery stables. Three passenger trains a day were now serving Farmington. Land that George Truax formerly had paid \$1.75 an acre for was now selling for \$500.00 a lot, and some lots sold for as high as \$1800.00.

The water supply was furnished by a 225 foot artesian well drilled in 1890. At the time of drilling it would raise water 6 to 8 above the ground. In 1910 a wooden water tank was built and wooden water mains laid. In 1930 a new steel water tank was constructed; however the original well and water mains are still in use.

Some people on the surrounding farms planted a few apple trees. When it was found that apples would readily grow in this area, new orchards sprang up. The business became so large that two apple packing plants located here. However, in the early 1900's a freeze killed most of the trees, and the land was gradually turned back to wheat production.

In 1887 the railroads were extended on to Spokane and a few years later the round house and shops were moved to Tekoa. For this reason and also due to the new towns springing up in the surrounding area, Farmington began to decline. Its hinterland no longer reached out for 30 miles, but was now only a few miles. The population of 1200 in 1890 had dropped to 500 in 1900. This was a blow that Farmington never recovered from. The population has declined slowly, but steadily, as it at the present time numbers about 200. The many industries that were once located here gradually died out, leaving farming as the sole support of the city.

The Farmer's Warehouse and Educational Co-op were established in 1907. Farmers in those days would sack their grain and haul it to town by team and wagon. The warehouses were used to store all the grain. However, in the late 1930's it was found that it was easier and more economical to haul the grain in bulk. Consequently, a new grain elevator was built in 1941. This method is now used entirely in handling the grain, although many of the former warehouses still exist.

Formerly, there had been a family living on every 160 acres of ground; now however, the average farm size in Whitman County is 670 acres. Technological innovations in the farming industry have enabled the farmer to increase the amount of land that he can farm. This decrease in the farm population has been felt by Farmington. Many of the stores and shops that were supported by farmers in the area have been forced to close down.

In 1946 Louis Korth established a lumber mill in Farmington. Everyone was glad to see this new industry come to town for it would provide a new source of income. The mill was unable to operate all year round however, as they could not

get logs in the winter and were unable to accumulate enough logs in the summertime to run all winter. This new venture did not prove too successful and was forced to close down in 1955. Various other businesses have operated here since 1900 without leaving too much of an impression with the passage of time.

One might ask, what is left in Farmington after the good start it once had? The only businesses that have survived the times are, a general store, a remnant of the Farmer's Warehouse and Educational Co-op established in 1907, a butcher shop, the Farmington State Bank established in 1929 after the preceding one had failed, a post office, a garage established by the Whitman Farmer's Co-op in 1945, grain elevators and beer tavern. The bank and the grain elevators are very stable businesses and are likely to continue here for some time, however the store, beer tavern, and garage have at times had a rather unstable existence, and have changed hands several times.

The problems that face Farmington are somewhat similar to the other small towns in the area. There has been some pressure to move the school to a larger town and it seems likely that this will happen very soon. Some of the students now drive to larger towns to attend school. Another problem facing Farmington is that many of its people drive to larger towns to do their shopping. The roads also are a major problem. When they lost the last passenger train about 1940, their only means of transportation was the automobile. Every spring when the frost leaves the ground, the roads break up, making it almost impossible to enter or leave town. Sometimes the people are practically isolated for about a month. When the roads are normal they are usually full of chuck holes. However, if they did have better roads they probably would lose more business to the larger towns. This problem may be a blessing in disguise. The character of Farmington is a slow moving, friendly, farm town. If you are driving around you have to be careful not to run into any kids, dogs, cats, chickens, cows or tractors. Everyone in town knows everyone else's business. When you ring central to have her get you your party, she is likely to tell you that Mrs. Tuft just went to garden club and that you could reach her at the Oakes. If you would drive through the place on Saturday night, you wouldn't see a soul on the street after 9 o'clock. But the people like it this way and wouldn't think of moving some place else. However, the young people after graduating from high school have to seek employment elsewhere if their dad doesn't have a place for them to farm.

Farmington has one outstanding scenic attraction nearby. The Sky Line Drive which was recently completed by Virgil T. McCrosky is located about 10 miles to the east in Idaho, and runs for about 15 miles on the top of the nearby mountains. Mr. McCrosky has devoted the last few years to conserve the natural beauty of the mountain forests of this area. He has purchased many thousands of acres of timber in an attempt to save them from the woodman's saw. Also, he has constructed roads at his own expense to make this area easily accessible for people

who would like to see the scenic beauty of the forest. The final result being one of the most beautiful drives in this part of the state. At one point on the Sky Line Drive, you can see four states, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Oregon. Mr. McCrosky has attempted to give this to the State of Idaho for a State Park. He also purchased a butte west of Farmington and gave it to the State of Washington. It is known as the Steptoe Butte State Park.

Farmington has a wide assortment of people of different nationalities. German and Russian are probably the most predominate. A few of its people are from the old country, but like most small towns in this day and age their numbers are small. Out of the three churches in town, Seven Day Adventists, German Lutheran and Methodist, the Seven Day Adventists have the largest membership largely comprised of German and Russian stock, the Methodist next in number comprised of many different nationalities, and the German Lutheran third, also with German and Russian stock.

Most of the residential dwellings of Farmington are old one and two-story wood frame houses. There are some new ranch style houses on the surrounding farms, however, no new houses have been built in Farmington for some time.





# PIONEERS OF FARMINGTON

**As told by Mrs. Mary Leonard**

**Written by Gertrude M. Ladd**

In the days of the covered wagon, when the Northwest was being opened for homesteaders, when the rolling prairies were covered with bunch grass, there came a three-months old baby, with her father, mother, uncle, a brother and a sister. The three-months old baby, now Mrs. Mary Davis Leonard, living in a comfortable modern little home in Spokane at N. 2944 Lacey, tells of the settling and development of the town of Farmington and the rich grain land in the surrounding area.

Mr. Adin Davis and brother Harlow Davis, Jane Holland Davis, Wife of Adin, a four-year old son, Horace, a two-year old daughter, Sarah and three-months old Mary, left Council Bluffs, Iowa, in June, 1871. Their wagon was loaded to capacity with supplies, clothing, a tent and probably some seeds, but no furniture. Their two horses, a grey and a bay were not large and lived for years afterward.

There was no written account kept of that long, hard trip out west, but Mrs. Leonard recalls some of the stories her folks told, although there had never been any particular mention made of them. She regrets now that she did not ask to hear more of their experiences. She does remember their saying the family had no trouble with Indians on the way, but the trails were very poor and dangerous. In places where they were particularly bad Mr. Davis wanted his wife to take the children out and walk, but she said no, if anything happened to him she did not want to be left alone on the trail with the children.

Traveling all during the heat of the summer, they reached Walla Walla in the fall. Mr. Davis was fortunate to find work and he stayed there that winter, but with the coming of spring they again packed up and set out to find a homestead. He needed a place where there was water and trees not too far away for his buildings. He located a strip of land on the boundary of Idaho and Washington territories, having 123 acres, where there was a spring and the hills, covered with trees, were not far in the distance. This land was rolling prairie covered with tall bunch grass and where the prairie chickens were numerous. Mrs. Leonard recalls that the name of Rutherford B. Hayes appeared on the abstract.

Mr. Davis planted an orchard of mainly apple and cherry trees. There were no worms on the apples for a long time as well as no garden pests to contend with



*Photo Courtesy of Washington State University Libraries (88-127)*

### *Crowd at Farmington depot, about 1910*

until the northwest became more settled. The land raised fine wheat and oats and corn. They were able to raise a good garden without irrigation. Cultivation brought up the moisture. Horace spent much of his time shooting prairie chickens. When his father built a fence around the orchard the fence would be black with birds. They were good eating too so it was profitable as well as good sport.

The Davis family was one of the first to settle around that area, another family by the name of Price had come about the same time. Others began to come in about 1874. About six years after the Davises came two brothers, Walt and Fred Hayfield arrived. They married two sisters by the name of Harris. A son was born to Mr. and Mrs. Walt Hayfield by the name of Claude Hayfield, who is now a banker in Farmington. George Truax, another early settler, started the townsite and sold lots. When the Northern Pacific Railroad came into Farmington about 1884 he was instrumental in getting the Roundhouse located there which made the town boom. It gave men work and the town grew until there was a population of around 1,000. After about ten or eleven years the roundhouse was moved to Tekoa and Farmington felt the loss of it.

When Mr. Davis first settled on his homestead and the railroad had not yet come in he had to go to Walla Walla for supplies. Once a year at harvest time, he left his family at home and went for clothing, shoes, flour, sugar, seeds, etc. The family had one pair of shoes a year and if they wore out before the next year they would have to go barefoot. The first trip he brought home hogs, cattle and chickens. He worked cradling grain to help pay for the supplies. Later on he took his grain to a mill

about where Palouse is now located, to have ground into flour, bran and shorts, etc. Mrs. Davis took the whole kernel of wheat and boiled it with lye as she did the corn to make hominy. She made her soap and tallow candles. She also acted as midwife when the babies were born as there was no doctor nearer than Walla Walla at first. There was not much sickness in that small settlement which was fortunate. The winters were long and the snow and drifts would cover the fences so the children could walk over them on the way to school. A bachelor neighbor, Henry McNeil, moved in about three miles from the Davises. He made rails and built fences, and hired Mr. Davis to help him.

With the new settlers coming in, the saloons came too. With the saloons came the drinking and excitement. In about 1885 a family by the name of Masterson moved in up near the mountains. Their boys were pretty wild—they would go to town, get drunk and do some shooting around town and also some horse stealing. Finally when the people had enough of that they formed a Vigilante committee and made it hot for them.

One day in the year 1876 when Mr. Davis was out working in the field, old Chief Seltice came to him to warn him the Indians were coming and had already killed one man and for the others to “get.” Mr. Richey, a bachelor, was the one spoken of whose head had been split open. Mr. Davis got his family together and within an hour was fortified up at a place built for that purpose in town. Other families had moved in as well. They took their own supplies and slept on straw ticks, cooked on a community stove and ate at one large table. One family had five children sleeping in one bed. When brother Horace expressed surprise, one of the other children said, “Yes, supposen there were ten?” Life at the fort was pretty strenuous for the mothers. Horace got into scrapes with the other boys and after a week Mrs. Davis said Indians or no Indians she was going home. They found the Indians had gone through their house and taken some things but they had gone on and there was no further trouble.

In 1882 or 1883 the first mail came to the town. Mr. Mooney carried the mail by horseback from Cheney. The Post Office was located at the fort and a Mr. Brewer, a lame man from Utah was the first Postmaster. He had a wife and a child or two. Also in 1882 the Masonic Order laid out a cemetery on a hill overlooking the town. Trees were set out and lots were sold. Very few were buried there at that time. The oldest grave is that of Mr. Richey who had been killed by Indians.

When the brother Horace was 12 there was another Indian scare. The Davises had gone to Colfax to a camp-meeting. Horace had been left home to care for the cattle, but stayed with a neighbor, Mr. McCabe, who lived about a mile away. Colfax was a very small town with maybe a dozen houses. There was no fort but when they saw some Snake Indians going by the people gathered together in a lower area which would have caught them in a pocket if the Indians had attacked

them. One evening about 4 o'clock Horace and Mr. McCabe came riding in on horseback, hot and all covered with dust. They had heard the warning and struck out for Colfax.

While at the camp-meeting diphtheria broke out. The children seemed to be most susceptible. Most everyone taking it died. They were buried at the cemetery at Colfax. Mrs. Leonard remembers going into a room with three beds and three very sick people. She had wandered in, stayed awhile and went out again without anyone noticing her. Luckily she did not contract the disease nor did any of her family. There was a family by the name of Cummins who also escaped the disease.

In about 1876, when Spokane Falls was just a little place Mr. Davis took a load of wheat there to sell. He went home with the report that there was nothing but Indians and the land was covered with rocks and he wouldn't have it if it were given to him.

The Methodists were the first to organize a church in 1880, but it was not long after that the Congregationalists and Adventists built churches. At first there was no Sunday School but just a regular meeting in the morning and one in the evening.

Mrs. Leonard attended a little log school just across the border in Idaho Territory as their land lay on that side. The first teacher was a lame man who got around on crutches. The second teacher was a young married woman, Minnie Allen, about 24 years old. When this school closed down all the children went to the two room frame school house in Farmington. Mr. Kennedy was the first teacher and taught all eight grades. Later Mr. and Mrs. Pussey taught the 12 grades. At the time Mr. and Mrs. Pussey taught, Farmington was a busy little town and Mr. Pussey edited a little paper.

The social life centered around the school, the Masons, the Temperance Union and the dances. The Eastern Star was organized later. A Mr. Morrison and his three daughters, Minnie, Ida and Ella, came over from the little town of Seltice, which is about seven miles from Farmington on the way to Tekoa. Fiddler Davis played for the dances. He was no relative of Mrs. Leonard, however. He lived at the edge of the timber. They would hold Christmas entertainments in the school house and in the churches with fir trees lighted up by tallow candles as was done for years afterward in many places. The buildings would be crowded and the door likely as not would open in instead of out. Mrs. Leonard remembers one time the paper chain used for trimming on the tree caught fire from one of the candles and a man standing near just reached up and rubbed out the burning paper.

The town consisted of a blacksmith shop, two or three general stores, a jewelry store, hotel, and two or three saloons. Mr. Gallon had a store, who later moved to Spokane. Mr. Cooper and his two sons, Jake and Isaac, had one of the general stores and Mr. Hayfield also had a general store where he also sold under-

taking supplies. The women of the town took care of the sick and the dead. The women made their own dresses as there were no ready made ones, but they could get yard goods. Later they could get housedresses. The jewelry store was run by Mr. Paddock, two of his daughters lived at Farmington for years, but both live in Spokane now. Maude Paddock married a man by the name of Frederick.

Mrs. Leonard's husband had come out west when he was 21, with an older brother, in 1892. His sister had come out several years previously. He bought a farm of over 200 acres. Mr. Leonard's sister was the wife of Dr. Gramm, who was one of the doctors in the town. There were three other doctors Dr. McCloud, Dr. Benson and Dr. Carpen.

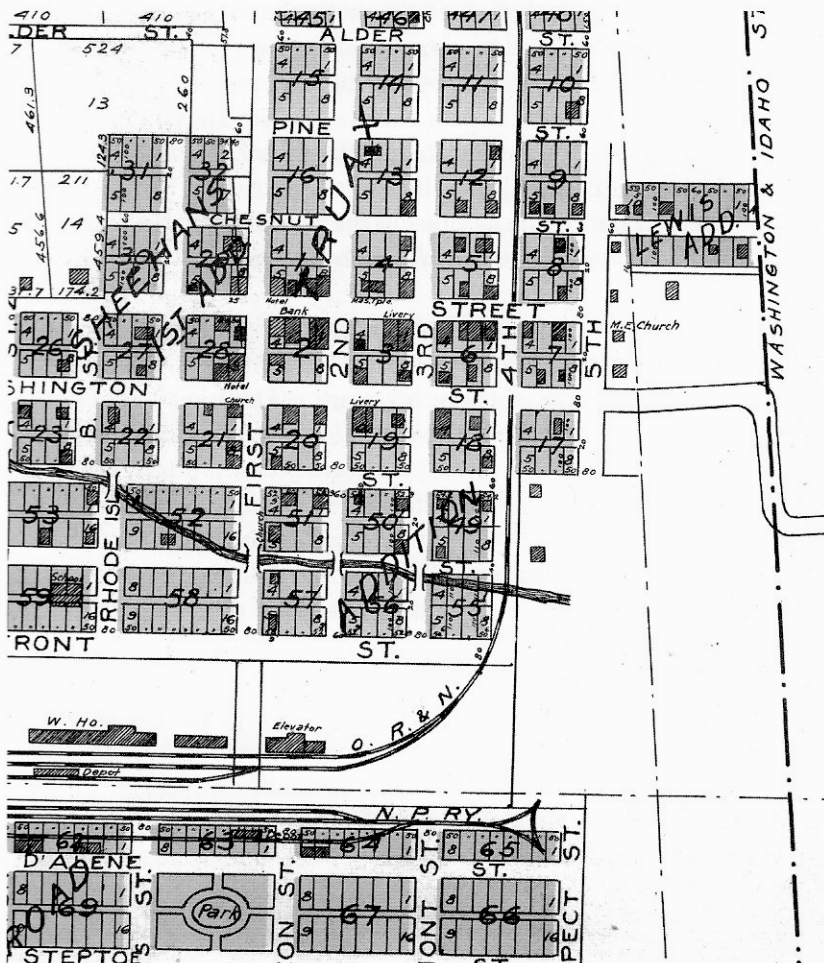
The trees set out by the Masons in the cemetery in 1882, are now lovely large trees. There are many graves there, each one marking some part of the history of that area. There is the grave of fourteen year old Sarah Davis who died in 1883 when the Scarlet Fever was taking its toll. To get a doctor the father rode horseback to Colfax and the doctor drove back in his buggy which meant the loss of valuable time. Another grave is that of Mr. Harlow Davis who died in 1881 at the age of 46 years. He had been doing some building in Spokane and was trying to finish the job in the rain. He took cold which quickly developed into pneumonia. He sent for his brother Adin, who was serving on the jury at Colfax on a murder case at that time, so the message was not given to him until the case was finished. By the time he arrived the brother had passed away.

Near the entrance of the cemetery is another grave. On the tombstone is the name of Matilda J. Sager, who as a little girl was one of the survivors of the Whitman Massacre, on November 29, 1847. She had come to Farmington with her second husband, Mr. Matthew Faultz and for years they ran the hotel there. This hotel was remodeled later on but it burned down and as there was no insurance it was a total loss to her. Mr. Faultz died in 1883, a daughter Irene, age 15 died in 1885. Mrs. Faultz later married a Mr. Delaney but did not live with him very long. Matilda had three daughters by the first husband and two daughters and a son by the second marriage. Matilda lived to be an old lady and died in 1928 at the age of 89 years. She was buried with her second husband Mr. Faultz and her daughter Irene, but the name on the tombstone is that of Matilda J. Sager.

Mr. and Mrs. Adin Davis went to live with their daughter Mrs. Leonard in Spokane in about 1917. Jane Davis died in 1918 at the age of 71 years. The son Horace also passed away in 1918 in Colfax, at the age of 51 years. He had a heart attack. Mr. Adin Davis lived to be 93 years old and died in 1923 at the home of his daughter in Spokane.

Mrs. Leonard's son Albert C. Leonard is now farming the old homestead and other places making about two sections he is handling. Farmington today has gone the way of many other small towns and community centers. Progress has

been the cause of many changes and the farmers with their modern homes and fine automobiles go to the larger cities to trade and for entertainment. People today would not want to give up their modern conveniences, but no doubt many of the old timers miss that old community spirit.



Central portion of map of city plat, 1910



# MY LIFE HISTORY

## J. J. Wagner

I shall try to write as much as I remember about happenings through my past years, and a few facts about my Father's place of birth in Russia. Uncle Conrad and Phillip Wagner told me some history which I will bring in. April 12<sup>th</sup> will be my seventy-eighth birthday, and I am well, except feeble knees——Isa.35:3

My Father, Jacob Wagner, was born in Russia on March 23, 1859, 75 miles south of Saratov and north of the Caspian Sea. At times they lived on one or other side of the Volga River. My Mother, Christina Ortner was born in Russia May 8, 1864. Father came to America to Kansas in 1875, and Mother in 1881. They were married in July 8, 1883.

Mother's sister Louise was older and the two were married at the same time; Louise with Karl Schneider. The girls went in one wagon and the two grooms in another one. But after the wedding they all went home in one wagon. The Ortner and Wagners were neighbors in Kansas. I remember hearing my Father tell a story to a man in Washington when I was about 7 years old. Here it is: Just before his marriage, he rode a horse out to the field to cultivate. He jumped from the horse to hook it to the cultivator and had forgotten to put a harness on the horse! Some boy, much like we would have been!!

Father wanted to homestead a place in Washington. So in 1888 when I was 4 years old they went by train to Walla Walla. I had a case of Diphtheria at the time, and still remember when I was choking and gasping for air. A man brought some live coal and honey from the dining car. The coal was in a basin in the aisle, and the honey over it made a dense fog. Into this they held me head down. The fever broke and I lived. A close call.

In Walla Walla, Father had a team and wagon and hauled wheat in sacks during harvest time. Plowed gardens. Mother did washings for people. Our small white house was located on the north side of Main Street near the end of town toward the present Union Station in 1889 east of the railroad. Streetcars were drawn by one horse in front of the car, trotting along in the middle of the track.

Then came the day when they arranged for a scouting trip to look for a homestead. In the party were four families with their covered wagons, Uncle John, the Wagners, Schlotthaus, and Abels, and my Father. There must have been 15 to 20 children with their parents. David Schlotthaus was one of the older ones. One time I nearly choked on one of these old-fashioned dumplings when we were camp-

ing. Must have been very hungry—about 5 ½ years old. Another close call! They were traveling by Garfield and around there. One time Father came from town to our camp. I crawled into the back of the wagon while he was unhitching. He did not have all the tugs unhitched, the team was scared and ran away. Uncle John followed, I reached out, and he grabbed me from the runaway team. Another scare! Seems to me now I was a nosy kid!!

A spring was lost from the wagon seat. Then all the children formed a long line and found it in the grass. You may say, Did they have money? They finally camped one mile west of Farmington by the Pine Creek when the money was about all gone. Now what?!! The men went to town, and there was a Mr. Belshaw, the father-in-law of Walter Shore. This man was an implement dealer, and fitted the men out with plows, and had them break up prairie on his lands. In this way they made enough to get back to Walla Walla again, and no homesteads either. Father and mother worked on again and saved to be able to go back to Kansas.

I had a little brother just younger than David. He passed away and was buried in Walla Walla. His grave was poorly marked and is lost to us by now. Adam's father George died of typhoid fever about that time and Aunt Kate left for Kansas. She was later married to Uncle Conrad, father of all the other boys. I still remember seeing Adam's father breathing his last at Walla Walla.



*Photo Courtesy of Washington State University Libraries (88-0135A)*

*Farmington School, about 1910*



In the summer of 1890 we left Walla Walla for Kansas, and came to Grandfather's home right at dinner time. I was six years old and hungry! Grandma Wagner had many good things to eat, also good milk. By this time you can see that the little boys were always hungry. Uncle Conrad told me when Grandpa Wagner (his father) bought a fine black team and a spring wagon, the people called him the "rich Wagner". There never was a rich Wagner! Grandpa Wagner lost all he had, about 65 years old, and came to Farmington to stay with his children.

In 1890 was my father's first trip away and back to Kansas. He tried to farm again in Kansas, but became discouraged and went back to Washington State January 1, 1891. Uncle John had been back to Kansas and was now also in Washington again. We stayed with Uncle John from January until they had a two-room house built on an 80-acre tract of land father bought for \$1600 one mile west of Farmington. The house was built of 1x12 boards and 1x6 grooved floor, and later built on a low lean-to kitchen. This is the only home my parents ever owned. A quart tin on the table held spoons, another forks—no phone, no radio, no water piped into the house, no bathroom—just a tub in a corner to bathe in!!

In 1893 there was no fall grain, just all spring crops sowed late, and harvested late with what few headers there were. The fall rains came early, and many people lost their crop even in sack piles—too wet to get into the field. In our front room we had wheat poured all over the floor to dry it out.

July 28, 1891: My father, his brother John, Schlotthaur and Link had a new hodge header in company. I saw them unload it from a flatcar. The four borrowed some money from the bank, 12% interest, \$116.25. That same year they made payments: Oct. 5—\$11.95, Oct. 19—\$71.48, Oct. 19—\$9.00, Oct. 19—\$17.95, paying the sum of \$110.38. Claude Hayfield gave me the old note not all paid out in 1912. I have it in my Scrapbook.

In 1894 money was hard to get. Dad tried to borrow some and pay his 80 acres. I went with him to Palouse to a bank. I thought the man would give us some money, but no. I remember yet how I looked forward to getting money, and I wonder how my father felt! He was overcome with heart dropsy and lost all he had. Some of his debts were cancelled and forgiven, like Mr. Belshaw and Carl Bennett's Dad. This same land is now worth about \$22,000. This story I now tell always puts a lump in my throat. Father was honest, a hard working man, in size like my brother Dave.

Father wanted to pay some of his debts, so he promised to harrow a big acreage of summer-fallow for the man he owed. He took me along—about 9 or 10 years old. He used the larger harrow and I a smaller one. It was dry and cloudy, both of us walking behind. Very soon my big toes were bleeding—no shoes for me. I called to him. When he came, he tore his red handkerchief in two, wrapped each big toe carefully, and I say the tears dropping from his face. He was quiet. We harrowed on, and what a prayer he said when we went to sleep in an old shack in

the hills 15 miles away from home. I know the Lord heard and answered his prayer. That night there came a nice rain and how nice it harrowed next day. "A treat for my feet"

Many times I went with him to bring logs home for fuel. He hauled lumber from the sawmills in the mountains for that long warehouse on the N.P. track. Theodore's land then was all prairie and we used to drive our cows there daily. Elder Haffner was our preacher then. He had children's meetings with us all, the Link and we in our homes. There were no Congress meetings in those days.

On October 12, 1895, Father passed away in Haffner's home at College Place. The last morning of his life he took each of us three oldest boys by the hand, told us to be good, and mind mother. I have never forgotten this. Mother was left with 5 of us, Eddie the youngest, only 9 months old. Poor mother! No home, a team and wagon left and a few belongings. We did not have a chance to mind mother very long. She grieved so, and took typhoid fever and passed away February 6, 1896, only 3 months and 20 days later.

In 1896 we five children stayed with the Wagner Grandparents near Milton, Oregon. In March we moved to Farmington into the old Dean Johnson house by the big barn 3 miles west of Farmington. Uncle Phillip sowed some spring wheat, and Aunt Eva worked out for \$3.50 a week. We boys went to Pine Creek school that winter. My school had been so scattered that the teacher tried me out for two days, and put me in the third reader. I still have this reader, now 65 years old. We moved to the Mantz house near where Katie Repp lives. One day there we received a telegram from Elder Haffner from College Place that he was going to Oklahoma and would take some of us children along to mother's side of the house, the Ortners family.

We were eating dinner, Grandpa said "Who will go?" I said, "I want to stay here." Brother Carl and Dave were glad to go. Now there was George the crippled one, and nice little Eddie. The Grandparents took pity on the crippled brother and sent little Eddie along, 2 or 2 1/2 yrs. old. It was more than Grandma could take to see the little healthy Eddie go away, and she cried aloud for sorrow. Uncle Phillip went along as far as Garfield, and walked home from there by night. From there the three went alone to Walla Walla where the Haffners took care of them. He took them on to Oklahoma where they found homes with the Ortners. Thanks to the Haffners for all they helped us.

My parents' grave is located near the northwest corner of the Cemetery marked by a flat reddish-brown stone.

The summer in the Mantz house, Uncle Phillip sowed some spring wheat south of the house on that hill. After it was harvested in a sack pile, a wheat buyer offered a price of 35 cents a bushel and said it was only for chicken feed. We were all in need of many things. My suit had been given to one of my brothers that left for Oklahoma. The Grandparents were Godly people and felt their great need, after

losing all in Kansas. So the two make it a matter of prayer to ask for help. Right after the prayer came a knock on the door, and there stood another wheat buyer from Belmont. He gave them a price of 75 cents a bushel. Uncle Conrad and Phillip were away at the Dr. Leuty place just west of Theodore's place. I was sent trotting over the hills to tell them this. They wrote a note for me to take to Belmont to the buyer, Adams by name. Men at the warehouses saw the note in my hand and wanted to see it. Now the cat was out of the bag. They also wanted that wheat. I found Adams and gave him the note. The other men raised the price, Adams went up some more and he got the wheat.

Uncle Phillip went to Oakesdale to get the money—no checks in those days—all \$20 gold pieces. It was over \$500 in all. First they gave \$200 tithes they had not been able to pay in Kansas. Then another \$200 paid a debt where the brethren in Kansas had borrowed money. There were about 18 of them, and Grandpa only one of them, yet he paid it all. He expected some of the others to repay their debt to him, but never a dollar came. I saw the note Grandpa received, and the man was so thankful to him for being an honest man. It was a plain ruled tablet sheet with a red star pasted in the upper right hand corner, and all the names on it. There was not much of the money left for us all. We had no reed organ, no radio, no phone, no water piped in the house—just a water bucket. We were all satisfied as it was.

The Grandparents had a habit to sing together later in the evenings, songs they knew from Russia while they were Lutherans. Then there was evening worship. In my mind I can still hear them sing, and I have recorded about four of those songs now on reels. Compare these times with our present life!

In 1898 something great happened. All my life I idolized even a picture of a reed organ, and now a man by the name of Price (an early church member of Farmington) moved to the Nez Perce country in Idaho. He left their Whitney & Homes reed organ with us, and what a satisfaction that was to me! I remember one time I practiced 4 hours straight. An organ instruction book was with it and I took one key after another and practiced it thoroughly until I could play as well in 5 sharps as 3 flats. Soon I played hymns. My public school years were from 1896 to March 1901 at the Pine Creek school near Dean Johnsons..

We went to Campmeeting in 1898 by wagon and two horses, taking 2 and three-quarters days from Farmington to Walla Walla. Saw Dr. Kellogg there. We camped the first night in Colfax down by the Palouse River bed. Another party with us and their wagon had lost their \$10 there, and found it again. Think of going to Camp meeting now and staying clear through with only \$10! We crossed the Snake River at Central Ferry as there was no bridge as yet. Coming home we went up the south side to Penawawa Ferry to cross. We used to pick up so many nice pebbles up the south side of the Snake River, and men panned for gold there too. We came up past the present John Link home, and Schlotthauers [var.] lived opposite from them then. We had breakfast with them, a large skillet of fried potatoes and coffee in a

can almost as large as a bucket. They were a large family. I was fourteen years old now, and hungry!

My brother Eddie passed away in Oklahoma, 5 years old in December 1900.

In January 1901 we received a letter from the Ortner in Oklahoma. There was land to be homesteaded in the Shattuck country—to come at once if interested. So Uncle Phillip and Conrad and Aunt Eva went at once. They filed on lands, also Grandpa. The crippled brother George, the Grandparents and I with Aunt Kate and all her boys left after March 11, 1901 for Lehigh, Kansas. There the Grandparents stayed for some time, Aunt Kate went to her parents in Oklahoma and I was sent on to Shattuck to help the Uncles. I broke sod while the Uncles built two small houses. The place at Lehigh is where Wasemillers lived, a daughter of Grandpa's. There I met Sam Wasemiller, a boy of my age. In '61 he visited me after 60 years and a great visit we had!

In my vest lining they had sewed \$20 gold pieces for safe keeping. These I turned over to the Uncles. None of us have ever seen any more gold pieces since then. We finally had homesteads after 12 years. When the houses were ready to live in we went to East Cooper to get the others home to the Shattuck country.

In June 1901 came a complete change for my life. With the Ortner Uncles in East Cooper, I was in harvest now trying to earn money for my own future life. I was seventeen now, and it was goodbye now to the home with Grandpa Wagner. He still had the crippled brother George, who died that summer, and Grandpa buried him near his home alone. We were all away in harvest. For all they did for us, their reward is sure. Harvest lasted six days, heading grain at \$1.50 a day, \$9.00 for harvest. Then there were 2 or 3 days bundle stacking.

I was on my own now, with no home. Uncle George Ortner gave me 4 months work hauling building rocks. He was not able to pay when I was done, \$17 a month. From the estate of Grandpa Ortner from his share I later received my pay, eight years later. Near the end of 1901 Uncle Abe Ortner hired me by the year for \$175, and gave me January & February 1902 free to attend German church school in East Cooper church. At the end of February I took my school books, looked back at the others and said goodbye to all and any more school for the rest of my life.

Uncle Abe and Aunt Ortner were kind to me and he and I became good companions and worked together. He taught singing and bought a reed organ for his home. I played for him in all his singing schools and also for the church. To me it was home and ever after when I was out of a job, I felt free to come home to him and he always had plenty to do with all his cattle. I was glad to have a place to stay. I took no more pay from him ever after, except harvesting.

About at the age of 19 or 20 years, around 1903 to 1904, my good cousin Jake Ortner took me in training in carpenter work. He was a contractor. I received \$1.50 per day at hard work, and later on, \$2.00 per day. Soon I was able to build a

barn, then houses. All through the rest of my life this was a great help to me and others. I still do painting, and feel deeply indebted to Jake Ortner. Between building, I took any work I could get. Once for two months I got \$13 a month, or 50 cents a day doing hard farm work along with milking 10 cows twice a day.

One day in March 1906, Uncle Abe and I came home from the timber, and he said, "I think I have a plan for you". The right to a 160 acre tract of school-land was for sale 2 miles from the church. We went to see it and we arranged to buy it for \$1800. There was a crop of wheat on half of it. How could I buy land? Well, Uncle Abe signed every note payment with me without asking, just like a father would have done. So a home began to dawn again for me after 11 years after my parents died.

Now I had to have a cook and I don't remember everything I said to my Sweetheart. This was close to her home too, and the wedding was to be July 17, 1906. From March until June I went away to Lincoln, Nebraska to earn more money building houses. I did framing more than finish work. Altogether I had about \$700 earned from 1901 to 1906, but that money went fast. Had plenty of debts and crop failures, but did some building till the fall of 1909 we had sold this land and we had \$1635. This was a profit of \$300 a year—thanks to Uncle Abe and Aunt for their help. Our beginnings on this farm were very discouraging. Green bugs, hail, rain too much, sold wheat for 40 cents to 60 cents a bushel. One year from 90 acres of wheat we harvested only 150 bushel.

About this time the California fever ran high with many. Brother Dave and I decided rather to try our luck in Washington where we had been before when we were young. We with our wives left September 17, 1909 for Farmington. Our first Sabbath in church was not so happy. We were asked to help with the 11 o'clock hour, but neither one of us had been active that way before in church. The inside of the church was drop siding, and the benches were painted with a dark red paint. A.T. Jones at an early date had helped to build this church. Uncle Conrad told me that the lumber for the church was hauled from Sprague.

A soon as the singing started (no organ) the tears flowed. It was all so different. David said after the meeting, "Let's go home and bawl!" We lived in an old-time shack at the edge of town, but later bought 100 acres together at \$2.25 an acre. We each built a small house on 50 acres, but it was not home to us. The wives had never been out of seeing distance from their home in Oklahoma. All beginnings are hard, and so was this one. Then from 1910 onward, children were born. Slowly it became more like home, especially with the children too. Each one was dear to us. Uncle Dave's [family] went back to Oklahoma on a visit after 5 years. In 1917 they sold out and moved back. In 1915 Leona, Paul, and their mother went on a visit to Oklahoma. I was busy building the McCann home at the Evergreen district, but went at Christmas time when my work was done. Leona was 4 years old, and Paul

was 2. We went again by train in 1920 when Palmer was a little fellow. Our ticket was \$512.00 [sic].

It is interesting to know how it came to be that lentils found their way as a crop in the open market. It began in 1916 when we had planted the small kind in our young orchard, between two rows of apple trees about 60 feet long. They were planted in rows 18 inches apart, but filled in so no rows could be seen. The seed we received from a Mr. Martin living in Farmington, an S.D.A. (*Seventh Day Adventist*). Our old Brother Schultz, a German minister, visited our home and saw the lentil patch. He said we could sell them if we planted more. His word was good to all our people, and upon his advice, I planted this seed with an old hoe drill in 1917 east of our driveway, about an acre or less. They yielded well, but now to find a market for them. At that time, Garfield had the Trading Store where Gus Ralff and his best girl Nora were working. They wrote to B.L. Gordon, a wholesale house in Spokane which offered 9 ¼ cents a pound. So our first crop was sold for over \$130!

Then we advertised in our church paper, finding a market among our S.D.A. people, Academies, Colleges, and Loma Linda Food Co. Prices ranged from 5 cents to 13 cents different years. We also sold to brokers like John J. Ehlinger at Spokane and others in San Francisco. Even shipped to a Food Co. in Australia.

Finally the Washburn Wilson Seed Co. of Moscow, Idaho got hold of lentil seed and contracted acreage's to farmers in the whole Inland Empire. Now we thought all was lost out of our hands, and it was bad for a year or two with prices down to 3 ½ cents a pound. Yet a good thing was happening though all this, and crops increased until there were thousands of acres planted. This created competition on the open market until the price even reached 15 cents a pound. We shipped lentils for 30 years, and once in two weeks I had 65 checks to take to the Bank. All this was a life-saver for us in our day. It was a task to ship parcels in any size package, and by 100 pounds by freight. I was called the "Lentil King" for a time of years—a big thing from a very small beginning!!

Coming back once more to the time when Paul and Leona were very young, we tried to teach them to be missionary minded. We promised the Sabbath eggs to them, and a Buff-Orpington chicken to hatch chicks. "Yelly" was her name. One day the hen followed me to the south hilltop where I was plowing. The little colt followed along also. Suddenly a hawk came and the chicken flew clear down the hill. The little colt left its mother and took out after the hen. When the hen lit in the stubble, the colt ran in a small circle around the chicken which lay flat on the ground for fear of the Hawk. The hawk had no chance and flew away. The chicken hit the high places for home and the colt went back up to its mother. I stood and watched all this—you will think what I did too!! The Lord put it into the colt's mind to do this. All went well that summer and we had \$132 for missions in the fall with our promise and theirs.

For a spell of years I began to believe that the end of all things was at hand. Had not planned to build any more to the house, nor a larger barn, or buy no auto any more. When we came to Oklahoma and saw all they did and had, we came home and built the east part of the house on new, built a good barn to store hay for the horses. Also life was more responsible with the children to train. I found a deeper conversion. Grandma Wagner said it takes you down on your knees to train the children, and we are not wise enough. Life had its sunshine and its rain. The church wanted me for one or another part for 15 to 20 years. There was the family to support, my daily work, try to do right, and bring the church a blessing. Sometimes it seemed impossible. I found what Grandma had said was true; alone with God on my knees helped to go along all the way. I still feel very close to our church in Washington.

Mom and I made two more trips to see her mother buried in Oklahoma, and also when her father passed away. When 1950 came along, Mom left home for the hospital in Spokane—and never came back. Before the ambulance came, she asked me to play on the organ, “My Faith Looks Up to Thee” and I heard her sing with a faint voice.

You were all in your own homes now. I, now alone, locked my door once again to stay with the children for a time. As long as we were all together we all tried to save and get along, and Mom did her big part to save and was our guide in many ways.

During the year of 1951 I made up my mind to make my home again. It was a hard decision to make. It took time and advice from Aunt Nellie. She asked me to go over and talk to Nettie, and that’s what I finally did. I knew her from 50 years back and knew they were good people.

Since then my home has been again a pleasant home. Although we both realize the loss we both had, we are happy. We have traveled to Florida twice, and every summer to Washington. There are two sides to the house now, and all the Schneider children are good to me, as you are to Mom too. This is the best that could be done, so we built a nice home together here in California.

I have here tried to relate the main happenings and they are as fresh in my memory as if they happened only yesterday. “Endure to the End, the same shall be saved.” Matt. 24:13



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