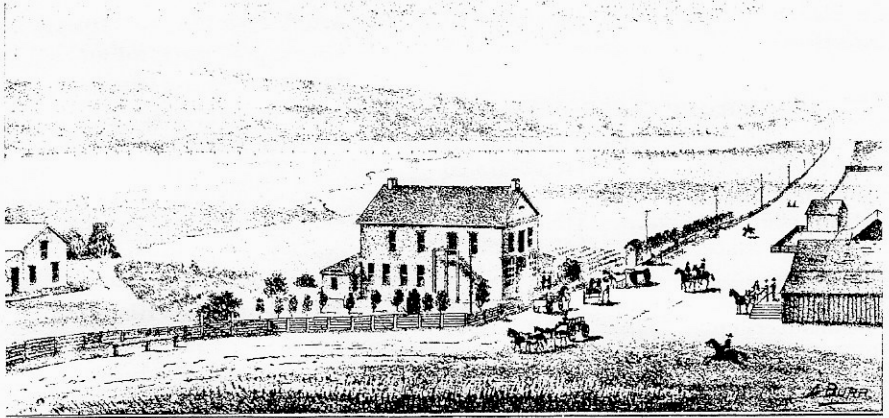


# Bunchgrass Historian

Whitman County Historical Society  
Colfax, Washington

Volume 19  
Number 2  
1991



FARM & BUSINESS PROPERTY OF JAMES S. DAVIS, STEPTOE STATION, WHITMAN CO., W. T.

- **Gilbert's Whitman County**
- **M.B. Darden, La Crosse**

# Whitman County Historical Society

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

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

### Memberships and subscriptions

Gwenlee Riedel  
Membership Committee  
Whitman County Historical Society  
SW 220 Blaine  
Pullman, WA 99163

### Articles for Publication:

Lawrence R. Stark, Editor

### The Bunchgrass Historian

P.O. Box 2371 C.S.  
Pullman, WA. 99163

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SW 405 State Street  
Pullman, WA 99163





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## THE AUTHORS

Frank Gilbert was a Portland journalist who toured Southwest Washington in 1882 and wrote the first history of Whitman County.

The story of M.B. Darden was collected by Fred Yoder, Professor of Sociology at Washington State University in about 1935.

## COVER

From Gilbert's Historic Sketches



## From your editor:

### Reprint of a "classic"

This issue of *Bunchgrass Historian* features the reprint of a famous account of Whitman County written in 1882. The author called it a history, even at the early date.

The piece is the Whitman County section of Frank Gilbert's *Historic Sketches of Southeastern Washington and Adjacent Oregon*. Veteran researchers of Whitman County know this item well, and will have seen this before. Yet it is not a commonly available book. Perhaps fewer than ten copies exist in Whitman County itself, requiring many readers to go out of the way to find it. Occasionally a copy does appear in the used book trade, often offered by a bookstore far, far from Whitman County. Considering this situation, *Bunchgrass Historian* concluded that any copyrights had long ago expired and the book had probably long ago fallen into the public domain. Thus this extract could be reprinted for the use of our readers.

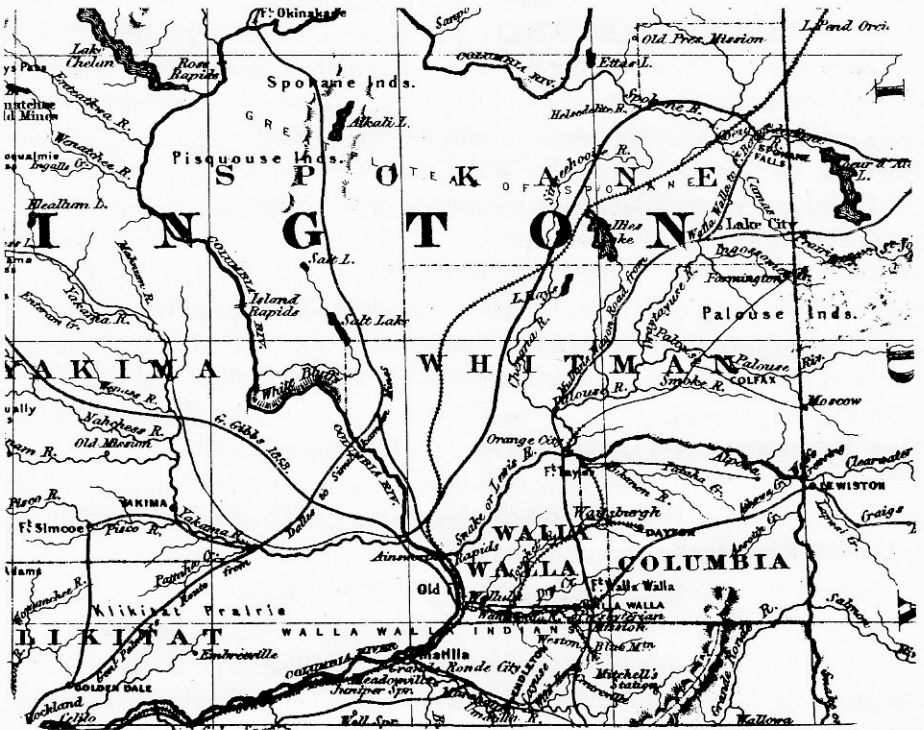
The book was written and published in 1882 by Frank Gilbert, about whom we know little. The publication was somewhat related to newspapers in Portland. In format the book is like the subscription histories that became common a few years later. Unlike those, it is short of biographies of the type that made these books known as "mug book histories," although it does have a shorter section of biographies (we omit those from the passages reprinted here; perhaps a later issue could carry some.) Rather it is long on descriptive detail, basically a report of Gilbert's tour around the area.

The detail of the tour is interesting. The first thing one notes is that the geography of the county was different, so to speak. A principal place was Almota, which today barely exists, and today's largest town, Pullman, appeared as a beginning townsite, barely organized by the developers. Colfax is central and important, which is one of the few features that has remained constant since that time. The reader may note other similar contrasts.

Illustrations are selected from the original publication, along with maps found elsewhere.

The issue is rounded out with selections from pioneer interviews taken in the 1930 by Fred Yoder. These are similar to an account of Pine City, carried in *Bunchgrass Historian* two issues back.

Readers of the last issue of *Bunchgrass Historian* will be interested in learning that the fragmentary account that seemed to be related to the story of George Miller, as it appeared in *Told By The Pioneers*, has been identified by one of our readers as indeed that. In his possession is a more complete manuscript in which the two parts go together, and actually extend out to greater length.



## WHITMAN COUNTY

### Extracted from Gilbert's Historic Sketches (1882)

#### CHAPTER XXXIX

##### ITS BOUNDARY AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The county of Whitman lies immediately north of Snake river, and borders on the Idaho line. Its area of 5,000 square miles is bounded north by Spokane county, east by Idaho, south by Snake river, separating it from Garfield, Columbia, and Walla Walla, and west by Spokane county and the Columbia river, which flows between it and Yakima. Of this vast extent of territory, in the eastern portion only, are found extensive tracts of arable land; the western half being somewhat sandy, dry and nonproductive, though much of it makes a fair range for stock. Within the region are a number of thriving towns, small but hopeful, the oldest but ten years of age, and some of them but a few months. These are Colfax, Palouse City, Farmington, Almota, Penawawa, Texas Ferry, Wawawa, Endicott, Pullman, Uniontown, and Garfield. The first three have become towns of considerable importance; and each will be the terminus of a road soon to be built from Palouse Junction, on the Northern Pacific. Endicott is also the terminus of a branch road, and was laid out this spring.

##### WATER COURSES AND LAKES

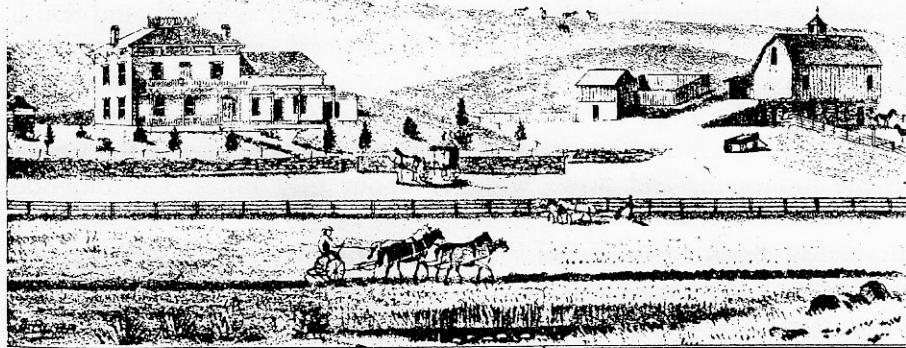
Snake river, the only navigable stream in this section, forms the southern boundary, is a highway for the commerce of a large portion of the county, and Wawawa, Almota, Penawawa, and Texas Ferry, are the shipping and receiving points along its banks. Its creek tributaries are: Steptoe, nine miles long, near the Idaho line; Wawawa, seven or eight miles in length, which flows into the river at the village of that name; a ten-mile stream with two branches, that discharges at Almota; Penawawa that runs fifteen miles to reach the river at the town of that name; and Alkali Flat creek, with a narrow channel, forty miles long, which empties into Snake river at Texas Ferry.

The largest stream flowing through this section is Palouse river. Its source is in the Coeur d'Alene mountains, and after a westerly and southerly course of about 120 miles, it joins Snake river below Texas Ferry. At Colfax this stream divides into two branches known as North and South Palouse, and the principal tributaries are: Cow creek, which is its source in the northeast portion of the county, whence it flows southward, and is twenty-five miles long; Rock creek, with source in Spokane county, runs southwest forty miles; Pine creek, a tributary of Rock, rises in the Coeur d'Alene mountains and flows westerly about fifty miles; Cottonwood creek, a small stream forty miles long, discharges its waters about five miles below Rock creek; Rebel Flat and Union Flat creeks, with parallel courses run to the west, between Colfax and Snake river, and empty below Colfax. The former is fifty, and the latter seventy miles on length. Hangman creek, second only to the Palouse in size, is a tributary of Spokane river. It rises in the Coeur d'Alene mountains and flows in a northwesterly course about sixty miles. Smaller streams, tributaries of those already mentioned, are numerous, among which are Siler, Clear, Dry, and Cedar creeks.

There are several bodies of water within the county, the largest of which is northeast from Colfax near the north line and is called Rock lake. It is seven miles in length, and from it flows the creek of that name. Big lake lies partially in Spokane, and is smaller than the one just mentioned. Washtucna lake lies about fifteen miles west of the mouth of Palouse river; is about two miles long and a great watering place for stock. Sulphur lake is eight miles further west, and is but a small pond of dirty water, strongly impregnated with the mineral indicated by its name.

#### SETTLEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

The first settlers who came to Eastern Washington, remained in the Walla Walla valley; but as good land there was gradually absorbed, they worked north and east, and finally crossed Snake river in search of it. Preparations being made by the Northern Pacific Railroad Company, to construct a line through this region, gave encouragement to the movement and quite a number of families located on Union Flat in the summer and fall of 1869. It was erroneously supposed that the altitude would render it subject to frosts that would injure its value as a grain producer, although known to be excellent arable land; but this objection has not been sustained by experience. For the next two years immigration came slowly but steadily in; and in 1871 there were 83 permanent settlers, or a population of about 200, on Union flat and around the Palouse forks. A saw mill was built that fall at the forks, and a flour mill was in contemplation. This was a portion



FARM RESIDENCE OF A. M. FLETCHER, WHITMAN CO. W. T.

A. S. WALLING, LITH. PORTLAND, O. R.

of Stevens county at that time, and Colville, the seat of justice, was more than 100 miles north of this colony of farmers and stock men, and they were consequently anxious for the creation of a new county that the advantages of a home government might be brought nearer to their own doors. To be sure they were in numbers not strong, but it was known that more were coming, and by the time a county could be created and properly organized, that population would be largely increased. Hon. Anderson Cox, a citizen of Waitsburg and Receiver of the United States Land Office at Walla Walla, was the man who contemplated erecting the flour mill; and it was through his influence and exertions that a bill for the creation of Whitman county was passed by the Legislature. He also secured the location of a territorial road from Walla Walla to Colville, to pass by the forks of Palouse river. The town of Colfax was laid out that winter, and the commissioners appointed by the organic act, declared it to be the county seat.

Mr. Cox, the father of Whitman county, died suddenly in March, 1872, while on the road from Colfax to Waitsburg, having been to the new town on business connected with his proposed mill. He was born in Dayton, Ohio, in 1812, and moved to Iowa in 1838. In 1845 he came to Oregon among the pioneer emigrants to that unorganized territory. He served twice in the legislature of that State, and received the Union nomination for Governor in 1862. He came to Washington Territory that year, and settling near Waitsburg, engaged in the manufacture of lumber. When the United States Land Office was located in Walla Walla in the spring of 1871, Mr. Cox was appointed Receiver, and held the office at the time of his sudden demise.

Section one of the Act of November 29, 1871, is as follows: "Be it enacted by the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Washington: That all



that portion of the Territory of Washington included within the following limits be, and the same is hereby, organized into a county known as the County of Whitman, via: Commencing at a point in Snake river where the line dividing Idaho and Washington Territory strikes said river; thence down mid-channel of said river to its mouth; thence up mid-channel of the Columbia river to White Bluffs; thence in a northwesterly course to where the fifth standard parallel crosses Longenbeal creek; thence east along said parallel to the dividing line between Idaho and Washington Territories: thence south along said line to the place of beginning.” The boundary as it nows exists was more clearly defined by the act of November 12, 1875: “Commencing at a point where the section line between sections 21 and 28, township 14, north of range 27, east of the Willamette meridian, Washington Territory, strikes the main body of the Columbia river on the west side of the island; thence east on said section line to the line between ranges 27 and 28, east; thence north on said range line to the fourth standard parallel; thence east on said parallel to the Columbia guide meridian: thence north to the fifth standard parallel; thence east on said parallel to the boundary line between Idaho and Washington Territories; thence south on said boundary line to the mid-channel of Snake river; thence down the mid-channel of Snake river to mid-channel of Columbia river; thence up mid-channel of Columbia river to a point opposite the place of beginning; thence east to place of beginning.”

The organic act appointed officers to serve until after the general election in November 1872, as follows:

Probate Judge -- John Denny.

Sheriff and Assessor -- Charles D. Porter.

Auditor -- James Ewart.

Treasurer -- Warren A. Belcher.

School Superintendent -- C.E. White.

Coroner -- John Fincher.

County Commissioners -- G.D. Wilbur, William R. Rexford, Henry S. Burlingame.

There being then no town within the county limits, the Act appointed William Lucas, Jesse Logsdon and J.A. Perkins commissioners, to select a place for the seat of government until it should be permanently located by vote at the next general election. The new county was united to that of Stevens and Walla Walla, in the election of a Joint Councilman; to Stevens in choosing a Joint Representative, and to Walla Walla for judicial purposes. The seat of justice was fixed by the commissioners at Colfax, a new town laid out after the county was created; and by a vote that place became the permanent location the following November, having no rival for the official honor.

## POPULATION, FINANCES, SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS

From a population of but 200 when it was organized, this county has advanced to the third, and possibly second, position in the territory. In 1875 their numbers had increased to 1,465, and two years later to 2,247, when a great rush to the Palouse country began; and three years later the census of 1880 recorded a population of 7,014. This was exceeded only by Walla Walla and Columbia. The latter has since been divided, which would give Whitman the first place were it not for the fact that King county, which was then but 104 behind Whitman, has increased largely within the past two years and may now rank second. The population of Whitman is over 8,000, and new settlers are constantly arriving. For the fiscal year ending June 26, 1882, there were received into the treasury from taxes and other sources, and credited to various funds, \$39,168.15. Of this sum \$12,367.98 remained in the treasury, sufficient to cancel all outstanding warrants but \$2,133.22. Sixty-six school districts have been organized, in which, January, 1882, there were 2,093 school children; and this lacked but three months of being within ten years after creation of its first district.

As yet Whitman county has no court-house. A rented building in Colfax having always been used by its officers. One who attended the court held here in 1877 by Judge S.C. Wingard, says that court was held in the school-house, while the clerk's office was used for a grand jury room, and the clerk and auditor transacted official business in the open air. When ready to advise among themselves upon a case submitted, petit juries retired to the shade of a neighboring tree, and were given select seats upon the grass by the sheriff, who retired a short distance and kept a watchful eye upon their movements to be sure that there were never more nor less than twelve of them. Good King Alfred would feel at home in this nineteenth century could his spirit witness a scene like this. A small county jail was built in Colfax in the summer of 1878. The building of a court-house such as the size and importance of Whitman county seem to demand will no doubt soon be commenced the county commissioners have submitted that question to be voted upon at the November election of 1882.

### THE INDIAN SCARE OF 1877

On the fourteenth of June, 1877, *Chief Joseph's* band of Nez Perces went on the warpath in Camas Prairie, Idaho, and murdered many defenseless settlers. Troops were at once sent against them, and the people of Whitman felt very uneasy about the possibilities of their coming or being driven into this region. A week later, June 23, John Ritchie was shot in his cabin on Pine creek by a renegade Indian. Reports that the Palouses, Coeur d'Alenes and Spokanes had broken out and that *Chief Moses* was on his way south to join the hostiles, threw the people into a panic of fear and excitement. Farms were deserted, stock left in corrals with nothing to eat,



VIEW N.E. FROM TUCANNON, ACROSS SNAKE RIVER, STEPTOE BUTTE. COEUR D'ALENE MTS. IN THE DISTANCE.

or allowed to roam at will, while one and all fled to Colfax and Palouse, or pushed clear on to Dayton and Walla Walla. In the first two towns rifle-pits were dug, and barricades of wagons and stones erected in the streets; men rushed about in a high state of excitement, as rumor of butcheries came in, while the women and children wept and lamented the horrible fate in store for them; shot-guns, rifles, revolvers, and everything that could serve as a weapon of defense, were put on a war footing. Near Palouse City a block-house 125 feet square was built, and 200 people occupied it for a number of days. It took 480 wagon loads of poles to construct it.

The morning after the first dreadful night, a company of twenty men left Colfax on a scouting expedition. They saw no signs of hostile savages, and at Fort Howard, Idaho, learned that *Joseph's* band had not crossed Clearwater. During their ride they had observed nothing to suggest an Indian outbreak. Nothing at the deserted farms had been disturbed, while animals left in corrals were calling loudly for something to stay the pangs of hunger. Hearing that Father Cataldo was detained at the Catholic mission by the Coeur d'Alenes, two of them, D. S. Bowman and James Tipton, started for that place, and the balance of the party returned to Colfax. These two men found the Indians much excited and preparing for defense, because the sudden gathering of settlers had caused a belief that the "Bostons" were going to make war upon them. This was equally true of the Palouse and Spokane tribes, but the situation was soon explained to them and their excitement allayed. Father Cataldo procured certificates of peaceful intentions from the chiefs, and with these the two men also returned to Colfax.

Meanwhile a new cause of alarm had arisen. Settlers on Crab creek abandoning their homes at the first danger note had started for Walla Walla and other points; but before reaching Snake river, a few of them concluded to

return home. While they were absent a small band of Columbia River Indians in passing through from the camas grounds found everything deserted, and helped themselves to provisions, clothing and stock. Those who returned saw these evidences of a raid, and fleeing in haste, reported depredations of all kinds, confirming the general belief that northern Indians were on the war-path. *Chief Moses* was said to have 200 warriors at Spokane bridge.

The return of Bowman and Tipton from Coeur d'Alene with the certificate from Father Cataldo, had a pacificating influence. The people began to return to their homes, where it found that the Indians, instead of being hostile, had in many cases protected their fields from the depredations of loose stock, and guarded property during their absence. June 30, Rev. H. T. Crowley, a missionary of Spokane Falls, wrote to James Ewart and J. C. Davenport, Colfax, that: "I hasten to give assurance of the pacific disposition of the Spokanes, also of the Snake River, Nez Perce, and Palouse Indians camped here. In public council held last Monday at the Falls, they unanimously declared their friendliness towards the whites, and we have found them thus far unusually careful to avoid giving offense. The Spokanes have, of course, been somewhat alarmed both at the gathering of whites at Colfax, and at the Falls, but now that all have returned to their houses, everything has quieted down." It seems, then, that the only real danger was caused by action of the settlers in so suddenly concentrating and arming themselves, thus conveying to the Indians an impression that the *whites were going to break out*. Had an excited man confirmed this idea by shooting an Indian, the consequences might have been an Indian war instead of only a scare. The Nez Perce war was fought and ended, and not a hostile Indian set foot within this county.

### FLOOD AT COLFAX

Sunday night, February 23, 1879, a flood of water rushed down the Palouse, breaking up the ice and raising the stream very high. Three bridges at Colfax were swept away, and were accompanied down stream by a house and barn. Next morning citizens endeavored to establish communication across the angry flood. A rope was stretched from bank to bank, and William Proitz, a Prussian, started, clinging by his hands and knees, back downward, to pass to the opposite bank. The rope was new, and as he approached the middle, it was stretched and sagged by his weight, until he was lowered into the turgid flood. Chilled by the cold water, bruised and cut by floating ice, he lost his hold and was swept away to certain death. A spectator jumped into a boat, without oars, and endeavored to rescue the drowning man, but failed and was fortunate in not meeting the same fate himself. Considerable damage was done along the stream, wherever there was anything the waters could seize upon.

## COLFAX

The county seat and principal town of Whitman, is Colfax, at the forks of the Palouse, sixteen miles north of Snake river, in the midst of a fine agricultural section. It first became a village in 1872, and though prior to 1877 the region was not sufficiently populous to support a business center of any consequence, yet since that date, it has become one of the leading towns of Washington Territory. Though twice nearly destroyed by fire, the energy of its citizens has re-built and placed it on a firmer foundation than before. The railroad soon to be extended into this region from Palouse Junction, will have one terminus here, and with the advantages of a county seat, good location, and a railroad, Colfax cannot fail to increase rapidly and maintain its position in the front rank.

This locality was settled in the summer of 1871 by James A. Perkins, Levy Reynolds, and H.S. Hollingsworth, as most favorable for the site of a saw-mill, designed to supply lumber to settlers on Union flat and at the forks. It began running on the twelfth of September, 1871. Mr. Perkins had previously settled here, and built a small cabin, which was afterwards used for a wood-shed. J.M. Nosler built the second cabin, which was used for a hotel for a year or two. Anderson Cox and D.S. Bowman who were contemplating the erection of a flouring mill, met with Messrs. Perkins, Reynolds, and Hollingsworth in the saw-mill, December 15, 1871, to discuss the question of building a town at this point. They decided to do so, and upon suggestion of Mr. Cox, the future town was named Colfax, in honor of Vice-President Schuyler Colfax, of Indiana. The commissioners appointed by the Legislature to locate a county seat for Columbia, selected this point. In February, 1872, A. L. Knowlton surveyed the town site. A blacksmith shop was soon opened, but the sudden death of Mr. Cox in March put an end to the flouring mill project for a time. In April a public meeting was held in the saw-mill, at which D. S. Bowman, George Hall, and James Cooper were appointed a committee to locate a school house, the first in Whitman county. The site chosen was near the center of town, and the district was called No. 1. The house then erected was used for seven years for all public meetings, county conventions, district court, etc., until it was destroyed by fire. The first convention held by Republicans met in the saw-mill, while the Democrats soon afterwards convened at the residence of J. A. Perkins. A small store was opened in 1872 by W. A. Belcher, and in 1873, Wolfard & Davenport opened a second one. Several efforts were made to secure a flour mill, but unsuccessfully, until 1873, when J. C. Davenport erected there the first one north of Snake river. The farmers subscribed 5,000 bushels of wheat to aid this enterprise. It has two run of stones, and belongs now to Livingston & Co. The first postmaster was J. M. Nosler, who was succeeded by Warren A. Belcher, T. J. Smith, W. B. Renshaw, and Louis T. Berry, the present incumbent, and it's a

money order office. As before stated, it was not until after 1877 that Colfax assumed the commanding position it now occupies. At that time the surrounding country had filled up to such an extent, that its business of all kinds sought this point as a commercial center. In the fall of 1876 Whitman Land District was created, with the office at this place. Ex-Governor James, of Nebraska, was appointed Register, and E. N. Sweet, Receiver, but the office was not opened for transaction of business until April 15, 1878. The present incumbents are J. M. Armstrong, who succeeded Governor James in May, 1880, and J. L. Wilson, who followed Mr. Sweet in May, 1882. In 1878 the town had grown to such proportions that it contained:

Agricultural implement stores ....4	General stores.....4
Hardware stores .....2	Drug stores .....2
Saddlery stores.....2	Millinery stores.....1
Hotels .....2	Restaurants .....2
Saloons .....2	Brewery .....1
Saw-mill.....1	Planing mills .....2
Sash, door & furniture factories....1	Wagon & cabinet shop .....1
Blacksmith shops.....3	Barber shops .....2
Tailor shop .....1	Boot and shoe shops .....2
Upholstering shop .....1	Meat markets.....2
Livery and feed stables .....2	Paint shop .....1
Flour mill .....1	Newspaper & printing office ....1
Bank .....1	Attorneys and physicians.....
Public school.....1	Academy.....1
Land office .....1	Post-office .....1
Express office .....1	Churches.....

Since that time Colfax has been twice swept by fire, inflicting great loss upon her business men. Though these calamities have not overshadowed the place, they have served to somewhat check its growth; and though the courage, energy and confidence displayed have accomplished wonders, yet have not been able to place the town where it would have been had not these disasters overtaken it. The first of them occurred on the morning of July 22, 1881, when a large portion of the business part of Colfax was burned. At two o'clock in the morning fire was discovered in a blacksmith shop opposite the Ewart House, and in half an hour a whole block on the east side of the street was destroyed; at three o'clock the Ewart House and adjoining buildings were consumed. Three whole blocks were lost valued at \$60,000. In one year after this disaster the burnt district had been rebuilt with more substantial structures, many of them of brick.

Such was the condition of Colfax when the cry of "Fire!" roused its citizens from their slumbers about one o'clock on Friday morning, July 14, 1882. It originated in D.M. Osborne & Co.'s agricultural warehouse, and

was undoubtedly of incendiary origin, as the building had been occupied but a few weeks and no fire was kept in it. Before many had time to reach the scene and realize the condition of affairs, flames had seized upon the adjoining buildings and were spreading with alarming rapidity, aided by a strong breeze. Desperately they fought, but almost in vain. They wished then that the old sun-cracked engine in the creek, had been taken care of. In two hours the business portion was nearly blotted out, fifty-eight buildings being destroyed; but a bare skeleton remained to show where the town had stood. The total loss was about \$350,000, on which there was a little less than \$200,000 insurance.

The records of the land office perished, but those of the county were saved. Immediately after the fire people began to rebuild, some of them substantially, while others put up temporary structures, intending to build of brick in the spring. No disposition was shown to remove to Endicott, or any of the rival towns; and the appearances indicate that in a year Colfax will be rebuilt in a more substantial manner, and the business be placed on a firmer footing than before. At present the point for shipping and receiving freight is Almota, on Snake river, seventeen miles distant. Stages from Pomeroy, connecting there for Dayton, arrive by the way of Almota, where passengers by the boat also land. A telegraph line was built in 1880 by the government, and runs from Pomeroy to Fort Coeur d'Alene through Almota, Colfax, and Spokane Falls, a signal service office being opened in Colfax. The *Palouse Gazette* was established in 1878, and escaped the last great fire. The *Washington Democrat* started in March, 1881, and was destroyed. The streets are now supplied with water from a large spring belonging to Mr Hollingsworth; but adequate water-works must be provided to give security from fire. An old hand-engine purchased in Walla Walla, had been run into the river where sun cracks rendered it useless as a fire extinguisher, even had there been time to get it out. Several efforts have been made to secure a good steamer, but unsuccessfully.

The Colfax Academy is one of the leading institutions of the town. In July, 1876, the Baptist denomination chiefly through the exertions of Rev. S. E. Stearns and Theophilus Smith, raised \$1,700, and a church and school building was erected, much of the work being done by Mr. Smith. School was opened in the building by Miss L. L. West, September 11, 1878. She taught it successfully for three years. Additions were made to the amount of \$2,400; and December 21, 1881, the Baptist society incorporated the Colfax Academy, to be managed by fifteen trustees. Three teachers are now employed, and the school will no doubt grow to dimensions hoped for by its founders. A specialty is made of its normal course. The Baptist church was organized July 23, 1876, by Elder John Rexford, who became the first pastor. He has been succeeded by Elders S. E. Stearns, D. W. C. Britt, George Campbell, and S. W. Beavens. The membership has

increased to thirty-eight; and a Union Sunday-school of about 100 scholars is under the superintendence of Miss L. L. West. Methodist Episcopal services were first held in Colfax in September, 1872, by Rev. H. K. Hines; and a church organization was then perfected. For some time there was no regular pastor, the first being Rev. M. S. Anderson. He has been followed by Revs. W. S. Turner, D. G. Strong, and H. W. Watts. A church building was erected in 1881, at an expense of \$2,500. The membership is 152. The Congregationalists have an organization, and are ministered to by Rev. J. T. Marsh. Four good lodges exist here: Hiram, No. 21, A. F. & A. M.; Colfax No. 14, I. O. O. F.; Coeur d'Alene, No. 4, K. of P.; and Colfax, A. O. U. W.

Colfax was incorporated in 1879, and again by the act of November 29, 1881, embracing the southwest corner of section 14, township 16, north of range 43, east of Willamette meridian, and styled "City of Colfax." The government consists of a mayor, five councilmen, and marshal, to be elected annually on the first Monday in April; a recorder, assessor, and *ex-officio* clerk, and a treasurer to be appointed by the council. The mayors of the city have been James Ewart, E. N. Sweet, J. H. Bellinger, and J. A. Perkins.

### PALOUSE CITY

The second largest town in the upper country is Palouse City, lying on the north branch of the river bearing that name, and within one and one-half miles of the Idaho line. It is the center of a large and prosperous farming section in Whitman and the adjacent county of Nez Perce, Idaho. The first settler of the upper Palouse river was William Ewing, who located two and one-half miles above the town site in 1869. There soon followed him Joseph Hammer and family, and A. Towner and family. Ewing & Atwood brought 400 cattle to the river, and have since been engaged in the stock business. Many others then came, and in a few years quite a population had centered in this vicinity.

The location of Palouse City is one possessing special advantages for water-power, and because of easy access to the river at this point, affords special conveniences for mills. It was this inducement that led W. P. Breeding to establish himself here in the fall of 1874, and begin the erection of a flour mill that was completed in the summer of 1875, and contains two run of stones. It now belongs to Breeding's estate, and is leased to Jesse Bishop. Mr. Breeding laid out Palouse City in the spring of 1875, the first to follow him in establishing themselves in business being W. L. Powers, William P. Ragsdale, and Waldrip & Kelley. An addition was afterwards laid out by James A. Smith. Trade rapidly sought the new town, and mercantile business grew to large proportions as the country on all sides rapidly filled up with people. In 1877 a height of prosperity was reached seldom attained by towns of but two years' growth. It then had a flour mill,



three steam saw-mills, a steam planing mill and sash factory, two general stores, a drug store, a millinery store, two blacksmith shops, two hotels, a saloon, meat market, livery stable, barber shop, and a boot and shoe shop. It now contains a population of about 200, and three general stores, a drug store, two saloons, a saddlery store, hardware store and tin shop, a livery stable, two blacksmith shops, two meat markets, one cabinet shop and furniture store, one flour mill, and one saw-mill. Powers Bros'. team saw and planing mill is situated one-half mile from town, and was built in 1881. The post-office was established in 1876; J.H. Wiley is postmaster. A fine public school is one of its advantages. The Methodists have a church organization. Two physicians live here, and practice throughout the surrounding country.

The original town stands on ground inclining at quite a steep pitch, equal to two feet to the rod. In April, 1882, Fitch & Wiley laid out an addition one-eighth of a mile below, on the river bottom. The business in the new additions two general stores, hardware store and tin shop, livery stable, two hotels, two meat markets, boot and shoe store and two saloons. The shipping and receiving point is Almota, on Snake river, twenty-seven miles distance, from which goods are brought in wagons, and from which mail, express, and passengers, are conveyed by stage. The contemplated railroad into this country will give better transportation facilities. Its advantageous location, and the prosperous country surrounding it, there being no rival within fourteen miles, conspire with the importance already attained to guarantee a long and prosperous career for Palouse City. The *Boomerang*, an independent weekly newspaper, was established here in August 1882, by E. H. Orcutt, and will undoubtedly do much to aid the town in its future growth.

### FARMINGTON

This village is situated on a plain 2,000 feet above the sea, surrounded by low hills. Four miles to the east are the Coeur d'Alene mountains, while fourteen miles westward is seen the towering form of Steptoe Butte. The same distance south is Palouse City, Garfield eight miles southwest, and Colfax twenty-three miles in the same direction. Wood from the adjacent mountains, and water from springs, wells and a little stream called Pine creek, supply the town.

George W. Truax, the town proprietor, located here in October, 1871, and about the same time Hiram S. Young, W. W. Johnson, S. J. Tout, R. A. Truax, George Briggs, Jesse Cash, L. W. Davenport, Patrick Mackey, John Warick, and James Conkling settled in the vicinity. They began the business of stock-raising and general agriculture; the latter on a small scale at first, but now rapidly increasing and becoming the leading industry. To accommodate these settlers, a post-office was located here in 1872, and named Farmington. William Brewer was appointed postmaster. His suc-

cessors have been Michael Sheehan, Frank Harrington, and E. E. Pad-dock, who has held the office since September 9, 1880. The fire of August 15, 1881, destroyed the records of the office. A small trading-post was established in 1877 by Michael J. Sheehan, who subsequently sold to H. A. Stratton and Frank Harrington. The business has been largely increased, and Mr. Stratton is now sole proprietor. His store is 34x70 feet, and is filled with a valuable stock of goods. When Mr. Sheehan opened his store a town was laid out. The people of the surrounding country united in erecting a fine two-story school-house, which was completed in December, 1878. At that time nearly every lot on Main street was taken, and many buildings were being constructed. In 1879 it became quite a town, and has slowly grown from year to year. August 15, 1881, a disastrous fire burned a drug store, blacksmith shop, saloon, tin shop, warehouse, and several small dwellings.

Situated in the midst of an extensive and fertile agricultural district, and surrounded by prosperous grain and stock farms, Farmington has become a permanent business center, and has a bright future before it. This is to be one of the termini of the proposed road from Palouse Junction, on the Northern Pacific, to be built in the near future. It now has two stores, one hotel, (J. H. Mayfield, proprietor), saloon, livery stable, blacksmith shop, tin shop and hardware store, drug store, meat market, post-office, church, school-house, a number of dwellings and a population of about 200. The professions are represented by a lawyer and a physician. The Methodist own a church edifice; have a circuit pastory and maintain a Sunday-school. The Seventh Day Advents have a pastor, Rev. Alonzo T. Jones, and a Sabbath-school but no building. The Christian denomination has an organization. The public school has an attendance of forty pupils. At present the receiving and shipping points are: Cheney, a station on the Northern Pacific, forty-eight miles northwest; and Almota, on Snake river, forty miles southwest. The advent of a railroad will remove the disadvantages under which the town is now laboring, and make it the shipping and receiving point for a large section of country.

The only shingle mill in the county was built in May, 1882, four miles east of Farmington, by Quarles & Grass. It has since been removed to Hangman creek, sixteen miles southeast of town. Its capacity is 20,000 shingles per day.

Farmington Lodge, No. 37, A. F. & A. M., was organized under dispensation January 29, 1882, and was granted a charter June 9, 1882. The first officers and charter members were: Daniel Fish, W. M.; Jesse P. Quarles, S. W.; Moses R. Fish, J. W.; Richard A. Truax, T.; Franklin McCarrie, S.; Arthur Huyck, S.D.; James M. Woody, J.D.; John N. Elliott, Tyler; George W. Truax, and Henry L. McClure. The lodge in July had a membership of twelve, and owned property to the value of \$450. Stated communications held on Saturday on or before the full moon.

## ALMOTA

The principal receiving and shipping point on Snake river for the region lying north of it is Almota, a thriving little town on the north bank of that stream. It is equidistant for Lewiston and Texas Ferry, the former being thirty-nine miles up the stream, and the latter down. Colfax is sixteen miles north, and Pomeroy and Pataha twenty-two south, the stage between those points crossing by the ferry at this place. The telegraph line built in 1880, from Pomeroy to Colfax, Spokane, and Fort Coeur d'Alene also crosses here, where a United States Signal Service station has been established.

The first settler on Almota creek was Hon. L. M. Ringer and the first on the tow site was Henry H. Spalding, Jr., son of the venerable Nez Perce missionary so often mentioned in this work, who died at Lapwai amid the scene of his life's labors, August 3, 1874. At this point Snake river extends farther north than anywhere else and the grades are easier than at any place above Texas Ferry, consequently, when the O.S.N. Co. began carrying freight for the Palouse country, they established a landing and discharging place here, where a considerable amount of freight was handled, increasing in quantity from year to year. The settlement of adjacent agricultural lands soon made this an important shipping point, as well as a desirable locality for trade. A town was, therefore, laid out in the spring of 1877, and liberal inducements were offered to business men. L. M. Ringer opened a store, and soon afterwards Paine Bros. & Moore built a warehouse 75x80 feet; Hawley, Dodd & Co. built one 50x100 feet; Spalding & Butler erected a two-story frame hotel 40x48 feet; Adams Bros. and Carter & Ringer built a grist-mill, 24x30 feet and three stories high; a blacksmith shop, shoe shop, livery stable, school-house, another hotel, and a number of dwellings were added; and in December Adams Bros. opened a second store. Thus, in a few short months, did the town of Almota spring into being. A ferry was established across the river that fall, and in May, 1878, the new territorial road from Dayton to Colfax, *via* Pomeroy, was located through Almota, and this became the regular crossing for travel and the mails between those points. A post-office was established in 1877, with H. H. Spalding as postmaster, a position he still retains. In 1880 J. A. & H. H. Hungate bought the flour mill and are now operating it; capacity 70 barrels daily; two run of burrs.

Almota has now a population of about seventy-five, and is enjoying greater prosperity than ever before. It is the most important landing of the O. R. & N. Co. on Snake river, office receipts averaging \$8,000 monthly. One store, a hotel, salon, livery stable, blacksmith shop, Signal Service office, express office, post-office, flour mill, and a number of residences make up the composition of the town. Nine miles above is a granite quarry belonging to M. C. Moore, the only bed of granite known to exist on the river, and a source considerable profit to its owner. The agricultural lands

back are extensive and good, and their product will continue to be shipped at this point for years to come. The raising of horses, sheep, and cattle, which has heretofore been the leading industry, is gradually being superseded by wheat culture. The creek at the mouth of which the town lies, is ten miles in length. It divides into two branches, known respectively as Big and Little Almota. Another, the West Almota, flows into Snake river one-half mile below the town.

### **PENAWAWA**

The creek that bears this name heads near Union Flat, and runs southwest a distance of eighteen miles, emptying into Snake river fourteen miles below Almota. The first settlers along the stream were Montgomery and Trimble, who came with stock in 1870. They sold to Ed. Johnson in the spring of 1871, who thus became the first permanent settler. He is still engaged in stock-raising and farming there. At the mouth of the stream lies the little village of Penawawa. In 1872 the territorial road from Walla Walla to Colville was located to cross Snake river at this point, and C. C. Cram established a ferry, which began running in December, 1872. This then became the crossing for Colfax and Walla Walla travel, as well as landing point for passengers and goods coming up by steamer. The present ferry was built by Cram & Son in 1877 and is now owned by W. S. Newland. E. Fincher was the first permanent settler, and the town was laid out by Cram, Byrd and Fincher, in November, 1877. In 1873 Mr. Cram built a warehouse and A. L. Kiser a hotel and stable. In the summer of 1878 Elliott & Andrews opened a store, and Hawley, Dodd & Co. built a warehouse. A post-office was established, and Penawawa became one of the recognized towns of Whitman county. It is fifty-three miles below Lewiston and twenty-five above Texas Ferry, at which point passengers change from the cars to the boat. Many of them land at Penawawa and take the stage for Colfax and other place. This is also quite an important shipping and receiving point for a large section of country. The town contains a store, hotel, livery stable, stage station, post-office, ferry and several dwelling houses.

**ONECHO POST-OFFICE** was established September 9, 1879, near the head of Penawawa creek, with James R. Wicks, present incumbent, in charge. Mails received tri-weekly.

**LINCOLN, OR CHASE'S MILL.** An effort was made in 1877 to found a town with the name of Lincoln, on the Palouse river, twelve miles above Colfax. That summer Charles S. Chase built a flour mill there, and in the fall a post-office was established, with Mr. Chase as postmaster. He also built a saw-mill; a blacksmith shop was located there; a school organized; and much talk indulged in about a woolen mill. The flouring mill is still in operation, and belongs to A. J. & James Chase, brothers of the builder. It has one pair of buhrs. The place is generally known as Chase's Mill.

CLINTON. John B. Wolf settled on the South Palouse, nine miles below Moscow, Idaho Territory, in 1876, and built a good house and blacksmith shop. December 24, 1877, a post-office was established there by the name of Clinton. Mr. Wolf opened the office and a small store in his dwelling house. Clinton is fifteen miles from Wawawa on Snake river.

PULLMAN was laid out on the South Palouse in 1881. It now contains two stores, a blacksmith shop, hotel and post-office.

UNIONTOWN lies at the head of Union Flat, three miles from the Idaho line. It contains two stores, a hotel, livery stable, blacksmith shop, meat market and a few residences.

GARFIELD was laid out in the fall of 1880, and now contains two stores, a hotel, blacksmith shop and post-office.

ENDICOTT is on a branch of the Northern Pacific road, and was laid out in the spring of 1882. Considerable attention is being drawn in that direction, and as it is fostered by the railroad company, will probably become a place of considerable importance. A post-office was established July 28, 1882, with H. D. Smith as postmaster.

TEXAS FERRY has been for a number of years a ferry and steamboat landing on Snake river, forty miles below Almota and fifty-five miles from Colfax. The terminus of the O. R. & N. Co's. branch from Walla Walla is on the opposite side of the river, where passengers for Lewiston change from the cars to the boat. It has about eighty inhabitants, a store, three saloons, a restaurant and a good hotel.

WAWAWA is situated at the mouth of Wawawa creek, eight miles above Almota and thirty below Lewiston. It is quite an important shipping and receiving point. In the fall of 1877, Hawley, Dodd & Co. built a warehouse, and that winter a school was organized. A town was laid out on the large flat along the river, by Hawley, Dodd & Co., J. C. Davenport, and I. C. Matheny. Large quantities of freight for the upper Palouse country are landed here from the O. R. & N. Co's boats. Two warehouses stand on the river bank.

UNION, REBEL AND ALKALI FLATS. The term "flat", as used in this section, signifies a strip of bottom land of varying width and length. Union flat is seventy miles long, and lies south of Colfax. A small stream runs through it and empties into Palouse river, its course being westerly. Rebel flat lies parallel to this, and is fifty miles in length. Alkali flat is thirty-five miles long, and has a general southwesterly course. The soil is somewhat impregnated with alkali, which renders much of it unfit for cultivation. The other two are exceedingly fertile, and are among the garden spots of Whitman county.

PLAINVILLE is the name of a new town laid out the past summer by H. D. Chapman, for the Oregon Improvement Company. It is in Rebel flat, at the junction of the Lewiston, Penawawa and Texas Ferry roads, and on the line of the proposed railroad from Palouse Junction.

## **The Story of M. B. Darden LaCrosse, Washington**

Mr. Darden was born in Jefferson County, Iowa, in 1855. Left for the west by ox team in 1864. On the way out, traded the ox team for horses or cayuses at Salt Lake City. The cayuses were stubborn and balked and kicked at first.

The Darden family first went to California before coming to the Palouse country. On the way to California they did not travel in one big caravan. Most of the time there was a small group of families traveling together consisting of three or four. There were twelve of the Darden children when they crossed the plains in 1864. There had been seventeen children in the Darden family.

Darden's family came to California to seek gold, but he didn't follow mining after he got there. He worked in almost every kind of work.

The Dardens had no trouble with the Indians crossing the plains. They saw one fight between the soldiers and the Indians. Once they saw signals and expected a battle with the Indians, but the battle did not come off.

On the way out of California, the Dardens met a number of families returning to the middle-west.

In 1865 the Dardens moved to Albany, Oregon. In 1867 they moved back to California.

Mr. Darden came to the Palouse country in 1883.

At first he worked for wages and then began to operate a farm himself. Darden's brother had come to the Palouse country to raise stock.

The method of travel from California to Palouse was by boat to Portland, and then by railroad to Walla Walla and Waitsburg.

At first home-steaded near Endicott, about six miles south of the town. Had 160 acres at first. Darden's brother and himself were partners in the stock business at first, and when they divided up their land, Mr. Darden had about 400 acres. The two together at one time had operated about 960 acres.

The Dardens raised horses and cattle chiefly until about 1895. They had from 40 to 50 horses and some 200 or 300 head of cattle. They sold their horses off the range. They sold one car-load of horses in Chicago.

At first, they raised Shires and Clydes and then finally some Percherons, because they had more permanent bones and joints and didn't get dead-head so easy. In 1907 sold five three-year-old horses at \$2.50 each. At first, they sold many of their horses at Ritzville. Altogether they sold about \$5,000 worth of horses in Ritzville.

Cattle were driven to Ellensburg and some to Coeur d'Alene. Old Rothrock bought cattle for the Coeur d'Alene miners. Stocks of cattle raised were Hereford and Shorthorns. Dardens were the first to bring the Shorthorn to Whitman County. Some of their cattle were sold over in the Puget Sound country.

Land at Endicott was being sold by the Oregon Improvement Company at from \$5.50 to \$6.50 an acre. Railroad land about LaCrosse could be bought for \$2.50 an acre.

At first the pioneers didn't think that they could raise wheat around Endicott and LaCrosse. So they raised stock. They began raising wheat extensively about 1892 or 1893. They raised wheat long enough to get in debt in the early 90's. Wheat sold for 17¢ a bushel in the depth of the depression. People worked for two bushels of wheat a day and were glad to get it.

At first, the banks didn't loan money for wheat raising on land that lay below Diamond. So the country below Diamond came out ahead because farmers hadn't borrowed so much money. Interest on mortgages was around 8%.

Lumber to build houses was first hauled from Palouse and Viola. Wood was also hauled from this vicinity.

First home was a cabin 16 by 20. In 1892 Mr. Darden built a good house. It contained nine rooms.

For harvesting machinery, bought headers and binders. The combine began to be used about 1908.

Trading was done at both Endicott and Colfax. There were good merchandise stores in both of these places.

The Russian-German population began to come into Endicott about 1890.

The first mail was received at Endicott at one of the stores. There was no LaCrosse at that time.

The nearest neighbors were about one-half mile away. The country was settled up very rapidly and in a very short time. There were many more people living in the neighborhood than there are now.

Cattle and horses were turned loose. There were no fences at that time. They ranged great distances. Bunch grass was the main feed. There was some salt grass and wire grass.

Some of the pioneers never fed their horses and cattle, but the Dardens always fed. The winters seemed to be colder than they are now. Often there was two feet of snow on the ground. Most of the pioneers let their

horses winter out on the bunch grass. The first school in the neighborhood was built in 1885. It ran three months at first, then six, and then nine.

For church, the people attended at Endicott. People went for five or six miles distance. Ministers would also hold religious services at school houses and private residences. There was a big camp meeting held over on Union Flat each summer.

The play and recreation of the early pioneers consisted chiefly of dances. They would go fifteen or twenty miles to attend them. Most of the people participated in the dances in those days. Visiting was another form of fellowship and recreation. When people went visiting, they likely would stay all night with their friends.

Neighbors were very friendly and helpful. They usually shared what ever they had with one another as milk, cows, potatoes, and so forth. When people got sick, neighbors went in to help them. The people were much more sociable and friendly than they are today.

A doctor lived at Endicott. Sometimes doctors would come from Colfax. The only epidemic that afflicted the people was a slight epidemic of small pox at one time.

Horses and cattle thieves operated through the country. In 1892 a stock association was formed, and its purpose was to drive out the thieves. It was organized on the plan of a lodge. If any man wanted to join the association and he was black-balled, a committee of three was appointed to examine his case and recommend whether he be taken in. At one time, as many as eight persons plead guilty of stealing horses. One old judge gave some of these men eight years in the penitentiary.

There were three men out of one family who were horse thieves.

Newspapers taken at the time were the San Francisco Examiner, the Colfax Gazette and Commoner, and later on the local Endicott paper. The Spokesman Review was taken twice a week by the Darden family at that time.

Mr. Darden has a stock range near LaCrosse and goes out to this ranch every day. He is still raising Hereford and Shorthorn cattle.