

Bunchgrass Historian

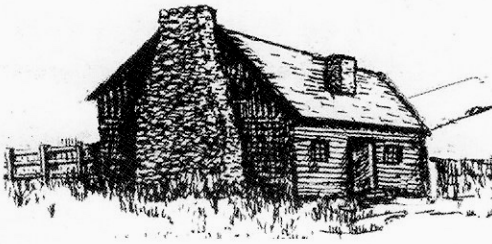


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- N. S. GOLDING AND COUGAR GOLD CHEESE
 - ATTEMPTS TO SUBDIVIDE WHITMAN COUNTY
 - ST. JOHN'S ACADEMY 1915-2015
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The *Bunchgrass Historian* is published by the Whitman County Historical Society. Its purpose is to further interest in the rich past of Whitman County.

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COVER

Dr. N. S. Golding checks the vacuum on different can sizes, 1950s

CONTENTS

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF N. S. GOLDING: The Father of WSU's Cougar Gold Cheese By Tim Marsh	4
THE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO SUBDIVIDE WHITMAN COUNTY By Robert E. King	10
ST. JOHN'S ACADEMY 1915-2015: A photo Essay	22

FROM THE EDITOR

Tim Marsh, long a member of the Pullman community and the WSU staff but now retired to Oregon, has maintained his interest in our area. He has used his time to research the "Life and Times of N. S. Golding, lead researcher for WSU's famous Cougar Gold Cheese," an article that has been posted on the website of the WSU Creamery. Tim submitted the article to us for republication, and we are happy to present here a slightly revised version of his work.

Robert King's article in this issue on unsuccessful attempts to further divide Whitman County is connected to his story printed in the previous *Bunchgrass Historian* on the 1883 subdivision of Whitman County. While researching for that article, Bob was surprised to find newspaper stories starting only a few years after 1883 telling of still more attempts to subdivide Whitman County. Those unexpected stories sparked his interest in further research on the topic. He was amazed by the many attempts to subdivide Whitman County and the many groups and individuals who were involved.

The Photo Essay on the St. John's Academy in Colfax is included here in honor of the 100 year anniversary of the building. It is part of an impressive complex of buildings at the south end of town, and the building has played a role in the lives of many area residents. The academy has a loyal group of alums who organized a reunion for all students in Colfax, June 29-30, 2012. The information presented here comes mainly from their Reunion Booklet.



N. S. Golding in his WSC laboratory, date unknown

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF N. S. GOLDING: THE FATHER OF WSU'S COUGAR GOLD CHEESE

By **Tim Marsh**

Since Cougar Gold Cheese from the Washington State University (WSU) Creamery in Pullman was developed in the 1930s and 1940s, its production, sales, and fame have increased over the years. But cheese namesake Norman Shirley Golding is not as famous as the cheese he helped develop as lead researcher at what was then Washington State College (WSC). For the record, the name "Cougar Gold," honoring Norman Golding and Butch, WSU's cougar mascot, was the result of a campus-wide contest.

The youngest of thirteen children, nine of whom survived to adulthood, Norman Golding was born Feb. 13, 1889, in the village of Plaxtol in the south of England in the county of Kent. His parents were Sarah ("Sally") Barton Golding and Thomas Golding. Kent, on England's southeast coast, is called the "Garden of England" because of the flowers and hops grown there. Hops are a key ingredient in beer. East Kent Golding Hops belong to the Golding Family of varieties, and is considered a premium hops that is celebrated in the U.K. and the U.S.

Norman said that in 1791 a Golding family member selected a hop that is the parent hop to more than half of the hops grown on the Pacific Coast in the U.S. and Canada. One establishment still serving beer made with Golding hops is Plaxtol's Golding Hop Pub. Golding family members have each enjoyed a pint or two there.

In his youth, Norman and three younger cousins were taught by his older sister Mabel at the family home, known as the Tree House. Then, he attended Sevenoaks (Kent) Grammar School until he was 15 years old. For about a year, he was ill and had little schooling. Finally, he studied for two years, graduating in 1907 from Retford Grammar, a boarding school in the county of Nottingham in England's Midlands. This was followed by two years at Midland Agricultural College, where he earned a first-class diploma and passed Royal Agricultural Society examinations in agriculture and dairying.

After several months seeking a job, he went to work in 1910 for a Derbyshire milk factory. Norman moved in late 1910 to Canada, joining his two older brothers in Ontario. He obtained a junior teaching post at Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph and also did research for \$50 a month in the science of cheesemaking, while working on his bachelor of science degree in agriculture (earned in 1914). There he met his future wife Marion (May) Hill, who worked in the college's poultry science department.

In 1914, the Canadian and U.S. governments increased agriculture education funding to fulfill the need for those trained in agriculture. Having a pick of schools

at which to study, Norman selected Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa, and studied there from June of that year until January 1915. His time at Iowa State University was cut short when patriotic duty called. Great Britain entered World War I on Aug. 4, 1914, when it declared war on Germany. Norman was the first of his college graduating class to return to Ontario and enlist as a Canadian Army private in the 91st Regiment Canadian Highlanders in Hamilton.

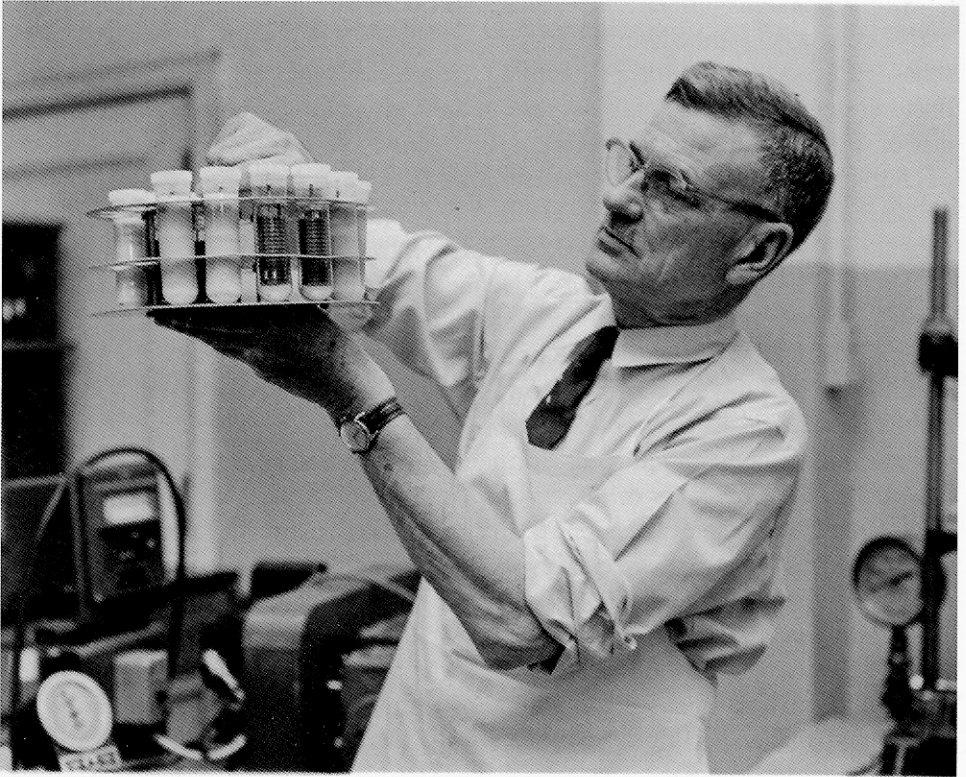
After six months, his regiment traveled as part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force to England and spent six months camped out. During that time he was promoted to corporal. "All I saw of war in 1915 were German Zeppelins (dirigibles/blimps) flying toward London to drop bombs," he wrote.

In January 1916, he was commissioned a first lieutenant in England's Royal Army Medical Corps Territorial Force. Since the British army had a shortage of medical doctors, he qualified for sanitation training because of his studies in bacteriology. After three months training in London, he took command of a London Sanitary Company unit of 27 soldiers and 1 other officer and later was promoted to captain. Just after Christmas in 1916, Norman and May married in a Plaxtol church. May had come over from Canada by ship with a convoy. While he served, she lived at Tree House and took jobs to help the war effort. One duty was counting hay bales loading for shipment to France to feed British army horses.

Norman and May had two months together before his division moved to the Bethune area of France, where he helped lead efforts dealing with water supplies, sewage (including manure from army horses), filtration, and chlorination of water. Typhoid was a major problem. Unlike British and Canadian troops, French soldiers were not inoculated and suffered many more illnesses and deaths as a result. Sanitary sections helped reduce mortality from disease. Because two or three men in each British army section were trained in filtration and chlorination of water, the results were healthy British soldiers, in contrast to sickly French troops.



*Royal Army Medical Corps member
N. S. Golding during World War I*



N. S. Golding in his WSC laboratory on April 19, 1955

Following the war, Norman remained in France several months to help deal with the fact that the Germans had left Tournai, Belgium, in “very bad sanitary shape, piles of garbage on every corner, a huge pile of fermenting horse manure with accompanying house flies in the middle of cavalry barracks.” When the work in Tournai was well under way, Norman was transferred as chief instructor to the Fifth Army Agricultural School for three months in Calais. There he provided agricultural training to soldiers before they returned to civilian life. Norman served in the British army until discharge in May 1919.

Thomas (“Tom”), Norman and May’s son, was born in 1918 in Sevenoaks, about seven miles from Plaxtol. In mid-summer 1919 the three Goldings sailed on the RMS Olympic transatlantic ocean liner to Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. It was filled with Canadian troops, as well as mothers and children.

While May and Tom stayed in Ontario, Norman traveled to the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver. For 17 months, he taught former soldiers through the Soldiers Civic Reestablishment Program (SCR). The focus of the SCR was teaching agricultural skills for use in civilian life. Norman taught how to make cheese.

Following Norman's SCR duties, he became a member of the UBC faculty, and May and Tom joined him in Vancouver. For six summers he attended graduate school at Iowa State University, earning a master of science degree in 1924 and a doctoral degree in 1929, both degrees in dairy mycology. The titles of his theses demonstrate his continuing interest and growing expertise in the practical science of cheesemaking: *Wensleydale Cheese: Part 1, Manufacture on the Coast of British Columbia; Part 2, Mycological and Chemical Studies* (1924) and *Some Factors Affecting the Growth of Penicillium Roqueforti in Cheese* (1929).

In 1932 as a ramification of Depression economic woes, Norman lost his job when the UBC agricultural department suffered a 66 percent budget cut. Well known and qualified, he was hired for a temporary position at WSC in Pullman filling in while a faculty member and Iowa State University graduate, Hans Bendixen, dairy science professor, was on leave, 1932-1933.

After Bendixen returned, Norman went across the border from Pullman to Moscow to the University of Idaho (UI). During the 1933-1934 academic year, he filled in for UI associate professor of dairying Donald Theophilus, who was on leave completing his doctoral degree at Iowa State. Theophilus later became president of UI.

In Oct. 1934, Norman returned to WSC as an associate professor and later became professor in its dairy program. In Pullman the Golding family lived on College Hill. Son Tom attended and graduated from Pullman High School and WSC (Bachelor of Science, 1939). In 1943 he earned a medical doctor degree from McGill University, Montreal.

During Norman's WSC tenure (1934-1955), he discovered how to can cheese without carbon dioxide building up and exploding cans. At that time, before plastic (shrink-wrap, sealed bags etc.) was used to package food items, cheese was commonly encased in wax, but the wax often cracked. When WWII started, the U.S. government and the American Can Company helped fund Norman's research, which was assisted by undergraduate and graduate students.

While Cougar Gold is Norman's best known accomplishment, he had other successes. A Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Norman continued his research in the dairy program after retiring from WSC in 1956. He helped develop a process of curing canned cheese, a simple chemical test for bacteria in milk, and a rapid, but reliable test for determining the amount of non-fat milk solids. Some research was funded by the American Dairy Association and what he called "generous financial support" from the college/university. He was author of many articles and bulletins, and a participant in international dairy conferences in Sweden, Holland, Italy, and England.

"He was always inventing something," said Jerry D. Clarke, WSC Class of 1942, one of the students who worked with Norman on the development of Cougar Gold Cheese. "Dr. Golding was the Thomas A. Edison of WSU," Clarke wrote in a

1994 letter, equating Norman with the famous American inventor. Looking back on his time at WSC/WSU, Norman said his research and working with undergraduate and grad students, faculty, and staff was “congenial, helpful and cooperative” as well as “rewarding.”

May died in Pullman in 1961 after a long illness. When Norman left Pullman in the mid-1960s, he moved to Victoria, British Columbia, with second wife E. Louise Nasmyth Golding, a retired WSC music faculty member. After Louise died in Victoria, Norman married Margery Excell Golding, a nurse. She soon became ill and succumbed several years later.

Norman led an active retirement that included extensive travel, especially to visit his four grandchildren in Tampa, where their parents, Tom and daughter-in-law, Lois, lived and worked. Norman died at age 95 on Aug. 30, 1984, in Victoria. His ashes are buried near the chapel at Victoria’s St. Stephens Anglican Church Cemetery.

His grandchildren have fond memories of their grandfather, whom they called “the Professor.” They speak of his pronounced British accent, sense of humor and hearty laugh, his 6-foot height, his mustache, the eyeglasses he wore, the fact he always smoked a pipe, played golf, liked to swim, fish, travel and read (especially British authors), and drank scotch.

SOURCES FOR THIS ARTICLE include Dr. Tom Golding, a “Palouse Profile” from the July 11, 1968, issue of the Pullman Herald; a letter written by Norman and his brief autobiography, “How I survived to 89 years of Age;” an article about him from the March 29, 1979, Victoria, B.C., Times; WSU HillTopics, Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries; and interviews with Russ Salvadalena and Marc Bates, respective manager and former manager of the WSU Creamery.



From the left: Original 1940s 64 oz. Cougar Gold can. Middle: 1970's 40 oz. American Cheddar can. Right: 1990s 30 oz. Cougar Gold can.

THE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO SUBDIVIDE WHITMAN COUNTY

By Robert E. King

Introduction

On November 28, 1883, after much controversy, the western portion of Whitman County was split off to form present-day Franklin and Adams Counties. The prime reason was that the western part of the county was difficult and expensive to administer due to virtually no roads and railroad lines scarcely started. That division left Whitman County as we know it today for size, but during the following 32 years there were several unsuccessful attempts to further subdivide the county. The issue came to a head in 1903, when a heated debate was held in Pullman that drew hundreds of people from all over the county. This was the high-water mark of the “divisionists’” efforts to split up the county, but other efforts would follow.

1889 to 1894 Three Subdivision Attempts

Attempts to further subdivide Whitman County began in 1889, scarcely six years after Whitman County’s subdivision in 1883. The citizens of Oakesdale, discontent with the county’s size, proposed a northern split, creating a new county with Oakesdale as the county seat. On February 2, 1889, (p. 2), the *Pullman Herald* on reported the opening salvo in what would be a festering issue of splitting Whitman County. “Oaksdale¹ has petitioned Congress to divide Whitman county and create a new county, bounded as follows: Beginning at the northeast corner of Whitman county, running north six miles, west to the east line of Lincoln county, thence south six miles, west six miles, thence south to the southwest corner of township 18, north of range 39 east Willamette [Meridian], then east to the Idaho line, thence north to the place of beginning.” The petition stated that the fact that the county was too large was “generally recognized by everyone outside of Colfax, and that it must be divided is the natural consequence.”²

This plan was daring. It would have removed not only the northern part of Whitman County and placed it into a new county later proposed to be called “Steptoe County,” but it also would have added a 6-mile east-west band of southern Spokane County to the new county. Oakesdale wanted to become the county seat to gain all the benefits that came with that position, including many new jobs as well as being the focus of the new county’s business.

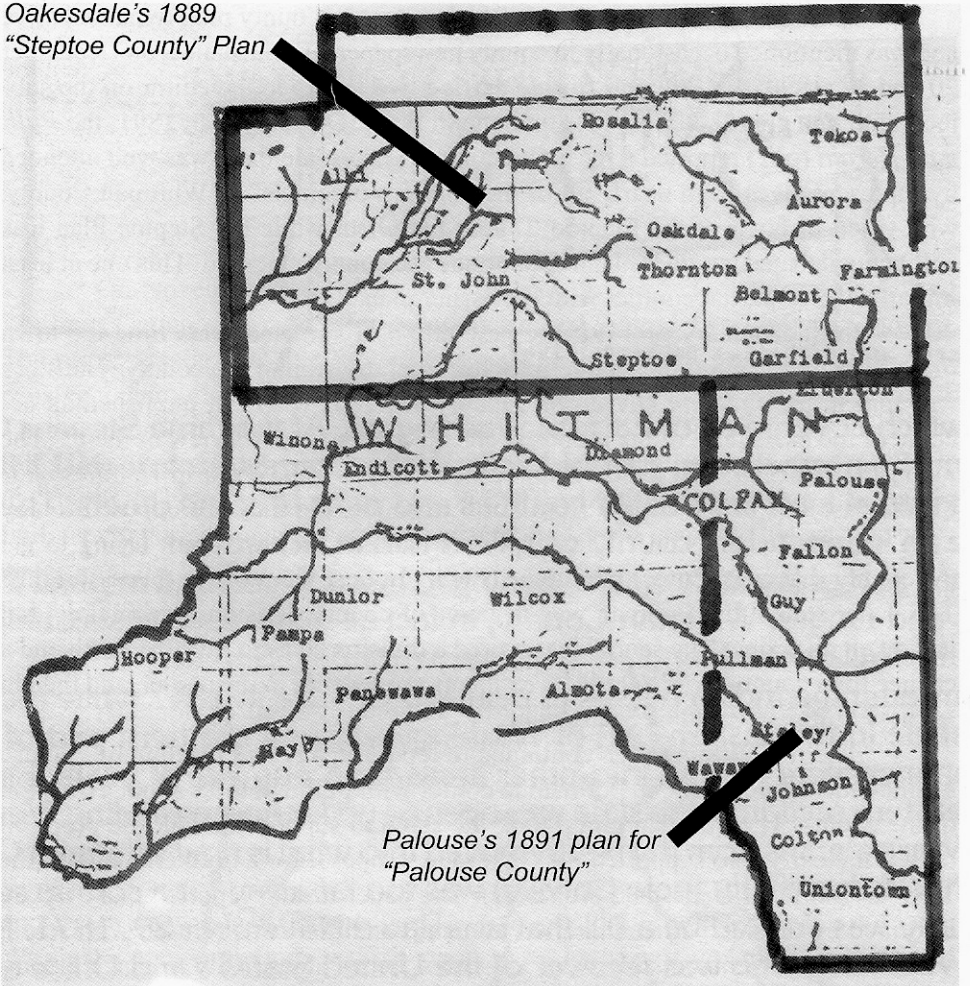
During 1890 and into early 1891, the Steptoe County plan remained alive and was mentioned occasionally in county newspapers. For instance, on December 20 and 27, 1890, the *Pullman Herald* carried two letters to the editor on the subject, with one opposed to the idea and one in favor. On January 3, 1891, the *Pullman Herald* (p. 1) reported a recent meeting in Oakesdale that “was well attended by representatives from nearly all of the northern precincts” of Whitman County, who voted in favor of the Steptoe County Plan. But while the Steptoe Plan was still being debated, another plan to subdivide the county emerged. This one at least initially was in partial conflict with the earlier plan.

In mid-January of 1891, the new proposal surfaced. This time the town of Palouse was leading the charge for a different division of the county. The story was told in the *Pullman Herald* on January 17, 1891 (p. 1). It published an account of the basic facts of the proposed change and the paper’s view of them. “The Palouse City scheme for the division of the county is to take a strip 13 miles wide off the east side of the county from north to south, and they are opposed to any other scheme for division.” The supporters claimed they were not trying to get the county seat at Palouse, “but the facts will not bear them out in this assertion.” The paper stated that Pullman was in favor of county division on principle, but had taken no action. The sentiment favored a division so as to give the north end a chance for a county of its own as its residents moved first in the matter, and then in fairness Pullman would be heard from.

The *Herald* story then continued to report on a recent meeting of Palouse businessmen, who came to Pullman to confer with Pullman folks about a division of the county. The Pullman group took the stand to support the Palouse proposal only if it clearly also supported the Oakesdale proposal for a northern county (the 1889 division that Oakesdale promoted). The paper further reported that “we are informed by outside parties that the Pullman [condition] was refused with scorn, and a delegation immediately went to Colfax from Palouse City to make a combination with the Colfax people to assist them in their scheme of division.” Any southern division of the county would not succeed without the support of Pullman, and the paper said: “Pullman has not yet asked for division, although she may be forced to do so. In the mean time the northern part has our sympathy for division on the north.”

Two weeks later, on Jan. 31, 1891, the *Pullman Herald* carried a front-page interview with Senator Fariss, who gave his views on the possibility of success of either the original 1889 Oakesdale Plan to divide off the northern part of the county, or the 1891 Palouse Plan to divide off the eastern side into a narrow north-south strip of land. The Senator reported that many state legislators were opposed to creating narrow “shoe string” counties as Palouse proposed. In contrast, Senator Fariss thought that the legislature would support passage of the earlier Steptoe County Plan.

Oakesdale's 1889
"Steptoe County" Plan



Palouse's 1891 plan for
"Palouse County"

But it didn't. On February 21, 1891, the *Pullman Herald* (p. 4) reported that legislative proposals to subdivide Whitman County had stalled. It was also noted that a "Mr. Holt presented a petition with 1,800 signatures against a division of Whitman county. Someone, for a joke, asked to have the names read, but this was laughed down." The legislature produced no results toward the creation of either a Palouse County or a Steptoe County.

The next attempt at dividing Whitman County is found in a 1894 claim that Pullman was interested in a plan to subdivide Whitman County. It was enough to make statewide papers and was viewed as a matter of increasing Pullman's political influence at the expense of other towns. This time, however, the idea was not to split off the northern part of Whitman County, but instead to create a new county in the southeastern part of Whitman County, for which Pullman would be the county seat.

The *Yakima Herald* on February 1, 1894, ran a short article on its front page about this controversial idea, headlined “Pullman wants a division of Whitman county.” The new county, to be known as Washington County, was to include “all of Whitman county lying south of the North Palouse river, east of Guy [the pre-1900 name for Albion] and west of the Idaho line.” This was a daring idea, but judging by the lack of follow-up stories about this proposal in the Pullman and Colfax papers, this plan seems to have gotten little if any traction and may have been more rumor than truth. Yet as later events in 1902-1903 would demonstrate, the idea was far from dying. It was just biding its time and would be unleashed again when it could find an ally.

1902-1903 Subdivision Plans

In late 1902, the even bolder idea of creating two new counties out of Whitman began making news that would last into 1903 and beyond. It was a plan that was even more alarming to many county residents as it was a fusion of the old Oakedale idea to split off the northern part of the county with the more recent Pullman plan to split off the southeastern part. Once this became known through rumors, it created heated debate and bad feelings between Colfax, with all those



The Whitman County Courthouse in Colfax constructed in 1893

who wanted to keep the county intact for their own reasons, versus the “divisionists” in Oakesdale and Pullman and their allies. Considerable interest was aroused throughout Whitman County by the publication of these rumors of a county division scheme, which it was said would be brought up in the coming session of the state legislature.

On December 18, 1902, a press dispatch sent out from Colfax gave voice to the rumors, just arrived in Colfax, of a scheme to divide Whitman County into three counties, making Oakesdale the county seat of one county and Pullman the county seat of another new county, leaving Colfax the seat of a much smaller Whitman County. The reports caused a sensation. The press release reported a movement to gather petitions to be presented to the legislature and that they were being freely signed. When the circulating of the petitions began, Garfield, Colfax, Elberton, Endicott and many other points were reported to be up in arms against the new 3-county plan. Dr. J. A. Dix, representative-elect of the Eighth District, and C. L. MacKenzie, representative-elect from the Seventh District, lived in Garfield and Colfax respectively, and they were expected to oppose the measure.

The new Oakesdale-centered county (with somewhat different boundaries than the earlier Oakesdale Plan) was a scheme supported by senator-elect E. E. Hailey, of Oakesdale, and representative-elect G. W. Witters, of Thornton. The proposed new county would be 19 miles wide from north to south and 42 miles long from east to west. Rosalia, Tekoa, Farmington, Garfield, Thornton, Sunset, St. John and Pine City would be in the proposed new county. The project included the northern tier of sections in township 17 for the purpose of including the town of Garfield, which lies on both sides of the township line.

Rumor had it that Pullman was also preparing to ask for a new county, of which it was to be the seat of government, and that it was working hand in glove with Oakesdale. Dr. G. B. Wilson of Pullman, senator-elect of the Eighth District, and J. E. Durham of Colton, representative-elect from the Seventh District, were supposed to favor any move looking toward the formation of a new county with Pullman as the seat of government. If they joined with Oakesdale in pressing the matter in the legislature, it would give the scheme or schemes the support of both senators and two of the four representatives of Whitman County.

On December 20, 1902, the *Pullman Herald* introduced Pullman residents to the revived county division plan by printing the Colfax press dispatch for its readers. While it gave background information about the proposals, it also cast some of it as rumor that had been printed in Colfax’s newspaper. Pullman’s article was published under the headline: “To Divide Whitman Co. -- Rumored Division Scheme.” The prior day, December 19, the *Spokesman-Review* had printed an article on the controversy in Whitman County. The *Colfax Gazette* shot back on December 26 (p. 4): “The ‘scare head’ article in the *Spokesman-Review* of the 19th inst., regarding the division of Whitman county, would naturally lead people to

believe that Colfax was in an intense stage of excitement over the proposition. As a matter of fact, the citizens of Colfax have long since ceased worrying about this county division scheme which Oakesdale has to spring about every so often.” Colfax, it seems, was trying to downplay the revival of Oakesdale’s idea as something almost laughable, which wouldn’t work. “Every so often some one has to spring this long dead idea upon an unsuspecting public. It serves but one purpose, and that is to make staunch friends for Colfax.”

The next issue of the *Pullman Herald*, on December 27, included a short editorial statement on the second page to “set the record straight.” The editorial took exception with what had been printed earlier in the Colfax paper (and reprinted in the prior Pullman paper) and in other Whitman County newspapers by saying: “Some of our friends at Colfax, Palouse, Garfield and elsewhere, having been saying bad things about Pullman because of her ‘attempt to divide Whitman county.’ If they would read this issue of the HERALD what Pullman really thinks of the matter, they may look at it in a different light.” The paper asserted that Pullman would welcome becoming a county seat, if Whitman should ever be cut up. But this was not the time.

A longer article in the same paper (p. 5) was titled: “DIVISION NOT FAVORED – SENTIMENT AGAINST IT.” It stated: “The idea of county division as advanced in some localities has not met with the spontaneous outburst of approval which backers had anticipated, but rather there seems a preponderance of the opinion that old Whitman should not be shorn of her power and grandeur by being cut up into three counties at this time.”

The article repeated the view that while every resident of Pullman confidently expected the day to come when a denser population and improved financial conditions would make the division necessary, there were few who thought the time was ripe for division. It further asserted that passage of needed railroad legislation and funding for the agricultural college in Pullman were the important matters before the legislature and would require the united energy and the attention of Whitman County legislators. “If they do their full duty by Whitman’s interests in regard to the passage of adequate railroad legislation, and see that the agricultural college is dealt with as liberally as the needs of the institution demand, they will have little time to give to the furtherance of a division scheme.”

The response by Colfax in the next issue of the *Colfax Gazette* on January 2, 1903 (p. 3), was of relief with Pullman’s stance. The paper pointed out that other county newspapers beside Pullman’s were also opposed to the idea, with the lone – and predictable – exception being Oakesdale’s paper. The stance of the *Garfield Enterprise* was characterized by the comment that “every Whitman county town that has a state senator has aspirations to become a county seat. If this ambition is satisfied, old Whitman county like ancient Gaul, will be divided into three parts and, like Gaul, be gobbled by little Caesars in the shape of small

politicians who want office.” The *Colton News-Letter* summed up the attitude of its citizen, admitting the convenience of Pullman as its county seat, but expressing the concern about building a new courthouse after paying for one a decade earlier. “A new county seat would mean a new court house, new office furniture, new supplies. Now, unfortunately for Pullman, there are several highflyers in that town who happen to be among the leading spirits, and no makeshift court house would satisfy them. A repetition of the debt-producing schemes of ten years ago would surely be the program if the change should be made as proposed.” The same Colfax paper further mentioned recent meetings in Rosalia and Farmington that similarly opposed the division of the county for mostly economic reasons. The issue came to a head in Pullman in a remarkable public debate involving hundreds of county residents.

January 21, 1903, Debate in Pullman

On January 23, 1903, the *Pullman Herald* reported that over 400 Whitman County residents from outside of Pullman had flooded into Pullman’s old Opera House (called the Auditorium) on Grand Avenue to hear a very lively debate about the possible division of Whitman County. A lengthy article (p. 2) told what transpired under the headline: “DIVISION IS DEBATED: Whitman County Versus the City of Pullman. Pullman Was Treated to a Crowd, Heard a Brass Band and also Listened to Oratory.”

The debate was organized by Colfax, which had secured the Pullman auditorium for the afternoon of Wednesday, January 21, 1903. It was not definitely settled until Wednesday morning that Pullman would accept the challenge to debate with the anti-divisionists, including many from Colfax. However, the Colfax people were determined to hold a meeting, even if the divisionists refused to debate the question with them. The time of the meeting was set for 2 o’clock in the afternoon and the large auditorium was “filled to its utmost capacity by an eager, expectant, and enthusiastic audience.”

By noon about 250 citizens of Colfax had arrived in Pullman to attend the debate. By 2 pm an additional 150 citizens from Rosalia, Farmington, Garfield, and Palouse had arrived. The Colfax people had brought a band and the Rosalia citizens carried a banner, which had become famous all over Whitman County, although it had been in use only two weeks. It read: “Old Whitman County, with her historic name, shall never be divided.” Reportedly, the Rosalia people have “gone down the line with their banner and have practically defeated the divisionists in the northern part of the county.”

The Colfax band furnished music for the occasion, and ex-Senator R. C. McCroskey of Garfield presided over the meeting. Mr. McCroskey stated briefly the object of the meeting and introduced William Goodyear, who opened his address by asking the question: “Can you run three counties as cheaply as you run

one?" Mr. Goodyear spoke for 20 minutes "dwelling upon and refuting the claims of the divisionists that the proposed new county could be run at a proportionately less taxation than that which exists in Whitman county at the present time." He referred to the tax levies of all the small counties of the state and compared them with the tax levy of Whitman county and the proposed new county. "He showed that Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Lincoln and Stevens counties enjoyed a tax levy for current expense which ranged from 5.5 mills to 8.43 mills, while Whitman county only levied for that fund 4.60 mills." Mr. Goodyear referred to the *Pullman Herald* of December 27 [1902], which published interviews of citizens of Pullman who were against division for the simple reason that it would increase taxation. Mr. Goodyear inquired how it was that some of these same men were now advocating division because it would reduce taxation.

W. V. Windus, vice president of the Pullman State Bank, was the next speaker. He produced a blackboard chart and proceeded to show the figures for the necessary tax-levy of the proposed new county. However, it turned out that his figures came from a circular, sent out earlier by the divisionists, which claimed an assessed valuation of \$5,000,000 in the proposed Pullman County, whereas the county records only showed something like \$2,800,000 as an assessed valuation. It appeared that all of the Pullman figures were juggled in the same reckless manner.

D. F. Anderson, of Rosalia, then spoke against the division of Whitman County and explained that the people of Oakesdale could not hope to be set off as a county, since a majority of the voters of that county had remonstrated against the proposed division. Mr. Anderson's speech was "full of good, sound, logical argument against division." He called upon the people of Pullman to make good their statement that they were against the division of the county if the northern county was not cut off.

The next speaker was H. J. Welty, of Pullman, who said that he was unable to keep figures in his head, invariably getting them mixed. The paper sarcastically added: "This was practically the only true statement which the gentleman made." H. W. Canfield, a member of the board of regents of the Agricultural College and School of Science, spoke next against the proposed division as being detrimental to the interests of the college. The paper noted that Canfield "proved beyond the question" that Pullman was taking great risks in dividing or attempting to divide old Whitman County. He "grew earnest and eloquent in his address and his words went home to the hearts of his hearers. Undoubtedly his speech will have weight upon many people in the proposed Pullman county."

The *Pullman Herald* clearly indicated its preference as it reported that "John W. Mathews consumed 20 minutes of valuable time in one of the bitterest innuendo speeches ever delivered in Whitman county." He did not attempt to discuss the subject; "he only offered insults to the people of Colfax and Whit-



Oakesdale's large public school built in 1893 in anticipation of the town's continued growth

man county.” Plus “Every word which he uttered was foreign to the subject under discussion”.

J. C. Lawrence of Garfield followed Mathews and remarked upon taking the platform that “he was very glad that he had not preceded the gentleman.” Lawrence delivered a pleasing and convincing speech against division, in “a happy contrast to the speech of Mr. Mathews.” He produced facts and figures to prove all of Pullman’s claims to be false. “He was given the best attention by the entire audience of any speaker of the afternoon.”

Parker Kimball closed the argument for Pullman. He reiterated the statement that unless the Oakesdale county was to be cut off, Pullman did not desire division; but “if the northern county was established then Pullman demanded to be set off from Whitman county.” Further, “he also added that Pullman people had every reason to believe the assurances of Oakesdale that the northern county would be established and in view of that fact Pullman would continue to work to that end.”

J. C. Lawrence closed the debate with a 10-minute summary of the afternoon’s addresses. Reportedly, the audience sat from 2:00 until 5:30, giving good attention to the speakers for both sides. However, during the afternoon some of the “hoodlums of Pullman” stole the Rosalia anti-division banner “This act of vandalism is not very becoming to the dignity of a town of Pullman’s ambitions. Otherwise the afternoon passed pleasantly and the visitors were treated very considerably by the individual citizens of Pullman.”

The Aftermath of the January 21, 1903, Pullman Debate

The *Colfax Gazette*, on January 23, just two days after the debate, was all but gleeful in reporting that the Tekoa newspaper was also unconvinced about the “scheme.” The Colfax paper told of Tekoa’s skepticism, quoting the *Tekoa Blade* as saying, “Candor compels us to state that we will have to see some stronger argument advanced in favor of the scheme than we have yet seen to demonstrate its expediency. Don’t lose any sleep, brother, they can’t show you—they’re all up.”

The same issue of the Colfax paper also contained a map (p. 8) labeled “As They Would Carve It.” Perhaps due to non-support of the plan by southern Spo-

kane County towns, the original idea proposed by Oakesdale in 1889 was amended to exclude them. Instead, the map showed the northern boundary of the proposed northern break-away county to be the existing northern border of Whitman County.

But there was more. The January 23, 1903 *Colfax Gazette* (p. 4) presented additional arguments against Pullman's promotion of the division of Whitman County, concluding that "...Pullman, as a city, will be far better off without being the county seat of a small county." It also restated that the plan was hatched by ambitious politicians who were not considering the economic backlash that could affect the college funding. Indeed, the Colfax paper warned: "Pullman cannot afford to run the risk of losing her school, or any portion thereof, simply to gain the empty honor of being the seat of government of the smallest county in the state... If Whitman county is shorn of her prestige, the Agricultural college is bound to suffer. It is inevitable."

The article concluded with colorful admonitions to the people of Pullman: "Don't allow your politicians to gratify their own personal ambitions and sacrifice the interests of that institution of learning upon the altar of Mammon; don't allow them to compel you to bow down to the golden god of greed. They have done just such things in the past and they are ready at this time to offer up a burnt offering that their sins may not seem so great before the eyes of the people! Think again, Pullman!"

On January 30, the *Colfax Gazette* (p. 4) added a new twist. It framed the division scheme as a raw political maneuver to gain votes by an ambitious former senator, John L. Wilson, whose support was strongest in Pullman and Oakesdale. This contradicted what a rival Colfax paper, the *Commoner*, had recently printed, attributing the division scheme instead to Levi Ankeny "for the sole purpose of securing votes for himself for United States Senator" with support by the railroad lobby.

According to the *Pullman Herald*, Jan. 31 (p. 1), Colfax people were visiting the county school houses, holding meetings in an attempt to turn public opinion against the division of Whitman county. Speakers from Pullman were often present, and some animated discussions were held. Despite the optimism expressed by the Pullman paper, the three-way division of Whitman County was not to be. A week later, the matter was settled.

On February 20, 1903, the *Colfax Gazette* (p. 2) happily told the results. The state senate committee on county boundaries had listened to the arguments of the divisionists and anti-divisionists on the afternoon of February 18 in Olympia. About 40 people appeared before the committee and gave their reasons why the county of Whitman should or should not be divided. Attorney R. A. Hutchinson of Oakesdale presented the argument for the creation of Steptoe County, and John W. Mathews of Pullman followed with his argument for the creation of Palouse County. Then D. F. Anderson of Rosalia and J. C. Lawrence of Garfield spoke

against division. Representatives C. L. MacKenzie and J. M. Klemgard were present in the committee meeting and worked against the bill. MacKenzie, the only Democrat from Whitman County in the legislature, declared that the whole business started in a row in the Democratic Party in Whitman County. Finally, the argument in committee was closed by Joshua M. Palmerton of Pullman, who spoke at some length in favor of the creation of the new county of Palouse. The committee majority did not support any division of Whitman County.

When the division bill came up in the senate on February 19, the committee majority report favored an indefinite postponement. The senate voted 26 to 16 for the majority report, so the issue was shelved. The February 21, 1903, *Pullman Herald* (p. 4) put it simply: "There will be no division of Whitman county at this session of the legislature."

Later Attempts to Subdivide Whitman County

Nonetheless, in less than a year, the idea of changing Whitman County's boundaries was again in the news, but by new proponents with a much different plan. Lamont, Rock Lake (later Ewan), and Revere took up the banner. Rather than desiring to become part of a new county in northernmost Whitman County, they wanted to detach the northwestern most part of Whitman County and include it in neighboring Lincoln County. The reason given in a petition to the Whitman County Commissioners was that the area was closer to Sprague in Lincoln County where they did their business, including marketing crops. Supporters also argued that reaching the Lincoln County courthouse in Davenport was easier than traveling to Colfax.

The outcome was reported in the July 9, 1904, *Pullman Herald* (p. 7). The county commissioners had refused the petition of the voters in the four northwestern townships to call a special election to vote on their proposition. The Colfax papers also carried the story, including the notion that this was the first step in a possible power play by Sprague to become a county seat by adding lands not only from Whitman County but also from nearby Lincoln and Spokane Counties.³

In early 1911, the *Colfax Gazette* carried news of yet another ill-fated plan to create a new county that would have involved cutting off a portion of Whitman County. This time, land in western Whitman County near Washtucna would be detached and added to portions of two other neighboring counties, Franklin and Adams (themselves created from Whitman in 1883). In this plan Washtucna in Adams County would become the new county seat. Not surprisingly, the *Colfax Gazette's* February 3, 1911 edition (p. 4) opposed the idea saying: "There is about as much need for a new county in the territory named as a wagon has for the fifth wheel." Apparently most everyone agreed, and the idea disappeared from later newspapers.

But that was still not the end of it. In early 1915, yet another plan surfaced to detach part of north Whitman County and join it with a portion of southern Spokane County. It was another version or alteration of the same idea promoted by Oakesdale over 25 years earlier. And again, the new county would be called "Step-toe County." Colfax's *Commoner* for February 12, 1915, reported the story under a front page headline: "A Fight to Divide Whitman May Be On At Olympia Soon." It stated that papers and plans had been forwarded from the northern townships to Representative Black of Pomeroy, who is to introduce the bill to take a strip of territory from northern Whitman south to Steptoe, thereby cutting off nearly three townships south from the northern line, and taking from Spokane County one and a half townships to the north. What drove the 1915 plan was a feeling that northern Whitman County was being unfairly treated and that it was too distant from Colfax. In any case, the idea of dividing off northern Whitman County did not appear to have made much if any impression in other towns.

Conclusions

From the perspective of history, it was customary in county formation dating back to colonial times for the earliest counties to include large areas that would later be subdivided (and frequently many times) to create smaller counties. This was in response to new needs for a closer seat of government that arose with increased population and economic development. This pattern played out from the east coast to the west coast, including in Washington Territory (and later State), with Whitman County an example. Its origin in 1871 was as a subdivision from the older and larger Stevens County that once took up most of northeastern Washington after its creation from Walla Walla County in 1863. In turn, in 1883 Whitman County itself was subdivided to allow for the formation of Adams and Franklin Counties. This process of creating new counties from older ones continued statewide until the last Washington county was created in 1911. This was Pend Oreille County, taken from Stevens County. In this context, what was happening in Whitman County from at least 1889 into 1915, with its citizens in some areas attempting to form a new county, was within the norm of how new counties were formed.

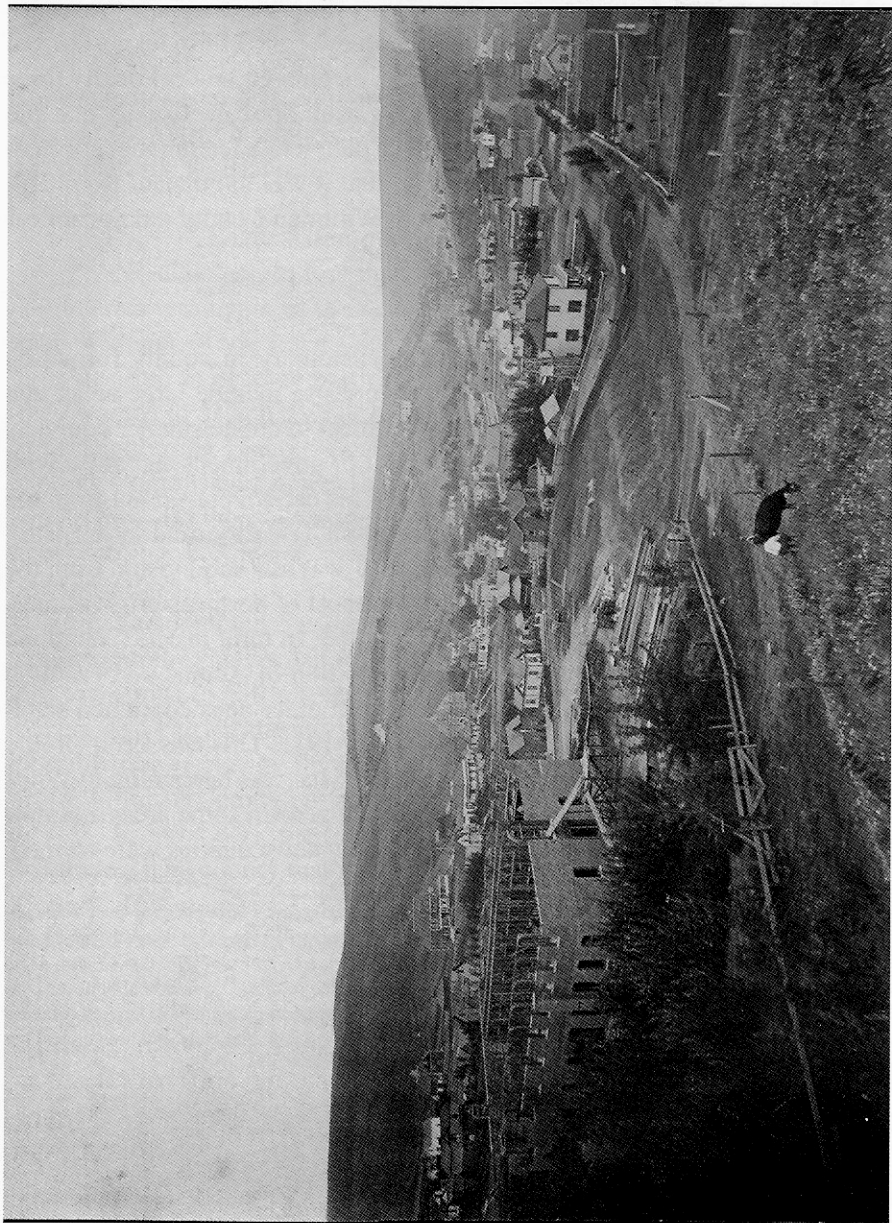
1 In the later 1880s, the spelling of Oakesdale was frequently given as "Oaksdale," with even the post office using this spelling for a time on its postmarks. Later, some county newspapers still used the "Oaksdale" spelling.

2 This wording was similar to what was later printed in 1901 in *An Illustrated History of Whitman County, State of Washington* by W. H. Lever, Publisher. Lever speculated (p. 112) that the proposal "was probably never considered by Congress." A word of explanation: The Oakesdale promoted petition had gone to Congress directly because Washington as a territory did not have the power to create counties. Only after statehood was this power available by action of the State legislature.

3 *Colfax 100 Plus* by Edith E. Erickson, self-published, 1981, p. 11.

ST. JOHN'S ACADEMY 1915-2015

In 1913, St. Patrick Parish, Colfax, received a bequest to enable the parish to build a boarding and day school. The construction began in 1914 and classes began on September 7, 1915.



The construction of St. John's Academy is shown at the left of this panorama, taken from behind the site, looking northwest across Mill Street.



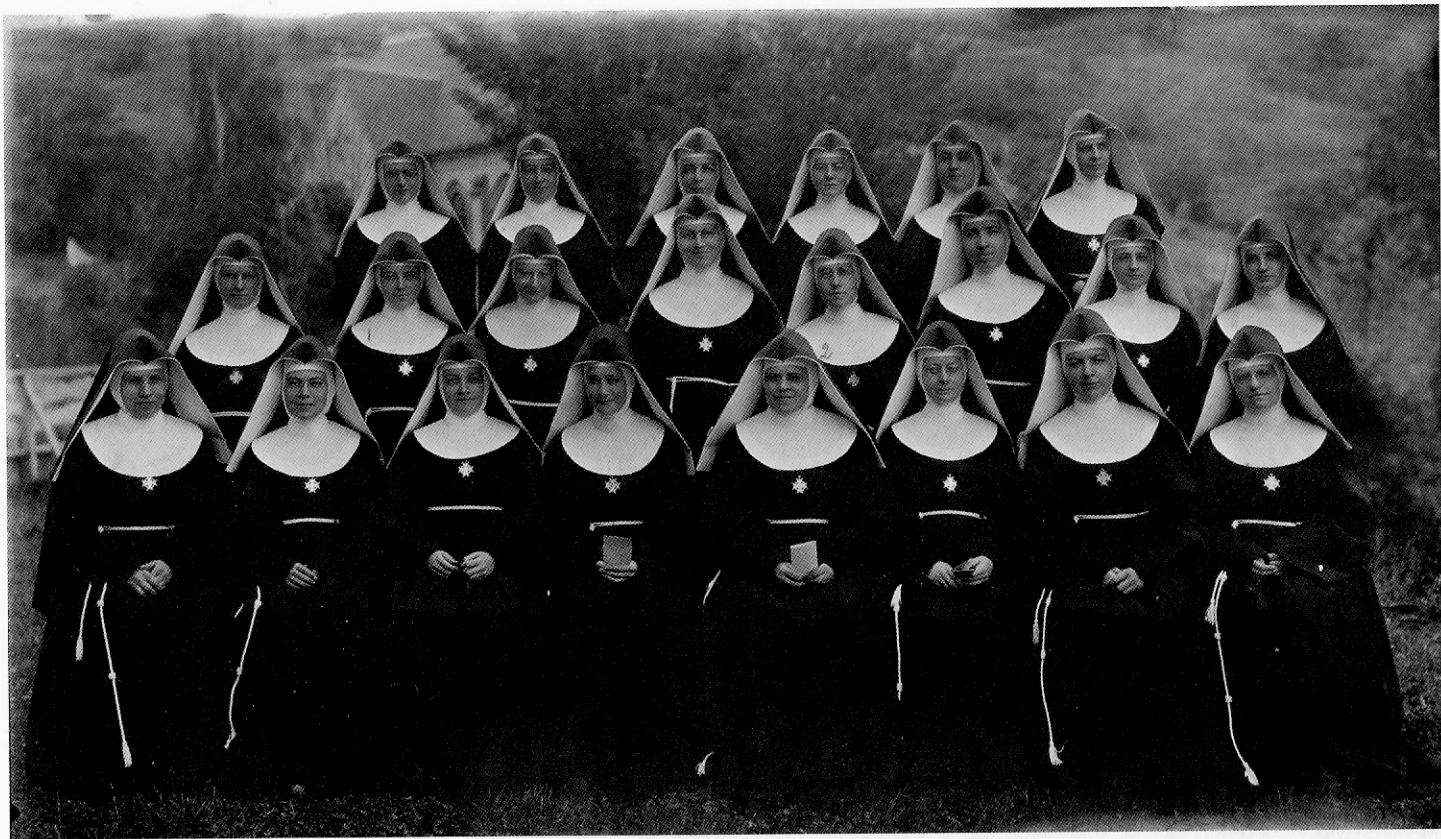
This view taken shortly after 1915 shows St. Ignatius Hospital (built 1893-94) on the left, St. John's Academy in middle, and St. Patrick Church (built 1894-95) on right.



*Panorama taken from south hill looking directly down Main Street
This clearly shows the relationship of these three Catholic structures on the south edge of Colfax.*

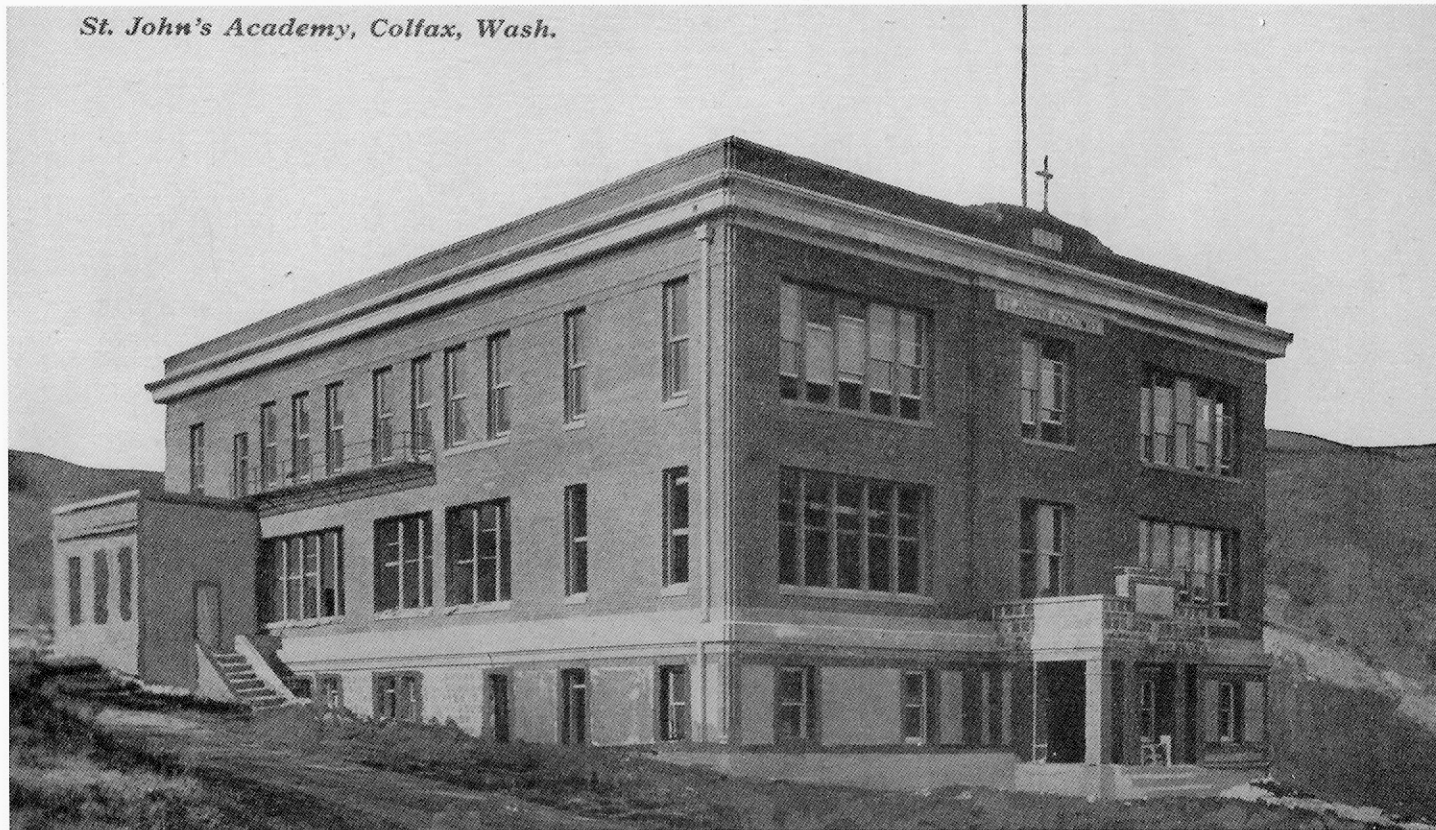


*The side of the St. John's Academy towards the Church
The original plan called for the ravine to be filled in – a task only accomplished in 1948.*

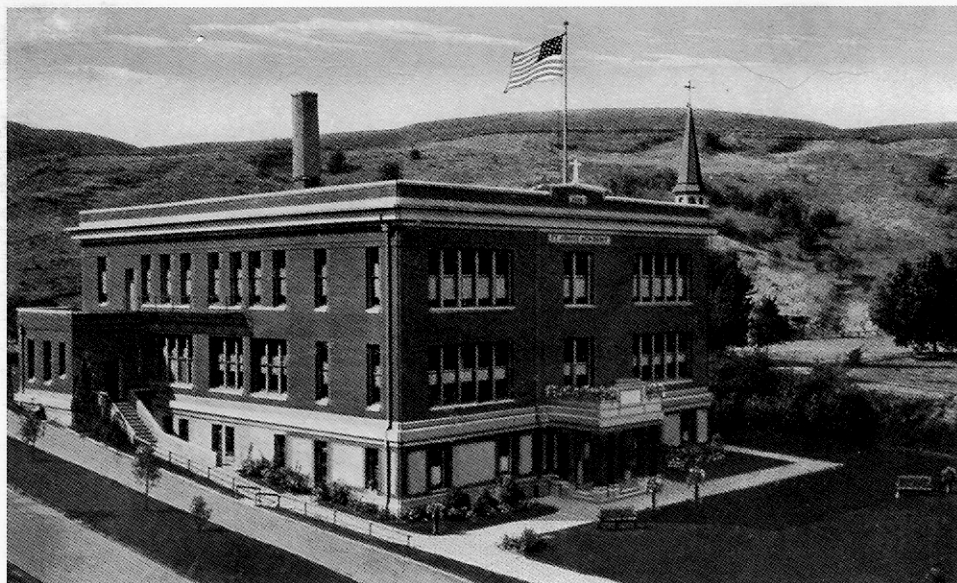


Group portrait of the Franciscian Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, the Order that ran the school 1915-1938. In 1924, these Sisters purchased the school from the parish. In 1938, the Franciscian Sisters sold the Academy to St. Ignatius Hospital (Sisters of Providence). The hospital used the building in part for their nursing education program and continued the parish school in two classrooms of the building.

St. John's Academy, Colfax, Wash.



In 1954, the Sisters of Providence sold the Academy to the parish. The Sisters continued to staff the school until it was closed in 1966. The St. John's Academy building continues to serve as the parish hall.



St. John's Academy as it appeared in the late 1940s

Bunchgrass Historian



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