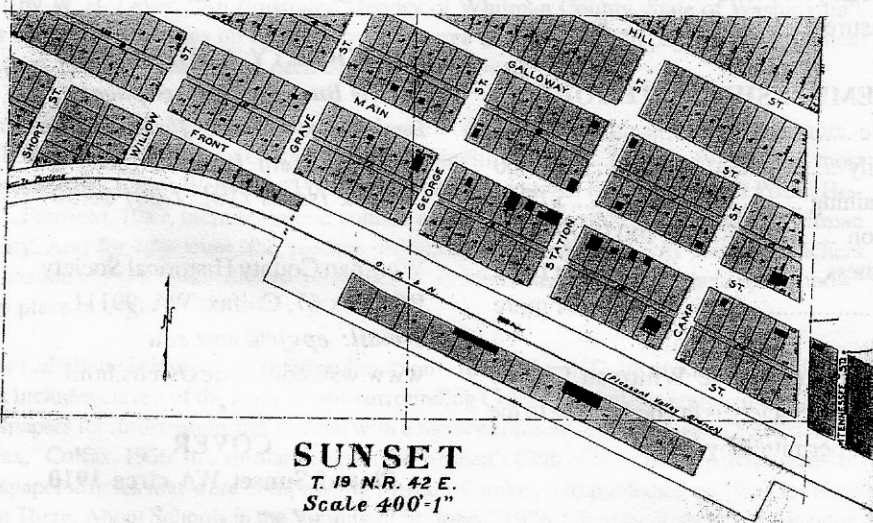


Bunchgrass Historian

Whitman County Historical Society
Colfax, Washington

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TOWNS OF PROMISE -- TOWNS OF DREAMS

Three Palouse Country Towns:

Penawawa - Sunset - Diamond

Whitman County Historical Society

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

Plat of Sunset WA circa 1910



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Sources:

Various railroads put out emigrant recruitment pamphlets. The Union Pacific issued one on "Whitman County, Washington: Greatest Grain Producing Country in the World" in 1893. The one we quoted here was the Northern Pacific's "The Fertile and Beautiful Palouse Country in Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho," St. Paul, 1888.

One of the most comprehensive early sources on Whitman County is the book published in 1901 by W. H. Lever, "An Illustrated History of Whitman County, State of Washington". This book has 281 pages on the history of the area and another 228 pages of biographical sketches. Lever has entries on each of these three towns.

There are indispensable books for specific topics of our past. For place names – and more – Edith Erickson's "Whitman County: From Abbierville to Zion," Colfax, 1985, is the most complete source. Bert Webber's "Postmarked Washington: An Encyclopedia of Postal History", Fairfield, 1987, includes in one volume every post office that has existed in Whitman County. And for education, the volume produced by Whitman County Retired Teachers Association in 1976, "Education in the Rough: With Memories of Early Teachers and Schools" is the place to begin.

Tabor LaFollette is known – like Edith Erickson – for works on Colfax history. LaFollette's work includes eleven of the small towns surrounding Colfax. LaFollette searched the Colfax newspapers for information and worked with a history committee to produce "The History of Colfax," Colfax, 1956. In a similar vein, Junior Women's Club of St. John prepared a series of newspaper articles that were compiled by Miriam Trunkey and published as "We Got Here From There: About Schools in the Vicinity of St. John," 1976. Clarence Roberts, an educator, farmer, and carpenter, prepared a series of radio talks on Whitman County history. The selection used here is taken from the transcript of his 1935 broadcasts.

Another source used here is the R. L. Polk Directories of Whitman County. All of these basic resources, used in compiling this edition of the Bunchgrass Historian, are available at the Whitman County Historical Society Archives.

Note: Editorial comments are in italic type throughout.



Wedding in 1922 of Louie Delegans and Marie Koutoula

TOWNS OF PROMISE...TOWNS OF DREAMS THREE PALOUSE COUNTRY TOWNS: PENAWAWA - SUNSET - DIAMOND

In the 1880s and 1890s transportation by river and railroad made settlement in the Palouse a rewarding experience. The rich soil produced amazing crop yields and the new railroads promised a ready access to markets. Small farms sustained an entire family. The planting and harvesting techniques of the time required a large number of laborers. Horse power required constant care and attention. Hence the rich Palouse hills and valleys saw a dense settlement pattern. Settlers were needed and the Palouse seemed like a land of hope and promise.

Opportunity was also there for those who supplied the farms: those who built warehouses, the blacksmith and machinist, those who provided the general supplies for farm and family as well as those who ministered to the soul and the mind. The post office and the local newspaper provided a link back to the areas from whence the settlers had come. Not only did new settlers write home to encourage others to follow them to this new land, but also the railroads encouraged settlement. The railroads, which had land to sell and freight charges to collect, published recruitment pamphlets to attract settlers to the region. These widely distributed publications described the attractions and opportunities just waiting to be seized.

One such booklet, published in 1888 by the Northern Pacific Railroad, was titled "The Palouse Country: An Attractive Region for General Farming and Stock Raising." According to the Northern Pacific: the Palouse Country possesses all the natural advantages which go to the building up of a rich and densely populated farming region. It has a soil of remarkable fertility, sufficient rainfall for the certain maturing of crops, timber on the foot hills of the neighboring mountains and along the water courses, luxuriant natural pastures, a mild and healthful climate, and good means of transportation. No reasonable fault can be found with the country by a man who expects to get his living out of the soil, and its merits are so apparent that immigrants are invariably delighted with it at first view.¹

Lured by the lavish descriptions of agricultural wealth, men dreamed of establishing towns in the region, saw opportunity just waiting for action. The rush was on to lay out and plat towns, to attract a railroad, and to attract a

business community. Some sites such as Penawawa grew due to river transportation and a mild river valley climate. Other sites such as Sunset and Diamond grew up along a railroad line. The promises and dreams seemed to be realized in the plans for each of these towns. The Whitman County 1910 Plat book records the optimistic plats projecting a continuing wave of growth.

PENAWAWA

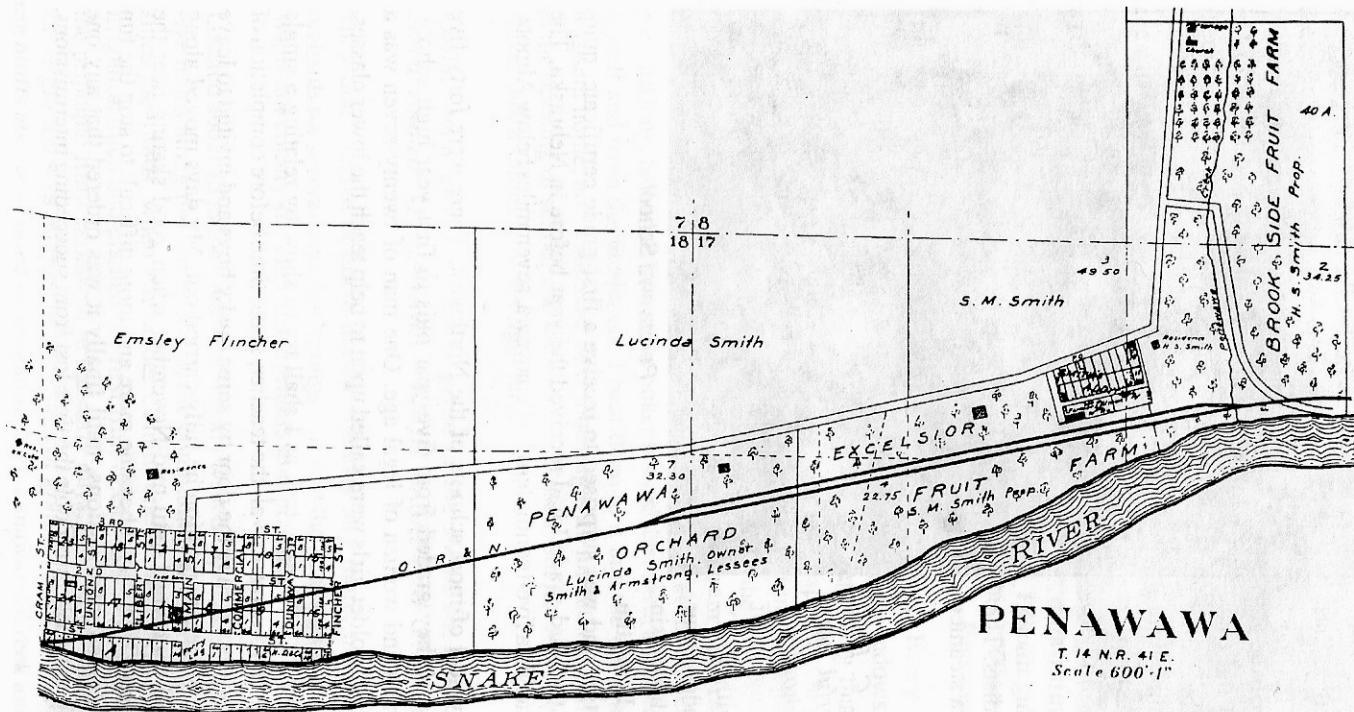
Penawawa was an early settlement along the Snake River, twenty-two miles southwest of Colfax. Its location and origin were due to the establishment of a ferry across the river in 1872 by C. C. Cram. This put Penawawa on the main stage coach route from Spokane to Pendleton, Oregon. The cable ferry lasted until the highway was rerouted through Central Ferry. The very early post office was established November 15, 1872, with Chauncy C. Cram as postmaster and remained in operation until July 31, 1937.

The town of Penawawa is described in 1901 as follows: The creek which is known by this name takes its rise near Union Flat and after a course of about eighteen miles empties its waters into the Snake river fourteen miles below Almota. It is recorded that the first settlers along the stream were Messrs. Montgomery and Trimble, who came with stock in 1870. They were succeeded in interest by Ed. Johnson, also a stockman, whose



RESIDENCE OF PAUL ACKERMAN,
Penawawa.

advent dates back to 1871. The mouth of the river, however, was not settled until 1872, in which year C. C. Cram established a ferry in anticipation of the Walla Walla-Colville territorial road, which was located to cross the Snake river at that point. It became a landing place for passengers and freight transported by Snake river steamers, and continued to increase in importance until in 1877 a town was laid out. The men who platted it were Emsley Fincher, one of the first two permanent settlers, and Messrs. Cram and Byrd. As early as 1873 Mr. Cram had built a warehouse, and in 1878 Hawley, Dodd and Company built another. In that year also Elliot & Andrews opened a store. Like other Snake river points, it was important as a shipping station before the advent of the railroads, and it still retains some of its prestige as a river port, but the principal business of its inhabitants now is fruit



Plat Map of Penawawa from the Anderson 1910 Plat Book of Whitman County

raising. Alexander Canutt, one of its earliest settlers, has the honor of having put in the first irrigation ditch in the vicinity and planted the first fruit trees. Now the entire country in the immediate neighborhood of the town is in fruit, George Smith & Sons, Mrs. E. Smith and Emsley Fincher being among the leading orchardists. The point is visited by a steamer every other day.²

Early educator, S. C. Roberts tells a wonderful story of teaching school at Penawawa: In August of 1883, together with R. C. McCroskey, now judge of our superior court, and his cousin S. M. McCroskey, I took the

teacher's examination and was surprised to receive a first-grade certificate, quite an advance above the third-grade I had received the year before in Nebraska. The following winter I taught a five-months term at Penawawa, seven miles below Almota.

That school was typical of most schools of the Northwest. There were forty-five students enrolled and they graded from five-year olds to first year high school. There were nine men and women of legal age. One man of twenty-seven was a third grader. Two of the older girls were called upon to help teach the lower classes.

To lead such a school was no easy task as I shall try to show by relating a single incident. The winter before my arrival, the teacher, some time before completion of his term, was forcibly escorted to the door by some husky boys and invited to leave and not come back, which suggestion he fully carried out. My days moved along quite happily for all concerned until mid-November when good skating near the schoolhouse came on. Gradually it became more and more difficult to stop the fun on time after the allotted intermissions, until finally it was ordered that any one coming in tardily should make up double the time lost from succeeding intermissions.



Penawawa School

As I rang the bell that afternoon at the end of recess period, five-year old Warren Cram, now automobile dealer in Colfax, rushed in with: "Teacher, them three biggest boys says they're goin' to stay out fifteen minutes to see what you'll do." With stifled feelings, I worked and in exactly fifteen minutes the three came in orderly, nonchalant. No friction developed that day. When recess time arrived next morning I reminded the school of the penalty incurred by the three and dismissed the school – but not, not to the skating area. Every mother's son and daughter of them grouped themselves outside the eight windows to watch developments. The three stayed; I took out the register remarking that the two recesses forfeited by them were for study and so forth. No response. On pressing my point, the leader of the trio paid me my first really professional compliment. Looking up with a complacent grin and putting his feet out into the aisle, he asked, "Now Professor, (first time I was ever so addressed), Professor, ain't you rushin' things a little too fast around here?" In desperation I quickly rose, as my eye caught a glimpse of the yard long, half-inch iron stove poker behind the stove, about equally distant from myself and from the mutineers. I beat them to it and the day was won. The leader was sent home, and, returning next morning with his father, made a manly apology at the opening of school and the incident closed, but not forgotten, for, to this day I shiver when I think how it might have been.³



COUNTRY HOME OF
T. W. RICHARDS
on his 3,000 acre Farm at
Penawawa.

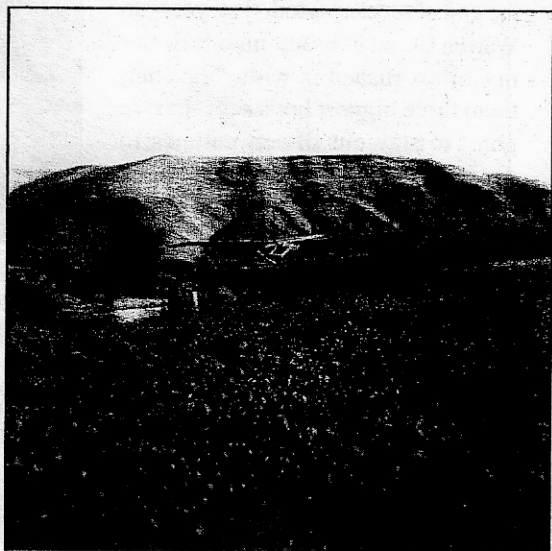
Another view of Penawawa is given in the 1950s by Tabor LaFollette in an article entitled: "PENAWAWA— FRUIT BASKET OF THE PALOUSE."

They don't arrive in horse-drawn vehicles any more, nor do they camp in the orchards for several days, but throngs still visit the Penawawa community in southern Whitman county for cherries, apricots and peaches come fruit season.

Located about 85 miles south and slightly west of Spokane, on bars extending nearly five miles along the Snake River, the community has been known for quality fruit since the 1880s, when Alexander Canutt, one of the early settlers, built the first irrigation ditch and planted the first fruit trees. Although apples and cherries were the principal fruits produced in the early days, growers eventually discovered that the virgin soil — a mixture of river sand of granite origin and wash from the towering bluffs above — aided by irrigation from Penawawa Creek and the warm nights

of the 600 foot elevation were ideal for raising peaches and apricots also.

Many residents of the Palouse country planned annual treks by horse and wagon to Penawawa for their fruit supply. Old-timers have vivid recollections of tents dotting the orchards each season, while entire families enjoyed camping out along with fruit picking, and horses grazed nearby. Some took their jars and canned the golden, tree ripened fruit right there. Peach-butter lovers concocted that delicacy from the windfalls and had it ready for the cellar shelves upon their return home.



Simpson Hotel - Penawawa

Visitors transported to the orchards today in their sleek automobiles are there briefly compared to those of a generation ago, and they are content to do their canning or freezing at home — except their personal intake, of course — but they are no less enthusiastic. They come not only from Spokane and surrounding Whitman County towns, but as far as Colville and even Butte, Montana.

The orchardists dispose of most of their fruit to customers who pick their own, although they do truck some to the Spokane market and nearby communities. Driving to Penawawa and doing his own picking doesn't really save the buyer money unless he lugs a great quantity, but it does assure him his money's worth. He gets the flavor of tree ripened fruit, and if each peach or apricot isn't perfect, it is his own fault.

Between 150 and 200 acres in the little valley are under cultivation and many of the orchardists find it profitable to raise a few cattle also. Pastures and alfalfa fields are watered by the same efficient sprinkler system which five years ago replaced the unsatisfactory irrigation ditches used for so many years. Water is electrically pumped from the river and distributed through a network of pipes. Sprinkling begins about May first and sometimes continues throughout the fruit harvest.

Mrs. Silas Smith, who lived in the community from 1910 until 1947, following the death of her husband, remembers how difficult it was to keep the irrigation ditches free of weeds and debris, and the water flowing in its proper channels. "Mr. Smith check the ditches the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night," she recalls.

In an average year Penawawa orchards will produce about 100 tons of cherries, a few Royal Annes and Lamberts, but mostly Bings; from 150 to 200 tons of Moorpark apricots; and 500 to 600 tons of peaches, including Golden Jubilee, Hale Haven, early Elbertas, Elberta, and J. H. Hale.

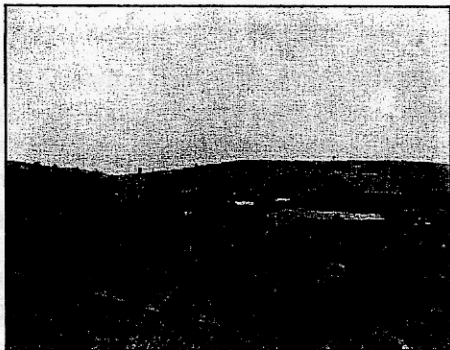
The fruit grower follows a definite year-round work schedule to keep his trees top producers. Pruning must be done in the winter and early spring. Buds begin to form in March and open the first part of April in normal years. Unseasonal warm weather in January or February sometimes brings out the buds earlier, and they may be nipped by frost. Spraying for insects and diseases is done primarily by hand from tractor-drawn tanks. Aerial spraying is used only for the cherry fruit fly, about twice during the season.

Thinning of apricots and peaches during May and June is the next activity — if neither crop has been frost damaged. Growers who have truck gardens put out their tomato plants and plant their melons early in May. Cherry harvest ordinarily comes the latter part of June, followed by apricots from July 4 to 10 and peaches from August first until after September first.

Winter temperatures usually hover around freezing, but sometimes the mercury drops close to zero to wrinkle the orchardists' brow. Average summer heat is 85 to 95 degrees. On the hottest days it may reach 100.

Penawawa is not exclusively fruit trees, for Colfax Grain Growers have a 350,000 bushel wheat elevator located along the railroad there. Salmon seining was a favorite activity at the spot, too, until it was outlawed.

Indians had enjoyed the peace of the narrow bar until the early 1870s, when a few white men pushed northward from Oregon and Walla Walla. Early settlers were sheepmen and stockmen. A ferry across the river was established by C. C. Cram, and in 1877 the town of Penawawa was laid out by Emsley Fincher, Cram and a man named Byrd. Cram built roads from the river at his own expense, operated a store, a hotel, an express business and was postmaster. He was in business in the community continuously until 1886.



HOME OF GEO MACKLIET,
Penawawa

Among the leading orchardists in the early 1900s were George Smith and his sons Silas and Herbert. Mrs. Silas Smith, who now lives in Hay with her daughters, recounts that her father-in-law was respected by the Indians who were in the majority when the George Smiths arrived at Penawawa. In fact, Mrs. Smith was the only white woman on the bar for some time. Kindness and consideration made the Redmen friends of the couple. George visited the braves, and they were welcome in his home.

The story goes that they paid one of these visits to the Smith home when Mr. Smith was in Walla Walla for supplies. They sat around, talking in their own language, glancing and pointing to George's guns on the wall. Mrs. Smith was perturbed when the visit became prolonged, but, showing no fear, finally convinced them that they had stayed long enough and that George Smith would not like it if they did not leave. When she had repeated this a few times, appealing to their respect for her husband, and the Indians had thoroughly considered the matter, the leader arose and walked out the door, followed by the others.

Shortly after the George Smiths went to the valley, a young Indian died of "consumption." In keeping with their custom of burying possessions with their dead, the Indians prepared to do so with the young man's pony. Since he had died gasping for breath, the pony was choked to death before being buried. George Smith was so saddened by this cruelty that he called a group of Indians to his home, read to them from the Bible, and attempted to explain that God would not approve of such an act. Whether they were impressed by God's disapproval or by George Smith's disapproval is not known, but they didn't repeat the act.

Mrs. Nellie Smith, widow of Herbert, who passed away herself in Spokane in 1956, told of hearing her mother-in-law tell about the Indians' cure for sickness. They dug deep pits and then built fires in them to heat stones. Over the hot stones they poured water to create steam — and behold the Indian version of a Turkish bath! They did not stop after steaming themselves in the pits, however; they dashed from the heat into the cold river. Too frequently the result was "kill" rather than "cure."

Penawawa was on the main stagecoach route from Spokane to Pendleton and was an exchange station for stagecoach horses. The river crossing there was by cable

ferry, which was used until the highway was re-routed through Central Ferry and the bridge built there. Early day fruit growers shipped their produce by steambóat down the Snake to Riparia, where it was transferred to the train and sent to Spokane. This practice continued until the railroad was built through the valley.

The church and the school both of which were established early in the town's history, gave the community a moral tone, Mrs. Silas Smith emphasizes. Brawls and quarrels prevalent in other small towns were unknown in Penawawa, she says. While business establishments gradually closed, the post office was removed, and the school consolidated with the Colfax District, the church still remains. Services are conducted by Reverend Warren Swartz, who lives in the parsonage next door.

Prominent fruit men along the river today include Chris and Gus Delegans, who have lived there for over 40 years and now have sons associated with them; Maynard Smith, son of Herbert Smith, born in the community; Kenneth Wallace; Stacy Eggers and Kenneth Pierce, whose parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Pierce, were orchardists when he was born there, and are now living in Colfax.

The town itself is no more and a new generation is tending the trees with new and improved methods, but Penawawa is still the fruit basket of the Palouse.⁴

¹ Northern Pacific RR, *The Fertile and Beautiful Palouse Country in Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho*, St. Paul, 1888, pp. 1-2.

² W. H. Lever, *An Illustrated History of Whitman County*, 1901, p. 227.

³ S. C. Roberts, *Reminiscences of A Pedagogue*, 1935, pp. 9-11.

⁴ Tabor LaFollette, *The History of Colfax*, c.1957, pp. 364-68.



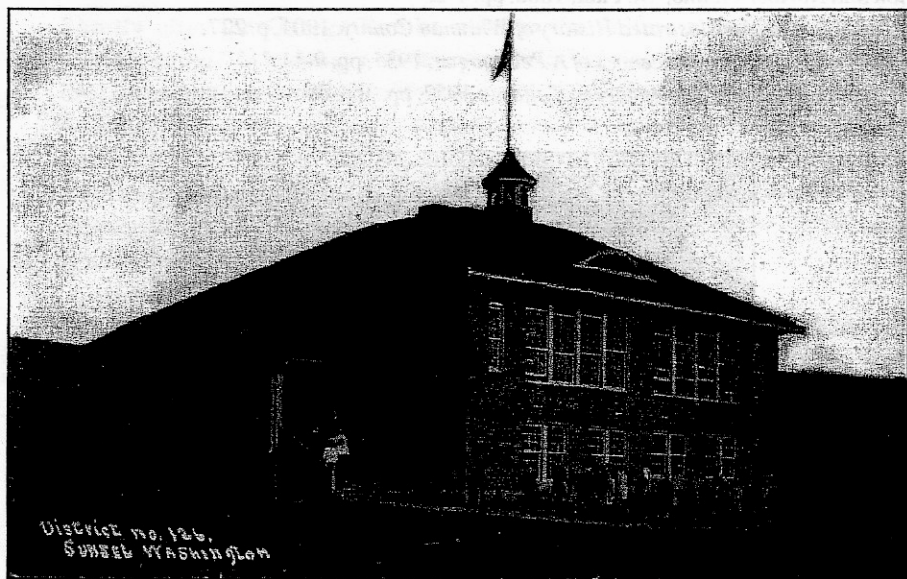
Sunset Train Station

SUNSET

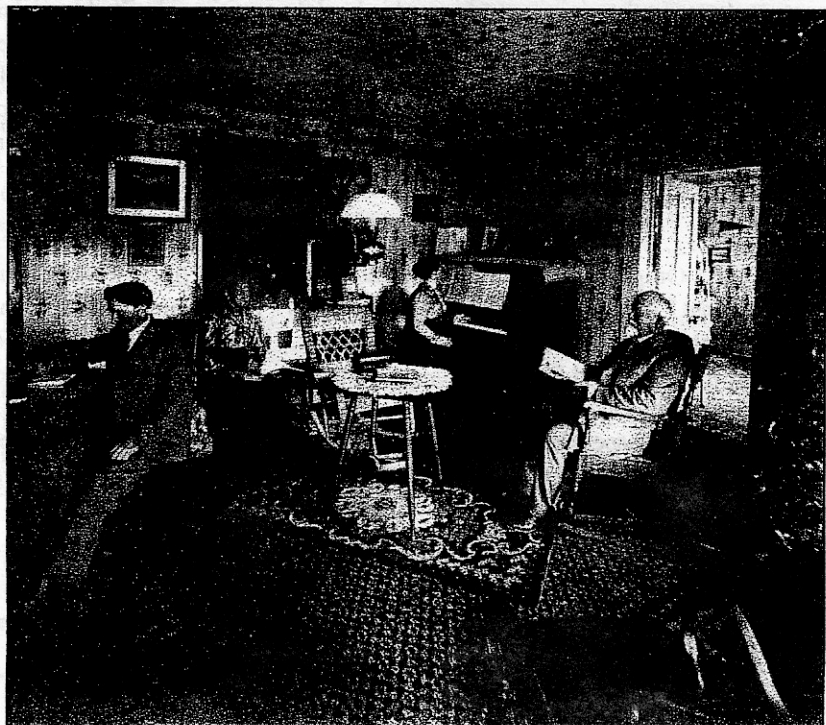
Located five miles west of Thornton and eight miles northeast of St. John, the town of Sunset was platted and recorded on November 16, 1888 by Joseph Canatzer. Before the townsite was platted, J. P. Gulley had built the first residence, which was also used as a hotel. There are two versions of how the town received its name.

According to Weber, "Sunset got its name from Joseph Conatzer, an early cattle man, because he liked to look into the west as the sun went down behind the rolling Palouse hills."¹ Edith Erickson records, "It is told that Sunset was named by J. P. Gulley. He had been traveling a good many days looking for a good place to settle down. He arrived at this place just as the sun was going down. He decided it looked like a good place to stay so he immediately named it Sunset."²

In describing Sunset in 1901, W. H. Lever wrote: Sunset is a small village on Cottonwood creek six miles from St. John. Like that town and Thornton, it was started about the time that the Pleasant valley branch of the O. R. & N. passed



Sunset School



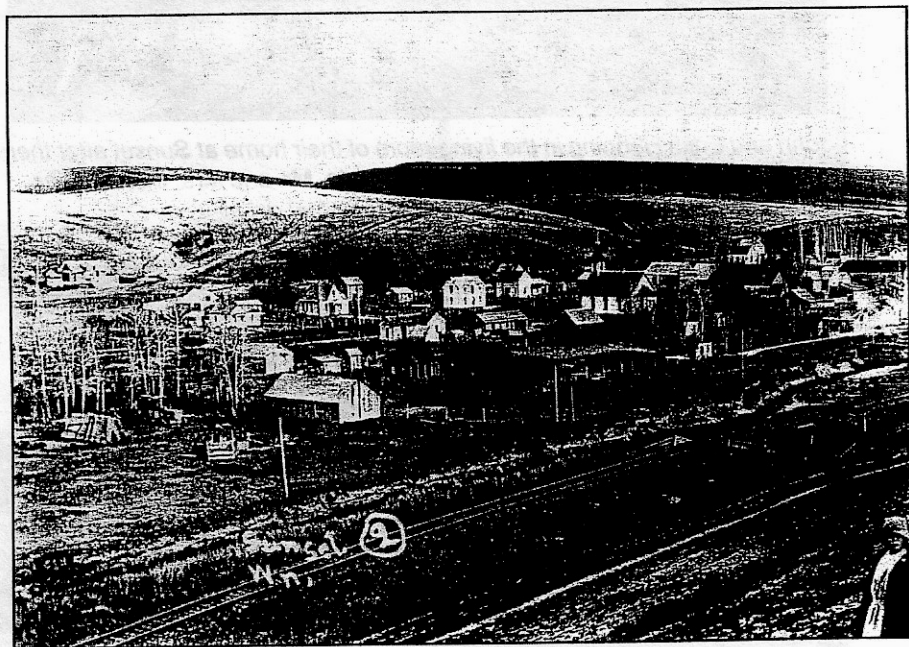
John and Edith Henning in the living room of their home at Sunset after their marriage in 1912. With them are her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Elias Davies.



Sunset Panorama Before 1910 with the Well in the Center of the Road

through its section. Joseph Conatser, who died recently, was one of the most prominent stockmen in the vicinity, and upon his land the town was built. At present there are there established three or four general merchandise stores, a hardware store, three warehouses, a hotel and a blacksmith shop. The town is surrounded by an excellent wheat raising country, hence is an important shipping point for breadstuffs. It contains a fine public school, but no church buildings. Several denominations hold services at intervals there, however.³

The 1904 R. L. Polk & Co. Directory of Whitman County lists the businesses in Sunset as : Oregon Railway & Navigation Co station; Interior Warehouse Co; Pacific Coast Elevator; Sunset Mercantile Co; S D Woodward Hardware and Groceries; Meat Market ; Godfrey General Store and Post Office; Puget Sound Telephone & Telegraph and Rural Exchange Telephone lines; Pacific States Telephone & Telegraph Co; Pacific Express Co; and a Presbyterian Church, a sheep shearer, a vet surgeon, a carpenter, a barber, a blacksmith, a teacher, a school principal, and various laborers, clerks, and farmers.⁴ The town was known for its well which to this day is in the middle of the street.



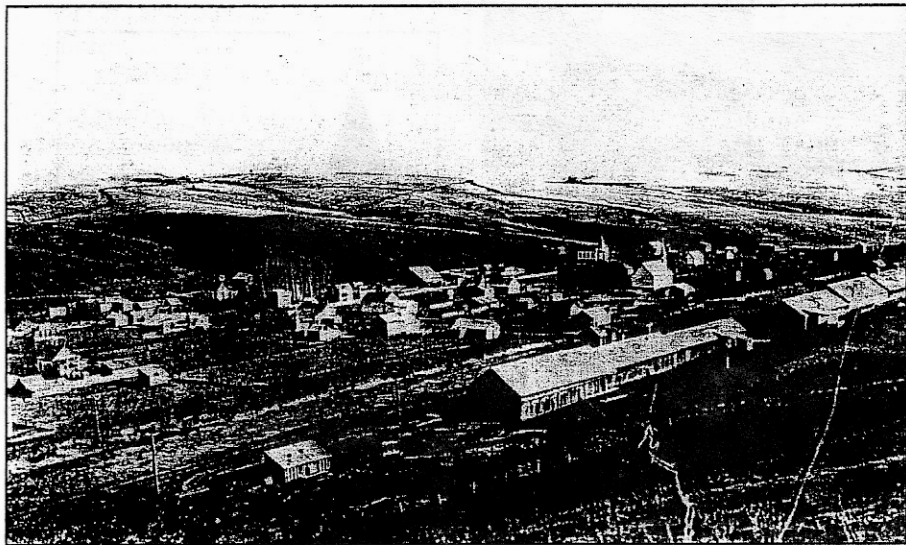
Panorama of the west side of Sunset

The post office was established October 16, 1889, with Rufus Fullerton as postmaster. The post office was in a general store and received its mail from the Union Pacific train. The Sunset post office established a three-time per week rural route November 1, 1907; this route went daily on March 2, 1908.

The Sunset school district is described thus: A small school building was built in time for the one month term ending June 30, 1891. There were 33 children in the District and Minnie Prichard was their teacher. Homemade, unpainted desks and seats were used. School records show that \$214.66 was apportioned to the District. The teacher's salary of \$45 spent at the end of the term June 30, 1891, left a balance of 169.66.

Construction on a new school was begun in the fall of 1892 and was completed four months later, just before Christmas. The teachers that year were Minnie Prichard and John W. Edwards. Forty-six children attended that year with an average daily attendance of 20. Sixty-three days of school were recorded. The larger school building was finished in time for a Christmas program. At this Christmas gathering, a scarlet fever epidemic broke out and [later] several children died.

By 1911, the Sunset school building was of brick construction, with a full basement in concrete. The school was valued at \$19,000 with equipment worth \$1,000 and was considered one of the better schools of the area.



Panorama of the east side of Sunset

Sunset School District #126 consolidated with St. John on July 22, 1943. The building and its contents were sold to Mr. Robert Black for \$452.51; the St. John district reserving the brick in the building. Sunset School was torn down, and the brick cleaned and sold in small lots to various buyers. Much of it was used in construction and repair work at the St. John school.⁵

*Teacher Lula Henning Prince said of her experience in that school: I started to school at Sunset, graduated from High School at Sunset, taught at Sunset, and married at Sunset. The hardest thing for pupils was to call me Miss Henning, when only 2 years before I was Lula to them. But that was the rule in those days, a teacher was Miss or Mr.*⁶

¹ Bert Webber, *Postmarked Washington*, Vol. I: Asotin-Spokane-Whitman, 1987, pp.311-12.

² Edith Erickson, *Whitman County Abbeville to Zion*, 1985, pp. 96-97.

³ Lever, p. 226.

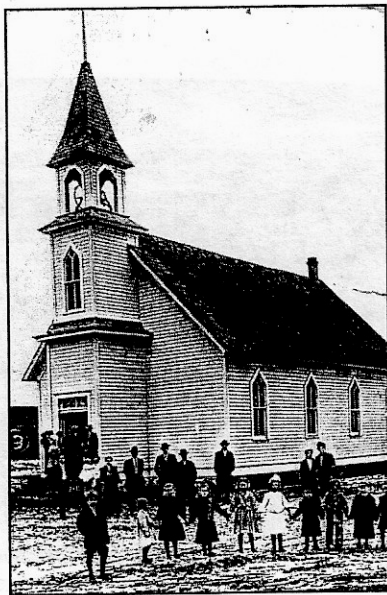
⁴ R. L. Polk & Co., *Directory of Whitman County*, 1904, p. 246.

⁵ *We Got Here From There: St. John Area Schools 1883-1976*, 1976, pp. 137-139.

⁶ Neita Curtis, et. al., *Education in the Rough: With Memoirs of Early Teachers and Schools*, 1976, "Prince."



Sunset Meat Market



Sunset Christian Church

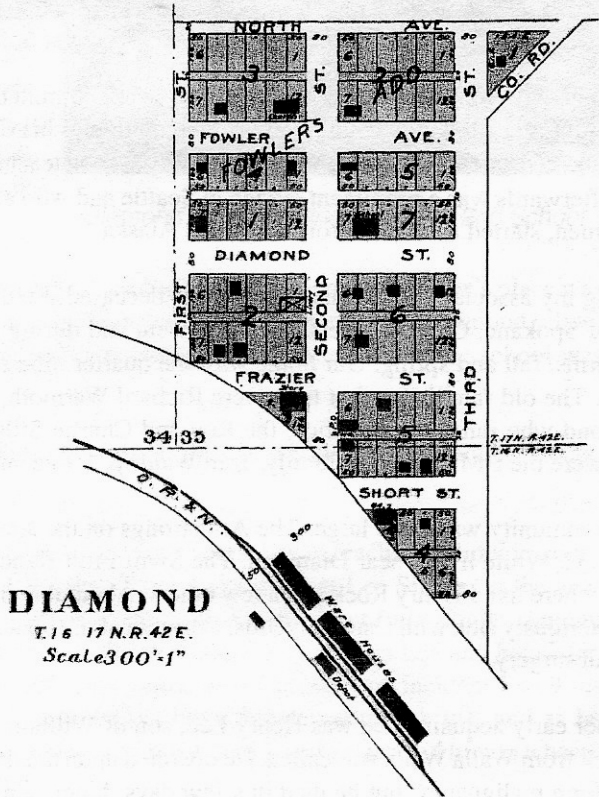
DIAMOND

Located nine miles northwest of Colfax, Diamond was established on the railroad line constructed by the Columbia and Palouse Railroad Co. (the OR&N) in 1881-1883. The railroad later was a division of the Ayer-Spokane branch of the Union Pacific. Diamond was first settled in 1885 and named for Q. Diamond who platted and founded the town.

The post office was established in 1886. According to the 1904 Polk Directory, the town boasted: a Baptist Church; "a good graded school;" Stuart's Custom Feed Mill; a laundry; Bonnar Quint, Blacksmith, Horseshoer, Wagonmakr and General Repairing; Stuart House Hotel; Kirkham's General Merchandise, Dry Goods, Clothing, Shoes, Groceries, Hardware, etc; Adam S. Hamilton's General Merchandise; Pacific States Telephone & Telegraph Co.; Davis Implement Co.; Pacific Coast Elevator Co.; and Interior Warehouse Co.¹

J. W. Sherfey, M.D., described growing up in Diamond at the end of the 19th century. He graduated from medical school in 1905 and practiced medicine until 1956. His account is contained in a letter written in 1957 in which he gave facts as he remembered them.

The original school of that district was located about three miles west of





Diamond School District No. 130 - First School

Diamond. My first teacher was H. M. Boobe who commuted from the homestead about four miles towards Union Flat bringing with him his oldest son, who now, I believe, is a resident of Dayton, Washington. My second teacher was John E. Blaine, who afterwards was a prominent citizen in Seattle and who at one time, with some other men, started a railroad from Seattle to Alaska.

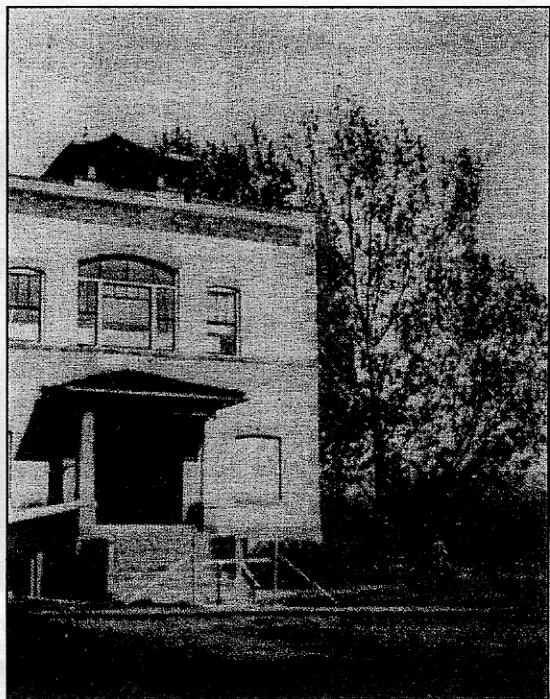
Among my associates was Harvey Lee, now deceased, Fred Waldrip, now a resident of Spokane. Other teachers came and went and during the year we had only two terms, fall and spring. Our home was one quarter mile east of this old school house. The old families at that time were Richard Warmoth, the Frazier family at Diamond who ran the post office, the Roy and Charlie Stilson families. West of there were the F.M. Hamilton family, Tom Waldrip, J. Lee and William Lee.

The community was quite large. The Armstrongs on the south. Freeburn Burnell, and A. C. White living near Diamond. The Swift Fruit Ranch was on the Palouse River where lived Henry Rock and a few others. About that time Fred Waldrip was taken seriously sick with Osteo-myelitis, a disease of the bone, but finally recovered without surgery.

Another early acquaintance was Henry Lee, son of William Lee, who was ill. Dr. Blalock from Walla Walla was called. He operated upon the little boy on the kitchen table for a malignancy, but he died in a few days. Later in my early life I went to Colfax attending the public schools. The building was situated about where the

Congregational church now stands on Main street. Professor O. L. Waller was superintendent. He afterwards went to Pullman and was for several years a teacher in the State College. The principal was Miss Winston.

I, coming from the country, was scared to death of the town boys, but Miss Winston came to my rescue and told the class: "Just wait to see and you will find that William will be a student among you." This remark put me at ease and endeared Miss Winston to me. After that I had no trouble making friends among the students. Among them was Mary Buck, Minnie Tarbet, Stella Perkins, Frank Baker, and others.

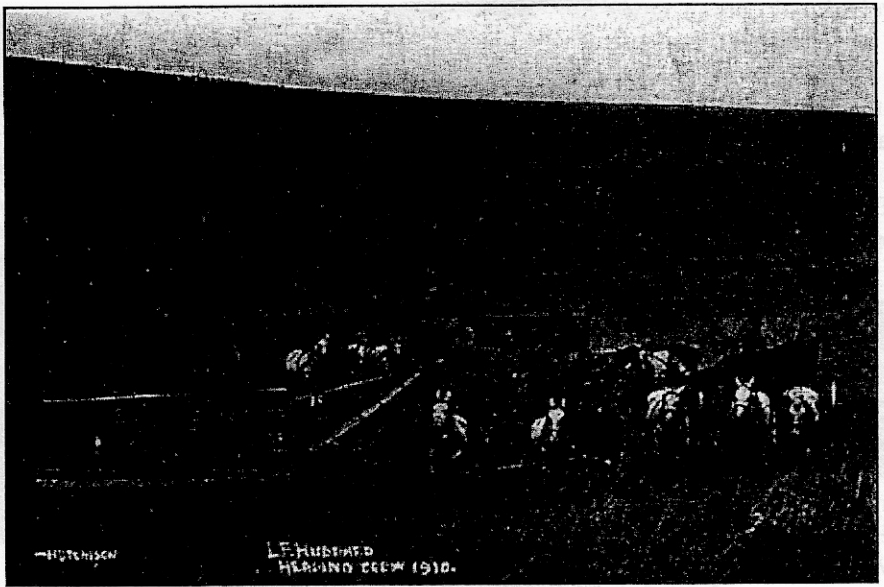


Diamond School District No. 130 - 2nd School

About that time the school district at Lee Siding was divided. My father's place was the line between Lee Siding and the Diamond school. I attended the Diamond school for a number of years before going to college. I think the Lee Siding school was established about 1892-4.

The first warehouse at Lee Siding was built by Aaron Kuhn, a merchant of Colfax, about 1895.

I afterwards went to Colfax College for four years, began teaching school in country districts, first near Pine City, then Rock Lake, then at Lee Siding, in the year approximately 1895-6. It was a one-room school with about forty pupils. Among these were Ollie Lee and Latie Lee, the two Oakes boys, Anna Lee and her sister. I taught in other districts the next few years, near Colfax. One incident I well remember was that one of the large Oakes boys threatened to lick me, and as he advanced towards me, I grabbed the iron poker and this discouraged him to a hasty retreat, with no further trouble.



L. F. Hubbard, Heading Crew 1910, Diamond, WA

The Palouse tribe of Indians occasionally would drive through that section of the country on the way to meet with the Nez Perce tribe in Idaho for their Pow Wow. Sometimes they would come back with more horses and sometimes with fewer. Everyone was on horseback. In later years this tribe became extinct, and I visited as a physician two of the older ones. Lucy, and her husband, Old Bones, in their wigwam lived near the mouth of the Palouse River at one time when they were both sick.

In later years I was a physician in the building of the SP&S and North Bank Railway and took care of the laborers of the construction on these railroads.

In 1901 I desired to study medicine and left for Kansas City. On my first trip to Kansas City a mob was gathering at Alliance, Nebraska. They put a man, his wife and a little child on the train telling the conductor to keep them there. This man was an anarchist. He had torn crepe from a public building. William McKinley, the president, had just died and this act aroused the citizens of the community. He was lucky to have gotten off without being hanged. He was not allowed to leave the train at any station along the way for several hours.²

¹ Polk Directory, 1904, pp. 109-110.

² LaFollette, pp. 295-297.

CHANGING DREAMS – CHANGING PROMISES

Penawawa's post office was closed in 1937—a sign of changes to come. Penawawa is now submerged by the waters of Little Goose Dam—a dam constructed on the basis of a new dream and a new promise. Sunset's post office was discontinued on March 31, 1955, and about 15 homes remain on the town site. The Diamond post office was closed in 1956 and today about two dozen houses are what remains of this town.

The era between the World Wars witnessed tremendous changes in transportation, agricultural techniques, and rural living. Advances in farm machinery and—gradually at first but then quite dramatically—the internal combustion engine meant the end of the large work crews on the farms. The former dense settlement pattern gave way to large, “efficient” farms as seen on the Palouse today. The presence of automobiles began to allow the rural inhabitants to shop in distant cities. As the railroads abandoned lines, many of the towns along them lost their reason for existence. The original promise gave out, to be replaced by a new promise. The Palouse is still a rich agricultural area. The dreams continue, but in changed form.



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