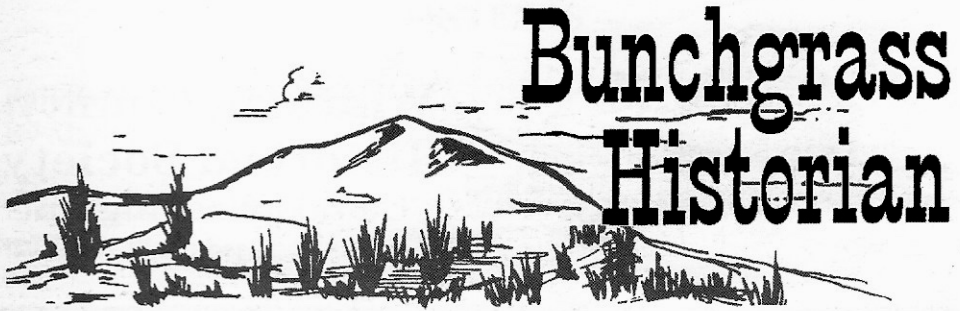


Bunchgrass Historian



Whitman County Historical Society
Colfax, Washington

Volume 37
Number 2
2011



GENERAL VIEW OF PULLMAN, WASHINGTON.

- Pullman's Military College
- Lincoln - A Town That Was
- Trains on the Palouse - A Photo Essay



Whitman County Historical Society Colfax, Washington

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

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY 2010 - 2011

President.....Dave Appel
Vice-President.....Pat Flansburg
Treasurer Cheryl Kammerzell
SecretaryEdwin Garretson

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Basic\$20.00
Family\$40.00
Sustaining.....\$75.00
Patron \$100.00 or more
Business \$50.00 or more
Life \$500.00 or more

Membership in the Whitman County Historical Society is tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

BUNCHGRASS HISTORIAN PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

Editor: Edwin Garretson
Editorial Ass't: Mary Jane Engh
Kathy Meyer
Layout: Steven Watson
Membership: Sally Burkhart

SOCIETY ADDRESSES

Whitman County Historical Society
P.O. Box 67, Colfax, WA 99111
e-mail: epgjr@wsu.edu

Current Issues \$4.00
Back Issues (Vol. 1-30) \$2.50

SOCIETY PROPERTIES

Perkins House and Cabin, Colfax
Chatters Printing Museum, Palouse
The Archive, Pullman
Holy Trinity Chapel, Palouse

COVER

This bird's eye drawing, looking south from behind the Military College, shows Pullman as it looked in 1892. This image was published in the Northwest Illustrated Monthly Magazine, Vol. 10, No. 9. (Sept. 1892), p. 22. The magazine printed a lengthy promotional article titled: In the Palouse Country.

CONTENTS

Pullman's Military College	4
By Mark O'English	
Lincoln - A Town That Was	13
By Dean W. Huber	
Trains on the Palouse	21
A Photo Essay	

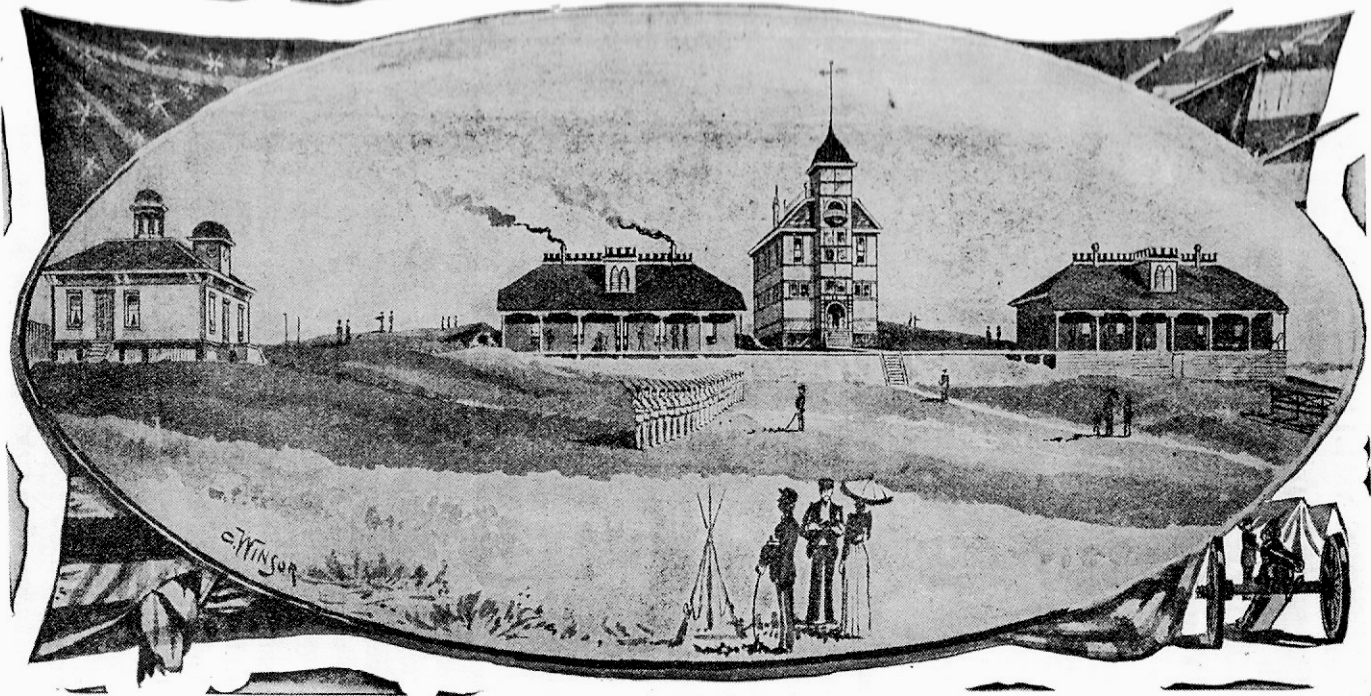
FROM THE EDITOR

Mark O'English is a lifetime Pacific Northwesterner, who moved to Pullman in 2000. He began working at the Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (MASC) at WSU in 2001. He is now the University Archivist, but he's more often recognized from having worked evenings at the Neill Public Library from 2001-2009. As a resident of Military Hill, who has heard many conflicting stories about the Military College from patrons at both libraries, he finally realized the only way to find some answers was to do the research himself. He still dreams of eventually finding an actual photograph of the College!

Dean Huber earned BS and MA degrees in Wood Science and Technology at the University of Idaho. While at the U of I, he met and married a farm girl from the Palouse area. After a full professional career providing technical assistance to the wood products and processing industries and assisting the sawmill industry, Dean retired to Palouse. He is currently studying the history of the sawmill industry on the North Palouse River. After finding references to a sawmill at Lincoln and asking where is that, he then searched the vague, scattered sources to find the answer.

The photo essay on "Trains on the Palouse" is a natural extension of the two articles. We read that the Military College was moved to Pullman due to its unexcelled railroad facilities and that Lincoln disappeared when the railroad choose to locate 2 ½ miles downstream at what became Elberton. The powerful role of the railroads on the development of the Palouse region is undeniable.

Your editor is grateful to Burgess Lange for driving Dean and I over the site of Lincoln and the surrounding area. Burgess was the most gracious, patient, and informative guide.



BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS OF THE PULLMAN MILITARY SCHOOL.

The Northwest Illustrated Monthly Magazine, Vol. 10, No. 9, Sept. 1892, pg. 24.

This 1892 drawing shows the three Military College buildings and the house on True Street that belonged to Major Walker.

PULLMAN'S MILITARY COLLEGE

By Mark O'English

In July of 1891, the city of Pullman won what the July 24, 1891, *Pullman Herald* titled “a great prize” – a new college to be located in the town. However, this college was not what later became Washington State University; that school had been awarded to Pullman just a few months earlier on April 25. Unfortunately, legal and political issues were still being contested, and whether Pullman would actually receive the college was still in doubt. This “great prize” was instead a military college, the Latah Academy located then in Latah, Washington. The plan was to move it to Pullman in the fall of that year.

In the July *Pullman Herald* article, the school's head, Major W.S. Walker, praised Pullman's unexcelled railroad facilities and the fact that “the moral surroundings of the town are of the best” as reasons for the move. The article noted that Pullman closed the deal with the payment of a “handsome subsidy for the location of the school.”

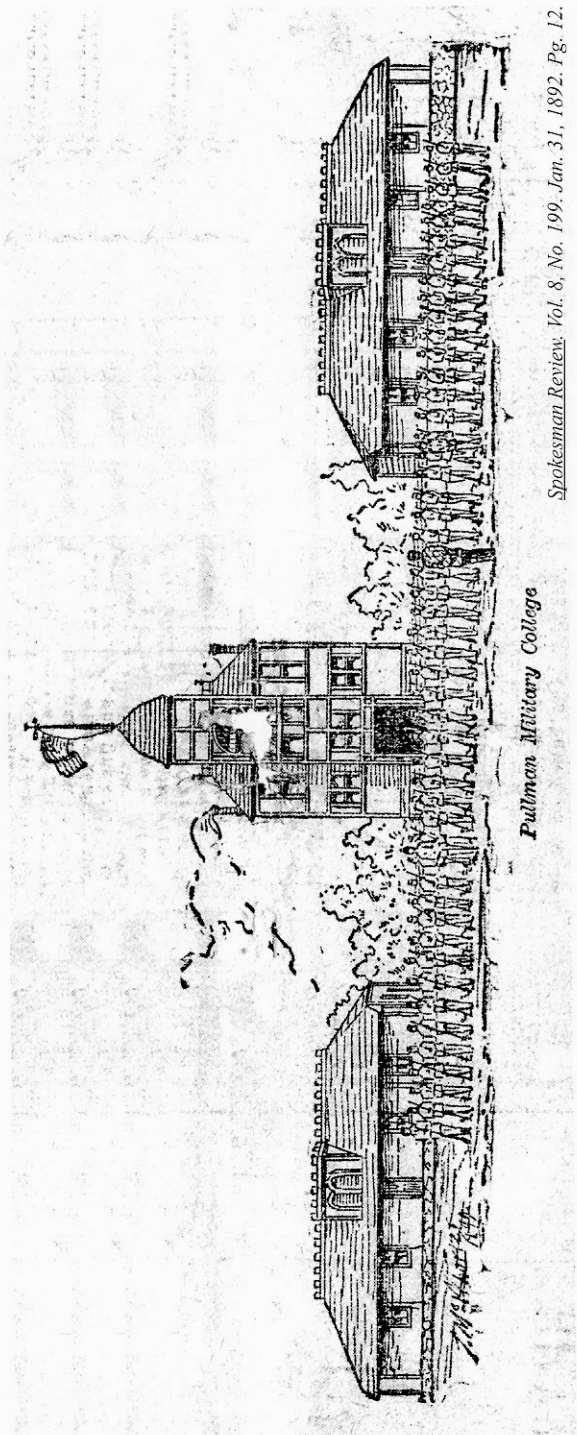
Major Walker had initiated the move himself, being unhappy with the way the city of Latah funded and oversaw his school. He toured numerous cities in the Palouse region in late June and early July, seeking a new location. He knew of the issues affecting Pullman's efforts to ensure receiving the state college that they had been awarded, and he argued that bringing in the Military College ensured that Pullman was a college town, no matter the eventual result of political wrangling. Walker was successful in persuading Pullman's city elders, and it was agreed that the school should come to Pullman.

Although the *Herald* reported this process as moving the school, the Latah Times Print's *Latah and Vicinity* (1893) notes that the Latah school subsequently remained active in its original facility, with a Professor H.A. Ellis (a former student of Walker's there) as its head. A public exchange in the letters pages of the *Spokane Review* occurred between Mr. Coplen of Latah and Walker in 1891, disputing the “moving” of the school and whether Walker left or was released. In the August 7, 1891, *Pullman Herald*, Major Walker contended that the departure of all of the faculty and the non-Latah resident students constituted moving the school. A similar debate over whether Walker was truly a military veteran was settled when the city of Pullman received his military records from the government and publicly affirmed his military service in the *Herald*.

In 1891, Pullman's new brick public schoolhouse (on the site of the later-built Gladish school) was under construction, rendering the existing wooden schoolhouse next door redundant. Although the original plans called for the Military College's classes to be held in that building, work on the new public school did not proceed

as anticipated (it was not completed until fall of 1892). It soon became clear that the old school would not be available to the Military College on time. According to an article about Pullman in the September 1892 *Northwest Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, businessmen W.V. Windus, E.H. Letterman, Dr. H.J. Webb, the Farris brothers, Thomas Neill, and M.C. True arranged and donated land for the school's eventual location on Pullman's then-unpopulated northwest hill. They also donated the \$7500 required to build the buildings. Construction of a new school with two sets of barracks began in early-to-mid-August. The school was located at the northwest corner of what was platted as State Street and True Street (block 24 of the College Hill addition); the classroom building faced south and was located between and slightly north of the two barracks.

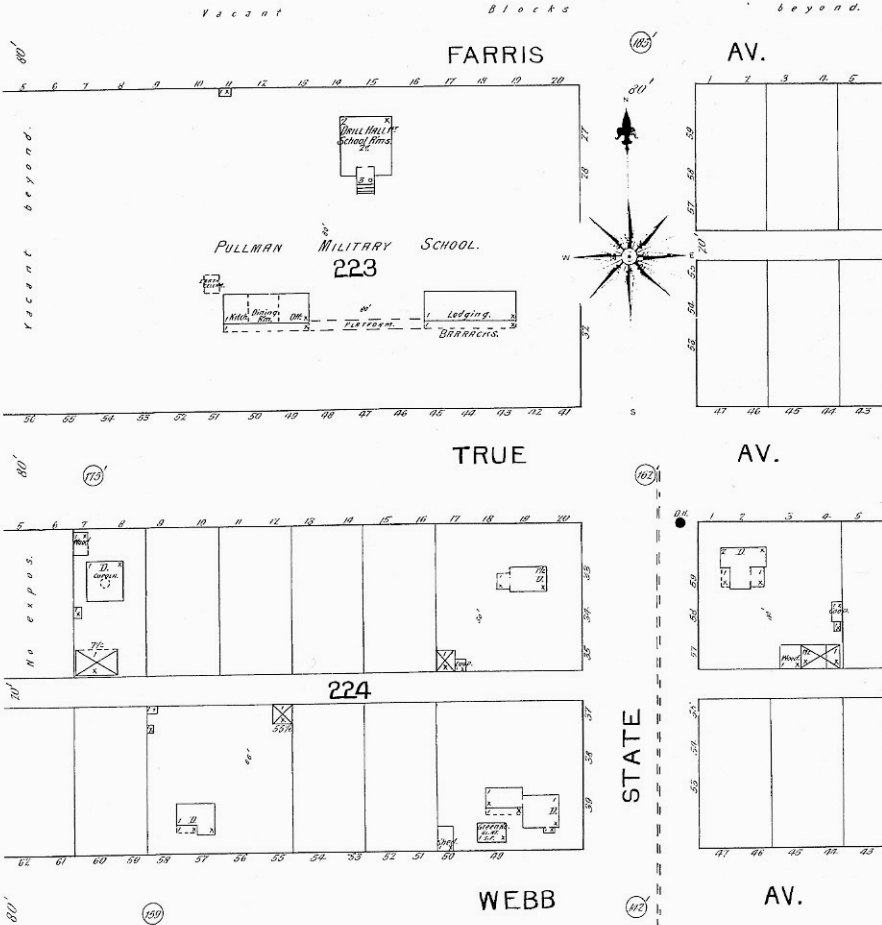
Though no known photographs of the school exist, the August 21, 1891 *Pullman Herald* and the December 1892 *College Record* provide detailed written descriptions of the college. The two barracks were small one-story buildings, each 64 feet east-west and 20 feet north-south, while the main schoolhouse was a grander facility, standing three stories



Pullman Military College

Spokesman Review, Vol. 8, No. 199, Jan. 31, 1892, Pg. 12.

and sized at 44 feet east-west and 66 feet north-south. It was designed by Pullman architect William Swain, whose best-known surviving work is undoubtedly Pullman's Greystone Church and whose Swain House (across from Gladish at 315 W. Main Street, Pullman) is on the National Register of Historic Places. The College's main floor consisted of open space and a stage that could be suited to any number of uses, including chapel, lecture, drill, and gymnastics. A portrait of George Washington "in heroic size" was mounted on the back of the stage. Stairs from the stage rose to the second floor, which was solely a five-foot wide balcony running around three sides of the building. From the balcony, stairs at the school's front led to the third floor, which consisted of several rooms used for recitation and study. A tower above brought the building to a total height of 66 feet. The original plans called for

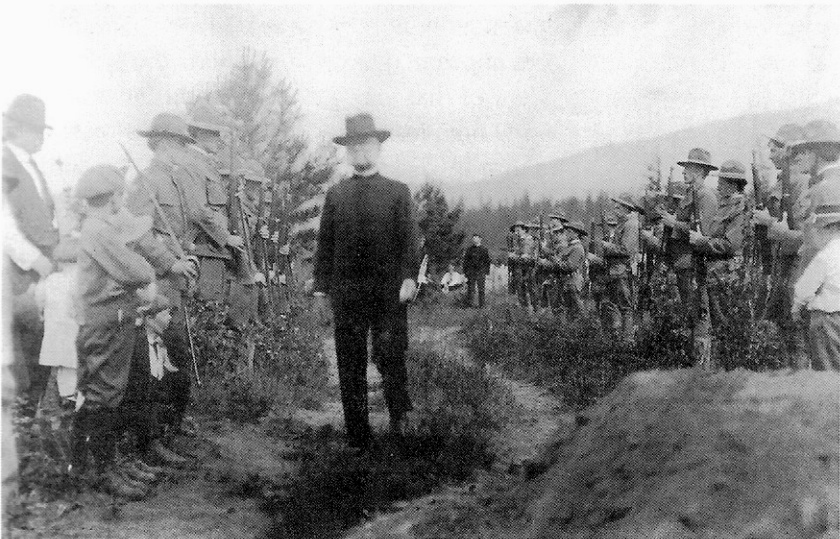


The 1893 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the location of the Military School at the corner of State Street and True Avenue. The residence with the cupola to the west end of True Street still stands, although much remodeled.

a basement and two stories; it is unclear from later descriptions if the basement in these plans became the main floor, or if a basement existed beneath the main floor. The two floors / three floors discrepancy occurs in a number of places and is likely a question of whether or not they considered the balcony an actual floor. Local civil engineer and surveyor G.W. Horner laid the buildings' foundations.

When the college's location was initially announced, there were no buildings on Pullman's northwest hill. However, school faculty immediately began building homes there (Walker, Evans, and Bailey all had homes near the school), and townspeople quickly began moving onto the hill. The *Pullman Herald* of August 14, 1891, noted the sale of 25 lots on that hill in the preceding week, and in late October the city ordered the grading of State Street up the slope of the hill. By November of 1891, there was \$12,000 in total building value on the hill, with more houses under construction; Major Walker's own home was noted as nearing completion in the November 6, 1891, *Pullman Herald*.

Classes at the Pullman Military College began on October 5, 1891, although at that point the main building was still unfinished and only the barracks were available for use. The school was coeducational, attended by young men and women alike; the initial enrollment is given as 46 students, reaching over 60 by the end of the month. Other reports say that in mid-November there were 19 students living in the barracks, but this difference is likely a result of local attendees who lived at home rather than in the barracks. In Latah, the school had a population of 85 students, and Walker hoped to double that in Pullman.



Courtesy Boundary County Historical Society, Bonners Ferry, WA.
Major Walker, ca. 1910-1926

Major Wayne Scott Walker was popularly described as the school's commandant, and in addition to running the school he also taught sciences and ancient and modern languages. Walker had been born in January, 1846, in Scotland, was a native Gallic (Scots) speaker, and emigrated to the U.S. in 1862, taking up residence in Terre Haute, Indiana. Upon his eighteenth birthday in January of 1864, he enlisted in the Union Army (11th Regiment, Indiana Cavalry), and his rank when he was honorably discharged in June of 1865 is listed as "bugler." At some point he moved to Neoga Township, Illinois, and began teaching school. He married Florence Helton there in late 1871, and their first child, Byron, was born less than six months later. By 1875, Walker was at the Lebanon Valley College (Pennsylvania) chapel. In 1876, following the July birth of his second son Neil, he brought his family west to Philomath, Oregon, where he had been appointed President of Philomath College, a religious school affiliated with the United Brethren of Christ (UBC).

By his time in Philomath, Walker was listed as holding an A.M. (Master of Arts) degree, though his college is unclear. According to UBC archivists, his college was most likely Westfield College, in Illinois, although the records from that time are lost. Years later his Philomath colleague Henry Sheak described Walker in his *History of Philomath College* (in the 1915 *Catalog of Philomath College*) as "a man of profound scholarship, extensive research, commanding presence and of administrative ability." In addition to serving as school president, Walker was listed as Professor of Mental and Moral Science, and Ancient and Modern Languages, as well as Teacher of Drawing, Painting, and Vocal Music. Some reports from his time in Philomath list him as a Reverend, but this is not uniformly the case, leading to the assumption this may have been an honorary school title, as his rank of Major at the Latah and Pullman schools appears to have been. He remained in Philomath for eight years (no other president of that era at that school lasted more than one or two years). While some reports note his moral strictness and discipline, others say that his administration was torn by dissension; the greater UBC itself was undergoing an internal crisis that resulted in an 1889 schism. Apparently, however, Walker's departure was more related to funding disputes than religion. Leaving Philomath in 1884 as a result of conflicts within the administrative board, Walker took an 1885-1887 position as principal in a United Brethren school in Brownsville, Oregon. From there he moved on to the UBC's Washington Seminary in Huntsville, Washington, (1887-1889) and to the non-religious Latah Academy (1889), where he also served as chaplain.

Other Pullman instructors included First Lieutenant Charles Milton Baldwin of Pomeroy, intermediate grade (Baldwin had been with Walker at his two previous positions, and later became a Washington State Senator from Garfield County); Second Lieutenant M.E. Hall, Adjutant, grammar and history, of Latah (later of Tekoa); Captain F.L. Evans, tactician; Captain Flavus Brooks of Farmington, math; and George W. Bailey of Milton, Oregon, chaplain. The latter two subsequently both

taught at Onecho (south of Colfax), and Bailey later planned a “Saints Home and School” for Union Flat. The intent to hire a business instructor was also stated, and it was noted that pupils holding county teacher’s certificates might also be given charge of certain classes.

In addition to listing the faculty, the July 24, 1891, *Pullman Herald* listed the three primary courses of study proposed for the Pullman Military College: literary, scientific, and philosophic. Advertisements in Palouse-region newspapers and as far away as Spokane described the school as offering “all courses, with Preparatory, Business, and Teachers’ Drill Departments.” It should be noted that although the school was called a Military College, it had no official association with any branch of the military. Only the young men, not the women, were given military training. The local newspaper noted that military training was secondary to education. Moreover, the mandatory uniforms served as economic levelers. With everyone in the same clothing there would “be no distinction in dress between the rich and the poor.”

Unlike the coming state college, the Military College charged tuition to support itself. According to the January 31, 1892, *Spokane Review*, a three-month term cost \$8 for preparatory schooling (equivalent to modern elementary school, but offered for adults), \$9 for academic (equivalent to modern high school), and \$10 for collegiate. In addition, room and board, if needed, cost between \$2.25 and \$3 per week. Students who excelled were rewarded with discounted tuition and board, along with advances in military rank.

As the year 1892 and the school’s second term began, the main building had been completed and the school was solidly established with 40 desks, 48 chairs, and 40 yards of blackboard. The *Spokane Review* reported enrollment in January at between 66 and 69, with the school having a capacity of 200. A school newspaper, *The Cadet*, to be 8 pages with 3 columns per page, was planned for production in March or April, although it is unclear if any issues were ever actually printed.

January of 1892 also saw the first classes of Pullman’s second college, the Washington Agricultural College and School of Science (later WAC, WSC, and then finally Washington State University). The two schools apparently built a supportive relationship. On February 21, the Military College held an open house and reception for the citizens of Pullman and the new students and staff of the state college, presenting a number of diverse exercises. The schools’ relationship quickly extended to athletics, and on Saturday, March 10, of that year both schools met in the first baseball game for each. The farmers of the state college proved to be too much for the Military. The game was called after six innings with the state school holding a 26-0 lead, with Military College first baseman Hale Daggett suffering a broken arm when WAC right-fielder John Jacobs collided with him at first base. The following month, WAC President George Lilley held an elaborate Arbor Day festival on April 15, and Military College commandant Walker brought his students over to participate. They entertained the agricultural school with a military drill

performance, and Walker himself gave a lengthy speech regarding “the pioneer and martyr of civilization in Washington, Dr. Marcus Whitman.” A Douglas Fir was planted in Whitman’s honor. The full text of Walker’s speech can be found in the April 1892 *College Record* (the predecessor paper to WSU’s *Evergreen*). Walker was an active public speaker in the greater Pullman community; the program from the October 22, 1892, Columbus Day dedication of Pullman’s new public school building features a dedicatory address by Major Walker.

As the school’s second full year neared its start, enrollment was expected to be at least 100, and it reached 114 in the spring. Fall of 1892 also saw the addition of a night school, run by Lieutenant Hall, for students in the commercial program. On Saturday, December 10, 1892, the Military College cleared the floor of its main school building for use as a roller skating rink and invited the students of the agricultural college to a skating and whist party. Wagons were provided to transport the 30 state students, but inclement weather and insufficient teams forced the men to hike up the hill to the military school; the women, traveling by wagon, took 15 minutes longer to accomplish the climb. Reports in the December, 1892, *College Record* pronounce the event as a great success, despite tracked-in snow proving to be a hazard to skaters, and despite the return trip to the state college taking so long that the skaters found themselves locked out of their dormitories when they returned, after hours, to their school. The favor was shortly returned: on February 24 the state school invited the military students to their College Hall for a joint dance. When the state college purchased a supply of rifles in February for military training, the two schools announced that joint drilling would begin once the state college constructed an armory. Sadly, this pleasant state of affairs ended only two weeks later.

The evening of Thursday, March 9, 1893, began normally, with a Military College debating society meeting in the main building past 11 PM before retiring for the night with a fire still burning in the stove. Shortly after midnight on Friday morning the building caught fire; this was quickly discovered and the alarm bell sounded at 12:10 AM but proved sufficient to rouse only a small portion of the town. The March 17 *Pullman Herald* reports that the bell-ringer was insufficiently trained and failed to sound the bell loudly enough. By the time the hose cart arrived and the hose reached the fire, the main building was a lost cause, although firemen did save both barracks. Only the guns were saved from the main building; the total loss was estimated at \$4,500. As the Military College was only partially insured (the building itself was insured at \$2,000 plus \$325 for furnishings), the school was left well shy of the necessary funds to rebuild.

Although that week’s *Pullman Herald* opined that classes should continue, possibly in Pullman’s old schoolhouse which had once been planned for the Military College’s home, classes were instead canceled. Plans were drawn for a \$15,000 building to replace the burned college, and in early May it was announced by Major Walker that \$2000 had been raised. However, by 1893 the town was in debt following

numerous community improvements, and with the country and region in the early stages of a depression the city proved unable or unwilling to rebuild the school. On May 15, Major Walker and his family left Pullman and moved to Hayden Lake, Idaho. The Military College never reopened. After his time in Pullman, Walker spent the rest of his working life teaching, store-keeping, and truck farming in Hayden Lake, Kellogg, Moravia, and Bonners Ferry, where he retired in 1910. He served two terms in the Idaho State Senate, from 1917-1920, but is best remembered in Bonners Ferry for painting murals of historic events in his house and around town, although his murals have not survived to present day. An interview in the September 3, 1920, *Pullman Herald* documents what was apparently Walker's only return trip to Pullman, 27 years after the fire, to retrieve a family-owned historic pipe organ that had been left with a local church. After moving to Spokane in 1926, Major Walker passed away at his son Byron's house on February 20, 1934 (his obituary appears on the front page of the *Bonners Ferry Herald* on the 22nd). He was buried in Bonners Ferry's Grandview Cemetery.

In early July, 1893, only four months after the fire, the two remaining barracks were sold to Chaplain George Bailey in a tax sale. Later reports say that a number of the students transferred to the state college but that most simply returned to their homes. Judge Thomas Neill notes in his 1922 *Incidents in the Early History of Pullman and the State College of Washington* that the presence of the state college, which was in a more secure financial position, hindered the rebuilding of the Military College.

Despite existing for fewer than 19 months, the Pullman Military College had a lasting effect on the town. As site of the town's first college, the northwest hill had become popularly known to townfolk as College Hill (the optimistic label actually predated the placement of either school), but after the military school burned to the ground, leaving the agricultural school as Pullman's only college, the name quickly proved confusing. It didn't take very long before Pullman's northeast hill also became known as College Hill, and to clarify which College Hill was being referred to, townspeople began referring to the hill that had hosted the Military College as Military Hill.



LINCOLN, WASHINGTON – A TOWN THAT WAS **By Dean W. Huber**

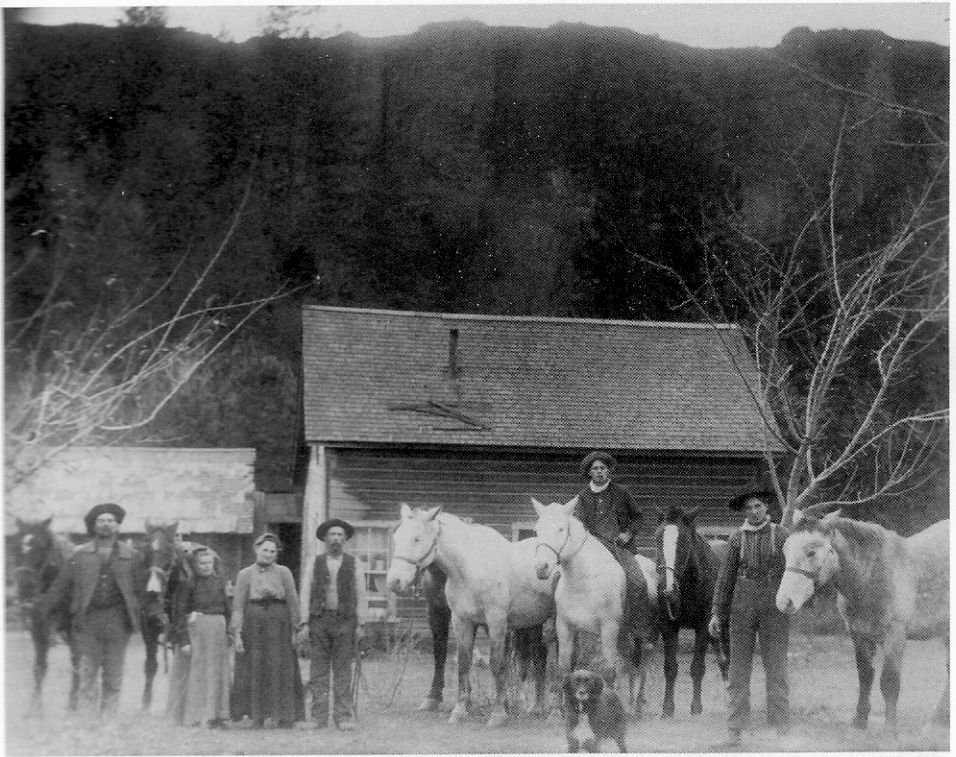
The community of Lincoln in Whitman County, Washington Territory, is a Palouse region mystery. Most references make only fragmented or passing comments about the community. Descriptions are vague as to its location. It does not appear on modern maps. Even if you know where to find it, there are no visible ruins indicating that it ever existed. Lincoln was never platted, nor incorporated. But the community did exist at one time, and it even appeared on a few maps of its era. This is the story of Lincoln, a town that was.

Lincoln began in 1872 when two brothers, Charles and Andrew Chase, came to the Palouse region from Oregon City, Oregon. They selected a location on the North Palouse River, between Colfax and Palouse, about two and one half miles up river from where the future town of Elberton would be built. The area chosen by the Chase brothers would be referred to as Chase's Crossing. The Chase's Crossing designation referred to the fact that the north-south road through the area crossed the North Palouse River here. This north-south road ran between the Palouse-Colfax road to the south, and the Palouse-Garfield road to the north. It seemed a promising place to establish a town along the North Palouse River which was both a transportation system for logs and a source of water-power for their mills.

James Lindsey, in writing an economic history of Whitman County in 1926, stated: "Some half dozen places [in Whitman County] have had ambitions to become industrial centers. At Lincoln, above where Elberton now is, the Chase's had a saw mill, a flouring mill, a pottery and planned a woolen mill also."¹ The Chase's industrial center soon was known locally as Chase's Mill. Although the town in its short lifetime was referred to in these many ways, it was officially named Lincoln.

Thus Chase's Mill was the site of a sawmill (c. 1872), a grist mill (c. 1878), and a blacksmith shop. In order to finance their building operations, the Chases made and sold pottery.² The Lincoln post office was established in 1877, with Charles Chase as the first postmaster. The post office application located it on the Northwest quarter of Township 17, Range 45, Section 19.

Charles Chase was active in public affairs in both his community and the county. Along with being the local postmaster, he was regarded as one of the leading citizens of the Palouse country. He and his wife Susan were blessed with six children (four boys and two girls). According to the early historian W. H. Lever, "His uniform fairness and integrity of character has won for him the esteem and regard of all who have had any kind of business or social relationship with him."³



Courtesy of Burgess Lange

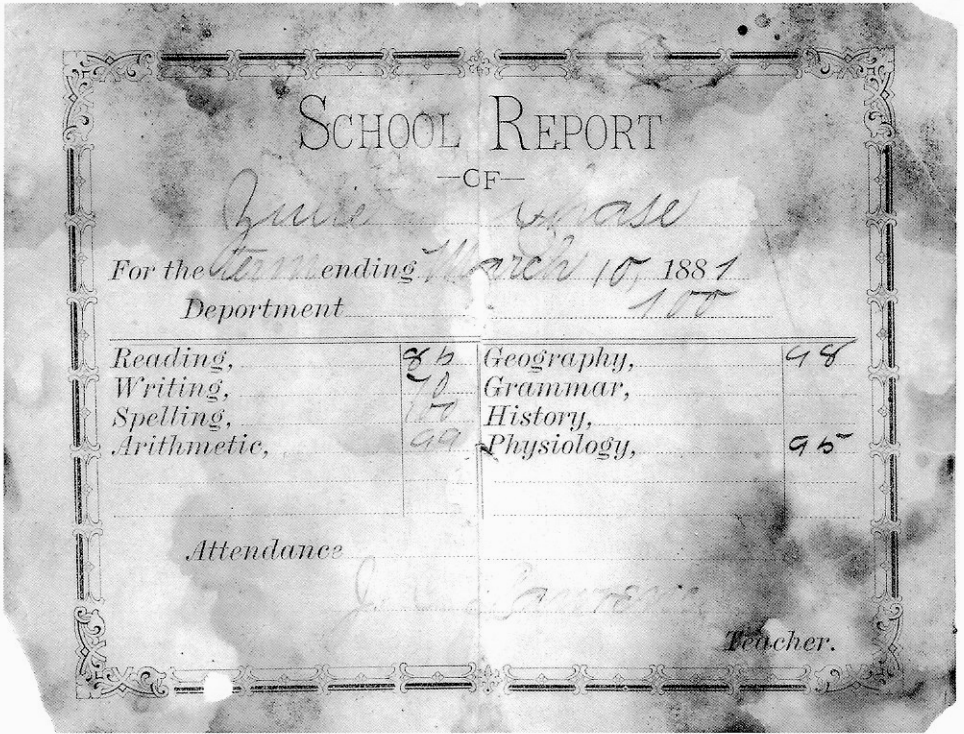
Typical of early communities in the Palouse region, the citizens of Lincoln were hard working folks of modest means. The status of their character is nicely shown in this photograph. The basalt cliff in the background is a prominent feature of the town.

Andrew Chase continued to live on his original homestead near the crossing, where he and his wife Mary Hughes raised a family of eight children (seven girls and one boy). Andrew Chase also engaged in the livestock raising business. His brand was known as the “bar C,” which was imprinted as a C with a bar through it (C).⁴

Like most rural communities of that era, Lincoln was the social center of many activities such as picnics, camp meetings, and other family gatherings. These were held under the large yellow pines (ponderosa pines) along the river. Mrs. Ickes reported on the camp meetings at Lincoln’s Mill, as she called it. “The people went to these camp meetings and tented. The meeting usually lasted over two Sundays. It nearly always rained at camp meeting time.”⁵ To quench the thirst of the participants at these affairs, there was a spring on the hillside that flowed with clear refreshing water. The current owner of the land has shown the author the still-flowing spring on this land.

The need for educating their children was a common theme among early immigrants to the Palouse region. Therefore, it is not surprising that Mary Turnbow

Ickes, who arrived as an 11 year old in 1875, wrote “within three years, both church and Sunday School were organized in the community. A Sunday School was started at a place near Lincoln’s flour mill and Chase’s saw mill. Sunday School was held in the school house. The school house was in to Eden Valley district about two miles from the Turnbow home. School at first was a subscription school. There was no public school in the district for three years.”⁶ There is no official record of the early Lincoln school. This is probably because the school at first was a subscription school, which had to be held for three years before a public school could be established. There is firm proof that an area school did exist in 1881. This proof is the report card for Zulie Chase, dated March, 1881.



Courtesy of Burgess Lange

Zulette Chase was born in Oregon City in 1867. She was the fourth child in the Andrew Jackson and Mary Hughes Chase family. In all the family had ten children, nine girls and one boy.

Lumber for the Eden Valley school building located at the intersection of what is now Lange Road and Route 272 was cut at Chase’s sawmill. The structure, on the west side of Lange Road, was built like a box, with rough-sawn heavy planks standing on end for the siding and lighter boards nailed over the cracks (board-and-batten construction). Unfortunately, the lumber used in this building was not thoroughly cured, so as it dried out the boards shrank, twisted, and cracked. This

provided ample ventilation for the school room. In 1891, a new schoolhouse was built, but now situated to the east side of Lange Road, a site currently marked with a plaque. The last operator of the Chase sawmill, Ben Palmer, gave the lowest bid and was awarded the construction job. This time it was built with cured, planed lumber and it was painted. ⁷ The now officially named Eden Valley School was given the number District No. 32.

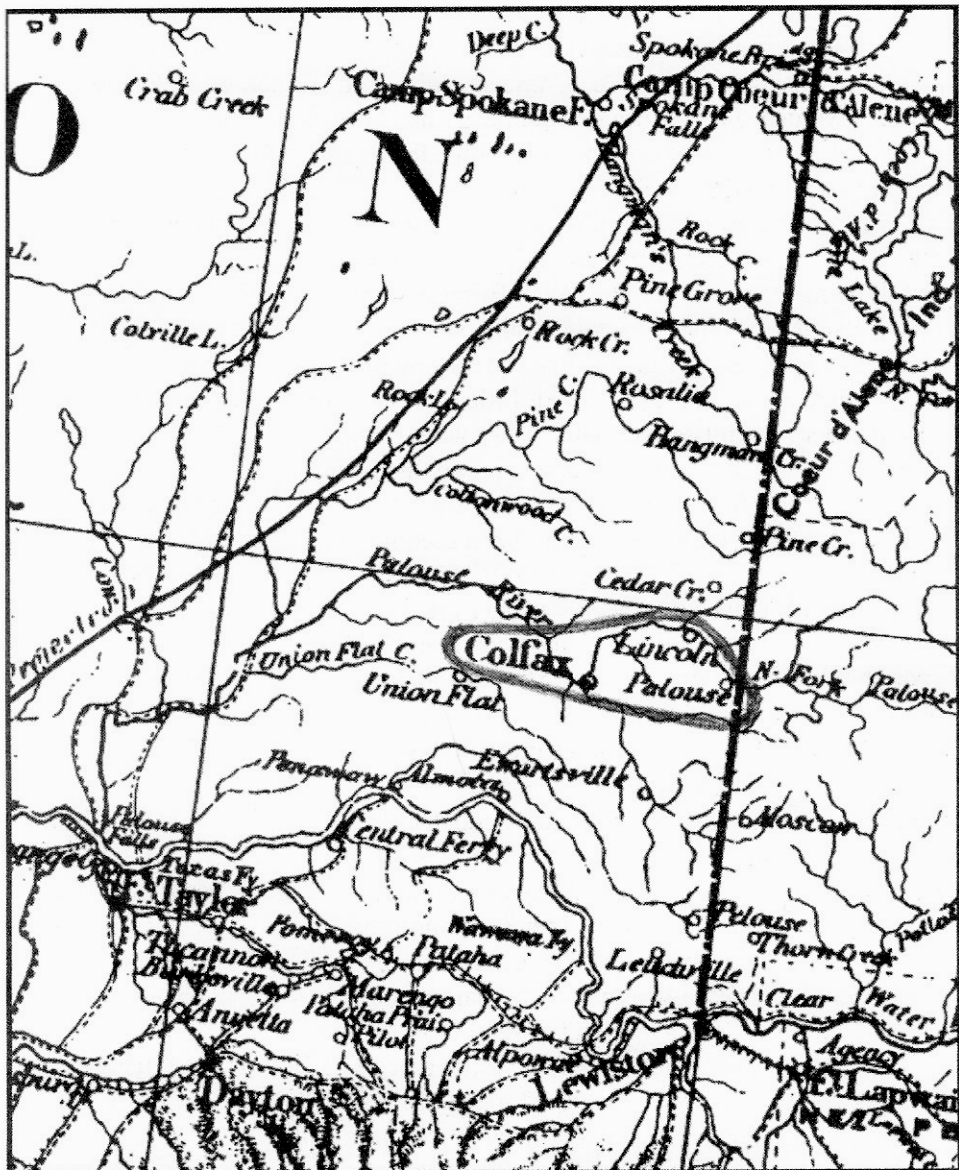
Pioneer immigrant families shared many common emotions; including the reality of death, especially of their children. Death was not a stranger to Lincoln. The following story was told by Lelah Burgess Lange: "In the edge of the timber, on the hillside near this early community, are two small graves. The picket fence around them is no more. They are marked only by the lilac bush so long ago planted by hands that cared. It is reputed their little caskets were of rough lumber from the mill put together with square nails. They were children who died with the black diphtheria when that virulent disease scoured this country."⁸

A letter written on April 5, 1874, by Edward Pedigo, who with his wife settled in the area in 1872, gives a first-hand account of the Chase Mill. "I was down at Chase's saw mill last evening (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles from my house). They are all well. The River is pouring a nice sheet of water over the dam. They have got one of the best mill frames I ever saw, large & strong, but will not be ready to saw before, sometime in May." A year later, Pedigo mentions in another letter that the river is up so high that Chase cannot run his saw. ⁹

Chase's sawmill was the second mill built on the North Palouse River. The first sawmill on the river was built a year or so earlier, in 1871. It was located down river at the confluence of the north and south forks of the Palouse River. This location would eventually become the town of Colfax. About half a decade later, the third sawmill on the North Palouse River would be built upstream at Palouse City. Between Lincoln and Colfax another community would emerge by the name of Elberton. It too would become a sawmill town. The lumber production from these four sawmill towns would supply local markets during the early era of immigrant migration into the Palouse region between 1871 and 1900.

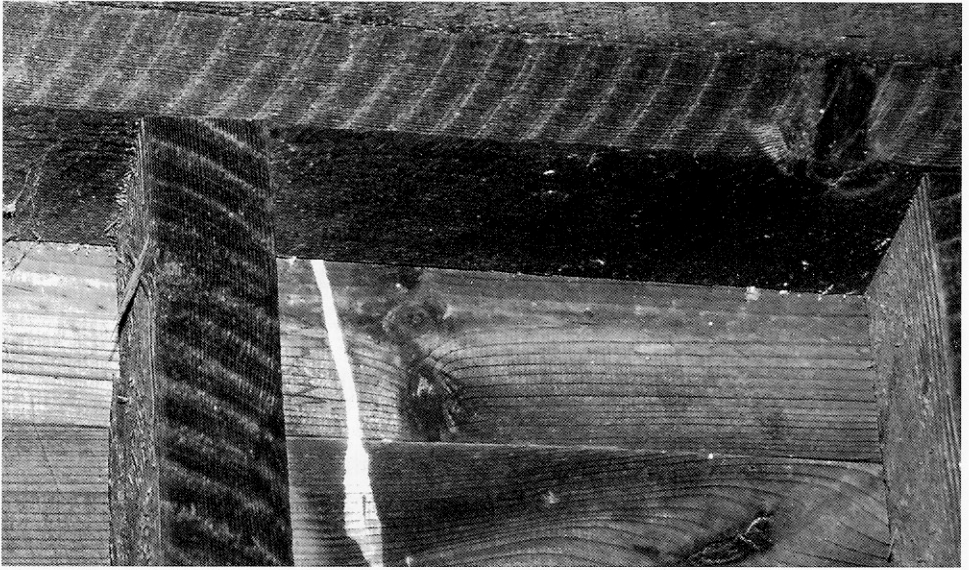
Logs to be sawn in Chase's sawmill came initially from the hillsides along the North Palouse River which fostered an abundance of softwood timber (ponderosa pine and Douglas fir). Once the local logs were cut out and the resources depleted, logs from further upstream were harvested and floated down to the sawmill. Upriver from Chase's sawmill, an earthen dam was built. A log-boom was used to cordon off a log storage area. As logs were needed at the sawmill, they were released from the log-pond and floated to the mill for sawing. The logs were sawn into various lumber products and hauled away by horse and wagon to build a farmer's house, barn or other buildings.

A mill race was constructed to channel water from the dam to the sawmill. The race was about a quarter of a mile in length and ran parallel to the river bank.



State of Oregon, and Territories of Washington and Idaho, Office of Chief Engineer, 1879 map showing location of Lincoln between Colfax and Palouse on the North Fork of the Palouse River.

Water from the mill race turned a waterwheel, which powered the sawmill. A circle saw was used to cut the logs into lumber. Evidence of the circle saw is in the scribe marks on the sides of large timbers and boards used to build a barn on Andrew Chase's homestead. This barn remains standing and use today. Although the mill was primitive in design, it was functional in providing urgently needed lumber



Circle saw scribe marks on surface of structural timbers in barn on Andrew Chase's homestead.

products for local farmers in this very active period of population growth. Thus, Chase's sawmill played a critical role in supplying sawn lumber products. Along with meeting these physical needs of the farmers, Chase's sawmill fulfilled some social needs too, as Lelah Burgess Lange relates:

The late George Draper, whose father took up land at a very early date a mile west of the Chase Mill, used to tell this story – "When I was 16, my father sent me to Chase's sawmill with a wagon and four horses for lumber, and I thought I was a man."¹⁰

The early settlement era in the Palouse region was one of subsistence farming. During this period, farmers were hardworking, self-reliant and independent. They lived on small family farms where they built their own houses, raised their own animals, and grew their own food. The wheat they harvested was taken to the local grist mill for grinding into flour for their own consumption. These farmers were self-sustaining; they lived in a dynamic balance with their land. Chase's grist mill played a critical role in servicing the needs of these farmers. Once again, the letters of Edward Pedigo mention on Sept 23, 1877, that Chase has his new gristmill up and will soon commence grinding. Lelah Burgess Lange tells this story:

A grand old Confederate soldier from Arkansas, Billy Morrison, pioneered in the Thorn Creek neighborhood near Oakesdale. Reminiscing one day, he remarked, "The first crop of wheat we had, I brought a sack of it, and rode bareback on a mule, to Chase's Mill and had it ground. That evening I rode back with a sack of flour."¹¹

The North Palouse River was both a transportation system that delivered logs to the sawmill and the source of waterpower that turned the waterwheels at the sawmill and the gristmill. But nature's rivers can be fickle. Severe winter conditions could freeze the river and cause ice jams that could negatively impact both of the mills. Early spring rains or Chinook winds could rapidly melt the snow and cause severe flood conditions that would carry logs past the sawmill. On a seasonal basis, the lack of rain in the fall could result in insufficient river flow to turn the waterwheels that powered the mills. Although use of the river was convenient for transportation and power, it was not a reliable operating system. Over time, technological changes in transportation and power created new reliable systems. Unfortunately that technology also brought about the demise of Lincoln.

This new paradigm of business would take a drastic toll on the Chase industries. The technology of railroads was coming, and that would change the dynamics of doing business. In 1885 the Columbia and Palouse Railroad, a branch line of the Northern Pacific Railroad, came into the neighboring town of Elberton, which did not even exist when Lincoln was founded. So the "upstart" community of Elberton grew, while Lincoln languished.

During the early years of their existence, Chase's sawmill and Chase's gristmill operated in a state of semi-isolation supplying the needs of local farmers. In spite of its fickle tendencies, the North Palouse River was their friend in providing transportation of logs to the sawmill and operating power for the waterwheels at both of the mills. Then new technology intervened to end the era of Lincoln.



The site of Lincoln as it appears in May, 2011. The irrigation pipe marks the location of the mill while the fence line shows the alignment of the mill race. The basalt cliff in the background can also be seen in the photograph on page 14. No structures from Lincoln exist on the site.

The Lincoln post office was discontinued April 3, 1882, when the mail was routed through Palouse. Eventually both the sawmill and the gristmill were sold. In 1888, the grist mill, which had been bought by Tolbert and Bragg, was moved downriver to the new town of Elberton.¹² “The last legal business transaction at the Crossing was in 1889 when Codd, a sawmill operator of Colfax, bought the rights and exclusive use of the Chase dam to assist in driving logs on the river.”¹³ After the sale of the mills, Charles Chase moved closer to Colfax, while Andrew Chase continued to live in his original homestead. Other people of the community moved on to new locations when the prosperous sounds of industry and joyful sound of picnics no longer echoed up the North Palouse River canyon. The voices and buildings of Lincoln are long gone from the site where the bridge on Lange Road (County Road No. 4210) crosses the North Fork of the Palouse River. The land of Lincoln is now part of the Burgess Lange’s Sundown Ranch.

¹ Lindsey, *Economic History*, p. 55.

² Lindsey, p. 38.

³ Lever, *Illustrated History*, p. 442.

⁴ “The Chase Crossing,” *Palouse Story*, p. 38.

⁵ “The Story of Mrs. Emma Ickes,” *Bunchgrass Historian*, 19/3, p. 21.

⁶ “Ickes,” *Bunchgrass Historian*, 19/3, p. 22.

⁷ J. B. West, *Growing Up*, pp. 112-13.

⁸ “The Chase Crossing,” *Palouse Story*, p. 39.

⁹ WCHS Archive Coll. #530, “Pedigo Letters,” 5 April 1874, and 23 April 1875.

¹⁰ “The Chase Crossing,” *Palouse Story*, p. 39.

¹¹ “The Chase Crossing,” *Palouse Story*, p. 39.

¹² Lindsey, p. 59.

¹³ “The Chase Crossing,” *Palouse Story*, p. 40.

Bibliography

Erickson, Edith E. *Whitman County, From Abbieville to Zion*. Colfax: University Printing & Copying, 1962.

Gilbert, Frank T, *Historic Sketches of Walla Walla, Whitman, Columbia, and Garfield Counties*. Portland, Oregon: A. G. Walling, 1882.

Lange, Lelah Burgess, “The Chase Crossing,” *Palouse Story* (History Report) of the Palouse Town and Country Study Program, 1962.

Lever, W. H. *An Illustrated History of Whitman County*. Published by Lever, 1901.

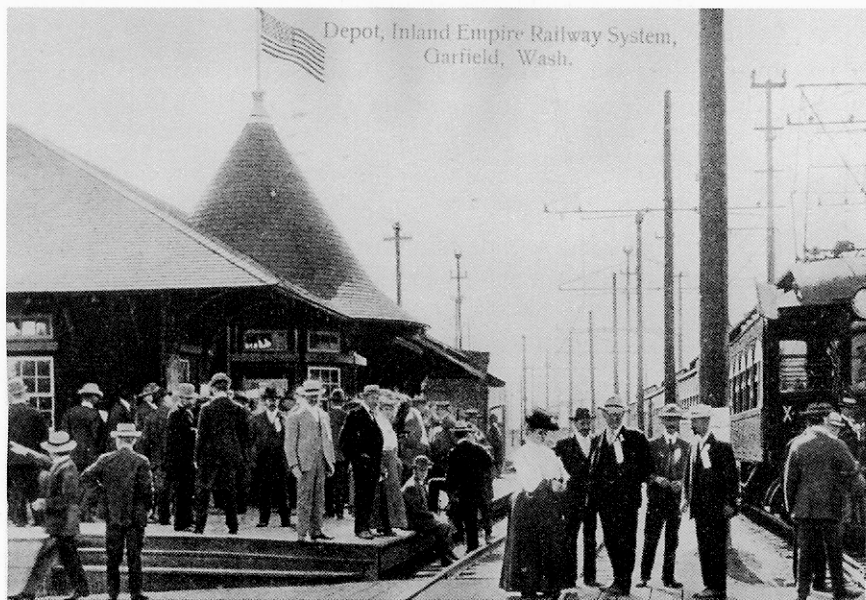
Lindsey, James E. *An Economic History of Whitman County Washington*. Master’s thesis, State College of Washington, 1926.

Pedigo, Edward. *Letters 1872-77*. WCHS Coll. No. 530.

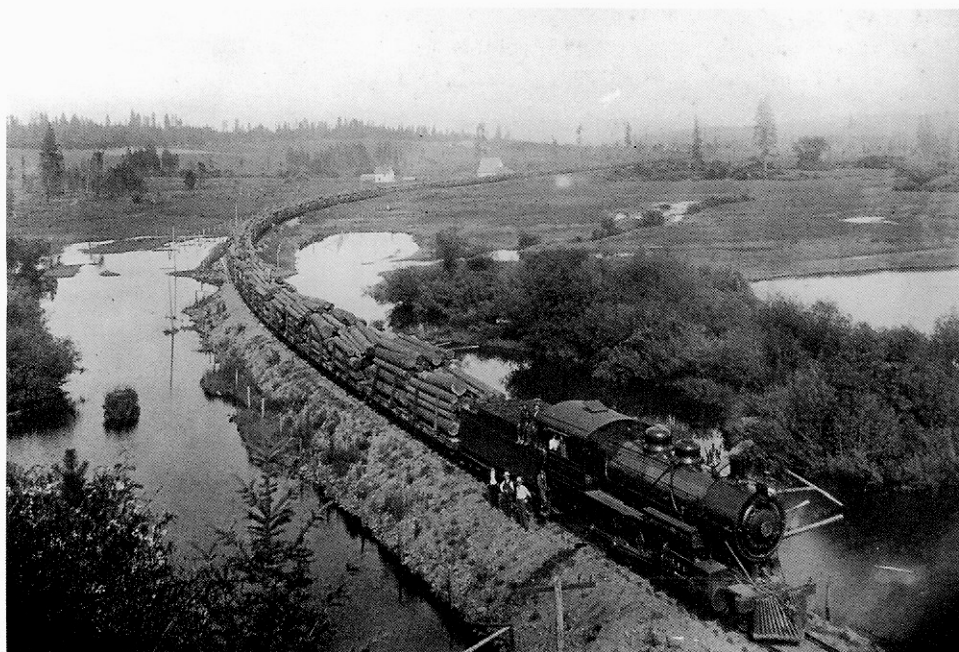
West, J. B. *Growing up in the Palouse*. Rosalia, WA: Citizen Journal, 1908.

Yoder, Fred. “The Story of Mrs. Emma Ickes, Palouse, Washington,” *Stories of Early Pioneers in Whitman County*, 1937; reprinted in *The Bunchgrass Historian* 19/3 (1991), pp. 18-22.

TRAINS ON THE PALOUSE - A Photo Essay



The Inland Empire Railway System Depot at Garfield ca. 1913



The longest trainload of logs going west to the Potlatch Mill on the W.I.&M. Railroad passing by the old Potlatch farm at Palouse. The train was one mile long, with 105 cars, and logs representing 1,100,000 board feet of lumber.



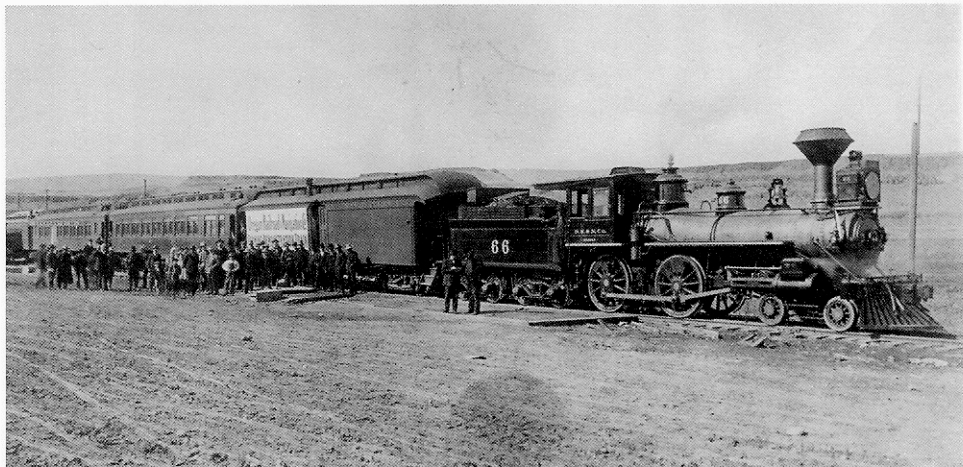
Even the smallest communities had rail service. This station at Winona stood near the hotel and other traveller services. The depot sign indicates it is 113 miles to Spokane and 320 miles to Portland.



These three young women explore Palouse, walking on the tracks in front of the Spokane and Inland Empire Railroad Depot. The overpass at the left was meant to be a tunnel, but when the soil gave way the overpass for the road to Colfax was constructed. The Powers house visible at the right of the cut still stands.



UP 3227 steam locomotive is crossing Kamiaken Street after leaving the Pullman depot, which can be seen at the far right. Before April 19, 1954, when diesels went into use, UP steam locomotives were the usual power for passenger train #62, which ran from Ayer Jct. on to Moscow ID. The old Pullman City Hall is seen at the far left. The former Pullman High School (now the Gladish Community Center) is seen just above the locomotive. The photograph was taken in the early 1950s.



This O.R.&N. Co. engine makes a stop at Hooper while pulling the Farming Demonstration Train cars.

Bunchgrass Historian



Bunchgrass Historian
Whitman County Historical Society
Post Office Box 67
Colfax, Washington 99111

Address Service Requested

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage

Permit No. 100
Colfax, WA 99111