

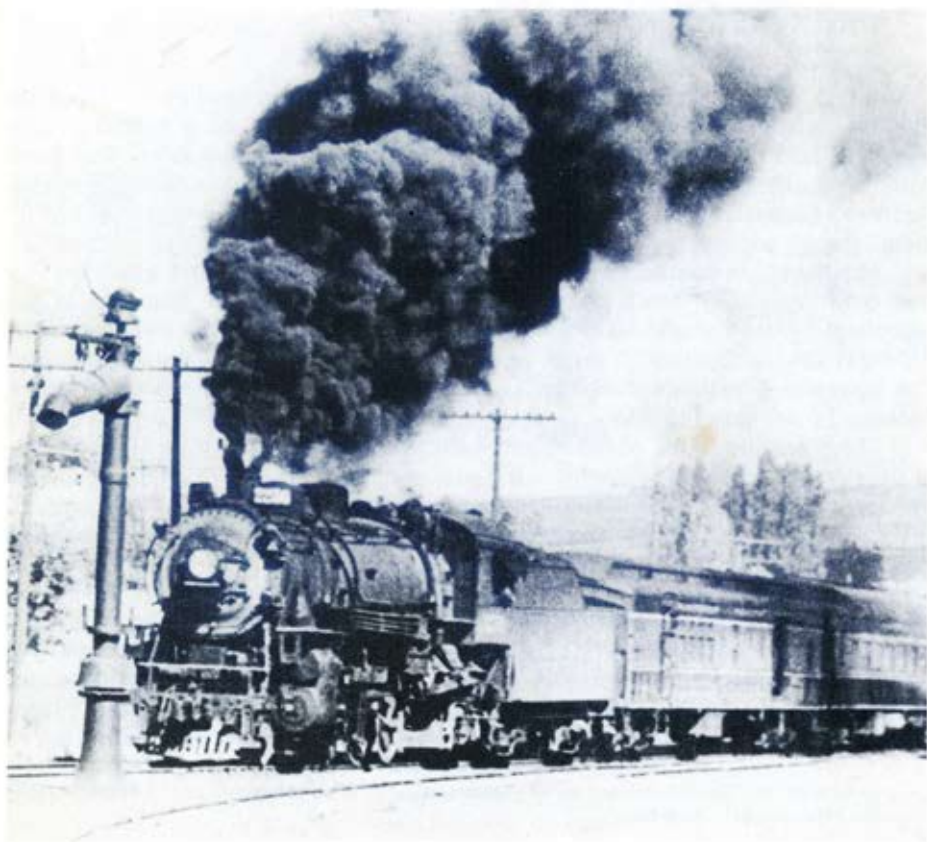


# Bunchgrass Historian

Volume 2, No. 2

SUMMER, 1974

## RAILROADING





## Bunchgrass Historian

Published quarterly in March, June, September and December during the calendar year by the Whitman County Historical Society, at P.O. Box 447, Pullman, Washington 99163 to further an interest in a rich and wonderful heritage by sharing memories of those days of early settlement in the bunchgrass country. Subscription rates are three dollars the calendar year. One dollar an issue.

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**Cover Photo**—One of the last steam trains on the Northern Pacific line into Pullman about 1954. Courtesy of Prof. Alfred B. Butler of Washington State University.

Indebtedness to Mr. A. L. Dokken, Union Pacific agent at Pullman, for the map and suggestions used in preparing this issue featuring the railroads.

We are grateful to all who were so generous with their photographs.

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## The Development of Railroading in Whitman County

By J. B. West

July 2, 1864 President Lincoln signed an act granting land to the **Northern Pacific Railway Company** to aid it in the construction of a railroad, with branches and telegraph lines from Lake Superior to Puget Sound. The grant could amount to 44 million acres but as no money or taxes were involved, Congress was in no mood to quibble over a few acres of land, which many of its members considered to be of little or no value.

The **Northern Pacific** was required to determine its route and when the line was definitely fixed, file a plat with the General Land office. The part of the railroad between Lake Pend Oreille and the Columbia river was designated as the Pend Oreille Division. Two of its branches were to cross Whitman county. The **Spokane & Palouse** would cross from north to south and the **Columbia & Palouse**, from west to east.

The grant consisted of the 20 odd-numbered sections per mile on each side of the right-of-way. This gave the railroad one-half of the land in an 80-mile wide belt from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Ocean! At the time the act was passed, it was not anticipated that settlers would move into the West in such great numbers in advance of the railroad. By the time the railroad was prepared to claim the land under the terms of the grant, some of it had been previously homesteaded, pre-empted or otherwise claimed by settlers. The railroad's lawyers contest the right of the people to the land on which they had made their homes. The cases had to be decided by the courts. Litigation was carried on for 30 years. Some of the cases were carried all the way to the United States Supreme Court. To compensate the railroad for any loss, it was permitted to

J. B. West of Palouse writes a weekly history column titled **Memories of the Palouse** for the **Palouse [Washington] Republic**.





acquired it. It was the nucleus of the network of railroads the latter company was to build across the county. After a delay of about two years, construction was resumed. It entered Whitman county near Hooper and ran through Pampa, Lacrosse, and north to Winona. From there it followed a southeasterly course up Rebel Flat through Endicott, Diamond and Mockonema. It then took a turn to the east, climbed out of Rebel Flat to Crest, then descended on a long grade down to the Palouse river at Colfax.

The first train arrived in Colfax November 10, 1883. For some time the train service was not dependable. The trains were usually late if they came at all. Colfax still had to rely partially on the stage coach for passenger and mail service. One time the mail was mislaid at Palouse Junction where it lay a week before it was discovered and forwarded. Another time service was discontinued for three weeks while the track was relocated above high water along Washtucna (Kahlotus) lake.

During the first year or two the **Columbia & Palouse** was operated by the **Northern Pacific**. When the **Union Pacific** began extending its **O.W.R. & N** lines beyond Colfax, it set up its own operation. In 1885 the railroad was extended from Colfax up the South Palouse river valley through Guy, later renamed Albion, Pullman and to Moscow, Idaho. In 1886 a branch was built from Colfax through Elberton, Garfield and to Farmington, where a roundhouse was built. In 1888 this branch was relocated at Tekoa where it remained until about 1949. When the diesels took the place of the steam engines roundhouses were no longer needed.

Until 1889 the **Columbia & Palouse** was a feeder line for the **Northern Pacific**. That year the **Union Pacific** constructed the first bridge over the Snake river at Riparia. From there it built a line through Hay to Lacrosse which



Head-on collision of Northern Pacific engines within Pullman city limits in 1892. Photo courtesy of Washington State University Library.



connected its growing Whitman county network with the main **Union Pacific** system. The **Columbia & Palouse** then lost its identity and the name was dropped. For the next dozen years the railroad to Palouse Junction, or Connell, as it is now known, was abandoned but was not removed.

The same year, 1889, a railroad was built from Winona through Sunset, St. John, Thornton, Oakesdale to Seltice where it joined the Farmington-Tekoa line. From Tekoa the railroad was extended to Rockford in Spokane county. A branch was built from Tekoa to Wallace, Idaho, and one to Plummer, Idaho, but later taken up.

In 1886, the **Spokane & Palouse**, the second railroad to enter Whitman county, was begun by the **Northern Pacific**. It branched off the main line at Marshall Junction and ran through Spangle and Plaza in Spokane county and through Rosalia, Oakesdale, Belmont, Garfield, Palouse, Pullman, Johnson, Colton and Uniontown in Whitman county and to Genesee, Idaho. Soon a railroad was built from Pullman to Moscow, Idaho and down the Potlatch canyon to Lewiston. A railroad was built from Belmont to Farmington. It was removed about 1970 for lack of use.

Early in the century the **Northern Pacific** and the **Great Northern** jointly built the **Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railroad** along the north bank of the Columbia river to give them access to Portland. It passes through Lamont as it cuts across the northwestern corner of Whitman county.

Sometime before 1910 the **Union Pacific** constructed the **North Coast Railroad** from Ayer Junction on the Snake river to Spokane, a distance of 120 miles. It passes near Palouse Falls on the west side of the river then crosses over into Whitman county. Again it crosses the river and bypasses Hooper on its way to Spokane. From Spokane it built a railroad south to Tekoa where it connected with its railroad there.

In 1906 the **Spokane & Inland Empire Railway Company** began construction of an electric line from Spokane, south into Whitman county. At Spring Valley, north of the county line, it split into two branches. The west branch was built through Rosalia, Thornton, Steptoe and down through Green Hollow canyon to the Palouse river. To reach Colfax it had to construct one tunnel and bridge the river six times. Eventually the tunnel caved in and that portion of the road was abandoned. The bridges are still intact. One of them a rare covered one, is now part of a private farm road. The east branch was built through Oakesdale, Garfield and Palouse in Whitman county, and through Viola to Moscow in Idaho. Early in its life a disastrous wreck occurred on its line near Coeur d'Alene when two excursion trains met headon. Fifteen people were killed and hundreds injured. As a result, it was forced into bankruptcy and it spent the rest of its corporate existence in the hands of a receiver. At the beginning, its income depended largely on its passenger business, mail contracts and express receipts from milk and cream shipments which it picked up daily from dairy farms along its route. In time all of these sources of income disappeared.

In the 1930's the **Great Northern** absorbed the **S&IE** which gave it an entry into Whitman county. Diesel-electric locomotives took the place of electric power. The trolley lines and all substations were dismantled. The part of the railroad from Mount Hope to Spokane was taken up.

Much of the **S&IE** railroad lies parallel to the **Northern Pacific Railroad**. When the merger of the **Northern Pacific** and the **Great Northern** as the **Burlington-Northern** was completed, demolition of the former electric line was begun. Many sections of the road have been taken up and many trestles have been dismantled. The dismantling of the high trestle near Viola, Idaho, severed its line into Moscow which eliminated the last of its original terminals. The



**Blasting—Dust and smoke rolling over valley after explosion Sept. 5, 1907 out of Hooper. Photos on pages 6 and 7 courtesy of Mrs. J. W. Young and Alex McGregor.**



**Steam shovel cleans up after the blast. 1907**





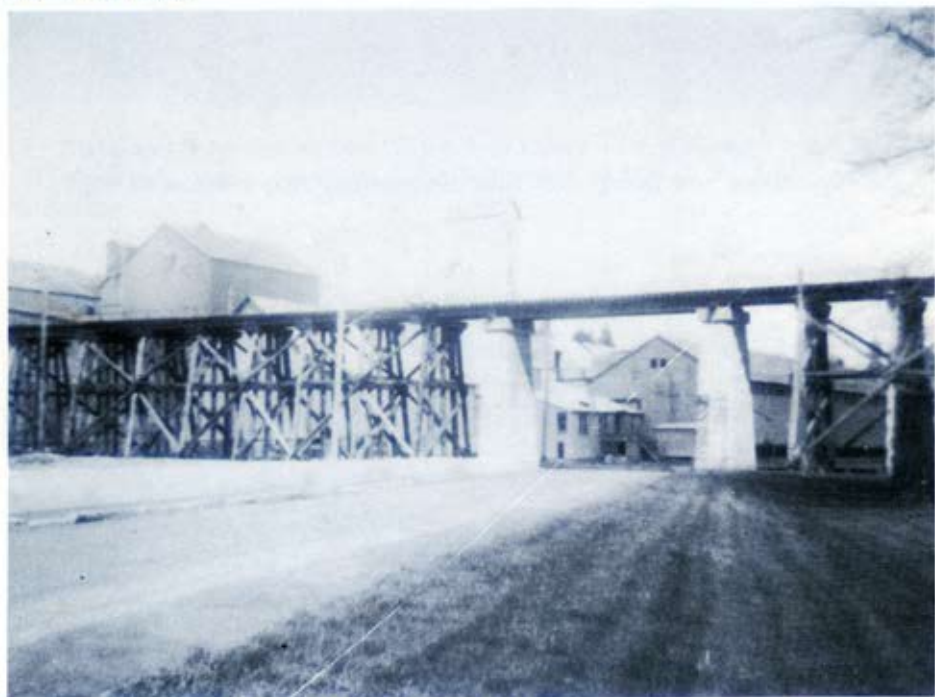
Dinky engine and dump cars near Hooper building railroad in 1908.



Train arriving in Hooper. Ca. 1910

largest trestle, the long curved one at Palouse which spans the **W.I.&M. Railroad** tracks, Main street and the Palouse river, is slated for dismantling soon. It is estimated that the cost will be as high as \$50,000 less salvage. Very recently, the Palouse Lions club has petitioned the **Burlington-Northern** to leave it as is. It spans the city park and is a monument worth saving. It was recently rebuilt and should stand a long time. The only parts of the line remaining are the ones serving grain elevators which make connection with a nearby **BN** track.

During the years 1905-6-7, the **O.W.R.&N.** constructed a railroad along the north bank of the Snake river. It connected Riparia, Central Ferry, Penawawa, Almota, Wawawai and other points famous in the early history of Whitman county as river ports and ferries. There is where the early settlers crossed into Whitman county and where the big freighters loaded their wagons for transportation of goods to towns in Whitman county and beyond. In more recent times those names were synonymous with fruit orchards. People could drive to the Snake river valley and in one day could return with a year's supply of luscious canning fruit for the family. But the towns and orchards are only memories now.



**The high trestle for the railroad at Palouse, Washington.**

The backwater of the Snake river dams has covered the little towns and orchards and left not a trace. Much of the railroad was submerged and it was debated whether to abandon it or relocate it on a higher level. It was finally decided that there would be enough traffic to warrant its rebuilding which is being done, with the prospect of completion in 1975. It is jointly owned by the **Union Pacific** and the **Burlington-Northern**.

In 1909, the **Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific**, called the "**Milwaukee**," for short, was completed through northern Whitman county. It passes through Tekoa, then it follows Pine creek past Rosalia, north into Spokane county for a short distance then back to Malden and Pine City, whose



site is on the old Indian trail and wagon road between Texas City on the Snake river to Colville. Then it passes southwest along the east side of Rock lake, then west into Adams county where it crosses the old **North Coast** railroad at Marengo.

In order to serve Spokane, the **Milwaukee** built a branch line from Plummer, Idaho to that city. The **Union Pacific** then extended its Tekoa-Rockford line to join the **Milwaukee** to pass jointly through Spokane. Leaving Spokane, going southwest to join its main line at Marengo, it used the old **North Coast Line**, which is now called the **Milwaukee**. The old **North Coast** railroad from Ayer

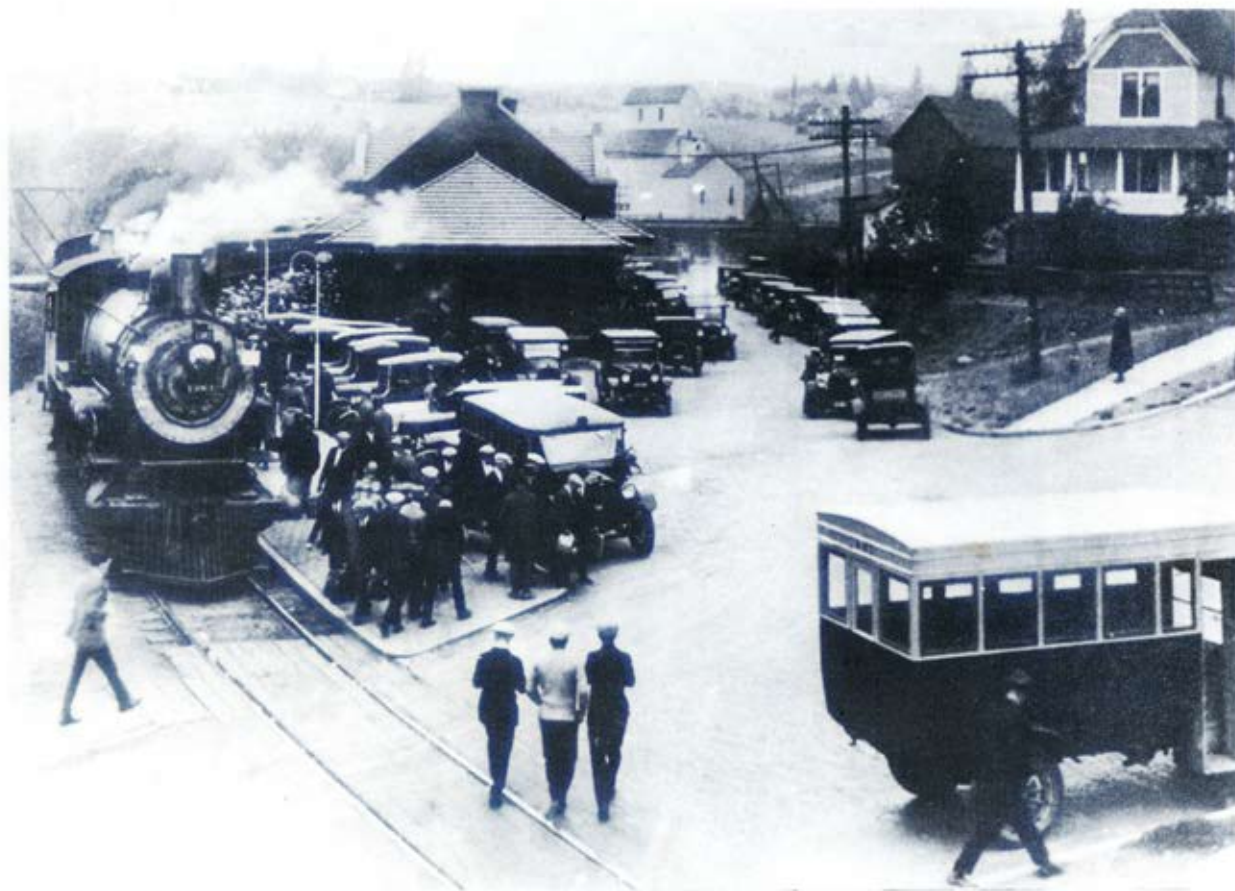


This picture of a U.P. train at the Lewiston depot was taken about 1908. It was the first train serving Snake river towns. Elliott Gay photo.

Junction to Marengo is now simply called the **Union Pacific**, and the one that was built from Spokane to Tekoa is now gone. The **Milwaukee** line, unlike the other transcontinental railroads, built its railroad without any land grants, government subsidies or loans of any kind.

The McGoldrick Lumber Company had a large sawmill (burned in 1924) in Spokane on the flat across the Spokane river from Gonzaga university. It had a big logging operation in the Emida-Sanders-Tensed area of Benewah County, Idaho. To transport its logs to Spokane it built its own railroad from that area to Tekoa. The trains of logs were then routed over the **Union Pacific-Milwaukee** railroads to its mill in Spokane. After the timber was cut, the railroad was removed. This occurred about 1940.

In 1905 the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company built its **Washington, Idaho & Montana Railroad** from Palouse, Washington, through its town of Potlatch to Bovill. About one and one-half miles of the line lies in Washington. At Palouse there was a turntable for its steam locomotives and a freight elevator to move mail and express up and down between the **W.I.&M.** and the **S.&I.E.** depots. The elevator was dismantled long ago, the **S.&I.E.** depot has been demolished and the turntable is now a bridge across a creek somewhere in Latah County, Idaho. The **W.I.&M.** depot, a perfect model of a Lionel toy train set, still stands,



Students returning to Washington State College at Pullman in 1926-27. Photo courtesy of Howard Kronemeyer, Pullman.



but unused. In 1909 the **Milwaukee** railroad built a branch from its main line at St. Maries, south up the St. Maries river and connected with the **W.I.&M.** at Bovill, then extended its road on to Elk River. Several years ago it purchased the **W.I.&M.** at a junk figure. At Palouse it has exchanges with the **Burlington-Northern**. A great deal of freight moves over it.

In 1902, after laying idle for 12 years, the former **Columbia & Palouse** between Lacrosse and Connell was put into use again. Inquiries made in April, 1974 at Kahlotus and Washtucna elicited the information that a trainload of potatoes was shipped over the railroad daily, including Sundays. A little study revealed that the potatoes were being shipped from the Columbia Basin, which is **B.N.** and **Milwaukee** territory to southern Idaho which is all **Union Pacific** country. There, processing plants convert them into Idaho dehydrated and frozen french fried potatoes. The 93-year-old railroad is a thin and somewhat rusty link between three big railway systems, and probably the only railroad in America used exclusively for potato shipments.

In the early 1880's the railroads owned hundreds of thousands of acres of Whitman county land. It was all disposed of within 30 years to farmers on very liberal terms. An old deed is at hand which throws a little light on the matter. The deed is made by the **Northern Pacific Railway Company** in November, 1906. It covers 40 acres of land and was given to a farmer upon payment of \$320.00, or \$8.00 per acre. This farmer had possessed the land 14 years.

Extra copies of this **Railroading** issue available at \$1.00 per copy.

## Union Pacific Depot Saved by Bank

By Roy M. Chatters

Those of us who have spent weary hours sitting on the hard wooden benches of some remote railway station would welcome the now well-padded ones found in the remodeled former **Union Pacific** depot in Pullman. The depot, long-idle as a passenger station, has recently been converted to accommodate the Lincoln First Federal Savings and Loan Association's banking services and to provide a community meeting hall. The **Union Pacific** resident agent also has office space which is leased from the bank. Occupancy by the bank took place September 24, 1973.

Much of the atmosphere of railroading has been retained. When one walks into the main service area of the bank, the old bulletin board which announced train arrival and departure times immediately catches the eye. This along with the use of those aforementioned benches along the wall, the former ticket counter opposite the tellers' windows and the original heavy hand-hewn ceiling beams almost make one listen for the whistle which would herald the arrival of some phantom train. Somewhat anachronistic are the modern desks of the bank manager and his staff, excellent lighting and the deep red carpeting in the main waiting room.

The area once occupied by the ticket agent, clerks and telegrapher has been made into a small meeting room for private banking affairs. A short hallway and the office of the present railroad agent separate the main banking area from a large room which formerly served for storing freight and baggage. It now provides a space in which small community gatherings may be held in pleasant surroundings. More of those familiar wooden waiting room benches with scars removed, now smooth and gleaming and accented with the red upholstered back pads, comfortable chairs, red and gold drapes, soft lighting and again the rich red carpeting plus facilities for preparing refreshments are to be found here through the courtesy of the banking firm.



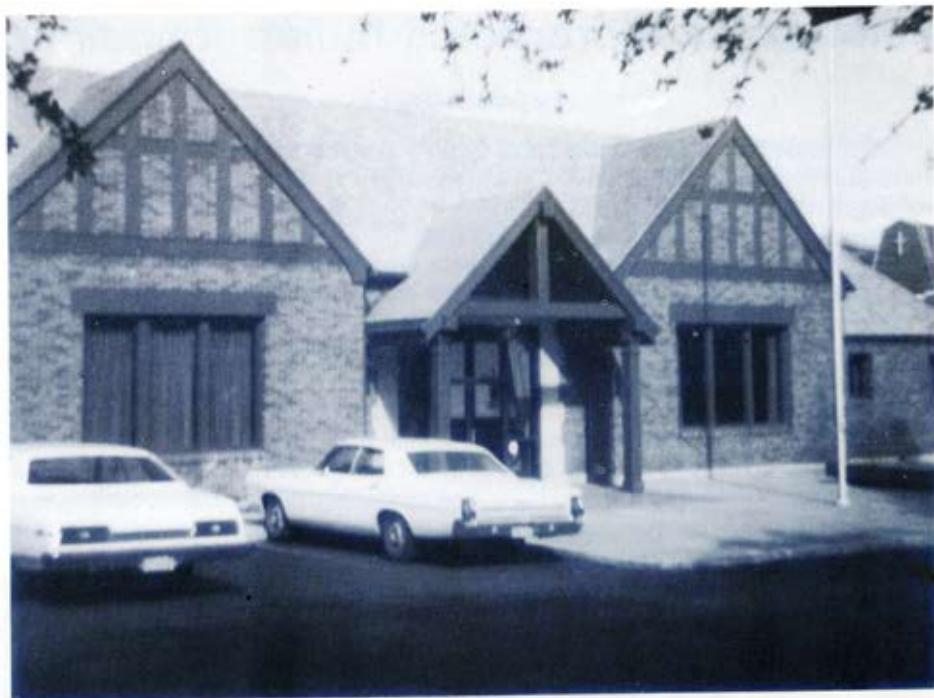
**Dorothy Myers, bank employee at the cashier's counter in front of bulletin board. Pullman Herald photo.**

Numerous railroad pictures hung throughout the building add to the feeling that this is still a railway depot, but one "with a human face."

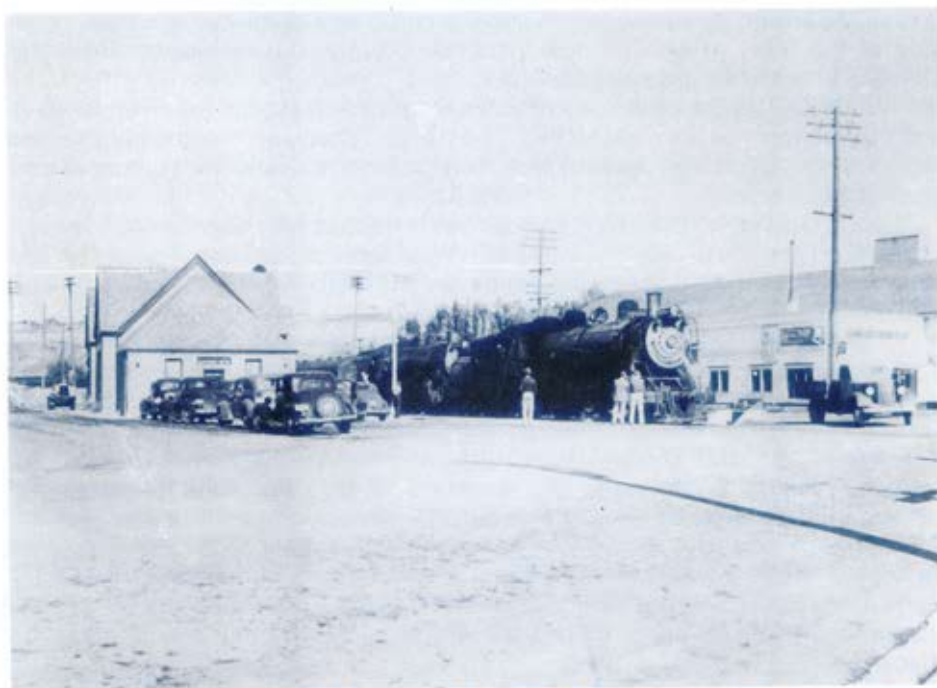
The exterior of the building has undergone some modification but not enough to detract from the railroad atmosphere. A covered entryway on the south side of the building, new concrete walks, paved parking space and landscaping enhance the appearance of the sturdy brick building.

While the depot, built in 1938, was not ancient, its disuse as a passenger station had begun to give it an air of decrepitude and "eye soreness." Happily, this landmark has now become a viable and attractive part of Pullman's commercial community and retained some of the flavor of another time in doing so.





Front entrance of the depot-bank building.



Cougar Special at UPRR depot. Ca. 1940. Courtesy of Washington State University Library.

# Salmon feast promotes Indian friendship

By Lewis Miles

A salmon feast, held in Whitman County, up the Snake river from Steptoe Canyon, promoted friendship between the Nez Perce Indians and the white people.

Governor or General, Isaac Ingalls Stevens provided the dinner for three friendly Nez Perce Chiefs, Red Wolf, The Lawyer, and Timothy. The salmon had been purchased from Chief Timothy, who was invited to share in the feast.

Hazard Stevens, the General's son, indicated that it was a beautiful sunny June 16, 1855, when General Stevens and his party took the trail. The Walla Walla Conference with the Indians was over, and the party was going to Montana to meet with the Blackfeet tribe. In the party, there were 22 persons, 41 long eared pack mules, 17 loose horses, headed for the Nez Perce Trail and Red Wolf's Crossing (Alpowa). The party's guide was a Coeur d'Alene Indian.

They traveled single file along the trail, camping on Dry Creek for the first night. Continuing on the Nez Perce Trail, they crossed the Touchet and Tucannon rivers, ascending Pataha Creek, over the divide and descending Alpowa Creek to the Snake River. At Alpowa (Red Wolf's Crossing) they met Chief Red Wolf and Chief Timothy. This was on June 19th after three days travel from Walla Walla.

General Stevens noted with pleasure the farming activities and the crops being planted by the Indians at Alpowa. He also made note of the bargaining necessary and the toll required to get the party and baggage ferried across the Snake River.

The Indians transported the members of the Stevens party and the baggage across the river in their canoes. While the camp was being made on the north side of the river, in what is now Whitman County, the Indians assisted the animals in swimming across the river.

While waiting for the horses to arrive on the north side of the river, Stevens and the two Nez Perce Chiefs visited. The General observed that the Indians had fresh salmon, which had recently been caught from the river. He purchased one from Chief Timothy.

Chief Lawyer, or The Lawyer, as he was always called, was to meet General Stevens on the north side of the river. While General Stevens waited for The Lawyer to arrive from Lapwai, he continued his visit with Chiefs Timothy and Red Wolf.

The Lawyer arrived and the four exchanged friendly greetings. General Stevens, impatient from waiting and anxious to get under way, now realized that it was time for the evening meal, and all were hungry. We can only surmise that The Lawyer invited Chief Timothy and Chief Red Wolf to remain for the Conference. General Stevens found that he had three guests to enjoy the salmon. William S. DeParris, the General's cook, must have prepared the salmon to perfection, for we find this remark: "By appointment Lawyer met the General here, and with the two other Chiefs took supper with him. The three devouring the lion's share of the fine salmon!" which Timothy had just sold General Stevens at a exorbitant price. After the feast, the Nez Perces completed the arrangements for sending their delegation to accompany him to meet the Blackfeet.

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Mr. and Mrs. Miles are history buffs in general and avid collectors of artifacts. They live at Palouse, Washington.



# Short history of Tekoa, Washington

By Mrs. Lewis Miles

The open prairies and rolling hills of the Palouse were covered with a deep rich mantle of green bunch grass. As the Homesteaders came, some were doubtful that it was good land. Others had the vision and faith of true pioneers.

Frank P. Connell was the community's first settler. He came to the county in 1875, and located a homestead a mile northeast of the present Tekoa. He established a trading post. He soon became widely known and highly respected among the Indians, and on many occasions served as their counselor and peace-maker. He also raised stock and did some farming.

The next settlers to arrive were three brothers, David, George H. and Nace Huffman. They each homesteaded in and near Tekoa. By 1883 a small community was gathered near the "Forks of the Creek". In fact that was the name applied to the community. The postoffice was located at "Lone Pine" four miles to the west. All mail was brought by a rider on horseback or by the Farmington stage.

In 1885 Daniel Truax and his brother built a saw mill on the west bank of the creek. News came that the little community was to be a junction for the Oregon, Washington Railroad and Navigation Company. The community seemed to grow overnight.

Mr. Truax, or "Uncle Dan" as he was known by all, headed the petition for the establishment of a postoffice, and the residents wanted a more suitable name than "Fork of the Creek". Mrs. Truax was standing on the porch of her home, and could see the many tents and temporary buildings, she suggested to her husband that they accept the counsel of Amos of Bible times and call the community "Tekoa," meaning "City of Tents," thus Tekoa was accepted as the name for the postoffice.

In the meanwhile Frank P. Connell had moved his trading post to the community from his homestead, and the first postoffice was located in his store.

A school district was organized on May 17, 1884. The second meeting in September 1884 voted a tax of \$250 to build a building 24'x30'x10' to be ready for the spring term of school. Henry Warner was the first teacher.

Other early settlers were John McDonald, Stephen Coffin, A.B. Willard, William Hoare, John MacCleod.

The Railroad reached Tekoa from Farmington in 1888-1889, and within two years was completed to Rockford and Spokane Falls.

On March 30, 1889, Tekoa was incorporated by Judge William C. Langford, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Washington Territory. Stephen I. Coffin became the first postmaster, first mayor and was also the first druggist.

Some of the decendants of George Huffman, William Hoare, Henry Warner and John MacCleod still live in Tekoa.

## CORRECTION:

In the last issue of the Bunchgrass Historian an uncorrected copy was inadvertently submitted to the editor on the Spalding cemetery. Mr. Moore lists the following corrections.

1. Spalding was (one of) the first white Americans . . .
2. Rev. Spalding had two girls (and two boys) prior to Henry Hart's birth.
3. Eliza was older than Alice.

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The map showing the Collins' roadhouse and the Spalding cemetery is incorrect in locating the cemetery in Garfield county. The cemetery is in Whitman county slightly above Almota.



# Boom Days in the Sheep Business 1905-1920

Alex McGregor [Cont. from Vol. 2, No. 1]

Several difficulties were encountered while on the summer range and while traveling to and from the mountains. Coyotes were a threat on the Idaho range, but not at first at the Stevens county location. Emile Morod was herding the first year the Spokane Indian Reservation was opened to sheep. He recalled that coyotes "didn't bother us too much at first because they weren't used to it . . . If a sheep die, I hang him up in a tree, way up . . . The coyotes never got a chance to get a taste of fresh sheep . . . I never lost any sheep because of them (that season)."

Poison weeds, including lupine and "death camas", were another serious threat to sheepmen throughout the West. John McGregor analyzed the difficulties in a 1918 letter seeking draft exempt status for experienced herders.

"We run during the summer months seven bands of sheep ranging from 2200 to 2800 head per band. From May to December it takes two experienced men with each. In trailing from our winter to summer range we pass through a country infested with poisonous weeds on which there has been as many as 900 head lost out of one band in two hours time. For twenty years I have been breaking these men in so that they now know the country and the poisonous areas . . . Until a man knows these areas he is practically useless to us."

Lupine was especially dangerous in October, when the poisonous seed pods (beans) ripened. Although sheep with sufficient feed usually stayed away from lupine, a hungry band would sample the plant. During one fall season, the plant cost McGregors 400-500 sheep in two days. Emile Morod recalled seeing two or three sick ewes in his band one morning and making "a big mistake."

"We had the sheep without any water, and we took 'em down a steep son of a gun hill down to the river . . . when the sheep come out of that doggone water they go crazy, some of them. (The affected sheep) run against a tree, under the wagon . . . and die right away. That poison was in 'em, and the water made it worse."

Another time, herding between Sprague and Waucon, the sheep, healthy at night were "dying like flies" by morning. Poisoned sheep ran into and over anything in their way. Emile and another herder tied them to fences but were unable to save them because they didn't have any whiskey. Alcohol when given to poisoned sheep would sometimes snap them out of their sickness.

The summer feeding grounds in Idaho and in Stevens county in general provided luxurious forage for the sheep during the years 1905-1920. The sheep spent most of their time eating shrubby plants and young brush, with buck brush and huckleberry bushes constituting a favorite diet. Prior to departure from the summer range, the black-faced sheep at the Spokane Indian Reservation were bred. The Idaho sheep, primarily white faces, were not bred until returning to the winter range at Hooper. Bucks were sometimes shipped to the summer range via train, and sometimes moved by one man with a team and a hay rack, being fed hay every night and kept overnight in farmers' corrals. Disease prevention was another concern, even though Washington state sheep seldom became infected. Blackleg serum was purchased in case that disease should appear. In addition sulphur was mixed with the salt given to sheep to prevent tick infestation.

[Concluded]