Bunchgrass Historian

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An Early Whitman County School

By J. B. West

In 1874, an early school in eastern Whitman county was taught by Sara Hughes in her log cabin home in the deep woods three miles below Palous alongside the west bank of the Palouse river. There were eight pupils. She wa granted a teacher's certificate by Cushing Eells, the famous missionary, wh was Whitman County Superintendent of Schools at the time. After a require

Mr. West, a local historian writes a weekly column for the Palouse Republic titled Memories Palouse.

Bunchgrass Historian

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examination, Mrs. Hughes was declared qualified to teach orthography, reading, arithmetic, defining, penmanship, English Composition, English Grammar and History of the United States. This certificate was for a term of six months, unless for good cause, revoked.

Her husband, "Shang" Hughes, had built their log cabin on his homestead. Like many early settlers, the land was chosen because there was wood, water, and a few acres of river bottom land which he could farm. However, the first crop of wheat he planted winterkilled, which convinced him that the Palouse Country was not suitable for growing grain. He made plans to found a town on his land, but when W. P. Breeding began building a flour mill three miles upstream and plotting a townsite to be called Palouse City, Hughes gave up the idea, at least for the time being.

When surveyors for the Spokane & Palouse Railway began laying out a route up the Palouse river toward Palouse City, Hughes suggested that a number of curves and several river crossings would be avoided if the projected route left the river and turned west at his farm. By proceeding up a gentle grade across his land, open country would be gained and a natural route could be followed toward Pullman. The change was feasible and the engineers were giving it serious consideration. If Palouse City was bypassed by the railroad, it was doomed as a town, and Hughes could revive his plans which he had made some years before.

Then A. M. Cannon, a Spokane and Palouse City banker who had invested in the town's future, took a hand. He traveled to New York City where he appeared before the directors of the Northern Pacific Railway Company. After a two-hour session he convinced them that it would be a mistake to bypass Palouse City.

"Shang" and Sarah Hughes were later divorced. Sarah was given the homestead and "Shang" left the area. It was reported that he spent the rest of his life with the Colville Indians. Sarah lived out the rest of her life, of some twenty-five years, in her log cabin with her son Eldon.

The Editor will welcome Christmas stories for consideration for the December issue. Send them to June Crithfield, Rt. 1, Colton, Washington 99113.

The School Board's Prayer

By R. L. Hartley

Somewhere in this world there must be a creature
Who can rightly be called the "ideal teacher".
His class recitations are wonderfully done,
In a way that the children all think is great fun.

He tries all the things that they taught him at Normal.
He is never too friendly and never too formal.
His school room control is not founded on force;
The children behave as a matter of course.

He sings second bass in the Methodist choir,
And helps out the church when occasions require.
His religious beliefs are simple and true;
He thinks they should guide us in all that we do.

He neither smokes nor drinks nor uses profanity;
He has never been questioned regarding his sanity;
He is much in demand for all social affairs,
For his sparkling wit drives out everyone's cares.

Dear Lord, we don't ask much. Please answer our prayer.
Look down on the earth from Your Heaven up there.
If you find such a man, we need him out here
To teach all eight grades at six hundred a year.

Grandma's "Receipt" for Washday

This is an authentic washday "receipt" in its original spelling as it was written out for a bride four generations ago:

1. bild a fire in back yard to heet kettle of rain water.
2. set tubs so smoke won't blow in eye if wind is pert.
3. shave one hole cake lie soap in bilin water.
4. sort things, make three piles, 1 pile white, 1 pile cullord, 1 pile work britches and rags.
5. stur flour in cold water to smooth, then thin down with bilin water.
6. rub dirty spots on board, scrub hard, then bile—just rench and starch.
7. take white things out of kettle with broom stick handle, then rench, blew, and starch.
8. spred tee towels on grass.
9. hang old rags on fence.
10. pore rench water on flower bed.
11. scrub porch with hot soapy water.
12. turn tubs upside down.
13. go put on clean dress—smooth hair with side combs—brew cup of tee—set and rest and rock a spell and count blessins.

Author Unknown

Settling in Washington Territory

By Belle L. Shirley Green

In the summer of 1879 my father, Ezekiel Allen Shirley of Monmouth, Oregon, had been hearing wonderful reports of the stock and grain farms in the rolling hills of the Palouse country of Washington Territory. Father had four boys, and three of them were old enough to file on government land for a homestead. In September of 1879 he began to make preparations to go to Waitsburg, Walla Walla County, W.T., for one or two years to look over the country and see if he could get his boys settled on government land. So he left a man and wife to care for the farm and stock during his absence.

In October of that year we shipped by steamboat down the Willamette River from Salem to Portland, Ore. The next day we started by boat from Portland up the Columbia River to The Dalles at Celilo Falls. At Celilo Falls a narrow-gauge railroad had been built, to take the place of the old portage mule train around the falls, by Dr. D. S. Baker. Grandmother, mother and I went on Dr. Baker's narrow-gauge railroad but we did not have to ride on the old passenger car as this was a new coach. We saw the old passenger car with the seats along the sides. I saw my first flock of prairie chickens on that trip. They were beautiful birds. I also saw my first coyote. The train stopped and a few of the men got off and shot at the coyote. It ran off through the bunchgrass, looking back at them. The men returned to the train and it continued on. Once we were past the falls on the upper Columbia, we boarded a steam-turning paddle-wheel boat on our way to Wallula Landing. This landing seemed a desolate place and was our destination by water. At Wallula father put us on the train, telling mother which hotel to go when we got to Walla Walla. Father had shipped a team of horses and a carriage to Wallula. He and the boys drove the team from Wallula to Walla Walla, about thirty miles I think.

When we finally arrived in Walla Walla father and the boys were at the depot waiting for us. He took us to our hotel for the night, and the next day we drove to Waitsburg, W.T., a little town in Walla Walla County. That was to be our home for the next year. My brother and I went to school that year in Waitsburg.

After school closed in June of 1880, father started with his family for Spokane Falls, as it was then called. From Waitsburg to the Snake River was mostly stock country. The grass grew in such large bunches that stock on the range were very fat. The large ranges were taken up by homesteaders. Little one room box houses of boards, the cracks battened, were scattered here and there through the hills and valleys.

We crossed the Snake River at the Almota Ferry, and stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Spalding for a few days. Here we learned that a day or so before a cloudburst in the Almota Canyon had washed out the road up the canyon, so our journey was postponed until they could make the road passable for teams. Father and mother were so glad to become acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Spalding, forming a friendship that lasted through life.

We finally started for Colfax and spent a few days with father's sister and other relatives. Then on to Rosalia and spent some time with friends and former neighbors there, father looking for land, finally arriving in Spokane Falls. At that time there were no bridges across the river nearer than Cowlys bridge, twelve or

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Mrs. Green's daughter, Mrs. H. B. Briggs of Santa Barbara, Calif., submitted the above article written by Mrs. Green in 1941.

fifteen miles above Spokane. The falls were magnificent when the wind blew the spray from one side of the river to the other. When father started back he wanted to go by way of Farmington to look at some land, then to see some old friends and former neighbors living at Palouse City and Moscow, Idaho.

In some way he met a man who had proved up on his pre-emption claim in Whitman County and was anxious to sell. Father drove down to the place, looked it over and bought the 160 acres. This farm was near the present town of Johnson, and was our home for many years. Sixty years in Whitman County.

There were no schools in the district when father first settled on this farm. Later a schoolhouse was built. Church and Sunday school and community entertainments were held in the schoolhouse. Mrs. Miles Hooper was the first teacher, she had all grades. Fletcher Staley and I were the only ones taking upper grade work. The young men of the neighborhood bought an organ for the church and Sunday school. A. J. Green kept the organ in his home and took it to the schoolhouse each Sunday. When the weather was nice we would have a neighborhood picnic dinner, then later we would have a lot of fun singing and visiting together.There was no rivalry nor envy. Everybody knew everybody even if they had not met before. The pioneer's doors were never locked. What was of interest to one was of equal interest to all. Sorrow in one family became sorrow for all.

I think it was in the year of 1881 father had a good house built on this farm, the boys were on farms of their own. He and mother thought they would sell the old donation farm in Oregon. He had the family piano and household goods shipped to Almota. The boys took the wagon and teams down to the river and brought the piano and other freight. I remember how happy I was when we had the piano and our furniture in our new home. Father and mother both could sing very well and both could read music, and one brother taught both voice and piano. It was the custom for the neighbors on Sunday afternoons that winter to gather at father's home around the piano and sing until they all had to go home and care for their stock.

Father's home was a haven for preachers. Both he and mother were deeply interested in the religious life of the community. One cold winter day when the wind was blowing and the snow was drifting I looked out our front window and saw a man coming into our yard. He had left his horse at the gate, with bridle reins thrown over the gate post. He was so cold he could hardly walk as he came to the house. I went to the door to meet him and he was so nearly frozen he could barely speak. But he told me his name was Cushing Eells. That was enough, everyone knew and loved the Reverend Cushing Eells. I started to fix the fire. He said would I please get a basin of snow for him, which I did and helped him get his gloves or mittens off his hands and into the basin of snow. I then got the wrappings off his head and feet. After a while I gave him something hot to drink. I had rubbed his hands and ears with snow. By the time father and mother came home he was quite comfortable. Father had met him some place and was very glad to have him in our home. Just think, I had rubbed snow on the

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The home place bought by E. A. Shirley is now owned by the Jennings family, and is located along the present Pullman to Lewiston highway between Chambers and the Jay Maxwell place.
One son Laif Shirley homesteaded land near Leitchville on the old Colfax to Lewiston wagon road. This was later bought by Jacob Entel and is presently owned by Ed Ankerson. Laif also owned another place near the Snake river breaks out of Colton known as the Oscar Bailey place. Mr. Bailey leased it for several years. The property is owned by the Burnham family, children of Laif Shirley's daughter. The land is farmed today by Dan Kramer of Colton.
Where the other Shirley boys took up land is not known.

ears of the Reverend Cushing Eells, the founder of Whitman College. The Reverend Eells told us about a small printing press which had been brought from the Sandwich Islands and set up at Lapwai. Books were printed in the Nez Perce language by the Reverend Spalding. This was the first printing press in the Northwest.

THE SNAKE RIVER BOATS

The steamboats plying up and down the river offered the farmers the opportunity of getting their wheat and other grains to the Portland market. The boats coming up the Columbia River would be loaded with freight for Wallula Landing and on the Snake River for Almota, Wawawai and Lewiston, Idaho. This route gave the farmers of the Inland Empire the opportunity, when hauling wheat, oats, barley, and flax for shipment to Portland to have on the return trip a cargo of freight for the merchants of the Inland Empire. The farmers would make profit as a freighter as well as a grower of grains.

At this time there was no railroad in Whitman County. The only method of travel or transportation was by Snake River boats, and by freight wagons to the merchants. All wheat and other grains grown in Whitman County and in the Moscow, Idaho, country had to be hauled to Wawawai or Almota on the Snake River for shipment to Portland. My brothers used to haul freight from Wawawai and Almota to Moscow, Idaho. Almota was the principal shipping point on the Snake River for many years for the entire country north of the river. Almota was one of the first settlements in eastern Washington. The first settlers had to go to Waitsburg for flour and produce. They crossed the Snake River at Almota. We went to Wawawai or Almota for fruit, peaches, grapes and pears, before fruit was grown on the upland. When father first went to Whitman County they didn't think fruit would mature up on the hills.

ON WILD HORSE BUTTE

My brother and I used to ride horseback over Wild Horse Butte (now known as Bald Butte), and from the top of the Butte looking over the hills and valleys was a beautiful sight. The hills and valleys were covered with a luxuriant growth of bunchgrass that rolled in billows with the breeze. This beautiful bunchgrass was knee high to the stock, and range horses and cattle were rolling fat. The ranch men would cut this grass for winter feed for cattle. The range horses could live out all winter, they would paw the snow off the grass with the forefoot or hoof. Father said this grass was like cured hay for the stock.

There were quite a number of wild horses in the early days on this Butte, some very good ones, others seemed to be just ordinary Indian ponies but all fat and very beautiful. The boys in the neighborhood would go to the Butte, take a lasso—it was a long rope with a running noose—and catch the wild ponies. Some of the men would catch the larger ones for farm work. In the winter farmers would train the horses to work in harness. First the man would put a harness on the horse until he would not be afraid, then by spring the farmer would have a new work team. My brothers got a beautiful dapple grey pony for me. I had her for my riding horse for quite a long time.

Looking southeast from Pullman, Washington, one can see Bald Butte not many miles in the distance. The old Indian trails go over the top of this Butte. The bunchgrass rolled with the breeze as far as one could see and not a fence to mar the beauty of this sea of grass. From the top of the Butte we could see

Moscow, Idaho, Colton, Uniontown and the present site of Pullman and Johnson.

The plowing of this bunchgrass was quite a job. The grass roots were tough and not easily broken. Besides the grass roots there were many sunflower roots which were very tough. They looked something like a sugar beet root. When the plow struck one of these roots it was sure to jerk the plow out of the ground or give the plowman a good jerk. When the roots were dry they were an excellent substitute for stovewood. Mother liked to have them when she had bread to bake or meat to roast. My brothers didn't like to get them from the sod. When harrowing the ground the harrow would pull them out of the ground and then they would be thrown in a pile to dry. When the roots were partly dry they were loaded into the wagon and taken to the woodpile so they could finish drying for summer wood. It would take two days for the men to haul a load of wood from the nearest place in the mountains where they could buy wood, so fuel was very scarce and the sunflower roots were a good substitute for summer wood for just the labor.

I have lived through a period of time when there were many advances in transportation. In 1870, it was horseback and wagon, in 1880 hack and carriage, with better roads came the buggy, and buckboard, then the railroad and motor car and later air transportation. The rapid development of the railroad in the early 1880's gave rural communities a chance to receive and send mail at least weekly. No privation suffered by the pioneers was more keenly felt than the lack of mail service. People had to make their own entertainment in the early days, church, Sunday school, and all community entertainments were held in the schoolhouse and the whole neighborhood was sure to be there. We had a good choir and singing class, like our community singing of today.

THE PALOUSE COUNTRY

When a homesteader built a new house, as soon as it was enclosed the neighbors gave a dance to celebrate the new home. Someone would hunt up two old-time fiddlers, a banjo and maybe a guitar. Then find a man that could call a square dance,"alle men left and swing on the corner." The "Over the Waves" waltz was very popular and the schottische, polka and mazurka were favorites with all.

The houses were built of boards, double boxed and battened. People lived quite plainly. Women and children wore calico, and gingham dresses for every day, with maybe a linen dress for Sunday afternoon at home.

By 1884 clothes were becoming important. The spinning and weaving days were over. Mother wore dresses with a full skirt, tight bodice and long tight sleeves. She always had some kind of cream lace at the throat, and always had a good looking black silk dress. When I went to Monmouth, Ore., to school I would have a black velvet dress for best, then a blue silk for church and Sunday school. Our school dresses were of cashmere and ladys cloth, all with long sleeves and high neck, a dress for parties, mull with puffed sleeves.

Felix Warren was a fearless early day stagecoach driver. He drove the stage from Spokane and Lewiston to Walla Walla. I have ridden on his stage from Lewiston to Walla Walla many times on my way to school at Monmouth, Ore. This thorough brace stagecoach was drawn by four, and sometimes six horses, all in a lope jolting along in and out of the ruts, the passengers sliding until you hit another passenger at the other end of the seat. From Walla Walla to Wallula, we went by Dr. Baker's narrow-gauge railroad, then on a Columbia boat down to

Portland, then up the Willamette River to Salem, then by stage to Monmouth. I have forgotten just how many days it did take to even get to Portland, but I think it was about a week. Then when school was closed in June, we would go to Salem, then by railroad to Portland, then up the Columbia and Snake River to Almota, where father would meet us.

"One beautiful autumn day in 1885, Noah W. Green, formerly of Eugene, Oregon, and Belle L. Shirley, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Shirley of Pleasant Flat, were married at the home of her parents. After the wedding breakfast the couple left for Spokane Falls and Hayden Lake on their honeymoon." We left with a team of horses and a buggy. We were in Spokane for a few days, then on to Hayden Lake, at that time there were no hotels or cabins on Hayden Lake. The place he had rented was almost a mile back in the timber. The owner had a boat he let us use. We had some good times rowing on the lake, sometimes we would take a picnic lunch with us then build a fire and make coffee, and maybe fry some kind of meat. The autumn coloring was beautiful. My husband's parents lived on Spokane Prairie and we drove over and spent the day with them. After a while we began to get anxious about getting back to Whitman County and start fixing up our new home on my husband's pre-emption claim. The house was just a box house of one room. He had built on a bedroom, kitchen and front porch, and fenced the yard. Before this yard fence was built, barnyard and field were all in one enclosure. We planted trees and a few flowers.

My first dressing table was made from a dry goods box. For the drawers I used soapboxes, and the knobs were spools. The dressing table stool was from a nail keg. I lined the inside with something white, made deep pockets of calico and tacked them on the inside of the keg. I had a pad with a flounce for the lid, and curtains of dotted swiss. I can't tell you how proud I was of my bedroom when I had finished it. It had cream walls, white curtains and a new white counterpane on the bed.

My father gave me a piano. After we got our home comfortable I took some music pupils, who came to my home for lessons. My husband and I were pals and business partners. He consulted me about everything he did although he was the business head of the house. At first I thought I would get a washing machine with my music money, but I had no place to keep one, so I just had a good old wash board, so wash day was rub-adub-dub.

There were quite a number of young men in the neighborhood who could sing very well, and we used to have them come to our home winter evenings. We would spend the evening singing around the piano enjoying our neighbors and friends.

The first railroad was built in 1883. It was called the Columbia and Palouse Railroad, and was intended as a feeder for the Northern Pacific. It connected at Palouse Junction. Construction of this line was continued in 1885, when it was extended to Pullman and Moscow. The Spokane and Palouse branch was very valuable to Whitman County.

The country was, at first, thought to be too cold for agriculture. It did not take long to find out how incorrect that idea had been. In 1893 Whitman County experienced a severe financial crisis. That summer is long to be remembered by all in the Pacific Northwest. Money was so hard to get and farmers were wondering how they would get through their harvest, but they did not know what the future was about to bring. During the wheat harvest we were almost flooded by heavy rains that continued for weeks and ruined most of the wheat crop in the northwestern part of Whitman County. It rotted in the fields in sacks.

We lost hundreds of acres of grain that year. We had just bought a farm, and had to have more farm equipment to operate the land. Mr. Green had rented for a few years. He was anxious to get this land paid for as soon as possible. But out of all this hundreds of acres, we just saved the grain on one field of thirty-five acres which we had cut and threshed before the rains came. Many business firms and farmers were forced into bankruptcy. This misfortune marked the end of a long period of prosperity and development of the new country.

Then came the beginning of the darkest time in the history of the country, panic and distress were felt everywhere. What wheat we had to sell, we sold for ten and eleven cents per bushel. Banks were closed all over the country. I had a flock of chickens. I would dress nice fat young chickens of two pounds and take them to Moscow. They would give me fifteen cents in trade for them, smaller than two pound ones I would get ten cents in trade, eggs five cents per dozen. However, with our chickens, eggs and butter we kept a good supply of staples. I can't remember that we ever had so many staples in our storeroom. We had a grand garden that year. I canned and dried so much corn and other vegetables, more than we could possibly eat. Mr. Green gave away to people that were not so fortunate, meat, garden vegetables, milk, fruit and eggs. I would get yards of calico, gingham, muslin, thread, shirts, socks and gloves for my husband. Our storeroom was well stocked with goods which I had gotten in trade for my chickens, butter or eggs. Mr. Green would kill a beef and divide with the neighbors. When this was used up another neighbor would kill a beef, so we had good meat all the time. My husband would kill hogs for our year's meat supply, and make sausage for winter and spring, then we would divide with anyone he thought would like some fresh meat.

One winter, my husband and some of the neighbor men organized a Mutual Benefit Club. They would meet in various homes in the neighborhood and discuss things of mutual interest to them. The ladies were invited to go and we would serve a hot oyster supper at midnight. This club met only in the winter months.

Sometime in the summer of 1893 the steamboat Annie Faxon exploded on the Snake River a few miles below Almota killing twelve or fourteen persons and several were injured. The entire galley was blown off into the river when the boiler exploded. I remember the great fire in Pullman in 1890, the admission of Washington Territory to statehood in 1889, the Spanish American War in 1898, the great Pullman flood of 1910, the first American World War and the second American War.

Here are some wheat prices from some old clippings I have—bumper wheat crop 1894, wheat price 23 cents and 27 cents a bushel, 1895 good crop, wheat 21 cents, continued to go down.

THE STATE COLLEGE FOUNDED

When the committee appointed by the Governor to select a site for the State College, or Agricultural College as it was then called, came to Pullman the townspeople of Pullman were very anxious to make as good an impression on the Governor's committee as possible.

My father came out to the farm and wanted us all to come to town the day the Governor's committee was to be there.

We dressed in our Sunday best and spent the day walking up and down the streets in town. The committee was informed Pullman was situated on the best farming land in the state.

The College was located here, the small brick building called the "Crib" was the first building. There was an element of discord that kept things in an uproar for a while. It was not running smoothly until Dr. E. A. Bryan was elected president in 1893. From that time on things commenced to function properly. Since then the growth of the college has been very rapid. The first class was graduated in 1897, and since that time each June a class has been presented for graduation.

Dr. Enoch Albert Bryan, president emeritus of the State College at the time of his death, died at his home in Pullman on the 5th of November, 1941. He was 86 years old.

In September of 1897 my husband was taken quite ill. Our doctor treated him for about a month, then thought it best to have him go to Portland for medical advice and an operation. Nothing they could do could save him. In April 1898 he died, leaving me along with our four young children to raise and educate. The first five years after his death were very hard; times hard, and wheat not a good price. I rented the farm and moved to Pullman to try my luck keeping roomers and boarders. I tried to make a little home life for college students and at the same time make enough to keep my children in school. I wanted to give them and raise them in the best environment it was possible for me to give them.

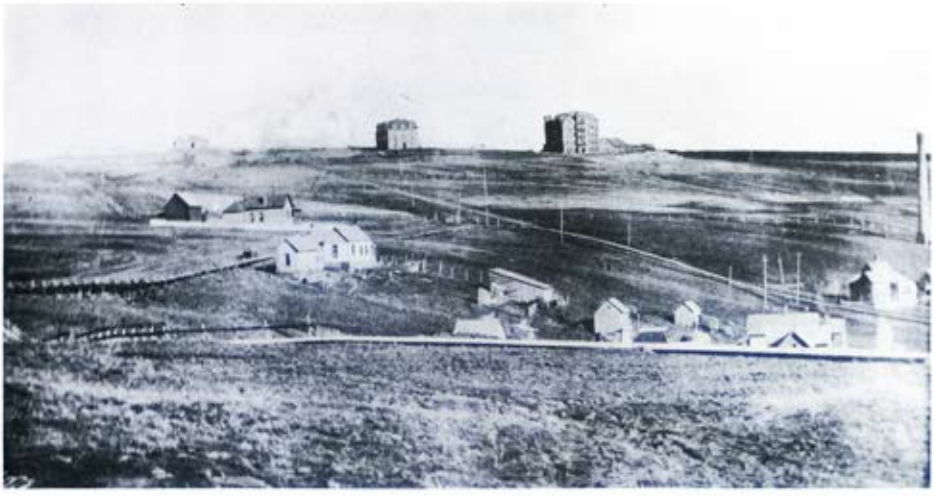
I have many pleasant memories of the years spent with college students and later college faculty members in my home.

My children are all married and have good homes of their own now. I devoted my whole life to our children, after their father was taken from us. I think Pullman was the best environment one could possibly give to one's family.

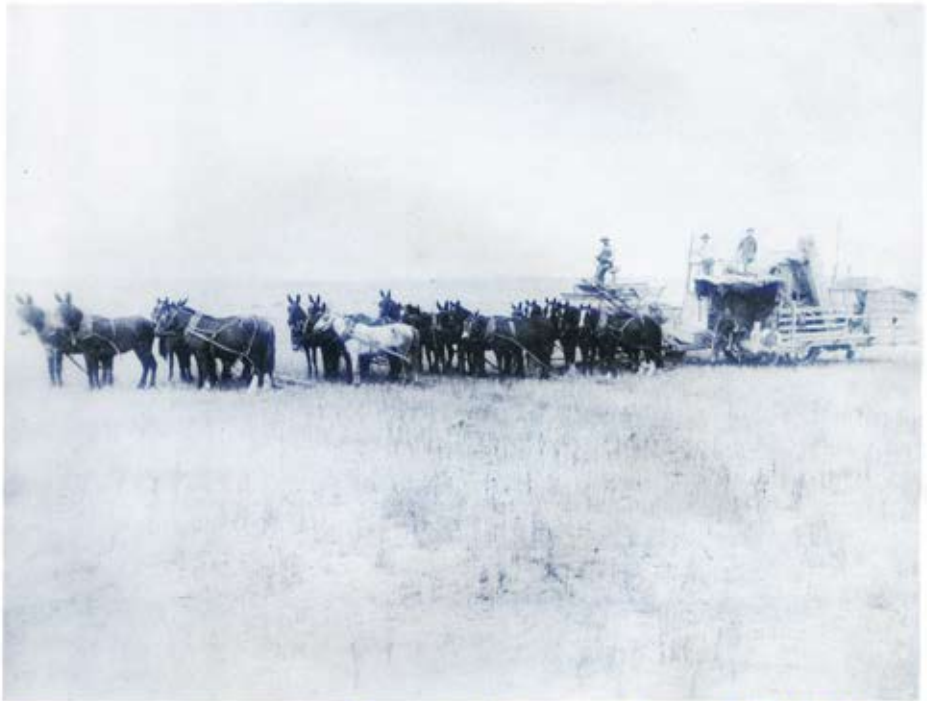
Twenty Mule Team

By Belle L. Shirley Green

I am going to tell you about an incident that happened many years ago and it made a lasting impression on me at the time. Even today it is an event that I remember very well. After we went to Waitsburg, we used to make weekend trips looking over the country. We spent the night at a place where a Twenty Mule freight wagon and team had camped for the night. The wagon was large with a high box loaded with some kind of freight. Then another wagon chained or fixed fast in some way to the lead wagon as a trailer and loaded with freight. As I remember the freight was consigned to some miners. Father had us up early the next morning to see the teamster hitch up the mules to the wagon. When the teamster had unhitched the night before the harness had been left on the ground in the mules' place. When he started to hitch his team to the wagon he did a lot of talking to them, then one mule after the other would come around to their proper places. I thought the mules knew as much about the job as the teamster did. When they were all in their places, at the command from the teamster, the lead team would lean forward and straighten out, so on down to the wheel mules. The driver of the team drove with a jerk line and rode one of the wheel mules on the left hand side. Then the twenty mule team was rolling on its journey. I don't remember that they even had the twenty mules but that seemed to be the name given this freight team.



Washington State University in 1893. —Courtesy WSU Archives Library



Multi-horse and mule team pulling combine harvester, August 12, 1912. Homer Dana was the separator tender. —Homer Dana Collection, WCHS

Recalling Early Days in Whitman County

By Jessie Hanford

In June, 1890, I came with my family to Colfax, Wash. We were the George L. Bratton family from North Loup, Neb. I was 11 years old at the time. My father had always wanted to come West, so here we were. My remembrance of North Loup, Neb., was that the Indians were traipsing through that little town on the way to the Dakotas where Sitting Bull was on the warpath. It was scary for us children, but quite entertaining, too.

We came West on the Union Pacific, and I still remember the desolation of Mountain Home and Ketchum, Idaho.

I do not remember where we lived in Colfax, but when my parents sent me to town for a lamp chimney, I remember walking down a railroad track to the store. I got the chimney all right, but when I asked the man how much it was, he said "Two bits." We looked at each other a moment and then he said, "Twenty-five cents." So having settled that big deal, I was happily on my way home.

In September, 1890, my father opened a dry goods and boots and shoe store in Oakesdale. That was a wild, bustling town in those days. We had three railroads, at least 11 saloons and a bad reputation for a fatal shooting every Saturday night.

That same year, I went to the new brick schoolhouse on the hill. A Mr. Sykes was our principal. When I reached the eighth grade, I remember our teacher, Miss Emma Lommason of Colfax. She pounded history, grammar and geography into our heads that I still remember. She was a great teacher.

The Hanford family came to Oakesdale from Chicago in 1889, the year Washington became a state. In 1891, Mr. Edwin H. Hanford and Mr. George Comegys opened the Commercial State Bank at Oakesdale. (Mr. Comegys was one of the signers of the State Constitution). My husband, Homer W. Hanford, who was 17 at the time, went in as office boy. There was a wide range of territory at the time and the bank did well.

My husband was behind the counter in that bank for 47 years. The institution was sold in 1938 to the Seattle-First National Bank. I consider my husband to have been one of the pioneer bankers of Whitman county. With team and buggy he used to go out collecting for the bank.

In 1893 we came upon very hard times. There was so much rain that the wheat sprouted in the sacks in the fields. There was some real hardship in those days. Some men, I remember, had gunny sacks wrapped around their feet. Wheat was parched for coffee substitute.

And so it was in the "Good old days."

Mrs. Hanford lives in Santa Rosa, Calif., with a daughter, Mrs. Winnifred Hanford Boyd.

Remember the Christmas when . . . . . ?

Tell us about it.